

POLITICS OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS IN MALAWI:  
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF MACHINGA AND THYOLO

M. A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS

JOSEPH BONIFACE MWAIMWAI MAERE

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

MAY, 2011

**POLITICS OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS IN MALAWI:  
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF MACHINGA AND THYOLO**

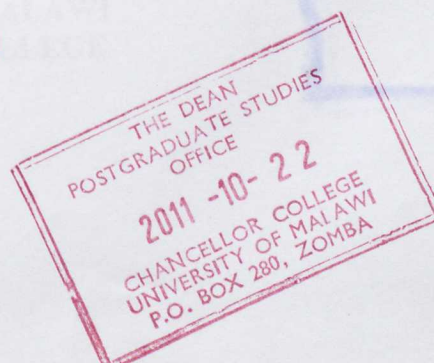
**M.A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE) THESIS**

**JOSEPH BONIFACE MWAIMWAI MAERE**



**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

**MAY, 2011**





**POLITICS OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS IN MALAWI:  
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF MACHINGA AND THYOLO**

**M.A. (Political Science)**

**By**

**JOSEPH BONIFACE MWAIMWAI MAERE  
BA (Humanities) – University of Malawi**



Thesis submitted to the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Faculty of  
Social Science, in  
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (Political Science)

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI  
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

**May, 2011**

## DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

**Joseph Boniface Mwaimwai Maere**

---

**Full Legal Name**



---

**Signature**

17. 05. 11

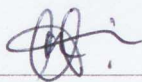
---

**Date:**



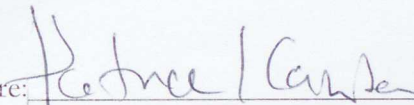
## Certificate of Approval/Certification

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

Signature:  Date: 13/05/11

Blessings Chinsinga, PhD (Associate Professor)

**Main Supervisor**

Signature:  Date: 13.5.11

Patrick Kambewa, PhD (Associate Professor)

**Member, Supervisory Committee**

## Dedication

*To my late grandmother, Mrs. L. Chisala,*  
She should be proud of what I am becoming.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first and foremost honour the Almighty God, without whom the production of the thesis would have been impossible.

I am also highly indebted to the NUFU Coordinator and my main supervisor, Dr. Blessings Chinsinga, and my co-supervisor, Dr. P. Kambewa, for their untiring effort to enable me reach this end. You have been my inspiration throughout the period. I also thank the MPS coordinator, Dr. A. Chiweza, and her team for the encouragement, programs and all the work she tirelessly offered to the whole class indiscriminatingly. The insights of Dr. Henry Chingaipe during the research proposal writing stage are highly appreciated.

I also express my thanks and appreciations to the management of NORAD funds, through the University of Malawi, Political and Administrative Studies Department, for making it possible for me to pursue this prestigious programme.

I also thank my Political Science colleagues for the social and moral support to this paper and the company.

Last but not least, I thank my whole family for its support throughout the period, the prayers and support from Pastor Mapunda Ngwira, and the Chancellor, Dr. C. Chanthunya and BIU management for the permission rendered during the research period.

## ABSTRACT

The study focuses on how informal institutions affect public policy implementation. Specifically, the focus is on whether informal practices involved during the distribution of agricultural inputs namely; the Starter Pack Scheme (SP), Targeted Input Programme (TIP) and Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme (AISP) had impacted food security programme implementations. The main argument is that politics exhibited by these informal practices contribute to the maladministration of the agricultural input programmes and violates the fundamental notion of public accountability. The study seeks to expose the effects of these tendencies on the distribution of the agricultural inputs in the light of effectiveness and accountability.

The study is based on the theoretical underpinnings of Helmke and Levitsky's conceptualization of the impact of informal institutions, and Thomas' conceptualization of Public Accountability to assess the effects of patronage politics manifested in the distribution. The study adopts a combined research design to evaluate the breadth and depth of the effects of these practices. Machinga and Thyolo districts are used as applicable case areas in the study.

Despite the success stories which the agricultural input subsidy programmes registered, the findings indicate that patronage politics, as an informal institution, is a vice against effective distribution and public accountability, and produce many repercussions in public policy implementation. From the findings, rules and regulations were violated, coupons and packs were sold out and some was used to woo political supporters. The study concludes that patronage politics manifested in the distribution of agricultural input programmes undermines public accountability and works against the purpose of the food security programmes.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Title Page.....            | i   |
| Approval Page.....         | ii  |
| Declaration.....           | iii |
| Dedication.....            | iv  |
| Acknowledgements.....      | v   |
| Abstract.....              | vi  |
| Table of Contents.....     | vii |
| List of Figures.....       | ix  |
| List of Tables.....        | ix  |
| List of Abbreviations..... | x   |

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

|     |                                |   |
|-----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1.1 | Background.....                | 1 |
| 1.2 | Problem Statement.....         | 4 |
| 1.3 | Study Objectives.....          | 7 |
| 1.4 | Research Design.....           | 7 |
| 1.5 | Significance of the Study..... | 8 |
| 1.6 | Limitations to the Study.....  | 8 |
| 1.7 | Outline of the Chapters.....   | 9 |

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

|     |                            |    |
|-----|----------------------------|----|
| 2.0 | Introduction.....          | 10 |
| 2.1 | Theoretical Framework..... | 10 |



|       |                                                                             |    |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 2.1.1 | Normative Institutionalism (NI).....                                        | 10 |
| 2.1.2 | Patronage Politics.....                                                     | 14 |
| 2.1.3 | Public Accountability Model.....                                            | 19 |
| 2.2   | Debates on Patronage Politics and Underdevelopment.....                     | 22 |
| 2.3   | The Government Sponsored Agricultural Inputs Implemented in Malawi<br>..... | 25 |
| 2.4   | How Patronage Politics Pervades Agricultural Input Programmes.....          | 28 |
| 2.5   | Conclusion.....                                                             | 30 |

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

|     |                                     |    |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----|
| 3.0 | Introduction.....                   | 32 |
| 3.1 | Research Design.....                | 32 |
| 3.2 | Methods of Data Analysis.....       | 37 |
| 3.3 | Challenges During The Research..... | 37 |
| 3.4 | Conclusion.....                     | 38 |

### CHAPTER FOUR: THE EXTENT TO WHICH PATRONAGE POLITICS HAS AFFECTED THE DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS IN MACHINGA AND THYOLO

|     |                                                                           |    |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.0 | Introduction.....                                                         | 40 |
| 4.1 | Thyolo District Socio-Economic Profile.....                               | 40 |
| 4.2 | Machinga District Socio-Economic Profile.....                             | 41 |
| 4.3 | Objective One: Distribution and Targeting of the Agricultural Inputs..... | 42 |
| 4.4 | Objective Two: The Existence of Patronage Politics in the Distribution    |    |

|                                                                                                                          |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| of Coupons and Other Farm Inputs in the Sampled Areas.....                                                               | 48 |
| 4.5 Objective Three: Overall Effects of patronage Politics on the<br>Distribution Process.....                           | 69 |
| 4.6 Objective Four: The Preventative Measures That Minimize<br>Patronage Politics on these Food Security Programmes..... | 72 |
| 4.7 Conclusion.....                                                                                                      | 75 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS                                                                             |    |
| 5.0 Introduction.....                                                                                                    | 77 |
| 5.1 General Conclusions.....                                                                                             | 77 |
| 5.2 Recommendations.....                                                                                                 | 81 |
| 5.3 Areas for Further Study.....                                                                                         | 82 |
| REFERENCE.....                                                                                                           | 84 |



## LIST OF FIGURES

|             |                                                                                       |    |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1.1: | Maize Production in Malawi (1997-2007).....                                           | 2  |
| Figure 2.1: | The Vicious Cycle of Neopatrimonial Social and State Structures.....                  | 24 |
| Figure 2.2: | Relative Costs of Fertilizer and Poverty rates in Malawi.....                         | 27 |
| Figure 4.1: | Distributions of Farming Families in Thyolo EPAs.....                                 | 41 |
| Figure 4.2: | Distributions of Farming Families in Machinga EPAs.....                               | 42 |
| Figure 4.3: | In your Opinion, was the Starter pack Distribution Fair?.....                         | 46 |
| Figure 4.4: | In your Opinion, was the TIP packs distribution Fair? .....                           | 47 |
| Figure 4.5: | Respondents' views on the existence of corruption in food security<br>programmes..... | 51 |
| Figure 4.6: | Who distributed the Fertilizer Coupons to the Respondents?.....                       | 55 |
| Figure 4.7: | Responses on the question of influence over the distribution of<br>coupons.....       | 56 |
| Figure 4.8: | Respondent's views on the existence of corruption in food security<br>programmes..... | 60 |
| Figure 4.9  | Opinions on whether access to fertilizer coupons was fair.....                        | 63 |

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 2.1: A Typology of Informal Institutions.....13

Table 4.1: Poverty Profiles of TIP Recipients and Non-recipients.....45

Table 4.2: Reasons for Unfair Distribution.....49

Table 4.3: Questions of fraud distribution and whether reporting was  
done.....55

Table 4.4 How the respondents accessed fertilizer coupons.....61

Table 4.5: Action Taken by the government after cases of Anomalies were Reported  
.....68



## LIST OF APPENDICES

|                                                                          |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Appendix 1: Questionnaire Allocation in the five villages.....           | 91  |
| Appendix 2: Assessing Targeting, Food Access and Food Availability ..... | 92  |
| Appendix 3: Household Interview Questionnaire.....                       | 93  |
| Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Question paper.....             | 99  |
| Appendix 5: Key Informant Interview Guide.....                           | 102 |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|          |                                             |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|
| ADD      | Agricultural Development Division           |
| AISP     | Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme        |
| CBT      | Community Based Targeting                   |
| DADO     | District Agricultural Development Officer   |
| DC       | District Commissioner                       |
| DPP      | Democratic Progressive Party                |
| EFI      | Extremely Food Insecure                     |
| EPA      | Extension Planning Area                     |
| FGD      | Focus Group Discussion                      |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product                      |
| GOM      | Government of Malawi                        |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus                |
| IHS      | Integrated Household Survey                 |
| MCP      | Malawi Congress Party                       |
| MGDS     | Malawi Growth Development Strategy          |
| MoAFS    | Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security   |
| MP       | Member of Parliament                        |
| NSO      | National Statistical Office                 |
| RDP      | Rural Development Project                   |
| SACA     | Smallholder Agricultural Credit Association |
| SP       | Starter Pack Scheme                         |



|      |                                         |
|------|-----------------------------------------|
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| TIP  | Targeted Input Programme                |
| UDF  | United Democratic Party                 |
| VDC  | Village Development Committee           |

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

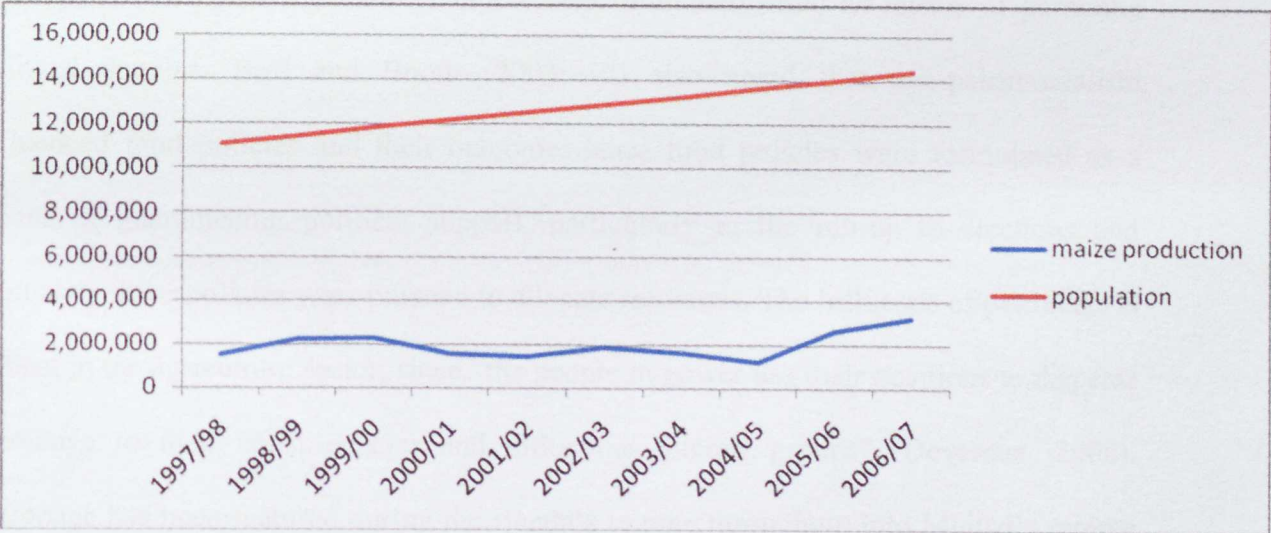
The Government of Malawi has been implementing various agricultural input programmes from 1998 to improve food security situations in Malawi. These efforts came in the wake of several food crises, among which is the 1991/92 food crisis, and food shortages experienced in the years as a result of the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) reforms, which among other reforms, abolished the universal fertilizer subsidy, a programme that had been cushioning the poor smallholder farmers.

Food insecurity in Africa is an endemic situation forcing most of the countries especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa to place agricultural input interventions as a policy agenda. The 2004 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report indicates that up to 840 million people were food insecure, with 23 percent in sub-Saharan Africa and 60 percent in Southeast Asia. In addition to that, Rosengrant et al (2001) point out that the number of hungry and malnourished Africans might increase to 300 million by 2020. In Malawi and other countries in Southern Africa almost 8 million in the Southern Africa remain food insecure every year (Cromwell and Chintedza, 2005). Considering the situations in Malawi, the country had been importing maize from the neighbouring countries since 1975 up to 2005, when it first had maize surplus to export (Stambuli as cited in Chinsinga, 2007). Even though, the Government of Malawi implemented several agricultural input programmes, the national food security situations did not register



expected outcomes, except the time it started implementing the Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme in 2005. The government had to import maize from neighbouring countries, to supplement the minimal maize production levels and ensure that the country remained food secure. These efforts did not completely guarantee food security as the country still experienced recurrent hunger crises over the years of the implementation of the interventions programmes, such as the 2001/2002 and 2004/2005 food crises. Below is a graph (Fig 1.1) illustrating the food production trends and the growing national population.

**Fig 1.1: Maize Production in Malawi (1997-2007)**



Source: Analysed data from statistics of MoAFS (2007)

This graph clearly indicates how maize production levels in Malawi over the years (1997-2007) had been fluctuating from the periods of national food security such as 1999/2000 and 2006/2007 growing seasons, yet in the same period the population had been steadily growing at 2.8 percent (NSO, 2008). These maize production shortages were produced by several factors ranging from declining soil fertility and dependence on



fertilizer subsidies to small plot size farms, lack of foreign exchange, erratic rainfall, and high incidence of HIV/AIDS (Sahley et al. 2005:2). Regardless of these setbacks, Doward *et al.* (2007) asserted that the government interventions had positive impact in ensuring increased maize production for the smallholder farmers who had no means of securing agricultural inputs, but had targeting problems.

Sahley *et al.* (2005:3) noted that “politics characterized these interventions and ‘food electioneering’ became a motive for the ruling parties during the same period.” The political party, which promised sound food security policies and effective agricultural input programmes, had the guaranteed support of the smallholder farmers. This tendency equally influenced the distribution of the inputs themselves as patronage affected the distribution criteria as agricultural inputs were ultimately used as means of garnering political support. Bird and Booth (2003: iii) also noted that neo-patrimonialism influenced food policies and their outcomes since food policies were formulated as a means of guaranteeing political support, particularly in the run-up to elections and ultimately these policies were pursued to allocate resources. The influence of patronage is critical in the agriculture sector, since “the people in power use their positions to disperse patronage to their constituencies and influential interest groups” (Devereux, 2008). Patronage has been featured during the Banda’s regime throughout into Muluzi’s regime without government commitment and political will to deal with it (Booth et al, 2006). It is this ‘politics of agricultural input programmes’ that form the basis of this study, as the study analyzes the pervasiveness of politics through the distribution of agricultural inputs at the micro-level of Machinga and Thyolo districts.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Malawi Government sponsored interventions inputs as efforts to minimize food insecurity and vulnerability. These interventions include Starter Pack Scheme (SP), Targeted Input Programme (TIP), and the Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme (AISP). However, studies have shown that most of the poor masses remained to be food insecure despite the implementation of these food security interventions.

The argument of this study is that patronage politics, as an informal practice, has characterised the distribution of farm inputs for government interventions meant for smallholder farmers, and this is having some negative effects on the distribution itself. The study supports Leftwich's (2008:5) contention that research institutions and economists in aid agencies have devoted little attention to "understanding the diverse political contexts, processes, and practices which frame developmental outcomes, whether positive or pathological, and hence determine poverty reduction outcomes." Much as economic reforms and sound food security policies have been implemented and have promised rewarding results, political, and institutional reforms is left untouched, and is producing adverse effects on the supposedly sound policies. Understanding 'politics' to be "all the many activities of cooperation, conflict and negotiation involved in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources" (Leftwich 2008:6), politics, therefore, plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of any seemingly effective policy. If proper mechanisms, empowered by political will are put in place to guarantee equality and proper distribution, the benefits of the food security policies would be shared by all.



While the food security interventions by the NGO sector, meant for a few beneficiaries, had been in response to natural disasters and had achieved their goals, most of the interventions by the government, meant for many beneficiaries, did not effectively achieve their agenda of ensuring improved productivity and increased food security (FANRPAN, 2007). The plight of the rural smallholder farmer masses depended on these interventions offered by the government and not much on the services of NGOs.

It is the 'politics' not the 'selection procedures', that determined who was to benefit from the agricultural input programs, and who would not. In support of this assertion, regardless of the set up procedures to distribute the free inputs fairly, on the ground, studies have shown that the identification and distribution processes were taken over by informal and political institutions in countries of Southern Africa (FFSSA, 2004). Scholars acknowledged "the distorting influence of neo-patrimonialism on the design and implementation of current policies influencing food security" (Howe, 2002). These scholars also acknowledged that "occasionally on a massive scale, state resources [were] diverted unofficially for political and personal gain" (FFSSA, 2004). Through the years, the distribution process of free inputs of government interventions in Malawi had been marred with anomalies as evidenced in most reports (Chinsinga, et al, 2002; Levy and Barahona, 2002; Dorward et al. 2008). Chintedza (2005) exemplifies the point from the Zambian case in which the state subsidized agricultural credit represented a form of patronage to small-scale farmers, which was regarded to be a mechanism for political support of the ruling party in the run-up to 1996 general elections.

Given the presidential regime of Malawi which places both the benefits of winning and cost of losing high, chances are higher for public policies to be entrenched with

patron-client relations and neo-patrimonial politics to secure continual support for the incumbents (de Mesquita, 2007 as cited in Leftwich, 2008). As some scholars elaborate that, in African politics, the pervasiveness of patronage politics is considered to be overwhelming (Van Donge 2002: 2; Bratton & van de Walle 1997: 61-97; Chabal & Daloz 1999: 17-45), this study is aimed to finding out on how politics manifested through patrimonial networks is practised in food security programmes especially in the selected districts.

The major focus of the study include, to analyze how pervasive patronage politics in the distribution processes, how politics manifested through the identification and distribution processes of agricultural inputs diffused and undermined the need for public accountability, and how the same undermined the objectives of the agricultural input programmes. Studies shown above did not essentially address the recurrences of patronage politics on the rural masses at a micro level, how it undermined public accountability and free input programmes' objectives. Much more, no scholarship focused at a critical analysis of pervasiveness of patronage politics in the selected districts and this research intends to fill that information gap.

### **1.3 STUDY OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.3.1 General Objectives**

The general objective of the research is to critically examine the extent to which politics of patronage affected the identification and distribution processes of agricultural inputs in the rural areas.



### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- To explore how agricultural inputs under government interventions were distributed in the selected areas of Malawi
- To explore on whether patronage politics has been persistently linked with the distribution of these inputs in those areas
- To expose the effects of patronage politics on the distribution of the agricultural inputs in the selected districts
- To find out the preventive measures that can minimize patronage politics in these food security programmes

## **1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design was a combined research methodology in which both qualitative and quantitative tools of research were adopted. The data collections tools included; focus group discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and questionnaires. The sampling procedures included the following: three TAs were selected in each of the districts, making six selected TAs in total, six FGDs involving 10 participants in each were conducted; one in each of the selected six TAs, the 150 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, 25 respondents from each of the selected TAs, one key informant interview in each of the selected TA, and three interviews for agricultural officials. The analytical tools after the data collection stage included the following; SPSS package, Microsoft Excel package, Content Analysis, and Discourse Analysis. Various documents, including newspaper articles, research reports, books, National Statistical

Office (NSO) reports, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) 2006/7 Annual Statistical Bulletin, MoAFS official documents and other scholarly items were accessed and assessed as secondary sources to supplement the information gained from the primary sources.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Apart from contributing to the academia, the research is very important in the area of good governance and public policy implementation as it highlights loopholes of agricultural input programmes. On the other hand, the study contributes to the academia by exposing the effects of politics in agricultural input programmes on the public accountability model. This study also contributes to the debate of how politics affects economics.

### **1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study faced the following challenges:

- Some officials from Thyolo District Agricultural Office were not cooperative because they viewed that the disclosure of certain sensitive information would threaten their job security.
- Some key informants such as traditional village heads, could not be interviewed on any politically sensitive subject as they were easily provoked.
- Some respondents perceived the research team as government officials, and they demanded immediate assistance in exchange of the disclosure of the information.



## 1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The rest of the chapters provide the following information: chapter two presents the theoretical framework and literature review. The theoretical framework focuses at the conceptual analysis of institutions, patronage politics, and the agricultural input programmes. The literature review sets out arguments on how patronage had influenced policy implementation and the distribution of inputs.

Chapter three details the research methods and analytical tools used in the study. The emphasis is to enlighten the methods adopted and their justification, in reference of the topic of discussion and objectives.

Chapter four provides the findings of this study with special emphasis on the links between food security interventions and neo-patrimonialism. The focus is on how these pervasive tendencies have affected interventions and to what extent has that affected food security in Malawi. And the last chapter produces general conclusions of the study and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter introduces the theoretical and empirical literature on patronage politics and its interface with food security policies. The first section of the chapter expounds on the theories used in the study while the second and last section outlines the studies conducted by researchers on how the process of agricultural input distribution had. The purpose of this section is to discuss and lay the foundation for the concepts and theories adopted in the study.

#### **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

##### **2.1.1 NORMATIVE INSTITUTIONALISM (NI)**

According to March and Olson (1996), Normative Institutionalism (NI) focuses on the impact of formation of norms or institutions on the common good of the society. These norms form the individual preferences which are aggregated at a community level. These norms are not identical to behaviour and they form institutions. Institutions operate interactively and interdependently of each other. Institutions are the “rules of the game” which forbid some behaviour and encourage others and are capable of promoting or hindering growth (North as cited by Leftwich, 2006).

Normative Institutionalism (NI) subordinates the individual, individual preferences and individual identity to the identity of the institution (Norgaard, 2001:21). Under this



theory, NI sees the institutions as defined by the rules guiding the behaviour of individuals belonging to the institution. These rules on the other hand describe a certain code of conduct (logic of appropriateness) that provides the individual with a civil identity and constrains and forms his or her actions (ibid). Under NI, institutions are formed from the society. That means individuals are socialized into certain values, beliefs and habituated actions before they enter the institution, even when the rules are hostile to democracy or social development. These institutions are classified as either the formal (written) rules or the informal (unwritten) rules legitimizing membership of the individuals.

#### **2.1.1.1 FORMAL INSTITUTIONS**

Formal institutions are according to O'Donnell (1996:40) are "formal rules about how political and administrative institutions are supposed to work". They are the rules and procedures that are created, communicated and enforced through channels widely accepted as official (Helmke and Levitsky 2004: 727). They include state institutions (courts, legislatures, and bureaucracies) and the state-sanctioned rules (constitutions, laws, and regulations) enforced in the state rational-legal structures. In other words, these are well-defined organizational patterns, regular rules and procedures governing the behaviour of groups and some concrete features such as group inhibit or physical attributes (Binder et al, 1971; Easton 1990; Eisenstadt 1968; Sangmpam 2007). Features of formal institutions include; transparency, accountability, meritocracy, fiscal discipline, adherence to book rules and regulations and constitutionalism (O'Donnell 1996).

### 2.1.1.2 INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS

Informal institutions in this study are defined as the “socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially [bureaucratic] sanctioned channels” (Helmke and Levitsky 2004: 727). These informal rules are most often implicitly endorsed, urgently implemented, highly observed and deeply embedded in most social structures and government institutions. Debates exist on whether these informal rules operate antagonistically or mutually with the formal institutions to affect public policy formulation and implementation either positively or negatively. One camp treats informal institutions as functional, or problem solving, in that they hold the answers to problems of social interaction and coordination (Weingast 1979; Weingast and Marshall 1988; March and Olsen 1989) while the second camp regards informal institutions as dysfunctional or problem creating (O'Donnell 1996; Böröcz 2000; Lauth 2000; Collins 2002). Features cited by the latter camp that are said to undermine the performance of formal, democratic, market and state institutions include clientelism, corruption, patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, cronyism and others forms of patronage (ibid).

The following figure outlines the classification of informal institutions depending on their interface with both effective and ineffective formal institutions and the effects of this interface on official policy goals on which the study largely depends.



**Table 2.1      Typology of informal institutions**

| Official Policy Goals | Effective formal<br>Institutions | Ineffective formal<br>Institutions |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Convergent            | Complementary                    | Substitutive                       |
| Divergent             | Accommodating                    | Competing                          |

Source: Helmke and Levitsky 2004

Based on the figure above, there are four types of informal institutional outcomes on policy as explained by Helmke and Levitsky (2004).

**Box 2.1 Classification of Informal Institutions**

*Both formal and informal institutions are convergent when they yield similar outcomes.*

- ***Complementary informal institutions***

These coexist with effective formal institutions such that the actors expect that the rules that exist on paper will be enforced these informal institutions as they offer some incentives.

- ***Substitutive informal institutions***

These take the place of ineffective formal institutions to yield expected outcomes to achieve what the formal institutions were designed, but failed, to achieve.

*While divergent institutions yield substantively different outcomes.*

- ***Accommodating informal institutions***

These are employed to correspond to effective formal institutions where the

informal rules do not directly violate the formal rules but they create incentives to some actors.

- ***Competing informal institutions***

These coexist with the ineffective formal institutions only to negatively affect the outcomes as they structure incentives in such a way that actors violate the formal institutions to get them.

Source: Helmke and Levitsky (2004)

The key area is to identify the categories in which different practices of patronage politics fall and connect with the policy goals. The following section discusses the features of patronage politics.

## **2.1.2 PATRONAGE POLITICS**

Patronage Politics is a situation in which agents rely on informal access of public funds to satisfy informal requests of patronage or largesse (Ochuno 2008:1). At the grassroots level, the logic of patronage politics is illustrated in situations where there is political pressure to 'do something' for one's electoral base as a kind of responsiveness, even though not necessarily one that relates to 'poverty alleviation' (Crook 2003:83). The terms, 'Patronage Politics', 'Political Patronage' and 'Politics of Patronage' are used as umbrella concepts of variants of 'patron-client' institutions by some scholars<sup>1</sup> such as

---

<sup>1</sup> The research articles are *inter alia*: Hyung-Gon Paul Yoo (2005) in "Corruption, Rule of law and Civil Society: Why Patronage Politics is Good for Developing Markets and Democracies"; Christopher Baum et al (2007) in "Political Patronage in Ukrainian Banking"; J. Hooper in "The Politics of Patronage" (MA thesis, University of York, 1984); Booth et al (2006) in "Drivers of Change"; Bruce Berman in "Ethnicity, Patronage of African States: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism"; R. Tangri in (1999) *The Politics of Patronage in Africa: Parastatals, Privatization and Private Enterprise*; Kenneth Green (2007) in "Creating Competition and Patronage Politics: The Pri's Demise".



Hyung-Gon Paul Yoo (2005), Christopher Baum and colleagues (2007), J. Hooper (1984), Booth et al. (2006), Bruce Berman (1998), R. Tangri (1999) and Kenneth Green (2007) among others. Forms of patronage politics depend on the level at which they occur and the client base of the resources, and even the type of resources in question. The forms include *inter alia*: patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, cronyism, clientelism, and corruption. The underlying definition of 'Politics' is thus best conceptualized as consisting of "all the activities of co-operation, conflict and negotiation involved in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources, whether these activities are formal or informal, public or private, or a mixture of all" (Leftwich 2007:13).

#### **2.1.2.1 PATRIMONIALISM**

The term 'patrimonialism' suggests any system that allocates authority and power over public resources to individual rulers not based on meritocracy but purely based on informal patron-client. According to Weber's description of the term, under the system, all "[allegiance] is owed not to enacted rules but to the person who occupies the position of authority by tradition or who had been chosen for it by the traditional master" (Weber 1978: 227). Furthermore, Weber contrasted patrimonialism with legal-rational systems of public management, which is characterized by graded hierarchy, written documentation, salaried, full-time staff and political neutrality.

Based on the description expounded by Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002:7), attributes of patrimonialism include; *inter alia*, unspoken hierarchy, frequent injections of kickbacks and bribes to nurture the system, arbitrary administrator's actions, public and private realms are blurred, verbal agreements and partial rules are only applied to a

selected number. Scholars have separated traditional patrimonialism from 'modern' patrimonialism in various conceptual papers written (Roth 1968; Eisenstadt 1973; Le Vine 1980). These scholars asserted that whenever the traditional patrimonialism encroaches into a rational-legal bureaucracy it is recast as 'modern' patrimonialism or neo-patrimonialism, a concept to be discussed below.

#### **2.1.2.2 NEO-PATRIMONIALISM**

Based on Bratton and van de Walle's (1997:62) definition, the term is applied to all administrative systems "in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, legal-rational institutions". Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002:40) further define neo-patrimonialism as a "mixed system of government administration, with a rational-legal veneer overlaying a web of personalistic ties characteristic of patrimonial rule". This term has been loosely classified as 'modern patrimonialism' since it is a mutation of patrimonialism in rational-legal bureaucracies (Le Vine, 1980). Tendencies of modern patrimonialism dispersed around in Africa after most of her countries attained independence forcing Medard in a book chapter entitled, "The Underdeveloped State in Africa: Political Clientelism or Neo-patrimonialism?", to conclude that neo-patrimonialism "best expresses the logic of political and administrative behaviour in Africa".

Features of neo-patrimonialism include; decisions about resources are made by 'big men'; these decisions are linked by informal (private and personal, patronage and clientelist) networks; corruption is rampant because private and public funds are co-mingled; their overarching logic is to gain and retain power at all cost; policy decisions



about development and governance are subordinated to that single, overriding goal; and these patron – clients networks can be ousted out of power as a result of effective checks and balances, a rotation of parties to power through fair elections, and a vocal and organized public (Bratton and van de Walle: 1997; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Cammack 2007).

### **2.1.2.3 CLIENTELISM**

The term refers to the complex chain of informal and personal bonds between political patrons, or bosses [*achikulire*], and their individual clients or followers (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2002: 2). These bonds are based on mutual material advantage such as patron kicks in excludable resources (jobs, money, fringe benefits) in exchange for clients' support and cooperation (votes, political allegiance, attending rallies etc.). Erdmann and Engel (2007: 106) regard clientelism as the exchange or brokerage of services or resources for political support often in forms of votes. The modern-day politics presents clientelism as 'Politics of Survival' championed by patrons whose political prowess and economic statuses are on the decline (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 2002; Midgal 1988). Although clientelism has been related with inequality and poverty and has been considered as an endemic problem for developing economies as Robinson and Verdier (2002) discovered, it is also not an uncommon practice in developed economies as also it is not uncommon to find wealth and powerful clients or brokers (Verdier 1995; Roniger 1990; Lowery and Brasher 2004).

The point of departure between patrimonialism and clientelism is the magnitude base of clients or followers. Under clientelism, there is a dyadic and asymmetric link between

patrons and clients in 'one-on-one' units which do not involve reallocation of positions, but merely work as exchange networks for incentives (providing access of resources for clients exclusively in lieu of support) while patrimonialism may operate within a single dyadic patron-client unit involving reallocation of positions which may reciprocally provide access to public resources even to patrons themselves.

#### **2.1.2.4 CORRUPTION**

This is another form of patronage politics that manifests itself in informal networks. Corruption is conventionally understood to be the private wealth seeking behaviour of someone who represents the state and the public authority (Andvig et al. 2000:11). The World Bank and Transparency International define corruption as "the abuse of public of public power for private benefit (gains)" (ibid). A more elaborative definition is given by Heidenheimer et al. (1989:6) that corruption is a "transaction between private and public sector actors through which collective goods are illegitimately converted into private-regarding payoffs". The practice surfaces along the interface of public and private sectors and are illustration of deviations from formal code of conducts to informal practices. This notion is supported by Mushtaq Khan's definition that "corruption is behaviour that deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing someone in a position of public authority because of private regarding motives such as wealth, power or status" (Khan 1996:12). Based on this definition, informal networks may act as breeding grounds for corrupt practices especially when the agents are motive by private gains.



### 2.1.3 PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL

This is the notion that states that the central feature of the new culture of governance consists of an array of constitutional checks on public authority, in promoting public accountability. Public Accountability forms the foundation of good governance and sound public administration (Muthien et al. 2009:10). Accountability is increasingly used in political discourse and policy frameworks because it conveys an atmosphere of transparency and trustworthiness (Bovens 2006:5).

In the centuries, the term 'accountability' has been confined to the field of 'accounting' up until the reign of William I of England, when the auditing approach applied to all property holders in quest of how much they earned in line with how much tax they had to pay (ibid). After this period, 'accountability' is free from its etymological bondage of accounting and it applies across the broad concept of good governance and in other political discourse. The concept does not refer to sovereigns holding their subjects to account, as was the case then, but to the reverse, in which authorities themselves are being held accountable by their citizens.

In the New Public Management (NPM) ideology, public accountability plays a role of an instrument, because it enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of public governance, and a goal, as in itself. In this study, accountability is used as an evaluative concept, and not as an analytical concept in which a model of principal-agent approach is adopted, where an agent states his or her account to the principal (forum) which can be represented as a parliament. Public accountability is used in four evaluative ways (Thomas, 2003) namely: answerability, accountability, responsibility and responsiveness.

### **2.1.3.1 ANSWERABILITY**

This is the simplest notion of accountability in which all that an organization or agent must do to satisfy this obligation is to answer for its actions (Peters, 2006: 303). This obligation is made simply by issuing a report or making a statement justifying the course of action. If this statement satisfies the needs of the enquirers in content and truthfulness then the obligation is discharged.

### **2.1.3.2 ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability takes one step ahead of answerability, to demand the individuals or the organizations in question not only render an account of action, but that they be judged by an independent body for that action (ibid). Bureaucratic organizations, such as the ministries and government departments, are mandated by law to perform certain acts and are constrained by rules of procedures. Any violation of these procedures attracts some penalties to the violator, as such the violator becomes accountable and is subjected to some judgment after being found guilty and convicted.

However, an accountability model can be applied in social relations. According to Bovens (2006) to qualify accountability for social relations, a new definition is embraced which states that accountability is a relationship between an actor and a forum in which an actor has an obligation to explain his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences.



## **Box 2.2: Accountability as a social relation**

A relationship qualifies as a case of accountability when:

1. There is a relationship between an actor and a forum
2. In which the actor is obliged
3. To explain and justify
4. His conduct
5. The forum can pose questions
6. Pass judgement
7. And the actor may face consequences

Source: Bovens, 2006:12

In this case, an actor, or accountor, can be either an individual or an agency while an accountability forum or accountee, can be either a specific person or agency and sometimes a virtual entity, such as in case of a devout Christian, God or one's conscience, or in case of traditional authorities and public servants, the villagers or general public (Bovens, 2005). In this study, the accountability forum is a virtual entity, the general public in the lens of the general will. All public institutions are supposed to portray accountability traits of this nature, or else they are bound to violate the wishes of the public and promote self-centred interests. Any situation that shows deviation from the case above proves that accountability is not there.

### **2.1.3.3 RESPONSIBILITY**

The term 'responsibility' though used interchangeably with 'accountability' has a different meaning from 'accountability'. While accountability uses hierarchical and

external relationships, responsibility involves a more inward source of control being exercised by an agent or a public servant (Bovens, 1998). The individual public servant is expected to remain responsible to his or her own conception of the law being administered, as well as to an internalized set of values.

#### **2.1.3.4 RESPONSIVENESS**

This is a more complex stage of the public accountability model in which the government is open to its subjects, in terms of employing citizen participation and engagement, in order to be more responsive to them and their demands (Peters 2006:306). In a hypothetical case, an institution will provide access to its information to all interested parties which it is serving in as far as it is able to respond to their queries.

### **2.2 DEBATES ALONG PATRONAGE POLITICS AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT**

There have been debates along two camps, that of development and underdevelopment. One camp of the divide argues that Patronage Politics is consistent with socio-economic development while another camp argues that it is a vice to socio-economic development citing that most African countries are failing to realize positive human development indicators because of lack of good governance propelled by patronage politics (Medard, 1982; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Bratton and van der Walle, 1997).

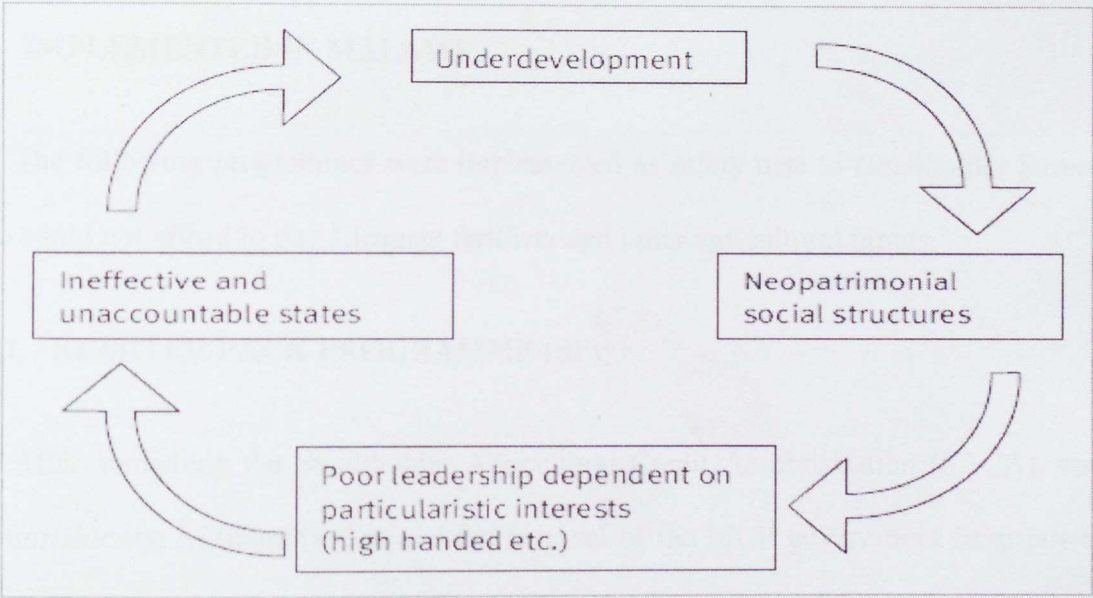
In Africa, patronage politics is so perverse and institutionalised as a result of weak government control systems. Most scholars, such as Leonard and Straus (2003: 6-7) and Hyden (1997:253), have asserted that patronage politics is to blame for African underdeveloped status, vindicating the economic policies from the Bretton Institutions championed in Africa. However, evidenced by the Eastern Tigers, it is still debatable on



whether patrimonialism contributes to underdevelopment, or not, as the East Tigers which flourished in the presence of patrimonial tendencies both in their public and private sectors.

In the literature reviewed, other scholars such as Bratton & van der Walle (1999), Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith (2002), Cromwell & Chintedza (2005), and Fritz & Menocal (2006) insist that neo-patrimonialism has led to state failure, placing most African countries into a the vicious cycle of underdevelopment as illustrated below as a way of unveiling its impact in Africa. Based on the following diagram, these scholars have concluded that patronage politics affects public policy negatively, dragging the state into underdevelopment conditions.

**Figure 2.1: The Vicious Cycle of Neopatrimonial Social and State Structures**



Source: Fritz and Menocal (2006)

The figure 2.1 clearly illustrates how neo-patrimonial social structures contribute to underdevelopment and how underdevelopment institutionalises neo-patrimonial social structures, forming a vicious cycle of underdevelopment. Underdevelopment is the

situation in which a country experiences poverty stricken situations and laxity of state bureaucracies in spearheading social development of its citizenry (Myrdal, 1968:1909). They assert that neo-patrimonial social structures distribute public goods through vehicles that champion particularistic interests as they are less-monitored and controlled. The state monitoring systems are ineffective and that renders the state machinery unaccountable to its own subjects, a condition which furthermore contributes to underdevelopment. In sum, underdevelopment leads to patronage politics and patronage politics leads to underdevelopment according to the above elucidation and figure 2.1. This assertion forms the centre of the study to test the working hypothesis that *patronage politics negatively influences the distribution of government sponsored agricultural inputs*.

## **2.3 THE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED AGRICULTURAL INPUTS IMPLEMENTED IN MALAWI**

The following programmes were implemented as safety nets to smallholder farmers who could not afford to buy adequate fertilizer and other agricultural inputs.

### **2.3.1 STARTER PACK PROGRAMME (SP)**

After abolishing the Smallholder Agricultural Credit Administration (SACA), with the introduction of liberalization and the removal of the MCP government from power, the new UDF party wanted to revive maize production that had declined during the transition period<sup>2</sup> to alarming levels. With the financial assistance from the donor community pioneered by the British Department for International Development (DFID),

---

<sup>2</sup> In 1991/92 overall maize production was 657,000 metric tonnes, improved in 1992/93 with 2,033,957 metric tonnes, but then tumbled down again in 1993/94 with an overall production of 818,999 metric tonnes. See GOM (2007) 2006/07 Annual Agricultural Statistical Bulletin, Lilongwe: MoAFS.



the MoAFS crafted a Starter Pack Scheme (SP), as the 'Best Bet' package for a small plot (0.1 ha) to be distributed to 2.86 million smallholder farmers, calculated to produce surplus maize production to the levels of 180,000 metric tonnes, equivalent to the capacity of the entire silo complex of the Strategic Grain Reserves (Mann 1998 as cited in Blackie and Mann 2001). A pack comprised of 10kgs of (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium) NPK (23:21:0+4S), 5kgs of Urea, 2kgs of hybrid maize, 2kgs of legumes and other accessories. The process commenced from 1998 till 2000, before it was 'redesigned' as Targeted Input Programme (TIP) pack, targeted to benefit the poorest and the vulnerable.

### **2.3.2 TARGETED INPUT PROGRAMME (TIP)**

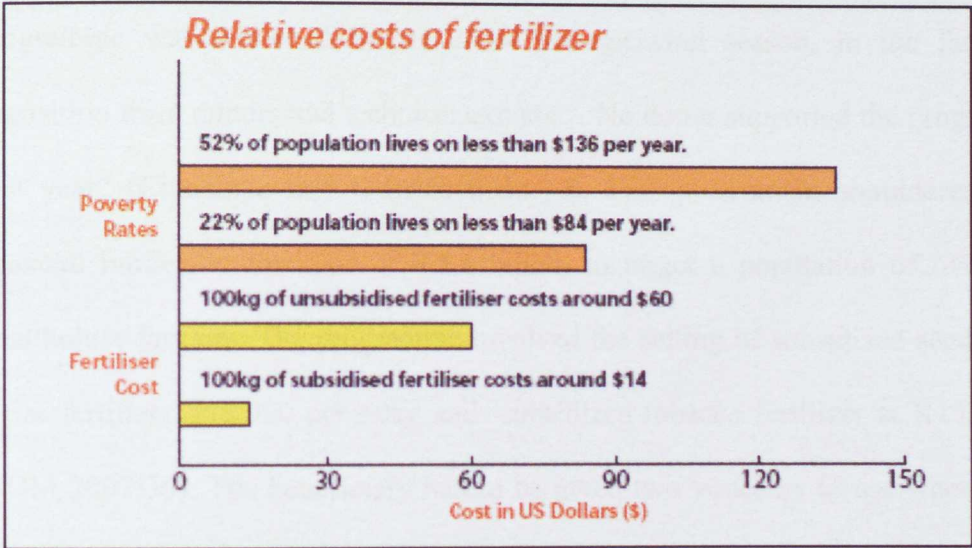
Targeted Input Programme (TIP) was introduced for purposes of sustainability and as a gradual exit strategy (Chinsinga 2005:285). It was observed that the number of beneficiaries for government intervention schemes had to be scaled down from 2.86 million (initially for the two SP projects) to 1.5 million for the 2000/01 TIP and then to 1 million for the 2001/02 TIP as the programme faced minimal funding. Furthermore, the quantity of the packs for TIP had to be reduced to 5kg fertilizer bag, 2kg Open Pollinated Variety (OPV) maize, and 1kg of legumes (soya beans, groundnuts and other) (GOM 2007, Nyirongo et. al. (2003). The name, 'Targeted Input Programme', came after the instruction to target only the poor and vulnerable farmers (poverty targeting), particularly, widows and widowers, the elderly, and farming families that housed orphans (Nyirongo et. al 2003: 12).



2.3.3 AGRICULTURAL INPUT SUBSIDY PROGRAMME (AISP)

After witnessing the 2001/02 and 2004/05 food crises, with the increasing fertilizer costs as elaborated in the figure 3.4 below, the government promised to reintroduce the fertilizer subsidy programme, that had been once implemented by the MCP regime, as a means to reduce the cost burden which most smallholder farmers were facing. Situations had worsened for this intervention, as other scholars pointed out that “access to fertilizer became a matter of life and death for Malawi’s rural population” (Chinsinga and O’Brien, 2008:28).

Figure 2.2: Relative Costs of Fertilizer and Poverty rates in Malawi



Source: Chinsinga and O’Brien (2008)

Bearing in mind that, living standards had deteriorated during the two five-year terms of leadership of Muluzi, as reflected in the indicators in UNDP (2005) compared to the indicators in 1994, Nthara (2003:114) noted that Malawi had regressed ten times below the level it was in 1994 in terms of development. Furthermore, he acknowledged that during the period the gains registered in some sectors were offset by the regression registered in other sectors. Based on the indicators in (2005), more smallholder farmers



could not afford the price of fertilizer, which had skyrocketed to around US \$60 as illustrated above. A lot of these farmers heavily relied on the subsidized fertilizer whose cost was almost 25 percent of the unsubsidized price.

Furthermore, according to Chinsinga and O'Brien, 52% of the population were classified 'poor', earning less than US\$0.40 per day, while 22% were classified 'ultra poor' earning less than US\$0.26 per day (2008:18). In addition to these poverty levels, the food production levels during the period suggested that the government intervention of TIP had lost its vitality. This created the need to implement a better policy that could address the problems of food insecurity. "[The] Malawi's Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme was launched in the 2005/2006 growing season, in the face of fierce opposition from donors and technical experts... No donor supported the programme in its first year" (Chinsinga and O'Brien 2008:19). The government shouldered the whole financial burden to the tune of K5.6 billion to target a population of over 3 million smallholder farmers. The programme involved the selling of subsidized seed, subsidized maize fertilizer at K950 per 50kg and subsidized tobacco fertilizer at K1500 per 50kg (GOM 2007:30). The beneficiary had to be given two vouchers to use when purchasing two fertilizer bags, one of NPK and another of UREA.

## **2.4 HOW PATRONAGE POLITICS AFFECTS AGRICULTURAL INPUT PROGRAMMES**

Food insecurity is caused by several factors as discussed above, but one of the understudied factors in most food security literature is neo-patrimonialism (Bird et al 2002: 6). Most scholars have acknowledged that lack of access to agricultural inputs is



quite a noticeable factor, but the central feature behind this lack, is the motive of institutional actors and their political agenda. The influence of politics on the institutional environment for food security programmes and their implementation has been a significant factor of food insecurity (FFSSA 2004). For instance, most sound agricultural policies are influenced by people in power who use their positions to disperse patronage to their constituencies or interest groups as a system of creating strong political base (Devereux, 2008). Ultimately, deserving farmers who should be given the farm inputs are sidelined on the pretext that they support a different political party than the ruling party, a political condition subject that the farmers into a situation of food insecurity.

For further analysis of the institutional influence, following the 2002 food crisis, Devereux identified two categories of causes for the famine; immediate causes and underlying causes (2002). The underlying causes increase livelihood vulnerability and are perennial in nature, which include structural causes such as macroeconomic factors, levels of poverty, and informal institutions. He then recommended that “[l]ivelihood vulnerability can only be addressed by dealing with these underlying causes to promote socio-economic development, in particular by pursuing policies that, directly or indirectly, raise the incomes of the poor households, and diversify or stabilize their food sources to reduce food security risks.”(2002: 2). But if the targeting of social protection safety nets is heavily politicized, it means that some of the underlying causes of famine are not adequately addressed.

Cromwell and Chintedza (2005:3) further argues that “the authority of the ruling regime depends on the distribution of socio-economic resources to clients, rather than on “legal-rational” mechanisms such as the rule of law, meritocracy and political accountability”. Most sub-Saharan African regimes distribute the socio-economic



resources along clientelist networks to reward their political supporters. These practices of personalised exchange, clientelism and political corruption have become internalised in formal political institutions and provide 'essential operating codes for politics' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 63). Cromwell and Chintedza (2005:2) conclude that the influence of politics, particularly the configurations making up neopatrimonial politics has contributed to poor implementation of food security programmes. Booth et al., (2006) also contend that political will is capable of manoeuvring policies to suit some political mileages, whether under pro-market policies or pro-state policies, such that food security programmes can be easily distorted by politics.

Studies have been conducted to check on whether neo-patrimonialism contributes to poor implementation of food security policies at the macro level, as those conducted by Cromwell and Chintedza (2005), and some to check its influence from the view of countries in Southern Africa such as Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique conducted by Bird K., Booth D. and Pratt, N (2003) and other research projects conducted by Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa (FFSSA) which were largely dealing with Southern African countries at the macro level. There is a gap of information in the literature on the study of patronage politics at the micro level, most significantly in Malawi, whose reputation of food security achievements is setting an example for other countries to emulate. The central question is on whether these food security achievements translate into overall food security situations both at national and household levels<sup>3</sup>, or whether the systemic factors have been dealt with in the fight against food insecurity.

---

<sup>3</sup> Von Braun, J., Bouis, H., Kumar, S., Pandya-Lorch, R., (1992) have challenged that household food insecurity can increase even with the increasing national food security levels.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the literature review and theoretical framework of institutions, patronage politics and food security. Patronage Politics does not occur in a vacuum, the institutions (rules of the game) modes and shapes the behaviours of the society and all systems. While the chapter presents the various arguments that different scholars have suggested on how patronage politics taking forms of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism, have been affecting food security in Malawi and across the Southern African countries, there is still no scholarship addressing the impact of patronage politics on agricultural programmes among the rural masses at the micro village level.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains the research design and the methods adopted for the study. In the first section of the chapter is the type of research methodology used, the data collection tools and sampling methods used for the study, while the latter sections outline the analytical methods and the challenges the research faced.

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design was a combined research methodology in which both qualitative and quantitative tools of research were adopted. The analytical tools after the data collection stage included the following; SPSS package, Microsoft Excel package, Content Analysis, Institutional Analysis and Discourse Analysis.

##### **3.1.1 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The justification of adopting both quantitative and qualitative research methods was to engage triangulation, thus gain the breadth and depth of the impact of patronage politics on food security and also to be able to appreciate its deep rooted effects. Since patronage politics is a politically sensitive subject, it requires in-depth elaboration and adequate understanding on how these networks function, thus making qualitative research method a requisite. On the other hand, quantitative research is used to generate data that can be generalized in the TAs of the two districts. According to Neuman (2003: 171) in

quantitative research, variables are predetermined and can be “converted into specific action during the planning stage” while in qualitative research, variables are context specific and cannot be easily attributed to the whole sample population. He furthermore argued that in quantitative research, data collection techniques yield quantitative numerical data that empirically represents abstract ideas, while in qualitative research, data collection tools yield spoken words, opinions and expressions that are of greater value when analyzing social contexts and institutions.

### **3.1.1.1 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

The data collections tools included; focus group discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and a questionnaire survey. The following sections elaborate on their justification.

#### **3.1.1.1.1 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD)**

The justification for adopting FGDs was to create room for open deliberations on the matter, as people more readily disclose issues with the encouragement of their peers. FGDs assist the participants to become more self-aware and reflective as they also become familiar with the research, the researcher, their peers, and the context under study (Wisker 2001: 176). Six FGDs involving 10 participants in each were conducted; one in each of the selected six TAs of Thyolo and Machinga, three FGDs in Machinga and three FGDs in Thyolo, one in each TA. The FGDs were conducted with the guidance of the interview guideline and the FGD checklist which incorporated the major objectives of the study to ensure that all aspects of the study are addressed. Each of the FGDs comprised at



distribution mechanisms influence of politics on food security policies and other issues of good governance.

The list of key informants included the following officials: Traditional Authorities, Village headmen, District Commissioners Thyolo and Machinga districts, members of Village Development Committee, some of the Members of Parliament (MPs) for the selected areas, employees of Machinga Agricultural Development Division and Blantyre Agricultural Development Division (umbrella administrative institutions for the selected areas), employees of Thyolo District Agriculture Office, and employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security headquarters in Lilongwe.

#### **3.1.1.1.3 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

The research also involved the administration of 150 questionnaires to respondents, 25 respondents from each of the selected villages. These questionnaires were strictly probing the respondents on their assessment of neo-patrimonial practices in the identification and distribution of agricultural inputs. These questionnaires were

least a member of Village Development Committee (VDC), smallholder farmers, and at least four to five women.

#### **3.1.1.1.2 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)**

Selected officials and other key informants were interviewed in a semi-structured manner in which some questions were drawn from the interview guidelines and others were follow-up questions. The central focus of all these interviews was on the major themes on tendencies of neo-patrimonialism, fertilizer subsidy coupon and starter pack



least a member of Village Development Committee (VDC), smallholder farmers, and at least four to five women.

#### **3.1.1.1.2 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)**

Selected officials and other key informants were interviewed in a semi-structured manner in which some questions were drawn from the interview guidelines and others were follow-up questions. The central focus of all these interviews was on the major themes on tendencies of neo-patrimonialism, fertilizer subsidy coupon and starter pack distribution mechanisms, influence of politics on food security policies and other issues of good governance.

The list of key informants included the following officials: Traditional Authorities, Village headmen, District Commissioners Thyolo and Machinga districts, members of Village Development Committee, some of the Members of Parliament (MPs) for the selected areas, employees of Machinga Agricultural Development Division and Blantyre Agricultural Development Division (umbrella administrative institutions for the selected areas), employees of Thyolo District Agriculture Office, and employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security headquarters in Lilongwe.

#### **3.1.1.1.3 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

The research also involved the administration of 150 questionnaires to respondents, 25 respondents from each of the selected villages. These questionnaires were strictly probing the respondents on their assessment of neo-patrimonial practices in the identification and distribution of agricultural inputs. These questionnaires were

distributed by five Research Assistants (RAs) who were trained before going into the field. With this approach, stratified random sampling was employed at each stage of the research to ensure that people of different socio-economic strata are included in the research (see Appendix 1 for the village distribution). They chose different households of varying landholding sizes, economic incomes and portfolios. The rationale for this was to capture across the stream of recipients and non-recipients, so that we can ably assess the screening criteria. Coding was employed to ensure appropriate analysis of the research findings and standard measurements were also be used. The application softwares that were used to analyse these questionnaires include Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel.

#### **3.1.1.2 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

The study incorporated secondary data compiled in various documents and articles on patronage politics in Malawi. The purpose was to capture events related to patronage politics on food security programmes that occurred during the periods. This data had to be triangulated with the data generated through the primary methods to guard against bias and human error. Various documents, including newspaper articles, research reports, books, National Statistical Office (NSO) reports, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) 2006/7 Annual Statistical Bulletin, MoAFS official documents and other scholarly items were accessed and assessed.



The main sample population is Thyolo and Machinga selected purposively based on the fact that they are home bases of Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika and Dr. Bakili Muluzi respectively. Scholars like Medard (1982) and Lemarchand (1995) assert that in most African States, leaders view public resources as their personal wealth from which their kinsmen can draw as they wish and that the hallmark of neo-patrimonial African states is the vertical dependency relationships between the ruler and his/her subjects. It therefore became imperative to include the home bases of the concerned presidents in this study. The snowball sampling technique was adopted for key informant interviews. Under the technique, interviews were conducted from one key informant to another in search for in-depth information. This research conducted in the following T/As of Machinga district; Kapoloma (home base of Muluzi), Nyambi (a UDF stronghold) and Chikweo, and the following T/As in Thyolo; Nchilamwera, Changata, and Chimaliro (home base for Mutharika). Stratified random sampling was employed to distribute 25 questionnaires in the selected T/As. Representative groupings of individuals from the sample populations were asked to complete the questionnaires, after which, this data was coded and entered in SPSS for analysis.

The quantifiable primary data sources were analysed using the SPSS and Excel. All data gathered through the questionnaire was coded and entered into an SPSS database. Tables and figures were produced by this software. Most of the statistics from

government documents were entered in an Excel software to produce some of the tables from government sources.

Qualitative data was analyzed using content and discourse analysis. Content analysis was imperative as words frequently used by the respondents were studied. Discourse analysis was used for documents and newspaper study, where words were carefully selected and interpreted.

### **3.3 CHALLENGES DURING THE RESEARCH**

The study faced several challenges and limitations that restrained the amount of information intended to be gathered at the proposal stage. The following are the summarized challenges that were faced.

Firstly, most of the officials were not willing to offer information which they deemed to be politically sensitive and others actually cautioned that the provision of such information to outsiders was banned. For instance, one official from Thyolo District Agricultural Office could not provide information based on the unstated ban.

Secondly, most of the respondents were females as most of the male respondents were involved with farming activities and could not avail themselves for the research. It was even difficult to collect information from some Village Development Committees (VDCs) whose composition was male dominated as a result of this factor.

Thirdly, some of the traditional authorities from Machinga were unapproachable as they intimidated their subjects. For instance, one TA refused to be interviewed on any matter that he viewed as a politically sensitive subject.



The fourth challenge was based on the fact that the research team, in many villages, was perceived to be government representatives, a perception that not only made it difficult to collect unbiased information, as the respondents were not free to be critical of the government activities in the process, but also posed a problem of convincing the respondents that the information was for academic purposes, and that they will not receive anything after the exercise.

Lastly, financing the research was challenge as the research required extensive travel to two districts that are far from each other. For example, I had to depend on public transport to conduct the research. I also faced accommodation problems especially in the remote areas.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

In this study, the selected research design is a combined research methodology, with purpose of triangulating the research findings and ensuring that the findings constitute a consensual representation of the views of the areas. The districts of Machinga and Thyolo are selected and from the two districts, six TAs were sampled for KIIs, FGDs, and questionnaire survey to collect primary data, while secondary data was collected from the archives. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and Excel software, while qualitative data was analyzed using content, discourse and institutional analysis tools.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE EXTENT TO WHICH PATRONAGE POLITICS AFFECTED THE DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS IN MACHINGA AND THYOLO**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter discusses the empirical data from Machinga and Thyolo districts to find out on whether patronage politics influenced the distribution of inputs and coupons. Firstly, the chapter presents the district socio-economic profiles, then it analyses the distribution of Starter Pack, TIP and Fertilizer Subsidy across Malawi, then presents and analyses the findings, and lastly makes conclusions based on the findings.

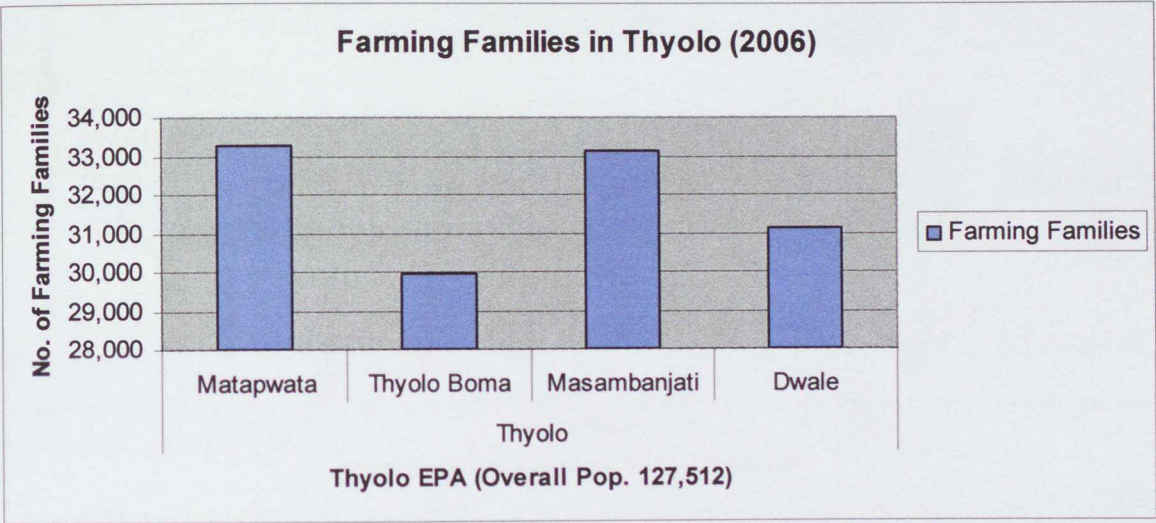
#### **4.1 THYOLO DISTRICT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE**

Thyolo district is found in the Southern Region of Malawi, bordering with Mulanje to the North-East, Blantyre and Chiradzulu to the North, Chikwawa to the West, Mozambique to the South-East and Nsanje to the South. It has land estimated to be of 1,792 km<sup>2</sup> with one of the highest population density of 343 people per km<sup>2</sup> rising from the 1998's population density of 268 persons per km<sup>2</sup> according to the Preliminary 2008 Population and Housing Census (NSO 2008b). The 2008 census registered a population growth of 0.6 per annum, with variation of growth rates at TA levels. The population has 68 percent male headed households and 32 percent female headed households (NSO 2008a). Findings in the Integrated Household Survey 2004/2005 indicate that 48 percent of the population live below poverty line, thus their income cannot enable them to source food throughout a year (NSO 2005).



The district falls under Blantyre Agricultural Development Divisions (BLADD), has its own District Agricultural Offices (DAOs) namely, Thyolo District Agricultural Office. This office is mandated to administer four Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) namely; Matapwata, Thyolo Centre, Masambanjati and Thuchila. The figure below presents distribution of the EPAs with their population of farming families in Thyolo based on analysis of the figures collected by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) in 2006.

**Figure 4.1: Distributions of Farming Families in Thyolo EPAs**



Source: GOM 2006

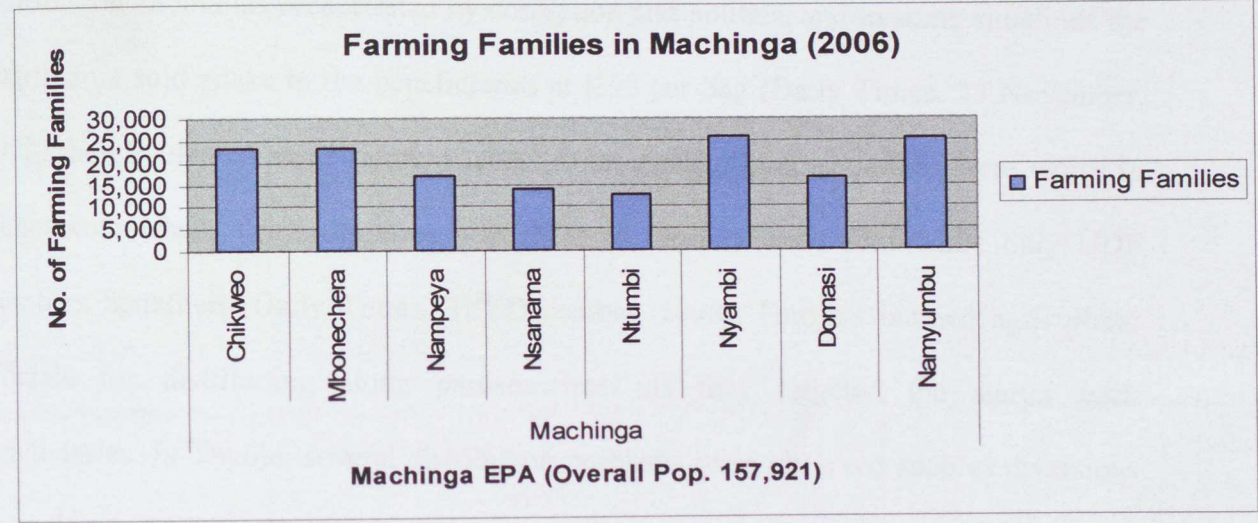
**4.2 MACHINGA DISTRICT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE**

Machinga district is located in the Southern Region, South of Mangochi, Eastern side of Balaka, North of Zomba districts and it shares boundary with Mozambique to the East having an area covering 3,771 km<sup>2</sup> (NSO 2008b). Overall population competing for the land is 488,996 with a population density of 130 people per km<sup>2</sup>, as indicated by the 2008 Population and Housing Census, (NSO 2008b).



The district is under the administration of Machinga Agricultural Development Division and has its own Machinga District Agricultural Office responsible for eight different EPAs namely: Chikweo, Mbonechera, Nampeya, Msanama, Ntumbi, Nyambi, Domasi and Namyumbu. Similarly, the figure below presents distribution of the EPAs with their population of farming families in Machinga based on analysis of the figures collected by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) in 2006.

**Figure 4.2: Distributions of Farming Families in Machinga EPAs**



Source: GOM 2006

**4.3 OBJECTIVE ONE: DISTRIBUTION AND TARGETING OF THE AGRICULTURAL INPUT PROGRAMMES**

This section presents the problems that occurred during the distribution of food security packs and coupons from 1998 to 2007. The major sources of information for Starter Pack and Targeted Input Programme (TIP) are research studies and newspapers, including the opinions of the respondents in the two districts, but fieldwork was mainly



focused at the 2007/08 Fertilizer Subsidy Programme. The central aim of this section is to explore how the distributions of inputs were conducted during the period across Malawi.

#### **4.3.1 STARTER PACK DISTRIBUTION**

The distribution method involved officials from the EPAs registering the names of the beneficiaries from their respective areas, and sending the list to the MoAFS logistics unit, through their DAOs, and the packs had to be distributed to the targeted farmers through the same channel. It was noted through the media that there were a lot of distribution anomalies orchestrated by corruption and politics, and in some situations the distributors sold packs to the beneficiaries at K50 per bag (Daily Times, 23 November, 1998) thereby denied some farmers access to the packs. Some situations were worse in Nkhosakota where demonstrations were held as farmers cried foul while only UDF members benefited (Daily Times, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1998). Farmers blamed agricultural officials for distributing along partisan lines as they targeted the starter pack beneficiaries. In Thyolo, several distribution problems were observed such as diversions of trucks as the Thyolo District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) observed (Key Informant Interview: 15 May, 2008). The Thyolo DADO noted that corruption and nepotism tarnished the programme as some corrupt officials took advantage of the ineffectiveness of monitoring and control procedures at the time.

#### **4.3.2 TARGETED INPUT PROGRAMME (TIP) DISTRIBUTION**

The programme faced the same distribution problems occurring among both the officials and the chiefs, as was the case with the Starter Pack programme. In TA Nchilamwera, Thyolo, villagers stormed the agricultural offices, stealing about 823 bags,



thus depriving the actual beneficiaries of their entitlements, as they were angered by the narrow targeting of TIP programme (The Nation, 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2001). In TA Chimutu, Lilongwe, some groups and village headmen refused to cooperate with government officials arguing that the targeting was too narrow, and this created unrest among those sidelined in the distribution (Daily Times, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2000).

In their evaluation of the TIP programme, Levy and Barahona, (2002: 4) summarised that there were three major reasons that made poverty targeting unachievable during the distribution: 1) some of the main criteria were not correlated with poverty, 2) village headmen and task forces selected themselves and their relatives as beneficiaries, at the expense of poorer farmers, and 3) communities were reluctant to identify 'the poorest of the poor'. A national survey, that picked 2952 respondents across the country, conducted by Nyirongo et. al. (2003:23) indicates that poverty targeting under the TIP programme of 2002/03 did not fully satisfy its criteria. The results showed that even those who were not intended for the programme were equally targeted by the scheme. Below is the table showing those figures which indicate that in 2001/02 Targeted Input Programme, more farmers were targeted who were falling outside the range of poverty margins meant for the programme.

**Table 4.1: Poverty Profiles of TIP Recipients and Non-recipients**

| Poverty category       | No. of TIP Recipients | No. of TIP Non-recipients |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Category 1: Poorest    | 407                   | 310                       |
| Category 2: Poorer     | 341                   | 295                       |
| Category 3: Poor       | 331                   | 324                       |
| Category 4: Less Poor  | 267                   | 281                       |
| Category 5: Least Poor | 199                   | 197                       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>1545</b>           | <b>1407</b>               |

Source: Calculated from Nyirongo et al 2003.



The table 4.1 clearly illustrates that farmers falling in 'less poor' and 'least poor' categories (466) received the packs while several farmers falling in the categories of the 'poorer' and 'poorest' (605) were left out. This is an indication that there were problems with the distribution criteria.

#### **4.3.3 AGRICULTURAL INPUT SUBSIDY PROGRAMME (AISP) VOUCHER DISTRIBUTION**

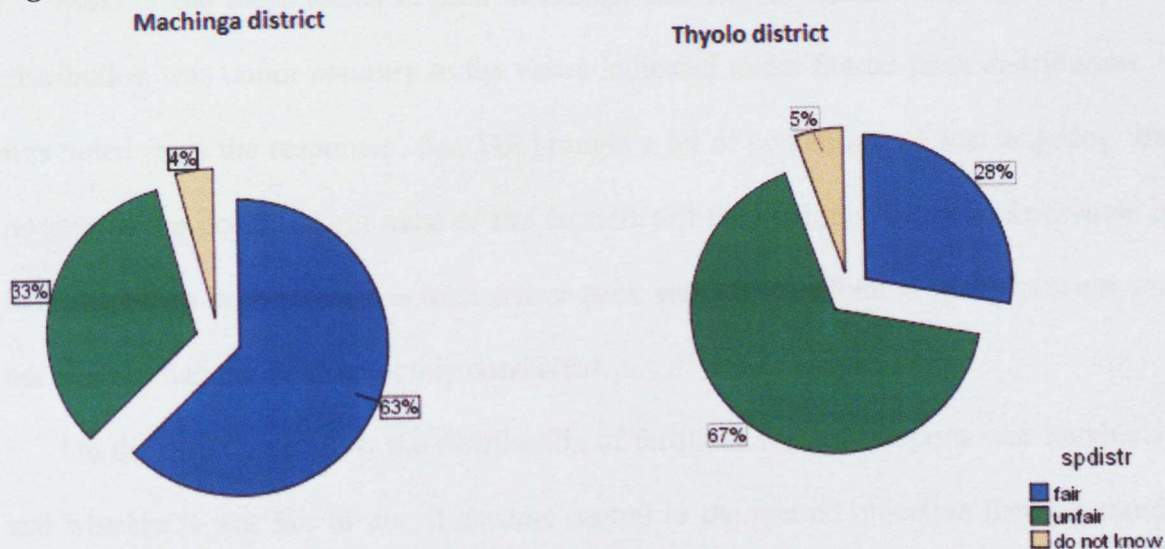
The programme faced distribution challenges as those witnessed by the previous programmes. Chinsinga and O'Brien (2008:74) acknowledge that despite being provided with targeting procedures, the discretion over coupon allocation rested with the distributors, thus consequently rendered the distribution process ineffective. The distribution was characterised by political influence as Dorward et al (2008: 64) reported that qualitative studies through FGDs and Key Informant Interviews revealed that decision making process for coupon allocation for 2006/07 growing season at all levels was too political such that it created great tensions among and between villages. Taking an example of Kasungu, where many of the respondents accused their village heads of diverting coupons to their friends and relatives, it was observed that the chain of distribution of coupons appeared long and complicated and appeared to contain instances of diversion at each of the different levels in the chain (2008:65). Overall, diversions during the distribution process had marred the targeting procedures of all most of the agricultural input programmes implemented by the government.



#### 4.3.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF STARTER PACK, TIP AND FERTILIZER SUBSIDY PROGRAMMES BASED ON THE RESPONSE FROM SURVEY

The central position of this study is to assess how the distribution of the packs or coupons was conducted as perceived by the sample population. To determine the authenticity of data, findings based on the opinions of the respondents are triangulated by the findings observed through the questionnaire survey. The information tables below explain the views of the respondents relating how they assessed the distribution of both Starter Packs and TIP packs.

**Figure 4.3: In your opinion, was the starter pack distribution fair?**

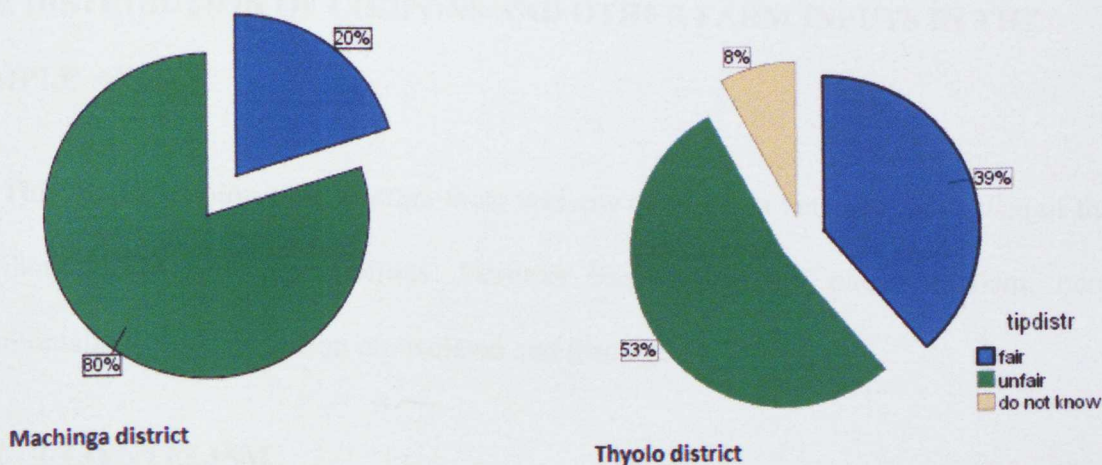


Source: fieldwork, 2008

According to Figure 4.3 above, most of the respondents from Machinga asserted that the Starter Pack distribution was fair while most of the respondents in Thyolo claimed that it was unfair. Most of the respondents had forgotten the distribution of starter packs. On the views of the respondents on whether TIP packs distribution was fair or not, the following Figure 4.4 illustrates the responses.



**Figure 4.4: In your opinion, was the TIP packs distribution fair?**



Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Most of the respondents in both Machinga and Thyolo claimed that the TIP packs distribution was unfair contrary to the views indicated under Starter pack distribution. It was noted from the responses, that TIP brought a lot of contention as was targeting ‘the poorest of the poor’, whom most of the farmers felt they belong. What is observable in both responses with regards to both starter pack and TIP distribution is the process was not fair and had not been smoothly conducted.

On the question of how the distribution of fertilizer subsidy coupons was conducted and whether it was fair or not, it became central to the second objective that we should zero in and assess on whether or not patronage politics as an informal institution influenced the unfairness of the distribution exercise.



#### 4.4 OBJECTIVE TWO: THE EXISTENCE OF PATRONAGE POLITICS IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF COUPONS AND OTHER FARM INPUTS IN THE SAMPLE AREAS

This section explores on whether there was any connection between anomalies of the distribution and patronage politics. Features like clientelism, patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, and corruption are isolated and discussed.

##### 4.4.1 CLIENTELISM

In order to trace clientelism, it was imperative to use one of the indicating factors of clientelism, vote-buying, a situation where goods are disbursed to clients in exchange of political support in form of votes or a promise for a vote. In one FGD in Msisi village, TA Chikweo, village headman Msisi confessed that during the distribution, the coupons were allocated to particular political party supporters, as bait for other farmers to reconsider their position regarding stance to the party. Based on one interview with a former VDC member in Machinga, the distribution processes were largely influenced by the instructions of the TA to distribute coupons to supporters of the ruling DPP party. In one instance during the 2007/08 growing season, the TA cautioned in vernacular that: *"Anthu omwe ndigwirizana nawo ine, ndiwagawira, koma anthu ondinyoza ineyo, kumakhala ndi TA wawo wawo, komanso ndi a UDF sindiwagayira"*, which means that only those who support him and his party must be given the coupons, but not those who have their own TA and support UDF" (Key Informant interview conducted on: 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2008). In addition to this, a newspaper feature reported that the former deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Ellock Maotcha Banda, had ordered the Machinga District



Commissioner (DC) to sideline UDF members from benefiting from the subsidy programme (The Nation, 17 September, 2008). On the other hand, in Thyolo, at one FGD in Mtambanyama, TA Changata, respondents expressed their discontent over the way the distribution was conducted, stating that it was characterised by favouritism, where in some cases coupons were returned yet a lot of registered beneficiaries were left out. The respondents stated that only relatives to the distributors and known supporters of the ruling party had access to the coupons (FGD, Njobvu village, Thyolo). When most of the respondents were asked to provide reasons for the unfair distribution of coupons most of them, suggested that the connections with the distributors determined their receipt of the coupon. It was noted that the definition of fairness or unfairness ranged from one respondent to another, but the general observation was that unfair distribution was based on criteria mentioned in table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Reasons for Unfair Distribution**

| Reasons                                             | Machinga  |               | Thyolo    |               | Total     |               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
|                                                     | No.       | %             | No.       | %             | No.       | %             |
| selected based on income                            | 8         | 11.4%         | 6         | 25.0%         | 14        | 14.9%         |
| selected based on gender                            | 2         | 2.9%          | 4         | 16.7%         | 6         | 6.4%          |
| selected based on party support                     | 38        | 54.3%         | 0         | .0%           | 38        | 40.4%         |
| selected based on connections with the officials    | 17        | 24.3%         | 3         | 12.5%         | 20        | 21.3%         |
| selected based on connections with the distributors | 2         | 3%            | 2         | 8.3%          | 4         | 4.3%          |
| Others                                              | 3         | 4.3%          | 9         | 37.5%         | 12        | 12.8%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                        | <b>70</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>94</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Fieldwork, 2008

Table 4.2, indicates the reasons for unfair distribution as perceived by the non-recipients from both Thyolo and Machinga districts. An outstanding number of

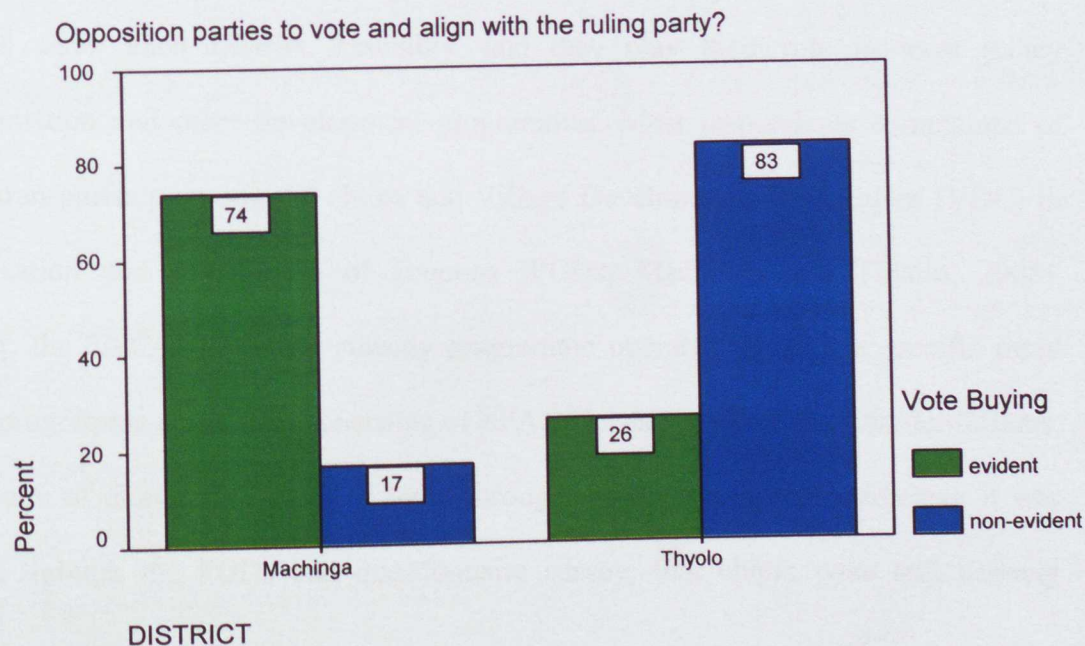


respondents (40.4%) indicated that the unfair distribution was influenced by political party support. On the other hand, a total of 25.6% of the respondents from rows 4 and 5 show that connections in forms of relations or friendships with either the DC or the distributors influenced the unfair distribution. According to the table, most of the respondents supporting that political support influenced the distributing originated from Machinga, which supports the suggestion that Machinga must have been used to woo supporters as it is a UDF stronghold.

Another question was posed to find out on whether the coupons were used to solicit political support (vote buying mechanism) in order to strengthen the political base of the ruling party. Below is the graphical presentation of the views solicited through the questionnaire survey on whether cases were witnessed in which coupons were used to buy votes.

**Figure 4.5: Respondents' views on the existence of vote buying in their areas**

Were there cases where coupons were used to lure supporters of the



Source: Fieldwork, 2008



Figure 4.5 clearly indicates the vote buying tendencies through the coupon distribution clearly evident in Machinga, as 74% of those who confirmed so are from the area, than in Thyolo where only 26% of the respondents affirmed its existence in their area, while 17% of the 'non-existent' views came from Machinga, in contrast to the 83 'non-existent' views from Thyolo. These figures suggest that most of the vote buying occurred in Machinga, where UDF is a force to reckon with than in Thyolo where the ruling DPP party commanded a strong support at the time of the research.

#### 4.4.2 PATRIMONIALISM

During the first two growing seasons, 2005/06 and 2006/07, the government had been implementing the coupon distribution system through the Local Government hierarchy in which the traditional authorities were involved in identifying the beneficiaries and distributing the coupons. The Decentralization Policy (1998)<sup>4</sup> recognized traditional authorities and sub-traditional authorities as ex-officio, non voting members under each District Assembly, and they play their role in most policy implementation and other development programmes. Most respondents complained of lack of transparency among the chiefs and Village Development Committees (VDC) in the allocation and distribution of coupons (FGDs, Machinga and Thyolo, 2008). However, the 2007/08 fertilizer subsidy programme operated through a specific input subsidy programme committee consisting of EPA officials and other smallholder farmers, with an aim of eliminating cases of fraud through the distribution. Nonetheless, it was reported, through the FGDs and questionnaire survey, that chiefs were still actively

---

<sup>4</sup> See The Malawi Decentralization Policy, Sect. 5, GOM



involved in distributing coupons. Below is the case where traditional authority (TA) Nyambi, influenced by some political mileage, influenced the coupon distribution for purposes of consolidating DPP support in his area.

#### **Box 4.1: Case Study of TA Nyambi**

##### **Case Study: The Rule of Favour**

The current TA Nyambi was once a soldier working with the Malawi Defence Force (then Malawi Army). He worked from 1980 to 1999, until he had to replace his father who died in the year 1999. He is married to TA Chamba who hails from the same district. The family has six daughters. Since 1999, after his promotion, there was law and order, in the area until in 2003, after he was rumoured to have killed a person and was arrested for murder. The murdered person was accused of trespassing, and intentionally stealing green maize from the chief's garden, during the aftermaths of the 2002 food crisis.

Prior to the arrest, the TA had accused the former president, Dr. Bakili Muluzi during a campaign, of prioritizing development in his own land, ignoring other surrounding areas such as Nyambi and Chikweo. He further accused the former president that he had started visiting the neglected villages, when he knew that elections were nearby. This was one of the causes which led to the arrest of Nyambi. The arrest was done arbitrarily without the court verdict that the TA had really committed the crime. He was imprisoned for five years and was released in August 2007 after the new government overruled that the arrest was unconstitutional and an act of violation of human rights. Pundits regarded this development as a political move. Realizing that Nyambi's area is a UDF stronghold which the new government might use the release of the TA as a strategy to woo support from the region.



Indeed, the TA pioneered in assisting political rallies in the area to amass more DPP supporters. The TA had permitted more DPP rallies in the area comparing to other areas in Machinga. He collaborated with that the Trade and Industry Deputy Minister, Ellock Maotcha Banda to distribute the fertilizer subsidy vouchers to only DPP supporters in the area. The system was a strategy to punish the UDF supporters, and force them to recognize the need to align with the ruling party, DPP. Consequently, all village headmen who aligned themselves with the ruling party were awarded more coupons, some of which they released for sale through the black market, while those who still posed as UDF strongmen lost out in the distribution 'game'. The village headmen who still chose to cling to UDF and lost out in this informally institutionalized rule include: Maisi, Chibwana, and Phingo.

***Key Informant, Malundani village, TA Nyambi, Machinga : 16th May, 2008***

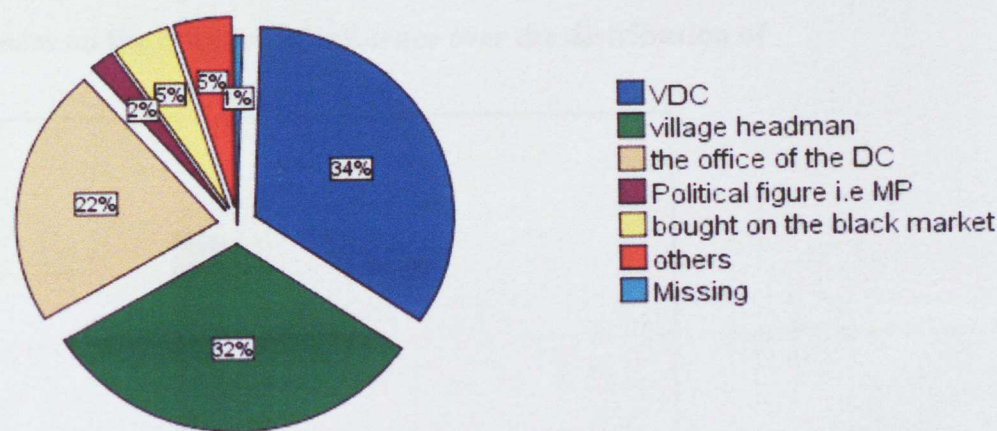
Dorward et al assert that the influence and involvement of Traditional Authorities in coupon distribution at local levels should be eliminated since that criteria could turn political along the way (2007:109). During the 2004/05 coupon allocation period, the Ministry of Agriculture distributed coupons to the districts and TAs, after which the TAs allocated them to VDCs to then be allocated to the actual beneficiaries. The involvement of VDC subcommittees facilitated a more transparent and equitable allocation when combined with clear mechanisms and publicising of all coupon issues in the districts, EPAs and villages. However, some villages had no VDCs, while others had the village heads as VDC chairs, as such the patrimonial influence over the operations of a VDC in those areas was still dominant. The areas that had no VDC include, Maisi, Chibwana,



Nyambalo and Nlanje villages of Machinga, and Magombo village of Thyolo. It must be pointed out that some villages had VDCs, but these VDCs were still influenced by the village heads, and their operations were subdued by patronage politics.

In order to probe more on how the village heads influenced the distribution processes of coupons in the area, respondents were asked to indicate how they accessed the 2007/08 fertilizer coupons, and on whether the distribution process was influenced by politics. The following Figure 4.6 indicates the responses to the questions.

**Figure 4.6: Who Distributed the Fertilizer Coupons to the Respondents?**



Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Figure 4.6 indicates that out of the sample population, 32% received their coupons through the village headman, while 34% received them from VDCs. Furthermore, 2% acquired the coupons from political figures while 5% of the sample population bought them from the black market. These indications prove that there were inconsistencies in the distribution evidenced through different distributors. The table below indicates whether reporting was done.



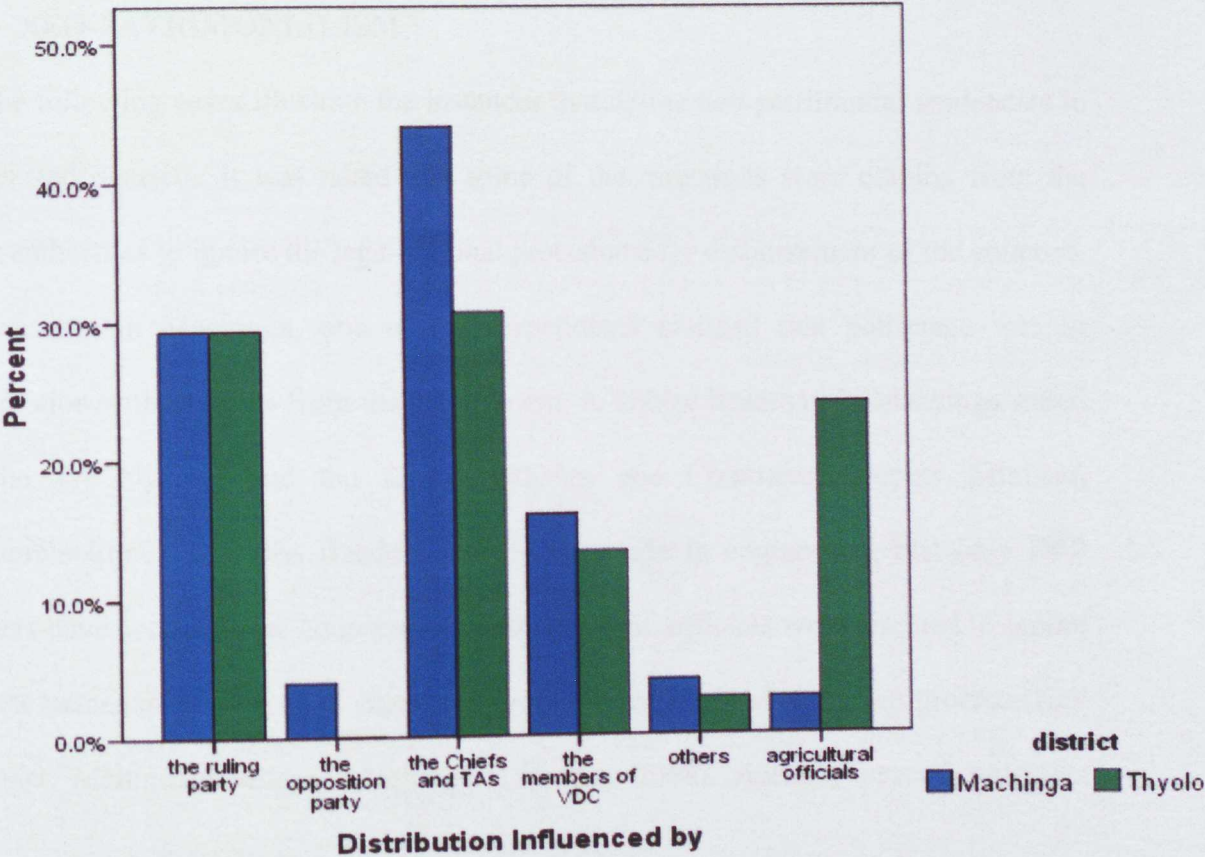
Table 4.3: Questions on fraud distribution and whether reporting was done

|                                                                        |         | District |        | Total |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|--------|-------|
|                                                                        |         | Machinga | Thyolo |       |
| Any reporting made on cases of using coupons to lure party supporters? | Yes     | 8        | 20     | 28    |
|                                                                        | No      | 2        | 23     | 25    |
|                                                                        | Missing | 2        | 4      | 6     |
| Total                                                                  |         | 12       | 47     | 59    |

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Table 4.3 above shows that reporting of cases of partisan distributions were there, only that they were largely evident in Machinga than in Thyolo. The following figure shows the respondents' views regarding who had huge influence over the distribution process.

Figure 4.7: Responses on the question of influence over the distribution of coupons



Source: Fieldwork, 2008

The above, Table 4.3 and the Figure 4.7, verify the existence of inconsistencies of distribution of coupons in the sampled area. Most notably, in Figure 4.7 the respondents indicated that the ruling party and the traditional authorities exercised a lot of influence over the distribution process. Based on the observation, there was a lot of control by the agricultural officials in Thyolo than in Machinga, while on the other hand, there was a lot of influence of traditional authorities in Machinga than in Thyolo. Thus according to the perception of the farmers in the selected villages, overall influence of traditional authorities was greater in both districts compared to the influence of agricultural officials. Most FGDs in both districts indicated that the chiefs distributed the coupons according to political party support and nepotism instead of need.

#### 4.4.3 NEO-PATRIMONIALISM

The following cases illustrate the instances that define neo-patrimonial tendencies in the selected districts. It was noted that some of the directions were coming from the higher authorities to ignore the legal-rational procedures for disbursement of the coupons. For instance, in Machinga, one of the respondents claimed that patronage was in collaboration with officials from the government. A village headman in Machinga stated that the TA Nyambi and the former Industry and Commerce Deputy Minister, Honourable Ellock Maotcha Banda<sup>5</sup>, had played a role in engineering that only DPP members have access to the coupons and further to that, officials were directed to ignore or delete names of known UDF supporters from the list in the distribution process (Key Informant, Malundani village, Machinga: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008). Actually several ministers

---

<sup>5</sup> This minister was implicated to have directed the District Commissioner (DC) in Machinga to distribute fertilizer coupons to DPP supporters only in 2008, sidelining the supporters of UDF. See: *Minister Orders DC to sideline UDF on coupons*, The Nation newspaper, 17 September, 2008.



were involved in the distribution of coupons, through unofficial networks. Examples of these ministers include, the former Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Honourable Bintony Kutsaira M.P., the former Minister of Defence, Honourable Bob Khamisa M.P and other unknown ministers and deputy ministers (Key Informant, MoAFS: 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008).

While in Thyolo, the DADO acknowledged that the distribution process was not procedural, such that, so many deviations from the rules occurred, even those involving corruption. It was noted that most often the distribution were influenced by politics (Key informant, Thyolo, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2008). Several worries expressed by some villagers suggest the government officials botched the distribution process by deliberately ignoring appropriate procedures. In one of the FGDs in Nchilamwera, respondents commented the officials would register beneficiaries and screen the register on their own with an intention of trimming the number of the beneficiaries without consulting the villagers thereby violating transparency and accountability of registering only those to benefit (FGD, Nchilamwera village, Thyolo). This system opened up room for politics and corruption while creating doubt on the authenticity of the criteria used to target the beneficiaries.

Additionally, one key informant acknowledged that the distribution of coupons took informal channels starting from the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC) to the local levels. He revealed that the president, in his attempts to establish a strong political support base for his minority government, disbursed an equal number of coupons to all DPP MPs, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and Regional and District Governors, who were to distribute them to farmers and relatives unofficially, creating some patron-client



networks in the process<sup>6</sup> (Key Informant, Luchenza: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008). Based on his explanations, we can notice that most of the coupons meant for the poor were being diverted for other purposes right from the OPC level to the lower levels. However, one official of the Blantyre Agricultural Development Division (BLADD) acknowledged that these were reports from newspapers, but in principle, no minister, district governor, or party official had the mandate to disperse coupons to anyone at any point during the distribution period or afterwards (Key Informants, BLADD: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008). These anomalies suggest nothing but lack of commitment to adhere to rational-legal procedures, which obviously produced further repercussions and opened room for political corruption and neo-patrimonialism.

#### 4.4.4 CORRUPTION

The village heads and some VDC members were empowered to identify and register beneficiaries in the earlier coupon distribution, however, the process was not as transparent as initially designed. Both Machinga and Thyolo witnessed rampant corruption orchestrated by the village heads, the unscrupulous VDC members and in some special cases by the TAs and some agricultural officials. For example, in TA Nyambi, Machinga, it was noted that the TA had the powers to allocate the fertilizer coupons as he wished to different village heads, yet some of these village heads were not transparent to their subjects and they distributed some as reserved some for sale to alleviate their own poverty (Key Informant, VDC member, Machinga: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2008).

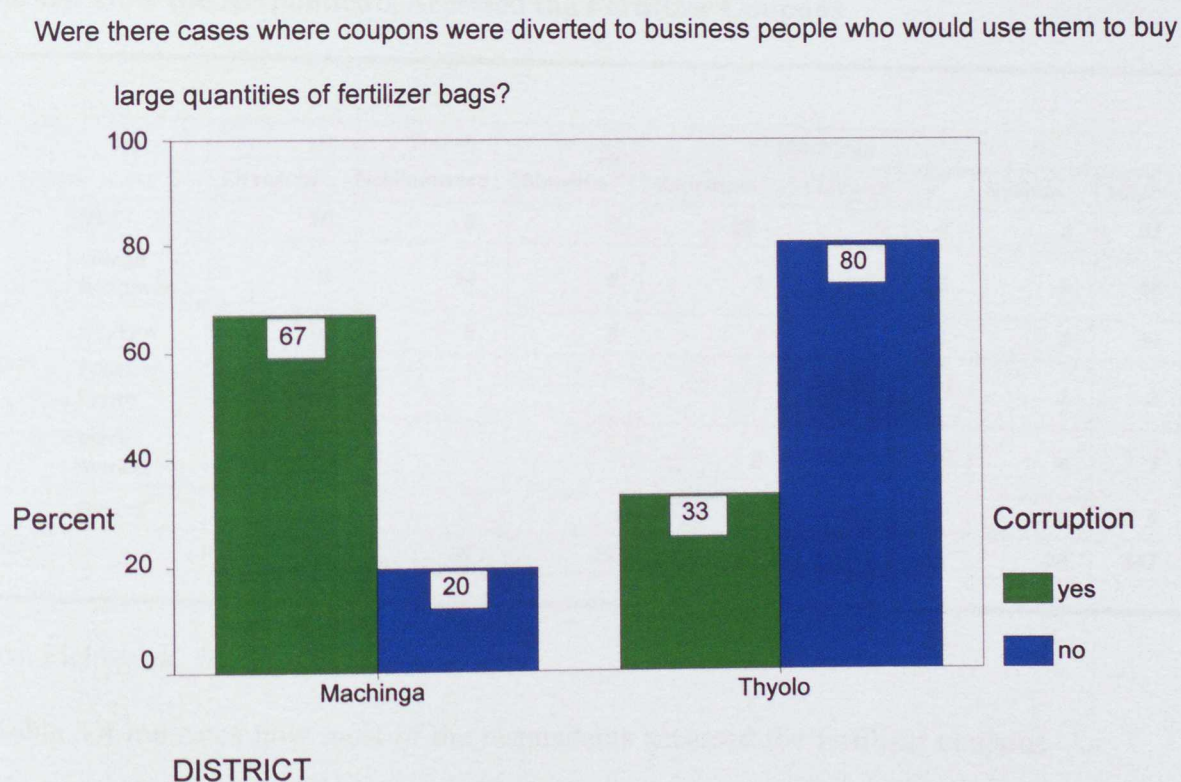
---

<sup>6</sup> This claim is further substantiated by large evidence in the papers such as: "Bingu thanks staff with coupons" in which Bingu is reportedly giving out three coupons and K10,000 to his workers as part of Celebrations of Christmas and New Year (Malawi News, January 3, 2008:3); and another article entitled: "Reverends receive coupons" in which the CCAP Blantyre Synod clerics were handed 450 coupons giving the rationale that they are meant for the widows and the orphans of the deceased church ministers and retired church ministers, evangelists and presbytery women's coordinators (Weekend Nation, 6-7 December 2008:2).



In Thyolo, some chiefs sold the coupons meant for the farmers, instead of distributing them. One of the key informants testified that several village heads were arrested and some agricultural officials were involved in the practice (Key Informant, TA Nchilamwera, Thyolo). The group village head (GVH) in Nchilamwera also acknowledged that in 2007/08 growing seasons, some agricultural officers from the ministry were allegedly involved in the trade of selling coupons at a certain school when they were supposed to distribute them freely (Key Informant, TA Nchilamwera, Thyolo: 14 May 2008).

**Figure 4.8: Respondents' views on the existence of corruption in food security programmes**



Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Based on Figure 4.8, the respondents acknowledged that corruption was common in the distribution of fertilizer coupons for the 2007/08 growing season. Of the confirmed cases, 67% are from Machinga while the remaining 33% are from Thyolo. This further confirms that procedures were heavily bleached in Machinga than in Thyolo and that attempts to establish a political base through the distribution of coupons in the district result in an increase in corruption through the same process. This assertion is further supported by Table 4.4 below that indicates across TA, the people from whom the respondents accessed coupons. Officially, based on the 2007/08, the farmers were supposed to access the coupons from agricultural committees operating from district assemblies of their respective areas.

**Table 4.4: How the Respondents Accessed the Fertilizer Coupons**

| TA    |                  | Thyolo   |             |           | Machinga |         |        | Total |
|-------|------------------|----------|-------------|-----------|----------|---------|--------|-------|
|       |                  | Changata | Nchilamwera | Chimaliro | Kapoloma | Chikweo | Nyambi |       |
| Agent | VDC              | 10       | 5           | 9         | 20       | 4       | 3      | 51    |
|       | village headman  | 3        | 14          | 8         | 1        | 16      | 6      | 48    |
|       | DC/EPA           | 10       | 6           | 8         | 1        | 3       | 5      | 33    |
|       | Political figure |          |             |           | 1        | 1       | 1      | 3     |
|       | black market     |          |             |           | 2        | 1       | 4      | 7     |
|       | Others           |          |             |           |          |         | 5      | 5     |
| Total |                  | 23       | 25          | 25        | 25       | 25      | 24     | 147   |

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

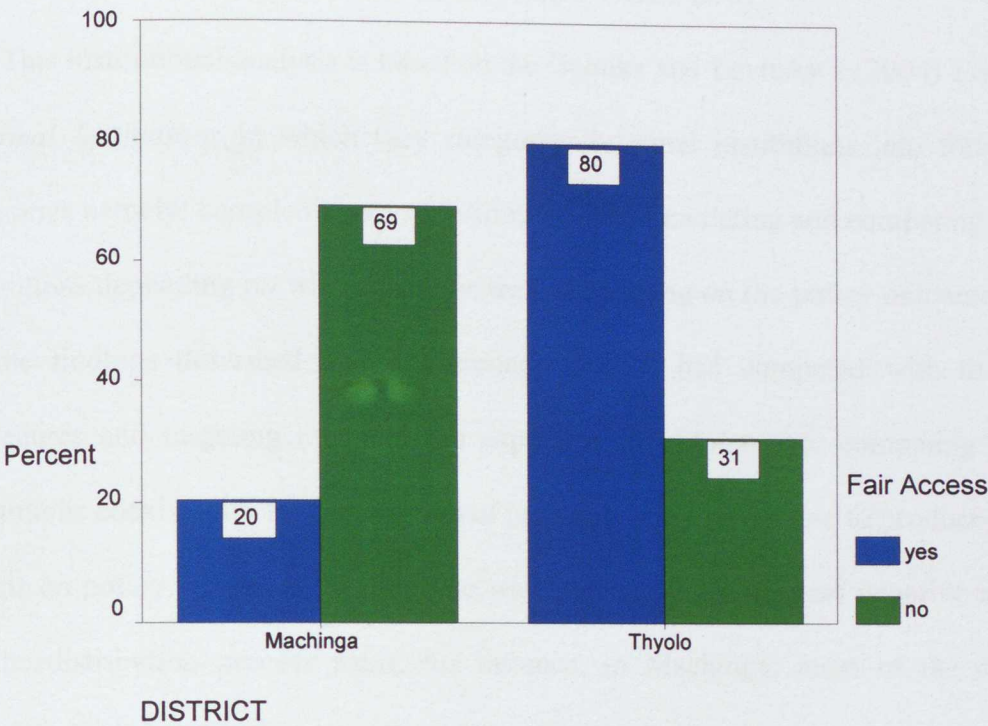
Table 4.4 indicates how most of the respondents accessed the fertilizer coupons. As noted by the table, it is only in Machinga where some respondents black market and political figures act distributor as noted in the table. Based from the table, there were



cases of political influence in Machinga, especially on the premise that some of the politicians were distributing coupons. This situation is not so evident in Thyolo based on the table.

According to the table above, 7 of the respondents in the questionnaire survey confessed that they bought the fertilizer coupon from the black market. In addition to that 48 respondents access the coupons from the chiefs. It is only 33 of 147 respondents responding to this question, who received the coupons from the legitimate distributors, with the rest receiving them from illegitimate distributors. This supports the premise that fraud and corruption were heightened by lack of proper control and adherence to procedures. Particularly in Machinga, based on several FGDs, respondents confirmed that the coupons were sold on a black market at prices ranging from K1, 400 to K1, 700. One of the FGD respondents had to confess: "*Coupon yokusyumizyadyo, akusumisya pamtengo wa K1,700, sambano soni dywakulagadyo ngaipata kuti?*" meaning: "On the black market, coupons are offered at the price of K1,700, and as poor as we are, where are we going to source that amount?" (FGD, Malundani village, TA Nyambi, Machinga). The figure below shows the responses in the affirmative after the questionnaire survey solicited views from the respondents on the existence of corruption.

**Figure 4.9: Opinions on Whether Access to Fertilizer Coupon was Fair**



Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Based on the Figure 4.9 above, those respondents who bemoaned the distribution as being unfair and unequal were in the majority (91) out of 150 representing 61% of the sample population. Most of these respondents expressed concern over the way the distribution was conducted and feel that it was counterproductive and did not satisfy the notions of public accountability and transparency. The following sections analyse the distribution in the light of public accountability model and the information institutions typology.



#### 4.4.5 AN ANALYSIS OF THESE INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF FERTILIZER SUBSIDY COUPONS

This institutional analysis is based on the Helmke and Levitsky's (2004) *Typology of Informal Institutions* in which they categorize informal institutions into four distinct categories namely; complementary, substitutive, accommodating and competing informal institutions depending on what functions they are playing on the policy outcomes. Based on the findings described above, patronage politics had competed with the formal procedures and targeting methods. As explained in chapter two, competing informal institutions coexist with ineffective formal institutions but only serve to produce negative effects on policy outcomes. In the same way, patronage politics had negative outcomes on the distribution process itself, for instance, in Machinga, most of the deserving beneficiaries cried foul because the chiefs were distributing the coupons along political party lines and selling the remaining coupons, while some village headmen were given very few coupons and others did not receive any coupon.

Group village headman Maisi confessed that in his area, some of the village heads who were supporting UDF did not receive coupons for their subjects (Key Informant, Maisi village, TA Nyambi, Machinga). Most of the farmers in TA Nyambi, where patronage politics influenced the distribution, bought coupons from black markets compared to some of the selected areas in Machinga and Thyolo. Table 4.7 above indicates that 4 out of the 7 respondents who bought the coupons were from Nyambi, and all of them were from Machinga district. The distribution process became a business enterprise such that even the chiefs, and VDC members were involved in it with impunity.

#### **4.4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICES THROUGH THE LENS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL**

##### **4.4.6.1 ANSWERABILITY OF DISTRIBUTORS**

The readiness to forgo formal procedures coupled with the influence of the informal institutions diluted the whole process of answerability. The agents were not answerable to their communities when distributed the coupons. They could not justify the procedures of distribution employed at any stage. For instance, in TA Nyambi, Machinga, most of the chiefs, whose mandate was to serve the villagers and to become answerable to their subjects, could collect coupons and start disbursing them to their relatives and the ruling political party supporters. The tendency was also observed among the agricultural officials, who were equally involved in diverting the coupons to business individuals. For instance, in Thyolo, Nchilamwera, specific business people could be found in possession of more than 30 coupons. They had to use these coupons to buy subsidized fertilizer bags and so they can resell them at exorbitant prices (Key informants, TA Chimaliro, Thyolo). This approach trimmed the number of coupons meant for the smallholder farmers. It was not surprising that in the same district, Thyolo, in TAs Changata and Nchilamwera, two farmers had to share a coupon, which meant they also had to share the 50kg fertilizer bag among themselves. This distribution procedure was not reported to the central agricultural offices and it violated the formal procedures of distributing two coupons per household (FGD, Nchilamwera, Thyolo). Overall, there was zero answerability on the part of the distributors of agricultural inputs.



The distribution process did not suggest that there was any accountability employed by the distributors both to the recipients or the government. The logic of accountability borders along the lines that an agent must establish a transparent relationship between himself/herself and the forum (community), through which the agent is obliged to explain or justify his/her actions, is subjected to the judgment of the forum (community), and is willing to suffer consequences resulting from his actions. The whole process of accountability in this light was violated from the top officials to the VDCs and other distributors on the ground. They had no urgency to establish a transparent relationship of the whole distribution process with the communities they worked with. Most of the villagers in both districts were not aware on who was officially mandated to disburse the coupons. In some areas, they expected them to come from chiefs, while others, VDCs, and yet others agricultural officials. Most of the respondents had to register their names to the chiefs, who would ultimately carry them to the DC. They never justified the rationale of their actions. Some of the beneficiaries were assisted behind the view of the whole community. Ultimately, they were never subjected to make accounts of how they distributed the coupons and most of them never suffered any consequence.

Appreciating that 'accountability' is the tool for citizens to force those vested with public power to speak the truth relating anything area of their concern, the process was not transparent. For instance, in Kachimanga village, TA Kapoloma, Machinga, coupons were sold in markets and taverns, yet no one was held responsible. Based on the Key Informant Interview (Malundani village, TA Nyambi, Machinga: 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2008) the village heads and the VDCs had connived to distribute the coupons to DPP supporters



only, and were neither answerable to their subjects nor accountable for their actions. The villagers, whose majority are UDF supporters, could not hold these chiefs and VDC members to speak the truth, based on the institutional set ups and fear.

#### **4.4.6.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF DISTRIBUTORS**

Based on the findings, it was noted that most of the distributors did not demonstrate an inward sense of duty, and commitment to the set of values regarding equitable distribution. This does not mean every one of them violated the procedural rules, but that a good number of them did not follow the instructions, and did not control themselves from indulging in nepotism or partisanship. Based on the findings collected from FGDs and KIIs of both districts, it was noted that some of these agents distributed the coupons either to members of specific political parties, or their relatives. For instance, the incidence that happened in TA Nyambi, where the Minister had to dictate the criteria that only those supporting the ruling party should have access to the coupons, is a one of the symbols of irresponsibility, as both the Minister and the agents who followed his instruction did not demonstrate a sense of duty.

#### **4.4.6.4 RESPONSIVENESS OF THE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS**

Assessing the whole process in both districts, most of the complaints that were raised did not get addressed. It is only a few cases where the government had to intervene and administer proper measures. Most of the respondents expressed ignorance of the procedures of reporting system. They also expressed fear to report their own traditional authorities who were involved in the practice to the police. The only incidence where villagers managed to report their own chief is in TA Nchilamwera, where the chief was



arrested and released afterwards. But in TA Nyambi, Machinga, where cases of anomalies were numerous, and where their own traditional authority was seen to be involved in distributing only to the ruling political party supporters, respondents expressed fear that it was difficult to guarantee their own safety after they had reported the matter to police (FGDs, TA Nyambi, 25 May, 2008). The following table shows how the authorities responded to the reported cases.

**Table 4.5: Action Taken by the government after cases of anomalies were reported**

| Action taken by the authorities after reporting |           |         |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                                                 | Frequency | Percent |
| No action as respondents did not report         | 70        | 47      |
| Arrested the culprits                           | 18        | 12      |
| Warned against the trend                        | 15        | 10      |
| Promised to intervene but did nothing           | 14        | 9       |
| Ignored the matter as untrue                    | 25        | 17      |
| Others                                          | 8         | 5       |
| Total                                           | 150       | 100.0   |

Source: Fieldwork, 2008

Based on this Table 4.5, of all the respondents only 22% acknowledged that the government was able to respond to the reports. However, of these 22%, only 12% of them acknowledged that the government arrested the culprits. It is therefore observable through both the survey and FGDs that the responsiveness of the government in dealing with cases of anomalies was inadequate and ineffective. The logic that follows from this conclusion is that since the responsiveness was minimal and infrequent, the tendency increased irresponsibility among the distributors, both the government officials and the chiefs, and it reduced the accountability of the distribution process.

## **4.5 OBJECTIVE THREE: OVERALL EFFECTS OF PATRONAGE**

### **POLITICS ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

The following section discusses the effects of Patronage Politics on the distribution process of agricultural inputs, especially the fertilizer coupons, conducted in the 2007-2008 growing season.

#### **4.5.1 DISTORTION OF TARGETING AND DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES AT ALL LEVELS**

Patronage Politics had an impact of distorting the targeting and distribution procedures at the district level. It must be noted that since the informally sanctioned rules were emulated with the purpose of strengthening the legitimacy of the ruling party, the effects of this approach was witnessed at all levels. As has been observed that even at the Office of President and Cabinet (OPC) distribution of coupons in unofficially sanctioned channels occurred like in the cited cases where the president distributed coupons to staff as part of New Year Celebrations (Malawi News, January 3, 2008:3), where the president and his cabinet ministers distributed 450 coupons to the clergy (Weekend Nation, 6-7 December 2008:2). This diversion is also observed when the president disbursed fertilizer coupons among his ministers, deputy ministers and governors for them to distribute as they will (Key Informant, Luchenza: 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2008). This violating of distribution procedures was emulated at the district or village level, as it has been observed in the isolated cases of Machinga and Thyolo in the study.



#### 4.5.2 OPPOSITION PARTY SUPPORTERS WERE DENIED OF THEIR RIGHT TO FOOD SECURITY

Most of the opposition party supporters who did not fall into the 'politically correct' category were left out of the list of beneficiaries of the distribution of coupons. This incidence ultimately denied them of their right to development especially the attainment of food security as it is enshrined in the Republican Constitution, Section 30, (2) that:

"The State shall take all necessary measures for the realization of the right to development. Such measures shall include, amongst other things, equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, shelter, employment and infrastructure".

Patronage politics unjustifiably segregated those who exercised their right to political association, as in Section 32, (1), which states:

"Every person shall have the right to freedom of association, which shall include the freedom to form associations"

of their inalienable right to development. Choosing who to benefit on political grounds is undemocratic as it suppresses the right to association. The farmers were forced to support a particular political party so that they can have access to the fertilizer coupons or the packs. The tendency exerted punishment on people, who were unwilling to defect to the ruling party, yet had to be punished for their political allegiance. In other words, the procedure placed the beneficiaries at a catch-22 situation, where they had to forgo their constitutional right of political association to attain their constitutional right to development, or vice versa.

#### 4.5.3 INCREASED CASES OF INCONSISTENCIES AND ANOMALIES AT ALL LEVELS

Even though the government kept on changing the distribution criteria, as they had previously been distributed by the chiefs, then they started distributing through the agricultural officials, the inconsistencies still existed and chiefs continued to distribute coupons in some areas illegally. Most of the anomalies were caused because some people, who were not mandated to distribute, were involved in the distribution process. Moreover, based on the findings, the OPC had been involved in this illegal distribution of coupons, it was concluded that these people were mandated secretly to still distribute the coupons to those who would offer them political allegiance (Key Informant Interview, Luchenza, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2008). It was observed that the distortions and anomalies were so pervasive in Machinga such that most farmers were only buying them on the black market and that some could be found at the taverns of Kachimanga village, while in Thyolo, the FGD at Chilambe village revealed that there were some irregularities involving officials who distributed one coupon to two smallholder farmers, and spared some to sell to other interested businessmen (FGD, Chilambe Village, TA Chimaliro, Thyolo). In other times, after a proper registration process, omissions and submissions could be made on the list of beneficiaries without offering justification to the villagers as was the case in TA Nyambi, in Machinga and TA Changata, in Thyolo.

Even at the stage of buying fertilizer bags, some villagers were forced to wait for days, as other business people bought large quantities of the subsidized fertilizer bags through the back door as was the case in TA Chimaliro of Thyolo (Key Informant Interview: 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2008). If poor farmers sought a quick process, they had to send



some boys who demanded a small processing fee of up to K400. Most smallholder farmers in the two districts experienced injustices because of practices of this nature. In sum, patronage was so pervasive and had greatly affected most farmers in the two districts of Machinga and Thyolo.

#### **4.5 OBJECTIVE FOUR: THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES OF PATRONAGE POLITICS ON THESE FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMES**

The following are the observed preventive measures that can minimize patronage politics and its effects on the distribution of government-sponsored agricultural inputs.

##### **4.6.1 ENSURING THAT THERE IS ACCOUNTABILITY AMONG THE DISTRIBUTORS OF THE FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMES**

There is a need to ensure that public officers are held accountable by the community or other forums over the way they implement their programmes, especially the way they distribute agricultural inputs. This suggests that the actions of the traditional authorities must be subjected to public judgment to prevent the chiefs from abusing their powers to exploit people. It has been noted that even though the police officers may be involved in the distribution of the coupons, public accountability is still not guaranteed. The involvement for every community member is vital in guaranteeing public accountability. The farmers must be empowered to report all cases of misuse and abuse of authority. Accountability has been merely rhetoric as community members have not been adequately empowered to report their traditional authorities whenever they find incidences that must be reported. The environment is not responsive enough to enhance thorough reporting from the grassroots and complaints are not adequately addressed.

Public accountability demands that no one, whether holding a position or not, should be above the law and that anyone who violates the law must be subject to that law. This can only be done where there is a responsive and free environment for all people to report cases of abuse of power.

#### **4.6.2 PREVENTING ALL FORMS OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS THROUGH THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

The 2007/08 AISP programme had been characterised by several anomalies, some of which were purposed to woo opposition party supporters in the wake of the 2009 general elections, as it has been observed through the study. As it is noted in Table 4.7 above, partisanship was one of the strong influences during the distribution of coupons. Farm inputs have for some time been used as political 'baits' for political support. In order to minimize patronage politics through the distribution of these inputs, the question of choosing other political campaign alternatives is vital. Since, food security policies are hot political issues in Malawi and that the party that guarantees food security for the nation, is the party that can easily win elections, the need to prevent politicking of farm inputs borders on ensuring that political parties are not meddling with all forms of public policy. What was also noted was that the ruling party influences informal practices to advance political ambitions during the distribution. The need separate political campaigning from public policy is central in fighting against the influences of politics in the distribution of farm inputs. Only if the ruling party commits itself to preventing all forms of patronage politics, such practices are bound to flourish even with maximum checks. The ultimate force to achieve this lies with the political will of the ruling party.



#### **4.6.3 PREVENTING ALL FORMS OF PROFIT MAKING VENTURES THROUGH THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL INPUTS**

It must be pointed out that corrupt business people took advantage of the weak monitoring system to exploit the poor through the implementation of AISP. Most of them were buying fertilizer coupons from the black market, or sending representatives to receive the coupons, so they can buy large quantities of fertilizer bags and resell them at exorbitant prices. The system had to ensure that all sorts of profit-making ventures were guarded against and they had to report all business people involved in this act. Proper checks and balances had to be placed to ensure that all coupons reach the beneficiaries and all beneficiaries having received the coupons are able to buy the allocated subsidized bags. In some Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund (SFFRFM) and ADMARC stations, queuing farmers waited for days to purchase subsidized fertilizers, as business people purchased the bags with ease.

#### **4.6.3 ENSURING THAT THE FORMAL RULES ARE ADHERED TO AMONG THE DISTRIBUTORS**

The formal rules of distribution must be adhered to at all cost. There should be transparency and accountability for every action executed. The distributors should be monitored and checked to ensure that they are compliant to the rules and regulations. The distributors must not change the list of beneficiaries and to distribute to their relatives or even sell the coupons. They should commit themselves to serve everyone regardless of political or religious affiliations. They should ensure that no ad hoc rule is taken on board during the distribution process. For instance, this point can be exemplified by the cases

where, in some areas in Thyolo, the villagers testified that these distributors could distribute a coupon for two farmers, a procedure that was not indicated in the rules.

#### **4.6.5 THERE IS NEED FOR THE POLITICAL WILL TO ENHANCE POLICING OF THE WHOLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE INPUTS**

As it has been observed that some of the anomalies were politically initiated, political will is required if efforts to minimize patronage politics are to be achieved. If our political leaders exercised their powers to curb any of these practices and prevent all political campaigns that distribute coupons, then patronage politics would have been long forgotten. Politicians, as individuals with political influence, should be committed in the first place, then, it shall be easier for the rest of the public to follow suit. But if the politicians themselves, especially the president and his cabinet are in the forefront violating the distribution procedures, it follows suit that people on the ground would do likewise. In the case, politicians, including the members of the OPC, had been involved in diverting coupons for political campaigns, a tendency that diffused the whole monitoring system and employed informal institutions at every stage of input distribution and implementation.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

Based on the empirical data analysed above, there are several influences produced by patronage politics as informal institutions which undermined proper distribution procedures and public accountability. Of much interest in the study is that access to inputs had been influenced by politics especially in the area of targeting and distribution.



This tendency had a negative impact on the whole distribution process and diminished the importance of public accountability among distributors.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study by outlining the general conclusions according to the objectives of the study and some recommendations. And the last section of the study exposes areas that require further research.

#### 5.2 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Within the debates of how informal institutions influence public policies, the study has further explained how patronage politics as an informal institution affects the implementation of government sponsored agricultural inputs, especially in the aspects of targeting and distribution. The study selected distinct features of patronage politics and analyzed how they negatively affected the distribution of agricultural inputs, and furthermore how these distribution problems contributed to the ineffectiveness of the whole programme implementation. The main argument of the study is that informal institutions negatively affect public policy since institutional actors champion their agendas at the expense of the common agenda for which the public policy was formulated. These institutional rules become the *de facto* conditions for selection and are in the study viewed to be political actors working as chiefs, VDC members, MPs, ministers, even the common villagers.

Based on the above mentioned argument, the findings uphold that patronage networks marred the distribution of agricultural inputs. The following observations support this assertion:



- *The distribution and targeting of government sponsored agricultural inputs remains problematic despite a lot of adjustments.* According to the objective one of the study, it has been revealed that the targeting of food security programmes from 1998 to 2007 have been characterized by distribution anomalies. Most of the consultants have asserted that the distribution had a role and affected the policy outcomes (Chinsinga et al 2002, Nyirongo et al 2002, Dorward et al 2007). The findings for the 2007/08 fertilizer subsidy programme from both Machinga and Thyolo clearly indicates that there still existed incidences of malpractices and misappropriations of the coupons. Even though the distributors could have been trained, some of them must have been influenced by informal practices as they disbursed the coupons.
- *Patronage politics influenced the distribution processes in both Machinga and Thyolo districts.* Patronage in the forms of favouritism, nepotism and partisanship involving the traditional leaders, village heads, TAs, agricultural officials and even cabinet ministers, influenced the unfair distribution of coupons even in the districts of Machinga and Thyolo. Most of the FGDs revealed that corruption ranged from the village heads to the agricultural officials, marginalizing the actual beneficiaries in the process and that targeting was done along political party lines in Machinga and Thyolo.
- *The effects of patronage on the distribution of the agricultural inputs were severe and pervasive in nature.* Considering the third objective that solicits the

effects of patronage politics on the distribution of agricultural inputs, the study concludes the following:

Firstly, patronage led to the promotion of upward accountability instead of the recommended downward accountability as embraced in the concept of decentralization. Most of the distributors defied the officially sanctioned procedures to distribute to supporters of the ruling parties only. This scenario in the informal platforms, intensified patronage politics as the political patrons demanded that the coupons be shared among their own political supporters.

Secondly, patronage distorted the proper distribution of coupons. More especially the fact that coupons were used as campaign 'baits' in the wake to the 2009 general elections, coupons could be distributed in church, and elsewhere, by everyone including chiefs, MPs and ministers. They could be sold at drinking places while some farmers had little or no access to them. This distortion was perverse and could be traced at any level.

Thirdly, as a follow up to the above point, patronage politics essentially denied the supporters of opposition parties, their right to development and food security. The fact that supporters of opposition parties exercised their political freedom of association, this exercise was at the expense of their right to food security, as patronage promoted discrimination against them. Strong evidence exists in the study especially from Machinga indicating that the TA and government minister advised that anyone intending to receive a coupon had to belong to the ruling party.



Lastly, the loopholes created by the pervasiveness of the distortions mentioned above, gave chance to unscrupulous business people to capitalize profit making ventures through the input programmes. Most of the cases of this nature happened in Thyolo, where business people could source more coupons and use them to buy extra fertilizer bags and resell them in new bags back to the farmers for whom they were meant.

- *Increased public accountability and political will can minimize patronage influence on the distribution of the inputs.* The study has revealed that food security programmes were politically motivated since the introduction of Starter Pack Scheme in 1998. All of the programmes have been characterized by partisan politics that systematically sidelines actual beneficiaries in some areas. Much as the government employs procedure of holding the distributors accountable, the findings indicate that there is need for more. In the first place, the government must commit itself to solve the problems on the ground, by ensuring that there is a responsive environment when everyone is free to report any case of fraud or misappropriation, and further more desist from using the inputs as campaign baits to reward supporters of a particular political party. If the traditional authorities are trained to effectively implement public policies without consideration of the wishes of the ruling party, then they can deliver. But since the government is at the forefront in politicizing the local government structures, the process of having traditional authorities operating as political vehicles is being institutionalized with time, and this informal institution shall be difficult to curb in future.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study suggests the following general recommendations to be incorporated to guarantee that we implement the food security policy programmes with the influence of institutional actors in order to avoid anomalies that have characterized the allocation and distribution processes of the agricultural inputs.

- The distribution process of the interventions should not be partisan in nature. Sound food security programmes are dented by politics that discriminate along political lines. Political will is paramount in the fight against partisan distribution.
- Adequate measures must be placed to ensure that the environment is responsive enough and guarantees accountability of every action conducted by the distributors. The traditional authorities must be subjected to law when they are caught misappropriating agricultural inputs or any other public goods. (Sibale et al, 2001; Chinsinga et al, 2002; Barahona, C. and Levy, S., 2005).
- The government should endeavour to punish those who are found to be illegally distributing coupons outside the mandatory channels. Most of the cabinet ministers, others, not cited in the study, have been rumoured to be distributing coupons, and yet the government is silent on them. The government should ensure that nobody is seen to be above the law in this matter.
- The government should set up clear grievance channeling procedures as a way of producing a responsive environment, through which villagers can forward their complaints at any stage during the distribution process.



#### 5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following are areas that I would like to recommend further research to explore more other aspects in the area of study. Firstly, there is a need to randomly select several districts from other regions in Malawi and not just those in the Southern Region, and assess the existence and effects of patronage politics on household food security in those areas. Secondly, there is a need to assess on the impact of political actors during the budgeting and policy formulation of food security programmes. Thirdly, there is a need to conduct some coefficient correlation between benefits of fertilizer subsidy and the electorate voting for the political party. It could be that those who benefit more from the food security programmes do not even vote for the ruling party in the coming elections. We have been noting that the hand-out syndrome in Malawi does not always translate into votes for ruling party. This tendency makes the need to investigate this political behaviour of prime importance.

## REFERENCES

- Bates R. (1982). *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bird, K. and Booth, D. (2003). Food Security Crisis in Southern Africa: The Political Background to Policy Failure. *Poverty and Public Policy Group Overseas Development Institute*. Birmingham University, August 2003.
- Blair, H. (2000). Participation and Accountability at the Periphery: Democratic Local Governance in Six Countries. *World Development*, 28, (1) 21–39.
- Booth D., Cammack D., Harrigan J., Kanyongolo E., Mataure M., and Ngwira N. (2006). Drivers of Change and Development in Malawi. (*Working Paper 261*) London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Bovens, M.A.P. (1998). *The Quest for Responsibility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bovens, M.A.P. (2005). Public Accountability. In E. Ferlie, L. Lynne & C. Pollitt (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management*, (pp182-208). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Bratton, M, and Van de Walle, N. (1997). *Democratic Experiences in Africa. Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Brinkerhoff, D.W and Goldsmith, A.A. (2002). *Clientelism, Patrimonialism and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Programming*. Prepared for US Agency for International Development Office of Democracy and Governance under Strategic Policy and Institutional Reform. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates Inc.



- Cammack, D. (2006). "Malawi: The Politics of Hunger" *Opinion*, London: Overseas Development Institute
- Cammack, D. (2007). "The Logic of African Neopatrimonialism: What Role for Donors?" in *Development Policy Review*, 25 (5), 599-614.
- Cammack, D., Golooba-Mutebi, F., Kanyongolo F. and O'Neil, T. (2007). *Neopatrimonial Politics, Decentralisation and Local Government: Uganda and Malawi in 2006. Good Governance, Aid Modalities and Poverty Reduction (Working Paper Series)* London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Chabal, P. and Daloz J. P. (1999). *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*. London: James Currey.
- Chingaie, H., and Leftwich, A. (2007). The Politics of State-Business Relationships in Malawi. *Discussion Paper Series (Number Seven)*. [Lilongwe]: Institutions for Pro-Poor Growth (IPPG).
- Chinsinga, B., Dzimadzi, C., Magalasi, M., and Mpekansambo, L. (2002). 2001-02 *Targeted Input Programme (TIP) Evaluation Module 2: TIP Messages, Beneficiary Selection and Community Targeting Agricultural Extension and Health (TB and HIV/AIDS)*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.
- Chinsinga, B. (2005). The Clash of Voices: Community-based targeting of Safety-net Interventions in Malawi. In *Social Policy and Administration*, 39, (3) 284-30.
- Chinsinga, B., 2007. *Reclaiming Policy Space? Malawi's 2005/2006 Fertilizer Subsidy Programme*, Retrieved on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from the world wide web: [http://www.future-agricultures.org/WDR/Malawi\\_case.pdf](http://www.future-agricultures.org/WDR/Malawi_case.pdf).
- Cromwell, E. and Chintedza, A., (2005). Neopatrimonialism and Policy Processes:

- Lessons from the Southern African Food Crisis. *IDS Bulletin*, 36 (2) 1-8.
- Crook, R., (2003). Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local-Central Relations. *Public Administration and Development*, 23 77-88.
- Devereux, S. (2002). State of Disaster: Causes, Consequences and Policy Lessons in Malawi: An ActionAid Commissioned by ActionAid Malawi. [Lilongwe]: Action Aid.
- Dorward, A. R., Chirwa, E., Boughton, D. and Kelly V. A. (2007). *Evaluation of the 2006/7 Agricultural Input Supply Programme, Malawi: Interim Report*, London: Imperial College.
- Esguerra, J. and Villanueva, E. (2009). Pathways out of Patronage Politics: New Roles of Communities, New Rules for Politics in Philipines. *IDS Bulletin*, 40 (6) 13-21.
- Erdmann, G. and Engel, U. (2006). Neopatrimonialism Revisited – Beyond a Catch-All Concept. In *German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) Working Papers (N° 16)*. Hamburg: GIGA.
- Evans, P., Reuschmeyer, D. and Skocpol, T. (1985). *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- GOM. (2007). *2006-07 Annual Agricultural Statistical Bulletin*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.
- GOM. (2006). *Food Security Quarterly Bulletin*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.
- GOM. (1998). *Malawi Decentralization Policy*. Zomba: Government Printers
- Hartlyn, J. (1994). Crisis-ridden elections (again) in the Dominican Republic:



- Neopatrimonialism, presidentialism, and weak electoral oversight. *Journal of InterAmerican Studies and World Affairs* 36 (4), 91-144.
- Heidenheimer, A. J., Johnston, M. and LeVine, V.T. (1989). *Political Corruption. A Handbook*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Helmke, G., and Levitsky, S. (2004). Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2, (4) 725-740.
- Howe, P. (2002). Reconsidering Famines. *IDS Bulletin* 33(4), 24-35.
- Huntington, S. P. (1993). *The Third Wave; Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma.
- Hussein, M. K. (2005). *Good Governance And The New Local Government System In Malawi: Challenges And Prospects*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University Of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Hyden, G. (1997). Democratization and Administration. In Hadenius, A. (Ed.), *Democracy's Victory and Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge Press.
- International Food Policy Research Institute, (Sept. 4-6, 2002). *Sustainable Food Security for All by 2020: Proceedings of an International Conference*, September 4-6, 2001, Washington, DC.: IFPRI.
- Jönsson, C. and Tallberg, J. (2004). *Institutional Theory in International Relations*. Retrieved on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2008 from the world wide web: [http://www.statsvet.su.se/statsvetenskap\\_04/publikationer/tallberg/joennesson\\_tallberg\\_institutional\\_theory.pdf](http://www.statsvet.su.se/statsvetenskap_04/publikationer/tallberg/joennesson_tallberg_institutional_theory.pdf).
- Joseph, R.A. (1987). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Khan, M. (1996). A Typology of Corrupt Transactions in Developing Countries. In *IDS Bulletin*, 8, (5). 12-21.
- Lemarchand, R. (1995). "African Transition to Democracy", in *Encyclopedia of Democracy*, vol.1, edited by Seymour Martin Lipset. London :Routledge.
- Leftwich, A. (2007). The Political Approach to Institutional Formation, Maintenance and Change: A literature Review Essay, *Research Programme Consortium on Improving institutions for Pro-Poor Growth (IPPG)*, Discussion Paper Series No. 14, October, 2007.
- Lembani, M.E. (2006). *Assessing The Effectiveness And Efficiency Of Targeting Methods In Public Works Programmes In Malawi: The Case of MASAF and CARE managed programmes in the Central Region of Malawi*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Western Cape, South Africa.
- Leonard, D.K. and Straus, S. (2003). *Africa's Stalled Development – Internal Causes and Cures*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher.
- Levine, V. T. (1980). African Patrimonial Regimes in Comparative Perspective, in: *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 18, 657-673.
- Levy, S. and Barahona, C. (2002). Briefing notes – Starter Pack and TIP: what does the evidence tell us? Reading, UK: Calibre Consultant, Reading and Statistical Services Centre, University of Reading.
- Lwanda, J. (2006). Kwacha: The Violence of Money in Malawi's Politics, 1954-2004. In *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 32 (3), 525 – 544.
- Maxwell, S. and Smith, M. (1992) Household Food Security: A Conceptual Review. In Maxwell, S. and Frankenberger, T. (Eds), *Household Food Security, Concepts, Indicators, Measurements: A Technical Review*. New York: UNICEF.



- Medard, J. F. (1982). The Underdeveloped State in Africa: Political Clientelism or Neopatrimonialism? In Clapham, Christopher (ed.), *Private Patronage and Public Power: Political Clientelism and the Modern State*, (pp. 162-189.) London: Frances Printer.
- National Statistical Office. (2005). *Integrated Household Survey*. Zomba: Government Printers.
- National Statistical Office. (2008a). *Welfare and Monitoring Survey 2007*. Zomba: Government Printers.
- National Statistical Office. (2008b). *2008 Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Report*. Zomba: Government Printers.
- Neuman, L. (2003). Quantitative and Qualitative Measures. In Schwitzer, S. (Ed.) *MA Development Management, Summer School (2004): Methods of Empirical Social Research*, Bochum, (pp.23-32). Boston MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Nyirongo, C. (2002). Food Production and Security report of Module 1 of the 2001-02 TIP Evaluation. Lilongwe: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.
- Nyirongo, C. C., Gondwe, H.C.Y., Msiska, F.B.M., Mdyetseni H.A.J. and Kamanga, F.M.C.E. (2002). *2001-02 TIP Evaluation Module 1: Food Production and Security in Rural Malawi (Main Season Post-Harvest Survey)*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Agriculture and irrigation.
- O'Donnell, G. (1994). Delegative Democracy. In *Journal of Democracy* 5 (1), 55-69.
- Osaghae, E.E. (1995). *Amoral Politics and Democratic Instability in Africa: A Theoretical Exploration*. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 4 (1), 62-78.

- Owusu, M. (1970). *Uses and Abuses of Political Power: A Case Study of Continuity and Change in the Politics of Ghana*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Owusu, K. and Ng'ambi, F. (2002). *Structural Damage: Causes and Consequences of Malawi's Food Crisis*. London: World Development Movement.
- Patel, N., Tambulasi, R., Molande, B., Mpesi, A. (2007). *Consolidating Democratic Governance in Southern Africa: Malawi EISA Research Report* (No 33). Johannesburg: EISA.
- Peters, G. B. (2006). Public Accountability of Autonomous Public Organizations. In Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, (Ottawa: PWGSC, 2006). *Restoring Accountability: Research Studies 3*, 297-336.
- Rakner L., Mukubvu L., Ngwira N., Smiddy K., Schneider A. (2004). *The Budget as Theatre – The Formal and Informal Institutional Makings of the Budget Process in Malawi: Final Report*, Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.
- Roth, G. (1968). Personal Rulership, Patrimonialism, and Empire-Building in the New States. *World Politics*, 20, 194-206.
- Sangmpam S. N. (2007). Politics Rules: The False Primacy of Institutions in Developing Countries. *Political Studies*, 55, 201-224.
- Sandbrook, R. and Oelbaum, J. (1999). Reforming the political kingdom: Governance and development in Ghana's Fourth Republic. In *Center for Democracy and Development, Critical Perspectives Paper* (No. 2). Retrieved on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from the world wide web: <http://www.historia-actual.org>.
- Sachikonye L., Chawatama, S., Mangongera, C., Musekiwa, N. and Ndoro, C. (2007). *Consolidating Democratic Governance in Southern Africa: Zimbabwe*, EISA



- Research Report (No. 30). Johannesburg: EISA.
- Sahley, C., Groelsema, B., Marchione, T., and Nelson, D. (2005). *The Governance Dimensions of Food Security in Malawi*, A Report Prepared for USAID Malawi. Lilongwe: USAID
- Sen, A. (1981). *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and deprivation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sibale, P., Chirambo, A.M., and Saka A.R., and Lungu V.O. (2001). TIP 2000-01, Targeted Input Programme: Food Production and Security Module 1. Lilongwe: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.
- Silungwe, C.M. (2005). *Customary Land Tenure Reform and Development: A Critique of Customary Land Tenure Reform under Malawi's National Land Policy*. Unpublished masters thesis, Warwick Law School, UK.
- Southall R. and Melber H. (2006). *Legacies of Power: Leadership Change and Former Presidents in African Politics*. Cape Town: The Nordic African Institute and HSRC Press. Retrieved on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 from world wide web: [www.hsrepress.co.ac](http://www.hsrepress.co.ac).
- Steinmo, S. (2001). The New Institutionalism. In Clark, B. and Foweraker, J. (Eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Democratic Thought*. London: Routledge.
- Thelen, K., (1999). Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics, in *Annual Reviews Political Science* 1999, 2, 369-404
- Theobald, R., (1982). Patrimonialism. *World Politics*, 34, (4) 548-559.
- Thomas, P. (2003). Introduction to Accountability Section. In B.G. Peters and J. Pierre, (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Administration*. London: Sage.

- Tollens, E., (Oct. 26-30, 1998) Food Security: Incidence and Causes of Food Insecurity among Vulnerable Groups and Coping Strategies. In *Food Insecurity in ACP Countries: policy and programmes interventions affecting vulnerable groups*, proceedings of a CTA seminar, Leuven, Belgium.
- UNACC/SCN (1987). *First Report on the World Nutrition Situation*. Geneva: The United Nations
- Von Braun, J., Bouis, H., Kumar, S., Pandya-Lorch, R., (1992). Improving Food Security of the Poor: Concept, Policy and Programs. New York: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
- Von Doepp P., (1998) The Kingdom Beyond Zasintha: Churches and Political Life in Malawi's Post Authoritarian Era. In Phiri K. M. and Ross K. R. (eds) *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*. Blantyre: CLAIM.
- Wakchekon, L., (2003) Clientelism and Voting Behaviour: Evidence from Field Experience in Benin. *World Politics*, 55 (3), 400.
- Weber, M., (1958). *The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*. Berkeley: Publications in Society and Institutions, 4 (1), 1-11.
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and Society*. New York: Bedminster Press.
- Wisker, G. (2001). *The Postgraduate Research Book*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- World Bank. (1986). *Poverty and Hunger: Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank
- World Bank. (2007). *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development*, Washington D.C.: The World Bank



89

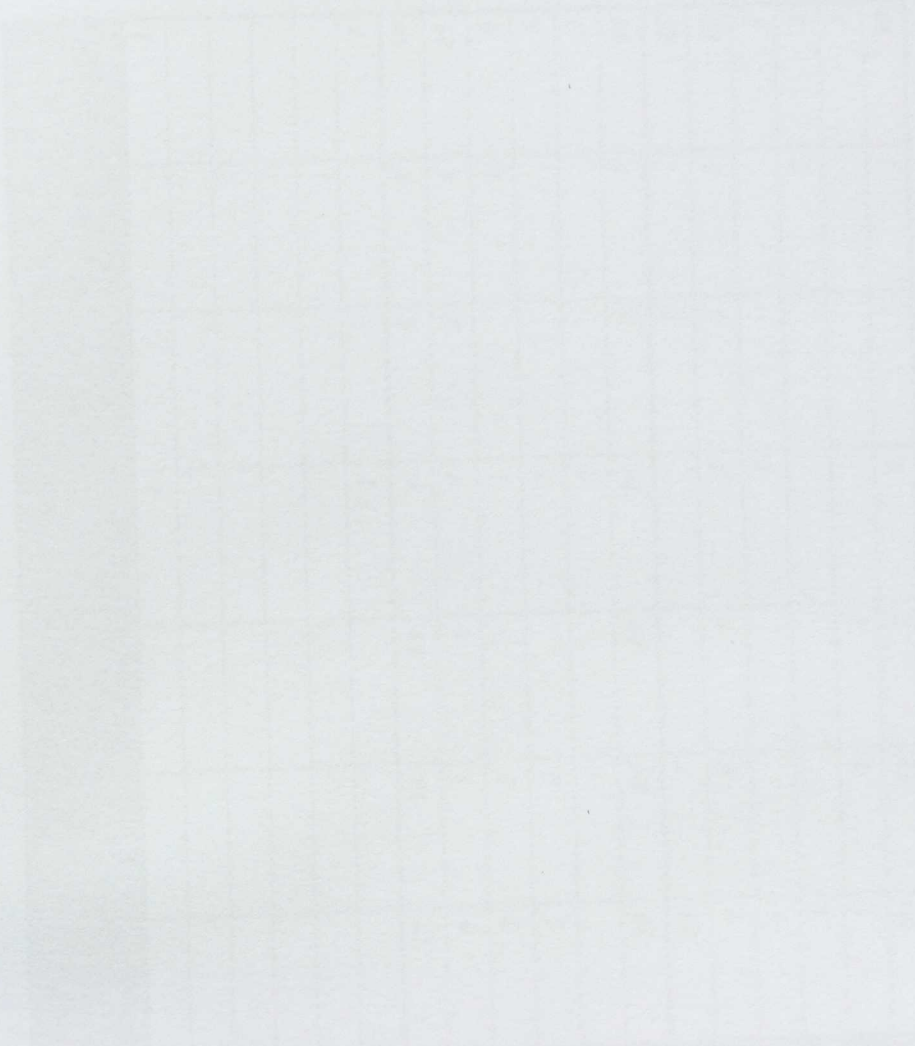
# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE ALLOCATION IN THE FIVE VILLAGES OF THE TAS IN MACHINGA AND THYOLO

### VILLAGE \* TA \* DISTRICT Crosstabulation

| Count    |         |             | TA       |         |           |          |             |        | Total |
|----------|---------|-------------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|--------|-------|
| DISTRICT |         |             | Changata | Chikweo | Chimaliro | Kapoloma | Nchilamwera | Nyambi |       |
| Machinga | VILLAGE | Chamba      |          |         |           |          |             | 5      | 5     |
|          |         | Chibwana    |          |         |           |          |             | 5      | 5     |
|          |         | Chikwembe   |          |         |           |          |             | 5      | 5     |
|          |         | Fred        |          |         |           | 5        |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Issa        |          |         |           | 5        |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Kunje       |          |         |           | 5        |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Maliro      |          | 5       |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Mangani     |          | 5       |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Manyamba    |          |         |           | 5        |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Msisi       |          | 5       |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Nazombe     |          |         |           |          |             | 5      | 5     |
|          |         | Nlanje      |          | 5       |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Nyambalo    |          |         |           |          |             | 5      | 5     |
|          |         | Sadi        |          | 5       |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Wadi        |          |         |           | 5        |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Total       |          | 25      |           | 25       |             | 25     | 75    |
| Thyolo   | VILLAGE | Changata    | 5        |         |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Chilambe    |          |         | 5         |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Chimbeta    | 5        |         |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Chipendo    |          |         | 5         |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Kwanjana    |          |         |           |          | 5           |        | 5     |
|          |         | Magombo     |          |         |           |          | 5           |        | 5     |
|          |         | Mpaso       |          |         | 5         |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Mwandarama  |          |         |           |          | 5           |        | 5     |
|          |         | Nchenga     | 5        |         |           |          |             | 5      | 5     |
|          |         | Nchilamwera |          |         |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Ngongoliwa  |          |         | 5         |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Njobvu      | 5        |         |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Nthulo      |          |         | 5         |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Pemba       |          |         |           |          | 5           |        | 5     |
|          |         | Thomasi     | 5        |         |           |          |             |        | 5     |
|          |         | Total       | 25       |         | 25        |          | 25          |        | 75    |







# APPENDIX 2: ASSESSING TARGETING, FOOD ACCESS AND FOOD AVAILABILITY

Household Income Per Month \* 2007/08 Maize Production \* Access to Fertilizer Coupon

| Count                       |         | 2007/08 Maize Production |          |          |            |            |                   | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|-------------------|-------|
|                             |         | 1-3 bags                 | 4-6 bags | 7-9 bags | 10-12 bags | 13-15 bags | more than 15 bags |       |
| Accessed Fertilizer Coupon? | missing | less than K1000          |          |          |            | 1          |                   | 1     |
|                             |         | K1000 - K3000            |          |          |            |            |                   |       |
|                             |         | K3000 - K5000            |          |          |            |            |                   |       |
|                             |         | K5000 - K10,000          |          |          |            |            |                   |       |
|                             |         | more than K10,000        |          |          |            |            |                   |       |
|                             | yes     | Total                    |          |          | 1          |            |                   | 1     |
|                             |         | less than K1000          | 17       | 14       | 11         | 6          | 6                 | 59    |
|                             |         | K1000 - K3000            | 9        | 5        | 4          | 4          | 2                 | 25    |
|                             |         | K3000 - K5000            | 2        | 1        |            | 2          |                   | 6     |
|                             |         | K5000 - K10,000          | 1        | 2        |            | 2          |                   | 5     |
|                             | no      | more than K10,000        |          | 1        |            | 2          |                   | 3     |
|                             |         | Total                    | 29       | 23       | 15         | 16         | 8                 | 98    |
|                             |         | less than K1000          | 15       | 7        |            |            | 1                 | 23    |
|                             |         | K1000 - K3000            | 9        | 4        | 1          | 2          | 2                 | 19    |
|                             |         | K3000 - K5000            | 1        |          |            | 1          |                   | 2     |
|                             |         | K5000 - K10,000          | 1        |          |            |            |                   | 3     |
|                             |         | more than K10,000        | 1        | 1        | 1          |            |                   | 3     |
|                             |         | Total                    | 27       | 12       | 2          | 3          | 3                 | 50    |

Source: Fieldwork, 2008



# APPENDIX 3: HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondent Number \_\_\_\_\_

## Socio-Economic Characteristics of Household

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Village \_\_\_\_\_ T/A \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_

1. Sex
 

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| Male = 1 | Female = 2 |
|----------|------------|
2. Age
 

|           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 15-24 = 1 | 20-24 = 2 | 25-29 = 3 |
| 30-34 = 4 | 35-39 = 5 | 40-44 = 6 |
| 45-49 = 7 | 50+ = 8   |           |
3. Religion
 

|                  |                     |          |
|------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Moslem = 1       | Catholic = 2        | CCAP = 3 |
| Pentecostals = 4 | Other Specify _____ |          |
4. Marital status
 

|             |                |               |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Married = 1 | Widowed = 2    | Divorced = 3  |
| Single = 4  | Polygamist = 5 | Separated = 6 |
5. Size of household
 

|         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1-3 = 1 | 4-6 = 2 | 7-9 = 3 | 10+ = 4 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
6. Ability to read and write
 

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Can read and write = 1 | Cannot read and write = 2 |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
7. Highest education qualification of head of household
 

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| None = 1           | PSLC not completed = 2 |
| PSLC completed = 3 | JC not completed = 4   |
| JC completed = 5   | MSCE not completed = 6 |
| MSCE completed = 7 | Diploma / Degree = 8   |
| Other State _____  | = 9                    |
8. Main economic activity of the head of household
 

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Rain-fed farming = 1 | Irrigation farming = 2 |
| Business = 3         | Wage employment = 4    |
| Self employment = 6  | Fishing = 7            |
9. How much do you earn per month?
 

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than K1000 = 1 | K5000-K10,000 = 4     |
| K1000-K3000 = 2     | More than K10,000 = 5 |
| K3000-K5000 = 3     |                       |
10. Do you own land of your own (not irrigation land)
 

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| Yes = 1 | No = 2 |
|---------|--------|
11. How large is your farm area?
 

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Less than 0.5 hectares = 1 | 1.5 - 2 hectares = 4 |
|----------------------------|----------------------|

- 0.5 – 1 hectares = 2  
1 – 1.5 hectares = 3  
2 – 2.5 hectares = 5  
More than 2.5 hectares = 6
12. What crops do you cultivate on your own land  
Maize = 1      Rice = 2      Vegetables = 3      Cassava = 4  
Other state \_\_\_\_\_ = 5
13. How long have you been farming in your area  
One year = 1      Two years = 2  
Three years = 3      More than three times = 4
14. How much do you harvest from a good growing season?  
1 - 3 bags = 1      10 - 12 bags = 4  
4 - 6 bags = 2      13 - 15 bags = 5  
7 - 9 bags = 3      more than 15 bags = 6
15. What kind of leadership position do you hold?  
Political traditional = 1      Political formal = 2  
Religious = 3      Cultural traditional = 4  
Social (Men, Women, Youth Associations) = 5      Devt Committees = 6  
Other specify \_\_\_\_\_

### Objective One

**How government sponsored food security programmes are being targeted in the area**

16. Do you know the following food security programmes?  
A. Starter Pack  
B. Targeted Input Programme (TIP)  
C. Fertilizer Subsidy Programme  
A = 1    B = 2    C = 3    A and B = 4    A and C = 5    B and C = 6    All = 7  
None of them = 8
17. If you know some or all of them, were you supplied with any of these farm inputs?  
All of them = 1      Some of them = 2      None of them = 3
18. If you were supplied, identify from the list any food policy programme which you had access to  
Fertilizer Subsidy Coupons = 1      Targeted Input Programme = 2  
Starter Pack = 3
19. How did you access these food security farm inputs?  
Given to me by the Village Development Committee = 1  
Given to me by the village headman or a religious leader = 2  
Given to me through the office of the District Commissioner = 3  
Given to me from a political figure = 4  
Bought from a black market = 5  
Other state \_\_\_\_\_ = 6
20. Would you suggest that all the vulnerable/food insecure people had equal access to the fertilizer subsidy coupons  
Yes = 1      No = 2
21. If your response is no, what do you think is the reason for the inequality?



Wealth Status = 1

Gender = 2

Political Party Support = 3

Links with the District Commissioner = 4

Links with the Group Village headman = 5

Other \_\_\_\_\_ = 6

22. Are the operations of Village Development Committees in your area reflecting the interests of all people?

Yes = 1

No = 2

23. How can you rate the targeting of the fertilizer coupon distribution in your area?

Fair = 1

Moderately fair = 2

Unfair = 3

Cannot assess = 4

24. Did you personally access the fertilizer subsidy coupon yourself?

Yes = 1

No = 2

25. If your answer is 'No', what would you suggest must be the reason for not receiving the coupon?

Do not qualify = 1

Do qualify, but has no farm = 2

Personal hatred = 3

Political allegiance = 4

Other \_\_\_\_\_ = 5

26. Did you personally access the subsidized fertilizer from the Small Farmers Revolving Fund of Malawi (SFFRFM) and ADMARC?

Yes = 1

No = 2

27. If your answer is no, why were you unable to access the subsidized fertilizer?

Received the coupon after the market was closed = 1

Failed to access the fertilizer suppliers = 2

Received coupon assumed fake = 3

Other \_\_\_\_\_ = 4

28. How much did you yield during the 2007/08 growing season?

1 - 3 bags = 1

10 - 12 bags = 4

4 - 6 bags = 2

13 - 15 bags = 5

7 - 9 bags = 3

more than 15 bags = 6

29. Are there areas of shortfall distribution in your village?

Yes = 1

No = 2

30. If your answer is 'Yes', what would you suggest to be the reason for the shortfalls in the distribution?

Criteria = 1

Partisanship = 2

Incompetence = 3

Other \_\_\_\_\_ = 4

31. In your opinion, has the 2007/08 fertilizer subsidy coupon distribution been fair?

Yes = 1

No = 2

I don't know = 3

Not most of the times fair = 4

32. If the answer is yes, under whose influence has the distribution been conducted?

The ruling party = 1

The opposition party (name) = 2

The Chiefs and TAs = 3

Members of the VDC = 4

Other specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 5

33. In your opinion, was the TIP distribution fair?

Yes = 1

No = 2

34. How much did you yield during the 2002/03 growing season?

1 - 3 bags = 1

10 - 12 bags = 4

4 - 6 bags = 2

13 - 15 bags = 5

7 - 9 bags = 3

more than 15 bags = 6

35. In your opinion, was the starter pack distribution fair?

Yes = 1

No = 2

36. How much did you yield during the 1999/2000 growing season?

1 - 3 bags = 1

10 - 12 bags = 4

4 - 6 bags = 2

13 - 15 bags = 5

7 - 9 bags = 3

more than 15 bags = 6

37. If your answer is 'No', where would prefer requires change for you to approve the distribution

The VDC = 1

The District Commission = 2

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security = 3

The District Agricultural Office = 4

Other specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 5

## Objective Two

To explore whether neopatrimonialism has been linked to food security policies in the area

If your answer in questions 29 and 31 was 'Yes', the complete the following questions

1. Were there cases in the distribution of the farm inputs that showed discrimination on political allegiance?

Yes = 1

No = 2

2. If the answer is 'Yes', which were the most contesting political parties in the discrimination incidences?

UDF against DPP = 1

DPP against MCP = 2

MCP against UDF = 3

DPP against all opposition parties =

4

3. What were the consequences that followed all those who showed strict allegiance to any of the opposition party?

No access to the farm inputs = 1

Access to the farm inputs = 2

Others, Specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 3

4. What were the consequences that followed all those who submitted to the demands of the distribution criteria in terms of party allegiance?

Access to few farm inputs = 1

Access to more farm inputs =

2

No access to the inputs = 3



- Others, specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 4
5. Were the cases of unfair distribution reported to the appropriate authorities?  
Yes = 1 No = 2
6. If the answer is 'Yes', what did the authorities do in response to the reported cases?  
Arrested the culprits = 1 Warned against the trend = 2  
Promised to intervene but did nothing = 3  
Ignored the matter as untrue = 4  
Others, specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 5
7. If your answer to question 5 is 'No', why was it the case?  
Fear of intimidation and attack = 1  
Saw no need for reporting = 2  
Saw no impact after reporting = 3  
Other factors \_\_\_\_\_ = 4
8. Were there cases where coupons were used to lure supporters of the opposition parties to vote and align with the ruling party?  
Yes = 1 No = 2
9. If the answer to question 8 is 'Yes', then under what conditions were the supporters convinced to align with the ruling party?  
Their poverty levels influenced them to submit to the demands = 1  
Their food insecurity and vulnerability influenced them to submit = 2  
Fear that they would be attacked for objecting/refusing = 3  
Friends and peers influenced them to submit to the demands = 4  
Good food policy undertaken by the ruling party = 5  
Others, specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 6
10. Were there cases where a group of people possessed more inputs than required?  
Yes = 1 No = 2
11. What qualified these individuals to possess more inputs than required?  
They had large farms that required more fertilizer = 1  
They were very poor and had to be highly considered than everyone else = 2  
They had links with the suppliers and distributors of coupons = 3  
They support the ruling party and had to be rewarded for such = 4  
Others, specify \_\_\_\_\_ = 5
12. Were there cases where the coupons were directed to unscrupulous businessmen who used them to buy large quantity of fertilizer bags?  
Yes = 1 No = 2
13. If the answer is 'Yes', then would you identify the political party which these businessmen aligned?  
UDF = 1 DPP = 2 MCP = 3  
AFORD = 4 Others \_\_\_\_\_ = 5  
Cannot identify the party = 6

### Objective Three



**To find out the effects of neo-patrimonialism on food security programmes in that area**

1. Based on the information provided above, do you agree with the suggestion that partisan politics influence food security in Malawi?  
 Strongly agree = 1    Agree = 2    Do not know = 3    Disagree = 4  
 Strongly disagree = 5
2. If you agree with the suggestion above, then where do you see this influence most?  
 Village Development Committee = 1    All farmers = 2  
 The chief = 3    Political leaders = 4  
 Government = 5    Other \_\_\_\_\_ = 6
3. What areas in food security policies demonstrate strong partisan politics?  
 Distribution = 1  
 Allocation of resources = 2  
 Participation in policy formulation = 3  
 Other state \_\_\_\_\_ = 4
4. Have your yields been affected by lack of access to these inputs?  
 Yes = 1    No = 2
5. If you agree, which area had the most impact?  
 Food scarcity at household levels = 1  
 Food scarcity at the village level = 2  
 Food scarcity at the community level = 3  
 No impact, we were able to cope up = 4
6. How did you cope up with food scarcity experienced during hunger crises?  
 We reduced the minimum food intake per individual = 1  
 We explored other edible plants (madeya, rice husks) = 2  
 We explored other plants, whether edible or not = 3  
 We postponed meals to accommodate the crisis = 4  
 We tried inedible stuff where it got worse = 5  
 Others \_\_\_\_\_ = 6
7. Do you agree that food security programmes are used as campaign tools for the ruling party  
 Strongly agree = 1    Agree = 2    Do not know = 3    Disagree = 4  
 Strongly disagree = 5
8. If you agree, then how do they propagate such campaigns in the programmes?  
 Giving the goods to their supporters only = 1  
 Wooing the opposition supporters to vote for them = 2  
 Starving the opposition party supporters to make them change = 3  
 Distributing fairly but prioritizing their supporters = 4  
 Other state \_\_\_\_\_ = 5

Thank you



## APPENDIX 4: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) CHECKLIST

Research Topic: The Effects of Politics of Patronage on Food Security in Malawi (1994-2007): The Case of Machinga and Thyolo

Research Duration: March to May 2008

Researcher: Joseph Boniface Maere (MA/PS/20/07)

Proposed participants:

Households or individuals of the selected villages in Thyolo and Machinga districts

Members of Village Development Committee

Selection criteria for the participants:

Each FGD will be comprised of ten participants and gender balance shall also be highly emphasized

**Total Participant time required:** 1 hour + 10 minutes – 1 hour + 50 minutes

Total focus group time: 1 hour + 10 minutes – 1 hour + 50 minutes

Break: 0 minutes

The purpose of the study is to conduct research to determine (in order of priority):

- To explore how food security programmes are being targeted and agricultural inputs distributed in your area
- To explore how patronage politics has been persistently linked with food security in your area
- To expose the effects of patronage politics on food security programmes (especially the fertilizer subsidy programme).
- To determine the preventive measures that can be put in place to minimize the impact of patronage politics on food security

---

*Below is a general guide for leading our focus groups. We may modify this guide as needed as each focus group will inform the subsequent groups.*

*Before the group begins, conduct the informed consent process.*

### Discussion Guidelines:

All participants are given equal chance of participation, no biases or priority will be given to any individual

You are encouraged to speak honestly, openly and freely without intimidation or fear

There may be interruptions if you speak too long, to encourage others to speak also

All information given and your identities will be treated with strict confidentiality

Thank you

#### **I. Introduction (10 m)**

- Welcome participants and introduction.
- Explain the general purpose of the discussion and why the participants were chosen.
- Discuss the purpose and process of focus groups
- Explain the presence and purpose of tape recorder equipment.
- Outline general ground rules and discussion guidelines such as the importance of everyone speaking up, talking one at a time, and being prepared for the moderator to interrupt to assure that all the topics can be covered.
- Address the issue of confidentiality.

#### **II. Discussion (1 hr)**

##### **Objective One:**

**To explore how food security programmes are being targeted and agricultural inputs distributed in the selected regions of Malawi**

1. The distribution of fertilizer subsidy programme, starter pack and TIP
2. The problems faced with the distribution process
3. The problems faced with the targeting process of the programmes
4. The reasons contributing to the occurrences of the problems
5. The observations with the distribution of (1) fertilizer subsidy, (2) T.I.P. and (3) starter pack.

##### **Objective Two:**

**To explore how patronage politics has been persistently linked with food security programmes in those regions**

6. The influence of party politics on food security programmes
7. The impact of this influence on food security goals
8. The intensity of the link between food security programmes and patronage politics



**Objective Three:**

**To expose the effects of patronage politics on food security programmes in rural areas**

9. The improvement of food security in the area of study
10. The reasons behind failure to improve, in the areas of no improvement
11. The impact of patronage politics in the failure to improve food security
12. The trend of the problems
13. The recurrence of the problem in the previous regimes

**Objective Four:**

**To determine the preventive measures that can be put in place to minimize the impact of patronage politics on food security**

14. Measures taken to improve food security
15. Measures taken to guard against patronage politics in food security programmes
16. Assessment of follow up actions to reports of patronage politics on food security programmes

**III. Closing**

Closing remarks

Thanking the participants

## APPENDIX 5: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Topic: The Effects of Politics of Patronage on Food Security in Malawi (1994-2007): The Case of Machinga and Thyolo

Research Duration: March to May 2008

Researcher: Joseph Boniface Maere (MA/PS/20/07)

Proposed respondents:

Officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Machinga Agricultural Development Division, District Agricultural Development Officers

My name is Joseph Maere, a student at Chancellor College, pursuing Master of Arts in Political Science. I do not represent any political party and do not work even for the government. As a part of my study, I am doing a research on the impact of patronage politics in food security policies especially considering the distribution of starter pack, Targeted Input Programme (TIP) packages and fertilizer coupons. All information provided will be used for academic purposes only and your particulars will be held with strict confidentiality.

### Objective One:

**To explore how food security programmes are being targeted and fertilizer subsidy coupons, starter pack and TIP packages**

1. What position do you hold and what are its roles?
2. What can you explain your experience in handling food security programmes?
3. Can you mention any of the strategies employed by the government to deal with food insecurity incidences in Malawi?
4. Have the food security programmes been a success or a failure?
5. Explain how the food security programmes were a success/ failure?
6. How has been the distribution criteria for the following food policy programmes;
  - Universal Starter Pack
  - Targeted Input Packs
  - Fertilizer Subsidy Coupons
7. Have the food security programmes been able to reach the vulnerable in time without any deviations along the way?
8. Have the targeting been motivated according to need and not other factors? (If there were other targeting factors name them)
9. How can you rate the distribution criteria employed by the government in the same food security programmes?



**Objective Two:**

**To explore how patronage politics has been persistently linked with food security programmes**

10. Have there been cases of mismanagement experienced in the distribution of the following public goods:
  - (a) Universal Starter Pack
  - (b) Targeted Input Programme
  - (c) Fertilizer Input Subsidy Programme
11. If there were, would you mind disclosing them?
12. Was there a special connection between the recipients and the distributors in the distribution process?
13. Have the programmes been politicised?
14. Which of the programmes have been highly politicized?
15. How has it been politicized?
16. What goals were central in the policy politicking?
17. Has the current administration continued the tendency or abolished it completely?
18. Would you recommend the maintenance of the tendency or not? Give reason for the answer?
19. What are the other factors that might be linked to the food situation in Malawi?

**Objective Four:**

**To determine the preventive measures that can be put in place to minimise the impact of patronage politics on food security programmes**

20. What do you suggest can be the mechanism to curb this policy politicking?
21. Is it the government or the community that fuel this politics?
22. Do you think patronage politics can be completely wiped out or it can only be minimised or tamed?

**Thank you very much for participating**