



**THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED TARGETING MECHANISMS
FOR SAFETY NETS. A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE TARGETED
AGRICULTURAL INPUT SUBSIDY PROGRAMME IN MALAWI**

By

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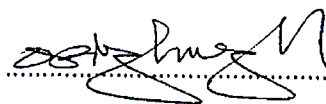
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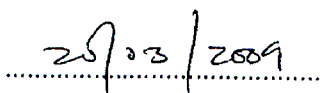
DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Development Studies, in the Graduate Programme in the School of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu – Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Development Studies in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu – Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University



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Date

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ABSTRACT

Community based targeting mechanism has been widely utilized in the delivery of relief interventions and safety nets. In developing countries like Malawi the approach has been championed as the most effective and efficient way of reaching the most vulnerable. However, very little is known on how community based targeting mechanism actually works. Using the Agriculture Input Subsidy programme as a case study, the thesis attempts to explore whether community based targeting lives to its billing of enhancing social capital. The purpose of the study was to examine community perceptions and experiences about community based targeting approach and how it affects social relations and collective actions in the community. The results demonstrate that while communities have the knowledge and capacity to target the most vulnerable, the approach is largely a top down process. The choice on whether to target or not is a delicate balance of social, economic and political factors. Communities largely participate to fulfil or comply with official requirements so that they can cash in from the benefits. However, given a choice communities would largely share resources equally to prevent social costs. Consequently, a targeted programme at national level becomes a universal programme at community level since benefits are largely shared to all community members. The role and influence of social factors in the community based targeting has been largely underestimated in the targeting literature.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

ADMARC	Agriculture Development and Marketing Corporation
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AISP	Agriculture Input Subsidy Programme
AEDO	Agriculture Extension Development Officer
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EFI	Extremely Food Insecure (Household)
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FI	Food Insecure (Household)
FS	Food Secure (Household)
Ganyu	Hired casual labour
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HH	Household Head
MoAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
NEC	National Economic Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSNS	National Safety Net Strategy
ONS	Office of National Statistics (UK).
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
TA	Traditional Authority
TIP	Targeted Input Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

There is a growing recognition that while economic growth is good for the poor, it is not adequate for poverty reduction if implemented in isolation (World Bank, 1997, 2000). Therefore, there is need for interventions that directly reach the poor. Over the past decades social policy has evolved from universalism to targeting for social provision. Current social welfare policies are therefore designed to narrow the scope of beneficiaries by targeting benefits (Gibert, 2001, Coady et-al, 2004). While the factors behind the change are broad the shift has been largely shaped by neo liberal economics and fiscal constraints after the financial crisis in the late 1970s, which resulted into the formulation of structural adjustment programmes (Mkandawire, 2005, Dutrey, 2007).

In the developing world targeting of social provision is a manifestation of both macro-economic and aid policies. In the aid dependent states, the push factor for social policy shift is a reflection of ideological changes in the donor and international funding institutions. In the context of aid fatigue there is a shift in the provision of aid. The focus of aid has become increasingly associated with helping the poor people rather than supporting developing countries. Therefore, it is politically essential to target and demonstrate that aid reaches the most vulnerable or the poorest. In this approach, premised on cost effectiveness, there is a clear relationship between inputs and outputs (World Bank, 1996).

Due to failures in traditional social welfare approaches in identifying and reaching the poorest, community based targeting approach has been heralded as the panacea to identifying the most vulnerable households. In the developing countries where information on poverty and vulnerability is not readily available community based targeting has been championed as being successful in dealing with information asymmetries. Proponents argue that communities have better information about themselves than external facilitators as such they are able to target the most vulnerable households using locally defined parameters (Conning and Kevane, 2001, Van de Walle, 1998).

Community based targeting is a mechanism that puts community agents in charge of facilitating the targeting process and delivery of social benefits. The term also describes a combination of administrative targeting and community participation where communities through committees select beneficiaries based on a given criteria. The agents normally include groups of

community members; community leaders, social or religious groups, community based organizations (CBOs), schoolteachers, or a mixture of community members and locally elected officials. It is argued that involving community groups in identifying beneficiaries lead to better targeting and screening since community groups or members are perceived to have better information about the needs and poverty status of members of the community (Conning and Kevane, 2001).

However, critics of targeting are sceptical on how community agents could successfully target where the central government has been considered weak. Targeting is based on the assumptions that there is an agreement about who are the poor and a consensus on the measure of standard of living (Besley and Kanbur, 1998). Therefore, even communities themselves are unlikely to find criteria that are able to represent the multifaceted nature of poverty and please all interest groups. Targeting by its nature results into differentiation and segmentation. In a context of high poverty levels and strong egalitarian values, the choice of selecting one poor family over another for a valuable resource is a critical decision making process. Van de Walle (1998) argues that most studies have largely underestimated how difficult it is to target. Poverty being multi dimensional, it follows that the criteria for selecting beneficiaries are at best as complicated, ambiguous and controversial as defining poverty itself. In a public works study in South Africa, it was found that instead of following the laid down poverty selection criteria to identify participants, communities decided to allocate beneficiaries randomly by putting the names in a hat so that everyone had an equal opportunity (Adato and Haddad, 2002). In such context of high unemployment, targeting is a highly contested debate driven by diverse and conflicting priorities.

Similar findings are reported in Chinsinga and colleagues (2001, 2003) where despite communities having selected people for the agricultural inputs, the inputs were later rationed equally among all the community members. In the *Clash of Voices*, Chinsinga (2004) explains that targeting criteria was rarely adhered to in most communities. In general, the decision to ignore the criteria was not necessarily driven by ill or fraudulent motives although some isolated cases existed. The article cites a number of examples where communities either completely ignored the selection criteria or modified it to fit their perceptions about needs, entitlement and equity values. In such cases the beneficiaries of the inputs were not necessarily the poorest of the poor.

On the one hand, the above examples demonstrate that sometimes communities are more concerned about inclusiveness rather than reaching the poorest of the poor. It is suggested that the principle of “equity in most societies is that like be treated alike” (World Bank, 2005). Therefore, the introduction of targeting may have unintended effects as it gives rise to choices in which people considered as being similar are treated differently due to laid down selection guidelines. On the other hand, the above examples beg the question why communities are afraid of targeting beneficiaries for safety nets when the purpose of the programme and the selection criteria are clear. It is argued that local leaders know what is “socially and politically feasible” within their communities (World Bank, 2005). Therefore, one may presume that communities have strong reasons to defy or modify the targeting process (Pritchett, 2000, Sumarto and Suryahadi, 2000).

1.2 Study Context

The concept of targeted social services is conceptually rooted in the understanding of poverty dynamics, risk and vulnerability. Therefore, designing an effective social policy requires a comprehensive understanding of the problem it seeks to ameliorate. In Malawi poverty and vulnerability has been on the increase over the past decades despite numerous poverty alleviation programmes. The trend has been attributed to a number of interrelated socio-economic, demographic, climatic and political factors, which include high population growth, recurrent climatic shocks and HIV/AIDS pandemic (Chinsinga, 2007)

Malawi ranked 164th in the Human Development Index (HDI) is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the Human Development Report (HDR) 2007/2008, 65% of its 13.2 million people live below the national poverty line. In addition, 28% of the population is classified as ultra poor that is living on less than US\$0.26 per day. Apart from failing to meet their daily requirements most of the ultra poor are socially excluded and very vulnerable to shocks but lack proper coping mechanisms. Poverty in Malawi is very dynamic with individuals or households moving above and below the poverty line due to shocks. Therefore, a significant percentage of people remain transitory poor due to increased vulnerability to shocks.

In Malawi food security is closely related and is a major determinant of poverty. The majority of rural population face food shortages for a period of five to six months in a year. Similarly, poor people spend more than 75% of their income on food (Chinsinga and O'Brien, 2007). Until 2006, agricultural production was largely on the decline due to a combination of climatic, socio-

Starbuck (Thouless 1971: 110) analysed conversion experiences and grouped them into successive stages of dejection and sadness, the point of transition and joy and peace. These stages are similar to those offered by the contemporary scholar Anne Sofie Roald (van Nieuwkerk: 2006. Accessed in May 2006), in her work on European converts to Islam. She identifies the phases of love, disappointment and maturity. In the first phase many converts tend to be obsessed with the new religion and want practice all precepts immediately. This is followed by disappointment with born-Muslim behaviour and ideas which at times drives converts away from Islam. The third stage entails the converts searching for new meaning of Islamic ideals within the cultural context they live in.

2.2.3 Reason conversion occurs

The classical researchers emphasized conversions as identifiable by the cause (volitional/self-surrender), nature (sudden/gradual) and content (social, intellectual or moral) of the experience where the individual undergoes a life changing process. People needed an organized framework in which to allow their life to take on meaning and purpose and the religious system provided such a system for spiritual growth and self realization. (Spilka et al 2003: 204) The general understanding amongst the scholars was that conversion was a result of a crisis in the life of an individual e.g.: a relative dying, near death experiences or illness. Experiencing such a crisis the individual questions life and its reasons.

2.3 Contemporary research

2.3.1 Conversion processes

The contemporary period focuses predominantly on the social effects on conversion rather than the psychological impact or reasons. Scholars accepted the classical findings that conversion could be sudden or gradual but felt that even in sudden conversions a period of unconscious incubation had taken place

1.3.1. Study objectives

- To determine whether communities can identify and target the poor households
- To examine how community based targeting affect social relations in the community
- To assess the role and impact of committees and village heads as community based agents for targeting and delivery of services.
- To examine whether inclusion or exclusion from targeted programme affect participation in community activities.

1.3.2. Key Questions addressed

- Is community targeting culturally appropriate?
- What factors influence successful community targeting?
- What are community perceptions on the effects of community targeting on the society.
- What have been the experiences of communities regarding community targeting.
- Does community targeting affect peoples participation in development activities

1.4. Significance of the Study;

While literature is abound with reviews on the efficiency and impact of targeted programmes (Ravallion and Datt, 1993, Van de Walle, 1995, 1998, Adato and Haddad, 2002, Chinsinga, 2004) there is little information on the impact of targeting on social capital. Similarly, empirical studies on community based targeting are rather scanty compared to geographical targeting, means testing, self-targeting and demographic targeting. Coady and colleagues (2002) acknowledge the literature deficiency arguing that community based targeting has been largely under represented in targeting literature. Much of what is known about community based targeting is rather speculative compared to other methods of targeting. Similar positions have been reached by Conning and Kevane (2001) who concludes that little is known about community based targeting. Therefore, the thesis contributes to the overall understanding of how community based targeting works in relation to social capital.

Coady et-al (2002) argues that while extensive literature on targeting is available, most of it is “largely dominated by descriptions of the individual, sometimes idiosyncratic programmes” which frustrates efforts for a broader understanding of the effectiveness of targeting. Similarly, Van de Walle (1998) argues that there are still uncertainties and limited knowledge on how to measure the benefits of targeted social programmes. While the benefits of targeting are large,

they can never be achieved without a cost that is economic, administrative, political and social. Within the context of analysing the effectiveness of targeting the study focuses on the social aspect of community based targeting. Analysis of social effects of targeting is not only relevant but also critical to the understanding of the efficiency and effectiveness of targeting methods.

Through a clear understanding of social costs of community based targeting the study contributes to the overall debate on the appropriateness of targeting methods for social transfers. In the context of performance variability, targeting should be considered not as an end in itself but rather a tool. The costs and benefits of targeting should be properly assessed in each context to decide on whether to target or not, or the method that is appropriate. Decisions on whether to target or not, and what method to employ should be largely driven by cost benefit analysis within a given context. Such social and hidden costs may be very critical in understanding the performance of both the targeting process as well as the uptake of social transfers (Coady et-al, 2002).

Proponents of the approach argue that community based targeting “may not only harness but may potentially also strengthen social capital and community organizations” (Conning and Kevane, 2001:3). The use of the word “may” signify either there is lack of empirical evidence to support the argument or in some cases it may not have such impact. Welfare economics should be concerned not only with the efficient allocation of resources but also the designing of the programmes to ensure that people are satisfied with the strategies being implemented. For instance, it is important to address both material and nonmaterial benefits and costs of programme to understand the impact of the targeted programmes.

Targeting in general has hidden costs and people frequently underestimate how difficult it is to target (Van de Walle, 1998). Although targeting is largely treated as a technical issue, the process is unlikely to be apolitical. Empirical evidence to the above questions on social political impact is imperative to understanding the implication of targeting on social policy. Since the questions are never raised, policy decisions do not take into account such issues.

Currently the Malawi Government is preparing for the 2008-2009 targeted agriculture input programme. In addition, the government is in the process of developing a social protection policy aimed at supporting targeted poor households with direct transfers. A pilot study on social protection using cash transfers is currently underway in Mchinji District. The cash

transfer project provides a monthly income of around MK2600 (US\$18) per family and targets 10% of the village household population. As part of the Social Protection Policy the project will expand across all the districts in the country in the immediate future. Considering that 22% of the population is regarded as ultra poor, living on less than \$0.26 per day, questions remain about who should be the beneficiaries and how to target them. In the context of efficiency and effectiveness, there is a contested debate on how to target the poorest 10% with one camp advocating for categorical targeting while the other arguing for poverty mapping (Miller, 2007). The choice of targeting approach largely depends on the instruments used to identify beneficiaries. In view of the community based targeting mechanism being propagated, it is imperative to understand how communities perceive poverty, vulnerability and targeting. Such an understanding will help to come up with strategies that communities have the ability to use efficiently and are appropriate to the cultural set up. It is therefore envisaged that the study findings will make a significant contribution to the development and implementation of the policy

It is increasingly recognized that social analysis of development policies is as equally important as economic, financial and technical analysis for successful development programmes. Socially well-designed programmes contribute to the economic development while poorly designed actions have deleterious impact on communities. Similarly, there is a general recognition on the importance of social motivation in the economics of targeting. However, social effects have not been fully investigated particularly in relation to the community-based mechanism.

1.5. Structure of dissertation

The paper is organized in six interrelated chapters. The first introductory chapter presents the research problem, rationale and significance of study topic. The second chapter provide the literature review on targeted social services and the conceptual framework upon which the study is grounded. As a basis for the study the chapter reviews the evolution of social policy from universalism to targeting of social services. Chapter three presents a description of study methodology. The section describes, the qualitative methodology employed in data collection and analysis. Chapter four provides the study context and how targeted social transfers have evolved in Malawi. In chapter five the findings of the study are presented under a number of themes. The themes are categorized in relation to perceptions, targeting feasibility and experiences in relation to social cohesion, participation and collective action as observed from the 2007-2008 targeted input programme. Some case studies are also included to highlight

emerging concepts and patterns. In this chapter the focus is to draw relationships and patterns between perceptions, feasibility and experiences on community based targeting mechanism. Using the various relationships developed the analysis attempts to answer the broader question of the project. The last chapter summarizes the key findings of the study with the view of developing a balanced conclusion. In addition, the chapter outlines the policy implications of the results and suggests recommendation on targeting for future social policy

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief outline on how social policy has evolved from universalism to targeted social services. The chapter starts with broader or international perspective on how the Washington Consensus ideologies have shaped social policy particularly the rise in impetus of targeted social provisioning. The chapter also describes the conceptual framework, which has informed the design of the study. Thereafter the discussion narrows down to community based targeting approach, the central piece of the study.

2.2. The rise and popularisation of targeted social services

The social policy shift from universalism to targeting for social services is to a larger extent a direct reflection of fiscal constraints, neo-liberal economics, shifts in aid policy, and ideological shifts. Due to the late 1970s financial crisis most countries suffered financial and budgetary constraints, which led to the introduction of structural adjustment programmes in developing countries. Politically, targeting of social safety nets was introduced as a quest for efficiency in the context of budgetary constraints. In this regard improved targeting of resources meant that more poverty alleviation could be achieved with fewer resources (Imai, 2004, Mehrotra, 2005, Dutrey, 2007)

2.2.1 Neo-liberal ideologies (Washington Consensus)

The policy shift of social provisioning from universalism to targeted social services is associated with the rise of neo-liberal ideologies. According to Milton Friedman, one of the proponents of neo-liberal ideology, provisioning of social policy based on communitarian principle is “counterproductive to the economy and social well being of the society” as it limits the choices and freedom of individuals (Friedman, 1975 cited in Mkandawire, 2005). Accordingly, provision of social services should be left to the markets. It is argued that markets will not only generate wealth but will also achieve a proper balance of redistribution to the poor people. The underlying assumption is that families as economic units are perceived to function optimally and able to meet their needs. Unless proven otherwise, government intervention in a functional family constitutes interference with their right to privacy. Such unwarranted interference would not only make families ineffective and irresponsible but also cause dependency (Neto and Vernengo 2004).

In this regard, markets not only encourage competition but also ensure freedom of individuals. Therefore, government intervention to provide social services is not only undesirable but also likely to distort markets. Consequently, government should only intervene where there is clear evidence that markets have failed or among those designated as not responsible. Such measures should therefore be temporary to encourage self-sufficiency and independence. In order to distinguish those that require assistance from those who can fend for themselves, targeting is required. Targeting (means testing) is important because it ensures that only those who require support are benefiting (Crampton, 2002, Tendler, 2004).

2.2.2 Ideological shifts and marginalization of social policy

The financial crisis coincided with ideological shifts towards citizenship and community. Such a shift was epitomized by the rise of Margaret Thatcher to power who argued, “there is no such thing as community” (Preston, 2005). Such beliefs and ideologies significantly weakened the core foundations of social policy that is solidarity and citizenship. It is argued that while “the choice between targeting and universalism is couched in the language of efficient allocation of resources subject to budget constraints and the exigencies of globalisation, what is actually at stake is the fundamental question about a polity’s values and its responsibilities to all its members” (Mkandawire 2005:7).

To a larger extent the choice for poverty alleviation policy and strategy is not only governed by the amount of financial resources but also ideologies that underpin the perception of poverty, its causes and how it can be addressed. In this vein, the ideological shift masked in the technical reasoning for the need of targeted social services fails to conceal the fact that “value judgments matter not only with respect to determining the needy and how they are perceived, but also in attaching weights to the types of costs and benefits of approaches chosen” (Mkandawire 2005:7). Through a successful campaign to eliminate social equity concerns that underpin the delivery of social policy, the neo-liberal ideologies have managed to pave a way for an individual market oriented service delivery. It is clear that neo-liberal ideologies have not only determined the sphere and threshold of the current social policy but also how it is governed through “user fees”, means testing and market delivery of social services.

2.2.3. The impact of the 1970 financial crisis

Due to the late 1970s financial crisis, most countries suffered financial constraints, which caused budget limitations on social provisioning. While the crisis meant that there was need for budget restraint toward social provisioning, it is worth noting that the situation provided a platform for the neo-liberal proponents to advocate their case for increased targeted social programmes. In the context of budgetary constraints targeting was championed as a quest for efficient use of limited resources. In this regard, "improved targeting means that more poverty alleviation could be achieved with less expenditure"(Besley and Kanbur, 1990:2). Since the governments were perceived to be financially weak and with less capacity to provide social services there was need for privatisation of social services. While the government would target its limited resources to reach the poorest, in general the labour markets would be able to meet the demands for social services for the majority of the population. In this vein, the approach not only eased government "heavy fiscal burden" but also ensured that those with the capacity to pay were able to invest in social security (World Bank 1996). The IMF sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) are a clear manifestation of how neo-liberal ideologies based on the quest for market delivery of social services have shaped social policy (World Bank 1996).

2.2.4 Shifts in aid policies

In the developing world particularly in the aid dependent states, the push factor for targeted social policy is a manifestation of ideological changes in the donor and international funding institutions. In the context of aid fatigue there is a shift towards the provision of aid. The focus of aid has become increasingly associated with helping the poor people rather than supporting developing countries. Therefore, it is politically essential to target and demonstrate that aid reaches the most vulnerable or the poorest (World Bank 1996). Consequently, many donors have embraced targeting as a fundamental principle for the provision of aid either directly or indirectly. On the one hand, the primary focus is to direct aid towards projects that are specifically aimed at the poor. On the other hand, aid is channelled to support sectors that are likely to benefit the poorest more such as primary education.

The developing countries have been forced to dance to the tune of contradictory economic policies advocated by the multinational institutions. While the IMF and World Bank initially advocated for market oriented economic approaches and that economic growth is good for the poor, there is recognition that growth alone does not benefit the poor. Therefore there is

increasing awareness that “a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction, calls for a program of well-targeted transfers and safety nets as an essential complement to the basic strategy” (World Bank 1990:3). In this vein, targeted transfers are considered part and parcel of the economic development policies. This is clearly reflected in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP).

2.2.5 The quest for efficiency

Targeting has been popularised through the concept of new *managerialism*, which strives for efficiency in resource allocation and delivery. Based on a market ideology, the purpose of new *managerialism* is to replace traditional forms of public administration with technocrat and independent agencies (Tendler, 2004, Mehrotra, 2005). Since developing countries were initially perceived to be weak and ineffective, these new arrangements were propagated to promote efficiency. Under new *managerialism*, governments were encouraged to form partnerships with the private sector and non-state actors including aid agencies and Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) to provide social services. Since the approach is grounded in market principles, in its pursuit for efficiency and reaching the most deserving poor there is a tendency of “*parcelization*” and “*projectization*” of social policy (Tendler, 2004). That aside, the rise of NGO was a realization on the part of the funding institutions about the negative effects that the neo-liberal policies were having on the poor people. In order not to concede that some neo-liberal policies were hurting the poor, there was need to provide “human face” to the structural adjustment process. Therefore funds were provided to these “efficient institutions” to mitigate the negative “social consequences of adjustment”. However, such interventions were considered temporally aimed at reducing poverty and inequalities through targeting the most “vulnerable” groups of population (Mkandawire, 2005, World Bank, 2007).

2.2.6 The decline of universal social provisioning

The impetus for targeted social services was also internally induced due to the failures of universalism. Postcolonial development policies tended to lean towards socialist ideologies espoused through universal provision of a number of services, such as free health, free education and subsidized food and agricultural inputs. However, such proclamations failed to live up to their expectations. In general the benefits were stratified towards some specific groups linked with nation building. Consequently, the benefits were captured by the elites and tended to concentrate among the urban well off at the expense of the poor majority (Dutrey, 2007). Due to increasing population and widespread unemployment there was increasing

pressure on resources. The above demographic factors coupled with decades of mismanagement and plunder by dictators, poverty and inequality increased thereby undermining the beliefs about solidarity and nation building (Areskoug, 1976, Arrighi, 1973). Consequently, there was an increasing self-awareness on the need to open up these services to ensure efficient allocation and redistribution of resources. In this regard, government began to experiment with different strategies including market oriented service delivery, which called for targeted social provision.

2.3.0 Theory and Taxonomy of Targeting;

2.3.1 Targeting Theory

The theory of targeting as propounded by Arkelof (1978) focuses on the design of transfer mechanisms for poverty alleviation. Targeting method refers to a set of rules, criteria and other procedures that determine the eligibility of an individual while targeting mechanism refers to broader elements of programme design including the choice of intermediary agents and organization designs (Conning and Kevane, 2001).

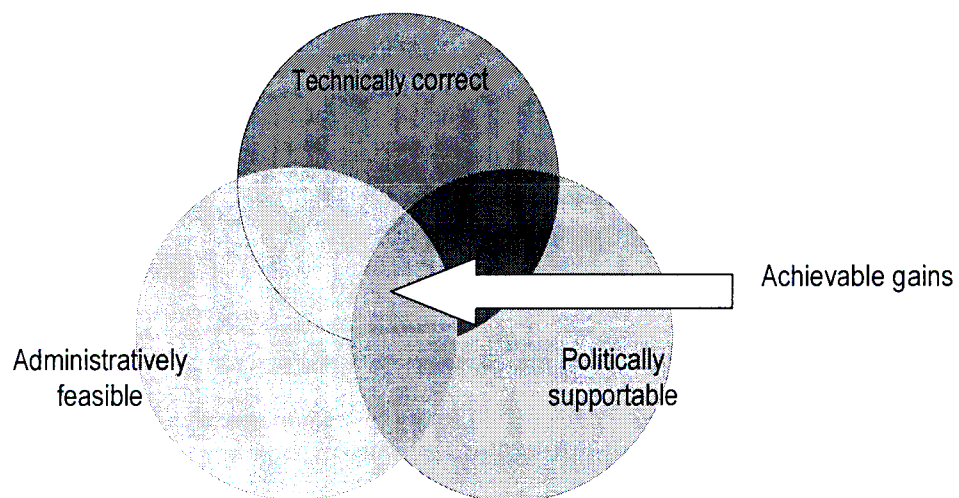
Targeting is generally categorized into two, broad targeting and narrow targeting. Broad targeting refers to allocation of budgets over different categories of public spending aimed at reaching the poor for instance free primary education. The major principles that inform broad targeting is that some categories of public spending matters more to the poor than other sectors (Van de Walle, 1998). However, broad targeting is considered to be more expensive and result into high leakages. In the context of budget constraints narrow targeting has become more popular in providing social services. Narrow targeting is described as a “deliberate attempt to concentrate benefits on the poor” (Besley and Kanbur 1991, Van de Walle, 1998).

The main purpose of targeting is to ensure that income and resources are transferred to the poorest so that they can move above the poverty line (Keen, 1992, Donda and Hendrix 1998, Coady et al, 2005). The guiding principle is that the benefits of targeting in reducing poverty and vulnerability outweigh the additional costs associated with it. The concept of targeting assumes that policy makers have detailed information on who is poor so as to exclude the non-poor. However, such an ideal situation is rarely found particularly in the developing countries. Even in developed countries self reported data is not always reliable since welfare programmes tend to generate incentives for dissimulation. Similarly, indicators for poverty and vulnerability

are not static. They tend to move in tune with transitory as well as permanent physical, social, economic, and political forces. Considering the costs and difficulties of carrying out detailed audits about the social status of individuals, eligibility to benefits tend to be linked to household characteristics such as gender, employment status and age (Akerlof, 1978, Boadway and Keen, 1992).

Gelbach and Pritchett (2000) developed the basic model of targeting to explain the political economy of targeting. While most targeting policy designs address technical as well as administrative feasibility, the political economy is largely underestimated. In most cases targeting is viewed as a technocratic issue. However, it can be argued that since the budget for redistribution is politically determined, the impact of targeting cannot be determined by a technocratic evaluation alone but it should also consider the effects and changes on the size of budget for redistribution. Therefore, successful targeted programmes require a delicate balance of political, technical and administrative costs. According to Gelbach and Pritchett (2000), targeting will yield the best results if the decision is located within the sphere of achievable gains as shown in figure 2.3.1.

Figure 2.3.1; Basic Model of Targeting



Adapted from Gelbach and Prichett (2000)

2.3.1.1 Features of targeting theory

The targeting model assumes that in the community there are three distinct income groups; poor, middle and rich. The main assumption underlying targeting is that it is possible to differentiate or distinguish between the poor and the non-poor. With the above categories, it is possible to target the poor using agreed indicators that are correlated with poverty. However, the middle-income group experiences both good times and bad times. Some people in the middle group are likely to benefit from the transfer if they have similar characteristics as the poor resulting into leakages and undercoverages.

The decision on whether to target or not is politically driven or based on fixed budget. In case of fixed budget, it is essential to target the poor to maximize the benefits of social welfare transfers. In targeting political considerations have a significant impact on the success or failure of the programme. Targeting may undermine political support particularly among those that are left out. Therefore, from a political economy perspective, some level of leakages are not necessarily bad for the poor as they help to reduce the effects associated with political support. Policymakers ignoring political considerations in the targeted transfers would therefore fail not only to provide “optimal thing to the poor” but also fail to protect the political votes of the middle income group (Pritchett 2005). Therefore, the choice of targeting method should take into account not only administrative costs and technical issues but also the political feasibility of the method.

2.3.1.2 Targeting Errors

Practically, targeting is conducted based on the available information, which in most cases is not perfect. In general perfect information about poverty or vulnerability status is not only costly, time consuming but also difficult to collect. Consequently, targeting based on imperfect information is likely to lead into errors. There are two types of errors associated with targeting, inclusion and exclusion error (Coady et-al 2005, Van de Walle 1998)

2.3.1.2.1 Inclusion or Type I Error

Inclusion error occurs when non-poor households are selected as beneficiaries for transfers. Cornia and Stewart (1993) refer to inclusion errors as E-mistakes that is excessive coverage. From a statistical perspective, inclusion error refers to type I error that describe overpayment of the benefits. This may be as a result of imperfect information or a deliberate move to target

non-poor households. Inclusion errors result into leakages. Leakages refer to the proportion of the non-poor benefiting from the programme (Hoddinott 1999). The formula for calculating leakages is given below,

$$L = N_{pi}/N_i$$

Where N_{pi} is the number of non-poor families who have been included in the transfer and N_i is the total number of targeted families.

2.3.1.2.2 Exclusion or Type II error

Exclusion error is the reverse of inclusion error. It happens when the poor are classified as non-poor and therefore are excluded from benefiting from the transfers. Such errors are also known as F-mistakes that is a failure to reach the target population (Cornia and Stewart, 1993). Like inclusion error this could be as a result of using imperfect information or due to high number of poor people compared to the quota for targeted families. Therefore, exclusion errors in statistics refer to type II errors, which describe the underpayment of benefits. Exclusion errors lead into under-coverage that is the proportion of poor families that are not targeted for the transfers. This can be calculated using the formula below,

$$U = N_{po}/N_p$$

Where N_{po} is the number of poor families who have been excluded from the transfer and N_p is the total number of poor families.

While targeting literature has largely focused on E-mistakes or inclusion errors, F-mistakes are critical in targeting as they demonstrate a failure in the prime objective of the intervention, which is supporting the poor people. Similarly, efficiency of targeted programmes is still determined through the lens of reducing inclusion errors. However, in a context of high levels of vulnerability analysis of F-mistakes is more important than E-mistakes (Cornia and Stewart 1993).

2.3.1.3 Leakages and Undercoverages

Assuming the government has developed a targeted transfer for a small village X. There are 100 households in the village, of which 60 households are food insecure while 40 are food secure. The programme has been designed to support the 60 food insecure households. However, during the actual targeting only 40 food insecure households are targeted together with 20 food secure households. The 20 food secure households that have been included

constitute an inclusion error while the exclusion of 20 food insecure households that were supposed to benefit from the programme form an exclusion error as shown in the table 2.1 and 2.2.

Table 2.1. Inclusion and exclusion errors.

Targeting Status	Food Security status		Total
	Food insecure	Food secure	
Not targeted	Exclusion error 20	Successful 20	40
Targeted	Successful 40	Inclusion error 20	60
Total	60	40	100

Adapted from Hoddinott 1999

Table 2.2: Leakages and Under-coverage

Targeting Status	Food Security status	
	Food insecure	Food secure
Excluded	Under-coverage	Successful
Included	Successful	Leakages

In table 2.2, the top green or shaded box of under-coverage shows food insecure households, which have been wrongly excluded from the transfers. The lower blue or shaded box of leakages shows that food secure households, which were not supposed to benefit have been included in the programme. Leakage rate can be calculated by dividing the total number of participants wrongly targeted (inclusion error) by the total number of beneficiaries and multiply by hundred. In the above example this would translate into $20/60 \times 100 = 33.3\%$. Undercoverage rate is calculated by dividing the total numbers of household wrongly left out (exclusion error) by the total number of poor households then multiply by 100. In the above example, this can be calculated as follows: $20/60 \times 100 = 33.3\%$. On the other hand, the top successful box indicates that food insecure households who were not supposed to benefit have been rightly excluded. Similarly, the bottom yellow shows that food insecure families who were supposed to be targeted have been rightly included. Ideally, all the boxes should be successful targeting. However, this is hard to achieve in practice due to imperfect information upon which targeting is based. In general, the goal is to achieve a lower leakage and undercoverage rate as much as possible. Apart from poor information used for targeting, undercoverage and leakage could be a result of poor awareness levels about the programme among the community members or

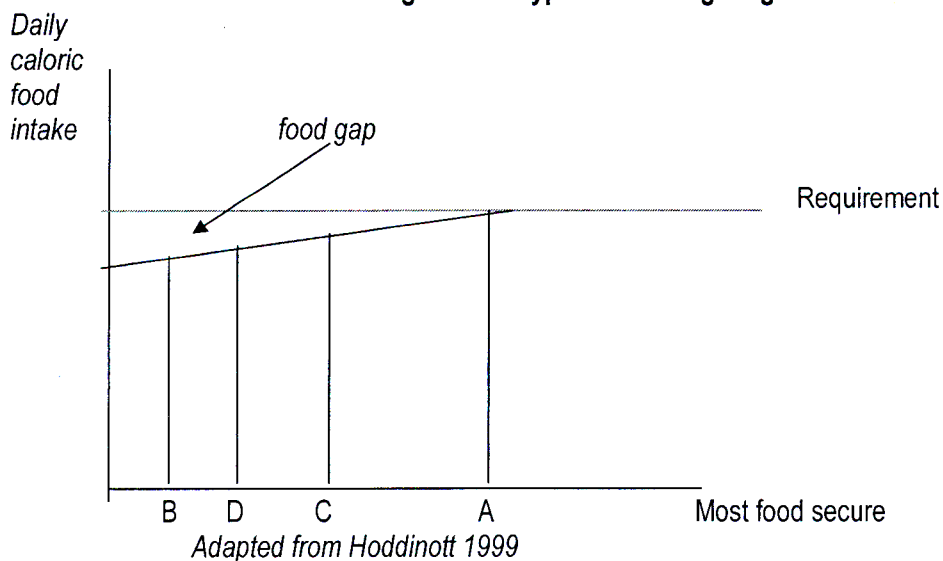
lack of an active member in the family particularly where participation demands labour supply. Due to poor project designs some households may opt out of the transfer if the transaction costs among the poor are perceived to be higher than the project benefits (Hoddinott, 1999, Pritchett, 2005).

Assuming the number of people in the programme is equal to the number of poor people, then the number or proportion of people wrongly included will always equal the proportion of people wrongly excluded. Therefore, if inclusion error is higher exclusion error will also be higher. However, where the number of poor people is less than the target allocation, leakages may be higher compared to undercoverage. Therefore, efforts to reduce the effects of one error are likely to increase the effects of the other error (Cornia and Stewart, 1993, Pritchett 2005). For instance, strict actions aimed at screening the non-poor to reduce errors of inclusion may as well end up increasing errors of exclusion, as the poor people are unable to provide relevant information.

2.3.1.4 Difficulties in selecting beneficiaries

Targeting errors not only affect the decision on whether to target or not, but also determine the choice of the targeting method that is likely to yield better results. Targeting errors reduce the net impact of the programme. Inclusion errors means that the net impact of the transfers aimed at the poor have been reduced while exclusion errors means that the targeted programme is less effective as it fails to support the people it was designed to help.

Figure 2.2: Hypothetical targeting



Targeting errors also highlight the question and difficulty of defining the poor. Consider figure 2.2 above where four households (A, B, C, D) are experiencing different levels of food insecurity. Assuming four households are expected to benefit then all of them would qualify. However, if the targeting is limited to two households then B and D should be targeted. This assumes that the agents or community have accurate information to measure vulnerability. In reality, this is difficult to attain, as the differences among B, C and D are very minimal.

On the other hand, assuming all the above four households were left out, all will be recorded as exclusion error without proper differentiation of whether the household is close to meeting its requirement or not. In the above case, an exclusion error for B would have high negative impact compared to A. In terms of benefits targeting the poorest is more desirable than the one just below the poverty line. However, if the objective is to raise someone above the poverty line, then targeting someone just below the poverty line such as A could be more appropriate (Hoddinott, 1999).

The emphasis on leakage and under-coverage approach fails to address the issues of trade offs within the groups and how communities themselves weighs the benefits of targeting transfers to the poorest or the middle groups. For the sake of political support, targeting A may be considered more appropriate than B.

2.3.2 Taxonomy of Targeting;

Narrow targeting is further categorized into three methods, individual/household assessment, indicator targeting and self-targeting. Similarly, individual assessment can be divided into means tests, simple means tests and proxy means tests.

2.3.2.1 Individual/household assessment

Individual assessment describes a method where agents carry out direct assessment about the poverty or vulnerability status of the households or individuals to determine whether they qualify for a transfer or not. The process is long and exhaustive. Household information on welfare or income is collected and verified against some independent sources such as pay slips or tax records. Some examples for household assessment include verified means tests, simple means tests, proxy means tests, and nutrition surveillance (Van de Walle 1998). In general the approach is more appropriate for developed countries where information about the targeted population is available through taxation records and high administrative capacity. The

approach is less appropriate for developing countries where poor people economic life is rarely documented. Where participants are expected to provide household information the approach shifts the transaction costs related to information gathering to the beneficiaries themselves (Coady et-al, 2002).

To a larger extent, targeting effectiveness in this method depends on gathering relevant and reliable information on household income at a lower cost. Compared to other methods, means testing is associated with high costs related to detailed information gathering and verification. In some cases, means testing may cause social stigma particularly where beneficiaries are expected to publicly identify themselves or take actions that prove they are poor (Haddad and Kanbur, 1991).

2.3.2.1.1 Simple means tests

A simple means test is applied where independent sources of information on income poverty for verification are not readily available. Therefore an official from the government or agency may conduct a household visit to verify the poverty or welfare indicators. In the absence of quantitative data, the verification process employ a qualitative approach using some visible characteristics that reflect and are consistent with welfare or poverty status (Pritchett, 2005)

2.3.2.1.2 Proxy means tests

Proxy means test has been developed as an alternative to pure means tests aimed at dealing with challenges and costs associated with detailed gathering and verifications of information. Proxy means test is relatively a new mechanism in the targeting literature. This method uses a score generated from few observable household characteristics that are correlated with the welfare status of the household to distinguish the poor from non-poor. The selected variables should be easier to observe but difficult to manipulate. The score generated through statistical analysis determines the predictive power of the variable. Some of the indicators used include residential location, type of dwelling, demographic structure, asset ownership, occupation, education, etc. A proxy means test ensures that there is "horizontal equity" among the beneficiaries so that the same households (according to the selected variables) are targeted (Hoddinott, 1999).

However, the use of rigid formula means that special cases observed in the field are not dealt with properly. In addition, the method fails to take into account the high standard error

associated with the prediction of individual households (Coady et-al., 2005, Pritchett, 2005). In theory, making the score public improves transparency and accountability. Practically, the use of a formula is rarely understood among the illiterate such that it may invoke the feeling that the computer decided on who should benefit (Clert and Wodon, 2000). In addition, where it is properly understood, it raises concerns about bribery and corruption as non-poor households may attempt to buy their way in. The approach is appropriate where detailed surveys are perceived to be costly and time consuming. A number of programmes have used proxy means test in identifying beneficiaries for various programmes such as cash transfers, subsidized food, health care, school feeding and housing subsidies (Hoddinott, 1999).

Like other means test methods, proxy means testing is also associated with high administrative capacity and relatively high costs of data collection. The use of the method requires a skilled and well-trained workforce to fill in the form and analyse the information using sophisticated computer packages. Proxy means tests are appropriate when targeting chronically poor households rather than the transitory poor. Due to the length of time taken to complete the registration process, proxy means tests are suitable where the delays in delivering the transfers do not have a huge impact on the welfare of the households (Pritchett 2005).

2.3.2.2 Indicator Targeting

Indicator targeting also referred to as tagging or categorical targeting uses observable characteristics of poor people that are correlated with low income. The method is an alternative to means tests, which despite the high costs may not necessarily be accurate. In this method eligibility is defined in terms of specific individual or household characteristics that are correlated with poverty. Such identifiable indicators are used as proxy for income to identify poor people. Some of the indicators include age, sex, and land holding size, residential type, disability and demographic composition of the household and geographical location. The major limitation for the mechanism is that people with the same indicator value are treated in the same way even when they have different economic status. This results into leakages where the non-deserving people benefit from the programme. The most common examples of categorical targeting include geographical and demographical targeting (Gelbach and Coady 2000).

2.3.2.2.1 Geographical Targeting

Geographical targeting also known as poverty mapping is one of the most popular methods applied in the delivery of safety nets. In this approach resources are allocated to geographical

areas that correspond with specific poverty indicators. Geographical areas in this case may refer to political constituents or catchments areas of service delivery such as schools and health centres. The underlying assumption to this method is that different areas or regions have different poverty incidences as well as severity levels but those levels are similar within the region (Pritchett, 2005). Such differences are manifested through different access to basic services. In order to construct a poverty map for identifying poor areas, it is important to calculate the poverty rates for each area. This is normally done during population census or supplemented with survey data (Van de Walle, 1998).

The efficiency and effectiveness of the method largely depends on the success of accurately identifying variables that are highly correlated with both poverty status and space. Such variables should be able to go beyond income poverty and encompass consumption as well as basic need concept of poverty. Spatial allocation of resources may fail to take into account horizontal equity such that the poor living in relatively better off areas may be left out. In this regard, the approach will lead to increased undercoverage rates. Politically, geographical targeting may encounter stiff resistance. For instance, it is very unlikely that one neighbouring health centre would offer free services while the neighbouring centres charge user fees (Pritchett 2005). Although research has shown that geographical targeting particularly in small units has larger impact on poverty reduction, inherent limitations on accuracy and political concerns, entails that the method should be used in conjunction with other targeting methods. For instance in public works programme both geographical and self-selection targeting can be used.

2.3.2.2.2 Demographic Targeting

Demographic targeting is one of the most widely used approaches in the delivery of safety nets. The approach uses observable demographic characteristics such as age and sex to define groups for targeted programmes. The underlying notion for the approach is that some demographical indicators are highly correlated with well-being. The most common demographic based programmes include child grants, elderly grants and disability grants. While demographic targeting appears to be relatively simple to implement, the approach requires high administrative capacity to deal with the many beneficiaries. If the approach is used exclusively, there are fears of inclusion and exclusion errors. When proof of documentation is required, beneficiaries may encounter private transaction costs as they attempt to process documentations or pay user fee. In general demographic targeting has a high political appeal

partly because of the perceived contribution toward human capital as regards to child grants or humanistic caring value in terms of programmes supporting the elderly and disabled (Hoddinott 1999, Pritchett, 2005).

2.3.2.3 Self Targeting

Self-targeting mechanisms are designed to ensure that only members of a specific target group participate or benefit. Unlike indicator targeting which rely on an agent to determine the beneficiaries self-targeting depends on potential beneficiaries to identify themselves. The principle underlying self-targeting is that there are differences in terms of private costs, transaction of participation costs, stigma, and quality preferences between the poor and the non-poor (Coady et-al, 2005). Therefore the goal is to create incentives that induce the poor to participate while screening out the non-poor. Ideally, self-targeting or self-screening involves limited administrative costs, as verifications of beneficiaries are perceived to be minimal. The method has been largely used in public works and employment guarantee schemes where low wages are considered to be attractive only to those with low opportunity costs of time as well as limited employment. The concept relies on offering unlimited employment but at a very low wage, which is deemed to attract only those below a certain level of income. In some cases, location for delivery points are situated in areas with a large concentration of the poor people so that the non-poor incurs high transport costs. Similarly, the transfers involve inferior quality of products such as low quality wheat or low quality packaging so that only those with low income can access them (Van de Walle 1998, 1999).

The success of targeting largely depends on how transaction costs and stigma associated with the transfers is able to deter the non-poor from participating in the programme. In terms of employment schemes, self-targeting is only suitable for those who are physically active. Therefore, the weak and physically challenged are likely to be excluded except where special arrangements have been made. Comparatively administrative costs associated with information collection are relatively lower compared to other methods. However, the actual implementation of the programme is rather complex and costly especially where the projects are scattered in several places. Self-targeting is applied in areas where other methods are unlikely to yield desirable results particularly in crisis situations and where administrative capacity is low.

2.3.3 Cost of Targeting

In general narrow targeting is associated with three types of costs; administrative costs, incentive costs and hidden costs related to social and political economy. Administrative costs refer to costs incurred in obtaining information to identify the poor with precision to avoid leakages. The problem is considered acute in developing countries where poverty information is not readily available. Typical examples of administrative costs include conducting surveys and means testing. These costs are likely to increase as the precision of targeting increases. In general these costs eat away or reduce the available budget to be directed to the poor (Van de Walle, 1998).

Targeting entails that the beneficiaries incur some private costs. For instance, targeted households may be required to obtain proof of certification such as identity cards, proof of residence or disability. In most developing countries the poorest are unlikely to have such documents, as such they will need to process them. In addition, beneficiaries may be required to travel to the programme offices to present their documents thereby incurring transport costs. In some cases, targeted households also incur opportunity costs due to the time spent waiting for the transfers. In this regard, some beneficiaries may even forgo some income opportunities as they wait for the transfers (Hoddinott, 1999).

Incentive costs are associated with behavioural change that might arise as a result of the targeting process. Since targeting involves a set of eligibility criteria some households might attempt to change their behaviour in order to fit into the selection criteria. For instance, a transfer targeting unemployed people or those below a minimum income level may induce some households to reduce their efforts in search for work in order to qualify for the transfers. In extreme cases, transfers might also cause household to relocate or migrate to areas where transfers are provided. Sometimes incentive costs may lead into positive results for instance, where households are expected to send their children to school or health services (Pritchett, 2005). Where targeting involves publicly identifying the poor as beneficiaries, it may create social stigma among the recipients. In such cases the poor may not turn up for the uptake of the transfer. This has been one of the major concerns in the uptake of HIV/AIDS intervention. In addition, the selection of beneficiaries in a context where the majority of the population is poor may create tensions among the community members (Van de Walle 1998).

Effective targeting means that only the poor are selected for transfers thereby excluding the middle-income groups. On the one hand, exclusion of the politically powerful middle class may undermine the political support for the programme. On the other hand, it can be argued that some interest groups such as advocates for social justice and suppliers may also render political support (Coady et al., 2002)

2.3.4. Community based targeting mechanism

While community based targeting has been heavily utilized by humanitarian agencies in targeting and delivering emergency aid, very little has found its way in mainstream literature. The conceptual framework of community based targeting is relatively new in the literature of targeting. Recently, Conning and Kevane (2002) and Chinsinga (2004) have attempted to provide more detailed analysis of community based targeting mechanisms. Community based targeting is defined as a state policy of contracting community groups or intermediary agents to identify beneficiaries, monitor the delivery process and carry out the actual delivery process (Conning and Kevane, 2002).

2.3.4.1 Community based targeting and social capital

Conceptually community based targeting approach is grounded on social capital models. While there is no clear-cut definition of social capital, there is a general consensus among scholars towards a description that emphasizes the following elements; networks, norms, trust, reciprocity, cooperation, collective action and moral obligation (Coleman 1990, Healy 2001, Putman 2000). Putman described social capital as the “features of social organization, such as trust, norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement that can improve the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putman 1993; 167). According to the World Bank (2005) social capital refers to the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of society’s social interaction. Social capital is regarded as the glue that holds members of the society together. This definition emphasizes on both horizontal and vertical associations between people that can have both negative and positive effects on community productivity and well-being.

Lynch (2000) cautions that unless properly defined social capital “risks trying to explain too much with too little and is being adopted indiscriminately, adapted uncritically and applied imprecisely” (Lynch et-al., 2000:404). For the purpose of this study, social capital refers to shared commitment to social values as expressed in the quantity and quality of social

relationships that may enable or constrain dynamic efficiency (Staveren, 2003). In addition the study adopts a functionalist perspective of the definition that emphasizes on collective action and social cohesion as a unit of measurement. Social capital being stratified can function as a mechanism of exclusion or inclusion resulting into constructive and destructive purposes (Grootaert et-al, 2004). In general the attention is on how community members interact, collaborate on issues of social concern. Since social capital describes the degree to which agents are engaged in social interactions that rely on cooperation and coordination, there is a relationship between targeting as a political process and social capital (Spagnolo, 1999). Targeting being an intermediary process between the agents and community members, there is a likelihood that community members might react in other dimension of social interaction.

The concept of community based targeting has gained popularity because of its perceived advantages in addressing information asymmetries affecting most of the targeting approaches. It is argued that involving community groups in identifying beneficiaries lead to better targeting and screening. Community groups are perceived to have better information about the needs, and poverty status of members of the community. Similarly, communities may use locally appropriate definitions of poverty that are appropriate and relevant to the context. Where statistical formulae of poverty fail to properly distinguish the poor from the non-poor, contextualized and culturally appropriate definitions of poverty may be more useful since they take into account household resources, needs and its causes. Through the use of local agents, the mechanism is considered to be cost effective as it reduces transaction costs associated with time and information gathering and processing (Conning and Kevane, 2001). In the developing countries where information on poverty and vulnerability is not readily available community based targeting has been championed as being successful in dealing with information asymmetries. As part of the decentralization policy, community targeting is championed as a process of empowerment, transferring power to grassroot institutions. In this regard, community targeting is perceived as a long-term development process of enhancing participation and social capital (Chinsinga, 2004). Similarly, as a concept of participation, community targeting is considered as “an end rather than only a means” where community members build their capacity to participate in critical decision making about allocation of scarce resources. In this regard community targeting may strengthen social capital as communities become more articulate about their needs and resource allocation (Nelson and Wright, 1995).

2.3.4.2 Criticisms on community based targeting mechanism

2.3.4.2.1 Conflicting priorities between external and internal perspectives

Critics of targeting are sceptical on how community agents could successfully target where the central government is considered weak. Poverty being multi dimensional entails that targeting is based on the assumptions that there is an agreement about who is poor and a consensus on the measure of standard of living (Besley and Kanbur 1998). However, even communities themselves are unlikely to find criteria that are able to represent the multidimensional nature of poverty and please all interest groups. In the community based public works study in South Africa, Adato and Haddad (2002), found that targeting in the context of high unemployment, is a highly contested debate driven by diverse and sometimes conflicting priorities shaped by local perceptions of needs as well as entitlements. In addition, community priorities and definitions of poverty did not fully correspond with externally defined criteria. For instance, in the above study communities felt more satisfied with a random selection process. In some cases, priority was given to people who were active in community activities regardless of poverty status. The study found little evidence that targeting reached the poorest among the poor. The major selection priority among the communities was equality of opportunities. While the study did not find any evidence linking targeting to nepotism, there were concerns over potential conflict between community members.

2.3.4.2.2 Targeting and community solidarity

In terms of local political economy, targeting focuses on providing social benefits to the poorest leaving out the middle income that often have the political voice (Van de Walle 1998). It is suggested that this politically important constituency if left out might sabotage the programme. In this vein, targeting is perceived to be bad for morale of the community. For instance, Coady et-al 2004 uses the following hypothetical situation to explain the effects. Assuming a neighbour denies a community member the benefits of a safety net programme, will the denied applicant be as likely to help him during hard times? The above scenario demonstrates that there are costs to community based targeting that are not easily identified or quantified.

Sometimes communities are more concerned about inclusiveness rather than reaching the poorest of the poor. The introduction of targeting may have unintended effects as it gives rise to choices in which people considered as being similar are treated differently due to laid down selection guidelines. In this regard, the social programme may be perceived as inequitable

which may also threaten horizontal equity as a certain cause of poverty is highlighted above others (World Bank, 2005). It is argued that local leaders know what is “socially and politically feasible” in their communities (World Bank, 2005). Therefore, one may presume that communities have strong reasons to defy the targeting process. In an Indonesia rice distribution programme local leaders argued that targeting was socially unacceptable and “inconsistent with the spirit of community solidarity and self help”. Therefore, if all people are expected to participate in development projects then benefits from government welfare programmes should reach everyone (Pritchett, 2005, Sumarto and Suryahadi, 2000)

2.3.4.2.3 Whose perception counts?

The application of this mechanism assumes that there is an agreement between the agency or government and the community that some community members will be included while others will be excluded. Community based targeting is not a complete devolution of power to the grassroots agents since local community agents are provided with specific set of procedures, rules and regulations. Such rules may therefore be in conflict with the equity values of societies. Communities may have their own perceptions about needs and entitlements and may be more concerned with preserving a sense of inclusiveness rather than following the laid down criteria (Sen, 1995).

Similarly, the question of fairness in the targeting literature requires further attention. While outsiders may view targeting of non-poor as an inclusion error, the community may regard it not necessarily as mistargeting but rather as an attempt to ensure fairness. In the *Clash of Voices*, Chinsinga (2004) explains that targeting criteria was rarely adhered to in most communities. The article cites a number of examples where communities completely ignored the selection criteria, modified it or shared the inputs equally. While beneficiaries of the inputs were not necessarily the poorest of the poor the decision to ignore the criteria was not necessarily driven by ill or fraudulent motives. The article demonstrates the dilemma of community based targeting that is whether it should be left to the communities themselves or it should strictly adhere to the official guidelines. If left to the communities themselves there is ample evidence that the poorest of the poor are likely to be excluded. However, if the official guidelines are strictly followed, there is a risk that social dynamics might be overlooked which pose potential risks for tension among community members. In addition, the community definition of fairness may not correspond with the official understanding. Social policy analysis incorporates

economist's judgment on fairness and equity however fairness and equity concerns from below are largely ignored (Van de Walle, 1998).

2.3.4.2.4 Targeting results in displacement of transfers.

Targeting social transfer like any other public intervention causes individuals to change behaviour. Cox and Jimenez (1995) in their study of social security and private transfers in Philippines, found that behavioural response of non beneficiaries has a potential impact on the social policy. Targeting of social security services was found to have a displacement effect of 74% of private transfers. In the study of the Employment Guarantee Scheme for Maharashtra, Ravallion and Datt (1993) estimated that the well off non-beneficiaries cut back on their private transfers to the poor. Similarly, the targeted food subsidy programme in Sri Lanka had a direct impact on the labour market. It is estimated that the programme resulted in a fall of 2.5 days per month for males and 2.5 days per month for females in labour market participation (Sahn and Alderman, 1995).

2.3.4.2.5 Targeting and community empowerment

Although community targeting is viewed as a process of community empowerment through decentralization of powers to grassroots institutions, in developing countries most of the decentralization policies have been conceived under constraints imposed by donor conditionality without adequate sociological analysis of the community institutions involved. In heterogeneous communities and underdeveloped economies, there is ample evidence that the benefits of decentralized social programmes are captured by the local elites (Bardhan, 1999, Gallaso and Ravallion, 2000). Decentralized social provisioning may lead to fragmentation of society or exclusion of the poor in the presence of elite capture. While at the regional level decentralization is perceived to exacerbate political tensions little is known at the community level

2.3.4.2.6 The question about community

Community based targeting approach overlaps with the concept of participation, empowerment, entitlement, power relations and collective action. The approach itself is embroiled in the argument of whether a "community" exists. The community based targeting approach relates to a community as if it is a well-defined geographical entity as opposed to an overlapping entity of ethnic, tribal and religious groups (Conning and Kevane, 2001:12). Similarly, artificial communities may be created to serve small population for cost effective delivery of social services (Harrigin and Chol, 1999). Therefore to assume that these different entities will work

together in apolitical way could be oversimplifying the reality. Geographical targeting has been cited as one of the contributing factors to ethnic tensions. Chavis and Wandersman (1990) argue that a strong psychological sense of community is the primary factor for participation in collective actions. Therefore, by isolating community members for safety nets one might argue whether targeting fosters or strengthens that sense of community crucial for active participation.

The question of community based targeting revolves around community governance. Community based targeting creates formal institutions to manage the process of beneficiary identification and delivery of benefits. However, traditional local leaders have little incentives to share power and allow others to participate in decision-making (Von Braun and Grote, 2000). Dhesi (2000) suggests that if formal institutions are in conflict with culturally embedded informal structures it constrains collective actions.

The above features demonstrate the policy environment underlying targeting and the belief that targeting is a means of increasing the benefits to the poor in a fixed budget. The model clearly highlights the fact that targeting is unlikely to be perfect in normal context. Information on poverty is hardly available particularly in developing countries. There are bound to be inclusion and exclusion errors resulting into leakages and undercoverages. Targeting in general has hidden costs and people frequently underestimate how difficult it is to target (Van de Walle 1998). In addition the political economy and behavioural response of participants is generally neglected. The next chapter outlines the study methodology of assessing the impact of community based targeting mechanism on the community.

Chapter 3: Study Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief description of the study design, methods and tools used for data collection and analysis. The research methodology draws on qualitative approaches and participatory tools to explore the effects of community based targeting on social structure. A qualitative approach was chosen to provide insights, experiences and in-depth analysis of the social processes. In order to get a clear understanding of the topic, the following tools were used to explore the social impact of targeting; social mapping, social card game, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants such as village heads and agriculture extension workers. In addition, the chapter briefly provides the field context, that is the villages visited and the participants with whom the research team interacted. Where appropriate secondary sources such as recent evaluation of the AISP have been used to complement the primary data.

3.2 Study design

There is a general understanding that community based targeting being a form of social capital is a “property of the group rather than a property of the individual” (ONS 2001:14). Therefore, the study considered community as a unit of analysis focusing on how community members interact and collaborate on issues of social concern including targeting and participation in collective action. Since social capital exists between people, research tools that help to assess people in a group yield better results compared to individual survey questionnaire (Grootaert et al., 2004). In addition, the study followed a sociological approach of enquiry where the focus was on the processes, exploring how and why the targeting was carried out in the way it was done and its social cost implications.

Although social capital is perceived as a societal good, the major trend of measuring it has been asking questions to individuals and aggregating their responses. However, collective action cannot simply be an aggregation of individual responses. Without proper contextual analysis, the aggregation of individuals who belong to different groups reveals little information on the strength or weakness of social capital if it does not include information on what people do as members of the group (ONS 2001).

Some scholars have questioned the validity of surveys of individuals in understanding group dynamics. For instance, Green and colleagues (2000) questions whether surveys of individuals can properly distinguish between the collective characteristics of the community and those of the individual. Therefore, it is imperative that measurements of such social and collective action should focus on groups rather than individuals. Similarly, Cote and Healy (2001) argues that measures for social processes should be comprehensive and balanced between attitudinal and behavioural aspects relating to the cultural context. From the above purview, it can be argued that the study topic is best suited for qualitative research approach. With qualitative methods the researcher is able to explore social issues and processes by understanding what they mean to people, and observing how people interact with each other and interpret their environment (Ulin et-al., 2002).

3.3 Qualitative approach

The study employed qualitative approach and participatory tools such as focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to understand the impact of community targeting on social issues. Qualitative research describes a process of interaction between the participant and the interviewer with the latter being interested in learning through what is observed and with what participants know and have experienced (Ulin et al., 2002). The purpose of qualitative research is to “accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding” (Lincoln and Guba 1985:227). As a form of phenomenological inquiry, qualitative research is ideal and suitable for understanding phenomena where little is known and to gain new perspective or in-depth understanding of something already known (Strauss and Corbin 1990). In the context of community based targeting, qualitative methods were chosen because they allow for more in-depth analysis of the social and political processes within a contextual framework (Krishna and Shrader, 2000).

Since the study deals with perceptions and beliefs, qualitative methods are appropriate, as the two concepts cannot be adequately quantified. According to Dudwick and colleagues (2006), qualitative approach helps to incorporate experiential knowledge into the development process. Unlike quantitative studies that analyses social processes from an expert point of view, a qualitative study appreciates the importance of local context that may shape some processes. Through active engagement of the local participants through qualitative and participatory tools such as social maps, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, the approach helps to tilt the balance of power from the researcher to the respondents. This is very important in

understanding social phenomena as Chambers (1997) points out that power hinders learning. Since qualitative tools allow participants to express their opinions, feelings, concerns and priorities without much limitation from the researcher, the approach is considered as fundamental in understanding the “complex issues of causality, process and context” that underpin community based targeting (Dudwick et-al., 2006:3).

Since the study is about understanding community perspective, qualitative approaches help to capture the voice of the communities from their own lens. The principle behind the approach is that human beings construct and shape their own reality thereby to understand what they do; one must try to understand the belief, attitude and context that govern such actions (Lincoln and Guba 1989, 1998, Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Through social mapping, card games, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, qualitative methods and participatory tools help to understand the views of both homogeneous as well as diverse group of people within the community. This is very essential in understanding the social impact of targeting. It is argued that exploring people's views in a group particularly in hypothetical situations such as social card games may yield better and more nuance information compared to individual based questionnaires or surveys. With participatory tools, social processes come into play and through these group exercises it is easier to observe the social dynamics (Dudwick et-al, 2006, Green et –al., 2000).

Similarly qualitative approaches through systematic use of language aim at building an image of the object being studied. While quantitative approaches can also deal with attitude and social issues, quantification alone fails to properly provide contextual specific themes that require an in-depth analysis of the subject matter (Waitzkin, 1991). In this regard, qualitative approaches are appropriate as they generate explanations, which are context specific but also on the basis of diversity. Such an approach is essential not only in understanding the concerns of participants but also in designing user-oriented and effective programmes (Elias, 1994).

3.3.1 Social Mapping

The social mapping exercise was the entry point and the centrepiece of the study. Social mapping involves drawing of a community map including geographical and institutional features that are of interest to the community. As participatory rural appraisal (PRA) technique social mapping promotes visual and reliable information about the community (Chambers 1997). At least six participants were required to draw the village map. These participants were those

familiar with the village and its members with one or two of them being functionally literate. The main purpose of the map was to show important socio-economic features of the village such as household homes, roads, rivers, churches, schools and hospitals if available. Participants were asked to identify and locate each household on the map. Thereafter, a card was prepared for each household denoting the number, name and sex of the head of the household. Participants were requested to identify elderly headed households and those keeping two or more orphans. In addition, households were categorized in terms of food security well being. This was done only after the group discussed and reached some consensus on what food security status meant in their context. For the purpose of this study households were categorized into three food security groups; food secure, food insecure and extremely food insecure generally defined as follows;

- Food Secure (FS) households refer to households with food or access to food throughout the year.
- Food Insecure (FI) households refer to households that have food from harvest period till Christmas period (December). They run out of food from December to April (the next harvest).
- Extremely Food Insecure households refer to families that experience longer periods without food. They run out of food soon after harvesting period much earlier before Christmas (December)

In rural Malawi food security status is highly correlated with poverty status such that food insecure households are more than likely to be poor households (Chinsinga, 2004). Participants were requested to sort out the household cards into three piles; that is food secure, food insecure and extremely food insecure. As the participants, sorted the cards according to their respective groups, research assistants observed the interaction and discussion process among participants. The importance of social mapping is not only enumerating and comparing the households but also “understanding the hidden dimension of poverty and analysing the causality and process by which people fall into and get out of poverty” (Robb 2002 quoted in Barahona and Levy, 2005:10). After the categorization process each card was labelled with a symbol denoting the appropriate food security status to which it belonged. The purpose of preparing the cards is to find out if communities can identify the poor and the most vulnerable within their communities. While efforts were made to ensure that all participants actively participated interference was limited to relevant probing.

A total of 46 community members that is 22 male and 24 female participated in the drawing of 6 social maps, writing and categorization of 482 households according to their food security status from the six villages visited. Table 3.1 below shows the summary of participants for social mapping across the sites.

Table 3.1. Summary of social mapping participants

District	Village	Household Population	Sex of participants		Total
			Male	Female	
Phalombe	Subili	148	4	3	7
Mulanje	Mandawala	37	4	4	8
Neno	Gobede	117	4	4	8
Dowa	Mpalikwa	63	4	3	7
Lilongwe	Nkulera	77	4	4	8
Mzimba	Mbozo	40	2	6	8
TOTAL		482	22	24	46

3.3.2 Social Card Game

While social card game appears to be a relatively new method in social enquiry, a number of studies have successfully employed these exercises in assessing social and economic impact of programmes (Levy, 2003, Chambers and Mayoux, 2003, Chinsinga, 2005). Social card games have evolved from participatory approaches assessing wealth and poverty using local participants' perceptions, observations and criteria. This approach also referred to as Grandin's method, is an advanced stage of wealth ranking techniques ((World Bank, 2001, Murkherjee, 2001). Social card games can be described as quasi-social experiments whereby groups of people participate in an activity. It is argued that such quasi-social experiments "allow investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (Yin, 2003:2). Similarly, Boruch and Foley (2000) note that quasi experiments are effective in evaluating community initiatives and with proper design yield superior results which can be difficult to achieve through other methods. However, the main concern is to ensure that the investigator does not interfere or manipulate the behaviour of the participants.

Since the study methodology involved participants to play games on beneficiary selection, there are concerns that such approach could raise expectations. Therefore, a number of

processes were put in place to limit such expectations. For instance, during the introductory meeting with the village head the team clearly explained the purpose of the visit, which was for research purposes only (Refer to field manual in the Annexes). Secondly, during and after social mapping and card games participants were informed that the activities were designed for research purposes only such that they should not be taken as a registration process.

The cards prepared during the social maps were the basis for subsequent social card game exercises and the ensuing focus group discussions. Firstly, the cards were used to simulate beneficiary selection for agricultural inputs for the coming planting season. Through purposeful sampling participants were selected from the social map to ensure proper representation of all sectors and social groups in the community. At the start of the exercise participants were informed that the government agriculture subsidy programme was continuing with the 2008-2009 farming season. Therefore, participants were expected to represent their village committee to identify and select poor households targeting 30% of the village population for the programme.

Secondly, the cards were used to select beneficiaries for a cash transfer programme. New sets of respondents were brought in to carry out the exercise. Participants were told that the government is planning to scale up its social protection programme to include all villages in the country – currently limited to six districts. Under the programme, the poorest households (10% of the village household population) will receive MK2600 (approximately US\$18) per month. The purpose of the exercise was to observe group interactions and reactions, determine how and why communities make specific decisions regarding targeting process. For example, why some households were left out even if they were extremely poor.

A total of 96 participants took part in the social card game; 49 people participated in input card game with 47 people involved in the cash transfer exercises. There were more women participants (51) compared to men (45) as shown in table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Summary of participants for social card game

District	Village	Household Population	AISP card game participants		Cash transfer card game participants		Total
			Male	Female	Male	Female	
Phalombe	Subili	148	3	5	3	4	15
Mulanje	Mandawala	37	3	6	3	4	13
Neno	Gobede	117	4	4	4	3	19
Dowa	Mpalikwa	63	4	4	5	5	18
Lilongwe	Nkulera	77	4	3	4	4	15
Mzimba	Mbozo	40	5	4	3	5	17
TOTAL		482	23	26	22	25	96

As participants played the game, the research assistants were attentive, observing the interactions and reactions of the participants and taking down notes. While the social card games were designed as a hypothetical targeting exercise, most participants took it seriously arguing that;

“Nyengo zinyake wangawa kuti wakulembelathu vya chaka chikwiza mbwee wanthu wazamuyambana na ise kuti tawaleka” (You never know this could be registration for next year, people will be on our necks for leaving them out). Female participant, Mbozo Village, Mzimba District.

“Tiyeni tisamale chifukwa akhoza kukhala kuti akufuna kubweletsa chitutukuko” (Let us be very careful, they may be bringing development in our village) participant Gobede Village, Neno District

To a larger extent, the seriousness on the part of participants partly reflects the importance attached to agricultural subsidy programme. Since the programme is on going, it was difficult for participants to believe that these were mere games.

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussion

After the selection process, participants discussed additional questions relating to their experiences and feelings about the 2007/08-targeted agricultural subsidy programme. Focus group discussions were appropriate for this study because they allow the researcher to explore

views of both homogeneous as well as heterogeneous groups, which help to unpack differing perspectives within a society. Unlike in-depth interviews focus group discussions are not designed to collect information about individual reactions but rather provide an atmosphere, language, values, perceptions and range of meanings, and identify areas of consensus and disagreements about prevailing discourses (Lincoln and Guba, 1989, Grootaert et-al., 2004). In general focus group discussion is relatively a quicker and efficient method of collecting complex information and people's insights. In addition, findings from focus group discussion helps to provide context to information collected through other sources such as in-depth interviews. In qualitative research context analysis is critical in understanding and developing an interpretive framework for individual behaviour and reactions (Lincoln and Guba, 1989).

Six to eight people representing both men and women and from all food security groups participated in the discussion that centred on their perceptions, feelings and experiences about targeting. The purpose of the discussion was to solicit and discuss people's views, perception and past experiences regarding community targeting. A total of 12 focus group discussion meetings were conducted in the 6 villages visited with more than 96 people participating in the discussions. On average 9 people participated in each discussion. This is within the required number of participants as large crowds might be difficult to control while small groups may fail to produce diverse information associated with focus group discussions. To a larger extent, the success of the discussion depends on the skill and competency of the facilitator and size of the group (Chambers, 1997, Lincoln and Guba, 1998). To ensure systematic data collection, a checklist was developed to guide the focus group discussion.

3.3.4 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews refer to a technique where the investigator interacts with a key respondent on a subject matter with the support of a checklist or broad themes. While the method gives adequate latitude to the respondent on the flow of the discussion, it is the role of the investigator to ensure that the participant remains within the domain of the discussion. In this regard, both the investigator and the participant work towards a common goal of learning and understanding (Ulin et-al., 2002). In depth interviews provides a relaxed atmosphere where participants are free and comfortable to discuss issues that affect them. Due to a relaxed setting, in-depth interviews yield rich data, which may be difficult to get in an open setting (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994)

In-depth interviews were conducted for local leaders including village heads and community development extension workers on the impact of community targeting based on the experiences of the previous years. In-depth interviews were chosen because they are suitable for exploring complex issues of causality process and context. The purpose was to gather attitude, feelings and experiences on how key people with insights on the community perceive the social impact of community targeting as reflected by peoples participation on collective actions. Using a semi-structured checklist, the investigator facilitated the conversation allowing the participants to talk freely about their feelings and experiences. The information was systematically recorded in the field journals.

A total of 8 in-depth interviews were conducted with community leaders that are village heads and agriculture extension workers.

3.3.5 Review of documents

Literature review was the first stage of research process. A number of relevant documents both international and Malawi specific relating to targeting and safety nets were reviewed. Specifically, the study benefited from the following evaluations on targeted input programme;

- Boughton D., Chirwa, E., Dorward, A., Jayne T., Kelly, V., and R. Slater, (March 2008) *Evaluation of the 2006/07 Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme, Final Report* commissioned for the Ministry of Agriculture, Lilongwe Malawi
- Chinsinga, B., Dzimidzi, C., Chaweza, R. Kambewa, P., Kapondamgaga, P., and Mgemzulu, O., (2001) *Consultation with the Poor on Safety Nets; An Evaluation Study for the Targeted Input Programme* commissioned for the Ministry of Agriculture and Department for International Development (DFID), Lilongwe Malawi
- Chinsinga, B., Dzimidzi, C., Chaweza, R., and P., Kambewa, (2001) *Agriculture Communications; An Evaluation of Targeted Input Programme* commissioned for the Ministry of Agriculture and Department for International Development (DFID), Lilongwe Malawi

The secondary data was reviewed to complement observations and findings from the primary data. Since the above studies were extensive and nationwide, triangulation of sources improves data validity and reliability. Therefore, common themes and patterns emerging from both primary and secondary data have a larger appeal.

3.4. Sampling

The study employed a two-stage sampling technique, that is both random and purposeful sampling were used to identify a representative sample of villages and participants. Firstly, six districts were selected randomly out of the 28 districts in the country representing all the three regions. Using a list of villages from the Targeted Input Programme (TIP) Logistics Unit, one village was randomly selected from each district. The selected villages were as follows; Subili in Phalombe, Mwandawala in Mulanje, Gobede in Neno, Mpalikwa in Dowa, Nkulera in Lilongwe and Mbozo Banda in Mzimba District. Refer to Appendix 1, Map of Malawi for the location of the study sites.

The six districts were chosen to represent all the three regions of Malawi. For instance, Phalombe, Mulanje and Neno were selected from the southern Region, Dowa and Lilongwe in Central Region and Mzimba in the Northern Region. More districts were chosen from Southern Region compared to central and north to ensure proportional representation since the South has more districts than other regions. Similarly, central region has more districts compared to the north. While all rural farmers practice subsistence farming the three regions have slightly different cultural, demographic and livelihoods characteristics as highlighted in the village profiles below. For example, culturally communities in Mzimba are patriarchal societies whereas the rest follow a matriarchal system of inheritance.

Participants for the social maps and focus group discussions were purposely selected. During the first day of booking the interview, the village head was requested to identify people from different parts of the village representing men, women and youth from all the clusters to develop the social maps. Participants for the social card games and focus group discussions were identified from the social maps. This was done to ensure that all groups of people according to their vulnerability status participated in the discussion. In each village, the village head was also interviewed for in-depth interviews. In most cases the village head was male except in Phalombe. In Mzimba there was some power struggle in the village as there were two people claiming to be village heads. Consequently, the team had to interview both to avoid antagonising the two camps. In addition, two agriculture extension workers were interviewed. However, in most villages the extension worker was either absent or lived far from the village visited. A total of 151 people participated in the study as shown in the summary of the participants' table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Summary of study participants

Research tool	Men	Women	Total
Social Mapping & categorization	22	24	46
Input card game & FGD	23	26	49
Cash card game & FGD	22	25	47
Key informant in-depth interview – VH	6	1	7
Key informant in-depth interview – extension worker/ religious leader	2	0	2
Total	75	76	151

The total number of men who participated in the entire process is less than that of women. More women participated in the group discussion compared to men. Although, the invitation sent through the village head, was for equal number of male and female participants, it was mostly women who turned up. Although fewer men turned up compared to women, it did not have significant impact on the quality of the discussion, as the overall number was above the minimum requirement of six for focus group discussion.

3.5 Data Collection

Four research assistants including one female were hired to facilitate the data collection process. The process started with a one-day training on the objective of the study and research methods and tools. A field manual was developed to guide the research assistants while in the field. The manual contained step-by-step guidelines for day-to-day activities including social mapping and interview checklist. The field manual was developed to ensure that the tools utilized were simple and easily understood by the participants. For the purpose of systematic data collection and comparability across the sites, a debriefing document was developed. The debriefing document was to be filled for each village summarizing the key issues.

After the training, a pilot study was conducted at Maulana village in Lilongwe. The purpose of the pilot study was to pre-test the appropriateness and applicability of study tools. Although the original plan was to use the tape recorder, during the pilot study participants refused to have their voices recorded. After some discussion, some hesitantly agreed while others remained reluctant to participate. Consequently, the tape recorder was dropped during the main study. Therefore there was a need for an additional note taker to record the deliberations of the group. Two more research assistants were taken on board. The data from the pilot study has not been included in the final analysis.

The field study was conducted from May to June 2008. In each village the team spent at least three days meeting the different groups of people. During this period, communities from the Southern Region were harvesting their produce. The interviews were conducted in local languages; Tumbuka and Chichewa. Therefore the research assistants recruited were fluent in both languages.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

The study used interpretive approach to data analysis that is through a process of inductive thematic analysis. Qualitative data analysis is a long and tedious process, which involves reading and reviewing of the same information again and again (Hayes 2000, Lincoln and Guba 1985). In general qualitative data analysis involves "three concurrent flows of activity; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verifications" (Miles and Hiberan, 1994: 10).

While data analysis in a qualitative study is a continuous process throughout the study spanning from the design through data collection stage into report writing (Goetz and Lecompte 1984), for the purpose of this study three key stages have been highlighted. The first stage of data analysis took place right in the field. At the end of each day, the research team that is the facilitator and the note taker had to discuss the interview process and compare notes to ensure that important issues were not lost. Where there was lack of clarity, the research assistants had to cross check with participants. Thereafter, the information collected was compiled into a site report using participants' own words and highlighting key statements, observations and ideas expressed by the participants. The data was then translated from tumbuka or chichewa into English. At the end of the three days in each village, a debriefing document was compiled to summarize the key issues emerging from the village including the context. The debriefing document was a product of experiences, observations and notes from all the research assistants involved in the process. This preliminary analysis was largely from the research assistant perspective.

The second stage of analysis involved compilation of translated field notes for each activity for instance, focus group discussions, card game observations and in-depth interviews from all sites into one document representing the sector. The documents were then photocopied into triplicates. Thereafter, the investigator carried out the first reading across the document to get a feel of the data. The next stage was to reread the document while taking down notes of interest

to the research problem. Since the analysis was theory driven, that is testing specific ideas or hypothesis, a significant amount of time was spent on reading and reviewing the documents to identify statements that relate or contradict with the research objectives. Different colours/markers were used to highlight the different themes. Thereafter, the highlighted pieces of paper were cut and sorted depending on the colour that represented a particular theme. Each colour was then given a label or name to identify the theme.

After sorting out the paper cuttings according to their colours or labels the notes were displayed on the wall and reviewed again to identify broad themes, sub themes and emerging patterns. In this last stage, the researcher had to review each theme separately and going through the transcripts again and again trying to identify some issues that correspond with the identified themes. Through coding, encoding and categorization some linkages were developed among the variables. Using the study objectives as a framework for analysis, a systematic comparison was made among different themes from different sources of information. In addition, summaries from the debriefing documents were used to check whether the investigator's analysis supported the key issues identified by the research assistants.

As Hayes (2000) point out thematic analysis involves identifying recurrent patterns, statements, attribution and assumptions that participants make. In this approach the emphasis is on the use of language and the context in which it is used. Consequently, the use of quotations and context specific case studies is paramount in highlighting recurrent themes and ideas.

3.7 Limitation of the methodology

Although qualitative approaches are considered to be flexible they require a great deal of skill, competency and patience among facilitators to yield better results (Simmons and Elias, 1994). Therefore ample time is required for training of interviewers on the data collection process. Unlike quantitative data collection, qualitative interviewing is a complex process, as it requires a delicate balance of asking questions, analysing and further probing at the same time. Such skills can only be mastered through training and experience (Ulin et al 2002). In order to minimize the above effect on the data collection process, the study employed three graduate and experienced research assistants with previous experience in conducting qualitative studies. In addition orientation training was conducted to ensure that research assistants had a clear understanding of the methodology and process. After the training, the team conducted a pilot study to test both the researchers knowledge and application of the tools.

Some of the major concerns about qualitative data are its lack of generalization of findings over broad populations and scepticism over its statistical reliability because of its perceived lack of rigorous enquiry and limited samples. While findings may be difficult to generalize, it is worth noting that the purpose of qualitative research is to build an understanding of complex society issues on the basis of diversity and according to context (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 1998). The fact that qualitative approach allows for open discussion does not necessarily mean lack of a rigorous approach to enquiry. While the tools in this study have been designed to achieve adequate latitude for the participants to express themselves, through the use of checklists, field manual and debriefing documents, efforts were made to ensure a systematic data collection process is followed.

As Lincoln and Guba (1998) argue validity and reliability tests for qualitative research should not be measured in the same way as quantitative methods due to the differences in the role of participants. For instance, instead of validity measure, qualitative research methods are more concerned with credibility and transferability. Credibility describes the extent to which results can be believed and considered legitimate from the participants' perspective. Transferability on the other hand refers to the degree to which findings from a qualitative study can be transferred to other contexts. Similarly, qualitative methods are concerned more with dependability rather than reliability. With dependability the emphasis is on accounting for the context in which the research took place. Furthermore, to enhance data reliability and validity the study employed a judicious combination and triangulation of different qualitative tools to provide a sounder empirical basis for reliable data. The use of various tools ensures that the outcome is not only a result of a specific methodological option but also the findings are reliable and trustworthy.

The use of food security as a proxy for poverty gives a simplistic view of poverty considering its multifaceted nature. However, the goal was to use something that can be easily understood by community members. While a sample of six villages is not adequate enough to make inferences and generalizations outside the research context, triangulation of information particularly recurrent themes with other studies improves data transferability.

3.8.0. Study area

3.8.1 Mbozo Banda Village, Mzimba District

Mbozo Banda village is located in Traditional Authority Mzikubola in Mzimba District. It is comprised of 40 households most of which are from the Banda clan. The village was the only patriarchal society visited during the field study. The village is predominantly ngoni society though tumbuka is the main language of communication. The community has two main sources of livelihood that is subsistence farming and migrant labour. The majority of the villagers depend on farming for food and income. The major crops grown are maize, soya beans, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, common beans and groundnuts. Some households also grow tobacco as a source of income. For those people who do not produce enough to sustain themselves they supplement their food through casual labour popularly known as *ganyu*. In addition, a significant number of men have migrated to South Africa in search of jobs. Some of them send remittances regularly to their families. These families are able to invest the money in agriculture and other off farm productive activities.

3.8.2 Mphalikwa Village, Dowa District

Mphalikwa village is found in Group Village Headman Mbalame in Dowa District. The village has 63 households. The main sources of livelihoods for the people of Mphalikwa are farming and casual labour. The common crops grown include maize and tobacco. In this community tobacco is highly regarded such that more land is dedicated to tobacco growing as compared to maize. Growing tobacco is seen as a way of escaping from poverty. However, most people spend the proceeds from tobacco sales such that they fail to procure adequate food for their households. *Ganyu* is the major coping mechanism for poor families. In this process poor families exchange their labour for either cash or food at the nearby farm and Refugee Camp. Culturally, the village follows a matriarchal system of inheritance where a man settles at the home of his wife. The wife owns all the property that the household might acquire including land and children. In general dissolution of marriages is relatively easier compared to patriarchal societies where men are required to pay dowry. Consequently, like other matrilineal societies, the village has a high proportion of female-headed households.

3.8.3 Nkulera Village, Lilongwe District

Nkulera village has 77 families and is located in Traditional Authority Dzoole. Apart from maize and tobacco growing the other sources of livelihoods include casual labour (*ganyu*), migrant labour to neighbouring districts, and small-scale business. Nkulera is located in a tobacco

growing belt area such that most farmers focus on the growing of tobacco at the expense of maize. Households, which fail to produce or procure adequate food, engage themselves in ganyu. The village has a long history of migrant labour to neighbouring districts such as Kasungu, Mchinji and Mzimba where they engage in contract farming in commercial tobacco estates.

3.8.4 Gobede Village, Neno District

Gobede village is situated in Traditional Authority Saimoni in Neno district. The district is one of the poorest and remote areas in Malawi characterized by poor infrastructure and accessibility to basic services. The village is made up of 117 households. The main source of livelihood is subsistence farming with maize and sorghum being the major food crops with cotton being the main cash crop. In addition, people supplement their income with charcoal baking. However, charcoal burning has negative impact on farming as people spend much time in the bush cutting trees instead of tending to their fields. Apart from charcoal burning most women collect baobab fruits to sell along the main road. Their main market for the fruits is the Village Hands, a small processing company at Kammwamba.

3.8.5 Mandawala Village, Mulanje District

Mulanje is one of the most densely populated districts in Malawi. Due to tea estate farming most people have been displaced into marginal lands. Consequently people in Mulanje have the lowest landholding sizes with an average of less than 0.5 hectares (Mulanje District Development Plan 2000). The village is located in Traditional Authority Nkanda and has 37 households. Despite the land pressure the main source of livelihood remains subsistence farming with ganyu being the main coping strategy for poor families

3.8.6 Subili Village, Phalombe District

Subili village is located on the foot of Mulanje Mountain in Traditional Authority Mkumba. The village has 148 households. All households are known by the female names since they are the owners of the land. As the original inhabitants women are more knowledgeable of their village compared to men who only come after marriage. The three main livelihood sources include farming, ganyu and exploitation of mountain forest including fruit gathering and selling of charcoal. Compared to the other sites, Subili had the highest percentage of female-headed households due to early marriages and high divorce rates.

Chapter 4

Targeted Social Protection in Malawi

4.1 Introduction

The concept of targeted social services is conceptually based on the understanding of poverty dynamics, risk and vulnerability. Therefore, designing of an effective social policy requires a comprehensive understanding of the problem it seeks to address. Targeted social safety nets assume that a targeted group exists in terms of both its numbers, characteristics and perceptions that are distinct from the rest. Chapter four provides a brief outline of poverty and vulnerability in Malawi. In addition, the chapter explores evolution of the targeted social programmes in Malawi.

4.2 Poverty and vulnerability in Malawi

Poverty being a multi-dimensional concept entails that the poor are deprived of economic, social, physical and psychological basic needs. However, for the purpose of comparability across countries, income poverty and the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) is widely used to measure poverty. In Malawi poverty and vulnerability has been on the increase over the past decades despite numerous poverty alleviation programmes. The trend has been attributed to a number of interrelated socio-economic, demographic, climatic and political factors. Due to high population growth of around 2.4% per annum there has been an enormous pressure on the limited resources particularly farmland (Harrigan, 2001). Malawi is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa (Harrigan 2001). The impact of high population growth has been exacerbated by the recurrent climatic shocks such as droughts and floods, which have severely affected agricultural productivity – the backbone of the economy and the main source of livelihood for 85% of the population (Chinsinga and O'Brien, 2007). Similarly, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has threatened major livelihood sources of the majority of the population with most families losing their economically active members and being left with a huge burden of orphans to care.

Malawi ranked 164th in the HDI is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the HDR 2007/8, 65% of its 13.2 million people live below the national poverty line³. In addition, 28% of the population are classified as ultra poor surviving on less than US\$0.26 per day (HDR

³ Based on the national poverty line of US\$0.40 per day. However if the international standard of less than US\$1 per day were used more than 85% of the population would be classified as poor.

2007). Poverty in Malawi is very dynamic with individuals or households moving above and below the poverty line due to shocks. Therefore, a significant percentage of people remain transitory poor due to increased vulnerability to shocks. Similar findings on increasing vulnerability are reflected in the World Bank sponsored Malawi Consultations with the Poor Report (Khaila et-al, 1999). The report argues that the number of households in the low well being category has doubled over the past decades, from 30-40% to 70-80%. According to the report the increase in vulnerability is associated with emergence or increase in number of people falling into the “lowest well being class” or the poorest of the poor locally known as – *osaukitsitsa*. This class has come into prominence due to the rising costs of living, increase in fertilizer prices, devaluation of the Kwacha, limited access to credit facilities and the impact of HIV/AIDS, which has robbed families of their breadwinners.

4.3 Transition of social protection in Malawi

While the term social protection is used interchangeably with social safety nets, social welfare, social security and social insurance, it is important to make the relevant distinctions. While these terms are part and parcel of social protection they do not equate to social protection on their own (Gentilin, 2005). Social protection is defined as “policies or actions that protect and promote the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable people” (World Bank, 2007). Broadly, social protection is built on three pillars, which are social prevention, social insurance and social assistance. For the purpose of this paper, the definition provided by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler will be used. In a context of vulnerability, social protection encompass “all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance social status and rights of the marginalized; with the overall objective of reducing economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups” (Devereux and Sabates- Wheeler 2004, cited in Gentilin, 2005: 138)

Social safety nets and social welfare form the social assistance pillar of social protection. While the two are largely confused, social safety nets are short-term measures that are designed to “provide income or consumption support to people when their livelihoods have declined to socially unacceptable level” (Devereux, 2002, Gentilin 2005). The World Bank define social safety nets narrowly as “direct measures to increase the consumption of the poor generally through transfers of cash or in-kind but not interventions intended to produce the long term increases in income” (World Bank, 1998:3). It is worth noting that the three pillars of social protection overlap. Haddad and Zeller (1996) argue that social safety nets encompass both

social assistance as well as social security functions. According to the 1990 World Development Report, social safety nets are essential for development as human capital investment and to ensure pro - poor growth. In this regard, social safety nets are conceived for the welfarist purpose that is to support inactive vulnerable groups and transitory poor. Therefore, social protection is considered to be a comprehensive policy framework that links social assistance actions to “wider objectives of vulnerability, growth and rights” (Gentilin 2005: 139). Recently the social protection discourse has evolved to encompass several other aspects including citizenship rights and social risk management. Similarly, social protection has moved from interventions merely aimed at cushioning the poor people from further slippage below poverty to being poverty reduction strategy and a human rights or entitlement issues (World Bank, 1998).

The social protection debate for Malawi has been largely shaped by international political and economic policies. Therefore to understand the policy environment, one has to understand the role and influence the donors and multinational financial institutions wield over Malawi Government policies. Similarly, the discussion on the social policy in Malawi is a debate that pits the state against the markets in the distribution of benefits of economic growth. In the context of agriculture, Doward et-al (2006) classifies social protection into four areas that is social protection from, independent of, for, through and with agriculture. Agriculture can serve as a vehicle of social protection (from) particularly where policies are aimed at stabilizing food prices and increasing availability of food. In Malawi, where the majority of people live in the rural areas and depend on farming as the main source of livelihood, agriculture is perceived as a mechanism to reduce livelihood risks through provision of crop or livestock insurance. Provision of agricultural inputs and seeds is a clear example of social protection through agriculture. The purpose is to ensure poor people have increased access to inputs so that they have improved production. While the government is yet to approve the policy, social protection has a long history in Malawi dating back to post independence period. According to Tsoka and Slater (2007), the history of social protection can be classified into four phases; period of universal subsidies, structural adjustment, social dimension adjustment and PRSP era, as shown in the Table 4.1.

4.3.1 Phase 1: Universal subsidies during post independence period

Like other new independent countries the postcolonial social policy was heavily tilted towards universal provision of social services. The main focus of social protection policy was price

controls and input subsidies. For thirty years until 1994, the country was a one party state. Under Kamuzu Banda dictatorship period the country experienced significant economic growth and agricultural expansion until early 1990s. The main driving force for the economy was the agricultural sector. The agricultural policy was largely characterized by universal subsidies on agricultural inputs and a dual system of production, that is, subsistence farming and commercial farming majoring in tobacco production (Harrigan 2001). Similarly, the government through its conglomerates such as the Agricultural Development and Market Cooperation (ADMARC) and the Press Trust maintained a tight control over agricultural production including prices of agricultural inputs and outputs. In addition, ADMARC also served as a distribution network of agricultural inputs and outputs across the country.

Table 4.1; Social Protection Phases in Malawi

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
1964 – 1981	1981 – 1990	1990 – 1994	1994 – 2008
Post independence era Universal subsidies Price and output controls	SAP Era Phasing out of universal subsidies Removal of price/output controls Privatisation Introduction of Targeted food transfers Targeted nutrition programmes	SDA Introduction of Targeted food transfers Targeted nutrition programmes Credit schemes	Towards a Social Protection Policy Credit schemes NGO proliferation of safety nets activities Public works programme Formation NSNS Social Protection Policy

Adapted from Slater and Tsoka (2007)

4.3.2 Phase 2; Structural Adjustment Programmes Period

Due to the late 1970s financial crisis, the government under the supervision of the IMF and World Bank adopted the structural adjustment programme. Under the SAPs the government was expected to remove agricultural input subsidies and deregulate the agricultural markets (Harrigan 2001). Although input subsidies and price controls were able to cushion the vulnerable from further abject poverty they were considered to be too expensive, unsustainable and a cause for market inefficiency. Therefore the government started to remove the subsidies

in the early 1980s. However, deregulation of markets did not take place until in the mid 1990s after change of government. Following in the footprints of the Washington Consensus and donor wisdom, the new democratic government led by Bakili Muluzi saw market control as the major cause of economic stagnation particularly low productivity among the smallholder farmers. Therefore, the new government with “technical advice” backed by aid conditionality from IMF and World Bank and other donors decided to deregulate the agricultural market and dismantle the conglomerates as part of the liberalization process of the economy (Chinsinga 2007). It is worth mentioning that while the government is perceived to be weak, the implementation of these new policies has not been as per the technical advice. The government has demonstrated passive resistance to some of the policies by delaying the implementation of such policies. A clear example is the deregulation of ADMARC, which took a decade much to the dislike of the multilateral donors.

The main underlying principle for deregulation was that markets would smoothen the benefits of increased economic growth so that the poor would have increased access to income. In this regard market liberalization was considered pro-poor policy as smallholder farmers were expected to participate in the production and marketing of agricultural produce (including tobacco which was formerly reserved for the big estates) at the international markets. Similarly, market deregulation was considered necessary since controlled pricing and subsidies were perceived to be distortionary and bred inefficient practices in the markets. Therefore, price deregulation would encourage competition among the buyers thereby benefiting the rural farmers through better prices (Harrigan, 2001).

However, years of market reforms alone failed to deliver the much-expected results. Although Malawi was one of the pioneers of SAPs in Southern Africa, the impact in addressing chronic structural imbalances has been largely negligible. On the contrary, the implementation of SAPs worsened the already declining economic situation. Prescriptions under the structural adjustment programme which advocated for market liberalization only helped to dismantle government systems and apparatuses that provided a minimum level of livelihood security. Before the introduction of SAPs in the early 1980s, the country GDP per capita was growing at an average rate of about 5.2%. Thereafter, the GDP began to fall at an average rate of 1.5% per annum. The dismantling of the agriculture sector particularly the removal of subsidies and privatisation of the conglomerates created huge consequences for the poor rural farmers (Chinsinga, 2007). Apart from agriculture being the major source of food in Malawi, it is the

major source of employment and subsistence for more than 85% of the population. Therefore, a decline in productivity with its resultant market variability creates livelihood shocks among poor families that increase their vulnerability. Therefore with increased economic and climatic shocks such as droughts and floods the situation resulted into increased vulnerability and poverty manifesting itself through food insecurity culminating into frequent food crises. Consequently, the country dropped from position 138 in 1990 to position 166 out of 178 countries on the Human Development Index (Chinsinga, 2007).

4.3.3 Phase 3; Social Dimension Adjustment Period

SAPs reforms failed to make significant improvement in the economy. Even the small gains achieved by few individuals failed to offset the losses experienced by the majority of the population. Such poorly designed and ill-conceived economic policies associated with the introduction of structural adjustment programmes left the small holder farmers more vulnerable. Even the World Bank, the proponent of structural adjustment policies conceded that market forces alone failed to distribute the benefits of economic growth to the poor to reduce poverty (Devereux, 2007):

“Bank is increasingly sensitive to the fact that the policy prescriptions and interventions it supports in Malawi are largely perceived to promote growth without directly addressing immediate poverty (and particularly the urgent problem of household food insecurity); and that effects of liberalization-particularly the dismantling of the previous state marketing apparatus and price controls for maize- have had a negative effect on the welfare of the poor. As a consequence, in the evolving strategy the bank is committed to do something to more directly address the immediate needs of the poor” (World Bank 1998:2).

Due to the worsening effects of SAPs, the World Bank realized that its economic policies were hurting the majority of the poor. Therefore the bank introduced the social dimension of adjustment (SDA) initiatives with the aim of developing “ the institutional capacity of the government in partnership with civil society in order to meaningfully integrate social and poverty concerns in the development process” (Devereux, 2007). Accordingly the SDA not only “opened up space but also built the foundation for an institutional framework for projectized safety net programmes among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs) and faith based organizations (FBOs)” (Devereux 2007:13). The bank’s push for a social dimension of adjustment was an indictment of multilateral donors’ failure to consider the negative effects of their economic policies but also a belated attempt to replace

previous strategies with livelihood protection measures. With the opening up of the space a number of safety net interventions were implemented by different stakeholders. Such relief interventions were aimed at cushioning the vulnerable households to prevent them from sliding into destitution. The interventions include; starter pack programme, targeted input programme, targeted nutrition programmes and direct welfare transfers both cash or in-kind

4.3.4 Phase 4; Towards a Social Protection Policy

The proliferation of safety net interventions meant that monitoring and coordination was rather difficult since the implementation of these activities were ad hoc, short term and without a clear policy direction. In view of the above, the government with the support of its donor partners developed the National Safety Net Strategy with an overall goal “to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society by enhancing their productivity and increasing their self reliance” (Chinsinga 2007). The justification of the NSNS was that it would bring harmonization and coordination of loosely interrelated donor initiated safety net projects (White and Appleton, 1999 cited in Chinsinga, 2007).

The NSNS was therefore designed to contribute to the MPRS through pillar three, namely improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable segments of society. Four interventions were recommended under this pillar which included: public works programmes, targeted input subsidies, targeted nutrition programmes and direct welfare transfers including food and support to secondary school going orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) (Slater and Tsoka, 2007). The NSNS distinguished two broad categories of safety nets. These were: 1) productivity enhancement safety nets also referred to as social insurance aimed at increasing income and boosting the local economy; and 2) welfare transfers also described as social assistance. The NSNS championed the community based targeting approach for efficiency and cost effectiveness in order to achieve greatest possible impact on poverty and vulnerability (Rook and Maleta, 2001).

Due to a number of factors including lack of political will and donor support the strategy collapsed soon after it had seen the light. In view of the demise of the NSNS, the government started developing a social protection policy. In the current set up, social protection is located within the pillars of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) that is the “overarching policy framework for wealth creation and economic growth as a means for

reducing poverty on a sustainable basis". The overall goal and objectives of the social protection pillar are respectively to: improve the socio-economic indicators for the most vulnerable people in society (MGDS, 2006: 28) and efficient and effective support to most vulnerable people with very limited factors of production (MGDS, 2006: 27). Therefore the social protection policy lies within the sphere of economic, social and disaster management policy as shown in figure 4.1.

4.4 The return of agriculture input subsidies

Malawi's is largely an agricultural based economy with agriculture alone contributing 39% to the economy and accounting for 83% total foreign earnings (Chirwa et-al, 2006). Similarly, agriculture employs 85% of the total labour force. Although agriculture has maintained its dominant role in the economy, the sector has been on the decline since the early 1980s. While there are some signs of recovery since 2005/2006, agricultural production has remained erratic due to both economic and climatic factors. Food insecurity is one of the factors contributing to poverty for the majority of Malawian population. The government in the past embarked on a number of initiatives including input subsidy and distribution of food aid to ameliorate the problem of increasing vulnerability and poverty.

4.4.1 Starter Pack Programme.

In view of the above market failures to redistribute the benefits of growth to the poor, distribution of free inputs was seen as a major mechanism to increase food security among poor households hence reduce poverty (NEC 2000). The majority of the poor live in the rural areas and survive on subsistence farming. Therefore intervention directed at the rural poor would have significant impact on poverty in general. The provision of agricultural inputs was seen as critical since "more than half the cash value of all food consumed by rural households comes from their own fields" (NEC 2000). Therefore, provision of free inputs was important in increasing household productivity and food security.

Following the 1997 –1998 nationwide food shortages, the government with the support from its donors embarked on one of major policy shifts since the implementation of SAPs. In 1998 the government re-introduced distribution of agriculture inputs to smallholder farmers under the Starter Pack Scheme. The purpose of the scheme was to provide agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and seeds to all 2.86 million-smallholder farmers (Chinsinga 2004). Except for those with regular employment (off-farm income sources such as urban dwellers), the scheme

targeted all smallholder farmers. The starter pack scheme had several objectives such as increase the number of poor farmers adopting improved agricultural technologies particularly use of hybrid seeds, increase cereal production, food security and improve soil fertility through the application of fertilizer (Levy, 2003). The programme was seen as an initiative to transform smallholder agriculture through the use and adoption of improved agriculture technologies. Over the two-year period when the programme was implemented, Malawi registered a surplus in maize production.

4.4.2 Targeted Input Programme

Despite the positive impact of the Starter Pack Programme, the programme was scaled down. The decision to scale down the successful programme highlights the level of dependence of the Malawi government on donor funding. Critics argued that free distribution of inputs was not sustainable and was distorting markets. Due to budget limitations and donor influence, beneficiaries for the “universal starter pack” were reduced from 2.8 to 1.5 million farmers in 2000 - 2001 growing season. The scheme therefore became the Targeted Input Programme. It was designed to target only the poorest farmers who were unable to access farm inputs. The rationale for distributing the inputs shifted from transforming the smallholder agriculture to poverty alleviation (Van Donge, 2001). As welfare programme the idea was to focus the intervention on the poorest to protect them from further shocks. While the programme continued in the 2001-2002 season, the number of farmers was further reduced to 1 million poorest of the poor farmers (Chinsinga et-al, 2001).

4.4.3 Agriculture input subsidy programme

Following the 2005 food crisis after Malawi recorded a massive 700,000 metric tonnes deficit of its food production the government with the support of the donors imported thousands of metric tonnes of food to feed the nation. The crisis however revived the debate on agricultural subsidies particularly within the new government circles. While previous governments had been forced to remove subsidies through conditionality, the hypocrisy behind such advice became more apparent as western governments continue to spend billions of dollars in subsidizing their farmers. With one of the highest population densities in Africa, rural farmers in Malawi cultivate small plots with an average of less than 0.5 hectares. Due to repeated cultivation without adequate time for fallow soils in Malawi have been largely depleted of key nutrients. Therefore, without the use of organic or inorganic fertilizer productivity is very low. However, by international standards the majority of smallholder farmers are poor as they survive on less

than US\$0.40 a day. Therefore procurement of fertilizer at \$30 per 50kg bag is beyond the reach of the majority of poor farmers. Without external support these farmers are likely to grow crops without fertilizer and harvest low produce (Chinsinga and O'Brien, 2007).

Previous policies of removing subsidies or free inputs have been superseded by food crisis. For instance, the country has suffered five food crises over the two past decades starting from 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2005. Food crises require massive importation of food to avert starvation among the population. However, importation of food is costly compared to subsidizing production. For example during the 2005 food crisis the government spent US\$93 million compared to \$51 million spent in the 2005 – 2006 input programme which allowed the country to produce adequate food to feed the population (Chinsinga and O'Brien, 2007).

Despite fierce criticism from international donors the government re-introduced the targeted agricultural fertilizer subsidy programme. While there was fear that the introduction of subsidies would create market inefficiencies, failure of donor prescribed policies to alleviate food security and vulnerability meant that there was little alternative (Chinsinga and O'Brien, 2007). Although donors shunned away from budgetary support to the programme in the first year, the government went ahead and implemented the programme in 2005-2006 seasons. Following impressive records of high agricultural production some donors began to support the programme in the second year. The goal of the programme is to boost national production of maize through the use of fertilizer and improved seeds at smallholder level. Under this programme the government provides vouchers to targeted poor families to procure seeds and fertilizer for maize and tobacco at a reduced price. Each targeted household receives two vouchers to procure two bags of subsidized fertilizer at MK900 (nine hundred Malawi Kwacha) instead of the market price pegged at MK4000 (four thousand Malawi Kwacha⁴). The programme targets more than a million poor farmers across the country. The fertilizer subsidy programme has been hailed for increased maize productivity in the country. In 2006, the country produced 500,000 metric tonnes more than its national food requirement of 2.1 million tones. In 2007, the country recorded a surplus of 1.3 million metric tones of maize (Kadzandila, 2007). There is still debate on the exact factors that led to the bumper harvest over the three-year period. On the one hand, the government attributes the bumper harvest largely to the introduction of subsidized fertilizer that has improved access to the input especially to

⁴ Current exchange rate for Malawi Kwacha (MK) against the United States Dollar is US\$1=MK140. Therefore the subsidized bag of fertilizer cost US\$6.43 compared to US\$28.57 at the market price.

smallholder farmers. In this regard, the introduction of subsidized fertilizer is perceived to be a major boost to agriculture production as it addresses the major constraint to smallholder farmers. On the other hand, sceptics argue that the bumper harvest was mainly due to good rainy seasons over the period. During the three-year period, rainfall pattern and distribution was largely normal apart from isolated cases of droughts and floods in few districts. Apart from fertilizer subsidy, it is evident from rainfall data that the country received normal rainfall requirements (FEWSNET 2006). Since smallholder farmers largely depend on rain fed agriculture, good rainfall pattern over the period played a critical role in increasing maize production.

From the above, discussion it is clear that isolating one factor as the major cause for the bumper harvest could be misleading. Similarly, it is also true that in the absence of good rains production could have been heavily compromised due to dependency on rain fed agriculture. While there has been increased production and surplus production at the national level, the critical question is whether there is food security at the household level as a result of the input subsidy. In chapter five, the thesis highlights the impact of targeting on household access to inputs and its resultant production. While there was some increase in production at household level, in general production has not been significant to attain food security for the majority of families because of targeting. Most households in the selected sites received less than one bag of fertilizer.

The shift from universal starter pack to targeted agriculture input meant that there was need to select potential beneficiaries to receive inputs. The government advocated for a community based targeting approach where the responsibility to select these beneficiaries was left with the communities themselves. Each village was expected to form a committee comprising of either of the following; the village head, politicians, religious leaders, local councillors, community members, etc. According to the guidelines, the community was tasked to select the poor and vulnerable farmers but with land and capacity to use the resources efficiently. However, evaluations have reported different outcomes on the agents and the targeting process itself.

4.5 Reflections on the transition of social protection policy in Malawi.

Like most poor countries in the world Malawi heavily depends on its donor partners. Aid and grants contribute up to 80% of the national budget and 50% of the recurrent expenditure (Chinsinga 2007). Due to their significant financial contributions donors through conditionalities

have largely dictated the economic policies. However, such policies are not necessarily shaped or influenced by context specific issues but rather oscillate between ideologies from their home countries and popular development models being championed through the financial institutions. The government's dependence on international aid, a limited fiscal base and lack of technical expertise renders it very weak in terms of bargaining or negotiating with its development partners.

However, donors themselves seem not to sing from the same hymnbook. There is generally lack of agreement on the role of the state in market regulation. The discussion on social protection particularly distribution of free inputs clearly demonstrate the ideological conflict between the two camps, that is free market economy or neo-liberal ideologies (espoused by the World Bank and USAID) and Keynesian followers such as DFID and EU who advocate for some government intervention (Chinsinga 2007, Devereux 2007). DFID, GTZ, EU and UNDP funded the initial Starter Pack distribution, a productivity enhancing safety net. The programme was designed as a response to the increasing poverty levels and the declining food security situation as a result of the economic policies promoted by the World Bank, IMF and USAID. For the Keynesian followers there was need for the government to intervene as the markets had failed to properly distribute the benefits of economic growth and combat poverty. However, proponents of the Washington consensus argued that free inputs distributions would create market distortions and act as disincentives to potential traders.

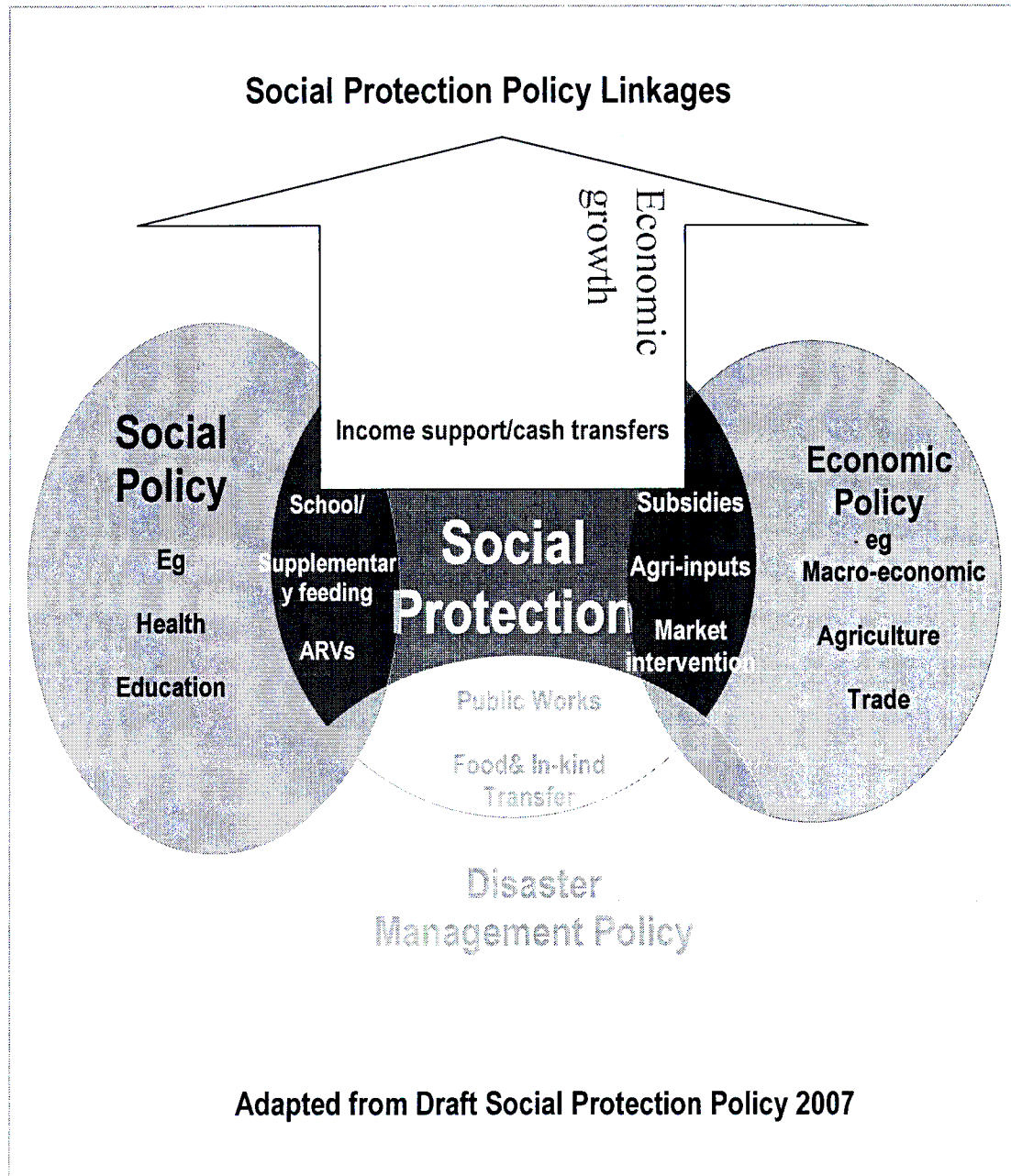
The lack of consensus among donors meant that there was only one loser, the poor. The free input programme was further scaled down to such an extent that it was no longer a productivity enhancement programme. Similarly in the absence of a general consensus between the government and donors, safety net programmes were perceived as temporally without long term commitment in terms of funding and institutional base among both the donors and the government. Until recently, the implementation of safety net programmes in Malawi has been largely reactionary rather than through a clearly developed policy. While a number of direct welfare transfers such as food and income transfers, have been implemented over the years most of them were adhoc and without proper coordination between the government, donors and NGOs (World Bank 2007).

The implementation of the subsidy programme has demonstrated the difference between externally induced and locally developed policies. Despite the technical advice from the donors

the government decided to ignore it and implement the programme. The decision was not only a bold one considering the influence of donors but was also an eye opener to the donor about developing strategies that have the potential to alleviate suffering in the Malawi. The programme has therefore created a new platform on policy formulation in Malawi. Instead of donors reproducing some one size fits all policies there is need for context specific strategies.

Until recently, donor and multinational financial institutions have largely driven the evolution of the social policy in Malawi. Unfortunately, these externally induced policies exacerbated poverty and vulnerability in Malawi. The dependency on foreign aid meant that the country was to a large extent a passive recipient and weak to offer tangible criticism. However, the subsidy has proved that government need courage to oppose policies, which are likely to have negative effects. The subsidy programme therefore provides a turn around in the policy formulation process where the government unlike donors has a central role to play. The government has been heavily applauded for its bold decision to start the fertilizer subsidy programme that has resulted into bumper harvests over the past two years. However, it is not clear whether the government adoption of targeting mechanism was because of a fixed budget or due to influence of neo-liberal policies that advocate for targeted interventions. Previous TIP evaluations had shown some anecdotal evidence that targeting was an alien concept and against egalitarian values. Using the experiences of the 2007 – 2008, the next chapter presents findings on how community based targeting works in Malawi and its impact on the society.

Figure 4.1: Malawi Social Protection Framework



Chapter 5;

Research Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the findings of the study, which are presented under a number of themes. The themes are categorized in relation to perceptions, experiences including cultural appropriateness, targeting feasibility, and participation for collective action. Some case studies are also included to highlight emerging issues and patterns. In this chapter the focus is to draw relationships and patterns between community targeting and social structure. Using the various relationships developed, the analysis attempts to answer the primary objective of the study.

5.2 Social demographics of the study population

5.2.1 Household Head Characteristics

Community based targeting mechanisms use observable indicators of poverty to select beneficiaries. Therefore, it is important to understand the various categories of people that exist within the community. For clarity and simplicity five common categories were used to classify community members according to household head; female headed, male headed, orphan headed and elderly headed households. The fifth category included was households keeping orphans whether male, female, or elderly headed. These categories have been widely used as indicators for targeting households for safety nets in Malawi (TIP 2002, 2003). For purposes of this study, an elderly person is defined as someone above sixty years old while an orphan is someone below the age of 18 who has lost both parents. A household keeping orphans refers to a family with more than two orphans. Due to the high population of orphans in Malawi estimated at close to a million, the minimum of two orphans per family was necessary if households were to be differentiated for the purpose of targeting (World Bank 2007). With a loose definition of orphans, almost all households would qualify as keeping orphans.

Despite initial reluctance in some villages, participants were able to categorize households according to the above groups. According to the social mapping exercise, 18% of the families were female headed. Elderly headed (whether male or female) constituted 12% of the household population while 1% were orphan headed. Similarly 5% of the households kept orphans with most of the majority (4%) being female-headed households. The table 5.1 below shows the summary from the six sites.

Table 5.1. Household head demographic characteristics (%)

Household Head	Village Name						Average
	Gobede	Mandawala	Mbozo	Mphalikwa	Nkulera	Subili	
Female headed	7	14	8	25	11	20	15
Male headed	70	65	75	67	66	68	68
Elderly headed	16	16	15	3	16	9	12
Orphan headed	1	2	0	0	1	1	1
Female headed keeping orphans	5	3	2	3	5	1	3
Widowers keeping orphans	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Elderly headed keeping orphans	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

While it is difficult to make generalizations across the regions because of the small sample size, it is clear that Mphalikwa and Subili have the highest proportion of female-headed households compared to Gobede (7%) and Mbozo (8%). Except for Mphalikwa (3%) the spread of elderly headed households is almost even across the six sites. The study shows that the majority of orphans live with female-headed households (3%) compared to male (1%) or elderly headed (less than 1%). Culturally Mbozo village is the only patriarchal society in the sample and coincidentally has the lowest proportion of female and orphan headed households. However, inferences across regions or between matriarchal and patriarchal society would require the same number of samples.

5.2.2 Household Food Security Status

Due to complexities of poverty and lack of adequate data to differentiate the poor from non-poor, the study used food security status as an indicator for poverty. The choice of using food security as a poverty indicator was based on field experiences. Communities were very resistant to distinguish each other in terms of poverty status. The common phrase one got when trying to differentiate people according to their poverty categories was that *"tonse ndife osauka kuno"* translated as, "we are all poor here" (Khaila et-al 1999, TIP 2001, 2002, 2004, Chinsinga 2004). Consequently, it was very difficult to classify people using poverty status directly as people refused to take part in such exercises. However, there was recognition among the communities that people access resources and necessities particularly food differently; *"timadziwa kuti anthu amapata mosiyana ngakhale anthu akumudzi tonse tili*

amphawi” (although we are all poor here in the village we know that we have different means of earning our living). People were willing despite some occasional resistance to categorize households according to food security status. Accordingly, participants recognized that there are households, which are food secure while others are food insecure. Within the food insecure group there are also some households, which are extremely food insecure. Despite the different names used by participants from the six sites to denote the above categories in general there were common characteristics of each category.

5.2.2.1 Food Secure Households

A food secure (FS) household refers to a household that has adequate food to last the whole year that is from harvest to harvest. The food can be either through own production or purchase from the market. There are a number of local names used to describe this group such as *opeza*, *obiliwira*, (Mphalikwa, Nkulera, Gobede), *akagwa amasisasa*, *opata* (Subili), *olemera* or *mwanaalirenji* – “what can a child cry for” (Mandawala) and *Awo vingoma vikusangana* (Mbozo). The term *obiliwira* means someone who is clean while *akagwa amasisasa* refers to someone who after falling down rubs himself to clean up the dust. According to the participants, the poor have no time to bath and look clean or to rub themselves after falling down. Therefore only those that are better off can afford to remain clean. While the description from Mbozo – *awo vikusangana* means that the farmer has to remove the previous year harvest from the granary in order to get space for the current harvest. The term highlights strong food security status such that the household does not suffer from food shortages.

Families in this group are able to access agricultural inputs with ease as such they are able to produce adequate food. In addition, they have the capacity to hire casual labour (*ganyu*) to support them in their farming. Similarly, this group is able to cultivate a variety of crops including cash crops, which brings the valuable cash to the households. They also keep different livestock such as cattle, goats, pigs, chicken and sheep. Therefore, even when one source of food is depleted they are able to offset the shortfall with other supplies. This category also includes salaried employees, pensioners, business people and those dependent on remittances. Remittances form a major source of income especially for households that have relatives working in South Africa. While this group of people relying on remittances may not necessarily produce adequate food from their own farm, they are able to procure enough food for themselves. The main characteristic of this group is their diverse income and livelihood sources, which helps to cushion them in times of shocks. In terms of poverty status this group

is largely non-poor. Some participants described them as “*oti atha kupala moto ndi pakamwa*” (those that can carry fire with their mouth which means they can solve all their problems with the resources they have).

5.2.2.2 Food Insecure Households (FI)

Food insecure households refer to households that do not have adequate food to take them throughout the year. Although they strive to produce as much as they can they are unable to produce adequate food due to lack of resources particularly agricultural inputs such as fertilizer. Consequently, they tend to run out of food in December such that during the lean periods these families have to struggle to make the ends meet as they wait for the next harvest in March or April. The group is commonly referred to by various names across the sites; *opezako* (Mphalikwa, Gobede, Nkulera), *ovutika* (Subili), *wakusangako* (Mbozo) and *opata* (Mandawala). While they may own few assets such as livestock and poultry the assets are few to cushion them during the lean periods and major shocks. Due to food shortages and a lack of reliable sources of income the main coping mechanism include soliciting support from relatives in form of credits or food. In addition they also rely on casual labour (*ganyu*) for survival. *Ganyu* refers to short-term agricultural labour or piecework, which is usually demeaning and is associated with food insecurity. Payment for *ganyu* is either in cash or kind and is generally low so that it only attracts those who are vulnerable.

Although this group struggles, it has the potential and will power to achieve food security provided it has access to inputs. In terms of poverty classification this group combines the poor and transitory poor. In a good rainy season combined with access to inputs this group can achieve food security thereby move to the food secure category. On the other hand, in a bad year, this group can as well fall into the last category of extremely food insecure.

5.2.2.3 Extremely Food Insecure (EFI) Households

Households in this group are the most vulnerable and socially excluded households. They are unable to produce adequate food due to either physical limitations or poverty. In most cases they grow their crops without applying fertilizer such that they get low produce. Due to perennial hunger problems these families resort to premature harvesting of their crops that is before the maize is completely dry. Due to premature harvesting, production is heavily reduced and they run out of food before or soon after the harvesting period as the quotation below demonstrates;

“Amavutika kuti adzidyetse panthawi yomwe adzawo akukolola” (They even struggle to feed themselves at a time when their friends are harvesting. Social mapping participants Gobede village, Neno

For more than six months, the households do not have reliable sources of food. They struggle to get food through ganyu and begging from relatives. Since food insecurity is a chronic problem these households spent most of their time doing ganyu instead of working in their fields. This group is popularly known by the following terms *ovutikitsitsa* (Mphalikwa) *ovutikitsa* (Gobede, Subili), *ovutika* (Nkulera) and *wakusuzgika* (Mbozo). In Subili village they are also called *anamalira*, which figuratively means the bereaved in a funeral set up but here it means they are always crying for help. Most of the people in this group include the elderly, chronically ill people or female-headed houses with many dependants.

While poverty is multi dimensional, studies have shown that food security and poverty are highly correlated in Malawi. The poor spend more than 75% of their income on food (TIP 2002, Chinsinga 2004). Since targeting is based on the assumption that the community can identify the poor from the non-poor, participants were requested to categorize households according to food security status. Although there are variations across the regions, on average 23% of the rural household population was considered as being food secure, 45% food insecure and 32% extremely food insecure. In general the proportion of food secure households was higher in Mbozo (38%), Subili (39%) and Mandawala (27%) compared to Nkulera (8%), Mpalikwa (14%) and Gobede (15%). To some extent the above distribution is closely linked with the growing of tobacco and maize as a primary source of income and food. Areas with tobacco as the dominant cash crop such as Mpalikwa and Nkulera reported a high proportion of food insecure households compared to areas where maize is the main crop grown.

While the above figures slightly differ from earlier studies, it is worth pointing out that timing of the study could have had some influence on the categorization process. From the group discussion, it was clear that people based their judgement on the prevailing situation as one participant put;

“Apa chomene titolelenga umu pakhomo paliri sono chifukwa nyengo zasinthako chomeneko” (We will mainly consider the current household situation because things have changed quite a lot) social mapping participant, Mbozo Village, Mzimba.

Since the study was conducted before the harvesting period except for the villages in Southern Region of Malawi, it is likely that the prevailing situation affected the categorization process. However, the results compare favourably with the previous studies conducted after the harvesting period, which found that 27% of the households were food secure, 44% were food insecure and 29% were extremely food insecure. Comparatively, there is a significant improvement in the South where more people (27% for Mandawala and 36% for Subili have moved into the food secure category than 18% reported during TIP 2002. Sampled villages from the north and south indicate a decline in household food security status. For instance the proportion of food secure category has decline from 47% to 40% in Mbozo and 28% to 14% in Mpalikwa village in Central Region. However, it is worthy noting that with the limited sample size, it could be difficult to make generalizations across the country. The proportion of food insecure and extremely food insecure households has remained relatively the same around mid forties and 32% respectively. To a larger extent, the improvement in the South can be attributed to favourable rainfall coupled with government's scheme of provision of vouchers for subsidized agricultural inputs to poor farmers over the past three years. However, for the central and north the results could indicate that either poor farmers are not getting adequate fertilizer or they are applying fertilizer meant for maize in tobacco fields thereby failing to achieve food security.

In general, the above findings are in line with recent poverty studies which shows that 65% of the population is poor with 28% being ultra poor (Human Development Report 2007). On the other hand the results shows that there is little improvement in well being measurements as reported in Khaila et-al 1999. According to the study findings the threshold or cohort of people in the lower well-being or poor is still within 70% - 80% as was the case in 1999. This is contrast to Chinsinga and O'Brien (2007) findings, which indicate 8% improvement in the well being of people. It is worth noting that while the methodologies were similar to this study; the previous studies were conducted after farmers had harvested their produce.

5.2.3 Relationship between household head and food security status

It is generally argued that the type of household head is directly correlated with poverty status. For instance, female-headed households are likely to be poor compared to male-headed households (Malawi Government 2007). Using basic descriptive statistics the study attempted to correlate the food security status and the head of the household.

Comparatively female-headed households are generally more food insecure (94%) compared to 69% for male headed. The majority of female headed households (56%) are found in the extremely food insecure category than other groups. Similarly female headed households and elderly headed households keeping orphans are more than likely to be extremely food insecure compared to male-headed households keeping orphans (33%). While elderly headed households are generally perceived as vulnerable and poor, the results show that there were more food secure elderly headed (10%) compared to female-headed households (6%). However, 63% of the elderly households were classified as extremely food insecure compared to 27% categorized as food insecure. This partly suggests that while being elderly headed households may be linked to vulnerability, elderly alone is not adequate indicator as some may be better off than other categories. Table 5.2 contains the summary of the findings across the six sites.

Table 5.2. Household Food Security characteristics

Household Head	Food Secure %	Food Insecure %	Extremely Food Insecure %	Total
Female headed	6	38	56	100
Male headed	31	52	17	100
Elderly headed	10	27	63	100
Orphan headed	0	0	100	100
Female headed keeping orphans	5	5	89	100
Widower keeping orphans	0	67	33	100
Elderly headed keeping orphans	0	0	100	100

According to participants' experiences female and elderly headed households are more vulnerable because they lack the means to generate the required cash. Firstly, old people unlike most men do not have the strength to compete with men in labour markets. Secondly, female-headed households are likely to have more children to look after which hampers their mobility to participate in income generating activities as one village head explained;

"Awa mwayi wopeza khobili amaatusowa kusiyana ndi anthu aamuna" (These people (referring to female and elderly headed) lack income opportunities unlike men)

Despite initial reluctance to categorize and the common allegation that we are all poor, it is clear that communities have the knowledge and capacity to classify who is poor or non poor as the quote below demonstrate;

“Awa ngakhale ana amadziwa kuti nkuchimake kwa mavuto, ngakhale mutakafunsa ku Mtengowathenga uko akakuuzani chimodzimodzi” (Even children know that her home is the headquarters of poverty, even if you go to Mtengowathenga hospital they will tell you the same story” Participants from Nkulera village describing Nasimbenji Mwale.

However, there were few occasions where participants debated strongly before reaching an agreement on the food security status of the family. In most cases such families involved the participants themselves.

5.4 Targeting

This section presents community perceptions, impressions, fears and practices on the concept of targeting. It provides a comparative analysis of what communities think about targeting and what they actually do when asked to target. The first part of the sections presents findings on targeting feasibility and the conditions under which it is carried out. Thereafter, the section explores community perspectives on the appropriateness of targeting. The last part of the section highlights the actual process of targeting in terms of who is targeted. Similarly, it presents some of the factors underlying their decisions on whether to target or not. The section also presents a number of examples through case studies on the overall impact of targeting on the community.

5.4.1. Feasibility of targeting

The social mapping exercise has demonstrated that communities know who is poor and better off in the village. Therefore it is expected that communities should be able to target effectively given that they are able to distinguish the poor from non-poor. The simulation exercises demonstrated that while targeting is feasible, the choice on who to target is a delicate balance of several factors apart from poverty status. In general people were reluctant to target people as “deserving” and “undeserving” (Levy, 2003, Chinsinga, 2005). In Nkulera village when participants were asked to target they initially requested to discuss amongst themselves before making a decision. However, unlike Chinsinga (2005) the study did not find communities that completely refused to target.

Despite the initial resistance, results from social card games show that targeting is largely possible as one participant explained;

“Timatha kusankha bwinobwino bola kuti zomwe akufuna kuti tizona posankha”

(We can target very well provided you tell us clearly the selection criteria) Social card game participants, Subili Village, Phalombe

“Ngakhale kusankha sikwabwino ngati zinthu zachepa nkotheke bola patakhala ndondomeko yabwino”. (If the resources are fewer we can target provided there are

proper guidelines but targeting is not good) Social card game participants, Mpalikwa Village, Dowa

During social card games, it was found that households in the extremely food insecure category were nominated first compared to other groups. Selection of households in this category went on smoothly without much disagreement. However, as this category got exhausted and the selection process moved on to other categories there was a tendency to debate longer than in the first instance. Partly, this demonstrates the difficulties of distinguishing people within the same segment of poverty

A number of participants reported that they were familiar with targeting especially during the 2002 and 2005 food crisis when NGOs requested them to target. While targeting has been going on for agricultural inputs they were not sure who was responsible for conducting it. However, the majority felt it was the village head in collaboration with the agricultural extension workers who were registering beneficiaries. In some villages the participants were very confident that they had selected the most vulnerable and even challenged the team to verify the names through household visits.

Despite the widespread condemnation of targeting, there were positive sentiments from some sections of participants. For instance, participants from Mandawala village believe that targeting has more benefits to the village. They observed that in the past the village used to mobilise itself to work in the garden of a colleague who was sick, old or had disability. Therefore, if government or any organisation is helping such village members it means that the whole village is being supported, otherwise the whole village is supposed to help those in need. Therefore, most villages that refuse targeting is because of selfishness. Most of the time those who insist that the village should refuse targeting are the fairly better off. They have that feeling

that “if I can't benefit then nobody else should”. They insist that we are all poor therefore they encourage people to resist targeting.

“Omwe ali opezako bwino ndi omwe amakana kuti tisankhe anthu zinthu zikachepa, amati kuli bwino tonse tisalandile (Those that are better off are normally at the fore front to reject the idea of targeting). Input focus group discussion, Mandawala village, Mulanje.

Even the idea of distributing the input equally among the village members is mainly hatched by the selfish people who are not the most vulnerable. The purpose of such a scheme is to benefit from handouts purely based on village membership rather than vulnerability status. However, participants argued that such thinking and practices are detrimental to the welfare of the poor;

“Maghanoghano ghakugawa kwa waliyonse na apo vinthu vilipo vidoko ngakukoma wanthu wakusuzgika chifukwa kadoko kala wapika kangawafumya mmasuzgo yayi”. (The idea of sharing inputs equally to all families is harmful to the aspiration of poor people, since the little they get is not enough to make a difference in their lives). In-depth interview, Mbozo village head, Mzimba

Similarly participants felt that those who are better off advocate resistance to targeting to maintain social economic status quo. Some participants argued that such people are afraid that if inputs are properly targeted the vulnerable may as well attain food security as such may be less interested in going for ganyu as the comments below sum up the concerns;

“Wakukhumba kuti wanyawo chaka na chaka wawenge na njala mbwenu wakapangenge maganyu mu minda yawo” (They want their friends to remain food insecure every year so that they can continue working in their gardens as ganyu labourers), In-depth interview, Mbozo village head, Mzimba

Despite such awareness on the importance of targeting, participants explained that *“pofuna kuti tikhale mumtendere ngati anthu a mudzi umodzi timangogawana pang'onopang'ono”* (for the sake of peace in the village they end up sharing the inputs). Those who are well off are more vocal such that the community is afraid to alienate them. Consequently, leaders and community members are forced to accept such reasoning and practices.

4.2. Targeting and appropriateness

In all the sites there was discomfort and resentment among the participants when the term targeting was introduced. In the initial stages, participants were very unwilling and reluctant to start the process. The response was surprising considering that officially targeting has been going on for some time during the relief and input distributions. Participants cited a number of reasons why targeting was not appropriate in the villages.

5.4.2.1. Belief that targeting is against the spirit of togetherness.

Targeting is perceived to run against egalitarian values particularly the spirit of togetherness locally known as *umodzi*. The participants in almost all villages except Mandawala argued that targeting erodes the feeling of being one as summed up in the quote below;

“Anthufe ngamodzi ndiye kuti tizisankhana chifukwa cha zinthu zaulere sibwino” (We are one group of people therefore targeting some and leaving out others is not right).
Input focus group participants, Mphalikwa village, Dowa

Most villages are composed of one or two clans whereby people are closely related. Therefore targeting in this context is viewed negatively and mostly equated to discrimination and segregation. Targeting by the village head is interpreted that he or she ranks other households higher and closer to him than those left out as the comments below demonstrate:

“Kusankha pa iko kokha ndikolakwika. Tsankho ndiloipa ndipo ndilosafunika pakati pa wanthu” (Targeting on its own is bad. Segregation is not good and should not be tolerated amongst people) Group Village Headman Gobede, Neno

“These villages are actually a big extended family therefore asking them to target is asking them to choose who is more important than other relatives”. Charles Mzika, agricultural extension worker, Phalombe.

5.4.2.2 Belief that everyone is poor hence deserves something

People in the village argue that almost everyone is poor therefore everyone deserves some form of support. In this regard targeting is perceived not only to be difficult but also unnecessary particularly where the selection criterion is broad such as poor people. According to social mapping exercises more than 75% of the households were considered food insecure therefore selecting half of them without proper guidelines is a daunting task.

There is a common perception that free things or handouts are for everyone therefore everyone needs to benefit from it regardless of their social economic status. The quote from Mbozo village highlights this point;

“Pala chinthu chiza mumudzi ndiye kuti ntchatose icho. Tose ndise wana wa Malawi ndipo chili chose chakufuma kuboma chikwenera kufukirira waliyose” (We are all Malawians therefore benefits from the government are intended for everyone in the village). Input focus group discussion, Mbozo village, Mzimba

5.4.2.3. Fear that targeting creates tension in the village

There was a common perception that targeting is likely to lead into tension within the village. Participants argued that those left out are unlikely to accept the status quo without a fight, which could lead into confrontation with village head or the beneficiaries. In this regard discussion on targeting is commonly associated with the following terms; anger, *“maudani”* (hatred among villagers), envy and divisions among the community members. In all sites participants were equivocal in linking targeting and creating tension as the comments below demonstrate;

“Twakusankhana tukuyambiska mbembe mmudzi”. (Targeted relief materials cause fighting in the village. Input focus group participants, Mbozo village, Mzimba

“Kusankhana kumapangitsa kuti anthu ena aziona ngati mfumu simamwawerengera” (With targeting, people think that local leaders do not care about those that are left out). Subili village head, Phalombe

5.4.2.4. Fear of reprisals from the non-beneficiaries

People were reluctant to target because they were afraid that those left out could reciprocate the favour in one way or the other. Since those left out are likely to be households that are better off, there was concern that in future these people may cut off support to the poor.

“Ife tinazolowera kuti zikavuta timathandizana ndiyemutha kusamusankha yemwe akukuthandizani pasogolo naye kukusiyilani” (We rely on each other therefore if we do not target those that help us, they may later stop supporting us as well). Mphalikwa Village head, Dowa

In this regard, small leakages are perceived to be good for the poor themselves to avoid backlash from those that have the resources and political power. In the context of increased

economic shocks communities are sensitive about alienating the people on who they rely on. Therefore to maintain the support and political base communities will try to include the better off even though there are some vulnerable people who should have benefited first. Consequently, focus on reducing leakages without proper understanding of the local dynamics would have long terms effects on the poor (Dutrey, 2007).

In all the sites, targeting was perceived to play a divisive role among the communities. Even where targeting has been transparent enough the mere fact that some equally poor households have been left out creates an attitude of inequality. In most cases those left out feel rejected such that they complain too much. Consequently, even the beneficiaries do not enjoy such benefits claiming that such complaints may bring “*skamba*” or bad omen.

Targeting causes widespread resentment among the non-beneficiaries such that even the beneficiaries do not feel comfortable to utilize the inputs. Some of the words used by non-beneficiaries are considered to be extremely negative to the extent that sometimes people even feel as if they are being cursed for being selected. Targeting also promotes suspicions and false accusation among the communities. In a context where the majority of people are poor, those selected are perceived to have bribed either the committee or the village head.

“Mulye mututuwe. Chitukuko mugwirenge ndimwe mwa wakukhuta” (You should eat and get fat. You whose stomachs are full will be doing development work). Input focus group participant, Mbozo village, Mzimba

5.4.2.5. Fear that people will withdraw from community development initiatives

People are reluctant to target because non-beneficiaries threaten that they will not take part in development activities since the government does not recognize them. This is a major concern for local leaders because most of the beneficiaries are old and weak people while the non-beneficiaries are largely young and energetic.

“Omwe amawakondawo ndi omwe akagwire ntchito” (Those that are liked by the village head will do community development work). Input focus group participant, Gobede village. Neno.

5.4.2.6. Targeting evokes fears of witchcraft.

Apart from rewarding those who actively participate in development activities, sometimes community members target a household for fear of being bewitched. Some households are

feared so much so that even during the selection of beneficiaries people do not object to their inclusion even when this comes at the expense of the poorest.

5.4.3. Reasons for inclusion for agricultural inputs and cash transfers;

At the beginning of the social card game participants were told to target poor families for the agricultural input for the 2008/09 growing season. The quota for each village was calculated as 30% of the village population except Subili where it was calculated at 25%. However, participants found that the quota was too low and the criterion of poor household was perceived to be too broad to effectively distinguishing beneficiaries from non-beneficiaries. Consequently, participants tried to fine-tune the criteria to sieve out the less vulnerable from potential beneficiaries. The common reasons for inclusion were as follows;

5.4.3.1. Being elderly, weak and vulnerable

Old people were considered to be weak and without reliable means of fending for themselves in terms of food. The elderly were checked out first and registered before any other group. For instance, in Mpalikwa village the participants agreed that old Bibi should be the first person to be registered. However, participants had registered her using the official name during the social mapping exercise. Therefore, participants checked each and every card until they found her name. Some of the common reasons when selecting elderly people included the following;

“A Nana alibe aliyense oti nkuwathandiza, kulima amangokakamiza koma alibirethu mphamvu” (The old woman has no one to support her she just forces herself to farm in the fields but she has no strength) Cash transfer card game participants, Mandawala village, Mulanje.

“Awa atamwalira akhoza kuwina kusiya ndi kukhala ndi moyo chifukwa alibirethu chithandizo ngakhale ali okalamba kwambiri” (It would be better for her to die because she is very old with no one to support her) cash transfer participant, Gobede village, Neno.

Selection of the elderly households shows the recognition and empathy the community has towards the aged especially those that do not have close relatives to support them. To some extent, it also demonstrates the role and effect of social exclusion on vulnerability. People with weak social networks were perceived to be more vulnerable than those with close relatives.

5.4.3.2. Orphans, widows and female headed household keeping orphans

Apart from labour constraint, orphan and female-headed households were considered to be more vulnerable as they lack means for sustainable livelihood source. Where the orphans were still young, it was reported that the household head spent much of the time caring for them instead of engaging in productive activities. Consequently, the majority of these households were extremely food insecure. During the selection process, participants gave the following reasons for the inclusion of this group;

“Alibe mwamuna komanso amasamalira ana amasiye 6 ndipo ali ndikamunda kakang’ono komwe amalima kopanda feteleza” (She is a widow and has six orphans and she cultivates a small plot without applying fertilizer. Her children are still young to do any productive work) Input social card game participants, Mphalikwa village, Dowa.

In addition, orphans living on their own were given priority over other households. The main concern was that such children spent their time looking for food instead of concentrating on school. For instance, the case of a school going orphan taking care of his grandmother received much empathy from participants in Subili Village.

5.4.3.3. Households with multiple problems

There were some families, which were considered as being “overloaded with problems”. Typically such households could be very poor, single parent and keeping a lot of children. Having many children requires adequate food to feed them but due to limited resources and labour constraints such households could hardly meet the basic requirements. The description below captures some of the reasons for selecting this category;

“Ndi olumala miyendo ndiye sangathe kugwira ntchito komanso ali pamitala pomwe iwo ndi mkazi wachiwiri” (She is disabled and a junior wife in a polygamous family)

Input social card game participants, Mphalikwa

In all the sites there was a general tendency to target polygamous families particularly the younger wife. It was reported that most second wives struggle to earn a living particularly where the husband stays with his first wife.

5.4.3.4. Disabled, chronically ill household head or keeping sick people

Families with sick household heads or keeping a chronically sick person were considered more vulnerable compared to able-bodied households. During agricultural input selection such

households were only targeted if there was someone in the family to use the inputs. On the other hand, cash transfer participants prioritised households with sick people arguing that they did not have the time and energy to do much productive work. Sometimes, even when the household was slightly better off, it was selected ahead of the poorest but able-bodied households.

“Awa akudwala matenda a Edzi ndiye akhala nthawi osagwira ntchito komanso alibe owathandiza”. (He is suffering from AIDS such that he has not been working and he has no one to support him). Cash transfer participants, Gobede village, Neno

Similarly, disabled household heads or those keeping people with disability were ranked higher than others particularly during cash transfer targeting. The participants argued that these families were labour constrained as such they struggled to fend for themselves. Like the chronically ill category, cash was considered appropriate for disabled households because they could use the money to procure the basic requirements as highlighted by the comments below:

“Uyu amagwa nkhunyu kawirikawiri moti kugwira ntchito ndikovutirapo komanso alibe omuyanganira”. (She is epileptic such that she cannot do hard work and she has little support). Cash transfer social card game participants, Nkulera village, Lilongwe.

5.4.3.5. Spreading across all the corners of the village

One of the salient factors considered was that participants ensured that beneficiaries came from all sections of the village. While participants did not explicitly mention that this was a criterion for selection, the discussions and actions revealed that this salient factor was very important in all villages. In some cases a poor household could be sacrificed for someone to ensure that all corners of the village were represented. Unfortunately, this factor ensured that some people who were classified as food insecure were targeted as beneficiaries at the expense of extremely food insecure household. The examples below illuminate the above scenario.

“Palibe kanthu kuti ovutikitsitsa nga banja limodzi koma nkoyenera kusankha mphepo zones zinayi za mudzi chifukwa mfumu ndi ya anthu onse” (It does not matter that the poor are coming from the same clan but it is important that we target from all corners of the village) Input social card game participants, Nkulera village, Lilongwe

“Mmalo mwakuti apa tingalekapo waka tiyeni titolepo Mathews mweneyuyu” (To avoid sidelining this cluster let us pick Mathews to represent them) Input social card game participants, Mbozo village, Mzimba.

In the above examples participants were reluctant to select from the same clan to ensure that all corners of the village were covered. Similar, incidences were reported in Mphalikwa where a female headed household was left out because her mother had already been selected. It was clear that some people were chosen not because of the poverty status but to represent their cluster. In the case of Mathews, he was categorized as food secure during social mapping exercises.

5.4.3.6. Other factors for beneficiary selection

There were some factors that were unique to some areas than others, for example targeting people who are hardworking in community development initiatives. Participants in Nkulera and Gobede village argued that it was important to target those that are hardworking to ensure that they do not slacken behind as the example below demonstrate;

“Anthu omwe amalimbikira ntchito za chitukuko sibwino kuwasala chifukwa akhoza kukhumudwa chitukuko nkumabwerera pa mbuyo” (It is important not to forget people who are hardworking during community development to avoid disappointing them). Input social card game participants, Nkulera village, Lilongwe

In this case, targeting was largely perceived as a reward for hard working people in the village. The challenge is that most hardworking people are unlikely to be food insecure.

According to participants from Mphalikwa village, targeting of any transfer should start with the village head. This was not necessarily because the village head is poor but because of his position. The feeling among participants was that the village head has a huge responsibility of looking after the village. Therefore, he should be targeted to ensure that at all times he is food secure.

“Mfumu imalera aliyense ndiye kuti akhale opanda chakudya sathanso kulandila anthu” (The village head takes care of everyone. Therefore for him to be without food he cannot entertain visitors). Input social card game, Mphalikwa village, Dowa.

In Subili village a single parent young woman was targeted to prevent her for adopting unconventional means of earning her livelihood. While the participants agreed that she was energetic and could do ganyu, there was concern that lack of food would force her to engage in prostitution. In Nkulera village some households were targeted not only because they were food insecure but also being too vocal when left out. Therefore, participants among themselves agreed that it was better to select them in order to save the village head from insults.

Self-selection was very uncommon in the study. Even when some households were nominated they could willingly replace their names with others whom they felt deserved more. However in Subili village two female participants selected themselves for agricultural inputs arguing that they were equally poor. The other participants reluctantly agreed to select them because there were others who were worse off than them.

5.4.4. Reasons for exclusion

5.4.4.1. Perceived to be energetic but poor

While the communities generally sympathized with people who are poor, they have little empathy to those who are poor but youthful and energetic. People who are energetic and with less responsibility are considered to be poor because of own liking. The feeling was that if such people worked hard they should be able to get adequate food. The case below highlights the above situation;

“A Kamwala amatofuna kuvutika chifukwa ndi munthu wamphamvu zake komanso amakhala okha, ndiye munthu angalephele kupeza chakudya chayekha” (Kamwala deliberately wants to be poor because he is still strong. After all he stays alone such that it should not be difficult to find food for himself). Cash transfer participants, Mandawala village, Mulanje.

The level of responsibility also determined whether one household should be targeted or not. A family with more children was ranked higher compared to an equally poor household with no children. For instance, in Mbozo village, George despite being equally vulnerable was replaced by his brother who keeps more people.

5.4.4.2 Having assets but food insecure

While some households were classified as food insecure, participants made distinction between those with and without resources. Some families were food insecure but they had

goats or even owned cattle. Participants were less interested in families with large numbers of livestock but were still food insecure as the case below demonstrates;

“Awa chakulya waliye kweni wanavingombe vinandi wakuchitachi navo? Muli wanyawo wakuti waliye chilichose kweni wakuyezga” (He is food insecure yes, but he has a lot of cattle. What does he do with them? There are others with nothing but they try their best to get food), Input social card game participants, Mbozo village, Mzimba.

5.4.4.3 Having steady income, working children or well to do close relatives

Households with a working member or a steady income whether from business, farming or salaried employment were the least on the priority list. This category also includes people with some skills such as builders, carpenters, weavers and tailors. Participants felt that these households have strong coping mechanisms than most villagers. In Mphalikwa village this group of people have money and can afford to buy food. Therefore when Jazz was nominated, his name was shot down because he was considered *“wabiliwiri uja”* meaning the smart one. It is believed that poor people have no time and money to keep themselves clean.

5.4.4.4. Other factors for exclusion

In an attempt to cover all parts of the village, participants in all the villages were reluctant to choose all beneficiaries from one section even when all the poor people came from the same cluster. Therefore, if a mother was selected it was unlikely that the daughter or son could be targeted even when they were all poor. Participants argued that such a selection process could be interpreted as being biased - *“wangati tatemwera”*. Therefore, it was evident that some households were left out because their close relative had been picked even if they were worse off than the one selected from another cluster.

5.4.5. Results summary of input social card game

The analysis from social card game demonstrates that except for isolated cases communities can target the most vulnerable groups. According to results shown in Table 5.3 below, 95% of the targeted households for agricultural inputs were poor with 68% of them being extremely food insecure while 27% food insecure. Similarly 41% of the targeted households were female headed, 40% male headed, 27% elderly headed and 3% orphan headed. As a proportion of the household head category, the results show that only 16% of the total male headed households were targeted compared to 54% for elderly headed households, 41% female headed, 63% of female headed households keeping two or more orphans. All orphan headed and elderly

headed households keeping orphans were targeted for the inputs. Except for the 5% inclusion error (from an external perspective but justified internally), the results indicate communities have the capacity to select the most vulnerable households for safety nets. The fact that priority was given to female, elderly and orphan headed households compared to male headed ones suggests that communities feel these categories require more support than male headed who are considered able to carry out ganyu and raise cash to buy inputs.

While exclusion error is as low as 5%, it is worthy pointing that successful targeting in this case does not consider the 67% food insecure households that were excluded. Ideally these households should have been included because they satisfy the selection criteria. However, due to limited quota only 33% of the deserving households were targeted. To a larger extent this partly vindicates participants resistance to target and claims that “we are all poor here”. From the above analysis, it is clear that communities perceive elderly headed, female headed keeping orphans, and orphan headed households to be more vulnerable compared to the other groups. During the selection process, more than 95% of the first 10-15 people were either elderly headed, chronically ill or female headed keeping orphans.

Table 5.3. Summary of targeted beneficiaries for inputs

Household Head	Targeted Households			Excluded Households			Total
	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure	
Female headed	0	7	21	4	19	17	67
Male headed	4	20	27	98	151	27	327
Elderly headed	1	7	24	5	9	13	59
Orphan headed	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Female headed keeping orphans	1	1	10	0	0	7	19
Male headed keeping orphans	0	0	0	0	2	2	4
Elderly headed keeping orphans	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	6	35	88	107	182	67	482

5.4.6 Results summary for cash transfer social card game

Cash transfer card games generated a lot of interest, enthusiasm as well as scepticism. It was reported that while targeting for cash was possible it would be more complicated than the input

transfers because in the village everyone wants money. Consequently, there were suggestions that such programmes should allow people to rotate or swap the vouchers to ensure that everyone benefited from the programme.

Results from the cash transfer beneficiary selection as shown in table 5.4 below, provide more insights on how communities perceive vulnerabilities. Unlike selection for inputs, targeting for cash transfers focused more on the physical condition of the individual household head. The main priority was on households who were considered to be weak and labour constrained such as the elderly, chronically ill, disabled and orphans. Their physical condition does not allow them to do heavy workload. Therefore such households could be supported well through cash transfers. Households with a combination of orphans, chronically ill and female headed ranked higher than other vulnerable households. Similarly, the assessment for cash transfer went beyond the present situation. For instance, in Subili village, a household was targeted because the head of the family was suffering from AIDS. Despite the household being relatively better off in sourcing food participants explained that as an HIV/AIDS patient the health status is likely to deteriorate in future therefore there was need to target the family with cash so that they can buy basic necessities.

Table 5.4. Summary of targeted beneficiaries for cash transfers

Household Head	Targeted Households			Excluded Households			Total
	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure	
Female headed	0	0	9	4	26	28	67
Male headed	1	4	6	101	167	48	327
Elderly headed	1	2	10	5	14	27	59
Orphan headed	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Female headed keeping orphans	0	0	7	1	1	10	19
Male headed keeping orphans	0	1	0	0	1	2	4
Elderly headed keeping orphans	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	2	7	38	111	210	117	482

While it is clear that the inclusion error or leakages for cash transfers was less than 4%, exclusion error was more than 42% among extremely food insecure households. The high proportion of undercoverage rate demonstrates the challenges of targeting in a context where the majority of the population are poor.

5.5 Targeting experiences from the 2007-2008 Agriculture Input Programme

Focus group discussion participants also discussed their experiences over the 2008-2009 agricultural input programme in terms of the targeting process, fairness and transparency. This was done to draw some relationships between what participants were able to do during simulation exercises, perceptions and their real experiences. The key findings are explained below;

5.5.1. Lack of transparency in the selection process

Except for Subili village in Phalombe where the registration process was decentralized to clan heads, there was a general lack of transparency and community involvement in the selection process. Similarly, there were no committees responsible for the registration process as per the guidelines. The registration process was largely dominated by the village heads or with his close associates. Consequently, most people did not know the actual number of coupons allocated to the village and the general criteria used to select beneficiaries.

Box 5.1 : Raising false hopes in Mandawala Village

During the previous AISP, it was reported that the village was advised by Agriculture Extension Development Officers – AEDOs to register poor households that required agricultural inputs. The village registered 34 households whom they felt were food insecure. However, during the distribution, ministry of agriculture officials invited all those that were registered to a trading centre. The village was advised to trim down the number of beneficiaries to 12 households so that they should receive the input coupons instead of all the registered 34. Bearing in mind that all the 34 households went to the venue with the understanding that they were going to receive the inputs, the village decided to share the coupons among 24 households so that each household got one coupon instead of the allocated two coupons per household. Even then, ten families did not receive the coupons. The feeling among community members was that it was better to tell the truth about the actual number of beneficiaries than raising false hopes.

Most village heads indicated that initially they were informed to register everyone but later when the inputs arrived they were told to cut back the number by half. However, this information contradicts reports from extension workers who argued that village heads were told to select poor households representing 30% of their population. In fact some villages such as Mbozo and Mphalikwa acknowledged that a quota and a criteria was provided to each village. Therefore, attempts to blame misinformation could be an effort by the village heads to cover up their mistakes or indeed not to be seen as being openly against targeting.

Due to lack of transparency, there was a general feeling and suspicion that both local leaders and extension workers had stolen coupons meant for the community. While some village heads were caught with stolen coupons there were suspicions that those in charge of the distribution exercise including the extension workers had stolen more than the village heads. It is alleged that since they are educated, extension workers were able to cover their tracks better than illiterate village heads.

In some villages like Gobede, there was a complete breakdown of the approach as the police were brought in to distribute the coupons at the expense of the village heads. Some participants questioned the role of the police in the distribution of vouchers to beneficiaries. Participants argued that the role of the police officers is to maintain order not the actual distribution, as they may not know the people in the village. Therefore, the process should be left to the villagers themselves.

5.5.2. From a targeted national programme to universal community programme

While there were general guidelines to target the 2007-2008 agriculture inputs to poor families there was widespread sharing of either vouchers or inputs after distribution. In all the sites visited coupons were shared among families. The level of sharing varied from one village to another depending on the number of coupons made available. In most villages, the two coupons were shared amongst two families so that each family got a bag of fertilizer and seed. Participants explained that people resorted to sharing after discovering that the inputs were not adequate for everyone. This was said to be the normal practice when few items are provided. For instance, in Mphalikwa it was reported that during the previous food distributions in the 2002 and 2005 food crisis, people used to rotate or swap the ration cards each month to ensure that everyone received the food. In Mbozo village the last time they targeted was five

years ago during the Targeted Input Programme. According to the participants this was done to prevent quarrels in the village.

Box 5.2: From two bags to one pail of fertilizer

Targeting in Mbozo Banda village has been on paper only. Since the inception of targeted input programmes people have always shared the resources. During the 2007-2008 season, it was reported that 22 coupons that is 11 for basal dressing and half for top dressing fertilizer were allocated to 11 households. Instead of the leaders giving the coupons to the 11 poor households, three households were paired against each name that appeared on the official list. These households contributed the money for the fertilizer subsidy. After receiving the two bags, the fertilizer was shared equally among the households with each family getting a pail of mixed fertilizer.

The village head explained that they decided to share to avoid quarrelling amongst its members. It was reported that during the previous TIP, some people had been left out which created a lot of tension in the village. Since then the village has resolved to sharing whatever comes from the government.

Similar experiences were found in Mpalikwa, Subili, Mandawala and Gobede. In these villages due to the higher allocation of coupons, each household received a bag of fertilizer. Those who wanted both basal and top dressing fertilizer had to exchange half of the contents with other families willing to do so. Ironically, all the villages had a beneficiary list that showed that only one family was entitled to the two bags of fertilizer. To a larger extent the list of proxy beneficiaries was used to fulfil the official requirement of a beneficiary list. In the above scenario, either the community were not ready for targeting or sharing could be seen as a form of passive resistance to targeting. Even some extension workers acknowledge that there is widespread redistribution of inputs.

5.5.3. When communities attempt to target beneficiaries.

Despite the limited sample, it is possible to draw some patterns linked to villages where targeting actually took place. In the sampled villages only one village actually distributed the inputs to beneficiaries whose names were on the list.

Box 5.3: Village head locked in police custody

Nkulera, can be said to have targeted its beneficiaries because coupons were distributed to those that were registered without further instruction of sharing. The village was allocated 50 coupons for 25 households out of 77 families. According to the village head the coupons were allocated to people considered as poor. However, his actions met stiff opposition from the members who alleged that he had stolen some of the coupons.

During the redemption of the vouchers the village head was insulted and harassed such that he had to run away to his home for safety. People followed him to his house and with the support of the community police they arrested and dragged him to the police station. Thereafter, the police came to the village for investigations and to keep order, as there was a lot of tension in the village. The village head was released after spending a night in the custody.

While the village head maintain his innocence some community members still believe that he should have remained in the police custody. They claim that he was released because he had given part of the vouchers to the police officers. Since that event, people have lost trust and confidence in their village head to conduct fair registration process.

Similar incidents of increased tension during and after the distribution of vouchers were reported in other villages. For instance, in Mengwa village, close to Mphalikwa Village a disgruntled member destroyed the whole pack of vouchers so that no one from the village could benefit. The incident happened during the distribution day in presence of hundreds of people. In Nteta village in Dowa District, the village head was badly assaulted on suspicion that he had hidden some coupons for himself. Similar incidents of fighting were reported in the village of Nyambalo and Makwete village in Phalombe Village. In both villages, community members failed to agree on who should get the limited vouchers. Therefore fighting broke out between the village heads with his sympathizers on one hand and the disgruntled villagers on the other.

The worse case scenario comes from Chipelepete village in Dowa where a village headman was assaulted to death as the case below highlights.

Box 5.4: When the village head pays with his life

Chipelepete village is in Traditional Authority Mkukula in Dowa District. During the 2007-2008 agriculture season the village was asked to target a third of its population for the fertilizer coupons. However, the village head without community participation produced the list and handed it to the extension workers. He told his people that everyone had been registered. During the coupon redemption fights broke out as people discovered that they were not registered. The village head was whisked away by sympathizers. However, later in the village, he was again confronted and assaulted until he collapsed. He was taken to the hospital but died shortly after his admission. The men were arrested and charged with murder.

While the Chipelepete and Nkulera case studies may be considered as an extreme, it highlights firstly, the manner in which the selection process was conducted in most villages. In most villages the selection process was seen as being secretive, without proper involvement of community members and generally lacked transparency. Community members were neither informed of the selection criteria nor the number of people supposed to be registered. It is therefore not surprising that when the actual vouchers were delivered some people became angry as they discovered that their names had been left out. Consequently, there are several reports where village heads or their councillors had been manhandled because the targeting process was considered to be unfair.

Secondly, the above case study demonstrates the effects of targeting on the social fabric of the community. Whether it is because of the fewer number of beneficiaries being targeted or because of the secrecy of the process, targeting in the above case breeds suspicion and mistrust between the leadership and those being governed. From the incident in Mengwa

village where the vouchers were destroyed to Chipelepete village where the headman was assaulted to death, there is clear evidence of weakened authority of local leadership. In the above cases local leadership was perceived to be unjust and biased. Therefore, the destruction of vouchers, assaulting of village heads and subsequent arrests, in this case could be interpreted as the fight against the unjust practices of targeting. Similarly, such incidents show that there is lack of faith in the normal channels of addressing grievances in the community as communities turn to other avenues or outside support. However, such incidences have long-term effect on the community governance as the scars may take long to heal.

5.5.4. Targeting and community participation

Targeting is regarded as a demoralising element in community participation. Participants observed that those left out threaten community leaders that they would withdraw their labour from development initiatives. However, for fear of being singled out and reprisals or punishment by the community, most people adopt a passive resistance approach where they participate in such community projects but without giving out their best. For instance, some would report late to such initiatives and when confronted they would argue that they had gone looking for fertiliser, food or seed as summarized in the quote below:

“ndachedwa chifukwa ndimakafuna ndalama zogulira feteleza sinanga anzathu anakuonani a mfumu” (I am late because I went to look for money to buy fertilizer and seeds. Unlike most of you the chief did not consider me). Input card game participant, Nkulera Village, Lilongwe.

However, it was noted that community initiatives are at two levels. The first level and upper level include development initiatives that involve more than one village such as building a school or a health centre. The second and lower level refers to initiatives that are carried out within a single village and by the village members themselves such as clearing of roads or footpaths. It was reported that people do not necessarily shun inter-village development initiatives even though they might not give out the best. In addition, some might even use the platform to complain publicly about their dissatisfaction of being left out from the input programme. In this case, being left out is largely linked to being not known by the village leaders. Consequently, such households argue that those being supported by the chief should work harder as the summarized in the quotation below;

“Timagwira ntchito molingana ndi momwe tikuthandizidwa ndi a mfumu, omwe amawaonawo adzigwila kwambiri”. (We work according to the support we get from the village head. Therefore, those that get a lot of help from the village head should work even harder). Input focus group discussion participant, Gobede Village, Neno.

Depending on the authority of the village head, it was reported that some people completely stay away from intra-village level activities such as clearing village roads. In response it was noted that some village heads impose disciplinary action on such people to prevent more people from shunning away from participating in development activities. The most common disciplinary action mentioned was banning the individual in question from attending or participating in funeral activities in the village. In cultural terms, this is considered as one of the most severe punishments because it entails withdrawal of support when he or she is also bereaved.

5.6. Theory and Practice; Linking perceptions, simulations and experiences

As theory suggests, it is evident from the results that communities have better information about themselves regarding who is poor and non poor. Similarly, simulation results have shown that communities have the capacity to carry out better targeting and screening because they know who is deserving and undeserving (Van de Walle, 1998, Conning and Kevane, 2001). With an inclusion error of less than 5% one would argue that communities have the capacity to target effectively. Further still, the impact of inclusion error is reduced if one considers the fact that the advantage of the community based targeting mechanism is that communities may apply contextualized and culturally appropriate definitions of poverty.

However, recent experiences from the 2007-2008 AISP indicate that the decision to target is influenced by perceptions about targeting, previous experiences with targeted transfers and beneficiary quota allocated to the village. Perceptions that we are all poor compounded by fears of retaliation from non-beneficiaries have resulted into people resorting to sharing of the inputs. While sharing of inputs is against the principles of targeting, to some extent, it could be argued such experiences demonstrate that communities recognize that large proportions of their community members are poor. Therefore, communities participate in the targeting process only as a means not an end in itself. To a larger extent, targeting in this case registration of poor families is viewed as a short-term requirement that is necessary to access the inputs as participants from Subili village put it;

“Timachita zimene mabwana atiuza, kwinako timaona momwe tingapangire katundu akabwera” (We do what we have been told by the bosses, but somehow we see what to do when the items have been delivered). Input focus group discussion participants, Subili village, Phalombe.

From the above quotation and the related widespread sharing, it can be suggested that communities are less prepared to sacrifice long-term social solidarity for short-term gains. To some extent, targeting is only conducted as a way of fulfilling the official requirement to cash in from the valuable resources. In this case, targeting is largely imposed on the community as part of the top down decision-making process. However, communities are less comfortable with the effects of targeting and if given the opportunity, it is likely that they would share the inputs equally among the population.

While proponents of community based targeting argue that the mechanism may enhance social capital, community perceptions and experiences from this study point to the contrary. Targeting in the above cases has been associated with quarrelling and tension within the villages. Social policies aimed at redistributing resources to the poor invoke issues of solidarity and citizenship. While sharing among village members is perceived to maintain or increase social trust, targeting on the other hand, it is considered as a threat to social cohesion. Targeting in a context of high poverty levels breeds suspicion, hatred, accusations and corruption. Similarly, targeting breeds the feeling of being unwanted or discriminated against particularly among the poor that have been left out. According to Dutrey (2007) such suspicions and feelings of discrimination erodes social trust not only in relation to public institutions but also at interpersonal level. At the village level, interpersonal trust is critical for forging social cohesion. The fact that those left out passively or actively withdraw from the community development initiatives is of major concern if the potential of community-based mechanisms to strengthen social capital is to be realised.

Community based targeting mechanism has been promoted as an empowering process where communities participate in critical decision-making process (Chinsinga 2005, Van de Walle 1998). However, the current evidence does not support such assertions. In all the villages except one community based targeting does not qualify to be a democratic process with community leaders dominating decision-making process. In most sites community members

were not aware of the selection criterion and the quota allocated to their villages. Effective participation and informed decision making requires information sharing. Similarly, the belief that local institutions are more accountable to the poor requires further scrutiny. The findings from this study supports Gallaso et-al 2000 argument that such claims are contentious and not supported by empirical data. Study results show that the majority of local leaders and extension workers, key agents to the process, were perceived to be corrupt. Similarly, accountability requires transparency. Therefore, the way in which the registration process was conducted reinforces the suspicions that some vouchers were misappropriated. As Tendler (2000) argues community based targeting mechanism is vulnerable to manipulation if not properly managed. In the above findings, it is clear that the process was largely driven by a small group of motivated individuals close to the village heads. In other words, as Conning and Kevane (2001) warned, the mechanism increases opportunities for elite capture. As the case from Mandawala demonstrate the decision to share the inputs is not necessarily driven by the interests of the poor but rather those that are better off and have an influence in the society.

It is worth noting that community decision-making is a complex process embedded with social cultural and political dynamics (Rao and Ibanez 2002). Therefore, lack of community participation could be an indication that local leaders are less willing to share power and responsibilities to other members of the society. The above experiences therefore partly confirm Von Braun and Grote (2000) concern that traditional local leaders have little incentives to share power and allow others to participate in decision-making. Similarly, as Dhesi (2000) suggests if formal processes are in conflict with culturally embedded informal structures local leaders are less likely to implement them.

While the decision to share the inputs could be attributed to elite capture, to some extent it reflects the strong egalitarian values at play in the communities. In all sites communities were against the idea of targeting for fear of dividing their society. During the social card games there were strong sentiments about "umodzi" or togetherness. People are largely perceived as one big family therefore targeting one over another particularly where the majority is poor is seen as an attempt to rank them according to who is more valuable than the other. Similarly, attempts by the participants to cover all sections of the villages demonstrate that targeting is "inconsistent with the spirit of community solidarity and self help" (Pritchett, 2000, Sumarto and Suryahadi, 2000). In a context where the principle of "equity is that like be treated alike" targeting evokes fears of reiteration including withdrawing from community initiatives.

Therefore, for the sake of inclusiveness and active participation in development activities, it was imperative that everyone should benefit from the inputs. Such actions support Chinsinga (2004) argument that communities might be more concerned with issues of inclusiveness rather than the impact of diluted transfers.

The quota allocated to the village has a direct influence on whether a village will target or not. In a context of high poverty levels, a small quota entails that the majority of the poor will be left out. Therefore, targeting is not only difficult but also likely to alienate the poor that it seeks to serve. While targeting effectiveness has largely focussed on reducing inclusion errors and leakages, communities are more concerned with exclusion errors and undercoverages. In a context like Malawi where poverty levels are already above sustainable levels coupled with heavily leached infertile soils, access to agricultural inputs is considered as a matter of death and life. The choice between one extremely food insecure household over another is therefore a critical decision about that involves life itself. In this regard, there is a huge difference between receiving something or not. Consequently, while sharing dilutes the intended impact of the input, it is considered as better option than having no access at all to agricultural inputs particularly for the most vulnerable households.

Dutrey (2007) argues that leakages and undercoverages are critical in the political economy of targeting. Therefore, if the goal of the programme is to reduce poverty then undercoverage should be taken as seriously as leakages since exclusion errors directly affect the welfare of the poor who are left out. If the issue of undercoverage is not properly resolved through adequate allocation of beneficiary quotas, targeting may be perceived as a discriminatory process of allocating precious resources to a special group. While the purpose of targeting is to allocate adequate resources to the vulnerable, for most communities combating social exclusion with programmes that exclude the majority of the people it seeks to serve is poor strategy. Therefore, for the purpose of successful targeting and economic justice the quota for beneficiaries should be within the threshold of the people it seeks to support.

The findings have also highlighted that communities have information regarding poverty status in their villages. However, due to inherent perceptions and fears communities are reluctant to adopt wholesale targeting. Some of the social incidents have demonstrated that targeting has the potential to cause social disorders particularly where it is not done properly. There is a major concern that targeting as practiced in the sampled sites erodes authority from the local

leaders. The numerous examples of fighting and conflicts in villages, which attempted targeting shows that targeting if left unchecked, weaken the local institutions responsible for maintaining peace and security. For instance, where the authority of the chief has been challenged either through arrests or fights, the position becomes weaker as people lose trust and confidence in the office.

Chapter 6:

Conclusion and Policy Implications

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of key findings from the study with the view of developing a balanced conclusion informed by both evidence and conceptual framework. Lastly, the chapter outlines the policy implications of the results and suggests recommendation on targeting for future social policy.

2.0 Summary

Social policy has been concerned with social protection, redistribution, as well as social rights, social cohesion, political stability and regime legitimacy (Mkandawire, 2004, Kangas and Palme 2005). However, critics are sceptical on how targeted social policy could achieve such objectives. On the one hand, community based targeting has been championed not only as an efficient way of reaching the vulnerable people where there is adequate information but also with the potential impact of harnessing social cohesion and social rights. On the other hand, community based targeting mechanisms have been propagated based on a set of assumptions that have not been empirically tested (Tendler 2000).

From the above discussion in chapter five, it is evident that communities have the knowledge and better information about poverty and vulnerability in their locality. In the context of developing countries such as Malawi characterized by information asymmetries about poverty status, such knowledge and information is critical in implementing targeted safety net programmes. While targeting is largely feasible in the communities as demonstrated through low levels of inclusion errors during the social card games, it is worth noting that targeting is considered inappropriate according to the cultural context. In general there is passive resistance towards targeting. The choice to target or not is influenced by perceptions, experiences and social values. Targeting is perceived to run parallel to the values of egalitarian societies. Where targeting is the only alternative to access services, communities will try to target. In this regard, community based targeting is seen as supply driven rather than demand driven. Targeting in this case is adopted as a temporal mechanism to cash in on the inputs. Given a choice communities tend to spread services across all sections of the populations.

Community based targeting mechanism like other methods involves costs such as administrative, incentive, political and social costs. Unlike other methods, costs for community based targeting mechanisms are largely unknown. While economic costs are perceived to be lower in community based targeting mechanisms, study findings have shown that the approach has social costs that require serious consideration. Although community based targeting has the potential to enhance social capital the above results clearly demonstrate that the mechanism has been divisive in the community. Widespread resentment among non-beneficiaries and repeated episodes of tension and conflict within the village can destabilize the society. Resentment to beneficiaries due to targeted safety nets leads to stigma. Therefore, mechanisms that evoke social stigma run parallel against definitions of development that promote empowerment and freedom. Similarly, accusations, suspicions of misappropriating resources and the resultant public harassment of the local leaders lead into loss of trust and confidence in the local leadership. While trust and social capital are difficult concepts to measure, it is evident from the above discussion that community cooperation is affected and the capacity for collective action is compromised. This is crucial particularly in the mobilization of people for community development initiatives.

Similarly, the study results have shown that community based targeting mechanism as practised in the sampled villages is a trade off between perceived community knowledge and accountability. While the approach is rooted in the principles of participation, the above experiences demonstrate that the process is largely captured by a small group of motivated people close to local leaders. The process therefore lack the basic tenets of community based targeting that is information sharing, community participation, process ownership, transparency and accountability. Consequently, despite its much-acclaimed democratic values, community based targeting does not necessarily empower the community as local leaders largely dominate decision-making process. Decisions made by such an elite group are unlikely to take into account the interest of the poor. For instance, decisions about sharing agricultural inputs largely hurt the poor as it perpetuates inequalities.

As Van de Walle (1998) points out, most scholars have largely underestimated how difficult it is to target and community based mechanism is not an exception. The process of choosing one poor household over another is a very complicated process bereft with compromises. In a context of high vulnerability targeting for a precious resource like fertilizer or cash is a matter of death and life. It is not surprising that communities are unwilling to pass that judgment for fear

of being labelled biased. It is argued that implementation of an effective and equitable social protection policy in any society is a struggle for democratic rights (Devereux 2007:3). Therefore, asking people to select one poor family against another poor is tantamount to procedural injustice. Such a selection process is against the principles of targeting whereby everyone who satisfies the criteria has the right to benefit from the resource (Levy 2002).

3.0 Policy implications

Decisions to target should be based on assessments of both benefits and costs. On the basis of benefits it is clear that the current community based targeting approach is harming the poor as they are getting less than the intended benefits. For instance, a poor farmer receiving both coupons for basal and top dressing fertilizer (100kg) should be able to produce not less than one tonne of maize under normal circumstances. On the other hand, a poor farmer receiving a pail of fertilizer (equivalent to 33kg) after sharing with three other neighbours is less likely to produce 100 kilogrammes of maize. Therefore, if the government is serious about maximizing the benefits to the poor to achieve food security at household level, then targeting should be taken seriously.

Setting up of beneficiary quotas without regard to the levels of vulnerability or poverty, defeats the purpose of targeting that is achieving more impact with fewer resources. In the context like Malawi where poverty levels are already above sustainable levels, with more than 80% rural population considered poor (using international standards of \$1 per day), beneficiary quota should therefore match with the proportion of people it seek to support. While the benefits of targeted social programmes are primed on its capacity to reduce leakages, the above discussion has shown that what is actually at stake is undercoverages, that is the proportion of poor people left out of the programme. For instance, targeted agricultural input programme should aim at reaching 80% of the rural population while social cash transfer should target about 30% of the rural population.

If the goal of development is to build socially inclusive, economically and democratically robust societies, then social costs of targeting cannot be overlooked. Therefore, the design and implementation of such programmes should ensure that the decision on who and how to target should be determined on the basis of democratic principles. The development of selection criteria should be based on what is feasible, appropriate and acceptable within the

communities. From the above findings such a choice is inclined to be universal in characteristics.

According to Sharp (1997) there are four basic requirements for an effective community based targeting mechanism; transparency, information, accountability and audit by external facilitators. Power and information structures are therefore critical for successful implementation of community based targeting mechanism. In the short term, the approach requires investment in community structures to ensure that they are strong and equitable. However, as part of the long-term social protection policy this could have significant impact for future programming. The composition of such structures should ensure that there are checks and balances. In this case the inclusion of a mixture of agents including religious leaders and external facilitators should be a must for such committees. Similarly, successful implementation of targeted programmes requires an effective monitoring system. Therefore, the government should strengthen the existing capacity of existing field extension workers and incorporation of community level institutions such as village extension multipliers.

While the government has been applauded for its decisive action for reintroducing fertilizer subsidies and its subsequent impact of bumper harvests, it can be argued that there are still some elements of neo-liberal influence. The emphasis of targeted programmes does not augur well with the social context of Malawi. After several years of targeted programmes in Malawi, policy recommendation for targeting are still designed without consideration of the actual local dynamics and lessons learnt from previous programmes. Policy makers like scholars seem to be over optimistic on how well community based targeting works. Targeting at national level becomes universal programme at the community level. Therefore, what is required is another bold decision from the Malawi government; universal fertilizer subsidy.

From the above discussion, empirical evidence shows that that community targeting may actively erode social capital. As Gallaso et-al (2000:3) argues "the enthusiasm for community based targeting in policy circles has run well ahead of the evidence". Due to the limited sample and the qualitative nature of the study, it is recommended that comprehensive assessments using integrated questionnaire of both qualitative and quantitative approaches should be conducted to understand the impact of community based targeting mechanism on social capital.

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TENTATIVE ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Site/Village	Date/Time	Activity	Materials required	Expected output	Comments
Preparatory activities	June 07	Orientation of research assistants on research objective and methodology	Project proposal, AISP Evaluation reports	clear understanding of the objective of the research	
	Morning				
	Afternoon	Discussion and familiarization with the research tools	Field Manual, Study Checklist, Notepads, Cards, Flip charts, markers	Clear understanding of the methods and tools to be used in the study.	
	June 08	Pre-test study in Kasungu	Field Manual, Study Checklist, Notepads, Cards, Flip charts, markers	RA are able to use the tools in the study and identify gaps.	
	June 09 Morning	Discussion on the processes and fine tuning the tools	Field Notes	Necessary changes are incorporated into the tools.	
	Afternoon	Planning for the field study including traveling and booking for Mzimba sites			Explain clearly the importance of a representative group of people
June 10 – 12, Mbozo, Mzimba June 13 – Travel day June 14 – 16, Mpalikwa, Dowa June 17 – 19, Nkulera, Lilongwe June 20 – 22, Gobedei, Neno June 23, Travel Day June 23 – 25 Mandawala, Mulanje June 27 – 29, Subili, Phalombe	Day 1	Team 1	Team 2	Expected output	Comments
	Morning	Social Mapping + preparation of cards (categorization)	Key interview with extension worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Village social mapTwo sets of cards with basic HH data and food security statusVillage debriefing notesInterview notes	6-8 people (male and female who know their village well. A mixture of young and old). Ensure the village head is not part of the process.
	Afternoon		Join the categorization process		
	Day 2	Agricultural input card game and discussion	Key interview with village head	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summary of input card game exercise and observationInterview notes	Ensure that participants are different from those that took part in the social mapping exercise
	Morning		Filling of debriefing documents		
	Afternoon				
	Day 3	Fill debriefing documents	Cash transfer card game and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summary of cash game exercise and observationsVillage debriefing notesVillage field notes	Ensure that participants are different from those that took part in agriculture input card game
	Morning	Writing up of the village experience			
	Afternoon				
June 30 – July 05		Write up and consolidation of field reports.		6 refined social maps, Consolidated reports for six villages, Consolidated field debriefing document, Field Reports	

Study Checklist

3. Field Activities

3.1 Introductory meeting with the village heads.

After the location of the village has been identified, it is important to meet the village head. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce ourselves, objective of the study and seek permission to conduct the study in the village. In general, the objective of the study should be presented as follows; **to learn about people's livelihood strategies in the area.** The topic of TIP should not be introduced at this stage as it is sensitive in some parts. It is important to ensure that we do not raise expectations, that is will lead into something in the future. You may give the village head the introductory letter from the university if necessary. When permission is granted, the team should book for a meeting for the following day (s) requesting the village head to organize specific groups of people. Explain to the village head the scope of work, the process, duration and the number or groups of people required.

For the first day activities; the team will require a maximum of 12 people. The twelve should include six men and six women coming from all areas of the village. The people should be knowledgeable of their community as such they should have lived in the village for the past five years.

3.2 Social mapping and household categorization

3.2.1 Materials required; flip charts, pens, pencils, and markers of different colours, seal tapes.

Social mapping is paramount for this study; as such the exercise should be carried out systematically and diligently. The objective of social maps is to provide information on the distribution of physical, social, economic, natural and human resources within the community. For the purpose of this study, our main interest is on the population distribution particularly households across the village. In an ideal situation, social maps should be drawn on sand then later transcribed on paper. Due to time constraints maps will be drawn straight on the flip charts. In addition, maps will be required for data analysis and referencing.

3.2.2 Procedures for conducting social maps

- Identify an open space where all participants are able to see or write.
- Explain the process and purpose of the exercise to the village participants (10 – 12 people). In addition, explain to the participants that this is a group exercise; as such everyone's opinion deserves respect (though constructive criticism is welcome).
- Choose one person who is knowledgeable about the village lead the group. It is always important to start with main features of the village such roads, rivers, mountains, schools, village heads home etc.
- Ensure that each household is indicated and numbered on the map. Note that the focus is on a household not a house. Prepare a card for each household ensuring the number on the card is the same as on the map.
- The map should have the name of the village, key and compass bearing. In addition, participants should indicate their names below the map.

3.2.3 Categorization of households according to demographic status

After the map has been completed and the cards prepared, ask the participants to categorize the cards according to gender of household head that is; male headed, female headed, elderly headed and orphan headed. Thereafter categorize them according to whether the household keeps orphans or not. For the purpose of this study, a household-keeping orphan refers to the family that has more than two orphans. Use the following symbols;

- FHH for Female headed household
- MHH for male-headed household
- EHH for elderly headed households
- OHH for orphan headed households
- FHHO for female headed household keeping orphans
- MHHO for male headed household keeping orphans
- EHHO for elderly headed household keeping orphans

3.2.4 Categorization of households according to food security status

Thereafter categorize the households into three groups of well-being; that is food secure, food insecure and extremely food insecure. The terms have been chosen because they are less sensitive compared to other forms of poverty categorization. Before you ask the people, to use these terms generate a discussion on what the terms mean. At the end of the discussion try to reach a consensus on what each term mean. It is important to get a brief socio-economic profile for the village, which provides context to the food security categories.

For this study the terms are defined as follows;

- Food Secure (FS) households refer to households with food or access to food throughout the year.
- Food Insecure (FI) households refer to households that have food from harvest period till Christmas period (December). They run out of food from December to April (the next harvest).
- Extremely Food Insecure households refer to families that experience longer periods without food. They run out of food before Christmas (December)

Ask the participants to sort the households according to the three categories. Write the corresponding symbol on each card. Ensure that the meaning of the symbols remain secret to the participants.

End of this exercise; thank the participants for their contribution. Explain that the cards will be used for further discussions. Select 6-10 people from the different groups to attend the following session. Record your analysis in the debriefing document.

4. Social Card Game and Group Discussions

4.1 Agriculture Input Card Game

4.1.1 Materials required; social maps, cards,

Participants: 6-8 people representing a community committee (ensure that they are different from those that prepared the maps and should not include the village heads and they represent a cross section of the community).

4.1.2 Procedures;

Being new participants explain to them who you are and the purpose of the study. At this introductory phase do not mention anything about subsidized inputs, as it is very sensitive topic.

Explain that earlier some community members developed the village map and labeled the households in it (do not mention about the categorization or the meaning of the symbols). Show the people the map and the cards that were prepared earlier. Ask the participants if they agree with the map and whether all the households have been captured.

Explain to the people the purpose of the exercise that is to select food insecure households 30% of the household population for the agricultural inputs. Explain to the participants is continuing with the AISP and would like villages to select beneficiaries in advance for good planning purposes. Please be attentive and observe the reaction of the participants when the topic is introduced. If they refuse then go to the next section (4). If the participants agree to target then explain to them that they need to select food insecure households about 30% of their total household population.

Before starting the exercise ensure that participants represent all groups and all sections of the village. Thereafter, display all the cards on the maps ask the participants to select beneficiaries. Let them discuss why an individual household has been selected to ensure objectivity of the process.

The researchers should be very observant of the process and as much as possible should refrain from intervening. As the selection process moves on the researcher should note the following;

- The ease with which participants are conducting the process.
- Reasons for inclusion;
- Reasons for exclusion
- Other factors considered in the selection process.
- Areas of disagreements
- How disagreements are resolved.

The researcher should also note which group of people are given priority in the selection process. As such it is important to write down the names, reason and sequence in which households are being selected. For the purpose of comparability use this format.

Sequence of selection	Reason for selection	Reaction/consensus	Other comments
1 st name			
2 nd name			
5 th name till the quota given is finished			

After the participants have selected the names triangulate the cards to check whether they are some anomalies. If so, ask why a certain household (FS) has been selected or not (FI or (IFS). Check how many participants have been selected in the process.

4.1.3 Discussion

After the game ask the following questions to the participants;

Part 1; General

- What are your perceptions on community targeting?
- Do you think community targeting is feasible? Explain
- Do you think community targeting is culturally appropriate? Explain your answer.
- What are the advantages of community targeting?
- How do people react when they are not targeted for safety nets
- Why is it that some villages refuse to target?
- Some villages instead of targeting share the inputs among all village members. What do you think are the reasons for doing this?
- Do you have any experience or knowledge of people quarreling because of being excluded?
- How do communities deal with the effects of targeting?
- Do you think targeting affecting community participation in your village? Give examples where necessary?
- How do you ensure that targeting does not affect community development activities?
- Do you think being left out from the selection affects one's participation in development work? Give examples if possible.

Part 2; Experiences from 2007/08 agricultural input subsidy programme (AISP)

- How was registration done for the 2007/08 AISP?
- Who was responsible for the registration and distribution process?
- How many people were registered?
- What criteria did they use to select the beneficiaries?
- Do they think the process was fair and transparent?
- What are your recommendations regarding community targeting?
- What do you think are the alternatives to targeting?

4.2 Cash Transfer Card Game

4.2.1 Materials required; social maps, cards,

Participants: 6-8 people representing a community committee (ensure that they are different from those that prepared the maps and should not include the village heads and they represent a cross section of the community).

4.2.2 Procedures;

Being new participants explain to them who you are and the purpose of the study. Explain that earlier some community members developed the village map and labeled the households in it (do

not mention about the categorization or the meaning of the symbols). Show the people the map and the cards that were prepared earlier. Ask the participants if they agree with the map and whether all the households have been captured.

Explain to the people that the government is planning to introduce a programme to provide money to the poorest 10% of the population. Each selected household will receive MK2000 per month. Therefore the purpose of the exercise is to select the poorest households representing 10% of the household population. Please be attentive and observe the reaction of the participants when the topic is introduced. If they refuse then go to the next section (4).

Before starting the exercise ensure that participants represent all groups and all sections of the village. Thereafter, display all the cards on the maps ask the participants to select beneficiaries. Let them discuss why an individual household has been selected to ensure objectivity of the process.

The researchers should be very observant of the process and as much as possible should refrain from intervening. As the selection process moves on the researcher should note the following;

- The ease with which participants are conducting the process.
- Reasons for inclusion;
- Reasons for exclusion
- Other factors considered in the selection process.
- Areas of disagreements
- How disagreements are resolved.

The researcher should also note which group of people are given priority in the selection process. As such it is important to write down the names, reason and sequence in which households are being selected. For the purpose of comparability use this format.

Sequence of selection	Reason for selection	Reaction/consensus	Other comments
1 st name			
2 nd name			
3 rd name			
4 th name			
5 th name till the quota given is finished			

After the participants have selected the names triangulate the cards to check whether they are some anomalies. If so, ask why a certain household (FS) has been selected or not (FI or (IFS). Check how many participants have been selected in the process.

4.2.3 Discussion

After the game ask the following questions to the participants;

Part 1; General

- What are you perceptions on community targeting?
- Do you think community targeting is feasible? Explain

- Do you think community targeting is culturally appropriate? Explain your answer.
- What are the advantages of community targeting?
- How do people react when they are not targeted for safety nets
- Why is it that some villages refuse to target?
- Some villages instead of targeting share the inputs among all village members. What do you think are the reasons for doing this?
- Do you have any experience or knowledge of people quarreling because of being excluded?
- How do communities deal with the effects of targeting?
- Do you think targeting affecting community participation in your village? Give examples where necessary?
- How do you ensure that targeting does not affect community development activities?
- Do you think being left out from the selection affect ones participation in development work? Give examples if possible.

Part 2; Experiences from 2007/08 agricultural input subsidy programme (AISP)

- How was registration done for the 2007/08 AISP?
- Who was responsible for the registration and distribution process?
- How many people were registered?
- What criteria did they use to select the beneficiaries?
- Do they think the process was fair and transparent?
- What are your recommendations regarding community targeting?
- What do you think are the alternatives to targeting?

DEBRIEFING DOCUMENT

Village name: _____ Date: _____

No. of households in village: _____

Research assistants: _____

Part I: Social Mapping

1.1 Household characteristics

Demographic characteristics of HH head	No. of HH	Comment
Female headed (FHH)		
Male headed (MHH)		
Elderly headed (EHH)		
Orphan headed (OHH)		
Female headed keeping orphans (FHHO)		
Male headed keeping orphans (MHHO)		
Elderly headed keeping orphans (EHHO)		

1.2. Characteristics associated with food security status

	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely food insecure
Characteristics			

1.3. Food Security status/categories:

Demographic characteristics of HH head	Food Security Status		
	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure
Female headed (FHH)			
Male headed (MHH)			
Elderly headed (EHH)			

Orphan headed (OHH)			
Female headed keeping orphans (FHHO) ⁵			
Male headed keeping orphans (MHHO)			
Elderly headed keeping orphans (EHHO)			
Total			

1.4. Key points raised during the social mapping exercise and behaviour observed during categorization (including key quotes that sum up the feelings/experiences)

<p>(a) Key observations (verbal and non-verbal including body language)</p> <p>(b) Experiences and feelings</p> <p>(c) Key quotes</p>

Part 2: Targeting

2.1 (a). Agriculture input card game

Key perceptions about targeting, observation on behaviour (verbal and non verbal language) when asked to target. Observe and find out why some households are left out when they appear to be more vulnerable than those that have been picked.

<p>(a) Key observations</p> <p>(b) Feelings and experiences</p> <p>(c) Key quotes</p>

2.1 (b) Cash transfer card game

Key perceptions about targeting, observation on behaviour (verbal and non verbal language) when asked to target. Observe and find out why some households are left out when they appear to be more vulnerable than those that have been picked.

⁵ Due to the large number of orphans in Malawi, keeping orphans here refer to households with more than two orphans.

(a) Key observation

(b) Feelings and experiences

(c) Key quotes

2.2. Summary of the targeted households for agricultural inputs

Demographic characteristics of HH head	Targeted Households			Excluded Households		
	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure
Female headed (FHH)						
Male headed (MHH)						
Elderly headed (EHH)						
Orphan headed (OHH)						
Female headed keeping orphans (FHHO) ⁶						
Male headed keeping orphans (MHHO)						
Elderly headed keeping orphans (EHHO)						
Total						

2.3. Summary of the targeted households for cash transfer.

Demographic characteristics of HH head	Targeted Households			Excluded Households		
	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure	Food Secure	Food Insecure	Extremely Food Insecure
Female headed (FHH)						
Male headed (MHH)						
Elderly headed (EHH)						
Orphan headed (OHH)						
Female headed keeping orphans (FHHO) ⁷						

⁶ Due to the large number of orphans in Malawi, keeping orphans here refer to households with more than two orphans.

Male headed keeping orphans (MHHO)						
Elderly headed keeping orphans (EHHO)						
Total						

3. Experiences of agricultural input subsidy 2007/08

3.1 Village committee responsible for targeting of AISP 2007/08. If available who are the members.

Name	Position in community	Position in committee	Other remarks

3.2. Targeting and distribution of input vouchers during the 2007/08

Village	Total HH Population	No. of HH registered	% of total HH Population	No. of actual recipients	% of total HH population

3.3. Key points on how the previous AISP was targeted and why? Comment on the number of HH that were registered to receive vouchers against number of actual recipients of inputs.

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⁷ Due to the large number of orphans in Malawi, keeping orphans here refer to households with more than two orphans.

3.4. Key positive experiences from the previous AISP targeting and why?

3.5. Key negative experiences from the previous AISP targeting and why?

3.6. Key points raised during the discussion (including perception on targeting, cultural appropriateness, fairness, transparency and social effects) and observed behaviour on participation in community development projects.

4.0: Summary of participants to the study.

Research tool	Men	Women	Total
Social Mapping & categorization			
Input card game & FGD			
Cash card game & FGD			
Key informant in-depth interview – VH			
Key informant in-depth interview – extension worker/ religious leader			
Total			