Donors and domestic policy makers: Two worlds in agricultural policy-making?

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“Until we understand why our society adopts its policies, we will be poorly equipped to give useful advice on how to change those policies.“

Stigler (1975, p.ix) Nobel Prize in Economics, 1982
Background

• Why do African governments adopt their policies?
  – Insights from the literature

1. Focus on incentive systems
   • Bates (1981): Government’s incentive to stay in power
   • Van de Walle (2001): Neo-patrimonial state
   • Jayne et al. (2002): Incentive dilemma – role of donors
   • Olper & Raimondi (2010): Role of regime types and electoral rules

2. Role of ideologies and values – more recent
   • Dutt and Mishra (2010): Role of political ideology
   • Kjaer and Joughin (2012): Role of ownership and values

• Gaps in the literature
  – Theoretical literature on policy beliefs (Sabatier et al. 2007), discourse (Hajer 1995)
  – Limited empirical applications on agricultural policy
Conceptual framework

Source: Adapted from Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1994: 181) and Birner et al. (2011:22)
Research methods

- **Grounded Theory and Discourse analysis**
  - The study combines
  - Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) and Charmaz’ (2006) Grounded Theory approach with
  - Carabine’s (2001) and Hajer’s (2006) discourse approach
- **In-depth interviews (67)**: Recorded and transcribed
- **Theoretical sampling**
  - Total: 37 interviews in Ghana and 34 interviews in Uganda
  - Farmer workshop

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<tr>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Domestic policy makers</th>
<th>Other stakeholders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
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What does it actually take to develop small-holder agriculture?
Analysis

• **In the field**
  – Memo-writing to identify emerging themes and additional actors to be involved as well as new questions to be asked
  – Charmaz: “Study your emerging data”

• **After the field work: Analysis with NVivo**
  – Upload of documents
    • Transcription of recorded interviews
    • Notes of non-recorded interviews
  – Coding of texts
  – Identification of metaphors and story-lines
  – Inclusion of additional texts (government programs, donor strategies)
# Findings from the discourse analysis

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<tr>
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<th>Domestic policy coalition</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Public sector centered</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main actors</strong></td>
<td>MoFA, ADRA, Research, Academia, IFAD,</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Framing of the main problem</strong></td>
<td>Farmers do not have access to inputs.</td>
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<td><strong>Views on input subsidies</strong></td>
<td>Important to transform agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Views on mechanization</strong></td>
<td>Important to modernize agriculture to attract the youth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-image</strong></td>
<td>Capable of understanding domestic problems and determining the best policy option for the local economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other-image</strong></td>
<td>They come with policies that create dependency</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Donor-led coalition</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Private sector centered</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Main actors</strong></td>
<td>World Bank, ACDI-VOCA, USAID, Research, Academia</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Framing of the main problem</strong></td>
<td>Institutions are not available, poor implementation, capacity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Views on input subsidies</strong></td>
<td>Subsidies not sustainable, kill private sector initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Views on mechanization</strong></td>
<td>Should be achieved by the private sector</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-image</strong></td>
<td>Capable of bringing external experience and superior knowledge to provide evidence based policy options</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other-image</strong></td>
<td>They lack capacity, they do not have any figures to show</td>
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Framing of the main problems facing the agricultural sector

• Overall:
  – Agreement on low productivity as a major problem
  – Differences regarding the underlying factors

• Donor coalition view:
  – “Agriculture (...) is constrained by low-productivity farming practices, poor infrastructure (e.g. roads, irrigation, and ICT), land tenure uncertainties, gender inequities, and uncertain access to inputs.” (Joint Assistance Strategy, 2007: 8)
  – Interviews also indicate focus on
    • failed policies, non-implementation and lack of capacity
      – “they do not have figures at all in any of their reports.“
      – “I have never heard of a government official who supports a service provision without an intention of getting their personal benefit from it.”
Framing of the main problems facing the agricultural sector

- **Domestic policy coalition belief**
  - Predominant metaphor: “Hoe and cutlass“ nature of farming
  - Access to physical inputs

The main problem is ...

“low productivity; productivity is a major problem in every aspect of our agriculture.”

(Acadamic and former member of the Ghana Parliament)

“for us in agriculture the issues ... about mechanization, water for production, seed and extension are generally the main concerns. In our minds these are the issues.”

(Government official MAAIF, Uganda)
Policy beliefs about mechanization

• Domestic policy beliefs
  – The “hoe and cutlass” type of farming is outdated.
  – Mechanization centers are necessary to modernize and transform smallholder agriculture;
  – Small-holder farms cannot afford the investment cost

The youth prefers jobs outside agriculture, which offer “better jobs than the drudgery that the youth go to face when they go into farming, because farming in Ghana is still largely dependent on hoe and cutlasses, so it is a lot of drudgery involved, so it is not attractive."

(Academic and former Member of Ghana Parliament)
Policy beliefs about mechanization

• Donor coalition beliefs
  – Investment in mechanisation is a private sector activity
  – Policy to develop mechanization is “old fashioned”
    • Programs are not sustainable.
  – Historical precedence of mismanagement shows that this not a viable investment.

“the tractors have a political image, because they are big, when they say we have brought in tractors, when they say we have brought in 1000 tractors, you can make a big political statement of it.”
## Policy processes

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<th>Domestic coalition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policies</strong></td>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Block Farming Program, AMSEC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy process</strong></td>
<td>Wide stakeholder participation</td>
<td>Consultation at the ministerial level</td>
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<td><strong>Role of parliament</strong></td>
<td>Was only consulted like other stakeholders</td>
<td>Debated there, was in charge of approval and budget allocation</td>
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<td><strong>Role of political parties</strong></td>
<td>No involvement</td>
<td>Was derived from party manifesto</td>
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<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>Private sector focus for service provision or developing institutions</td>
<td>Government sector focus for service provision and Public Private Partnership</td>
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Discussion

• Analysis of discourses and policy processes shows:
  – Two separate worlds:
    • Donor world *versus* domestic world
  – Fundamental differences in policy beliefs regarding the questions:
    • What does it actually take to develop small-holder agriculture?
    • What should be the role of the public versus the private sector?
  – Separate policy processes based on different policy beliefs (CAADP vs. domestic programs)
Policy implications

• Pay attention to the **role of policy beliefs** in agricultural policy making

• Practical implications
  – to achieving better development synergy

• **Bridging the gap**

• Better to understand the **policy beliefs** prevailing in
  – the “donor world” on the one hand, and
  – the policy beliefs prevailing in the “domestic world” on the other
Thank you for your attention
References