



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

Jonathan Mockshell
Regina Birner





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

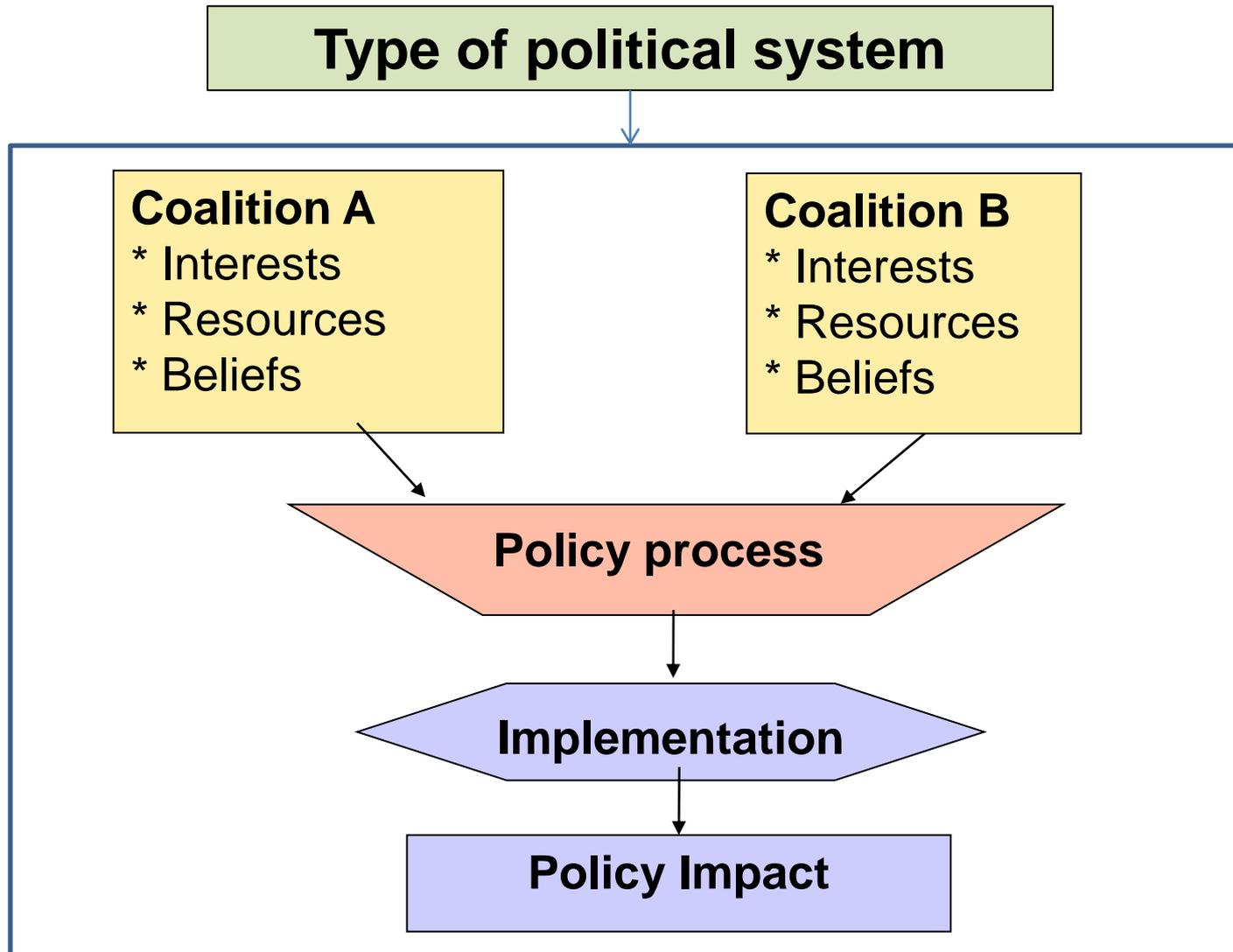
Stigler (1975, p.ix) Nobel Prize in Economics, 1982



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



Research methods

- **Grounded Theory and Discourse analysis**
 - The study combines
 - Glaser and Struass' (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

Donors	Domestic policy makers	Other stakeholders
19	28	20

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

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

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.”

(Academic 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



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

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



- Bates, R. H. (1981). *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (second.). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Birner, R., & Resnick, D. (2010). The Political Economy of Policies for Smallholder Agriculture. *World Development*, 38(10), 1442–1452.
- Dutt, P., & Mitra, D. (2010). Effects of Ideology, Inequality, Lobbying and Public Finance. In K. Anderson (Ed.), *The Political Economy of Agricultural Price Distortions* (pp. 278–303). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hajer, M. (1995). *The politics of the environmental discourse: Ecological modernization and the policy process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kjær, A. M., & Joughin, J. (2012). The reversal of agricultural reform in Uganda: Ownership and values. *Policy and Society*. (in press)
- Olper, A., & Raimondi, V. (2010). Constitutional Rules and Agricultural Policy Outcomes. In K. Anderson (Ed.), *The Political Economy of Agricultural Price Distortions* (pp. 358–392). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sabatier, P. A. (2007). *Theories of the Policy Process*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Jenkins-Smith, H., & Sabatier, P. a. (1994). Evaluating the advocacy coalition framework. *Journal of Public Policy*, 175–203.
- Van de Walle, N. (2001). *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999. Political economy of institutions and decisions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.