Chapter 8

Competitive elections and agricultural sector initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa

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Forthcoming in *Developing Democracy: Democratization, International Stability and Political Renewal* (Aarhus University Press, 2013).

Edited by Michael Böss, Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning

Introduction

During the course of the 1990s, regular multi-party elections became the norm for most states in sub-Saharan Africa,[1] and Africans increasingly preferred democracy over the rule by one party, by one man or by the military.[2] Today, African ruling elites must therefore win elections in order to legitimize their access to power. This democratic upsurge has given rise to a number of studies on how elections were carried out and how they affected the quality of democracy.[3]

However, other important dimensions of the democratization process have been neglected. In particular we know relatively little about the effects of competitive elections on policy-making and implementation in agriculture in Africa.[4] Such knowledge is especially relevant for three reasons: agriculture provides the livelihood for a very large proportion of the population in sub-Saharan Africa;[5] improved agricultural productivity is central for economic transformation and

[1] Nicolas Van de Walle, "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2003), 298.

[2] Afrobarometer 2008, The quality of democracy and governance in Africa: new results from Afrobarometer round 4. Afrobarometer; Benno Ndulu, "The Evolution of global development paradigms and their infleunce on African economic growth, " in ed. Benno Ndulu, Stephen A. O'Connell, Jean-Paul Azam, Robert Bates, Augustin K. Fosu, Jan Willem Gunning and Dominique Njinkeu, *The Political Economy of Economic Growth in Africa, 1960–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 315–390.

[3] Lise Rakner and Nicolas van de Walle, "Democratization by Elections? Opposition Weakness in Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 3 (2009):108–21; S.I. Lindberg, "The Surprising Significance of African Elections," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 1 (2006): 139–151.

[4] Anne Mette Kjær and O. Therkildsen, "Elections and Landmark Decisions in Tanzanian and Uganda." *Democratization* i-first 2012.

[5] World Bank. 2012. *World Development Report 2013*. Washington: The World Bank

sustained poverty alleviation;[6] and research prior to the 1990s has shown that policies to strengthen agriculture generally had much lower priority among ruling elites than securing cheap food for urban populations.[7]

The institutionalization of elections may strengthen the incentives for political elites to focus more on agriculture than they did in the past.[8] Smallholders may increasingly use their strength as the largest occupational group in SSA-countries to seek to further their economic interests through voting; and as elections become increasingly competitive political elites may become more responsive. This, at least, is a basic assumption in the demand-supply thinking that underpins much of the democratisation literature according to Booth (2012).

Furthermore, major global and national changes may motivate political elites to focus on agriculture. Rising food prices in recent years have often ignited political unrest and attempts at regime overthrow in many countries across the continent.[9]. Demographic pressure and rapid urbanization will also continue to make food security and urban food prices a central political concern. In addition, future global food production may be insufficient to keep global food prices down. Consequently, the import of cheap food to compensate for low or uncompetitive domestic production –as was often done in the past – is an increasingly costly option.[10]

At a first glance, political elites in Africa, as well as many donors, have again begun to prioritise agriculture. Several African countries have launched large-scale agricultural sector plans in the new Millennium, and most of them have signed up for the Maputo-agreement, pledging

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[6] Ousmane Badiane, *Agriculture and structural transformation in Africa* (Washington: International Food Policy Institute. 2011); Xinshen Diao, Peter Hazell, and James Thurlow, "The Role of Agriculture in African Development." *World Development* no. 38, 10 (2010).

[7] M. Lipton, *Why Poor People stay poor: urban bias in world development* (London: Temple Smith, 1977); R.H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Colin Poulton, Understanding the Political Economy of Agricultural Policy Making in Africa: A Conceptual Framework (London: Centre for Development, Environment and Policy, 2011).

[8] Poulton, 2011; Kjær and Therkildsen, 2012.

[9] Raj Patel, "Food riots," in ed. Emmanuel Wallerstein and Ness, *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (Blackwell Publishing, Blackwell Reference Online, 2009); Marco Lagi, Karla Z. Bertrand, and Yaneer Bar-Yam. The Food Crises and Political Instability in North Africa and the Middle East (Cambridge, Massachusetts New England Complex Systems Institute. 2011).

[10] G. Djurfeldt, H. Holmén, M Jirstrõm, and R. Larsson, *The African Food Crisis: Lessons from the Asian Green Revolution* (Wallingford: CABI International, 2005).

to spend 10 per cent of the public budget on the agricultural sector.[11] Nevertheless, the key issue is how agricultural sector initiatives are actually decided upon and implemented and how this has been affected by competitive elections. We do not know much about this because research on the effects of democratisation have mostly focused on good governance issues such as the independence of the electoral commission, or the effect of elections on democratic legitimacy, rather than their effect on economic policies.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to explore such policy making and implementation issues by analysing election dynamics of recent agricultural initiatives in each of four different countries. The cases of initiatives were chosen because they represent four different ways in which elections affect implementation. Thus, one of the initiatives has little importance for the ruling elite in terms of either votes or potential for financing the government or the ruling party (palm oil in Ghana); one case has importance in terms of political financing and votes in certain areas (rice in Tanzania); one has importance in terms of both votes and financing (dairy in Uganda); and finally, one case, that of sugar in Mozambique, has significant importance in terms of votes, and not so much in terms of political financing.[12]

Moreover, the four countries have democratized to varying degrees, so it allows us to examine the effect of elections regardless of whether the country is a democracy, a semi-democracy, or a semi-authoritarian regime. Ghana, having passed the two turn over test, and with a Freedom house score as Free, qualifies as a democracy; Tanzania, Mozambique, and Uganda are all dominant party systems categorized as partly free by Freedom House, but they are not equally democratic. Both Mozambique and Tanzania has an institutionalized two-term limit on the presidency. Uganda, on the contrary, has had the same president since 1986, and the ruling elite is becoming increasingly authoritarian.

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[11] Shashidhara Kolavalli et al., "Do comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Processes make a difference to country Commitments to develop agriculture?." IFPRI Discussion Paper 01006. July 2010.

[12] The collaborative project on Elites, Production and Poverty (www.diis.dk/epp) thoroughly investigated thirteen productive sector case studies to explore how policy-initiatives in these sectors were influenced by political-economic factors. Our four case studies are drawn from this collaborative project. All cases involved repeated and careful field study, and the primary data sources are referenced in detail in the DIIS Working Paper series, which is referred to in each case narrative. The authors gratefully acknowledge support from the Consultative Research Committee of Danida which enabled us to carry out this research. The authors would also like to thank Michael Böss and an anonymous reviewer as well as members of the comparative politics research section, Political Science, Aarhus University, for useful comments on an earlier version.

The four cases are interpreted through a political economy perspective.[13] We argue that decisions affecting a particular agricultural initiative are *de facto* made during the implementation rather than during the policy making process, and that such decisions are primarily influenced by political incentives facing political elites (subject to product-specific circumstances). Moreover, the main political incentives derive from the imperative to win elections to stay in power, as well as to obtain political financing in exchange for rents to specific groups.

On basis of this we argue that competitive elections are likely to increase clientelism and patronage rather than reducing it.[14] Consequently, democratisation provides very mixed incentives for political elites to push for the implementation of initiatives that can increase smallholder livelihoods. Although in some circumstances competitive elections may help to improve productivity and smallholder incomes (and help to win elections), this may not be the most common outcome. At present the political conditions for a broad based transformation of African agriculture may only exist for certain agricultural products that have a special position in that country's political economy. As shown later, this position has to do with the potential that such products have for political financing and winning votes.

In the following we start by briefly sketching the little we know of how elections affect initiatives in agricultural sectors in African countries. We then analyse how the sector-specific characteristics have influenced the way in which initiatives have been implemented.

The impact of elections on agricultural initiatives

The present day imperative to win elections to get legitimate access to power constitutes a powerful motivation for ruling elites and directly influences development outcomes in poor countries.[15] More specifically, Chauvet and Collier (2008), Hickey (2006) and Stasavage (2005) all found empirical evidence that competitive elections *do* motivate the ruling elites to formulate and

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[13] Lindsay Whitfield and Niels Fold, "Developing a Palm Oil Sector: The Experiences of Malaysia and Ghana Compared," Copenhagen: *DIIS Working Paper,* No. 8. 2012; Mushtaq H. Khan, "Markets, States and Democracy: Patron-client Networks and the Case for Democracy in Developing Countries, " *Democratization* 12, no. 5 (2005): 704–724; *Political Settlements and the Governance of Growth-Enhancing Institutions* (London: SOAS, 2010).

[14] Whitfield et al., forthcoming.

[15] David Booth and O. Therkildsen. The political economy of development in Africa: A joint statement from five research programmes. Copenhagen, Leiden, London and York: Africa Power and Politics Programme, ODI; Developmental Leadership Programme, University of York; Elites, Production and Poverty: A Comparative Analysis. DIIS; Political Economy of Agricultural Policy in Africa. SOAS; Tracking Development, African Studies Centre and Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies. Leiden, 2012.

implement policies, which they perceive will be able to win them support. In addition, Kjær and Therkildsen (2012) found that the vote winning imperative motivates political elites to prioritise initiatives that have immediate and visible effects, that affect many voters, and that can be attributed by voters to the ruling party. Finally, Whitfield et al (forthcoming) found that elections tend to strengthen lower level factions of the ruling coalition, e.g. local party cadres, because they are able to mobilize votes. Consequently, there are strong incentives to use policy initiatives to benefit lower level factions.

Social sector policies have many of the above mentioned election winning attributes identified by Kjær and Therkildsen (2012). Building a class-room in a locality, for example, can be seen by everybody; it can be built pretty fast; and ruling party politicians and their local supporters can justifiably claim that their party made its construction possible. Moreover, classrooms are highly appreciated by many voters. It is therefore no surprise that primary education has enjoyed substantial political support in many African countries. Incidentally, donors have also prioritised social sectors – and often because they appeal to domestic politicians and constituencies in similar ways as they do in Africa. The result has been a significant shift in the allocation of both government revenues and aid away from agriculture and towards the social sectors for many years.[16] Consequently, aid has not contributed significantly to economic transformation.[17].

The political incentives of supporting agricultural initiatives in poor African countries are different. Unlike the social sector policies which typically benefit citizens country-wide, agricultural conditions – and crops – differ across agro-ecological zones such that, for instance, sugar or rice production are concentrated in certain regions.[18] In practice, many agricultural policies are therefore targeted to a specific region, and often this does not fit the election winning criteria outlined above. Moreover, because of the large number of smallholders, the costs of implementing an initiative that reach many voters in even a few constituencies can be quite prohibitive. This means that election winning imperatives may motivate national and local political elites to spread resources thinly among a large amount of smallholders. Conversely, regions that grow a particular crop, which is important for the economy, can be the basis for political

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[16] William Easterly, "Can the West Save Africa?," *Journal of Economic Literature* 47, no. 2 (2009): 373–447.
[17] John Page, Structural Change and the Private Sector in Africa (Helsinki: Recom. World Institute for Development Economics Research, 2012).
[18] Poulton, 2011.

mobilization around that crop and this can have significant influence on how agricultural initiatives are designed and implemented.[19]

Another significant difference between the social and the productive sectors highlights the character of political incentives in agriculture. Production is a potential source of government revenues. These help to fund the provision of public services without which winning future elections would be more difficult. However, agriculture is not a significant source of government revenue in SSA except for certain products in specific countries. In Tanzania, for example, the agricultural sector contributed less than ½ per cent of total government revenues in the mid-2000s. Smallholders are either too poor to pay tax, operate in the informal sector,[20] or are too distant from the tax collectors dragnet to be caught.[21] In addition, popular resistance to rural taxation motivated the ruling party to abolish most taxes on smallholders in the early 2000s (they did not yield much revenue anyway). Taxation of the agricultural sectors in Ghana, Mozambique, and Uganda are similarly insignificant or declining.[22]

Since it is a reasonable first assumption that the political bargaining power of smallholders depends on the size of the revenues that they contribute,[23] we should not expect that they yield much political power. An effective social contract between smallholders (the majority of people in African countries) and rulers centred on bargaining about taxation in exchange for public goods does therefore not really exist in the four countries.[24] Smallholders as producers are not an important constituency for political elites from a government revenue point of view.

Democratization does, nevertheless, generate incentives for political elites to strengthen relations with specific economic actors in agriculture. Competitive elections increase the

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[19] Catherine Boone,"State Building in the African Countryside: Structure and Politics at the Grassroots," *Journal of Development Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 1-31.

[20] Politicians In rich capitalist countries have a direct and strong incentive to promote productive sector development because production is done in the formal sector which can be taxed – and because capitalists have significant structural power in the economy (Khan 2010).

[21] O. Therkildsen, O., Democratisation in Tanzania. No taxation without exemptions. New Orleans: The American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, 2012.

[22] Kym Anderson, "Five Decades of Distortions to Agricultural Incentives," Agricultural Distortions Working Paper. No. 76 (World Bank, 2009).

[23] J.F. Timmons, J. F., "The Fiscal Contract: States, Taxes and Public Services," *World Politics* no. 57 (2005): 530-67.

[24] Except for cocoa in Ghana.

need for political financing to build and maintain coalitions among fractional elites.[25] Consequently, individual or groups of capitalists with money that typically operate in large scale farming, agribusiness and trade can be important sources of political financing for the party and for individual politicians. They are often also important sources of government revenue. In exchange, capitalists receive patronage (rents).[26] Depending on economic conditions and the stability of the distribution of power in a country such rents may enable capitalists to become more productive – and this may have benefits for the economy.[27] The opposite is also a real possibility: capitalists in agricultural use rents from political patrons for non-productive purposes or in ways that are negative for smallholders.

Finally, the political power of economic entrepreneurs in agriculture – smallholders in the informal sector or firms/farms in the formal sector – does not just depend on their importance for revenue generation and political financing. Power can also be based on organised interests. Although most smallholders in Africa are poorly organized, and therefore typically have limited influence as interests groups, they can be important actors in elections if they are organised. A farmer's cooperative, for example, may be able to move its members en bloc to the opposition if they are not satisfied with the initiatives of the ruling elite.

In sum, competitive elections do not automatically drive ruling elites to pursue growth-enhancing policies. But they do strengthen the incentives of ruling elites to initiate more immediately visible policies that benefit a large number of voters. Such impacts on policy, however, depend on specific characteristics; i.e. the importance of the agricultural product or commodity (called a sub-sector in the following) in terms of votes and its potential for generating political finance and revenues. If the sub-sector is not important in either of these ways, the ruling elite will likely not pay attention to it. In addition, the organization of economic actors matter, because if they are organized, they are more likely to successfully influence government policies. If the sub-

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[25] Michelle D'Arcy, Food security and Elite-ruler relations in sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the impact of democracy on public goods provision (Gothenborg: The Quality of Government Institute. Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, 2012).
The ruling coalition consists of the economic, social and political actors who support the ruling elite and help them remain in power. Coalition building involves a number of strategies such as allying with important elites, appealing to communities through campaigns, using patronage to keep lower level cadres within the coalition, and coopting important elites, e.g. by appointing them for ministerial posts, positions in the army or in parastatals (Whitfield and Therkildsen, 2011).

[26] E.g. by giving capitalist in agriculture special access to government licenses, tax exemptions, tariff protection or land.

[27] Khan 2010, 125.

sector is important both in terms of votes and financing, the influences on elite incentives will depend on the productive sector in question and the nature of interests involved, for example, whether the interests of voters and the financers of the ruling party are similar or conflicting. Finally, if ruling elites have political incentives for promoting an agricultural sub-sector, they will push for strengthening the capacity of the implementing bureaucracies. Thus, it is not a lack of implementation capacity in itself that is a challenge to promoting African agricultural sectors, but rather the lack of political incentives to promote agriculture in general.

The case studies in the next section show how these various factors influence the actual implementation and outcomes of country and product specific initiatives that were launched after the introduction of competitive elections in the four countries.

Analysis

The four cases analysed in this section represent different characteristic ways in which elections affect the implementation of agricultural sector initiatives. In all cases the formal policy goal was to increase productivity, as indeed could be expected in policies targeted at productive sectors, but the political and economic outcomes were often quite different as shown below. The four countries have varying degrees of democracy, but elections mattered in all of them. The implementation of the initiatives in the four cases were carefully explored through reading of relevant policy documents, parliamentary debates, newspaper articles, and a series of interviews with key politicians, public officials and sector actors. The interviews were carried out over a period of four years between 2008 and 2011 with repeated visits to the four countries.

The palm oil initiative in Ghana: undermined by competitive clientelism[28]

Ghana is one of the most democratic countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Following a period of military-bureaucratic rule, the country has seen two turnovers of the party in power since 1993, when multiparty democracy was reintroduced. Since then, elections have been relatively free and fair, and civil and political rights have been largely upheld. However, elections are closely fought. The margin of votes between the winner and looser of the presidential elections shrank from 28 per cent in 1992 to 0.5 per cent in 2008. Consequently, the ruling elites of the two main parties, NDC and NPP[29], are increasingly vulnerable in power. Moreover, these elites are increasingly fragmented

[28] This narrative is based on Fold and Whitfield (2011) and Whitfield et al. (forthcoming).

[29] National Democratic Congress and National Patriotic Party respectively.

at the top while the influence of the lower levels of each party has been strengthened over time because their support in mobilising votes is increasingly important. In short, the parties serve as an umbrella for competing factions as is typical for competitive clientelism. This has led to decentralized authority and weak discipline among politicians.

It is this context of competitive clientelism that president Kufour, following NPP's election victory in 2000, launched the President's Special Initiatives (PSIs) for the productive sectors. The declared goal was to diversify the economy by developing new productive sectors outside cocoa and gold – the two important pillars of the Ghanaian economy. Palm oil was one of the targeted sub-sectors. The initiative aimed to increase economic opportunities in rural areas by improving the production and productivity of the smallholders and link them to modern processing mills.

In hindsight it is clear that multiple imperatives drove the design of the palm oil initiative. It should directly benefit rural farmers; it should not challenge the land tenure restrictions posed by the chiefs' control of access to land; and it should be carried out by the state. However, the main political incentive for Kufour and his supporters in the NPP was that they could take credit for the PSI at election time.

In Ghana the palm oil belt is located in the south, where a large part of the population lives. Some 300.000 hectares of oil palm were cultivated in 2008.The industry is largely bifurcated. Some oil palm is grown by smallholders who supply about 400 small-scale processing units that produce mainly for home consumption. These producers are poorly organised, do not contribute much to government revenues nor to political financing. Oil palm is also grown and processed by estates producing for use in domestic manufacturing of various oil based products. Four predominantly foreign owned large processing mills (that also own the estates), and eight medium-scale Ghanaian owned mills make up this part of the sub-sector. Only a handful of these mills are profitable and pay some tax. They are not important sources of revenue, nor are they sufficiently organised to be able to put political pressure on government to further industry interests. And as a group these larger firms did not have strong ties to the NPP. They succeeded in helping to get palm oil on the political agenda but did not have much influence on the implementation of the PSI.

Crude palm oil supply increased in the 1990s but stagnated in the 2000s due to problems of access to land, low productivity on farms, and poor financing for growers and processors. Exports have been limited, while a steadily increasing domestic demand has led to a growing import. This has contributed to Ghana’s perennial balance of payment problems. Present economic prospects are better due to increasing crude palm oil prices and a surging interest in oil palm for biodiesel. For some of the PSI architects there was also a clear inspiration from Malaysia and Indonesia that had developed palm oil sectors.

The design of the PSIs was, however, largely informed by political imperatives. Interestingly, the PSIs were not mentioned in the NPP party manifesto for the 2000 elections. It was developed by Kufour after the closely fought election that year, which made the party realize the need to start initiatives to benefit smallholders so as to gain their support in the next election.

A small group within the ruling party centred around President Kufuor formulated the palm oil initiative. It was not designed in collaboration with the established larger scale industry actors. The idea was that the state should directly support smallholder farmers to increase oil palm cultivation outside that existing industry. The state should also facilitate the creation of community-owned enterprises where farmers and land owners had shares in a processing company, while the capital and management of the mill was supposed to come from ‘strategic’ private investors.

The Initiative was at first implemented through a Secretariat staffed by political appointees and run fairly autonomous outside the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. But the secretariat was poorly managed due to conflicts between bureaucrats and ruling elites and could not shield implementation from factional demands from within the ruling coalition. President Kufour did not have sufficient authority to help to solve these problems. Moreover, the implementation was underfunded: different factions within the NPP were simply unable to prioritize the Initiative as the government became confronted with a multitude of other claims on the budget. Each faction of the party – as well as individual members of parliament – struggled to ‘bring development’ to their own constituencies. The PSI on palm oil lost out in this competition for budget resources.

Another important dimension of the power struggles within NPP amplified this pressure to accommodate distributional claims. It concerned the struggle for presidential power among various factions of the party when Kufour stepped down (Ghana has a two-term four year limit). It began in 2003 – before Kufour had even won his second term. For a key architect of the

PSIs, who was appointed as the minister of Industry in 2003 was regarded as Kufour's preferred candidate for the race. This meant that political rivals within the NPP did not want to see the minister succeed with the PSIs, because this would give him an edge in the political contest to become the new presidential candidate when Kufour had to step down. Indeed, the minister actually did resign in 2007 to contest for the NPP presidential nomination for the 2008 elections, but lost.

By 2006 the Initiative had largely stalled due to poor management and poor funding, amplified by intense conflicts around the implementation. Consequently, the PSI did not achieve much of its ambitious economic goals and therefore its intended political goal – to win votes for the NPP – did not materialise either.

Import tariff on rice, Tanzania: winning votes by undermining own agricultural policy[30]

One political party, CCM, and its predecessor, TANU, [31] have been in power since the country's independence in 1961, longer than any other political party on the African continent. Moreover, following three decades of one-party elections the CCM won all competitive elections between 1995 and 2010 by significant margins. The party never scored below 60 per cent of the vote in the four presidential elections; never won less than 75 per cent of seats in the union parliament; and never had less than 90 per cent of seats in district and village governments. These 5-yearly elections have been reasonably free and fair on the mainland. Elections on Zanzibar have been different: closely fought, marred by vote rigging and violent.[32] This has had significant influence on the implementation of the import tariff on rice as shown below.

In 2005, the East African Community (EAC) agreed on a 75 per cent Common External Tariff on the import of rice. The tariff hike aimed to protect the domestic rice industry (growers, traders, transporters, millers) against cheap and often subsidized imported rice from the world market. In doing so, incomes in the rice sector would increase. On the other hand, rice consumers, who are mainly better off urban dwellers, and people on Zanzibar, for whom rice is a very important part of the diet, would have to pay more for their rice. It is the political balancing of such conflicting interests that democratisation brings to the fore.

Some information about the rice sector is helpful to understand its political economy. Rice imports had surged since Tanzania joined the WTO in 1999. The shares of food in imports

[30] This narrative is based on Therkildsen (2011) and Whitfield et al. (forthcoming).
[31] Chama cha Mapinduzi and Tanganyika African National Union, respectively.
[32] Tanganyika entered into a union with Zanzibar in 1964, but the isles have always maintained a semi-autonomous status.

prior to 1999 averaged seven per cent. After 1999 this share jumped to 13 per cent. Rice was a significant part of that import and made up some 30–50 per cent of marketed rice prior to 2005, thereby worsening the already strained trade balance and suppressing producer prices and the rice sector in general. Moreover, Zanzibar is much more dependent on rice imports than the mainland is.

The rice sector in Tanzania is quite important for the economy. Not only is paddy grown by around 15–20 per cent of the country's some four million food crop-producing households that account for some 94 per cent of local production. The crop also provides jobs to a large (but unknown) number of traders, transporters and millers. Paddy growing itself takes place in most parts of the country although production is concentrated in a few regions located across the country. Zanzibar's paddy production is limited compared to demand. The geographical scattering of production, and the fact that producers are overwhelmingly smallholders, mean that rice growers are poorly organised and with little direct political clout even in the constituencies were they are concentrated. And smallholders do not pay a significant amount of taxes, nor are they an important source of political funding for the ruling party, CCM. Five large companies, on the other hand, control almost all of the profitable rice imports, and some of them have close relations to the ruling political elite.

An effective tariff protection would, as already mentioned, boost incomes from paddy among a large number of households country-wide. Despite this vote winning potential, the change in policy (introduced in the run-up to the 2005 elections) was not used by CCM in its election campaign. The tariff decision has actually never attracted much public attention. Although it was pushed by technocrats in the five EAC member countries and sanctioned by political leaders they did advocate openly for it. This is, perhaps, not surprising given the political draw-backs of the tariff decision for the consumers of rice.

Rice accounts for some 20 per cent of cereal consumption, and is mainly bought by urban consumers, and by people on Zanzibar, where it is a much more important part of the diet than on the mainland. When the tariff on imported rice was raised from 20 per cent to 75 per cent in 2005 it did *not* have a significant impact on retail prices. These rose as fast during a three year period before 2005 as during the three following years. Yet, the volume of legally imported rice *did* decline to one third after 2005, while illegal import of rice increased as shown below.

Nevertheless, retail prices on rice have increased fairly fast during the 2000s – tariff or not –as have prices on food in general. Moreover, food prices are generally three to four times higher on Zanzibar than in the rest of Tanzania because production and internal trade on the isles are generally ineffective. Such food prices rises in urban areas and on Zanzibar are crucial for understanding how the official raise in the import tariff on rice was dealt with by the authorities.

For Zanzibar is of central importance in Tanzanian politics. It is the only part of the country where CCM's political hegemony is seriously threatened, and where the competitive elections since 1995 have been marred by fraud and unrest in a country otherwise well known for its peace and stability. Should the opposition win elections on the isles, the union with the mainland – a centre piece of CCM's political objectives for decades – would be in jeopardy. Moreover, the prospects of finding oil around Zanzibar have increased the economic stakes of keeping the union together because the revenues generated would have to be shared by the mainland and Zanzibar.

Although the introduction of the 75 per cent import tariff have caused a dramatic decline in the official import of rice since 2005, a closer look at rice imports and marketing shows that the government undermined its own rice import policy so as to win the elections on Zanzibar. Thus, the fall in legally imported rice has occurred simultaneously with a substantial increase in illegally imported rice to both the isles and the mainland. Both bills of lading for ships bringing rice for offloading in the harbour of Zanzibar town, as well as data on the availability and prices of imported rice in retail shops in 2009 and 2010 in Dar es Salaam shows this.

The port in Zanzibar is a main entry point for smuggled rice and customs services and control of smuggling is the responsibility of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA). This authority is a relatively competent organisation that has steadily improved its tax collecting performance over the years. The illegal import of rice is therefore not a result of weak capacity. TRA has turned a blind eye to smuggling out of loyalty to the CCM-controlled government. For enforcement of the government's own tariff policy would have led to even bigger rice retail price increases on Zanzibar and in towns (especially the capital, Dar es Salaam) than has already occurred, and this would have increased dissatisfaction with the ruling party.

In this way, the politics of elections has had a significant impact on the implementation of the government's own tariff policy. The proclaimed economic objective of the tariff policy – to strengthen the domestic rice industry – was sacrificed in order to win the crucial elections on Zanzibar and help to secure the vote among urban consumers generally. That the illegal import of rice may also have dampened increases in rice prices in the urban areas, where opposition to CCM is growing, is an added political advantage of not enforcing the government's own policy. In the case of rice, competitive elections have motivated the ruling political elite to favour urban consumers and politically sensitive constituencies on Zanzibar to the detriment of rural smallholders.

Uganda's dairy sector: productivity enhancement driven by need to build support[33]

When Uganda's National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power in 1986 after a civil war, the Movement had support in the central area but not in the southwestern area, which was president Museveni's home region. This is also an area with a strong tradition for cattle keeping. Elections did not matter much for policy-making in the first years of NRM's rule, because the Movement had a sort of honeymoon period for the first decade, during which it sought to reconstruct the country and politically to build a broad based coalition. However, from 1996 with the first elections under the new constitution, and particularly after 2006, with the introduction of multiparty elections, their significance increased.

The NRM party won all elections from 1996 to 2011 and remained strongly represented in parliament by 2011 with 263 out of 364 elected seats. Nevertheless, there was considerable and increasing competition, both between the government and opposition parties as well as within the party for parliamentary seats. Concomitantly, lower level factions of the NRM have grown in strength, and the candidates supported by President Museveni have not always been eventual winners. Expenses for election campaigns have increasingly burdened the national budget, and there has been an evident use of public funds in order to win elections.

The initiatives to support the dairy sector took place over a number of years. Some of the earliest industrial policies carried out by the new NRM government in the late 1980s were initiatives to improve milk production in the southwest, such as re-habilitating milk coolers, providing generators, and supporting the acquisition of higher yield cows. In addition, milk trade was liberalized in the early 1990s when the monopsony of the state-owned dairy corporation was abolished. This meant that a myriad of traders emerged and dairy farmers found a new outlet for

[33] This section is based on Kjær et al., 2012; Kjær and Katusiimeh, 2012, and Whitfield et al. (forthcoming).

their milk. As a result, milk production grew quite rapidly in the southwest, and a need for regulating the milk sector in order to improve milk quality emerged. Such regulatory initiatives were taken in the new millennium.

The dairy sector consists primarily of smallholders owning between one to about fifty pieces of cattle and hence these farmers constitute a large number of voters. About 800,000 dairy farmers in Uganda are estimated to sell milk on a daily basis and most of the milk, more than two thirds, is traded in the informal sector. A large number of traders in the southwest have established themselves in the dairy business, and many of them are NRM Members of Parliament. They are important, because they are able to mobilize votes and support among the local constituencies. The so-called "south-western milk shed" overwhelmingly support the ruling party, in most districts the support at the 2011 elections was at round 90 percent.

The now privatized and by far the largest milk processor, Sameer Ltd (or SALL), is supplied mainly by the dairy farmers in the south west. Over 30,000 of them have organized in co-operatives unions, and they deliver milk to coolers owned by SALL but run by the cooperatives. These dairy farmers are also important to the ruling elite, for the same reason as the traders. They could indeed be considered to constitute lower level factions of the ruling coalition, and they feel they owe their wealth to the president. At the same time, they are angry with the Museveni government for not letting them buy shares in the Dairy Corporation when it was privatized. The dairy farmers also feel the coolers in the southwest were given to SALL, although the coolers rightly belonged to them. Hence, they are supportive of the ruling elite but at the same time, there is a conflict between them and the Privatized Dairy Corporation which they feel is representing the government .

As state owned company and as privatized company, SALL is likely to have provided political financing for the ruling coalition. Such political financing is difficult to verify, but influential Ugandan observers were of the opinion that SALL may sponsor the Movement in return for preferential treatment. It is clear that President Museveni was very supportive of SALL, referring to the company as "My investor", and there were government initiatives to protect SALL's new milk powder production, such as a temporary tariff on the import of milk powder from Kenya in the years from the mid2000s and up to 2010 when the EAC tariffs were gradually harmonized

In sum, the milk sector is highly important to the ruling coalition but very complex and with contradictive incentives to the ruling elite. On the one hand, there are up to million important voters living off incomes from milk in a crucial region whose votes the ruling elite would like to keep. Many of them constitute important lower level cadres who are able to mobilize votes. On the other hand, the biggest processor is in all likelihood an important source for political finance. The initiatives to regulate the milk sector should be seen in this perspective. The efforts to regulate the informal milk trade were unpopular with traders and farmers who were important voters and many of them supporters of the ruling elite. At the same time, SALL (and the other emerging processors) both as state-owned company and after 2006 as a private company, had an interest in abolishing the small-scale trade of raw milk or at least making sure they were subject to hygienic and other standard requirements. Living up to such standards would add to the cost of milk and therefore make the informal sector less of a price-competitor to SALL. Therefore, SALL pressured the government to regulate the informal milk trade. Regulation had also been part of an initial Dairy Master Plan which the government had decided upon in the early 1990s.

In 2000, a Dairy Development Authority (DDA) was set up with the purpose to regulate and develop the dairy sector. The Dairy Traders' Association initially resisted regulatory initiatives, but the DDA established a relationship with the traders and big dairy farmers based on mutual recognition and trust. The Authority had competent staff, most notably its director (until 2011), who had past experience in the Ministry of Agriculture as Commissioner and had been on the board of the former Dairy Corporation in the 1990s. The director of DDA consistently negotiated with the milk traders and farmers and in the process, persuaded them to upgrade their practices and equipment in order to improve the quality of the milk. One of the first regulatory measures was a ban on the use of plastic jerry cans to transport milk. However, since aluminum cans cost much more than jerry cans, the Traders' Association and the farmers protested. The ban was postponed so as to allow the traders and farmers time to save and invest in aluminum cans, and they eventually came to see the ban as a positive development because it raised standards. In the same way, other measures to regulate the sector were met with protests but a bargaining process led to the cooperation of industry actors. Although the sector is still characterized by a number of challenges, the fact that farmers and traders organized and collectively bargained with the DDA eventually led to a better regulated dairy sector.

In all, the dairy sector would have been promoted without elections, as it was part of building a ruling coalition. However, elections played a role in the enforcement of regulatory initiatives.

Mozambique's sugar sector: Rehabilitation driven by a vote-winning imperative[34]

The civil war between Renamo, the opposition forces, and the ruling Frelimo government ended in 1992. The country was almost split in two parts during that war. At the end of it Frelimo lacked control over much of the territory, had little political legitimacy, and lacked a strong support base. Since then, Mozambique has taken gradual moves towards a transition to democracy. Frelimo was close to losing the first elections in 1994 as the party's presidential candidate only got 53 per cent of the vote. Also the 1999 elections were closely fought. Subsequently, Frelimo managed to consolidate its victories in the 2004 and 2009 elections. The latter was won with a large majority, although turnout was very low. All these elections have been considered sufficiently free and fair to be accepted by the international community.

The sugar sector had been very large prior to the civil war: not only had it been the third biggest export sector; it was also the biggest formal labour employer before independence in 1975. Moreover, the sugar estates provided rural infrastructure and social services in the areas where they were located. The main sugar regions were situated along the Pungue and Zambezi rivers in the Northern and central and the Incomati River in the Southern parts of the country. The central and northern regions were predominantly loyal to Renamo after the end of the civil war, whereas the southern regions were loyal to Frelimo.

From 1972, production had declined steeply. The civil war had affected the six sugar producing factories so badly that by 1982 four had been closed and two were operating at low capacity. From the mid-1990s, a strategy for rehabilitation of the sugar industry was elaborated and a sugar Master Plan aimed at making the industry competitive was launched. It was approved in 1996 and focused on issues related to privatisation, attracting experienced investors, cost efficiency, human capital development, market creation, and the potential impact of the sector for the social and economic rehabilitation of the rural areas. Four out of the six state owned or state affiliated sugar estates were targeted for rehabilitation. The aim was to make production profitable for investors and create jobs and social services for rural populations. Three regional sugar companies with productive and marketing capabilities were brought in during the privatisation phase: the two

[34] This section builds on Buur et al (2011), Buur et al (2012) and Whitfield et al (forthcoming).

biggest South African sugar companies at the time (Tongaat-Hulett and Illovo Sugar) and a Mauritian consortium of four companies.

The strategy was implemented by the Mozambican sugar institute with considerable political support from the Frelimo government. The result is that four out of six sugar estates with sugar producing factories became functional again between 1998 and 2002. From being close to a total standstill with only around 16.000 tons of sugar produced in 1986, production increased to just over 500.000 tons of sugar by 2012, with close to half of this being exported.

The initiatives to rehabilitate the sugar industry were driven by key members of the ruling Frelimo-elite: state bureaucrats, top-level ministers and trade unions. Despite privatization of the sugar estates and factories the Mozambican state retained a majority share in them. This helped to attract foreign investors because their risks were reduced by this co-ownership. The main driver in this was political. Frelimo had been in close competition with Renamo in elections throughout the 1990s, and the government badly needed to increase support in the sugar-areas where it had lost elections in 1994, 1999 and 2004. The four sugar estates that were rehabilitated with state support were thus selected at least partly because the Frelimo elite considered them to have a substantial potential for winning voter support.

Frelimo's initiatives to rehabilitate the sugar industry involved components, such as a tariff on imported sugar, that would potentially hurt important urban consumers and illegal sugar importers, some of whom provided political finance to top party members. Nevertheless, the drive to win supporters in populous Renamo dominated constituencies and to provide jobs to loyal voters in the South overruled both the fear of losing urban votes and the conflicts with top party members that benefitted from relations to the sugar importers.

Thus from 1994 to 2003 the Chissano-government implemented the sugar strategy despite its unpopularity among key Frelimo urban voters and top level members. This was possible probably only because the industry created up to 30,000 full time jobs over time which was extremely popular, and because the provision of social services fitted post-conflict election winning imperatives. But equally important was the fact that changing the distributional rules for rents did not benefit any particular individuals or groups in the ruling coalition. There are no indications that anyone from the top leadership benefited directly or indirectly in any considerable manner from rehabilitating the sugar sector during the implementation phase. Instead, supporting the sugar sector allowed the state and government to forge new links to rural electoral constituencies in the central areas where it had struggled to assert itself before.

The rehabilitation of the estates meant that Frelimo elites in these areas could more easily mobilize local constituencies in favour of the Frelimo party. In the longer term, rehabilitation of the sector would also mean the expansion of outgrower schemes and hence an increase in the number of smallholders who would then be more likely to support Frelimo. Sugar estates also provided services such as health and education for their employees. These strategies were so successful over time so that by 2008 and 2009, Frelimo had won both local and national elections in former Renamo areas like Marromeo along the Zambezi River, where one of the largest sugar factories is situated.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we set out to explore the case-specific dynamics that influence how elections affect the design and implementation of agricultural sector policies aimed to increase productivity and production in four agricultural sectors (palm oil, rice, dairy and sugar). The four case studies – one each from Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Mozambique - represent different characteristic effects of such elections.

Three out of the four cases analysed had positive *political* outcomes from the point of view of the ruling political elite; that is, the initiatives arguably contributed to winning elections. Only palm oil in Ghana did not do that: the ruling political elite here was too fragmented to be able to prioritise the initiative and it simply died out. Interestingly, in two of the three cases with positive political outcomes – import tariff on rice in Tanzania and dairy in Uganda – winning elections was <u>not</u> the intended policy purpose from the outset (winning elections *was* a clear, but unspoken aim of the sugar initiative in Mozambique). In Uganda, the initial support for dairy happened prior to the introduction of elections and was driven by a need to build a support base. However, the implementation of subsequent regulatory initiatives was affected by electoral dynamics.

This illustrates a striking feature: the election winning motivation is more likely to kick in during the implementation phase than during the policy making phase. This supports the proposition that powerful factions in poor countries are more likely to seek to influence the implementation process rather than decision-making.[35] It also helps to explain why van de Walle and others are wrong when they deduce that political elites – and voters – are not interested in policy making. They *are* interested. But what actually gets implemented is often not related to the policy debate or to the official policy design. What actually gets implemented is much more likely to be determined during the implementation phase than in the policy decision phase in countries where the institutionalisation of decision making is weak. Why bother much with policy making when what matters happen during implementation?

The two cases with positive political *and* economic outcomes (dairy in Uganda and sugar in Mozambique) have two characteristics in common: (i) there was a strong mutual interest in positive economic outcomes between political elites and producers; (ii) these producers were organised and/or had strong capabilities, so that they could put clout behind their demands. In the two other cases, producers were both disorganised and had little capacity to influence policy making and implementation. In particular, they were not important for state revenues and political financing either.

In addition to the four cases presented here, elsewhere we analysed nine other cases, including some outside agriculture (fisheries and manufacturing).[36] We found elections to be important for political or economic outcomes on the ground in ten of the thirteen cases but a general feature of the cases is that in most of them (eight of ten), productivity outcomes were either uncertain or outright negative. Indeed, good politics may sometimes be bad economics. Such negative outcomes of the policy initiatives are linked to the political motivations that elections generate: increased competition in fragmented political contexts combined with increased political and economic costs of winning elections under such conditions. There may be a long term positive relation between elections/democracy and positive economic outcomes, but in the short term, elections often create negative effects on the implementation of economic policy.

On the other hand, the case study findings presented here confirm an emerging consensus among some European researchers: "Development outcomes in poor countries depend fundamentally on the political incentives facing political elites and leaders…. Because of the way

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[35] John W. Thomas and Merilee S. Grindle, "After the Decision: Implementing Policy Reforms in Developing Countries," *World Development* 18, no. 8 (1990): 1163–1181.

[36] See publications at www.diis.dk/epp and Whitfield et al. (forthcoming).

democratisation affects politicians' incentives … the introduction of competitive elections is a mixed blessing" for productive sector development.[37]

The case studies also illustrates that agricultural policies are very difficult to implement, because they involve changes in state resource allocations as well as institutional changes. Both affect the distribution of economic benefits, creating immediate winners and losers. Politics around resource allocations typically makes it difficult for state agencies to defend implementation from political pressures.

Thus democratization has tended to increase clientelistic politics rather than reducing it in the four countries included in this study. It is therefore not 'more democracy' that Africa 'needs' in order to motivate its ruling elite to formulate agricultural policies that benefit producers, most of which are typically smallholders. Instead, better organised producers with stronger technical and economic capacities that operate in the formal sector are needed: that is, an economic transformation which helps to strengthen capable economic entrepreneurs.

This is a bit of a chicken and egg situation. The prospects for improvements in the quality of policy decision making and implementation are not around the corner because their emergence is closely linked to the structural changes in the economy which, in turn, to some extent depend on the impact of policies aimed to increase production and productivity in agriculture.

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[37] Booth and Therkildsen 2012, 1,5.

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