

# The Role of Policy Beliefs and Discourses A Case Study of NAADS in Uganda

**Patience B. Rwamigisa**

**Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries,  
Uganda**

**AFRISA, Makerere University, Uganda**

*International Conference on the Political Economy of Agricultural Policy in  
Africa, March 18-20<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Roodevallei, South Africa*

# Introduction

---

- Uganda in 2001 adopted the most far reaching agricultural extension reform in Africa, spearheaded by NAADS program.
- The Program adopted a decentralized, farmer-owned and private sector serviced contract extension system; a complete departure from the centralized public extension system
- This reform model was highly publicized and considered a model for other African countries.
- With the World Bank, NAADS played a key role in terminating the “Training and Visit” (T&V) system.

# Problem Statement

---

- World Bank's own assessment found that **NAADS performed below expectations.**
  - Supported by other literature (e.g., Kjaer and Joughin, 2012)
  - Public criticism of the program, Parliamentary report
  - Statistical evidence on income effect inconclusive (IFPRI, UBOS) (Benin et al., 2011, 2012)
- **Different views regarding the underlying reasons**
  - Donors: Lack of performance by government
  - Government: Imposition of the program by donors
- **Purpose of this study:** Contribute to filling knowledge gaps by
  - analysing the role of different actors involved in the design and implementation of the NAADS program, and
  - analyzing their discourses and policy beliefs.

# Methodology

---

- **Focus on the policy process**
- **Conceptual framework**
  - Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993; Resnick and Birner, 2010) combined with
  - Discourse analysis approach developed by Hajer (1995)
- **Data collection methods**
  - Review of policy documents
  - Interviews (56)
  - Participant observation (e.g., participation in numerous meetings at different levels)

# Policy actors and their belief systems

---

- **Two discourse coalitions** (interest coalitions of policy actors) were identified based the analysis.
- The two coalitions differed fundamentally in their **policy beliefs about the way in which extension should be reformed**
  1. Coalition dominated by **donors**
    - emphasized need for **radical extension reform**
  2. Coalition dominated by technical staff in **MAAIF**
    - emphasized need for **gradual extension reform**

# Description of Policy Actors

	Radical reform coalition	Gradual reform coalition
Members	Ministry of Finance, Donors led by World Bank, NAADS leadership	Ministry of Agriculture, Local Governments, NARO, PMA, Academia
Self-Perception	True reformers; defending farmers' interests	True understanding of the system; able to identify what can work
Other - Perception	Defending vested interests of bureaucracy and politicians	Captured by donors and their reform models; not open to locally adapted solutions

# Defining the coalitions

---

- **Gradual reform coalition:**

- “The radical agricultural extension reforms, as being advocated by the NAADS program, are institutionally disruptive and destabilizing; technically destructive; and may not be sustainable in the long run.”
- “Suppose the World Bank was not involved, would these policies be in existence? And if it pulled out now, would these policies hold?”
- “Agricultural extension reforms have been pushed by an alliance of development partners, and a group of “reformers” within the government system who have worked closely to undermine the authority of MAAIF in the reform process.”

- **Radical reform coalition:**

- “MAAIF has frustrated efforts to reform and only keeps blaming and opposing any reform efforts.”

# Institutional set-up of NAADS as a semi-autonomous institution

---

- Radical reform coalition:
  - “MAAIF is the most bureaucratic ministry and not flexible to new thinking and approaches. Officials in MAAIF continue to live in the past and are resistant to reforms. It is very difficult, to advocate for agricultural extension reforms within MAAIF”
  - “I do not think we would have achieved what we have so far if we were operating within the Ministry of Agriculture. The semi autonomous status has enabled the program to reach out to more stakeholders, some of whom we would never have reached under MAAIF arrangement.”



# Institutional set-up of NAADS as a semi-autonomous institution

---

- Gradual reform coalition:
  - “My experience of 25 years at the World Bank has made me come to believe that promoting institutional change is the most difficult undertaking, and in most cases you end up with: suboptimal structures; create a whole army of enemies; and is incredibly time consuming. The best option is to work with existing institutions and help people to come up with good results.”
  - “the reform process ... within the agricultural sector, over the years resulted in creation of eight semi-autonomous agencies. The establishment of these agencies drained MAAIF Headquarters of both human and financial capital; thus, limiting the capacity of MAAIF to effectively coordinate, regulate and manage the agricultural sector.”

# Participation in the reform process

---

- **Exclusion of members of the Gradual Reform Coalition:**
  - Out of the 16 Task Managers for the thematic areas addressed under PMA, MAAIF had only one representative.
  - The Task Manager for the thematic area of agricultural extension was the head of one research institute under NARO at the time (who later became the Executive Director of NAADS).
  - Mid-Term of NAADS: Out of 200 participants, there was not a single technical head from MAAIF.
- **Reaction of the Graduate Reform Coalition:**
  - “It was a form of silent boycott of the process by the technocrats in MAAIF,”
  - When the failings of the program became obvious, the Gradual Reform Coalition staged their come-back.
    - Example: Prevented lay-off of extension staff, instituted the Probe Committee that found major problems – turning point

# Conclusions

---

- **Main finding:** Deeply divided coalitions regarding policy reform
  - **Rationale of the radical reform coalition:** Excluding staff of MAAIF as they were considered to be opposing any reform.
  - **Consequence:** Passive resistance; lack of using relevant expertise in the design of the NAADS program
    - Contribution to the failure of the program
- **Implication**
  - For comprehensive institutional reform programs, such as agricultural extension reform, consensus building is important.
  - The failure to achieve consensus across the ideological divide resulted into “the winner takes it all” approach.
- **Outlook**
  - Ideological divide remains today.
  - Failing of the NAADS reform strengthening the Gradual Reform position – MAAIF is fighting to take the lead.
  - Donor reaction remains uncertain.

Thank You

For Your Attention

# Acknowledgements

---

The author would like to thank the following institutions and persons:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of the Republic of Uganda (MAAIF)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- Dr. Prossy Isubikalu
- Professor Arseni Semana
- Associate Professor Margaret N. Mangheni

# References

---

- Benin, S., Ephraim, N., Okecho, G., Randriamamonjy, J., Kato, E., Lubade, G., & Kyotalimye, M. (2012). Impact of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (Naads) program of Uganda: Considering Different Levels of Likely Contamination with the Treatment. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 94(2), 386–392.
- Benin, S., Nkonya, E., Okecho, G., Randriamamonjy, J., Kato, E., Lubade, G., Kyotalimye, M., et al. (2011). *Impact of Uganda's National Agricultural Advisory Services Program*. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
- Birner, R., & Resnick, D. (2010). The Political Economy of Policies for Smallholder Agriculture. *World Development*, 38(10), 1442–1452. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2010.06.001
- 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*. doi:10.1016/j.polsoc.2012.09.004
- Sabatier, P., & Jenkins-Smith, H. (1993). *Policy Change and Learning - An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. Westview Press.