



The Political Economy of Agricultural Extension Policy in Ethiopia: economic growth and political control

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The Paper Addresses ...

1. The high levels of investment in extension: what motivates these?
2. The inefficiency of investment in extension: root causes
3. Lessons for reform of extension elsewhere

	SSA FEWs	Ethiopia FEWs	Ethiopia Share
2000	150,000 (source: Sasakawa)	15,000	10%
2010	180,000?	45,000	25%?
2015?	195,000?	60,000?	30%?

Ethiopian Agricultural Policy Context

- Smallholder agricultural development central to national growth strategy
 - Unambiguously 1995-2005 (ADLI)
 - Large farm investment scaled up since 2005
- Agricultural share of budget has exceeded 10% for past decade, i.e. even before Maputo 2003
- Extension / credit + PSNP, rather than fertiliser subsidy; land certification
 - Serious about agricultural growth

Evolution of Extension Policy

- Extension prominent under Imperial and Derg regimes
 - Package approach
 - Undermined by tenure insecurity, agricultural taxation
- SG-2000 demonstrations 1993-95
- Participatory Demonstration and Training Extension System (PADETES) 1995
- Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (ATVETs) 2004 + Farmer Training Centres
 - focal point of extension support in every kebele
- Approach to BMGF 2009

Political Context

- Neglect of agriculture contributed to overthrow of both Imperial and Derg regimes
 - Rural populations willing to support armed insurgency groups
- Narrow “core” support base of EPRDF
 - Tigray 5% of population; split after war/peace with Eritrea
- Multiple internal and external threats
 - Ogaden NLF, Oromo LF; Eritrea, Somalia
- 2005 election “surprise”
 - Redoubled efforts on growth and political control

Extension Performs the Twin Roles of ...

- Stimulating agricultural growth
 - Dercon et.al. (2008)
 - Establishing political control
- These two roles are in tension
- Political control imperative reduces the efficiency of investment in extension
 - Top-down vs responsive, adaptive, local information

Market Liberalisation and the Role of Donors

- Support from World Bank, SG-2000, IFAD
 - But also major investment from GoE's own resources
- GoE dictates terms
 - extension policy is 'the one policy we can't do anything about'
- Agribusiness Forum 1997, then complete reversal on commercial participation in key input markets
 - Non-EPRDF companies squeezed out of "liberalised" fertiliser market
 - Similar story on seed (Dawit Alemu 2010)
 - No concessions to Bill Gates

The Political Control Function of DAs

- “Our writ runs in every village.” (Meles 2012)
- State structures (*kebele* Council and Cabinet) are dominated by EPRDF
- DAs are (informally) selected for their political loyalty
- DAs give priority to farmers loyal to EPRDF in their allocation of seeds, fertilisers and credit
 - Similar claims for microfinance, food aid
 - Drive to capture rural elites post-2005 (Lefort 2012)
- Opposition party complaints of DA interference during 2005 elections

Political Incentives for Investment in Extension

- “Autocratic” regimes under multiple threats have incentives to invest in agricultural growth, including public goods
 - Establish legitimacy / undermine opposition sympathies
 - Can afford to adopt MR perspective
- ... but may also be reluctant to allow pluralistic extension systems
- Governments with weaker incentives to invest in agricultural growth may allow donor experimentation
- ... but no commitment to learn or scale up?