

# **LINKING RESEARCH AND POLICY: THE CASE OF GHANA'S RICE TRADE POLICY**

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Aaron deGrassi

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## ABSTRACT

Agricultural trade policies, in particular import tariffs to protect domestic production, constitute a highly contested field of agricultural policy. In view of the recent focus on “evidence-based policy making” in the international development debate, the question arises as to which extent research-based evidence is used in such policy decisions, and which role research plays as compared to other political factors. Against this background, this paper seeks to examine and explain research-policy linkages in the case of rice tariff reform in Ghana. It is based on literature reviews and 70 interviews. The paper uses a historical cultural political economy approach, and reveals that in order to understand the actions of Ghana’s policy makers, there is a need to go beyond currently used approaches to understanding politics in order to reveal the complex factors that underlie such policy decisions. The paper starts by locating the study in the framework of the recent interest of the international development community in agriculture on the one hand, and in evidence-based policy-making on the other. The paper then reviews the recent literature on then links between research and policy making. After briefly describing the study’s conceptual framework and methodology, the paper gives an overview of Ghana’s governance, political dynamics, socio-economic trends, agricultural policies, which provide the setting for research-policy linkages. The presentation of the findings of the study starts with a general description of the links between research and policy that have been observed in agricultural policy-making in Ghana. In order to discover the underlying factors in linking research and policy requires examining particular conceptual lenses (“discourses”) in Ghana, as well the intricate politics of elections, nationalism, external pressure, and rifts with civic campaigners. To see whether or not the nature of linkages is unique to the rice sector, the report also contrasts the case of rice with on the case of agricultural mechanization.

**Key words:** research, policy, trade, politics, trade liberalization, Ghana

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# LINKING RESEARCH AND POLICY: THE CASE OF GHANA'S RICE TRADE POLICY

Aaron deGrassi

## 1 Introduction

With the future of international agricultural trade and the world's farming powerhouses resting on the outcome of Doha negotiations in 2003, people taking to the streets in protest in countries across the world, dozens of studies commissioned, and rice imports at unprecedented levels, what would policy-makers in Ghana – one of Africa's purportedly best governed countries – do? Would policy-makers consider available research, given that many of the conditions were there to promote the use of research in policy making: rice is an issue of national pride in the run-up to celebrations of a half-century of independence, research had been done, farmers groups were pressuring, public debate was ignited, prominent agricultural researchers were represented in Parliament and high levels of government. The present study, based on literature reviews and 70 interviews, examines this ongoing saga. Taking policy-making import tariffs on rice as an example, the study goes beyond the current literature on research-policy linkages by placing them in the wider range of factors, including discourses, electoral politics, nationalism, external pressures and civil society actions, which ultimately influence political decision-making. To identify whether or not the nature of observed research-policy linkages is unique to the rice sector, rice is briefly contrasted with research and policy on agricultural mechanization.<sup>1</sup>

Interest has increased recently in the question of how knowledge is used in policy processes in developing countries. Governments across Africa and much of the developing world have--often under policy conditionality--implemented stabilization and structural adjustment reforms, frequently in partial or temporary manners. They are now increasingly being tasked with preparing "country-owned" policies and strategies, often as a prerequisite for increased aid, loans, and/or debt relief. There is consequently great interest in the ways in which research and knowledge systems relate with policy processes in poor countries. In Ghana in particular, the UK has funded an Evidence-Based Policy Making Project, and the International Food Policy Research Institute has established a Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System. A salient project looking at on Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) began around 2002, hosted by the London-based Overseas Development Institute. The RAPID project – building on an earlier formative review and analysis by Keeley and Scoones (2000) – aims to inform practitioners, and has come to emphasize that the ways research links with policy are influenced by the nature of evidence, networks, and political context. Each of these three components are analyzed and examined in case studies in various RAPID reports. While this project has yielded

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<sup>1</sup> The original research on which this study is based focused on five areas of agricultural policy: the 2002 Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP), budgeting, rice tariffs, mechanization, and oil palms.

many useful insights, it is relatively new and has a broad scope. Hence, there is still a need for more empirical data and methodological refinement, as further detailed in the next section.

While focusing on rice policy in Ghana, the study is relevant to a number of broader issues. After declining interest in and funding for agriculture in the 1980s and 1990s, international development agencies have renewed their emphasis on food and agricultural development. This has been combined with efforts that build on lessons from the difficulties in implementing structural adjustment programs (SAPs), which shifted the focus on governance, political commitment, and policy processes. Ghana is one of the only African countries slated to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The period since 2001 is also the first test of the “liberal” faction in Ghana since 1972, and was a critical turning point as Ghana’s first democratic change of regime. There are some important limits to this study. It is based on an initial review of the ongoing policy process regarding rice production, and policy decisions always encounter difficulties and reworking once put in practice (Berry 1993). Nonetheless, the paper provides empirical data that is often lacking in debates about policy processes in developing countries, and provides a comparison of two different sub-sectors. The issue of rice trade also is relevant to older debates about monetary versus structural constraints to African agriculture (Delgado and Mellor 1984), as well as about the sequencing of reforms. The research also speaks to current questions about what the role of Ministries of Agriculture will be in new contexts of liberalized markets and decentralized governance (Cabral and Scoones 2006). Also, in contrast to research emphasizing “networks,” this report examines links between research and policy that might not be captured with the notion of networks. Finally, the study also provides an interesting contrast to case studies of policy processes that focus on research in relation to policy shifts (Young et al. 2003; Leksmono et al. 2006), rather than policy “stickiness.”

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the recent literature on links between research and policy making and lays out the conceptual framework applied in this study. Section 3 describes the methodology used, and Section 4 provides a background context on Ghana’s governance, political dynamics, socio-economic trends, agricultural policies, and the setting for research-policy links. Section 5 describes links between research and policy on rice trade issues and the factors facilitating and constraining these links. Section 6 analyzes the discourses, which constitute conceptual lenses for analyzing policy processes. Section 7 deals with the political dynamics of policy-making, throwing light on the role of elections, nationalism, external pressure, and rifts with civic campaigners as factors explaining agricultural policy choices. Section 8 compares the case of rice policy with mechanization policy, and Section 9 concludes.

## **2 Conceptual Framework**

The issue of research-policy links has recently attracted increasing interest for a number of reasons: the broader rise of new public management; non-implementation of structural adjustment, the shift to Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and increasing emphasis on M&E with concerns about scaling up of aid. People believing that greater integration of research and policy can help reduce poverty have consequently sought to understand why research policy linkages vary, and how they can be improved.

This paper attempts to answer these questions by merging lessons from the literature on policy processes and research-policy links with a ‘historical cultural political economy’ (HCPE) approach. This approach pays attention to historical detail, a view of politics and economics as mutually constituted, and of phenomena as simultaneously material and meaningful. This

approach also acknowledges the role of discourse in policy-making<sup>2</sup> As shown below, this approach is warranted because it attends to the specificity and complexity of the policy process under investigation, and it is able to provide a more precise explanation than existing approaches in much of the literature on policy processes and bridging research and policy.

Recent work on bridging research and policy has provided useful insights and reviews, however, it has remained limited in three ways: First, its treatment of links has mainly been based on the concept of networks, while other important notions received less attention. Secondly, current approaches have tended towards a positivist view of knowledge that has been called into question by social science research, which emphasizes the role of knowledge as socially constructed (see below). Third, current approaches have insufficiently specified the political dynamics behind linkages, for which HCPE is particularly useful.

## ***2.1 Recent Approaches***

The early literature on the policy process tended to take a “top down” (Sabatier 1986) view of policy as a linear progression by policy elites through defined stages such as setting the agenda (defining the problem), formulating options, choosing among options, designing the policy, implementing it, and monitoring and evaluation (deLeon 1999). Subsequent literature has argued policy often does not progress through these stages, and there may be considerable ‘muddling’ (Kingdon, 1984). A policy may be pushed and then cause people to recognize a problem hitherto unnoticed, or unexpected actions by ground-level staff may mean what is implemented in practice differs from the original design.

Views of the role of research in the policy process have changed also. The traditional model of a one-off, one-way flow of information from a researcher through a channel to a policy maker has been argued to be inaccurate and ineffective. Rather, emphasis has been placed on iterative processes and feedback loops between researchers and policy makers throughout the policy process (Hovland 2003; Court and Pollard 2006).

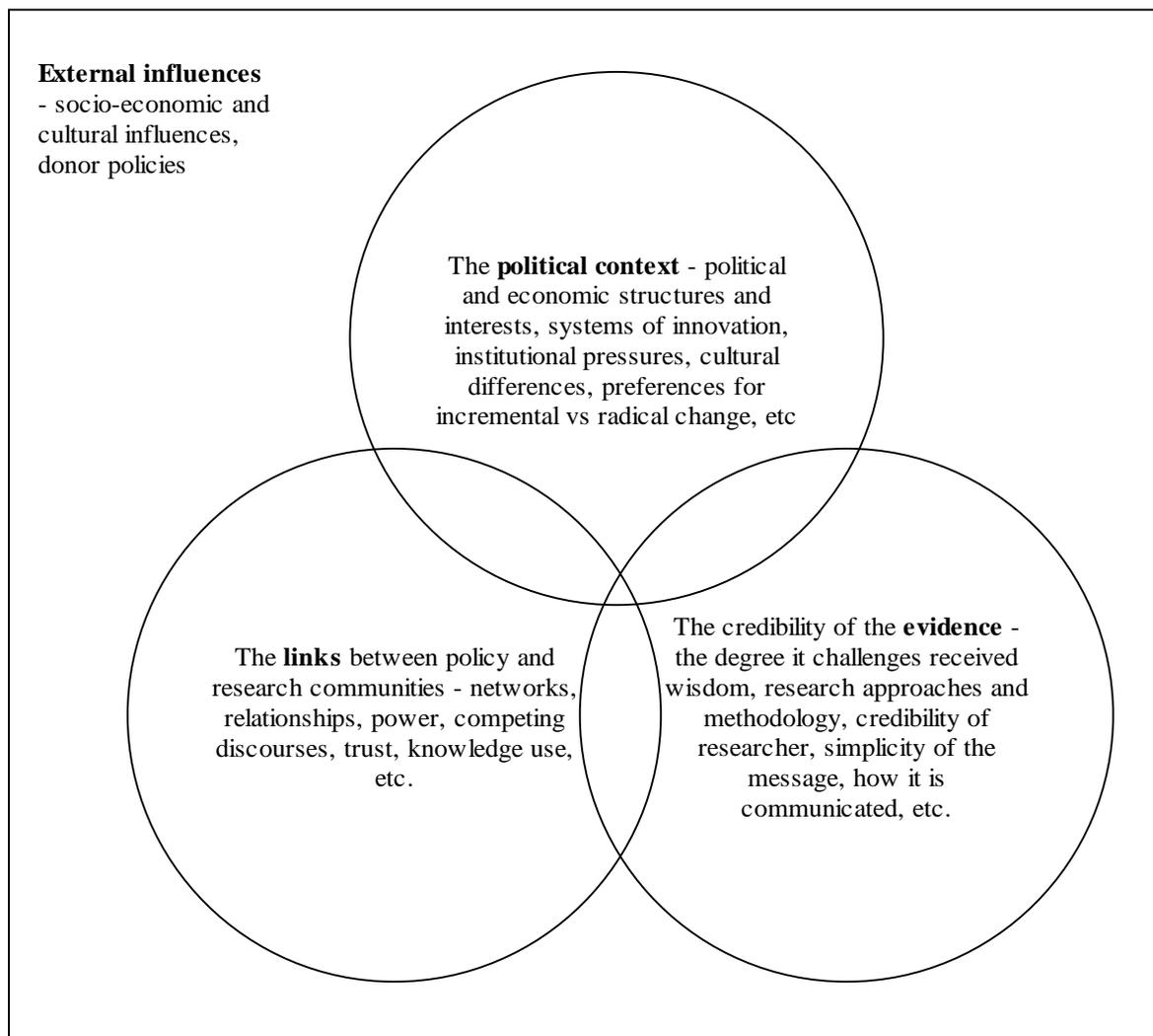
The intervening years since the dominance of linear models has seen a tremendous range and volume of research (Sabatier 2007; Ryan and Garrett 2003; Sutton 1999). In their synthesizing review of the literature on policy processes, Keeley and Scoones (1999: 3) harness a “wide range of sources from a variety of disciplinary approaches,” and conclude that “policy approaches are likely to be influenced by dominant policy discourses and narrative, by powerful combinations of political interests and by effective actor-networks” (29). Crewe and Young (2002: 2) argue “along the lines of Keeley and Scoones” that policy is “structured by a complex interplay between political interests, competing discourses and the agency of multiple actors (see Figure 1). The themes of knowledge, networks/organizational arrangement, and political context are common to various theories of policy processes (though these theories differ in the weight put on each, as well as in scope, methods, and other characteristics) (Schlager 2007).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This contrasts with ‘new’ political economy approaches that are premised more on individual methodologism and some version of formal rational choice theory (Sayer 2000), sometimes overlapping with public choice approaches and economic models of politics. ‘Analytic’ political economy uses formal mathematical analysis (Hinich and Williams 2007; Setterfield 2003). It also contrasts with classical political economy from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo and others.

<sup>3</sup> Several authors suggest that the context for policy processes in some developing countries is different, stemming from different politics and institutions, capacity, levels and modes of participation, less regime legitimacy, the scope

**Figure 1: RAPID's Context, Evidence, Links and External Influence Framework**



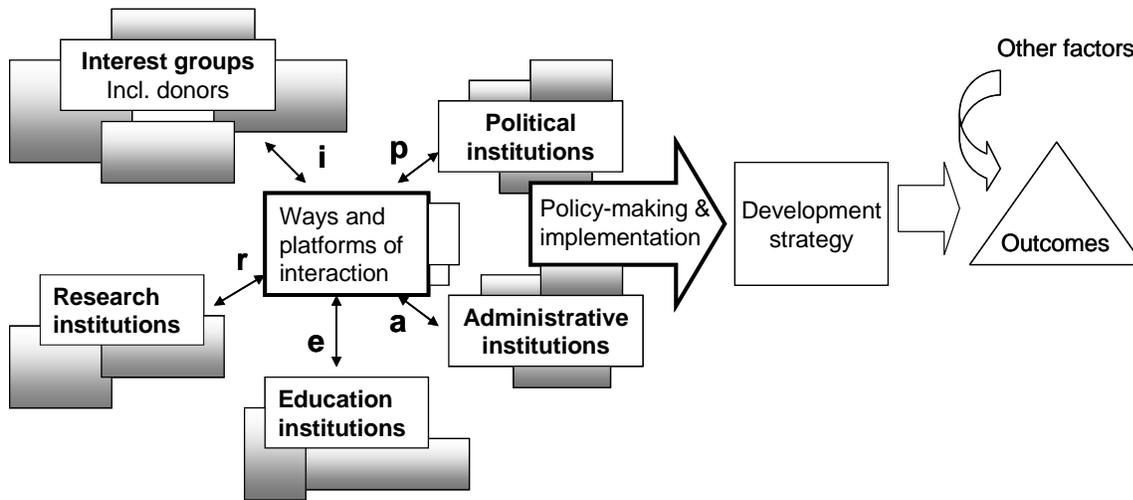
Source: Court and Young (2003: 8); Start and Hovland (2004: 7)

Birner et al (2005) elaborate the interactions by drawing from the literature on National Systems of Innovation (see the reviews by Balzat and Hanusch 2004; Sumberg 2005), as well as on Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems. They depict institutional structures in the figure below. Like their counterparts in communications theory, they shift the emphasis away from a view of links as a linear flow from researcher through channel to end user, and instead emphasize multiple, recursive interactions amongst a range of actors.

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and level of centrally directed policy, capacity research supply and communication, influence of donors and foreign models, and roles of civil society, though the actual processes may differ more in degree than in kind (Young 2005; Horowitz 1989).

**Figure 2: National Knowledge and Information Systems for Development Strategy**



Source: Birner et al (2005: 5)

The next section describes the elements and perspectives that will be added to these approaches to provide a conceptual framework for this study.

## 2.2 Complexity and Specificity

The HCPE approach pays attention to the complexity and specificity of policy processes, which warrant an in-depth familiarity with history and political economic dynamics. As Sabatier (2007: 4) notes,

Understanding the policy process requires knowledge of the goals and perceptions of hundreds of actors throughout the country involving possibly very technical scientific and legal issues over periods of a decade or more while most of those actors are actively seeking to propagate their specific “spin” on events.

HCPE is also warranted because the dynamics of research, policy, and linkages can be specific to particular sub-sectors and issues. Keeley and Scoones’ (1999) analysis, for example, is somewhat specific to environmental issues in which “understanding of biophysical processes may be characterized by high levels of uncertainty.” This uncertainty has implications for the way research relates to policy. Various studies have analyzed the political and economic implications of the different characteristics of various crops and farming systems (Bates 1981; Little and Watts 1994; Mcmillan and Masters 2000).

In contrast, the RAPID literature does not analytically disaggregate the issue of research-policy links at sub-sector levels. The authors that have, so far, worked within this framework, have not analyzed whether there are any intrinsic differences in the dynamics of research-policy links in, say, the education versus the energy sector. There may be specific characteristics of the agricultural sector in general, and agricultural sub-sectors in particular (say phyto-sanitary vs.

soil fertility issues), that shape research-policy links.<sup>4</sup> In addition, specific sorts of policy issues in a particular sector or sub-sector may have their own dynamics in relation to research – for example, trade, administration, regulation, subsidies, or financing. An HCPE approach enables understanding the implications for research-policy linkages of the particularities of the rice sector in Ghana.

The case tariff reforms also a number of specific features. For example, major issues in the case of tariff reform related to the framing of the problem, agenda setting, selecting options, and choosing solutions. As will be analyzed below in more detail, many actors, except certain donors and international financial institutions (IFI), agreed that the problem was lack of support for development of rice production. Civil society campaigners argued that the problem was also one of inadequate protection against cheap imports, and consequently sought to promote the option of government tariff protection. Tariff reform is a fairly fundamental policy decision, one which was arguably rare, but had considerable scope for research input (Court and Cotterrell 2006: 14). Other policy issues in the rice or agricultural sector may have involved more routine, and more incremental, or emergent decisions, and hence different dynamics of research-policy links. In addition, tariff reform has its own characteristics related to implementation, being relatively easier to implement in some cases, and more difficult in others (van de Walle 1989). The issue of rice tariff reform is also an ongoing one, which is likely to continue to feature in elections and civil society campaigns. Therefore, the findings of this study reflect the situation until early 2007, when research for this study concluded.

### **2.3 *Understanding Links***

In addition to building on the policy process and RAPID literatures, and using an HCPE approach, this study also uses a refined concept of “linkages.” Much of the literature on policy processes uses the concept of “networks” in various forms, such as policy or epistemic communities, discourse or advocacy coalitions, or issue networks (Crewe and Young 2002: 15). The present study uses a broader concept of “linkages” to be able to capture more possible connections between research and policy. Interviews and research were used to develop a list of different forms and characteristics of linkages in Ghana, together with the proximate constraints on and promoters of such linkages. This approach complements the RAPID work. Though their conceptual framework includes the word “link,” they sometimes do not focus explicitly or in-depth on them. Crewe and Young (2002: 14-17), for example, discuss generally policy networks, experts, and chains of legitimacy. Court and Young’s (2003) review of 50 case studies found “no clear conclusions about the nature of the links,” but note that “issues of trust, legitimacy, openness and formalisation of networks emerged” (33). They recommend further investigation on specific issues such as the presence, impact and encouragement of bridging “champions,” more receptive policy makers, variations in networks, and the question how trust and legitimacy

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<sup>4</sup> While debatable, Foster et al (2001), for example, suggest that agriculture is unique in that it is a productive sector, the ministry has different and relatively smaller roles, donors and government often disagree about the state’s role, donors disagree amongst themselves, intra-governmental coordination is a relatively greater requirement, and high level political support for reform may be limited.

vary, and how it can be built. While subsequent studies have gone on to discuss functions and forms of networks (Mendizabal 2006a; 2006b), few have explicitly dealt with links.<sup>5</sup>

In other studies such as Leksmono et al.'s (2006) work, for example, one can find mention of links like stakeholder meetings, collaborative research projects, personnel, news media, publications, videos, and a formal network. There is also a key distinction made by Weiss (1977) that the indirect and long-term impacts of research can also be important, but may be less visible as they “percolate” throughout society and change the broader shape and direction of discussions. Informed by this literature, the present study uses an inductive analysis to identify predominant forms and characteristics of research-policy linkages in the case under consideration.

Understanding why linkages take the forms they have is important for deriving policy implications, but research on this topic has remained limited. Sometimes explanations appear tautological. For example, Start and Hovland (2003: 2) state that “CSOs in the South will be more able to engage with the policy processes of their government and of international institutions ... if they are able to access and participate in Southern and Northern policy networks.” Or CSOs may be able to engage if “they are able to communicate their concerns in an effective and credible manner.” These statements beg the question of how and why such issues regarding participation, effectiveness and credibility arise. While some literature, as shown below, has started to analyze the enabling environments for linkages, there is much scope for further research on this topic. A key step is moving beyond positivist notions of ‘evidence’ and analyzing the relations between knowledge, discourses, and power.

#### **2.4 Beyond ‘Evidence’: Knowledge, Discourse & Power**

The current literature on research-policy linkages varies in important ways in its treatment of evidence, knowledge and power. Though some authors at times recognize that “opinions of what ‘counts’ as evidence vary hugely” (Pollard and Court 2005: 6; see also Crewe and Young 2002: 12) this recognition is often overshadowed by casual references to ‘evidence’ and its connotations of objective information. While de Vibe et al (2002) state that “The political context also consists of broader macro formations – ‘discourses’ or ‘paradigms’ – that may exert a powerful influence over which ideas are noticed and which ignored,” several RAPID toolkits barely touch on discourse analysis (Start and Hovland 2004: 62; Court and Cotterrell 2006: 23; Nash et al. 2006). Rather, the concern with some of this “practice-oriented” literature seems to seek to provide tools that can be used by individual organizations to promote their own particular viewpoints, rather than a broader *democratic* reform in the way science and policy are approached in a society.<sup>6</sup> It thus contrasts with earlier work by Keeley and Scoones (1999) that reviewed research demonstrating how knowledge and science are partial and socially constructed. Authors have shown that many preeminent scientists and “common sense”

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<sup>5</sup> The RAPID papers on tools for researchers to impact policy (Start and Hovland 2004) and reviews of communication of research (Hovland 2003) are not used here as they are derived largely from literature from Western countries and from business and marketing models rather than studies of poverty-related research and policy in developing countries.

<sup>6</sup> Some of the key theoretical and review papers from RAPID only mention democracy in general terms or in passing (Crewe and Young 2002; deVibe et al 2002; Hovland 2003; Start and Hovland 2004; Mendizabal 2006; Mendizabal 2006). Several other papers deal with issues directly relevant, such as PRSPs and Legal Aid Centers.

narratives about issues such as deforestation and over-grazing were highly inaccurate (Leach and Mearns 1996). For Keeley and Scoones (1999), a key recommendation arising out of this disjuncture is the need for a more deliberative, democratic approach to science and policy (see Holmes and Scoones 2000).<sup>7</sup> So, rather than conceptualizing the issue of knowledge as a separate ‘evidence’ sphere that interacts with political context (as in the RAPID diagram), their analysis emphasizes the inseparability of power and knowledge, and the consequent need for more participation and democratic deliberation in the conduct and discussion of research.

The interest and theorization of discourses grew in social sciences generally since the 1970s (e.g. Finlayson and Valentine 2002; Belsey 2002), within development studies since the 1980s (Apthorpe 1986; Escobar Arturo 1984; Ferguson 1990; Apthorpe and Gasper 1996; Grillo and Stirrat 1997; Pieterse 1998; cf. Friedman 2006), and with specific application to African agriculture since the 1990s (Leach and Mearns 1996; Keeley and Scoones 2001). Some of the conclusions from this literature are that discourses and narratives operate as lenses that shape peoples’ interpretations of the world and their role in it, and hence influence their actions. Rather than viewing power as something one group may have another not, an emphasis on discourses stresses a view of power as diffuse or “capillary” because discourses shape actions. Discourses can shape what issues and which actors are viewed as problems, or solutions, what is seen as legitimate evidence, what regulation and intervention is desired, and who is allocated authority and resources. Development policy discourses often have story-like narrative structures with a beginning, middle, and end, clear causes and effects, simplified stereotypes or ‘labels,’ problems and solutions, and heroes and villains (Wood 1985; Roe 1991). Discourses arise out of and are inseparable from social, cultural, political and economic relations (as discussed below), not sole individuals, and are sometimes contradictory. Different people may invoke the same discourse with different conclusions, or may attempt to transform the discourse.

Various studies of policymaking have reached somewhat similar conclusions, if albeit generally not from the same literature. They have emphasized that policy-makers – with limited time and resources – are often confronted with a range of ambiguous, contradictory, or questionable mass of research<sup>8</sup> and consequently rely on other values, beliefs, or frames (in short, discourses) to understand the world and what actions to take (Kingdon 1984; True et al. 2007; Zahariadis 2007; Ingram et al. 2007; Rein and Schon 1993).

This study addresses discourses to help describe and explain research policy linkages. Through field interviews and review of primary and secondary literature, this study identifies three prominent discourses about agriculture in Ghana – modernization, populism, and youth. The study aims at identifying the ways in which they shape research-policy links and influence policy outcomes.

## ***2.5 Explaining Links***

Many analysts point to the important role of politics and democratization in shaping research-policy linkages. For example, with regard to tax reform in Ghana, Jebuni et al (2004: 167) argue that “central lessons” from research “were ignored by the government and the Bank of Ghana

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<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Torgerson (1986: 43) states “the post-positivist orientation now points to a participatory prospect.”

<sup>8</sup> Studies have begun to chart the range of diverging approaches to agricultural development in particular that have accumulated over the years (Delgado 1994; Staatz and Eicher 1998).

because of the strong political pressures that were pushing Ghana in the direction of fiscal imbalance.” In a review of 50 case studies on bridging research and policy, Court and Young (2003) found that political context was “the most important domain, with the key issues relating to the extent of policy-maker demand (by policy-makers and society more generally) and the degree of political contestation.” Court and Cotterrell (2006: 9) note the empirical finding that “the degree of policymaker demand is one of the main issues distinguishing cases where research is taken up from those which have little impact on policy.” At a more theoretical level, Sutcliffe and Court (2006: 4-5) suggest

democracies imply a greater accountability of governments and therefore a greater incentive to improve policy and performance. Democratic contexts also imply the existence of more open entry-points into the policymaking process and there are fewer constraints on communication. In contrast, autocratic regimes often tend to limit the gathering and communication of evidence and have weak accountability mechanisms.

In addition, capacity – which is often mentioned in explaining research-policy linkages – is also shaped by political economy. “The striking characteristic of these expensive donor efforts to create technical capacity on behalf of their adjustment programs is how little local support for the adjustment program they have engendered,” notes van de Walle (2001: 175). Straub and Anderson (1999) find in their thorough evaluation of past efforts that “effective policy dialogue is demand driven.” Tilney and Block’s review (1991) likewise emphasise “strong support from influential policymakers” and “an internal demand for policy analysis.” Brinkerhoff and Kulibaba (1994: 2) found that “demand for policy analysis remains limited.” A related argument is made by van de Walle (2001) and others: corruption is easier when the state institutions do not function well – that is, when there is little capacity – and hence rent-seeking bureaucrats and politicians are not interested in building capacity. Such a caricature may be questionable, but the basic message is useful: there is a need to understand the political economy because it shapes capacity building.

Analysts have also pointed to the lack of specific investigation on how political economy relates to research-policy linkages. Hovland (2003: 13) emphasizes the need for greater research on the “lack of an enabling political/economic environment that would allow the practitioners to take up and use the information at hand,” as well as on “how to approach communication at a systemic level.” Pollard and Court (2005: iii) point to the gap in research on the question “How does the political context (democracy, centrally planned republic, authoritarian regime) affect the way CSOs can use evidence?” Similarly, Court and Cotterrell (2006) state:

We do not yet have a systematic understanding of when, why and how political context matters for bridging research and policy (BRP) in developing countries. Is bridging research and policy easier in democratic countries? Do different issues matter in different components of policy processes (e.g. agenda setting, formulation or implementation)? Is using research to inform policy easier in a context of crisis? What makes bureaucrats more susceptible to changing practice based on research evidence?

Countries vary greatly of course beyond the simple democratic/undemocratic split (van De Walle 2002; Collier and Levitsky 1997), and the range of other relevant characteristics is long.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In their discussion of macro-political issues, Court and Cotterrell (2006) also emphasize academic freedom, media freedom, civil society, crisis levels, and commitment to development goals.

In analyzing the factors that shape research-policy linkages, methodological issues are often bound up with conceptual frameworks. In their review of 'Mapping Political Contexts,' Court and Pollard (2006) develop checklists with 48 items related to five topics: key macro-political issues, specific policy issues, policy implementation, decisive moments, and ways policy makers think. Such checklists can provide stimulus to design and analyze studies, but it is not clear how they help in understanding specific contexts. On specific methodologies, Court and Cotterell (2006) list nine approaches to assess political context:

- 1) literature reviews
- 2) reviews of government documents
- 3) discourse analysis
- 4) surveys
- 5) interviews
- 6) focus groups
- 7) participatory exercises
- 8) bibliometric analysis
- 9) forcefield analysis

While these are all possible approaches, they are rather broad categories, and the authors do not discuss vitally important variations, for example building trust with particular interviewees, or differences between literature reviews lasting one day vs. several years. Thoroughly understanding these differences is a critical part of the solid hermeneutics and epistemology of in-depth understanding. For it is not simply the broad type of discourses (modernization, populism, and youth) and the general political factors (electoral politics, pressure from international financial institutions and donors, and rifts with campaigners) mentioned above that matter, but the historically and geographically specific form that they have taken in a particular situation, in this case Ghana.

Some of the approaches promoted by donors and development agencies to understanding politics may be quite new, under-scrutinized, and limited, and consequently will not be utilized here. (deGrassi 2005; Marquette and Scott 2005).<sup>10</sup> More insights can be gained by learning from specific attempts to explain agricultural policies in Africa (see deGrassi 2005 for a review). Many recent studies of African agricultural policy have cited or utilized the conceptual frameworks of urban bias derived from Bates (1981) or neo-patrimonialism (van de Walle 1989; Bird et al. 2003). These approaches have important limitations (deGrassi 2005; Gyimah-Boadi and Jeffries 2000). The urban bias literature, for example, is based on the assumption that small-scale farmers are not able to organize themselves as political interest groups, which is contradicted by empirical evidence. The debate on neo-patrimonialism in Ghana illustrates the challenges of this concept: While Booth et al (2004) strongly argue that Ghana is neo-patrimonial, they also make a careful qualification which calls into question the actual precision and utility of the concept: "Ghanaian neo-patrimonialism is not only distinct with respect to other countries, but has worked differently under different political regimes, corresponding to different

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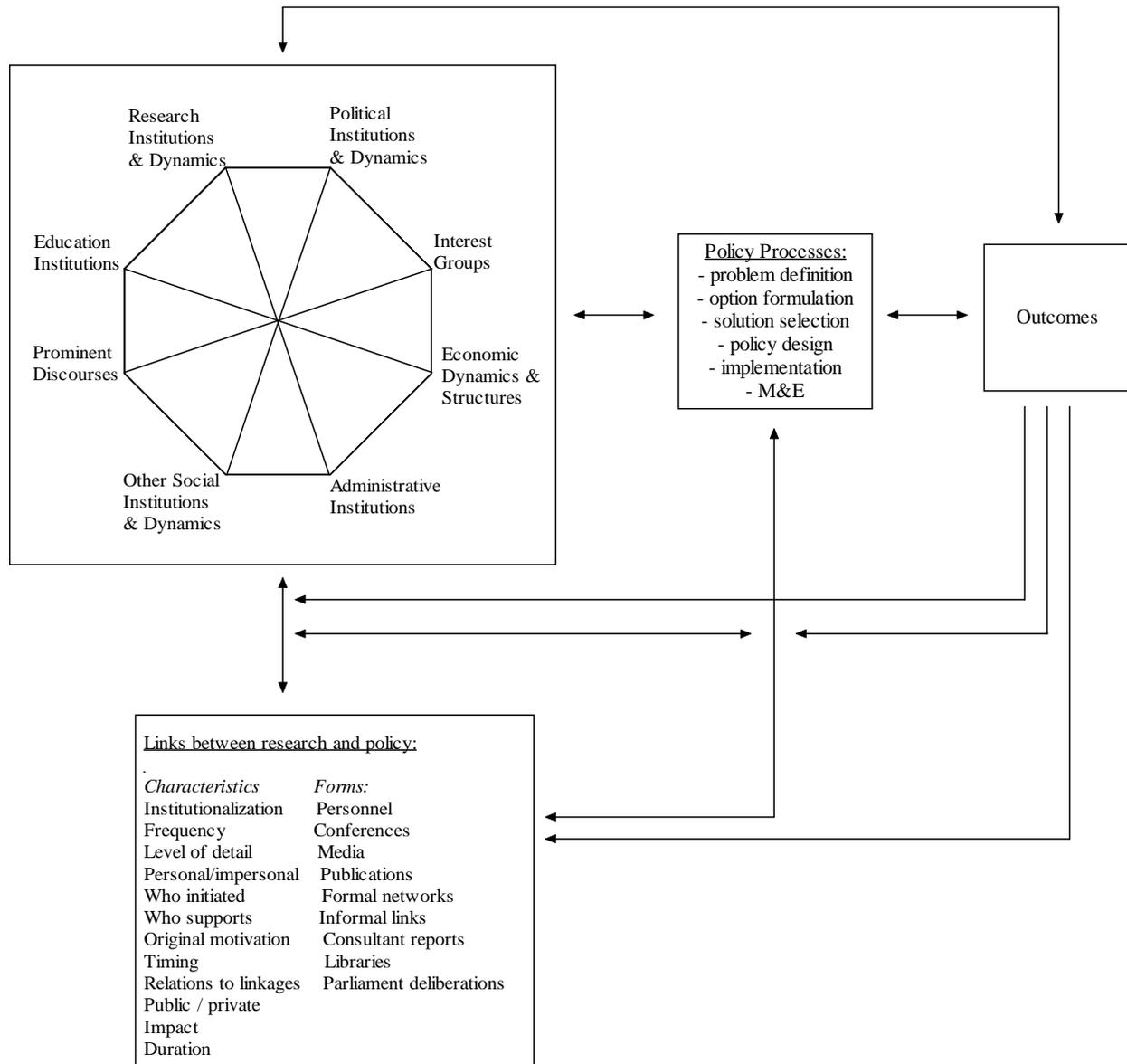
<sup>10</sup> Some of these approaches include Drivers of Change (DfID), Expected Utility Model (World Bank), Reform Readiness Analysis (World Bank), Democracy and Governance Assessment (USAID), Governance Questionnaire (GTZ), Political Context Questionnaire (ODI), Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (World Bank), Civil Society Index (CIVICUS), Power Analysis (Sida), World Bank Governance Indicators (World Bank)(Nash et al. 2006; World Bank 2005).

Ghanaian political traditions. Patronage politics anyway takes different forms under different sorts of political competition.” In light of these limitations, the current study does not further review the analytic debates surrounding urban bias and neo-patrimonialism. Rather, the emphasis is placed on understanding specific key political dynamics as they have developed historically.

## ***2.6 Conceptual Model***

Figure 3 outlines the HCPE framework, which pays attention to the multiple relations between different actors, dynamics, institutions and structures. The box on the left-hand side captures the different types of institutions, organizations and dynamics which influence the policy process as well as research-policy linkages. The diagram also specifies the types and the characteristics of policy-research linkages. In the case of rice, linkages were partly shaped, for example, by the relationship between farmers’ calls for policy reform – in turn caused by trade liberalization and the removal of subsidies--and the increased policy advocacy by NGOs (which have received increasing donor support). After presenting the methodology used, these linkages are further described below.

**Figure 3: HCPE, Links and Policy Processes**



Source: author

### 3 Methodology

Three main methods were used for this study. First was US-based literature review of internet and library sources on agriculture, policy and political economy in Ghana, including donor documents, local and international news and magazine articles, policy papers, academic books and articles, other reports. Databases used include Web of Knowledge, WorldCat, AfricanStudies on BiblioLine, Lexis-Nexis, and GAINS, DEC, Africa Confidential, FBIS, and JOLIS. Secondly, 65 people were interviewed in semi-structured conversations of roughly 30-90 minutes. Interviewees were a range of people relevant to (but not necessarily immediately

involved in) agricultural policy processes in Ghana. Most interviews were conducted in Accra, however a trip was taken through other districts up to the North to obtain views from outside the capital.

**Table 1: Interviews Conducted**

University	8
Local NGO	9
Farmer Organization	3
Foreign NGO	3
Media	2
Government	14
Local/Regional Government	4
Parliament	3
Private Research Institute	2
Public Research Institute	4
Donors & IFI	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>

NB: At some interviews, more than one person was present

Interviewees were identified through existing documentation, IFPRI contact lists, and prior research. Snowballing was also used to supplement the list of interviewees. IFPRI staff in Ghana were first approached. Early interviews aimed for a mix of interviewees (e.g. NGO, government, donor, etc) to obtain familiarity with a wide range of perspectives. As more information was gathered, more detailed interviews were conducted with higher-level officials. Interviewees were each given a short one-page description of the research, describing its aims, background, outputs, timeline, and contacts. At the beginning stages of the research, interviewees were asked if they would mind having the interview recorded. While some people had no problem, for others the question raised obvious discomfort. Thereafter efforts to record interviews were discontinued. There was a need to be sensitive in interviews in administrative systems unaccustomed to public transparency and in a political context in which knowledge is power and therefore often closely guarded.

The research also involved collecting Ghanaian documents, simultaneous with interviews, but also separately (e.g. library research). Libraries consulted included the University of Ghana at Legon, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), and Parliament.

#### **4 Background and Context in Ghana**

This section provides background information on Ghana's political system and political dynamics, socio-economic trends, agricultural policies, and the setting for research-policy links. These sections provide the background for understanding issues of rice trade and agricultural mechanization in Ghana. The major focus will be placed on the question of import tariffs. In

2003, after much public discussion about rising rice imports and lagging domestic production, Ghana's Parliament passed a budget that raised tariffs on rice by 5% (and poultry by 20%). However, this increase was not implemented by customs, prompting a lawsuit by poultry farmers. In 2005, the ruling party voted in Parliament to repeal the tariff increase. In a different sort of policy move – one involving substantial additional expenditure – Ghana's government has imported hundreds of tractors (the largest importation in decades) to promote agricultural mechanization. This issue will be considered for the purpose of comparison. The following sections provide background information on the context in which these policy events took place.

#### ***4.1 Political system***

Ghana's strong executive branch and lively civil society are critical factors in research-policy links. Ghana is currently governed by its 1992 Constitution, which was put together with a Commission established by the PNDC military government under pressure from civil society and donors, and reflects a compromise of allowing measures of formal democracy with certain provisions facilitating the incumbent party's control of government. During the early 1990s transition to formal democratic rule, formal and informal restrictions on civil society organizations and media were partially relaxed. Some further reforms were made after the change of administrations in 2001, including--importantly--reform of the overly restrictive 1960 Criminal Code on libel and defamation. There remain important limitations, as indicated by delays in and criticisms about key legislation such as the Right to Information Bill, and NGO Policy.<sup>11</sup>

Members are elected to Parliament if they receive a simple majority in their district (there are 138). The Parliament has relatively circumscribed powers and weak capacity. In contrast, the Executive in the form of the President has relatively strong powers. The President appoints Ministers, half of whom must be MPs, and who Parliament is authorized to interview. Various changes have occurred in Ghana's system of government (Ayee and Tay 1998), which has undergone various rounds decentralization, the latest proscribed in the 1992 Constitution. It has been argued that decentralization, however, was established as a concession and as part of an effort to establish local legitimacy for military rule (Mohan 1996; Haynes 1991). The current system of local government falls short of democratic decentralization for a number of reasons, which have not been changed yet in spite of an ongoing political debate on the issue (European Union; Consultative Group; Ayee and Tay 1998). Most notably, one third of members are appointed by the President, and District Assemblies are managed by a President-appointed Chief Executive, as are Regional Assemblies.

Food and agriculture interventions are coordinated by a range of Ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Ministry of Lands and Forestry, the Ministry for Environment, Science and Technology, Ministry of Trade, Industry, President's Special Initiatives, and Private Sector Development, and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

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<sup>11</sup> (2007) 'Civil society group calls for passage of Right to Information Bill,' GNA, 24 May.

## 4.2 Political Dynamics

The policies under consideration in this report took place under the New Patriotic Party (NPP) administration.<sup>12</sup> The NPP represents a political faction in Ghana that follows the tradition of J.B. Danquah, a prominent lawyer in decolonizing Ghana. Its outlook can be described that as conservative, liberal, urban and Asante-based, chief-allied, and linked with professionals (Agyeman-Duah 2003). Historically opposed to the Danquah tradition, is the faction dating from Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, which is more populist, leftist, and entails a critique of the uncaring corrupt elite and foreign dependency. The divisions of course are not absolute, and do not always correspond to right/left, incorporating a large measure of pragmatism. Nonetheless, the dynamic between the factions – mingled amongst periods of military rule – is critical to understanding Ghana's politics (Nugent 1995).

**Table 2: Ghana's Post-Independence Regimes**

1957-1966	Convention People's Party (CPP) Government under Nkrumah	Civilian
1966-1969	National Liberation Council (NLC)	Military
1969-1972	Progress Party (PP) Government under Busia	Civilian
1972-1975	National Redemption Council (NRC) Government under Acheampong	Military
1975-1979	Supreme Military Council (SMC) Government under Acheampong	Military
1979	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Government under Rawlings	Military
1979-1982	People's National Party (PNP) Government under Liman	Civilian
1982-1992	Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Government under Rawlings	Military
1992-2000	National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government under Rawlings	Civilian
2000-present	New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government under Kufuor	Civilian

The early 2000s – as Table 2 shows above – were the first time in nearly 30 years that the Danquah faction was in power, and this historical turning point has shaped the NPP's approach to agriculture and policy. On the one hand, the NPP had much learning to do to understand what projects, policies and programs were in place in relation to the agriculture sector. On the other hand, the NPP would seek to maintain the place in power it had gained after such a long time and use food and agriculture activities accordingly.

Chiefs, professional associations, religious organizations, students, and trade unions all have played important parts in politics. The country's largest ethnic group is the Akan in the south, followed by Ewes in the east, and a range of other smaller groups. Though the south is largely Christian and the north largely Muslim, a long history of migration has intermixed people substantially. Matrilineal inheritance and succession predominates in Ashanti areas, and while

<sup>12</sup> Readers are referred to other in-depth studies for greater detail on Ghana's political history (Gyimah-Boadi and Jeffries 2000; Nugent 1995; Hutchful 2002).

women are prominent in marketing positions, they also continue to face discrimination and political and socio-economic inequalities (Mensah 2005).

### **4.3 Socio-Economic Trends**

Recent policy and research on rice have come to public attention due to rice imports, which have risen after partial liberalization of a somewhat unstable economy. The story of Ghana's turbulent economic trajectory is widely documented and will not be reviewed in detail here (see Aryeetey et al. 2000; Hutchful 2002; Rimmer 1992). Ghana's largest economic sectors are in cocoa, gold, timber and food crops such as yam, maize and cassava. Under Nkrumah, Ghana pursued a strategy based on import substituting industrialization, funded largely by heavy taxes on cocoa exports. The highly centralized economy stalled, and cocoa prices dropped. After Nkrumah was overthrown, oscillating military and civilian regimes followed, while the economic decline continued. J.J. Rawlings, shortly after taking power for a second time, began to pursue stabilization and structural adjustment, including many of the standard components of tightening monetary policy, privatization, civil service layoffs, and market liberalization. Though adjustment would eventually prove to be highly fragmented, partial, and temporary, Ghana was portrayed in the beginning as a star pupil of structural adjustment.<sup>13</sup> As Hutchful notes,

Ghana's ERP [Economic Recovery Program] took off just as the adjustment paradigm of the IMF And the Bank was coming under considerable critical pressure and when the two institutions badly needed a 'miracle' to vindicate their approach ... Once the 'miracle' was proclaimed, Ghana could do no wrong. In turn, the Ghanaians were highly effective in terms of their ability to 'play' the donors and to tap the many sources of multilateral and bilateral sources of aid (Hutchful 2002: 151-2)

Consequently, economic development became highly fragmented by thousands of different development projects and organizations operating across the country – a situation that many hoped the development of sector-wide approaches (together with budget support) would help resolve. Numerous loans in the 1980s led to mounting debt, so that by the end of the 1990s, the NPP administration decided (not without criticism) to take part in the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative.

During the 1990s Ghana's economy continued to be influenced by changing regional and global economic trends, as well as by domestic factors, notably heightened spending on wages and a reluctance to readjust some prices during the major pre-election campaign seasons in 1992, 1996, and 2000. These confluences created a highly turbulent situation in 2000, after oil prices tripled, cocoa prices fell to 30-year lows, the cedi depreciated by 100%, and inflation was up to 60%. After taking office, the Kufuor administration raised domestic fuel and utility prices, and resumed (and intensified) relations with donors. While Kufuor has proclaimed a "golden age of business" and "zero tolerance" for corruption, and has sought to dramatically increase both

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<sup>13</sup> See Hutchful [Hutchful 1995 /d]. For more recent adulation in the context of undelivered G8 promises, see also: (2007) 'Ghana on course to halve Poverty before MDG deadline,' 24 May, World Bank Press Release No:2007/392/AFR, <http://go.worldbank.org/TJ2ZE961U0>, last accessed 12 June 2007; (2007) 'Ghana's Growth, Falling Poverty Rates, Could Raise Income Status in a Decade,' 2 March, <http://go.worldbank.org/CBMOR0Q8U0>, last accessed 12 June 2007.

foreign and domestic trade and investment, the NPP administration has not been free from criticism of corruption, nor has it abstained from direct economic intervention in lieu of ensuring an “enabling environment” (Hasty 2005a; Arthur 2006).

#### **4.4 Agricultural Policies**

Prior to the 1980s, agriculture appears to have only been incorporated into a range of broader development plans and policies, which include

- the First Ten Year Development Plan (which was condensed into a Five-year Plan 1951-1956)
- the Consolidation Development Plan 1957-1959
- the Second Development Plan 1959-1964
- the Seven-Year Development Plan 1963/64-1969/70
- the Two-Year Development Plan 1968-69-1969/70
- the One-Year Development Plan July 1970-June 1971
- the Five Year Development Plan 1975/76-1979/80
- the Economic Recovery Program 1984-1986
- the National Development Policy Framework: Long-Term Development Objectives 5 January 2007(Ghana-Vision 2020)”

(Vordzogbe and Caiquo 2001: 5)

While there are references to a “Ghana Agricultural Policy: Action Plan and Strategies” for 1984-6 and 1986-8, these documents are hard to find and little is known about them. Shortly after the Economic Recovery Program, the Medium-Term Agriculture Development Strategy (MTADS) was developed, being finalized in 1991. The MTADS did not have strong Ghanaian input, and was dominated by Washington-based World Bank staff.<sup>14</sup> In 1996 MTADS was replaced by the Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy (AAGDS). The AAGDS appears to have arisen in relation to the 1995 Consultative Group meeting, which was informed by the analysis of poverty in the Country Economic Memorandum (1995), which was in turn informed by the trends from GLSS done in 1988/89 and 1993/4.<sup>15</sup> It’s not clear when exactly the AAGDS was substantially composed, but it appears that was finalized around 1999 or 2000 in conjunction with preparations for the Agriculture Sub-Sector Investment Project (AgSSIP).

## **5 Setting for Research-Policy Links**

As several studies have shown, agricultural policy making has historically been highly centralized and technocratic in Ghana (Harris 1974; Chambas 1981; Pupilampu 1998), making little use of research, though several efforts in recent years have attempted to modify this.

Under Nkrumah, and particularly after an assassination attempt, government became increasingly centralized and authoritarian. The Ministry of Agriculture was divided amongst a number of parastatals. This was briefly reversed, but the military regimes of the 1970s and 1980s also furthered insular and centralized policy making (Agyemang-Mensah 1984)(Gridner 1979; Oquaye 1980). Tense relations between universities and government were frequent. Adding to

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<sup>14</sup> Interview, MTADS consultant, July 2007, Accra.

<sup>15</sup> There was also a 1995 participatory poverty assessment.

this legacy, structural adjustment programs in the 1980s further shifted responsibility for policy making from line sector-specific ministries to the Ministry of Finance, which contributed to reduced linkages with sector-specific research (Hutchful 2002; Kedem 1993).

The 1970s and 1980s also saw declining funds for (largely technical) agricultural research (Tabor et al. 1993). This shortage began to be reversed in 1991 with the World Bank-funded National Agricultural Research Project (NARP), which did not focus on bottom-up planning and consultation with stakeholders, reflecting the fact that there was relatively little interest by government or donors at that time in opening up policy space to a broader range of stakeholders (World Bank 2001). During the 1990s, a range of private research institutes grew, and in recent years, there have been efforts by donors to support greater links between research and policy, including the Ghana Research and Advocacy Project, the Department for International Development's (DfID) Evidence Based Policy Making Project (Vordzogbe and Swainson 2006), support to the Economic Network of Ghana, and the University of Ghana, Legon's Agribusiness Development Programme.<sup>16</sup> The following paragraphs provide more specific details on organizations relevant to linking policy and research, including government agencies, universities, and private and public research institutes.

### **5.1 Government Agencies**

Since 1994, planning has been mandated to the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), though the Commission has in the past been characterized as having insufficient staff, resources, and capacity, as being “held in low regard within the civil service” and as “having been used as a political dumping ground” (Killick and Abugre 2001: 21) with unclear and overlapping responsibilities in relation to other ministries.<sup>17</sup> At the time of this study, it was directed by a former MOFA Deputy Director. The NDPC was conceived in 1987 with a Hungarian consultant with support from UNDP. According to one study, it was prevented from taking on much responsibility by the World Bank and Ministry of Finance (Hutchful 2002: 112). However, with the recent emphasis on “country ownership” and the requirement to prepare a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (which the NDPC has charge over) as a pre-requisite to accessing HIPC funds, the NDPC seems to have gained in some resources and responsibilities (Whitfield 2005). However, it is questionable whether the NDPC's new responsibilities translate into actual influence or authority, as financial decisions are still largely made by the President and Ministry of Finance.<sup>18</sup> It is not clear whether the NPP has seen the NDPC as its own; the

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<sup>16</sup> ENG is an electronic forum for discussing economic issues and “seeks to make easily accessible to a wider audience the findings of all the research.” It is supported by the African Capacity Building Foundation and hosted at ISSER. It supports discussion under 10 general themes. See <http://www.egnghana.org>, last accessed 30 July 2007. The ADP is a CIDA-funded collaborative project between Legon and the University of Guelph, running from 2005-2011, aiming to establish an agribusiness center, network, and education and training program – see [http://oraweb.aucc.ca/pls/cupid/show\\_project\\_e?project\\_no\\_in=55/S61268-547/I](http://oraweb.aucc.ca/pls/cupid/show_project_e?project_no_in=55/S61268-547/I), last accessed 30 July 2007.

<sup>17</sup> A National Planning Commission was established by Nkrumah in 1962. In 1972, this was replaced by the National Economic Planning Council at the Ministry of Economic Planning. Planning was subordinated to the Ministry of Finance during the years of structural adjustment.

<sup>18</sup> It was reported that three other officials, in both the NPP and NDC administrations, were transferred (“dumped”) to the NDPC after they left other ministries in controversial circumstances. See (2004) ‘NDPC, Ghana's Siberia!’, *Public Agenda*, 21 Jan.

NPP was reported by some to have cast aside Vision 2020 as an NDC document.<sup>19</sup> The President appointed the only CPP member of cabinet to head the NDPC. The NDPC also switched Ministries early on under the NPP, though it still reports to the President. After reported restructuring of the President's Economic Management Team in late 2003, long-standing liberal J.H. Mensah was appointed to head the NDPC.<sup>20</sup>

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) is a complex organization with over a dozen directorates and sub-vented organizations, and consequently has to grapple with both inter- and intra-ministerial coordination.<sup>21</sup> Complicating matters is the legal mandate to decentralize conflicting with the actual political incentives towards centralization, or deconcentration at best. As with other Ministries, frequently reported problems include inadequate remuneration, low capacity and high staff turnover, which persist despite numerous civil service reform projects which initially focused on cutting junior staff.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding policy, there is a tendency among some staff to think that responsibilities for policy matters generally belong to higher officials and the Policy, Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Department (PPMED), except for minor involvement in particular sub-sector policies. Some research is separated into the Statistics, Research and Information Division (SRID), and, according to an AgSSIP mission “coordination between SRID and PPMED has not been effective.”<sup>23</sup>). Likewise, coordination with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, which includes agricultural research, has been a challenge, as this is under a different Ministry, and has been largely concerned with technical agronomic research rather than policy research. MOFA's library and information resource center was recently moved, and is not adequately supported nor stocked with much up to date, Ghana-specific, or policy-related information. PPMED was created with the assistance of external consultants in the late 1980s under a government reform program, replacing what had been the Department of Economic Research and Planning (Hutchful 2002: 109).

To improve the effectiveness of government agencies, a Public Sector Management Reform Project ran from 1999 to 2003, but was, according to a review, “relatively top-down,” lacked “wider stakeholder ownership,” “driven by external consultants,” and failed to adequately appreciate the changes associated with the 2000 election (World Bank 2004: 6-8). Revision of pay structures, human resources management, and performance management had not been finalized by 2004. AgSSIP also had a \$30 million component on “Institutional Reform and

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<sup>19</sup> The constitution mandates that each new government must present parliament a set of coordinated policies within its first two years in office.

<sup>20</sup> (2004) ‘Senior Minister Appointed Chairman of NDPC’, GNA, 16 Jan; (2003) ‘Kufuor Sidelines J.H. Mensah ... Economic Management Team Dissolved’, The Independent, 13 Oct.

<sup>21</sup> Finance and Administration, Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, Human Resource Development and Management, Statistics, Research, Information and Public Relations, Crop Services, Agriculture Extension Services, Plant Protection and Regulatory Services, Agricultural Engineering Services, Animal Production Veterinary Services, Fisheries, Women in Food and Agricultural Development, Grains and legumes Development Board, Ghana Irrigation Development Authority, Veterinary Council, Fishers Commission

<sup>22</sup> Other civil service projects include the Civil Service Reform Programme (19xx-1993), and the Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (1995-), National Institutional Renewal Program (1994-).

<sup>23</sup> Implementation Support Mission (2005) AgSSIP Aide Memoire; 21 October -1 November, p. 7

Strengthening of MOFA,” which aimed to support decentralization, assessment and realignment of MOFA’s structure, staff and processes, and strengthening of central directorates. Some PPMED officers have gone on short training courses in policy.

An Agricultural Policy Coordinating Committee was established under the Agricultural Sector Investment Project (ASIP) (1993-1999), but had ceased operating. An Agricultural Development Coordination Unit was also briefly established in 1969 following the fragmentation under Nkrumah. Babu (2003) reports that there is some sort of informal coordination. At MOFA-development partner meetings in 2006, there was some support for the idea of an Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee, but several people also expressed the need for better coordination even within MOFA.

Despite the obvious importance of other relevant Ministries (Trade, Finance, Private Sector, etc), it was beyond the scope of this study to obtain a detailed understanding of their institutional character. While MOFEP has had relatively more skilled staff and resources than other ministries, it has not been without its institutional weakness, including a marked centralization (Hutchful 2002; Whitfield 2005; Kabo 2004; Azeem and Ahadzie; Foster and Zormelo 2002; European Union 2007; Consultative Group 2007). Recent institutional strengthening in MOFEP dates back to the 1987 Structural Adjustment Institutional Support Programme, which established an Economic Policy Unit.

Another key group is the National Economic Management Team, a high-level informal body that advises the President. It was headed by Vice President Atta-Mills under Rawlings, and by JH Mensah under Kufuor. The EMT was formed in 1989, bringing together three informal teams/task forces (Hutchful 2002: 149). The EMT is reported to include over a dozen ministers with economic responsibilities, meet once a week for policy coordination, and be supported by the cabinet secretary and a few administrative officers (ECA 2003). However, otherwise there is relatively little public information on the responsibilities and resources of this team.

## **5.2 Universities**

There are five main public universities in Ghana: Legon, Tamale, Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Winneba. Legon is in many ways the leading university, and, although it is even one of the best universities in West Africa, it has many difficulties, which shape the sorts of research that is done and the efforts made to link research and policy. Library resources are inadequate, as are computer facilities. Funding for students is low and fees are rising, prompting them to work in addition to pursuing studies (Manuh et al. 2007; Akurang-Perry 2007).

Research on food and agriculture was established via ‘professional’ disciplines, rather than ‘pure science.’ Much university and institute research has focused on cocoa, to the detriment, some argue, of other important agricultural issues. Legon was established after the UK Labour government assumed power, and was financed with a levy on cocoa sales. A Faculty of Agriculture was established by 1952 with financing from the Cocoa Marketing Board. Several research stations were also established, but by the 1960s there was some debate with Nkrumah as to whether the agriculture departments at Legon and KNUST should be merged or replaced by a separate college, an idea abandoned after the 1965 coup. In 1961 new departments were established in the faculty, including agricultural economy and farm management, animal science, extension, and crop science. Faculty participated in government departments, and in advising the NLC, and a professor of agriculture served briefly as Minister in 1979. By the 1970s there was

also growing collaboration with various donors and international bodies, which grew thereafter, and has included USAID, IDRC, World Bank, CIDA, JICA, FAO, DANIDA. While research was given rhetorical boost by the SMC, the University deteriorated greatly and was the site of protest and closures. As economic decline worsened, and Rawlings took power in 1983, efforts were furthered to promote the semi-commercial production of food at the University and its research stations. There is now a Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management at Kumasi's otherwise technical Faculty of Agriculture. Tamale's campus houses a Faculty of Agriculture, which appears to be largely separate from the Wa campus of Integrated Development Studies. Associated with Legon is the United Nations University and its People, Land Management and Ecosystem Conservation program (Agbodeka 1998).

As several studies have pointed out, Ghana's academic system has always shaped and been shaped by politics. Schools have served both as a training and meeting ground for entrenched or nascent elite (cf. Yankah 1997)(Stiglitz and Weiss 1981; Hutchful 2002: 141). Schools are also a locale where students – represented through National Union of Ghanaian Students – protested against certain regimes (Nugent 1995; Oquaye 1980; Sawyerr 1994). There are a handful of pre-university schools that are well known and training grounds for Ghanaian elite, including Achimota, St. Augustine's, Mfantsepim, St. Peters, and Prempeh College (Coe 2005). Many of the members of Rawling's regime in the early 1980s were student leaders or from the university. A key turning point in the transition to democracy in the early 1990s is often said to be the lectures given by Professor Adu Boahen at the University in 1988, and Boahen was to run for President several times. Rawlings' Vice President, and the 2000 and 2004 presidential candidate, John Atta Mills, was also a professor. More recently, another senior professor at the university ran for a MP position.

Relations between high-level government officials and universities broke down as the PNDC government embraced structural adjustment, whilst universities – from where several key official originated – remained focused on more structuralist, Marxist approaches, viewing the former as sell-outs. Though some economists had short-term contracts with MOFEP, government officials were reluctant to engage researchers partly because of “the perception that the universities and academics were opposed to adjustment” (Hutchful 2002: 148). Researchers, for their part, believed the “government did not appreciate or encourage independent research and analysis, particularly where this challenged or conflicted with the official viewpoint” (ibid).<sup>24</sup>

Academic associations that could have served to link researchers and policy makers have broken down under economic decline. An Economic Society of Ghana existed in the 1970s, but was only recently replaced by the Economy of Ghana Network, established in 2004, and based at Legon's Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER). The Society had only sporadically published a Bulletin. Only in March of 2006 was a Ghana Association of Agricultural Economists established. Academic research on food has largely been separate from research on agriculture. Research on food in turn is divided into two areas, nutrition and

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<sup>24</sup> Hussein (c. 2000) also writes (without evidence) “As in most other countries, academic and research institutions in Ghana place much weight on refereed publications and reports as regards remuneration and promotion. Such a system does not reward researchers who consult with policy makers in identifying and defining relevant natural resources management problems nor to write research outcomes in concise and clear languages for policy makers.”

processing. Both of these have tended to be seen as “women’s areas,” while analysis of production and trade is often done largely by men.

One of the foremost research institutes is ISSER, a semi-autonomous institute of the Faculty of Social Studies at Legon. ISSER has less than two dozen staff, including several prominent analysts of food and agriculture, with research projects on cocoa economics, fishing and on land tenure. ISSER has collaborated with research institutes in the US and Europe, and received a 2001-4 grant for institutional strengthening from Canada’s International Development Research Centre. Another grant has required that ISSER engage more in policy. Research priorities are largely set by staff preferences and opportunities for consulting.<sup>25</sup> ISSER’s work is held in relatively high regard, and the institute has been requested several times by the government to produce research on policy issues (Aryeetey 2005). ISSER currently has only a few links to other research institutions, and mostly through personnel, due to lack of funds and staff. Some research on agriculture and policy related issues has also been conducted by people in Legon’s Institute of African Studies.

### **5.3 Private Policy Research Institutes**

With the political transition and opening in 1992, there have been a growing number of private research institutes in Ghana (all based in Accra) doing research on political and socio-economic issues. These include:

- Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) (est. 1989)
- Center for Economic Policy Analysis (CEPA) (1993)
- Third World Network (TWN) (1994)
- Institute for Democratic Governance (1997)
- Center for Democratic Development (CDD) (1998)
- Institute of Policy Alternatives (2000)

Ohemeng (2005) notes that many of the staff of these research institutes are highly qualified (have PhDs) – which lends to their credibility – and are often also affiliated with universities. According to the interviews held for this study, the institutes have often been influential to government and policy makers. While they formally state independence (non-partisanship), close political connections are sometimes evident.<sup>26</sup> The research institutes produce reports, newsletters, and other publications, are often featured in the media, and relatively frequently hold conferences, meetings, roundtables, and/or lecture series. None of the private institutes deal with food or agriculture in an in depth or systematic manner, though TWN has done work on agriculture and trade (e.g. African Trade AgendaKhor and Hormeku 2006), and CEPA’s aggregate economic analyses sometimes involve attention to agriculture.

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<sup>25</sup> Interview, senior staff member, July 2007, Accra.

<sup>26</sup> “Dr Baffour Agyemang-Duah, deputy executive director of CDD, and Henry Kwasi Prempeh, its director of legal affairs, are card-bearing members of the ruling NPP. Furthermore, J.B. da Rocha, a past chairman of the NPP as well as Haruna Esseku, the party’s current chairman, are fellows of IEA. Professor Adzei Bekoe, who is a member of the Council of State, a constitutional body mandated to advise the president, is also a fellow of IEA, while Dr Charles Mensah, the executive director of IEA, is a personal adviser to the president. Likewise, two prominent members of CEPA, Dr Anthony Osei-Akoto and Dr Samuel Nii Noi Ashong, serve in the current government as deputy minister of finance and minister of state in charge of fiancé respectively” (Ohemeng 2005: 457).

#### 5.4 *Public Agricultural Research Institutes*

The other major research institutions are the state-funded ones of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), effectively established in 1966.<sup>27</sup> CSIR has a budget of several dozen million dollars, and several hundred researchers. A range of CSIR's institutes are relevant to food and agriculture, including:

- Crops Research Institute
- Savanna Agricultural Research Institute
- Soils Research Institute
- Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
- Oil Palm Research Institute
- Food Research Institute
- Water Research Institute
- Animal Research Institute
- Plant Genetic Resources Centre
- Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana
- Biotechnology and Nuclear agriculture Research Institute
- Science and Technology Policy Research Institute

Most of the research at CSIR institutes has been focused technical bio-physical issues, rather than socio-economic and/or policy studies. Where they do exist, they tend to focus on micro-economics and farm management. CSIR has struggled under structural adjustment, and since 1996 has been required to raise 30% of its own funds (Tabor et al. 1993; Cage and Sarr 2001; Stads and Gogo 2004). CSIR has an online Agricultural Library, but it seems largely technical and a recent search by the author reveals that numerous reports, articles, books, thesis and miscellaneous papers on Ghanaian agriculture are not listed. CSIR also hosts Ghana Agricultural Information Network System (GAINS), which has been supported through ASIP and AgSSIP, and appears more comprehensive (at least of material produced in Ghana, if not on development in Ghana), but still mostly technical.

### **6 Research-Policy Links on Agriculture and their Forms, Opportunities and Constraints**

A number of ways in which research and policy on the issue of rice were linked could be established in the course of this study. This section describes the types of linkages observed, as well as the opportunities and barriers for stronger, more extensive links.<sup>28</sup> The research identified eight different types of linkages:

- Government employment of university graduates and/or staff
- Conferences

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<sup>27</sup> CSIR has been located under the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, but was recently moved to ... See also <http://www.csir.org.gh/>

<sup>28</sup> If we think about links as possible networks, then, following Mendizabal (2005), we can think about different functions that such links could take: filter, amplify, convene, invest/promote, build communities, and facilitate. While this may help in some general sense to classify different formal networks, it's not clear what it really adds to the study of links between research and policy. The literature has generally pointed out that political context, knowledge, and actors/networks are important, but come up with specific propositions or generalized arguments.

- Media
- Publications
- Formal networks
- Informal links
- Consultant reports
- Libraries
- Parliamentary deliberations

These different types of linkages also vary in other characteristics:

- level of institutionalization (formal/informal)
- frequency of interactions
- level of detail / length
- type of interactions: personal / impersonal; public vs. private
- actors who initiated the link, and origin of supporting resources;
- original motivation, timing, and duration
- relations with other linkages
- impact

Linkages were said to be facilitated by a number of factors, including:

- greater freedom of speech
- leveraging outside pressure from donors or NGOs to get government to consider research
- personal networks
- conference invitations
- links with private sector
- research institute workshops
- regular workshops / meetings
- public solicitations/advertisements for input / contributions
- requirements or conditionalities on funding that researchers engage with policy
- requests from Ministries for studies

The following sections describe the linkages identified above, and mention some of the barriers for stronger more extensive connections.<sup>29</sup>

### **6.1 Personnel**

MOFA employs graduates of the universities, who bring with them familiarity with research and faculty there. A number of graduates with Bachelors and Masters degrees from the University system work in government offices. High level officials also have been based at the university. A long-standing MOFA chief director came from ISSER, and the current one came from KNUST. Many high level officials also have higher degrees from schools overseas.

Links facilitated by personnel are somewhat diminished because new hires from universities often enter lower rungs of the bureaucratic hierarchy and have little influence on policy. In addition, existing linkages are disrupted by high staff turnover at universities, research institutes,

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<sup>29</sup> The constraints listed under each type of linkage are not necessarily exclusive to that linkage.

NGOs, donors, and governments. Frequent re-organizations of government agencies also disrupt these personnel links.

## 6.2 Conferences

Another important link between research and policy is organizing and attending numerous conferences by NGOs, government, or research institutes (see Table 3 below).

**Table 3: Selected Rice-Related Conferences, Seminars, Forums, and Workshops**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Organizer</b>	<b>Location</b>
2000 – June – 7	Rice Uptake Pathways in Ghana	NRI	University of Ghana, Legon
2000	National Rice Workshop	ODI and UDS	Ho, Upper East Region
2002 – April 11th	Make Trade Fair launch	Oxfam	Accra
2003 – Aug – 11	Tariffs, Subsidies and Trade	ISODEC/GAWU?	Teacher’s Hall, Accra
2003 – Nov – 18	Rice Donors Meeting	MOFA and MFA	Accra
2004 – May – 23	Food Security Seminar		
2004 – Aug 31	Forum with UK Parliamentarians	Cotton and Rice Farmers’ Associations; Oxfam	Tamale
2004 – Sep 18	Media education seminar on food security	GAWU	Accra
2005 – May - 24	Media Sensitization Seminar on Food Security	GAWU	Accra
2006 - end Aug	Rice Durbar	GTLC	Asutsuare

Source: compiled by author

The links forged through conferences are sometimes hindered and weakened when key people are excluded or do not attend. Only certain people may be invited, comfortable or obligated to show up, or conferences may not be widely publicized early enough or held in accessible locations. If people are not assured that their views will be sincerely considered, they may not bother to attend or contribute (Whitfield 2005). Most of the public meetings on rice, it appears from news reports, were organized by civil society groups. Government officials were reportedly invited to the 2006 rice durbar but apparently did not show up. There is a tendency for MOFA to hold conferences and workshops in private locations around Accra or in the south (Sogakope, Akosombo, etc). Even where conferences are held, facilitators may not structure them to allow

full discussion by everyone present. Some interviewees noted that sometimes conferences seem to be held only to meet donor requirements, with little meaningful motivation to forge links (see also Brock and McGee 2002; Brock et al 2004; Cornwall 2002).<sup>30</sup>

### 6.3 Media

Media publicity of these conferences also forms a way of linking researchers and policy makers. Much of the news about critical perspectives on rice have come through *Public Agenda*, a paper affiliated with the NGO, the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC).<sup>31</sup>

The press has expanded greatly over the past 15 years, but there are clear biases and limitations. The state-owned *Daily Graphic* tends to be pro-government, while the *Statesman* is allied with the NPP, the *Insight* with the CPP, and the *Palaver* with the NDC (see Temin and Smith 2002; Hasty 2005b). Ohemeng (2005: 463) reports that “While in 1996, there was only one national radio and television station, there are now over 140 radio stations countrywide, with about 21 in Accra.” There are also over a dozen newspapers, with many online. The Ghanaian Journalists Association has often been outspoken on certain political issues having to do with freedom of speech, however libel laws have often been invoked to prison, fine or threaten journalists on certain issues (Hasty 2005b). While the *Daily Graphic* is usually devoted to covering projects or government official statements, a few other papers (notably *Public Agenda*) and some radio stations provide substantive analysis of food and agriculture issues.

The media was also seen to be biased in some cases, and lacking the skills and knowledge for accurate reporting and effective communication.<sup>32</sup> Some researchers were criticized for not publicizing their research, and some researchers noted they did not have the mandate or resources to publicize their work in the media.

### 6.4 Publications

An important link between research and policy was through publications. Some government staff had access to some publications from NGOs, private and public research institutes in Ghana and overseas, and national and foreign universities, and these organizations also had some important government documents. The publications and consultant reports had different objectives, data, methods, findings, lengths, funding, audiences, and formats. It may be less helpful to surmise retrospectively about the exact reasons why each of these reports were not invoked more in relation to policies on rice tariffs. What is likely more helpful is to understand the specific

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<sup>30</sup> Interviews, Accra, July 2007

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Adabre, J. (2006) ‘Rice Farmers Say They Are Tired of the Empty Promises to Boost Agric,’ *Public Agenda*, 11 Dec.; Abaah, J.B.A. (2006) ‘The Media, Food Security and the Eradication of Extreme Poverty in Ghana,’ *Public Agenda*, 7 April; (2005) ‘Whither Agriculture,’ *Public Agenda*, 14 Nov; Adabre, Jonathan (2005) ‘The Road to Hong Kong,’ *Public Agenda*, 28 Oct.; Domfe, Nana Gyeabour (2005) ‘Choose Between Imports and Livelihoods, Farmers Tell Ghanaians,’ *Public Agenda*, 29 July; Pobia, B.D. (2004) ‘The Sad Days of Rice Farming in the North,’ *Public Agenda*, 12 July; Out, Martin Luther (2004) ‘Reintroduce Tariff on Rice and Poultry-TUC,’ *Public Agenda*, 16 Feb.; Klebs, Florian (2003) ‘Ghanaians Call for Better Treatment of the Poor at WTO,’ *Public Agenda*, 8 Sep.; (2003) ‘2003 Budget: More Duty on Imported Rice,’ *Public Agenda*, 3 March; Otu, Martin Luther (2002) ‘The Hungry Food Basket of Ghana – Northern Region,’ *Public Agenda*, 16 Nov.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews, Accra, July 2007.

politics that created a general climate un-conducive to research-policy linkages (as described above and in sections 6 and 7 below).

**Table 4: Published or Academic Studies**

<i>Author</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Publisher</i>
A. Wayo Seini and Felix Asante	1998	Rice Production Systems in Ghana - A Policy Analysis Matrix (PAM) Assessment	NRI
Samuel Assuming-Brempong	1998	Profitability, Competitiveness and Welfare Effects of Trade Liberalisation on the Rice Sub-Sector in Ghana.	CODESRIA
Abdulai, Awudu and Wallace Huffman	2000	Structural Adjustment and Economic Efficiency of Rice Farmers in Northern Ghana	<i>Economic Development and Cultural Change</i>
A. Wayo Seini	2002	Agricultural Growth and Competitiveness under Policy Reforms in Ghana	ISSER
Christian Aid	2002	A Level Playing Field? Rice Farming in Ghana	Christian Aid
Kranjac-Berisavljevic, Gordana, R. M. Blench, and R. Chapman	2003	Rice Production and Livelihoods in Ghana.	ODI/UDS
Christian Aid	2005	The Damage Done: Aid, Death and Dogma	Christian Aid
Kate Raworth and Duncan Green	2005	Kicking Down the Door: How Upcoming WTO Talks Threaten Farmers in Poor Countries	Oxfam
Mark Curtis	2005	Trade Invaders: The WTO & Developing Countries' 'Right to Protect'	ActionAid International
FAO	2006	Ghana: Rice, Poultry and Tomato Paste (Brief on Import Surges No. 5)	FAO
Martin Khor and Tetteh Hormeku	2006	The Impact of Globalisation and Libersation on Agriculture and Small Farmers in Developing Countries: The Experience of Ghana	TWN for IFAD

Source: compiled by author

**Table 5: Unpublished or Consultant Studies**

<i>Author</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>
SOFRECO and Gerson Lehrman Group Consultants	1997	Bottom Land Rice Development Study (CFD-CREDIT): A Detailed Economic Study of Paddy Production, Processing & Rice Supplies & Marketing in Ghana
SOFRECO	2000	Updating of the Detailed Economic Study on Production, Processing, Rice Supply and Marketing in Ghana
E. Aggrey-Fynn	1999	The Rice Sector in Ghana: A Case Study
Akanko H.A., Bimpong, I., Affram, V., Achaab, C.	2000	A case study on the Decline of Rice Industry in the Northern Region and the way forward. Paper submitted to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.
MOFA	2000	Report of the Committee on Improving the Quality of Locally Produced Rice to Reduce Imports
GAWU	<2003	?
J. Oteng	2003	Special Task Force Report on Strategies for Improving the Rice Industry in Ghana and Business Plan
BMOS Agro Consultants	2004	Tariffs and Rice Development in Ghana: Final Report; submitted to the Food Security and Rice Producers' Organisation Project
Morrissey, Oliver, Dirk William te Velde, Ian Gillson, and Steve Wiggins	2005	Sustainability Impact Assessment of Proposed WTO Negotiations

Source: compiled by author.

Publications on Ghana's rice sector were difficult to obtain. Most were not listed in GAINS, and various lengthy and circuitous routes of photocopies, visits, emails, and telephone calls are necessary to obtain them. Some published analyses had abstracts or executive summaries, but few seemed to be accompanied by the often recommended concise, readable two-page brief describing relevance and recommendations (except the FAO brief).

High-level government and donor seemed more likely to have access to key grey literature. Some of the publications (particularly government ones) that are available are vague or overly technical. A problem mentioned by some interviewees was the way research was done extractively, with researchers or consultants arriving, taking data, and leaving, without widely sharing the results of their analysis. Another factor mentioned was that there was less interest by

younger researchers in studying agriculture, so the number of skilled people producing well-informed publications about these issues was shrinking.

Publications from oppositional groups, based on new kinds of research, or with dramatically differing positions may be disregarded. For example, in 2005, a coalition of groups toured parts of the countries, gathering inputs, and prepared a report issued to the Minister of Trade and Industry a few days before the Hong Kong WTO meetings.<sup>33</sup> This represents one form of research, yet it has not been publicly acknowledged by government (Pollard and Court, 2005).

### **6.5 Formal networks**

On rice specifically, the first meeting of the National Rice Development Committee was held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003, at MOFA's Resource Center in Accra. At this occasion, the Food Security and Rice Producers Organisation Project (FSRPOP) presented its report reviewing '10 Years of Studies on the Ghanaian Rice Sector.' This Committee was publicly announced by Minister Quashigah in November of 2003, though little has since been said publicly about it. The committee was to consist of MOFA, research institutions, non-governmental organisations, financial institutions, rice farmers' groups, rice agents and input and agro-suppliers.<sup>34</sup> On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, 2003, MOFA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a rice donors meeting in Accra.

This committee may have been turned into the Ghana Rice Interprofessional Body (GRIB), created in July 2004.<sup>35</sup> The president is Ralph Mends-Odro, a self-described "big time broker in the industry." GRIB met with Minister Debrah and France's Mrs Girardin at Tema on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2006.<sup>36</sup> It purports to represent 7,000 to 10,000 people in the sub-sector. It has received funding from a business support project, and a bank loan to rice from farmers.<sup>37</sup> GRIB was formed a somewhat hurried, top-down way, and has since focused more on loans for its members (David-Benz and Dugue 2005).

Another important recent network is the Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition, launched in August 2006, and which has a program to advocate for rice farmers. The Coalition, however, includes almost none of the public or private research institutions mentioned above.<sup>38</sup>

### **6.6 Informal links**

Informal links and friendships potentially constitute important links, as well. For example, a former MOFA chief director was friends with several prominent ISSER staff. Associates of the Minister and MOFA officials also collaborated on the FASDEP policy. Friendships and associations are also sometimes important in finding people to invite to NGO- or government-organized conferences. Informal links however are hindered by high staff turnover, frequent

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<sup>33</sup> Adabre, Jonathan (2005) 'The Road to Hong Kong,' Public Agenda, 28 Oct.

<sup>34</sup> (2003) 'MOFA Established Rice Development Committee', GNA 8 Nov.

<sup>35</sup> (2005) 'Government to Revitalise the Rice Sector,' GNA, 25 April.

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.ambafrance-gh.org/IMG/doc/Visitprogramme\\_website\\_.doc](http://www.ambafrance-gh.org/IMG/doc/Visitprogramme_website_.doc)

<sup>37</sup> (2006) 'Merchant Bank to Make Available €20bn to Farmers', Daily Graphic, July 12.

<sup>38</sup> GTLC (2006) 'Launch of the Ghana Trade & Livelihoods Coalition & Campaigns,' Press Statement, 28 August, GNAT Hall, <http://www.isodec.org.gh/Papers/GTLCpresstate.PDF>, last accessed 30 July 2007.

reorganizations, as well as the increasing commercialization. Interview partners mentioned that there has been declining interaction of researchers with people who do not fund them, and a waning spirit of volunteerism and public service.

### **6.7 Consultant reports**

Donor organizations, governments and international financial institutions often rely to a large extent on consultants, and consultancies are therefore often relevant to the ways research and policy are linked. University professors, for example, are contracted in the process of policy formulation. International consultants play an important role, as well, particularly in foreign-funded projects. However, consultants on short-term contracts provide little institutional stability, and can sometimes be a drain of information. Once finished with active research, or out of the area, they are difficult to contact, and feed back to policy makers and researchers often remains limited, as the reports often remain in donor circles and are not necessarily made publicly available. Lack of inter- and intra-ministerial coordination can also be a challenge for sharing the insights of consultancy reports, as well. Another problem of short-term consultant reports is that they are often done in a shallow or incomplete manner due to the time constraints faced by consultants. In the absence of peer-review and rigorous methodological requirements, consultancy reports may be more prone than research papers to reflect received wisdom, predominant discourse, personal views and institutional positions.

### **6.8 Libraries**

Libraries also form a way of linking research and policy. There are libraries at MOFA and other ministries, at the universities, at FAO, at some NGOs, and at research institutes. Some of the research relevant to agriculture in these libraries has begun to be distributed through the Ghana Agricultural Information Network System. This online catalogue was established as part of a World Bank-funded project. It is based in Accra at the CSIR.

One major constraint with regard to research-policy linkages is the selection of books and other material that is available there, which often consists in a somewhat random array government and academic documents. Libraries suffer from a lack of resources to obtain publications and package and catalogue existing ones. As a consequence, the available material is often outdated and difficult to access. The Ministry of Agriculture's library ("resource center") was inaccessible for many months when it was moved to its new location. MOFA's ministerial change was said to have weakened support for the library.

### **6.9 Parliament**

Meetings and debates in Parliament or sub-committees, including hearings, potentially constitute an important linkage between research and policy. The issue of rice was, in fact, repeatedly raised in Parliament, and in agricultural and trade sub-committees. However, some interviewees viewed the Parliament's mandate as only passing laws, rather than discussions of policies. In addition, there was skepticism of the benefit of engaging with Parliament, given its perceived weakness. Policy was seen to emanate from the executive branch, irrespective of what Parliament believed. This was particularly the case regarding the way in which policy preferences are made effective through budget allocations. The Parliament has very little ability to shape the content of the budget. In fact, there is a great lack of transparency on the budget. And, as budgeting is still largely done in incremental fashion, even though it should formally

based be based on activities and be specific items and well-defined priorities and outcomes, policy statements may not even matter. Parliament also lacks space, skills, human and financial resources for its members and, notably, for its research unit.<sup>39</sup>

Other factors that were mentioned in the interviews related to Parliament include the following: Only the most divisive issues get serious attention in the Parliament. The short 4-year electoral cycle inhibits attention to long-term development issues. Economic restructuring has changed the resources and constituency of pressure groups. In particular, the decline in formal sector agricultural jobs for more casual work meant less demand on Parliament to ensure policies were well-designed to benefit agricultural sub-sectors.

#### ***6.10 Other constraints to research-policy linkages***

In addition to the specific problems affecting the sorts of existing linkages just mentioned, there are also more general issues that constrain linkages. Researchers mentioned a lack of mandate to do advocacy or ensure policy impact, as well as a lack of resources do research and do outreach. There were also concerns that sometimes well-financed or high-profile initiatives or projects had diverted attention and resources, and thereby weakened pre-existing research and links. The dependence on and attention to outside funding of research was also mentioned as limiting the extent to which researchers would engage with policy makers.

In addition, policy makers felt they lacked a mandate to consider research, and that specific thematic focuses of research were not relevant, systematic, or trustworthy. They also mentioned they lacked resources to access research. Also cited was the outdated view that current research – like some in much of the crisis years of the late 1970s and 1980s – was sparse and of poor quality. Some people said policy makers sometimes had material interest in either ignoring research, or going contrary to findings, or that they simply ignored research that differed from their pre-determined positions – this was particularly mentioned in relation to research on gender aspects of rice ignored by largely male policy makers. Other interviewees mentioned that external pressure (donor conditionality, timelines, project management, reporting duties, pressure, funding & influence) skewed policy priorities and inhibits attention to research. There was also the perception that only the PPMED in Accra needed to consult research because only it had the mandate to develop policies – policy was seen to flow from the top/center down/out, so districts were not perceived to be required to engage in policy discussions or coordinate with research. Coupled with this was perception of exclusive policy responsibilities (PPMED), and restrictions for funding of policy training to PPMED, meaning that other divisions within MOFA did not link up with research on important policy matters.

Some interviewees mentioned that the government viewed its legitimacy as resting on electoral victory, and no more consultation with the public or researchers was needed afterwards. It is also appeared in some cases that close links with private sector were used instead of research to provide convincing positions to policy makers. Other cases were mentioned in which there was little expressed demand – or even opposition – by some elements of private sector for policy changes, and consequently little desire to consult research on the issue.

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<sup>39</sup> Interviews, Accra, July 2007.

### **6.11 Towards politics**

As important as these explanations for weak or sparse linkages are, they are somewhat limited. And many are neither novel to Ghana nor to studies of bridging research and policy generally (Villars 1999) Boadu et al; Jebuni et al; Kanbur 1992; Aryeetey 2005; Asenso-Okyere et al 1998](Alemna 1993; Amanor 2002; Amanor and Brown 2003; Sam 1995; 1996; 2003; Asenso-Okyere 1986; Boateng 1997; Omaboe 1966; Gilbert 1970; Harris 1974; Osafo 1983; Alemna and Sam 2006; Yarney 2005; Babu 2003).<sup>40</sup> While Court and Maxwell (2002) emphasize that political context matters to bridging policy and research, they do not specify exactly how, and they focus mostly on policy making rather than research-policy links per se.

To understand more precisely how politics affects research-policy links, there is a need to better understand the politics of rice trade issues in Ghana. “Urban bias” and “neo-patrimonialism” approaches are not sufficient to explain the observed policy changes. Regarding urban bias, while one could see the repeal of rice tariffs as an effort to reward the largely urban support base of the NPP with “cheap food,” there are at least two flaws in this logic. First, the tariff was not that significant – a mere 5%, and likely would not have affected consumers that much. Second, urban voters form a strong base of NPP, and much more critical are the swing regions, particularly, the north (Lindberg and Morrison 2005; Fridy 2007; Kelly 2005), a key rice growing area.

Regarding neo-patrimonial explanations – that ostensibly modern bureaucracies are less important than underlying patronage networks – one might suggest that the NPP administration was rewarding supporters with cheap food, and diffusing opposition through projects and material patronage in the form of milling equipment, tractors, and irrigation. One might also point to connections by high-level figures in the NPP government with rice and poultry importing businesses. Such explanations are, however, flawed for the same reasons above. In addition, an emphasis on patronage misses the point that much of the project and machinery would not reach rural areas before the 2004 elections, and it is not clear that they would be accessible by, and of benefit to, the far more numerous but poorer smallholders and laborers. It is also not clear why the relatively small tariff increases on rice would be so strongly opposed by politicians with high-level import-business connections.

The following sections provide an alternative explanation, starting with the conceptual lenses through which food and agricultural development are often perceived in Ghana.

## **7 Discourses**

Based on an analysis of literature and news media, this study has identified three particularly prominent public discourses in Ghana on agriculture, poverty and development: modernization, agrarian populism, and youth. In any particular agricultural sub-sector, there may also be other specific discourses, but the three identified are broadly relevant. They sometimes overlap, and are often invoked in relation to issues of rice in the country, with government officials stating the imperative of modernizing agriculture, campaigners pointing out the plight of the poor rice farmer, and both pointing to numerous rural youth who have moved to the cities. Understanding these discourses is therefore critical to understanding research-policy links on rice trade issues.

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<sup>40</sup> Holderness et al (2000) are primarily concerned with technical research outputs such as new technologies and extension messages.

## 7.1 *Modernization*

The term “agricultural modernization” is used frequently in Ghana, and the term has recently come under critical scrutiny in a DfID-commissioned report by Samuel Asuming-Brimpong et al (2004). While discussions on to define it in more precise terms are ongoing, this study is concerned with the discursive ways in which modernization has been used – as Asuming-Brimpong et al. (2004) note: “There is no categorical statement either in FASDEP or in the GPRS (and other related documents) as to what the government means by ‘modernization of agriculture’” (30).

In this paper, the term “modernization” is used to refer to the celebration of large, concentrated efforts to push new or highly engineered technologies, and the promotion of such techniques disproportionately on the basis of their novelty and scale as compared to other criteria (e.g. cost effectiveness, user demand, environmental sustainability, etc). Notions of the need to “modernize” agriculture in Ghana, however, are much older and go back to colonial times at least. After the transition to independence, there was considerable continuity government staff’s colonial predilection for ‘modernizing.’ Examples from Ghana’s recent PRSP and Parliament include the following:

“The archaic, near-subsistence agricultural economy into a progressive, dynamic, entrepreneurial and profitable business ... will act as a stepping stone to widespread industrialization (Ghana 2003, 36),” the GPRS makes “modernized agriculture based on rural development” one of its medium-term priorities, with the objective “to develop the country to become an agro-industrial economy by the year 2010” (Ghana 2003, 144).

“Mr. Speaker, looking at the nature of agriculture in Ghana at the moment, if adequate preparation is not undertaken to modernize the system of agriculture, we are not going to do much in terms of the implementation of the GPRS II document. Modernized agriculture through irrigation, mechanization and agro-processing is seen as a positive move towards making agriculture a very viable sector for national development.”<sup>41</sup>

“I believe I may leave the world with the continuing use of the hoe and cutlass; and that is why our agriculture is not progressing. That is why we are not able to entice the youth into agriculture.”<sup>42</sup>

“We are still suffering with the hoe and the cutlass.”<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, in his 2005 State of the Nation address, President Kufuor stated, “Agriculture which is the largest employer of labour, and the backbone of our economy will be modernized through mechanization ... This is to improve productivity and profitability, reduce the drudgery and attract youth into the sector.”<sup>44</sup> This approach has considerable continuities over the past decades.

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<sup>41</sup> Gbediame, Mr. G.K.B., 26 Jan 2006, Hansard Col. 143.

<sup>42</sup> Ocran, Mr. L. 26 Jan 2006; Hansard Col 135.

<sup>43</sup> Deputy Minister for Finance, Coleman, Mrs. Grace, 21 May 2002, Hansard, Col. 248.

<sup>44</sup> Kufuor, J.A., 3 Feb, 2005, Hansard Col. 282.

There was a strong current about modernization underlying Nkrumah's approach to agriculture. Nkrumah's nationalism sought to harness the tools of modern science to enable Ghana to 'catch up' with more developed countries. Nkrumah prioritized the use of imported tractors, large farms, irrigation and other modern technology. These efforts encountered numerous problems, which were not limited to Nkrumah's authoritarian and purportedly socialist approach (Dadson 1970; Konings 1986; Shepherd 1979).

Consequently, the emphasis on modern technology continued after Nkrumah's downfall. For example, discourses of modernization played a key role in the 1970s in Acheampong's Operation Feed Yourself. They also played a role in the 1980s and 1990s through the Sasakawa Global 2000 program, which emphasized hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizer, and high-density monocropping in straight rows. The modernization rhetoric is sometimes fused with discourses about nationalism and self-sufficiency. National-level self-sufficiency in food production is often held up by politicians as an indication and/or goal of an independent modern nation.

Consequently, it is necessary to understand the NPP government's aim to "modernize agriculture" within this longer discursive continuity. The NPP has further highlighted the "agriculture is a business" view of modernization – a perspective which often clashes with some Ghanaian civil society campaigners' emphasis on global justice, fair trade, and food sovereignty. There are currents of modernization discourses that also emphasize economic aspects of agrarian change – the development of markets, and increased commercialization. This draws somewhat on colonial era depictions of farmers as lazy and not guided by rational calculation of their material interests. While the NPP has brought their own particular interpretation and emphasis, the party's position still relies on a common basic understanding of modernization.

The rhetoric on modernization has shaped research-policy links in several ways. The emphasis on modernization has tended to prioritize technical research and solutions, and emphasize top-down interventions based on an assumption of a relatively omniscient and benevolent state. In a modernization view, there is consequently little need to support research on socio-economic-related policy issues, and there is little need for the state to consider such research. Initially, in the case of rice, modernization attempts were promoted in the form of new seed varieties, irrigation, tractors, and mills. After rice did not increase sufficiently, tariffs were raised, and after the tariffs were repealed, modernization measures were again highlighted by government officials in news statements.

## **7.2 *Agrarian Populism***

Agrarian populism is the largely uncritical celebration of rural folk life, often in contradistinction to some sort of elite (Kitching 1982). It usually does not appreciate the extent or causes of rural differentiation, and romanticizes the past.

Populism in Ghana takes many, sometimes contradictory, forms, and is mixed with patronizing paternalism and discourses on modernization and youth (Nugent 1995; Oquaye; Kraus; Owusu; Kilson 1987; Oelbaum 2002). It is common to hear farmers at once celebrated and also castigated in the same breath. Farmers, for example, are praised for being hardworking, but also urged to repay loans and to think of agriculture as a business, and not just a "way of life;" for example, "the peasant farmer is the very backbone of agriculture; and we shall for a long time

depend on the peasant farmer,” or peasants “push our dear nation forward in our march towards agricultural self-sufficiency.”<sup>45</sup>

Ghana is often represented as a nation of smallholders, since cocoa is argued to be scale-neutral technology, and there was no large white settler population. This is despite a long history of vastly unequal control over land, between chiefs and commoners, early settlers and later migrants, men and women, and old and young (Amanor 1999; 2001). In the past, chiefs have been shown to have an interest in playing down socio-economic differences (Kilson 1987).

As discussed above, and as Nugent (1995) has demonstrated, Ghanaian politics is often posed as two factions consisting of conservative liberals, business-oriented ‘Big Men’ allied with chiefs, and more populist, radical, ‘Young Boys.’ The latter faction is exemplified by the PNDC government. For example, in 1983, after the Rawlings coup, expulsion of over a million Ghanaians from Nigeria, and widespread bush fires, students were sent to rural areas to assist in cocoa harvesting. In addition, committees for the defense of the revolution were established in the country sides, and there were numerous ad hoc trials of people believed to have benefited from corruption in the previous regimes (Oquaye 2004). The paradox of a regime espousing populism and ‘power to the people’ and yet conducts secretive, authoritarian policy is resolved by identifying the ambiguities of populism. As Hutchful (2002: 51) notes,

Rawlings’ strength – and the essence of his so-called ‘populism’ was ability to position himself simultaneously in all three ideological terrains [nation vs. imperialism, people vs. officialdom, and labor vs. capital] at different times (and sometimes simultaneously) and to work with people and interests drawn from each of these discursive positions.

Rawlings established annual ‘Farmer Day’ celebrations in 1984, which occur each December. In the celebrations, awards are given to ‘Best Farmers’ at the district, regional, and national levels. The government and companies provide gifts to the winners, ranging from a few cutlasses to a new truck or home. The criteria for selecting farmers have historically not specified, nor was the committee doing the choosing. The celebration romanticizes farmers, and emphasizes the hard work that farmers do, and the service they provide to the nation as a whole. Government officials often call on farmers to do more in one area or another, while farmers thank the government for the awards and ask for particular projects or favors. These celebrations stand in contrast to the turbulent economic restructuring of the period.<sup>46</sup>

The NPP has not had a strong base in rural areas, and it too has consequently also latched on to agrarian populism. It celebrates ‘the typical farmer,’ while at the same time castigating them and urging them to do better, and holding itself up as generous provider. Agrarian populism prevents the government from taking an interest in the different types of farmers, their varying conditions and causes of poverty, and their political struggles over efforts at agricultural development – a point raised forcefully by Asuming-Brempong et al’s (2004) review of FASDEP and “agricultural modernization.”

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<sup>45</sup> Ackah, Mr. J.K. 21 May 2002, Hansard Col. 236; Deputy Minister for MLGRD, Effah-Dartey, Capt (rtd) N., 21 May 2002, Hansard, Col 240.

<sup>46</sup> E.g. (2002) ‘Agriculture is Backbone of Economy,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 11 Dec.; (2006) ‘Hurray! Ayeekoo to Our Farmers,’ *Accra Mail*, 4 Dec.; (2006) ‘National Farmers Day,’ *Accra Mail*, 4 Dec.; (2003) ‘Farmers of Ghana, ‘Ayeekoo’ ,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 5 Dec.

Rhetoric on agrarian populism has shaped research-policy links in various ways. Firstly, it has translated into continuing promotion of self-sufficiency, downplaying any debates or associated research on that issue. Secondly, the paternal aspect of populism emphasizes a protective state providing inputs and protection to farmers, downplaying the need to consult research on those issues. It also projects an image of a coherent family farm (sometimes subsistence-based), downplaying questions and research on gender, wealth, age and other differences, as well as the situation of rural laborers and consumers.<sup>47</sup>

### 7.3 Youth

Discourses about youth involve not just objectively identifiable “young adults,” that is, people below the age of 25, say. Rather, they involve socially constructed ideas of maturity, knowledge, wealth, social connections, and ability.

One of the most frequent justifications for investing in agriculture is to stem the flow of unemployed youth from the countryside to cities. There is a long history of sometimes blaming youth for being lazy or not interested in agriculture, in lieu of quick returns or simple curiosity in urban areas. There have been a number of Youth in Agriculture programs. The latest is the NPP’s Youth Employment Program. A notable recent example of the prominence of youth in national discourse is the Vice President’s “Campaign Against Indiscipline,” which was widely reported and commented on in the press. Youth are presented as undisciplined, needing guidance, motivation and regulation by more enlightened elders. Consider the following exemplary quote from Parliament: “In this country, I do not think that much has been done to bring up people, especially the youth to love agriculture ... I would like to suggest that clubs are formed in schools and that knowledge in agriculture is imparted to members.”<sup>48</sup> Or another: “If you look at the present agricultural policy, we should actually have to get the youth involved in agriculture, but Mr. Speaker, it is so sad to note that the youth do not like to go into agriculture; and this is our problem.”<sup>49</sup> In his State of the Nation address, President Kufuor noted “Government is putting in place all the necessary measures to enable young people [to] prepare themselves for the future. Let me remind them that the most important part of any training is mental and attitudinal. A disciplined life will ensure success ... A proper work ethic has been sorely missing in our work-places ...”<sup>50</sup> Reacting, an MP commented “Ghana is blessed with very fertile land and if we are able to inculcate the interest in agriculture, for instance, in our youth for them to go back to the land, it is going to do a lot for this country in terms of food security and also rid our streets of the stream of youth ...”<sup>51</sup> These sorts of perspectives sometimes spills over into the infantilization of peasants in particular, and citizens in general.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> E.g. (2002) ‘Agriculture is Backbone of Economy,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 11 Dec. Gyebi, Ed. (2005) ‘Go into Commercial Farming,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 6 July.; (2006) ‘Our Farmers Deserve Better Than This,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 30 Nov.

<sup>48</sup> Mensah, D.Y. 21 May, 2002, Hansard p. 230-1.

<sup>49</sup> Ackah, Mr. J.K. 21 May, 2002, Hansard p. 235.

<sup>50</sup> Kufuor, J.A., 3 Feb, 2005, Hansard Col. 278.

<sup>51</sup> Baah, Y. 9 Feb 2006, Hansard Col 636.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. Ayirebi-Frimpong, K. (2004) ‘The Campaign on Indiscipline,’ *Accra Mail*, 25 Mar.; (2004) ‘Bechem Omanhene Laments Indiscipline Among Youth,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 13 Dec.; Agbewoode, S. (2006) ‘The

In sum, these three strong discourses are highly resonant and political, and provide powerful justifications for efforts in agricultural development. Rather than relying on careful analysis and planning, these discourses are often invoked to justify programs and interventions.

Youth politics have played a central role in the history of Ghana. Youth and student organizations were essential in the struggle against colonialism, and youth wings of major political parties have played key roles in both party and national politics. When Nkrumah – one such activist – was in power, he attempted political indoctrination and repression with the Ghana Young Pioneers Movement, which was modeled on experiences in East Germany and the Soviet Union and was reported to have reached (compulsory) membership of roughly one million by 1964 (NRC 2004: 366). After the coup toppled Nkrumah, the Pioneers movement was abandoned, and the PP government established a National Youth Service Corps. The subsequent NRC government also mobilized youth under the Operation Feed Yourself Program. It was under Rawlings, however, that youth politics really took center stage. Different youth factions with different political perspectives competed for power (see Oquaye 2004; NRC 2004), and students were memorably sent to fields to collect cocoa. By the 1990s, Rawlings had established a Youth in Agriculture program that, though occasionally cited, has not been shown to have had a substantial impact. Under the NPP government, Vice President Mahama rallied against what he called “indiscipline” by the youth. The NPP has also established a (controversial) Youth Employment Programme. Recently, GAPVOD and ISODEC (2005) list over a hundred domestic NGOs working on youth issues in some way.

Rhetoric on youth shapes research-policy links through a range of mechanisms. Failed programs may be blamed on the attitudes of (“lazy,” “disinterested,” etc) youth, rather than followed with inquiries into how to better inform programs with research. Secondly, there is an emphasis on paternalism, on the superior judgment of older policy makers, and a consequent discounting of research that harnesses bottom-up knowledge flows. For policy makers to accept the need for research would be, embarrassingly, to admit that they are not knowledgeable enough or able to provide for the youth. Mobilized youth are also seen as a potential threat, particularly in urban areas, and this sometimes compels policy-makers to exclude certain issues, or to take drastic measures, thereby ignoring research.

Contemporary policy making on rice has been shaped by longer legacies of discourses on and projects with youth. Many students became involved in rice projects because Operation Feed Yourself was launched at around the same that the national service – in which new graduates would work in public service – was instituted by the military government in lieu of military training (Blay-Amihere 2001: 51-53).<sup>53</sup> Of particular note is the Dawhenya rice irrigation scheme, just outside of the capital Accra, home of the pre-eminent University of Legon: “Streams of students literally kept flooding to this camp every day in support of the government’s laudable plan” (Blay-Amihere 2001: 53).<sup>54</sup> Many of these students would go on to become leading figures in government, politics, academia, media, business, and civil society, and these early experiences would make salient the issue of rice. These sorts of poorly documented,

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Menace of Bushfires,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 14 June; (2004) ‘Farmers Asked to Take Advantage of Government Programs,’ GNA, 4 March.

<sup>53</sup> After debates within students about service or military training for tertiary students.

<sup>54</sup> See also ‘In Ghana, A Self-Help Farm’, NYT Jan 27 1974, p. 215

long-term trajectories and memories are subtle but extremely important, and are hard to capture in quantitative and snap-shot assessments.

The discourses outlined above – on youth, populism, and modernization – all shape the dynamics of linking research and policy. The discourses do not inherently inhibit research-policy links, and might be ‘reframed’ to promote them. These discourses, however, also shape and are shaped in various ways by several important political dynamics that influence connections between research and policy.

## 8 Political Dynamics

Understanding politics complements the above attention discursive factors, and the largely bureaucratic/proximate reasons described earlier, and provides us with a deeper understanding of why links were allowed to be weak and sparse. Rather than assume a priori that poor research-policy linkages have somehow been the natural state of affairs since time immemorial due to poor countries’ lack of resources and capacity, it may be more accurate to understand how fissures are actively *produced*.

Rice trade policy has been and remains a highly contentious topic. The complex political economy is only discussed here to the extent that it is relevant for research-policy linkages. As stated at the beginning of Section 4, rice tariffs were raised from 20% to 25% in 2003, then revoked, and after a lawsuit was filed, the law instituting the increase was repealed. Despite numerous studies on rice production in Ghana, little research was explicitly mentioned by government, farmers, donors, NGOs, CSOs, business people, or reporters in debates over the rice tariffs. Though research did not provide unambiguous advice on the rice tariff issue, hardly any of the various findings were ever even mentioned in debates on the issue. Rather, policy seems to have been driven primarily by three political dynamics: election campaigning, donor pressure, and civil society pressure. While a thorough study of the impacts of rice tariffs might have been useful for civil society, IFIs, or the government to reinforce their positions, it seems unlikely that it would have made much of a difference on the policy outcome given the political dynamics described below.<sup>55</sup>

### 8.1 Electoral Politics and Nationalism

The heavy promotion of domestic rice production in Ghana must be understood in relation to electoral politics and nationalism. Rice imports have long been a contentious issue in Ghana, and long been associated with issues of nationalism. The first rice mill was established in 1927 because the colonial government became concerned with the cost of increasing rice imports in the 1920s, with imports rising by over 300% from 1921 to 1927. Tariffs were imposed in 1961 and in 1966 the tariff on rice was eliminated, though devaluation resulted in declining imports until 1970, when imports nearly doubled.<sup>56</sup> A USAID official in fact recommended, among other things, raising import tariffs (Sherman 1968). At a conference convened in 1968, policy-makers declared their intention to be self-sufficient in rice by 1972 (Sherman 1969: 1). Beginning in

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<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the rice tariffs were included in the same legislation that doubled poultry tariffs to 40%, and it would presumably have been awkward to have only implemented the rice aspect of the increase

<sup>56</sup> The tariff was 0.025 new pesos per pound, plus 5% sales tax.

1970, imports of rice were taken out of private hands and assigned to the parastatal Ghana Procurement Agency (Prakah-Asante and Nyanteng 1981: 20).

Shortly after seizing power, the NRC government launched an “eat local foods” campaign. This complemented their massive Operation Feed Yourself campaign, under which heavily subsidized rice production increased dramatically. In 1972, Acheampong declared that “we must be self-reliant ... We must produce the food we eat.”<sup>57</sup> And, he added, “by 1974, we should stop importing rice.”<sup>58</sup> Rice production did increase under heavy subsidies and protection (imports were banned altogether in 1975), and military and government officials took up farming large commercial tracts in order to reap these benefits, but they encountered problems with labor, environmental sustainability, and land disputes (Goody 1980; Konings 1986; Shepherd 1979).

With the removal of subsidies and tariffs under structural adjustment, imports of foreign goods, including rice, boomed, prompting a backlash and calls to ‘Buy Ghanaian.’ After markets were liberalized and subsidies removed, imports of rice per person more than tripled (1989-1994), and there was reportedly public debates in 1994 that rice imports were reducing incentives for food production (Seini and Asante 1998: 21-22).

It is in this longer historical context of debates over and efforts at national rice self-sufficiency that the NPP attempted to come to power in 2000. A key role was played by soon to be NPP Minister of Agriculture, Major Courage Quashigah, a cousin and former confidant of President Rawlings, who became NPP’s campaign strategist after being imprisoned by Rawlings.

The NPP, outside of its Ashanti stronghold, had relatively more support in the cities, while the NDC had stronger support in the countryside (Nugent 1999). The NPP’s fierce rhetoric about rice production thus picked up on a nationalist theme in order to burnish the NPP’s rural credentials in the run up to the election. Rawlings’ government had signed several high-profile agricultural projects, prompting Quashigah to speak out at a rally in his home Volta Region – a major rice producing area and traditionally a stronghold for Rawlings – against the NDC’s record on agriculture, and remarking that the NPP would make the country self-sufficient in rice in under three years.<sup>59</sup> When Kufuor traveled to the Volta Region to court opposition voters, he also emphasized revamping rice production.<sup>60</sup> The NPP election manifesto, launched in the Volta Region capital, also emphasized boosting rice production, explicitly mentioning a major scheme in the region. In response, the NDC presidential candidate (VP at the time) said everything was being done to ensure Ghana was self-reliant in rice.<sup>61</sup> The state-run newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*, also began highlighting rice production. Days before the election Kufuor again emphasized rice, saying that, if elected, his government would make the country self sufficient.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Rasberry, William (1972) ‘Ghana Self-Sufficiency,’ Washington Post, July 26.

<sup>58</sup> (1973) ‘Ghana Backs Large-Scale Farming,’ New York Times, 4 Feb.

<sup>59</sup> Safo, Amos (2000) ‘Ignore Rawlings: Says Quashigah,’ Accra Mail, 19 June; Coomson, Kofi and Alfred Ogbamey (2000) ‘As NDC Does it in Blood’ Ghanaian Chronicle, 11 Sep 2000.

<sup>60</sup> (2000) ‘The Politics of Manifestos,’ Accra Mail, 13 Sep.

<sup>61</sup> GBC Radio, 16 August 2000, FBIS-AFR-2000-0816

<sup>62</sup> GBC Radio, 27 November 2000, FBIS-AFR-2000-1127.

Meanwhile, traders threatened to strike again to protest against high tariffs on imported goods, as well as the devalued cedi.<sup>63</sup>

Within days of being elected in 2001, Quashigah spoke again of producing enough rice, and President Kufuor noted “from all indications, we should be able to reduce [the] agricultural import bill in the few years ahead.”<sup>64</sup> Soon thereafter, the Northern Regional Rice Farmers Association also lobbied the government.<sup>65</sup> A few weeks later, MOFA’s chief director announced that the government would cut imports in half, though this was later reduced to 30% – a goal later enshrined in the 2001 budget.<sup>66</sup> Quashigah announced this 30% target at a meeting in Tamale with farmers from the Rice and Cotton Growers Association.

Kufuor was pressed from a range of sides. The IMF hoped to take advantage of the critical honeymoon period and pressured him to demonstrate his rhetorical commitments to economic reform by implementing unpopular utility and fuel price hikes. This however may have raised inflation, and did in fact lead to protests in the streets. Kufuor was well aware of the potential dangers of such a move. He had served in the Busia government that was overthrown in a coup in 1972 after concerns (including protests and strikes) about inflation and rising food costs (Jefferies 1978; Agyeman-Duah 2003). Kufuor’s time in jail after that 1972 coup must have impressed in his mind the salience of the issue. If that were not enough, inflation and food prices also contributed to the 1978 coup.

Kufuor also had to balance patriotism and nationalism with carefully cultivated links from abroad. While promoting “self-sufficiency” and the nation’s farmers, Kufuor also had strong rhetorical commitments to “economic freedom” and was trying to attract foreign aid and investment.<sup>67</sup> He had earlier balanced these, as Deputy Foreign Minister when hundreds of thousands of “aliens” were expelled from Ghana in 1969, and in the 1970s when he went into business with Lebanese traders. His Presidential campaign was partly financed by overseas Ghanaians, and he sparked massive street protests with attempts to allow Ghanaians overseas to vote in elections.<sup>68</sup> Another factor, cited by several sources, was a commitment to harmonization with ECOWAS countries on trade and tariffs, but this has been questioned (Christian Aid 2005).

At first efforts focused on increasing production by improving credit access, production, milling technology, and labeling of local rice. The government also announced a program for guaranteed purchase and price for locally produced rice. Another factor came into play in August 2001, the

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<sup>63</sup> Tariffs were raised in an Act passed in 2000. (2000) ‘Traders May Soon Strike’, *The Independent*, 22 Nov.

<sup>64</sup> GBC Radio, 11 January 2001, FBIS-AFR-2001-0111; (2001) ‘President Unveils Plan of Action,’ *Daily Graphic*, 17 Jan.

<sup>65</sup> GBC Radio, 19 January 2001, FBIS-AFR-2001-0119

<sup>66</sup> (2001) ‘Ministry to reduce rice import by 50%’, *Daily Graphic*, 7 Feb; (2001) ‘Government to Cut Rice Importation by 30%’, *Ghanaian Chronicle* 22 March; Budget item 179.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Rhetorical’ because many initiatives, notably the Presidents Special Initiatives and tractor promotion, involved significant active state intervention in markets in the form of subsidies, grants, and regulations. Relations with donors had soured after spending increase in the run-up to the 2000 election. The new NPP government sought to reassure donors they would maintain prudent fiscal policies, and subsequently adopted HIPC status and its associated debt relief, as well as a half billion dollar grant from the US’ Millennium Challenge Corporation.

<sup>68</sup> (2006) ‘Exporting the vote,’ *Africa Confidential* 47(6): 3; Agyeman-Duah [Agyeman-Duah /d]; cf. Mohan [Mohan 2006 /d].

implementation date of an Act passed by the previous government shortly before the elections. The Internal Revenue Act (592) lowered rice tariffs from 25% to 20%. The Finance Minister noted in early 2002 that the budget would support smallholder rice farmers and reduce imports.<sup>69</sup> However, it emerged that even available local rice was not being purchased. Consequently, Quashigah warned against traders manipulating rice prices, and others called for price subsidies for rice farmers.<sup>70</sup> To help figure out what to do, on November 6, 2002, the Government signed a 1.4 million euro 'Food Security and Rice Producers Organization' project with AFD, as a complement to the 1998-2003 Northern Region 'Low Land Rice Project.'<sup>71</sup>

After new reports of smuggling rice into Ghana, the CEPS commissioner was replaced, and the Finance Minister, Yaw Osafo Maafo, noted in late 2002 that the low prices of imported rice and poultry were giving foreign competitors an advantage.<sup>72</sup> By this time, food prices and inflation had dropped, and it was safer to implement tariff increases. The 2003 budget announced in February 2003 included a measure to increase rice tariffs by 5% (and poultry tariffs by 20%):

Mr. Speaker, Ghana currently imports about 120,000 metric tonnes of rice annually, accounting for about 58 per cent of total national consumption. The country, however, has the natural resources for the production of rice. Government, therefore, intends to increase domestic production of rice in order to reduce reliance on imports and thereby conserve foreign exchange. To support and make domestic production more competitive, it is proposed that the duty on rice imports be increased by 5.0 per cent to 25.0 per cent.

It's not clear who would have the final say on this issue: the Finance Minister, the Trade Minister, or the President.<sup>73</sup> The former two are now candidates to lead the NPP in the 2008 Presidential election.

## **8.2 IFI and Donor Pressure**

In midst of the NPP government's high-profile efforts to promote rice production, Ghana's government faced pressure from International Financial Institutions and some donors over the rice tariff increase. These developing pressures seem to have influenced the government's interests and its calculus about rice trade policy.

In mid 2002, outgoing World Bank country director in Ghana Peter Harold controversially remarked on the BBC 2002 that the efforts would be for naught because Ghana's rice was not competitive. It is not clear whether Harold stated where he obtained this information, and his

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<sup>69</sup> (2002) 'Government allocates 349.9 billion to Agriculture Ministry,' Ghana Newsreel, 21 Feb.

<sup>70</sup> GBC Radio, 7 December 2001, FBIS-AFR-2001-1207; GBC Radio, 28 January 2002, FBIS-AFR-2002-0129

<sup>71</sup> Two French Technical Assistants, which salaries are additional to the project budget, will help to the implementation of the project. One will be based in the Tamale Agricultural Regional Directorate, the other one in the MOFA in Accra. [http://www.ambafrance-gh.org/article.php?id\\_article=215](http://www.ambafrance-gh.org/article.php?id_article=215), last accessed 13 June 2007.

<sup>72</sup> (2002) 'Minister Concerned about Inefficiencies in Revenue Mobilisation,' 10 Dec., <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/economy/artikel.php?ID=30375>

<sup>73</sup> Osafo-Maafo was noted to be a competent policy person, who had headed the National Investment Bank. He was also minority spokesperson for the NPP in the 1990s. He is a traditional authority in the Akyem Oda area. He was finance minister when the unpopular HIPC decision was made. Some speculate that he was moved out of the Ministry of Finance because he approved a loan for an education project in contravention of the 2003 Public Procurement Act.

comments were widely publicized, and also criticized.<sup>74</sup> Then, at a summit in Greece in March of 2003, shortly after the tariff was announced in the 2003 budget, the then president of the World Bank, James Wolfenson, raised the issue of rice and poultry tariffs with J.H. Mensah, a top NPP official, brother-in-law of President Kufuor, and head of the National Economic Management Team.<sup>75</sup>

The timing was critical for two reasons. First, international negotiations were ongoing regarding the Doha round of world trade negotiations. That March had seen deadlines pass for countries to agree on a formula for cutting tariffs and subsidies. The world was abuzz with agricultural trade issues, and subsequent trade talks in Cancun failed largely on agricultural issues, with West African countries teaming up with Brazil, China and other powers. Second, Ghana was to send a Letter of Intent to the IMF the next month for a \$258 million loan.<sup>76</sup> Subsequently, after the tariff became law in May, the Government suspended it after only a few days, and the next day the IMF approved Ghana's loan.

In addition to this specific pressure by the World Bank and IMF, the US had pressured Ghana more generally. The US – a major exporter of rice to Ghana – pushed for trade liberalization in several events with and trade missions to Ghana. First, Ghana's trade minister (amongst others) met with the US Department of Commerce in October 2001.<sup>77</sup> Subsequently, in May 2002, Treasury Secretary O'Neil traveled to Ghana. Then, in June 2002, after Harold's comment, the US criticized Ghana on trade and investment.<sup>78</sup> Several months later, in November 2002, the US Commerce Secretary visited Ghana, noting that trade held promise to reduce poverty, and commenting "the fruit of a free market economy is there for everybody to see."<sup>79</sup> In March, the National Black Chamber of Commerce made a trade mission to Ghana. Neither the US nor World Bank have projects supporting irrigation or rice in Ghana, with some Europeans claiming this is because of US interests in Ghana as market for US rice exports (EGEVAL 2005: 151):

Neither USAID nor the World Bank will finance irrigation infrastructure in Ghana (or West Africa more generally). There are suspicions that this is because the US has a good

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<sup>74</sup> The 1985 World Bank Agricultural Sector Review of Ghana found that rice was not competitive (Pickett et al 1990). Earlier Bank research (World Bank 1991: 4-6) had stated, albeit on very unclear grounds, that Ghanaian rice production was not competitive to wholesale. But it also said maize and cassava – perhaps even more fundamental Ghanaian staples – were not competitive either.

<sup>75</sup> (2003) 'Gov't succumbs to pressure from IMF/World Bank', *The Statesman* 28 May.

<sup>76</sup> Two weeks after the Greece meeting, President Kufuor replaced his Minister of Trade with the then Ambassador to the US, Alan Kyeremanten, also an aspirant to succeed Kufuor in 2008.

<sup>77</sup> Kayani, Lusungu (2001) 'US Dept of Commerce Committed to AGOA,' News Feature, 7 Nov., <http://www.unido-aaitpc.org/unido-aaitpc/new1/news/2001/11nov/news071101-1.html>, last accessed 31 July 2007.

<sup>78</sup> Trade Compliance Center (2002) 'US Criticizes Ghana's Investment Drive,' June 21, <http://www.mac.doc.gov/PressMain/Jun2002/Jun17GhanaInvestment.html>, last accessed June 2006

<sup>79</sup> US Department of Commerce (2002) 'Commerce Secretary Leads Business Development Mission to Ghana and South Africa,' Press Release, 9 Aug, [http://www.commerce.gov/opa/press/Secretary\\_Evans/2002\\_Releases/Aug\\_09\\_Evans\\_BusDev\\_Mission.htm](http://www.commerce.gov/opa/press/Secretary_Evans/2002_Releases/Aug_09_Evans_BusDev_Mission.htm), last accessed 31 July 2007; US Department of Commerce (2002) 'Business Development Mission: Ghana and South Africa,' <http://www.osec.doc.gov/africatrademission/>, last accessed 31 July 2007; Moses, Maame Efua (2002) 'US government to remove export subsidies' *Accra Mail*, 13 Nov

rice market in West Africa, and it is believed they have pressured the World Bank into refusing to finance rice projects.

The World Bank, IMF and United States have shown a relatively strong *a priori* commitment to trade liberalization in Ghana, and this study did not find that their reports or public statements explicitly made use of much serious research on the issue of rice tariffs in Ghana.

### **8.3 *Rifts with Civil Society Campaigners***

Most explicit support for the tariffs has come from several farmers' organizations and a range of domestic and international NGOs. Though the issue of rice tariffs has featured prominently in advocacy efforts by a range of NGO organizations, few seem to have explicitly drawn on serious economic research about rice in Ghana.

Ghana has seen its NGO sector boom during the 1980s and particularly the 1990s. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies have provided much funding and technical assistance to Ghanaian NGOs. To coordinate the NGO sector, the Ghanaian Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development (GAPVOD) was established in 1980 with roughly 20 members, which rose to 120 by the early 1990s (Hutchful 2002: 185). It began receiving greater recognition and funding (from UNDP) and, according to Hutchful, "increasingly became an instrument for government and donors to control NGOs" (186). GAPVOD has, however, recently played a role in consultations on the cooperatives and NGO bill, and in organizing input into PRSPs and other policies. There are thousands of grass roots community organizations that are smaller in size and more informal, often concerned with savings, trade, farming, cultural interests, and employment. With regard to food and agriculture, there are hundreds of domestic organizations that provide services, but not one is wholly dedicated to undertaking research and advocacy on food and agriculture policy at the national level. By 2000, some NGOs – most notably ISODEC (which is linked with the newspaper *Public Agenda*) – had begun to move from service delivery to research and advocacy. Some staff have gone into NGOs after being disillusioned as the once left-leaning Rawlings government became increasingly authoritarian and neo-liberal, and not being interested in either the largely conservative opposition or the relatively weak leftist CPP party.<sup>80</sup>

Since the late 1990s, civil society campaigners and government had debated with one another over a range of contentious issues, including water privatization (Yeboah 2006), budgeting, the PRSP process (Whitfield 2005), trade, environmental degradation, and mining. As noted above, at times discourses of youth are invoked, with government staff being represented as omniscient and paternal with legitimate rights to rule earned through elections, and campaigners being portrayed as vocal but naïve rambunctious upstarts who are best carefully ignored. NGOs, with support from international NGOs campaigning against certain SAP measures, have been critical of SAPs generally, and of the Ghanaian government's implementation of SAPs in particular. These recent advocacy dynamics and historical rifts, have meant that although the NPP had campaigned for greater democratic debate and liberty for civil society, significant differences remain between the government and civil society.

Campaigners were highly disappointed by the government's move not to implement the tariff increase. Thereafter, the Center for Public Interest Law, on behalf of the Ghana National

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Gary (1996); Gyimah-Boadi (1994).

Association of Poultry Farmers, filed a lawsuit to have the tariff law enacted. Before the judge could deliver the ruling, however, the NPP pushed through a law in Parliament to have the original tariff increase repealed. That the NPP could secure the allegiance of nearly all its MPs shows the executive branch's strong leverage over Parliament.

CEPIL was established initially to work on behalf of communities affected by toxic spills in mining areas, and was supported by ISODEC, which receives support from Christian Aid. The debates over rice and poultry featured prominently in Christian Aid reports in 2002 and 2005, and in their campaign materials. Christian Aid has supported a Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition, which has mobilized farmers in protest, and conducted some unpublished analysis regarding rice dumping practices.<sup>81</sup>

The work on rice was part of a larger campaign agenda, which included fair trade more generally, anti-retrovirals, housing rights, opposition to water privatization, extractive industries (advocacy for community rights in mining areas), and budget advocacy. This agenda is relatively coherent and relatively oppositional to many World Bank and IMF prescriptions.<sup>82</sup>

Rice also featured in advocacy efforts by Oxfam. In April of 2002, Oxfam had launched its Make TradeFair campaign in various countries around the world, including Ghana.<sup>83</sup> Oxfam came under criticism from both critics and proponents of free trade.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, its high-profile campaign continued, and Oxfam released a series of reports on various commodities, including one on rice, which used examples from Ghana (Raworth and Green 2005).<sup>85</sup> In 2005, Oxfam launched a 5-year nationwide campaign against rice dumping in Ghana. Oxfam also helped establish the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana, which has been highly critical of the government's stance on rice tariffs. In 2006, a Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition was announced, based at ISODEC, and with rice as one of its key campaigns over the next 3 years.

Caught between electoral and economic pressures, and between external powers and civic advocacy with strongly fixed rhetorical positions, the new government maneuvered through these challenges with rhetoric, projects and programs, and with a flip-flop on the rice tariff issue. Maneuvering through these challenges largely determined policy, and weakened the pressure to forge stronger and more extensive links with actual existing research.

## 9 Comparison

Are the relatively weak and sparse research-policy links described above unique to the highly politicized issue of rice trade? We should not assume that what happens in one sub-sector holds in another. Different sub-sectors involve a different range of actors, networks, particular

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<sup>81</sup> Adabre, Jonathan (2006) 'Trade Coalition Proves Dumping Case Against Government,' Public Agenda, 10 Nov.

<sup>82</sup> In addition to the reports cited above, see, e.g., Yeboah [Yeboah 2006 /d] and [www.isodec.org.gh](http://www.isodec.org.gh), last accessed 31 July 2007.

<sup>83</sup> See Yawson, Doreen and Steve Manteaw (2002) 'The Ghana Launch of Oxfam International's Trade Campaign – 11<sup>th</sup> April 2002: Record of Proceedings, Final Draft,' [http://www.isodec.org.gh/Papers/GhanaLaunch\\_oxfamtradecampaign.pdf](http://www.isodec.org.gh/Papers/GhanaLaunch_oxfamtradecampaign.pdf), last accessed 13 June 2007.

<sup>84</sup> See , <http://www.maketradefair.com/en/index.php?file=27062002164441.htm&cat=3&subcat=3&select=1>, last accessed 7 June 2007.

<sup>85</sup> See also Oxfam (2004), *From Donorship to Ownership: Moving Towards PRSP Round 2*, Oxford

commodity characteristics (with their own political implications), research, interest groups (domestic, international, bureaucratic, etc), expenditure implications,<sup>86</sup> and available information. To further explore these question, the present section compares Ghana's rice policy with mechanization policy.

While there has been much research and public discussion on rice, there has been relatively less debate on mechanization. In contrast to the divisiveness of the debates over rice, mechanization in many NGO, policy, news, political and media circles in Ghana is agreed as a positive goal – a path towards agricultural modernization. In one of the largest purchases of tractors in several decades in Ghana, the NPP administration spent tens of millions of dollars importing several thousands of tractors. Mechanization had been an explicit part of the NPP campaign (though it was also mentioned by the NDC).<sup>87</sup> Kufuor noted that under the NDC private sector agriculture had reached a state “where there has been no modernization in the way our farmers farm ... where there is hardly any mechanization ...”<sup>88</sup> It was also recently announced that an Indian company would establish a tractor assembly factory in Ghana to produce 6,000 tractors annually for the country and region.<sup>89</sup> The tractor purchases seem to have derived from the government's aim to show its rural credentials and to ‘modernize’ agriculture, rather than drawing on a strong evidence base. One of the acquired tractors is parked outside MOFA's offices on a main thoroughfare in downtown Accra.

Half the tractors came from the Czech Republic, with which the government had been holding trade and investment talks since coming into office in 2001.<sup>90</sup> Shortly after the incoming President Kufuor appointed his cousin to be the Ambassador to the Czech Republic, a team of Czech investors traveled to Ghana to discuss investment in Ghanaian agri-business. Another group of Czech businessmen arrived during the 2002 International Trade Fair, and Quashigah launched some of the Czech tractors then. Negotiations with Czech investors took some tumbles, including accusations of bribes, and false promises to invest in a divested state shoe factory in Kumasi, but by 2004 the Government of Ghana had secured a €10 million line of credit from a little known US-Czech investment company for VARI Multipurpose Mini Tractors and 42-HP VARI W 5000 Compact Tractors tractor purchases through a Ghanaian broker.<sup>91</sup> The state newspaper paraphrased the new Minister Mr Ernest Akubour Debrah as saying the tractors were imported “to promote large-scale mechanised agriculture ... the move, among others, was the

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<sup>86</sup> For example, while tractors have required significant outlays, rice tariffs would have brought in around \$3 million in 2003, \$6 million in 2004.

<sup>87</sup> Tractors and mechanization were not mentioned in the NPP's manifesto, but were emphasized by Kufuor before the elections and soon after; (2000) ‘NDC has created a mess of economy – Kufuor’, *The Dispatch*, 29 Aug; Quist-Arcton, Ofeibea (2001) ‘A date with Ghana's new man: Part 2’, *The Independent* (Banjul) 19 Jan.

<sup>88</sup> (2000) ‘NDC has created a mess of economy – Kufuor’, *The Dispatch*, 29 Aug

<sup>89</sup> Alhassan, Issah (2007) ‘Indian COY to Set Up First Tractor Assembly Plant in Ghana,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 1 May.

<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, Nkrumah had also imported tractors from Czechoslovakia in the 1960s (as well as from Yugoslavia), then worth \$40 million (LeVine 1975: 102; Dadson 1970).

<sup>91</sup> Interviews, Accra, July 2007; Freiku, S.R. (2002) ‘The Czech are Here and Ready,’ *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 13 May; (2006) ‘Ghana embroiled in Czech Elections II,’ *Prague Monitor*, 10 Jan; (2004) ‘Parliament Approves Loans for PSI and Other Sectors,’ *GNA*, 13 April.

ministry's grand design to modernize agriculture to ensure that the country achieved its expected targets."<sup>92</sup>

The other half of the tractors resulted from an agreement reached by Kufuor during his trip to India in August 2002.<sup>93</sup> Kufuor had 200 40-75 horse-power (Ford) Farmtrac tractors imported from the Indian company Escort in early 2004 – Escort claims it controls 80% of the tractor market share in Ghana.<sup>94</sup> Forty of these were distributed to districts in the northern region, and, according to then Northern Regional Minister Debrah, “meant for the youth in agriculture.”<sup>95</sup> The 200 were the first installment of a total of 1,000 tractors, with the last ones delivered in early 2006.<sup>96</sup> These were to be sold to farmers at subsidized prices.<sup>97</sup> The purchases apparently used part of two lines of credit with the Indian Government totaling \$42 million.<sup>98</sup> By 2005, MOFA had developed a draft “Proposed National Policy and Strategy for Agricultural Mechanization,” which cited almost no research on the issue of mechanization in Ghana.<sup>99</sup>

The tractor acquisitions, as illustrated above, derived from high-profile trade and investment activities, rather than through public demand and consideration of research. Tractors are key in prominent discourses on youth and agricultural modernization. For example, a district assembly member was paraphrased: “with the tractor at the doorstep of the people, the general living standards of the youth in the area, who were basically tomato farmers, would see remarkable improvements.”<sup>100</sup> Youth have been provided with tractors under the controversial Youth Employment Programme.<sup>101</sup> In contrast, there has been much research in Ghana on expenses of buying and maintaining tractors, the incompatibility with root crops, and the negative effects on crop productivity due to soil compaction and other factors. Of course there is also literature on capital-intensive labor-saving technology in labor-surplus economies (e.g. Pingali et al. 1987).

The new push for tractors was said by some to be justified due to lessons learned from past mechanization programs. ‘Old’ approaches to tractors were said to be characterized by expensive imported tractors with few functions (mostly labour-displacing activities such as land preparation & harvesting), used by large farmers receiving subsidies, with various brands and types requiring imported spare parts and lacking local repair know-how. These were used only a few times a year, soon breaking down beyond repair. In contrast, ‘new’ approaches to tractors were said to involve small, unsubsidized affordable, multi-functional tractors that could be used year round

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<sup>92</sup> (2006) ‘400 tractors from Czech Republic’, GNA, 22 April

<sup>93</sup> (2004) ‘NPP campaign launched in Greater Accra’, 22 January, GNA

<sup>94</sup> ‘Escort bags \$8.5-m tractor order from Ghana’ Hindu Business Line, 3 March

<sup>95</sup> (2004) ‘Govt allocates 40 tractors to Northern farmers,’ GNA, 11 Aug.

<sup>96</sup> (2004) ‘200 Tractors Commissioned to Boost Agriculture’, *Ghanaian Times*, 12 May; (2006) ‘Indian firm sells 1,000 tractors to Ghana’, 30 March *GHP*

<sup>97</sup> Address delivered by H.E. J.A. Kufuor, before the dissolution of the Third Parliament of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic, on January 4th 2005.

<sup>98</sup> (2005) ‘Ghana Bilateral Relations on Upswing’, *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 15 Aug.

<sup>99</sup> JICA doc.

<sup>100</sup> (2004) ‘Chief Donates Tractors to Six Communities,’ 26 July.

<sup>101</sup> (2006) ‘Minister Commends Improved Security Situation in Dagbon,’ GNA, 12 July.

(for example, for hauling), particularly if irrigation was increased, and in which local mechanics would be trained, and whose services even small farmers would be able to afford in order to overcome important labor bottlenecks, such as timely tilling and sowing.<sup>102</sup>

However, it is not clear that such a significant shift has occurred. Tractors are still being subsidized, and owners allegedly sometimes collaborate to fix the price of plough service rates.<sup>103</sup> Tractors are given to relatively wealthy, large-scale “best farmers,” and called for by prominent figures.<sup>104</sup> Tractors can also be used to stake or reinforce claims to expanses of land or contested lands, displacing small holders (Amanor and Pabi 2007). There are lingering concerns about impacts such as top soil degradation, sheet erosion, soil compaction, disruption of root mats that facilitate regenerative fallows, displacing labor, fuel costs, and use of foreign exchange. Also, as a news article and high level politician expressed, tractors might be used as patronage by the ruling party in the run up to the 2004 election, though this was denied by the government.<sup>105</sup> For example, the President-appointed Upper West regional minister formed a committee to oversee the distribution of 200 tractors.<sup>106</sup> And different tractors and machinery are coming from various sources, including Japan, Czech Republic, and India.<sup>107</sup>

The aim at increasing aggregate production may stem from the failure in the NPP to appreciate the importance of socio-economic variation in rural areas, as well as its effort to tackle high food prices, which had reached levels such that they prompted debate in Parliament.<sup>108</sup> The NPP is based in urban areas, and the years before the 2000 election were economically tumultuous, with inflation, depreciation, and oil price rises making food more expensive. Food price rises, are, of course, a key part of broader economic inflation, an issue of great concern to the IMF. In the midst of these food price rises, Kufuor remarked on national radio that greater access to tractors would improve food supply and reduce the cost of living.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Interviews, Accra, July 2007; (2004) ‘Parliament Approves Loans for PSI and Other Sectors,’ GNA, 13 April; Subcommittee Reviewing Agricultural Engineering Policy and Strategy (c. 2005) ‘Proposed National Policy and Strategy for Agricultural Engineering in Ghana.’

<sup>103</sup> (2006) Kassena-Nankana Assembly Procures 10 Tractors for Farming,’ GNA, 8 March; (2005) ‘Veep Concerned about Bolgatanga-Bongo Road,’ GNA, 27 July.(2005) ‘Cotton Farmers Appeal to Tractor Owners, Cotton Companies,’ GNA, 18 April.

<sup>104</sup> (2004) ‘Government urged to mechanise agriculture,’ GNA, 4 June.

<sup>105</sup> (2004) ‘MOFA Denies Publication by “The Lens,”’ GNA, 2 April.

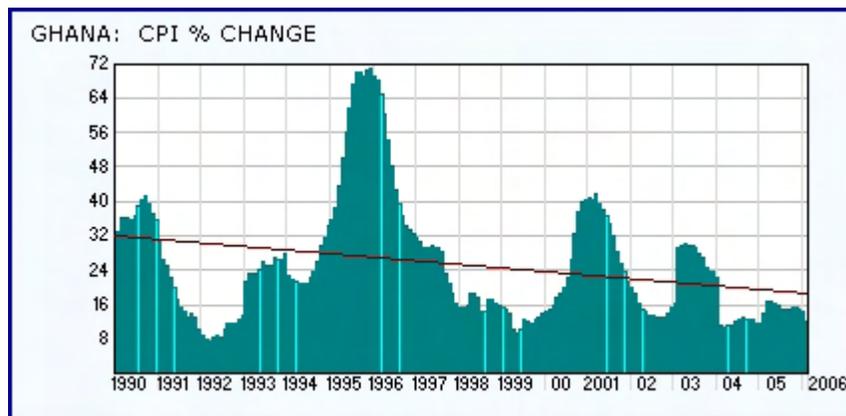
<sup>106</sup> (2004) ‘Farm Machinery for UWR,’ *Accra Mail*, 9 June.

<sup>107</sup> (2007) ‘Boost for Rice Production in Ghana: Japan Donates US\$3.3m Worth of Machinery,’ *Accra Mail*, 14 Feb.

<sup>108</sup> (2001) ‘Ghana is in Deep Crisis’, GHP 6 June; (2001) ‘Parliamentarians Debate Increases in Food Prices’, Joy Online, 19 June; (2001) ‘NDC is Sincere about High Food Prices – Minority’, GNA 20 June; (2001) ‘Food Prices to Go Down Soon – Quashigah’, 22 June; (2001) ‘Majority Deserts Parliament’, GNA 27 June; (2001) ‘Minority’s Food Motion Defeated’, GNA 29 June; Cf. (2001) ‘Food Prices to Drop by the End of September’, GNA 25 July.

<sup>109</sup> GBC Radio, 21 June 2001, FBIS-AFR-2001-0621.

**Figure 4: Percent Change in CPI 1990-2006**



Source: <sup>110</sup>

The tractor acquisitions were nonetheless in line with the strategic objectives of the government, including the FASDEP, MOFA's Strategic Plan, and the GPRS. One of the indicators for the GPRS I, for example, was increased access to mechanized tillage, and the 2003 budget notes "In line with the GPRS policy on the promotion of farm mechanization, the Ministry will facilitate the establishment of tractor pools in 9 strategic areas on [sic] pilot basis" (item 256).<sup>111</sup> These actions were in line with MOFA's 2003-5 strategic plan, which, under the broad output "Ensuring food security through increased production," sought specifically to "promote use of modern harvesting techniques" through activity #65 to "facilitate access to 500 tractors by Dec. 2005" and activity #66 "Make tractor services readily available to farmers." Similarly, FASDEP, which was initially supposed to just have a tractor on the cover, notes:

The continued use of the hoe and cutlass is a constraint to agricultural production. There is the need to adopt mechanized farming on a much wider scale. MOFA will facilitate farmers' access to agricultural machinery and equipment such as tractors and bullock ploughs, where suitable. MOFA will also support the establishment of plant pools by private entrepreneurs for leasing of machinery and equipment and manufacturing implements. (25)

Some NGOs seem to share the faith in tractors, though also without much research. ISODEC, for example, argued in 2005 "Agriculture's contribution to overall GDP will be greatly increased if more measures are put in place to commercialize and mechanize our agriculture."<sup>112</sup> And ActionAid Ghana prominently featured an article about its 'Woman of the Year,' with a picture of the large-scale commercial farmer riding on a tractor. Parliament too, with its limited authority

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<sup>110</sup> Department of Trade and Industry, Republic of South Africa, <http://www.thedti.gov.za/econdb/IMFConGHANACPICHA.html>, last accessed 21 July 2007

<sup>111</sup> The 2004 budget also notes "In line with government's efforts to modernize agriculture and also reduce significantly the drudgery, associated with traditional agricultural methods, 200 farm tractors with matching implements (in knocked down form) were imported with HIPC resources, assembled locally and distributed to farmers all over the country ... In addition, Parliamentary approval was given during the year to procure another 1000 pieces of tractors and 400 high-powered tractors" (356 and 357)

<sup>112</sup> [http://www.ghanaweb.com/public\\_agenda/issue.php?PUBLISHED=2005-03-04&CAT=3](http://www.ghanaweb.com/public_agenda/issue.php?PUBLISHED=2005-03-04&CAT=3)

and resources, has seen numerous MPs emphasize the need for tractors and/or mechanization (see, for example, the quotes in section 7 above).

In sum, the much less contentious issue of mechanization suggests weak and sparse research-policy links are not unique to the issue of rice-trade. These two examples show that even within the same country, there may be significantly different dynamics operating in different sub-sectors to produce somewhat similar levels of connection between research and policy. This finding highlights the need for solid in-depth research in different agricultural sub-sectors before generalizations can be made about the nature of and reasons for levels of research-policy links. It also points to the changing role of external actors, with traditional Western donors and IFIs playing little direct role, and India exerting much more influence.

## **10 Conclusions and Policy Implications**

### ***10.1 Linking Research and Policy***

As this study has shown, there are a range of reasons why research-policy linkages on the issue of rice trade were neither strong nor extensive. Some proximate reasons have to do with the particular sorts of linkages identified, including personnel, conferences, media, publications, informal links, consultancy, libraries, and Parliament. However, the study also found that, in addition to these sorts fairly common proximate reasons already widely identified in the literature, part of the explanation also rests in prominent discourses and intricate politics in Ghana. Understanding these in turn rests on moving beyond such catch-all explanations as urban bias or neo-patrimonialism, as well as beyond overly aggregate checklists.<sup>113</sup>

Those wishing to improve research-policy links need to address the constraints identified above. Some potential actions might include, for example, facilitating contacts between people who are not usually linked, changing existing tendencies for expensive exclusive conferences (rather than modifying organizations), advocating for greater funding for libraries, developing an online clearing house for food and agriculture related documentation,<sup>114</sup> supporting secure funding to Parliamentary research and sub-committees, and supporting Right to Information legislation. Some of the constraints mentioned above are targeted in various donor projects, and some are targeted specifically in the EBPM project. This study may help provide a baseline to see whether these projects and other efforts have an impact. A follow-up study on the status of research-policy links could complement the use of semi-structured interviews with systematic surveying and questionnaires on types linkages (and opportunities for and barriers to linkages), and also consider some of the other sub-sectors (e.g. crop varieties, soils, land tenure, etc).

### ***10.2 Studying Political Context***

There are some important methodological lessons from this research. Due to the complexity caused by the range of actors and series of events, constructing a detailed timeline and list of

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<sup>113</sup> Also cf. (c.2006) 'Generic Political Context Questionnaire,' Economics, Education and Research Consortium, Global Development Network, and Overseas Development Institute, [http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Pol\\_Context\\_questionnaire.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Pol_Context_questionnaire.pdf), last accessed 2 July 2007.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Ghana's Lands and Forestry Policy Support Facility, <http://www.ghana-psf.org/index.asp>, last accessed 31 July 2007, and the Tanzania Development Gateway, <http://www.tanzaniagateway.org>, last accessed 2 July 2007.

relevant people can be helpful. Newspapers can be important sources of information, though must be examined carefully and triangulated if possible. This study has also found that to better understand links between research and policy, an in-depth analysis of politics is required. However, much of the work on understanding political contexts in policy processes and bridging research and policy pays almost no attention to highly contentious debates in the literature on methods for the study of politics over the past decade (Monroe 2005).

In better understanding how politics relates to research-policy links, one relevant issue is the relation between democracy and policy. Democratizing policy processes might facilitate greater linkages between research and policy by reducing the exclusivity of current policy processes, enabling pressures for a more nuanced context-adapted set of policies, and allowing prioritization based on societal needs (Puplampu 1998). This would entail building up from the local level, learning from the experiences of projects working with District-based policy, planning and research (e.g. Amanor and Brown 2003). Understanding these local dynamics would in turn require a different form and organization of research – one which heads the lessons of past applications of political science in Africa (Coleman and Halisi 1983; Coleman 1994) and one that does not rely excessively on aggregate quantitative indicators or limited past approaches.

A first start would be more detailed, regular and accessible tracking of food- and agriculture-related politics, policies, and research. One option would be to boost support for research capacity and policy relevance in the existing public and private research institutions, though public funding and administrative control may set limits on the independence of such research. Another option would be to establish an independent Ghana Research on Agricultural Policy Institute with long-term secure funding and a mandate to conduct policy-relevant research in an open, participatory manner in the interest of poverty reduction. Given the divergent views and great number of agriculture-related topics, such an institute would need to be governed by people from various backgrounds and perspectives, and deliberations to choose any option should be conducted in an inclusive, public, participatory democratic manner.

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