

Implementing the Common African Agricultural Development Programme in Malawi: Conflicts and Communication among Stakeholders

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With the Common African Agricultural Development Programme the African Union responds to the growing awareness that first, the agricultural sector has a great potential to generate economic growth and second that the involvement of stakeholders into the political communication process is a key point guaranteeing the successful implementation of policy programmes. While the participation of stakeholders enhances the perceived legitimacy of policy programmes, their integration may increase the potential for conflicts during the formulation process. Thus, learning about the roles that civil society organizations, private sector actors and political institutions play within the formulation of agricultural policy is of great value to design political decision-making processes efficiently. Applying the concept of a conflict index, we assess conflict lines within stakeholders and politicians during the implementation of CAADP in Malawi. For example, conflicts between stakeholders and politicians arise, if they have to develop strategies for institutional capacity building being a prime mover for knowledge dissemination. We further analyze to what extent political conflict determines political communication structures and vice-versa to what extent communication generates political influence fields operating on actors opinions that attenuate or amplify political conflicts. This knowledge may help to design platforms for stakeholder communication that reduce conflicts and make political decision-making more efficient. Our work is based on empirical data from a network study held in Malawi in 2010 that has collected policy positions and communication networks among stakeholders and politicians concerning the “Agricultural Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp)”. This sector investment programme in Malawi is built on the principles of CAADP.