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The Politics of Maize in Zambia: Who holds the Keys to Change the Status Quo?

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The Politics of Maize in Zambia: Who holds the Keys to Change the Status Quo?

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As both the national staple food and primary smallholder crop, maize occupies a central position in Zambia's agricultural political economy. Despite the government's large subsidies, maize productivity levels remain way below global averages, maize commercialisation in the smallholder sector remains highly concentrated, maize meal prices are highly volatile, and rural poverty remains high. This study uses a political economy framework to better understand the policy-making process, power structures and dynamics involved in the maize sector in order to get a better understanding of who holds the keys to change, and how to influence agricultural policy changes. Net-Map procedure was used to map the linkages of key players in order to determine critical nodes of policy change. The Executive (Cabinet/State House) was found to wield the most power in commanding the other actors in the sector. However, powerful lobby groups with links to the Executive have often opposed changes to the sector to maintain large rents to their constituency with disregard to the negative effects on the whole sector. In addition, a "Command Triangle" which holds the keys for sustainable policy changes in the maize sector was identified. This command triangle consists of the President, Minister of Finance and Minister of Agriculture. Hence, in order to bring about long-lasting changes to maize marketing policies in Zambia, there is a need for strong collective action within the command triangle, as it possesses the most influence.

Key words:

Zambia, maize politics, Net-Map procedure, lobbying linkages, command linkages, VisualLyzer software

Introduction

For decades, maize has occupied a central position in Zambia's agricultural political economy. The political importance of maize can be traced back to the early colonial period, with maize input and output price subsidies being the

hallmarks of the country's policy approach. The food riots experienced when supplies ran short in 1986 and again in 1989 have not been easily forgotten by either the people or political leaders. Nevertheless, is it just because politicians fear shortages in the basic foodstuff that the commodity is politicised, or are there other underlying factors? The answer to this question is complex.

Maize and other basic food staples are rain fed, thus their production is susceptible to variations in weather. This means that production volumes tend to fluctuate not just with changes in the market, but also with fluctuations in the weather, and this in turn means that their prices tend to fluctuate alarmingly if left unregulated. Also, basic foods are quite inelastic in their demand, and consumers usually find it difficult to shift to alternatives in most developing economies including Zambia. For these reasons alone, politicians often become nervous about the prospects of either low prices (too many farmers will suffer) or high prices (fear of consumer rage), the usual food price dilemma. Therefore, they tend to advocate for subsidies when perhaps it might be wiser if they did not. However, despite the evidence that the intervention programmes—the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) and Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP)—do not manage to effectively reach the poor, it is probable that most people still believe that they do. This is because once the government becomes involved in food market opportunities, certain operators take advantage of the subsidies and, hence, the incentive to sustain government interventions beyond what makes technical sense becomes stronger.

Discretionary and unpredictable FRA intervention continues to be the greatest policy problem plaguing the maize marketing system and food security in Zambia. Generally, the actual and potential government interventions by the FRA generate private sector uncertainties and inaction leading to a cycle of recurrent need for government intervention. All this comes at a huge expense to the treasury and causes headaches for politicians who are concerned about the country's budget deficit. The high government expenditure on maize production and market subsidies stifles broad-based agricultural growth because little money is going to key drivers of agricultural growth such as rural infrastructure (roads, rail, and telecommunication), agricultural research and development, market information, irrigation, institutions that foster the development of effective markets, and complementary services such as agricultural extension and credit (Chapoto et al., 2015).

Apart from the politicised maize policies, Zambia's trade policy has also been highly unstable. Stop-go trade policies have led to skyrocketing consumer prices and increased informal trade, suggesting that Zambia is failing to take advantage of regional markets and opportunities to increase tax collection. Chapoto and Jayne (2009) show that countries (including Zambia) that had unpredictable maize marketing and trade policies had the highest price

variability and unpredictability compared to countries that had an open border maize policy. The latter took advantage of trade in both deficit and surplus years whereas countries like Zambia continued to be in panic mode resulting in 'knee-jerk' policies that curtail meaningful agriculture growth.

As a result of the deeply political nature of maize in Zambia, and the extensive use of inefficient subsidies to promote production and manage food prices, the private sector has tended to take a cautious approach to investing in the sector. At the same time, maize productivity levels remain way below global averages, maize commercialisation in the smallholder sector is highly concentrated, maize meal prices are highly volatile, and rural poverty remains high. The combination of these factors suggests an urgent need for policy change. Therefore, the main question is how the government can help unlock the potential of the Zambian agriculture sector to achieve meaningful pro-poor agricultural growth.

Behind this backdrop, this study explores the political economy networks that have maintained maize as the primary focus of Zambian agricultural policy and how these networks can be influenced to change the *status quo*. We utilised a participatory interview-based mapping method called Net-Map (Schiffer and Hauck, 2010) to help understand and visualise the political dynamics of maize in Zambia, and identify the main key forces of change, their primary policy objectives, how they are linked, and their ability to influence policy outcomes.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 discusses the evolution of the maize marketing and trade policies in Zambia; Section 3 presents the data and methods; Section 4 uses the Net-map procedure to help understand the political economy issues in the maize sector in order to identify the key levers for policy change; and Section 5 concludes and presents some recommendations on how to reform the maize sector.

The History of Maize in Zambia

Pre-Independence period

In order to fully understand Zambia's maize-centric policies since gaining independence in 1964, we need to start by understanding what the maize product is and how it came to be popular in Zambia. Maize in all of its varieties has its origins in the Americas, specifically Mexico, and was progressively brought to African shores from about 1500 onwards. At that time, millet and sorghum were the cereal subsistence staples of African populations, and were not replaced by maize for many centuries. What led to an expansion in maize production was its relative suitability to commercial production. It was easily cropped, came with a series of variety improvements developed in America and Australia, and matured relatively quickly compared with sorghum and millet, thus requiring less labour and producing better value productivity (McCann, 2001).

These physical attributes made maize suitable from two perspectives. Firstly, while it did not lend itself especially well to subsistence farming (though some African farmers did produce the crop with success) it suited commercial farming, and therefore, almost exclusively maize was produced by white commercial farmers. Secondly, it produced a basic food that lent itself to the growing demand from migrant labourers working in the expanding mines of South Africa, as well as from the then Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Maize was provided on contract to the mines, who distributed it as rations to their employees.

Maize, a crop which had been referred to as food for Europeans in the 1930s, was the food of choice for most Zambians by the time of independence in 1964 (McCann, 2001). Independent Zambia was, therefore, heavily reliant upon maize as a staple food; according to JAICAF (2008) over 60% of land planted to major crops at this time was under maize. But the way in which this expansion was achieved was highly favourable to white commercial farmers.

The great depression of 1933 did not spare the mining sector in Northern Rhodesia. Many new mines on the growing Copperbelt were closed at precisely the time good weather yielded a bumper harvest. This was also exacerbated (for the whites that is) by an expansion in African production on the Tonga Plateau, where ox-drawn plough technology was enhancing production and productivity. Prices plummeted and commercial farmers' profitability in particular was threatened. The solution was to introduce market controls. The Agricultural Advisory Board established a Maize Control Board. Farmers were required to sell to this Board, which would then be responsible for onward sale, including exports and imports when necessary. In addition, the Board stipulated that a minimum of three parts of total maize bought (by farmer revenue) and a maximum of one part would go to white commercial farmers and African farmers respectively. Effectively, the white commercial farmers were legislating against any expanded competition from African competitors (Vickery, 1985). In fact, at this time Africans were not even defined as farmers, and could therefore not join cooperatives established for the purpose of expanding markets.¹

Between 1940 and 1964, fortunes fluctuated. During the liberation war years, Northern Rhodesia failed to produce enough to satisfy urban demand, and imports were required, mainly from the South. Prices to the mining companies rose, and they lobbied hard for reductions, and from this point on the Board began to subsidise consumers, and so operated at a loss. By the late 1950s and early 1960s production was in surplus again, but a political culture of support for white farmers and subsidies for the operation of the mines had been established as part of the expected political landscape. Preferential treatment of the white farmers continued more or less right up to the end of the colonial period.

Post-Independence period

After independence, the political objectives changed. The *Frontline States*, a loose coalition of African countries from the 1960s to the early 1990s committed to ending apartheid and white minority rule in South Africa and Rhodesia, imposed sanctions against the Smith Regime in Southern Rhodesia that made it politically unpalatable for members to commercially source maize in years of shortage. Zambia now became relatively dependent upon smaller farmers to provide what had become its basic food, and was in any case politically committed to supporting indigenous smallholder farmers, and redressing their discriminatory exclusion from markets.

In this environment, Zambia started to establish rural crop-buying stations, which were formed under the National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBOARD) in 1969. Maize as a staple continued to receive major government support and maize self-sufficiency became a key government policy. Cooperatives were established with a view (initially) towards improving access for smallholder farmers, both to inputs and to the market outlets according to the willingness and ability to supply, unrestricted by quota. Import and other controls were also imposed as a means of encouraging domestic growth. By 1970, these measures were beginning to have an impact. Whereas, up until that year, domestic production had run at about 600,000 to 800,000 tonnes, by 1976 it was up to around 1,600,000 tonnes (Figure 1).

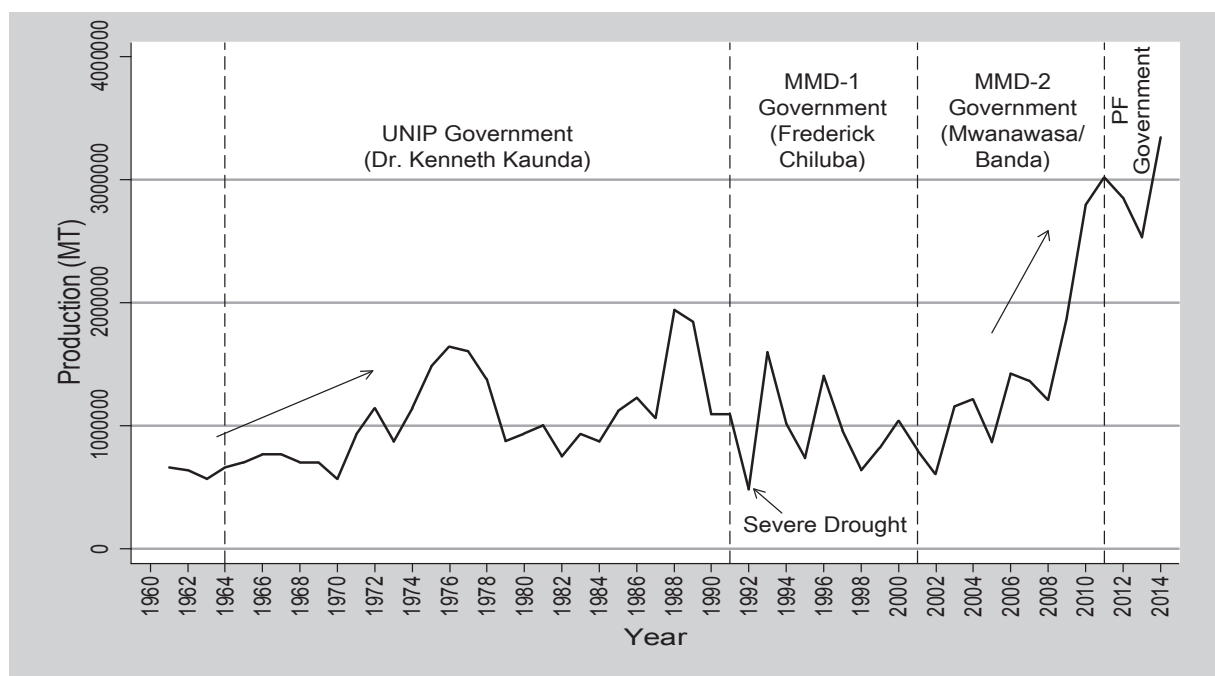


Figure 1: Zambia's Maize Production from 1961 to 2014
Source: FAOSTAT 2013; CSO/MAL Crop Forecast Survey.

The approach to maize subsidies in general hardly changed. The practice of supporting farmer prices and subsidising urban populations previously used by the colonial government was merely continued. What changed was the withdrawal of pro-white discrimination, and Zambia now had a new government devoted to promoting the interests of African farmers.

The approach to supporting production improvements was heavily state-centric. The political philosophy propounded by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) and its leader, Kenneth Kaunda, was socialist and humanist, partly owing to the historical, anti-western position taken by UNIP's predecessor, the Zambian African National Congress (ZANC) and their approach to building a broad social future for the mass of poor Africans, together with the non-aligned or somewhat pro-Soviet position chosen by the liberation movements. In this era, cooperatives were seen as potentially important contributors to overall rural mobilisation and agricultural development rather than just as member-based business organisations (Öjermak and Chabala, 1994).

Economic decline and political change

The early years of independence were reasonably successful, with annual real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates averaging 3.9% between 1965 and 1974, although this was only 0.6% per capita (Sousa and Fedec, 2015). But subsequent nationalisation of various sectors, including the mainstay copper mining, contributed to a decline in the efficiency of these industries. This, coupled with the decline in the global copper price and the rise in the price of oil undermined economic growth and government revenue.

The expanded recurrent expenditures by the government parastatals, especially on maize subsidies through NAMBOARD and subsidies on mealie meal prices, exacerbated national debt and contributed to increasingly uncontrollable inflation. From 1975 right through until 1998, GDP growth was largely stagnant, with GDP per capita running annually at around minus 2.5%. Food shortages and price increases, as subsidies had to be rescinded in the face of structural adjustment conditions, led to riots in 1986 and again in 1989. Under these various pressures, but also apparently under the clear impression that he could not lose an election, Kaunda permitted the registration of political parties, and an election was called in 1991. In this election, Kaunda lost to the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) under the leadership of Chiluba.

The approach to the economy adopted by the MMD was starkly at odds with that of UNIP. Indeed, injecting change in this respect was a key part of its agenda and appeal. MMD embarked upon a radical programme of privatisations centred on the copper mines but also involving the wide range of state-owned

parastatals under the Industrial Development Corporation (INDECO). Subsidies and controls were removed, not just from maize, but from other markets as well (Howard and Mungoma, 1996). The private traders and millers were expected to fill the void left by NAMBOARD, but the environment was not yet conducive for them to meet the challenge. Interest rates rose to above 200% through the early 1990s, and so the required investments in new business infrastructure were not forthcoming.

Meanwhile demand for maize continued to grow, and the food shortages and price hikes of 1986 and 1990 could only be repeated. This was exacerbated by a severe drought in 1991, which caused production to fall to just over 500,000 tonnes, its lowest levels since independence. Throughout the 1990s, production fluctuated wildly, partly as farmers reacted to market instability and in response to weather changes. Many people concluded that the market had failed to yield any kind of stability, or self-sufficiency in the staple crop.

After failing in his bid for a third term in 2001, Chiluba was replaced by another MMD candidate, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa who dubbed his government the New Deal Government. With the economy reeling from the effects of market reforms, the Mwanawasa government decided to re-establish maize input and output support programmes. Coincidentally, Zambia like some other countries in Africa had her debt forgiven, making it possible for the government to implement these programmes without putting a lot of strain on the national budget. Maize production began to recover and indeed, expand. Therefore, the history both of food riots in the 1980s and of continuing poor harvests through the 1990s imprinted on successive governments the need to intervene. The subsidy programmes were ramped up under Rupiah Banda but could not secure him the election against Michael Sata. Table A1 in the Appendix summarises the key features of the five republics as they apply to the development of the maize sector.

Data and Methods

To address the objectives, the study uses a qualitative research method. The key research tool utilised is a participatory mapping method called Net-Map (Schiffer and Hauck, 2010), which allows for the collection of qualitative data using a semi-structured interview approach. Net-Map, an interview-based mapping tool, was used to help understand, visualise, discuss, and improve situations in which many different actors influence outcomes². The tool can be adapted to any situation, and in our case, was applied to gain an understanding of the political dynamics of the maize sector in Zambia, identifying the main key levers of change, their primary policy objectives, how they are linked, and their ability to influence policy outcomes.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine key informants knowledgeable about the Zambian maize sector. The key informants were drawn from public institutions, private institution, civil societies, regional bodies, and some influential individuals in the maize sector. The informants were asked to identify the main actors in the maize sub-sector who are influential in changing or maintaining the current maize policies. They were also asked to identify the linkages that exist among the actors and to rate how much power/influence each actor had in blocking or supporting policy change. From this analysis, and in combination with our knowledge of the sector, we make recommendations of who, and how, to change the current *status quo* in the maize sub-sector.

Twenty-five actors from the public and private sector were identified by key informants as being influential in the agricultural policy-making process. The main actors identified included the State House/Cabinet (hereinafter referred to as the Executive), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL), Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP), Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU), Millers Association of Zambia (MAZ), and Grain Traders Association of Zambia (GTAZ). These actors interacted in various ways, how they interacted influenced how, and which policies are made in the maize sector. Two main linkages under which they interact were identified as lobbying and command. The lobbying linkage is when one actor tries to influence another actor for policy change, while the command linkage is when one actor instructs another actor to perform or carry out certain duties/activities. To show these linkages between the actors, social network analysis was undertaken on the aggregated network data from the interviews with key stakeholders. The different perspectives of the various informants were aggregated using VisualLyzer software to control against potential bias (Schiffer and Hauck, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Key actors and the agricultural policy formulation process

Government: The agricultural policy planning process in Zambia involves several different levels of government including the MAL, MoFNP, and the Ministry of Justice. Any agricultural policy changes or new policies are communicated to the Cabinet through a Cabinet memo. The Policy Analysis and Coordination (PAC) division in the Cabinet office then sends the memo to relevant ministries for review before the relevant Cabinet Committee makes recommendations to the full cabinet for approval, and the policy decision is communicated back to the ministry for implementation (Koenen-Grant and Garnett, 1996).³ Policies that are approved by cabinet for implementation are usually administrative policies. Policies that require enactment of new laws are taken to parliament for debate and vote on the proposed bill. However, it is very rare that Cabinet

recommendations fail to pass through parliament because debates and voting is done along party lines.

The Executive plays a very significant role in agricultural policies especially the maize sector. Most of the agricultural stakeholders interviewed said that any change in policy would need to start from the top. The rural smallholder farming community is of great interest to politicians because they constitute the largest voting bloc in the country. Hence, to win the rural vote, the politician must win over the hearts of smallholder farmers by having programmes and/or policies targeted at them. The fear of losing elections has contributed, in many ways, to the high level of ad hoc maize marketing and trade decisions made by the government. As an arm of government, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has often been forced to justify and implement decisions announced from the top. , Maize sector policies can be formulated at technical level but decisions are made at political level.

Zambia National Farmers' Union: ZNFU was founded in 1905, and consisted of large-scale farmers. Before independence in 1964, the ZNFU was called Rhodesia National Farmers' Union. After independence, the name became Commercial Farmers Bureau. In 1992, the name was changed to ZNFU, to represent the inclusion of smallholder farmers as members. Currently, it represents small- and large-scale farmers and agribusinesses. Its members are categorised into district farmers' associations, commodity specialized associations, corporate farming businesses, the agribusiness chamber, and association members. Some of the union's objectives are to promote and safeguard the interest of members, to support the conduct and the development of the agriculture industry in Zambia, and to make representations to the government or to any competent authority with regard to matters directly or indirectly affecting agriculture (in its broadest sense). One of the union's core functions is to lobby and advocate on behalf of its members. In terms of maize policies, the union has a lot of influence when it comes to lobbying for change/no change due to its large membership base.

Millers Association of Zambia: MAZ comprises more than 30 members who are engaged in commercial milling of maize meal, flour, and stock feeds. These members are located across the country though concentrated along the line of rail. These milling companies tend to service mostly urban consumers. Small-scale millers are not members of the association. MAZ tends to advocate for cheap maize grain prices, and has been shown to have a lot of power in influencing policy shifts by using consumer prices of maize meal as bargaining chips. Government is usually caught in a dilemma of trying to offer affordable maize meal prices and offer farmers a good price for their produce.

Grain Traders Association of Zambia: GTAZ was established in 2005 mainly

to promote commodity trading, develop sound trading rules and regulations, to encourage the development of small and medium traders and to work with the government and other stakeholders to improve the agriculture sector in Zambia. GTAZ comprises a diverse membership base of both Zambian and international companies, some of which are multinational and regional players. Currently they are more than 20 members trading in a number of other products apart from maize. However, when it comes to influencing policies surrounding maize, GTAZ seems to lack political influence, mainly stemming from a historically embedded distrust of private trade in general and in agricultural products in particular.

Lobbying network

Figure 2 summarises the lobbying network. The network shows that ZNFU has the largest influence as they have access to numerous actors in the sector including the Executive. MAZ, due to its large membership base, is also influential as they are seen to control consumer maize meal prices and, therefore, are able to leverage politicians' fears of escalating maize meal prices in order to lobby for cheap maize grain from FRA, either directly to the Minister and/or the Executive. Fertiliser companies have a lobby power almost equal to the millers because they also have access to the Executive. Because fertiliser is big business in Zambia, substantial campaign contributions by large fertiliser companies are likely to enable these companies to have direct access to State House. Key informants indicated that some fertiliser firms, especially those that have been winning the FISP tenders, have this access whilst others do not, suggesting an uneven playing field. GTAZ has the least influence compared to the other three actors as there is a long-standing distrust of private maize buyers, hence the grain traders' advocacy efforts tend not to matter as much as those of MAZ or ZNFU.

MAZ normally lobbies for cheap maize grain from FRA directly to the Minister and/or the Executive. One informant pointed out that, "the ones that benefit from the current policies are millers, as they use consumers as a bargaining chip". They tend to push the government to subsidise maize grain by making FRA sell cheaper maize to selected large millers (MAZ members) with the promise to reduce mealie meal prices. On the other hand, Grain Traders represented by GTAZ support and lobby for an open maize market policy, which is opposed by some large-scale millers who have in the past benefited from cheap FRA maize.

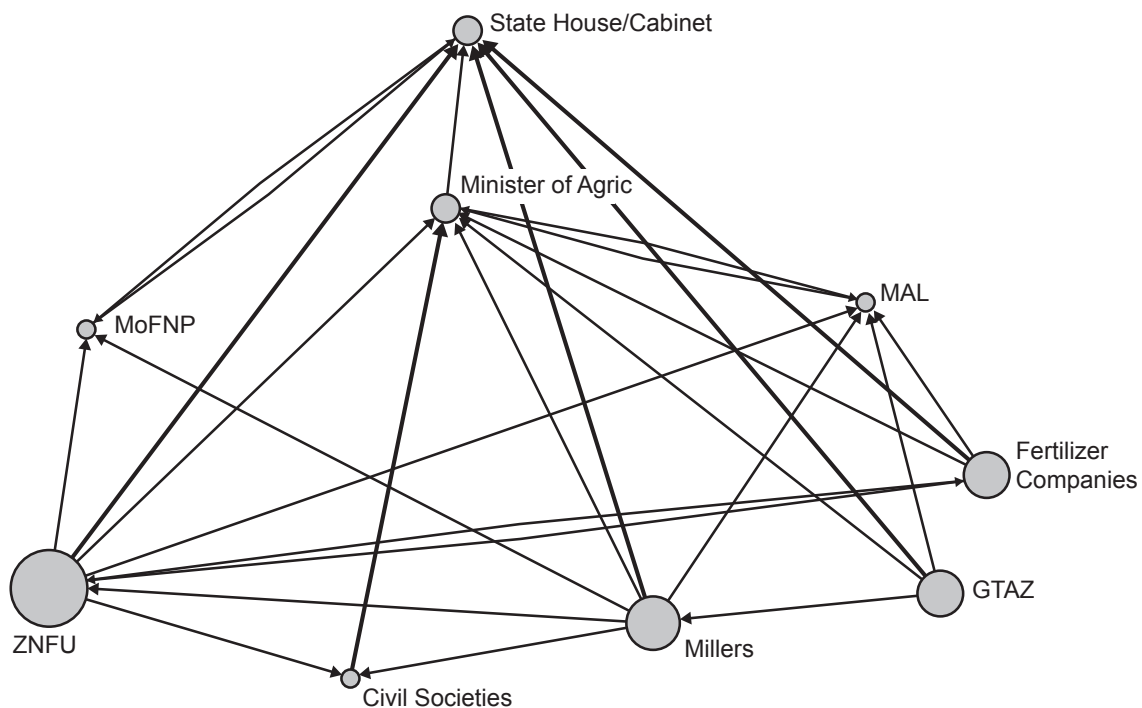


Figure 2. Lobbying Network

Source: Authors' calculations with VisualLyzer from interview data. Actors sized according to influence level.⁴

The actors identified in Figure 2 have varying interests and goals and each one of them lobbies to reach their association's goals. In terms of the maize sector, ZNFU tries to serve the interest of the smallholder farmers by lobbying for input provision and higher output price from the government. However, in most instances their lobbying has ignored empirical evidence that suggests that the majority of the beneficiaries have not been the smallholder farmer (Mason et al, 2013).

The fact that the interests of these key players do not overlap on a number of issues makes it difficult to reach a consensus when it comes to agriculture policy. ZNFU has in the past, been able to single-handedly lobby for FRA producer maize price increases, putting them at odds with traders and millers, who would rather have access to cheaper maize grain. However, as powerful as the union is, there are times when things do not go its way. For instance, on 17 March 2015, the Minister of Agriculture announced the importation of wheat, which the millers saw as a welcome move. However, this did not sit very well with ZNFU which went to the extent of calling the minister, "minister of millers" in an article posted on the union's website expressing dissatisfaction on the way things were going (ZNFU, 2015).

Within the milling industry, members of MAZ are seen to have unfair competitive advantage as they are usually the ones who are able to access

cheaper maize from FRA. However, the MAZ lobby success is usually mixed. For instance, after the removal of the maize grain subsidy in 2013, it has not been successful with its lobby effort to fully bring back the subsidy. The continued tug of war among the different stakeholders makes policy changes in the maize sector much more difficult.

There are some areas of consensus amongst these players, for instance ZNFU depending on the crop, can also work in tandem with the millers and MAL. ZNFU, GTAZ, and some fertiliser and seed companies seem to have aligned interests when it comes to lobbying policy change concerning FISP and for Zambia to have a functional commodity exchange. Such areas of consensus can be used as a starting point for pushing for policy changes in the agricultural sector.

Command network

The results in Figure 3 show that the power to command actors in the maize sector is centralised around the Executive. For instance, although FRA reports to MAL, the Executive seem to have more power to influence the direction of the policies by formally and/or informally commanding both MAL and FRA to implement certain policies. For example, during the 2014/2015 marketing session, the ice resident at a political rally announced that FRA was going to buy all the surplus maize from the smallholder farmers and immediately FRA started buying more maize, exceeding the strategic reserve of 500,000-mt target. In addition, in August 2015, we saw the resident announcing a higher FRA maize price (K75 from K70 per 50kg bag) than announced by the agency a week before.

MoFNP is the second most powerful, followed by MAL in terms of the number of actors it can command. Thus, the Executive, MoFNP, and MAL form a command triangle, which according to the various stakeholder interviews possesses the keys to changing the current maize sector policies. At the centre of the triangle is the Minister of Agriculture who has command over MAL and FRA. However, the Ministry of Agriculture has been and is a revolving door, with an informant pointing out that “no single minister has been able to last long enough to gain sufficient control of the inistry to understand the challenges and advocate for change”. Since 2010, the inistry has had six inisters of Agriculture. Given the status quo, the only way policies can change is if the Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Finance, and the resident agree on policy issues. Together, these three hold the keys for change in the maize sector.

Stakeholders also pointed out that currently the Executive makes politically motivated policy pronouncements without consultation and these actions leave no budgetary accountability to either parliament or the Ministry of Finance.

Parliament on the other hand seems unwilling to hold the Executive accountable for decisions that affect the approved budget. It was also noted that the actual lines of command especially with the actors in the triangle are extremely convoluted and unclear, which makes it hard to determine where an order comes from and to hold particular actors and institutions accountable for actions.

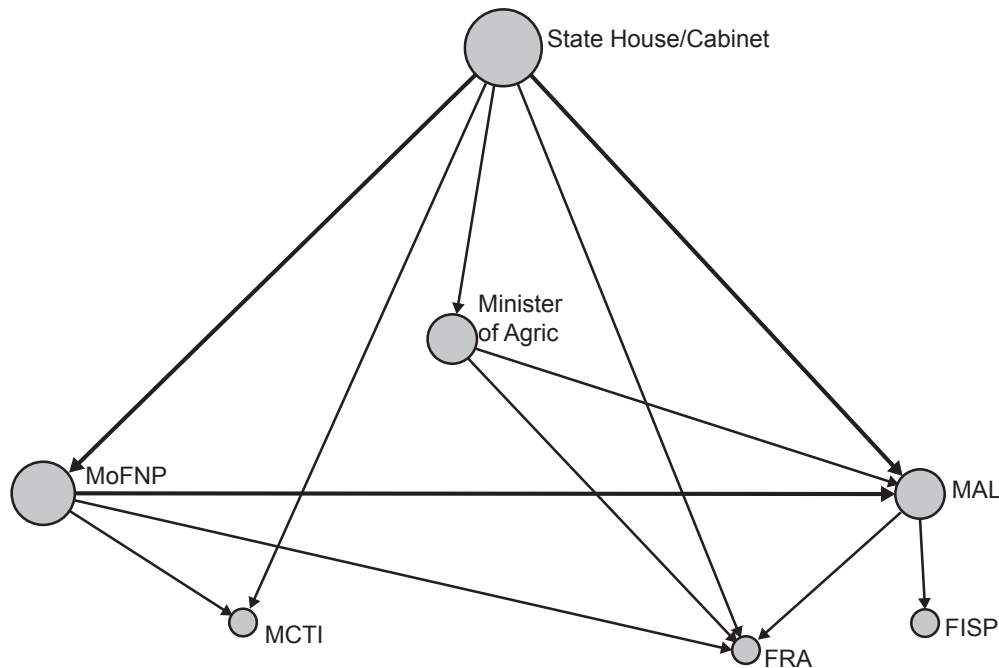


Figure 3. Command Network

Source: Authors' calculations with VisualLyzer from interview data. Actors sized according to Influence Level.

Who and how to change the system

The current maize system has remained unresponsive to policy change despite numerous policy recommendations. In order to change the system, the main actors that need to be targeted for policy change are those actors with the highest influence levels in the policy making process. Using information from the aggregated interview results from both the lobbying and command networks, actors that support, block, or are undecided about policy change were identified by key informants (Figure 4). Actors that support policy change are indicated in green, those that block policy change are indicated in red, while those that are undecided are indicated in yellow. The size of each actor's node shows the influence level that the actor has. As mentioned earlier, the results from key informant interviews indicated that the major actors identified to have the power to change the system are those that are undecided in terms of the policy direction they need to take. The actors who want to have the maize

policies revamped (MoFNP, GTAZ, and civil societies) were found to be not very influential.

From this triangle of actors, MoFNP fully supports policy changes in both input and output markets due to the huge financial strain on the national budget caused by the large unbudgeted expenditures on FRA and FISP, however, it depends on the actual line ministry (MAL) to indicate which policies need to change. The Executive and MAL seem to be undecided when it comes to changing policy on FRA and FISP, as we continue to witness these programmes becoming larger and more ineffective. The Executive was said to remain undecided, as some of its members believe that FRA and FISP are key to winning the electoral rural vote.

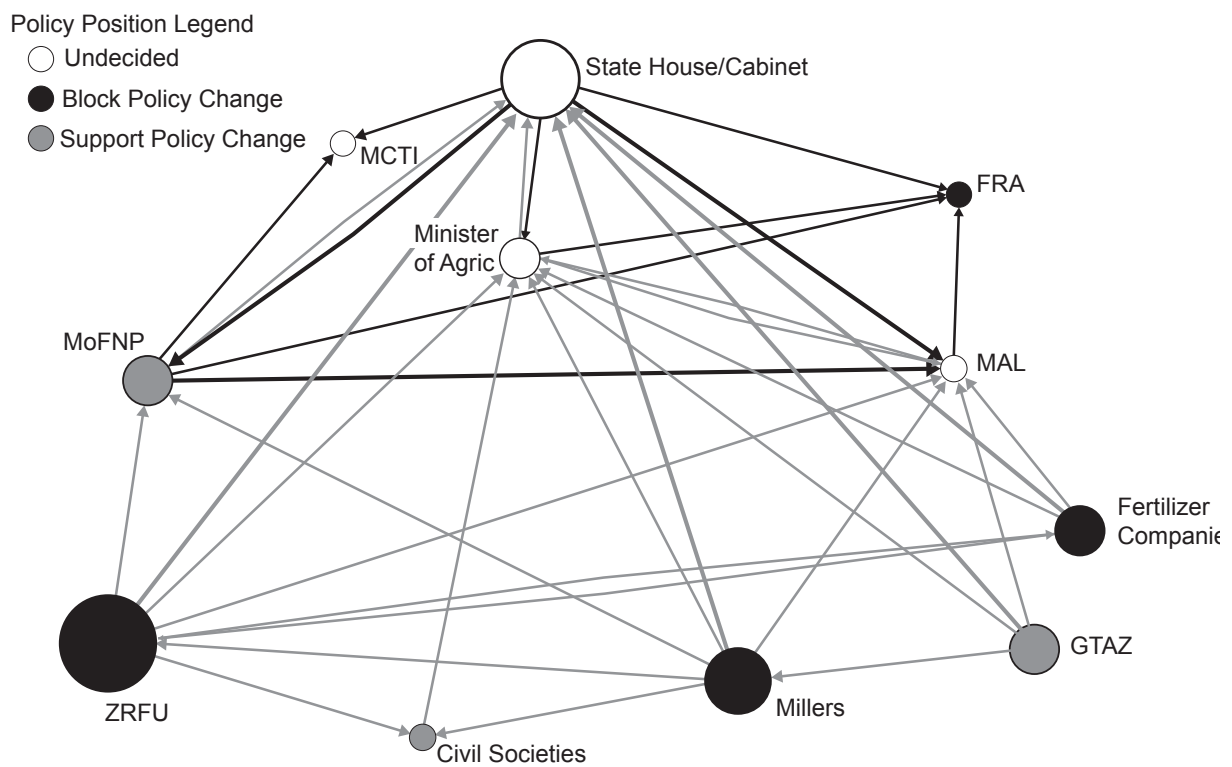


Figure 4. Aggregated Network on Support, Undecided, and Blocking Policy Change
Source: Authors' calculations with VisualLyzer from interview data. Actors sized according to influence level.

The majority of those interviewed indicated that there were opposing forces within MAL; hence, it was difficult for the ministry to push for change unequivocally. They said that as long as there is something to be gained from the *status quo*, people tend to protect it. This rent seeking behaviour is said to be obstructing change. The consensus view of those interviewed suggested that some of MAL's technical officers seem to advocate for policy choices that

benefit them personally as opposed to what benefits the agricultural sector. For instance, the stalling of the implementation of the e-voucher in preference for the traditional FISP was ascribed to a small group within MAL protecting their interest in the FISP tendering, transportation, and distribution processes. The enactment of the Agricultural Marketing Bill has also stalled because the stakeholders advocated for the inclusion of the Agricultural Marketing Council to deal with marketing issues. However, some of MAL's technical staff perceived this as a threat to their jobs and ability to control the agricultural sector, hence, the bill has not been finalised.

The critical question is how we can change this way of thinking. Without full cooperation of the ministry's technical staff, it would prove difficult to change the maize policies because they are crucial in the policy formulation process. Any hesitation on their part tends to delay or derail the implementation of good policies. It was noted by some respondents that as long as the message from the technical staff is mixed, the minister would not be confident to carry it to Cabinet.

The analysis of the responses from the key informants also show that the millers, big fertiliser companies, and ZNFU seem to be the main actors blocking policy change (see Figure 4.) because they tend to lobby for policies that have short-term benefits for their constituents disregarding the long-term impact on the sector. In addition, with access to both the resident and Minister of Agriculture their voices tend to be heard over others.

Conclusion

The consistent interference in the market means that the expansion in production is economically ineffective. The productivity level achieved as a result of encouraging maize production by small farmers and by paying above market prices means that it would be more efficient, and most of the time cheaper, to buy maize on the international futures markets rather than to produce it domestically. Similarly, the practice of subsidising fertiliser – especially by importing the product or producing it inefficiently in government-run plant such as Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia – would continue to undermine the potential for the expansion of domestic input industries and burden the national treasury.

In order to bring about long-lasting changes to the maize marketing policies in Zambia, there is a need for strong collective action at the highest level, especially with the command triangle. The Executive need to make a deliberate effort to depoliticise the maize sector in order to achieve broad-based growth in the agricultural sector. This is because any random pronouncement by the Executive at any fora usually becomes policy; Ministries of Agriculture and Finance are then forced to implement such *ad hoc* policies which often defy

empirical evidence. In addition, the sector requires consistency, beginning with the minister's position. The current situation where ministers are frequently reshuffled does not promote stability because in most cases, the appointments are more political rather than based on the experience and contribution the person would bring to the sector.

Currently, actors are seen to push their agendas independently and decisions affecting the different actors are not coordinated. This lack of coordination perpetuates the *status quo*. Thus, to have meaningful progress in policy changes, there is need for sector actors to come together and push for policy reform in a coordinated fashion especially in areas where their interests align. For instance, we found that there was some consensus regarding the urgent need to reform FISP by adopting an e-voucher system in order to include more players and reduce government expenditure on the programme while at the same time reaching more beneficiaries. Also, we have seen ZNFU, MAZ, and GTAZ come together and agree on the need for the creation of a commodity exchange, an innovation that the government can use to meet the country's food security and poverty reduction objectives without disbanding FRA. Together they managed to convince the government to issue the Statutory Instrument (SI 59) required making the exchange operational. What remains is to demonstrate that FRA can be a big player in the commodity exchange because instead of procuring maize grain directly from farmers, the agency can do it through the private sector. This greatly reduces some of the financial losses currently incurred by the agency due to storage losses, transport logistics, and some of the inefficiencies associated with running a parastatal.

Finally, the decisions in agriculture are made with what are perceived as immediate benefit of winning political support. Providing options of how to gain immediate political mileage through other instruments has not been done sufficiently. FRA and FISP are being used as a form, albeit ineffective form, of social protection. Therefore, if the government would like to provide effective social protection, then part of the solution lies in putting more of FISP and FRA resources to alternative but more effective forms of social protection programmes. For instance, evidence in other countries has shown that giving people cash (social cash transfers) that does not distort the market has greater multiplier effects than distributing a commodity, which crowds out private sector investment. Therefore, there is need to have farmers who are the main actors affected by these policies understand the massive costs of the current programmes at the expense of them seeing tangible benefit; they could then assist in pushing for policy reform. In addition, the need for a well informed, strong, and independent civil society cannot be over emphasized.

Endnotes

- ¹ Under the Farmers Licensing Ordinance Number 30 of 1946, a farmer was defined as any person other than: (a) An African or; (b) Any company or body of persons where the controlling interest was held by Africans. With this background and the continued obstacles to the formation of cooperatives by Africans, it was not surprising that the Northern Rhodesia Farmers' Union (NRFU) at Independence in 1964 was essentially a union for the European commercial farmers. It was recognised as the only representative organisation for the farming community in the country (see Öjermark and Chabala, 1994).
- ² Net-Map has been applied on studies in International Trade and Policy Reform and Governance (see for example, Aberman and Edelman (2014); Raabe et al. (2010)).
- ³ The communication structure remains the same to date, only that the line ministry in charge of the policy proposal contacts the relevant ministry as opposed to it being done by PAC. The role of the now PAC is to take the final memo to cabinet.
- ⁴ The size of the influence level is determined by how many other actors a particular actor can lobby when it comes to policy shifts and changes.

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Appendix

Table A1. List of Identified Actors in the Agricultural Policy Making Process

Public Institutions	1. Food Reserve Agency (FRA)
	2. Fertiliser Input Support Programme (FISP)
	3. Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL)
	4. Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Stock Monitoring Committee
	5. Minister of Agriculture
	6. Ministry of Commerce Trade and Industry (MCTI)
	7. Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP)
	8. Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Lands
	9. Parliament
	10. Cabinet
	11. State House

Private Institutions	12. Research Institutions
	13. Zambia National Farmers' Union (ZNFU)
	14. Grain Traders Association of Zambia (GTAZ)
	15. Millers
	16. Zambia Agricultural Commodities Exchange (ZAMACE)
	17. World Food Programme (WFP)
Regional Bodies	18. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
	19. Southern African Development Community (SADC)
Others	20. Consumers
	21. Retailers
	22. Small-scale farmers
	23. Commercial farmers
	24. Commercial banks
	25. Civil societies

Source: Authors' compilation

Table A2. Summary of Key Agriculture Sector Policies, 1964 to 2015

Time line	Policy
First Republic (1964-1972)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of fertiliser and consumer maize meal subsidies in 1971 • Pan-territorial pricing policy implemented. • Expansion of State crop buying stations first through National Agricultural Marketing Board in 1969 and later through the Zambia Cooperative Federation (ZCF). • Trade restrictions in terms of exchange controls, quantitative controls, and import and export restrictions imposed as a way of protecting the industry.
Second Republic (1972-1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of its first Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1978 and producer/consumer subsidies reduced as part of the SAPs. • Following urban riots, the government reverted to price controls and subsidy provision in 1987. • Abolition of NAMBOARD in 1989 and partial liberalisation of the grain markets.

<p>Third Republic (1991-2001)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated and expanded the reform process by removing input and price subsidies. • Exchange controls, quantitative controls, and import and export restrictions removed. • Government's direct involvement in maize marketing minimised. • Establishment of the Food Reserve Agency in 1996 through the Food Reserve Agency Act of 1995, to hold strategic reserves.
<p>Fourth Republic (2001-2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced the Food Security Pack programme in 2001 to help the most vulnerable households. • Resumed large-scale distribution of subsidised fertiliser to registered farmer cooperatives through the newly introduced Fertiliser Support Programme (FSP) in 2002/2003. • Amendment of the Food Reserve Act (No. 20 of 2005), giving FRA the authority to participate and engage directly in maize marketing.
<p>Fifth Republic (2011- to date)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recapitalisation of NCZ • Increased FRA buying activities • Increased spending on FISP • <i>Ad hoc</i> maize export policies. • Signing of the Agricultural Credits Act authorising the use of warehouse receipt system. • Promise to reform FISP and implement it through the e-voucher.

Source: Authors' illustrations.