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ARRANGEMENTS IN DEVELOPING AGRICULTURAL MARKETS: CONTRACT FARMING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract. Smallholder farmers in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa have begun to participate in global supply chains through applying contract farming (CF). The main aims of this paper are: to present a typology of CF and to describe the contract farming in Sub-Saharan African countries. This article has synthesised the findings from contract farming agreements in Sub-Saharan African countries to form a conceptual framework of the determinants and dynamics of farmers' participation in CF agreements. This article can be treated as an introduction to a complex comparative study of the Sub-Saharan African CF schemes and may spur further integrative analysis of the transformation in agriculture in developing countries.

Key words: contract farming, Sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture

INTRODUCTION

Recently, product supply chains for agricultural commodity have become increasingly globalised and internationalised. The omnipresent delocalisation and fragmentation of production have not left this sector unaffected. Large food corporations and smaller companies are interested in more fragmented and diversified supply chains. Hence, they have focused on agriculture in developing countries. As a result, more smallholder farmers in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa have begun to participate in global supply chains through applying contract farming (CF) schemes[1]. A number of theoretical approaches can be used to explain the linkages between growers and companies. Nevertheless, no conclusive theory or approach exist as yet [Rehber 2007].

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[1]The fragmentation of farms has been visible in developing countries. According to the African Development Bank statistics, an average farm size in Africa is 1.6 ha [e.g. in Ethiopia 1 ha, in Uganda and Kenya 2.5 ha, in Tanzania 2 ha] [African Development Bank Group 2014].

Arrangements between a farmer and a firm seem to be popular in many countries. Unfortunately, reliable data and information on their size in developing states still remain poor. Contrary to developed states, it is difficult to assess the size of CF in Sub-Saharan Africa due to lack of data. Plausibly, the proportion of agricultural production under CF in developing countries may not exceed 15%, but this remains a hypothesis [Oya 2012]. Usually, when estimating the CF share in agricultural production, we rely on surveys covering the largest corporations, e.g. Nestle or PepsiCo. According to "World Investment Report 2009", CF activities by transnational corporations covered over 110 developing and transition economies [UNCTAD 2009]. Brüntrup and Peltzer have estimated that contract farmers represent from 30 to 40% of the farmers in Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Kenya and 33–43% of farmers in Cameroon [Brüntrup and Peltzer 2007]. In Mozambique around 10% of smallholders are involved into CF [UNCTAD 2009].

Contract farming has existed for a long time; however, since the end of the 20th century it has become more important, especially in developing countries. Developments in food industry, global value chains, the process of globalisation, consumer demands, and technology in agriculture networks of supermarkets have accelerated the changes in CF patterns. Expansion of various forms of institutional solutions in developing countries as well as endemic imperfect market information on prices, costs, technology, financing, etc., combined with preferential market access to the most developed countries have led to great interest in CF arrangements. Generally, a CF agreement consists of two or sometimes three parts. This type of production refers to the contractual agreement between a corporation (firm, integrators) and farmers (growers). These two actors are essential. Occasionally, this two-side agreement can be extended to a third party. CF may be understood as a farmer's commitment to provide an agricultural commodity of a type to the contractor. According to Kusterer and Glover [1990], CF can be simply defined as arrangements between a grower and firms (exporters, processors, retail outlets, shippers) in which nontransferable contracts specify one or more conditions of marketing and production. In literature we can find two terms related to the linkages between farmers and firms: "CF" and "outgrower scheme". Usually, these terms are synonymous. However, some authors point towards some slight differences between them. Some researchers indicate that the term "CF" often refers to private contractor arrangements, while "outgrower schemes" describes agreements between growers and public enterprises and entities controlled by the state [Kusterer and Glover 1990]. Moreover, the so-called grower schemes are usually used in Sub-Saharan Africa [Eaton and Shepherd 2001]. Each contract basically involves four elements: price, which is pre-agreed, required quality, quantity or acreage (minimum/maximum) of agricultural commodity and time when the delivery should be completed [Key and Rusten 1999][2].

[2]In CF we can usually find following provisions: the duration of the contract, the quality standards to be applied, quality control, quantity, the cultivation and raising methods required by the contractor, time of delivery, packaging, transport, price, technical assistance, procedures for paying farmers, insurance, procedures for dispute resolution [Bijman 2008].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The paper tries to characterize African CF features and selected consequences of CF. The main aims of this study are: (1) to present a typology of contract farming and (2) to describe the contract farming in Sub-Saharan African countries. The article is theoretical. The study uses secondary sources of research material. These secondary sources include: literature in the area of contract farming in developing countries and available databases, mostly of international organisations, such as the World Bank, FAO and UNCTAD. The applied research method is based on the detailed analysis of available literature and information on CF agreements in the selected regions. The serious obstacle to deepened research is the limited knowledge on the institutional arrangements and strategies adopted both by the farmers and the corporations. In the analysis, not only literature sources, but also press releases were used.

This paper consists of two parts that refer to the research questions of the article. First, this article presents the overview of the typology of CF which may be found in developing countries. This section bases on the literature review. The second part is a study on African CF schemes in terms of crucial, according to the author, features of CF. In the conclusions, selected recommendations for further regulation in these specific areas of agricultural production in the light of the presented drawbacks are presented and some alternative solutions to CF are delineated.

TYPOLOGY OF CONTRACT FARMING: OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

The most popular categorisation of CF models has been elaborated by the FAO. The organisation indicates 5 models of CF: centralised, nucleus estate, multipartite, informal, and intermediary. The centralised model involves a centralised contractor and numerous small farmers. It is vertically coordinated with the control of quality and quantity. The nucleus estate model is similar to the centralised type of CF, but the sponsor manages a central estate or plantation. It involves a significant provision of material and management inputs. In the multipartite model, we can find many cooperating organisations. This model is located in between the centralised and nucleus estate models. Individual entrepreneurs and small companies are involved in the informal model. This scheme applies informal production contracts (usually on seasonal basis) and often requires government support. It is connected to higher risk. In the intermediary model we can find a sponsor in subcontracting linkages with farmers to intermediaries. There is a danger that the sponsor loses control of production, quality, and prices received by farmers [Eaton and Shepherd 2001].

Williams and Karen [1985] have bridged the gap between the above-mentioned models and practice by adding some new forms of CF: modified nucleus estates, nearby processing and CF, distant processing and CF, and CF and marketing companies. Modified nucleus estates are similar to standard nucleus estate models. They are a combination of small scale and larger commercial operations. Nearby processing and CF includes enterprises that obtain all of their raw materials through a system of CF, using small scale operators mainly, but possibly including larger scale, commercial farms also. Such firms do not have a farm or plantation operated by the processing plant. The model of distant processing and CF is similar to the previous ones, but farming takes place some distance away from the processing plant. In the scheme "CF and marketing companies" enterprises have no investments in a processing plant. They market raw materials obtained through a system of CF, using small-scale farmers mainly, but sometimes including large-scale commercial farms and plantations.

According to Mighell and Jones [1963], we can distinguish three types of contract in agriculture: market-specification contracts, production–management contracts, and resource–providing contracts. The first kind of contract is the pre-harvest agreement between the farmer and the company that specifies the time and the location of the sale and the quality of the product. Market specification contracts are associated with retaining the control of production and management in the farmer's hands, and shifting most of the production risk on the farmer. Information and coordination costs are limited. In turn, production–management contracts give more control to the company that specifies and coordinates the production process. Under this type of contract, the farmer delegates a substantial part of his decision rights to the contractor, who should bear most of the market risks. This type of contract optimises costs and improves farmers' skills. In the resource–providing contract the company secures the market and provides inputs for production. Usually, this contract is applied when there is a great divergence between input and output. The division of risk between two sides of the contract varies and depends mostly on the agreement between a contractor and a farmer. Moreover, Minot [1986] has expanded this typology by discussing how these models of contracts may solve the most frequent transactional problems. Mighell's and Jones' classification has been strongly criticised by Hueth et al. [2007] on the basis of their empirical research conducted in the United States.

Regarding the level and number of strictly specified elements of the contract, the arrangements may be divided also into three types. First, procurement contracts, under which only sale and purchase conditions are specified, seem to be the simplest form of farmer–firm linkage. The second type of linkages are partial contracts in which only some of the inputs are supplied by the contracting company and output is bought at pre-agreed prices. Finally, we can distinguish total contracts, under which the contracting company supplies and manages all the inputs and the farmer becomes only a supplier of land and labour [Key and Rusten 1999].

Gulati et al. have acknowledged the differences between two main forms of farm–company linkages: direct procurement and the so-called open source intermediation. Each of these models contains different combinations of arrangements. The first one ranges from simple marketing agreements to very complicated schemes of risk sharing or futures contracting. This type of linkages may be treated as a standard CF model. The second one involves the provision of information about market prices, crop, and cultivation practices to farmers without any buy back guarantee. The main goal of open-source intermediation is to diminish the knowledge, technological, and information gap and provide farmers with inputs without forcing them to sign agreements such as CF [Gulati et al. 2008].

Agriculture is a specific economic area where contracts are not complicated and very often only verbal [Bogetoft and Olsen 2004]. That is why another useful typology of CF makes a distinction between written formal contracts and verbal informal contracts. In many developing countries, it is natural that the linkages between companies and farmers are unwritten. These informal agreements are respected by both sides. Moreover, we can find a number of reasons why contracts are informal and incomplete on purpose, because the agreements contain some variables that cannot be easily verified by the jurisdiction system in case of contract breach. Should the contract parties be able to write complete contracts, it may be less expensive to engage in verbal informal contracting and rely on self-enforcement instead of on the court or the third party protection [Fafchamps 2004].

The typologies of CF mentioned above do not exhaust the patterns and possibilities of arrangements in agriculture. The presented selection of agreements aims to prove that there is still no consensus regarding CF perfect models. Researchers, farmers, and contractors are searching for improvements in this area. Under no circumstances should the CF be constructed without taking into consideration the cultural context and the tradition. The process of development process and the more and more close relations between farmers (growers) and companies have led to a rapid increase of new types of CF. The popular typology of CF has been proposed by the FAO; nevertheless, in many developing countries these patterns have been modified and adjusted to the local requirements and conditions. For instance, in Bangladesh three kinds of contracts are popular: formal production–marketing, formal input marketing, and informal output marketing. All of them stem from the most basic parts of CF known from literature, but many elements of these contracts are more suitable to the local markets and tradition.

CONTRACT FARMING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

This section presents the literature review regarding CF in Sub-Saharan African countries. It has been decided to present CF in these countries applying the following criteria: forms of CF; products that CF covers; the significance of CF for poverty alleviation; and the factor that drives CF development. These criteria seem to be important in the light of previous literature review, though they do not exhaust the possible questions that we may ask analysing CF and its results.

What forms does CF take?

Contract farming schemes can take numerous forms, so a rigid categorisation is a difficult task. The centralised model is popular in countries where crops are popular agricultural product, for example, Gambia, Ghana, and Kenya. The same model is also applied when we deal with products that need processing, e.g. milk, poultry, sugarcane, tea, or coffee. The nucleus estate model is recommended for tree crops and is applied in Ghana. Palm industrie is also a nucleus estate with contracted outgrowers established and managed by the state. When we try to distinguish CF models regarding the number of partners, there is a wide range of configurations. Very often a significant side in CF scheme is a financial institution, e.g. a bank or a microfinance institution. For example, in Nigeria banks are advised to provide a loan to farmers engaged in CF as well as the entrepreneur to ensure fair prices of agricultural products. Sometimes we can find multipartite schemes involved with franchises and the above-mentioned contractors. Informal models are popular in the African countries where vegetables and short-term crops are under contracts [Eaton and Shepherd 2001].

Analysing the forms of CF across Africa, ownership structures are diverse and range from fully controlled state schemes to multipartite arrangements and full private agribusiness control. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the state role in CF. Depending on the country and the political system, the state has interfered with different intensity. When we analyse the existing case studies, it turns out that the state in African countries is highly involved in CF. The results of this interference, however, have been different depending on the country and its domestic socio-economic conditions. The success of the state's role in Africa in promoting CF was visible in Kenyan or South African cases [Little and Watts 1994]. On the contrary, in Sudan the cooperation between state and farmers was a failure [Kontos 1990].

One more aspect is also important: the reduction of the state's role in agriculture. As part of market liberalisation policies, governments in developing countries often reduced their expenditures for and direct involvement in providing inputs and technical assistance as well as in marketing farm products. Contract farming seems to fill the significant gap between farmers' needs and their access to inputs. Another problem of the role of the state is the form of CF. Many developing countries do not have the tradition of written contracts, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, informal contracts do not need any institutional and formal environment such as the state, juridical system, and agency. In the light of the above-mentioned aspects, the role of the state remains under question [Stessens et al. 2004, Narayanan 2012].

What products does CF cover?

Usually CF schemes cover agricultural products with following features: (1) high perishability products; (2) economically important quality variation (high quality products); (3) technically difficult production; (4) high initial costs or inputs costs; (5) crop is difficult to grow, it is new to farmer [Minot 2011]. In Africa CF covers usually plants. Livestock or dairy products are not so popular, contrary to Asian developing countries where CF is also popular agricultural arrangement. These structures of products under contracts derive mostly from the agricultural traditions in the analyzed regions. In Africa plants are more developed area of agriculture, what explains the contractor's interests in this type of production (Table 1).

How significant is CF for poverty alleviation?

In fact, the greatest success stories in agricultural growth and poverty alleviation originated from the "green revolution". This wave covered Asia, especially China and India, but unfortunately omitted Sub-Saharan Africa [Dorwar et al. 2004]. Currently, CF in developing Africa is perceived as an important tool against poverty [Hazell et al. 2006]. There is plenty empirical evidence that contract farmers in developing countries profit more than non-contract growers[3]. Many researchers have indicated connections between

[3]Contract farmers in Kenya incomes are as much as 100% higher than incomes of conventional farmers [The World Bank 2007].

Table 1. CF products in the African countries

Country	Farming product
Benin	cotton
Burkina Faso	cotton
Cote d'Ivoire	coffee, rubber
Ethiopia	passion fruit, green beans, vegetables, coffee, flowers
Gambia	rice
Ghana	palm oil, fruit, cocoa, cashew, rice, maize, sorghum, tomato, rubber
Kenya	horticultural seeds, tea, tobacco, fruit [pineapple, mango, passion fruit], vegetable [dehydrated], sugarcane, sunflower, rice, potatoes, French beans [canning], sesame seed, milk, poultry, coffee
Lesotho	asparagus
Madagascar	French beans, vegetables, maize, barley, rice
Malawi	paprika, chilies, tea, tobacco, sugarcane
Mali	cotton
Mozambique	tobacco, cotton, vegetables, sugarcane
Nigeria	rice, sorghum, fruit [guava, pineapple, mango, and passion fruit], cocoa, cotton
Rwanda	tea, coffee
Senegal	fruits, vegetables, French beans
South Africa	sugarcane, timber, tea, fruits
Sudan	sugarcane
Swaziland	sugarcane
Tanzania	tea, coffee, tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, vegetables
Uganda	flowers, milk, coffee, tea, rice, tobacco
Zambia	cotton, tobacco, paprika, sugarcane
Zimbabwe	sugarcane, tea, cotton, flowers, tobacco, vegetables, legume crops, paprika, sorghum, fruits, ostriches, chickens

Source: Author's own study.

CF and poverty alleviation. Minot [2011] and Adjognon [2012] have examined the general positive impact of CF on poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa; Bolwig [2012] tested organic tropical products under CF in Uganda; Porter and Phillips-Howard [1997] examined CF in Nigeria and South Africa; Minten et al. [2007] observed the technology diffusion to agriculture in Madagascar; Nsiku with Botha [2007] examined the tobacco sector in Malawi; and Vermeulen et al. [2008] examined over 60 case studies assessing the impact of African forestry on poverty reduction. However, despite the fact that CF can be intended to reduce poverty, this goal is not accomplished in every case and the role of CF is limited [Salami et al. 2010, Freguin-Gresh et al. 2012, Mwambi et al. 2013]. The critics of the positive role of CF in poverty reduction see in these arrangements the means of exploiting for minimum wages and taking control over small farms.

As a whole, there is no agreement with regard to the role of CF in promoting economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Empirical evidence presents ambiguous effects of CF introduction on poverty alleviation in the analysed regions. Usually, farmers treat participation in CF as a diversification strategy, which multiplies the sources of income and influences income. It seems to be the main reason of the debate concerning the point of the farmer's agreements in the light of the manipulation of contracts by companies and the growing social tensions generated by this externally induced change [Carney and Watts 1990]. The conclusion from this part of analysis is that CF should be assessed in a regional context.

There is a serendipitous aspect of the interdependence of poverty and CF – increasing the likelihood of poor and small farmers being included in these schemes. There are three explanations of this phenomenon. First, public schemes are more likely to welcome smallholders than private ones when there are political objectives of inclusion and poverty reduction. It is quite a popular action that governments and donors subsidise the credit available to private companies when they decide to include farmers with small holding. Second, smallholders are generally perceived as partners without bargaining power. Nevertheless, they might be able to overcome the preference for contracting with larger farmers if they lobby through farmers' cooperatives, have local authority support or are represented within the scheme's management. For example, in Ghana a lot of institutions, ranging from local to governmental, support the small agribusiness sector and are involved in CF [Rotteger 2004]. Third, poorer farmers are better able to participate when there are low or no barriers to entry. This can be quite interesting: in the example from Kenya, the company in question placed a limit on the amount of French beans or horticultural sub-sector that each contract farmer could grow in order to discourage side-selling, which meant that smaller farmers could participate [English et al. 2004].

To sum up, it is worth presenting the latest evidence of small farmers' participation in CF. The data on the degree of smallholders' participation in CF suggests that poorer smallholders are often excluded. For example, there are several studies that find a strong association between asset holdings, mostly land, geographic factors (such as market access and agro-ecological zone), and participation [Barrett 2008]. Though CF generally improves the agricultural output of participants, some studies show that CF mostly involves the better resourced, who have previously benefitted from e.g. public support [Freguin-Gresh et al. 2012]. Bellemare [2012] has shown similar results. He examined 1,200 households in Madagascar and stated that those participating in CF owned larger landholdings, more assets, were better educated and more likely to be a member of a producer organisation. A more optimistic interpretation of smallholders' participation in CF is offered by researchers from the ADB. They have demonstrated that although smallholders are likely to be excluded in dualistic agrarian economies, there are numerous exceptions to this pattern [Readon et al. 2009]. Of the 35 successful cases on CF assessed by Prowse [2012] in his study, 54% were with smallholders, and 26% were with a combination of both small and large farms.

What drives the development of CF?

Corporations' participation in agriculture in the form of CF may result in the transfer of technology, standards, and skills, as well as better access to credit and markets. All these effects improve the productivity of the industry, including the farming of staple foods. Moreover, TNCs' contribution to food security is not just about food supply; it also includes enhanced food safety and affordability [UNCTAD 2009].

Generally, in Sub-Saharan Africa there have been five main drivers behind the rise of CF in the last decades. First, international corporations as well as domestic and foreign industrial firms want to develop cheaper and less risky alternatives to plantations. Second, there is political and economic support from governments to increase exports and establish modern peasantry in their rural development plans. Third, we can find support for CF among donors from developed countries. Four, African agriculture is still underdeveloped and in stagnation. Five, we have observed significant changes in international supply chains [Smalley 2013].

In Sub-Saharan Africa, many CF promoters (for instance, NGOs, foreign aid agencies) have seen in these schemes an alternative measurement of welfare improvement and poverty alleviation in rural areas. Involving government is a very popular solution in CF, because this multipartite scheme ensures that poverty alleviation or rural development goals will be realised. Unlike socially motivated CF, contract schemes for profit are not limited to crops produced under alternative agriculture systems. As such, while this type of CF can potentially help improve farmers' incomes, its non-income dimensions of poverty, such as issues of health and environmental sustainability, are still open to discussion. The second stream of CF focuses on commercial orientation. Many private companies use CF schemes for the production of non-traditional, usually high-value agricultural products for export. In many cases, access to credit proved to be a very important motive for smallholders.

While devising the company strategy, the national context is important. In the case from Nigeria, the nature of firm–farm linkages can be understood within the context of Nigerian economy. Obviously, the primary role of agriculture is the supply of raw materials to the manufacturing sector. It explains the popularity of direct purchase from farmers or producers, use of out-growers or CF, and own production where firms set up their own farm enterprises [Rotteger 2004]. In the case of Mozambique, sugar companies had plentiful land but faced substantial costs of rehabilitating state-owned sugar factories, an imperative that led them to contract with large commercial farms that would not need credit and could quickly produce large yields [Marini 2001].

CONCLUSIONS

The dynamic changes in agricultural value chains, the development of CF schemes, the rapid rise of large multinational retailers and global agro-exporters are the phenomena of contemporary agriculture. Similarly to the "green revolution", CF has affected agriculture in developing countries in varying degrees. Some regions benefit from this wave; some of them are omitted by this scheme. Many empirical studies of the effect of CF participation have struggled to establish causality. Nevertheless, there is a number of cases which indicate that national context and domestic condition determine the success or failure of CF[4]. Most of the studies suggest that in stable institutional surroundings

[4] The empirical surveys of CF display mixed results. Prowes provides a synthetic view of this evidence. He compared 44 cases of CF where 35 cases were evaluated as 'successful' and 9 as 'failed'.

participation in CF may lead to higher levels of welfare and poverty reduction. Unfortunately, many poorer countries in Africa cannot establish stable institutional environment and cannot ensure for the smallholders positive results from CF schemes. Much more remains to be explored, because we still know little about the role of the state in promoting CF, the role of informal contracts in increasing welfare, or the importance of social conditions in positive results of CF. Contract farming continues to be perceived as a phenomenon which occurs in selected regions rather than a tendency in agriculture. The available data concern individual products or regions rather than countries or even continents as a whole.

This article has synthesised the findings from CF agreements in Sub-Saharan African countries to form a conceptual framework of the determinants and dynamics of farmers' participation in CF agreements. General conclusions suggest that there is a serious lack of data essential for conducting a complex comparison of the states of developing Africa. This analysis does not provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of CF in this region. However, this survey can be treated as an introduction to a complex comparative study of the Sub-Saharan African CF schemes and may spur further integrative analysis of the transformation in agriculture in developing countries.

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Among the successful cases, 14 were from Africa (Kenya: 3 cases, Burkina Faso and Senegal: 2 cases per country, and a case per country in Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and West Africa) [Prowse 2012].

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UMOWY STOSOWANE W ROLNICTWIE KRAJÓW ROZWIJAJĄCYCH SIĘ: KONTRAKTOWANIE W AFRYCE SUBSAHARYJSKIEJ

Streszczenie. Małorolni producenci w regionie Afryki Subsaharyjskiej mają szanse włączenie się do globalnych łańcuchów dostaw przez kontraktacje. Celami opracowania są: przedstawienie typologii kontraktowania w rolnictwie i charakterystyka umów kontraktowych stosowanych w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej. Artykuł jest syntezą literatury dotyczącej rolnictwa kontraktowego w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej i tworzy ramy koncepcyjne dla dalszych rozważań dotyczących kontraktowania na badanym obszarze. Opracowanie można traktować jako wprowadzenie do kompleksowego badania porównawczego różnych rodzajów kontraktowania w Afryce Subsaharyjskiej i systemów umów stosowanych w rolnictwie krajów rozwijających się.

Słowa kluczowe: kontraktowanie w rolnictwie, Afryka Subsaharyjska, rolnictwo

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