Contemporary African Agricultural Transformation

Presentation at the 2016 AAEA Meetings
Boston, MA
Outline

• Context
• What is new?
• Moving forward
Context: 20\textsuperscript{th} century

• Classical structural transformation
• Neo-classical structural transformation dependent on agricultural transformation
• Supported by failure of Prebisch-Singer ISI, success of Green Revolution
• Indicators:
  – Agricultural transformation = staple crop yields
  – Structural transformation = ag share GDP/jobs
GR but not available for everyone

• But some countries particularly African and South Asian agricultural economies did not join in the Green Revolutions
• Differences in 20th century: institutions, markets, policies, land pressure, climate etc.
What isn’t new?

• Necessity of productive and efficient agricultural and food systems in structural transformation and economic growth
• Necessity of linked agricultural / food system growth and non-agricultural growth
What is new?

- Current feasibility of 20th century GR led ag transformation: lower staple prices, longer supply chains, deindustrialization, agglomeration vs. congestion, etc.
- Constraints: water, GHG emissions, deforestation, desertification, biodiversity, nutrition, income inequality, global competition, etc.
- Opportunities: high-value commodities, new technologies, multi-product agriculture, energy crops, solar/wind farming, carbon sequestration, geo-politics, urban offsets, urban pollution remediation, etc.
- Knowledge: ag/food system, environmental/ecological, nutritional/health, policy/institutional, technological, etc.
- post 2015 global context: SDGs, Paris Agreement (COP21), World Health Association Targets, etc.
What is new?

• Therefore the form of the agricultural transformation is new
• Therefore the policy implications are new
Normative

• What are we asking agricultural and structural transformation to accomplish?
  – Country-owned agendas
  – Regional/continental agendas
  – Post-2015 global agendas
Illustrative Visions of Successful Transformation
Positive

• (Normative) what are we asking agricultural and structural transformation to accomplish?
• Is what we are asking feasible?
• What are policy instruments and best practices for getting there?
Approach

• Take a more holistic view of agricultural and structural transformation

• Requires a broader set of indicators of agricultural and structural transformation

• Examine effect of policy on moving this set (or a subset) of indicators forward—but recognizing that few policies work in isolation.
• Inputs Policy
• Dietary Diversity
• Agricultural Transformation and Nutrition
Knowledge

- Ag & food systems
- Environmental/ecological
Post-2015 global processes