

Megatrends and the Future of African Food Systems

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Main Argument

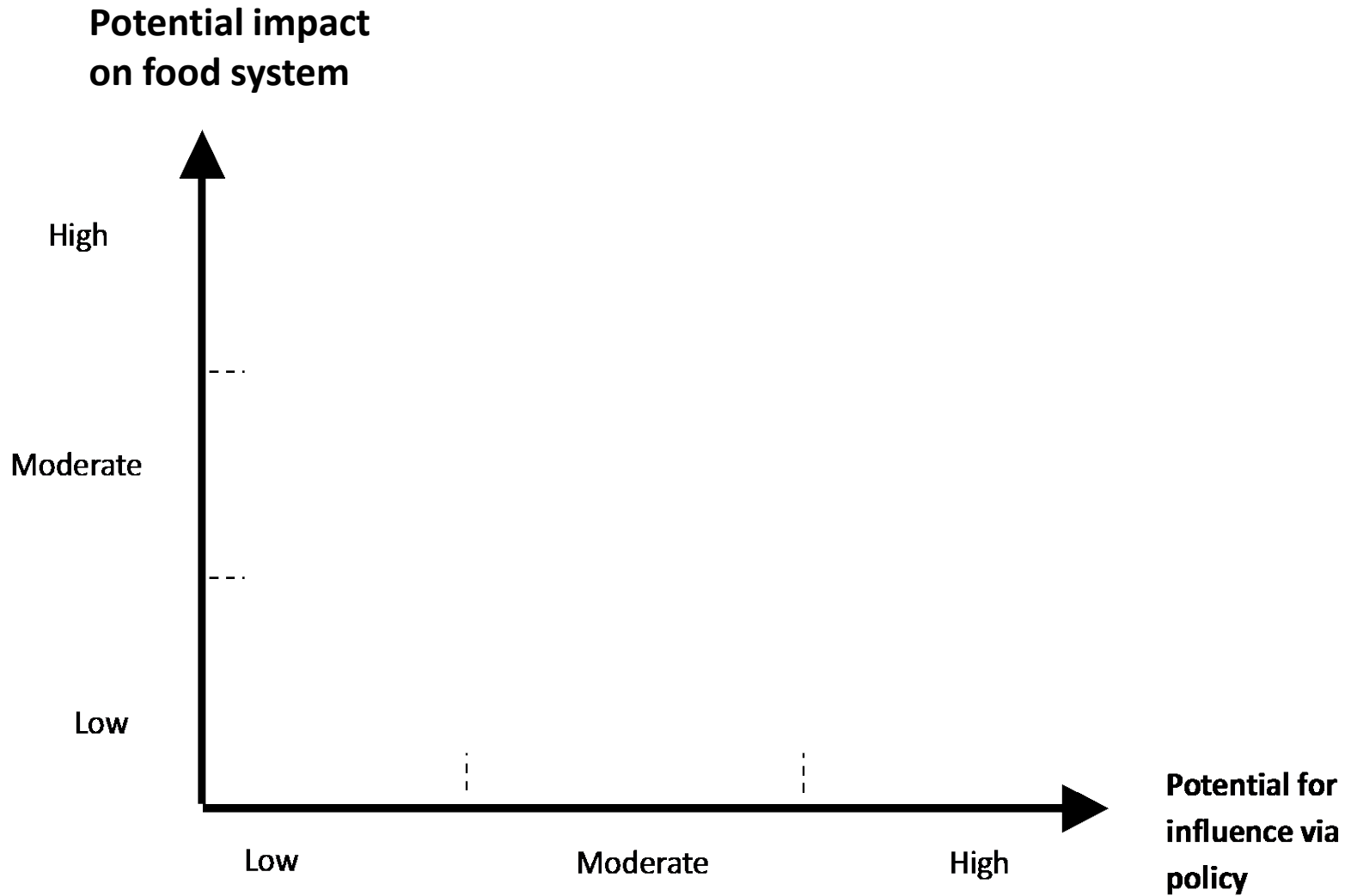
- Most “megatrends” shaping the future of AFS are less certain and are neither irreversible nor inevitable
 - dependent on the time path of other trends
 - **Policy** can influence future trajectory of some trends



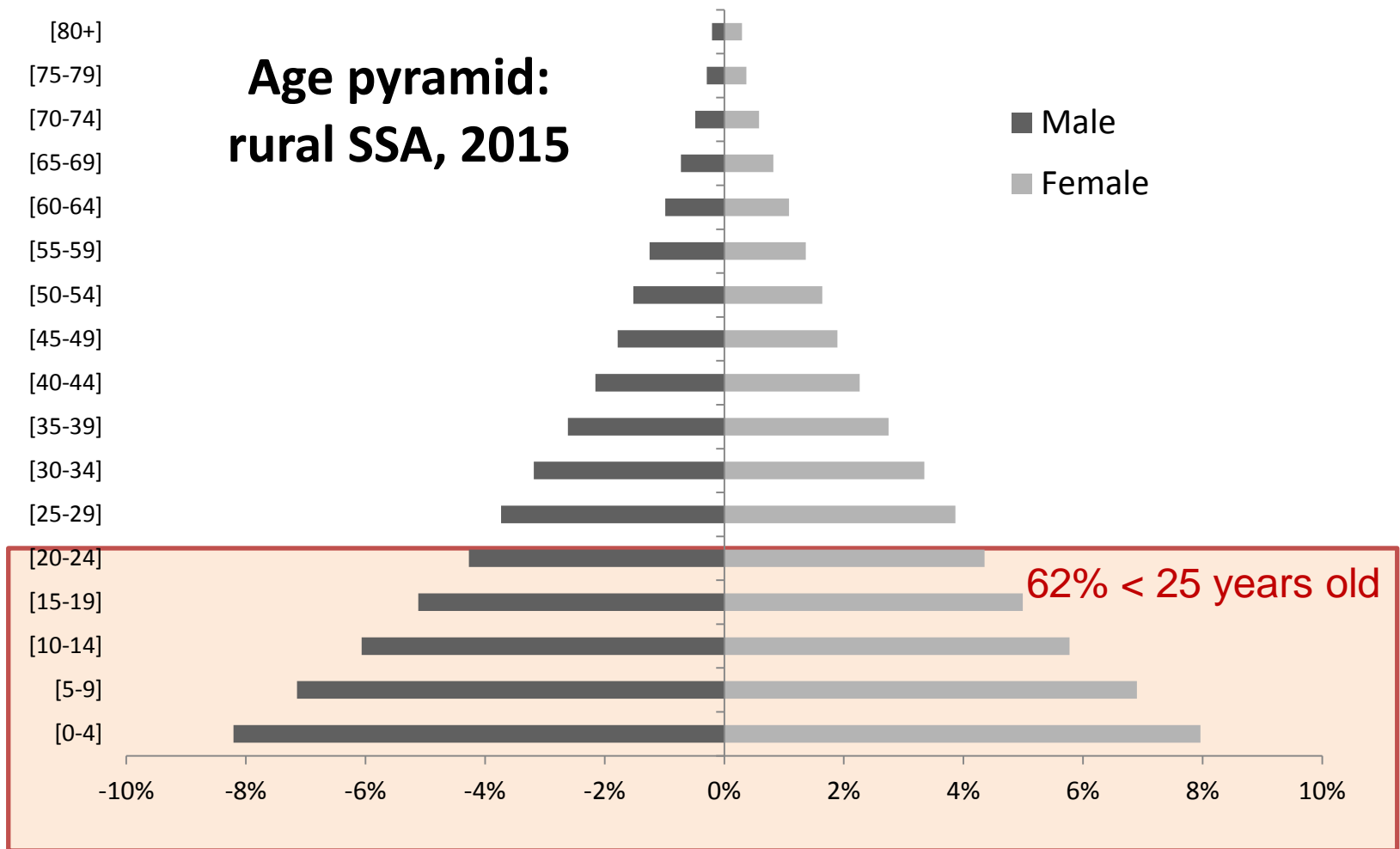
Objectives

- Investigate the “mega-trends” shaping African Food System (AFS)
- Consider how policy can influence the trends
- Recognizing
 - variation across countries
 - The trends we highlight are not the only ones

Objectives



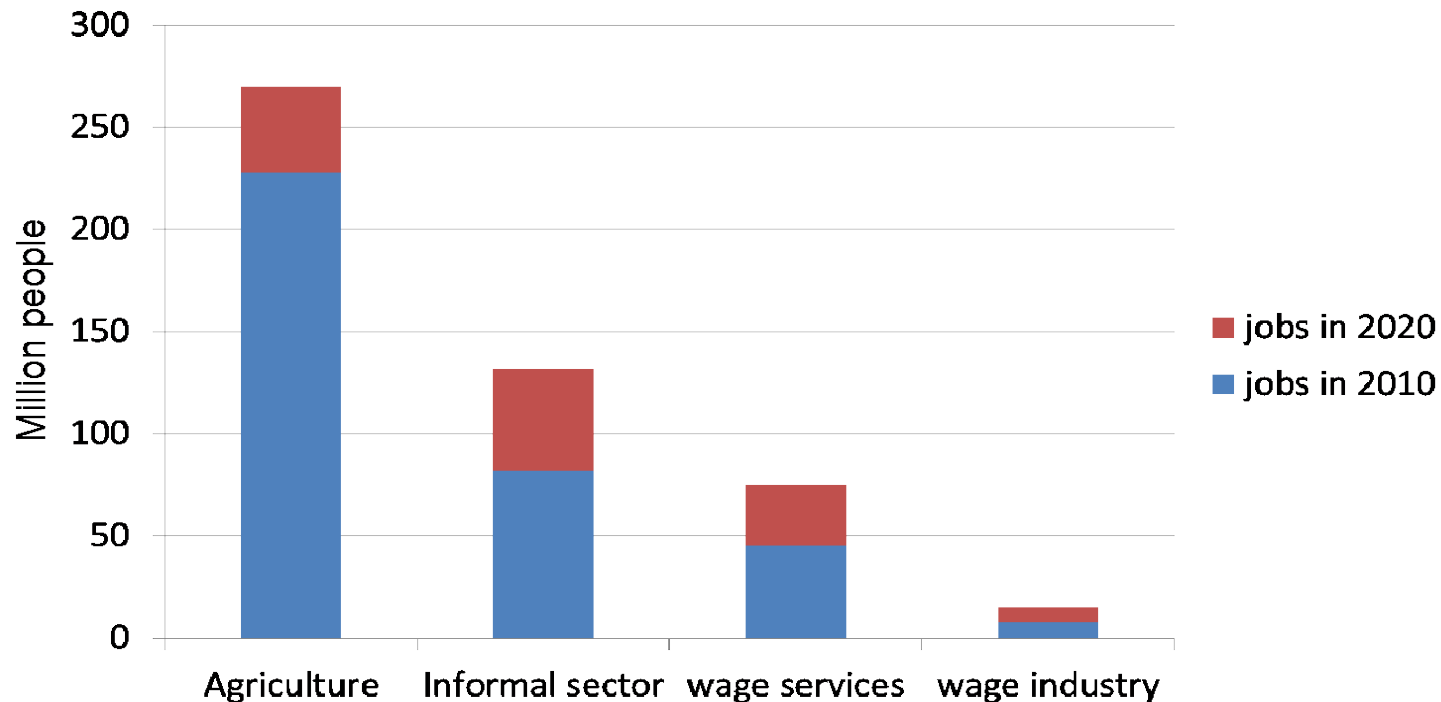
Trend #1: Youth Bulge/ Labor Force Expansion



Trend #2

Growth in non-farm employment

- Growth in non-farm employment < number of people entering labor force → rising importance of “viable” agriculture



Trend #3:

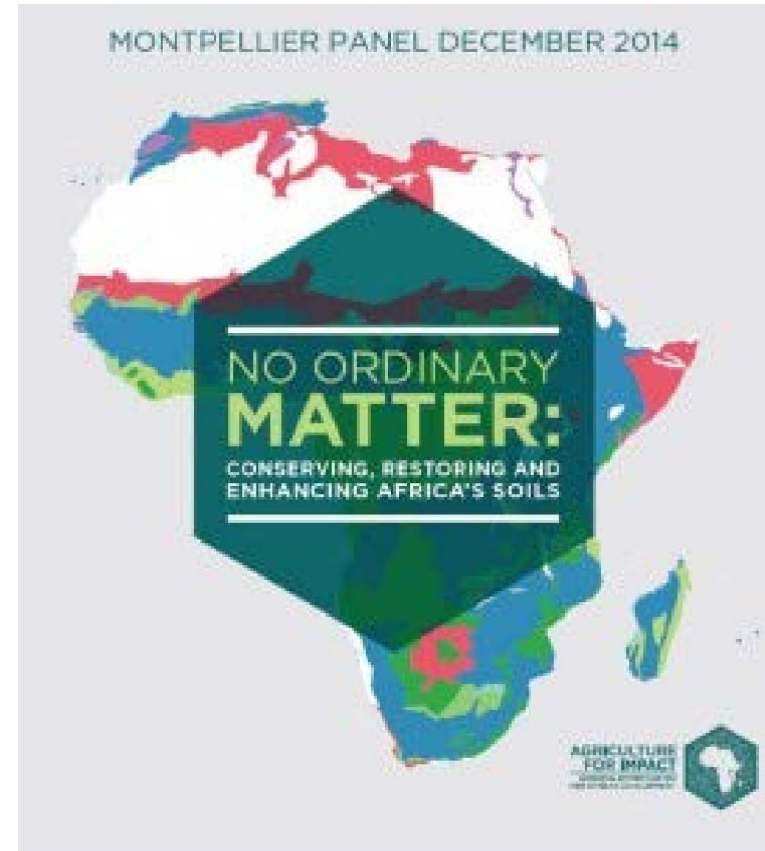
Concentration of landholdings

- Changing farm structure
 - Meteoric rise of medium-scale farms (5-20 ha)
 - Urban-based HHs own between 10-30% of national agricultural landholdings (DHS data)
- Gini coefficient of land distribution rising rapidly (Jayne et al. 2015)
- Rapid concentration of land → increasing land scarcity for smallholders farmers

Trend #4

Widespread Soil Degradation

- Extent of degradation
 - 65% of arable land
 - 30% of grazing land
 - 20% of forests
- Smallholders most negatively affected



Trend #5

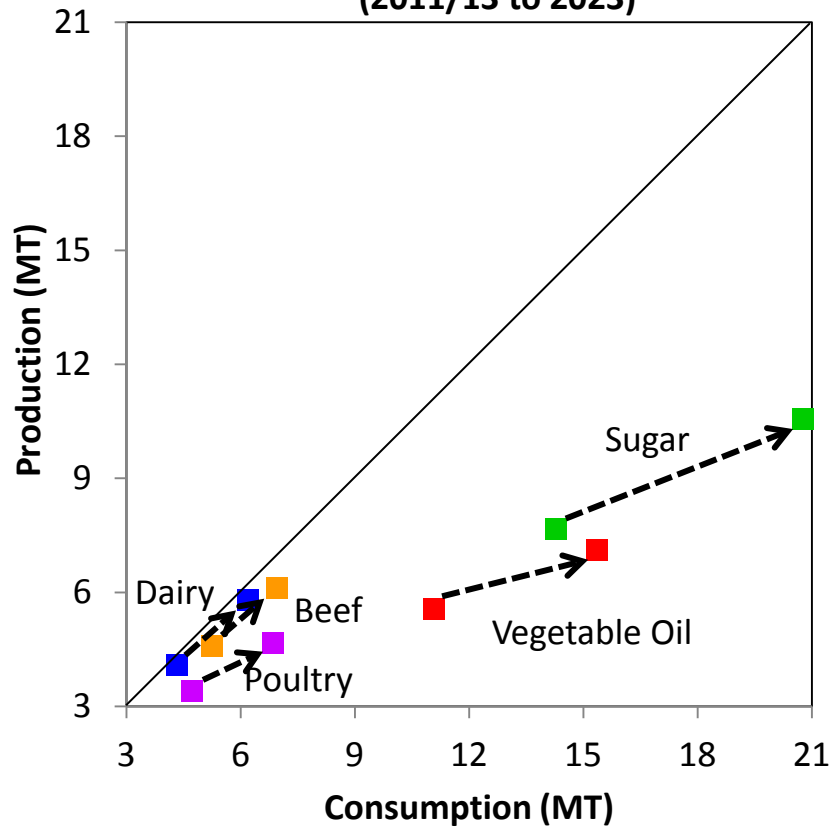
Urbanization and “rising” middle class

- Urbanization and rising per capita incomes in urban areas → diet transformation and modernization of food system (Tschirley et al. 2015)
- **Extent of urbanization and income growth debatable** (Potts 2012)
- Urbanization and income growth are responsive to public actions affecting returns to labor

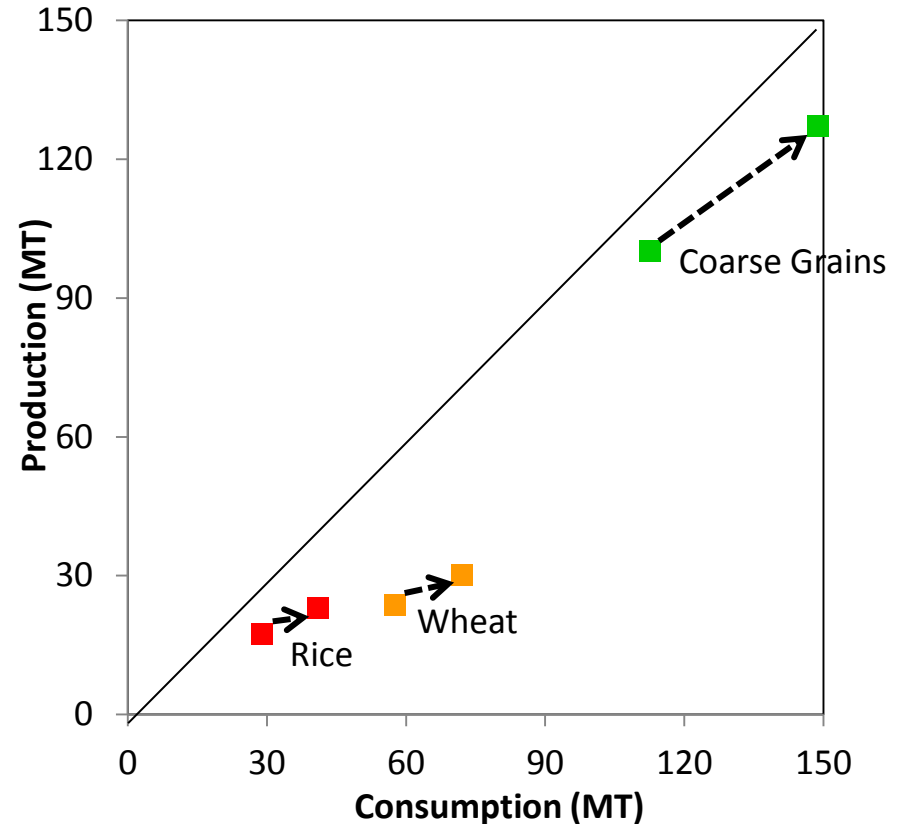
Trend #6

Food Demand Outstripping Production

High-Value Commodity Production and Consumption Change
(2011/13 to 2023)



Cereal Production and Consumption Change
(2011/13 to 2023)



Trend # 7

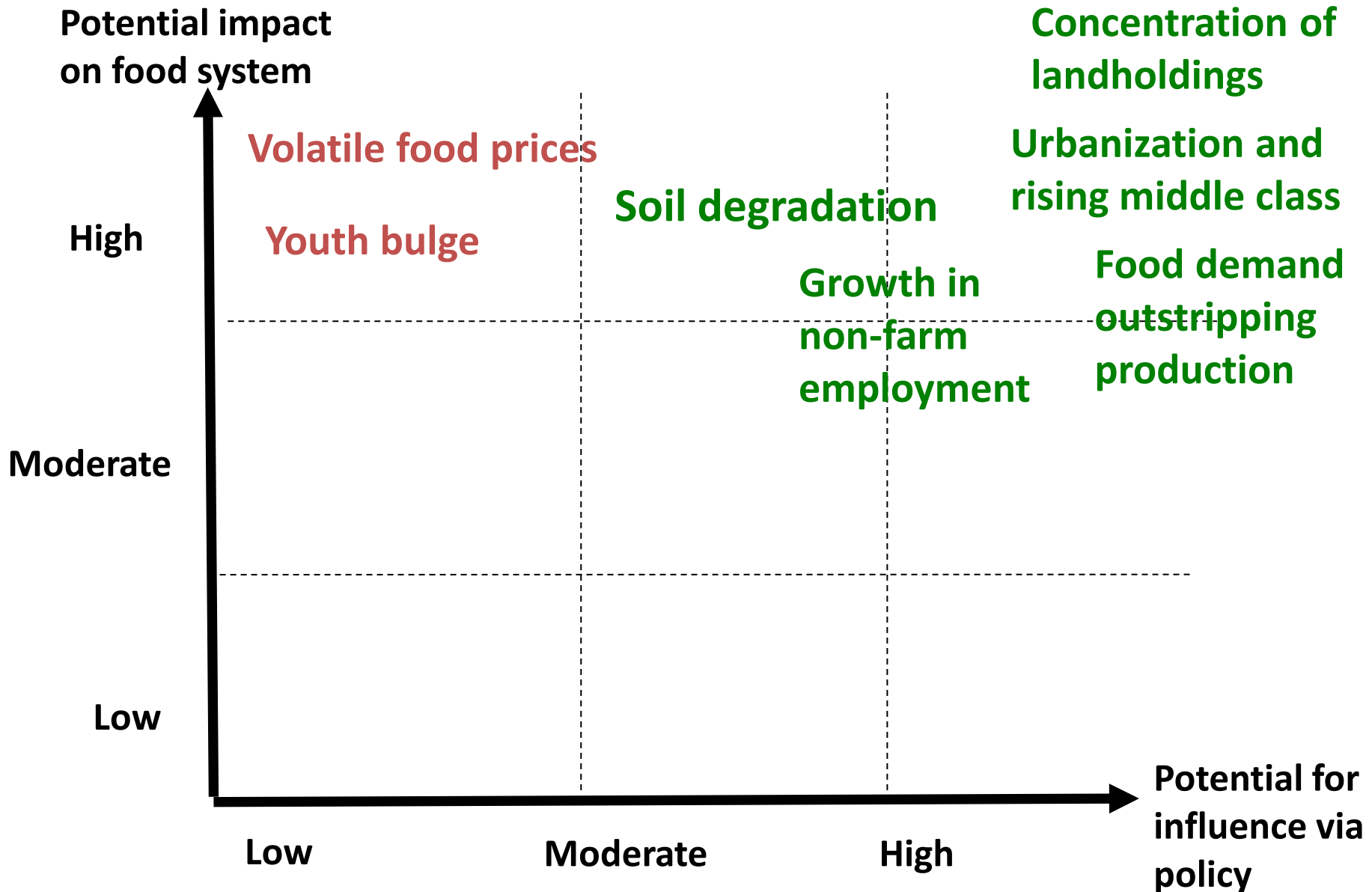
Volatile food prices

Global food and cereal price indices, 1994-2012

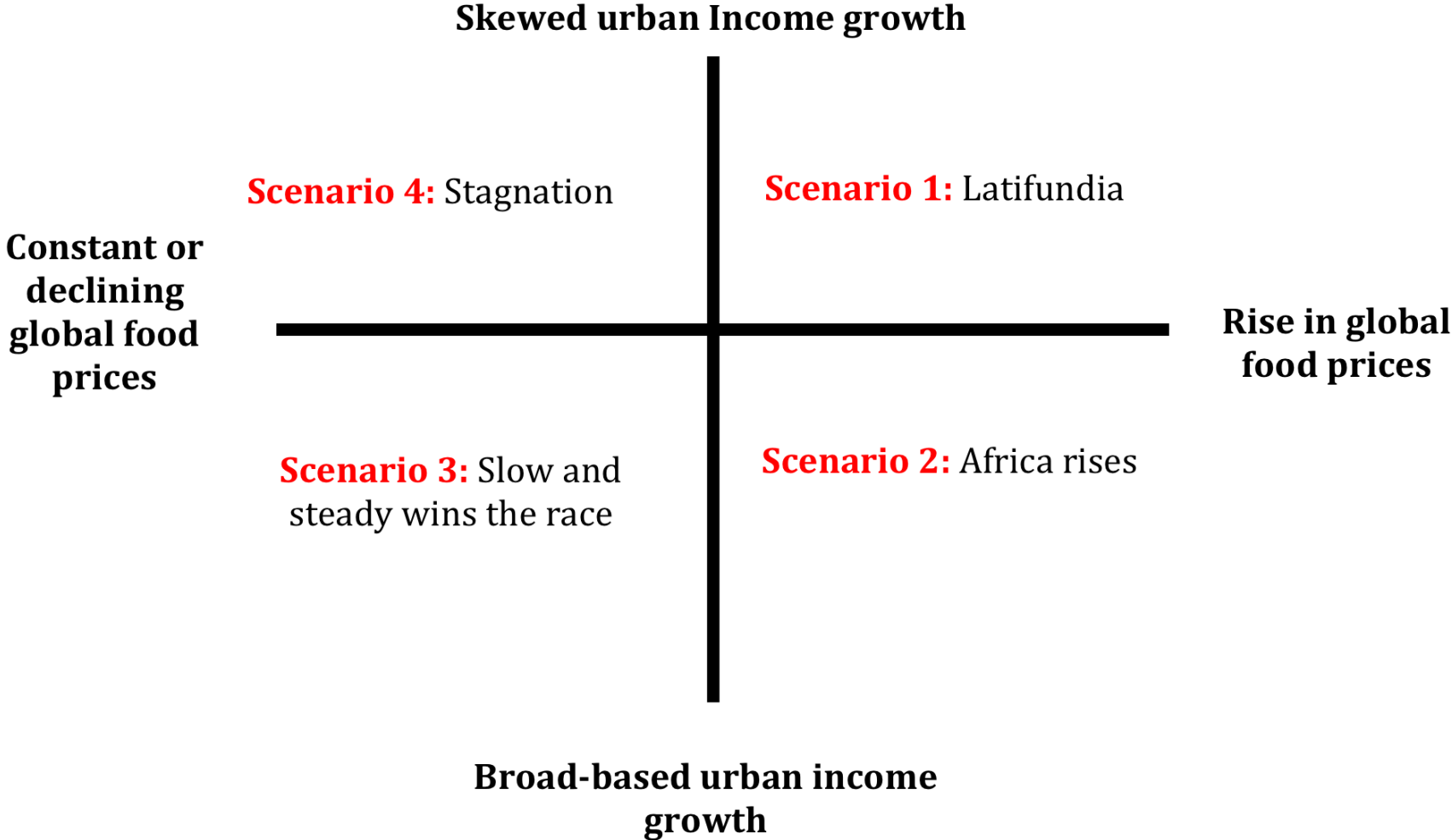


Source: FAOSTAT

Classification of Trends



Four plausible future scenarios



Summary

- **Don't accept all these trends as inevitable**
 - some trends are highly uncertain, and dependent on the time path of other trends
 - **Policy** can influence future trajectory of some trends
- Agriculture will remain an important/dominant source of employment for the expanding labor force at least in the next few decades

Main Conclusions

- Need to consider how land policies are affecting the potential for inclusive development and poverty reduction in future
- Re-double investments in sustainable forms of agricultural productivity growth
 - to re-capture the burgeoning urban markets for local farmers
 - To generate growth multipliers /employment in non-farm economy
- Consider agricultural, poverty reduction and employment objectives in coordinated manner



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