

Improving dietary diversity through agricultural public policies: an institutional perspective in Burkina Faso

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INTRODUCTION

- In response to malnutrition, improving dietary diversity is recognized to be one possible lever.
- The multisectoral approach of nutrition suggests that several sectors could undertake actions to increase dietary diversity, agriculture being one sector with the highest potential.
- Taking the case of Burkina Faso where dietary diversity is critically low and the government committed to develop nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions, the research analyzed to what extent dietary diversity is addressed in agricultural and food security policies

ADDED-VALUE

- Literature on policy analysis is limited, mainly focused on nutrition agenda setting, multisectoral approach of nutrition and the nexus agriculture-nutrition (see references).
- This research contributes to this body of literature by focusing on dietary diversity and by drawing on neo-institutional approach in policy analysis (Fouilleux et al., 2017; Schmidt, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research

- Extensive policy and project document analysis.
- Participant observation in various policy forums from 2017 to 2019.
- 44 semi-structured interviews with institutional actors.
- 20 individual interviews and 3 focus groups in three villages in the Tuy province, South West of Burkina Faso.

Number of interviews per actors' categories and scales

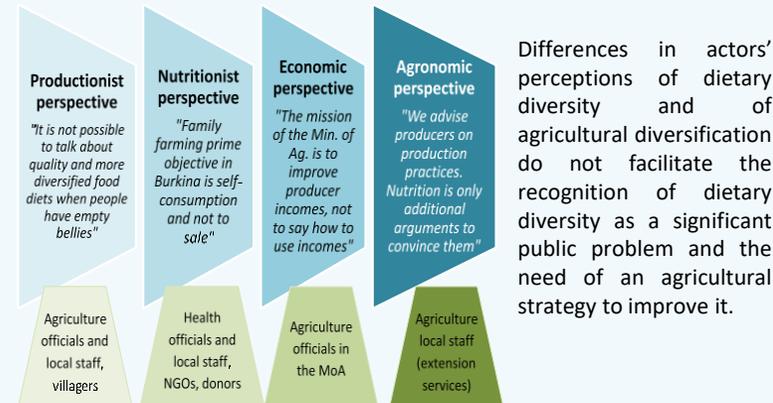
| | Central | Regional | Provincial | Municipality | Total |
|---------------------------|---------|----------|------------|--------------|-------|
| Officials - Min. of Agri. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 12 |
| Min. of Health | 2 | 2 | | 5 | 9 |
| Local authorities | | 4 | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| International agencies | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Donors | 2 | | | | 2 |
| NGOs | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Producer Organisation | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Research | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Total | 17 | 10 | 6 | 11 | 44 |
| Villages | | | | | |
| Individual interviews | 9 | 6 | | 8 | 20 |
| Focus Groups | 6 | 12 | | 33 | 54 |

RESULTS

Limited focus on dietary diversity

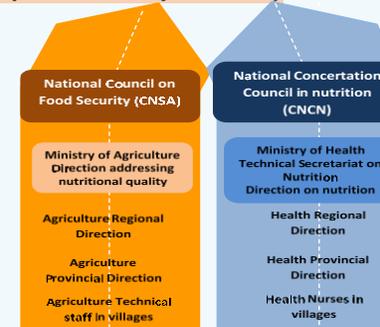
- Nutrition has gained increasing political attention in Burkina Faso over the last decade, especially under the 2010 international Scaling up' Nutrition movement (SUN).
- Dietary diversity is now integrated in some food security policy documents (e.g. National Policy on Food Security, PNSAN) and monitoring systems.
- However, food consumption issues are addressed in a limited way compared to food production ones in documents, forums and practices. They are seldom linked to agriculture, including along diversification objectives.

Four different perspectives on dietary diversity



Segmented institutional landscape on dietary diversity

Dietary diversity is addressed both by the Ministry of Agriculture which focuses on nutritional quality of food and by the Ministry of Health which targets vulnerable groups. Despite closer move at national level, sectors remain mainly disconnected at sub-national levels. This situation creates "institutional vacuum" to properly address dietary diversity.



Incompleteness of policies on the ground

- Policies integrating dietary diversity as an objective such as PNSAN remain incomplete when it comes to implementation due to the critical lack of financial and human resources.
- Most of the interviewed agricultural officials at local levels do not know PNSAN and the agricultural interventions planned to increase dietary diversity.
- Some donors and NGOs may bring a dietary diversity perspective in villages by complementing agricultural public budget and activities but this situation raises issues of coordination and up-scaling.

CONCLUSION

- Dietary diversity emerges as a public concern in agricultural and food security policy documents but hardly enters officials' and projects' realities due to barriers in perceptions and administration organization.
- The revision of agriculture curricula is a critical lever to open agriculture officials' perceptions to food consumption issues. In parallel, health curricula should be revised to better consider food production realities.
- Efforts to connect agriculture and nutrition sectors should pay more attention to officials' practices on the ground and not only to institutional organization and reform at national level.
- These findings are convergent with the growing literature on policy analysis of the agriculture-nutrition nexus, thus confirming the relevance of mobilizing political scientists and practitioners skills.

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