



Research paper

Diagnosing institutional logics in partnerships and how they evolve through institutional bricolage: Insights from soybean and cassava value chains in Ghana



Charity Osei-Amponsah^{a,b,*}, Annemarie van Paassen^a, Laurens Klerkx^a

^a Knowledge Technology and Innovation Group, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

^b Council for Scientific and Industrial Research – Science and Technology Policy Research Institute. P.O. Box CT 519, Cantonments, Accra, Ghana

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Institutional change
Institutional logics
Institutional fit
Bricolage
Innovation platforms
Public–private partnerships
Ghana

ABSTRACT

Trade globalisation and climate change pose new challenges for food security in Africa. To unlock smallholder productivity, more understanding is needed of the institutional context and the role of development interventions, such as partnerships, in the food sector. This article proposes institutional logics as a theory and methodology for institutional diagnosis to gain insight into context-embedded negotiation and change processes created by project-based partnership interventions. We analyse the institutional logics of organisations active in the development of two value chains in Ghana to subsequently show how, in partnerships, these logics are negotiated in light of the objectives and interests of the intervention. The main findings are that donors, with their market and professionalisation logics, are quite influential, but many other development actors still adhere to principles of grassroots empowerment and social security. In the evolving partnership process, market logic remains strong, but coupled with institutional logics endorsing farmer empowerment and solidarity with the resource-poor. This is done in a process of bricolage in which field level implementers go against the dominant logic of project initiators: showing that newly introduced development logics are mitigated by an existing local structure fostering other development logics. The broader implication is that new development paradigms may need a considerable transition period to become mainstream. The concepts of institutional logics and bricolage as a diagnostic tool allow researchers to characterise the adherence to and blending of institutional logics by actors. This tool helps to understand the mobilisation strategy of the initiator and to follow the negotiation of logics that takes place amongst partners in partnerships. Detailed insights into the blending of potential partners' logics, pathways of negotiation processes and the plausible outcomes enable development practitioners to strategically prepare and manage their collaborative interventions.

1. Introduction

Many Africans face food security challenges (Rosegrant and Cline, 2003; Spiertz and Ewert, 2009; Godfray et al., 2010); this implies that not everyone always has access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active healthy life (Mwaniki, 2006; Garrity et al., 2010). The situation is worrying, as the potential to produce more food for an ever-growing African population is declining: current projections show that higher temperatures and lower rainfall trends combined with a doubling of the population will lead to a 43% increase in food insufficiency (Funk and Brown, 2009; SEI, 2005). New technologies as embodied in high yielding cultivars and good agronomic practices have not been sufficient to reduce food insecurity (Röling, 2009). To make matters worse, food production in

Africa is largely dependent on resource-poor smallholder farmers and ineffective value chains. These value chains are embedded in institutional contexts, some of which constrain farmers from capturing the full benefits of technological interventions (Röling, 2009; Nederlof et al., 2007; Struik et al., 2014). For example, farmers are not well organised and have little power. Research is supply-driven; public service delivery and input provision have collapsed as a result of structural adjustments policies; and local governments, traders and middlemen raise revenue from agricultural production to the detriment of farmers (Van Huis et al., 2007). In such institutional contexts, farmers have small windows of opportunity (Nederlof et al., 2007).

Multi-actor partnerships are increasingly promoted to create innovation for smallholder farmer development and improve food security, and to ensure the co-evolution of technological and socio-

* Corresponding author at: Knowledge Technology and Innovation Group, Wageningen University, The Netherlands.
E-mail address: cdosei72@gmail.com (C. Osei-Amponsah).

institutional change (Bitzer et al., 2008; Kilelu et al., 2013). These multi-actor partnerships have been captured under different terminologies such as innovation configurations (Engel, 1995), coalitions (Biggs, 1990), cross-sector partnerships (Dentoni et al., 2016), innovation platforms (IPs) (Nederlof et al., 2007) and public-private partnerships (PPPs) (Spielman et al., 2010). Although the potential of these types of partnerships for smallholder development in food value chains has been emphasised (Klerkx and Leeuwis, 2009; World Bank, 2007), and research has been done on how they promote institutional change in the development sector and food value chains (e.g. Bitzer et al., 2008; Kilelu et al., 2013; Manning and Roessler, 2014), little is known about the driving forces behind their organisation and how these evolve over time.

Various authors have highlighted the importance of understanding meaning-making and practice in multi-agency aid chains (Lewis et al., 2003; Mosse, 2004; Bebbington et al., 2007; Morrison, 2010) to provide policymakers and development practitioners with management advice (Lewis et al., 2003; Mosse, 2004). So far, most studies have focused on the collaboration between donors and implementing NGOs, but little attention is given to new hybrid collaborations, such as multi-actor partnerships. Furthermore, studies on meaning-making in development collaborations tend to take ethnographic and discursive perspectives and focus on a specific level of interaction: international, national or local (Lewis and Mosse, 2006).

However, for multi-actor partnerships, it is not clear what institutional logics (e.g. norms, values, incentives, procedures) different partners adhere to and how they bring these to bear in the partnership, when negotiating the partnership objectives, activities and implementation (Leeuwis, 2000), thus ultimately influencing the outcomes of the work done in the partnership. Sometimes, a partner in the partnership may find that the development objectives challenge its own logic, as the scope of change proposed may be systemic (Fuenschilling and Truffer, 2014).

Thus, in line with the focus of this special issue (Schouten et al., 2017), we apply a multilevel institutional logic perspective, as it explicitly pays attention to the influence of the institutional context on the negotiation of meaning and the legitimation of practices. We look at the differentiation, fragmentation and contradiction of institutional logics in multi-actor partnerships and unravel through the lens of institutional bricolage how the negotiation process that ensues from different institutional logics shapes interventions to create change in the food sector in Ghana. As diagnostic methodologies to explore pathways of institutional change are still lacking in the agricultural development literature (Schouten et al., 2017), our perspective can provide detailed insights into the blending of development partners' logics and negotiation process pathways. This can enable development practitioners to better prepare and manage the initiation and collaborative intervention of multi-actor partnerships.

The paper continues with a brief outline of the concepts of institutional logics and institutional bricolage. Then, we demonstrate the use of this analytical framework for the case of partnership-based interventions in the staple food sector of Ghana, focusing on soybean and cassava value chains. Finally, conclusions are drawn about the value of the institutional logics and bricolage perspective as a diagnostic tool to assess partnerships.

2. Conceptual framework

In this section, we outline the analytical lens used to analyse the context-embedded meaning-making in partnerships, regarding their development interventions in the food value chain. We briefly explain the theory of institutional logics linked to institutional fit (congruence of logics between actors and the proposed joint action) and bricolage (blending of logics).

Institutions integrate organisations and communities through universalistic rules, contracts and authority (Parsons, 1951), and these are thus what have been called 'the rules of the game' (North, 1990). The

institutional logics concept focuses on the content and meaning of institutions and shows that institutions regularise behaviour while at the same time enabling agency and change (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999). In line with Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012: 2), we define institutional logics as 'the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organisations provide meaning to their daily activity, organise time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences.'

A key assumption is that institutional logics shape, and are shaped by, the behaviour of individual and organisation actors (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008) whose institutional logics in multi-actor partnerships differ, depending on where they are positioned in a societal sector, as each has a core set of institutions or even can be considered an institution (Friendland and Alford, 1991; Thornton, 2004). In the African staple food sector, we could think of families, the market, the bureaucratic state, research and the development sector, in which certain logics guide, legitimise and constrain meaning-making and practices at individual, organisation and sector level. Within a sector, there may be single, multiple and/or hybrid institutional logics (Mars and Schau, 2017: 5). Single logics are those that come to dominate a particular sector, and in doing so bring uniformity and longevity to field-wide practices (Lounsbury, 2007). Examples are market logics and state logics that retain a sector-wide commitment. Multiple logics on the other hand are logics that co-exist, and in some cases compete, within a common sector, leading to practice variation and segmentation (Lounsbury, 2007; Purdy and Gray, 2009). Blended or hybrid logics are those that emerge through the melding of elements from multiple logics (Rao et al., 2003; Mars and Lounsbury, 2009).

Differences in institutional logics may influence what has been named 'institutional fit', which is about the congruence of institutional logics adhered to by the different actors and the logic proposed for the joint action (Young, 2010; Schouten et al., 2016). However, given that in partnerships actors with often different interests and backgrounds come together (Glasbergen, 2007), such institutional fit is generally not a given and requires negotiation. Such a negotiation process can be seen through the lens of institutional bricolage, which is about consciously or unconsciously 'piecing together' new practices and institutions from different elements of existing institutions (Levi-Strauss, 1966). Actors creatively combine practices and institutional logics from different societal actors. Emerging sets of ideas are not always a coherent whole, but are hooked on to older ideas, moulding them in such a way that they gain partners' acceptance (Carstensen, 2011). Bricolage processes are often linked to practical problems (i.e. the issue being addressed by the partnership at a particular juncture) and must somehow resonate with the logics of other actors to secure legitimacy and political support for the new proposed course of action (De Koning and Cleaver, 2012). Depending on their interests and power relations in the partnership, other actors will modify (alteration), accept (aggregation) or reject (formulation) the proposed practice and underlying logics (Cleaver, 2002; Cleaver and De Koning, 2015).

As a diagnostic tool for institutional analysis – one of the goals of this special issue (Schouten et al., 2017) – looking at the presence or the absence of institutional fit can help to assess the likelihood of certain partners collaborating with each other; the required negotiation between them; and the resulting logic of the collaborative action. By analysing the process of bricolage between partners initiating, joining and implementing development interventions, researchers can track the influence that each of the partners and the farmer recipients exert in defining the actual practice and outcome. The above leads to a number of diagnostic questions:

1. To what types of institutional logics do different partnership actors adhere and bring into partnerships?
2. What direction and entry point for the development intervention do partnership actors propose and how does this link to their

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8877144>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8877144>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)