

***INTERPRETING THE CURRENT
CRISIS IN THE MALIAN
COTTON SECTOR:
A FOCUS ON INFORMAL
PRACTICES, NORMS, AND
VALUES***

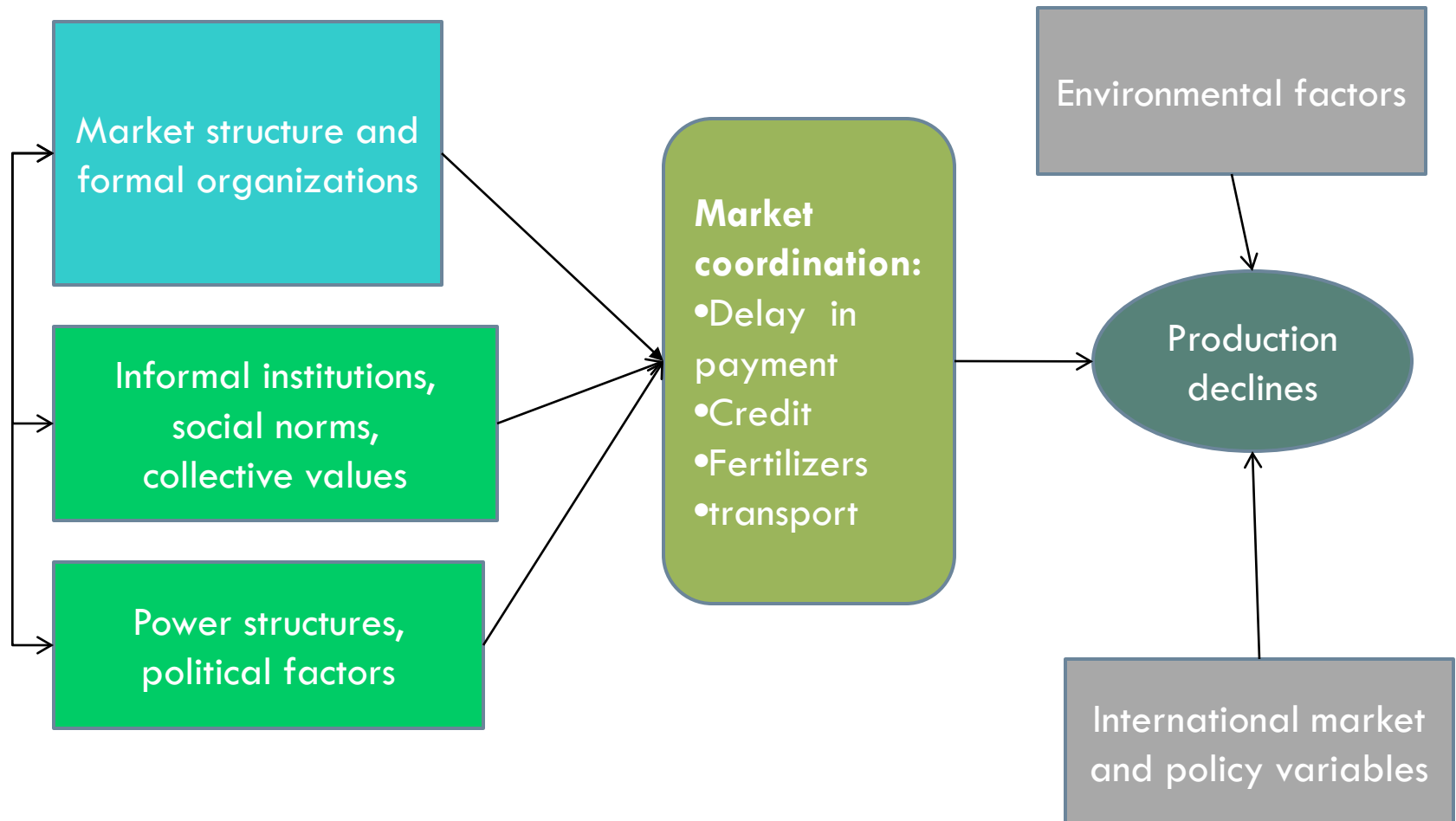
Renata Serra (Center for African Studies, University of Florida)
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African Power and Politics Program

- International research consortium, led by David Booth (ODI, London)
 - ▣ “Institutions that work for poor people”
 - ▣ How to work with the ‘grain’ of African societies?
- Funded by the UK DfID and Irish Aid
- CAS at UF one of the partner institutions
- Cotton research project is one of 7 streams
 1. Comparative study of cotton reforms in Mali, Benin and Burkina
 2. How can reforms and policies incorporate local solutions for collective action?

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Theoretical framework



Research goals

- Explain problems in the level of cotton market coordination as a function of:
 - ▣ Political sphere: bargaining power among stakeholders
 - ▣ Collective values: how should a cotton sector be managed?
 - ▣ Social norms and institutions at the village level
- Show how cotton sector policies need to engage with local power dynamics and social norms

Methodology

- Collaboration with local researchers
 - ▣ Institut d'Economie Rural
- Mixed methodology
 - ▣ Qualitative data: Interviews, focus groups
 - ▣ Quantitative data: survey of 113 farmers
- Fieldwork at two levels
 - ▣ Village level (11 villages)
 - ▣ Capital (meetings with stakeholders, participation in seminars)
- Some policy engagement activities
 - ▣ Bamako Workshop, May 18-19, 2009
- 3 visits during 2008/09 + extensive work by local team

Summary statistics: Mali farmers data set

Variable	Value
<i>Type farm (1, 2, 3)</i>	1.88
<i>Exp HH head (years)</i>	19.42
<i>HH size</i>	23.02
<i>N workers</i>	4.93
<i>Food sufficient</i>	0.64
<i>Plough</i>	3.2
<i>Tractor</i>	0.03
<i>Spray</i>	1.04
<i>Did cotton 08 %</i>	0.91
<i>Ha cotton 08</i>	2.88
<i>Mais ha</i>	1.41
<i>Sorghum ha</i>	3.11
<i>Millet ha</i>	2.58

N=113

Cotton acreage decisions & reasons

Reasons	Decline in ha from 2007 to 2008 (40)			Decline in ha from 2008 to 2009 (21)		
	<i>1st reason</i>	<i>2nd reason</i>	<i>3rd reason</i>	<i>1st reason</i>	<i>2nd reason</i>	<i>3rd reason</i>
<i>Too low price</i>		25.93	32	18.75		36.36
<i>Delay input</i>	25.71			18.75		
<i>Land constraints</i>	31.43					
<i>Difficulty credit</i>			24			27.27
<i>High cereal prices</i>		22.22		18.75	33.33	27.27
<i>delay payment</i>					25	
<i>high debt levels</i>						
<i>tension coop.</i>						
<i>lack of trust</i>						
Reasons	Increase in ha from 2007 to 2008 (17)			Increase in ha from 2008 to 2009 (52)		
	<i>1st reason</i>	<i>2nd reason</i>	<i>3rd reason</i>	<i>1st reason</i>	<i>2nd reason</i>	<i>3rd reason</i>
<i>Sure income</i>	37.5	23.53		37.93	21.28	
<i>Good price</i>		23.53		17.24		
<i>Access to credit</i>						20.5
<i>Access to inputs</i>						
<i>Benefits to cereals</i>			50		23.4	25.64

Theme 1: Disconnect national/local level

- Cotton as highly politicized sector where interests are fragmented and ever changing
- “Bamako” discourse: focus on the price level
- Village discourse: emphasis on market imperfections
- Cotton is not cultivated for its intrinsic income but for a wider set of services and benefits
- HP: Farmers care less about the price than about the functioning of related markets and services

Theme 2: Disconnect national/donors

- Conflicting logics regarding how cotton sectors should be managed
 - ▣ “Cotton as development” vs. “cotton as business”
- Primacy of the informal realm and symbolic values
- Path dependency of the integrated model in WFA
 - ▣ This determines which trade-offs are acceptable
- Need for “Unconventional paradigms”
 - Simple organizational restructuring will not do!
- Interesting examples of “hybridity”:
 - ▣ No spatial competition in both Mali and Burkina
 - ▣ “False privatization” in Burkina

Theme 3: The ‘culture’ of cotton

- The “culture” of cotton (know-how, prevailing practices, social capital) may persist after organizational change
- Distinctive experience in Mali: “CMDT was the state” in cotton areas
- Relationship between CMDT and farmer associations like a patron-client relationship
- Is this distinctive culture/know how/social capital a constraint or a resource for development?