

# Reform of Agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire: Between Diversification and Competition Among Crops.

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## ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the foundation of the social, economic and political development of Côte d'Ivoire. This agriculture was dominated by speculative crops depending on political orientation and with the aim of bridging national regional disparities until the year 2000. Initially, Ivorian export agriculture was at the center of political attention. It represents one third of GDP, two thirds of export earnings and employs more than two thirds of the active population (World Bank, 1994). However, this growth dynamic was confronted with external shocks from the 1980s. The country's agricultural economy entered a deep recession. Internal agricultural restructuring reforms were implemented in 1980, slowed by the political-military crisis that hit the country in December 1999. Since then, new reforms have been introduced. However, in their feasibility, they are similar to a kind of diversification of agriculture, highlighting a notion of "duality" according to Chaléard (2003). This paper examines and compares the reforms and explains why and how their implementation was difficult. It then recommends ways to make the reforms more sustainable and effective. The methodology is based on a theoretical framework and data collection (documentary research and Focus Group Discussion with the Directors of services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as the Chambers of Agriculture of Côte d'Ivoire) and a questionnaire. According to the results obtained. For 64% of farmers, the reforms only concern export crops. Subsistence agriculture remains an unorganized sector in which state reforms remain very weak. We note a disengagement of the State or an absence of communication in favor of subsistence agriculture. Reforms are also underway for the food sector. This requires stakeholder involvement, participatory management and global strategic orientations based on agricultural potential for sustainable agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, sustainable reforms, export culture, food crops, Côte d'Ivoire.

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has largely contributed to the development of the Ivorian economy and continues to constitute the pillar of its development. Beyond its economic, political and social role, agriculture has contributed to making Côte d'Ivoire a mosaic of agricultural lands dominated largely by speculative agriculture. Thus, agricultural production zones were strongly observed in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, according to Kouamé (2015), export agriculture dominated by coffee, cocoa, oil palm, fruits and vegetables and cotton monopolized the Ivorian agricultural space following independence. Supervision and technical assistance structures for the development of crops were created like the Fund for Stabilization and Support of Agricultural Production Prices (CSSPPA), better known by the diminutive CAISTAB<sup>1</sup>, was responsible for managing the sectors of

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<sup>1</sup> Caisses de Stabilisation et de Péréquation

cotton, cocoa and coffee on a national level since its creation in 1960 until its dismantling in August 1999. To boost agricultural production, the government created state or mixed economy companies, including in particular the SODEPALM-PALMINDUSTRIE-PALMIVOIRE group responsible for the development of oil palm and coconut crops and SODEFEL, to fruits and vegetables to the detriment of subsistence agriculture do not benefit from the attention of Ivorian policies and remain confined to its essential role, namely self-consumption. Export agriculture, a provider of foreign exchange and heavily dependent on the outside world, suffered the major effects of the economic crisis from 1980. The fall in the costs of raw materials and its corollaries plunged the country into deep reflections despite its good desire to bridge regional inequalities by implementing plans (AVB<sup>2</sup> and ARSO<sup>3</sup>, etc.) from 1969.

Profound reforms in the agricultural sector took place in 1994. A new concept appeared: "Let's consume Ivorian". Indeed, the economic crisis of the 1980s exposed the limits of export crops, long the basis of economic success of Côte d'Ivoire. Reforms are introduced regarding subsistence agriculture. The State decides to give a much greater look to the development of subsistence agriculture. Structures are created, others have been reformed with the mission of supervision and development of the food crop. However, the finding is alarming. Can we talk about reforms and diversification of agriculture? when export crops still benefit from the attention of the State to the point where new crops have been introduced (Rubber, Cashew) with structures under government supervision at the expense of subsistence agriculture still at the dragged. Indeed, the "diversification of agriculture" constitutes one of the four components of the strategy that Côte d'Ivoire has adopted to become by 2015-2025 a new industrialized country (NPI)<sup>4</sup> with a strong, healthy and diversified economy, capable of withstanding economic disruptions. This diversification of agriculture creates a notion of Duality, or competition between food crops and export crops (Chaléard, 2003).

What must be done for a sustainable balance in agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire?

Previous studies have focused on the development of agriculture, crop dualism without examining the reforms and its applicability for stable and efficient agriculture. It is therefore a question of studying agricultural reforms in Côte d'Ivoire, between competition and diversification of crops.

## METHOD AND DATA

It is based on a theoretical framework and data collection. Rogers Everett's theory of diffusion of innovations (1962, 1995 and 2003) allows us to better understand agricultural reform, its adoption and its application.

### Theoretical Framework: The Theory of Diffusion of Innovations

Rogers (1995) defines the diffusion of innovations as "the process by which a new practice, idea or product is diffused throughout a society". Innovation thus refers to the question of reforms. The diffusion curve (called S-curve) which describes the level of adoption of reforms over time. Indeed, the reforms emanate from the consequences of the economic crisis of 1980. The State therefore considers it imperative to reform Ivorian agriculture. The diffusion curve allows us to understand the different stages of adoption of reforms (Figure 1.1).

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<sup>2</sup> Autorité pour l'aménagement de la Vallée du Bandama

<sup>3</sup> Autorité pour l'aménagement de la région du sud-ouest

<sup>4</sup> Nouveaux Pays industrialisés

### 3. Time

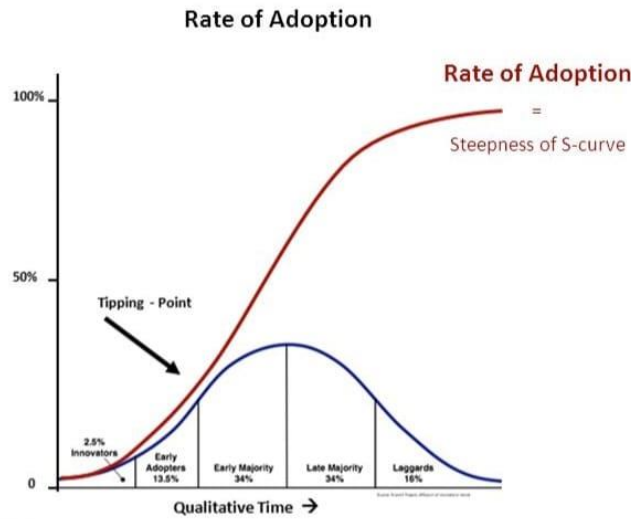


Figure 1.1: Diffusion curve of an innovation over time, Rogers 1995

As mentioned in our study, innovation refers to “reform”. This spreads in space and time following a process of adoption. This process takes place in five phases:

- (i) An initial phase which occurs at the start of the innovation process. The adopters of the innovation are then few in number (State). In the case of our study, the initial phase corresponds to the aftermath of the 1980s.
- (ii) A major phase: the process of diffusion of the reform spreads to other places often located in remote places with a progressive involvement of actors from 1994.
- (iii) A condensation phase: at this stage, the reform is increasingly accepted by the adopters with an increase in numbers. The need to reform the agricultural sector in Côte d'Ivoire is increasingly perceived and accepted by stakeholders. Indeed, farmers understood the importance and merits of agricultural reform leading to a diversification of agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire until 2000.
- (iv) A saturation phase: final stage where the phenomenon unfolds all its effects with participatory involvement of the actors until 2002. Unfortunately, the socio-political situation in Côte d'Ivoire from 2002 leads to a slowdown in activities.
- (v) A phase of progressive decline: this phase is the direct consequence of the effects induced in the socio-political situation from 2002.

The theory of diffusion of innovation helped us understand the stages over time as well as the evolution of the adoption of agricultural reform in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to reforms (innovations) as mentioned by Rogers (1995), there are factors slowing down (barriers) the process of diffusion of innovations (reforms). Indeed, these are endogenous and exogenous variables. Whether they originate externally or internally to the innovation, the barriers act distinctly on the diffusion of innovation. They are classified into three main types of effects: absorbent barriers, which prevent any progression of diffusion; permeable barriers, upon contact with which the process can partly continue, and finally, reflective barriers, which direct the diffusion in another direction.

# THE DATA COLLECTION

## The Study Area

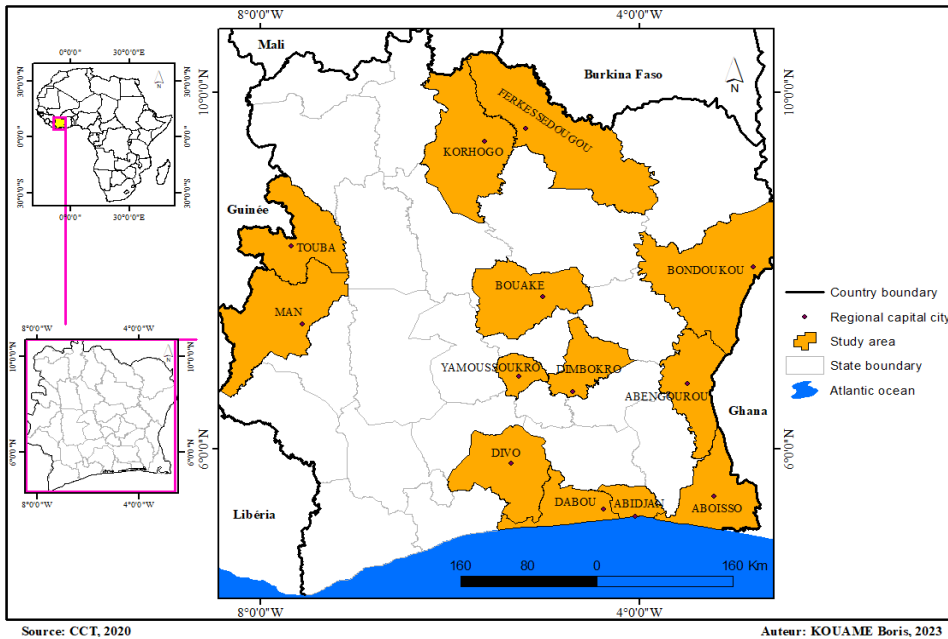


Figure 1.2: Location of study area

The localities chosen (Figure 2) were agricultural production basins both for export crops and for food production in Côte d'Ivoire (Kouamé, 2015). Indeed, the east of Côte d'Ivoire was the first pioneer front (Coffee and Cacao) before moving towards the center of Côte d'Ivoire (Cacao Loop) from 1975 to currently the southern region -western Ivory Coast. Climatic and anthropogenic factors have contributed to the displacement of cocoa and coffee crops. As for the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire, it benefits from enormous development programs and projects as mentioned by Coulibaly (2010) like the RIZ NORD (PRN), PRODEMIR, PADEMIR project, etc.

## Survey Technique

I used documentary research on agricultural reforms as well as the diversification of agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire. Also, it was necessary to carry out FGDs (interviews) with the Directors of the central services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the structures under supervision and the statistics department. Furthermore, a questionnaire was submitted to producers of export crops and food crops to better appreciate the duality of these two crops. The “snowball” technique allowed me to survey producers over 50 years old to learn about the historicity and experience in growing crops. A geographical division according to agricultural potential was observed. Thus, five major geographic regions are chosen. The North (Korhogo), the South (Abidjan), the Center (Dimbokro), the east (Abengourou) and the West (Man) as indicated in the following.

Table 1.1: Summary of respondents and localities.

Geographic Division	Surveyed
North: Korhogo, Ferkessédougou	27

South: Abidjan, Divo, Dabou	35
Center: Dimbokro, Bouake, Yamoussoukro	47
East: Aboisso, Abengourou, Bondoukou	39
West: Man, Touba	19
Total	<b>167</b>

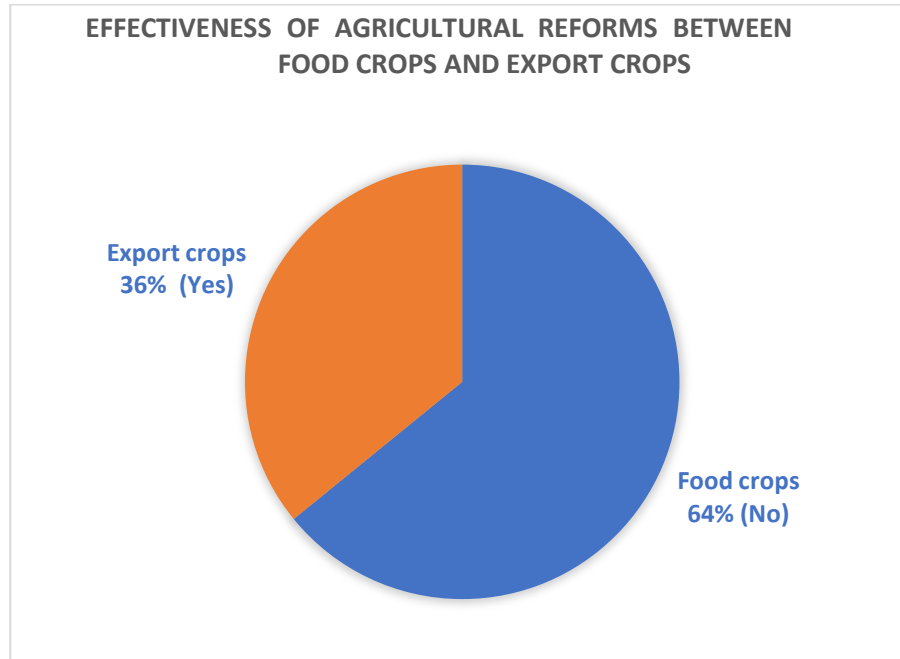
Source: Kouamé Boris, fieldwork, November 2023

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

It is important to note that the results of this study with farmers and directors of decentralized structures were the subject of a qualitative analysis. This analysis was compared with the level's theory of organizational behavior of Jerry and Frederick (1988) for a perfect understanding and sustainable agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire as well as its functioning. 80% of respondents explained why reform was necessary for Ivorian agriculture. Indeed, the economic crisis has led to a reduction in investments in the agricultural sector and a drop in agricultural production leading to a drop-in food production. Farmers have had to downsize or have been forced to leave their land due to financial difficulties. This has led to increased unemployment and economic hardship for many farmers and their families. Additionally, the crisis has had a significant impact on poverty in Côte d'Ivoire, mainly due to its dependence on agriculture. With reduced agricultural production and reduced incomes for farmers, many households have faced significant economic hardship. Faced with this situation, the State is undertaking the implementation of agricultural reform policies. It is ;

1. Economic stabilization programs: The Ivorian state has implemented economic stabilization programs to combat inflation and restore macroeconomic stability. These measures included reducing public spending, controlling inflation, rigorous management of public finances and monetary policy reform.
2. Crop diversification: The economic crisis showed the vulnerability of the Ivorian economy, which was dominated by an excessive dependence on the production and export of cocoa and coffee. In an effort to diversify agriculture, the state has encouraged the production of other crops, such as cashew nuts, palm oil, fruits and vegetables, as well as livestock.
3. Promotion of subsistence agriculture: To ensure food security and reduce dependence on imports, the Ivorian state has encouraged the production of staple foods, such as rice, corn, tubers and vegetables. Subsidies, soft loans and tax incentives were provided to farmers to boost local agricultural production.
4. Improvement of rural infrastructure: The state has also invested in improving rural infrastructure, such as roads, irrigation networks, storage systems and processing of agricultural products. This aims to facilitate the transportation of agricultural products, reduce post-harvest losses and boost agricultural development in rural areas.
5. Support for agricultural research: The Ivorian state has supported agricultural research by funding research institutions and encouraging collaboration between researchers, farmers and agricultural companies. The aim was to develop new high-yielding crop varieties, improve agricultural techniques and increase agricultural productivity in the country.

These reforms allowed the Ivorian State to overcome, to a certain extent, the crisis and to revive agriculture. However, in practical feasibility, we observe much more attention in favor of export crops to the detriment of food crops. Indeed, to the question of whether subsistence agriculture has benefited from reforms with a view to its dynamism and sustainable development like export crops, 64% of respondents responded in the negative as mentioned in the figure. (2.1).



Source: Kouame Boris, November 2023

The words of Mr. Konan, producer in the Dimbokro region are summarized as follows: “since you have been in Ivory Coast, after ANADER which takes care of all the food farmers. Have you ever seen an organized structure for food crops like CAISTAB?

I think that the State is not interested in food crops because they think that it has no money in its practice. But it's really not true....”

The cocoa-coffee sector has been reformed several times. Indeed, on August 24, 2012, an agreement was signed between the Coffee-Cocoa Council and development support structures (FIRCA<sup>5</sup>, ANADER<sup>6</sup>, CNRA<sup>7</sup>) for the training of producers in good agricultural practices and for research and development activities., particularly against swollen shoot disease with an average of 10 billion per year and specifically for the 2012/2013 campaign, 15 billion FCFA of work planned. In addition, securing the income of producers by establishing a guaranteed minimum price as well as improving internal and external marketing and finally, the establishment of a strong inter-professional association based on producer organizations credible.

It is important to note, according to our surveys, an imbalance of information is observed in the food sector. The results from our interviews with those in charge of structures also show much more attention in favor of

<sup>5</sup> Fonds Interprofessionnel pour la Recherche et le Conseil Agricoles

<sup>6</sup> Agence Nationale d'Appui au Développement Rural

<sup>7</sup> Centre National de Recherche Agronomique



export crops but are all unanimous that efforts are being made by Ivorian politicians in favor of food crops. However, farmers do not share this opinion. For them, food crops are left to their discretion. Sometimes even, the latter not benefiting from technical assistance from ANADER are left to their own devices and to local initiatives and sometimes the support of certain NGOs.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of our study show a similar situation in countries where export agriculture has been the mainstay of development. Joseph (2017) shows that Haiti's agricultural production system is archaic, obsolete, traditional and inefficient. Based on export agriculture, it is not compatible with the requirements of an appropriate environment for a growing human population. To this end, he is proposing a number of reforms, including the communalisation of agricultural land, and much more mechanised subsistence farming, with the involvement of agricultural companies to the detriment of speculative crops. The latter is based on the words of Karl Max according to Billings (1991): "Food and adequate housing are the minimum basic elements that a nation must provide for its citizens - food crops are needed to feed the constantly changing population". As a result, reforms must be geared more towards popularising self-consumption agriculture, since the world's population has grown from 1 billion in 1800 to 2 billion in 1925, 4 billion in 1975, 6 billion in 2000, and is expected to reach 9 billion in 2050, peaking at around 9.5 billion in 2070-80 (1991). To achieve this, reforms must be increasingly geared towards food-producing agriculture for mass consumption, to ensure food sovereignty, and not towards export-oriented agriculture. This ideology is shared by Mazoyer (2009). Reforms are needed that provide greater incentives for food production. Similarly, Boureima (2006) shows that in Niger, the agricultural policies implemented since 1960 have been aimed at overcoming food insecurity. From the search for increased productivity through direct state intervention, to the search for food self-sufficiency and food security, and then poverty reduction, agricultural policies have not yet succeeded in resolving the primary problems of the rural world. For this reason, Kouamé (2015) suggests that the Ivorian government should pay particular attention to food crops. Indeed, there needs to be complementarity based on a form of balance between food production and export production. There is a risk of upsetting this balance if government programmes or policies focus solely on export sectors to the detriment of food production. Competition between export crops and food crops is evident when public support for agriculture focuses solely on cash crops at the expense of food crops. Temple and Fadani (1997) explain the competition between these crops in Cameroon. Interactions between export crops and food crops can be analysed at both macro- and micro-economic levels. At the macro-economic level, the theory of comparative advantage justifies a country's specialisation in products where it has a competitive advantage. The export earnings it obtains then allow it either to import food products, or to import the intermediate goods needed to increase productivity for food crops and ensure food security. This second link is recognised as a priority by international bodies. It helps to avoid structural food dependency on international markets. In addition, these export revenues enable a tax to be levied (to finance the State) and help to balance the balance of payments. It was for this reason that the former President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, while in office in 2009, said at his meeting with FENACOVICI<sup>8</sup> on 6 March 2009: "I think that agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire is heading in the wrong direction. When we talk about agriculture, we mean feeding people. But in Côte d'Ivoire, when we talk about agriculture, it's to produce and export cocoa, coffee and rubber. People can have tonnes of cocoa in their shops and still die of hunger if they have nothing to eat... the figures are list Côte d'Ivoire must be protected from external hazards. We need to produce sufficient quantities of food to feed the population, but also to sell the surplus abroad. Given the importance of food crops, we need to help and organise food producers so that Ivorians do not starve, hence the need to move to a higher level of production by mechanising farms. The State of Côte d'Ivoire will make a fund available for the mechanisation of food crops. We've had the cocoa, coffee and rubber revolutions, and now it's time to move on to something else. Despite the money from cocoa, we went

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<sup>8</sup> Fédération Nationale des Coopératives de vivriers de Côte d'Ivoire

hungry because rice was expensive (...) there is still land left to feed people. And all the remaining land must be developed to grow yams and rice. I would really like to encourage Ivorians to practise subsistence farming". It is for this reason that the FAO and the AU have developed a strategic framework for Africa in 2019 for sustainable agricultural mechanisation for maize, wheat and rice. Indeed, the strategic framework provides for the agricultural mechanisation of food crops, as well as the establishment of more operational structures and political will for African countries. However, for Tano (2012), the export crops introduced by the coloniser provide remarkable income. For this reason, Maréchal (2001) shows that these crops have enabled states to create remarkable infrastructures and facilities, to such an extent that most African countries have made them the mainstay of their development. It is therefore only natural that these crops should receive special attention from the state. Agreeing with this assertion, Chaleard (2003) adds that food crops are less profitable for states because they are not regulated, unlike export crops, which receive special attention from state authorities. Colin and Bairnes (1985) explain the shortcomings of this type of agriculture, which remains traditional and therefore not yet mechanised. Despite the importance that governments attach to export crops, efforts are being made by some governments to promote food crops. According to Tujague (2004), food crops are emerging as a solution to the export crop crisis in the Abengourou region. Tomato growing is a source of social and economic empowerment for rural populations in the region. According to ANADER data (2009), food crops are the leading agricultural production sector, with a turnover of more than 700 billion CFA francs, or 7% of GDP. The workshop to draw up the national strategy for the development of food crops other than rice (SNDCV 2013) recommended that a food crop development fund be set up, and that an agricultural policy law be drafted to give pride of place to the food crop sector. Conclusions and recommendations were formulated by the various commissions, including the introduction of appropriate arrangements for financing food crops at preferential rates. However, despite its role, namely self-consumption, subsistence farming suffers from many problems compared to export farming. Kouamé (2015) lays bare the difficulties of subsistence farming. Subsistence farming is a sector of the future that can be a major player in development. However, this sector faces a number of climatic, political and economic challenges: land conflicts, hazards and climate change, particularly drought. The isolation of several agricultural regions makes it difficult to sell produce. Subsistence farming in most sub-Saharan countries is still extensive, with rudimentary and archaic agricultural techniques and equipment. Difficulties in preserving food products, which are little or unprocessed.

## CONCLUSION

The antagonistic dualism of agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire deserves particular attention from Ivorian politicians. Indeed, export agriculture benefits from particular attention from politicians and is constantly reformed given the speculative nature of raw materials. There are several management structures, support-advice, chambers and advice in favor of export crops to the detriment of subsistence agriculture which is still lagging behind. This is the place to call on our decision-makers for a strategic reorientation and a contribution in favor of subsistence agriculture. If subsistence agriculture benefited from the same privileges as export agriculture, it would be even more profitable economically, it would also make it possible to achieve food sovereignty and above all the preservation of the environment and biodiversity. This is why it is important to establish complementarity and not competition between cultures.

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