



Utrecht University

Preventing Governmental Overthrow during the Global Food Price Crisis

*How Repression and Partly Effective Concessions allowed the Cameroonian
Government to Regain Control during the February 2008 Protests*

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Abstract

During the Global Food Price Crisis of 2007-08, Cameroon experienced its first serious societal disruption after its independence. Nevertheless, unlike other countries facing comparable uprisings, the Biya government of Cameroon was able to regain control. This study explains what strategies enabled the Biya government to remain in power and prevent major internal conflicts until it gained a renewed mandate during the October 2011 elections. The three variables proposed by political scientist Harry Eckstein to analyse government actions during uprisings – “effective repression”, “diversionary mechanisms” and “adjustive mechanisms” – are used as analytical framework. Applying this framework, this paper adds two key insights to the historiographic debates on government responses to uprisings. Firstly, it provides insights into the hitherto limitedly examined concessional government responses in instances where living costs sparked protests. Secondly, this is the first time Eckstein’s model is applied to analyse a case study. Consequently, this study shows the model’s usages and limitations: it demonstrates the need to consider Eckstein’s three variables as a continuum. This research also underlines the importance of including an analysis of the effectiveness of adjustive measures, and thus the need to add additional categories to Eckstein’s model. This research shows that, while harsh repression was a central strategy, the government implemented short-term and longer-term oriented adjustive measures as a response to the protestors’ demands of lowering the costs of living. Many of these measures were only partly effective. Nevertheless, the costs of living and their inflation decreased, thereby lowering the burden the Global Food Price Crisis posed upon Cameroonian citizens.

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Introduction

Aged 87, President Paul Biya of Cameroon has already ruled the country continuously for 38 years. During most of these years, up to the Coffin Revolution of 2016-17, Biya held firm control over the country. It was only in February 2008 that serious anti-government protests occurred that were highly disruptive and potentially able to overthrow the government.¹ In these protests, where demands for Biya's resignation and more democracy were widespread, the global food price crisis of 2007-08 played a crucial role: with significant increases of food prices, especially in urban areas, conflict and disruption became apparent. Protestors demanded reduced living costs. In this, Cameroon is not an exception. Especially from the 1980s onwards, many analyses and researchers have shown how food shortages and rising food prices have sparked, either directly or indirectly, societal uprisings, ethnic cleansing and even international conflicts.² For instance, Todd Smith has analysed forty African countries between 1990-2012 and showed how increases in domestic food prices highly increased the probability of urban unrest.³ Furthermore, damaged agricultural yields have been identified as a key reason for the outbreak of the Syrian civil war that is still raging today.⁴ During the 2007-08 food price crisis and the grave price increase up to 2011, food riots spread throughout the developing world,

¹ Confidence Chia Ngam Da, Ph, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode 1998-2008: The Opportunities Lost and Gained in Securing a National Consensus," *Journal of Advances in Social Science and Humanities* 4, no. 8 (2018): 209-226; Hamadou Tidiane Sy, "Cameroon Hit By Social Unrest With Political Implications." *allAfrica*, March 3, 2008, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200803030661.html>; Jean Engo, "Decomposition of Cameroon's CO₂ emissions from 2007 to 2014: an extended Kaya identity," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 26, no. 16 (2019): 16702.

² Jackson C. Holleman, M.V. Sánchez and R. Vos, *Sowing the seeds of peace for food security. Disentangling the nexus between conflict, food security and peace* (No. 2143-2019-4789, 2017); P.Y. Echarren, "Hunger and conflict," *Cuadernos de estrategia*, 161 (2013): 171-194; M. Lagi, K.Z. Bertrand, and Y. Bar-Yam, *The food crises and political instability in North Africa and the Middle East* (Cambridge: New England Complex Systems Institute, 2011); I. Salehyan, "From climate change to conflict? No consensus yet," *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(3) (2008) 315-326; T.F. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, scarcity, and violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); N.L. Peluso and M. Watts (Eds.), *Violent environments* (Cornell University Press, 2001).

³ Todd Graham Smith, Todd Graham, "Feeding unrest: Disentangling the causal relationship between food price shocks and sociopolitical conflict in urban Africa," *Journal of Peace Research*, 51:6 (2014): 679-695.

⁴ Jan Selby, Omar S. Dahi, Christiane Fröhlich and Mike Hulme, "Climate change and the Syrian civil war revisited," *Political Geography* 60 (2017): 232-244; J. Ciro Martínez and B. Eng, "Struggling to perform the state: The politics of bread in the Syrian civil war," *International Political Sociology*, 11(2) (2017): 130-147.

affecting over thirty countries.⁵ What is remarkable about Cameroon, is that it is the only country with a relatively high number of victims, indicating a significant disruptive uprising, while the government was not overthrown. This uniqueness is further elaborated upon in chapter 1. In fact, Cameroon had remained relatively stable until the Coffin Revolution of 2016-17.⁶ Thus, some form of mitigation of discontent by the government is suspected to have taken place that was sufficient to ensure the Biya government regained control over its population.

Historians have already widely investigated how revolutions, uprisings and internal conflicts occurred, have been successful or have been sparked by food crises. Some analyses focus on long-run, underlying causes, such as Crane Brinton's account of the English, French, American, and Russian Revolution, or such as Theda Skocpol's comparative analysis in *States and Social Revolutions*.⁷ Others focus on immediate and contingent factors, such as the account of Killian Clarke on the Egyptian uprisings during the Arab Spring.⁸ Cameroon's 2008 protests, however, are an interesting case study to investigate how government intervention stopped protests even in the face of such fundamental demands as food. This is a topic less thoroughly investigated, with accounts focusing mainly on harsh repression or failure of the opposition to mobilize.⁹ The ways government actions targeted to reduce food insecurities or prices have been able to stop popular uprisings is an especially underrepresented topic. Nevertheless, government concessions have been documented as critical measures to ensure longer-term success of restoring order, while also possibly sparking further unrest, for instance in the Iranian Revolution by Karen Rasler and in the protests against Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak by Dina Bishara.¹⁰

⁵ T.A. Wise and S. Murphy, *Resolving the food crisis: assessing global policy reforms since 2007* (Global Development and Environment Institute, 2012), 4; A. Mittal, *The 2008 food price crisis: rethinking food security policies* (United Nations, 2019), 15.

⁶ Billa Nache Robert, "Uprising and Human Rights Abuses in Southern Cameroon-Ambazonia," *Education, Human Rights and Peace in Sustainable Development, IntechOpen*, 2020, [Uprising and Human Rights Abuses in Southern Cameroon-Ambazonia | IntechOpen](#); Billy Agwanda, Israel Nyaburi Nyadera and Ugur Yasin Asal, *Cameroon and the Anglophone Crisis* (2020).

⁷ Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: WW Norton and Company, Inc. 1938); Theda Skocpol, *States and social revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁸ Killian Clarke, "Unexpected brokers of mobilization: Contingency and networks in the 2011 Egyptian uprising," *Comparative Politics* 46, no. 4 (2014): 379-397; Robert H. Dix, "Why revolutions succeed & fail," *Polity* 16, no. 3 (1984): 423-446.

⁹ Lee Sterrenburg, "The Last Man: Anatomy of Failed Revolutions," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33, no. 3 (1978): 324-347; Dix, "Why revolutions succeed & fail," 423-446.

¹⁰ Will H. Moore, "Repression and dissent: Substitution, context, and timing," *American Journal of Political Science* (1998): 851-873; Dina Bishara, "The politics of ignoring: Protest dynamics in late Mubarak Egypt," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 4 (2015): 958-975; Karen Rasler, "Concessions,

This study will therefore add key insights to the current historiography on government responses to uprisings by analysing how the Cameroonian government responded, via repression but most importantly by introducing policies and actions to respond to the increased living costs. An analysis of the period from February 2008 to October 2011 will be made, ending at the presidential elections of 2011. There are two reasons for choosing this period. Firstly, while these elections cannot be seen as fully free and democratic, they did renew the mandate of Biya's government, receiving 77% of the votes, and most observers believed the outcome reflected popular sentiment.¹¹ Secondly, the global food prices rose until the end of 2011, making government intervention critical throughout 2008-2011, and potentially less important beyond 2011. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following question: how can the actions of Cameroon's government during and in the aftermath of the protests of February 2008 explain the government's ability to remain in power and prevent any major internal conflicts until the next election of October 2011?

To answer this research question, this paper will first explain the context of the 2008 protests and its demands, and the link to the impacts of the food price crisis on Cameroon. After that, an analysis of government response to the protests will follow. To do this structurally, the theory of American political scientist Harry Eckstein will be used to understand the occurrence and success of internal wars, allowing for a clear idea of what strategy the Cameroonian government deployed. In his famous book *On the Etiology of Internal War*, Eckstein presents a model where eight variables can be universally applied to understand why internal wars do or do not succeed in arising, and achieving their aims.¹² The four variables enhancing chances of successfully erupting are "elite inefficiency", "disorienting social process", "subversion", and "available rebel facilities". For the four variables obstructing this success, one is related to the existing contextual conditions, being the "available incumbent facilities". The three remaining consist of the variables related to government action per se and are therefore important for this research. These are "diversionary mechanisms", "adjustive mechanisms" and "effective

repression, and political protest in the Iranian revolution," *American Sociological Review* (1996): 132-152.

¹¹ Michael A. Yanou, "Democracy in Cameroon: a socio-legal appraisal," *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee/Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (2013): 303-320; Ivo Tapang Tanku, "Cameroonian president wins vote, extending 29-year-rule," *CNN*, October 22, 2011, <https://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/22/world/africa/cameroon-election-outcome/index.html>; Commonwealth Secretariat, *Cameroon Presidential Elections*, October 2011, <https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/news-items/documents/Cameroon%20Presidential%20Elections%202011%20Final%20Report.pdf>

¹² Harry Eckstein, *On the Etiology of Internal War*, *History and Theory* 4, no. 2 (1965): 133-163, 153, 160.

repression". Repression entails violent suppression of revolutions, while diversionary measures describe those where governments provide different channels or outlets for revolutionary discontent and energy while not solving their causes. Adjustive mechanisms respond to protest's demands and causes.¹³ The actions of the Cameroonian government will be explained by using these three variables, to determine what strategy enabled the Cameroonian government to remain in power throughout 2008 and beyond. Chapter 2 will focus on repressive mechanisms, while chapter 3 will focus on diversionary and adjustive mechanisms.

Eckstein's model is an ideal one: in reality, it should be seen as a continuum. This is especially true for the difference between diversionary and adjustive mechanisms. In chapter 3, this paper therefore further explains the decisions made on categorization and how Eckstein's model can be used in practice. Eckstein's model has been seen as a critical contribution to the historiographic debate, mentioned in many historical and historiographic publications on government responses to uprisings.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the framework has never been applied to analyse government responses in a particular case study. This is striking, as only practical application can expose the usage and limitations of Eckstein's model. Therefore, by using and reflecting upon the limitations of Eckstein's model in the context of the Cameroonian February 2008 protests, this research will provide a critical addition to the current historiographic debate. It can be used to guide the application of Eckstein's model in future research on government responses to uprisings.

In this research, both secondary and primary sources will be used. Primary sources will include news articles from African media outlets, that will be crucial in the definition of demands and the reaction of the public and the government to the protests. This research does not only include media outlets from Cameroon only, as harsh repression of purely national media may have led to less objective accounts from Cameroonian media. These sources will be

¹³ Ibid., 160.

¹⁴ R. Davis, *The making of an insurgent group: a case study of Hamas, vox populi and violent resistance* (Doctoral dissertation, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2014); J.C. Donnell, J. C., "Understanding Revolution in Vietnam," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 28(4), (1969) 821-831; Andres Suarez, "The Cuban Revolution: The Road to Power." *Latin American Research Review* 7, no. 3 (1972): 5-29; Theda Skocpol, "France, Russia, China: A structural analysis of social revolutions," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18, no. 2 (1976): 175-210; Allison Percy, "The Revolutionary Potential of Mexico in the 1980s," *Journal of International Affairs* (1987): 373-385; Stoyan V. Sgourev, "The explosive rise of a political party: the logic of 'sudden convergence'," *European sociological review* 26, no. 6 (2010): 639-654; Rosemary HT. O'Kane, "A probabilistic approach to the causes of coups d'etat." *British journal of political science* 11, no. 3 (1981): 287-308; Dhikru A. Yagboyaju, "Food and national security in Nigeria: A study of the interconnections," *Trajectory of land reform in post-colonial African states*, 2019: 29-41; Gabriel Al. Almond, "Harry Eckstein as political theorist," *Comparative Political Studies* 31, no. 4 (1998): 498-504.

especially useful to understand the revolution and to give an account of the repressive measures used, as well as to understand how the diversionary and adjustive measures were perceived by the people. Secondary literature was used to compare this with and provide a sound account of the protests. The basis in analysing the diversionary and adjustive measures were government documents and policies regarding the demands and subsequent policies. Data and reports from international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank, the World Food Programme, the International Monetary Fund and many others were also used, to get a more fact-based understanding of the causes and demands of the protests, and to analyse government actions and their impacts afterwards. Sources from these international organizations are especially critical to analyse the diversionary and adjustive measures as they are the main sources that provide detailed and objective accounts of Cameroon's policies and their effects.

1. The Global Food Price Crisis and the Cameroonian Anti-Government Protests

1.1. The Global Food Price Crisis of 2007-08

1.1.1. Impacts

In 2007-08 global food demand outpaced its supply due to enhanced consumption, climate-induced crop-losses and decades-long declines in global grain stocks. The effect was a major rise in global food prices.¹⁵ Commodity prices, including major food crops and oil doubling (figure 1).¹⁶ Impacts differed per country and group. As the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report of 2009 noted:

The impact of higher food prices on the poor depends crucially on whether they are net food sellers, in which case the impact could in principle be positive, or net food buyers, in which case the impact is unequivocally negative. The evidence suggests that most households in the developing world and especially the poor are net buyers of food, and this holds even for rural households that are mostly engaged in agriculture.¹⁷

In developing countries, increases were highest, with food import costs growing by 56% in 2007-08.¹⁸ As food represents between 60-80% of consumer spending in these countries, impacts

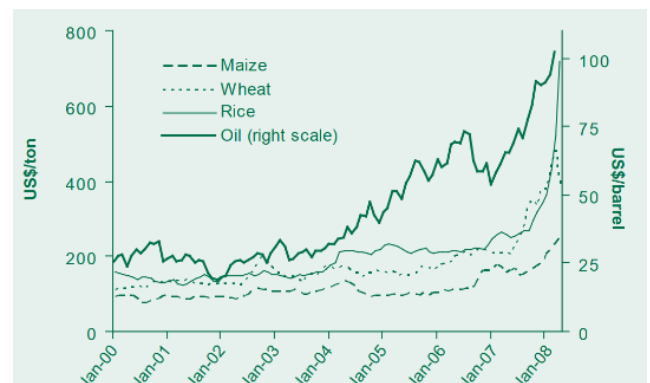


Figure 1: international commodity prices 2000-2008 (FAO, 2008)

¹⁵ T.S. Jayne, A. Chapoto, I.J. Minde, and C. Donovan, *The 2008/09 Food Price and Food Security Situation in Eastern and Southern Africa: Implications for Immediate and Longer Run Responses* (No. 1096-2016-88367, 2008), 5; G. Hochman, G. D. Rajagopal, G. Timilsina, and D. Zilberman, "Quantifying the causes of the global food commodity price crisis," *Biomass and Bioenergy*, 68, 2014, 107; Mittal, *The 2008 food price crisis*, 4.

¹⁵ Worldometer, "World Population by Year", Accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/world-population-by-year/>.

¹⁶ Wise and Murphy, S. (2012). Resolving the food crisis: assessing global policy reforms since 2007. Global Development and Environment Institute (GDAI), 8; Von Braun, Joachim, Akhter U. Ahmed, Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere, Shenggen Fan, Ashok Gulati, John Hoddinott, Rajul Pandya-Lorch et al., *High food prices: the what, who, and how of proposed policy actions*, No. 599-2016-40121. 2008, 3.

¹⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization, "What happened to world food prices and why?," In *The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2009* (2009), 26.

¹⁸ Mittal, *The 2008 food price crisis*, 1.

were grave.¹⁹ Highest impacts were found in poor countries with net food import in Africa and South Asia, the regions already generally most food insecure.²⁰ Consequently, 1020 million people, more than ever before, became undernourished.²¹ In urban areas, dependence upon imported food and exposure to international food prices is highest and thus impacts most severe.²²

1.1.2. Emerging conflicts

Food riots spread through the developing world during 2007-11, arising in over thirty countries.²³ Figure 2 shows a clear correlation between the higher food prices and emergent uprisings during 2007-11.²⁴ As shown by the numbers in brackets, the gravity of conflicts differed substantially and the Cameroonian 2008 protests and the Arab Spring associated uprisings in Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Egypt, Yemen and Iraq were most severe.²⁵ Of these countries with relatively high amounts of victims, indicating a significant uprising, Cameroon is the only that did not see an overthrow of a government with effective control over the country.²⁶ Thus, some form of mitigation of discontent has taken place which was sufficient to

¹⁹Ibid., 1.

²⁰ Ibid., 13; Food and Agriculture Organization, "What happened to world food prices and why?"; Julia Compton, Steve Wiggins and Sharada Keats, "Impact of the global food crisis on the poor: what is the evidence," *London, ODI* 99 (2010): 99, ii.

²¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, *More people than ever are victims of hunger*, 2009, http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Press%20release%20june-en.pdf.

²² Food and Agriculture Organization, "What happened to world food prices and why?," 26.

²³ Wise and Murphy, "Resolving the food crisis," 4; Mittal, *The 2008 food price crisis*, 15.

²⁴ Lagi, Bertrand and Bar-Yam, *The food crises and political instability in North Africa and the Middle East*, 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 13.

²⁶ In Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria, uprisings led to the overthrow of government and in some cases civil war. (Jack A. Goldstone, "Understanding the revolutions of 2011: weakness and resilience in Middle Eastern autocracies," *Foreign Affairs* (2011): 8-16; David W. Lesch, "The Arab spring—and winter—in Syria," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23, no. 3 (2011): 421-426; April Longley Alley, "Tracking the " Arab Spring": Yemen Changes Everything... And Nothing," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4 (2013): 74-85; Ibrahim Fraihat, *Unfinished revolutions: Yemen, Libya, and Tunisia after the Arab spring* (Yale University Press, 2016); Ahmed Al-Rawi, "The Arab Spring and online protests in Iraq," *International Journal of Communication* 8, no. 1 (2014): 916-942; Louise Fawcett, "The Iraq War ten years on: assessing the fallout" *International Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2013): 325-343). In Yemen and Iraq, there has either not been a stable single government since 1990, or there have been such a high amount of uprisings since the Iraq war starting in 2003, conflicts and instability that it is difficult to assess the specific conditions of the 2011 uprising and share of importance of the food price crisis (Nadwa Al-Dawsari, *Tribal governance and stability in Yemen*. Vol. 24. (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012); Jeremy M. Sharp and Ida A. Brudnick, *Yemen: civil war and regional intervention* (2015); Mieczysław P. Boduszyński, "Iraq's Year of Rage," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 4 (2016): 110-124.).

ensure the uprisings stopped before government overthrow. This country is, therefore, as already indicated, an interesting case to analyse government responses to the uprisings.

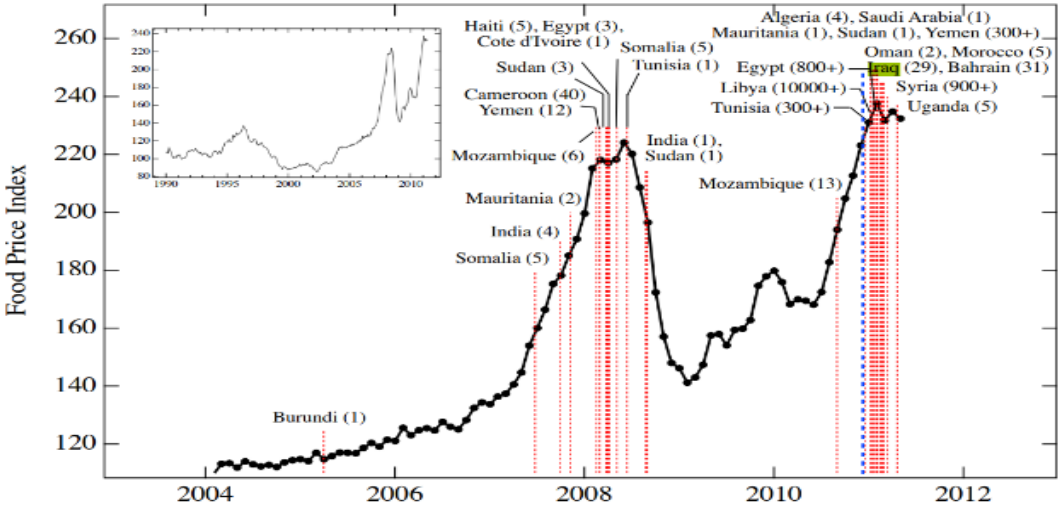


FIG. 1: Time dependence of FAO Food Price Index from January 2004 to May 2011. Red dashed vertical lines correspond to beginning dates of “food riots” and protests associated with the major recent unrest in North Africa and the Middle East. The overall death toll is reported in parentheses [26–55]. Blue vertical line indicates the date, December 13, 2010, on which we submitted a report to the U.S. government, warning of the link between food prices, social unrest and political instability [56]. Inset shows FAO Food Price Index from 1990 to 2011.

Figure 2: food price index and conflicts emerging, 2004-2012 (Lagi, Bertrand & Bar-Yam, 2012)

1.2. Cameroon

1.2.1. Political and governmental context of Cameroon

Before analysing the impact of the Global Food Price Crisis on Cameroon and describing the February 2008 anti-government protests, it is critical to understand Cameroon’s political and governmental context. Cameroon is a decentralized unitary state, governed by a president and its government.²⁷ While democratization processes have taken place since the 1990s, Cameroon is still identified as having an authoritarian rule with limited political rights and civil liberties.²⁸

²⁷ Ndiva Kofele-Kale, "Local Governance under Cameroon's Decentralisation Regime: Is It All Sound and Fury Signifying Nothing," *Commonwealth Law Bulletin* 37, no. 3 (September 2011): 513-530, https://heinonline-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/HOL/Page?collection=journals%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20&handle=hein.journals/commwlb37&id=521&men_tab=srchresults#; Nkwi, Paul Nchoji, and Francis B. Nyamnjoh, eds. *Regional Balance and National Integration in Cameroon: lessons learned and the uncertain future*. Vol. 1. African Books Collective, 2011.

²⁸ Giovanni Carbone, "Do new democracies deliver social welfare? Political regimes and health policy in Ghana and Cameroon," *Democratization* 19, no. 2 (2012): 157; Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2008. The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 2008*, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Freedom_in_the_World_2008_complete_book.pdf, 138.

The consolidation of President Paul Biya's regime after the 2007 elections led to a steady return to a one-party system.²⁹ Corruption is high and censorship limits freedom of expression, with many media banned or state-owned, often used for propaganda. Courts are subject to extensive political influence and corruption.³⁰

Paul Biya, head of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, has been in office since 1982. Over the years, he has strengthened his control, though with some backlashes and resistances.³¹ However, large-scale impactful uprisings against the Biya government before 2008 did not occur.³² The smaller uprisings that took place were generally guided by the three main opposition parties: the Social Democratic Front (SDF), the National Union for Democracy and Progress in Cameroon (UNDP), and the newly revised Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC).³³

1.2.2. The impacts of the Global Food Price Crisis

The impacts of the Global Food Price Crisis in Cameroon were severe: prices of cereals increased by 42%, of fish by 30%, beef by 45% and chicken even by 103% between 2005 and 2007.³⁴ Vegetables and fruit prices increased in the range of 10%.³⁵ Poor urban and rural households were hit hardest and food insecurity and undernutrition levels rose.³⁶ Rising fuel prices further discouraged smallholder farmers in supplying food by increasing transportation costs. This further increased the food prices.³⁷ At the same time, poverty levels in Cameroon were high, indicating a high vulnerability of its population to increased food prices.³⁸

²⁹ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2008*, 138.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 140-41.

³¹ Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226; Julius Amin, "Understanding the protest of February 2008 in Cameroon." *Africa Today* 58, no.4 (2013), 22; Marianna Babboni, "The Revolution Conundrum in Cameroon: A study of Relative Peace Under President Biya's Rule," *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection 2832* (2018), 5, 9.

³² Babboni, "The Revolution Conundrum in Cameroon," 5, 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ G.Q. Kane, G.L. Mabah Tene, J.J. Ambagna, I. Piot-Lepetit and F. Sikod, *The impact of food price volatility on consumer welfare in Cameroon* (No. 2015/013), WIDER Working Paper, 2015 1; Engo. "Decomposition of Cameroon's CO₂ emissions from 2007 to 2014", 3.

³⁵ Kane, Mabah Tene, Ambagna, Piot-Lepetit, and Sikod, *The impact of food price volatility on consumer welfare*, 12-13.10.

³⁶ K.A.N.E. Quentin, "Food Price Violations in Cameroon": determinants, transmission and consequences," (PhD diss., Université de Yaoundé II, 2018), 128-29; Kane, Mabah Tene, Ambagna, Piot-Lepetit, and Sikod, *The impact of food price volatility on consumer welfare*, 12-13.

³⁷ World Bank Group, *Cameroon Agricultural Value Chain. Competitiveness Study*, 2008, 3.

³⁸ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic and Financial Surveys. World Economic Outlook. Country Information*, 2018.

Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2008*, 139.

Additionally, the country faces serious issues with food security and malnutrition: in 2008, 3.1 of its 19.3 million people did not receive the food needed.³⁹ While significant increases in prices were also expected, effects were even worse because Cameroon was not supported by any of the five main aid programs set up to tackle the food crisis, that supported over 70 countries.⁴⁰

1.2.3. The February 2008 anti-government protests

According to multiple authors, the February 25-29 protests in 2008 was the worst crisis witnessed in Cameroon since its independence and were the first significant events of societal unrest after the guerrilla warfare against colonial rule from 1955 to 1970.⁴¹ A series of violent anti-government demonstrations took place in Cameroon, spreading to hundreds of different cities around the country and spilling into the streets of Yaoundé, its capital.⁴² The economy was paralyzed and disruption was significant.⁴³ Quickly, streets in the main cities including Kumba, Douala, Buea, Limbe, Yaoundé, and Bamenda, became centres of violence, looting, police brutality, and destruction'.⁴⁴ On February 26, a state of emergency was proclaimed by

³⁹K.A.M.G.A.I.N.G. Serge, and Fotio Alain Hermann, "Food Insecurity in the Northern Part of Cameroon: Calorific Contribution Approach versus Score of Dietary Diversity," 2011, 8; Food and Agriculture organization, "What happened to world food prices and why?," 26; Max Roser and Hannah Ritchie, "Hunger and Undernourishment," *Our World in Data*, Last modified 2013, <https://ourworldindata.org/hunger-and-undernourishment>.

⁴⁰ Compton, Wiggins, and Keats, "Impact of the global food crisis on the poor," 13-14; N.A. Gilbert, S.G. Linyong, and G.M. Divine, "Impact of agricultural export on economic growth in Cameroon: Case of banana, coffee and cocoa," *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(1), 2018, 45-46.

⁴¹ Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226; Tidiana Sy, "Cameroon Hit by Social Unrest";_Engo, "Decomposition of Cameroon's CO 2 emissions", 16702; The New Humanitarian, "Unrest spreads to Yaoundé even after taxi strike ends," *The New Humanitarian*, February 27, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2008/02/27/unrest-spreads-yaound%C3%A9-even-after-taxi-strike-ends>; International Crisis Group. *Cameroon: The Dangers of A Fracturing Regime*, no.161, 2010, 6. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=28DF7BF5D9C9DE1020B2E22438A73C47?doi=10.1.1.527.1678&rep=rep1&type=pdf>,1.

⁴²International Crisis Group. *A Fracturing Regime*, 6, 9; Amin, "Understanding", 32.

⁴³ Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226; Tidiana Sy, "Cameroon Hit by Social Unrest"; Engo, "Decomposition of Cameroon's CO 2 emissions", 16702.

⁴⁴ J.A. Amin, J. A., "Cameroonian youths and the protest of February 2008," *Cahiers d'etudes africaines*, 53(211) (2013), 677.

city administrators.⁴⁵ Twenty-four to hundred, 139 or even more deaths and damage of over 15.2 million euros were reported.⁴⁶

A. Groups involved

While following a transportation strike where especially taxi drivers, bus operators and affiliated workers took the threats, youth soon joined and played a central role in the protests.⁴⁷ This is also seen in the many news articles that were produced during and in the aftermath of the protests.⁴⁸ It was with their engagement that the strikes turned violent, ‘as many fought with police on the street, looted and vandalized property, including petrol stations, loot various stores and burnt finance ministry building, cars, tires, blocked roads, bridges and other buildings set on fire.’⁴⁹ While youth-dominated, protestors came from many different age and labour groups, such as scammers, shopkeepers, students, university graduates, and school dropouts.⁵⁰

B. Rhetoric and demands

The protests emerged out of a non-violent strike by transport workers to oppose high fuel prices and poor working conditions. Additionally, they are directly linked to the announcement of president Biya’s plans to amend the constitution to remove presidential term limits, allowing

⁴⁵ Amin, “Understanding”, 32.

⁴⁶ Julia Berazneva and David R. Lee, "Explaining the African food riots of 2007–2008: An empirical analysis," *Food Policy* 39 (2013): 30; Babboni, "The Revolution Conundrum in Cameroon"; Martin A. Nkemnqu, Martin A., “Facts and Figures of the Tragic Protests”, *Cameroon Tribune*, March 11, 2008; Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226; Joe Dinga Pefok, “Cameroon: 139 People Died in 2008 Protest – Observatory,” *allAfrica*, February 27, 2009, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200903020443.html>.

⁴⁷The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal,” *The New Humanitarian*, March 6, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2008/03/06/not-quite-back-normal>; The New Humanitarian, “Douala burns as taxi strike turns into general rioting,” *The New Humanitarian*, February 25, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2008/02/25/douala-burns-taxi-strike-turns-general-rioting>; Afrol News, “7 killed in Cameroon protest,” *afrol News*, February 26, 2008, <http://afrol.com/articles/28129>.

⁴⁸The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal,”; The New Humanitarian, “Douala burns”; Andy Matthews, “Cameroon: Protests Against Biya Planned For Washington,” *allAfrica*, March 13, 2008, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200803130075.html>; Reporters sans Frontières, “Cameroon: Newspaper Publisher Held Incommunicado and Reporters Attacked on Streets as Government Steps Up Crackdown On Media,” *allAfrica*, March 4, 2008, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200803040691>; Afrol News, “7 killed in Cameroon protest.”

⁴⁹ IRIN, <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/76932/CAMEROONDouala-burns-as-taxi-strike-turns-into-general-rioting>, 27 February 2008, retrieved 29th March 2018 at 14:21pm; Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226.

⁵⁰ Amin, “Understanding,” 25.

him to be in office until 2011.⁵¹ The protestors' demands were centred around two key topics. Firstly, people demanded Biya's removal, rejection of the constitutional amendment, and actions to stop corruption. Placards read: 'No More Biya' and 'No Constitutional Amendment', while media outlets expressed strong opinions about the proposed constitutional amendment. For instance, journalist Kennedy Epie wrote: '[t]he truth is that Cameroonians are fed up with his regime and we need a change'.⁵² Especially the opposition leaders framed this as the central issue of the protests, as became markedly visible in the speech of A.S. Ngwana, Chairman of the opposition party, the Cardinal Democratic Party, on February 26, 2008. Here, he framed the protest by saying:

The question is simple, should we allow President Paul Biya to amend the Constitution, to destroy the Constitution, to enable him to become life president of Cameroon? [...] We cannot allow Mr. Biya to manipulate the Constitution so that he can continue to govern Cameroon after nearly 30 years. We cannot allow Mr. Biya to be life president of Cameroon. Various governments under President Paul Biya have been most corrupt, inefficient, and disastrous.⁵³

Secondly, policies to stimulate the economy and lowering the costs of living were demanded. While opposition parties put most emphasis on political demands, the many news articles written about the protests write that living costs were most important for the protestors themselves.⁵⁴ Demands specifically responding to the risen prices of food during the global food price crisis, were widely documented, and placards with the texts 'We Need Jobs', 'Halt

⁵¹ Amin, "Understanding," 21; Berazneva and Lee, "Explaining the African food riots" , 37; Engo, "Decomposition of Cameroon's CO 2 emissions" 16702; International Crisis Group. *A Fracturing Regime*, 12.

⁵² Amin, "Understanding," 26, 34; International Crisis Group. *A Fracturing Regime*, 4.

⁵³ The Recorder Newline, "Party Leader Pleads with Colleagues , MPs to Defend Cameroons Constitution," Last modified February 26, 2008, <https://recorderline.blogspot.com/2008/02/party-leader-pleads-with-colleagues-mps.html>.

⁵⁴ The New Humanitarian, "Rapid intervention military unit strays from its mission," *The New Humanitarian*, August 29, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/80065/cameroon-rapid-intervention-military-unit-strays-its-mission>; The New Humanitarian. "Unrest spreads to Yaoundé even after taxi strike ends." *The New Humanitarian*, February 27, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2008/02/27/unrest-spreads-yaounde-even-after-taxi-strike-ends>; <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/80065/cameroon-rapid-intervention-military-unit-strays-its-mission>; <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/82898/cameroon-farmers-%E2%80%9Cforgotten%E2%80%9D-government>; <http://afrol.com/articles/28129>.

the Cost of Living’, ‘We Are Hungry’ were widely visible.⁵⁵ The anti-government protests are therefore also generally referred to as the “food riots” by many academics and general media: they were brought about by increasing food insecurity due to higher prices, thus underlining the importance of the 2007-08 food price crisis and its effects upon Cameroon.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Amin, J. A. (2012). Understanding the protest of February 2008 in Cameroon. *Africa Today*, 58(4), 26; <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2008/02/27/unrest-spreads-yaound%C3%A9-even-after-taxi-strike-ends>; <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/80065/cameroon-rapid-intervention-military-unit-strays-its-mission>; The New Humanitarian, “Farmers “forgotten” by government,” *The New Humanitarian*, February 12, 2009, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/82898/cameroon-farmers-%E2%80%9Cforgotten%E2%80%9D-government>; Babboni, "The Revolution Conundrum in Cameroon," 10; Amin, “Understanding,” 28.

⁵⁶Alexander F. Legwegoh and Evan DG Fraser, "High food prices in urban Cameroon: coping strategies and suggested policy actions," *Development in Practice* 27, no. 8 (2017): 1064-1077, 1065; Babboni, "The Revolution Conundrum in Cameroon," 10; Amin, “Understanding,” 21-43; Amin, “Cameroonian youths,” 677-697; Lauren Sneyd, "‘We eat what we have, not what we want’: The policy effects of food riots and eating after the 2008 crisis in Cameroon," *Food Riots, Food Rights and the Politics of Provisions*, Routledge, 2017: 114-131; International Monetary Fund, “Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations,” *IMF Country Report*, no. 10, 257 (2010). <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr10257.pdf>, 29.

2. Repressive Responses of the Cameroonian Government

This chapter and those following analyse the Cameroonian government's responses to the protests by applying the framework of Eckstein as described in the introduction. This chapter will discuss the usage of repressive mechanisms, while chapter 3 focuses on diversionary and adjustive mechanisms.

2.1. Short term repressive responses during and in the aftermath of the protests

Effective repression was the key mechanism that allowed the government to take back control during the protests. It took the form of violent interference to break down the groups of protestors, of limiting freedom of expression, and of arresting political opponents.

2.1.1. Breaking down the protests

A nation-wide televised press conference was given by the President on February 27, where he urged Cameroonians to stop protesting and proclaimed to prosecute those responsible for it, calling them 'demons' that had 'manipulated' the protesting youth. He promised to take action to restore stability, with any means possible.⁵⁷ Following the press conference, security forces and especially the special rapid intervention battalion, the BIR, in all cities put deeds to words.⁵⁸ Up to 100 protestors were killed on the way.⁵⁹ This repression first increased tensions, with Julius Amin stating that for a moment on 28 February, 'it appeared as if Cameroon might slide into open revolution'. However, on February 29th, stability was indeed restored. While the government claimed to have arrested 1,600 protestors, human rights groups claimed that in the city Douala alone, 2,000 people were arrested.⁶⁰ Their prosecution did not follow lawful procedures and happened at a pace too fast for sufficient trials.⁶¹ For instance, a lawyer in the

⁵⁷ *Cameroon Tribune*, February 28, 2008; *Chronicle*, March 6-16, 2008; *New York Times*, February 29, 2008, see KAMÉ (2009: 84); <http://afrol.com/articles/28165>, Amin, understanding the protests, 33.

⁵⁸ Amin, "Cameroonian youths," 677; International Crisis Group. *A Fracturing Regime*, 9.

⁵⁹ Susan Dicklitch, "The Southern Cameroons and minority rights in Cameroon," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 1, 2011, 53.

⁶⁰ Amin, "Cameroonian youths," 677; Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226.

⁶¹ International Crisis Group. *A Fracturing Regime*, 9.

capital Yaoundé, Me Francis Djonko, stated that ‘[t]he accused should have at least three days to prepare their defence but that is not being respected in the cases I have had to defend.’⁶²

2.1.2. Limiting freedom of expression

Secondly, the media was targeted. Artists, media outlets and journalists were accused of threatening national stability.⁶³ International media monitoring groups accused the government of censoring the media already during the protests. They also reported on issues where government officials beat and intimidated journalists and confiscated of their equipment.⁶⁴ Major media houses were closed by March 6th, and authorities had already ordered the closure of the independent Equinoxe TV, Radio Equinoxe and Magic FM, all critical against the government or proposed amendment.⁶⁵ The Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Elvis Ngolle stated that the closed media houses ‘either carried out certain broadcasts which are insensitive, provocative, or controversial and obviously certain administrative decisions have been taken in order to ensure that these broadcasts do not endanger the stability or social order.’⁶⁶ Jacques Blaise Mvié, the publisher of the important La Nouvelle Presse weekly was arrested upon the orders of Defence Minister, after a critical article published on February 27th.⁶⁷ Two musicians were thrown in jail for singing songs criticizing the proposed constitutional amendment.⁶⁸

As stated by the international Press Freedom Organization, ‘President Paul Biya and his associates seem to be ready to resort to anything to ensure their political future, including arbitrary arrests of journalists’.⁶⁹ This was precisely the rhetoric President Biya himself also used in his press statement on February 27th.⁷⁰

⁶² The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal.”

⁶³ Da, "Cameroon Political Leadership and Nightmare Episode," 209-226; International Crisis Group. *A Fracturing Regime*, 9.

⁶⁴The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal.”; Reporters sans Frontières. “Cameroon: Newspaper Publisher Held Incommunicado”; Afrol News, “Cameroon media faces crisis,” *afrol News*, March 4, 2008, <http://afrol.com/articles/28205>.

⁶⁵The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal.”; Afrol News, “Cameroon media faces crisis” ; Afrol News, “Cameroon minister closes TV,” *afrol News*, February 22, 2008, <http://afrol.com/articles/28100>.

⁶⁶ The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal.”

⁶⁷ Afrol News, “Cameroon media faces crisis.”

⁶⁸ Afrol News, “Critic musicians still detained,” *afrol News*, April 24, 2008, <http://afrol.com/articles/28701>.

⁶⁹ Reporters sans Frontières. “Cameroon: Newspaper Publisher Held Incommunicado”

⁷⁰ Afrol News, “Cameroon leader alerts overthrow,” *Afrol News*, February 28, 2008, <http://afrol.com/articles/28165>, Amin, “Understanding,” 33.

2.1.3. Arresting political opponents

In his media statement on February 27, President Paul Biya directly attacked his political opponents, saying that ‘certain politicians’ were seeking to overthrow his government with a coup d’état.⁷¹ According to news articles, on Monday 31st of March, the government of Cameroon arrested and detained four top functionaries, including former ministers and highest civil servants.⁷² Said to be part of a larger anti-corruption campaign that in total arrested 125 former ministers, lawmakers, mayors and directors general. A wave of arrests took place just after the February protests.⁷³ Members of the opposition were also arrested, including Mbanga, a well-known member of the Social Democratic Front party, accused from instigating the February protests.⁷⁴

2.2. Repressive mechanisms until the 2011 elections

Repressive measures naturally decreased after the February protests. Nevertheless, repression remained a key tool in the government’s responses to discontent and small uprisings up until 2011. In particular, according to Susan Dicklitch, repression targeted the minority Anglophone population that comprised about 20% of the population and is actively involved in the opposition to the regime.⁷⁵ Torture, repression, detention and murder occurred regularly, especially by the special security forces. Excessive force to disperse demonstrators also continued, resulting in high levels of killings and injuries. According to Dicklitch, this strategy of repressive and authoritarian tendencies has been critical for the stability of the Cameroonian regime.⁷⁶

This repression has also been widely documented in primary sources such as the United States Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Cameroon, reports from Amnesty International and general news articles. For instance, the United States Department of State Country Reports of both 2010 and 2011 clearly describe tortures, arbitrary arrests, harassment and imprisonment of journalists, restrictions in freedoms of speech, press, and association, and impediment of freedom of movement.⁷⁷ Government and security officials

⁷¹ The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal.”

⁷² Afrol News, “Cameroon combats graft,” *afrol News*, April 1, 2008, <http://afrol.com/articles/28448>.

⁷³ Afrol News, “Cameroon combats graft.”

⁷⁴ Afrol News, “Critic musicians still detained”; Dicklitch, “The Southern Cameroons,” 53.

⁷⁵ Dicklitch, “The Southern Cameroons,” 52, 55.

⁷⁶ Dicklitch, “The Southern Cameroons,” 52.

⁷⁷ United States Department of State Diplomacy in Action, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011. Cameroon*, 2011, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2011humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

have been reported to arbitrarily break up or prevent meetings of civil society organizations and human rights groups that were suspected to be critical to government policies.⁷⁸

Multiple news articles can also be found on repressive mechanisms used by the Cameroonian government after the protests up to 2011, detailing obstructing journalists and arresting protestors, opposition leaders journalists.⁷⁹ Critical writers and directors of media outlets were imprisoned also in 2010, some died during imprisonment.⁸⁰ An Amnesty International publication of 2011 stated that, while the official charge was corruption, many sources indicate that ‘dozens of former government officials and heads of state companies’ were prosecuted for political reasons.⁸¹ The US Department of State Country Report of 2011 further underlined the governments’ actions to keep opposition activists and dissidents under surveillance, sometimes detaining family members or neighbours.⁸²

2.3. Concluding remarks

Thus repression was a key mechanism used by the government of Cameroon to stop social and political turmoil. It took the form of police and security forces violently breaking up protests, the arrests of protesters and more in general political opponents and critics, and the illegalization and closing down of critical media platforms.

⁷⁸ Amnesty International. *Republic of Cameroon. Make Human Rights a Reality*. 2013. <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/afr170012013en.pdf>, 13.

⁷⁹ Committee to Protect Journalists, “Cameroon: Security Forces Obstructing Journalists,” *allAfrica*, February 25, 2011 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201103020001.html>; Committee to Protect Journalists, “Cameroon: Local Reporter Detained After Questioning Arrests,” *allAfrica*, April 4, 2011, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201104040740.html>;

Amnesty International, *Republic of Cameroon*, 7,19; Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 Cameroon*, 2011, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4dce15783c.html>.

⁸⁰ Amnesty International, *Urgent Action. Cameroonian Writer Held in Harsh Conditions*, April 2011, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/24000/afr170012011en.pdf>; Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2011*; Martin Nkematabong, “Cameroon: Journalists Urged to Respect Canons,” *allAfrica*, May 4, 2010, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201005040798.html>; International Freedom of Expression Exchange Clearing House, “Cameroon: Author Jailed for Insulting President's Wife,” *allAfrica*, March 29, 2011,

⁸¹ Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Annual Report 2011*.

⁸² United States Department of State Diplomacy in Action, *Cameroon 2012 Human Rights Report*, 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/204309.pdf>.

3. Non-Repressive Measures of the Cameroonian Government

Besides the harsh repression, the Cameroonian government initiated multiple non-repressive measures as response to the protestors' demands and the underlying causes. This chapter will analyse these responses, dividing them into short-term and longer-term oriented responses. The former are policies aimed for direct results, while the latter have results visible only later, such as agricultural development. Some short-term oriented policies have been in effect over the entire period of February 2008 – October 2011. This chapter analyses these non-repressive measures in four steps. First, it describes their content and how they were framed by the Cameroonian government. After that, the theoretical framework that will be used to assess the measures, based upon Eckstein's model, will be introduced. Thirdly, the chapter provides an assessment of the specific non-repressive measures. Lastly, the sufficiency of the government's measures in responding to protestors' demands is determined. This is critical for understanding to what extent the adjustive measures of the Biya government were key in stopping protests and preventing its overthrow, or to what extent repression may be more important.

3.1. An overview of the non-repressive measures

3.1.1. Short-term oriented responses

This section focuses on responses the government has taken to immediately calm the violent protests by decreasing the factors causing the protests.

A. Economic measures: salary raises and price caps and tax cuts

During and in the weeks after the February protests, the government reduced fuel and food prices and raised incomes. This was a standard response used by many countries during the 2007-08 crisis.⁸³ On February 27th, President Biya announced a petrol price reduction from FCFA 600 to 594 per litre. Gas oil prices were reduced from FCFA 600 to FCFA 545, kerosene from FCFA 400 to FCFA 375. The government also lifted an ordinance where drivers had to

⁸³ P.C. Abbott, "Export restrictions as stabilization responses to food crisis," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 94, no. 2 (2012).

pay an FCFA 25.000 for being wrongly parked.⁸⁴ These measures were to become a longstanding and expensive policy: fuel prices were frozen until December 2008, when they were lowered, and have not been adjusted until 2013. In 2012, the plan to stop this policy was withdrawn after heavy strikes.⁸⁵ It thus seems, that even though the amount of reduction in 2008 seems symbolic, it was actually an adjustive policy the government could not refuse to introduce. Its effect increased over the longer term, as international fuel prices kept rising due to inflation.⁸⁶

On March 7th, 2008, President Biya announced a salary rise of 15% for civil servants and military personnel.⁸⁷ Additionally, he announced a suspension of the 5% (import) taxes on cooking oil, fish and rice. An agreement with retailers was reached to lower prices in exchange for these reduced import taxes.⁸⁸ Up to 2011, the reduction of tariffs and subsidization of import

⁸⁴ Amin, "Understanding," 32; Orock Eta, "Cameroon: Government Reduces Fuel Prices," *allAfrica*, February 28, 2008, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200802280664.html>; Legwegon and Fraser, "High food prices in urban Cameroon," 1070; Orock, "Government Reduces Fuel Prices."

⁸⁵ Masami Kojima, "Petroleum Product Pricing and Complementary Policies. Experience of 65 Developing Countries Since 2009," *World Bank Sustainable Energy Department Policy Research Working Paper 6396*, 2013, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/13201/wps6396.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, 38; International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," *IMF Country Report*, no. 12, 237, 2012, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12237.pdf>, 48.

⁸⁶ World Integrated Trade Solution, "Cameroon Product AHS Weighted Average from World in % 2006-2011," accessed December 11, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CMR/StartYear/2006/EndYear/2011/TradeFlow/Import/Indicator/AHS-WGHTD-AVRG/Partner/WLD/Product/all-groups>; International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon: Staff Report for the 2009 Article IV Consultation and Request for disbursement Under the Rapid-Access Component of the Exogenous Shocks Facility," *IMF Country Report*, no. 09, 318, 2009, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2009/cr09318.pdf>, 7.; International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon: 2011 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report; Debt Sustainability Analysis; Informational Annex; Public Information Notice on the Executive Board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for Cameroon," *IMF Country Report*, no. 11, 266, 2011, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2011/cr11266.pdf>.

⁸⁷ Legwegon and Fraser, "High food prices in urban Cameroon," 1070; The New Humanitarian, "Lifting of import taxes fails to reduce food prices," *The New Humanitarian*, April 29, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/77971/cameroon-lifting-import-taxes-fails-reduce-food-prices>; International Monetary Fund, "2009 Article IV Consultation," 7.

⁸⁸ Legwegon and Fraser, "High food prices in urban Cameroon," 1070; The New Humanitarian, "Lifting Import Taxes"; International Monetary Fund, "2009 Article IV Consultation," 7.

on foods remained central in Cameroon's trade policy.⁸⁹ All measures were presented by President Biya as a radical relief package to respond to the protestors' pressing concerns.⁹⁰

B. Food availability measures: food aid and export restrictions

Cameroon released public food stocks and offered subsidies for staple food to support those most food insecure.⁹¹ Export was restricted, causing more food produced in Cameroon to be available for national consumption.⁹² Both measures were omnipresent, standard responses in countries hardest hit by the food price crisis.⁹³

3.1.2. Longer-term oriented responses

Cameroon's agricultural sector performs below potential. Only 20% of its fertile land is used for food production leading to high and unnecessary imports of key staple crops. This made Cameroon highly vulnerable to global food prices. High inefficiencies due to traditional farmer practices are key blockages.⁹⁴ Acknowledging this, the Cameroonian government introduced policies focusing on responses to the protestors' demands that yielded more longer-term and systemic outcomes, related i.e. to agricultural development, food security and livelihood cost-reducing policies.

⁸⁹ International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon: 2011 Article IV Consultation"; International Monetary Fund, "2009 Article IV Consultation"; International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon: 2010 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report; Debt Sustainability Analysis; Informational Annex; Public Information Notice on the Executive Board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for Cameroon," *IMF Country Report*, no. 10, 259, 2011, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr10259.pdf>; International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper."

⁹⁰ The New Humanitarian, "Lifting Import Taxes."

⁹¹ Mulat Demeke, Guendalia Pangrazio, and Materne Maetz, "Country responses to the food security crisis: Nature and preliminary implications of the policies pursued," *Food and Agriculture Organization*, December 2008, http://www.globalbioenergy.org/uploads/media/0812_FAO_-_Country_responses_to_the_crisis.pdf, 5.

⁹² Demeke, Pangrazio and Maetz, "Country responses," 6.

⁹³ Mittal, *The 2008 food price crisis*; Demeke, Pangrazio and Maetz, "Country responses," 6; Gérard Viatte, Jacques De Graaf, Mulat Demeke, Takashi Takahatake, and M. Rey de Arce, "Responding to the food crisis: synthesis of medium-term measures proposed in inter-agency assessments," Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy, 2009; Abbott, "Export restrictions".

⁹⁴ The New Humanitarian, "Food self-sufficient in two years?," *The New Humanitarian*, April 25, 2008, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2008/04/25/food-self-sufficient-two-years>; N.A. Gilbert, S.G. Linyong, and G.M. Divine, "Impact of agricultural export on economic growth in Cameroon: Case of banana, coffee and cocoa," *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(1), 2013, 45-46; International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations," 48; World Bank Group, "Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (current US\$) – Cameroon," last modified 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.CD?locations=CM>; The New Humanitarian, "Food self-sufficient in two years?"

A. Agricultural development: a 2-year emergency program for food self-sufficiency

On April 24th, 2008, the government announced a two-year emergency program to double Cameroon's food production and achieve food self-sufficiency. This program was explicitly linked to the February protests and was launched with the notion of Rabelais Yankam Njomou, advisor on agriculture to the Cameroon government, that '[m]y hope is that the current crisis created by high world food prices would end up having a positive impact for Cameroon by forcing us to become an agriculture-based economy.'⁹⁵ The policy targets both inefficiencies of current practices and expansion of agricultural land.⁹⁶ Concrete interventions and plans included:

- subsidizing fertilizer (whose price doubled during 2008, being a by-product of petroleum) by between 40 and 50% and create free high-quality seed banks where farmers can get good quality seeds;
- subsidizing tractors by 15%;
- handing out 4-5 hectares of fertile land to any farmer showing the capability of using it productively.⁹⁷

An increase of productivity of up to 70% due to the use of modern techniques was expected. Consequently, Cameroon would become both self-sufficient, and a major food exporter, according to World Bank Economist Georges Tchokokam.⁹⁸

B. The IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Cameroon of August 2009

In the IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Cameroon of August 2009, a document prepared by Cameroon in consultation with amongst others the World Bank and IMF, the government of Cameroon announced a vast program to increase agricultural production by

⁹⁵The New Humanitarian, "Food self-sufficient in two years?"; The New Humanitarian, "Farmers "forgotten" by government"; Viatte, De Graaf, Demeke, Takahatake and De Arce, "Responding to the food crisis," 33-34.

⁹⁶The New Humanitarian, "Food self-sufficient in two years?"; The New Humanitarian, "Farmers "forgotten" by government"; Viatte, De Graaf, Demeke, Takahatake and De Arce, "Responding to the food crisis," 33-34.

⁹⁷The New Humanitarian, "Food self-sufficient in two years?"; Viatte, De Graaf, Demeke, Takahatake and De Arce, "Responding to the food crisis," 33-34.

⁹⁸ The New Humanitarian, "Food self-sufficient in two years?"

modernizing the production system. A clear link was drawn to the February 2008 protests.⁹⁹

The program consisted of:

- making the factors of production accessible and available, especially land, water, and agricultural inputs;
- promoting access to technological innovations by encouraging research and awareness campaigns; and
- enhancing the competitiveness of the production sectors.¹⁰⁰

This plan is broader than the 2-year emergency program described above. It also has an expanded timeframe, with identified goals for 2015. Specific actions for key crops and smallholder farmers were identified.¹⁰¹ It is strongly linked to fighting price rises and living costs as seen in 2007-08, stating that ‘reinforcement of local production through various initiatives aimed at promoting sectors that enhance growth, and substituting imports will help limit the impact of imported inflation.’¹⁰² Thus, their interventions are explicitly addressing the protestors’ demands.¹⁰³ Overall, a 5.3% growth in food production was expected during 2010-20, compared to an annual 4.1% growth during 2000-10.¹⁰⁴

C. The National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon

Rice is a key crop in the Cameroonian diet and can be grown in almost all areas of Cameroon. It requires relatively cheap and available manpower.¹⁰⁵ During the Global Food Price Crisis, rice-importing areas in West Africa were hit the hardest.¹⁰⁶ Cameroon is an example. National production only satisfies 20% of demands due to limited scope and high inefficiency. Nevertheless, Cameroon has the potential to be self-sufficient.¹⁰⁷ The National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon, published in March 2009, aims to respond to this.¹⁰⁸ It was the last

⁹⁹ International Monetary Fund, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper,” 66.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 66.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 104-05, 112.

¹⁰² Ibid., 108.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 29, 66, 104.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁵ Compton, Wiggins, and Keats, “Impact of the global food crisis”, 3; Gilbert, Linyong, and Divine, “Impact of agricultural export on economic growth,” 46, 48; The New Humanitarian, “Food self-sufficient in two years?”; International Monetary Fund, “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper,” 48.

¹⁰⁶ Compton, Wiggins, and Keats, “Impact of the global food crisis”, ii.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, *National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon*, March 2009, 3-4.

big national policy response that came forth during 2008-11 with explicit links to the causes of the February protests.¹⁰⁹ The following main strategic measures were identified that together would fivefold production and achieve self-sufficiency:

- support for the acquisition of agricultural inputs, including fertilizers, pesticides and improved seeds;
- support for rice irrigation schemes to enhance yields;
- constitute unions and cooperatives, and provide extension services and financial resources; and
- support processing and marketing of rice, e.g. to decrease the post-harvest losses.¹¹⁰

The strategy includes detailed plans for all subsectors and has as main outcome an increased national production from 65,000 tons in 2008 to 627,250 tons in 2018.¹¹¹ This would be achieved by expanding rice production and lifting yields from 1.5 to 2.5 tons per hectare.¹¹² As a consequence, import would no longer be needed while safety stocks would be built up.¹¹³

D. Development of fuel production targeting the fuel prices

Lastly, in 2009 the government announced considerable support to businesses wishing to invest in biofuel refinery, to enhance the fuel self-sufficiency of the country.¹¹⁴ The construction of an oil yard in Limbe and starting oil production in Elombo were announced.¹¹⁵ It furthermore articulated the aim of boosting growth through strongly developed extractive industries, including importantly oil and gas.¹¹⁶ A rise in production of 30% by 2016 was expected.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 3-4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 3-4.

¹¹¹ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, *National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon*, March 2009, 3-4.

¹¹² Ibid., 12.

¹¹³ Ibid., 3, 18-20.

¹¹⁴ International Monetary Fund, "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," 70, 108.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 18, 105.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 88.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

3.2. Theoretical framework: applying Eckstein's model to assess the measures

According to Eckstein's model, the non-repressive measures described above can be seen to be either diversionary or adjustive. Diversionary mechanisms provide different outlets for aggression and discontent or absorb the emotional tensions in ways that do not address or solve the actual causes of the discontent. Key examples include foreign wars to divert attention from domestic troubles, strengthening nationalist sentiments, and orgiastic excitements or presents to the population, the so-called 'bread and circuses'.¹¹⁸ Adjustive mechanisms, on the other hand, are concessions and compromises: actions that respond to the demands and underlying causes of protests.¹¹⁹

Eckstein's model provides a good framework to analyse government responses. However, it is also an idealized one. For instance, the described repressive measures that targeted the general political opposition that was not so much involved in the protests can also be seen as a diversionary mechanism related to seeking internal enemies to unite against. So can the mentioned rhetoric of Biya on February 27th, saying that 'certain politicians' were seeking to overthrow his government with a coup d'état.¹²⁰

The grey area between diversionary and adjustive mechanisms is even bigger. Here, Eckstein's model should be perceived as a continuum. To practically use Eckstein's model to assess the above interventions, four main categories in this continuum are established. Table 1 provides an overview. Firstly, sometimes, measures seem to be adjustive but actually are diversionary. This includes, for example, measures announced without any resources or actions to realize them, such as the introduction of policies without a budget or personnel, or the introduction of laws without actions to enforce them. Secondly, policy plans that do have a budget, but one that is evidently too limited to implement the aims, should be seen as partly diversionary and partly adjustive: it was clear from the onset that they could not respond sufficiently to the demands. Thirdly, measures that have allocated financial or other resources,

¹¹⁸ Eckstein, *On the Etiology of Internal War*, 155-156; T. Clifton Morgan and Christopher J. Anderson, "Domestic support and diversionary external conflict in Great Britain, 1950-1992," *The Journal of Politics* 61, no. 3, 1999: 799-814; Natsuko H. Nicholls, Paul K. Huth and Benjamin J. Appel, "When is domestic political unrest related to international conflict? Diversionary theory and Japanese foreign policy, 1890-1941," *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2010): 915-937; Frederick Solt, "Diversionary nationalism: Economic inequality and the formation of national pride," *The Journal of Politics* 73, no. 3 (2011): 822-823.

¹¹⁹ Eckstein, *On the Etiology of Internal War*, 156.

¹²⁰ The New Humanitarian, "Not quite back to normal."

but are not effective in implementation, are ineffective adjustive mechanisms. Lastly, measures that have allocated financial or other resources but are ineffective because resources are not properly spent, e.g. due to corruption by government officials, should also be seen as non-effective adjustive mechanisms if those introducing the measures are not involved in the corruption themselves. If they are involved, this indicated that the introduction of measures was never meant to be completely successful, making them at least partly diversionary.

Table 1: overview of introduced categories of non-repressive measures.

Category	Definition
Diversiónary measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide different outlets for aggression and discontent; - Do not address or solve the actual causes of the discontent; - Includes measures that seem to target the actual cause but do not have any resources or actions to realize them.
Partly diversionary and partly adjustive measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target the causes of the discontent but have evidently too limited resources or actions to realize their aims; - The allocated resources are not properly spent through corruption of those who introduced the measures.
Ineffective adjustive measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The allocated resources are not properly spent by those who had to implement the measures, e.g. through corruption of public sector officials or bureaucratic inefficiencies, leading to not reaching the aims; - Other, external factors caused the measures to not reach their aims.
Effective adjustive measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach the aims with which they are introduced.

Because the design and content of policies are considered, diversionary and adjustive measures are differentiated based upon an analysis of aims and potential chances of success. Actual success, however, is critical for the (longer-term) content of the population and thus whether they will pick up the protests again, and will therefore also be analysed in this chapter. The following section assesses the above government measures by analysing their potential and actual effectiveness where possible.

3.3. Assessment of non-repressive measures

3.3.1. Short-term oriented responses

A. Economic measures: salary raises and price caps and tax cuts

Oil price caps remained in effect until 2011. Tax cuts were identified as main factors allowing for contained inflation rates.¹²¹ Figure 3 from World Integrated Trade Solution, a database from the World Bank, shows that the real value of income tariffs dropped in 2009, while rising for some products again afterwards. It also shows the freezing of oil prices. While imports on certain commodities were banned, overall import costs on food products did not decrease, as shown by the weighted average.¹²² Assessments of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) state that these impacts helped to reduce the social tensions.¹²³ While the impacts of not all measures endured until 2011, these changed regulations are clearly concessions and thus adjustive mechanisms.

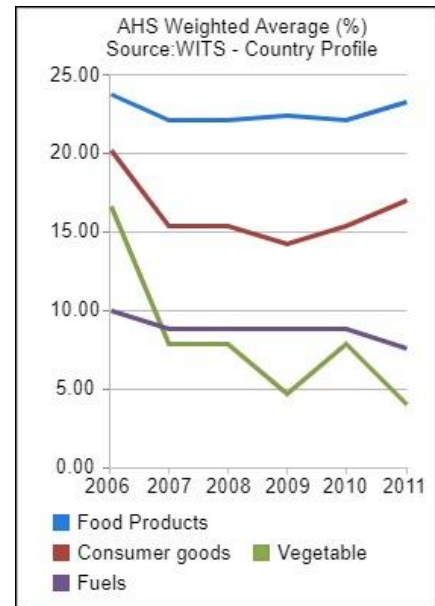


Figure 3: weighted average import tariffs (%) Cameroon, 2006-2011 (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2020).

However, their effectiveness is debated. News articles show that prices in May were similar or even higher than in February.¹²⁴ For instance, the price of rice had increased with 7% since the lift of the 5% import tax. The price of bread has remained unchanged, while the price of fish did decrease.¹²⁵ Some experts pointed at retailers not respecting the deal on lowering commodity prices. As a response, the government acted to close down those retail shops.¹²⁶ This follow-up underlines the fact that this policy was aimed to work and thus is an adjustive measure.

¹²¹ International Monetary Fund, “Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations,” 8; The Recorder Newline, “Party Leader Pleads”; The New Humanitarian, “Not quite back to normal.”

¹²² World Integrated Trade Solution, “Cameroon Product AHS Weighted Average.”

¹²³ International Monetary Fund, “2009 Article IV Consultation,” 7; The New Humanitarian, “Lifting Import Taxes”;

¹²⁴ The New Humanitarian, “Lifting Import Taxes”.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

The effectiveness of the policy seemed, however not to be entirely in the government's hands. As Jean Marc Mbarga, a rice retailer in Douala stated: '[t]he government can't make us sell at a lower price until we can buy at a lower price.'¹²⁷ Other experts, such as Cameroonian economist Georges Tchokokam, note that: 'as long as world demand is higher than supply then removing import taxes will do nothing to resolve the problem,' and supply was highly undermined by China's export restrictions.¹²⁸ IMF estimates of 2009, however, state that the tax exemption, together with programs to boost agricultural productivity, kept inflation rates below 3% until after 2011.¹²⁹

This significant reduction in inflation by 2009 is shown in figure 4. It also shows that inflation rose after September 2010 again, when global food prices increased even more, thus indicating a net positive result for Cameroon.¹³⁰ The "CPI inflation" line indicates the Consumer Price Index, the weighted average price of goods, which can be associated with the real cost of living. A similar trend is visible.

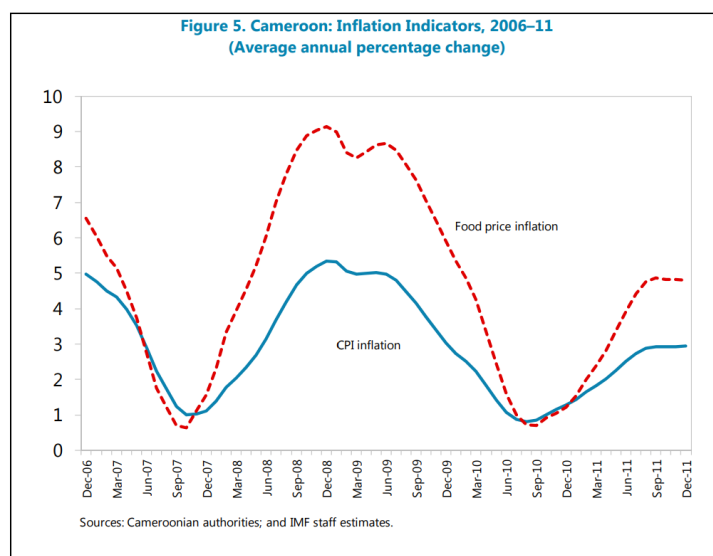


Figure 4: Cameroon Inflation Indicators, 2006-2011 in average annual percentage change (IMF, 2012).

Figure 5 with data from the FAO also shows that while actual food prices (based upon inflation rates) rose sharply during 2008, this rise decreased during 2009, while increasing again in 2010.¹³¹ It can be concluded that the policies regarding food and commodity tax cuts were partly effective adjustive measures, effective not during the entire period, while the policies on fuel price caps were effective adjustive measures.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ International Monetary Fund, "2009 Article IV Consultation," 112; International Monetary Fund. "Cameroon: 2011 Article IV Consultation," 11.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 10; Lagi, Bertrand and Bar-Yam, The food crises and political instability in North Africa and the Middle East, 3.

¹³¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, "national-consumer-prices.csv," accessed December 11, 2020, <https://data.apps.fao.org/catalog/dataset/prices-cameroon-national-1998-2011/resource/12f3d6e0-c8e3-4d85-ac34-9a967f101968>.

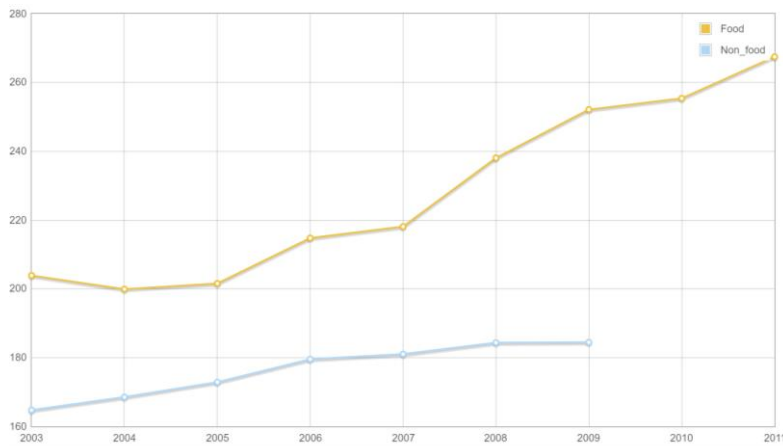


Figure 5: Food prices and non-food prices in Cameroon, 2003-2011 (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2020).

B. Food availability measures: food aid and export restrictions

According to multiple authors and reports, food aid and export restrictions were effective adjustive measures as they lowered the national food prices due to enhanced supply.¹³²

3.3.2. Longer-term oriented responses

A. Agricultural development: a 2-year emergency program for food self-sufficiency

Effectiveness of the 2-year emergency program was undermined predominantly by the allocated resources, being US\$1.73 million.¹³³ According to Tchokokam, this was ‘hardly enough to pay all the civil servants working in the ministry’, let alone give out seeds and subsidies.¹³⁴ According to Rabelais Yankam Njomou, a US\$201.13 million budget would be required to successfully implement the program.¹³⁵ Consequently, a year after the government program news articles reported that farmers were ‘forgotten’ by their political leaders, not receiving the financial support and training pledged and needed to enhance productivity and move beyond subsistence farming.¹³⁶ Hozier Nana Chimi, representing the local NGO Support to Local Development Initiatives stated: ‘[f]or the moment, we have seen absolutely no

¹³² Mittal, *The 2008 food price crisis*; Demeke, Pangrazio and Maetz, “Country responses,” 6; Gérard Viatte, Jacques De Graaf, Mulat Demeke, Takashi Takahatake, and M. Rey de Arce, “Responding to the food crisis: synthesis of medium-term measures proposed in inter-agency assessments,” Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy, 2009; Abbott, “Export restrictions.”

¹³³ The New Humanitarian, “Food self-sufficient in two years?”; The New Humanitarian, “Farmers “forgotten” by government.”

¹³⁴ The New Humanitarian, “Boost maize production or face food crisis, local NGO warns,” *The New Humanitarian*, December 15, 2008.

¹³⁵ The New Humanitarian, “Food self-sufficient in two years?”

¹³⁶ The New Humanitarian, “Farmers “forgotten” by government.”

realisation of this plan on the ground. [...] It appears this vast programme was announced just to calm people's anger at the time, but it has all remained merely intentions.¹³⁷ Thus, because of its clearly insufficient resources, the program must be perceived as a partly adjustive partly diversionary mechanism used by the government.

Bureaucracy and corruption have also undermined its effectiveness.¹³⁸ For instance, Thomas Etoa, president of a federation of farmers' cooperatives in Essé, told the New Humanitarian that '[w]hen we want to get any assistance from a government ministry, we run into a mountain of red tape.'¹³⁹ In December 2008, a report by the Citizens' Association for the Defense of Collective Interests (ACDIC) concluded that 62% funds earmarked has been 'misappropriated' by civil servants from the Ministry of Agriculture.¹⁴⁰ Charges were denied by Sikapin Paul, coordinator of the Ministry's maize programme. Nevertheless, the Governments' National Commission Against Corruption launched an investigation, indicating at least some willingness to respond to this corruption.¹⁴¹ Consequently, this 2-year emergency plan should be seen as a partly diversionary and partly not highly effective adjustive measure.

A. The IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Cameroon of August 2009

The IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, on the other hand, has a detailed cost framework with increased agricultural expenditures. Financing for rural projects increased from US\$9.3 million in 2009, to US\$ 12 million by 2014.¹⁴² The percentage of public expenditure in the rural sector would increase significantly, from 5.6% in 2009 to 9% in 2020.¹⁴³ Additionally, as corruption is a general problem in Cameroon's public sector, the IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper can be identified as partly effective adjustive measures.¹⁴⁴ Because the government has not used this strategy as propaganda in its media outlets or to stop discontent, it cannot rightfully be stated to be a partly diversionary mechanism.

¹³⁷The New Humanitarian, "Farmers "forgotten" by government."

¹³⁸ The New Humanitarian, "Boost maize production."

¹³⁹The New Humanitarian, "Farmers "forgotten" by government."

¹⁴⁰The New Humanitarian, "Farmers "forgotten" by government"; The New Humanitarian, "Boost maize production."

¹⁴¹The New Humanitarian, "Farmers "forgotten" by government"; The New Humanitarian, "Boost maize production."

¹⁴² Ibid., 114.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 124.

¹⁴⁴ Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2008*, 138-141.

B. The National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon

The National Strategy for Rice Growing includes details on significant amounts of financial and human resources, the institutional frameworks with involved ministries, companies and civil society groups, and an overview of allocated public financial investments.¹⁴⁵ Consequently, the National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon can be labelled an adjustive mechanism.

An FAO report on rice farming practices in Sub-Saharan Africa noted that the strategy had promoted best practices across the value chain, strengthened partnerships amongst stakeholders, disseminated new seed varieties and introduced irrigation systems. Together, this led to substantial improvements to local rice production.¹⁴⁶ Figure 6, with yearly numbers of Cameroon's rice production shows clear progress. While only half of the target production value was eventually reached in 2018, the significant progress during 2007-11 makes the National Strategy rather an effective adjustive measure than a partly effective adjustive measure.¹⁴⁷

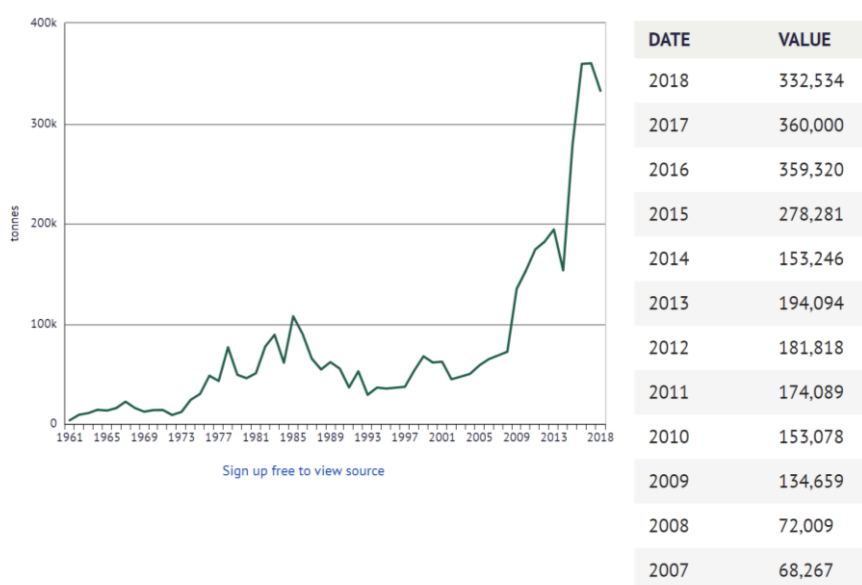


Figure 6: Cameroonian rice production in tons per year, 1961-2018 (Knoema, 2020).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 18.

¹⁴⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization, *Knowledge exchange on the promotion of efficient rice farming practices and value chains in sub-Saharan Africa through South-South Cooperation*, (2018), 2.

¹⁴⁷ Knoema, "Cameroon - Rice, paddy production quantity," accessed December 11, 2020, [https://knoema.com/atlas/Cameroon/topics/Agriculture/Crops-Production-Quantity-tonnes/Rice-paddy-production#:~:text=In%202018%2C%20rice%2C%20paddy%20production.at%20332%2C534%20tonnes%20in%202018](https://knoema.com/atlas/Cameroon/topics/Agriculture/Crops-Production-Quantity-tonnes/Rice-paddy-production#:~:text=In%202018%2C%20rice%2C%20paddy%20production.at%20332%2C534%20tonnes%20in%202018;); Food and Agriculture Organization, "Crops." *FAOSTAT*, accessed December 14, 2020, <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QC>.

B. Development of fuel production targeting the fuel prices

Before the October 2011 elections, the effects of the policies to enhance fuel production were not yet visible. Imports of oil kept rising while the total revenue of Cameroon obtained from oil decreased from 7.4% of GDP in 2008 to 5.4% in 2011.¹⁴⁸ As multiple years of construction are needed before production can start, this is not irregular. Because of the invested resources and late results, these measures can be seen as adjustive measures whose effects were not yet visible in the period under consideration.

3.3.3. Overview of assessments of key government responses

Table 2 below summarizes the main assessments made of the specific government measures taken by applying Eckstein's model, as explained above.

Table 2: summary of implemented non-responsive measures by the government and their classification

Measure	Classification of measure	Short explanation on classification
Short-term oriented		
Salary raises	Effective adjustive measure	- Measure targeting demands implemented effectively.
Price caps on fuel	Effective adjustive measure	- Measure targeting demands implemented effectively.
Price caps, tax reductions & subsidies on food	Partly effective adjustive measure	- Measure targeting demands implemented partially effectively: - some food prices continued to rise; - but overall results of lower food inflation & CPI inflation, though not during the entire period; - government follow-ups to secure effectiveness further indicate adjustive nature

¹⁴⁸ International Monetary Fund, "Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations," 8, 11.

Release of public food stocks	Effective adjustive measure	- Measure targeting demands implemented effectively.
Restriction of export	Effective adjustive measure	- Measure targeting demands implemented effectively.
Longer-term oriented		
2-year emergency program for food self-sufficiency	Partly diversionary and partly not highly effective adjustive measure.	- Measure targets demand but evidently too little resources allocated to be fully implemented, making it partly diversionary.
IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Cameroon of August 2009	Partly effective adjustive measure	- Measure targets demands and has clear resource allocation for implementation; - However, corruption most probably undermined effectiveness and investments still too limited to reach desired outcomes.
National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon	Effective adjustive measure	- Measure targeting demands implemented effectively, with clear resources and good results; - Main policy target of 2018 was not reached, but key progress was made during 2008-11 indicating the effectiveness of policy during the analysed period.
Policies targeting fuel prices	Adjustive measure with no effects yet by 2011	- Clear plans to enhance fuel production to reduce prices, but outcomes on fuel prices & self-sufficiency (as projected) not visible before the 2011 elections.

3.4. Sufficiency of government's adjustive measures

Above, the effectiveness of specific government interventions was identified. However, even if the aims of specific policies are reached, their sufficiency in responding to people's demands are critical to understanding their importance in stopping protests. Thus, the sufficiency of the government's package of adjustive measures is critical for understanding to what extent the government's adjustive measures were key in stopping protests, or to what extent repression may be more important.

To give an idea of the sufficiency of the measures, an analysis has been done on the overall indicators addressed with the policies described above: food availability; food production and self-sufficiency; stability in food production, availability and prices, related to vulnerability to food shocks; and the general costs of living. An in-depth background analysis has been done, included in annex 1.1. A summary table on the key trends per indicator is provided in annex 1.2.

The correlation-causation tension that exists in this analysis is important: as there are no reports on whether certain policies have led to certain outcomes, the statements below are indicating potential causal links between the government's actions and key trends based on what these responses targeted. From the analysis (annex 1), it can be concluded that in certain areas, the entire package of the government's adjustive measures can be reasonably linked to enhanced progress in the key underlying causes of the February 2008 protests. Especially, an increase in agricultural production and production stability, and a decrease in living costs and inflation can potentially be linked to the government's interventions. While part of this production has been used for national consumption, trends in the import-export balance do not show a significant increase of self-sufficiency of Cameroon's food systems during 2008-11. This means that the government's adjustive measures have not led to lower vulnerability to global food prices.

All in all, protestors' demands mostly focused on living costs, predominantly fuel and food, which have led the government to implement multiple measures driving underlying food availability, production, stability, self-sufficiency and shock vulnerability. While not all these indicators were effectively improved by government interventions, the costs of living were. Therefore, it can be concluded that the sufficiency of the government actions to reach their aims was not high, but in terms of the protestors' demands, it was significant.

3.4.1. The limits to responding to demands

The non-repressive responses were clearly limited to non-political demands: the constitutional amendment extending Biya's potential reign time that triggered the protests, was passed on April 10th, 2008. On the same day, another amendment was passed to give the president immunity from decisions made during his tenure as president.¹⁴⁹ As a response, the SDF opposition party called out a 'day of mourning' for democracy.¹⁵⁰ Thus, the protests did not lead to more but less democracy, as the free press was restricted, aims to strengthen government control were not stopped and the president was given immunity.

3.5. Concluding remarks

While non-repressive responses were limited to the demands focusing on the costs of living, the government had, both in the direct aftermath of the protests and later, implemented multiple measures aimed to respond to protestors demands. This included short-term oriented measures, aimed to get fast results and relief, and longer-term oriented measures, aimed to tackle the root causes of the high living costs via agricultural and fuel-industry development and self-sufficiency. Due to a lack of resources, corruption and bureaucracy, not all of these measures were effective adjustive measures: some are classified as partly diversionary measures. Sufficiency, looking at the aggregated results of the entire package of measures, was measures not significant, especially for the development- and self-sufficiency-oriented. Nevertheless, the package of government responses can be said to have led to a decrease of living costs and inflation. As this was the main demand of the protestors, the government has, to some extent, responded with effective concessions to the February protests' demands. The minimum amount of information on perceived effectiveness shows that this was not, however, always perceived to be sufficient.

¹⁴⁹ The New Humanitarian, "Rapid intervention military unit."

¹⁵⁰ Amin, "Understanding," 35.

Conclusion

In 2008, the Global Food Price Crisis shook up many countries across the developing world. In Cameroon, the February 2008 protests led to widespread disruption. While countries with similar uprisings faced government overthrow or civil war, President Biya was able to restore order. No major uprising occurred before Biya's mandate to rule was renewed in the 2011 elections. To understand how the government succeeded in doing this, this research examined government responses to the protests by applying the framework developed by Harry Eckstein. This paper has contributed to the current historiographic debate by showing the practical application of Eckstein's idealized model. As reality is more complex than Eckstein's three categories of "effective repression", "diversionary mechanisms" and "adjustive mechanisms", the paper showed the need of applying Eckstein's model as a continuum, especially between diversionary and adjustive mechanisms. For instance, if there are insufficient allocated resources or actions taken to implement and enforce measures, measures that seem adjustive are actually partly diversionary measures. Moreover, Eckstein's model does not take into account the effectiveness of adjustive measures. This is crucial as adjustive measures cannot rightfully be said to be a key strategy enabling the government to restore order if they are unable to effectively respond to protestors' demands. People's discontent would not be decreased by ineffective actions. This paper analysed both the effectiveness of specific measures, and the sufficiency of the total package of the government's adjustive measures. To do so, additional categories of effective and partly-effective adjustive measures were introduced in Eckstein's model.

The application of Eckstein's model to the February 2008 protests has shown that the Cameroonian government used harsh repression to stop social and political turmoil. Police and security forces violently broke up the protests, many were arrested, and many media platforms were criminalized and closed. Nevertheless, repression alone was insufficient for the government to restore order. This is illustrated by, for instance, the violent protests that broke out when the government tried to undo the fuel price cuts it had implemented in 2008, causing the government to revert course. Consequently, this research underlines the importance of focusing on concessional actions when analysing government strategies to living-cost-induced uprisings, something yet underrepresented in the historiographic debate.

From February 2008 to October 2011, the government implemented a package of short-term and longer-term oriented policy responses to the protestors' demands, focusing on

lowering living costs, and achieving agricultural development and enhanced self-sufficiency. Short-term oriented responses included salary raises in the public sector; price caps and tax cuts on commodities; the release of public food stocks; and export restrictions. Longer-term oriented policy responses included a 2-year emergency program for food self-sufficiency; the IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Cameroon of 2009; the National Strategy for Rice Growing in Cameroon; and the development of the fuel production industry. Only the 2-year emergency program for food self-sufficiency can be classified as partly diversionary due to an evident lack of allocated resources. The development of the fuel production industry was an adjustive measure whose effects were not yet visible by 2011. All other measures were (partly) effective adjustive measures. Effectiveness was limited by insufficient allocation of resources, corruption, and external factors such as the global food market.

The package of the government's adjustive measures aimed to improve food availability, agricultural production and productivity, self-sufficiency, food price stability and reduced costs of living. In terms of general costs of living, food prices, food production and food production variability there are clear positive trends that can be linked to the government's actions. There are, however, no significant effects observable in the trends on self-sufficiency, food availability or agricultural productivity. Consequently, the package of government measures was insufficient to have a significant positive impact in many of the targeted areas. Nevertheless, all in all, the government's adjustive measures, despite their inefficiency and ineffectiveness in reaching some of the intermediate outcomes, were effective in responding to the demands of lowering living costs. The government in no way responded to the protestors' political: freedom of the press was further restricted and government control further strengthened through immunity.

It can thus be said that the Biya government was able to quell social unrest via repression and partly effective adjustive measures that responded to the contextual causes of the Global Food Price Crisis. This was the key strategy that enabled the government to retain power.

By showing how Eckstein's framework can be practically applied, and by underlining the importance of adjustive mechanisms or governmental concessions in allowing governments to regain control, this paper provides a basis to compare governmental strategies in other countries, both during the Global Food Price Crisis and other events. Via a comparative analysis, it can shed light on why other governments were overthrown during the 2008 crisis and the subsequent years. While repression was undoubtedly essential, responding to the underlying causes of protests were critical for the Biya government to remain in power. Where

governments were overthrown, a lack of effective adjustive mechanism could thus be a key explanation.

This research has two main limitations. Firstly, due to unavailability of progress and impact reports of the different adjustive measures taken, and their impact on commodity availability, production, self-sufficiency, and price reductions, this research was only able to provide indicative causal linkages to government actions and the key analysed trends. Secondly, this research has not included an analysis of perceived effectiveness. Ultimately, it is the perceived effectiveness that can be seen as a determinant of renewed protests as, even if policies are effective, the protestors' perception of this effectiveness mainly affects their discontent. This is only partly based upon the actual effectiveness analysed. Perceived effectiveness has not been investigated thoroughly in this research simply due to a lack of sources and literature on this. Additional qualitative and quantitative research, including interviews or surveys amongst the Cameroonian people, is critical to get a better insight in whether it was in the end indeed the effectiveness of government policies or the fear of repression that stopped protestors from raising their voice. Because of the existing repression, it is important that this research is set up in such a way that people feel safe to express their opinions.

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ANNEX 1 – Background analysis on sufficiency of Cameroon’s adjustive measures.

This annex provides the background analysis done to determine the sufficiency of the adjustive measures of the Cameroonian government implemented as a response to the February 2008 protests. To give an idea of the sufficiency of the measures it has analysed the overall indicators that the government has aimed to address and improved in the policies analysed in this research. These key indicators include: food availability; food production and self-sufficiency; stability in food production, availability and prices, related to vulnerability to food shocks; and the general costs of living. Annex 1.1 provides the key data and a short explanation on the seen trends for each indicator. Annex 1.2 provides a summary table of the key outcomes of the analysis. This includes an assessment indicating if observed positive trends can rightfully be attributed to the package of the government’s adjustive measures. It is critical to look at all these indicators that are targeted by the government strategies to respond to the protestors’ demands because:

- Availability itself says little about accessibility to consumers and price: for the latter it is key to look at inflation, consumer price index and food prices;
- General agricultural productivity is a key driver of self-sufficiency, but production itself does not indicate self-sufficiency: this relates to the types of crops produced, and whether these lead to increased export or decreased import of products.
- Self-sufficiency was a target as it is critical to reduce vulnerability to external price shocks;
- Variability in per capita food supply and production, as well as the value of food imports over total merchandise exports are critical indicators to measure stability and thus vulnerability to (external) shocks, such as the Global Food Price Crisis. This is related to self-sufficiency in terms of external shocks, but presents a more overall measures.

1.1. Underlying Data

1.1.1. Food availability & access

In terms of overall food availability and access, Cameroon has only improved in the years 2008-2011. This can be seen in the below figures from the FAO on prevalence of undernourishment, and average dietary energy supply adequacy. Together with data on food insecurity, these are the key indicators for food availability and access. Unfortunately, yearly data on food insecurity does not exist for Cameroon before 2015. Nevertheless, the figures do not show an increased trend after 2008.¹⁵¹ Therefore, it cannot be rightfully stated that the additionally implemented

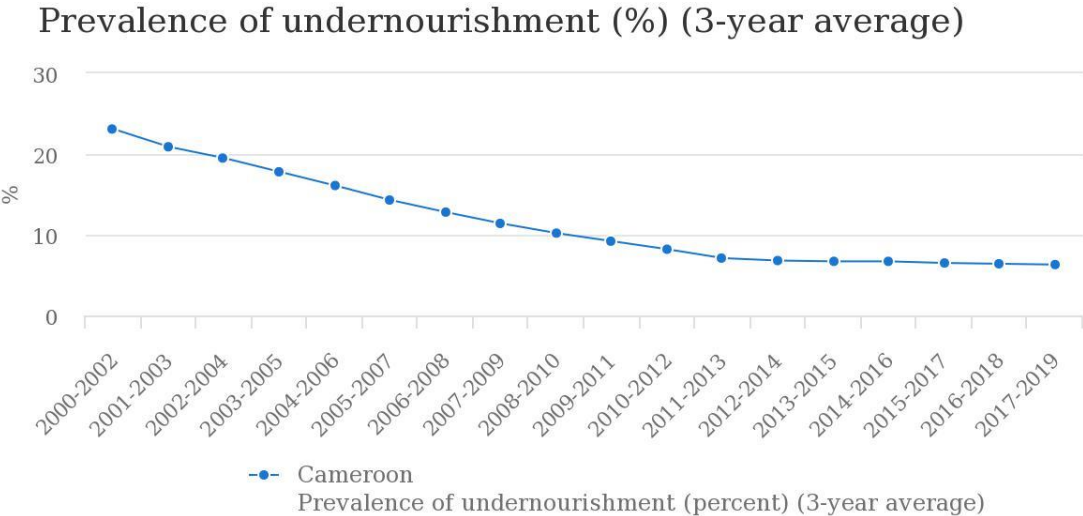
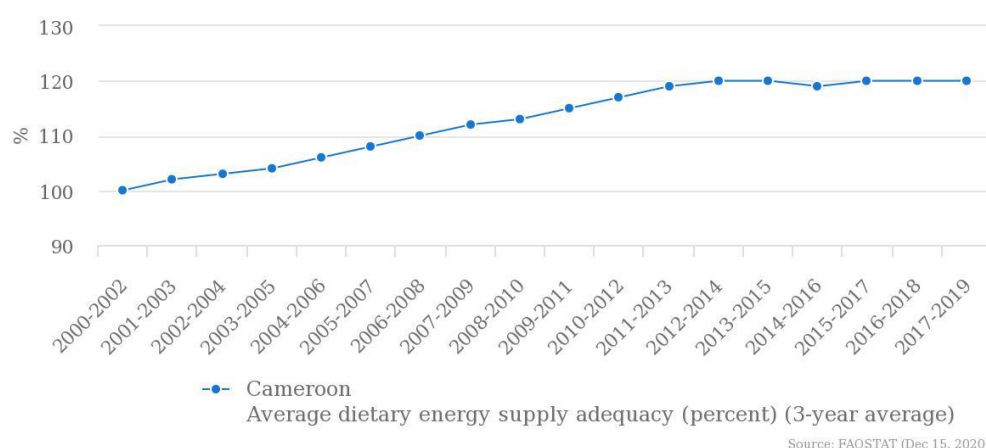


Figure 7: prevalence of undernourishment, %, 3-year average (FAO, 2020).

government actions after 2008 can be linked to this increased trend. This does not mean, however, that the trend would have been the same without the government interventions: it is possible that government interventions of 2008-2011 supported the seen trend, and without them the figures would show less optimistic.

¹⁵¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, “Cameroon,” *FAOSTAT*, accessed December 14, 2020, <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#country/32>.

Average dietary energy supply adequacy (%) (3-year average)

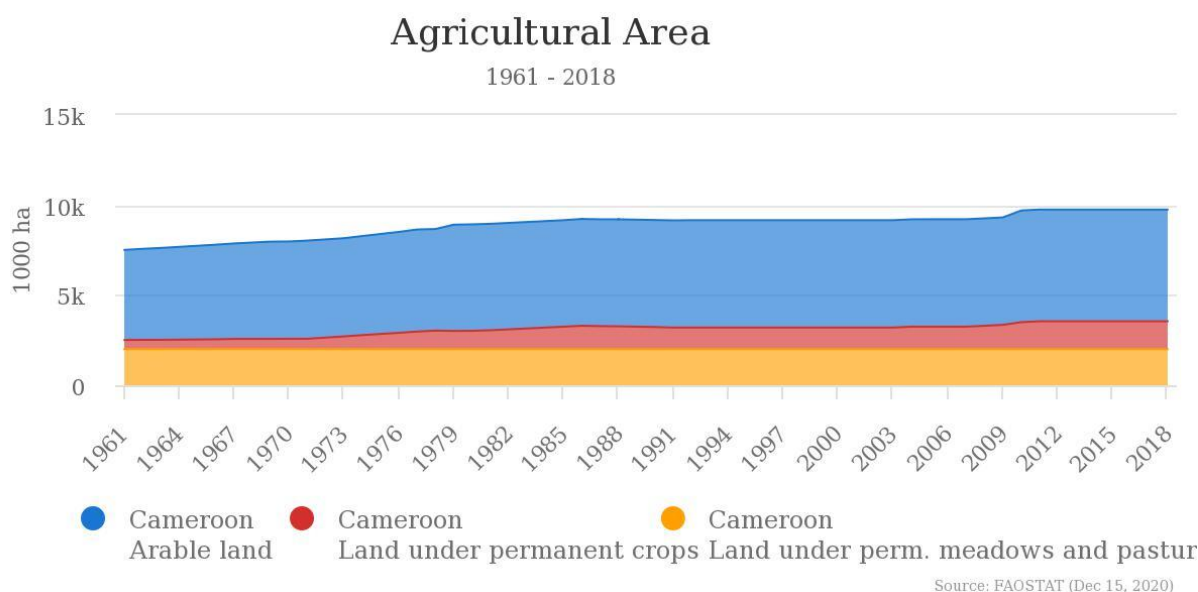


Source: FAOSTAT (Dec 15, 2020)

Figure 8: average dietary energy supply adequacy, %, 3-year average (FAO, 2020).

1.1.2. Food production & productivity

One of the areas the agricultural policies focused on is using more of the available fertile land of Cameroon. This is also linked to food production and supply levels. Here, some remarkable growth can be seen in 2009-2010 specifically, as shown in the below figure of the FAO.¹⁵²



Source: FAOSTAT (Dec 15, 2020)

Figure 9: extent of agricultural area Cameroon, 1961-2018 (FAO, 2020).

This increase is shown even better in the below zoomed in figure from the World Bank. It includes land that is arable, under permanent crops, and under permanent pastures. Nevertheless, this still falls short to the potential fertile land being used for agriculture. In 2008, as stated in chapter 1, less than 20% of its fertile land is used for food production. The rise

¹⁵² Ibid.

shown here is an increase from around 92,000 km² to 97,5000 km², or to around 1.2% of the fertile land.¹⁵³



Figure 10: Agricultural land (sq. km), 2003-2014 (World Bank Group, 2020).

The production of food, measured with the food production index, is shown in the figure below from the World Bank. This figure shows, strikingly, that the increase in food production became larger (the curve steeper) during the years 2008-09, while its increase became less again in 2009-10, with a small enhanced increase in 2010-11.¹⁵⁴ This indicates that in 2008-09 food production was enhanced at higher rates than before, which can be attributed to the described government policy to enhance production, while this was no longer the case afterwards. Increased food production can come from increase arable land or increased efficiency.

¹⁵³ World Bank Group, “Agricultural Land (sq. km) – Cameroon,” last modified 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.AGRI.K2?end=2014&locations=CM&start=2003>.

¹⁵⁴ World Bank Group, “Food production index (2004-2006 = 100) – Cameroon,” last Modified 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.PRD.FOOD.XD?end=2014&locations=CM&start=2003>.

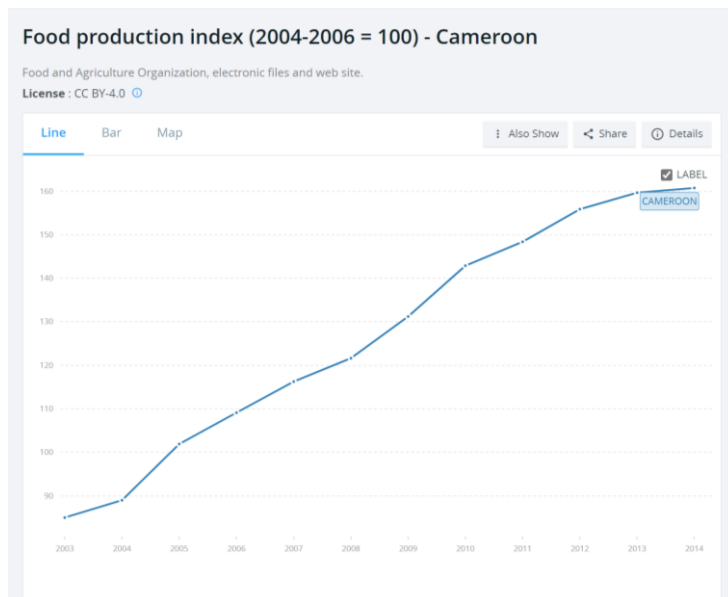


Figure 11: food production index (including food crops that are considered edible and that contain nutrients) (World Bank Group, 2020).

For efficiency in food productivity itself, the international Agricultural Total Factor Productivity Index gives an idea of yearly trends per country. Data from the US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service on this for Cameroon has been visualized in below graph.¹⁵⁵ The Agricultural Total Factor Productivity Index is calculated with taking 2005 as the baseline, having value 100. The figure below shows this index for 2005-13. As is clear, efficiency in productivity rose during these years in Cameroon. Especially interesting here, is

¹⁵⁵ United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, “International Agricultural Productivity,” accessed December 11, 2020, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/international-agricultural-productivity/>.

again the steepness of the curve: during the years 2008-11, the curve is not very significantly steeper than in the previous years, though there is an increase visible in 2009-10.

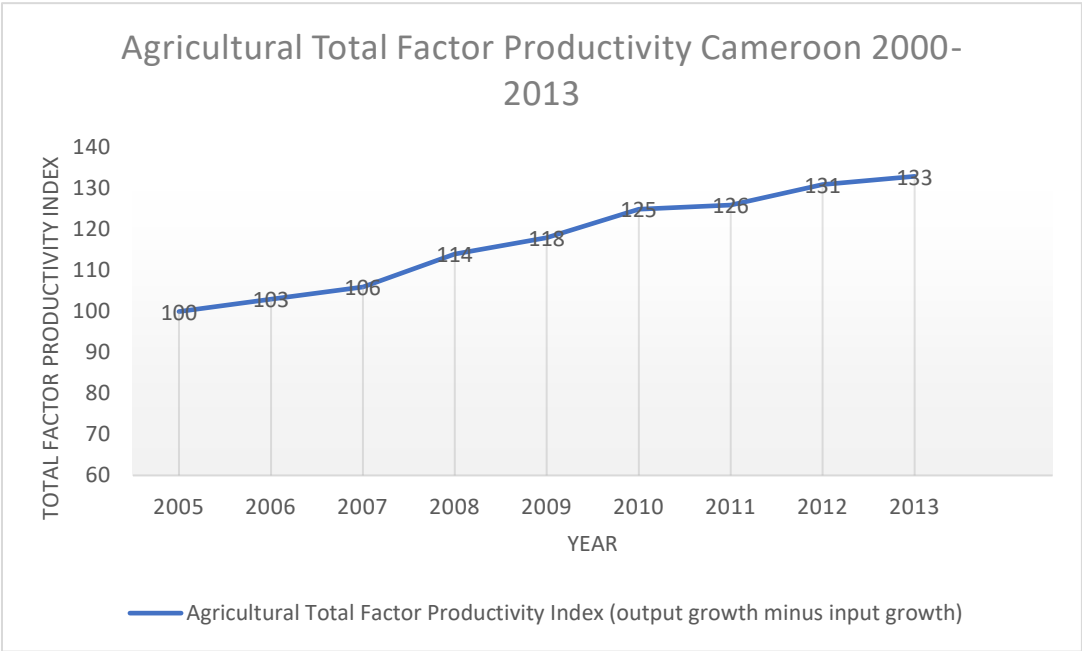


Figure 12: Agricultural Total Factor Productivity Index (US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2020).

1.1.3. Economic and food stability

The figure below on average food supply variability is another key indicator to measure annual fluctuations in the per capita food supply, that generally result from a combination of instability and responses in production, trade, consumption, and storage, in addition to changes in government policies such as trade restrictions, taxes and subsidies, stockholding, and public

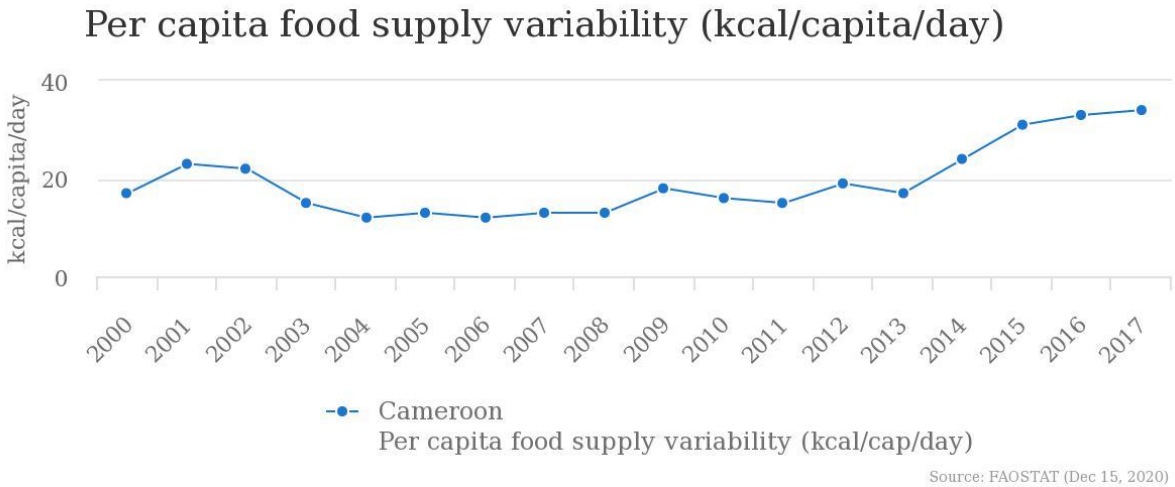


Figure 13: per capita food supply variability, kcal/capita/day (FAOSTAT, 2020).

distribution. It thus is an indicator of the effect the overall government policies have had on food supply.¹⁵⁶ When the graph goes up, this means that the food supply per capita increased, while it decreased with a decreasing curve. Here, it is seen that in 2008-09, the graph increased, while it decreased again between 2009-11. Thus, there is no attributable impact of additional government actions.

The per capita food production variability (I\$ per person constant 2004-06) is the total value of annual food production variability, thus change, in international dollars, divided by the total population (kcal/capita/day) (I\$ per person constant 2004–06), determined over a 3-year average. It is a key source of linking agricultural production with food security and by the FAO is used to determine economic and political stability.¹⁵⁷ A high variability means that food prices, and thus supply, are not stable and this is generally associated with higher levels of food insecurity. The figure below from the FAO shows that in 2008-10, this variability highly decreases, thus indicating more stability and security in production, potentially from the government policies also targeting this.¹⁵⁸

Per capita food production variability (I\$ per person constant 2004-06)

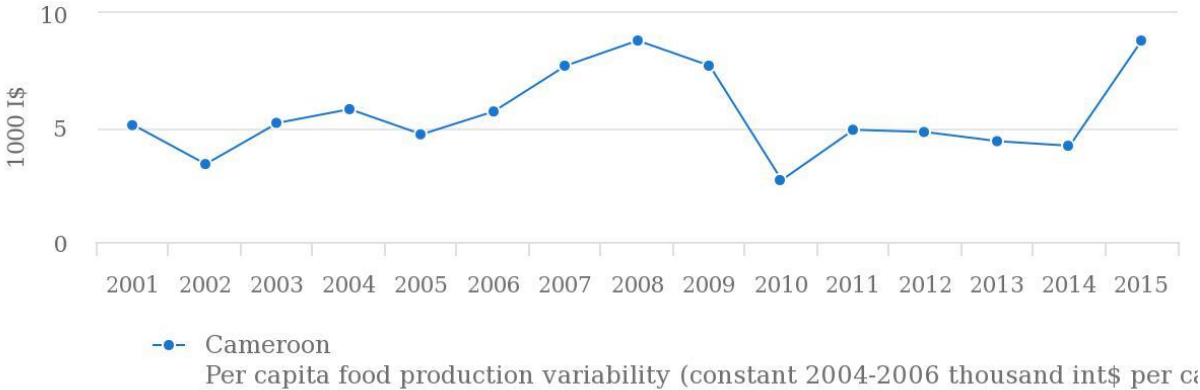


Figure 14: Per capita food production variability, I\$ per person constant 2004-06 (FAO, 2020).

1.1.4. Food-specific import-export balance and self-sufficiency

Self-sufficiently, and with that vulnerability to external shocks in the global food market as those underlying the February 2008 protests, is measured best by considering the import-export

¹⁵⁶ International Dietary Data Expansion Project, “Per capita food supply variability standard deviations of kcal/capita over time,” last modified 2018,

<https://index.nutrition.tufts.edu/data4diets/indicator/capita-food-supply-variability>.

¹⁵⁷Hongxing Yao, Mohammed Ismail Alhussam, Omar Abu Risha and Bilal Ahmed Memon, "Analyzing the Relationship between Agricultural FDI and Food Security: Evidence from Belt and Road Countries," *Sustainability* 12, no. 7, 2020, 2906; Food and Agriculture Organization, “Cameroon.”

¹⁵⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, “Cameroon.”

balance and value of food imports over total merchandise exports. Considering this, and as stated by the IMF, Cameroon will for a long time continue to depend upon fluctuated prices in primary products, amongst which foods, an unstable foreign exchange rate, and changing oil prices due to its pattern of export: many of the food and fuel products it relies upon are being imported.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, no big increase in self-sufficiency due to, potentially, the government policies is visible from this data.

Table 3: Cameroon's food products import, export, import share and export share between 2006-2011.

	Import Food Products USD Thousands ¹⁶⁰	Export Food Products ¹⁶¹	Import Product share (%,The share of total merchandise trade (export or import) accounted for by the product in a given year.) ¹⁶²	Export Product Share (The share of total merchandise trade (export or import) accounted for by the product in a given year.) ¹⁶³
2006	129,998.31	293,468.71	4.13	8.21
2007	168,912.67	317,131.88	5.17	7.50
2008	203,389.63	510,503.32	4.92	24.00
2009	206,260.02	681,463.04	5.44	39.34
2010	225,270.88	777,835.85	4.39	20.06
2011	312,703.10	678,265.32	6.16	31.59

The value of food imports over total merchandise exports indicator provides a measure of vulnerability to shocks and global prices and thus stability and to some extent also self-sufficiency. It captures the captures the adequacy of foreign exchange reserves to pay for food imports, which has implications for national food security depending on production and trade patterns. A higher percentage, indicates a higher vulnerability to shocks. Thus, it can be seen that between 2008-11 and actually until 2013, this percentage actually increased, indicating an

¹⁵⁹ International Monetary Fund, "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," 51, 105.

¹⁶⁰ World Integrated Trade Solution, "Cameroon Food Products Exports, Imports, Tariffs by country and region 2009," accessed December 11, 2020, https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CMR/Year/2009/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/ALL/Product/16-24_FoodProd.

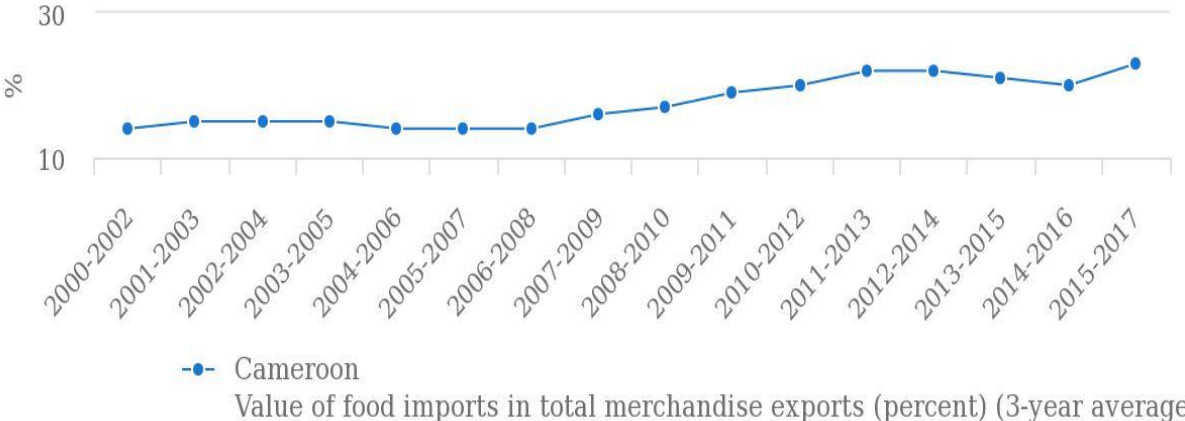
¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

increasing inadequacy to respond to international food price changes and no enhanced self-sufficiency.¹⁶⁴

Value of food imports over total merchandise exports (%) (3-year average)



Source: FAOSTAT (Dec 15, 2020)

Figure 15: Value of food imports over total merchandise exports, %, 3-year average (FAO, 2020).

1.1.5. General costs of living and inflation of general living costs

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is, as explained above, the weighted average price of goods. It is one of the key indicators to measure the real cost of living. The below figure shows the IMF Consumer Price Index measures for the years 2007-13. Clearly, there is a great rise in CPI during 2007-08. There is also a great decrease, up until 2010, after which the prices rose again to a new high in 2011. Importantly, this new rise can be associated with the second big global increase in food prices, as shown in chapter 1. What is striking, is that while global food prices rose in 2010-11 to even higher levels than 2007-08 (see chapter 1), the CPI increase of 2010-11 in Cameroon is in fact lower, indicating that changes in production, import, export or government policies regarding price caps and taxes here supported significant mitigation of increased consumer prices. Besides that, this figure shows clearly that living costs decreased sharply during 2008-10.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization, “Cameroon.”

¹⁶⁵ CEIC Data, “Cameroon Forecast: Consumer Price Index Growth,” last modified 2020, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/cameroon/forecast-consumer-price-index-growth>.

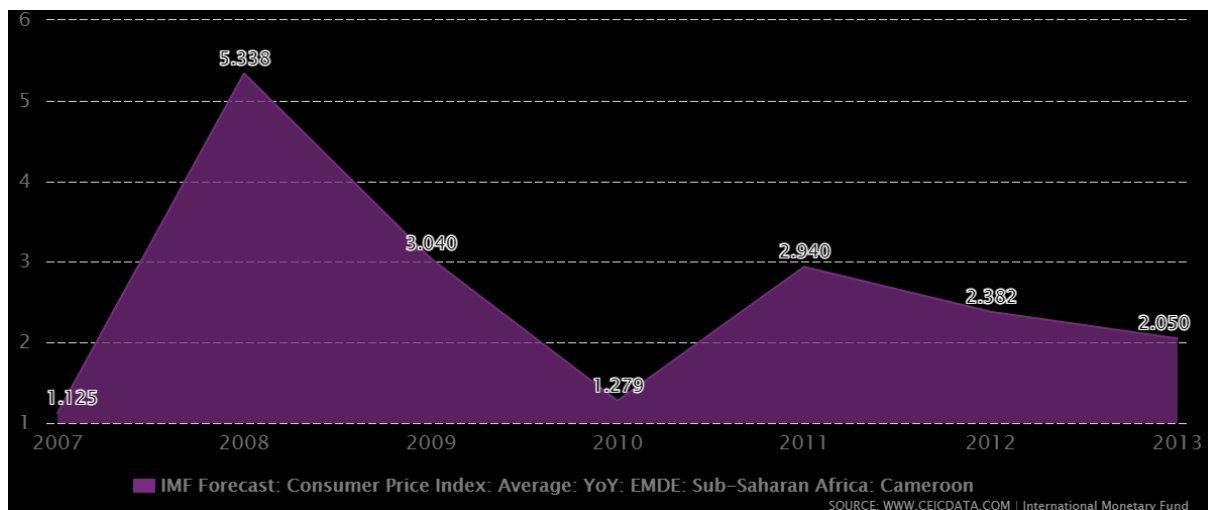


Figure 16: IMF estimated Consumer Price Index Cameroon, 2007-2013 (CEICdata, 2020).

This significant reduction in inflation by the end of 2008 can be seen in below figure, while it also shows that inflation rose after September 2010 again, when global food prices increased even more, thus indicating still a positive result for Cameroon.¹⁶⁶ The “CPI inflation” line indicates the Consumer Price Index, that is the weighted average price of goods and can be associated with the real cost of living. A same trend is visible. The IMF Article IV consultation report of Cameroon from 2012 links this positive result to the role of increased public investment and measures to boost agricultural production in keeping inflation low and increasing growth rates are also seen in the IMF Article IV consultation report of Cameroon from 2012. Here, it states that:

[i]nflation is expected to remain below the regional convergence criterion of 3%. Initiatives to boost agricultural production, subsidize food imports, build and maintain stocks, and improve the provision of information on food market conditions are likely to moderate the impact of a possible increase in world food prices.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 10; Lagi, Bertrand and Bar-Yam, The food crises and political instability in North Africa and the Middle East, 3.

¹⁶⁷ International Monetary Fund, “Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations,” 12.

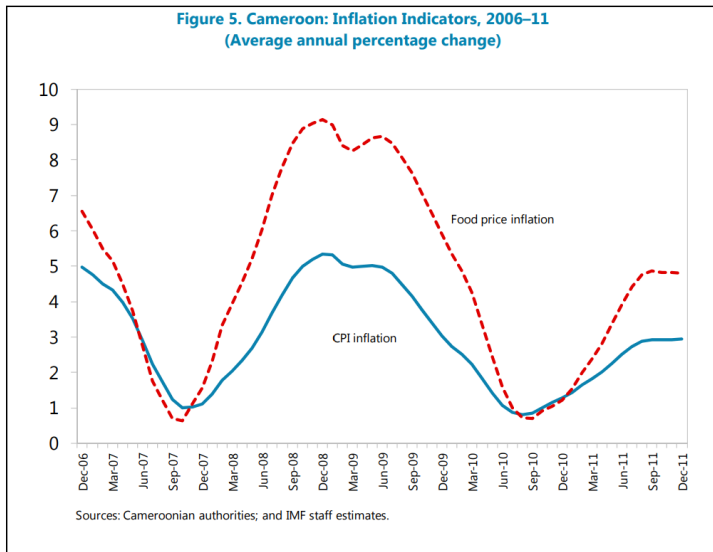


Figure 18: Cameroon Inflation Indicators, 2006-2011 in average annual percentage change (IMF, 2012).

Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization also shows that actual food prices (showing the impacts of inflation rates) rose sharply during 2008 still, this rise decreased during the years afterwards, as can be seen in the graph below.¹⁶⁸ It can be concluded that these policies are partly effective adjustive measures.

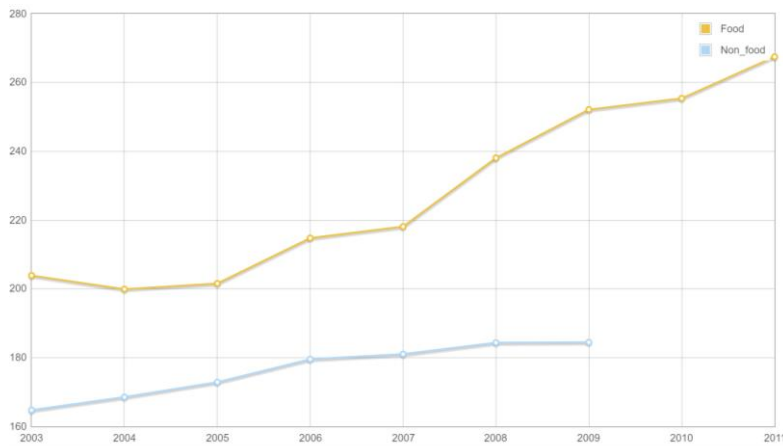


Figure 19: Food prices and non-food prices in Cameroon, 2003-2011 (FAO, 2020).

¹⁶⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, “national-consumer-prices.csv.”

1.2. Summary Table

The below table provides a summary of the above described background analysis on each indicator, and explains what implications this has for the package of adjustive measures implemented by the Cameroonian government as a response on the February 2008 protests.

Table 1: Indicators of food availability, production and productivity, self-sufficiency, stability and costs of living, linked to Cameroon's adjustive measures.

Indicator	Key trends 2008-11	Implication for Cameroon & adjustive measures
4. Prevalence of undernourishment	Decline, but not more rapidly than before. ¹⁶⁹	Availability/Access: Higher food security, but no attributable impact of additional government actions to speed it up.
5. Average dietary energy supply adequacy	No higher increase than before 2008. ¹⁷⁰	Availability/Access: General increase in available dietary energy, but no attributable impact of additional government actions to speed it up.
6. Agricultural area	Key increase in 2009-10. ¹⁷¹	Production: Enhanced use agricultural land and thus own production, able to be linked to government actions but at a very limited scale.
7. Food production index	Increased growth 2008-09 and 2010-11, though for latter not bigger than before, decreased growth 2009-10. ¹⁷²	Production: Increased growth in 2008-09 can potentially be attributed to government policies.

¹⁶⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Cameroon."

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Cameroon"; World Bank Group, "Agricultural Land (sq. km) – Cameroon."

¹⁷² World Bank Group, "Food production index."

Indicator	Key trends 2008-11	Implication for Cameroon & adjustive measures
8. Agricultural total factor productivity	No higher increase than before 2008 ¹⁷³	Productivity: increase in productivity but no attributable impact of additional government actions to speed it up.
9. Per capita food supply variability	Increase in 2008-09, decrease in 2009-11. ¹⁷⁴	Food availability stability: higher variability in 2008-09, thus less food security, lower variability in 2009-11 but not lower than pre-2008 levels. Thus, there is no attributable impact of additional government actions.
10. Per capita food production variability	Steep decrease in 2008-10, increase in 2010-11, but not back to pre-2008 levels. ¹⁷⁵	Food production, availability & self-sufficiency stability: increasingly more stable and secure production in 2008-10, in 2011 less stable and secure. Food production stability due, potentially to government actions.
11. Food imports & Import Product Share	Very little increase in food import 2008-09; higher increase in 2009-10 and relatively high increase in 2010-11. 2011 import values almost 3x 2006 import values. Not one trend visible in import product share. ¹⁷⁶	Food self-sufficiency: continuously dependent upon large import, no big declining trend in import importance.

¹⁷³ United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, “International Agricultural Productivity.”

¹⁷⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization, “Cameroon.”

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ World Integrated Trade Solution. “Cameroon Food Products Exports.”

Indicator	Key trends 2008-11	Implication for Cameroon & adjustive measures
12. Food exports & Export Product Share	Very high increase in food exports. High increase in food export share during 2007-09, sharp decline in 2009-10 and increase again in 2010-11. ¹⁷⁷	Food production for self-sufficiency: Generally more beneficial import-export balance over the years in terms of food. Does not explain much in terms of food self-sufficiency: Cameroon continues to produce or produces even more crops not for own consumption. Potential link to food production not being for own consumption, with policies to enhance this not reaching aim.
13. Value of food imports over total merchandise exports	Increased value of food imports over total merchandise exports during 2008-11. ¹⁷⁸	Food shock vulnerability: increased % means higher vulnerability to shocks and global prices, indicating higher risks of instability in food availability and price, and to some extent also less self-sufficiency. Government policies that may have enhanced general production thus not enhanced self-sufficiency.
14. Consumer Price Index (CPI)	Clear decrease of CPI after 2008, and clear lower impact of second global food price rise than the first. ¹⁷⁹	General costs of living: indication of effective government policies and, related to lower rise in 2010-11 of less vulnerability to external shocks/more self-sufficiency.
15. CPI inflation rate	Major reduction in inflation rates from September 2008-September 2010, after which it increased, but	General costs of living & shock vulnerability: indicating effective policies to decrease general cost of living prices, with moderating the impact of the 2010 world price increases.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Cameroon."

¹⁷⁹ CEIC Data. "Cameroon Forecast."

Indicator	Key trends 2008-11	Implication for Cameroon & adjustive measures
	remained below the cap of 3%. ¹⁸⁰	
16. Food prices	Clear decreasing rise in 2009-10, but rise again in 2010-11. ¹⁸¹	Costs of living: indicating partially effective government measures to stop price increase of food.
17. Food price inflation rate	Major reduction in inflation rates from September 2008-September 2010, after which it increased, but remained below the cap of 3%. ¹⁸²	General costs of living & shock vulnerability: indicating effective policies to decrease general cost of living prices, with moderating the impact of the 2010 Global Food Price increase.
18. Fuel prices	Clear decrease and cap on fuel prices after February 2008 until 2011. ¹⁸³	Costs of living: indicating an effective government policy.
	Colour codes	No significant positive change
		Positive change but not extra; no attribution government policies
		Limited extra positive change, potentially some impact of government policies
		Extra positive change, potential impact of government policies

¹⁸⁰ International Monetary Fund, “Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations,” 10.

¹⁸¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, “national-consumer-prices.csv.”

¹⁸² International Monetary Fund, “Cameroon 2012 Article IV Consultations,” 10

¹⁸³ Kojima, “Petroleum Product Pricing,” 39; World Integrated Trade Solution, “Cameroon Product AHS Weighted Average.”