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**The dynamics of food security policy in Cameroon  
(2008-2019)**

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## The Dynamics of Food Security Policy Process in Cameroon (2008-2019)

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This article intends to examine the improvement in fighting against food insecurity in Cameroon since February 2008, a period marked with so-called hunger riots. In response to this, and in order to reply satisfactorily to this social crisis and the security that predates it, the government set up, at the end of 2008, the national food security program (NFSP).

**Methodology:** Based on participant observation, non-reactive data collection techniques and socio-historical analysis, the article underlines the concept of the food security policy process, which does not escape the enlightening analytical framework of the advocacy coalition framework.

**Findings:** The paper proposes, grounded on the scrutiny of the interpenetration of the NFSP by state and others institutional actors, to analyse a category of negotiated and incremental public policy.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** It explains that the concept of food security policy is not merely confined to studies on food regulation and industrialisation. It is necessary to take in mind the political processes that shape its historicity.

**Key words:** *Food security, public policy, policy process, State, expert, and socio-historical analysis*

## Introduction

Food security has only attracted considerable media and political attention in developed countries since 2008 with the riots related to rising food prices in developing countries (Fanzo et al., 2010). It consists of putting in place appropriate policies for the supply of and access to safe food for populations (Food and Agriculture Organisation [FOA], 2003) that generate adequate levels of effective demand through income growth or transfers. These so-called food security policies usually involve structural changes in relative prices, the economic environment, targeted food subsidies, improved technologies and institutions for farmers and consumers (Weber et al., 1988).

Several approaches to the analysis of the concept of food security policy help to identify its characteristics. The first generation of food security policy approaches focused on regulating the control and supply of food (Sinclair & Baldwin, 1996). The second generation of approaches analyses the logics of industrialisation of food products. This is the case for the visual inspection of products, the detailed specification of approved hygiene practices and consumer protection, etc. (Sinclair & Baldwin, *ibid.*). A third generation of approach not explicitly explored in the literature is of interest. This is the policy process (Sabatier, 2014), which aims to understand how the logics of interaction between actors, institutions, networks, ideas/beliefs, contextual factors and events structure food security policies (Cairney & Heikkila, 2014). These processes define the food security policy process, which in Cameroon has the National Food Security Programme (NFSP) as its institutional edifice.

Several theoretical models for understanding the policy process (Weible & Carter, 2017) have been developed. Among the best known in the literature (Petridou, 2014) is the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993), which is interesting here for capturing how food security policy is worked through by different types of actors, institutions and/or networks of formalised and non-formalised relationships depending on the beliefs/interest of the actors/institutions in defending an idea and thus actions are influenced by the context and external events (John, 2003). Furthermore, this model allows us to understand how the state in Cameroon (Bayart, 1979) takes charge of the food security of the population. The advocacy coalition framework invites us to consider, in addition, how the matrices of the Food security service change over time.

This evolution is sensitive to a socio-historical analysis (Baudot, 2006) that seeks to restore its historicity (Laborier, 2003) based on two essential analytical dimensions. The first integrates the diachronic dimension of the three historical moments of the food security policy process: the institution of the NFSP (2008-2013), its development (2013-2016) and its maturation (2016-2018). The second combines the sociological dimension, which aims to open the 'black box' of the state by examining the different concrete configurations of the food security policy process at these different moments of its evolution over time.

The study methodology is based on "participant observation". Indeed, between 2008 and 2015, for the empirical and inductive purposes, the research have implied participative activities into the NFSP through an acquaintance, a public agent – manager at the time – who held positions of responsibility within the national coordination and then within the regional coordination of the centre of the said programme, which was represented in the ten regions of Cameroon. During this

period, it was possible to interact with different categories of actors: the programme's executives – the national and regional coordinators and the heads of components, field agents – agricultural technicians –, private contractors, employees, maintenance agents and drivers. Between February and July 2017, the study carried out an academic internship that was part of the continuation of our doctoral research. These two periods allowed us to appreciate the paradigmatic evolution of the public food safety service. In addition to these participatory observational data collection methodology, a corpus consisting of activity reports and the strategic plan of the NFSP, inter-institutional reports on the state of food security in Cameroon, reports from United Nations agencies – in this case the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) – and scientific articles dealing with public policy and food security, was mobilised.

The general objective of this article is to reconstruct this evolution through non-directive interviews – notably limited to those of the Coordinator of the NFSP from 2013 to 2016 and those of a technical expert who initiated the latest changes within the organisation in 2017 –, archives, informal exchanges with the actors mentioned, participation in several coordination and inter-agency meetings; and for specific objectives to put, implicitly, in sense the concept of food security policy process from an empirical anchorage – collected data –, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to show the meaning that the public service of food security takes, its historical evolution and the forms that it takes in this evolution, that is to say between 2008 and 2019.

The article is structured around two axes. Firstly, it analyses the logic behind the institutionalisation of the NFSP (2008-2013) (1). And secondly, it examines the dynamics of development of the said programme which refers to its adjustment policy (2013-2016) and the framework of maturation of the said programme, focusing on the factors determining its strengthening (2016-2018), on the other hand (2).

## **1. Structuring the food security system: the nurturing of the NFSP (2008-2012)**

The building of a food security system is a dynamic process involving interactions between the state and several categories of actors who collaborate with a view to reducing food insecurity and related crises within a network of actors and institutions (1.2) predetermined by two structuring factors: sustainable food insecurity and the end of the riots, which are a process resulting from the food and oil crisis and the political tensions affecting the country, which are shaped by the logic of the actors (1.1).

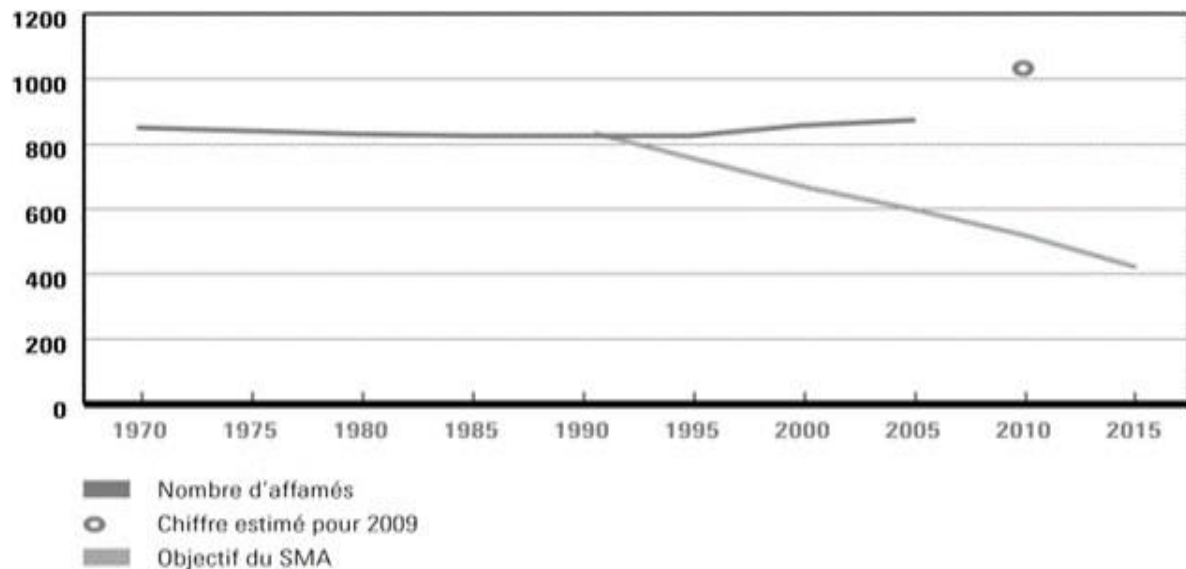
### **1.1. Factors predetermining the institution of the NFSP**

There are two factors, i.e. events and processes that affect the food security of the population and the stability of the state and that will push the latter to set up a food security mechanism, the NFSP in this case: Firstly, sustainable food insecurity, and secondly, food riots, which are above all a political process resulting from two crisis situations and/or tensions: the food crisis marked by the increase in the price of foodstuffs; the energy crisis marked by the increase in the price of petrol; and the tensions that feed the political field around the issue of eliminating the number of presidential terms (Golay, 2010). **The persistency of food insecurity**

Food insecurity is a long-standing concern. In 1960, the FAO launched a campaign against hunger which led to the creation, in 1963, of the FAO/WHO [World Health Organisation] "Food Codex" commission. The aim of which was to define world food standards and adopting an international commitment on food security. The latter was done in 1974 at World Food Conference at Rome. Between 1996 and 2000, states made a solemn commitment to fight hunger. Thus, in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action adopted in 1996, which will pave the way for various paths towards a common goal, the reduction of food security at individual, family, national, regional and global levels by 2015 will be a priority. The multidimensional nature of the follow-up to the World Food Summit, including the implementation of the recommendations contained in its Plan of Action, involves action at the national, intergovernmental and inter-agency levels. In 2000, in the UN Millennium Declaration, they made a more modest commitment to halve the proportion of undernourished people by 2015.

Based on these commitments, it is possible to calculate the progress made in food security. According to FAO outlooks, 842 million people were chronically undernourished in 1990 in the world (FAO, 2008). In 1996, in Rome, the states committed themselves to reducing the number of undernourished people to 421 million by 2015. In 2000, in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, they committed to reducing the number of undernourished people to 591 million by 2015, but this target is difficult to achieve (Kracht, 2005). Moreover, 848 million people were still chronically undernourished in 2005: 832 million in developing countries, including 221 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 231 million in India and 123 million in China, and 16 million in industrialised countries (FAO, 2008).

Between 1990 and 2005, the number of undernourished people thus increased by 6 million, while their proportion only decreased from 20% of the world population to 16% (FAO, 2006). However, between 2007 and 2008, the undernourished population increased. By the end of 2007, the number of undernourished people was 923 million (FAO, 2008b). In 2008, an additional 40 million people were affected by the crisis, bringing the number of undernourished people to 963 million at the end of 2008 (FAO, 2008). This trend has continued (figure 1), with the number of people rising to one billion (FAO, 2009). The international community, the UN system, including FAO, has important contributions to make to the implementation of the Plan of Action. The FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action in its different regions. In this respect, sub-Saharan Africa will be one of the grounds for its security action, especially since several countries, including Cameroon, are facing prolonged food insecurity.



**Figure 1: Number of undernourished people in the world (in millions) Source: FAO, 2009a**

Food insecurity in Cameroon will be further predetermined by an unstable socio-economic situation (Moudio, 2019). Indeed, the pre-crisis situation, which corresponds to the period from 1960 to 1978, made agriculture the mainstay of the Cameroonian economy and allowed Cameroon to record real growth thanks to the development of the oil sector. Annual growth rates estimated at 7% and 16% for investments and exports respectively, and around 3.3% for national consumption, explain this feat. However, from 1986-87 onwards, the economy experienced strong contractions with a high growth rate. This crisis was mainly due to the fall in the price of export products (oil, coffee and cocoa) by 45% over the last three years – 2005 precisely –, combined with a depreciation of about 40% of the US dollar against the FCFA (Franc of African Financial Communities), the currency in which the prices of the main export products are denominated. During this period, the annual growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 4.8% in real terms over the period. After the discovery of oil in 1978, the GDP growth rate increased sharply, remaining at an average annual rate of 8.2% until the end of the oil boom in 1986 (MINADER, 2013).

The contribution of agriculture to total imports and exports in 2004 was 17% and 25% respectively. With an agricultural trade surplus falling from US\$307 million in 2002 to US\$253 million in 2004. And the value of agricultural imports increased from US\$160 million in 2002 to US\$365 million in 2004; the value of agricultural exports increased from US\$460 million in 2002 to US\$634 million in 2004. The main agricultural products imported by the country are milled rice and wheat, which in 2004 accounted for approximately 56% of the total value of agricultural imports. The important agricultural products exported by the country are cocoa beans, cotton fibres and green coffee, which in 2004 represented approximately 69% of the total value of agricultural exports. Cocoa accounted for 38% of this value in 2004, coffee for 11% and cotton for 20%. Cereal import requirements for the 2008 marketing year (January/December) were estimated at some 680,000 tonnes, and were covered through commercial channels (Cameroon,

2008). These cereal imports have doubled in contrast to the period 1961 and 1998 when they went from 32,100 tonnes to 348,148 tonnes.

The assessment of the national food situation carried out in 1985 already indicated a deficit of 36.8% in cereals, 53.2% in pulses, 51% in vegetable oils and 74.2% in meat. Although national agricultural production has not kept pace with demographic changes, it must be acknowledged that the volume of food imports increased tenfold between 1961 and 1998, from 32,000t to 348,148t. The import/food production ratio was 25%. Wheat and rice were the most important import items in Cameroon, representing 32% and 19.4% of total imports respectively. These products represented 80.2 billion in terms of household consumption expenditure in 1996. Imports increased significantly from 72.101 billion in 1999/2000 to 80.2 billion in 2000/2001.

The rise in the household consumer price index and the strong recovery of food imports since 1996 seem to confirm the low growth of certain products (cereals, fish, animal products, etc.) relative to demand. This situation prevents sustainable poverty reduction among the most vulnerable groups. Between 1990 and 2001, the proportion of the Cameroonian population living on less than US\$1 per day and less than US\$2 per day represented 33.4% and 64.4% of the total population respectively. Between 1990 and 1992, the proportion of the total population and the number of undernourished people were 33% and 4 million, respectively. The corresponding aspects for 2001-2003 are around 25% and 4 million.

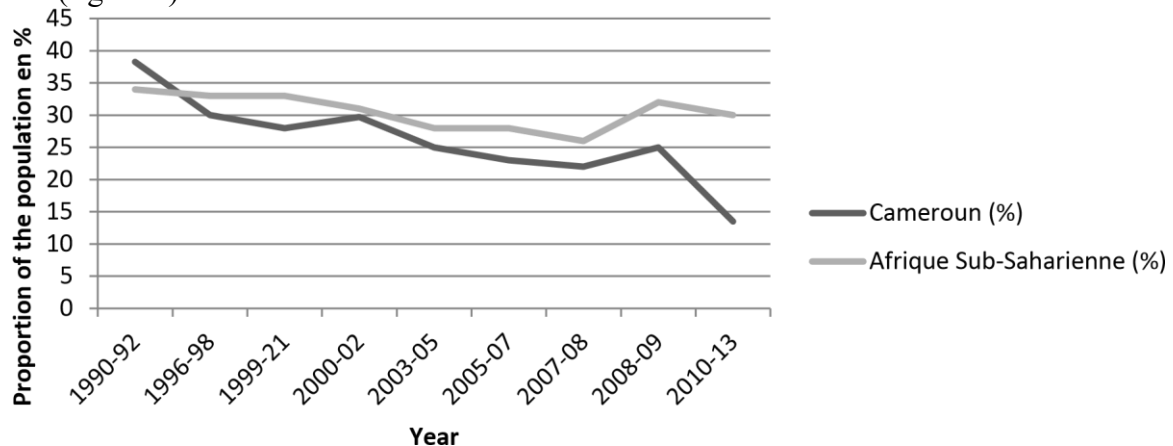
In addition, after the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC), the state needs to rebuild its economic health. Between 1985 and 1995, the gross domestic product fell by 6.3% per year, with negative growth rates of -6.4% in 1987, -13.3% in 1988, -3.4% in 1989, -2.5% in 1990, 5.8% in 1991, -4.0% in 1992, -3% in 1993. The average annual growth rate (AAGR) was 9.4% between 1976 and 1985; -3.1% between 1986 and 1995; 4.1% between 1996 and 2005 and 2.9% between 2006 and 2010. The economic crisis that Cameroon is going through will then result in an imbalance in macroeconomic accounts, and in particular in public finances. In the country's strategic plan, the agricultural sector is an important lever for economic and social development, as part of the strategy to combat food insecurity (DSCE, p.68). In this perspective, the government's strategy will consist of increasing yields and areas by around 30% compared to 2005 levels in order to ensure food security and strengthen growth and employment in this sector. This objective will be achieved in particular through: the promotion of medium and large farms by facilitating access to land; encouraging the grouping and synergy of family businesses in the form of cooperatives or ICGs, thanks to targeted and privileged support from the state.

However, as a low-income country with a food deficit and despite its agricultural assets, it should be noted that per capita food availability is declining, as is the level of food self-sufficiency, which in 1980 was 96% and in 2007 was around 80%. It is this reality that makes Cameroon a Low-Income Food Deficit Country (LIFDC). With an agriculture essentially dominated by food products, whose growth rate represented 4.9% of the agricultural GDP in 2005/2006, Cameroon cannot isolate itself from the problem of hunger and, consequently, from the food insecurity that affects a large part of the population.

Cameroon's population growth rate rose from less than 2% in 1950 to 2.9% per year between 1976 and 1987, which means that the population doubled in less than 24 years. In 1976,

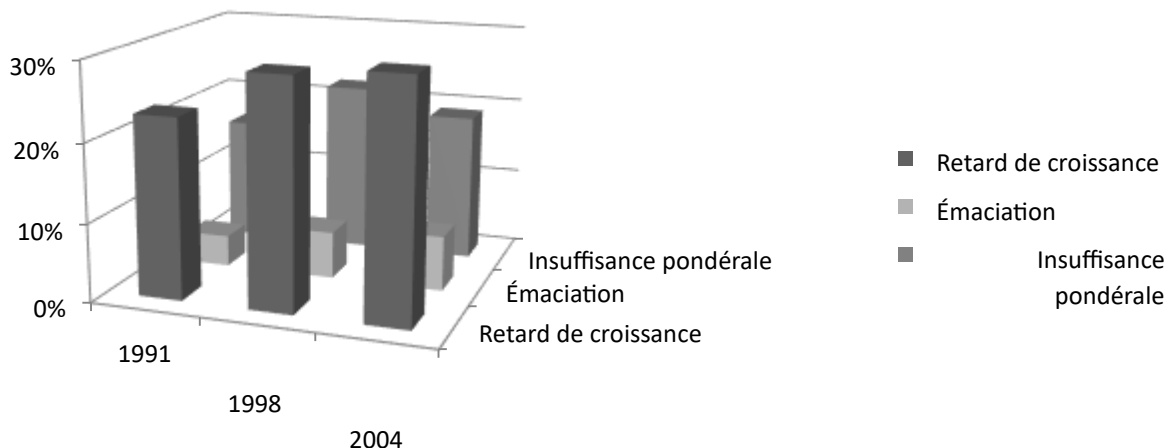
Cameroon had 7,663,246 inhabitants; in 1987, the population was 10,493,655. In 2005, the final results of the 3rd General Census of the Human Population indicated 17,463,836 inhabitants.

This demographic evolution confirms the maintenance of a strong human potential in the country, with an average annual population growth rate estimated at 2.8% during the period 1987-2005 and 2.6% between 2005 and 2010. Before 2008, the proportion of the Cameroonian population affected by food insecurity was estimated at nearly 25%. This trend is downward in terms of the proportion of undernourished people and remains low in relation to the reality of sub-Saharan Africa (figure 2).

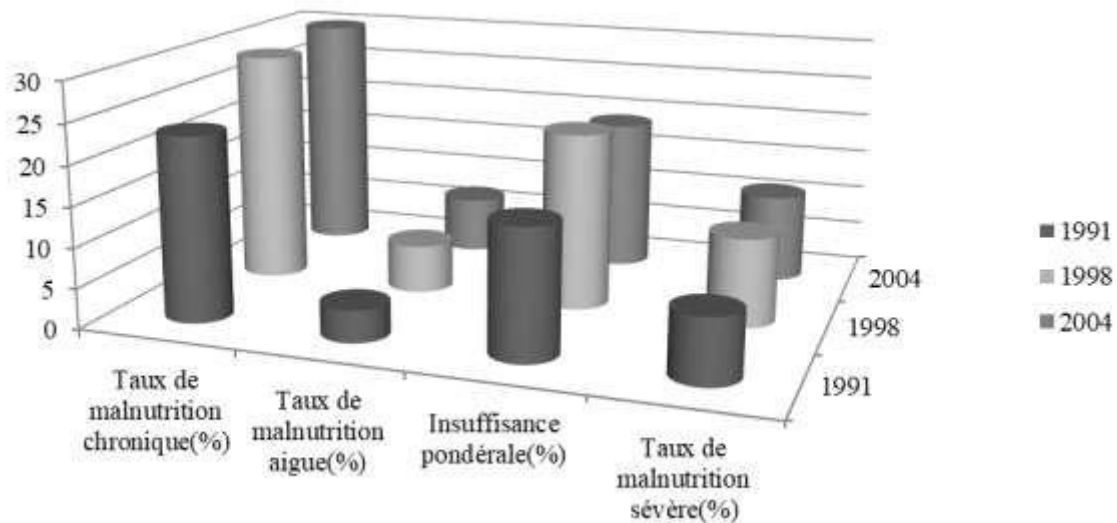


**Figure 2: Proportion of population in Cameroon and sub-Saharan Africa (1990-2013)**  
**Source: FAO, 2014**

Cameroon's nutritional trend (figure 3) remains precarious despite its enormous agricultural potential. Indeed, 33% of children aged two years are underweight, which is an indicator of malnutrition and the cause of 38% of pre-school deaths. In addition to that, 42.5% of children aged 12 to 24 months are stunted or chronically malnourished. No region of the country is spared from this situation. However, the Far North, North, West, North-West and South-West regions seem to be the most affected with more than 30% recorded (MINADER, 2012).

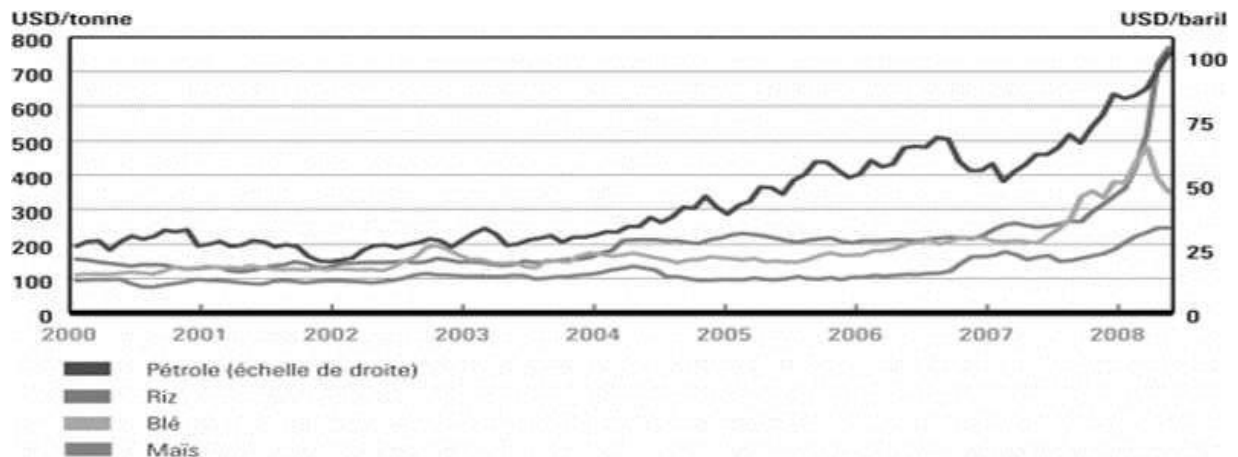


**Figure 3: Malnutrition trends in Cameroon (1960-2004) Source: PA-PSSA working document, 2005**



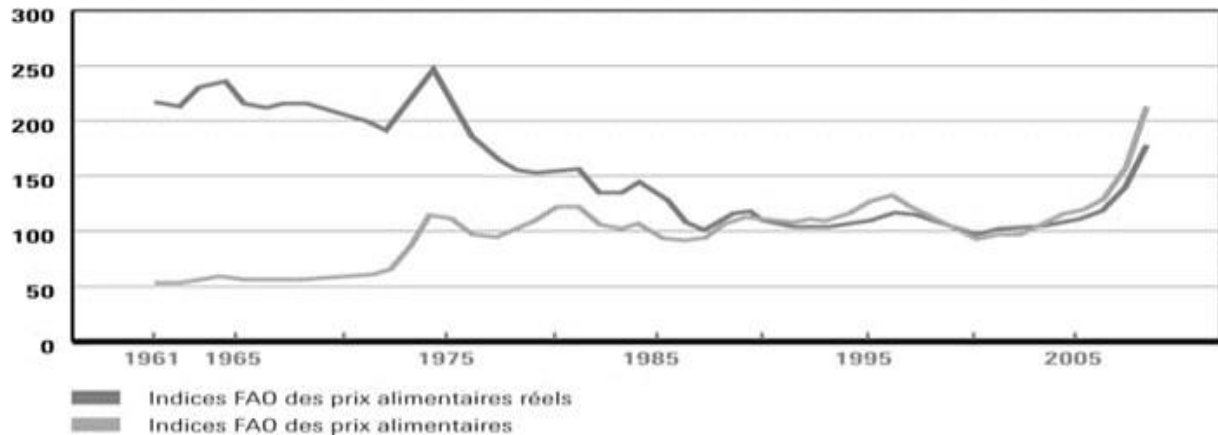
**Figure 4: Malnutrition in children under 3 Source: PA-PSSA, 2005**

The evolution of exclusive breastfeeding (0 to 6 months) has gone from 25% (1998) to 23% (2004) to 21% (2006) (figure 4). This shows the practice of exclusive breastfeeding for children aged 0-6 years and the inherent consequences for the health of these children. The number of malnourished children rose from 50,000 in 1991 to 80,000 in 2006 and those suffering from malnutrition doubled from 70,000 in 1991 to 170,000 in 2006. The prevalence of malnutrition, which is 12.6% in the North and Far North regions, exceeded the emergency threshold (>10%) in 2006; with 40% and 65% of children suffering from chronic and acute malnutrition in these regions. 43.7% of annual deaths of children under 5 are attributable to malnutrition. Severe malnutrition increased from 5% in 2004 to 6.1% in 2006 with pockets of over 10% (MINADER, 2012).



**Figure 5: Prices of maize, wheat, rice and oil between January 2000 and March 2008**

Source: IFPRI, 2008



**Figure 6: Evolution of FAO food price indices, 1961-2008 Source: FAO, 2008b**

In 2008, Cameroon experienced a significant increase in food prices worldwide (Golay, 2010). This was the case for cereal prices, which rose globally with the increasing demand for meat products by the middle classes (Parmentier, 2009) in emerging countries (figure 5). Indeed, international nominal prices of all major foodstuffs have reached the highest levels, while prices in real terms have increased (figure 6). This situation will be compounded by the political tensions that are emerging in opposition to the constitutional amendment that allows President Paul Biya to run for additional terms as head of state (Tchoupie, 2009). Several African countries that were not affected by the seriousness of food insecurity experienced food riots, unlike others (figure 1) where the seriousness of the problem was less pronounced – in terms of the undernourished population – such as Cameroon (figure 2), which was affected by the rise in food prices; the rise in food prices was politicised by political actors for political purposes.

### **Hunger riots at the crossroads of socio-political and economic patterns**

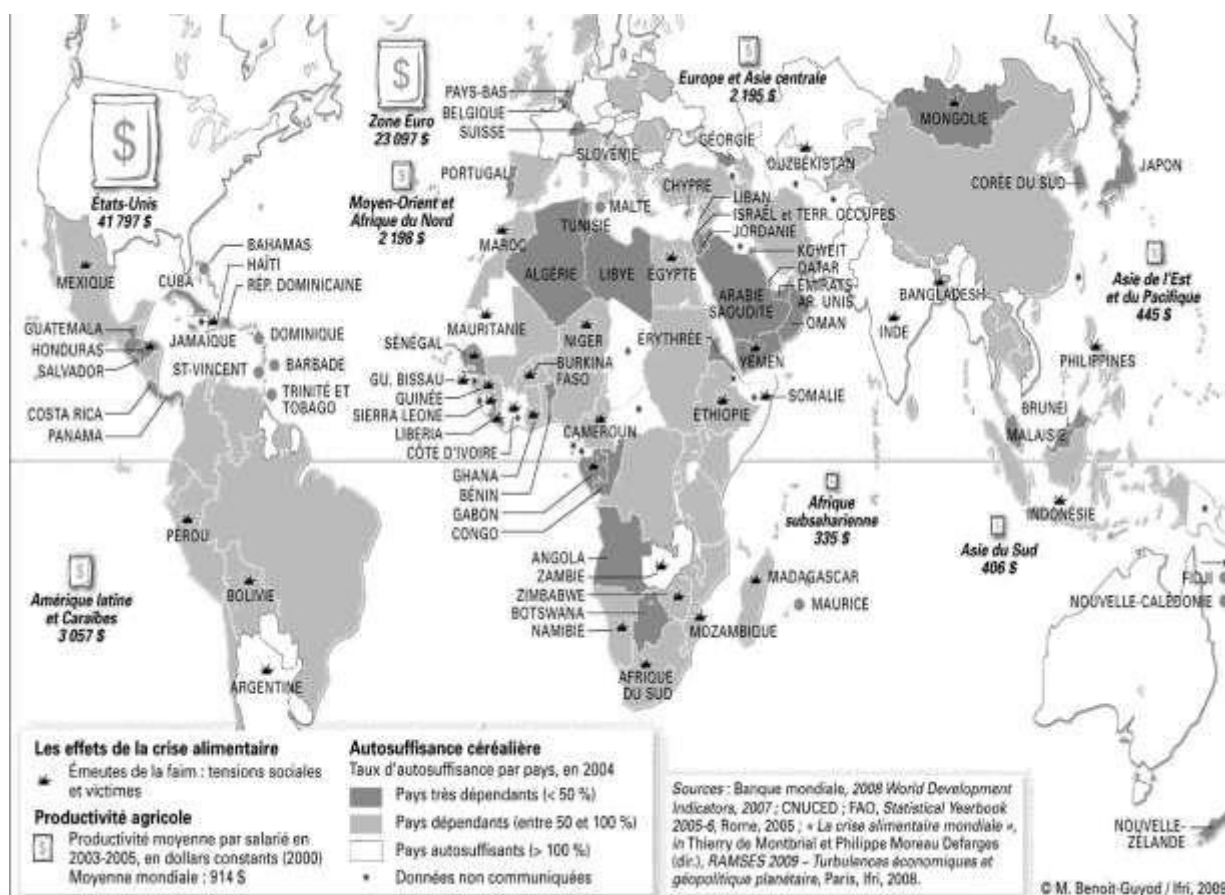
The hunger riots in Cameroon are the result of the conjunction of two converging processes of tension. On the one hand, it is a process resulting from the cumulative dynamics of systemic dysfunction of supply functions (Rubin, 2009). On the other hand, it is a question of the contraction of political consultation frameworks concerning the abolition of presidential term limits, which is still marked by the prevalence of strategic, collusive and conflictual interactions between actors from different socio-political backgrounds, but who have found themselves dynamically congraphed in the political field around this abolition according to the criterion of legitimacy or illegitimacy.

As regards the systemic dysfunction of food supply functions, which affect agricultural production, the trade in foodstuffs and their social and geographical redistribution, their dynamics depend on the seasonal availability of products, the volume of foodstuffs in circulation and price levels; but also, on geographical distance and the state of road infrastructure, which enables exchanges between villages and towns. Rural infrastructure – agricultural water supply, roads,

etc. – is thus crucial because it has an impact on the quality of life. Rural infrastructure – agricultural water supply, roads, etc. – is thus crucial because it has structuring effects.

The increase in the level of food prices was linked to the lack of supply and therefore to the lack of agricultural and rural infrastructure (IFAD, 2011). Consequently, the dysfunction of the food supply function can be reduced to the fragility of rural infrastructure development policies (FEWS-NET, 2020). Thus, in Cameroon, among the areas that have benefited from more resources within the framework of integrated rural development, rural infrastructures are the least well off.

**Map 1: Fragility of agricultural economies**



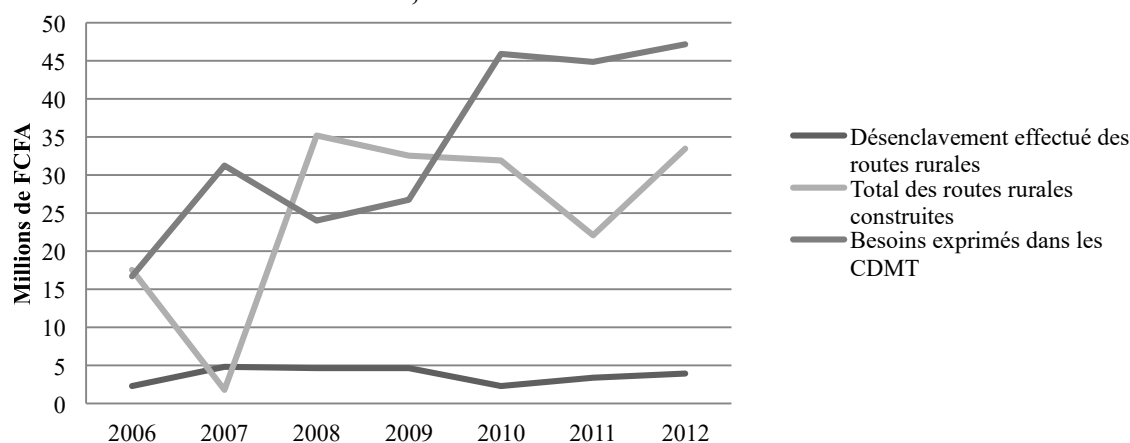
Indeed, state intervention between 2003 and 2011 was focused on cross-cutting projects (43%), food security (11%), extension (19%) and training/professionalization (8%) village water development infrastructure (4%) and rural infrastructure (3%) (World Bank, 2014). The case of rural roads is quite obvious in that existing resources are insufficient to ensure the maintenance (Table 1) of 35,000 km, and thus a large part of the estimated 80,000 km are neglected (World Bank, 2014). Available data show that annual resources allocated to rural roads for rehabilitation, asphaltting and maintenance have been stable since 2008 to 2012 in the range of 32-35 billion (table 1). Analysis of the Ministry of Public Works' (MINTP) medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEF) from 2006 to 2012 reveals the extent to which rural road financing needs

are estimated at an annual average of FCFA 33.8 billion with a gradual increase. As far as the budgetary allocations decreased since 2009, this created a growing gap between the needs expressed in the CDMTs and the budgetary allocations, which is around 30% in 2012.

**Table 1: MINTP budget and expressed needs for rural roads 2006-12 (millions of FCFA)**

| Type of intervention                    | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   | 2010   | 2011   | 2012   |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Maintenance of priority rural roads     | 5,674  | 6,036  | 6,629  | 7,292  | 2,304  | 6,600  | 10,030 |
| Maintenance of non-priority rural roads | 547    | 2,779  | 2,303  | 2,533  | 3,871  | 1,500  | 1,000  |
| Rehabilitation of rural roads           | 9,049  | 174    | 21,586 | 18,095 | 13,456 | 612    | 6,517  |
| Tarring of rural roads                  | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      |
| Opening up of rural roads               | 2,251  | 4,781  | 4,636  | 4,610  | 2,250  | 3,350  | 3,900  |
| Total rural roads                       | 17,521 | 1,769  | 35,154 | 32,530 | 31,881 | 22,062 | 33,447 |
| Needs expressed in the MTEF             | 16,664 | 31,221 | 24,011 | 26,741 | 45,900 | 44,818 | 47,142 |

Source: MINTP and MTEF data, 2013



**Figure 7: Rural roads development needs in millions of CFA Source: MINTP and MTEF data, 2013**

The pressure for rural road development (figure 7), which corresponds to the need for rural road development, moves in the same direction as food insecurity. This correlation is evident when the data from figure 2 and figure 7 are crossed in terms of corresponding analysis. However, it can be seen from figure 2 that the evolution of food insecurity in the world corresponds to that of Cameroon; the latter remains more important than the former. Therefore, by syllogism, the evolution of the increase in cereal prices, the price of petrol/oil (figure 5) and the price index of foodstuffs (figure 6) in the world is in line with that of Cameroon. This allows us to infer the impact of the low level of development of rural roads on the increase in food prices in Cameroon for the period preceding the food riots, but which remains marked by tensions around these

increases. This period was marked by political tensions between the ruling party and the political opposition over the issue of the abolition of presidential term limits.

Concerning the contraction of political consultation frameworks on the abolition of presidential term limits, which remains marked by the prevalence of strategic and conflictual interactions (Tchoupie, 2009). The action of actors for or against the abolition of presidential term limits in late 2007 and early 2008 is far from neutral and disinterested. It is to a large extent a matter of calculation, i.e. of instrumental rationality. It is disciplined by ends/means relations, given that it is increasingly accepted nowadays that there is no such thing as an absolutely disinterested practice and that every agent always has some interest in doing what he or she does, including an interest in disinterestedness (Accardo, 1983). And is subject to a collision of contradictory strategies and intentions which is part of the confrontations marked by a cognitive dissonance producing varied repertoires of actions.

The abolition of the presidential term limit allows the Head of State Paul Biya to maintain a 'dissuasive doubt', given that the possibility for him to run for another term at the head of state largely contributes to containing the ardour of actors whose commitment to a fierce struggle for his succession could be harmful to the socio-political stability of the country. The actors concerned here therefore prefer not to limit the number of presidential terms because it tends to reduce the uncertainty into which the country risks sinking in the event of prolonged fratricidal political struggles for the replacement of the incumbent president. The path of lifting presidential term limits is a rational choice, in the sense that it tends to provide lasting satisfaction by fulfilling the function of stabilising the political order. President Biya largely supported this idea in his message to the nation on 31 December 2008, stating that 'the constitutional revision that took place during the past year has removed the mortgage on the country's political life by making all options possible'. This pro-constitutional amendment stance did not meet with the approval of the opposition, causing tensions.

The challenges to the constitutional amendment are made concrete through two forms of action repertoires: declarative cognitive postures and street demonstrations. The recourse to declarative actions is marked above all by the conjunctural de-sectorisation of the social space (Dobry, 1986), which is reflected in the decompartmentalization and interpenetration of political arenas. The discursive act integrates actors from the political, religious, academic, cultural, diplomatic and media fields. This will contribute to the formation of an enlarged network of interrelations, which will replace the more local and compartmentalised forms of interdependence (Dobry, 1986). The various political technologies frequently used are articulated around the exaltation of the limitation of the number of presidential terms and the call for mobilisation against the revision of the Constitution. This is the case with the statement of the American ambassador to Cameroon, Janet E. Garvey, who maintains that this limitation of the number of terms of office of the President is not an option. Garvey who supports this limitation of the number of mandates (Le Messenger, 2008); and it is moreover that of Samuel Mack Kit, National President of one of the tendencies of the Union of the People of Cameroon (UPC) (La Nouvelle Expression n°2142 2008) in favour of collective mobilisation. The majority of the dynamics engaged at that time were in fact inspired by a conflictual logic, and the opposition's means of action were largely

dominated by demonstrations (Sindjoun, 2004) which, from the outset, were of a very limited nature, as they were confined to the city of Douala and led by actors with little political weight and were localised, following the example of Mboua Massock and the regional leaders of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) for the Littoral.

Localised social mobilisation became widespread as a result of the markers of risk and change – shocks, processes and interaction – notably the transport union's call for a strike in reaction to the rise in the price of petrol. The localised demonstrations spread to most other parts of the country, especially following a strike call by the transport union (Tchoupie, 2009). This led to demonstrations and riots that reached Yaoundé, the country's political capital. Although these social demonstrations were described as hunger riots, the fact remains that they were in response to the fight against the abolition of presidential term limits (Tchoupie, 2009). Many demonstrators carried placards and banners reading "no to the modification of the Constitution". Social appeasement, through the institution of the NFSP, was made possible by the implementation of technicalization procedures that are deployed both as a discourse and as a hegemonic practice to organise responses according to codified instrumental procedures and assigned technocratic objectives (Moudio, 2019). **1.2 Setting an institutional framework for food security**

The building of an institutional food security system historically predates the hunger riots and is part of the state's institutional agenda to address the sustainability of food insecurity. It will be marked by the initiation of a pilot phase, the special Food Security Programme Support Project (PA-PSSA), which was launched in 2005. The hunger riots and their effects will contribute to accelerating the implementation of this mechanism, and in particular its organisational framework, which refers to an instituted governmentality resulting from a process of rationalisation and technicalisation.

### **Setting the institutional agenda**

The construction of the agenda as a mode of institutional legitimisation of a set of induced processes giving the social problem the status of a public problem, thus justifying the legitimate attention of public authorities, within a framework of multi-level consultation/collaboration, proceeds from a primary evaluation of the dimensioning of the problem (Cobb and Elder, 1983). The problem of food insecurity in Cameroon has preoccupied different levels and has mobilised the primary contribution of the international community. The latter, under the aegis of the FAO, has set itself up as an "opportunity for improvement" in order to fight against food insecurity through strategic lines of resolution of the problem, which is preceded by a global situational evaluation of the problem. The FAO estimates the number of undernourished people in the world at 852 million for the period 2000-2002, i.e. 815 million people in developing countries, 28 million in countries in transition and 9 million in the industrialised world. Before this period, that is, between 1990 and 1992, food insecurity was already claiming many victims in developing countries, despite a decline. The World Food Summit (WFS) held in 1994, under the auspices of the FAO, was marked by the objective of reducing by half the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015.

The work of sizing up the problem carried out by an institution leads to a framework of legitimisation of the intervention which is based on technical expertise. The institution which

proceeds to the dimensioning of the problem defines a structure of meaning for the action which focuses on the specificity of the problem. To this end, it mobilises a specialised human resource that works to give meaning to identifying the intrinsic properties of the social problem. The United Nations (UN) will create a Hunger Task Force as part of the Millennium Project to promote immediate action to help achieve this goal. The Task Force is composed of experts in nutrition, agronomy, environmental sustainability, research, capacity building, business management and telecommunications from a wide range of national public and private organisations and institutions. The Working Group undertook research to better identify and locate hungry communities. To this end, it used a set of maps highlighting the world's hunger hotspots to define general typologies of the hunger phenomenon. Based on the information available, the Working Group concluded that about half of the world's hungry people belong to smallholder farming communities, while 20% are landless rural people and about 10% are communities that derive their livelihoods from pastoral activities, fisheries or forest resources. The remaining 20% live in cities (Moudio, 2019). The definition of the problem on a global scale tends to orient the 'decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen' (Schon, 1983, p.40) on a regional and local scale, especially in Africa.

The technical expertise that drives the working group is going to be relocated into Central Africa States – Cameroon, Chad, Congo and Gabon,) within the framework of the PA-PSSA which was implemented between 2002 and 2005. The sectoral objective of the PA-PSSA is to strengthen food security. In Cameroon, more specifically, this pilot phase involved the implementation of models of water management techniques, intensification and diversification of agricultural production adapted in three pilot regions of the country, namely: the Centre, the Adamawa and the North regions.

As the executing agency, FAO managed the African Development Fund (ADF) grant and the Project Implementation Unit (PIO) housed in the Cameroon Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) was responsible for the day-to-day implementation of activities. The CEP was placed under the responsibility of a National Coordinator assisted by three (03) provincial coordinators. The ten pilot sites were supervised by a permanent village animator (AV). In addition, three support staff were assigned to the National Coordinator by MINADER and each provincial coordinator had at his disposal a team of four provincial technicians for the technical monitoring of aspects related to agronomy, fish farming, livestock and rural engineering. The project was implemented in partnership with the Institute for Agricultural Research and Development (IRAD), which provided the VAs with crops. In addition, six (06) Egyptian experts and technicians were also involved in the framework of the South-South cooperation.

The participatory approach was at the heart of all the project's activities grouped into five technical components. Water control and management; agricultural intensification; agricultural diversification; farmers' organisations and analysis of constraints; communication. All these components were covered. The results obtained are satisfactory. Apart from the development and horticulture in the lowlands, where the objectives of the pilot phase were revised downwards due to the arduousness of the work, a total of 124 agricultural intensification demonstrations were

carried out of the 127 planned, i.e. an achievement rate of more than 97%. In terms of agricultural diversification, 44 demonstrations were carried out of the 44 planned, with an increase for fish farming and a decrease for small ruminants. 167 partner groups out of 200 planned worked with the project. Proposals were made to improve the expansion phase. These proposals include: the establishment of a marketing component to address the difficulties faced by farmers' organisations (FOs) in marketing their products; strengthening synergy with other projects working in the sites; empowering and emancipating FOs; increasing the size of demonstrations according to FOs' capacities in order to achieve economies of scale; and mobilising isolated and high-potential producers in the extension strategy.

At the end of this pilot phase, Cameroon, in synergy with its regional peers, will deploy for the implementation of the extension phase. Indeed, the problem of food insecurity has been the object of great interest on the part of the African States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). ECCAS, with the support of the FAO, has formulated a regional food security programme (PRSA) which has been supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB). During a participatory evaluation workshop held in Libreville in 2005, recommendations were made on the basis of input from experts from each country and from the FAO and AfDB. These were based on the recommendations made on the SPFS-AP in each country concerned. The experts from each country concluded that measures should be put in place to improve the RPFS. This programme will contribute to the strengthening of capacities for the formulation and implementation of agricultural development policies, projects and programmes of member states and the ECCAS General Secretariat. The NFSP, an extension phase of the PA-PSSA, was developed with the support of FAO and its consultants (**Table 2**) in 2007 and implemented in 2009.

**Table 2: Technical experts who developed the NFSP**

| <b>Consultant</b> | <b>Technical expertise</b>       | <b>Area of consultation</b>                           |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Male              | Agro-economist engineer          | Team Leader                                           |
| Female            | MINADER Technical advisor        | Assessment of the financial gap in crop production    |
| Female            | Rural engineering engineer       | Water control and management and basic infrastructure |
| Male              | Engineer in food dietetics       | Nutrition                                             |
| Male              | Agronomist engineer              | Food crop intensification                             |
| Male              | Agro-economist engineer          | Early warning and crisis response                     |
| Male              | Development study                | Microfinance                                          |
| Male              | Post-harvest engineer            |                                                       |
| Male              | PROMOPA coordinator              | Rural Institutions                                    |
| Male              | PSSA Centre coordinator          | Horticulture and fruit growing                        |
| Male              | Agronomist zootechnical engineer | Financial gap assessment in livestock and fisheries   |
| Female            | Female agricultural engineer     | Non-timber forest products                            |
| Male              | Agricultural engineer            | Financial gap                                         |

**Source: NFSP Report, 2005**

Given its multisectoral nature, the constitutive document of the NFSP was submitted to the Government for approval in October 2007 at the request of the Head of Government who had just granted an audience to the FAO Cameroon Representative. After several meetings to examine the programme at the Prime Minister's Office, two at the level of the Ministers and two at the level of the Secretaries General of the ministries involved, its adoption was materialised by Decree N°2009/045/PM of 14 January 2009 on the organisation of the institutional framework of the NFSP. Subsequently, the National Technical Committee (NTC) was created by decision N°10/SG/PM of 28 July 2009. This regulatory framework establishes the emergence of a legal framework for action, the National Coordination (NC) of the NFSP, which operates through two levers: the administrative lever and the technical lever, which constitute its governmentality (Moudio, 2019).

**Structuring dynamics of the NFSP**

To speak of the structuring dynamics of the NFSP is to analyse its construction through the prism of the process of rationalisation and technicisation based on a series of specific governmental apparatuses and a set of knowledge, or more precisely, knowledge systems, whose intersection forms the basis of the power mechanism. This process of rationalisation and technicisation is constituted by two essential elements which are based, upstream, on the centrality of politics in the decision-making process; it is a political-bureaucratic rationality. And downstream of this institutional level of political-bureaucratic decision-making, there is a second level which is technical and implementation-oriented, namely national coordination (NC), which follows a professional bureaucratic logic.

The bureaucratic rationality of the NFSP relates to the means and resources chosen to achieve the specific goals. Wolfgang. Mommsen describes this logic of rational domination as a formally legal and teleologically purely rational system (Mommsen, 1992). It can be understood in terms of the power structure and the procedures for the organisational realisation of the objectives it implies. The power structure corresponds to the interactions that are essential for achieving the defined objectives. It defines the constitution of the general architecture of the bureaucratic organisation of the NFSP. Through its analysis, it is its ownership that needs to be examined. Importance is given to the examination of the set of devices that enable the distribution, coordination and control of activities, and guide the behaviour of people within the framework of the organisation's objectives (Desreumaux, 2015). As a modality of arrangement and articulation of the different organic components, the power structure determines in a more or less formalised way the main modes of division of labour between groups. It also defines the mechanisms of collaboration and coordination ensuring the overall coherence of the organisation.

The particularity of the 2009 decree was to place the NFSP under the political supervision of the Prime Minister through the Inter-ministerial Committee on Food Security (ICFS). The Minister of Agriculture had a marginal place, which was not the case for the Secretary General (SG) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) who chairs the National Technical Committee (CTN). In 2015, the creation of the Steering Committee (COPIL) chaired by the Minister of Agriculture will put the latter in pole position in the political and administrative

control of the NFSP. The SG will have a marginal place, unlike its previous status. From now on, COPIL will be a buffer between CISA, CTN and the National Coordination (CN). The Minister of Agriculture has pre-eminence over the national coordination. He has relative sovereign authority because of the existence of the CISA, which has pre-eminence over the architecture. However, the NTC and the Project Directorate also act on the NC as an administrative-bureaucratic authority. The structure of domination that has been established could reveal that the national coordination of the NFSP is directly linked to COPIL.

The study of the bureaucratic organisation of the NFSP highlights the functionality of hierarchical relationships. Pfeffer (1982) and Scott (1987) have addressed this in terms of the uncertainty of goals and tasks, professional autonomy and the challenge of control under conditions of ambiguity. The analysis of the power structure of the NASP bureaucratic organisation consists of making explicit the basic constitutive elements that derive from a hierarchical conception of the division of labour. The division of the bureaucratic organisation of the NPSA into distinct formal groups and specialised technical units is based on the principle of specialisation, which defines the way in which the division of activities in the organisation is carried out. As mentioned above, there are groups with multiple functions. While some of them have a political vocation: CISA, COPIL and CTN, some may also have a strategic function: COPIL, CTN, and CN. Some have a purely administrative function: COPIL, the NC and the regional coordination (RCs). They also have an executive function in terms of their hierarchical relationship. This is the case for COPIL, the CTN, the CN and the RCs.

The existence of links between these bodies is justified by the unity of action, by the need to coordinate the activities of each in order to select and achieve an objective (Abecassis, Caby and Jaeger, 2000). The submission of work or activity reports – in the field – by each unit or unit manager is the main coordination mechanism implemented under the NFSP. Each technical specialist service submits a monthly activity report to the monitoring and evaluation department in the form of a report-document. The material accounting and administrative and financial affairs departments are included. The technical departments also submit their work reports to the material accounting and administrative and financial affairs departments. The department for monitoring and evaluation of programme activities harmonises all reports and documents and processes them in statistical or tabular form. The aim is to provide the coordinator with objective elements on which to base his decision. The congruence of these interactions highlights the existence of a bureaucratic duality within the NFSP.

Bureaucratic rationality in the NFSP is based on two distinct and mutually complementary levers: the political lever and the technocratic lever. The political lever is based on the pre-eminence of politics upstream in the decision-making process for food security policy through the ICAR; with the involvement of central administrations in the NTC, the strategic security policy body that occupies the second hierarchical place in the political-administrative decision-making process. The political bureaucracy of the NFSP is fundamentally characterised by a hierarchy. It is made up of multiple competences that are explicitly attached to the singular missions of each formal group – CISA, CTN, COPIL – that compose it. This structural configuration reveals that there are several levels of decision and intervention within the political bureaucracy. The Comité

Interministériel de Sécurité Alimentaire (CISA), the Comité Technique National (CTN), and the Coordination Nationale (CN) each represent different decision-making levels. Each level is composed of senior officials who cannot act at will, e.g. to establish or abolish an officially created post. Moreover, a post that has become vacant must be filled again (Moudio, 2019).

The CISA is chaired by the Secretary General of the Prime Minister's Office and includes, in addition, all members of the Government involved in food security; its mission is to determine the political and strategic orientations of food security actions in Cameroon and to remove obstacles to their implementation. The CTN assists the CISA in the technical implementation of the Programme and is chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development assisted by the National Coordinator, and is composed of all the Secretaries General of the ministries concerned. The NC, ensured by the National Coordinator who, here, plays the role of adviser at the decision-making, strategic, political and administrative levels. His role in the organisation is limited to technical proposals prepared downstream in the context of his interventions in the field. In addition to this political-administrative decision-making level, there is a second bureaucratic level that is technical and implementation-oriented in terms of food security, namely the national coordination of the NFSP, which follows a professional bureaucratic logic.

With regard to the professional bureaucracy of the NFSP, it is necessary to analyse its organisational structure and related competences. The interest in the professional bureaucracy of the NPSA also lies in the examination of its identity, which is a mark of its singularity vis-à-vis the structure of political domination. The identity of the professional bureaucracy is that of the agricultural and agricultural engineering profession. It is structured around the notion of technicality. It covers a profound reality, or even a rationality that structures organisational performance. This concept postulates firstly the idea of sectoral know-how, a particular expertise in a given field. This dynamic of know-how suggests in substance the representation of a particular cognitive device, a professionalisation of knowledge with a view to social intervention, a social intervention that would accompany practices that only come under the heading of social emergency and would thus easily accommodate a situation of precariousness. The question of technical know-how characterises the contemporary demand for expertise in the fields of social intervention and particularly in the food security sector, as is the case with the NFSP (Table 3).

**Table 3: National Coordination Frameworks of the NFSP**

| Grade or area of expertise   | Organisational function                                         |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Agro-economist Engineer      | National Coordinator (NC)                                       |
| Senior Agricultural Engineer | Food security monitoring, surveillance and alert system (RSADV) |
| Agro-economist Engineer      | Support to production and nutritional education (RAPEN)         |
| Agro-economist Engineer      | Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)                                 |

**Source: Internship, 2017**

The structural duality of the NFSP bureaucracy, whose architecture is based on political and technical leverage, has generated a crisis that has forced a readjustment since 2017, the source of which is the conflict between the political and the technical expert. However, it should be noted

that this readjustment came after the institutional adjustment that took place in 2013 and led to a resizing of MINADER/NFSP's intervention in the food security sector, taking into account the means/action rationality that remains at the origin of the paradigm shift in state action in favour of food security.

## **2. Consolidation of the food security system: the development of the NFSP (2013-2019)**

The consolidation of the food security system focuses on two aspects that correspond to two specific moments in the evolution of the state's intervention in food security. The first aspect, which runs from 2013 to 2016, is a horizontal development, as it focuses on improving food security intervention. This leads to a specialisation and territorialisation of the NFSP intervention, which aims to avoid duplication (2.1). The second aspect is a vertical development, based on hierarchical relationships of domination, which brings into play the conflict between the politician and the technical expert around the issue of decision making. This will lead, between 2017 and 2019, to the creation of the Technical Group on Food Security (TGFS) whose objective is to influence political decision-making (2.2).

### **2.1. The technical reterritorialization of the NFSP intervention (2013-2016)**

The NFSP reduced its interventions due to the absence of financial contributions from some partners. This fact is considered as a reterritorialization of its interventions which, until now, covered many areas and extended to the 10 regions of the country. This situation is posed in terms of economic rationality which relates the means to the outcome of the action, and implies to question the NFSP intervention in terms of rationalisation of the state action in food security.

#### **The pre-determining factors of a technical reterritorialization**

The dynamics of the concretisation of state intervention and of the NFSP, in particular, in the area of food security have been consolidated around micro interventions. The latter reflect the state policy to penetrate society in its complexity. The complexity here can be seen in the pluralism of the areas of intervention; in the pluralism of the social categories to be reached because they are affected by food insecurity; in the urban/rural duality to be covered; and in the territorial networking of the intervention. Indeed, between 2008 and 2012, the activities of the NFSP were financed to the tune of FCFA 1.575 billion, solely by the public investment budget (BIP) of MINADER for FCFA 1.475 billion and a counterpart of 100 million from MINEPAT. The FAO provided US\$1,100,000 in the framework of two TCPs. This enabled support to be provided to 919 micro-projects and inputs to 29,383 beneficiary households/families.

In 2008, under TCP/CMR/320 1 (E): Provision of inputs to vulnerable populations in the framework of the "Initiative on Soaring Food Prices" (ISFP) financed by the FAO for an amount of US\$500,000, inputs were provided to producers (fertilisers, seeds, feed, cotton cake, vaccines) to 6,883 beneficiary households/families. The project covered all 10 regions and BIP MINADER was financed to the tune of FCFA 75 million, which made it possible to carry out 29 microprojects in the 10 regions. For 2009, the NFSP received 150 million FCFA from BIP MINADER. This funding enabled the Programme to maintain a minimum level of activity in the field, through the implementation of 77 micro-projects in the 10 regions under the Crop Intensification and Production System Diversification sub-programmes. In 2010, the programme was still funded by

BIP MINADER for an increased amount of 250 million FCFA. The emphasis was placed on the progressive recruitment of staff and the acquisition of equipment and materials. Approximately 109 microprojects in priority crops have been set up in the 10 regions.

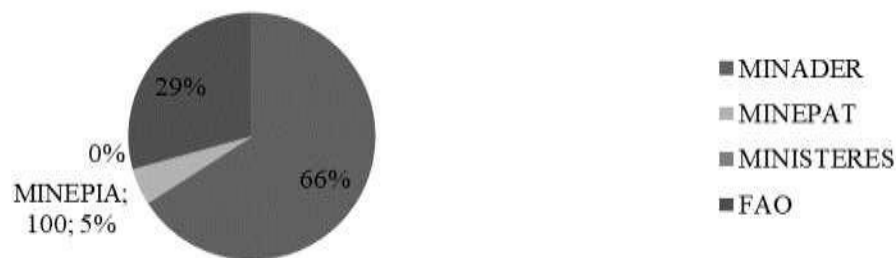
For the year 2011, the programme obtained a budget of 500 million CFA francs, jointly financed by BIP MINADER for 400 million CFA francs and the counterpart of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) for 100 million CFA francs. The technical activities comprising 225 targeted micro-projects in the 10 regions were postponed in 2012 due to the late arrival of funding. For the current year 2012, the programme has benefited from FCFA 600 million from the MINADER BIP, which is not yet available, and it is planned to develop 479 micro-projects. However, during the first half of 2012, the 225 microprojects from 2011 that were not carried out due to the late arrival of funding were launched and are currently being completed. FAO support, through project OSRO/CMR/201/CHA, amounting to US\$611,000 for Logone and Chari has made it possible to provide 143 tonnes of maize, sorghum and millet seeds for 22,500 beneficiaries. And 250,000 doses of vaccine against pests from small ruminants and 624 tonnes of cotton cake (MINADER, 2012).

However, despite this effective dynamic, the financial participation of CISA members is a sign of real political will, which is lacking. Out of a total amount of the programme estimated at 70,079,000,000 FCFA (seventy billion seventy-nine million), for a period from 2008 to 2015 (NFSP Report, 2008), the expected participation of the Cameroonian State represents 50% of the total amount, it has been noted that the real financial participation of the Cameroonian State is essentially reduced to the MINADER BIP. The financial contribution of other ministries is nonexistent. However, it was noted that in 2011, MINEPIA mobilised a financial contribution of an estimated FCFA 100 million, compared to FCFA 400 million for the contribution of MINADER.

**Table 4: Balance of NFSP funding from 2008 to 2012**

| Year                            | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | Total        |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|
| <b>BIP (Millions FCFA)</b>      | 75   | 150  | 205  | 500  | 600  | 1475         |
| <b>FAO (Millions FCFA)</b>      | 275  |      |      |      | 336  | 611          |
| <b>Total (Billions of FCFA)</b> |      |      |      |      |      | <b>2,086</b> |

**Source: Author construction based on documented data, NFSP 2008 Final Report**



**Figure 8: Actual contribution of partners Source: data from NFSP 2008 Final Report**

Out of the total financing needs of the programme between 2008 and 2015, estimated at FCFA 70.079 billion, only FCFA 2.086 billion were mobilised for the implementation of programme activities, which include the programme's administration component. This corresponds to a coverage rate of programme activities that remains far below the needs, given the range of technical actions to be covered. This situation will lead to a readjustment or a restrictive reterritorialization of the field of action of the NFSP.

#### **Towards a technical reterritorialization: resizing the territories of competence**

The need to change the intervention paradigm is justified by the inadequacy between the financial means available and the immensity of the technical field of action to be covered. The needs in terms of intervention are greater than the intervention capacity of the NFSP. This imbalance is a structuring factor in the decision-maker's choice insofar as it is based on rationality. It will lead to a reterritorialization of the NFSP's activities; that is, their relocation to specific areas of competence that take into account the balance between needs, available resources and organisational capacities for action. Therefore, the territories of competence cannot be considered in themselves, as a closed, autonomous and self-sufficient entity, but in their relationship with the global. Indeed, the territory is above all that of competences. It brings together the actors – decision-makers and technical experts – and distinguishes them from each other.

These territories of competence remain, however, tangible spaces. Thus, reterritorialization is not only the exaltation of the territory of competence or its simple claim or the sectorisation of organisational competences, but the specialisation or localisation of competences. It is a political choice aimed at recreating the territory of specific competences, as a historicised social construction, as a specific institutional reality, as a place for the institution of power over society, as an instance for a new cooperation between the state and society. In the interview of 12 June 2017 with a former national coordinator of the NFSP, Mr Foudama, the reforms were justified by the imperative to adapt the availability of financial resources to the real costs of the programme. This situation led to the redefinition of the territories of competence. Thus, the NFSP was reduced to the objectives of monitoring-evaluation, alert and rapid reaction, on the one hand, and support to production and nutritional health, on the other, because MINADER already has many programmes that intervene in all agricultural sectors. It was therefore necessary to find specificity for the programme in order to avoid duplication, as the programme explored dimensions already highlighted by other programmes.

**Table 5: MINADER programmes and projects 2011 N MINADER Projects and Programmes**

|    |                                                                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| o  |                                                                                     |
| 1  | Rural Family Income Improvement Programme in the Northern Provinces                 |
| 2  | Rumpi Area Participatory Development Project                                        |
| 3  | GP-DERUDEP; Grassfield Participatory and Decentralised Rural Development Project    |
| 4  | PADC: Community Development Support Project                                         |
| 5  | PNDRT: Root and Tuber Development Programme                                         |
| 6  | Cereal Storage Project                                                              |
| 7  | Mount Mbappit Region Development Project (PDRM)                                     |
| 8  | Project to support the production and marketing of perennial crops                  |
| 9  | Programme to improve the competitiveness of agro-pastoral farms (ACEFA)             |
| 10 | Programme for the renovation and development of training in the agricultural sector |
| 11 | Support programme for the management of rural sector administrations (AMO)          |
| 12 | Programme for the development of village palm groves (PDPV)                         |
| 13 | Programme for the revival of the plantain sector (PRFP)                             |
| 14 | National support programme for the maize sector (PNAFM)                             |
| 15 | Support project for the protection of the cocoa/coffee orchard (PPVCC)              |
| 16 | Support project for the revival of tobacco growing in eastern Cameroon (PARTEC)     |
| 17 | Project to combat major food crop pests (PLGFV)                                     |
| 18 | Programme de valorisation des Bas-Fonds (PVBF)                                      |
| 19 | Rural development programme for the Mounjo-Nkam agricultural basin (PDRBA-MN)       |
| 20 | Decentralised Rural Credit Project (PCRD)                                           |
| 21 | Support project for microfinance development institutions                           |
| 22 | Support project for the integration of young people in agriculture (PAIJA)          |
| 23 | Kennedy Round 2 Project (KR2)                                                       |
| 24 | Fertiliser sub-sector reform programme (PRSSE)                                      |
| 25 | Cocoa and Coffee Seed Project (CCSP)                                                |
| 26 | Cocoa and Coffee Development Fund (FODECC)                                          |
| 27 | Mushroom sector development project                                                 |
| 28 | Rural development programme for the Mungo-Nkam agricultural basin (PDRBA-MN)        |

**Source: MINADER programmes catalogue, 2012**

The reterritorialization of NFSP activities, with regard to MINADER's catalogue of programmes, was also intended to seek organisational originality in order to contribute to the creation of a dynamic of change. It is understood both as a need to truly transform and as a desire to strengthen the interventional legitimacy of the NFSP vis-à-vis the society in which it intervenes. Starting from a denaturation of existing MINADER programmatic artefacts (Table 5) to give a new nature to an object. But the reterritorialization of interventions goes well beyond the specific areas of competence of the NFSP, which are distinct from MINADER programmes.

Between legitimisation and innovation, the dynamics of reterritorialization will be further concretised in the restriction of geographical locations of intervention according to priorities – level of vulnerability to food insecurity – which also takes into account the relationship between financial means and capacity for action and which is based on prior studies. According to the 2011 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA), approximately one million people in rural areas, or 9.6% of households, are food insecure (2.2% severe and 7.4% moderate). In the Far North and North, 17.9% and 15.4% of households are food insecure, respectively. During the lean season, these rates are certainly higher. Approximately 615,000 people are food insecure in these two regions, which are the most populous in the country. According to EFSA 2015, 35.5% of the population in the Far North is food insecure, Adamawa (18.7%), North (10.6%) and East (8%). Taking into account the level of incidence of food insecurity is a fundamental variable that will structure the institutional framework of the NFSP. The reorientation of interventions in the field will help to reduce the administrative burden. Thus, the NFSP will reduce the number of RCs from 10 to 4: East, Adamawa, North and Far North. This reterritorialization, which corresponds to a horizontal development or consolidation of the NAHP's intervention, will be followed by a vertical reterritorialization (between 2017 and 2019).

## **2.2. Technical framing of the political decision-making process (2017-2019)**

Strengthen the decision-making performance of the NFSP by reinforcing the institutional framework through the introduction of a decision-support tool. The main objective is to enable technical experts to make sense of the action. Since 2017, the NFSP has begun restructuring the intervention framework to respond effectively through the introduction of the Food Security Technical Group (FSGT). The reason for this change is fundamentally linked to the need to match the political constraints of the state with the social constraints of the population in terms of food security by producing technical reference frameworks and reliable statistics that will enable the policy maker to have a clear view of the real situation, based on a set of data to decide. What are the drivers of this new deal? What is actually changing?

### **The main forces leading to a rezoning of the political decision-making framework**

The crisis affecting the bureaucratic organisation of the NFSP is linked to its power structure. It is pre-determined by its duality in that it presents a pyramid of power at the top of which is the politician. The latter is fundamentally and structurally made up of the CISA, the COPIL and the CTN. It is constitutive of political rationality. At the base of the pyramid are the technical experts of the NC and the RCs. The conflict between these two brings into play the decision-making power held by the politician. The issue of decision-making power is built around its conquest by the experts and its conservation by the politician. The duality of the bureaucratic organisation of the NFSP predisposes to a conflict of interest between these two categories of actors.

This configuration makes it possible to understand the organisational system as a bureaucratic field in which opposing rationalities clash. Opposition is, at the very least, a space of limited sociability, because the existence of tensions does not exclude collaboration. It inscribes the relationship between the technocratic centre and politics within a power relationship that operates within a bureaucratic field. This bureaucratic field is a dialectic of active rationalities that arise through their interaction, opposing each other in their singularity. The bureaucratic field brings

two forms of rationality into conflict. A political rationality embodied by CISA, COPIL and CTN; and a technocratic rationality embodied by the NC and the RCs.

The imbalances in the relationship between the political and the technical experts are the result of the subjectivation logics of the technical experts, which generally oppose the latter to the political decision-making bodies – this flawed context is a catalyst for any dissonant reaction (Kiesler, 1971) of the technical experts. These experts, who initially adhered to a political cosmogony shaped by exclusive political logics, are now detached from it. To this end, a relationship of cognitive inconsistency based on opposing cognitive-political perspectives (Joule, 1986) emerges: systems of beliefs, values, ideologies, opinions, positional perception within the body politic (Stone and Cooper: 2001); and reinforced political learning (Rosenberg, 1965) received from elsewhere that will be at the centre of the dynamics of technical expert subjectivation. This cognitive inconsistency has grown and changed into a state of sustained cognitive dissonance; a state of sustained motivation that will be internalised and assimilated sustainably by all the experts involved in the intervention dynamics within the NFSP.

This system of dissonant behaviour is largely influenced by social stimuli, such as the technicality of the political decision in a technical field, which becomes a performance issue but also a power issue for technical experts – in the political decision-making process – around which a coalition of causes for change is formed. As a performance issue, the question of the technicality of the political decision is first of all posed in terms of decision-making time. While it is true that the decision is based on a number of pieces of information, it is also true that taking time into account in the search for and collection of information lengthens the decision-making process. The political decision-making bodies involved in the GTSA do not have enough time to make the best decision. The question of time arises, for example, insofar as the members of the ICAR and the CTN do not have enough time to produce or consult technical documents. Almost all of its members are politicians and very senior civil servants in the administration. The objective of introducing the GTSA into the institutional architecture of the NFSP is to produce decision support tools that will be presented by technical experts at ICAR, COPIL and NTC meetings.

Alongside the issue of performance, the issue of power arises. In a normalised organisational environment – marked by the relationship of domination of the politician over the technical expert – the purpose of which is to maintain group cohesion, becomes a framework of sanctions designed to maintain this cohesion. The norm acquires a coercive force that reinforces the social distances between the governing and the governed. The exclusion of the technical expert in the political decision-making process concerning a technical field such as food safety generates a psychological discomfort at the origin of a cognitive dissonance. This normative character, when it increases deviations, creates a state of intense tension (Festinger, 1952), becomes normality while the governing system of action is seen as deviant. Conformity to the established norms thus turns against the subgroups that derive less satisfaction from it (Goulner, 1959). Conformity turns out to be a factor of instability and conflict in the long run (Littesnen, 1958). According to the CN technical expert who initiated the GTSA, 'the ICAR and the NTC in their decision making do not actually have any real data from the field. The decisions they take on the basis of statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INS) and UN agencies are far from satisfying

their competence. The guidelines that come out of these meetings are limited and reduce action on the ground to verification, not problem solving" (Interview with Abate, 15 June 2017).

The fundamental issue that structures the logics of groups of actors within the NFSP is its domination through control of the decision-making process. But the nature of the stake depends on the position of each of the two actor groups in the bureaucratic system. For the politician, the challenge is to remain the dominant actor and agent in the system by preserving decision-making power. For the technical experts, the challenge is to acquire the key to dominance, which is decision-making power, which remains a process essentially dominated by a coalition of causes.

### **Strengthening the political decision-making framework: the institution of the GTSA**

The strengthening of the political decision-making framework through the institution of the GTSA initially proceeds from a process of subjectivation of technical experts that starts from a situation of discomfort with their position in the institutional architecture. The moral discomfort system of the individual technical expert is largely dependent on socio-organisational stimuli provided by the political centre. The social status of the technical expert as a member of the professional body of agricultural engineers in the global society, the first level of moral pressure, leads to a significant number of frustrations. The position of the technical expert within the bureaucratic organisation of the NFSP is no longer experienced only as a relationship of duty towards the hierarchical authority, but rather as a duty of recognition and an organisational constraint (Moudio, 2019).

The technical expert's self-sacrifice in responding to the imperative of concern for the population in terms of food security becomes the condition for obtaining an organisational prestige that marks the dissatisfaction of an unrewarding public service. Concern for the population now imposes their desire for recognition. The technical expert at the initiative of the GTSA alleges in this sense that: "I realised that I was not doing what I was appointed to do, and there are things that are not being done to really ensure food security. Bureaucracy is a hindrance...." (Abaté, interview 15 June 2017). The sense of responsibility crystallises into moral discomfort that results from socio-cognitive self-pressure.

Values, ideas, even beliefs, and overall professional socio-cognitive experiences are combined in the time of awareness. Between rethinking and being pragmatic, time forces the expert to a strategic withdrawal into himself; at this level, he constructs forms of representations and projection of himself onto the bureaucratic organisation in order to escape the system of precariousness. The self-representation in the constraining organisational space is that of organisational uselessness, of the incapable expert; the expert interviewed agrees with this when he says 'I think that when you feel you can't do anything where you are (...)' (Abaté, interview 15 June 2017). This situation will lead him to empower himself by engaging in a process of institutional recognition.

The recognition of the self-expert is the product of a process of struggle for institutional legitimisation by the politician, the GTSA. The technical expert enters into negotiation with new peers from other spheres of professional socialisation. Their encounter constitutes a new interactional and intersubjective edifice, an organisational environment that is being constructed and within which, together with his peers, he will begin a march towards his desire to exist and

influence the power structure. Through political entrepreneurial empowerment logics. The enterprising attitude that translates into the initiation of informal meetings between technical experts from all departments and international partners involved in the issue of food security is a cognitive deviation that manifests a willingness to make a moral break with the bureaucratic culture. The belief in the rationalisation and evidential value of the bureaucratic organisation of the NFSP is forged by pessimistic representations. The technical experts have useful information that will enable them to better think about themselves within the organisation; and to find the flaws in their bureaucratic production system. The technical expert asserts in this sense that: 'I consulted the documents on the programme, going through all the activity reports since the implementation of the NFSP, I realised two things. It was important to think of other mechanisms of action and to activate the lever of prevention, which has not been mobilised. The microprojects are poorly distributed because, in the field, NGOs and other projects and programmes are working on the same aspects as us. There is no harmonisation of actions between partners. To this end, we had to create a platform that integrates all these partners in order to find a sustainable solution' (Abaté, op.cit).

The informal monthly meetings constitute a new space for intersubjective interactions. It will indeed imply an institutional reform that will allow the AHTG to have an institutional meaning. The partners engage in this form of negotiation to constitute a determining environment in the future transformation of the overall bureaucratic organisation system. The actors of the GTSA will mobilise a bottom-up strategy through the initiation of informal meetings since 2015. They will combine these informal meetings with the mobilisation of social capital to penetrate MINADER's places of influence. Their legitimacy will be formalised by a decision N°0687/MINADER/SG/DEPC/NFSP of 16 June 2016 modifying decision N°0943/MINADER/SG/DEPC/NFSP of 15 May 2015 on the creation, organisation and functioning of the GTSA, which, placed under the authority of the Minister of Agriculture, is a framework for exchange, cross-analysis and capitalisation of information between stakeholders involved in food security in Cameroon.

The GTSA is not only a space for intersubjective interactions between experts, but also a framework for the democratisation of technical expertise. The democratisation of the GTSA is reflected in the contradictory exchanges that take place within this negotiation space. It reveals the nature of the consultation environment. This environment is a social structure characterised by the existence of institutional socialisation corridors to which the various negotiators belong. It is binding insofar as each category of expert is influenced by its original institutional socialisation environment. Each of the categories entering into a relationship with the other wants to impose its ideas on it, which are only the product of institutional socialisation. There is a constraint of the institutional structure on the individual. But since it is necessary to collaborate, the different categories of experts will join in a sociability that is collusive, to say the least. Walking along their corridor of institutional socialisation, they will, thanks to their mobility, cross paths at the crossroads of intersubjective negotiation, which is the ideal place – the GTSA – for producing clashes of ideas. Consensus will be built thanks to mediation, which does not extinguish tensions but dissolves them in the form of a compromise. The configuration of interactions is identified with collusive sociabilities interested in insidious rivalries and the

appropriation of strategic resources by one another; thanks to the possibilities of bifurcations which constitute its mechanisms of realization. It tends to socialize the different expert categories. It implies their simultaneous convergence towards a place of sociocognitive interactions of the intersubjective type which identifies with the intersection or the central meeting area of the different subjects and expert actors: this place is the GTSA. The meeting space between these different actors is a space for intersubjective negotiation, collaboration and cooperation.

The centripetal structure of the configuration produces sociability – understood as a social mechanism at work – collusive. The thesis of collusive sociability suggests the capacity of a category of experts to enter into an indirect but conflictual interaction with another. It suggests the existence of a participatory convergence of these categories of experts towards the space of intersubjective negotiation. Collusive sociability involves, in the principle of competing relations, the existence of corridors of expertise a priori opposable by nature: technical expertise vs political expertise; financial expertise vs political expertise; international expertise vs national expertise, etc. The reality of the expertise carried out as part of the budget preparation for the InDepth Survey on Food Security and Vulnerability (CFSVA) 2017, within the GTSA, presents a cross structure of expert mobility that links categories of experts from different backgrounds or institutional corridors and expertise (Moudio, 2019).

This segmental and crossed structure provides fundamental information on the existence of places of categorical expertise which have a meeting point where sociocognitive intersubjective negotiation takes place – the GTSA. This corresponds in reality to several sites of collective decision-making. The development of the CFSVA within the framework of the GTSA gave rise to meetings which included experts from the World Food Program (WFP), those from the NFSP, and those from the Directorate of Agricultural Surveys and Statistics (DESA); the meetings most often took place at the premises of the NFSP, within the Ministry of Agriculture, if not at the premises of the WFP, and on a few rare occasions at the premises of the DESA. The constraining nature of expert mobility is not easily recognizable insofar as the constraint is exerted on each category in the form of pressure from the institutional socialization environment: this institutional pressure is clearly experienced in the negotiation space of the GTSA where the " we can see, in particular in the case of CFSVA 2017, the opposition between categories of experts – statisticians, financiers, agronomists, development specialists, agronomists, administration – grouped under the banner of representative of the WFP.

## **Conclusion**

At the end, this contribution analyses the evolution in food security policy in Cameroon from the theoretical perspective of the policy process. The latter theoretical perspective is questioned by several models of which the advocacy coalition framework constitutes the model called upon. In fact, through this study, it is the concept of food security policy that is questioned through the prism of the policy process and starting from the aforementioned model. It is actually a question of answering the following question: what does the food security policy process refer to, which combines the concepts of food security policy and policy process? The concept refers a priori, in our study, to the public food security service, to its historical evolution and to the forms it has

taken in this evolution; That is to say, between 2008 and 2019. It corresponds, more and more precisely, to a negotiated and incremental process marked by a sociological historicity.

As a process negotiated or worked through negotiations and incremental, the food security policy process, highlights the logic of actors with divergent interests who integrate public policy communities like the PA-PSSA, in a context of 'sustainable food insecurity, on the basis of which the policy to fight against food insecurity and the institutional framework which shelters it, the NFSP, is drawn up between 2008 and 2012. Among these actors, we have " on the one hand, collective actors – interest groups, governmental and intergovernmental organizations (Weible 2014) – such as the State, the FAO and the transport unions who play a leading role in the face of the hunger riots of 2008, a political context which will mark and give a boost to the evolution in the consideration of the problem of food insecurity in the institutional agenda. And, on the other hand, we find individual actors like technical experts, political decision-makers are penetrated by forms of individual subjectivation in the sense that they make rational choices which structure changes or evolution. The public food security service outside the institutions. This is also the case of the national coordinator of the NFSP who from 2013 will initiate a restructuring of the organization.

The analysis reveals that these institutions – that is, rules, norms, practices and relationships – are, on the one hand, formal and widely understood, as when they are written into decisionmaking acts. – Ministerial decrees and decisions which organize and define the function of the NFSP and the GTSA respectively. And, on the other hand, informal because they are included in specific organizations such as the GTSA which will subsequently be formalized thanks to the lobbying of technical experts carried out with the decision-making bodies of MINADER. The latter determines the new characteristic of the public food security service at a technical level and at a given moment in its evolution, from 2017. Constituting, thereby, a place where political decision-making at the technical level is watered. This allowed these experts to enter the political process. The GTSA is interpenetrated by technical experts from different organizational and institutional backgrounds who exchange information to influence the political decision-making process. Thus, with the GTSA, the other functional political subsystems of the NFSP, in particular the COPIL and the CISA are now interpenetrated by political decision-makers (Jordan, Halpin, & Maloney, 2004) and technical experts with whom they consult and negotiate.

So, as forward in term of policy recommendations to improve the food security policy process, a social division of labour is needed between the decision-making centre – the Inter-ministerial Committee on Food Security (CISA) and the Steering Committee (COPIL) – and the technical expertise centre – the Technical Group on Food Security (GTSA). The PNSA should play a more synthesizing role between these two centres in terms of the framework for implementing the national food security policy strategy. This will enable it to use two levers simultaneously. A political lever because it remains subject to the policy from the point of view of the hierarchy and a technical lever because it frames the activities of the GTSA.

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