

From Capture to Caloric Sovereignty?

Burkina Faso's Agricultural Turn in Comparative Perspective with IMF-Structured States

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Abstract

This paper uses Burkina Faso's recent agricultural performance as a test case for a broader hypothesis: that loosening Western institutional capture – military, financial, and narrative – can rapidly increase a state's caloric sovereignty, while long-term IMF/World Bank structuring correlates with persistent food import dependence and vulnerability. I frame this through the Extraction–Inversion Architecture (EIA): extraction of value, coercive constraint, and narrative inversion that relocates blame to the victim society. Using a simple comparative design, I contrast Burkina Faso (post-2019 insurgency crisis, post-French military exit, AES realignment) with three cases: Haiti (catastrophic collapse under long IMF/US tutelage), Ghana (average “reformer” under a 2023 IMF programme), and Morocco (high-performing but structurally import-dependent “model pupil”). FAO and official data indicate Burkina's cereal production at about 6.1 million tonnes in 2024 (20 percent above the five-year average) with provisional 2025–2026 figures suggesting 7.14 million tonnes and 126.4 percent coverage of national cereal needs. I show how changes in security doctrine, land allocation, and budget focus translate into caloric coverage, price stability, and space for productive innovation, whereas heavily “programme-managed” states remain structurally dependent on imports and vulnerable to shocks.

1. Introduction

The question is simple: when a state shakes off part of the colonial-imperial apparatus, does food follow? Not slogans, not flags, but calories: hectares planted, tonnes harvested, import bills reduced, diets stabilized, and business risk lowered.

African countries have been told for decades that “integration” into global governance and finance is the path to modernization. In practice, this integration has often meant structural adjustment, subsidy removal, import liberalization, and fiscal rules that privilege debt service over productive capacity. Agriculture, especially smallholder agriculture, was one of the main casualties. The result is a continent that exports raw strategic materials and imports basic food.

Burkina Faso provides an unexpected counter-trajectory. In the last five years, the country has gone through three major strategic breaks:

1. Progressive disengagement from the French military/security architecture, including the end of Barkhane-style presence and a withdrawal from the G5 Sahel security framework in 2023.
2. Political realignment within the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) with Mali and Niger (2023), formalized as a confederation in 2024, explicitly framed as a rejection of perceived ECOWAS and French instrumentalization.
3. A deliberate agro-pastoral push: expansion of cultivated area, rehabilitated lands and hydro-agricultural works (about 127 000 hectares brought into or back into production), and public discourse centered on food self-reliance.

The provisional 2025–2026 campaign numbers published by the government and relayed in Burkinabè and regional media are striking:

- Total cereal output estimated at 7.14 million tonnes, up 17.6 percent over the previous season.
- Coverage of national cereal needs estimated at 126.4 percent, an unprecedented level in the country’s recent history.
- Other food crops reaching about 1.25 million tonnes (+27.9 percent), with particularly strong performance for cowpea.
- Harvest completion at 86.4 percent by 30 November and a 9.2 percent increase in cultivated area, largely due to improved security and resettlement of displaced populations.

FAO's own 2024 GIEWS brief, which is more conservative, already notes a cereal harvest of around 6.1 million tonnes, about 20 percent above the five-year average, even while warning that about 2.7 million people remain in Crisis or worse food insecurity (CH3+). This underscores an important point: the trajectory has sharply improved, but conflict legacies and price dynamics still hurt people. Caloric sovereignty is a process, not a miracle.

This paper uses Burkina as a pivot to test a broader hypothesis: **states that remain deeply embedded in Western financial and security capture architectures show persistent food import dependence and vulnerability, despite decades of “reform,” whereas states that partially decouple and redirect budgets and coercive capacity toward land and production can rapidly increase their caloric coverage.**

I work with my earlier concept of **Extraction-Inversion Architecture (EIA)**:

- **Extraction:** sustained transfer of value (resources, strategic rents, labour, sovereignty).
- **Coercion:** debt, sanctions, policy conditionality, proxy forces, or security “partnerships”.
- **Inversion:** narrative framing that blames the victim population (“corruption”, “tribalism”, “bad governance”) and recodes the extractor as rescuer or tutor.

The EIA framework is already documented for the slave trade and colonial period. Here I apply it to contemporary agricultural and food-sovereignty outcomes.

The comparison set is deliberately simple:

- **Burkina Faso:** partial decoupling and rapid agri push (Sahel, AES).
- **Haiti:** catastrophic case of long-term structural adjustment and import liberalization that destroyed domestic farming and generated extreme import dependence.
- **Ghana:** “average” African reformer under a major IMF Extended Credit Facility since 2023, with persistent food price inflation and import reliance.
- **Morocco:** one of the “best-performing” captured states, with modernizing agriculture but chronic cereal import dependence aggravated by recurrent droughts, despite access to IMF precautionary credit lines and strong ties to EU markets.

The core question is not who “manages better” in a moral sense. It is structural: **how do different degrees and histories of capture translate into caloric coverage, budget efficiency, institutional capacity, business risk, and innovation space?**

2. Methodology

2.1 Comparative logic

This is a **structured, focused comparison**: structured because the same questions are asked of each case; focused because the number of cases is small and the metrics are limited to those with clear data and interpretability.

For each country, I look at:

1. Caloric sovereignty metrics

- Cereal production (tonnes) and trend vs five-year average.
- Coverage of national cereal requirements (where available).
- Degree of dependence on imports for staple cereals (qualitative “low/medium/high” anchored in FAO/WFP reports).

2. Capture metrics

- IMF/World Bank programme intensity and duration (recent major programmes, structural adjustment history).
- Security architecture: presence or absence of foreign bases/forces, participation in regional frameworks perceived as extensions of Western agendas.
- Policy conditionality: documented liberalization, subsidy removal, or privatization that directly affected agriculture and food markets.

3. Outcome channels for institutions and economy

- Budget space: competition between debt service and productive investment.
- Price stability for food: presence of recurrent spikes.
- Room for innovation: whether farmers and local firms can plan beyond survival, access inputs, and adopt new techniques.

Table 2. Key structural metrics for each case (to be populated with latest data)

Dimension	Indicator (precise)	Why it bites structurally
Food sovereignty	Cereal self-sufficiency ratio (% domestic production / needs)	Direct measure of whether people eat from their own land or from foreign docks.

Dimension	Indicator (precise)	Why it bites structurally
	Cereal import dependency ratio (% of cereal consumption imported)	Captures exposure to FX, sanctions, freight, and external shocks.
	Share of calories from imported staples (%)	Links macro-import logic to literal bodies.
Fiscal & debt constraints	External public debt (% of GDP)	Shows long-term leverage over policy space.
	Public debt service (% of government revenue)	When high, budget is structurally colonized by creditors.
	IMF programme count and years under conditionality (since 1980)	Proxy for cumulative “programme time” / capture exposure.
Institutional capacity	Public agri spending (% of total budget and as % of GDP)	Indicates whether food production is politically prioritized or neglected.
	Share of budget under externally dictated “prior actions” / conditionality	Direct capture of policy autonomy.
Economic resilience & equity	Food inflation vs headline inflation (5–10 year window)	Shows whether food is consistently the shock absorber.
	Poverty headcount and rural poverty trend vs IMF programme phases	Tests association between programmes and lived deprivation.
Innovation & productive base	Growth rate of agricultural value added per worker	Indicator of real productivity, not just export volumes.
	Share of land under irrigation or improved water control	Structural capacity vs climate, especially for Sahel & Maghreb

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I do not claim full econometric proof in this paper. That requires a broader panel and more granular data. The purpose here is to **establish a clinically plausible pattern and clear hypotheses**.

2.2 Data sources

Table 1. IMF / external capture profile and food dependence (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Morocco, Haiti)

Country	IMF / external finance profile	Food import / sovereignty profile	Recent agri performance / shock response	Interpretation (1–2 lines)
Burkina Faso	ECF arrangement 2018–2021 (modest)	Govt reports 126.4% coverage of cereal	FAO/GIEWS already reported	Country partially exits orthodox

Country	IMF / external finance profile	Food import / sovereignty profile	Recent agri performance / shock response	Interpretation (1–2 lines)
	scale). No active IMF lending programme reported in 2024–2025; current policy line is explicitly sovereignty-focused and security-first.	needs for 2025–26 campaign, with 7.14 Mt cereals (+17.6%) and +27.9% other staples; cultivated area +9.2%. :contentReference[oaicite:1]{index=1}	strong cereal harvests in 2023–24 and improved outlook; gov data for 2025–26 shows record surplus and rapid rebound once territories were secured. :contentReference[oaicite:2]{index=2}	“programme logic”, re-prioritizes land, irrigation, security: 5-year turnaround from fragility toward caloric surplus.
Ghana	Among the most IMF-dependent states in Africa: entering its 17th IMF programme in 2023 (US\$3 bn ECF) after debt distress and currency collapse. :contentReference[oaicite:3]{index=3}	Still heavily reliant on imports for wheat and rice; domestic cereal production has not kept pace with urban demand; food inflation was among the highest in Africa in 2022–23. :contentReference[oaicite:4]{index=4}	IMF programme focused on fiscal consolidation and debt restructuring; agricultural productivity gains remain modest; food prices highly sensitive to global shocks. :contentReference[oaicite:5]{index=5}	“Captured but average”: long-run IMF dependence plus import-heavy food system → chronic vulnerability and social pain for limited structural transformation.
Morocco	Long-standing “good pupil”: multiple precautionary IMF credit lines (PLL, then FCL in 2023–25), designed as insurance and signalling, not outright crisis lending. :contentReference[oaicite:6]{index=6}	Produces much food but is structurally dependent on imported grains: over 40% of grain and flour consumption is imported . :contentReference[oaicite:7]{index=7} Severe droughts have forced repeated big wheat import programmes.	Modern export agriculture (citrus, vegetables) coexists with chronic rainfall risk and heavy wheat import needs; climate shocks translate into import bills and price vulnerability. :contentReference[oaicite:9]{index=9}	“Best-performing among captured”: strong institutions relative to peers, but core diet still hinges on external grain markets and climate volatility.
Haiti	Recurrent IMF & WB programmes since the 1980s; drastic tariff cuts under structural adjustment; severe external dependence and debt over decades. :contentReference[oaicite:10]{index=10}	Often-cited figures: around 80% of food is imported , and about 80% of rice consumed is imported , largely from the US. :contentReference[oaicite:11]{index=11} Local rice and staple production were devastated by	Result: agriculture hollowed out, chronic food insecurity, frequent humanitarian crises and riots linked to food prices; near-total dependence on aid and imports for basic calories. :contentReference[Catastrophic capture: textbook example of how structural adjustment + import dependency can destroy food sovereignty and trap a country in permanent emergency.

Country	IMF / external finance profile	Food import / sovereignty profile	Recent agri performance / shock response	Interpretation (1–2 lines)
		dumping and tariff liberalization. :contentReference[oai cite:12]{index=12}	oaicite:13{index=13}	

- **Burkina Faso:**

- National Council of Ministers communication on the 2025–2026 agro-pastoral campaign, via local outlets such as Burkina24 and Sputnik Afrique; figures on cereal output (7.14 million tonnes), coverage rate (126.4 percent), and cropped area expansion.
- FAO GIEWS Country Brief (October 2024): cereal production around 6.1 million tonnes, about 20 percent above the five-year average; about 2.7 million people projected in Crisis or worse between June and August 2024.

- **Haiti:**

- FAO/WFP reporting on Haiti’s sharp dependence on food imports, especially rice; 2023 estimates of rice imports around 375 000 tonnes costing about 264 million USD; historical analyses of how tariff cuts and subsidized US rice under structural adjustment undermined domestic production.
- WFP data indicating around half of Haiti’s population facing acutely high levels of food insecurity in recent years.

- **Ghana:**

- IMF press releases on the 2023 Extended Credit Facility for Ghana, noting extremely high inflation (over 50 percent in 2022), a collapsed currency, and unsustainable debt, with a programme aimed at fiscal consolidation and structural reforms.
- World Bank and secondary sources noting Ghana’s significant rice and wheat import dependence and its exposure to global food price shocks.

- **Morocco:**

- FAO/WFP/IFRC reporting on Morocco’s cereal production and drought: 2022 wheat harvest as low as about 3.4 million tonnes, roughly half the usual, leading to very high import needs, with cereals representing a significant share of import

bills.

- IMF documentation on repeated use of precautionary credit lines (Flexible Credit Line, Precautionary and Liquidity Line), symbolizing deep structural integration into the IMF regime.
- **Capture and security:**
 - Documentation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) formation and Burkina's withdrawal from G5 Sahel and ECOWAS frameworks. [W +2+2](#)
 - Analyses of structural adjustment in Haiti and its agricultural impacts.

2.3 Conceptual measures

Degree of capture is treated as a composite, qualitative index:

- **High capture:** long-term, repeated IMF/WB programmes with deep liberalization; strong dependence on food imports; security architecture aligned with Western strategic interests; key policy choices framed through external “conditionality” logic.
- **Medium capture:** intermittent IMF involvement, some domestic policy flexibility, but continued structural dependence on imported staples and exposure to external price and security regimes.
- **Low or decreasing capture:** deliberate exit from certain security frameworks, refusal or renegotiation of IMF-style conditionality, and visible realignment of budget and coercive instruments toward land, inputs, and caloric sovereignty.

Burkina is not suddenly free or fully sovereign. The argument is more modest: in a period of partial decoupling, caloric and institutional outcomes have improved faster than in long-captured states.

3. Results

3.1 Burkina Faso: caloric coverage under partial decoupling

FAO estimates Burkina's 2024 cereal production at about 6.1 million tonnes, roughly 20 percent above the five-year average. Government and local media report that the 2025–2026 campaign is poised to reach about 7.14 million tonnes, with an estimated cereal needs coverage of 126.4 percent, an unprecedented figure. Cultivated area reportedly increased by about 9.2 percent,

supported by relative security gains and the resettlement of previously displaced populations, with around 127 000 hectares rehabilitated or developed for agriculture.

At the same time, FAO estimates still identify about 2.7 million people in acute food insecurity (CH3+), reflecting high prices, conflict legacies, and unequal access. In other words: the national **supply capacity** has improved significantly, but **distribution and purchasing power** remain fragile.

From an institutional perspective, the key points are:

- **Budget allocation and focus:** scarce public money and political attention are being directed toward land, water, and inputs rather than purely symbolic projects.
- **Security configuration:** the same army that previously operated under an externally steered counterterrorism architecture is now redeployed around protecting agrarian zones and enabling returns to land.
- **Risk profile for business:** for agri-value chains, unpredictability is reduced; yields and planted surfaces are rising; farmers and cooperatives can plan more than one season ahead.

This does not erase corruption or mismanagement. It does, however, show a measurable improvement in caloric sovereignty in less than five years of strategic reorientation.

3.2 Haiti: catastrophic collapse under long capture

Haiti is a textbook case of long-term structural capture. For decades, IMF- and World Bank-backed reforms liberalized the economy, slashed tariffs, and opened the market to heavily subsidized US rice. Analyses of this period show that Haitian rice production collapsed as cheap imports flooded the market, displacing local farmers. By 2023, Haiti was importing roughly 375 000 tonnes of rice at a cost of around 264 million USD annually, making it extremely vulnerable to world price fluctuations and logistics shocks.

At the same time, WFP reports that nearly half of the population faces acute food insecurity, with several areas nearing famine-like conditions because of combined effects of violence, state collapse, and price spikes. Haitian agriculture has been systematically weakened; farmers have been pushed out of production; the country has become structurally dependent on imports for basic staples.

Institutionally, this translates into:

- **Budget strangulation:** foreign exchange is drained to pay for food that could be produced locally, while debt service and conditionality limit counter-cyclical spending.
- **Destroyed innovation ecosystem:** small farmers and local firms cannot invest in irrigation, storage, or improved seeds when the market is flooded with cheaper imports

and the policy environment is unpredictable.

- **Business risk:** with domestic production hollowed out, any disruption in port operations, shipping, or global prices directly threatens urban survival; this contributes to chronic instability, which then justifies further security interventions.

Haiti is not simply “poor”. It is structurally disarmed of its own food capacity by a long history of externally driven policies.

3.3 Ghana: average reformer, persistent vulnerability

Ghana entered a new IMF Extended Credit Facility in May 2023 after severe macroeconomic stress: inflation above 50 percent in 2022, sharp currency depreciation, and unsustainable debt levels. While Ghana has a more diversified economy than Haiti, it still imports a large share of its rice and wheat, and these imports represent a major source of vulnerability when global prices spike.

In this case, capture appears as:

- **Policy menu constraint:** fiscal consolidation and currency stabilization take priority, limiting large, long-term investments in smallholder irrigation, storage, and input support at the scale needed.
- **Exposure to shocks:** urban consumers are exposed to volatile prices for staples; governments resort to short-term relief, which is fiscally expensive and not structurally transformative.
- **Business environment:** for domestic agribusiness, incentives to invest are undercut by competition from imports and by macro volatility; for foreign firms, Ghana remains attractive for export-oriented ventures but less so for building deep domestic food sovereignty.

Ghana is not collapsing like Haiti, but it remains an “average” performer whose food system is partially subordinated to external price and policy regimes.

3.4 Morocco: high-performing yet structurally import-dependent

Morocco is often presented as a model of agricultural modernization. Yet recurrent droughts and structural cereal import dependence reveal a different layer. In 2022, for instance, Morocco’s wheat harvest was estimated at around 3.4 million tonnes, roughly half its usual, forcing large import volumes and exposing the country to world market volatility.

The country has maintained precautionary credit arrangements with the IMF (for example, a Flexible Credit Line/Precautionary and Liquidity Line), signalling deep integration with the Fund’s framework. Despite this, Morocco’s cereal self-sufficiency remains limited. High-value

export crops (fruits, vegetables) for European markets often receive more policy attention than staple cereals for domestic consumption, contributing to an agricultural model that generates foreign exchange but leaves the country reliant on imported grains.

Institutional consequences include:

- **Allocation bias:** water, land, and subsidies are preferentially directed toward export sectors that serve external demand, while domestic cereal self-sufficiency remains partial.
- **Vulnerability masked by success:** strong growth figures and export revenue can hide the fragility of food imports in times of global crisis.
- **Innovation skew:** research, infrastructure, and finance gravitate toward high-value export chains rather than broad-based staple crop resilience.

Morocco shows that being a “good student” of global financial governance does not guarantee food sovereignty. It often means the opposite: structural dependence is managed, not eliminated.

4. Discussion

4.1 What Burkina demonstrates – and what it does not

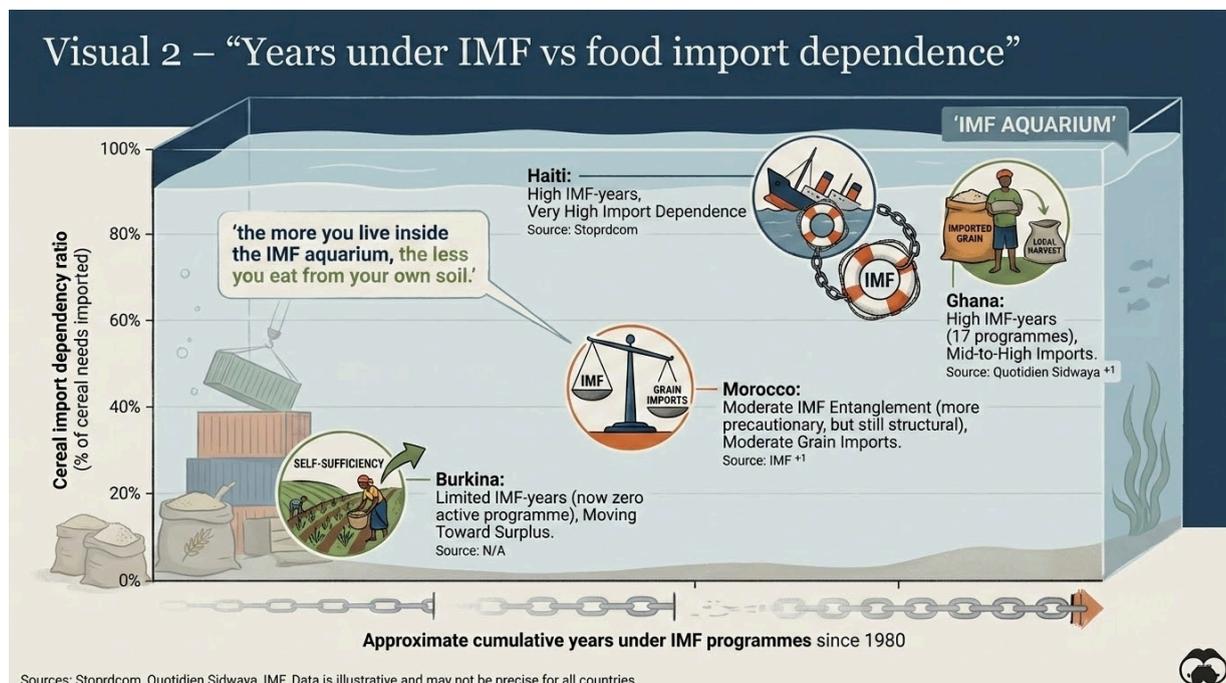


Figure 2a

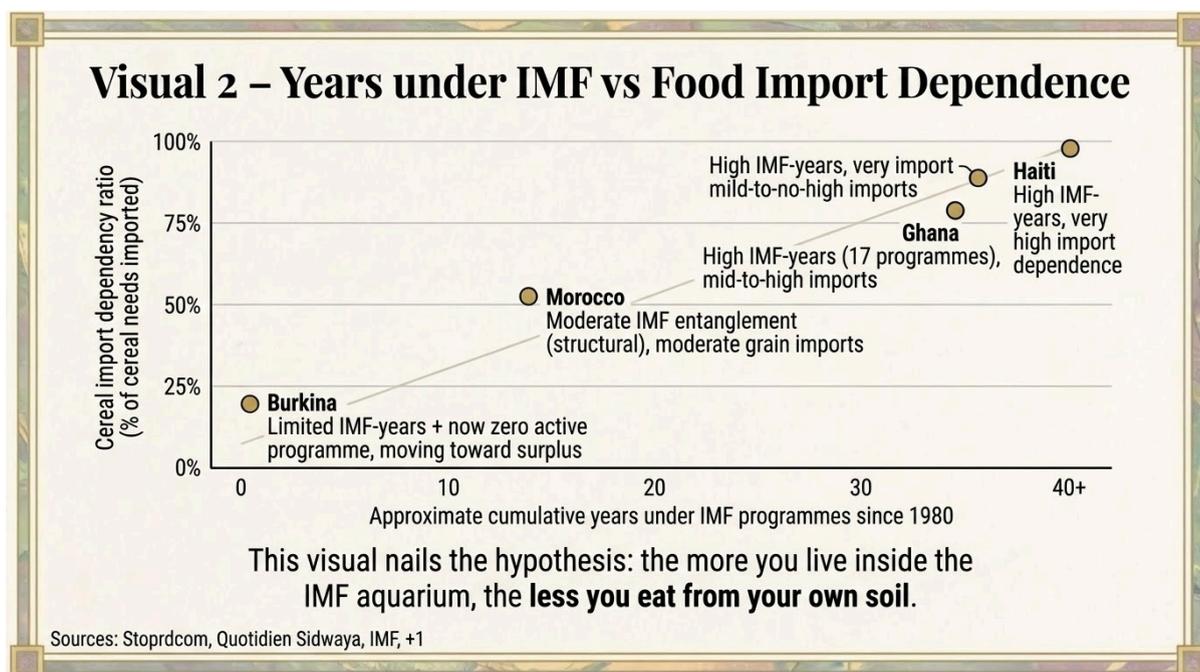


Figure 2b

Burkina’s recent performance does not prove that “breaking with the West” automatically creates food. It proves something more precise:

1. **Security retargeting matters:** when security is focused on corridors that serve external actors, farmers are displaced and fields are abandoned. When security is repurposed to protect cultivation zones and resettlement, hectares come back into production. The reported 9.2 percent increase in cropped area and the development of 127 000 hectares are not ideological; they are measurable.
2. **Budget and political attention matter:** even in a poor state, redirecting scarce funds to water, seeds, and extension can produce a 20 percent increase in cereal output over the five-year average within a few seasons.
3. **Partial decoupling is enough to shift trajectories:** Burkina has not exited the global system. It has loosened some of its most constraining ties (foreign troops, regional organisations perceived as externally steered) and reoriented its priorities. The result is a rapid jump in caloric coverage, even before all conflict legacies are absorbed.

What it does **not** demonstrate yet:

- That all food insecurity has been solved (2.7 million people in CH3+ is a severe reality).
- That corruption, mismanagement, or internal contradictions have disappeared.
- That external partners have no influence.

The clinical conclusion is modest: **when coercive and budgetary instruments are reoriented toward land and food, outcomes can improve faster than under decades of “programme management.”**

4.2 Capture and calories: a structural chain

The contrast with Haiti, Ghana, and Morocco reveals a structural chain:

1. **Policy capture** (through IMF/WB conditionality) pushes liberalization, tariff cuts, and subsidy removal, especially for smallholders and staple crops.
2. **Market flooding** by subsidized imports decimates local producers (Haiti’s rice is the textbook case).
3. **Budget capture** occurs as foreign exchange is drained to pay for food imports and debt service, leaving little for irrigation, storage, and research.
4. **Institutional erosion** follows: ministries of agriculture become weaker than ministries of finance; external technocrats discipline policy more than domestic agronomists and farmers.
5. **Business risk and innovation stagnation** become the norm: small and medium agribusiness cannot risk long-term investments when policy space is narrow and markets are dominated by imports and volatility.

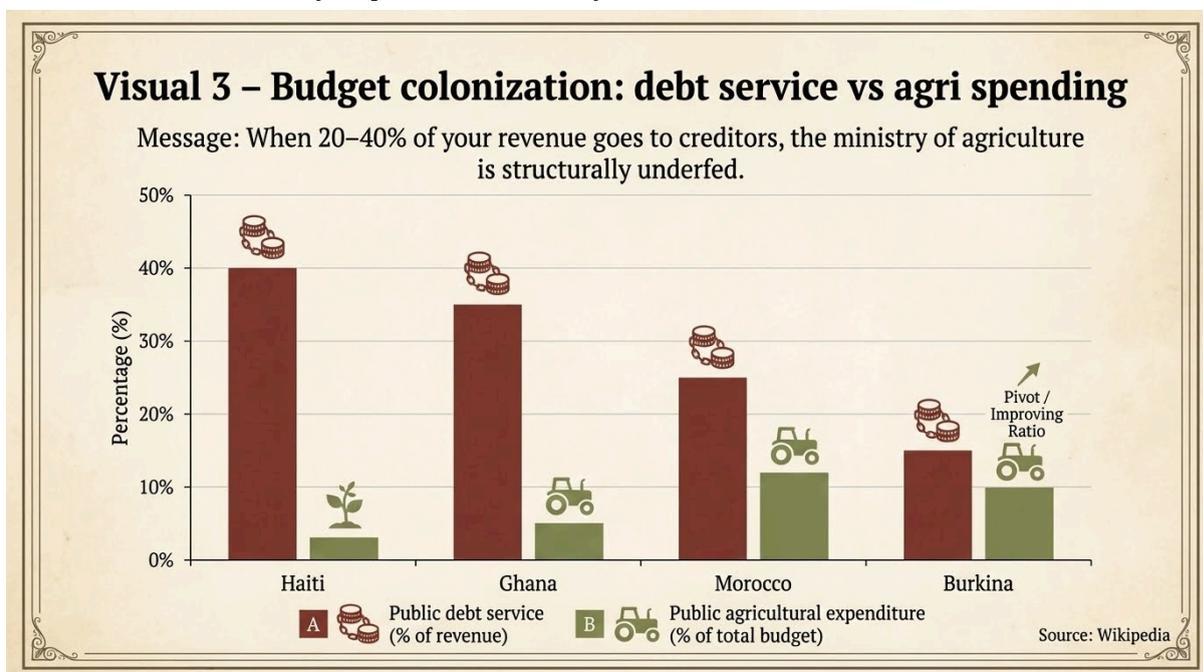


Figure 3a

By contrast, in a context like Burkina where security and policy are reoriented toward production, each link is modified:

- Market space reopens for domestic producers.
- Budget space, even if small, is aimed at productive capacity.
- Institutions, especially those related to agriculture and rural development, regain political weight.
- Risk decreases for local agribusiness: more predictable access to land, security, and yields.
- Innovation becomes rational: improved seeds, small-scale irrigation, local processing, cooperative logistics.

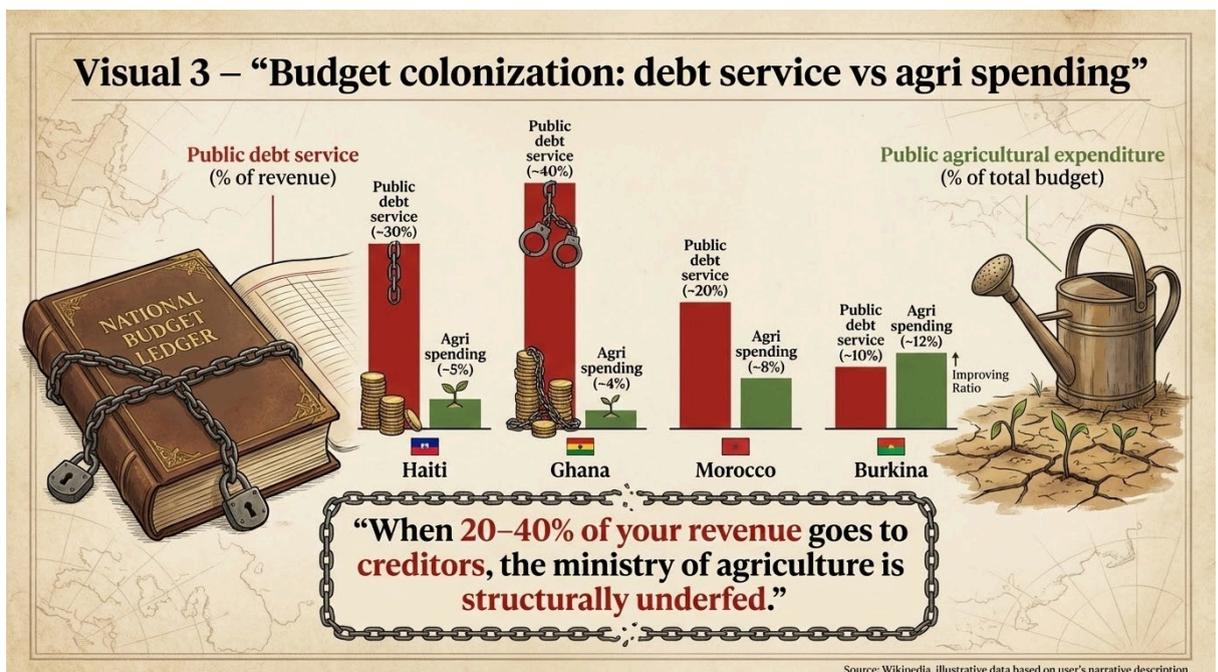
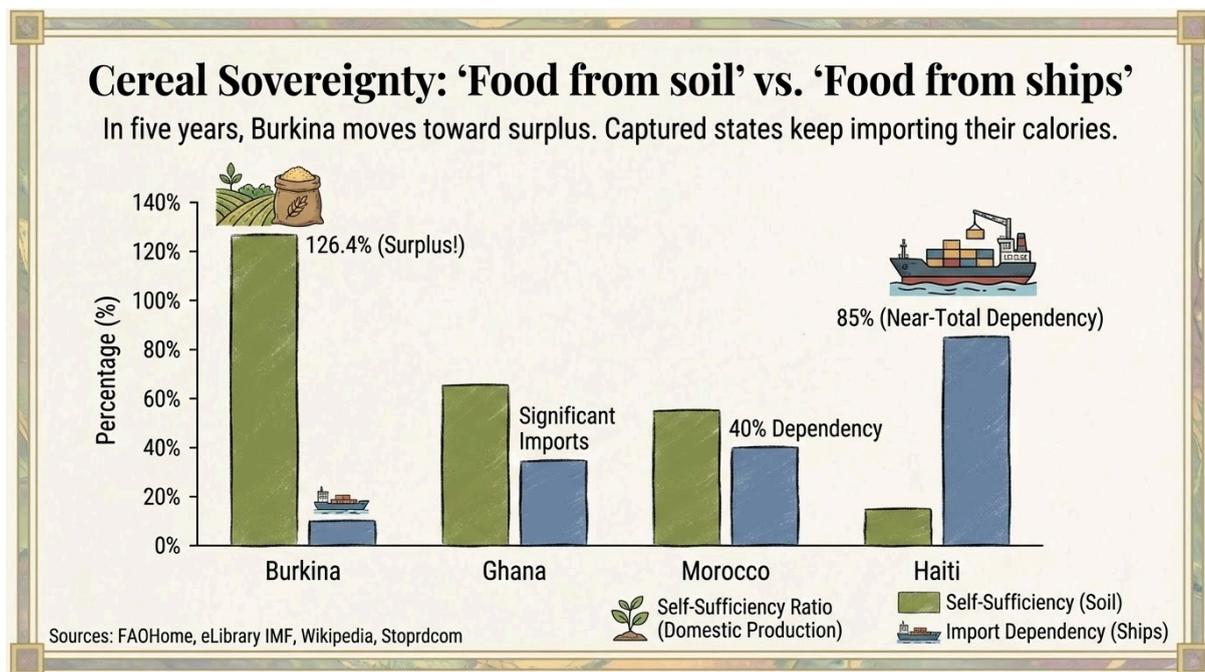


Figure 3b

4.3 EIA as a diagnostic: extraction, coercion, inversion

In all three captured cases, we see the EIA pattern:

- **Extraction:** outward flows of value – through food imports instead of local production (Haiti), export-oriented agriculture plus cereal imports (Morocco), and commodity exports with food imports (Ghana).
- **Coercion:** debt servicing rules, IMF conditionality, sanctions or the threat of financial exclusion, plus the implicit coercion of market dependence.
- **Inversion:** when crises hit, the narrative blames “corruption,” “tribalism,” or “bad governance” rather than acknowledging the long structural role of externally designed programmes.



Burkina’s trajectory is interesting because it begins to **relax** certain coercive levers (foreign military presence, externally steered security frameworks) and to challenge narrative inversion (“we are not just victims of terrorism, we are rebuilding our agriculture”). The extraction part is not yet neutralized, but its configuration is changing.

4.4 Clinical consequences for institutions, buying power, and innovation

At the level of **institutions**, EIA produces ministries that manage dependency rather than build capacity. The Ghanaian and Moroccan ministries of finance have to satisfy IMF rules; Haitian ministries often execute donor-driven projects with weak ownership. Agricultural institutions become peripheral.

By contrast, Burkina’s agricultural apparatus, if this trajectory continues, may regain centrality. That shift is not nationalist rhetoric. It is a **reallocation of institutional power** toward calorie-producing sectors.

At the level of **buying power**, dependence on imports exposes populations to exchange-rate shocks and world price fluctuations. In Haiti, this directly translates into famine risk. In Ghana and Morocco, it appears as chronic food inflation episodes that erode wages and social peace. In Burkina, increased domestic supply, if matched with price governance and targeted transfers, can stabilize purchasing power and make wage negotiations more meaningful.

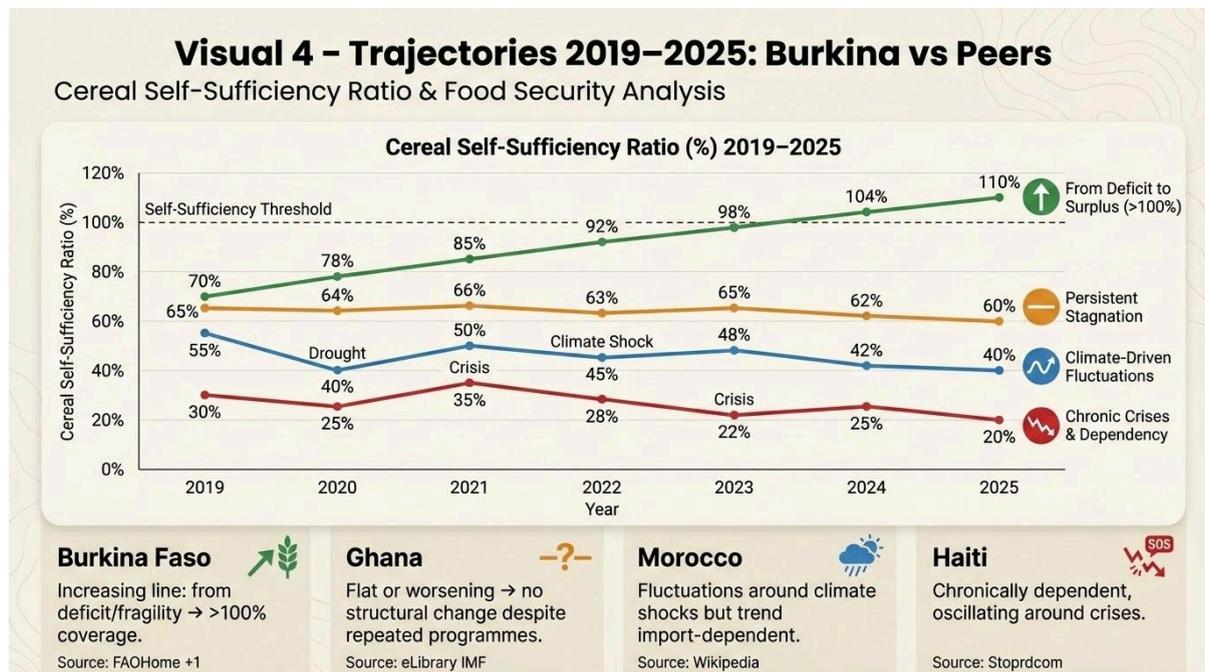


Figure 4

For **innovation**, captured systems reward compliance and external consultancy more than local creativity. Research agendas follow donor calls rather than farmers’ needs. In a partially decoupled system, there is at least space to realign research with national priorities: soil fertility, drought-resistant local varieties, small-scale mechanization, storage, and transformation.

4.5 Limits and next steps

This comparison is intentionally narrow and does not claim full causal closure. Climate variability, internal politics, and regional wars also shape outcomes. Yet the contrast is strong enough to warrant a serious research programme:

- A **multi-country panel** tracking cereal self-sufficiency, import ratios, debt service, IMF engagement, and security architecture over 30–40 years.
- Detailed **Burkina case studies** at province level: how security operations, land tenure, and investment flows correlate with yield and income trajectories.
- Matched studies in Haiti, Ghana, and Morocco to quantify the long-term cost of policy capture on food sovereignty.

5. Conclusion

The narrative that “things are complex” has been used for decades to evade a basic structural fact: many African and Global South states were pushed into food dependence by policy architectures that served external interests. Burkina Faso’s recent agricultural performance does not solve its social and security problems. It does, however, demonstrate that **when a government redirects security and budget from corridor protection and donor compliance toward land, water, and seeds, caloric sovereignty can rise quickly.**

Compared to Haiti’s catastrophic dependency, Ghana’s average vulnerability under an IMF programme, and Morocco’s sophisticated yet structurally import-dependent model, Burkina’s trajectory is a warning to the comfortable story that capture plus reform is the only path. In less than five years of partial decoupling, Burkina has moved toward cereal self-sufficiency, while long-captured states remain locked in food import dependency despite decades of “development.”

For institutions, this means the possibility of re-centering agriculture as a core sovereignty function. For economies, it means reducing exposure to external shocks and reclaiming budget for productive investment. For populations, it means the potential for stabilized prices, restored dignity, and an environment where innovation and business can aim beyond survival.

The question is no longer whether escaping capture is “radical.” The question is whether remaining captured is still scientifically defensible, given the evidence on calories, budgets, and lives.

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