

**DEMOCRATIZATION IN BURKINA FASO  
(1991-2006)**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**DEMOCRATIZATION IN BURKINA FASO (1991-2006)**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of requirements for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

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## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*Lastly it goes without saying that I am responsible for the remaining faults and inadequacies in this work*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ameswar Naik', with a stylized, cursive script.

*(Ameswar Naik)*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ADB	:	African Development Bank
ADF	:	Alliance for Democracy and Federation
APL	:	Alliance for Progress and Liberty
AU	:	African Union
CDP	:	The Congress for Democracy and Progress
CDR	:	Revolutionary Defence Committee
CDS	:	Convergence for Social Democracy
CEAO	:	Economic Community of African Organization
CEAO	:	Economic Community of African Organization
CENI	:	The Commission Electoral National Independent
CFD	:	Confederation for Federation and Democracy
CFT	:	Common External Tariff
CMPRN	:	The Military Committee of Recovery for National Progress
CND	:	National Decentralization Commission
CNDP	:	National Convention of Progressive Democrats
CNPP	:	National Convention of Progressive
CNR	:	National Revolutionary Council
COMESA	:	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSP	:	The Council for the People's Salvation
DESA	:	Department for Economic and Social Affairs
ECOWAS	:	Economic Community of West African States
FP	:	Popular Front
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
LDC	:	Least Developed Country
MDP	:	Movement of Progressive Democrats
MDS	:	Movement for Social Democracy
MNR	:	National Movement for Renewal
NAM	:	Non-Align Movement
NGO	:	Non Government Organization
NPR	:	National Rebirth Party
OAU	:	Organization of African Unity
ODP-MT	:	Organization for Popular Democracy-Labour Movement
PAI	:	African Independence Party
PDP	:	The Party for Democracy and Progress
PNDRD	:	National Programme for Decentralized Rural Development
PPD	:	Popular Development Programme
PS	:	Socialist Party
PSB	:	Burkinabe Socialist Party
PSD	:	Patriots-Social Democratic Party
PTM	:	Movement for Tolerance and Progress



RBP	:	Burkinabe Party for Recasting
RDA	:	African Democratic Assembly
REB	:	Rally of the Ecologist of Burkina
ROC	:	Rally of Communist Officers
SA	:	Socialist Alliance
SADCC	:	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SAGECOM	:	Community Management and Development
SAP	:	Structural Adjustment Programme
SFF	:	Social Forces Front
TPRS	:	The Revolutionary Popular Tribunals System
UDD	:	Union for Democracy and Development
UDPI	:	Union of Democrats and Independent
UDV-RDA	:	The Volta Democratic Union-Africa Democratic Rally
UFB	:	Union of Burkinabe Women
UFP	:	The Union of the Progressive Force
UN	:	United Nations
UNDD	:	National Union for the Defence of Democracy
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNIR-MS	:	Union for Rebirth / Sankara Movement
USDI	:	Union of Independent Social Democrats
UVDB	:	Union of Greens for the Development of Burkina Faso
VG	:	Village Group
WAEMU	:	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WB	:	World Bank
WTO	:	World Trade Organization

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## POLITICAL MAP OF BURKINA FASO



Source: "The Candence of Democratic Development in Burkina Faso", IDEA, Stockholm, Sweden, [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 June, 2007 URL <http://www.int-idea.se>.

## PREFACE

Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) is a Francophone West African state and one of the least developed countries of the world. It achieved the independence from France on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1960 with Maurice Yameogo as the first president. After its independence, the country was under the control of the military regime and faced the socio-economic and political crisis for almost three decades. Burkina Faso has a rich tradition of democratic struggle but post-independence regime in general and military in particular considerably eroded those traditions. Agriculture is the prime occupation of its people which provides livelihood to the 90 % of the population. But the regime change and repeated military *coup d'etat* has neglected to resolve the fundamental problems of the people. Thomas Sankara a charismatic leader and the former president of Burkina Faso started the Burkinabe revolution to overcome the economic crisis and led the socio-political reform. The aim of Sankara's popular and democratic revolution was to create an independent, self-reliant and planned economy in Burkina Faso. He came to power promising an end to both neocolonialism and rural suffering. Although Sankara's revolution was cut-short by his assassination, but this revolution did initiate improvements in rural literacy, health, food security and women's rights in Burkina Faso.

The people of this country struggled against the military regime and achieved the goal of democratization in 1991 when democratically civilian government enthroned President Blaise Compaore in Burkina Faso. Since independence, Burkina Faso had only three successful civilian regimes elected by the common people before 1991. Now, there is a democratic government under President Compaore, which became a reality after a long struggle for democracy. For the last fifteen years, the country has experienced the democratic transition through the successful back-to-back parliamentary and presidential elections. Though Compaore introduced the multi-party system with the new constitution but Burkinabe failed to challenge the single party dominance and the authoritarian regime of president Compaore. Nevertheless, Burkina Faso has become one of fewer Francophone countries which have a significant reputation for political stability and democratization.

In this historical backdrop, I have tried to focus on the democratic struggle and political consequences of Burkina Faso in a political aspect for the purpose of academic research. It has mainly focused upon the involvement of the state in the military regime as well as the political transformation in the post-colonial period. The study has intended to understand the political changes of Burkina Faso within the context of multiple political and economic forces working since the period of 1991. The study employs historical, analytical and descriptive methods based on primary and secondary sources to understand the nature of democratization in Burkina Faso since 1991 to 2006.

Three hypotheses have been taken into consideration while conducting the research.

- The failure of multiple illegitimate and military rule since independence along with frustration of people, military governance led Compaore to shift from military to civilian set up without losing power.
- Globalization and end of cold war discouraged military coups and enhanced democratization in Burkina Faso.
- Democratization during the civilian rule under H.E. Blaise Compaore is a limited, guided and controlled democratization that does not have required strong political institution and vibrant civil society.

The research work has been divided into five chapters, chapter – I contains the introduction which deals with the conceptual framework of democratization. It also analyses the political set up of Burkina Faso. Chapter-II focuses with the causes and factors of civilian transition in a historical perspective. Chapter-III concentrates on the nature of democratization and political changes that the state attempted to bring up in the aftermath of independence. Chapter – IV deals with the impact of globalization and its influence in continuing democratization process in Burkina Faso. Finally, chapter –V has summarily throws the light upon the whole research that has been undertaken in the previous chapters.

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# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction**

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## CHAPTER-1 INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa faces enormous challenges for the restoration of democracy. The African political situation is different from other developing regions as Africa is facing increasing political instability in other developing countries. African countries bear the legacies of imperial exploitation and economic dependence; and many countries fail to offer even minimal protection to their people. In the post - independence period, military regimes replaced single-party government in most part of Africa. Coups divided armies and political and social affiliations, as a result politics of transition emerged. In the 1990s, most governments assented to multi-party elections, willingly or reluctantly. Constitution arose from political compromises. Similarly, election enabled the people to choose who would represent their views and interest. Political event and election continued in the larger context of democratization in Africa.

Democratization is a process of political transformation that is taking place in the most part of Africa particularly since 1990s. Democratization can also be called as the political liberalization which is essential to ensure sovereignty of the citizens. Majority of the African countries in the phase of democratization have multi - party elections since the end of cold - war. Francophone West Africa is facing tremendous challenges to consolidate democratization. The nineties have witnessed the various crisis of governance in Africa. There emerged the resistance against the authoritarianism and misgovernance. In fact, the poor governance and nature of regimes caused the democratization process in African countries. Democratization is defined as the political change for the better in a particular country. The better government will be set up through the removal of autocratic rule of the state. Democratization can also be defined as the democratic and popular movement for removal of military rule and introduction of democratic set up. Social, economic and political environment are essential for the democratization process. However, elections and political parties are extremely important to improve the governance both for political stability and sustainable economic growth. People are demanding “Democracy” by free election and the end of autocratic rule in the whole of African countries. Today there is a need of democratic reforms for successful democracy.

Burkina Faso has become an example of stable democracy particularly in the Western part of Africa. It has introduced the multiparty system in 1991 and made an important effort to be considered as the democratic country. The aim of this work is to explore how democratization took place in Burkina Faso since 1991. What was its nature, what were the factors supporting the democratization and what were the obstacles in the path of this process of democratization? An attempt has been made to explore the causes and the major factors for the transition from military to civilian rule and for the process of democratization in Burkina Faso.

## **1.0 DEMOCRATIZATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Human beings are members of different groups or associations, from families, neighborhoods, clubs and work-units to nations and states, in all such associations, from the smallest to the largest, decisions are taken as a unity. This is called collective decisions in contrast to individual decisions taken by people on behalf of themselves alone. Democracy belongs to the sphere of collective decision making. It embodies the ideal that such decision, affecting an association as a whole, should be taken by all its members, and that they should each have equal rights to take part in such decisions making. A Democracy in other words, entails the twin principle of popular control over collective decision-making and equality of rights in the exercise of that control.<sup>1</sup> To the extent that these principles are realized in the decision-making of an association, we can call it democratic.

Defining Democracy makes two things clear. Firstly, democracy doesn't just belong to the sphere of the state or government, as we usually tend to think of it. Democratic principles are relevant to collective decision making in any kind of association. Secondly, democracy is not an all or nothing affair, which an association possesses either in full or not at all. It is rather a matter of degree of the extent to which the principles of popular control and political equality are realized of greater or lesser approximations towards the ideal of equal participation in collective decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> Beetham, David and Boyle Kevin, (1996), "Democracy", New Delhi: National Book Trust, P.2.



Conventionally we have come to call a state democratic if its government is accountable to the people through competitive election to public office, where all adults have an equal right to vote and to stand for elections and where civil and political rights are legally guaranteed. However, no such state in practice could realize ever the two principles of popular control and political equality as fully as it might. To that extent, the work of democratization is never ended, and democrats everywhere are involved in struggles to consolidate and extend the realization of democratic principles in whatever regime or political system.

### **1.1 Democratization**

Democratization is a process that is characterized by multi-party system of government based on regular free and fair elections with legally and constitutionally recognized opposition party/parties. As Stephanie Lawson argues, any regime, which does not permit the articulation of free political ideas is not worthy of the label democracy.<sup>2</sup> The rationale behind this assumption is that if democratization process is to culminate to a viable multi-party system of government, the essential ingredients that constitute civil society spontaneously and truly created social organizations such as voluntary associations (ethnic base), interest groups, and trade unions, professional associations, free press, religious economics and other social institutions also have to prevail in civil society.

### **1.2 State and Democratization**

State plays a crucial role in the democratization of society and political system. The notion of 'stateness' refers to the degree to which the administrative and legal order in a country is compatible with the interests of individual members of the political community.<sup>3</sup> State builds an important part in laying the foundation for democratization. There is a general agreement that an organization with state-like attributes is a necessary condition for the pursuit of democratic form of governance.

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<sup>2</sup> Stephanie, Lawson (1993), "Conceptual Issues in the Comparative Study of Regime Change and Democratization", *Comparative Politics*, p.162

<sup>3</sup> Linz, J. J. and Stepan, A. J (1996), *Problems of Democratic Transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, P.8.

Democratization is a continuous process. It means development of a democratic culture. Scholars who are working in electoral democracies are probably concerned with democratic stability in terms of avoiding democratic break down. Those who work in liberal democracies are concerned with democratic progress in terms of deepening democracy a positive outcome. Thus, democracy is consolidated with the role of civil society and such other organizations.

### **1.3 Phases of Democratization**

Democratization takes place in two phases. One is transition to democracy and second, democratic consolidation; civil society may play a crucial role for successful transition as well as for democratic consolidation. During the democratic transition phase, civil society organizations are often active in the process of putting an end to the authoritarian rule in inaugurating democracy. Civil Society is united; it has a common goal and internal differences as part aside. With relatively small resources civil society groups may discredit the authoritarian regime to the extent that it loses legitimacy, not only at home but also in an international context. Once authoritarian regime is replaced, mass participation might seem less important to ordinary citizens.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.4 Democratization in Africa**

The last decade of the twentieth century brought dramatic political changes to Africa. The whole continent was swept by a wave of democratization from Tunisia to Mozambique, from Mauritania to Madagascar after the government was forced to compete in multi-party elections against new or revitalized opposition movements. Elsewhere, the democratic picture was bleak. Africa had become a continent where governments were removed by force not by elections. By contrast, competitive democracy bloomed in the 1990s. As late as 1988, one-party states and military governments had been dominant and Africa was in an era of one leader, one ideology and one political party.<sup>5</sup> Reasonably, free and fair elections did occasionally occur in

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<sup>4</sup> Diamond, L. (1999), *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press, p.222.

<sup>5</sup> Claude, Ake (1993), "The Unique Case of African Democracy", *International Affairs*, pp.239-244.

these countries (When the military returned to barracks, for examples Nigeria and Ghana), but these elections never amounted to an on-going commitment to democracy

Granting several of these democracies amounted to paper exercises only but many proved to be fruitful. Momentous occasions such as when Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia for 27 years, respectfully bowed to the will of the people in 1991 or Nelson Mandela's 1994 victory in South Africa's first non-racial elections, demonstrated that multiparty democracy had gained a foothold in the African continent<sup>6</sup>

Democracy is usually measured in terms of a viable multi-party system, separation of powers between legislative, executive and judicial institutions of the government, the rule of law through the setting up of constitutional and other legal norms as well as adequate institutions for their enforcement, free and faire elections, freedom of the press, the general observance of human rights and should be taken into account in the evolution of democratization process in the transition countries. The non-existence of these vital virtues retarded the development and application of democracy in African countries.

A Prerequisite for the prospects of genuine democracy in the region is the reinstating of certain missing dimensions which constitute the fundamental conditions for sustainable democratization, namely representation, accountability and participation. Post-colonial Independent African states lacked these virtues.<sup>7</sup> While free and fair elections are necessary, these are not sufficient for democratization. Many third-wave democracies have elections, but they lack basic institutions of the modern state. First wave democracy differs from the third wave democracy on grounds of sequence in development.<sup>8</sup>

Countries in the first wave, such as Britain and France initially became modern states establishing rule of law, and institutions of civil society. In contrast,

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<sup>6</sup> Alex, Thomson (2001), "Democracy: Relegitimising the African states"? In his book. An introduction to African politics, London: Routledge, p.215.

<sup>7</sup> John, W Forje (1997), "Some observation on prospects of Democracy in Contemporary World: Africa's Transition to democratic governance system", in Tatu Vanhanen (ed.) Prospects of Democracy. A Study of 172 countries, London: Toutledge, pp.321-322.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher, Chelpham (1993), "Democratization in Africa: obstacle and prospect", *Third World Quarterly*, pp.425-438.

third wave democracies started democratizing backwards, by introducing free elections prior to establishing basic institutions as the rule of law and civil society. Third World democracies have begun democratization backwards. Free election and accountability of the government to the electorate introduced before the institutions of a modern state are fully secured. The governors of these new democracies thus face a double challenge: completing the constitution of modern state while competing with their critics in free election. The extent of the challenge is greater when a new democracy follows a totalitarian rather the authoritarian regime. While an authoritarian regime includes the mass of the population from political participation, they may be satisfied with passive compliance with what the regime dictates and it may allow some scope for select institutions of civil society and the rule of law. By contrast, in communist countries the totalitarian vocation of the old regime led it to attempt to coerce the population to achieve the ideological goals.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps the single most important aspect of the political transformation around the globe starting in the early 1980s has been an assault on the state as on institutions. Around the world the state has been challenged both from above and from below by ethnic, religious and regional groups by international actors, supranational bodies and institutions and indeed the state elite itself.

The democratization process that gathered renewed momentum, since the early 1980, a decade that marked the end of communism in eastern Europe and Soviet Union and the parallel rejection, the decline of authoritarian one party regimes, in various third world countries more specifically in African continent. This wave of democratization in Africa was termed as 'second wave of democracy'.<sup>10</sup> Democratization may be regarded as a specific type of change and implies the transformation of a non-democratic dispensation in order to meet the requirements set for a multi-party democracy.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Richard, Rose and Doh Chull Sin (1998), *Democratization Backwards: The Problems of Third Wave Democracies*, British Journal of Political Science, pp.432-453.

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel, Ezahi (1997), "Problems and Prospects of Democracy in Africa", *Philosophy and Social Action*", pp.17-19.

<sup>11</sup> A. Duvenhange (1998), "Democratization as a Phenomenon: An Africa Perspective", *Africa Quarterly*, pp. 17-19.

## 2. 0 DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

The purpose of election might not simply serve to conform to the liberal democracy but rather serve the state and ruling elite. An electoral process provides the means to manage regime change thereby pre-empting a possible prospect of violent change through revolution the *coup d'etat*, whether managed by military or civilian forces.<sup>12</sup>

The new wave was the hope of the various reform movements that appeared in most African countries from the late 1980 that authoritarian one party regime were to succeed by the restoration of the democracy, or multi-party democracy, the platform from which the first opposition parties were mostly launched to the election of the early 1990s. Simultaneously, from the standpoint of international donors' agencies, political liberalization was regarded as condition of economic liberalization, improved economic performance, growth and development.<sup>13</sup>

Elections are to serve as a means of change in regime to make a transition away from corruption as a systematic form of government. Elections are meant to be the means for establishing governance. As an alternative to violent change through a coup or revolution, election are to legitimate a change in regime and make a new regime, through successive election an accountable one.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Burkina Faso, it is somehow different; even though it became a multi-party democratic country, but could not succeed as pure democracy. It has been ruled by single party dominance based on electoral process. From 1992 to 2007, the country is dominated by Compaore's party. Even in the presidential election, Compaore's party has been winning with absolute majority. Thus, there is no scope for regime change in Burkina Faso. It has turned as a restricted, limited and authoritarian democracy since 1987. President Blaise Compaore is well set up to continue an authoritarian state. Even though there is regular election but there is no change of government and political leaders.

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<sup>12</sup> Owen, Michael and Laakso Liisa (2002), "*Multi-party election in Africa*", New York: James Curry Limited, p.1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.12.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.13.

## 2.1 Multi-Party Elections and Democratization

Burkina Faso incumbent regimes ruling parties won the first multi-party elections during 1992 and have learned to live with multi-party politics. In fact, there was no case in which opposition parties won a general election or significantly gained in any elections except 2002 general elections.<sup>15</sup> Outside Senegal, and to a considerable extent Burkina Faso, the political process in the French-Speaking West African states, exhibited varying combinations of these features either in its civilian or military variant, the one-party state promoted corporatism by encouraging labour unions, students groups, and some professional associations- in a world civil society- to the state phenomenon was even more pronounced in the ideologically oriented and in socially reconstructive military regimes which emerged in Francophone West Africa evidenced by the political engineering aimed as creating new societies that occurred as different intervals in Marxist Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and in Niger.<sup>16</sup> In Burkina, Faso the project of Blaise Compaore's regime launched to 'rectify' the revolution initiated by the late Thomas Sankara that is to control civil society more effectively. Finally by 1990s the major industrialist countries (Britain, France, United States and Germany) were calling openly for political reform in Africa as a condition for their sustained economic assistance to the region. Above all, it was the democratization mechanism adopted by Benin which set the pace to serve as a model for some and at the same time engendered counter-measures for others in democratization process in Francophone West Africa. It was Benin who affected an active civil society in Francophone West Africa.<sup>17</sup>

Gradually both Burkina Faso and Mauritania responded to the pressures for democratization by opting for the regime- directed modality. The regime of Blaise Compaore was engrossed in a quest for legitimacy within the larger society in the aftermath of the brutal elimination of Thomas Sankara in 1987. This had entailed building fresh alliance with other grown in Burkinabe civil society with a view to setting up of one-party framework shown the radical rhetoric of Sankara era. Once the pressure of democratization had upset these calculations, Blasé Compaore followed

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>16</sup> Olowu, Dele et al. ( 1999), *Governance and Democratization in West Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 267

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.273-274.

the lead of his mentor, the late Houphouët-Boigny, in undertaking a regime-directed democratization during which the presidential elections of December, 1991, boycotted by the opposition, were won by him.<sup>18</sup>

## **2. 2 The Role of Political Parties and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Two important questions are imperative which influenced for the evolution of African political parties. First, what are the factors that contributed to the emergence of the African political parties? Second, what are functions of political parties in general and African political party in particular? What are the consequences of the above factors in the evolution of African political parties and their capacity to sustain? African political parties originated outside the electoral and parliamentary cycle. They emerged during the colonial rule which was neither democratic nor legitimate. In most of the African countries political parties emerged in a non-democratic setting.<sup>19</sup>

The existence of several competing political parties is accepted as a crucial characteristic of democratic regime. In the words of Robert Dahl, 'Political regimes that ban political opposition and competition among political parties for votes of the people are not 'competitive' and as a consequence not democratic'. The wave of democratization in Africa in the early 1990s represented the most significant political change in the continent since the independence. The significant political liberalizations resulted in the emergence of free press, opposition parties, independent unions and a multitude of civil society organizations from the state.<sup>20</sup>

While Botswana is Africa's longest continuous multi-party democracy, Benin can be considered as the first African country that made a transition to democracy during the exclusive wave of democratization after the end of cold war. It is generally agreed that events in Benin had a crucial 'democratization effect' in western Africa, especially among the Francophone countries as those in South Africa did later among the Anglophone countries in Southern parts of Africa. The events in Benin excited

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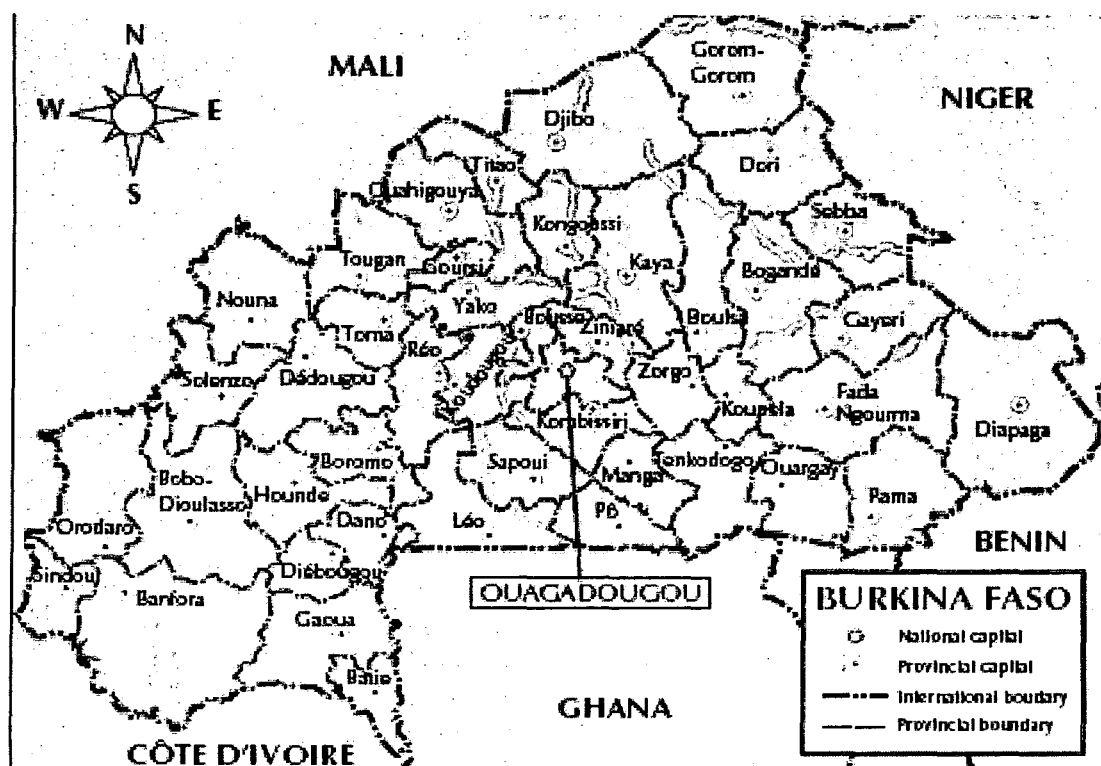
<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.277.

<sup>19</sup> Salih, Mahamed.M.A. (2003) (ed.), *African Political Parties: Evolution, Institutionalization and Governance*, London: Pluto Press, pp.1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp.169-170.

people throughout Francophone Africa, and the model was followed in one country after another, such as in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso (Salih 2003:171-172). There are many African democracies in which civil liberties are not sufficiently guaranteed; the government of Burkina Faso during the Compaore regime has used laws against inciting muting and threatening public safety to harass journalists. From the murder of Journalist Norbert Zongo, it clearly shows that journalists are threatened, after publishing stories involving official corruption and after reporting critically on government policies. In fact a dominant single party system has developed recently in the new Burkina Faso democracies. It is a system in which one party is constantly in office and often governs alone. For example, President Blaise Compaore's party CDP (Congress for Democracy and Progress) has been dominating since Compaore became the elected president in Burkina Faso in 1991.

### 3. BURKINA FASO: AN OVERVIEW



There are nine Francophone countries in West Africa of the African continent. Burkina Faso is one of these countries situated in the western part of Africa. The



country covers 274,200 square kilometers in the centre of West Africa. It is surrounded by six countries Mali to the north, Niger to the east, Benin to the south-east, Togo and Ghana to south and Cote d' Ivory to the south-west. The capital Ouagadougou lies almost in the geographical centre of the country. It was the capital of a powerful Mossi kingdom and became the seat of French colonial administration in 1919. Burkina Faso is a land-locked country. It has primarily a tropical climate with a wet season and dry season. Rains show extreme variations from year to year, in both timing and quantity.

Burkina Faso is a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic country. Approximately 60 languages are spoken and remains deeply divided among various major ethnic-linguistic groups. Some of the main ethnic groups are Mossi, Peulhs, Gourounsi, Senufo, Samo, Dagara, Bwaba, Bobo, Lobi, Marka, Bissa, Dioula, Birifor, Songhay, Touareg etc. The eastern and central regions are dominated by the Mossi, the Gurmanche in the east and Peulhs and Tuareg in the north. The western and southern regions contain a number of ethnic groups which were politically less centralized. Largest of these groups are the Bisa and Gourounsi in the south, the Lobi and Dagara in the southwest and Bwaba and Samo in the north-west. In the case of linguistic affiliation, French, the language of the former colonizing power is used as the official language. Unlike this, more than 60 languages are spoken in Burkina Faso. Of these 38 belong to the voltaic language family whereas Mande language family includes twelve languages. Burkina Faso is a secular state and a tolerant country in matters of religions. It has no major conflict between religions. This situation ensures that ethnicity is a significant political factor in the state of Burkina Faso. Even though the country has no major conflict in between religions, yet the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and geographical divisions have threatened the integrity of Burkinabe state. According to its constitution, the country is a unitary and secular state with having unicameral legislature known as National Assembly. President is the real executive in political structure, elected by the popular votes for five year terms. He appoints the Prime Minister, chairs the Council of Minister as well as the Higher Council of

judiciary. Thus, all the legislative, executive and judicial power is vested in the President.<sup>21</sup>

The total population of Burkina Faso is 13,902,972(July 2006). It is increasing at a rapid of 2.5 per cent per year. Burkina Faso is one of the least developed countries of the world. Agriculture is the prime occupation of its people and it provides livelihood to the 90 % of the population. Agrarian earnings primarily drive the country's economy and it contributes more than 40 % to the GDP. The country has limited natural resources. Its economic infrastructure is under-developed. The main expert remains labour. Since colonial days, migrant labourer from Burkina Faso went to work in the gold mines and plantations of Ghana and Cote d' Ivoire. Today more than a million Burkinabe live permanently in the Ivory Coast and a considerable number of Burkinabe live in France. However, Burkina Faso gained the reputation for the cotton production and export. Gold and animal products are the second and third important export and are first growing industry. The current regime of President Blaise Compaore has deregulated the economy, mended relations with the West, and pledged a commitment to democracy. He undertook country's first Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with the support of International Monetary Fund (IMF) which aimed at opening up economy and increase participation by the private sectors. Burkina is still extremely poor, but enjoys a reputation for political stability, religious and ethnic tolerance as well as art tradition. The country has assets that offer hopes of over-coming underdevelopment and launching a process of sustainable growth. These are human resources, often reputed to be disciplined and hard - working and maintenance of political stability and relative social peace.<sup>22</sup>

Burkina Faso (then Upper Volta) became a self-governing Republic within the French Community in December 1958. On 5th August 1960, Upper Volta proclaimed its national independence from France. Maurice Yameogo of Mossi ethnic group and the leader to Union Democratic Voltaic (UDV) became its first President. Yameogo adopted a pro-western foreign policy while moving towards a single party system and assuming almost dictatorial rights. In fact, his administration became autocratic in

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<sup>21</sup> Kuba Richard and Hien Pierre Claver 'Culture of Burkina Faso', [Online: Web] Accessed on 6 July, 2007 URL <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Burkina-Faso.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

style. Opposition parties were banned and popular support for the government reduced as the country's economic condition worsened. Thus, country's first military coup occurred in 1966 in which the army encouraged by the trade unions overthrew Yameogo in the same year. Sangoule Lamizana, chief of army staff came to power and served as the new President. In 1970, he served as the elected civilian in Burkina Faso. Further election was held in May 1978 for the democratic regime but all parties except UDV of Herman Yameogo were suppressed. The country alternated between periods of military and civilian rule and in 1977 and 1979 a new constitution was adopted. During this regime Burkina Faso faced economic difficulty and popular unrest. In the meanwhile, President Lamizana was overthrown in a coup led by Col. Saye Zerbo. In 1980, the third President of Burkina Faso was designated to Saye Zerbo. However, during 1978 to 1980 there emerged the civil-military relation in the country. The first multi-party transition was held in the year 1977-1978 which led the foundation for the restoration of democratic regime in near future.<sup>23</sup>

Saye Zerbo's administration was in trouble and he was deposed in 1982 by a coalition of conservative and socialist officers. They installed Major-Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo as president. During this regime Captain Thomas Sankara became the minister and later Prime Minister.

Sankara was young, ambitious and charismatic, a popular hero of the frontier war with Mali. As conflict grew up between Ouedraogo and Sankara subsequently a coup took place which left Captain Sankara in charge. The year from 1984 to 1987 changed country's political and social landscape profoundly as Sankara led Burkina's administration and introduced many reforms. Dropping the old colonial name, Upper Volta, he changed the country's name as 'Burkina Faso', which means (the land of incorruptible men). The aim of Sankara's popular and democratic revolution was to create an independent, self-reliance and planned economy in Burkina Faso. He came to power promising an end to both neocolonialism and rural suffering. Although Sankara's revolution was cut-short by his assassination, but this revolution did initiate improvements in rural literacy, health, food security and women's rights in Burkina Faso. The revolutionary government stressed its intension to mobilize the peasants

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<sup>23</sup> .... (2006). "African Election Database" [Online: Web] Accessed on 17 February, 2007 URL <http://www.africanelections.tropod.com/bf.html>.

and workers in a socialist transformation of the country. The regime gradually moved towards a totalitarian system. Numerous conflict and tensions developed during the four years rule of the CNR. In the meanwhile, Sankara was killed along with his 13 allies on 15th October 1987 by his old friend and colleague Captain Blaise Compaore. In fact, Sankara's violent death made him a martyr for his ideas; he remains an idol among the youth in Burkina Faso and other parts of Africa.<sup>24</sup>

In the years following the bloody 1987 coup, a Front Populaire (FP) was proclaimed as the successor to the National Revolutionary Council (CNR) of Sankara and Captain Blaise Compaore, the chairman of FP, became the President of Burkina Faso. Compaore embarked on a policy called rectification, meant to change most of the revolutionary policies of his predecessor. Military leaders taking power through coups became a characteristic and persistent feature of Burkina Faso. They served more than two decades in the numerous style of regime. Yet, throughout Burkina's long history of military rule, the appeal of democracy remained strong. Compaore seized power during a time of severe economic crisis. He embarked a policy of economic liberalization combined with political centralization, reforms and repression. Negotiation for financial assistance with IMF and World Bank was initiated.<sup>25</sup> In 1989, a new political group named The Organization for Popular Democracy/Labour Movement (ODP/MT) was formed under the leadership of Clement Oumarou Ouedraogo, a prominent supporter of President Compaore. Compaore initiated and manipulated freely towards democracy. A new constitution was adopted in 1991 and in the same year Compaore introduced multiparty system in Burkina Faso. The president election was held in 1991. Compaore was elected with huge vote as the ODP/MT candidate and became the elected President of the Fourth Republic for seven years terms. On 24 May 1992, Burkina Faso conducted its parliamentary election in which around 27 political parties contested the election to the 107 National Assembly seats. The ODP/MT (Organization for Popular Democracy/Labour Movement) won in a landslide victory with 78 seats. Thus, Compaore's party continued to be the most dominant political party in the country. However, this was the first time in the history of Burkina Faso, that multi-party

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<sup>24</sup> Speirs, Mike (1991), "Agrarian Change and the Revolution in Burkina Faso", *African Affairs*, p.105.

<sup>25</sup> Wilkins, Michael (1999), "The Death of Thomas Sankara and the Rectification of the People's Revolution in Burkina Faso", *African Affairs*, pp.387-388.

election was held with several political parties on the basis of free participation and representation. The process of democratization started through the free and fair election and liberalization of political parties in Burkina's post-1990 era. The rise of political parties was the significant factor for the democratization process in the country. Compaore appointed Youssouf Ouedraogo as the Prime Minister. The new government also included representative of seven political organizations.

However, due to the political split, Youssouf Ouedraogo resigned from the Prime Minister post and subsequently Kabore was appointed as the next Prime Minister of Burkina Faso. Thus, within a few years following Sankara's assassination, Burkina Faso could experience a formally democratic system. Some of the political changes existed in 1997 through the constitutional amendment. New electoral codes were approved by the Burkinabe parliament in January 1997. It declared the removal of restriction on the renewal of presidential mandate, an increase in the number of parliamentary seats to 111, the number of administrative provinces was increased from 30 to 45. The second legislative election for National Assembly was held on 11 May 1997. The CDP (Congress for Democracy and Progress) which has been renamed from ODP/MT won an overwhelming majority with a total of 101 seats. In addition, in the 1998 presidential election, Compaore was reelected for another seven year terms. Thus, it shows that the ruling party repeatedly minimized the opposition political influence. In fact, Compaore's authoritarian regime became the one and only governance for the people of Burkina Faso. However, as the regime grew increasingly repressive, civil society organizations such as human right movements, trade unions, student and women's association continuously used their liberties to express their dissatisfaction with government. The assassination of the well-known journalist Norbert Zongo in December 1998 resulted in a massive political protest that shook the Compaore's regime. Civil society groups and opposition parties were joined together to demand justice and end of impunity. The regime was thus forced to implement political, constitutional and electoral reforms. These reforms and popular dissatisfaction led to an electoral decline of the ruling party of 2002 parliamentary elections.<sup>26</sup> Some 30 political parties contested to the National Assembly. Indeed, the president's party, the CDP lost considerably power in this election retaining only 57

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<sup>26</sup>.... (2005), Transformation: Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 1 July, 2007 URL <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/84.0.html>.

of 111 seats in the parliament. The opposition parties won 54 seats and became a sizeable and significant factor in the parliament. The May 2002 parliamentary election marked the end of an era as it ended the dominance of the ruling party and saw the emergence of a strong opposition.<sup>27</sup> Burkina Faso government took major steps for various reforms in terms of electoral, political and constitutional matter. According to the constitutional amendment in 2000, the presidential term was reduced from seven years to five year. Despite the political protest by the opposition, Compaore once again sought for 2005 presidential election, he was reelected for five year terms. Compaore's victory was the crucial factor for the preparation for the 2007 parliamentary election. His ruling party CDP swept maximum seats with absolute majority in the recent parliamentary election which was held in May 2007.

In Burkina Faso political parties inevitably became identified with sectional groups. Since 1991, there is a rise of numerous political parties; however, their political representation in the parliamentary election is very low. Some of the important opposition parties of Burkina Faso are; ADF /RDA (Alliance for Democracy and Federation/ African Democratic Assembly), PDP (Party for Democracy and Progress), PS (Socialist Party), UDD (Union for Democracy and Development) UNIR-MS (Union for Rebirth / Sankara Movement) etc. In fact there is a lack of understanding and alliance and co-operation among the Burkinabe opposition. They lost the unity that had provided the basis for May 2002 success. They found themselves fragmented and busy with infighting. The Burkinabe voters claim that the opposition neither offered a clear strategy nor a credible alternative for the presidential elections. Internal struggles and the personalized agenda of opposition leaders create an unattractive image of a weak and divided opposition in the political battle of Burkina Faso. Thus, all this favoured the re-election of Compaore as president with more than 80 % of the votes in November 2005 election as well as his party won with a landslide victory in May 2007 parliamentary elections.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, political transformation in Burkina Faso has progressed in many areas on the basis of democratization process. Burkina Faso has a rich tradition of

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<sup>27</sup> Loada, Augustin and Santiso Carlos (2003), ' Landmark Election in Burkina Faso: Towards Democratic Maturity', p.1-16, International Idea's Burkina Faso Project, <http://www.idea.int/Burkina>

<sup>28</sup> ..... 2006), Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 15 June, 2007 URL [www.democoalition.org/pdf/6-Burkina-Faso.pdf](http://www.democoalition.org/pdf/6-Burkina-Faso.pdf).

democratic struggle but post-independence regime in general and military in particular considerably eroded those traditions. The civil society organizations particularly trade union, media, student and human right movement played a crucial role in compelling the military rulers to step down. They struggled against the military regime and achieved the goal of democracy in 1991 when democratically civilian government enthroned in Burkina Faso. In fact, Burkina Faso is one of the fewer Francophone countries which have a significant reputation for political stability and democratization. The relationship between society and polity of Burkina Faso in the 30 years of independence, Burkina Faso had only a few years of democratic rule but there were many years of the civil-military government. However, in the last sixteen years four successful back-to-back parliamentary election as well as three presidential elections have taken place in Burkina Faso. Thus, this shows that Burkina Faso has maintained the political stability and democratic struggle on the basis of free and fair election.

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**Chapter-II**  
**Causes and Process of Transition**  
**from Military to Civilian Rule in**  
**Burkina Faso**

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## CHAPTER-2 CAUSES AND PROCESS OF TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN RULE IN BURKINA FASO

The main aim of this chapter is to explore the causes and various factors for the transition from military to civilian rule in Burkina Faso in a historical perspective. It attempts to analyze the political development of Burkina Faso since colonial to post-colonial period. It examines the nature of 1983 Burkinabe Revolution which was started by Thomas Sankara, the most famous and charismatic leader of Burkina Faso during military regime.

### 1.0 Historical Setting

Like Niger and Mali, Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) is a land-locked state of West Africa. It is surrounded by six countries: Mali, Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Cote d' Ivoire. In Burkina Faso leadership position suggests that country is a prosperous and peaceful country, but it has a troubled history of economic malaise and socio-political crisis due to the increasing military *coup d'etat*. The people of Burkina Faso have had to grapple within post-colonial nation building in one of the most diverse sate in the world. Approximately 60 languages are spoken, and the country remains deeply divided into 15 major ethno-linguistic groups.<sup>1</sup>

The main ethnic groups are the Mossi in the North, which are most dominant groups in Burkina Faso politics. This group comprises half of the population in the country. Unlike the Mossi, Bobo in the south-west, and the Gourma in the east comprise some part of population in the country. In the northern border are the semi-nomadic Fulani, who are also present in the east of the country. Towards the south-western border, it connects with Mali and the density of population in the north-central Mossi area is remarkable. Above all, in the early independence regimes, the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and geographic divisions repeatedly threatened the integrity of the Burkina Faso. The Burkinabe politics, not surprisingly, has been marked by a competitive struggle for preferential control over the government and resources. The

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<sup>1</sup> ..... (2006), Europa Year Book p.966.

Burkinabe state has however survived despite forces that logically led towards disintegration. Furthermore, notwithstanding periodic bouts of military rule and corrupt civilian governments of Burkina Faso shows a persistent inclination towards democracy. Election of 1970 evokes some optimism that Burkina Faso's transition to durable democratic regime is continuing. In May 2005, Burkina Faso re-elected President Blaise Compaore to a third term and polling was generally accepted as free and fair. Compaore's re-election marked that the country had successfully carried a back-to-back election of civilian government.

Will the transition to democracy continue? If yes, then the subsequent chapters will examine it in a historical perspective. First, what are the causes, which made Burkina Faso for the transition from military to civilian? Second, what are the important factors that played a major role for the development of democratic regime in Burkina Faso? In this Chapter, the focus will be on the historical background of Burkina Faso, the causes of transition that Burkina Faso gained through the prolong struggle for the restoration of democracy. This chapter looks into the factors responsible for political development and explains the role of various organizations played for the civilian transformation in the country.

### **1.1 Pre-Colonial Burkina Faso**

A common history can help to hold a nation together, but the most significant observation that can be made about pre-colonial history of Burkina Faso that it is not the history of Burkina Faso, but the history of different ethnic groups, therefore, according to available data there were 60 ethnic groups in the pre-colonial period in Upper Volta. While it is true that Burkina Faso's pre-colonial history does not provide the basis for a Burkinabe nation, in fact, there is little in her pre-colonial history that adds to the difficulty of preserving and building the Burkinabe nation. There are relatively few unsettled scores, historic grievances, and thwarted drives for expansion that could have been expected to erupt after the French departure.

It is said that a prince named Widiraogo, son of a Malink king set forth from the place where the black and white Volta Rivers converge and flow towards the sea and conquered his neighbours, after which he established a kingdom called Dagomba.

His empire was split into three equal parts. Widiraogo's first son, Zungurana, was given the western region, the second son, Rou inherited the Northwestern territories and the third son, Diaba-Lompo was willed the eastern possession. Zungurana's son, Ubri, grew his nation into the empire, which was called Mossi. Eventually, five principal Mossi nations emerged Wagadugu (Ouagadougou), Yatenga, Fad-n-Gurma, Mamprussi and Dagombo. They were located where the modern Upper Volta/ Burkina Faso and Ghana are now.<sup>2</sup>

The Mossi administrative system resembled those of the other nation of western Sudan. They were ruled by a Monarch, the *Morbo-naba*, who was assisted in his decision-making by a council of eleven ministers, one of whom was a Muslim. The Mossi kingdom was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages with each state accepting and recognizing the *Morbo-naba's* supreme authority. The Mossi peoples succeeded in resisting the pressures of Islamic conversion and, until their conquest by French in the late nineteenth century, practiced stability. Thus, it clearly says that, Upper Volta is the ancestral home of Mossi who successfully resisted both European and Muslim penetration until late in the ninetieth century.<sup>3</sup>

Before the colonial era Burkina Faso was a melting pot of numerous ethnic groups (Mossi, Peulhs, Gourouns, Senufo, Samo, Dagara, Bwaba, Bobo, Lobi, Marks, Boussance, etc.) who lived in unity and harmony. This historical peaceful cohesion between the ethnics groups has always helped the country to remain a haven of peace, nurturing fundamental values like solidarity, work and honesty. The population of the land was organized into strong and powerful central states (kingdoms), rural communities (Bwaba system) and rural democracies, (Samo Dagara and Lobi). The history of the county is characterized by the existence of powerful kingdoms and emirates, which flourished and gained international repute. Some of them were the Mossi kingdom of Tenkidogo, Mossi kindom of Fada, N' Gourna Guiriko kingdom, kingdom of Peul in the north who played important role to maintain peace and prosperity during the pre-colonial period.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Trupin James E. (1971), West Africa: A background Book from Ancient Kingdoms to Modern Times, parents, Magazine Press, New York, pp.29-31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp.29-31.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.221.

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## 1.2 Colonial Burkina Faso

In 1886, the Mossi Kingdom of Ouagadougou became a French protectorate after being defeated by French forces. In 1898, the majority of the region was conquered. In 1904, these territories were integrated into French West Africa in the heart of Upper- Senegal- Niger Colony. It was originally administered as part of Cote d' Ivoire colony, but became an autonomous colony in 1919 and was called as the 'Colony of Upper Volta'.<sup>5</sup>

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Early in the colonial period, there were violent resistances to the French (most notably, the some revolts in 1898 and the Bwa clashes with the French in 1899), and most ethnic groups in the region took advantage of the anarchy by organizing raids on neighbours. In the central areas of the country, the Mossi staged a quick rebellion in 1899 after the death of their monarch in and the appointment of new one. The French responded by burning villages, seizing goods and animals, imprisoning some chiefs and lowering chiefly stipends. From 1915- 1916, there was the Muslim rebellion at the bend of the Black Volta. This uprising has been described as "the largest armed movement of resistance to colonialism in Africa", with tens of thousands of casualties. Moreover, Burkina Faso had to bear out a numerous resistance and rebellion during the colonial era. Thereafter, Burkina Faso lost her pre-colonial unity and harmony.<sup>6</sup>

On 1st March 1919, Edouard Hesling became the first governor of the new colony of Upper Volta. The colonial administrators, such as Hesling, Henri Carbou, Henri Chess, governor Reste, etc. could not put the attention towards the Burkinabe. Therefore, Upper Volta gradually became backward in the every field. Above all, the French colonial administration was frankly revealed in all its confusion and weakness as authorities openly discussed in official correspondence what their actual purpose was: Civilizing, and proselytizing or exploiting. There emerged economic, political and social crisis within the inhabitants of Upper Volta *The Moogo Naaba*, the highest authority in local society, had little idea who his counterpart was the French, and what

<sup>5</sup> Fearon, James and Laitin David (2006), "Burkina Faso", Stanford University, [Online: Web] Accessed on 15December, 2006 URL

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/Random%20NarrativesBurkinaFaso.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



they stood for. The French administrators, distant from the people, ruled and unable to speak local languages and had little ability to be intelligent to the situation that surrounded them.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.0 Post -Independence Political Development**

Burkina Faso became a self-governing Republic (as Upper Volta) within the French Community in December 1958 and achieved independence on 5 August 1960. At that time UDV was a Mossi dominated political party in Upper Volta. Maurice Yameogo who was the leader of the Voltaic Democratic Union (UDV) became the first President and led the civilian government in Burkina Faso.<sup>8</sup>

The 1960 constitution provided for election by universal suffrage of a president and a National Assembly for 5-year terms. Soon after coming to power, Yameogo banned all political parties other than the UDV. The political office remained in the hands of a small-educated elite, military officers, and labour unions in which Yameogo was a member. During his period, Yameogo adopted anti-federalist ideas developed by France and one of his close friends, Felix Houphouet-Boigny. It is said that the Mossi people were seen as having legitimacy as the natural rulers of the country. In fact, Yameogo's administration was autocratic in nature. In this time country's economic condition worsened rapidly. The voltaic syndicates drove a nationwide strike, the Upper Volta army then decided to seize power. However, after much unrest, mass demonstrations and strikes by students, labour unions and civil servants and military intervention against Yameogo's administration, he was obliged to leave the presidency, finally on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1966, the military coup deposed Yameogo, suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly and Lt. Col. Aboukar Sangoule Lamizana, the army chief of staff, became the President and Prime Minister of Burkina Faso. Lamizana served as a nominal head for 4 years transition to fully civilian elected leadership. As an elected civilian he remained in power throughout 1970 for military or mixed civil – military governments.<sup>9</sup> However, in the early 1970s again military intervention and dissolution of the Assembly brought Lamizana back in

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<sup>7</sup> Kevane, Michael (summer, 2006), "Dem Delobsom: French Colonialism and Response in Upper Volta", *African Studies Quarterly*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>8</sup>..... (2006), *Europa Year Book*, p. 966).

<sup>9</sup> Background Notes Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 April, 2007 URL <http://www.dosfan.lib.uic.edu/erc/bgnotes/af/burkinafasogr06.html>.

control. The Voltan ratified a new constitution that established a 4 years transition period toward complete civilian rule. In early 1971 Lamizana appointed the UDV leader Gerard Ouedraogo, as the Prime Minister and the head of a mixed civilian and military Council of Ministers. During this period, a series of conflicts arose between the government and the legislature, therefore, in February 1974, Lamizana announced that the army had again assumed power. A new constitution was written and approved providing for a return to civilian rule. Lamizana was re-elected by an open election, which was held in April 1978. During this time, Assembly elected Lamizana's nominee, Dr. Joseph Conombo as the Prime Minister.<sup>10</sup>

Saye Zerbo, who was the foreign minister in the military government of Lamizana from 1974 to 1976, overthrew President Lamizana in a bloodless coup. He suspended the constitution, which had been introduced in 1977 and established the Military Committee of Recovery for National Progress (CMRPN) as the supreme governmental authority. In fact, since Zerbo's regime, country was under military rule till the end of 1990.<sup>11</sup>

Saye Zerbo banned all the political parties, thus, single party regime continued under his administration. However, as a result of a series of ill-advised restrictions on civil liberties (strict regulation of the workers' right to strike, banning of all political parties), the CMRPN soon found itself in direct conflict with the trade unions, traditionally a powerful political force in Burkina Faso. Therefore, Zerbo did not last long in power mainly because of continuing labor unrest. Finally, on 7 November 1982, Ouedraogo who declared himself President overthrew Saye Zerbo. This coup was led by a group of younger more radical junior army officers, headed by Commander Jean- Baptiste Ouedraogo. The leaders of this coup created a ruling body called the Council for the People's Salvation (CSP). The CSP named Surgeon-Major Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo as the President and Captain Thomas Sankara as the Prime Minister. Like his predecessor, Ouedraogo also banned all political activities and his reign was also short. Sankara had been dismissed from Prime Minister Post and jailed by Ouedraogo three months earlier. However, Thomas Sankara and three other young army officers seized power in Upper

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<sup>10</sup> ..... (2006), Europa Year Book, P. 966.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.117.

Volta leading a national revolution, which aimed to establish social justice and make the country economically self-sufficient.<sup>12</sup>

## **2.1 Thomas Sankara and Burkinabe Revolution**

Burkina Faso has been under the control of military or mixed –civil military regime for more than 2 decades. But the emergence of Thomas Sankara and the new regime under him has become much remarkable for its revolution in the larger interest of the Burkinabe. Thomas Sankara was the youngest leader to become the president of Burkina Faso as well as the entire African continent. He also became the champion of the people for his charismatic leadership and brought various reforms in Burkina Faso. In fact, he is still considered as the hero of the Burkina Faso revolution. From his life's work, it shows that he made a serious attempt to eliminate the poverty and abuse of power in Burkina Faso.<sup>13</sup>

Sankara was born into a Roman Catholic Mossi family in Upper Volta in 1949. He grew up as Catholic in a country dominated by traditional religion and Islam. He began his military career at the age of 19. He was sent to Madagascar for officer training where he became increasingly idealistic and political. In the early 1970s Sankara went to the prestigious Parachute Training Centre in France. He worked his way up the ranks in the military. His regular contacts with African radical students and other organizations in France also helped shape his revolutionary mentality. His military career made him responsible for urgent change of people. With the short period of his regime he could do various things and earned much reputation from the Burkinabe as well as the external powers. He fought in border war between Upper Volta and Mali and became champion. He became commander of his country's Commando Training Centre in Po in 1976. In the same year he met Blaise Compaore in Morocco and two years later established an important friendship with Captain Blaise Compaore. The two friends formed the so-called "Popular Republic" at the Commando Training Centre, which helped them build their power within the military. He was appointed as the secretary to the President in charge of information 1981.

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<sup>12</sup> Martin, Guy (1987), "The Ideology and Praxis in Thomas Sankara's Populist Revolution of 4 August 1983 in Burkina Faso", *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>13</sup> Skinner, Elliott P (1988), "Sankara and the Burkinabe Revolution: Charisma and Power, Local and External Dimensions", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 440-443.

However, in the meantime, he was accused of treason and was imprisoned in 1982 but in the same year he became the Prime Minister of new regime under Jean-Baptiste-Ouedraogo. As Ouedraogo became more controlled by the military, his fear of Sankara's popularity increased. He condemned him for treason in 1983 and had him imprisoned. In the meanwhile, Blaise Compaore who was his closed friend mobilized a unit of paratroopers and told Ouedraogo that he would seize the capital unless Sankara was freed and allowed to resume his post in the army. Ouedraogo's agreeing to the demands empowered Sankara to rally his many sympathizers and seize the government. Thus, a *coup d'etat* organized by Blaise Compaore made Sankara the President on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1983 at the age of 33.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 The Charismatic Leader

Whether deliberately or not Sankara did present the picture of a young "charismatic" leader of a small country, challenging a large, complex, corrupt and often brutal world. As soon as he became well known locally, he was labeled "charismatic" both by his followers and the international media, thus linked spiritually to such gifted African leaders as Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure Modibo Keita, Jomo Kenyatta and Patrice Lumumba, who had emerged during the waning days of Western colonialism. Thomas Sankara made a serious attempt to eliminate poverty and abuse of power which was rampant in Burkina Faso when he took power in 1983. His government undertook major initiatives, fought for corruption, improved education, agriculture, income, distribution and the status of women. Improving women's status was one of his explicit goals. He banned prostitution, condemned polygamy and promoted contraception. He named women to about one-quarter of his ministerial posts. They were put in charge not only of family affairs, health and culture, but also of such key ministries as the environment and the budget. In fact, he championed women's rights due to his major initiative steps for the empowerment of women.

Apart from this, in an effort to deal with beggars, who scoured of many urban centers, Sankara took them off the street, and established 'solidarity' compounds, where they could be taught trades. One of Sankara's first acts was to change the

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Sankara, [Online: Web] Accessed 15 June, 2007 URL [http:// www.answer.com /topic /thomas\\_sankara](http://www.answer.com/topic/thomas_sankara).



colonial name of Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, said to mean 'the Country of dignified people'. Thus, he renamed the country as Burkina Faso (The home of men of dignity) and citizen name Burkinabe in 1984. Above all it can be noted that, among the Burkinabe, Sankara was greatly admired as a man of vision, and a man who was able to instill a sense of pride to an impoverished people.<sup>15</sup>

Despite his eccentricity, no one could deny Sankara's achievements, including massive campaigns to eliminate illiteracy, vaccinate the entire population, and rebuild the city of Ouagadougou. Sankara's radicalization of Burkina Faso is evident both in the development of Ouagadougou's infrastructures and in the names of streets: Rue Palestine, Rue Kwame Nkruma, Rue Nelson Mandela etc. Therefore it came as a great shock to the general populace when Thomas Sankara was killed during a *coup de'tat* 1987 by long time friend Blaise Compaore. Even though Compaore claimed that he had played no part in the execution of Thomas Sankara, but the history of Burkina Faso clearly mention that, on 15 October, 1987 Sankara was killed with his 13 officials in a *coup de'tat* organized by Blaise Compaore. The Public widely believed that Compaore betrayed Sankara's confidence and came to power along with the support of France and Cote d' Ivoire. Even after the death of Sankara, his ideas and leadership quality still remains in Burkina Faso.

### **2.3 The Aim of Burkinabe Revolution**

Thomas Sankara proclaims that chance of sympathy returning to the previous type of government becomes meaningless. Thus, there must be a change, a new type of constitutional government, which can clean up the political mess, corruption, etc. Above all, he frankly admitted that he and his collaborators were revolutionary ideologue who determined to reform voltaic society to clean it up and purify. According to the revolutionary ideologue their own revolution was on local realities. Sankara became popular with students who wanted to break with the old order, with trade unionists that were considered to be an important element in the transformations of the mentality of the people. He also won much applause of many urbanites through his charismatic activities. Sankara strongly determined to head a clean and honest

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<sup>15</sup> Skinner, Elliott P (1988), "Sankara and the Burkinabe Revolution: Charisma and Power, Local and External Dimensions", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 443-444.

regime, to exclude all the former politicians from power and finally deprive the Mossi chiefs who were survivors of a decadent feudal, who had held the power over centuries.<sup>16</sup>

Though, Ouedraogo was depending on young people but he was not contaminated with party politics to bring a success out of civilian rule. In this period in Upper Volta, Ouedraogo's regime was extremely autocratic with military politics which did not support to the political parties to return to civilian rule. Captain Sankara alienated President Ouedraogo by insisting that country had to move rapidly towards democracy and towards the triumph of progressive ideas. During his political carrier, he was impressed by Colonel Qaddafi and his Libyan achievement and visited to Libya and North Korea. He also attended the NAM Summit in New Delhi in 1983. Though, he gained much influence of the external power, but he displeased both France and the United States. He established close relations with Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings of Ghana and Colonel Mathieu Kerekou of Benin.<sup>17</sup>

#### **2.4 Political Organizations of Burkinabe Revolution**

As per the political organization is concerned, the core system of Burkina Faso was made up of four men namely Captain Thomas Sankara, Henri Zongo, and Commander Blaise Compaore and Jean-Baptiste Lingani. In this core group, the National Revolutionary Council (CNR) was appeared another important group, whose key members were again the above-mentioned leaders along with Commander Abdou Salam Kabore and the main political and military leaders of the country. Then came the government, which was made of civilian and finally the Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDR). In short, Burkinabe maintained the civil – military relations during Sankara's regime. The CDR was structured according to a five level hierarchical system: The apex of the system was the office of General Secretary directly linked to the CNR. Just below the CDRs Congress organization's supreme body, there were many committees such as Revolution Provincial Executives Provincials, (Garrison Committee, District Committee and Work Place Coordination Committee), Local Committee, student and Military Unit. Above all, through the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp. 440-41.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pp.441-43.

structure and functioning, the CDRs played as a genuine mass organization. In addition, an additional structure, the Revolutionary Popular Tribunals system (TPRs) was created on 19 October, 1983 to contribute to Burkinabe Revolution.<sup>18</sup>

## **2.5 Ideology and Thought of Burkinabe Revolution**

Every revolution has its ideologue and leaders, but in the case of Burkina Faso, Sankara himself was the ideologue and leader of Burkinabe Revolution. He clearly denied that his revolution was not inspired by any past or present foreign policy, experience or model, rather he affirmed that the revolution of Burkina Faso, the people of Burkina. Sankara said that, “our revolution is the result of our specific experience and history”. Although certain elements in his political thought were clearly influenced by Marxism, but he saw himself as neither a Marxist nor a Communist as he had often been portrayed by the western press. He is the first and foremost rodent Nationalist and convinced Pan-africanist who worked hard for, restoration of dignity of the Africa and well-bing and progress of the African continent.

The Burkinabe leaders openly rejected the western socialist level and claimed to build a socialism based on democratic and modern society. The aim of the revolution was to end the bourgeois. However, it did not aim at the elimination of private property or private economic initiation and entrepreneurship. According to its leaders, Burkinabe Revolution was essentially democratic and popular. It was seen as a transition towards a high stage of development in the Burkinabe society.

According to the political thought of Thomas Sankara, “People are the main actors and should be the main beneficiary of the revolution.” In 1983, Sankara stated “The revolution’s object is to give the people power, and take power out of the hands of national bourgeoisie and their imperialist allies and put it in the hands of people”. Sankara s saw himself and the ruling group as the people’s servants, as he once declared “I consider myself as someone who has a duty to respect the wishes and

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<sup>18</sup> Martin, Guy (1987), “The Ideology and Praxis in Thomas Sankara’s Populist Revolution of 4 August 1983 in Burkina Faso”, *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, p. 80.

demands of the people. I will do as I am told by the people". He also said, "I am nobody's agent, yes, in fact I am someone's agent, I am the agent of the people of Burkinabe. If they (Burkinabe) don't follow me, I'm out". He argued that 'people' constituted by a coalition of popular classes the working class, the petty bourgeoisie which includes- traders, craftsmen, and intellectuals (students, civil servants, office clerk etc.), peasantry and luments, proletariats and marginalized city dwellers.<sup>19</sup>

The CNR (National Revolutionary Council) and the CDR (Revolutionary Defence Committees) were the two important institutional instrument of the Burkinabe Revolution which played a major role in the political, economic and social level. Not only at the national level but also at the international level, the Burkinabe revolution proclaimed to oppose any form of imperialist and neo- colonialist domination and exploitation and all kinds of hegemony in the motherland of Burkina Faso.

## 2.6 Origin of the Revolution

Soon after independence, Upper Volta established its own government. Thus, Burkina's first Civilian President, Maurice Yameogo took the charge in 1960 and continued his civilian rule till 1966. Trade Union had been playing a major role as a powerful political force in every change of regime in Burkina Faso, as it found, The CMRN (The Military Committee For Reform and Nationalist Programme) which was Saye Zerbo's regime ruling body faced a major conflict with the powerful trade union and subsequently it resulted a *coup d' etat* on 7 November, 1982 on Zerbo regime. The new governing body called CSP (Council for the People's Salvation), headed by Commander Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo came to power to work towards a policy of social justice. The CSP consisted of 120 soldiers and included the key members of Thomas Sankara's Group, namely Captain Blaise Compaore, Henri Zongo and Major Jean- Baptise Boukari Lingani. This radical group, whose vanguard was the '*Regroupment des Officiers Communistes*'( ROC) established a close and regular working relationship with various civilian leftist and extreme leftist forces and among intellectuals the Marxist "*Ligue Priatique pour le Development*' (IPAD), the pro-Chinese '*Union des Luttes Communistes*' (ULC), and the '*Parti Communiste*

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp. 77-78.

*revolutionnaire Voltaïque*' (CSV). Colonel Gabriel Yorian Some' and his group represented the moderates within the CSP, Ouedraogo's ruling body. In fact, Gabriel's group was close to Western (particularly French) interest and willing to return to power of the old civilian first President Maurice Yameogo.<sup>20</sup>

On 11 January 1983, President J. B. Ouedraogo appointed Captain Thomas Sankara as the government's Prime Minister. Subsequently, Sankara imprinted progressive and anti-imperialist orientation at public meeting through the pronouncements on 26 March 1983. This gave much influence and he also visited officially to Libya and North Korea. In addition to, he also gave his uncompromising anti- imperialist speech at the Non- Aligned Nations Summit in New Delhi as well as personally extended on invitation, unknown to President Ouedraogo, to Colonel Gaddafi to visit Burkina on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1983. As a matter of fact, this largely became shock and disappointment to the moderates and their allies abroad.

Being irritated Sankara's popularity, and anti-imperialist speech both within and outside of the country, some opposition groups started diplomacy to dethrone him from his popularity. Colonel Yaran Some met Guy Perme, the French President's special advisor on Africa flew into Ouagadougou on 15 May. Available evidence indicates that in the French ambassador's resident, it was decided for arresting Sankara along with his supporters in the ruling CSP. Immediately, the President Ouedraogo arrested Sankara and his supporter except Compaore. However, Captain Compaore having escaped arrest was able to demand and obtain the release of Sankara and other arrested through threatening to march on capital. Thereafter, Sankara and all his allies were released and became extremely powerful. Gradually plotted the course of his return to full power, which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1983, Colonel Yorian Some and some of his followers were killed in the ensuing fight.

## **2.7 Background Notes on Burkina Revolution**

The article by Guy Martin is an inquiry into the origins, the ideological basis, political and economic organization and prospects of the Burkinabe Revolution by the military coup *d'état* of 4<sup>th</sup> August 1983 led by Captain Thomas Sankara. The major problem of

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.77.

the Upper Volta by that time was the background of scarce resources, dismal poverty, and recurrent drought, regional and international hostility. The fact is that Burkina Faso has been able to survive for almost three years in such an unfavorable situation.

Thus, the hypothesis is to be noted that the relative longevity and temporary success of Sankara's regime is to be explained such that, it has actually managed to actively and durably mobilize genuine and significant popular support for its policies. This is because these policies are essentially focused on the satisfaction of the basic needs of populace, and thus enjoy wide popular appeal. In addition o, Sankara's regime has been careful to build a broadly based military and civil defence system to safeguard the Revolution and internal and external threats.

## **2.8 Economic and Social Development**

Burkina's economic and climatic conditions were extremely harmful along with the economic mismanagement, corruption and downright plunder had left the Burkinabe economy in shambles.

Some basic indicator in 1983 shows that, with an area of 274000 sq miles and population of 6.5 millions, Burkinabe had a GNP per capita of US \$ 180, which grew at a rate of only 1.4 percent over the period 1965- 1983. Life expectancy at birth was 44 years in 1983. In case of agriculture and food the picture was bleaker. Similarly the total debt of Burkinabe dramatically increased over the period of 1975 to 1983.

Therefore, in view of such a dismal economic situation, one of the Sankara's primary objectives was to establish an independent, self- sufficient and planned economy. In this context, the most urgent priority of Sankara's revolution was the attainment self-sufficiency in food through an appropriate agriculture development strategy.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.82.

## **2.9 Constrains and Contradiction and the end of Sankara era**

The Burkinabe Government has proclaimed its desire to pursue the non-aligned foreign policy politically independent but actively anti-imperialist. The relation between Burkina and France was bad particularly in 1983 however this relation somewhat improved in 1986. But Burkinabe government always used to suspect France apparently with some justification. It is known that France was encouraging Burkina's neighbours notably (Cote d' Ivoire, Mali and Niger) and movement opposing Burkinabe regime operating in these countries or France. Some of Burkina's neighbours particularly Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger and Togo had given their hostile indication towards Burkinabe Revolutionary regime. In 1985, Sankara's Burkina was deliberately accused of being responsible for destabilization attempts that have affected Niger and Togo. Later on major differences and contradiction emerged between Burkina and Mali on the issue of Mali's growing relation with France.

It has become clear that Sankara's regime caused much concern and worry among a small coterie of autocratic and corrupting neo-colonial rulers who were acting as the watchdogs of French and Western imperialism in West Africa. Thus, these rulers were worried about the affect of the Burkinabe Revolution and aimed at the eventual overthrow of the Sankara's regime.<sup>22</sup>

Although Sankara did not believe in the foreign government for the development of his country nevertheless, he sought external financial aid from the World Bank in order to build a railway from Ouagadougou to Tambao, so that the mineral resources with high grade manganese could be exploited. But the external fund didn't come to Burkina Faso. Therefore, Sankara launched an effort to construct the route with the help of group of workers of his country. With regard to aid, though Sankara had enough trust on Soviet Union and Libya but finally they gave less aid than did the United States and France.

Sankara was a nationalist and patriotic; once he ordered that all functionaries should wear domestically produced cotton dresses, suits, shorts or burnoose, while at

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 77-90.

work. All this shows he had local pride and patriotism. Although Sankara was very much of a Pan-Africanist but his attitude towards the neighbour was not much friendly. Both Seyni Kountche of Niger and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo believed that Sankara was behind attempts to overthrow them. As Sankara resented that previous generations of his people had been used as forced labourers by the French to build up the prosperity of Cote'd Ivoire. Burkina Faso continued to depend upon the remittances of Burkinabe, who were mistrusted and considered as undesirable criminal and strangers. Thus, it shows that Sankara did not have good relation with Cote d' Ivoire. He allegedly created bitterness between the Burkinabe and the Ivorian by jailing one of their former ministers, Mohammad Diawara. During this also Burkina Faso lost the opportunity to host a meeting of the Economic Community of African Organization (C.E.A.O.) and later the much larger Economic Community of West African states.

A war broke out between Burkina Faso and Mali on the issue of mineral resources located on the road border of these countries. Though Sankara won this war but it became threat to his regime. Apart from this, several who saw Sankara early in 1987 began to suspect that his 'charismatic' qualities were too parochial and inadequate to deal with the complex economic and power realizes within the global system.<sup>23</sup>

## **2.10 Internal Constraints**

Sankara set up an appropriate agricultural development strategy based on CNR's objective for the attainment of faced self- sufficiency. The main objective of this strategy was embodied in the fifteen- months Popular Development Programme (PPD) from October 1984 to December 1985 notably to lay the foundation for the next five year development Plan (1986-1990). The PPD was clearly the expression of the needs of the rural masses, which was based on the self-reliance and popular participation for Burkinabe development. Nevertheless, gradually some conflicts and contradiction emerged that badly affected the realization of the PPD's objectives. It was realized that, his initiative would be dictated by the powerful financial institutions

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<sup>23</sup> Skinner, Elliott P (1988), "Sankara and the Burkinabe Revolution: Charisma and Power, Local and External Dimensions", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 437-55.



like IMF and World Bank. As the PPD's ultimate success depended on the regime's capacity to maintain and strengthen popular mobilization and support. However, country's very limited financial and managerial capacity did affect badly to the success of PPD.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of social and political field, there emerged a number of conflicts and contradiction on the management of Sankara's regime in Burkina Faso. There were some important objectives of Burkinabe revolution, which were against a variety of traditional and socio-political forces. It aimed at slowing down or breaking up the traditional chieftaincy and the bourgeoisies. In this context, the Burkinabe government launched a frontal attack on the traditional chieftaincy that was very influential and powerful among the Mossi, the country's dominant ethnic group. Even though Sankara belongs to the same Mossi ethnic group but became very much anti over the chieftaincy. This affected Sankara's future regime. Furthermore, the Burkinabe revolution had taken bold measure in order to drastically reduce the privileges and living standard of the bureaucratic bourgeoisies. Although, steps were taken for the benefit of the peasantry and the common people but it resulted in the conflicts between the bourgeoisies and the revolutionaries. In terms of political constraints, it is found that the CNR had curbed the powers of traditional chieftaincy. It reduced the role of political parties, trade unions and voluntary associations. The LIPAD and most of the trade unions had been marginalized and voluntary associations were under strict control particularly '*Union des Lattes Communiste*' (ULC), the group communiste, and '*Union des Communistes Burkinabe*' (UCB) were badly affected by some strict principles.

Apart from this, the CNR had instigated in order to create the "Union of Burkinabe Women" (UFB) and a national Union of Burkinabe's elders (UNAB). Maurice Yameogo and Sangoule Lamizana were the most prominent members of the UNAB. It was observed that the success of the Burkinabe revolution largely depended on the CNR's ability to quickly rally the peasantry and workers around it. But ultimately it was also observed that there was the lack of communication between the leadership and grass-root revolutionaries. Thus, Sankara's people did not fully

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<sup>24</sup> Martin, Guy (1987), "The Ideology and Praxis in Thomas Sankara's Populist Revolution of 4 August 1983 in Burkina Faso", *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, pp. 77-90.

comprehend what actually happening and was somewhat suspicious. In fact, it was the programme of socio-economic and political transformation for the interest of the Burkinabe. But the problems and prospects mentioned above could reduce spreads and continuity of this revolution and ultimately Sankara had to face a lot of opposition and contradiction, which became obstacles for his regime.<sup>25</sup>

### **2.11 Concluding Remark of Burkinabe Revolution**

To conclude, it should be noted that the major factors for the ultimate success of Sankara's Burkinabe Revolution were to overcome from the various economic, social and political crisis of the people of Burkina Faso. The military and civil defence system were the instruments to safeguard the Revolution against internal and external threats. In short, external economic dependency, open hostility of reactionary bureaucratic bourgeoisies and petty bourgeois, were the crucial factor that more or less hindered the revolution.

To some extent, Sankara's Revolution aimed at bringing the socio-political change in the country and established a regime, which fought against poverty, disease and ignorance of his people. In fact, Sankara was a Pan- Africanist, nationalist and most dedicated leader of the post-independence Burkina Faso. It was Sankara who actually laid the foundation for the transition from military to civilian rule in Burkina Faso. Though Burkinabe Revolution was cut short due to the assassination of Thomas Sankara in 1987, but it successfully showed the new path for the people of Burkina Faso.<sup>26</sup>

### **3.0 The Leadership Ability of President Compaore**

Burkina Faso moved to a state of representative democracy in 1991. A new democratic constitution was adopted, which proposed a multi-party system. The, governmental instability during the 1970's and 1980's was followed by presidential election in the early 1991 and parliamentary election in 1992 based on multi-party system. Compaore proceeded to consolidate his power reviving the cronyism of pre-

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, pp.77-90.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.87.

revolutionary days and during the bidding of the International Monetary Fund as part of his campaign for respectability. He introduced a multi-party democracy while at the same time working to co-opt, buy off or repress opposition. In power since 1987 Compaore, as a military dictator became the administrator. He remained in power throughout the 1990s, and led his country into the 21<sup>st</sup> century leaving behind a trail of blood and the economy in tatters. He then won the presidency in 1991 as the only candidate in a rigged election to perpetuate himself in the office.<sup>27</sup>(Godfrey 2001).

Blaise Compaore was born on 3 February, 1951, in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. He married Chantal (a niece of Houphouet, the then President of Cote d' Ivoire) and created good relation with the Ivorian political leaders. He spent much time for military courses and gained popularity due to his good military carrier. Finally, he reached the rank of captain in the Voltaic Army. Compaore has also various honorary doctorates from many universities. He is considered one of the best educated people of the country (Presidency of Burkina Faso). He met Sankara in 1976 in military training Centre in Morocco, and since then Compaore and Sankara became close friends. Compaore played a major role in the *coup d' etat* against Saye Zerbo and Jean Baptiste Ouedraogo during his early political carrier. He became the Minister of Justice under President Thomas Sankara in 1983 but gradually became hungry for capturing the whole power of Upper Volta. In fact, Sankara was a man of faith, charisma and popular leader of Burkina Faso. Never was there the misunderstanding and enmity between Sankara and Compaore. Moreover, Sankara believed much Compaore as his best friend and colleague in his political carrier.

Therefore, he could never imagine the diplomatic rule of Compaore against him. Ultimately, on October 15, 1987, Sankara was assassinated in a coup which brought Captain Blaise Compaore to power in Burkina Faso. After the bloodiest coup in the country, he installed the ninth political regime. Compaore played important role for the political stability in Burkina Faso. This period opened the way for democratic set up in the country. Henri Zongo and Maj. Jean-Baptiste Boukari Lingani formed the popular Front (PF) which played to continue and pursue the goals of their revolution and “rectify” Sankara’s deviation from the original aim. Compaore

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<sup>27</sup> Godfrey, Mwakikagile (2001), *Military Coups in West Africa since the sixties*, New York: Nova Science Publishers.

suspended socialist reform and instituted conservative economic reform. Compaore's role during this period is the major cause for the transition to civilian rule. Though Burkina Faso had been experienced the continuous coup in the military regime. But when Compaore as a military ruler came to power without any strong political organization, soon he made the long-term strategy for his political career. Thus, he took first step to organize the political body for his continuous support. The political organization was formed in June 1989 by Popular Front (FP) that was able to accept three non-marxists. On 18, September 1989, while Compaore was returning from two week trip to Asia, Lengani and Zongo were accused of plotting to overthrow the Popular Front, thereafter; they are arrested and executed the same night. Subsequently, Compaore abandoned Marxism – Leninism but he resisted the National Conference route to democratization in Benin and taking place throughout the Francophone Africa. With this brutal assassination and autocratic style, he faced popular revulsion, rioting and violence.<sup>28</sup>

It is argued that Sankara's death in disguise is a blessing for Compaore. Thus he could become the president in place of Sankara. He could quickly observe that his political future is dangerous and uncertain. Thus, in order to stay in power he did not try to make same mistake, rather opened the way for democratic set up. After coming to power, he sought aid from the foreign countries. In July 1987, the International Monetary Fund was called in so that Burkina Faso's dire (dreadful) economy could receive a foreign – backed boost. Sankara had always believed that such a move would spell an end to the Popular Revolution. But in March 1989 the eyes of the world were focused on Burkina Faso as *Comic Relief donated millions of pounds of the nation*. This initiative work helped Compaore to remain in power and in a short period he could learn game of politics from the external sources. Compaore continued to try and gain the support of those whom Sankara had managed to.<sup>29</sup>

How does political leadership influence the progress of reforms? The question has been answered in different terms in the literature. Some believe the political will of the leader is the major determinant of the choice and implementation of policy

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<sup>28</sup> History of Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 April, 2007 URL [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history\\_of\\_Burkina\\_Faso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history_of_Burkina_Faso).

<sup>29</sup> Wilkins Michael (1989), "The Death of Thomas Sankara and the Rectification of the People's Revolution in Burkina Faso", *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 352, pp.387-388.

measures. Others consider more the importance of political circumstances and the interplay between social groups and society. It is not certain that this theoretical distinction is relevant in practice. Strong leadership cannot succeed without favorable political circumstances. But even if circumstances are favorable, weak leadership will appear as a “loss of opportunity.” In the case of Burkina, aspiration after Sankara was for a more liberal environment, leadership was essential in overcoming resistance, maintaining national cohesion, and setting a new direction. And of course, the vision of the leader in charge played an important role.

What shapes the vision of an individual and his perception of events? Many factors contribute, among which education, situations encountered in life experience, readings, and advice from others are included. If President Compaoré had any liberal vision of what the economic picture of his country should be, then that must have rapidly developed during the first years of the revolution. Biographers of President Compaoré describe him as determined and thirsty for justice during his youth, who led his first “anti-establishment” demonstration at the age of 15. Was he a communist or did he belong to a communist party? Certainly not, but in the political ambiance of the country in the '1970s, any man willing to prepare for a role in public life was somehow a member, or affiliated with or close to people or organizations who took pride in labeling themselves “communist,” or “Marxist,” or something similar. He belonged to “the officers of the third generation,” an expression used to designate the new generation of African officers who, contrary to their elders, were also graduates and thus had a certain intellectual level. Young leftist officers were said to have started up a secret organization, named ROC, influenced by the African Independence Party (PAI), the first Marxist party of Burkina. By 1978, the ROC was supposedly led by Thomas Sankara, Blaise Compaoré, Jean-Baptiste Lingani, and Henri Zongo, namely the four historical leaders of the 1983 revolution. While in many writings ROC stands in French for “Rally of Communist Officers,” a different version was given by Compaoré himself, who explained that ROC stood only for “stone,” which it also means in French, to evoke the vigor of their struggle. The fact is that at no time during the revolution, under Sankara or Compaoré, although the official discourse was revolutionary, was any economic measure taken that could possibly be labeled communist. Viewed from the present, the conspiracy of these young officers inside the army, which led to the 1983 revolution, appears as nothing more than a rebellion

against elder officers and the established order. The seizure of power in 1983 was in a certain way a preventive decision to save their own lives, because many political events between 1980 and 1982 had enabled the military high hierarchy to unmask them. The course of events will demonstrate that from 1987, based no doubt on his experience of public affairs, Compaoré was fully confident of the superiority of the capitalist system. A few months after taking office, he declared in a speech that “the Rectification is not a fight against the private sector. A revolutionary state needs more the support of the private sector.” After only one year in office, in a speech to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the revolution, he called on revolutionaries to “accept the existence of bourgeois production links.” His practice of economic policy revealed him to be a very pragmatic decision-maker. He was less interested in general macroeconomic equilibrium and more concerned with the practical effects of economic measures. He viewed agriculture as the main engine of growth. That explains a set of measures he initiated in favor of rural areas as a complement to the overall adjustment program and his own farming activities: a discourse on production on June 4, 1994, a few months after the devaluation of the CFA currency, which he was among the first heads of state to accept; a letter of intent on sustainable human development; initiatives to settle down young agricultural producers; and so on. These actions were driven by his tendency to seek innovation constantly and to try new experiences, along with an exceptional ability to anticipate events. This combination certainly contributed to his success in turning an entire generation of Marxist into free-market believers.

A shrewd and secretive politician, Compaoré understood very early after taking power that the demand of the people was for more freedom and democracy, and that the mood of the country was no longer revolutionary. To avoid being taken hostage by left-wing organizations, as Sankara had been, he gradually united the left into a single organization, quickly got rid of those who did not want to follow, insulated them inside their own camps, and sought support far beyond the usual leftist circles. Luck and fate did the rest, but he was certainly helped by the mood of the main social forces, among which the unions and the business class figured prominently. (Guion 1998)

Donors become happy to the democratic country, because. They do not delay to give aid due to the big government. Thus, Blaise Compaore could gain the financial support from the foreign country. It was also the time of African countries that were moving from military rule to civilian rule for good governance and political stability. Hence, Compaore's regime was influenced by some of the African countries which were transforming their regime from military to civilian rule for the larger interest of the society and in this way the democratization process began in the Burkina Faso.

In terms of political career of Blaise Compaore, it is said that he is a much influential and popular leader in the political history of Francophone West Africa. After serving as Minister of Justice in 1983, he became the president of Burkina Faso in 1987. Since then he served as the military ruler. In the Fourth Republic in 1991, he was elected president and in 1998, he was re-elected first time and gradually on November 13, 2005, he was again re-elected president, defeating 12 opponents and winning 80.25% of the vote. This shows that Compaore is the only president in Burkina Faso as well as in the Francophone West Africa who is the longstanding president.

#### **4.0 Role of Civil Society Organization**

Civil Society Organizations played a major role in strengthening democratization process. Special attention should be given to the institutions of civil society which plays a crucial role in building democracy, such as Burkinabe movement for Human Rights as the Rights of People, the umbrella organization for electoral observation, association of lawyers, private press and unions. The articulation between the organization of civil society and the global society express itself through a search for balance between traditional and modern values which lie at the heart of Burkinabe society. Consequently, the viability of civil society must go through the necessary "Junction" between peasants, Mossi ethnic groups, Trade Union, students and workers, chieftains and religious movements.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Nordstrom, Lennart (May, 2004), "Burkina Faso: A study of political, social and economic structures and power relationship", SIDA, Division for Democratic Governance, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December, 2007 URL <http://www.sida.se/publications>.

Since 1960, Burkina Faso has experienced various political, constitutional and civil-military regimes. In terms of years, the country has had sixteen years of constitutional government and nineteen of military rule. The military regimes have in general been autocratic and dictatorial with accompanying violence and massive violation of human rights.<sup>31</sup>

Country analysts however, view it as a watershed period from 1983 to 1987 when the CNR or (National Council of Reservation) came to power under the dynamic and charismatic leadership of Captain Thomas Sankara. A new chapter was opened at that period in the civil- military relation in Africa in general and Burkina Faso in particular. Sankara government deliberately mobilized the peasants who constitute the bulk of the society to participate in the democratic process. Civil society was also given a boost by the state in the form of empowerment of women, peasants, students, workers and other organizations. Never before were the basic needs of the ordinary Burkinabe as attended to as they were by Sankara regime. However, it was not a representative democracy, but it was a participatory one.<sup>32</sup>

The coup of 4 August 1983 which brought the late Captain Thomas Sankara to power marked a turning point in the history of that country. The new government's commitment to socio-economic and political transformation (especially in the capital Ouagadougou) surpassed that of previous governments. Fifteen months after the National Council of Reservation ( CNR) to power , a total of 334 primary schools, 284 clinics and maternities, 78 drug stores, 28 retail shops and 553 housing apartments were built, and 258 dams/ reservoirs and 962 wells and bore- holes were dug, relying mainly on mass labour mobilization. These attempts at radical socio-economic transformation were remarkable not because of the nature of the projects but rather the determination of the leadership to transform society. The Sankara years are best remembered for the efforts at grassroots mobilization. These were 'popularly' associated with the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs). CDRs were to be organs of people's power as well as local representatives of the CNR in all sectors of national life. The legacy of the Sankara era has played an important part in

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<sup>31</sup> The Status of Human Right Organization in Sub-Sahara Africa, Burkina Faso, University of Minnesota Human Rights Liberia, [Online: Web] Accessed on 15 February, 2007 URL <http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/Africa/burkin.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



current efforts by Village Groups (VGs) to improve their well-being. A study commissioned by Burkina Faso's National Commission for Decentralization examined the potential role (in decentralized development) of grassroots organizations for development (VGs and their Unions/ Federation), traditional and religious structures, local government structures and civil society (Trade Unions and associations).<sup>33</sup>

It would be right to say that, Burkina Faso witnessed a golden age of human rights protection under Sankara government. Among many Burinabe Sankara was greatly admired as a man of vision, a man who was able to instill a sense of pride to an impoverished people. During his era, government, military and evil corruption was almost non-existence in Burkina Faso. Heavily influenced by Latin American revolution like Fidel Castro of Cuba, Sankara sought to make Burkina Faso economically self-sufficient. No one could deny Sankara's achievements including massive campaign to eliminate illiteracy, vaccinate the entire population, and rebuild the city of Ouagadougou.<sup>34</sup>

In October 1987, Sankara was assassinated during a *coup de'etat* by Blaise Compaore. After the bloodiest coup in the country's history, Compaore installed the country's ninth political regime. Monitor recorded the highest ever number political assassinations hit squads and "disappearance" under this regime. Burkina Faso during this period ratified international human rights conventions, including African chapter on Human and Peoples Rights in 1984. In addition, the regime adopted a new constitution in 1991.<sup>35</sup>

The process of democratization that has been ongoing in Burkina since 1991 has encouraged the emergence and expression of a civil society, following a long period in the 1980s when it had been stifled by emergency regimes. At the national

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<sup>33</sup> Atampugre, Nicholas (1997), "Aid, NGOs and Grassroots Development: Northern Burkina Faso", *Review of African Political Economy*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>34</sup> Wise Christopher (1998), "Chronicle of a student strike in Africa: The case Burkina Faso, 1996-1997", *African Studies Review*, p21.

<sup>35</sup> The Status of Human Right Organization in Sub-Sahara Africa, Burkina Faso, University of Minnesota Human Rights Liberia, [Online: Web] Accessed on 15 February, 2007 URL <http://www/umn.edu/humanrts/Africa/burkin.htm>.

level, Burkinan civil society includes thousands of associations and organizations of a dozen different types: unions, religious organizations, human rights organizations and specific pressure groups, the private-sector media, NGOs and development associations, youth movements, associations of people, farmer groups etc. There are legal associations, recreated to promote the economic and social development of some specific region and groups. In this respect, it could be said that they are championing the specific interest of a group or region. There are, however, key players that have a national base, championing trans-ethnic or non-religious interest working to promote economic or social development and democratic governance. Of these key players in civil society are the press and other media, unions, development NGOs, movements for human rights defence and the promotion of democracy, religious groups, women's organizations etc.

Unions play an ambivalent role in the democratization process. On the one hand, unions have been opposed to dictatorship and government restrictions on public freedom ever since independence. Consequently, the trades unions were the instigators of the popular uprising of 3 January 1966 against the authoritarian regime of the First Republic, the strikes in 1975 that prevented General Lamizana from implementing his plan to set up a one-party state in Burkina Faso, workers' resistance against the revolutionary regime of the mid-1980s, opposition to the abusive and arbitrary actions of the various regimes, and so on. On the other hand, it can be seen that the trades unions have also destabilized constitutional regimes, some of which were more democratic than others; and prevented the adoption of reforms that were often necessary, etc. The fact is that the trade union movement in Burkina Faso is extremely political and often torn between a moderate wing, which is generally prepared to engage in dialogue with government, and a radical and revolutionary wing, distinguished by its rejection of compromise and sometimes even of dialogue. The Burkinan trade union movement is currently dominated by the radical wing, which claims to have its roots in revolutionary and even Marxist-Leninist, trade unionism; this wing opposes the economic liberalization of the country and,

sometimes, the democratic experiment in progress, which it refers to as “bourgeois democracy.”<sup>36</sup>

At regional and local level, Burkinan civil society is essentially made up of peasant farmer and community-based organizations. They are associations freely created at local level by groups of young people, women, agricultural and livestock farmers, craftspeople and others, with the aim of promoting the economic, social and cultural development of grassroots communities. In addition, there emerged the bar association as well as other professional bodies, particularly in the fields of health, press and other media, architecture, accounting, etc., most of which were set up in the early 1990s.<sup>37</sup>

### **5.0 Role of Political Parties in Democratization Process in Burkina Faso**

The existence of several competing political parties is a crucial characteristic of a democratic regime. While Botswana is Africa’s longest continuous multi-party democracy, Benin can be considered as the first African country that made a transition to democracy during the explosive wave of democratization after end of the Cold War. It is generally agreed that events in Benin had a crucial ‘democratization effect’ in Western Africa, especially among the Francophone countries, as those in South Africa did later among the Anglophone countries in the southern parts of continent. Since 1990s, democracy in Benin has experienced significant progress and remarkable development that strongly influenced the people throughout Francophone Africa and this model was followed in one country after another, such as in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso etc. Political regimes that ban political opposition and competition among political parties for the votes of the people are not competitive and not democratic. But these countries are now considered as minimal democracies. They conduct regular election through the multi-party system which is relatively free and fair. Thus, there is the possibility of competition and inclusive suffrage in the political system. The number of parties and their interaction varies among democratic regimes. Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Central African Republic all are

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<sup>36</sup> Nordstrom, Lennart (May, 2004), “Burkina Faso: A study of political, social and economic structures and power relationship”, SIDA, Division for Democratic Governance, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December, 2007 URL <http://www.sida.se/publications>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

characterized by a system with many parties. Burkina Faso, for the first time could hold the multi-party election in 1992 for the National Assembly. It also held the presidential election in 1991 and Captain Blaise Compaore became the president in Burkina Faso. However, for the two consecutive general elections, only the ruling party had been dominating. Similarly, in the presidential election, the ruling party is winning regularly with clear majority. Therefore, it says that Burkina Faso's democracy is not pure rather it can be considered as the limited, restricted and authoritarian democracy.

## **6.0 Role of External Powers for Democratic transition in Burkina Faso**

Against the background of the on-going phenomenal expansion of the democratic space, with its veneration for democratic governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, this part seeks to analyze the reaction of the international community to the seemingly endless transition from military rule to democratic governance in Burkina Faso. It also benefits from regular substantial assistance from the international community. National economic policy is formulated in such a way as to preserve the harmonious relationship that exists between the country, Bretton-Woods institutions and other institutions and other donors. The focus will be on the Western powers, particularly the United States and the France, and the international agencies like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and African Development Bank (ADB) which are critical and influential institutional actors in international economic diplomacy. France and Burkina Faso has been developed various relation like political and economic relation. In addition to this, they have also developed cultural, scientific and technical cooperation and other type of cooperation. Burkina Faso and France have a long shared history and are equally concerned with preserving the world's cultural diversity. They also share in interest in facilitating and sustaining the multiple twinning arrangements and initiatives that link their respective elected representatives, universities, schools, hospitals, consular chambers, associations and trade union and human rights movements.<sup>38</sup> The World Bank has supported more

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<sup>38</sup> ..... (2006), France and Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 25 June, 2007 URL [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files\\_156/Burkina-faso-182/france-and Burkinafaso-3851/framework-partnership-document-france-burkinafaso-2006-2010-8468.html](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files_156/Burkina-faso-182/france-and-Burkinafaso-3851/framework-partnership-document-france-burkinafaso-2006-2010-8468.html).

than 50 economic and social development projects in Burkina since the country became independent

## **7.0 Emergence of Structural Adjustment Policies in Burkina Faso**

Burkina Faso was one of the last West African countries to sign a structural adjustment package financed by the World Bank and IMF. As for the World Bank, it had earlier argued that the country 'has been taking, since mid-1984, a number of adjustment measures which are beginning to bear fruit'. Such an assessment helps explain the Bank's seemingly peculiar decision, its 1994 'Adjustment in Africa' report, to rank Burkina among Africa's top reformers on the basis of policies adopted over 1987-91, that is, mainly before the formal adjustment programme began. by Pascal Zagre, who was the planning and cooperation minister, helped negotiate the adjustment programme and put forth the most detailed treatment of the tradition of adjustment' argument. In 1984, he notes, the Sankara government imposed 'strict budgetary rigour, successfully slashing the budget deficit from FCFA 24.5bn to FCFA 4.5bn by 1985. The World Bank, in a major assessment of structural adjustment in Africa, ranked Burkina among just six African countries judged to have had a 'large improvement' in their macro-economic policies between 1981-86 and 1987-91. Western governments likewise have been full of praise for the relatively orderly manner in which the affairs of state are managed ( ' good governance'), and especially for Burkina's political democratization: the adoption of a new constitution in 1991 establishing a formal multiparty system, followed by a succession of presidential legislative and municipal elections.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Harsch, Ernst (1998), "Burkina Faso in the Winds of Liberalization", *Review of African Political Economy*, p. 627

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**Chapter-III**  
**Nature of Democratization during**  
**1991-2006 in Burkina Faso**

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## **CHAPTER-3 NATURE OF DEMOCRATIZATION DURING 1991-2006 IN BURKINA FASO**

This chapter intends to deal with the nature of democratization through the various regimes during 1991-2006. It attempts to analyze the political development of Burkina Faso in the context of multi-party democracy. It also examines the electoral process, role of political parties, functioning of the National Assembly, civil and political rights, judicial system, grassroots democracy and the role of civil society in strengthening democratization in Burkina Faso.

### **1.0 Electoral Process**

In contrast with several other African countries, the democratic process underway in Burkina Faso has long historical roots. Admittedly, the first Republic from 1960 to 1966 was distinguished by its presidential regime led by Maurice Yaméogo and based on a single-party – the Volta Democratic Union-African Democratic Rally (UDV-RDA), from 1966 to 1970, the country then lived under an exceptional regime run by Lieutenant-Colonel Sangoué Lamizana. But on 14, June 1970, a new constitution was adopted by referendum creating a rationalized parliamentary regime with, the military power. Open general elections (with seven parties standing) were organized in December 1970, for the first time since 1959. They were won by the former single-party with 37 seats, the remaining 20 seats being shared between three other formations. The parliamentary majority however was deeply divided, and the work of parliament and the government was paralyzed by fighting between factions at a time when a terrible drought was hitting the country.

On the pretext of the divisions of the political class, the exasperation of public opinion and the deleterious social and political atmosphere in the country, the army interrupted the democratic process by putting an end to the presidential regime of the Second Republic in February 1974. This time, the army strengthened its hold on power and attempted to make its position a durable one by proposing the idea of a single party, the National Movement for Renewal (MNR). There were immediate protests, the army had to retreat from its position and promised to return to normal

constitution on 27 November, 1977 and that laid the foundation for the Third Republic. The organic law of 25 May, 1979 created a three-party system. Official recognition was granted only to the three parties that were best placed after the election of April 1978. These were the former single party, the UDV-RDA, The UNDD (National Union for the Defence of Democracy) and UPV (Volta Progress Union). The presidential elections were held in May 1978 and were won by General Lamizana in what was a close-run battle because, for the first time in Sub-Saharan Africa, an outgoing President needs a second round to be elected, in this case against Mr. Macaire Ouedraogo of the UNDD.<sup>1</sup>

An increase in corruption among the ruling elite brought about the fall of the third Republic on 25 November, 1980. The new government, called the Council for Salvation of the People (CSP), promised to re-established normal constitutional life within two years. However, this system led to a conflict between Captain Thomas Sankara, the Prime Minister and President J.B.Ouedraogo. Ultimately, Sankara was arrested on 17 May, 1983. But the so-called the groups of CSP, headed by Captain Blaise Compaore took its revenge through a military *coup de'etat* on 4 August, 1983. A new revolutionary project to favour the peasant population was developed by the new regime, known as the National Council of the Revolution (CNR) under the leadership President Thomas Sankara. He attempted to remodel the country and its society on the basis of a social revolutionary programme. Democratic transformation was initiated in 1987. However, the political and social crisis had provoked a military overthrow. In the meanwhile, Sankara and 13 of his allies were killed in a *coup de'etat* in 1987 that was led by Blaise Compaore.

Compaore took over power as the new President of Burkina Faso, immediately after the assassination of Sankara. Presenting it as a movement of rectification, the new President gradually put an end to the revolution and applied a policy of openness to civil society. With the loss of international credit of Marxist references and a rise in domestic demand for democracy, the regime abandoned its Marxist orientations and implanted a process of democratization over which it succeeded in keeping control. A

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<sup>1</sup> Abdourhamne, Mr. Boubacar Issa (2006), "Burkina Faso: Institutional Situation", [Online: Web] Accessed on 6 July, 2007 URL <http://www.etat.sciencespobordeaux.fr/-anglais/institutionnel/burkina.html>.



new constitution was adopted by referendum on 2 June, 1991. The Presidential election was held in December 1991. The opposition boycotted the election, leaving the Compaore as the only candidate. Compaore was elected with 86% of the vote with a turnout of 24 %.<sup>2</sup>

Multi-party system was introduced in 1991 in Burkina Faso. The formation of numerous new parties were tolerated and legalized. Article 13 of the constitution guarantees multiparty democracy and Burkina Faso does indeed have large number of parties: 67 parties were officially registered, while a total of 27 political parties contested the legislative elections, which was held on 24 May, 1992. By 28 January, 1997, the number of officially registered parties had gone down to 46. The Presidential party, the Organization Popular Democracy- Labour Movement (ODP-MT) merged with about ten political parties to form the Congress of Democracy and Progress (CDP). Some of the popular political parties of Burkina Faso are: RDA-ADF (African Democratic Rally- Alliance for Democracy and Federation), CFD (Confederation for Federation and Democracy), CDP (Congress for Democracy and Progress), MTP (Movement for Tolerance and Progress), PDP (Party for Democracy and Progress), UVDB (Union of Greens for the Development of Burkina Faso), PS (Socialist Party) etc. In the first general election the ruling party ODP-MT got a large victory, taking an absolute majority of 78 seats while the CNPP-PSD won 13 seats and remained in the second place. The UDV-RDA and RDF won 5 and 4 seats respectively. The main political forces of the 1997 general elections were: the CDP, which strengthened its position with 88 members of Parliament, PDP became the second group in parliament with 9 members, ADF and RDA, who formed a nine-member parliamentary group.

Thus, at the end of 1997, four parties were represented in the Assembly. Out of 27 parties who took part in the 1992, only 13 of them took part in the elections of May 1997 and 4 of them won seats. From the party performances and representations, it is to be noted that except four to five parties, most of the parties are deprived of representation in the parliamentary elections. The ruling party CDP is the only party which has been gaining successful percentage of votes winning seats with the absolute

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

majority.<sup>3</sup> The CDP remains as only dominant actor in Burkinabe politics. It is a coalition of several parties what is commonly called presidential movement. The present day CDP and its predecessor the ODP/MT won overwhelming majorities in legislative elections in 1992 and 1997 as well as in municipal elections in 1995 and 2000. In 1991 President Compaore won the presidential elections, at this time he was the only candidate since the opposition boycotted them. Internationally, this created serious problems of democratic legitimacy for Compaore. Less than a quarter of the registered voters participated in the 1991 elections. In the early 1997, the National Assembly changed the 37<sup>th</sup> article of the constitution according to which the President could be re-elected only once. Today President Compaore may be re-elected more than one times. Critics say that, in practice, this means that he has become 'President for life'. Compaore was re-elected in the Presidential elections with 87.53 % of votes. The only other candidates were those of the moderate opposition are Ram Ouedraogo, 6.6 % and Fredric Guirma, 5.86 %. International observers judged the elections to have been relatively fair, although the radical opposition of the 14 February group, led by Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo and lawyer Herman Yameogo, boycotted the election. Despite the boycott President Compaore regained a certain democratic legitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.1 Political Crisis and Democratization**

In February 1998, around 10 opposition parties formed a Front called FUDR in preparation for the presidential election scheduled for November. In April, following consultation with pro-government and opposition parties the Council of Ministers adopted legislation providing for the establishment of an independent electoral commission, the 27 member called Commission Electorale Nationale Independent (CENI), which was to comprise six representatives of the parliamentary majority (CDP and its allies ) and six opposition representatives, together with 14 representative of civic society. However, when the CENI was inaugurated in July, several opposition parties refused to fill up their seats and indicated their intention to boycott the forthcoming presidential election stating that the measures in place were no guarantee of transparency at poll. As the presidential election approached,

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<sup>3</sup> Santiso, Carlos et al. (1997), "The Candence of Democratic Development in Burkina Faso", IDEA, Stockholm, Sweden. [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 June, 2007 URL <http://www.int-idea.se>.

<sup>4</sup> Hagberg, Sten (2002), "Enough is enough: ethnography of the struggle against impunity in Burkina Faso", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, London, Cambridge University Press, p.225.226.

principal opposition leaders including Herman Yeameogo (ADF-RDA) and Joseph Ki-Zerbo (PDP) refused to participate in the presidential election held on 15 November, 1998. Compaore was challenged by two minor candidates, Ram Ouedraogo (UVDV) and Frederic Guim (FR-RDA). The provisional result confirmed a decisive victory for Compaore with 87.53 % of the valid votes. Despite opposition calls for a boycott, the rate of voter participation at 56.08 % was considerably higher than in 1991. A new government again formed with Kadre Desire Ouedraogo as the Prime Minister in January 1999. Compaore had hoped to strengthen his legitimacy shortly after being re-elected as the President in 1998 on the basis of a relatively high voter turnout. However, he faced a crisis that not only further revealed the regime's authoritarian character but also contested the legitimacy of the President as well as of political system as a whole. The crisis centered on the presumably state-ordered assassination of Norbert Zongo, founder and director of *L'Independent*, Burkina's most influential private weekly. *Trop C'est trop* quickly became the slogan of an increasingly radical opposition movement, which demanded justice not only in the Zongo case, and denounced the deficiencies of the rule of law and lack of political accountability, as well as the deteriorating living conditions experienced by most Burkinabe.<sup>5</sup>

Burkina Faso faced a 'severe political crisis' particularly after the killing of noted journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998. Unlike Zongo Affairs, the country had already experienced the increasing killings, murders and assassination during the regime of Blaise Compaore. Many people have been assassinated or have disappeared because of number of orphans and widows have been suffering for the justice and their livelihood. Neither the investigation nor the punishment could take place properly for the diseased. After all, the Zongo Affairs became a great shock for entire nation and therefore the Burkinabe took a strong revenge against the Compaore regime and the ruling party.

Norbert Zongo was a warm animated and compassionate man, founding director and editor of the *L'Independent* (The Independent) a weekly newspaper, and the President of the Association Independent Newspaper Editors in Burkina Faso. He

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<sup>5</sup>..... (2006), Europa Year Book, pp. 118-19.

started this weekly newspaper in 1993 and was soon admired for his courageous analyses of Burkinabe politics. He did not hesitate to pick up sensitive topics. Zongo emerged as one of the few who dared challenge the power-holders of the Fourth Republic. Some of the persons, who lost their life during Compaore regime, are: David Ouedraogo, who was the driver of Francois Compaore, younger brother of President Blaise Compaore, Professor Guillaume Sessouma were killed in 1989. The medical student Dabo Boukary was killed in 1990 and Clement Oumarou Ouedraogo, a prominent opposition leader, who was killed in a grenade attack in Central Ouagadougou in 1991. Norbert Zongo started to write about the death of David Ouedraogo, but despite his writing Burkinabe judicial system took no action for the death of David Ouedraogo. In the last few months of his life, Zongo wrote explicitly that he feared for his life. Early in November 1998, he was to have been poisoned when he took a trip to Kaya, some 100 kilometers North of Ouagadougou, but the attempt failed. During the very last days of his life Zongo is said to have been increasingly aware that something was going to happen. But he changed neither his position nor his editorial policy. Thus, the journalist continued to celebrate the pioneering. On 13, December 1998, Zongo was found dead in his burned-out car with his brother Yembi Ernest Zongo, his employee Ablaise Nikiema and driver Blaise Iliboudo in Sapou, a village about 100 Kilometers South of the Capital Ouagadougou.<sup>6</sup>

Within two days of the killings in Sapou, spontaneous demonstrations broke out in the capital and Koudougou, Zongo's hometown. Initially, it was reacted to by students and youths, but soon salaried employees, professionals, street Vendors and many other Burkinabe joined in. After the 'Sapou Drama' Burkina Faso faced a deep socio-political crisis. Gradually, throughout the country, both in the larger cities and smaller provincial towns, trade unionists, villagers, students, teachers, lawyers, students, teachers, lawyers, secretaries and many other Burkinabe reacted with shock and outrage. Strikes and riots became common in the struggle to bring justice to Norbert Zongo and other victims of blood crimes in which the perpetrators were neither tried in court nor punished. The strikers staged repeated protest marches and rallies and sometimes physical attacks on the homes and property of government and ruling party officials, and the wealthy business people allied with them. They formed

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<sup>6</sup> Hagberg, Sten (2002), "Enough is enough: ethnography of the struggle against impunity in Burkina Faso", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, London, Cambridge University Press, p.234.

an array of civil liberties and social rights, and began to unite into a vital new formation on Burkina's political scene. *Trop, C'est trop*: (Enough is enough) quickly became the dominant slogan of the civil insurgency. Many Burkinabe, not just intellectuals and political activists concluded that the murder of Zongo and his companions was too much. Throughout December and January, large number of demonstrations, some numbering tens of thousands rocked the country. In February, for the first time in the country's history, several hundred intellectuals, university professors, lawyers, doctors- staged a public protest to mark their social status. They marched from the university campus towards the presidential palace to submit to President Compaore, manifesto signed by 800 intellectuals. Citing a number of academics who had been killed by the security forces or arrested, fired or suspended for their political beliefs, the declaration called on Burkinabe to reject barbarism and end the culture of silence and compromise.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of January 1999, the investigation commission started work, with a strong representation of the political opposition and civil society organizations. Demonstration started again and some leaders were arrested for a few days, notably, Herman Yameogo (ADF/RDA), Halidou Ouedraogo (MDDHP) and Thibaud Nana (President of the Association Thomas Sankara). On 21 May, 1999, Blaise Compaore announced financial compensation for families of the deceased. He also announced the creation of a 'College of Wise Men' an advisory board of former heads of state together with religious and political authorities. This was formed to work in order to resolve the crisis. However, people continued to wait for reactions of President Compaore, who in late 1999 created two ad hoc commissions to revise the judicial and political systems. In April 2000, a demonstration led to serious clashes when the armed forces stopped people marching towards the presidency. In early October 2000 the government decided to invalidate the academic year 1999-2000 because of many strikes among students and pupils. Thus, it is argued that the 'Norbert Zongo Affaire' has led to the deepest crisis in the post-colonial Burkina Faso. It is important to note that since 1980s, people of the inner circle of the country's political power have committed 'blood crimes' without any punishment. Therefore, the struggle against impunity aims to render justice to those killed and their widows and orphans. Both

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<sup>7</sup> Harsch, Ernest (1999), "Trop, C'est trop: Civil Insurgence in Burkina Faso, 1998-1999", *Review of African Political Economy*, pp. 395-399.

Thomas Sankara and Norbert Zongo are two important political issues which became popular due to their contribution in the larger interest of the people of Burkina Faso. Today, Zongo has become a national hero, many Burkinabe link him with former President Thomas Sankara. Both Sankara and Zongo are sometime treated as 'saints' as neither was afraid and both always said what they thought. In October 1999, *L'Independent* (12.10.1999) republished an article written by Zongo on the 10<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Thomas Sankara. The introductory note states that both Sankara and Zongo were killed, because they dreamt about the same thing for this people of peasants, dignity and social justice. The silent point is that Sankara and Zongo dared to tell the truth and therefore had a lot of courage. In other words they made public what had long kept secret and silenced.<sup>8</sup>

## **1.2 Political Development and Democratization**

Despite the major political crisis for a long time, President Compaore maintained the balance to continue his administration with the help of his ruling party, the CDP, in Burkina Faso. In course of time political development took place in the country through the electoral process. It makes clear that the 2002 General election and 2005 Presidential election stood for the great signal of democratic development. This is an achievement for the future of the successful democracy in Burkina Faso.

The Presidential election of 2005 of Burkina Faso makes the path of political development in terms of political participation and representation. Though Burkinabe Government in 2004 announced for the increase of salary from 4.5 % to 8 % for the employees, made a long delay without any clear hint on the above issues, but it did not immediately come to the employees. Thus, ahead of the Presidential election, some 60,000 state employees observed a two-day strike by trade unions in February 2005 in support of demands for 25 % increase in salaries and pensions and reduction in the taxes of fully electricity and transport. In March 2005, it was announced that the first round of the presidential election would take place on 13 November. Local elections were postponed until 12, February 2006. In the following months a number of candidates for the presidency emerged, including three candidates representing a

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid, pp.400-403.

12-party opposition alliance known as Herman Yameogo of National Union for the Defense of Democracy (UNDD), Philip Ouedraogo of the Convergence for Social Democracy (CDS) and the Union of the Progressive forces (UFP) and Benewende Stainslas Sankara of Union for Rebirth / Sankarist Movement (UNIR-MS). The other candidates were Professor Ali Lankoande, Norbert Tiendrebeogo etc. In late June Compaore announced his intention to seek a further term as the candidate of the CDP and smaller parties also declared their support to Compaore. After this announcement, several opposition parties including the presidential candidates demanded a ruling by the constitutional as to whether the constitutional amendment approved in 2000, (which notably restricted Presidents more than two terms of Office) applied retroactively.

The constitutionality of Compaore's candidature for the Presidential election has been debated intensively in Burkina Faso in 2004-2005. The opposition and several independent legal scholars protested that his third bid for power would violate the constitution. In 2001, article 37 of constitution was revised to limit the Presidential mandate maximum of the two terms. CDP leaders however have argued that such a term limit could not be enforced retroactively. The constitutional court rejected the legal challenges filled by the opposition and confirmed the CDP's interpretation of the law. Most of court's 11 judges politically favor the CDP, with three of its members being former cabinet ministers.<sup>9</sup> On 2<sup>nd</sup> October the constitutional court approved nominations of 13 of the 16 presidential candidates. Following a ruling by the constitutional court later in the month confirms that Compaore was entitled to contest for the forthcoming election. After Compaore's confirmation for the Presidential candidates, Herman Yamaeogo of UNDD announced to his withdrawal (although his name remained on the ballot paper). Immediately, the UNDD called for a campaign of civil disobedience against a 'forceful step' towards the installation of an 'absolute republican monarch'. Nevertheless, Presidential election was held, as scheduled on 13<sup>th</sup>, November 2005, in peaceful conditions.<sup>10</sup>

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9..... (2006) "Burkina Faso, Centre for Democratic Development", [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 June, 2007 URL <http://www.democoalition.org/pds/6-Burkina-Faso.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> ..... (2006), *Europa Year Book*, pp.968-69.

**Table – 1**  
**2005 Burkina Faso Presidential Election Result**

Candidates	Nominating Parties	Votes	%
Blaise Compaore	Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP)	1,660,148	80.35
Benewnde Stanislas Sankara	Union for Rebirth/ Sankara Movement (RU-MS)	100,816	4.88
Laurent Bado	National Rebirth Party ( NPR)	53,743	2.60
Philippe Ouedraogo	Party for Democracy and Socialism ( PDS)	47,146	2.28
Ram Ouedraogo	Rally of the Ecologist of Burkina (REB)	42,061	2.04
Ali Lankoande	Party for Democracy and Progress/Socialist Party (PDP/SP)	35,949	1.74
Norbert Tiendrebeogo	Social Forces Front ( SFF)	33,353	1.61
Soumane Toure	African Independence Party ( PAI)	23,266	1.13
Gilbert Bouda	Burkinabe Party for Recasting (RBP)	21,658	1.05
Pargui Emile Pare	Socialist Alliance ( SA)	17,998	0.87
Hermann Yameogo	National Union for the Defense of Democracy ( UNDD)	15,685	0.76
Toube Clement Dakio	Union for Democracy and Development ( UDD)	7,741	0.37
Nayabtigungu Congo Kabore	Movement for Tolerance and Progress ( PTM)	6,706	0.32
Total (Turnout 57.7 %)		2,066,270	100.0
Invalid votes		196,629	-
Total votes		2,262,899	
Registered voters		3,924,328	

Source- 2005 Burkina Faso Presidential Election, [Online: Web] Accessed on 26 November, 2006  
URL [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkina\\_Faso\\_presidential\\_elections%2C\\_2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkina_Faso_presidential_elections%2C_2005).

The table shows that the result of the 2005 presidential election, Blaise Compaore obtained an overwhelming victory securing 80.35 % of the votes and became the elected President for the third time and head of the state for the fourth time in the political history of Burkina Faso as well as in the Francophone West Africa. The second placed candidate was Benewnde Stanisla Sankara, with just 4.88 %. Around 57.7 % of the registered electorate participated in the election, comparatively higher than ever before. After being re-elected President Compaore in



early January 2006 reappointed Paramanga Ernest Yonli as the Prime Minister, heading a new government that include several members of opposition parties, although many of the principal positions remained unchanged from outgoing administration.<sup>11</sup>

The President of Burkina Faso has strong executive power. Executive power is vested in him, who is the head of the state, and in the government which is appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. With effect from the November 2005 election, the President is directly elected, by the universal suffrage, for a five year term. It was previously seven years terms. He is eligible for re-election for the second term. Above all, the President of Burkina Faso is the real executive. According to article 36 of the constitution, as the head of the state, he takes care of the respect of the constitution. The functions of President of Burkina Faso are incompatible with the exercise of any other elective mandate at national level. He nominates the Prime Minister and puts an end to his functions. The President of Burkina Faso chairs the Council of Minister. After the consultation with Prime Minister and the President of National Assembly, the President can dissolve the National Assembly. He also communicates with the French National Assembly. The constitution of Burkina Faso stipulates that he is also the President of Higher Council of the Magistrate. He can nominate and remove high-ranked magistrates and can examine the performance of individual magistrates. He is also the chief of the armed forces, head of the Supreme Council of magistrates and has the power to decree of amnesty. Above all, the President is highly privileged and respected. He enjoys all kinds of power, such as executive, legislative, judiciary military etc. In fact, he is the guarantor of the constitution.<sup>12</sup>

## **2.0 Functioning of National Assembly**

Every political system is necessarily the end-product of a process. Thus, the political system of the Republic of Burkina Faso is the result of longstanding efforts marked by various constitutional and unconstitutional regimes. If the stormy past of the

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<sup>11</sup> Presidential election of Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 26 November, 2006 URL [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkina\\_Faso\\_presidential\\_elections%2C\\_2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkina_Faso_presidential_elections%2C_2005).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

political history of Burkina Faso has contributed to temper the passions of the actors, it should be noted that the constitutional text has largely helped close two parliamentary terms without, interruption. Two main inspirational references of 1991 Burkina Faso constitution are the French constitution of 1958 and the existing Benin constitution which includes some liberal provisions. Therefore, it can be argued that although there is much left to be done, at least the legislative part of the Burkinabe Parliamentary System is functioning well. The present constitution was approved in a national referendum on 2 June, 1991 and was formally adopted on 11 June. Gradually various provisions of the constitution were amended in January 1997, April 2000 and February 2002.

The Burkinabe constitution declares as the 'revolutionary, democratic, unitary and secular', which the Fourth Republic of Burkina Faso guarantees the collective and individual, political and social rights of Burkinabe citizens and delineates the power of executive, legislature and judiciary. According to the provision of the constitution, discrimination of any kind, particularly based on race, ethnicity, region, colour, sex, language, religion and caste is prohibited. Slavery and slavery-like practices are prohibited. As a secular state the Burkinabe constitution strongly declares freedom of belief, non-belief, conscience, religious opinion, worship, observance of customary practices etc are guaranteed by the constitution. With regard to the constitutional development, the political parties or grouping are established freely. However, pro-tribalism, regionalist, racist parties or political groupings are not authorized in any part of the country. According to article 15 of the constitution, the right to property is guaranteed. The constitution also provides various provisions in the case of education, social security, work, housing, health, material and child protection which are protected based on the constitutional development.<sup>13</sup>

The constitution of 1991 formally founded a semi-presidential regime with a Prime Minister responsible before the National Assembly which could be dissolved by the President of the Republic. In reality, however, the system is a presidential one, due to the existence of a dominant party and in so far as the president can dismiss the Prime Minister at will. Executive power is in the hands of the president of Burkina

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<sup>13</sup> Presidency of Burkina Faso: Constitution of Burkina Faso (January, 1997), [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 January, 2007 URL <http://www.presidence.bf/constitution.php%3>.

Faso, elected by direct universal suffrage for 5 years and eligible for re-election. Based on the constitution of 1991, Burkina Faso had the bi-cameral legislature such as the National Assembly and the House of Representative. But in 2002, the Burkinabe parliament abolished the second chamber, the House of Representatives. Thus, currently, Burkina Faso has the unicameral legislature known as 'National Assembly' whose members are called the deputies. The duration of the legislature is 5 years and the deputies are elected by direct, equal and secret vote. The election is held in every 5 years for the 111-member National Assembly based on the proportional representation. The speaker of the Assembly elected for duration of the legislature. He is the President of the National Assembly as well as the Burkinabe parliament. He is responsible for the management of the parliament (Lorose 2001).

**Table – 2**  
**Burkina Faso 1992 Legislative Election**

Political Parties	Number of Seats	(Percentage)
Popular Front (FP)	84	78.50
ODP/MT	78	72.89
PAI	2	1.86
PSB	1	0.93
MDP	1	0.93
MDS	1	0.93
USD	1	0.93
Opposition Parties	23	21.49
CNPP/PSD	12	11.21
RDA	6	5.60
ADF	4	3.73
USDI	1	0.93

Source: Political Handbook of the World 1995-96, Binghamton, NY: CSA Publication, 1996, [Online: Web] Accessed on 23 June, 2007 URL <http://www.binghamton.edu/cdp/era/elections/bfo92par.html>.

Burkina Faso conducted the first General Election on 24 May, 1992, in which 27 registered political parties contested the election. However, the 1992 legislative elections emphasize the disproportionality of the electoral system. The ODP-MT scored a large victory, taking an absolute majority, total of 78 seats with only 48 % of the vote while the CNPP-PSD (National Convention of Progressive Patriots – Social

Democratic Party) won 12 % of the seats with 12 % of the vote and UDV-RDA almost 5 % of the seats with 11.5 % of vote. The 107-member National Assembly was soon dominated by the President Compaore Party. On 16 June the president appointed Mr. Youssouf OUEDRAOGO (ODP-MT) as the Prime Minister. In all, Ouedraogo became the first Prime Minister since the country introduced multiparty democracy in 1991.

**Table – 3**  
**Burkina Faso 1997 Legislative Election**

Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage
<b>Ruling Party</b>		
CDP	97	90.65
<b>Opposition Parties</b>		
PDP	6	5.6
RDA	2	1.86
ADF	2	1.86
Others	-	-
Total Seats	107	100

Source: Political Handbook of the World 1999 Binghamton, NY: CSA Publication, 1999, [Online: Web] Accessed on 23 June, 2007 URL <http://www.binghamton.edu/cdp/era/elections/bfo92par.html>.

Ahead of parliamentary election, some remarkable political changes existed in Burkina Faso in 1997 through the constitutional amendment. The new electoral codes were approved by the ADP (the parliament) in January 1997 on the basis of constitutional amendment. Some of these were: the removal of restriction on the renewal of the presidential mandate, an increase in the number of parliamentary seats to 111. The number of administrative provinces was also increased from 30 to 45. The second legislative election for the National Assembly took place on 11th May, 1997. Despite of the constitutional amendment on election the CDP, which is an ally of ODP/MT, won an overwhelming majority of seats. Among the opposition parties in Burkina Faso some of them boycotted the election and others were fragmented and divided on the basis of various conflict and issues. In fact, it requires a unity and mutual understanding among the opposition to challenge the monopolization of the ruling party. By and large the sizeable representation of the opposition parties could be the sign of multi-party democracy and the political transformation for the larger interest of the Burkinabe People.

The May 2002 Parliamentary elections of Burkina Faso marked an end of an era as they ended the dominance of the ruling party and saw the emergence of a strong parliamentary opposition. The ruling party, which has monopolized political power since the country initiated its transition in 1991, had to face numerous debates about their decline in the electoral battle. In fact, the unexpected gains were made by the opposition in the parliamentary elections that constitute a transformation of Burkina's political landscape. In reality elections are important juncture in a nation's political development which creates the path to advance democratization in the country.

The interesting thing is that for the first time since the restoration of democracy in 1991, the parliamentary opposition was able to represent a sizeable group. Indeed, successive multiparty elections of the previous regime failed to produce a legitimate working of parliamentary and other institutions rather made a capable of holding the executive to account for the misuse of power and abuse of authority. Thus, improvements in the electoral system denote a gradual strengthening of the mechanism of 'vertical accountability'. The 2002 election also demonstrate that technical improvements in the electoral system can have systematic effects on the incentives shaping the political process and quality of democratic representation.<sup>14</sup>

Many challenges remain to consolidate democratic governance and anchor the rule of law in Burkina Faso. In particular, the fight against impunity, the containment of the role of the military and strengthening of the judiciary and other institution of accountability are important tasks. The system remains one in which the ruling party is by far, the largest party with continued and unfettered power while the opposition remains fragmented and divided, generally providing limited oversight of the executive for an alternation in power. Nevertheless, the 2002 legislative election mark an important qualitative improvement in the democratization process as it eroded the dominance of the ruling party and witnessed the emergence of a sizeable parliamentary opposition.

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<sup>14</sup> Santiso, Carlos and Loada Augustin ( 2003) "Explaining the unexpected: electoral reform and democratic governance in Burkina Faso", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, London, Cambridge University Press, p.395-398

The political development of Burkina Faso is the outcome of various factors. Burkinabe's struggle for democratic consolidation was made possible to improve the quality of governance and nature of regime. With the parliamentary elections of 2002, the country has successfully organized seven electoral consultations in eleven years of formally democratic rule. The democratic struggle originated from a gradual opening of the military regime of Blaise Compaore who captured power by overthrowing his predecessor Captain Thomas Sankara. While allowing opposition political parties to exist and a vibrant civil society to develop, the president has largely controlled the liberalization process. Since the beginning, the electoral process lacked the credibility as the ruling party, initially the ODP-MT after 1996; the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) has dominated the political system and captured most level of power. The combination a highly centralized presidential system and monopoly of the ruling party has allowed autocratic modes of government to persist. Impunity and weakness of the rule of law have been constant features in the last decade of formally democratic rule.

Opposition leaders are regularly arrested and put into the custody. Meanwhile, the authoritarian features of the regime surfaced in the wake of 'Zongo Affair'. In short, it has revealed and shaken the authoritarian roots of Compaore's regime. As the crisis continued in a violent manner, the opposition movement radicalized its demands, denouncing the lack of political accountability and deficiencies of the judicial system and calling on the president to resign to allow for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Civil society organizations and opposition political parties joined their hands and continued their protest and demonstration for a swift resolution of the Zongo case and an end to impunity.<sup>15</sup>

During Zongo crisis the motives of the largest people of Burkina Faso was to change the regime in order to establish the social justice and end of 'crimes, hegemony, and impunity. Indeed, the opposition political parties and civil society groups played a major role to put pressure on Compaore's regime as well as opened the path of democratic struggle. In short, the 'Zongo Affair' was made political issue for the opposition and the larger section of Burkinabe. In February and March 2001,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 398-400.

twenty-six political parties gathered to discuss the reforms required to strengthen governance including the ruling coalition, the moderate opposition and several parties from the radical opposition. Even though the Burkinabe judiciary is under the control of ruling executive and the president, in the course of time the judicial process has been marked by recurrent political interference. Finally, in early February 2001, Marcel Kafando, found guilty in David Ouedraogo murder case. He was also indicated for murder in the Zongo case.

However, the Compaore government and his ruling party CDP were targeted for full responsible for the murder of Zongo and such other personalities in the country. Unlike this, partly due to Zongo Affair and its aftermath Compaore's standing abroad significantly deteriorated. Over the year Compaore had built an image of himself a democratic and regional statesman, but in the midst of the country's political crisis, his leadership ability and personality got shocked. He was put under pressure to vacate the office. However, he continued his official visit to foreign countries. During 1998 and 1999 Burkina Faso assumed the chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Compaore maintained his capacity to chair it. However, during once such a visit to Europe in April 1999, he was harshly criticized by the press and the parliament in Denmark. Similarly during his visit to Belgium he was threatened by judicial injunctions from several human rights groups. But his official visit to France in October 2001 was more cordial. Nevertheless, the international repercussions of the Zongo crisis became a major threat to his regime's survival. (Loada and Santiso 2003: 1-3).

In Burkina Faso, after a decade of successive electoral contests, the ruling party saw its legislative majority shrink dramatically in the 2002 parliamentary elections. The opposition made significant gains, increasing its share of seats as well as the percentage of vote. In fact, they represent a sign of the strength of the democratization process, because the one-party dominance ended once in the political history of Burkina Faso.

**Table – 4**  
**Result of 2002 Parliamentary Election**

Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Seats
Ruling party - CDP	57	51.35
Opposition Parties	-	-
ADF/RDA	17	15.32
PDP/PS	10	9.01
CFD	5	4.50
PAI	5	4.50
PAREN	4	3.60
PDS	3	2.70
ENIR/MS	3	2.70
CNDP	2	1.80
CPS	2	1.80
APL	1	0.90
FPC	1	0.90
UDPI	1	0.90
Others	0	0
Total	111	100

Source: Santiso, Carlos and Loada Augustin (2003) "Explaining the unexpected: electoral reform and democratic governance in Burkina Faso", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(3), London, Cambridge University Press

**Table – 5**  
**Performance of Ruling Party and Opposition in Burkina Faso in historical perspective (1992-2002)**

	1992		1997		2002	
	<i>Number of seats</i>	<i>Percentage of seats</i>	<i>Number of seats</i>	<i>Percentage of seats</i>	<i>Number of seats</i>	<i>Percentage of seats</i>
Ruling Party	78	73	101	91	57	51
Opposition	29	27	10	9	54	49
Total	107	100 %	111	100 %	111	100 %

Source: Santiso, Carlos and Loada Augustin (2003) "Explaining the unexpected: electoral reform and democratic governance in Burkina Faso". *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(3), London, Cambridge University Press



The results of the 2002 parliamentary elections reflect several positive trends. Firstly, the degree of political competitiveness substantially increased, leading to a more diverse assembly. The legislature could integrate a broader range of political parties, as 13 parties emerged to have parliamentary representation, compared to just four in 1997 legislative elections. The 3,540 candidates who fought for 111 parliamentary seats came from 13 political parties, the largest number of political groupings to participate in an election. Under the chairmanship of Herman Yameogo (ADF/RDA) consolidated its position and became the main opposition party with 17 seats. The Party for Democracy and Progress / Socialist Party (PDP/SP), historically main opposition party and headed by Josep Ki-Zerbo won 10 seats, an increase from the six it had previously. The remaining 27 seats went to 10 other smaller parties. Secondly, in this elections voter turnout was relatively high, reaching almost 65 % of registered voters. According to Table- 5, the gains of the opposition are comparatively higher than the previous elections. In 1992 the opposition won 27 % of seats with 52 % of the vote. Similarly, in 1997 it could obtain a mere 9 % of the seats with almost 32 % of the votes. In 2002, with slightly over 49 % of the votes, the ruling CDP won over 51 % of the seats, while with over 50 % of the vote, the opposition won 48 % of the seats. Finally, it is significant to note that the result also reflects a significant decrease in support enjoyed by the ruling party in terms of numerical votes. Nevertheless, the 2002 parliamentary elections strengthened democracy in a semi-authoritarian context.<sup>16</sup>

The results of 2002 parliamentary elections are extraordinary as they were unexpected. Although broader factors contributed to the decline of the ruling party in the context of socio-political crisis of Burkina Faso, since 1998 several technical electoral reforms have also played a major role. These include in particular the reform of the electoral system, the introduction of ballot and strengthening of the independent of the Election Commission. Although the 2002 election eroded the dominance of the ruling party and saw the emergence of a legitimate parliamentary opposition, but in the recent legislative election held in May 2007, the ruling CDP captured an absolute majority of the seats.

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<sup>16</sup> Santiso, Carlos and Loada Augustin (2003) "Explaining the unexpected: electoral reform and democratic governance in Burkina Faso", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, London, Cambridge University Press, p.401-408.

**Table – 6**  
**2007 Burkina Faso Parliamentary Election,**

Political Parties	Seats	Percentage	+/-
CDP	73	65.76	+16
FDA/RDA	14	12.61	-3
UR	5	4.5	+5
UR/SM	4	3.6	+1
CDFB	3	2.7	+3
UPS	2	1.8	+2
PDP	2	1.8	-8
PDB	2	1.8	+2
PDS	2	1.8	+/-0
PRN	1	0.9	-3
PAI	1	0.9	-4
RCP	1	0.9	+1
DU/SP	1	0.9	+1
Total (turnout 56.4 %)	111	100	-

Source: Burkina Faso 2007 Parliamentary election, [Online: Web] Accessed on 8 June, 2007 URL [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkinabe\\_parliamentary\\_election%2C\\_2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkinabe_parliamentary_election%2C_2007).

From the 2007 parliamentary election it can be observed that Compaore's ruling party, CDP won a landslide victory with 73 seats, an absolute majority in the National Assembly. The remaining 28 seats were divided among 12 opposition parties. Winning 14 seats, the FDA/RDA became the main opposition parties in the National Assembly. Compared to the 2002 parliamentary election, the opposition lost the representation as well as seats. There are various factors which show the gain for the party as well as loss for the opposition. After winning the sizeable seats in the previous parliamentary election, the opposition parties remained silence. Firstly the Burkinabe opposition are divided and fragmented on the basis of various issues. Secondly, in 2002 parliamentary election, most of the opposition parties and civil society groups protested, united on the Zongo Affair, which helped them positively to gain the seats in the Assembly. However, between the gap periods, the ruling party could not make any socio-political issue as a major problem and remained silence. They also failed to understand the logic of the ruling party and particularly Compaore's government. The rate of protest, strike, and demonstration were relatively reduced against the monopolization and dominance of the ruling party as

well as the government. They also became overconfident in winning more seats comparatively higher than the 2002 parliamentary election. In addition this, President Compaore victory for the third term in 2005 presidential election helped his ruling party for making a political strategy to win the parliamentary election. In fact, the opposition had a strong unity in the previous election that provided their success. But in the 2007 election their commitment was different and they were fragmented. The opposition neither offered a clear strategy nor a credible alternative for the presidential as well as parliamentary elections. All this favoured to the ruling party for their landslide victory. They could neither profit from the huge dissatisfaction among the Burkinabe population, which suffer from poverty, poor public service and unemployment, nor manage to use its strong position in the legislature to further gain political ground. Instead, internal struggles and personalized agenda of opposition leaders created an unattractive image of a weak and divided opposition, which looked incapable of running the country. However, there is the ray of hope to open the way for an alternation in power in near future. Above all, the Burkinabe democratization process will be strengthened, when the political parties, particularly the opposition will work united along with the civil society groups. The 2002 legislative election was a clear signal for the representative democracy which allowed the political scope the success of democracy.<sup>17</sup>

Women in Burkina Faso constitute more than half of the population (52 %), but they are largely excluded from decision making position. Democracy can not be successful without the empowerment of women. In the case of Burkina Faso, women are under-represented in the power structure. Article 12 of the 1991 constitution signifies that 'all Burkinabe, without distinction of any kind, have the right to participate in the management of the affairs of government and society'. Accordingly, the Burkinabe women have the right to vote and to seek elected into various offices, but their political participation is still limited. From the historical perspective it shows that women won the right to universal suffrage in 1956. Nonetheless, women's access to the legislature has been slow in coming and has continued to limited after independence. Just one woman was elected in 1977, 4 were elected in 1992 (3.7 %),

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<sup>17</sup> ..... (2007), Burkinabe Parliamentary election, [Online: Web] Accessed on 8 June, 2007 URL <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burkinabe-parliamentary-election.2C-2007>.

10 in 1997 (9.0 %) and 11 in 2002 (9.9 %). Even though their representation in the parliament comparatively growing but very limited. Some of the important factors which continue to hinder women's access to the National Assembly are the practices of the political parties, illiteracy and poverty. Political parties and electoral system are still major obstacles to broaden women's participation in the political life and government of Burkina Faso. The voters cast their ballots for parties and not for individual candidates. The political parties through their decision as to the composition of their lists have the power to design the candidate who can win in the legislative election. Thus, most of the time, women are placed towards the end of the list and therefore have practically no chance of being elected. Moreover, traditionally, women leave their families when they are married. This also limits their chance of running for office in their province of origin. Similarly, education and poverty also affects women access to the National Assembly. In order to overcome certain obstacles to women's political participation, changes must be strengthened by the role of state, political parties and civil society organization. Women's political participation is one of the important issue should be focused and included among the changes brought about in the process of democratization under way in Burkina Faso.<sup>18</sup>

### **3.0 Democracy and Decentralization**

The primary challenge in this regard is to exercise democracy locally while maintaining a responsible and efficient central power capable of retaining its role and functions in development. Generally, democratization must follow local democracy to take root by encouraging the population to take charge of its basic needs (participatory development) and by developing in locally elected official the ethics of responsibility and a sense of the common good.

Democratization in Burkina Faso is governed both by the constitution and programme of structural and institutional adjustment of the economy and the state. In June 1993, the constitutional laws redefined the territorial organization of Burkina

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<sup>18</sup> Tiendrebeogo-Kaboret, Alice ( 2002), "Burkina Faso: Obstacles to Women's Participation in the Legislature". [Online: Web] Accessed on [Online: Web] Accessed on 6 July, 2007 URL <http://www.idea.int/publications/wip/upload/CS-Bukina-Kaboret.pdf>

Faso. They created local authorities provinces and commune. Article 3 of the Burkinabe constitution declares, political and administrative decentralization is to go hand in hand with local management of services in order to give more say to local governments in the management of those services. Similarly, article 6 defines local communities as province and commune. The commune can be qualified as urban commune or rural commune, besides these are other types of administrative entities: province, department, and village. In November 1993, the government set up the National Decentralization Commission (CND) to draw up and implement a consistent policy for administrative decentralization. The municipal elections were held in 1995, 2000 and 2006 respectively. In 1996, 15 new provinces were created bringing the total number to 45. The CND also established two technical instruments to manage the decentralization and support it through the donors (Canada, Denmark, Netherland and Switzerland) and consolidating with the objective of creating 500 communes by 2010. These two institutions are the Community Management and Development Support Department (SAGECOM) and Commune Start Up-Fund (FODECOM). The institutional development at the local level of Burkina Faso is the means of strengthening grassroots democracy.<sup>19</sup>

The pragmatism and progressive nature of the approach taken towards decentralization in Burkina Faso are the matter of concern. So far decentralization has affected only 18 % of the population particularly from the urban areas. So there is a need to extend the process to rural areas. In 2000, the CND introduced the development policy on the decentralized rural development based on a number of principles; such as full empowerment of grassroots communities, broadening the scope of investment fund, refocusing the role of the state and involving private operators and civil society etc. Along with this, the government adopted a National Programme for Decentralized Rural Development (PNDRD) as an attempt to capitalize on participatory rural development. This programme is supported by several development partners including the World Bank and UNDP. According to this programme, the grassroots development process should enable local people, particularly the disadvantaged to participate more directly in managing local affairs.

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<sup>19</sup> Nordstrom, Lennart (May, 2004), "Burkina Faso: A study of political, social and economic structures and power relationship", SIDA, Division for Democratic Governance, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December, 2007 URL <http://www.sida.se/publications>.

With regard to 1998 law, the territory of Burkina Faso was organized to provide members of local communities with the right to information about the management of local affairs. However, very few people are aware of this right to information about the management of their local affairs. Nevertheless, the decentralization process has well progressed in providing developmental assistance and support by the state as well as the donors.<sup>20</sup>

Since the colonial era, the traditional authorities have often played a supporting role to government and open the space for decentralization. Decentralization has generally been promoted for reformist objective, aiming to create more transparency, accountability and efficiency in the management of local affairs. Accordingly, decentralization is seen as a means in the post-colonial state. A law on new territorial reorganization was issued in the context of political decentralization in 1996. It reshuffled the country's 30 provinces into 45. It was particularly in western and south-western Burkina that larger provinces were divided.

However, the new division was much debated and drawing of boundaries emerged as key issue. Nevertheless, the reshuffling of provincial boundaries did indeed play a significant role in the development of the Benekadi Hunter's Association in Western Burkina Faso, because it had defined itself as a provincial association. It has been fighting to get official, local recognition as provincial one. However, the important thing is that political administrative decentralization and traditional leadership carve out a public space for a politics of belongings based on a supraethnic and regionalist collective identification. Above all, the segmentation of socio-political structure is not merely caused by the divide-and rule governance initiated by post-colonial state, but results from the inter play of the logistics of the post-colonial state with those of local political process.<sup>21</sup>(Hagberg 2004: 57-67).

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Hagberg, Sten (2004), "Political Decentralization and Traditional Leadership in the Benkadi Hunters' Association in Western Burkina Faso", *Africa Today*, pp. 57-67.

#### 4.0 Judicial system

The institutional separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches is guaranteed in Burkina Faso's constitution, but limited significantly in practical terms. The president's board powers and the continued majority of the ruling party have guaranteed the executive a legally secured monopoly on power. Parliament's authority and involvement in the political decision-making is inefficient and limited significantly, which was organized and run pursuant to the 1991 constitution and the organizational instruments, is based on democratic principles and seeks to guarantee collective and individual freedom and civil, political, economic, social cultural and other rights for all inhabitants of Burkina Faso. The constitution provides for an independent judiciary (Art.129) and the President is the guarantor of the independence of the judiciary (Art.131). Article 127 of the 1991 constitution provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court, the highest court in the law comprising four divisions, including the division, responsible for monitoring the legality of administrative acts affecting individuals: the career of state agents and officials, disciplinary measures, administrative acts relating to real estate etc. (State of Burkina Faso, United Nations 1997: 3-4).

However, there is a development of judicial system in 2000 particularly during the phase of democratic process in Burkina Faso. According to the constitutional amendments approved by National Assembly in April 2000, the constitution established the court system in four permanent chambers: Court of Cassation (*Cour de Cassation*), The Council of State (*Conseil d'etat*), The Audit Court (*Courdes Comptes*) and Lawyer Court and Tribunals (*Courts et less trubunaux*) all of which commenced operations in December. Judges are accountable to a Higher Council, under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Burkina Faso. The Supreme Court of Appeal or the Court of Cassation is the high jurisdiction of the judiciary system. The Council of state is the high jurisdiction for administrative matter (public administration) and the Audit Court is the high jurisdiction audit and monitoring of Public Finance. Judicial power was placed in the hands of the judges. But the judges are accountable to a Higher Council, under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Burkina Faso. It is because the High Council of the

judiciary which is to ensure the independence of the judges is presided over by the head of the Republic.<sup>22</sup>

There are also numerous shortcomings in the judicial branch. The judiciary is formally independent and institutionally distinct, but dominated and politicized in practice by the executive branch. Thus, Burkinabe judicial system suffers from deeply rooted corruption resulting from inefficiency, political pressure, poor equipment and lack of education. In fact, the deficient judicial system is Burkinabe's main impediment to strengthening democracy. Above all, it is a lack of independence and efficiency which disables the judiciary from translating the concept of the rule of law into public policy. First of all, the constitutionally guaranteed independence of the judiciary is constrained by the selection procedure of its members. The executive has extensive appointment powers via the Minister of Justice. The minister presides over the Council of the judiciary, which proposes judges before their nomination by the Minister of Justice. The career of a magistrate is dependent on a political decision along the lines of political color than on legal qualifications.

Political pressure on judges is high, and in practically, it is the executive who decides which cases are dealt with and which are fused. This explains the hundreds of unresolved cases on political and economic crimes involving the Burkinabe.<sup>23</sup> Burkinabe judicial system also suffers from the technical grounds. The institution is affected by considerable inefficiency. It may take months to get a simple certificate and even up to four years to obtain the required documentation to executive a verdict. Lack of motivation among jurists, poor knowledge about the basic rules, as well as insufficient human resources in the justice sector and inadequate material are reasons for this sluggishness. In short, all these conditions strongly favor corruption. The impunity does not apply to delinquents outside the judicial sector. The dominance of impunity, as consequence, creates frustration among citizens who have been deprived of their right to justice. Young judges are united to change the current situation. Provided with a better education which is said to have improved and to have been

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<sup>22</sup> ..... (2004) Republic of Burkina Faso, Country Profile, Public Administration, DPADM and DESA, United Nation, [Online: Web] Accessed on 25 November, 2006 URL <http://www.unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN023252.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> ..... (2006), Burkina Faso, [Online: Web] Accessed on 15 June, 2007 URL [www.democoalition.org/pdf/6-Burkina-Faso.pdf](http://www.democoalition.org/pdf/6-Burkina-Faso.pdf).



largely free of political influence for the past few years and a spirit of democratic transition which has grown over the years, a generational change among lawyers and judges provides hope for the system's improvement. After all, Burkina Faso continues to experience the development of judicial system on the way toward democratization process.

## **5.0 The Role of Civil Society in Strengthening Democratization**

A healthy democracy requires information about government actions, and effects of their policies from independent sources that are accessible to the public. The strengthening of democracy must be considered from the point of view of balance between the state and civil society, each occupying its own sphere of competence and managing its own domain in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance. Democratization takes place in two phases: first transition to democracy and second, democratic consolidation. Civil society may play a crucial role for successful transition as well as for democratic consolidation. From military to civilian rule in Burkina Faso, civil society organization, particularly, the trade unions were often active in the process of putting an end to the military rule in inaugurating democracy. The most significant pressures for democratic reform come from civil society groups particularly; trade unions, labour unions, human rights movements, media, student movement and eventually political parties played a key role in fighting against the post-colonial military rule in Burkina Faso. The socio-political crisis of 1987 and 1998 on the issue of the assassination of Captain Thomas Sankara and Norbert Zongo were the tragic period when the political parties as well as the civil society groups challenged together against the monopoly administration of Compaore government.

The process of democratization that has been ongoing in Burkina Faso since 1991 has encouraged the emergence and expression of a civil society. Civil society organizations and in particular, human rights associations, unions, media and NGOs promoting democracy and good governance, assist the democratic process, by playing a role of counterbalancing the authoritarian drift of the state and ruling party, and of providing information, training and education on democratic principles and values. Some of the most politically influential organizations and civil society groups have been organized in the movement against impunity set up following the murder of

journalist Norbert Zongo and played a very important role in the Burkinian democratization process. There have been protests against impunity, the shortcoming of justice system and the superficial nature of Burkinabe democracy. This protest movement is partly responsible for the growing political and institutional reforms that have enabled the country to make some democratic progress. Burkinian civil society includes thousands of associations and organizations of dozen different types: unions, religious organizations, human rights organizations, pressure groups, media, NGOs, student movement, legal associations etc. However, of these, historically the Trade Unions, Human Rights Movement and Media are some of the key components who had been playing significant role for the transition to democracy in Burkina Faso.<sup>24</sup>

### **5.1 Trade Unions**

There have always been several unions in post-colonial Burkina Faso and the trade unions have, historically, played an important role. They have been spearheads of civil society and have represented a real political counter-weight to make power more balanced. In fact, several governments in the course of the first three Republic in Burkina Faso fell at their hands. The unions play an ambivalent role in the democratization process. They are opposed to dictatorships and government restrictions on public freedom ever since independence. Consequently, the trade unions were the instigators of the popular uprisings of 3 January 1966 against the authoritarian regime of Maurice Yameogo of the First Republic, the strikes in 1975 that prevented General Lamizana from implementing his plan to set up one party state in Burkina Faso, workers' resistance against the revolutionary regimes of the mid-1980s, opposition to the abusive arbitrary action of various regimes and so on. The CGT-B (Confederation General for Burkina)/ (*Confederation General du Travail du Burkina*), which is country's largest union and the leader of the radical tendency. It is constantly denouncing corruption, violations of human rights and public liberties, impunity, assassinations, hegemony of the party in power, shortcoming of the government etc. It can also be seen that the trade unions have destabilized constitutional regimes, some of which were more democratic than others; and

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<sup>24</sup> Nordstrom, Lennart (May, 2004), "Burkina Faso: A study of political, social and economic structures and power relationship", SIDA, Division for Democratic Governance, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December, 2007 URL <http://www.sida.se/publications>.

prevented the adoption of reforms that were often necessary. The fact is that the trade union movement in Burkina Faso is extremely political. The Burkina trade union movement is currently dominated by radical wing, which claims to have its roots revolutionary and even Marxist-Leninist wing opposes the economic liberalization of the country. Nevertheless, the trade union is one of important instruments in consolidating democratization in the country.<sup>25</sup>

## **5.2 Human Rights Movement**

The Government's human rights records remained poor although there were some improvements in a few areas; serious problems remained in the most part of the country. The continued dominance of President Compaore and his ruling party limited citizen's right to change their government Security forces were responsible for some killings. They continued to torture and abuse detainees. However, there are fewer such cases than the previous regimes, particularly in the military as well as the early regimes of the Compaore government. In fact, the Burkinabe constitution guarantees civil and political rights in their entirety, in many instances a gap exists between the law and its application. The general culture of impunity among members of ruling elites and security forces still remain a huge problem.

The human rights movements are playing a leading role for the restoration of justice and reduction culture of impunity. There are a number of human rights protection and promotion organization that are working to promote, protect and defend human rights in Burkina Faso. These organizations repeatedly denounce the impunity, enjoyed by the regime's dignitaries, police torture, disappearances and extra-judiciary and execution of ex-members of the presidential guard. On 13 December, 1998, Norbert Zongo, the chief editor of the weekly *L'Independent*, was assassinated while carrying out an investigation into murder in the entourage of brother of the president Compaore since then, the country has been shaken by protest campaigns and occasions of violations of human rights. Human rights groups generally operated without government restrictions. Country's most important human

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<sup>25</sup> Abdourhamne, Mr. Boubacar Issa (2006), "Burkina Faso: Institutional Situation", [Online: Web] Accessed on 6 July, 2007 URL <http://www.etat.sciencespobordeaux.fr/-anglais/institutionnel/burkina.html>.

rights group the Burkina Faso Movement of Human and Peoples (MBDHP) was affiliated with the Inter-African Human Rights Union. This is one of the leading organizations in the civil society of the country which is playing important role in the situation in terms of human rights.<sup>26</sup>

### 5.3 Media

If civil society in Burkina Faso wants to effectively safeguard the people's right and interest against the government, it needs to acquire information and awareness of the working of government and state apparatus. In this regard, media has important role which can contribute to the strengthening of civil society. Freedom of press is largely guaranteed, state-operated media outlets have a significant pro-government bias, but a multitude of private media operate with little governmental interference and are often highly critical of the government and the authorities. Private radio stations and press have been popular in Burkina Faso since the beginning of democratic process. *L'Independent*, a private weekly founded by Chief editor Norbert Zongo has been working as an important newspaper for bringing out the authentic information for the larger section of Burkinabe. However, it became critical by the ruling regime and finally Norbert Zongo was assassinated along with his brother and a driver in 1998. This shows that the state has firm control over media. Nevertheless, there is a degree of liberty of Press. The state has important role to extend the support for the improvement of media. Above all, the press and other media are taking important steps in field of giving information, raising awareness, training and educating the people and helping for the progress of democratization in Burkina Faso.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

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**Chapter IV**  
**Globalization and its Impact on**  
**Continuity of Democratization**  
**Process**

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## **CHAPTER-4 GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON CONTINUITY OF DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS**

This chapter intends to deal with the relation between globalization and democratization, the impact of globalization on African democratization and the role of regional organization. It attempts to analyze Burkina's economic environment and its performance with the help of international institutions particularly IMF and World Bank and the role of external power on Burkina's democratic struggle.

Globalization refers to the process of intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across the international boundaries. Globalization is a process which is broadening and deepening linkages of national economies into worldwide markets for goods and services. The integration of African economy into the capitalist economy is a part of the globalizing tendencies of capitalism. Globalization highlights the deepening as well as broadening of political process. In the sense that local, national and global events constantly interact. It often goes hand in hand with localization, regionalization and multiculturalism.

There are distinctive forms of globalization such as economic, cultural and political. In the economic field, globalization is reflected in the idea that no national economy is now an island. All economies have to, to a greater or lesser extent, be absorbed into an interlocking global economy. One of the key implications of economic globalization is to reduce the capacity of national governments to manage their economies and in particular to resist their restructuring along the free market lines. In the case of culture, it is a process whereby information commodities and images have been produced in one part of the world into a global flow that reaches the nations, regions and individuals. Cultural globalization is also associated by so-called information revolution, the spread of satellite communication, network, information technology, global media corporations etc.

The most significant is the political globalizations those evident in growing international organizations. These organizations are transnational as they exercise jurisdiction not with a single state, but with international areas comprising several

states. Most such organization has emerged in the post-1945 period. For example, this includes the United Nations, NATO, European Union, World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organization and Organization for Economic and Development (OECD). In fact, the IMF and World Bank are the instruments of globalization which are interconnected with all over the world. Globalization also linked with the global civil society, based on the activities of transnational cooperation, non-government organization (NGOs) and international pressure groups.

### **1.0 Globalization and Democratization**

The 1990s wave of democratization has taken place in a context of particular global formation –the economic hegemony of advanced capitalism. The world economy, its media consortia, its technological and scientific discoveries and novelties are grounded in market mechanism and reproduced them, Encouragement or pressure towards democratization emanates from the western industrialism and nations and global institutions based in these countries. There is surely, an attempt by the government and international agencies not only to make democracy safe for capitalism but also to ensure that a political framework exists in virtually all parts of the globe that allows the free market and capitalism.

It shows that particularly the poor democracies are extremely vulnerable to bad economic performance. In fact, democratization provides a real opportunity to overcome the economic crisis. Thus, the emergence of a more participatory and competitive politics holds the possibility of improved management of the economy.<sup>1</sup> Democratic governance has emerged as a crucial element on the foreign policy agenda of the major power in North America and Western Europe. These major powers use their considerable influence in international economic organization so as to ensure that these institutions play a dominant role in the expansion and continuation of democratization in the most part of Africa.

With the exception of a few African countries such as Cote d' Ivoire and Ghana with cocoa, Libya and Nigeria with oil, and Botswana with diamonds, most

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<sup>1</sup> Richard, Joseph (1999), 'State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa', London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.95.

African economies are too small to have a noticeable impact on the world economy. Today world economy and overall globalization trend have a significant impact on African economies. On the basis of membership in international institutions and organization, it is shown that today, all African countries are members of the World Bank and the IMF. They also belong to at least one regional economic group. In addition, they are also active in trying to attract multinational corporations. Thus, due to the globalization process African countries are globally interconnected and interact with various international organization and major powers.<sup>2</sup>

## **2.0 Globalization and Africa**

Integration of African economy into capitalist economy is the significant part of the globalization process. In fact, the emergence and role IMF and World Bank has the important role before the globalization process in Africa. Since the primary goal of globalization is the issue of global capital. This has been done through policies such as privatization and deregulation in respect of liberalization which is a process of removing artificial restriction on production, exchange or use of goods and services and factors of production. There has been a liberalization of international trade and factor movement which are necessary condition for firms to globalization. It has deepened the integration of African countries into the global system of production and finance by encouraging capital inflows and bringing foreign ownership of formerly public owned enterprises<sup>3</sup> African governments have made considerable strides in opening the economies to world trade. Most of the African countries have moved ahead with trade and exchange liberalization, eliminating multiple exchange rates and non -tariff barriers and also lowering the degree of the tariff protection. Throughout the continent government intervention in economic activity is on the wane. Administrative price control is being reduced and agricultural marketing has been widely liberalized. The process of restructuring and privatizing state enterprises has been under way for sometime in the most countries. The fiscal reform is gaining ground. African countries are taking firms steps to rationalize their tax systems to reduce exemptions and to enhance administrative efficiency.

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<sup>2</sup> Nnadozie, Emmanuel (2003), *African Economic Development*. USA, Academic Press, p.500.

<sup>3</sup> Globalization and Africa, [Online: Web] Accessed on 13 May, 2005 URL [http://www.multiworld.org/m\\_iversity/articles/globaf.htm](http://www.multiworld.org/m_iversity/articles/globaf.htm).



So far as donors are concerned, Britain and France have major role in West Africa. Today West African countries depend largely on external aid to manage their budget. When the structural adjustment programme of IMF and World Bank in West Africa was introduced, the control motive of France and Britain was to keep more developed. Now there is the issue of good governance, human rights protections and democratic set up are being arisen among these countries. Good governance as a concept provides the framework through which citizens and groups exercise their rights, meet their obligatory needs and articulate their interest. In fact, the good governance is essential ingredient of Africa's reform process. Globalization is the source of pressure on West African government to adopt good governance in their respective government. Multi-party democracy is considered one of the pillars of good governance. In short, major political changes took place in most of the West African countries due to the re-introduction of multi-party system of government. Thus, since, 1990s, most of the African countries introduced the multi-party system for democratic transition for their respective countries. Above all, the democratization process which started in 1990s particularly in West African countries; such as Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and Benin became much influential factor for Burkina Faso to proceed the democratization process.

The Burkina's economic crisis which began in the early 1980s and IMF-World Bank adjustment programme adopted in 1991 has played an important role in the growth of civil liberties movement which is the main and strongest pillar of democracy. President Compaore's regime under SAP provided the space for the reawakening of the broad democratic consciousness of various social groups as they began to build alliances to defend their material interests and check the authoritarian government. The consciousness of democratization started in West African countries. Of these Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and Benin have significantly influenced Burkina Faso to establish the democratic political set up and continue the democratization and political stability.

### **3.0 Economic Environment of Burkina Faso**

Burkina Faso is a least-developed country (LDC) in West Africa and has been independent since 5<sup>th</sup> August 1960. It has been continually challenged in its efforts to

ensure the survival of its agricultural and pastoral economy and has limited prospect of modernization whether through industrialization or the expansion of external trade. Agriculture (including forestry and fishing) contributed 30.8 % of GDP in 2004. According to World Bank, about 92.2 % of the labour force was employed in agriculture in 2003. The principal cash crop and the main export is cotton that supplies 40 % of these earnings. It was accounted for an estimated 69 % of the value of total exports in 2004. Burkina Faso has also considerable mineral resources (gold, ferrous and non-ferrous ores) as well as energy resources. Gold accounts for around 10 % of export earnings.<sup>4</sup> Burkina is highly dependent on the maintenance of good economy and political relations with its six neighboring countries. Some two millions people of Burkina Faso work in the foreign countries primarily in Cote d' Ivoire and Ghana for their livelihood struggle. Burkina Faso has improved its relations with West African neighbours in the recent years. It has been maintaining its relation with the trading partners on the issue of economy, trade and commerce. Burkina has many trading partner but main trading partners are France, Cote d' Ivoire, Switzerland and Indonesia. They have been important outlets for Burkina products. Burkina Faso exports cotton principally to Switzerland, Mauritius and Indonesia, gold to France, hides and skin to Spain, Switzerland and Indonesia and live animals to West African sub-regions specifically Cote d' Ivoire and Ghana. On the other hand heavy equipment is imported from developed countries (especially France). Petroleum products are generally imported from Nigeria and Cote d' Ivoire. Burkina's imports from Cote d' Ivoire includes cement, fruits, food and chemical product, paper and salt. Thus, this is how Burkina Faso has developed the economic relation through significant influence of globalization.

In spite of all Burkina's resources, cotton plays important role and help most of the people. In many West Africa countries, cotton is the main engine of rural livelihood. Over two millions in Burkina Faso (16 % of total population) depend on this product. For five countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Togo) the cotton sector represents between 5 % and 19 % of GDP. Cotton is the most important export commodity to several countries. In fact, cotton production and marketing are vertically integrated with state enterprises typically providing input credit and

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<sup>4</sup> (2006), Europa year Book, p.12.

technical support. It was in the mid-1990s that West Africa turned to cotton as the main source of export earnings. Democratization of West African countries after 1990 favoured pro-market reforms in agriculture. It is said that in West Africa the cotton sector has performed well in the past and achieved impressive growth by regional standards. Recently, however, the sector has been characterized by the rising costs, lower yields and declining profitability. In 1998, the estimated annual production of cotton grains was 420,000 tones, which brings Burkina Faso among the best producers of cotton in West Africa. Burkina's cotton is exported to France, Cote d'Ivoire, Switzerland, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, India and other Asian countries. In 2001, cotton production in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad, accounted for 5 to 10 percent of gross domestic product and an average of about 30-40 percent of overall export revenues. However, as a consequence of cotton subsidies, in 2001, Burkina Faso lost 1 percent of its GDP and 12 % of its export incomes. Mali 1.7 % and 8% and Benin 1.4 percent and 9 % respectively have shown their loss. Nevertheless, cotton holds indisputably a strategic position in these country's development policies and poverty reduction programmes.<sup>5</sup>

The country remains one of the world's poorest countries. On the UN development programme's human development index, Burkina ranked 175<sup>th</sup> of the 177 countries in 2002. In this case its very poor health and education become the sole indicators. Revising the nationalization policy pursued by Sankara's regime in 1983-1987 became the major aspect of the structural adjustment programme that was designed to enhance the role of the private sector. Burkina's best prospects of modernization and economic growth appeared to lie in the development of the mining sector, small-scale resource based manufacturing, increased exports of horticultural products to Europe and in modest expansion of the tourist industry.

Today many people live outside of Burkina Faso and gained numerous experiences. Many Burkinabe migrate to neighbouring countries for work and their remittances provide a contribution to economy's balance of payments that is second to cotton as a source of foreign exchange earnings. Migration to the other countries as well as the migration from rural to urban areas within the country play major role in

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<sup>5</sup> Elbehri, Aziz and Macdonald, Steve (2004). 'Estimating the Impact of Transgenic *Bt* Cotton on West and Central Africa: A General Equilibrium Approach', *World Development*, pp. 2049-2061.

the era of globalization. The impact of migration and urbanization become very important instrument for the continuity of democratization process in the country. There emerged a shift from rural to urban areas in Burkina Faso. The rapid growth of cities in developing countries is sometimes presented as the most significant of all post-war demographic phenomena. It is the subject of a growing policy concern in the vast majority of less developed countries especially in Africa. Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso are two important cities where the urban settlement is rapidly growing. The impact of the cities' growth on the urban economy in Burkina Faso is most influential factor. The 1990s have shown that migrants integrate quite well into the urban economy in the large cities in Francophone West Africa. In fact, the rural-urban migration could be the positive effects on the welfare of the migrants, on the country's GDP and on the rural population as well.<sup>6</sup> People who live outside the Burkina Faso also create good relation with the people of other countries. Burkinabe in diaspora, particularly beyond Africa, is not being tapped enough for business purposes. However the diaspora relation helps people to people contact and creates the socio-economic, political and cultural relation which becomes a kind of platform for the country's democratic struggle.<sup>7</sup>

Since the last decade the country has been progress for the various economic reform and programme to overcome the economic crisis. Even though the institutional framework for free market competition is weak, but Burkina Faso was granted generous foreign loans and grants in the recent year. Responding to pressure from the IMF and World Bank, foreign trade has been increasingly liberalized. To ensure macroeconomic stability the government intends to proceed with the partial privatization of the public sector enterprises. Regional trade was expanded when a common foreign tariff was adopted as a part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Thus, the transformation toward democracy and market economy was raised by such regional organization. Overall, transformation progress in Burkina Faso has been modest over the last few years. Key democratic and market economy reforms to be resolved in the medium to long term include the strengthening of democratic institutions, increasing administration, stabilizing democratic

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<sup>6</sup> Beauchemin, Bruno (2005), 'Migration to Cities in Burkina Faso: Does the Level of Development in Sending Areas Matter?' *World Development*, pp.1130-1131.

<sup>7</sup> Burkina Faso", [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 July, 2007 URL <http://www.infoplease.com/country/profiles/burkina-faso.html>

representation, continuation of market and development. In short, there is a much international as well as the transitional (particularly from the West Africa) support for the rapid democratization in Burkina Faso. But the willingness of the ruling party, government and parliamentary opposition to co-operate with one another remained low during the globalization period. Thus, Burkina Faso is yet to establish the concrete collaboration among the parliamentarians and the civil society organization for the continuation of democratization.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4. 0 IMF-World Bank “Structural Adjustment Programme” in Burkina Faso**

Adjustment is always a response to an economic crisis. But the road that leads to crisis is not the same for all adjusting countries. It varies and depends on the respective government for structural reform. The structural adjustment programme adopted by the Sub-Saharan countries, mainly comprise policy reforms formulated in collaboration with the major international financial institution i.e. International Monetary Fund and World Bank to achieve sustainable development in Africa. The major goal of SAP includes reducing the size of government, privatization of public enterprises, reduction of budget deficits, imposition of ceilings on government borrowing from the banking system, liberalization of the economy, import liberalization, devaluation of economy etc. Some of the major element that has been identified as the essential part of structural adjustment policy includes: agrarian focused strategy, support for rural non-agricultural production, industrial development, diversification of export and development of human capabilities.

Like many Sub-Saharan countries that underwent the reform process, Burkina Faso implemented the structural adjustment programme in 1991 being influenced by its neighbouring West African countries. Under the influence of structural adjustment and globalization, the transborder trade have been restructured and globalized in West African countries. The overall effect of structural adjustment and globalization in West Africa has been a significant expansion of transborder trade. This expansion has taken place in the context of a dramatic transformation of the trade as well as far reaching changes in the organization of parallel trading networks and in the role of

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<sup>8</sup> Transformation: Burkina Faso (2005), [Online: Web] Accessed on 1 July, 2007 URL <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/84.0.html>.

parallel currency markets. These changes have had profound implications for the effectiveness of market reforms in West African countries.<sup>9</sup>

Burkina was one of the last West African countries to sign a structural adjustment package financed by the World Bank and IMF. Although Compaore government had requested IMF support for an agricultural sector loan in mid-1988, just months after seizing power, and the following year announced that it had opened talks for more comprehensive adjustment programme, it was not until March 1991 that the first such agreement was actually signed the IMF. With a structural adjustment loan in hand, Burkina soon became one of Africa's most favoured aid recipients. In order to permit the agricultural sector to play a key role in the national economy, the government has adopted many reforms, which aimed to stimulate economic growth and generate the food of the country. Thus, SAP was started with the promise of economic growth. The SAP has liberalized commerce and price of cereals, recognized the cotton network and created a suitable fiscal system for the agricultural sector. Over 1991-95, total aid receipts averaged about \$450m per year, with France, generally accounting for about one-fifth and the World Bank share steadily increasing from \$40m in 1991 to \$81m in 1995. The second Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility with the IMF, for 1996-98 stipulated further deregulation as well as opening up the utilities to private participation. It basically declared health to be a priority sector, set specific targets for increasing the school-going rate.

Eventually, the concept of human development with its strong emphasis on poverty-reduction, improved health and education, advances for women and protection of environment has entered the standard vocabulary of Burkina's economic managers and of the IMF and World Bank staff who routinely visit the country.<sup>10</sup> Government and its donors have taken some pride in their programmes to promote women's political and social advancement. In 1997, although Burkina ranked 172<sup>nd</sup> out of 175 countries according to UNDP's overall human development index, it moved notably up the ladder to the 144<sup>th</sup> place when ranked according to the gender-

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<sup>9</sup> Meagher, Kate (2003), "A Back Door to Globalization? Structural Adjustment, Globalization and Transborder Trade in West Africa", *Review of African Political Economy*, pp. 57-59.

<sup>10</sup> Harsch, Ernest (1998), "Burkina Faso in the Winds of Liberalization", *Review of African Political Economy*, PP. 627-631.

related development index. This ranking was due to primarily to women's relatively high participation in salaried employment in Burkina Faso, mainly in the civil service. With cotton playing a major role in the process particularly during the SAP period in 1998, the adjustment programme resulted positive effects in the most sectors. With the image of political stability and social calm the government sought to maintain the socio-economic situation. According to the structural adjustment credit-III of Burkina Faso, the overall objective of the US\$25 million credit, which closed in June 2000, was to support a reform programme. It aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the Burkinabe economy to substantially raise growth rates over the medium term and alleviate poverty, improving public finance management, particularly with regard to tax policy and the use of public resources and completing the third phase of the common external tariff (CFT) adopted by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAMEU). The impact of this phase resulted significant progress on health, education, public investment, and budget procedures. Burkina's budget guidelines were significantly improved and the share of public expenditure for health and education has been increased (Mohan 2002: 2)

Burkina Faso remained an agrarian economy, with agriculture providing a livelihood for 90 % of the population. But the performance of agriculture is strongly considered by irrigation, limits of land and water and by demographic pressure on the availability of land. It is a land-locked country of 13 million people which is considered one of the world's poorest states with participation in the world market. According to the IMF statistics, 91.8 % of the population relies primarily on subsistence farming for its employment which complicates market participation. Since independence the state has played a major role in the agrarian transformation of Burkina Faso. It has devoted between 10 % and 25 % per annum of public investment to agriculture and started many rural integrated development programmes. The most recent is the Valley of the Sourou River Projects.<sup>11</sup>

As the policy makers are influenced by the performance and improvement of the agricultural sectors of the neighbouring countries, the country has been taking the initiative step for agricultural development. Since 1980s the government and NGOs

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<sup>11</sup> Speirs, Mike (1991), "Agrarian Change and the Revolution in Burkina Faso", *African Affairs*, p.96.

have taken a number of measures to reduce the heavy dependence of agriculture on rainfalls, there have been a number of reforms implemented by the Burkinabe government. In short, Sankara government introduced various changes at the policy level to give the ongoing transformation in a new direction. Subsequently various reforms were implemented. The restriction on the activities of the trade unions was abolished and the effort to encourage private investment was created as the basis for democratization. The legalization of political parties as well as inclusion of various political grouping became the greatest challenge of the Burkina Faso. Since the beginning of 1993, lots of issues like globalization, environmental concerns and the role NGOs have suddenly gained prominence.

### **5.0 Regionalization and Globalization**

The declining effectiveness of national government is the cause of growth of regionalization. As the territorial nation-state is seen to be less effective in delivering security, stability and prosperity, these goals are increasingly achieved through collaboration with neighbouring and geographically prominent states. Regionalization is a step on the road to globalization. With the closer economic integration, each country has an interest in ensuring the appropriate policies are followed in its partner countries. This can be achieved by coordination components relevance national policies within a regional context. Throughout the continent, African government are coming together to coordinate components of their policies and virtually all countries are now members of regional organizations. Efficient regional cooperation allows the economic of Africa to overcome the disadvantages, their relatively small size and by opening access to larger markets to realize economies of scale. The obligation of membership in some of these organization also make it easier for each individual country to achieve further progress in regulator and judicial reform (as in the case in the CFA Franc Zone), to rationalize payments facilities and to relax restriction on capital transitions and investment flows (as in the cross-border initiative), and to develop the mutual economic infrastructure. Enhancing the trade links among themselves naturally also strengthens their ability to participate in trade on a global scale, and could lead towards further progress in the directions of non-discriminatory multi-lateral trade relations.



The growth of regionalization among the African countries is the significant factor under the era of globalization. There are various regional organizations in the African countries. Some of the important organization which are playing important role among the African states in the global level are: African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Common Market for the Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) etc. Most of these organizations have been response to economic globalization.<sup>12</sup>

## **6.0 Role of Major Power and International Cooperation**

Working with an international context is a key element of Burkina's statehood. More than 30 ethnic groups lived the state's border nomad and migrant workers depend on postures and jobs in neighbouring countries. The CFA franc pegs the country to other states with currency. Improvement in Burkina Faso's economic transformation since the early 1990s has been linked directly to intense cooperation with national and international donors. At the top of the list are the World Bank, the European Union, the African Development Fund, and France, which is a key bilateral partner. It is obvious that economic development in Burkina Faso is characterized by the assiduous coordination of reforms and a high degree of willingness to fulfill the established conditions as closely as possible. External actors played a more limited role in democratic transformation.

However, Compaore sought economic assistance from the external power and thus Burkina Faso has increased its foreign relation with much major power since 1991.<sup>13</sup> Relation between Burkina Faso and United States are generally good. Having steadily improved after leftist Revolutionary period of 1983-87, the Burkinabe government has shown solid progress towards democratic reforms and individual liberties. In addition to regional peace and stability, U.S. interests in Burkina Faso are to promote continued democratization and greater respect for human rights and to encourage sustainable economic development. Burkina's government has played a

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<sup>12</sup>..... (2004), "West Africa, Donors Condition. Aid Increasing Poverty", [Online: Web] Accessed on 6 July, 2007 URL <http://www.realityofeid/org/raoreport.php?table-roa2004 &id-15>.

<sup>13</sup> Transformation: Burkina Faso (2005), [Online: Web] Accessed on 1 July, 2007 URL <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/84.0.html>

more constructive role in resolving regional conflicts, supplying peacekeepers in Liberia and brokering agreements including to end the regional crisis. The United States provides humanitarian assistance to Burkina Faso with goods modest levels of regional and bilateral development assistance. Thus, Burkina Faso has improved its relation with the United States particularly for aid assistance.<sup>14</sup>

France and Britain are two important former colonial powers who are playing major role in terms of economic development in West African. Burkina Faso has developed its relation with France particularly after Compaore came to power. France is probably the most active and influential non-African power in the West African sub-region. All most all the francophone countries are associated with France for socio-economic and diplomatic cooperation French economic and financial ties in Africa are strongly enhanced by the fact that Francophone African states operate firm control over the economic and monetary policies of her former colonies. In fact, France maintains significant ties with Francophone states, including Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cote d' Ivoire and Senegal. France and Burkina Faso refer to the same founding principles and mechanism to establish and guarantee good political governance: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, mechanism for evaluating pairs and a product of the NEPAD. With regard to good economic governance, two parties refer to the conclusion of IMF to assess the quality of financial governance. In short, France and Burkina Faso are the heirs to a common legal, administrative and financial tradition. Thus, through the external powers Burkina Faso has developed its network connection in the international level and influenced by the international forces to continue its democratization process.<sup>15</sup>

To conclude it is said that in the post-independence era particularly since 1991, Burkina's relation with various countries as well as regional and international organization has significantly inspired and encouraged the people to continue the democratic struggle.

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<sup>14</sup> "Burkina Faso", [Online: Web] Accessed on 10 July, 2007 URL  
<http://www.infoplease.com/country/profiles/burkina-faso.html>

<sup>15</sup> Ando, Michael O. (2000), *International Relations in Contemporary Africa*, Oxford, University of Press, pp.201-204.

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**Chapter V**  
**Conclusion**

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## CHAPTER-5 CONCLUSION

Burkina Faso is the ancestral home of Mossi, the dominant ethnic group which successfully resisted both European and Muslim penetration in the pre-colonial period, particularly until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the Mossi people were seen as having legitimacy as the natural ruler of the country since the colonial era. Among all the military rulers of the post-colonial military regime, Thomas Sankara was the champion for the cause of his charismatic role in providing the socio-political and economic reforms. During his regime the Burkinabe revolution turned as the most influential factor for democratic transition. In fact, Sankara was a Pan-Africanist, nationalist and most dedicated leader of the post-independence era. It was he who actually laid the foundation for the transition from military to civilian rule in the country.

The political landscape of Burkina Faso has undergone a dramatic transformation since independence. The country has spent most of its post-independence years struggling with political, social and economic failures. Repeated attempts to sustain and consolidate democratic government have failed a number of times. Since the time of independence Burkina Faso had only three successful civilian regimes elected by the common people before the multiparty democracy. Now, there is multiparty system which became a reality after a long struggle for democracy which managed to win the successive general elections and achieved great success in the process of democratization in Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso was able to set up the state of representative democracy in 1991 with the multi-party system. During this time, most of the African countries; particularly the West African countries installed the multi-party democracy in their respective states. Being influenced by the neighboring countries Burkina Faso opened the space for civilian rule and carry on the process of democratization.

The arrival of Blaise Compaore in political scenario is the most important factor for the transition of democracy in Burkina Faso. Compaore came to power after the brutal assassination of Thomas Sankara in a military *coup d'etat* in 1987 and

remained unchallenged till today in Burkina's political administration. Through his leadership Burkina Faso achieved much reputation for political stability and democratization. However, Compaore's regime became the authoritarian model on the basis of his ruling party, CDP which is a single dominant political party of the country.

. During 1990s democratization consciousness developed in the most part of Africa. The West African countries, particularly Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and Benin established their democracy in 990s onwards. In fact the democratic consciousness spread throughout the continent. Thus being influenced by African countries in general and neighbouring West African countries in particular, Burkina laid its foundation for the democratic set up. The process of democratization that has been undergoing since 1991 has encouraged the emergence of expression of civil society, inclusion of opposition and liberalization of political parties. The civil society organization of Burkina Faso is not as strong as in Nigeria, Ghana and other West African countries who have often extended their support for the democratic transition and consolidation. Nevertheless, some civil society groups particularly trade unions has played important role during the military rule and continuously fought for the civilian transition and good governance are considered the most powerful groups in Burkina Faso.

The international community and agencies, particularly the USA, France Switzerland, IMF, World Bank, African Development Bank and some other neighbouring countries have extended their support and assistance towards Burkina's democratic struggle. Since President Compaore installed his regime, Burkina started increasingly its foreign relations and cooperation to solve the economic crisis and maintained the political stability of the country. Thus, subsequently the socio-economic and cultural cooperation of the international community stood for larger impact on the country's democratization process.

The tradition of political participation and election was started much early in Burkina Faso but it was held in non-democratic way. In the early independence period political parties were banned by the military rulers. The unstable, authoritarian and military regime suppressed the political parties and social groups. Elections were

not held in the regular basis due to the repeated military *coup d'etat* and regime change. However in 1983 when Sankara came to power the Burkina's transformation progressed in various areas. The political suppression and restrictive nature were comparatively lower than the previous regimes. Moreover, during the rule of President Compaore, electoral reform was increased and political parties were liberalized, as a result, their participation in the elections increased. But in the case of representation, none other than CDP, the ruling party won in a sizeable expected number in the National Assembly. In Addition, the women representation in the parliament remained very low but for the last two general elections their participation and representation has grown considerably.

Burkina Faso had major political crisis particularly after the killing of noted journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998. It has also experienced the killings, murder, impunity and corruption during the current authoritarian government. There were mass protests and strikes against the government for culture of impunity violation of human rights and so on. In fact, 'Zongo Affairs' became one the major political issues among the people of Burkina Faso. Civil society groups and the opposition parties joined together and protested against Compaore's administration and his ruling party to end the culture of impunity. As a result Compaore's ruling party declined in 2002 general election. For the first time Burkina Faso enjoyed the sizeable representation of opposition in the parliament. They became the strong political opposition in the country and shared in the decision making body. They secured 54 seats out of 111 seats comparatively higher than ever before. It makes clear that the 2002 general election stood as the great signal of democratic development.

Nevertheless, the CDP, once again swept considerable seats in the recent parliamentary election held in May 2007. The defeat of the opposition makes sense that they are fragmented and divided on the basis of their self-interest and ethnic issues. Burkina Faso fails to have strong opposition and civil society groups thus. Thus, the ruling political elite continuously can play the political battle without losing power. The long standing leadership and repeated victory of President Compaore as well as his victory in 2005 presidential election greatly supported for the decline of opposition. In addition, political parties and the civil society are the main pillars of

democracy, but in Burkina Faso there is a lack of cooperation and understanding of these groups.

Burkina Faso is a democratic, unitary and secular country having unicameral legislature, the National Assembly. It is mainly based on the French National Assembly. So far as its nature is concerned, it stands as a semi-presidential republic. According to the constitution of Burkina Faso, President is the real executive, elected directly by the popular votes and eligible for re-elections. He appoints the Prime Minister, chairs the Council of Ministers and the High Council of Magistrates. All the executive, legislative and judicial power are vested in the President. Thus, he is the most powerful politician, leader and chief of all the organs of the government. In fact, he can be considered as guarantor of the Burkinabe constitution. The reason for political shortcomings on the way towards democracy is to be found in the highly centralized presidential system, as a very dominant executive thwarts the functioning system of checks and balances. The virtually unconfined influence on the security apparatus, on the judiciary, and on parliament, has far reaching consequences: the abuse of power by a small elite which does not shy away from violence and crime if it comes to the protection of its privileged position a culture of impunity and corruption in all parts of society, a deficient rule of law and a parliament that does not counterbalance the power of the executive, in which the opposition does not offer any real political alternative.

Burkina's government is unchanged since the country held its first multi-party election in 1992 and Compaore continues his only political throne since he came to power in 1987. For many Burkinabe, Compaore's regime does not represent a better future. For the donor community, however this regime is much more valuable. In short, though the socio-political atmosphere of the country has considerably progressed in the post-1991 period that led to democratic space it has become an authoritarian, restricted and limited democracy due to growing dominance of the ruling party.

Integration in African economic into capitalist economic is the significant part of globalization process. In fact, most of the African countries were influenced by the role of IMF and World Bank under the era of globalization. Unlike the other international community, Britain and France proclaim as the major donors in the West

African countries. President Compaore adopted the IMF-World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme in 1991. It provided the space of the reawakening of democratic consciousness of various social groups. In addition, more than two millions people of Burkina Faso live in the abroad particularly in Cote d'Ivoire for their livelihood. The development of migration and urbanization makes the country integrated and modernized and influences the entire Burkinabe to continue their democratic struggle and establish the long standing political regime.

## **1.0 Consolidation of Democracy in Burkina Faso**

Sankara era inspired the country with vision and practical measures for the future. The Burkinabe are therefore politically aware and capable of imagining alternatives to the present authoritarian rule. They emphasize a high degree of participation in public matters, greater transparency in political decision-making, and demand an understandable explanation of claims that democracy requires a free market economy. Many Burkinabe feel that the participatory structures of traditional society and the grass-roots development of the Sankara era were destroyed by those promoting a market economy. The development of last two decades may have expanded the space of civil society in the political system, but there are still something lacking in this civil society. Just because of these problems, civil society does not play effective role in democratization process.

This study indicates that civil society has dual and some times contradictory role and that its contributions may have both supportive and critical roles in achieving and sustaining democracy. Although Burkina Faso is not having the strong civil society like in the other West African countries, however, now these organizations are actively pointing out the shortcomings such as corruption, embezzlement, lack of transparency and weak judiciary. On the one hand, there is an obvious discontentment with the government and the president, as too little was done to improve the overall living standard. On the other hand, the notoriously weak opposition does not offer any convincing alternative. However, despite the shortcomings of Compaore's government, it has over many years guaranteed a level of stability in a country surrounded by fragile states or conflict-ridden neighbours.



## **2.0 Challenges for the future of Burkinabe society**

Substantial improvements are needed to keep Burkina on its democratic path. It requires pursuing the process of economic diversification. The government and the state institutions need enhanced legitimacy through more transparent and accountable politics, and a real and far reaching reform agenda. The rule of law should be strengthened and the functioning of the judiciary system should be improved. Enhanced human, financial, and technical capacities will be of great importance in this regard, but most important is the formal and de facto independence of the judiciary. The fight against corruption has to be a top priority not only for the government but also for donor programs. Enhanced transparency and accountability is needed in all areas to Burkina's political, social and economic life.

The government should allow for an electoral reform process. A more proportional representation and more inclusive politics are necessary. In this context, an improved system of checks and balances is also needed. Only then, will the state institutions be strengthened. It will therefore be of great importance to build capacity within parliament to counterbalance the massive power of the executive. Also, major improvements are needed with regard to understanding the role and workings of the political opposition. There is a need of leadership change as well as the change of current regime, so that the new government can show a better political set up and good governance. It can truly help the oppositions and other political parties to feel the reality of multi-party democracy. The political parties should also commit themselves to designating more women to their decision-making bodies, as women activists and women with responsibility in politics may become more aware of their civil rights. There is need for a transition to a veritable multiparty democracy with a strong opposition, especially, with regards to the question of success of president Compaore after the end of his term.

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