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AU-ECOWAS Intervention in Burkina Faso Political Conflict in 2014

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Abstract

This paper examined the African led intervention in the Burkina Faso conflict. The outbreak of political conflict in the relatively stable and peaceful Western African country in October 2014 over the attempt of President Blaise Compaore to alter the constitutional provision on term limit drew global and regional attentions. The inaction that followed the conflict from the international community however changed following the flight of President Blaise Compaore to Cote D'Ivoire on 31 October 2014 and the assumption of political power by the military in November 2014 which awakened the international community to the dimension of the conflict. Data were from journals, newspapers, and books, analysed qualitatively using a historical approach revealed that the degenerating of the conflict forced the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a sub-regional organisation which Burkina Faso is a member to initiate a mediatory role to restore peace and order in the country. The AU-ECOWAS intervention was backed by the United Nations and other global institutions in bringing peace to the country. The mandate of the AU-ECOWAS mediating team was to restore democratic and civilian or constitutional rule in the country. The mediating team under AU-ECOWAS proposed a one-year transition programme that made Col. Yacoub Ziga to step down as the Head of State while Mr. Michel Kafando assumed leadership of the country. The paper concluded by positing that the regional body handling of the Burkina Faso political situation largely helped to broker peace in the country and put the country on the path of stability and development.

Keywords: *ECOWAS, AU, Burkina Faso, Conflict Management, Political Issues.*

Introduction

The outbreak of conflict in Burkina Faso sent shock waves across Africa because the country was relatively stable despite being under authoritarian rule. The dimensions of the conflict led to the intervention of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS). Conflict is regarded as a product of the struggle for incompatible interests that often degenerate into threats and actual violence. The danger inherent in conflict cannot be overemphasised. There is no gainsaying that conflict is destructive with the capacity for creating internal and regional insecurity, loss of lives and property. This made the ECOWAS expand its mandate to include conflict management in its protocols, while the AU has been increasingly involved in conflict management on the continent. It must be said that

the United Nations occupied the front burner in the management of conflict across the globe, especially in Africa. The non-exclusion of local solutions in the management of conflict on the African continent by global bodies such as the UN has not helped in restoring enduring peace in conflict zones in Africa. Given this scenario, in recent years, there has been more emphasis on African led interventions in political conflicts in Africa. This was demonstrated in AU and ECOWAS interventions in several West African countries since the 1980s. ECOWAS, using its military wing, ECOMOG brought relative peace to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Cote D" Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, and so on which attracted regional and global commendations. The success recorded by ECOWAS has somewhat influenced the international community to encourage and support regional and sub-regional organisations in playing leading roles in addressing challenges in their regions. It should be noted that ECOWAS was formed in 1975 to foster and promote trade; free movement of goods, personnel and services; development of transportation systems; development and cooperation in areas of telecommunication, energy and power, and education among member states. AU is the umbrella body for countries in Africa for the promotion of economic and political development as well as security.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to state that the African continent has witnessed numerous political conflicts since the 1960s when several African countries gained independence. Most of these conflicts resulted in civil wars or military interventions and even both led to loss of lives and property. Some of the conflicts included the Congo, Nigeria, Angola, Liberia, and Algeria civil wars that drew regional and global attention. For instance, United Nations (UN) had to send peacekeepers to the newly independent Congo Republic following political and ideological disagreements among the leaders in the country. In the 1960s, African countries, in the attempt to promote peace and integration among their members, inaugurated the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) now rechristened African Union (AU). The AU is the biggest and the most important intergovernmental organisation on the continent and has broad objectives and goals. The major objectives of the organisation are: to achieve greater unity among African States; to defend states' integrity and independence; to accelerate political, social, and economic integration; encourage international cooperation and promote democratic principles and institutions. The military assumption of power after mass protests in the country had forced President Blaise Compaore to flee to Cote d" Ivoire which made AU work in tandem with ECOWAS

supported by the UN, European Union, United States and Canada. The paper examines the conflict and how it was managed by the AU-ECOWAS joint team thereby bringing out the importance of African led intervention in the region. The study also addresses the trends of the conflict in Burkina Faso and the outcomes. The fragile and weak nature of states in Africa, especially in West Africa, made the crisis in Burkina Faso worrisome and frightening because of the resultant insecurity, loss of lives, displacement of people and their impact on the sub-region. The questions that arose are what were the factor(s) that trigger the violence? What were the trends and dimensions of the conflict? And, why did AU-ECOWAS intervene in the conflict? In a nutshell, the study brought to the fore the dynamics of the conflict and management by AU-ECOWAS.

Conceptual Discourse

Conflict

Conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Defined in broadest terms, conflict denotes the incompatibility of subject positions (Diez et al, 2006: 565). The foregoing view assumed that opposition or incompatibility is at the heart of a conflict but it leaves open the exact nature of these incompatibilities, namely, whether they are between individuals, groups, or societal positions; whether they rest in different interests or beliefs; or whether they have a material existence or come into being only through discourse (Pia and Diez, 2007). The view of (Diez et al, 2006) demonstrates the major factors that often promote conflicts.

Lund (1997) conceives conflict as the behaviour of parties that have incompatible interests, thus leading to competition over power, resources, identity, and status. Power to him, is seen as an avenue to the control of resources, identity, and status. According to Lund, the major issue that generates conflict is the existence of incompatible interests among different people. David (2009) submits that conflict is the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. He added that armed conflict is the use of armed violence and force in achieving the incompatible and specific interests and goals. Akpuru–Aja (2007) sees conflict as a product of competing interests, thus he says peace can be threatened by lack of social amenities, namely, food, education, employment, religious interference amongst others. He also sees conflict as an attitude, behaviour, or a process that brews strains and stresses in

the existing human relationship between two or more parties on the attainment of a set of interests or goals.

Noma (2002), cited in Ugbudian 2011, contended that conflict can be quite unusual among parties that neither interacted nor have plans to interact at various levels because there are no stated relationships and common objectives. For conflict to occur among a selected group of people or individuals they must have interacted within a defined structure. In other words, interaction and engagement among people usually creates rooms for conflict. Coser (1956) affirms the views above by positing that conflict is the outcome of the quest to fulfill a struggle over values and claims to a scarce resource, status, power, and resources which aims (of the opponents or rivals) are to neutralise injure or eliminate their rivals. The claims could lead to physical or non-physical conflict. Dudley (1973) opines that conflict is an inescapable part of our daily lives and an inevitable result of our complex competitive and often litigious society. This was further expanded by Zartman (1988) who observes that conflict interaction, including war, is a catalyst for progress in most countries of the world, even in Europe. In other words, conflict could also trigger and lead to development if well managed elsewhere as it happened in Europe.

The Heidelberg Conflict Model has been used by Trim, Wenker, and Schwank (2016) to explain the dynamics of violence. According to Trim, Wenker, and Schwank (2016), the Heidelberg Conflict Model defined conflict as a positional difference regarding values relevant to society - the conflict items - between at least two decisive and directly involved actors. These actors often pursue incompatible needs and differences that result in violence. In other words, political conflict based on Heidelberg Conflict Model deals with the use of observable and interrelated conflict means that lie beyond established regulatory procedures and threaten a core state function or the order of international law, or hold out the prospect to do so. Therefore, political conflict relates to incompatible differences among political actors largely over a struggle for political power. This explains the seemingly incompatible intentions between the President Compaore and the opposition political party as well as the mass of the people on the issues of removing the tenure limit in the Constitution. It also gives a pointer to the intervention of AU-ECOWAS in the conflict to prevent anarchy, insecurity, and even destabilization of the sub-regional.

Democracy

There is no consensus among scholars regarding the concept of democracy, however, the characteristics are accepted. Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted in 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy conceived ideal democracy as a system of governance that “aims to protect and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, instil social justice, and foster economic and social development. Democracy is a political system that enables people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government.” The position of IPU basically deals with the theoretical aspects of democracy that should guide the practice. According to Marcel Gauchet, cited in Momoh (2010), democracy is the unity of multiplicity, which is a mixed regime that is composed of three dimensions interacting with each other: politics, law, and history. Politics in this context means nation-state and political community. While the law is the principle of legitimacy and judicial composition, in short, human rights and history is the temporal organisation of collective action. The point is that democracy tends to underline freedom of thought and expression, free media, freedom of association and assembly, regular elections, separation of power, different political ideologies and parties, free market and neo-liberal economic policy, and more. The aforesaid values result from a long process. In recent years, democracy seems to mean the promotion of individualism with human rights in the centerpiece. The attempt to deepen the values and nuances of democracy in most African states especially Burkina Faso has been met with stiff resistance by the ruling elites. While the mass of the people is seeking for regular and periodic elections that are free and fair, the political gladiators are more interested in perpetuating themselves in power. Albert (2011) has described this as a major trigger of conflict in emerging democracies on the African continent.

Regionalism

Regional integration has been regarded as the process through which countries "voluntarily mingle, merge, and mix with their neighbours so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflicts among themselves." Some scholars see regional integration simply as the process by which states within a particular region increase their level of interaction regarding economic, security, political, or social and cultural issues.

The meaning of regional integration considerably differs among scholars considerably. According to De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove cited by Agyapong (2005), it is a worldwide phenomenon of territorial systems that increases the interactions between their components and creates new forms of organisation, co-existing with traditional forms of state-led organisation at the national level. Regional integration is collaborating and joining of individual states within a region into a larger whole or body to protect their common interest. The viability, success or degree of integration depends upon the willingness and commitment of independent sovereign states to share their sovereignty.

Van Langenhove posits that regional integration initiatives should fulfil some basic functions, namely:

- the strengthening of trade integration in the region
- the creation of an appropriate enabling environment for private sector development
- the development of infrastructure programmes to support economic growth and regional integration
- the development of strong public sector institutions and good governance;
- the reduction of social exclusion and the development of an inclusive civil society
- contribution to peace and security in the region
- the building of environment programmes at the regional level
- the strengthening of the region" s interaction with other regions of the world

Mitrany (1994), cited in Belmakki (2005), defined regional integration as an institution aimed at promoting political integration, which is where a new political community is superimposed on the former status. The view was furthered stressed by Ernest Haas (1966), cited in Aning, K. and Bah, S.A. (2010), that regional integration is a process in which stakeholders in the political scene in the numerous but distinct countries negotiate and compromise to shift their loyalty and political events to a new platform whose institution possesses or demand jurisdiction over preexisting national states.

Regional Organisations and Conflict Management

For many decades, the United Nations Organisation shouldered the management of conflicts because of its spread, power, and capacity to initiate such actions. Despite the successes recorded by the UN, the seemingly intractable nature of the armed struggles eventually led to the emergence of regional organisations in the mix. Scholars have well noted the rise in regional management of conflict. According to Diehl (2008:538), “from the late 1980s and early 1990s to the present time, there has been a dramatic upsurge in regional conflict management activities of all forms.” Less than half of all peace operations since 1997 have been undertaken by the UN, while instead, most peace operations had been assumed by either regional organisations or willing coalitions”. It should be stated that some of the peacemaking operations of regional blocs were authorised and supported by the UN (The International Peace Academy, 2003). The rise of violent conflicts and the UN Article 52 consequently led to granting of mandate to regional bodies to embark on collective actions to manage issues concerning the maintenance of law and order and peace and security in the region, but the regional bodies must abide by the practice direction and principles of the UN. Indeed, the power of regional organisations to deal with regional conflict is succulently captured in Article 53, subsection 1 thus “the Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilise such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority”

Several reasons have been adduced for the shift from the UN to regional organisation management of conflict which included better organisation, socio-cultural, political affinity and overwhelming of the UN manpower and resources due to the increase in the number of violent conflicts across the world. Michel and Doyle (1998) argue that from 1989 to 1996, no less than 29 peacekeeping operations were set up leading to a huge rise in the budget for the purpose from 230 million US dollars in 1988 to 3.6 billion US dollars in 1995. Hensel (2002) observed that the geometrical rise in armed conflicts in the past two decades profoundly led to a paradigm shift in the managing authority of conflict. The concomitant implication of the foregoing is the upsurge, as stated by Kabia (2009) includes a spike in the peacekeeping and humanitarian support qualitatively and quantitatively.

Bennett 1991 submits that regional groupings are more organised and focused on building inclusive decision through consensus in the management of conflicts in the regions. The consensus-building roles of

regional organisations have been seen in the willingness of the local disputants to defer to the mediating effort of the organisations. This is usually historically established ties, values, affinity and friendship among the people and leaders in the regions that potentially create room for local solutions

Concurrently, regional organisations including ECOWAS, North Atlantic Treaty Organisations (NATO), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) have been regarded as some of the highly effective regional organisations in managing conflicts and insecurity. For instance, SADC played a pivotal role in the peace process that culminated in the 1999 Lusaka Accord signed by the parties in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) (Zartman 2007). Similarly, ECOWAS was instrumental in dealing with the wars and crises in a several countries, namely, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, and Guinea Bissau, While NATO was involved in restoring law and order in the former Yugoslavia.

This should be guided by regular consultation within a common framework, prior agreement regarding the level of support, a clearly defined division of labour according to comparative advantages, a strategy that commensurates with the resources made available, and a coherent implementation among partners. Regional organisations have become important partners in the management of peace and security across parts of the world. Despite the constraints faced by regional organisations, the determination and willingness of the members had sustained their conflict management operations.

Methodology

Data for the study were generated from newspapers, journals, books, unpublished essays, and online platforms. The data captured and analysed the history and political development in Burkina Faso as well as the intervention of AU-ECOWAS in the 2014 conflict. Some of the data also accentuates the whole gambit of regional organisations' management of conflict. The collected data were analysed and evaluated qualitatively using a historical approach that involved subjecting the data to contradiction and corroboration.

Burkina Faso in Historical Context

The political trajectories of Burkina Faso are amplified because the country has witnessed seven military interventions, civilian presidents, and decades of authoritarian rule. Burkina Faso, then known as the Republic of Upper Volta, gained independence from France on August 5 1960. The French imposed constitution of 1960 enshrined five terms for the president and members of the National Assembly that were to be elected through the application of universal suffrage. The candidate of the Voltaic Democratic Union (VDU) Maurice Yameogo emerged victorious in the presidential election in 1960, and thus became the first president of the country (Msuya 2011)). The foreign policy and ideological standpoints of President Yameogo favoured the colonial overlord, France. The president promoted French economic and business interests as well as local bourgeois. These moves of the president were not generally accepted, especially, by the rural poor and peasants as well as workers. This segment of the Burkinabe society accused the officials of the government of corruption. The leadership style and conduct of president Yameogo and his cohorts began to generate resentment and threat of a crisis in the country particularly among the workers.

The threat of crisis by the people due to increasing poverty among the masses and display of obscene wealth by the political class led to demand for a pay rise that culminated in industrial action by the trade unions led by the teachers. The industrial action however degenerated from demands for a pay rise to demands for good governance and development of the country. Many groups, namely, students and civil servants embarked on a prolonged public demonstration against the government. The failure of the government to agree to the demands of the workers and students coupled with confusion in the country due to the mass strike and demonstration led to the breakdown of law and order leading to military intervention. The 1966 coup d'état in the country brought Lieutenant Colonel Sangoule Lamizana as the Head of State. He uprooted democratic institutions including the suspension of the constitution. The military pledged to deal with corruption and issues of poverty as well as return to democratic governance. It, however, took the military four years to design a transition program to civilian rule that was to take another four years to implement. The first process was the conduct of a referendum on the adoption of the constitution drafted by

the military on June 4, 1970. Most people voted for the adoption of the constitution.

By 1978, after a series of disagreements over the provision of the 1970 constitution and promulgation of a new constitution in 1977, colonel Lamizana contested and won the presidential elections. The transmission of the military officer into a civilian president was not without questions but Colonel Lamizana used the security agencies effectively to terrorise his opponents. The inability of the government to address the endemic poverty and corruption in the country created a problem between the government and the trade unions from 1978. This culminated in the overthrow of the government by Colonel Saye Zebro on November 25, 1980. The rivalry within the military also led to a counter-coup d'état in November of 1982 when Major Dr Jean-Baptiste Quedraogo assumed political leadership. The political instability in the country remained as the Council of Popular Salvation, established as the ruling body by the military, soon got factionalised due to infightings. The infighting was traced to ideological differences between the moderates and the radicals. The radicals led by Captain Thomas Sankara were victorious in the power struggle through a military coup and he was made Prime Minister in 1983.

Captain Thomas Sankara for the four years was the president of the country. He established the National Council for the Revolution (CNR) and The Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRS). The government was communist in character and the committees were to "mobilise the masses" and implement the CNR's revolutionary programmes. As part of the reformation in the country, Thomas Sankara, a thoroughly bred Marxist changed the name of the country on 4 August 1994 from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso- the country of honourable people. However, the regime was overthrown and Sankara was killed in 1987 by his friends led by his deputy, Captain Blaise Compaore. This was to set the tone for the twenty-seven years reign of Compaore

Compaore became a strongly ally of the West because of his role in maintaining security and stability in the Sahel by launching a massive crackdown on the militias and terrorist groups in the sub-region. On the home front, Compaore ruled the country with an iron fist and jailed opposition figures. However, his power began to be challenged by the people following the murder of a local journalist, Nobert Zongo who was investigating the criminal activities and corruption of the allies of President Compaore in 1998. The killing of the journalist sparked mass

protests by the people and was followed by the mutiny of junior military officers and strikes by the trade unions.

The 2014 Political Conflict and AU-ECOWAS

The president of Burkina Faso and former military ruler, Blaise Compaore fled the country on 31 October 2014. This was a fallout of the political violence that followed his attempts to seek another term in office after twenty-seven years by tinkering with the constitution. Hence, the mass uprising by several groups including civil society organisations eventually forced President Compaore out of office. The president had dissolved the parliament and executive arms of the government in an effort to placate the demonstrators a day earlier. He also pledged that he would not stand in for re-election in the forthcoming election. These pledges were however rejected by the stakeholders and the opposition political parties that championed the uprising against his sit tight designs.

The flight of President Compaore and his immediate family to neighbouring Cote D'Ivoire created crisis and confusion that led to a political vacuum in the country. Consequently, the struggles for political leadership emerged within the country military (Lewis and Bonkougou (2014)). First, General Honore Traore, Chief Security Officer to President Compaore appointed himself as the country's new Head of State. The posture of General Traore coupled with his closeness to the former president further fuelled the political uprising. The leaders of the protests demanded his resignation and vacation from the office. The undoing of the General Traore was that the demonstrators were tired of the former president and wanted a break from him which also affected anyone close to him. Moreso, that Article 43 of the 1998 constitution of the Republic of Burkina Faso prescribes how the political succession should be managed if the president resigns or is incapable of discharging its duties. In other words, Article 43 of the constitution charged the speaker of the parliament with full state powers as acting president when there is a vacuum (BBC, 2014).

Second, the rejection of General Traore despite false claims of assumption of power based on the country's constitutional provisions by the leaders of the protests led to the appointment of another military officer, Colonel Isaac Yacouba Zida by the military as the new Head of State thereby jettisoning General Traore earlier claims of being the choice of the military. The twists and turns in the military circle also showed the instability and division within the country's armed forces.

The appointment of Colonel Zida, a deputy head of the elite, Presidential Guard, was relatively accepted by some of the protesters but drew local and international organisations condemnation. For instance, on November 3, 2014, AU gave the military a two-week ultimatum to hand over to a civilian-led transition government. Also, ECOWAS, (UN, European Union (EU), United States, France, Canada and others condemned the military intervention and demanded the restoration of democratic institutions. The military had suspended the 1998 constitution and uprooted democratic institutions thereby establishing full blow military rule. The military responded that they were not interested in political power but to create stability and midwife the transition to democratic governance programmes. It should be noted that the military did not specify the timeframe for the transition programme and the composition of the membership. It is instructive to state that most of the leaders of the protests accepted Colonel Zida as the Head of State which showed that a larger percent of the country's population were disenchanted with former president Compaore and his cronies.

It must be said that the crisis was worsened by the apparent inordinate quest for powers by diverse actors, most notable members of the armed forces, worsened the crisis. Coupled with this was the disdain most members of the opposition groups, Peoples' Movement for Progress (PMP); Union for Progress and Reform (UPR), National Rebirth Party (NRP), Movement of People for Progress (MPP), and Balai Citoyen (Citizen Broom) had for the ruling class. This was apparent in these groups vehemently opposing the members of the Congress for Democracy Progress and the allies of President Blaise Compaore from participating in the negotiation. This was well noted by one of the activists, Mathias Tankoano who averred that "we can't sit in the same room as those who are to blame for the deaths of the victims and acts against the constitution that have resulted in violence in our country" (Associated Press 2014; Ero1998)). Similarly, the opposition party stated that "the army had confiscated our revolution." Several movements comprising the youth were formed to demand their political inclusion in the transition programmes and the ousting of the military from the political leadership of the country. This position of the opposition groups comprising civil society groups and political parties, though popular, was however divisive and unhelpful in building consensus and enduring peace.

Given the division and violent dimensions of the conflict, the intervention of AU-ECOWAS became inevitable in restoring sanity to the country. Put differently, the intervention of AU-ECOWAS was an attempt to prevent the conflict in the country from snowballing into a sub-regional challenge that would promote insecurity and humanitarian disaster. The previous experience of the ECOWAS leaders in managing such crises became handy. The AU-ECOWAS mission led by the presidents of Nigeria, Senegal, and Ghana held several meetings with the stakeholders in the country. The mediation process was given a two-week mandate to usher in a transition government that would conduct elections. Despite the initial tensions and animosity among the various groups in the country, the mission doused the situation for a draft agreement acceptable to the stakeholders. The mission was led by the Chairman of ECOWAS and Ghanaian president, John Mahatma. Other members were the Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, and Senegalese President, Macky Sall as well as AU representatives.

The altruistic and commendable natures of the AU-ECOWAS mission made the international community back and support the process. One of such international actors was the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon who reiterated the peace process. Ban Ki-moon also admonished and encouraged the parties to agree as soon as possible and restated the support of the UN to the Joint Mediation Mission of the AU and ECOWAS quest for a civilian-led transition program for Burkina Faso. The UN Security Council also expressed unalloyed support to the Joint Mission by stating that all the security institutions should subordinate themselves to a civilian-led transition government that will be produced by the AU-ECOWAS mission. The UN Security Council further averred that step should be taken to restore constitutional law and order through inclusive consultation with all relevant stakeholders in Burkina Faso. It, however, warned that the transition government should drive the country towards a credible and transparent election that would lead to democratic Burkina Faso.

The Mediation team met with all the stakeholders at Libya hotels in the country's capital, Ouagadougou on November 5, 2014. The stakeholders also met Colonel Zida, civil society organisations (CSO), and political party leaders. The meeting was tense as some of the stakeholders walked out, but the mediation team was able to bring them back and open a line of dialogue for the restoration of democratic institutions in the country. The diplomatic shuttle of the mission paid off when the stakeholder reached a consensus on the composition of the

transition government, its powers and term. In other words, the following agreement was unanimously accepted as a framework for resolving the political impasse in the country in the middle of November 2014:

- 1 Commencement of inclusive consultation among political party leaders, representatives of religious, Civil Society Organisations, traditional leaders, and the military to work out the composition of a transitional government
- 2.Urgently designate a suitable eminent civilian to lead the transition.
- 3.Immediately lift the suspension of the Constitution to enable the Constitutional Council declare power vacancy and facilitate the establishment of a transitional government.
- 4.Made provision for the security and protection of all Burkinabes, including political party leaders, members of the Government and National Assembly, and protect human rights and property.

The AU-ECOWAS mediated meeting was concluded with the sharing of the portfolios. The Mission and the stakeholders created 26 political offices, out of which 6 described as strategic were allocated to the military. The positions included the Prime minister and defence occupied by Lt. Col. Zida; Mines, Communication, and Interior ministries. Other members were drawn from civil society groups and a medley of political parties (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/11/burkina-faso-appoints-transitional-government>)

The transitional government was, however, headed by a renowned diplomat and former minister, Mr. Michel Kafando who severed as both the president and the minister of foreign affairs. Consequently, a decree was issued to give legal backing to the transition government. Western diplomats have expressed reservations about a strong army presence in the transitional government and advised against the appointment of Zida as prime minister. Under the terms of a transitional charter agreement, neither Zida nor Kafando is eligible to run for president next year (Reuters-Lewis and Bonkougou, 2014)

Conclusion

The study revealed the dynamics of the political trajectories of Burkina Faso since independence in the 1960s. The country within the period witnessed instability caused by the political leaders making wrong choices

that culminated even in the pauperisation of the majority of the people and underdevelopment. Given the fact the country also encountered military Coup d' état and Counter coup d' état, the road to peaceful and democratic governance became a difficult task with the country drifting into autocracy and dictatorship. The emergence of Captain Compaore in 1987 following the killing of Captain Thomas Sankara established long years of dictatorship.

Despite futile attempts to adopt multi-party democratic governance in the late 1990s, President Compaore and his allies still dominated the political space. Although elections were conducted, it was a mere academic exercise because the ruling political party of President Compaore predetermined the outcome. The aftermath of the largely not free and fair elections made most people to lose faith in the process. This seeming loss of faith in the electoral system by most of the citizens and the seeming unwillingness of President Compaore to relinquish power manifested in his attempts to alter the term limits which would allow him to contest for the presidency in 2015. The majority of people including the opposition political parties, civil society organisations, trade unions, and other interest groups were alarmed by his new designs which eventually culminated in nationwide protests in October 2014.

The unprecedented dimension the anti-Compaore protests took made President Compaore resign and flee to Cote d' Ivoire on October 30, 2014. The vacuum created by the resignation of Compaore which ought to have been filled by the speaker of the parliament, was usurped by the military. The military takeover further exacerbated the conflict which led to the intervention of AU and ECOWAS. The intervention of AU-ECOWAS which was supported by the UN, EU, US, Canada and several Western nations demonstrated the effectiveness and efficiency of African led interventions in African affairs. The conflict which was successfully resolved lead to the inauguration of a transition government under the headship of a civilian by the AU backed ECOWAS mediation team further demonstrated that Africans can resolve their problems as well as promote democratic governance in the continent.

In a nutshell, the paper revealed that the intervention of the AU-ECOWAS mission after a two-week deliberation with the stakeholders was able to successfully install a civilian, Michel Kafando led transition government. The efforts of the mission team no doubt promoted constitutionalism and restoration of law and order as well as democratic governance in the country. The intervention of AU-ECOWAS also

pointed to the fact that Africans are capable and competent in managing local challenges through African solutions.

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