

Burkina Faso

Status Index (Democracy: 5.27 / Market economy: 4.57) 4.92		Management Index 4.43	
HDI	0.317	Population	12.4 mn
GDP per capita (\$, PPP)	1,174	Population growth¹	2.6 %
Unemployment rate	-	Women in Parliament	11.7 %
UN Education Index	0.16	Poverty²	44.9 %
		Gini Index	48.2 (1998)
Source: UNDP: Human Development Report 2005. Figures for 2003 unless otherwise indicated. ¹ Annual growth between 1975 and 2003. ² People living below \$ 1 a day (1990- 2003).			

A. Executive summary

The government failed to acknowledge or implement democratic institutions. Pressure exercised by civil society on government affected their acceptance of dissenting views. Market economy reforms resulted from pressure exerted by donor institutions.

While no elections were held during the period under review, the government was forced to grapple with the consequences of 2002's parliamentary elections. Having lost a two-thirds majority, President Blaise Compaoré and the ruling Congrès pour la démocratie et le progrès (CDP) were increasingly subject to opposition criticism. Together with extra-parliamentary organizations, opposition parties were capable of challenging the government more frequently and in ways previously impossible.

The list of reproaches was, and is, long: Many Burkinabé, including those in the army, questioned Compaoré's involvement in intra-regional conflicts and weapons and diamond trafficking. The president and his followers responded to these criticisms by slandering and intimidating journalists and political actors, starting investigations and trials, and even permitting acts of violence against their opponents. These measures have fueled the opposition's ire, both within and beyond parliament.

The diverse population has increasingly challenged the government and CDP leaders.

Slight gains in Burkina Faso's economic development have yet to bear enough fruits to combat the sense among the population that they have been denied the means of securing a better future. Accommodating a large number of Burkinabé from Côte d'Ivoire has burdened Burkina Faso's social and administrative structures considerably and further increased existing poverty. The current exodus is often blamed on Compaoré's interventions in neighboring countries. Discussion

of punitive measures against Compaoré have yet to be substantiated, which reflects the limits of Burkina Faso's rule of law.

The institutional framework for a market economy has improved. Debt reduction following the completion of the HIPC initiative provided needed relief. Acknowledging the government's efforts, the donor community has released new funds.

Elections in 2005 will serve as a litmus test for the state of democracy in Burkina Faso.

B. History and characteristics of transformation

When Upper Volta (renamed Burkina Faso in 1983) achieved independence from France in 1960, it soon lapsed into authoritarian rule. The first republic under President Maurice Yaméogo proved to be a repressive, corrupt single-party system. Following a popular uprising in 1966, General Sangoulé Lamizana led a military coup and ruled until 1980. Until 1987, Burkina Faso alternated between military and civilian governments, with military putsches in 1980, 1982, 1983.

Whereas the first coup d'état may be described as a palace revolution, the putsch of 1983, led by Captain Thomas Sankara, was of a different nature. The aim in 1983 was to transform the country through revolutionary socialism, or at least populism. The coup ushered in changes to Burkinabé society that continue to influence political actors. A motto of self-reliance during the Sankara period mobilized the rural population to focus on basic interests and needs. The dynamic and occasionally intolerant activism of the Sankara era prompted resistance and bitterness among those whose privileges were threatened, both within Burkina Faso and beyond.

Following Sankara's assassination in 1987, the character of reforms changed radically, as democratic transformation gradually began. One of the key leaders of the 1987 coup, Blaise Compaoré, assumed power. Pledging not to alter the prevailing ideological framework established by Sankara, "rectification" came to define the new government's controlled reforms.

Compaoré consolidated power by continuing with agrarian reform, liberalizing the economy, and encouraging private initiatives and civil rights. He also sought to re-integrate the urban middle class as well as traditional and religious authorities into the system by creating a special council. Compaoré became party leader, defense minister, head of government and parliament, underlining the continued autocratic character of his regime. Advanced reforms were introduced under strong domestic pressure, particularly from unions, following the statutory

legalization and establishment of several new parties that had been tolerated since 1990. A new constitution was approved in 1991.

The first presidential elections, held in December 1991, led to a boycott by the opposition. Despite low voter turnout (less than 25%), the elections officially confirmed the president in his office; his party won the 1992 parliamentary elections with an overwhelming majority. Thus, within a few years following Sankara's assassination, Burkina Faso had a formally democratic system.

The 1997 landslide victory of the ruling party, which had since been renamed *Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* (CDP), minimized the opposition's political influence. New laws and constitutional changes introduced since indicate regression toward an authoritarian regime. However, as the regime grew increasingly repressive, civil society gained in power as hundreds of NGOs, one of Africa's strongest human rights movements, trade unions, students and women's associations used their remaining liberties to express their dissatisfaction with the government. At the same time, the opposition recovered gradually from the shock of defeat in 1997. The assassination of the well-known journalist Norbert Zongo resulted in a massive political protest that shook the regime. Civil society and opposition parties were galvanized to demand justice and an end to 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. Indeed, the president's party lost considerable power in the 2002 elections, retaining only 57 of 111 seats in parliament. A "non retroactive" change to the constitution in 2000 re-established a two term limit (suppressed three years before) but allows Compaoré to run for another term in 2005; Compaoré is expected to win the 2005 presidential election

Since independence, Burkina Faso has been ranked one of the poorest countries in the world. Until the late 1980s, the state was the dominant player in an economy in which approximately 90% of the population made their living from agriculture and livestock. The rural population lived almost exclusively in a subsistence economy, although food shortages were frequent. Burkina Faso has been heavily dependent on international aid.

During Sankara's attempts at revolutionary reorganization, development policy focused on rural areas to improve social and physical infrastructure (especially health and education), and foster industry. Efforts to reduce dependence on foreign aid stemmed from his understanding of national pride, self-reliance and the mobilization of communities. Economic policy was reoriented following a move to open the country politically in the late 1980s.

A structural adjustment program, developed together with the IMF and World Bank, was implemented in 1991 and extended in 1993 and 1996. Dramatic economic and institutional reforms included the liberalization of domestic and foreign trade (particularly agricultural products), the privatization of state-owned

enterprises, tax reform, and the reform of public enterprises and the banking sector.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, average economic growth rates kept pace with the rate of population growth, improving progressively to a peak of 7.5% in 1996. A degree of social cushioning from the structural adjustment program was achieved in some areas, but reform implementation was particularly painful for the poor. Improvements in macroeconomic data did not spell an increase in the standard of living for most citizens. Many of them depend very much on the remittances from relatives working and living abroad, including more than two million Burkinabé in Côte d'Ivoire, frequently second or third generations. With the outbreak of civil war in 2001, at least 500,000 Burkinabé were forced to flee, increasing social and economic problems in Burkina Faso.

C. Assessment

1. Democracy

Political transformation in Burkina Faso has progressed in some areas. Several NGOs play an important role in expressing needs and goals and employ all legal and/or tolerated means of doing so. Shortcomings persist particularly in rule of law and institutional stability; some indicators of democratic stability have shown regression. However, the opportunities for progress have increased through the changes resulting from legislative elections.

1.1. Stateness

The state's monopoly on the use of force is largely intact. However, during the period under review, violent militias active primarily under the orders of the government elite have threatened security. The return of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire has resulted in a crime rate increase. The state has failed to adequately integrate and monitor the refugees.

Although Burkina Faso has a relatively high degree of ethnic diversity, the definition of and qualifications for citizenship are not politically relevant. All citizens have the same rights, church and state are separated, and the political process is secularized. Recent protests against government measures took place throughout the country, despite regional affiliations.

More than 50% of the Burkinabé are adherents of traditional beliefs. Muslims make up roughly 35% of the population and Christians, mostly Roman Catholics, comprise the rest. There are no tensions between the religious groups. Islamic fundamentalists have not yet influenced the Islamic communities, although

returnees from Nigeria or refugees from the Côte d'Ivoire might direct their frustration toward radical Muslim groups. Whereas the Roman Catholic Church is rather liberal and tolerates syncretism, the Christian hard-liners who decry African traditions are generally fundamentalists with American connections, such as the 'Assemblés de Dieu'. Most of their followers can be found in the urban middle to lower-middle class and very often among younger employees in public services. Nevertheless, the secular character of the state is clear and not threatened substantially by any government or civic interference.

A basic state infrastructure exists throughout the country, but shows functional deficiencies in many areas.

1.2. Political participation

The constitution guarantees all citizens the right to elect officeholders through direct, general, uniform and free elections. The right to vote and to run for office is guaranteed. The legislative elections of 2002 were the first to follow preliminary changes to election laws and thus characterized as largely transparent and fair.

Generally, the elected government has the power to govern. However, the military can act as a veto power should the civilian government dare to curtail some of its considerable privileges. Military coup attempts have been recorded periodically, most recently in October 2003. However, it remains unclear whether these reports are true or manipulated by the government. There is some dissatisfaction within the armed forces about Compaoré's foreign adventures. Much depends on the president's maneuvers to secure his re-election and whether he will instrumentalize the army for his purposes. The extent to which army officers influence political decisions or exercise veto powers is unknown. However, retired army members often play an important role in NGOs as they are educated and possess technical-organizational experience.

Political and civic groups have the right to associate and assemble freely—a right exercised extensively by the population. One of the most important groups is the large, occasionally militant trade union, Confédération Générale des Travailleurs Burkinabé (CGTB). Founded in 1988, the CGTB insists on democratic rights and opposes harsh conditions imposed by international finance institutions.

As a rule, the government respects the freedom of assembly guaranteed by the constitution. However, it has repeatedly attempted to curtail citizens' rights to demonstrate and strike—albeit with only limited success. Ethnic cleavages have almost no impact in the dynamics of civil society.

The government restricts freedom of the press and opinion to a certain degree. According to the Global Press Freedom Survey, Burkina Faso ranks 88th of 193

countries ('partly free', value 39). In random cases, reports critical of the government result in press bans, and there is occasional self-censoring by journalists.

The delicate status of press freedom is currently challenged by the government's massive PR activities, which tap tremendous foreign sources, as seen in the case of contributions from Liberia's toppled dictator Taylor.

1.3. Rule of law

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 broad 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 process is inefficient and limited significantly.

The judicial system rests mostly on laws introduced by colonial authorities. Attempts during the Sankara period to merge former colonial laws with modified customary laws (see: Ministère de la Justice, 1985: *La Justice Populaire au Burkina Faso*) have since been abandoned or diluted. However, in minor cases, particularly in local communities, chiefs/priests (*chefs de terre*) and the councils of elders continue to play an important role.

Civil liberties are guaranteed. There is a large number of NGOs and a diverse media landscape in Burkina Faso. The country's literature and films also point to a considerable freedom of expression. As the key platform for the African film industry, Burkina Faso cannot afford to gag its creative authors. However, police harassment and intimidation of journalists can be observed frequently.

There are also shortcomings in the judicial branch. The judiciary is formally independent and institutionally distinct, but dominated and politicized in practice by the executive branch; its performance is considerably impaired. The Burkinabé judicial system suffers from deeply rooted corruption resulting from inefficiency, political pressure, poor equipment and a lack of education. Fighting the rampant political and bureaucratic corruption is one of the public's main demands; the call for criminal prosecution of corrupt officeholders has taken center stage.

Freedom of religion and a ban on discrimination guaranteed by the constitution are generally respected. However, a small elite employs repression, torture and murder to prevent exposure of its illegal activities. As public actors are not obliged to adhere to legal standards, a culture of impunity has developed. The government has responded to public pressure and placed this issue on the political agenda. However, appropriate political and legal measures have yet to

show significant change. As witnessed by the protracted persecution of Norbert Zongo's murderers, convincing action has been slow in coming.

1.4. Stability of democratic institutions

Democratic institutions are functional only to a limited degree, and do not have intra- or inter-organizational stability. Stability suffers greatly from shortcomings in the rule of law and the lack of both qualified personnel and materials. Acceptance and support for democratic institutions is low among large segments of the Burkinabé population; democratic institutions are nearly irrelevant for the rural population. Parliament in particular is generally viewed as powerless, although the increase in opposition parties has increased transparency. Several members of parliament work with NGOs, which provides them another opportunity to challenge questionable government decisions.

The army is not reliable in guaranteeing stability and security. Compaoré's interference in various African conflicts (Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire) have been the cause of great concern among some officers and soldiers. As noted, there have been repeated displays of discontent in the army and open protests.

1.5. Political and social integration

The number of parties is not easy to survey. In September 2004, an official report of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization listed 103 registered political parties. However, many of these were the result of splitting, renaming or mushrooming. While parliament's 10 parties improved their position following the last election, they continue to play a minor role in decision-making, particularly vis à vis the dominant ruling CDP, which holds an absolute majority in the National Assembly. Political parties as a whole remained weak and unable to serve effectively as a mediator between society and the state. In preparation for the presidential election in 2005, 16 of the more radical opposition parties have formed a new alliance, *Alternance 2005*. The opposition as a whole is increasingly unified, as it is subject to accusations from the government of being unpatriotic with regard to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the exodus of compatriots. Galvanized by a shared suspicion of the regime's manipulation of both the judiciary and electoral process, the opposition parties are cooperating more closely.

Non-parliamentary groups and an active civil society develop and articulate societal concerns. Pastoral letters read and published by Catholic bishops are key in crises.

Burkina Faso has a diverse landscape of interest groups dominated by unions, student associations and human rights organizations. The quality of

representation is high. Despite a rather small labor force, labor unions in particular are well-organized. The network of interest groups cooperating with one another has become highly politicized; they have the power to coerce the state to be more cooperative.

Civic self-organization in Burkina Faso operates independently of the state and must be viewed against the background of the broad landscape of interest groups. In many areas, it takes on a representative function that government institutions are not able to perform. Civic organizations are cooperative and strategic; they generally operate under principles of self-regulation, and are a voice of political concerns. Highly integrated, civil society organizations in Burkina Faso strengthen democratic action and consciousness. They benefit from an incalculable partnership system with NGOs and considerable support received from migrants.

The government responded to public outrage over human rights by instituting a "Council of the Wise" in 1999. The council recommended a truth commission be appointed to investigate crimes committed by the government under President Compaoré.

2. Market Economy

Burkina Faso's level of socio-economic development has made some progress, and the institutional framework for market economic activity improved slightly. However, shortcomings persist in numerous areas such as the absolute level of development and the institutional framework of competition, as well as in the sustainability of economic growth.

2.1. Level of socioeconomic development

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. Social marginalization is severe and structurally reinforced. Key indicators show minimal progress. GDP per capita is at 1.100 (UNDP Human Development Report 2004); Burkina Faso ranks 175th of 177 on the HDI. During the period under review, the gap in income distribution and poverty rate—particularly in urban areas—increased further.

The literacy rate remains very low. In 1990, when the enthusiasm of the Sankara era had yet to fully dissipate, the rate of enrollment for those above age 15 was 16.3%; the rate dropped to 12.8% by 2002. Although the government promotes education for girls, women are still at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to their access to education. Two-thirds of all women participate in the economy, yet continue to be underrepresented politically. In 2002's parliamentary elections, only 12 women were elected to a parliament of 111 members. Existing

developmental imbalances between regions did not diminish during the period observed.

2.2. Organization of the market and competition

The institutional framework for free market competition is weak. The 2005 Index of Economic Freedom describes Burkina Faso as “mostly unfree”. This is surprising as Burkina Faso was granted generous foreign loans and grants during the years under review. Responding to pressure from the IMF and World Bank, foreign trade has been increasingly liberalized. However, the process is by no means complete in several sectors and protectionism is rampant. In addition to tariffs, trade barriers exist in the form of licenses and fees.

The government’s decision to continue plans to privatize important sectors (oil imports, power utilities, cotton) has buttressed confidence in the government’s will to adhere to its program of structural reform. However, the formation of monopolies and oligopolies is not regulated consistently. To ensure macroeconomic stability, the government intends to proceed with the partial privatization of the Société Nationale d’hydrocarbures (Sonabhy, oil and oil products) and the Société Nationale d’électricité du Burkina (Sonabel). The monopoly held by the privatized Société Nationale des fibres et textiles (Sofitex) was broken in 2004 with the formation of two new cotton enterprises, one belonging to a French company (Dagris), the other Swiss-owned (Faso Coton). Increased dynamism is expected as the areas under cultivation have been extended. An underdeveloped ginning capacity spells delays in collecting crops. However, a new mill is under construction. Unrest among casual workers has brought about labor disputes over payments. There are only a few common ground rules for market participants and regulation is inconsistent. The informal sector is expansive; a sizeable proportion of economic activity takes place on the black market.

Regional trade was expanded when a common foreign tariff was adopted as part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). However, regional trade has suffered significantly due to the conflicts in Côte d’Ivoire during the past two years.

Previously regulated and controlled by the government, the banking system continues to undergo restructuring. Recent attempts to tap the working population’s cash and informal sector have yet to prove successful. Burkina Faso's banking system is supervised by common central bank serving all members of the WEAMU.

2.3. Currency and price stability

Burkina Faso benefits from its membership in the CFA franc zone. The common, stable currency—a rarity in Sub-Saharan Africa—has fixed parity with the euro. Strict fiscal and monetary regulations within the WEAMU, which plays more or less the role of a central bank, keep domestic inflation low by African standards, approximately 2.5%. Because price development is highly dependent on the annual crop yield, inflation rates are subject to considerable fluctuation (2000: -0.3%; 2001: 4.9%; 2002: 2.2; 2003:2.0; 2004: -0.3%) according to IMF International Financial Statistics). However, the (currently) strong euro will help mitigate the high prices of imported oil.

Foreign exchange reserves have steadily increased during the evaluation period: 2002: \$313 mio, 2003: \$435 mio, 2004: \$465 mio (est.) according to the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU). Burkina Faso's high trade deficit continued, reaching – 75.70 bn CFA in the 3rd quarter of 2003, according to the EIU. This can be attributed to the decreasing prices for cotton and the diminished remittances from Côte d'Ivoire. External debt continued to increase to high levels. By adherence to IMF guidelines, Burkina Faso became eligible for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) Initiatives I (1997) and II (2000), and several debt reductions starting in 2000, which lowered the total debt burden somewhat. The HIPC initiative is scheduled to provide approximately \$112 mio in 2005 – 2006 for poverty reduction.

2.4. Private property

Due to legislation in the past decade, land generally is the state's property and leased to farmers and other interested parties or institutions. These measures are intended to prevent arbitrary acts by traditional authorities, accommodate the increasingly diverse population and facilitate decentralization.

Property rights and the acquisition of property are adequately defined under the law, but weaknesses in the judicial system complicate or prevent their implementation.

The privatization of state-owned enterprises progressed steadily during the evaluation period as a result of pressure from the IMF and the World Bank. By 2004, 26 state enterprises had been privatized; several remained on offer and more than a dozen had been placed in liquidation.

2.5. Welfare regime

The wage-dependent portion of the population is very small and is essentially the only group to benefit from a modest social security system. Existing social welfare laws provide pensions, disability insurance, occupational injury insurance

and health insurance. Workers and unions have demanded improved social welfare networks for years and made this a key issue of several strikes. Privatization and the liquidation of a number of enterprises and services have resulted in high job losses with little hope of compensation.

It is nearly possible for individuals to combat poverty alone, particularly in rural areas. Despite intensified government efforts, welfare services, medical care and access to sanitation remain poor. Women's access to higher education is promoted, yet the proportion of women in higher education remains far below that of men. Equal opportunity in access to public services exists in principle. However, the disabled are often subject to social and economic discrimination against which no legal protection exists. Survival for the disabled is frequently dependent entirely upon cooperation with well-organized beggars' organizations, particularly in Muslim areas.

2.6. Economic performance

Growth of per-capita GDP is fluctuating. During the period under review, the economy was sustained by the positive effects of the structural adjustment program: higher export revenues from cotton. The favorable CFA/euro exchange rate to the U.S. dollar could moderate some factors shaping economic conditions such as rainfall shortages, small harvests, increasing oil prices, a decrease in bank transfers from people living in exile, collapsing gold exports, political unrest, the rehabilitation of Burkina Faso from Côte d'Ivoire, government corruption and expenses incurred by military exploits in neighboring countries.

Despite forecasts of growth in 2001, Burkina Faso's economy remains small. A current account balance deficit of the previous could be improved. Limited economic activities in the formal sector curb the government's ability to levy taxes, which are decreasing anyhow. The debt service ratio and high expenditure for wages and salaries keep the budget deficit high and make it difficult to limit spending.

2.7. Sustainability

The government considers environmental issues selectively; this is in part due to the priority given environmental education during the Sankara period and NGO lobbying (both domestic and foreign). An extensive semi-nomadic economy and the need for fuel (wood) in urban areas make overgrazing and soil erosion key problems in Burkina Faso. Awareness of these issues has led to the pursuit of environmental sustainability. Implementation of the U.N. Desert Convention and recommendations of CILSS (*Comité permanent inter-Etats de lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel*) are prominent and often used as a reference in development.

However, the EU and several NGOs have been very critical of Burkina Faso's field trials with genetically modified seeds supplied by the U.S. companies Monsanto and Syngenta, which began in 2003.

The state system of primary, secondary and tertiary education remains inadequate despite increased investment and some improvements. School enrollment rates in the late 1990s were as follows: 41% in elementary schools, 10% at the secondary level, and only 1% at the university level. Permanent infrastructure and investment in science as well as research and development remain underdeveloped.

3. Management

The Burkinabé government has clearly progressed somewhat on the difficult track of transformation. However, it seems that most actions are the result of primarily domestic and foreign pressure rather than endogenous vision and foresight. With regard to democratic development, the government shows little enthusiasm for implementing decisions that may limit its power.

Profile of the Political System

Regime type:	<i>Democracy</i>	Constraints to executive authority:	1
System of government:	<i>Semi-presidential</i>	Electoral system disproportionality:	4.8
		Latest parliamentary election:	05.05.2002
		Effective number of parties:	3.3
1. Head of State:	<i>Blaise Compaoré</i>	Cabinet duration:	01/04-present
Head of Government:	<i>Paramanga Ernest Yonli</i>	Parties in government:	1
Type of government:	<i>unified government</i>		
		Number of ministries:	20
		Number of ministers:	21

Source: BTI team, based upon information by country analysts, situation in July 2005. Constraints to executive authority (1-6 max.) measures the institutional constraints posed by a federal or decentralized state, a second parliamentary chamber, referenda, constitutional and judicial review and the rigidity of the constitution. Electoral disproportionality (Gallagher index) reflects the extent to which electoral rules are majoritarian (high values) or proportional: $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i - p_i)^2}$; v_i is the share of votes gained by party i ; p_i is the share of parliamentary mandates controlled by party i . For presidential/ semi-presidential systems, the geometric mean of presidential election and parliamentary election disproportionality is calculated. Effective number of parties denotes the number of parties represented in the legislature, taking into consideration their relative weight (Laakso/Taagepera index) = $1 / (\sum p_i^2)$; p_i is the share of parliamentary mandates controlled by party i . Number of ministries/ ministers denotes the situation on 1 January 2005.

3.1. Level of difficulty

The level of difficulty for transformation toward democracy and a market economy is high. One key issue here is the tenacity of the current government and its leader Blaise Compaoré in maintaining his hold on power. Emphasizing his implementation of structural reforms that have been viewed positively by the donor community, Compaoré exploits his relationship with the donor community

to present himself as indispensable to attracting foreign aid. Compaoré and his followers therefore often ignore complaints and criticism. Consequently, many people fail to view the established democratic institutions as instruments of a better future. Popular satisfaction with and support of democracy shows a regression.

Nevertheless, structural constraints on the government are massive. An already extremely high poverty rate is further challenged by the need to accommodate hundreds of thousands of Burkinabé returning from Côte d'Ivoire, where they had been a source of support. Other constraints include a weak infrastructure and deteriorating climate conditions (soil erosion, desertification, locust plague in 2004, etc.). The prices for main exports cotton and cattle cannot be calculated in advance and the expected gold boom does not necessarily spell reliable benefits for Burkina Faso.

Clearly, civil society traditions are relatively strong in Burkina Faso. The fluctuation and fragmentation of existing political parties do not reflect these traditions. It remains unclear even among scholars as to which objectives each of the 100 political parties represent. One of Burkinabé society's key strengths lies in its numerous organizations and associations, some of which are rooted in pre-colonial society. These organizations include the "groupements villageois" and youth associations, originally self-help groups or warrior companies. Key purveyors of messages spread via word-of-mouth and public appeals, trade unions, student unions and a wide spectrum of literacy, environmental and women's advocacy groups, such as trader and professional organizations, are vital to civil society in Burkina Faso. The network of hundreds of NGOs with local or sectoral development objectives and sister-city/village relations through foreign organizations are also important. Many NGO members are also political actors or business leaders; personal ties to NGOs are thus common. Clearly, NGO networking with foreign groups providing funds may exacerbate corruption. The *Bureau de Suivi des ONG (BSONG)* no longer acts as a monitor in this capacity.

Ethnic and religious conflicts are infrequent. However, dissatisfaction with the government may increase significantly should the government continue to abuse its power and/or fail to punish politically motivated crimes.

Worth emphasizing: as is typical for a Sahel country in which the seasonal movement of livestock is commonplace, herders' search for pastures often leads to clashes with local farming communities.

3.2. Steering capability

Compaoré's government pursued an economic reform strategy with goals appropriate for the country's problems, yet was not very successful in achieving

some of them. As implemented, the reform policy was associated with high costs for certain sectors of the population and welfare improvements were made available only to a small elite; improvements are not expected for the majority in the short or medium term.

Although reforms may be well considered, properly prepared and legally enacted, they often fail to become fully implemented in practical terms. In many cases, the government simply does not have the requisite capacity to supervise and monitor results. Furthermore, decentralization and a culture of self-help translate into measures being left to local institutions or organizations for implementation. Often these organizations' financial support is dependent upon foreign donors and valued as a source of relief for the state budget.

A limited consistency and coherence is detected among individual measures aimed to facilitate democracy and a market economy. Democratic reforms have been partial and shortsighted, reaching only as far as needed to appease looming social unrest and intense popular pressure. For the most part, reforms reflected the Compaoré administration's self-serving strategies rather than the long-term aim of furthering democracy. However, civilian pressure resulted in a somewhat long-term democracy-oriented policy manifest in constitutional amendments and changes made to election laws. Related to this, some members of moderate factions within the ruling party helped to further reform implementation. In this regard, the political leadership does often react with flexibility, as evidenced by pay increases sanctioned by the government in December 2004 following trade union protests.

3.3. Resource efficiency

The effective use of available human, financial and organizational resources was observed only in very few areas. Immense amounts of resources are wasted because of corruption and the lack of infrastructure, coordination and official monitoring. Furthermore, the majority of the state's resources are distributed to a small elite via patronage networks. The extravagant building projects in Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso show that more funds than ever before have accumulated in urban areas.

Generally, conditions set by the IMF and World Bank have been met, and reform plans implemented on schedule. Public services are deficient in many areas, particularly in education, healthcare and infrastructure. Further economic transformation is hindered or complicated because of these deficiencies. The same is true for the promotion of entrepreneurship among lower or medium income groups. The Burkinabé in diaspora, particularly beyond Africa, is not being tapped enough for business purposes; humanitarian issues dominate contacts.

Similar problems arise in terms of political capital. Many Burkinabé respond with caution or distrust to government appeals for them to contribute knowledge, human and economic resources to meet development objectives. The fruits of their good will have more often than not been reaped by others. Consequently, directed reforms are often met with skepticism.

This skepticism on the part of the population explains conflicting objectives, even in cases where the government may show far-sightedness in seeking necessary changes. Peasants and urban labor fear that their efforts are misused for the benefit of a small, impenetrable elite.

As corruption has increased everywhere throughout the country, the international donor community has moved the fight against corruption to the top of the demands list. While minimal progress in integrity has been made (e.g., party-financing legislation, judicial reform, creation of the High Authority for the Coordination of the Fight Against Corruption), visible success in the fight against corruption has yet to materialize. Cultural resources, such as the relative willingness of the people to self-organize and take responsibility for themselves, play a very minor role in the government's reform policy.

3.4. Consensus-building

The consensus on democracy and a market economy among key political actors is driven by opportunism rather than deep conviction. Consequently, implementation is carried out with reluctance and in response to civil society and foreign pressure. Given the opportunity, the actors currently in power would prefer to turn the wheels back to autocratic rule. Burkina Faso's traditional society and the various regimes following independence were famous for their ability to build consensus in a wide spectrum of conflicts. Currently, polarization characterizes politics in Burkina Faso. Critics refer to the more visionary Sankara era, traditional communities' regulation of matters, or universal principles in the context of the United Nations or French Revolution.

Exactly how the exclusion or co-option of anti-democratic veto actors takes place is unclear. Clearly, those who do not favor rapid democratization in the sense of increased transparency are within the ruling system. Evidence of co-option is seen in the culture of impunity surrounding affairs such as the assassination of Sankara or Zongo. Those challenging the regime by legitimate means, such as NGOs or labor groups, are excluded and frequently slandered for being "anti-democratic".

In many areas, key political and social actors differ on the goals of development and how to attain these goals. The Sankara era continues to define Burkina Faso. The former president's revolutionary reform policies, which aimed for an African socialist society and a grass-roots based economic system, live on in

the memory of many Burkinabé. These ideals, sometimes considered reflective of a “true” democracy of fair distribution with a strong farming community, remain popular; market economy transformation is compared to these ideals with disapproval. It should come as no surprise that a minimum of nine parties define themselves as “Sankarist.”

The majority of the population has yet to taste the fruits of progress toward a socially responsible market economy. At the same time, they suffer the negative effects of privatization, restructuring and liberalization, and feel helpless vis-à-vis the tremendous advertising campaigns for goods and services – essentially things which they themselves used to produce or carry out within their self-determined structures.

Forging a consensus among actors on the methods and goals to shape the economy was nearly impossible. While the government managed to prevent the escalation of conflicts (wages and salaries were increased to avoid unrest), it failed to succeed in reducing existing conflicts. For example, the legal procedures against those accused of instigating Norbert Zongo’s murder is still pending. The same is true of several other crimes.

Another significant issue is the permanent friction between semi-nomadic groups—particularly Fulani—and farmers caused by overgrazing. In some cases, government institutions have been incapable of settling violent conflicts peacefully.

Although the willingness of the government and the parliamentary or extra-parliamentary opposition to co-operate with one another remained low during the evaluation period, numerous civic organizations succeeded in exerting considerable influence over the political agenda shaping economic and social welfare policy. Progress made in consensus-building thus far has in no way satisfied the need for a more comprehensive policy to come to terms with the past. Burkina Faso has yet to establish anything resembling a “truth and reconciliation commission” to scrutinize human rights violations of the past.

3.5. International Cooperation

Working within an international context is a key element of Burkina Faso’s statehood. More than 30 ethnic groups live beyond the state’s borders, nomads and migrant workers depend on pastures and jobs in neighboring countries, no fight against desertification is possible without regional collaboration, seaport access is dependent upon agreements with neighbors to the south, and the CFA franc pegs the country to the other states with the same currency.

Improvements in Burkina Faso's economic transformation balance since the early 1990s have been linked directly to intense cooperation with national and

international donors. At the top of the list are the World Bank subsidiary IDA, the European Union, the African Development Fund (AfDF) and France, which is a key bilateral partner. In December 2004, Burkina Faso became the 38th country in Sub-Saharan Africa to receive preferential access to U.S. markets under the Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), thus widening the growing influence of the United States in the region.

Without assistance from external actors, most of which arrived as grants or loans with favorable conditions, as well as comprehensive debt relief, economic development would have made very limited progress in many areas because of the extremely difficult structural conditions. 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. In response to massive pressure exerted by international donors, Compaoré reluctantly announced the decision to monitor weapons imports in late 2000, after a U.N. report named Burkina Faso as a center for weapons and diamond trafficking.

Burkina Faso's economically and politically important relationship with its closest regional partner, Côte d'Ivoire, suffered greatly during the period under review. Burkina Faso has proven a reliable and cooperative partner in economic affairs with other countries, and international and regional organizations. During the period examined, Burkina Faso actively and successfully fostered economic cooperation. However, Burkina Faso's record in other areas is mixed. After having won great respect for his role as an active mediator in African conflicts such as that between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Compaoré sabotaged this respect through his problematic involvement in regional conflicts in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and in the Côte d'Ivoire.

4. Trend of Development

The time under review is characterized by an increase of democratic, mostly non-parliamentary forces confronting the government's authoritarian, arbitrary methods of rule and neglect of key components of democratic and economic development.

4.1. Democratic development

To some degree, democratic transformation has progressed from 2000 to 2005. The improved democratic character of the 2002 elections and the greater unity among the opposition has prompted a simultaneously more careful and in part more aggressive government response. Positive signs in economic development

as well as the good will of donor institutions are being used to keep assistance flowing. A sophisticated public relations campaign has facilitated the notion that slight improvements in economic development are the sole merit of President Compaoré. Clearly, this is a strategy aimed at winning the 2005 presidential election.

Burkina Faso's stateness was never threatened during the period under review. Even the exodus of Burkinabé from the Côte d'Ivoire and consequent sharp fall in remittances has been manageable.

In terms of recognizing civil liberties, the government engages in dialogue and cooperative behavior for tactical reasons only. The trials with genetically modified seeds were not up for discussion with farmers or their elected representatives. Nor was government willing to discuss openly its questionable role in conflicts in neighboring countries or in diamond trafficking. Citizens and members of the media demanding clear answers have been slandered as traitors.

A clearly functional rule of law lags behind the constitutional mandate. Trials are protracted and diluted, the prosecution of corruption is rare. Corruption functions as the lubricant of many political decisions. A critical UNDP assessment attributed Burkina Faso's critical problems to this phenomenon (see PNUD 'Rapport sur le Développement Humain, Burkina Faso 2003). The report's recommendations may continue to influence foreign and domestic political actors, especially those in Burkina Faso supporting the opposition parties, or members of NGOs and human rights' associations.

Democratic institutions in Burkina Faso have yet to reach the consolidation phase. The majority of Burkina Faso citizens show little trust in these institutions nor do they expect the judiciary to be effective. Although no more than 20% of the population has a competent knowledge of French, cases are conducted in French and the illiterate are forced to rely occasionally on costly and intransparent translations.

4.2. Market economy development

The fundamental indicators of development show slight improvement during the period under review. The same applies to the institutional framework for a market economy. However, shortcomings in the economy and competition remain. Macroeconomic development lost some of its momentum as compared to the previous period reviewed. Nevertheless, the management program for the economy has been approved by the IMF and has thus strengthened the country's negotiations with donors. Donors have pledged up to \$2 bn over 2004-06 in support of the Poverty Reduction Program.

Burkina Faso's level of development stagnated during the period under review. Although Burkina Faso's HDI rating changed by +0.011 from 1995 (0.312) to

2000 (0.323), it declined by -0.021 from 2000 to 2002. One explanation may be the burden of accommodating more than 500,000 refugees from the Côte d'Ivoire and the blocked access to Ivorian port facilities.

The institutional framework for a market economy has improved to a small extent. Privatization of state-owned companies has progressed, and new investors have entered the cotton industry.

According to the IMF, Burkina Faso is making satisfactory progress: growth rates have fluctuated between 4.6 and 8.0% since 2001, inflation is not a problem thanks to the strict monetary policy of the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO). Burkina Faso also benefits from foreign debt relief under the HIPC initiative, although transparency in funds management is not complete.

Development of annual indicators (2000-2004)

	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^b
Real GDP growth (%)	1.6	6.8	4.6	8.0	4.8
Consumer price inflation (;%)	-0.3	4.9	2.2	2.0	-0.3 ^a
Exports of goods fob (US\$ m)	206	223	245	326	381 ^c
Imports of goods fob (US\$ m)	518	509	548	685	860 ^c
Current account balance (US\$ m)	-	-291	-298	-259	-365
Foreign exchange reserves (exc. gold US\$ m)	244	261	313	435	465 ^c
Total external debt (US \$ m)	1.40	1.492	1.580	n/a	n/a
Exchange rate CFAfr:US\$ (av)	712.	733.0	697.0	581.2	528.3

^a actual, ^b official estimates, ^c Economist Intelligence Unit estimate; Source: Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report for Burkina Faso, Feb. 2005

D. Strategic perspective

As Joseph Ki-Zerbo, an old statesman and scholar, once commented, "Burkina Faso is a country of democrats without democracy."

Perhaps more so than any other African country, Burkina Faso is ripe for transformation. Not only has the population grown weary of military regimes, but also the short Sankara era inspired the country with vision and practical measures for the future. The Burkinabé 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 Burkinabé 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.

For many Burkinabé, Blaise Compaoré does not represent a better future. For the donor community, however, he is much more valuable than an unknown, inexperienced, likely contested and potentially radical leader.

Nevertheless, there are improvements observed in Burkina Faso. Civil society is very active and quick to point out shortcomings such as corruption, embezzlement, the lack of transparency and the weak judiciary.

More than 120,000 Burkinabé live abroad in Europe or America; their telephone calls, Internet and mail contacts as well as visits play a substantial role in influencing, at least informally, political events.

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 efficiency and effectiveness, stabilizing democratic representation, the continuation of market and competition development, and strengthening the rule of law. As long as the judiciary lacks independence and thus remains dysfunctional, it will act as a barrier to democratic development and reinforce the culture of impunity.

Some progress has been made in strengthening parliament. The CDP's loss of its two-thirds majority in the 2002 parliamentary elections is an important step toward democracy as it means the ruling party can no longer amend the constitution without the approval of the other parties. However, a constitutional amendment would be required to curtail the president's unfettered access to the security forces. The government's elite is using security forces increasingly to protect their political and economic interests with violence and crime.

The presidential election in 2005 is key. For the first time since transformation began, regime change is on the agenda, whether this be a successor from within CDP ranks or the opposition. Should Compaoré lose the presidential elections, attention will then focus on how well-prepared the opposition is to assume power. It remains unclear whether the opposition, particularly *Alternance 2005*, possesses the capacity and willingness to tackle reforms demanded by the population while implementing conditions stipulated by international donors.

The prospects for Burkina Faso's economy are not altogether gloomy. Higher yields in agriculture are expected thanks to improved technology and consultation. Gold mining and cotton are close seconds to agriculture in terms of growth. New gold mines are expected to contribute to GDP growth rates 5% and 5.6% in 2006.

Also of key importance: Côte d'Ivoire is gradually becoming less important as

Burkina Faso's main gateway to the outside world. Ghana has been drawing Burkina Faso's cargo to its geographically closer harbors. Discussions are currently underway for an improved road connection with Niger, which could divert portions of Burkina Faso's transportation of goods to the Trans-Saharan highway and Mediterranean, thus fulfilling a Sankara vision.

Clearly, these objectives cannot be met so long as the population must battle with day-to-day survival and remains excluded from a transparent political process.