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Conditions for Civilian Supremacy over the Military in Burkina Faso

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Abstract

Burkina Faso, like many African countries, has challenges in civil-military relations. There has never been a peaceful transition of power between two elected presidents since the independence of the country to date. In 56 years of independence, the country experienced six military coups, some very bloody, without mentioning the failed ones. In the same period of time, three civilians totaled only seven years as presidents, while the military, as presidents, ruled the country for 49 years; there is a need for change from military domination to military obedience to civilian political leaders. In a contributing effort to solve the issue, I argue that a concerted effort to set mechanisms, educate, and train the military and society on the professional norms of democratic civilian supremacy over the armed forces, will help prevent the Burkina Faso's military from interrupting civilian political rule. The paper discusses the theory of civilian supremacy or control of the military, the issue of civil-military relations in Burkina Faso, and, lastly makes some recommendations for change to establishing enduring civilian supremacy over the military in the country.

Conditions for Civilian Supremacy over the Military in Burkina Faso

A state's existence and stability is shaped by the relation between the civilian political authority and the military leaders. Such civil-military relations evolve over time, nonetheless, it does not evolve uniformly in the world. Western countries, except a few, experienced a smooth development of civil-military relations where the uniformed servicemen are fully subordinate to the civilian authority. On the other hand, in other parts of the globe, civilian political leaders have had a hard time dealing with their military counterpart.

In Africa, for instance, the military commanders do not easily obey the civilian political authority. After independence in the 1960s, the majority of Africa's newly independent countries experienced military involvement in politics throughout coups d'état. "The period between 1960 and 1970 and slightly beyond has generally been called the decade of coups in Africa."¹ "By 1985, approximately half of the sub-continent's states were led by military or civil-military governments. Other states also had records of predatory attacks by their military forces."² In West Africa and likewise in the whole continent, the military has experienced a repetitive cycle of coups, as mentioned Chukwudi G. Chidume, from the Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria, "once coups started in West Africa they became like a wild African bushfire. They swept through the entire subcontinent at an alarmingly high speed. They leapt through national borders as if those boundaries did not exist anymore."³

Thus, Burkina Faso (Upper-Volta before 1984), is not exempt from the phenomenon of military intervention into the political arena; it experienced military interventions into national politics through coups d'état. The relations between the

civilian political authorities and the military did not go well, leading to political instability. The armed forces, instead of staying away from the political game, jumped in regularly. In 56 years of independence to date, the country adopted four constitutions, on 27 November 1960⁴, 14 June 1970, 13 December 1977⁵, and 1 June 1991⁶. Six military coups, without mentioning the failed ones, have taken place.

The first military takeover occurred on 3 January 1966, led by Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana, then Chief of Staff of the National Armed Forces (NAF). He managed to stay in power for 14 years. The second military coup was conducted by Colonel Saye Zerbo, through the 'comité militaire pour le redressement et le progrès national' (military committee for adjustment and national progress), on 25 November 1980. Two years later, Captain Thomas Sankara made the third military coup, but refused to lead the country at that time; the 'comité du salut du peuple' (committee for people salvation) designated Major Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo to become president of the country⁷. Then, on 4 August 1983, Captain Thomas Sankara, aided by his friend Captain Blaise Compaoré, seized power and installed a Marxist system; the 'Conseil National de la Révolution' (National Council for the Revolution), the leading military organization, changed the name of the country from Upper-Volta to Burkina Faso⁸.

Thereafter, it was Captain Blaise Compaoré's turn to overthrow his own friend, Captain Sankara, in the 5th military coup, a bloody one that happened on 15 October 1987 during which Sankara was killed. He is the only president who died during a military coup. Compaoré brought back democracy in the country with the vote of the 4th constitution, but he amended the constitution many times to stay in power for 27 years. His last attempt to amend the constitution, provoked a national civil uprising that forced

him to leave power on 31 October 2014⁹. Then, a transitional president, Michel Kafando, was appointed to lead the country.

During the transition period, General Gilbert Diendéré, former Chief of Staff of former president Compaoré, tried to regain power by making the sixth military coup on 16 September 2015. Many civilian protestors were killed in the bloody coup that Diendéré himself called ‘the overdone coup’. This coup is still vivid in Burkinabes¹⁰ memories. Pressed by internal demonstrations, regional and international organizations, and world powers, like the U.S., Diendéré ceded power to the transitional president. Kafando organized presidential and parliamentary elections within a year. Then, the third civilian president, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, the second civilian elected in the country’s history, has been in office since January 2016. In sum, civil-military relations, in Burkina Faso’s history, since independence, is marked by military dominance on civilian political elite through military coups and counter-coups. The situation has to change from the armed forces ascendancy in politics to enduring civilian control.

This paper is an attempt to think through this issue. I argue that a concerted effort to educate and train the Armed Forces and society on the professional norms of democratic civilian supremacy over uniformed armed men, will contribute to making a positive change in civil-military relation in Burkina Faso and prevent the military from interrupting civilian political rule. The paper will explore the theory of civilian control of the military, discuss the issue of civil-military relations in Burkina Faso, and lastly make some recommendations, including the need for change, in the relationship between civilian political authority and the armed forces, and establishing enduring civilian supremacy over the armed forces.

Theory of Civilian Supremacy or Control

Civil-military relations is a broad subject discussed in academic and political field; politicians, military strategists, “political scientists, sociologists, philosophers, and historians as well as national security practitioners all bring their unique perspectives to the field.”¹¹ To understand the concept, the paper first makes a comprehensive definition of civil-military relations, then explores civil-military relations theory.

Definition of Civil-Military Relations

There is no unique definition of civil-military relations, and many scholars give their thoughts in the field; Rebecca L. Schiff, a scholar of military studies, explained that “Civil-military relations involves the drama between the armed forces of a particular nation, political elites, society at large, and institutions, with the importance of their interconnectedness often not fully realized until a dramatic climax.”¹² For James Burk, professor of sociology at Texas A&M University, the domain of civil-military relation “...includes direct and indirect dealings that ordinary people and institutions have with the military, legislative haggling over the funding, regulation, and use of the military, and complex bargaining between civilian and military elites to define and implement national security policy.”¹³

Then, Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen, assistant professor of political science at the University of Southern Denmark, affirms that “Civil-military relations encompass every aspect of social life, where people who are defined as soldiers or warriors have something to do with people who are defined as civilians.”¹⁴ “Scholars use the term to mean...the relationship between elite actors ...cooperation between civilian and military institutions for military issues ...or the relationship between the military and civil society groups.”¹⁵ Therefore, civil-military relations can be defined as the co-existence and

interactions between, on the one hand, the military as an institution and individuals in arms and on the other hand, states institutions, civilian leaders of the institutions, and people of a country, under harmonized preset rules.

Next, the paper will examine three selected theories, the 'normal' theory from Samuel P. Huntington, 'concordance theory' from Rebecca L. Schiff, and 'convergence theory' from Morrison Janowitz, in order to understand the core concept of civilian supremacy or control.

'Normal' Theory

One of the well-known theorists on civil-military relations of the 20th century is Samuel P. Huntington. In his book, *The Soldier and the State*, published in 1957, Huntington highlights his theory using what he calls subjective civilian control and objective civilian control. For him, civilian control is effective when the military power is lessened.¹⁶ Subjective civilian control emphasizes enhancing the power of a civilian group at the expense of the military; it empowers particular governmental institutions, particular social classes, and particular constitutional forms.¹⁷

In subjective civilian control, low levels of military professionalism result in the military and civilian spheres essentially overlapping due to the lack of distinction between their competencies and their similar interests. In addition, civilian groups may try to subordinate the military to their specific factional interests.¹⁸

Subjective control "...achieves its ends by civilianizing the military, making them the mirror of the state..."¹⁹

In contrast, "objective civilian control relied on the acceptance of the principle of civilian control as a key component of professionalism in exchange for some level of professional autonomy."²⁰ The more the military is professional, the more they will enjoy

doing their tasks and stay out of politics. "...objective control achieves its ends by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state."²¹

Many scholars consider Huntington's theory on civil-military relations as the 'normal' theory because it implies complete separation between the civilian political power and the military institution. However, this is more of an ideal type, and balanced civil-military relations feature some level of cooperation between civilian and military institutions.

Concordance Theory

Some academics criticize Huntington's theory of civil-military relations arguing that it generally focused on western countries, without taking into consideration how the historical and cultural background of other countries might affect their civil-military relations. Marybeth P. Ulrich, Professor of Government at the U.S. Army War College, supports this idea, as she says, "the political culture and national values of each state influence how civil-military relations will be ordered in its constitution."²² So, Schiff develops concordance theory as an alternative to the 'normal' theory of civil-military relations. Schiff disagrees with the 'normal' theory which advocates the separation between civilian political power and military; the separation principle fits countries that have gained maturity in nation-building process, such as the U.S. Then, she explains that, "Effects of a nation building or rebuilding process are intertwined with civil-military relations and are continuous; the civil-military relationship continues during the life of a nation, although at some point nation building appears to end as a mature nation emerges."²³

Her view diverges from most scholars who think that only mature developed countries that experience western form of democracy have ideal of civil-military relations

which is when the civilian political authority controls the military; she thinks that "... emerging nations may achieve concordance among the military, political elites, and citizenry regarding the role and function of the armed forces within indigenous government while not conforming to western government standards."²⁴ Concordance theory focuses on a partnership between political elites, military, and citizenry; an agreed role of the military set by the three bodies is preferable to a systematic superimposition of the separate western prototypical worldwide.²⁵ Moreover, the basis of concordance theory is that military intervention into political affairs of a country, is unlikely to happen, as long as an accord exist between the civilian politicians, the military, and society.²⁶

Convergence Theory

In his book, *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait*, published in 1960, Morris Janowitz develops another theory of civil-military relations. His convergence theory matches some points of Huntington's theory of civilian control, but differs in others parts.²⁷ For example, he agrees with Huntington on the difference and separation of civilian power from the military, but then, suggests that both the military and civilian authority improve their relations by interacting with one another.

For Janowitz, civilian and military leaders can make some convergence in their relationships, by undertaking some activities or actions. This minimizes the gap between civilians and the military. "It was important that professional soldiers continued to think of themselves as citizen- soldiers rather than as mercenaries or just another politically partisan occupational pressure group."²⁸ To achieve this convergence, Janowitz discussed the massive conscription that would bring young civilians in the military. He recognized that, "intellectual isolation from the main current of American

university life may be one of main trends that needs to be avoided”²⁹, then, recommended “explicit program in political education to connect professional military training to national and transnational purposes.”³⁰

In addition, he sees the parallel recruitment and training of officers through American colleges, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program, as an alternative to allow college students to earn a degree while joining the armed forces.³¹

This may, in the future, make the military leaders flexible and ready to accept civilian control. His idea of civilianization of the military world allows a convergence between civilians and militaries³² which facilitates the rise of the ideal of civil-military relations, the civilian political control over military institution.

Concept of Civilian Control or Supremacy

The literature review of civil-military relations theory points out the tipping point of civil-military relations, the concept of civilian supremacy over the military. “The concept of ‘civilian control’ has its origins in the British parliament’s efforts to gain parliamentary control over the military in the 18th century by reducing the authority of the king.”³³ According to most theories, civilian authority must exercise supremacy over the military, even if the theorists diverge on the approach that would be used for this exercise. “If the armed forces are not to intervene, they must believe in an explicit principle – the civilian supremacy.”³⁴ The civilian supremacy over the military is the central nerve of civil-military relations in the current century; as Ulrich suggested, “an obedient military’s acceptance of civilian supremacy and governmental control is the most important principle and norm of civil-military relations”³⁵, and “there is nothing obvious or inevitable about the subordination of the armed forces to the wishes and purposes of the political leadership.”³⁶

Civilian control includes, governmental control exercised by civilians in charge of the Department of Defense and the political control which is carried out by Presidents, parliamentarian individuals and organizations. For example, in the U.S., to ensure a balanced use of the military power, the Constitution separates and shares authoritative power over the armed forces between the President and Congress.³⁷

It is a real fact that civilian rule must prevail in modern states and the military must obey civilian political authorities. The reason is simple, “those with authority ought to be the elected representatives of the people, and that these representatives ought to exercise ultimate authority over the military elite.”³⁸ In contrast, military leaders are not elected, they are appointed by the civilian power; they draw their legitimacy from the political power of those who nominated them to lead the armed forces. Thus, “the requirements of the military to the civilian authorities, are giving advice to them, and, finally, when so charged, executing their decisions.”³⁹

Conditions for Civilian Supremacy or Control over the Military

The literature review on civil-military theories shows diverse opinions in civil-military relations, nonetheless, there are some common and complementary thoughts on the conditions on which civilian political control or supremacy over the military is based. These conditions are the interaction between civilian and military, military professional ethics, and adherence to key principles of democratic civil-military relations. The paper will examine these conditions, one at a time, to find out how they influence and allow civilian supremacy or control of military institutions.

Interaction between Civilians and the Military

Even if the military is highly professional, supremacy of civilian authority is difficult to achieve without the interaction between civilian and military. It is not for the

government to simply decide everything that the military has to do, especially in the matter of organization and conduct of violence; it should be an agreed basis on which civilian power expresses its supremacy and for the military to also obey. For example, is-it possible for a civilian authority, in the exercise of supremacy, to order the military to kill opposition political leaders who march to express their desire for change?

The way in which the military should intervene must be decided in common accord between the two parties through laws and rules, in regard to international regulations on human rights, for example. This interaction should be effective at three levels. The first level of the interaction is between the civilian authority, military, and society represented by the parliamentarians or equivalents. It is a formal consultation for discussion on military issues and legislation. This reflects Schiff's concordance theory view, in particular for developing countries.

She advocates to "...achieve concordance among the military, political elites, and citizenry regarding the role and function of the armed forces within indigenous government..."⁴⁰ Burkina Faso is a developing country and civilians need military expertise in various domains. Burkina Faso military and civilians already showed their ability to interact. One example of civil-military interaction that has already happened is when the military and civilian leaders discussed and adopted the transition chart in November 2014 to allow a civilian to lead the country, after the resignation of former president Compaoré. Therefore, the government should create a formal consultation process to allow interactions between civilian authority, society, and the military institution.

The second level of interaction between civilian and military is informal activities conducted to increase each other's understanding of the other. For example, conscription, visits into barracks, conferences and lectures by officers at colleges or universities, can help civilians understand the military organization and function. Similarly, servicemen studying in civilian colleges or universities, can be educated on how democratic institutions function. It lessens the military hegemonic behavior and gives to the military an open mind to accept civilian supremacy. Janowitz in his convergence theory suggested the interaction between civilians and the military in the form of civilianization of the military and the militarization of civilian.⁴¹

The third level of interaction is between the military and society and between society and the state. According to Peter D. Feaver, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University,

this comprehensive approach to understanding civil-military relations utilizes both an institutional lens to highlight the relationship between the military as an institution to its civilian political leaders and a societal lens that highlight the relationship between military members and citizens at an individual level.⁴²

Ulrich's depiction of civil-military relations, through the figures bellow, helps understand the dynamics between the different actors in civil-military relations.⁴³

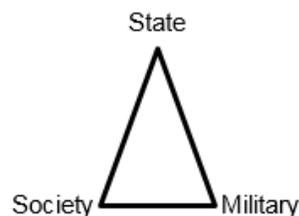


Figure 1. The Civil-Military Relationship Triangle Showing the Three Actors, the State, Military, and Society⁴⁴

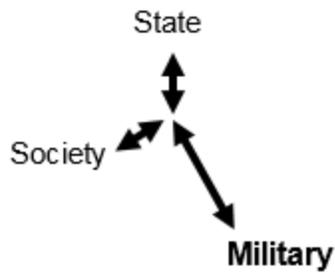


Figure 2. A Military More Distant From Society and State That Shows Conflicting Interests with the Civilian Authority and an Unwilling to Obey Due to the Level of Power the Military Institution Has⁴⁵

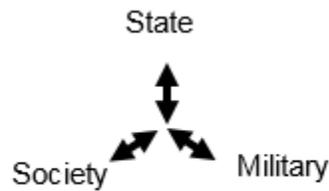


Figure 3. Balanced Relationship between the Three Actors; the Military May Have Equal Power Likewise the State and Society and Their Willingness to Cooperate and Discuss With the Civilian Leadership in Military, Security Policies Matters⁴⁶

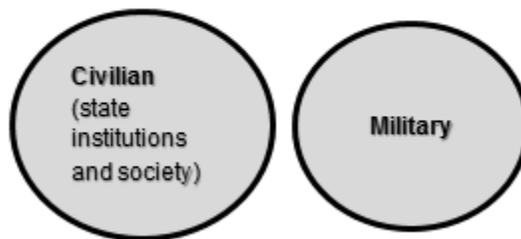


Figure 4. Lack of Interaction between the Military Institution and the Civilian Authority⁴⁷

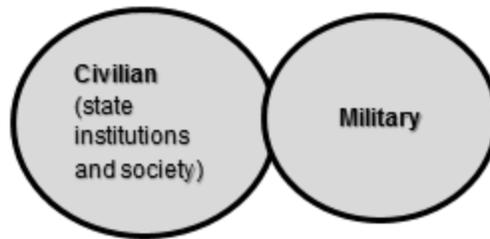


Figure 5. Civilian Authority Able to Control the Armed Forces, But Not Enough to Allow an Interaction⁴⁸

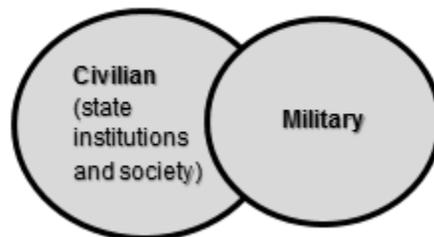


Figure 6. Cooperation between the Civilian Political Leaders and the Military Establishment, Which Permits an Easy Civilian Control⁴⁹

In Burkina Faso, this informal interaction exists between civilian society and the military. One way of interaction is the national service during which civilians receive civic and military training during a year, in the past. It was an opportunity for civilians to learn about the military as an institution and military life. Those who passed through this training do not have problems dealing with the military. Thus, this kind of interaction needs to be reintroduced and improved. The interaction should also include the education of officers on democracy and democratic civil-military relations.

Professional Military Ethic

According to Ulrich, “the concepts of ‘profession’ and ‘professionalism’ are central to understanding how civilian control is achieved.”⁵⁰ The professional military differentiates itself from mercenary or criminal armed groups. The “modern armed

forces may therefore be described as a profession. They are technicians in the management and organization of violence.”⁵¹ This is in contrast to the military before the French revolution in the beginning of the 20th Century during which “the various officer corps were either mercenaries who followed the paymaster, or noblemen who followed their king –even when he went into exile.”⁵² “Professionalism makes the armed forces, as it were, self-centered...Their task – organizing and equipping a force, training it, planning its activities, let alone ‘fighting it’ in combat against the enemy – is a full-time one.”⁵³ “...Thus, the greater the professionalism, the more immersed does the officer become in his own technical tasks, and the less involved in any policy issues that do not affect them.”⁵⁴

As any profession, the military profession has ethics to guide and organize the exercise of the profession. Ethics is defined as “the body of moral principles or values governing or distinctive of a particular culture or group, a complex of moral precepts held or rules of conduct followed by an individual.”⁵⁵ According to retired US Major General Clay T. Buckingham, professional ethics are those formal and informal standards of a profession put in place to guide practitioners through the best practice in a profession.⁵⁶ “Professional ethics are designed to assure high standards of competence in a given field.”⁵⁷ Huntington also gives his understanding of military professionalism; as for him, military “...professionalism comprises three ingredients. They are expertness; social responsibility; and corporate loyalty to fellow practitioners.”⁵⁸ The US Center for the Army Profession (CAPE) and Ethic gives a broadened explanation of professional military ethics:

The ethics of a professional Soldier serving this constitutional democracy have evolved toward an understanding of the military’s place in and duty

to society, a high level of professional expertise, a sense of military service as a full-time occupation and a long-term calling, a subordination to duly elected and appointed civil authority, an ethos of positive and responsible leadership of subordinates, and a moral ethical compass fixed on the laws of war, the Constitution, and the values and ethos of the Army.⁵⁹

CAPE's explanation highlights the importance of civilian supremacy discussed above. Professional uniformed armed men must be subordinate to elected civilian leaders. Furthermore, it includes a legal aspect regarding the conduct of the armed forces which should always be respectful to the national and international laws, rules, and orders.

But professionalism is a process that needs time to build. To this purpose, Marybeth P. Ulrich and Carol Atkinson introduce the notion of a professionalism spectrum and the calculus of participation, opposing Finer's notion of 'calculus of intervention'.⁶⁰ The figure 7 and table 1 below represent the spectrum of military professional and the levels of military professional.



Figure 7. Military Professionalism Spectrum has Five Levels or 'Labels' Depending on the Breadth and Depth Professionalism is Observed. The Spectrum Varies from Non-Democratic States, Through Democratizing States to Completely Democratic States⁶¹

Table 1. Describes the Levels of Military Professionalism⁶²

Level	Explanation
Non-Expert	Lack professional components related to civilian control, institutional capacity, and relationship with society
Aspiring Professional	Shows progress in the components of civilian control , institutional capacity, or relationship with society
Developing Professional	Show progress in all components of civilian control, institutional capacity, and relationship with society; progress may be sufficient to facilitate transition from authoritarian rule
Professional	Has achieved the basic professional institutional norms of civilian control , institutional capacity, and relationship with society
Consolidated professional	Achieve the norms of professional militaries and the standards of democratic military professionalism; defender of constitutional process and the democratic nature of the state

Professionalism is acquired through continuous education and training. Burkina Faso is a 'young' democratizing state, the military is aspiring to professionalism, while the U.S. armed forces has consolidated professionalism. Burkina Faso senior military leaders should educate and train the uniformed men to continuously improve their professionalism.

As for Finer, professionalism, "...makes the military look on their task as from that of the politicians, and as self-sufficient and full time, it ought, logically, to inhibit the army from wishing to intervene..."⁶³ Then, he concluded that adopting the concept of civilian control as part of their professionalism is the best way to annihilate the military desire to intervene.⁶⁴ In the other hand, he warned that military professionalism may push the military to intervene in politics for three purposes, they may consider themselves in service for the state rather than of the civilian authority; ...their military syndicalism may motivate them to decide on military issues and security policy; the

loyalty in executing their mission is so strong that they disobey, even intervene against the civilian authority.⁶⁵ This is considered as the professional military ethical trap.

In addition, Ulrich and Atkinson recognized that

more professional military have both an institutional interest to maintain and expand their professional competency as well as a vision for the national interest... the development of professional military leads increasingly to a distinct military sphere within society...and professional military expect the regime governing the state it serves to respect a degree of professional autonomy ...In return, professional militaries accept subordination to legitimate civilian authorities.⁶⁶

By promoting military professional ethics on civil-military relations, while avoiding the professional military ethical trap, Burkina Faso uniformed armed men would stay fully professional and leave the politics to civilian community.

Adherence to Key Principles of Democratic Civil-Military Relations

In most great democratic countries, civil-military interaction with militaries with a strong professional military ethic leads to the acceptance of the principles of democratic civil-military relations. According to Ngoma, “the key is to adhere to the basic requirements of democratic civil-military relations.”⁶⁷ These key principles of democratic civil-military relations guide the armed forces in dealing with civilian authority. The international community also recommends military establishments in democratizing countries adopt these processes. Ngoma details the key principles that the armed forces must adhere to facilitate the emergence of democratic civil-military relation.

Table 2 below lays out key principles of civil–military relations and explains the various requirements the military must meet to be recognized as obedient to democratic elected civil authority, which leads to democratic civil-military relations.

Table 2. Key Principles of Civil–Military Relations.⁶⁸

	Principles
1	To be accountable to civil authorities, independent oversight agencies and civil society
2	To adhere to the rule of law, that is, international law and domestic constitutions
3	Transparent planning and budgeting processes
4	Respect for human rights and a culture of civility
5	To be subjected to political control over operations and expenditure
6	Regular consultation with civil society
7	Professionalism
8	To support collaborative peace and security

Analyzing Civil-Military Relations in Burkina Faso

After discussing the theory of civilian supremacy or control of the military, the paper now analyzes civil-military relations in Burkina Faso. It first, considers the history of military supremacy over civilian political leaders, followed by the legal instruments that prevent the military from intervening in politics, the motives of the Burkina Faso armed forces' intervention into politics, and lastly the need for change.

Burkina Faso Military Supremacy on Civilian Political Power

A quick flashback on Burkina Faso's historical background, regarding civil-military relations, draws some deductions. The first deduction is that among the eight presidents who ruled the country, including the current one, five are military and only three are civilians. The three civilians are Maurice Yaméogo from 1960 to 1966, Michel Kafando (president during a transition of 12 months), and Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, the newly elected president in office, since January 2016. The second deduction is that in 56 years of independence, civilian presidents have ruled the country for only seven years, while the military presidents (some became civilian after resigning from the military) have ruled for 49 years. The third deduction is that there has been civilian democratic rule, purely military dictatorship without democratic instruments, and military

leaders assuming office disguised as civilians. Regarding the fourth deduction, there has never been a peaceful transition of power between two elected presidents from the time of independence in 1960 to date.⁶⁹ The next point of analysis on Burkina Faso's civil-military relations is the instruments preventing the military from intervening in politics.

Instruments Preventing the Military from Intervening in Politics

In contrast to its relative political instability, Burkina Faso possesses legal democratic instruments that are supposed to put the country on the democratic track and keep the armed servicemen out of politics. The most important instrument is the Constitution; four constitutions have been voted by referendum, in 1960, 1970, 1977, and 1991. Each indicates the separation of power between executive, legislative, and judiciary. Article 167 of the 1991 Constitution specifies that, "a power which is not legitimate by the Constitution, in particular, a power from coup d'état or putsch, is illegal; in such situation, civilians are allowed by the law to disobey."⁷⁰ However, on 16 September 2015, General Diendéré conducted a military coup against the interim government that provoked civilian unrest. Civilian unrest together with international pressure, forced Diendéré to quickly leave power.

The Constitution also allows the National Assembly to control the executive, and the armed forces. Article 101 of the fourth constitution allows the National Assembly to decide on national defense organization and obligations.⁷¹ Article 106 gives the responsibility to the National Assembly to authorize the declaration of war and send troops abroad⁷², as in the U.S. Furthermore, the internal organization of the National Assembly permits the commission in charge of the defense to take charge of "...the defense and security, military cooperation policy, long-term plan regarding the military

institutions and arsenals, military establishment, national service, and laws authorizing the recruitment of civilian and military personnel for the armed forces, including gendarmerie and military justice agents.”⁷³ The Constitution should also specify the general mission of the armed forces and indicate that military personnel should not rule the country, as president.

In addition, the National Assembly recently amended and adopted the law regarding the general statute of the National Armed Forces Personnel that gives more guidance. Article 8 of the Statute allows the military to have free political opinion and belief which must be expressed only off duty and outside barracks under reserve of the military obligation.⁷⁴

According to articles 12 of the statute, it is forbidden for a military to be a member of a political party or organization. Those who desire engaging in politics must first resign from the armed services.⁷⁵ On the other hand, article 13 of the statute gives the possibility to nominate a military for a high state responsibility or position.⁷⁶

In regard to this particular article, civilian and military leaders should be careful. Appointing some officers for such positions may motivate others to become politically connected in order to get these positions. In addition, officers who exercise high state appointments, as ministers or president of institutions, may be ‘wrapped’ in the political ‘fabric’ and will no more fit for military positions in the armed forces or use their status to influence the military institution. In the U.S. for example, a Department of Defense directive restricts military officers, still on duty, from being nominated for such positions.⁷⁷ Indeed, Burkina Faso is far different⁷⁷ from the U.S. and the country needs

military expertise, but restrictions should accompany the disposition, to constrain the military from insidious participation in politics.

In addition to the national instruments and regulations, international actors also prevent military intrusion into politics. The UN, does not just condemn military coups or urge for the return to a normal constitutional regime. The UN is able to take measures to force military coup plotters to give back power to elected civilian leaders. For example, in Haiti, the UN, with the support of the U.S., succeeded in bringing back president Jean Bertrand Aristide to power, in September 1994.⁷⁸ Aristide, elected as president of Haiti, was in office on 7 February 1991 and was overthrown by a military coup on 29 September 1991.⁷⁹

Likewise the UN, sub-regional and regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) have adopted legal texts that reject power takeover by force; they are able to put pressure on military coup leaders to release power to civilian elected presidents. For example, AU, ECOWAS, and other international partners coerced Captain Sanogo from Mali, to cede power to a Malian civilian, after Sanogo had taken power from elected president Amadou T. Touré, in March 2012.⁸⁰

Another vivid example is when recently ECOWAS succeeded in retrieving power from the former president of The Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, who refused to leave office to his opponent, after he had been defeated during presidential elections.⁸¹ Therefore, international, and regional organizations, as well as international partners, such the U.S. should help prevent power takeover by uniformed armed men. The last consideration of

the paper in analyzing Burkina Faso's civil-military relations, is the motives of Burkina Faso armed forces' intervention into politics.

Motives of Burkina Faso Armed Forces Intervention into Politics

In spite of the existence of legal instruments, laws, and rules preventing the military participation in politics, Burkina Faso's historical background shows the opposite results. Many factors may explain why the military took over the power six times, without mentioning the failed coups.

One of the historical factors contributing to Burkina Faso armed forces' intrusion into the political sphere is its colonial heritage. Ngoma said that "... civil-military relations on the continent have been strongly influenced by its colonial history..."⁸² The role of the Military in the colonial era was to collect taxes, arrest and defeat indigenous opposition to colonial rule and so on. It was established to fit the needs of the colonial power. Ngoma also mentioned that,

During the colonial era the military was expected to project the dominance of the colonial powers. This entailed an acrimonious relationship with the indigenous populations from which the military was derived... To a significant extent, some post-colonial governments on the continent perpetuated this relationship.⁸³

Additionally, General De Gaulle who led the French resistance during the Nazi occupation of France, in World War II, and later became president of France, might have inspired some military leaders of African countries, including Burkina Faso, to think that a military leader can rule a country to save it from anarchy. Thus, Burkina Faso's colonial heritage might have influenced the military to exercise its dominance over domestic civilian leadership. Therefore, both the military and civilian leadership should be educated on civilian political supremacy over the armed forces.

The next motive of Burkina Faso's armed forces intervention into politics by force, is their underdeveloped professional military ethics in civil-military relations. Professional military ethics are essential for military subordination to civilian political leadership. At the same time, professional military ethics can be a trap into which uniformed armed men fall in. Scholars such as Samuel E. Finer, Chukwudi G. Chidume, William F. Gutteridge, and Naison Ngoma, among others, point out this trap; in his article, *Military Coups in West Africa: the African "Phenomenon" That is Self-Inflicted*, Chidume recognizes that:

In the majority of the coups that have occurred, the military has deemed it a national and patriotic obligation to rescue the country from total collapse and thereby restore lost national prestige. Although these coups d'état have been executed in the guise of national interest and patriotic duty, more often than not, military regimes have turned out to be more corrupt, oppressive and downright inefficient than the civilian governments they deposed.⁸⁴

As an example, in 1966 during the political crisis, Maurice Yaméogo, the first civilian elected president, resigned and handed over power to the Chief of National Armed Forces Staff, Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana, instead of the president of the National Assembly, as the Constitution directed. Indeed, Lamizana did not refuse, and he took it as a mission given to the armed forces. He stated in his memoir, "then I found myself invested with an important mission, a heavy load on the shoulder. I inherit a surprising responsibility and a political situation which is difficult to manage by a military."⁸⁵ Lamizana justified the military takeover that "the National Armed Forces simply accomplished its sacred own mission which always is to guarantee public order, assure social peace, and serve liberty."⁸⁶ This is the time Burkina Faso armed forces got caught in the trap of professional military ethics.

In time of political crisis, Burkina Faso uniformed armed men feel that it is their duty and responsibility to intervene in order to save the country from disorder and chaos. It has been observed during Lamizana's presidency and the other coups which occurred in 1980, 1982, 1983, 1987, and 2015. As a result, the military overthrew civilian regimes and also fought other militaries to get the power which led to division in the military institution and political instability that did not ease the socio-economic development of the country.

After the resignation of President Blaise Compaoré on 31 October 2014, the struggle for power was observed between officers. The Chief of National Armed Forces Staff made a declaration to take over power. At the same time, the deputy commander of the presidential security regiment made a contradictory speech announcing his takeover of the power. Burkina Faso armed servicemen need to get out of this trap and understand that its mission is not to take over the power even when the national political situation is chaotic, but to defend the country and protect the people. The armed forces should help and allow civilian political leadership to designate a civilian to lead the country, like they did during the transition period, under external and internal pressure; this allowed negotiations for a consensus to nominate Michel Kafando to lead the country as transitional President for 12 months. Kafando was able to organize a credible, acceptable, and transparent presidential election.

In addition to the professional military ethical trap discussed, retired US Major General Clay T. Buckingham mentions tensions or dilemma that appear when applying professional military ethics within the military. Some of the tensions are the ethical use of military force⁸⁷ and authority.⁸⁸

This involves the level of forces, the opportunity to use it, the area to utilize it, whether external against potential enemy or internal against opponents or citizens at large. It also includes whether the authority is used for purposes directly or not associated with carrying out assigned responsibilities. If the force is wrongly used, it is used illegitimately and unethically. Burkina Faso military illegitimately and unethically used power against civilian they are supposed to protect. One example is the former presidential security regime's unethical use of force to oppress and kill civilians on the streets during the week following the coup d'état on 16 September 2015.

To avoid the dilemma, in regard to professional military ethics, Netherlanders Miriam C. de Graaff and Lieutenant-Colonel C.E. Van Den Berg suggest an ethical awareness-model to guide the Netherlands Armed Forces; the ethical awareness-model consists of asking questions before making a decision, for example, "what are the facts and which parties are involved? What are the solutions and also their possible consequences? Is my solution legal? Have all interests been considered? Is-it acceptable?"⁸⁹ Burkina Faso armed forces should educate and train the servicemen on the legitimate and ethical use of force to avoid abuse when exercising the force. Such increased professionalism will be recognized by the government and society and improve the armed forces' relationship with each.

Another motive that draws the military into politics is the civilian leadership and society's invitation for the military to intervene. When political opposition intend to topple a regime, they create a mess in the country and then, call the armed forces to intervene and take over the power. Lamizana reveals in his book that when Yaméogo assigned him to meet the trade union members for a last attempt de solve the social and political

crisis, the crowd loudly shouted 'long life to the armed forces!' and 'armed forces, to take over the power!'⁹⁰ Another illustration is the fact that, before Compaoré's resignation from power on 31 October 2014, opposition parties, trade unions, women, youth, and civil society movements demonstrated vigorously in the country and strongly called the armed forces to take power from the elected president Compaoré. The military intended to do so, but national and international actors discouraged them. Civilians should be educated on the mission and ethics of uniformed servicemen to avoid inviting or inciting them to make coup d'états and take over power; civilian politicians should learn to deal between themselves, indeed with the support of the military, to solve social and political crises.

The next reason that pushes the military to organize a coup d'état is the disproportionate ambitions and a lack of discipline among young officers. Except the first military takeover which was led by the Chief of National armed forces, the other coups leaders were lower rank officers or officers with a middle responsibility. Of course, officers involved in such succeeded coups are rewarded with political and administrative positions that gives them social and financial benefits, but the interest of the nation and armed forces must prevail on personal benefits.

To illustrate, after the departure of former president Compaoré from power on 31 October 2014, Lieutenant-Colonel Yacouba Isaac Zida, who was the deputy commanding officer of the presidential security regiment, contested the power takeover with General Honoré Traoré who was the Chief of Staff of the National Armed Forces. The subordinate Zida succeeded and became prime minister and minister in charge of defense. Many observers and officers criticized Zida's behavior because he lacked of

discipline and was lured of incommensurate ambition. It opened the way for possible division in the officer corps and armed forces at large. Burkina Faso National Armed Forces leaders should educate and create some mechanisms to limit such incommensurate ambition amongst uniform armed men, in particular in officers' corps.

Another example of indiscipline at the low level ranks, is when soldiers vigorously demonstrated their anger by looting civilian shops, destroying goods, and burning houses in the capital city and some major cities of the country in 2011. The Burkina Faso military, including officers, NCOs, and soldiers should be educated on discipline and military ethics; the military institution should create some mechanisms to reinforce the military ethics and discipline.

Weaknesses in governance of the military may also be a motive of Burkina Faso military intrusion into politics. For example, because the promotion in ranks, nominations for appointments, and other reward attributions might not be done in a fair and ethical way, upset uniformed armed men may make connections with political leaders to bypass the military command to get better positions inside or outside the military organization. Military command should apply good governance for the promotions in ranks and positions and other rewards distribution, according to the principles of professional merit, seniority, capacity, and capability of the military, instead of subjective methods, such as ethnic identity, regionalism, clannism, and other discriminatory approaches. Such practices of "military good governance" are also consistent with the Ulrich-Atkinson spectrum of professionalism.

The military, used as an instrument, by politicians, such as presidents and members of government, to coerce citizens, like government's domestic opponents, can

be seen as military involvement into politics. According to Finer, the armed forces “...often vents its discomfort at having to act against its own nationals by blaming the ‘politicians’, and by thinking of itself as being used by these for their own sordid purposes.”⁹¹

By acting in response to politician request, the armed forces get involved into the political ‘game’. As an example, when former president Compaoré’s regime wanted to amend the Constitution through the National Assembly, the Prime Minister signed a requisition giving orders to use any means, including fire arms, to protect the parliamentarians against demonstrators during their meeting for the vote.⁹² Luckily, the military institution did not obey the government’s order to use fire arms against civilians.

In the U.S., American soldiers are “entrusted to defend the US Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people,”⁹³ instead of protecting and defending individual politicians, including the President, who does not respect the Constitution. The Burkina Faso military and civilian political leaders should avoid using the armed forces for individual or collective political purpose, then, leaving the uniformed servicemen to their official missions.

Need for Change

The discussion points to the need for change. Burkina Faso Armed Forces need to change from a ‘military coup’ culture to a democratic civil-military relations’ culture. Culture is defined as the habits, customs, and behavior that a group of individuals share in common in their interaction. It is “the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.”⁹⁴ The culture of democratic civil-military relations consists of inculcating, the principle of military obedience to the elected civilian authority. Such obedience is essential for civilian

control of the military institution. Scholars discussed theories to create a change in institutions. John P. Kotter is one of them.

Kotter's theory of change consists of eight stage-process that leaders must follow. The eight stage-process includes establishing a sense of urgency, forming a powerful guiding coalition, creating a vision, communicating the vision, empowering others to act on the vision, planning for and creating short term wins, consolidating improvement and producing still more change, and institutionalizing new approaches.⁹⁵ Changing culture in military administration is part of leaders' responsibilities. By opting for this culture change through existed concepts such as Kotters' approach, Burkina Faso National Armed Forces' leaders will be able to remove the dominance mindset from the military and implement democratic civil-military relations' culture that allows military deference to elected political authorities. This will contribute to enduring civilian supremacy over the Burkinabe's military

Recommendations

To implement an enduring civilian political dominance on the military, in Burkina Faso, I suggest that the National Armed Forces' leaders facilitate a deep change from a mindset of military domination to a culture of military obedience to civilian political leaders. The paper identified some steps in the process of making organizational change. It identified the need for change and explained the civil-military relations' environment in Burkina Faso. Therefore, the paper is a starting point for further study, a step that Burkina Faso National Armed Forces' leaders should take to make a positive and enduring change toward democratic civil-military relations. Table 3 lays out specific recommendations for Burkina Faso Armed Forces and civilian stakeholders to initiate the process of positive change in both civil society and the military.

Table 3. The Recommendations Are Derived from the Issues Discussed Above. They are Grouped as Short Term and Long Term Actions Carried Out by National Institutions, such as the Government, National Assembly, Defense Ministry, Armed Forces, Civil Society, and international Institutions and Partners, Such as the UN, ECOWAS, and the U.S.

		Recommendations	Institutions Involved
Need for Change	Short Term Actions	1. Government and military institutions should create mechanisms to implement the disposition of Article 167 of the Constitution that prevent power taking through coup d'état or putsch	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		2. Government should include the general mission of the national armed forces in the Constitution.	Defense Ministry
		3. Government should include a provision in the Constitution that specifies that the military should not lead the country while in service, but a civilian must always be nominated to lead, even in the case of a power vacuum due to social and political crisis in the country.	Defense Ministry
		4. Civilian and military leaders should create a formal consultation to set up a formal environment, such as national service, to allow interactions between civilian and armed servicemen.	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces -National Assembly
		5. The military establishment should create strong mechanisms to accompany the disposition of Article 13 of the newly amended military general statute, which allows the military to be nominated for high national positions, with the aim of preventing armed servicemen of running behind politicians to get such positions.	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		6. Mechanisms should be put in place to inhibit ambitions not commensurate with uniform armed men.	Armed Forces
		7. Both civilian and military actors should create mechanisms that prevent the use of armed force for individual or collective political purpose, leaving the uniformed servicemen to their official mission.	-Government -Defense Ministry -Armed Forces

Need for Change		8. The military command should implement good governance regarding promotions in rank and appointments, according to the principles of merit, seniority, capacity, and capability of individuals, and avoid ethnicity, regionalism, clannism, and other discriminatory methods.	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		9. International institutions and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and international powers, such as the U.S. should equally pressure the military to deter them from taking over power in countries, including Burkina Faso, or oblige them to release the power in case they forcibly take it.	-Government -United Nations -African Union -ECOWAS -EU -U.S...
	Long Term Actions	10. Burkina Faso civilian and military leaders should opt for change from military dominance in politics to military obedience to elected civilian authority, using concepts for change in institutions, likewise Kotter's height steps for change.	-Government -Armed forces -Civil society
		11. The National Armed Forces should create a command and staff college and a war or defense college to allow the education of future military senior leaders, on concepts, doctrine, theories and national issues, including democratic civil-military relations.	-Government -Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		12. The military institution should cultivate military professional ethics iin civil-military relations, while eluding the military ethical trap, in order to make the uniformed armed men fully professional and motivate them to leave politics to the civilian community.	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		13. Officers and their subordinates should be educated and trained on the discipline and respect of professional military ethics in civil-military relations.	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		14. Officers and their subordinates should be educated and convinced to accept civilian supremacy over the military institution	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces
		15. Armed servicemen should be educated to always let civilian leaders lead the country, even when the social and political situation is chaotic.	-Defense Ministry -Armed Forces

		16. Civilian leaders should be educated and convinced that they must cooperate among themselves to designate one of them to always lead the country instead of inviting or inciting the military to takeover power, in crisis situation.	-Government -Civil society
		17. Civilian politicians, civil society organizations, and trade union leaders should be educated on the principle of civilian political supremacy over the military.	-Government -Civil society
		18. Civilian leaders should be educated to understand that the military institution as an instrument of power and violence, is a special institution that needs the special attention of the national stakeholders and the civilian community.	-Government -Civil society

Conclusion

Civil-military relations debates never end. Scholars still discuss them today as countries struggle for stability due to conflicting interests between civilian and military leaders. Scholars agree that the ideal of civil-military relations is that civilian political authority should exercise supremacy over military power. To allow civilian authority to exercise supremacy over the military, some conditions should be created. These conditions are the interactions between civilian and military actors, the promotion of professional military ethics in civil-military relations, and the adherence to key principles of democratic civil-military relations.

Civil-military relations are a challenge for Burkina Faso. In 56 years of independence, military officers, including those who resigned from the armed forces, held the presidency longer than civilians did. The military toppled civilian regimes many times, in spite of the constitutional and statutory measures in place to prevent them from engaging into politics, as specified in the general statute of the national armed forces personnel, the Constitution, and other official texts.

The analysis of Burkina Faso civil-military relations, shows possible reasons that draw the military into the political sphere. These include its colonial heritage, professional military ethical trap and dilemma, incitation from civilian leaders and society at large, disproportionate ambitions among officers and lack of discipline, lack of good governance in the armed forces, and the military obedience to be used by individual politicians, such as presidents, government members, to coerce government domestic opponents.

A concerted effort to educate and train the armed forces and society on the professional norms of democratic civilian supremacy over the armed forces, will help prevent Burkina Faso's military from intervening to interrupt democratic rule. Furthermore, civilians need to understand the fundamentals of the military establishment, such as the organization and mission of the armed forces to avoid giving to the military tasks and orders that do not conform to their professional ethics. The armed servicemen, on the other hand, need to improve their professional military ethics and discipline in order to limit their actions to adhere to the norms of democratic civil-military relations. As Ngoma added, "to enhance this process it is essential to include civic education programs at all levels of education and training of armed servicemen in order to gain a better understanding of and commitment to these principles."⁹⁶

These programs should concentrate on international humanitarian law, adherence to constitutional provisions, the rule of law, military ethics, military discipline, nonpartisanship, and the general understanding of the role and behavior of the military in a democratic society. Such programs are underdeveloped on the continent and need much more prominence and support.⁹⁷

Also, international and regional institutions and partner countries are assets that can help prevent Burkina Faso's armed forces from taking power from civilian political

leaders' hands. History has shown that regional and international institutions and partner countries can act to take back power from military coup conspirators and return it to the elected president.

This paper highlighted the current state of civil-military relations in Burkina Faso and recommended actions to facilitate organizational and institutional change toward democratic civil-military relations. By adopting the concept of change, Burkina Faso's civilian and military stakeholders will engage the military and society in the process of change. Such a process will help the Burkina Faso armed forces change from a culture of military supremacy in politics to a culture of full civilian control of the military establishment.

As Feaver wrote, "civil-military relations are just a special extreme case, involving designated political agents controlling designated military agents. Regardless of how strong the military is, civilians are supposed to remain the political masters."⁹⁸ However, as Ulrich remarked, "it is important to note that even in the most advanced democratic systems, managing the participation and influence of the military institution to maximize military effectiveness, sound strategy, and the democratic principles of the state is an ongoing challenge."⁹⁹

Endnotes

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