aposta
revista de ciencias sociales
ISSN 1696-7348

# The interplay of military dynamics and institutions in shaping the economic growth of a developing economy

*A interação entre dinâmicas militares e instituições na formação do crescimento econômico de uma economia em desenvolvimento*

*La interacción entre dinámicas militares e instituciones en la configuración del crecimiento económico de una economía en desarrollo*

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**Received in:** 5/6/2026
**Acepted in:** 7/6/2026
DOI: 10.23900/ra.v24i115.1170

**Citation format:**
Bekun, F. V., Joshua, U., Wara, Y. A., & Cavdar, S. C. (2026). The interplay of military dynamics and institutions in shaping the economic growth of a developing economy. *Aposta: Revista De Ciencias Sociales*, 24(115), e1170. https://doi.org/10.23900/ra.v24i115.1170

## Abstract
This study examines the dynamic associations between military dynamics, institutional quality, and economic performance in Burkina Faso. This study is of high importance and has a sensitivity given to the region and country of investigation. The country currently suffers from military rule and deviation from democracy. This study draws strength from time series econometrics leveraging on the autoregressive distributed lag (ARDL) methodology to explore the short- and long-run relationship between military expenditure and the role of institutional apparatus on economic growth over time frequency data. The empirical results indicate the presence of a long-run association among the variables based on the ARDL bounds testing approach. Additionally, a negative and statistically insignificant relationship exists between democratic accountability and gross domestic product per capita. While there is a positive relationship between government stability (GS) and GDPPC. Interestingly, the relationship between corruption and GDP per capita is negative but insignificant. These outcomes have far-reaching implications for government administrators and stakeholders alike.

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ISSN 1696-7348

From a policy standpoint the following are suggested from the present study namely: (i) polices that engenders government stability like good governance and enabling environment to attract investor(s) in Burkina Faso to boost economic growth. (ii) Bureaucratic quality (BQ) and bureaucratic red tape should be minimized to foster and encourage investor confidence and boost foreign direct investment among others. More policy caveats are presented in the concluding section of this study.
**Keywords**
Economic Growth, Institutional Quality, Time-Series Econometrics, Burkina Faso.

**Resumo**
Este estudo examina as associações dinâmicas entre as dinâmicas militares, a qualidade institucional e o desempenho económico em Burkina Faso. A relevância desta investigação é particularmente sensível, dada a região e o país em análise, que enfrenta atualmente um regime militar e um afastamento dos princípios democráticos. O estudo apoia-se em econometria de séries temporais, utilizando a metodologia autorregressiva de defasagens distribuídas (ARDL) para explorar a relação de curto e longo prazo entre os gastos militares e o papel do aparato institucional no crescimento económico, com base em dados de frequência temporal. Os resultados empíricos indicam a existência de uma associação de longo prazo entre as variáveis, de acordo com o teste de fronteira ARDL. Além disso, verifica-se uma relação negativa e estatisticamente não significativa entre a responsabilidade democrática e o produto interno bruto per capita. Por outro lado, observa-se uma relação positiva entre a estabilidade governamental (EG) e o PIB per capita. Curiosamente, a relação entre corrupção e PIB per capita é negativa, mas igualmente não significativa. Esses resultados têm implicações profundas para os gestores públicos e demais partes interessadas. Do ponto de vista das políticas públicas, sugerem-se as seguintes recomendações: (i) políticas que promovam a estabilidade governamental, como boa governação e um ambiente favorável à atração de investimentos em Burkina Faso, de modo a impulsionar o crescimento económico; (ii) a qualidade burocrática (QB) e o excesso de burocracia devem ser minimizados para fomentar a confiança dos investidores e estimular o investimento direto estrangeiro, entre outros aspetos. Mais considerações de política são apresentadas na secção conclusiva deste estudo.
**Palavras-chave**
Crescimento Económico, Qualidade Institucional, Econometria de Séries Temporais, Burkina Faso.

**Resumen**
Este estudio examina las asociaciones dinámicas entre las dinámicas militares, la calidad institucional y el desempeño económico en Burkina Faso. La importancia de esta investigación es particularmente sensible, dada la región y el país de estudio, que actualmente atraviesa un régimen militar y un distanciamiento de la democracia. El trabajo se apoya en la econometría de series temporales, utilizando la metodología autorregresiva de rezagos distribuidos (ARDL) para explorar la relación a corto y largo plazo entre el gasto militar y el papel del entramado institucional en el crecimiento económico, con base en datos de frecuencia temporal. Los resultados empíricos indican la existencia de una asociación a largo plazo entre las variables, conforme a la prueba de fronteras ARDL. Asimismo, se observa una relación negativa y estadísticamente no significativa entre la responsabilidad democrática y el producto interno bruto per cápita. En cambio, se encuentra una relación positiva entre la estabilidad gubernamental (EG) y el PIB per cápita. Curiosamente, la relación entre corrupción y PIB per cápita es negativa, aunque igualmente no significativa. Estos hallazgos tienen implicaciones de gran alcance para los administradores gubernamentales y demás actores involucrados. Desde la perspectiva de políticas públicas, se sugieren las siguientes recomendaciones: (i) políticas que fomenten la estabilidad gubernamental, como la buena gobernanza y un entorno propicio para atraer inversiones en Burkina Faso, con el fin de impulsar el crecimiento económico; (ii) la calidad burocrática (QB) y el exceso de trámites burocráticos deben reducirse para

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promover la confianza de los inversores y estimular la inversión extranjera directa, entre otros aspectos. Se presentan consideraciones adicionales sobre políticas en la sección final de este estudio.

**Palabras clave**
Crecimiento Económico, Calidad Institucional, Econometría de Series Temporales, Burkina Faso.

## 1. Introduction

Institutions, whether under military, democratic, monarchical, or otherwise, are said to be the bedrock of any societal development. The effectiveness of institutions in rendering efficient support for societal development heavily hinges on the favorable environment that is provided by the leaders of the country/society. In an environment where leaders are focused and envision redefining and changing their nation, institutions inside such a society will thrive and become crucial for positive economic change (Botah, 2024: 82). In Sub-Saharan African countries, most institutions are weak, fragile, and incapable of formulating policies and weak in achieving meaningful economic growth and societal development. In many areas, the lack of strong institutions has caused economic decline, social stagnation, and cultural decline. This is seen in many regions where the institutional framework has not been able to meet the many local demands (Spruk, 2016: 27). Institutions are the backbone of a society that leads all development aspects by utilizing communication tactics to engage people and promote involvement in development processes.

In any form of government, transparency, accountability, bureaucratic quality, political stability, and favorable socioeconomic conditions are usually the yardsticks for economic growth and development. In some sub-Sahara African countries today, due to massive corruption in governance and failure to address the social challenges battling most countries in the region, we have witnessed some drastic changes in government shifting away from democratic to military regimes orchestrated by the juntas who capitalized on the colossal societal issues such as economic and political unrest unaddressed by the democratic institutions (Ogutcu-Fu, 2023: 3). This military takeover usually arises with the aim of serving as a provisional corrective mechanism during political and economic disruption (Lee, 2026: 2). In some instances, the need to restore peace and order as well as shield conflicts from spilling over from one country to the others compels some actors to sponsor and support coups in a conflict-stricken country. In other words, the necessity for stability in adjacent states may prompt military action, as conflicts can transcend boundaries and jeopardize regional security.

Burkina Faso is among the poorest countries globally and has had nine coups since its independence in 1960, a record that underscores the fragility of the nation's institutions in establishing

political stability. The military and civilian power interplay created an environment of neopatrimonialism, a kind of political domination marked by uncertainty and insecurity over the conduct and function of state institutions. The result is the failures of state institutions to meet the people's demands. Burkina Faso is largely considered among the countries where national institutions are so weak as to yield positive socioeconomic outcomes (North, 1991: 102-5), which this article intends to examine.

This study analyzes how the relationship between Burkina Faso's fragile institutional foundations and persistent military dynamics determines its socioeconomic conditions. Within this analysis we responds to the question that what is the long-run equilibrium relationship between military participation in politics, institutional quality and economic growth in Burkina Faso? Justifying our findings, we argue that the country's low social and economic indices are fundamentally structured and strained by a detrimental cycle in which fragile institutions lead to military interventions and conflicts, further undermining institutional capacity and diverting the country's insufficient resources from productive investment. Studies of this sort are worthwhile, as they have received little or no documentation in the extant literature, which this study seeks to fill in with the incorporation of time series econometrics to underscore all variables in a time-frequency framework. Moreover, the research novelty lies in its being the first ARDL-based time-series evidence on how military participation in politics relates with six institutional dimensions (ICRG) in explaining GDP per capita in Burkina Faso, a country excluded from cross-country growth regressions due to data limitations and coup frequency.

The rest of this study proceeds with literature and theoretical section 2. While section 3 advances with data and methodological sequences. Section 4 presents the data, results, and discussion. Finally, section 5 concludes the studies with policy recommendations drawn from the study.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework: Neopatrimonialism, State Fragility, and Coup Dynamics in Burkina Faso

The neo-patrimonial nature of Burkina Faso's civilian governments has been a primary element in understanding the persistence of military coups in the nation's post-independence history. Neopatrimonialism blurs the line between public office and private gain, since leaders often amass power through clientelism, patronage networks, and the individual distribution of state resources (Shurkin, 2024: 163–165). This weakens the credibility of state institutions, makes it harder for the government to be held accountable, and makes a lot of people, including some members of the elite,

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feel hopeless. In this situation, the military has often said it is the only group that can bring back order and national unity, especially when problems with administration, corruption, or the economy show how weak civilian control is. Since Burkina Faso became independent in 1960, each new administration has been unable to create strong institutions that would gear the country towards economic development. Instead, politics has been ruled by personalism, elite bargaining, and unfair allocation of resources. This makes the military seem like the only organized group that can step in.

Military coups are not random events; they are the inevitable result of a political system where neopatrimonialism has continually degraded the civilian state, making the armed forces both a rival and a replacement for government. This is because of the weak civilian institutions, divided elites, and continuous economic problems due to the government's policies that preferred foreign political systems, ideas, and behaviors instead of the development of domestic factors (Erdmann & Engel, 2007: 101). This neo-patrimonial attitude of the political leaders of Burkina Faso after independence on August 5, 1960 (Williamson, 2013: 1), buttressed by their neocolonial inclinations, led to massive civil discontent and hence the occurrence of the first military rule in the country on January 3, 1966, when Lieutenant Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana overthrew the Maurice Yaméogo government. Corruption and a legal-rational bureaucracy were common during Yaméogo's leadership. He was the sole person running for president in October 1965, as the opposition candidates were not allowed to run (Widhalm, 2023: 24; Kpetsu,2025). Yaméogo's president combined government and public power into a single-party UDV-RDA, which pushed opposition to the side and took over political life. These traits are said to be the hallmarks of neo-patrimonialism (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994: 472). To further sustain Yaméogo’s domination, opposition members, via police harassment or bribery, were either driven out of the assembly or drew into the RDA (ruling political parties) (Harsch, 2017: 20). These actions, coupled with personalization of the democratic rule, increase the widespread perceptions of prebendaries of Yaméogo’s government; hence, he was ousted by the military on January 3, 1966, which aimed to replace a delegitimized patron with military guardianship (Phelan, 2016: 114).

Lieutenant Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana, who took overpower with enthusiasm to bring favorable reforms, began with strict action against trade unions, whose action paved the way for his assuming power. He later metamorphosed into civilian regalia, contesting and winning an election (Camara, 2023: 143–5). Lamizana's civilian administration began to replicate faults and errors that his predecessor associated with him; he was accused of a lavish and immeasurable lifestyle at the expense of the nation (Sawo, 2017: 6), a typical example of neo-patrimonialism, where leaders live a lifestyle at the cost of their country. Amidst these discomforts, Sangoulé Lamizana was overthrown

by Saye Zerbo on November 25, 1980, whose military administration was marred by a series of clashes with labor unions and a lack of foresight to reform the system. Zerbo was described as an authoritarian nationalist with no ideas for social change. The pockets of civil unrest marred by Zerbo's administration propelled another coup in Burkina Faso on November 7, 1982, which made Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo the fourth head of state of Burkina Faso (McFarland & Rupley, 1998: 92).

Ouédraogo's military administration was also supposed to redefine the system and prepare the ground for civilian transition. He promised to clean the political and economic mess of the previous administration (Skinner, 1988: 441-5). However, contrary to his promise, he somewhat reincarnated Zerbo's repressive policies by suspending the constitutional and political arrangement, an action that further stifled the advocacy institutions. These raised dissatisfaction and concerns among the army, trade unions, and students, which justified his government living short of expectations and tilting towards neo-patrimonialism. Complicating matters for Ouédraogo's administration are his excessively pro-Western conservative beliefs, which his radical military comrades deem damaging to the nation's needs and aspirations. The crisis resulted in the arrest of Pan-Africanist Thomas Sankara, revealing the neo-patrimonial character of the dictatorship and creating a chasm in the government characterized by intense hatred between nationalist and conservative military officers. The ensuing endeavors and astute opposition by pro-Sankara troops to liberate Sankara, along with a public movement, facilitated another military coup that overthrew the conservative dictatorship of Ouédraogo on August 4, 1983 (Harsch, 2013. 358-9).

The Burkinabé saw a hope; later dashed when Captain Thomas Sankara came to power. He took several reform measures to strengthen the country's economy, education, and agricultural institutions. Among his numerous legacies was the renaming of the country's name from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, "The Land of the Upright Men"; encouragement of popular participation policies that include peasants, workers, and youth, establishment of a special court to try corruption cases; and massive infrastructural construction alongside revolutionary measures in several sectors (Wilkins, 1989: 382-3). However, most of his too-ambitious colleagues found his administration alien to their personal selfish wishes, hence conspiring with some regional and western countries to topple his government (Jaffré, 2018: 103-8). Thomas Sankara was killed on October 15, 1987, for a combination of reasons, from his socialist ideology to his radical reforms in his country. The assassination of Thomas Sankara brought his close friend Blaise Compaoré's assertion, who was obviously one of the masterminds behind the bloody coup, to fruition.

Compaoré, who began as military head of state, consolidated power by establishing a semi-authoritarian regime, combining democratization with repression as he later metamorphosed into a

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civilian regime after being forced by trade unions and students to form a transition to civilian rule. Compaoré's government was a typical example of patrimonial domination, as he relied heavily on coercion, where critics are imprisoned, tortured, exiled, or killed (Harsch, 2017: 5). His administration took a drastic shift from Sankara's revolutionary policy to a system of clientelist appeasement and foreign alignment. Blaise Compaoré's 27-year rule illustrates a quintessential neo-patrimonial system in Africa, where the multiparty transition to civilian rule in 1991 was minimal, with the state apparatus becoming subordinate to the presidential authority. Moreover, the system was marred by a large scale of patronage through ministerial posts, military promotions, and business concessions, ensuring loyalty among elites (Hilgers & Loada, 2013: 194), a typical example of a neo-patrimonial regime where state resources are opened to a few elites who will mobilize the resources for their personal enrichment and the sustainability of an unpopular regime.

The Compaoré administration's tactical maneuvers to remain in power lost its clue when a nationwide protest began that saw the participation of even noncommissioned military personnel. The underlying socioeconomic problems, failed promises, and attempts to change the constitution to allow his further stay in power ignited the massive protest that forced him to resign on October 31, 2014. He went into exile in the Ivory Coast. His resignation was followed by forming an interim government headed by Michel Kafando to lead the country into constitutional order and a new government through election (Chouli, 2015). The neo-patrimonial nature of Compaoré's regime tried to resurface even while he was in exile, as the military officers loyal to him, headed by General Gilbert Diendéré, an aide to Blaise Compaoré, ousted the interim government and denounced the interim government's transition policies and requested modifications to exclusionary electoral statutes that prevented Compaoré's supporters from pursuing candidacy in the nation's elections. This indicates that Compaoré had established a conglomerate of military and civilian elites willing to remain and sustain power at all costs.

However, due to rising criticism against Diendére's draconian attempt and the international community's intervention, the interim government was restored, which ensured an election was conducted in November that brought Roch Marc Christian Kaboré to power on December 29, 2015. Kaboré's administration (2015–2022) was named the first civilian-led administration in Burkina Faso following Blaise Compaoré's lengthy rule. Kaboré's government was praised as a return to democracy. However, it had many of the same neo-patrimonialism traits as Compaoré's whose informal patronage networks, personal power, and clientelism were more important to him than official institutions (Bach & Gazibo, 2016). Moreover, although Kaboré broke away and formed the Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progrès (MPP), he was widely considered part of Compaoré's ruling

elite, under whom he served as prime minister and President of the National Assembly. This political relation is why analysts see his administration only symbolizing rupture, yet in practice it represented continuity of elite bargains (Haavik, Bøåsa, & Locchi, 2022: 330). Significant features of his administration encapsulate political appointments, state contracts, and resource access, were facilitated through party and regional patronage networks, solidifying clientelist allegiance.

Despite all policies and programs that were neopatrimonial in nature under Kaboré's administration, security issues fueled by Jihadist insurgency, nepotism, and corruption undermined the patronage network and clientelist allegiance to sustain the regime. Kaboré's ousting in the January 24, 2022, military coup by Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba further exposed the constraints of the neo-patrimonial survival tactics of his administration.

Damiba's military administration, January-September 2022, exemplified another neo-patrimonial style in which authority through military patronage is personalized. Although pledging reforms, his military rule adopted a culture of discretionary resource distribution and selective coercion under the guise of legality. Following the ousting of President Kaboré, Dambiba concentrated decision-making inside the presidency, reshuffled senior commanders, and administered through decrees, traditional methods to restructure clientelist allegiance among the officer corps. The lack of effort to restore efficiency and order in the country (Anonymous, 2022: 203, 205, 208) undermined its performance credibility and led to a countercoup by Captain Ibrahim Traoré in September 2022. Traoré, Burkina Faso's new military leader who replaced Kaboré, saw himself as a guardian rather than a dictator and regarded the coup that brought him to power as a necessary step for the safeguard of national sovereignty, giving a common cause to the youth and security forces (Asare Kwakye, 2025: 52). History will tell whether his administration will live up to its promise or will incline towards another patrimonial administration.

### 2.2 Institutional Fragility and Military Influence: The Dual Determinants of Economic Growth in Burkina Faso

Economic growth in Burkina Faso and the socioeconomic conditions of the Burkinabés have been determined by institutional fragility and the military influence the country has experienced since its independence. Burkina Faso is one of the world's least developed countries. The country shows how weak democratic institutions, greedy elites, and repeated military interventions have made it hard for the government to stay in power and make structural changes. These dual determinants are crucial in analyzing the country's patterns of civil-military relations and their implications for long-term socioeconomic development, which this article aims to justify.

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To begin with, the unequal relationship between the center and the peripheries as seen in the materialistic influence of France in Francophone West African countries coupled with the lack of wherewithal of the political elites to address socioeconomic issues is crucial to understanding the recurring coup events in Burkina Faso and other Francophone West Africa (Zhang & Poulin, 2025: 323-4), which also indicate fragile political cum economic institutions that would not sustain the nation. This weakness is one of the primary reasons for a series of incessant coups d'état in some African countries. Okon has argued that the military coups have made a comeback on the African continent due to several factors that facilitate such events, including remnants of authoritarianism, poor democratic institutions, collapse of democracy, inadequate regional and international governance, military indiscipline, political decay, and socio-political and economic issues that call for military intervention (Okon, 2022: 113).

In Burkina Faso, a country that has experienced multiple coups (1966, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1987, 2014, 2015, and 2022 twice), there is no doubt that it has had very fragile institutions and unsolidified policies to ensure political stability in the country. The military, therefore, has been resurfacing with the promise of injecting sanity into the system, yet with few outcomes. Our central question is to what extent institutional fragility and military influence have helped determine the level of economic growth in Burkina Faso. To respond to this question, we will first examine how institutional fragility hampered economic growth, how military influence aggravated the situation, the interdependence of the fragile institutions and military might, and poor socioeconomic conditions and governance instability as outcomes of weak institutions and military interventions in the country.

Institutional fragility in Burkina Faso is seen in ineffective bureaucracy, a poor rule of law, corruption, and a restricted ability to execute equitable economic plans, justifying Acemoglu and Robinson's (2012) model of extractive institutions, where power resides in the hands of a tiny elite and the resources of the state are invested in supporting patronage networks rather than productive investment (Jha, 2012: 168-170).

In addition, the road to democratic accountability has been bumpy, which has slowed the country's economic and social progress since it became independent in 1960. During Yaméogo's presidency in the first republic, the country fell into a one-party government distinguished by political persecution and economic suffering. There were no real institutions of accountability. This tendency escalated during Captain Thomas Sankara's revolutionary yet authoritarian government (1983-1987). Although it was lauded for its anti-imperialist stance and socioeconomic reforms, Sankara's government fell short of democratic accountability as it suppressed political pluralism and civil liberties that are the backbone of democracy (Harsch, 2014: 55-60). Compaoré's era was another

regime in Burkina Faso that was associated with a lack of commitment to the democratic ethos, which contributed to the weakening economic situation in the country. The 27-year presidency of Blaise Compaoré was characterized by a series of manipulations of the electoral system and co-option of opposition, albeit after the adoption of multiparty elections following the enactment of the 1991 constitution (Hilgers & Mazzocchetti, 2010). The assassination of journalist Norbert Zongo in 1998, associated with Compaoré's inner circle, exemplified the regime's oppressive views and became a symbol of its impunity and the inadequacy of legal systems designed to hold authority accountable (Mbaku, 2022; Pigeaud & Sylla,2024).

Compaoré's attempt to extend his tenure in 2014 was another feature of democratic inculpability that the country has witnessed. Although this triggered his removal by the junta, the democratic government of his successor, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, who came to power in 2015, was not much different. His government could not address deep-seated corruption and the escalating jihadist insurgency, which led to widespread disillusionment with the government. The result was the military exploiting the security crisis and seizing power in two coups in 2022, first led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba and then by Captain Ibrahim Traoré. According to the 2024 Democratic Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit, the level of democratic accountability for Burkina Faso is 2.55 out of 10, indicating a lack of civil liberty and weak democratic preference in the country (Our World in Data, 2025). This can be justified considering that the current junta has suspended the constitution and dissolved elected institutions, which have dismantled the formal channels of democratic accountability. Coupled with the current undemocratic narrative, the absence of a clear timeline for a return to civilian rule has raised concerns that the country will return to the authoritarian patterns of the past, contributing to its economic difficulties.

Quality of bureaucracy, which is the level of political interference in public administration, how sound policies are carried out, and how well professional standards are upheld, has been weak since independence (Nyadera & Islam, 2023: 2–6), putting long-term economic growth and stable governance in Burkina Faso at risk. The bureaucracy was so weak in Burkina Faso that it had one of the lowest numbers of civil servants per thousand, even among developing countries. According to IMF data, the public sector employment per thousand inhabitants for years during 1972-1992 for Burkina Faso was only 3.66, while for its neighboring countries such as Chad, there were 4.43, Mali, 6.27; and Togo, Togo12.08 civil servants per thousand citizens in the same period (Kraay & Van Rijckeghem, 1995: 40). These indicators show that even among its neighboring countries Burkina Faso's bureaucracy is the most incapacitated. Among the reasons for his weakness is the lack of permanent salaried staff and limited skills of the rural dwellers, and most skilled workers who reside

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in the cities are very reluctant to apply for jobs in the rural areas (Billing, 2018: 675), leaving institutions in the rural areas poorly managed and understaffed, further deteriorating the socioeconomic conditions of the country.

This weak bureaucratic feature of Burkina Faso is not unconnected with the country's inheritance of a colonial bureaucratic structure intended to benefit metropolitan interests rather than local administration. The independent government under Yaméogo shrunk the civil service by imposing austerity measures that reduced the salary of the civil service by up to 20 percent and a reduction of social security payments (Englebert, 2018: 46). Likewise, under Lamizana's military and civilian governments (1966–1980), bureaucracy lacked autonomy as administrative decisions were primarily determined by political loyalty (Eizenga, 2021). During Thomas Sankara's tenure (1983–1987), although bureaucratic responsiveness and accountability improved, they were temporary and characterized by radicalism, coercion, and inadequate institutionalization, resulting in bureaucratic alienation (Louw, 2022: 45-7). Subsequent regimes, such as Compaoré, Kaboré, Damiba, and current Traoré, are associated with bureaucrats lacking logistical and financial resources to effectively implement policies, especially in the rural areas, which contributed to the bureaucratic inefficiency that remains a central obstacle to the governance and economic growth of Burkinabés.

The country's institutions have been unable to tackle corruption effectively since independence, which has contributed to the weak economic situation of Burkina Faso. From 1960, when the country gained independence, just like many sub-Saharan African countries due to lack of strong post-colonial political and economic systems (Alhinho, 2023), it slumped from front and back from civilian to military rule, indicating political instability, a significant factor in economic degradation. Both regimes in the country have not succeeded in building strong institutions that would drive massive economic growth; instead, they have relied on neo-patrimonial governance and limited accountability structures. Political and military leaders have used state resources to strengthen their power and give favors instead of putting money into useful things like education, healthcare, and infrastructure (Ardigo, Jenkins, & Nicaise, 2019: 1–5). According to the Corruption Perception Index figures of 2024, Burkina Faso scored 41 percent, with a score change of 0 since 2023. The data indicate no significant improvement in corruption eradication over a decade, from 2012 to 2024, as its scores range from 38 to 42 percent (Transparency International, 2025), further testifying to the level of corruption that hinders economic progress in the country.

The fragility of the institutions, coupled with numerous coups and countercoups that Burkina Faso has witnessed, are the major determining factors of the poor socioeconomic conditions of the country (Brailey, Harding, & Isbell, 2024: 12-15). While the institutions remain weak in addressing

the numerous national challenges, military interventions indicate political instability, another stumbling block for economic development. These have created uncertainties and raised many concerns and doubts in the hearts of local and foreign investors, deterring them from investing in the country. Burkina Faso, like many other developing countries, has had weak institutions throughout the years, which has made it harder for the government to do its job and eroded the rule of law (Haley, 2020: 9–10). This instability makes it harder to implement policies, encourages corruption, and diverts resources away from public welfare and development goals. Even with help from donors and money made from internally generated revenue, health, education, and infrastructure services are not good enough because of inefficiency and elite control (Haddad, Nougtara, & Fournier, 2006: 895). This has entrenched poverty and exacerbated inequality, rendering the majority of the Burkinabé vulnerable to socioeconomic shocks. Military regimes, like the weak civilian administrations, have aggravated the situation by taking charge regularly, undermining democratic consolidation, eroding institutional legitimacy, and consolidating the cycle of instability. This unpredictability discourages long-term investment and private sector investment within the country.

Burkina Faso is among the most impoverished nations worldwide, with a GDP per capita of USD 987.3 in 2024. Except for Niger, which has a GDP per capita of 722.7, all its neighboring countries—Benin, Mali, Togo, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire—have GDP per capita figures that are from 1 to 63 percent greater than those of Burkina Faso (World Bank, 2025). Justifying the poor economic condition in the country is the high number of the Burkinabé population who live below the poverty line. According to UNDP, more than 40% of the population in Burkina Faso lives below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2025). The striking factors behind this economic weakness are the fragility of the institutions and the political instability resulting from the numerous military coups that have occurred in the country. The instability of national institutions typically results in resource allocation according to patron-client networks, distorting investment objectives. This tendency has led to persistent underinvestment in infrastructure, thus restricting human capital development and productivity.

## 3. Data Presentation and Interpretation

This section provides pre-test analysis such as the summary statistics and unit root test to ascertain the characteristics of the data adopted for the model. The data spanned from 1984 to 2017;[1]

[1] The data for this study is limited to his point due to data availability and closed access. Hence the limitation of the data span. Furthermore, The dependent variable in the analysis is GDP per capita (constant US$), sourced from the World Bank, while the independent variables—military involvement in politics (MP), democratic accountability (DA),

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was adopted for the estimation. The first preliminary test estimated was the summary statistics as presented in Table 1. All data were sourced from the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)

**Table 1**

*Data Definitions and Summary Statistics*

| Panel A: Variables and Data Definitions | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **Description** | **Source** | **Scale/Range** | **Transformation** |
| **GDPPC** | GDP per capita (constant USD) | World Bank | Continuous | Log (lnGDPPC) |
| **GS** | Government Stability | ICRG | 0–12 | Level |
| **MP** | Military in Politics | ICRG | 0–6 | Level |
| **SEC** | Socio-economic Conditions | ICRG | 0–12 | Level |
| **DA** | Democratic Accountability | ICRG | 0–6 | Level |
| **CORP** | Corruption Index | ICRG | 0–6 | Level |
| **BQ** | Bureaucratic Quality | ICRG | 0–4 | Level |

| Panel B: Descriptive Statistics | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | GDPPC | GS | MP | SEC | DA | CORP | BQ |
| **Mean** | 525.1767 | 6.833333 | 2.035539 | 4.120098 | 2.634804 | 2.560049 | 1.132353 |
| **Median** | 500.6746 | 6.250000 | 2.000000 | 4.000000 | 2.875000 | 2.020833 | 1.000000 |
| **Maximum** | 771.6479 | 11.00000 | 3.000000 | 6.000000 | 5.000000 | 4.000000 | 2.000000 |
| **Minimum** | 357.9088 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 | 0.000000 |
| **Std. Dev.** | 129.0206 | 2.369178 | 0.918738 | 1.354891 | 1.252987 | 0.910169 | 0.413939 |
| **Skewness** | 0.427320 | -0.403266 | -1.145670 | -0.482680 | -0.040886 | 0.065132 | 0.781054 |
| **Kurtosis** | 1.819887 | 3.425543 | 3.480712 | 3.727494 | 2.368183 | 3.406711 | 4.789929 |
| **Jarque-Bera** | 3.007694 | 1.178072 | 7.765211 | 2.069986 | 0.574996 | 0.258376 | 7.995706 |
| **Probability** | 0.222273 | 0.554862 | 0.020597 | 0.355229 | 0.750138 | 0.878809 | 0.018355 |
| **Sum** | 17856.01 | 232.3333 | 69.20833 | 140.0833 | 89.58333 | 87.04167 | 38.50000 |
| **Sum Sq. Dev.** | 549328.3 | 185.2292 | 27.85463 | 60.57904 | 51.80923 | 27.33747 | 5.654412 |
| **Obser** | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 | 34 |

Note: The International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) scores are bounded index measures, based on expert assessments and will be interpreted as ordinal or score-based indicators. Consequently, estimated coefficients represent the effect of a one-unit change in the index score.

The result of the summary statistics presented in Table 1 above indicates that Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDPPC) achieved the mean value of 525.17, indicating an average level of growth in the economy. The standard deviation of 129.02 shows a wide variability in GDPPC across the observed period. The positive skewness of 0.427 suggests that the mean and the median are closed, a case of fairly asymmetric. while most values are above the mean, there are a few extreme low values. The kurtosis value of 1.82 indicates a platykurtic distribution, which means that the distribution is flatter and more spread out.

corruption (CR), socio-economic conditions (SEC), bureaucratic quality (BQ), and government stability (GS)—are obtained from the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG).

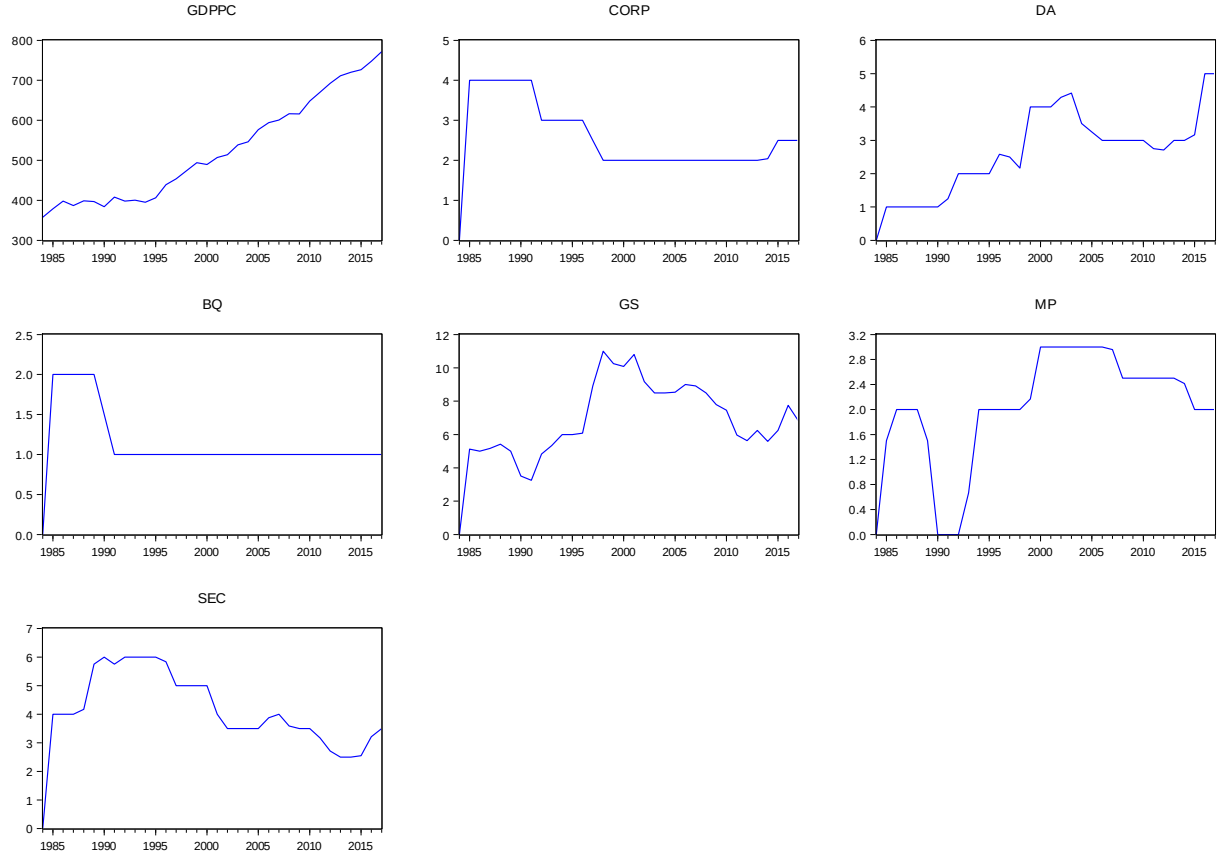
Government stability (GS) shows the mean of 6.83, and the standard deviation is 2.36, suggesting less wider variation. In essence, the values are consistent around the average. The skewness of -0.40 shows a slight negative skew, indicating more values above the mean than below. The kurtosis of 3.42 suggests a flatter distribution with a light tail. Military in politics (MP) demonstrate a mean of 2.30 and a standard deviation of 0.91, indicating that the values revolve closely around the average. The strong negative skewness of -1.1 indicates many high values and fewer low values. The kurtosis value of 3.48 suggests a somewhat more peaked distribution. Socio-economic condition (SEC) shows a mean of 4.12 with a standard deviation of 1.35, indicating moderate variation. The skewness of -0.48 suggests that most SEC is approximately symmetric. The very high kurtosis of 3.72 reflects a distribution with a sharp peak, suggesting that the SEC are highly concentrated around certain values. The democratic accountability (DA) has a mean of 2.62 and a standard deviation of 1.25, showing insignificant variability. The skewness of -0.04 indicates a slight positive skew, with more values below the mean than above it. The kurtosis value of 2.36 suggests that the distribution is platykurtic, with flatter and light tails. The corruption index shows a mean of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 0.91, indicating that the values are clustered around their mean with a positive skewness as suggested by the value of 0.06. The kurtosis of 3.40 is evidence of leptokurtic with a more peaked and heavy tails. The bureaucratic quality (BQ) demonstrates a mean value of 1.13 and a standard deviation of 0.41, suggesting that the values of the BQ closely cluster around the mean. The kurtosis of 4.78, greater than 3 shows a case of leptokurtic with a more peak and heavy tails. Finally, the probability value of the Jarque-Bera test statistic for all the variables except those of BQ and MP are not significant, indicating that the distribution of those variables is perfectly normal, while those of BQ and MP are not normally distributed. Further insights on data in terms of schematics are provided in figure 1.

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**Figure 1**

*Trend Analysis of the Variables under Study*




The trend analysis of the variables in the dataset shown in figure 1 reveals an upward movement in only democratic accountability (DA) and gross domestic product per capita (GDPPC). Most of the variables such as bureaucracy quality (BQ), corruption, socio-economic condition (SEC), government stability (GS), and military in politics (MP) demonstrate unstable trending. Military in politics (PM) stands out as more volatile compared to the other variables. Its negative skewness suggests significant fluctuations and occasional sharp changes over the period. This could suggest that the military are not always participating in politics in the country. The fluctuations in the trending in government stability show that change in rulership of the country is not stable at all in the period under review.

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**Table 2**

*Stationarity Results*

| Variables | ADF t-test @ Levels | Probability | ADF t-test @ first difference | Probability | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GDPPC** | 1.8556 | 0.9997 | -5.5737 | 0.0001 | I(1) |
| **DA** | -1.4717 | 0.5352 | -6.0723 | 0.0000 | I(1) |
| **GS** | -3.2503 | 0.0258 | -6.5283 | 0.0000 | I(0) |
| **CORP** | -4.1349 | 0.0029 | -16.8321 | 0.0001 | I(0) |
| **BQ** | -4.4281 | 0.0013 | -16.1551 | 0.0001 | I(0) |
| **MP** | -2.6725 | 0.0895 | -4.7040 | 0.0007 | I(1) |
| **SEC** | -3.5581 | 0.0124 | -9.1117 | 0.0001 | I(0) |

Source: Authors Computation *(E-Views 10)*

The results from the PP unit root test in Table 2 indicate the stationarity of the variables at different levels of differencing. Specifically, gross domestic product per capita, democratic accountability, and military in politics all exhibit probabilities above the 5% significance level at the level, but after first differencing, their probabilities drop below 0.05, confirming their stationarity at the first difference. In contrast, bureaucracy quality, corruption, socio-economic condition, government stability are stationary at a level with a probability below 5% level of significance, indicating it is integrated of order zero I(0). This suggests that while other variables need to be differenced once to achieve stationarity, GS, CORP, BQ and SEC are already stationary, reflecting a stable long-term trend. This confirms the case of a mixed order of integration, which suggest the adoption of the dynamic ARDL model[2]. The ARDL framework is adopted due to its suitability for small samples and mixed integration orders (I(0) and I(1)).

**Table 3**

*Lag Length Criteria*

| Lag | LogL | LR | FPE | AIC | SC | HQ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | -320.4448 | NA | 3.527136 | 21.12547 | 21.44927 | 21.23102 |
| 1 | -46.90419 | 75.12785* | 7.90e-05* | 3.587087* | 10.71077* | 5.909228* |
| 2 | -119.6843 | 297.9026 | 0.000215 | 11.33447 | 13.92490 | 12.17889 |
| 3 | 98.40015 | 84.37027 | 1.01e-06 | 9.800271 | 14.65732 | 11.38355 |

Source: Authors Computation from E-view 10

[2] Furthermore, due to the popularity of the ARDL and wants of space, further insights on the methodology can be gleaned from lead study of Pesaran et al (2001) available at Pesaran, M. H., Shin, Y., & Smith, R. J. (2001). Bounds testing approaches to the analysis of level relationships. *Journal of applied econometrics*, *16*(3), 289-326.

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Table 3 above presents the result of the lag length selection criteria. This study used criteria, such as the FPE (Final Prediction Error), AIC (Akaike Information Criterion), SC (Schwarz Criterion), and HQ (Hannan-Quinn Criterion), to determine the best lag length. Lag 2 is selected as optimal according to the FPE (7.90e-05*), AIC (3.587087*), SC (10.71077*), and HQ (5.909228) as it minimizes these criteria, which aim to balance goodness of fit with model complexity. The other lags (1 and 3) have higher values for most of the criteria, suggesting they are less optimal for the model. Thus, lag 2 is chosen as the most suitable lag length based on the majority of the selection criteria.

**Table 4**

*Bound Test*

| Test Statistic | Value | Signif. | I(0) Asymptotic: n=1000 Finite Sample: n=35 | I(1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actual Sample Size | 31 | | | |
| F-statistic | 4.571839 | 10% | 2.254 | 3.388 |
| K | 6 | 5% | 2.685 | 3.96 |
| | | 1% | 3.713 | 4.326 |

Source Author's Computation from E-view 10

In Table 4, the F-statistic value is 4.571839, which is compared with the upper and lower bounds for different significance levels to determine whether the variables are cointegrated or otherwise. The significance levels (10%, 5%, and 1%) provide the critical values for the I(0) and I(1) bounds, which correspond to the hypothesis of no cointegration and the presence of cointegration, respectively. For the actual sample size of 31, the upper bound for the 1% and 5% significance levels are 4.326 and 3.96, and the F-statistic (5.571839) exceeds these values, suggesting that the null hypothesis of no cointegration is rejected and there is a long-run relationship among the variables.

**Table 5**

*Short run ADRL output*

| **Variable** | **Coefficient** | **Std. Error** | **t-Statistic** | **Prob.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | -802.4630 | 266.4918 | -3.011210 | 0.0196 |
| D(DA) | -3.881088 | 10.58328 | -0.366719 | 0.7247 |
| D(DA(-1)) | -53.90301 | 18.74947 | -2.874908 | 0.0238 |
| D(GS) | 6.160774 | 5.520116 | 1.116059 | 0.3012 |
| D(GS(-1)) | 4.987920 | 6.623704 | 0.753041 | 0.4760 |
| D(CORP) | -42.63958 | 28.81351 | -1.479847 | 0.1825 |
| CORP(-1) | -85.19271 | 40.12506 | -2.123179 | 0.0714 |
| D(BQ) | 287.6108 | 91.91238 | 3.129185 | 0.0166 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| D(BQ(-1)) | -272.4584 | 89.66379 | -3.038667 | 0.0189 |
| D(MP) | -3.597510 | 11.48350 | -0.313276 | 0.7632 |
| D(MP(-1)) | -17.89772 | 11.60896 | -1.541716 | 0.1670 |
| D(SEC) | 8.608555 | 9.676557 | 0.889630 | 0.4032 |
| D(SEC(-1)) | -15.01171 | 11.57056 | -1.297406 | 0.2356 |
| CointEq(-1) | 0.647446 | 0.075700 | 8.552744 | 0.0001 |

Source: Author's Computation from E-view 10

Table 5 presents the results of the ARDL short-run estimations. The coefficients for DA in the previous and current periods are -3.88 and -52.90, with p-values of 0.7247 and 0.0238. This indicates a negative and statistically insignificant relationship between democratic accountability and gross domestic product per capita in the previous year, which turns to be negatively significant in the current year. Specifically, a 1% increase in DA will cause a decline in GDPPC by 52,90 in the current periods. The relationship between government stability (GS) and GDPPC though positive, but statistically insignificant, this means that government stability is not a driver of economic development in the periods under review. The effect of CORP on GDPPC is negative but only significant in the previous year. This means that corruption could endanger the national economy in the short run, aligning with the *appriori* expectation. BQ exerts a mixed effect on the GDPPC in the short-run. A positive change in BQ will increase GDPPC by 287.6% in the previous period. There is a positive relationship between BQ and GDPPC in the current. However, this turned out to be negative and significant in the previous year. The implication is that bureaucracy could frustrate the path of growth in the national economy in the short run. Military participation in politics is negatively related to the GDPPC though statistically significantly in the short run. Socio-economic positive is positively related to GDPPC in the past period, which turned out to be negative in the current year. This relationship, however, are statistically insignificant in both the current and previous periods paths.

**Table 6**

*Long run ARDL estimation*

| Variables | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | 1239.428 | 93.76759 | 13.21809 | 0.0000 |
| DA | -90.47910 | 23.43561 | -3.860753 | 0.0062 |
| GS | 21.80342 | 18.62798 | 1.170466 | 0.2801 |
| CORP | 131.5827 | 60.57993 | 2.172051 | 0.0664 |
| BQ | -450.2419 | 104.3874 | -4.313183 | 0.0035 |
| MP | 40.67061 | 32.25433 | 1.260935 | 0.2477 |
| SEC | -137.6605 | 29.77106 | -4.623971 | 0.0024 |

Source: Author's Estimation from eview-10

Table 6 displays the long-run relationship between the variables incorporated in this study. The coefficient for DA (democratic accountability) is is negative and statistically significant

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(−90.47910; *p*=0.0062). This suggests that higher levels of democratic accountability are associated with lower GDP per capita in the long run within the sample period. This corroborates the work of Barro (1996). The implication is that domestic accountability in Burkina Faso is acting as anti-development in the national economy.

In contrast, government stability has a positive but statistically insignificant coefficient in the long run. This implies that government stability has no significant relationship with the growth rate of gross domestic product per capita in Burkina Faso in the period under review, aligning with the work of Acemoglu & Robinson (2012). Surprisingly, corruption has a positive coefficient with statistical significance at 10 per cent level (131.5827, P=0.0664). This indicates that gross domestic product per capita and corruption are positively but weakly related in the long run. This supports the work of Acemoglu & Robinson (2012), conversely, due to weak institutions.

Further findings show that bureaucracy quality has a very strong negative relationship with GDPPC in the long run (-450.2419, P=0.0035). This suggests that poor bureaucracy quality in, relates negatively with economic growth.

Military participation in politics (MP) has a positive but statistically insignificant coefficient in the long-run. Finally, socio-economic conditions (SEC) exhibit a negative and statistically significant coefficient (−137.6605; p = 0.0024). This implies that improvements in socio-economic conditions are associated with lower GDP per capita in the long run. Similar to other institutional variables, this counterintuitive result may reflect the complex structural conditions of the economy, measurement constraints, or reverse dynamics within the sample period. It may also indicate that improvements in social indicators occur during periods of economic adjustment rather than expansion.

**Table 7**

*Residuals of Diagnostics Tests*

| Tests | Value | Prob. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|
| Normality | 0.02827 | 0.9859 | Residuals are normal |
| Serial correlation | 1.72517 | 0.2693 | No serial correlation |
| Heteroscedasticity | 0.30552 | 0.9854 | No heteroscedasticity |
| Ramsey RESET | 3.41535 | 0.1141 | Model is well specified |

Source: Author's Computation (E-Views 10)

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**Figure 2**

*CUSUM and CUSUM Square*

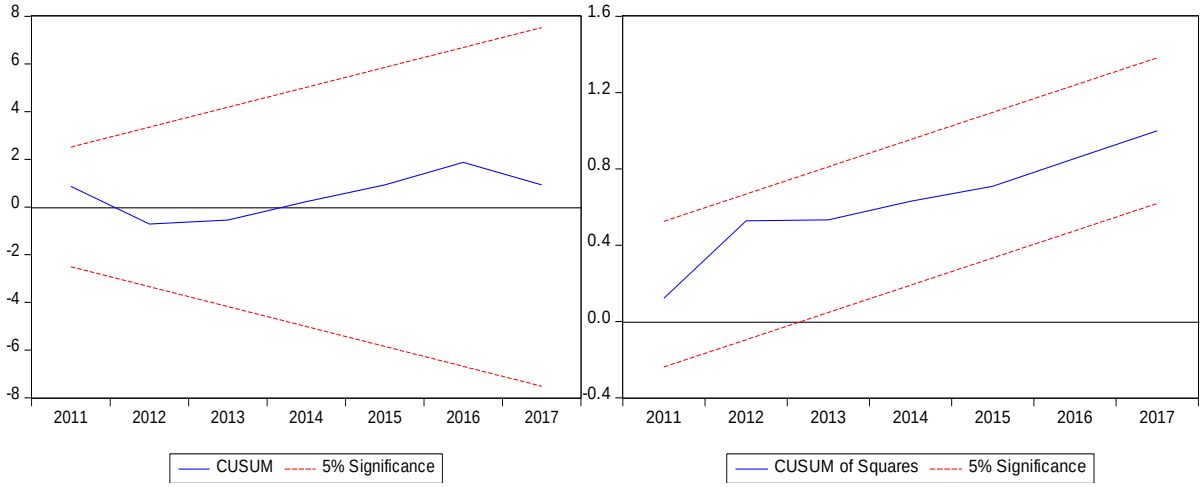



Table 7 above presents the results from the diagnostic test. The normality test achieved an F-statistic of 0.02827 and a probability value of 0.9859, which is greater than the conventional 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the residuals of the model are normally distributed, suggesting that the assumptions of normality in the regression analysis hold. The serial correlation test with the F-statistic is 1.72517, with a p-value of 0.2693, which is significantly above 0.05, indicating the absence of serial correlation in the model. This result suggests that the error terms are not correlated over time, which supports the validity of the model's estimation. Similarly, the heteroscedasticity test yields an F-statistic of 0.30552, with a probability of 0.9854, which is above the 0.05 threshold, signifying that the model is homoscedastic. The Ramsey Reset test, with an F-statistic of 3.41525 and a p-value of 0.1141, indicates that the model is well-specified, as the p-value is above the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that no major misspecification issues were detected in the model's functional form.

Figure 2 presents the CUSUM and CUSUM of Squares stability tests, which are crucial for assessing the stability of the model's parameters over time. These stability tests are essential to ensure that the model provides reliable estimates and predictions. The results support the conclusion that the ARDL model is stable and well-specified, making it suitable for further analysis and policy recommendations.

## 4. Conclusion and Policy Implication

This single-country study advances the political-economy literature for a West African country that has received little or no attention in the related literature by examining the relationship

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between military involvement in politics (MP), democratic accountability (DA), corruption (CR), socio-economic conditions (SEC), bureaucratic quality (BQ), and government stability (GS) and economic growth in the country. This study seeks to explore if the aforementioned institutional factors are associated with economic growth. Interestingly the findings are revealing and instructive with far-reaching implications for policymakers and stakeholders alike. Key study findings highlight that democratic accountability is negatively associated with economic growth which is converse to *apriori* expectation that support the literature that economic growth correlated with high democratic accountability. The plausible economic intuition could be due to the demographic structure and economic dynamic of the region or better still the government architecture of Burkina faso does not support democratic rule as it does not support economic growth. This is supported in the present study as we also observed that both bureaucratic quality and socioeconomic structure support finding of democratic accountability. These outcomes have the following policy implications. The study deviates from *apriori* expecttion and inconverse with the thesis put forth from famous scholar Acemoglu and Robinson on the role of institutional quality and nations prosperity. However, for this west african study under review it is pertinent to say that its socio-economic demograhy does not support democracy which hingers her economic growth. Thus, it is suggested that mix or a blend of partial demogractic rules should be enaged to enjoy the dividens of democracy as well and avert the effect of full militry rules with more authocratic regimes. This study further reveals that military politics increase economic rules which affects the aforementioned recommendation. Interestingly, corruption is seen to have a positive relationship with economic growth which corroborates the dirty growth hypothesis in the extant literature and is well-established for low-income or developing economies, as there are no or little institutional enformemnet.

In summary, the presnt study strongly suggests the need for self and autonomous institutions . This will engender the functionality of several other institutional appratus once there is an autonomous institution. In return it reduces corrupion , bureautic red tapes that also support correlation will be reduce if not eliminated in Burkina Faso. Additionally from the present study findings suggests the need to reinforce instititional apparatus in Burkina Faso raning from rule of law bureautratic quality and more to induced economic growth. However, there is need for civilian oversight on military rule to bring about balance. The mentioned civilian rule can be powered via paliamenarty system between civiloan and military. This phenomenon will boost investors confidence and by extension trigger economic growth. Furthermore, socio-economic condition and economic growth in the long-run shows a negative and statistically significant relationship. This is plausiable for a developing economy as most developing economic suffer from basic macro-economic issues

ranging from low wages,insecurity and weak institutional quality. Hence, the need for increase socio-economic status in Burkina faso to foster economic growth.

The present study is not without limitations that plagued previous study but more peculiar to this is data limitation. Furthermore, subsequent study can explore the theme for other Sub-saharan african countries to either explore the theme to validate or refute this study claims.

## 5. Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## 6. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Festus Victor Bekun, Yusuf Wara Abubakar and Udi Joshua; methodology: Udi Joshua and Festus Victor Bekun; investigation: Yusuf Wara Abubakar and Seyma Caliskan Cavdar; resources: Seyma Caliskan Cavdar, Festus Victor Bekun and Yusuf Wara Abubakar; writing—original draft preparation: Udi Joshua, and Yusuf Wara Abubakar; writing—review and editing: Seyma Caliskan Cavdar, Udi Joshua, Festus Victor Bekun and Yusuf Wara Abubakar; supervision: Festus Victor Bekun and Seyma Caliskan Cavdar. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## 7. Declaration of competing interest

The authors state that none of their known conflicting financial interests or personal connections could have impacted the work published in this publication.

## 8. Data availability statement

Data will be made available upon request from the corresponding author

## 9. Data Availability

World's Bank World Development Indicators and annual Statistical Bulletin of the Central Bank of Nigeria (2023) more details in section 3 of the study.

## 10. Consent for Publication

All authors have read and agreed to the publication of the manuscript.

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## 11. Language Editing

Grammarly was used only for minor grammatical and linguistic adjustments.

## 12. Disclaimer

AI technologies were used just for proofreading and translation.

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