



The Rise and Fall of a Political Party: Handling Political Failure in Municipal Elections in Burkina Faso

Sten Hagberg | Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Uppsala University

ABSTRACT This article examines the socio-political transformations of Burkina Faso, following the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré from power in October 2014 and culminating with the municipal elections in May 2016. In particular, I develop a case-study on a political party (*la Nouvelle Alliance du Faso*, NAFA) that was founded in early 2015 around a presidential candidate who in mid-September the same year was deemed ineligible with reference to a newly adopted Electoral Law, and by the end of September was arrested and put in jail for having supported a failed coup d'état. Yet rather than considering this failed attempt to access power, I would like to analyse its local repercussions on municipal elections the following year. I describe the political failure from the perspective of NAFA regional and municipal political leaders, particularly by analyzing the actions of two local politicians. Beyond the specific case-study, the issue of political failure highlights how local political leaders are caught between their constituencies of voters and supporters, on the one hand, and the party's headquarters and State administration, on the other. I look at the framing and timing of political failure and try to understand them as part of local leaders' attempts to turn it into a socially and morally loaded virtue.

Keywords: political transition, failure, elections, party politics, Burkina Faso

Introduction

At the end of October 2014, a popular insurrection – at the time most often called a revolution – ended the 27 years of reign of Blaise Compaoré in Burkina Faso. Once again, the President wanted to modify paragraph 37 of the Constitution concerning the limitation of presidential terms so as to remain in power for yet another term. However, civil society organisations and opposition parties in alliance with citizens stopped another manipulation of powerholders. The October revolution *à la sauce burkinabè* pushed a regime change and a democratic breakthrough.

This article examines the socio-political transformations of Burkina Faso, following the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré from power in October 2014 and culminating with the municipal elections in May 2016.¹ It builds on ongoing work seeking to combine a historically informed perspective on political developments with contemporary political and

¹ I would like to express my deepest gratitude for ongoing conversations over the last two decades with the two main actors of the case-study: Assita Ouattara and Amadou Ouattara. Earlier versions of this article were presented at two international academic meetings. First, it was presented at the international workshop *Transition politique et gouvernance communale au Sahel*, Ouagadougou, 26–28 April 2017, jointly hosted by Ludovic Kibora, and me. My sincere gratitude to all workshop participants for their comments. Second, it was presented at a panel organised by Rosa de Jorio and Joseph Hellweg at the 61st Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, at Atlanta from 29 November–1 December 2018. I am grateful to the panel organisers as well as the discussant Maria Grosz-Ngaté for sharp comments and productive questions. Finally, I would also like to thank two anonymous reviewers for constructive comments and critical remarks.

cultural perspectives in the analysis of the Burkinabe political culture and, by extension, the specific democratic culture in Burkina Faso post-Compaoré (Hagberg et al. 2017, 2018). In particular, I develop a case-study of the political party *Nouvelle Alliance du Faso* (NAFA) that was founded in early 2015 around the presidential candidate Djibrill Bassolé, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in the last government of Compaoré. Yet in September 2015, the Constitutional Council decided that the candidacy of Bassolé was ineligible, with reference to the Electoral Law that had been voted by the transition parliament on 7 April 2015. And by the end of September 2015, Bassolé was arrested and put in jail for having supported the failed coup d'état led by the ex-president's *Régiment de Sécurité Présidentielle* (RSP) on 16 September. Hence, Djibrill Bassolé, once the powerful Minister of Foreign Affairs for Blaise Compaoré and also General of the Gendarmerie, had a short-lived career as presidential candidate of the NAFA. This political failure at the very top of Burkinabe politics had repercussions for the new party, and its local leaders.

Yet rather than considering this failed attempt to access power, I would like to analyse the local repercussions that Bassolé's fall had on municipal elections the following year. Drawing on long-term fieldwork in the municipalities of Bobo-Dioulasso, Péni and Sidéradougou, I describe Bassolé's political failure from the perspective of NAFA regional and municipal political leaders. I follow the campaigns of NAFA leaders positioning themselves vis-à-vis the country's transformed socio-political landscape, particularly how local leaders handled the fact that the NAFA presented itself as a political alternative in early 2015 just to be a dead-end a few months later. The article is geared towards the question of how such a failure (*amanya* in Jula) was represented and discussed by key political actors in municipal elections of May 2016. Beyond the specific case-study, the issue of political failure highlights how local political leaders are caught between their constituencies of voters and supporters, on the one hand, and the party's headquarters and State administration, on the other. I develop a methodological point on the importance of focusing on failure and miscalculation. Instead of exploring success and progress, I argue that we do need to take apparent failures seriously, as in this case. While any political actor would always try to transform a mishap into a trampoline for further attempts, we do need to reflect more on how and by what means failure is practically and discursively dealt with. I am interested in exploring how political failures function socially and politically in "the new Burkina Faso" where nothing should be as before (Hagberg et al. 2018). "Failure is a moral accusation – and specifically a devaluation – of something or someone. Failure occurs when the subject's process of inscribing themselves in the world [...] is interrupted or aborted" (Carroll et al. 2017: 10). And, yet, even though failure is a central feature of social life, it is often insufficiently analysed. One sociological definition suggests that failure is "a consequence of the necessary incompleteness of projects of governance" (Malpas and Wickham 1995: 39). Hence, failure has a lot to do with "the interrupted", "the aborted", and "the incomplete", but is not necessarily the opposite to success. Instead, I would like to argue, failure is about framing and timing. In this article, I focus on political failure by paying attention to how local political actors handle and ascribe meaning to circumstances and events that occur far away from their constituency, and therefore far out of their control. More specifically, I look at the framing and timing of political failure and try to understand them as part of local leaders' attempts to turn it into a socially and morally loaded virtue.

The article is organised as follows. First, I make some remarks regarding Burkina Faso's recent years of socio-political transformations, followed by a brief description of the rise and

fall of the presidential candidate Djibrill Bassolé of the NAFA. Second, I describe the NAFA's electoral campaign in the municipalities of Bobo-Dioulasso, Péri, and Sidéradougou, and comment the election results. Third, I discuss how the NAFA's municipal and regional politicians handled, interpreted, and ascribed meaning to the political failure, by referring to cultural and moral values such as loyalty and trustworthiness.

From Revolution to Transition

In October 2014, years of social and political mobilisation culminated in a peaceful but forceful popular reaction against the government's decision to send a Bill modifying paragraph 37 of the Burkinabe Constitution pertaining to the limitation of presidential terms. The proposed modification would allow President Blaise Compaoré to present himself once again to run for presidential elections. Yet a popular insurrection chased President Compaoré after 27 years in power (Bantenga 2016; Bonnecase 2016; Chouli 2015; Dégorce et Palé 2018; Frère and Englebert 2015; Hagberg et al. 2015, 2017, 2018; Oulon 2018a; Zeilig 2017).² On Thursday 30 October, when the MPs were to vote the Bill, thousands and thousands of protesters moved towards the barricades set up by army units to protect the National Assembly, Burkina Faso's parliament. Finally, protesters succeeded in entering the courtyard of the National Assembly, which was sacked and set on fire (Hagberg et al. 2015). In a desperate move to save the situation, President Compaoré quickly announced that the government and the National Assembly were dissolved. The same evening, he made a declaration in which he promised to step down from power the following year. But it was too late. On Friday 31 October, Compaoré finally signed his resignation after strong pressure from the street protests orchestrated by civil society organisations like the Balai Citoyen (Dégorce and Palé 2018). A mob standing outside the headquarters of the Chief of Defence Staff in central Ouagadougou demanded Compaoré's unconditional resignation (Hagberg et al. 2015). Negotiations followed the resignation and a few hours later Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Yacouba Zida, a hitherto unknown public figure, assumed power with the support of some civil society leaders. On 1 November, Zida's assumption of power was confirmed in a written statement signed by the military hierarchy of the Burkinabe armed forces. Zida was the second in command of the notorious *Régiment de sécurité présidentielle* (RSP), an "army within the army", directly under the control of the President. With the support of other high ranking officers, Zida was the *de facto* head of state leading a military government for a few weeks before the transition of power to a civilian government.³

In November 2014, a one-year transition was agreed upon and put in place after negotiations between civil society and opposition political parties with the military lurking in the shadows. Former Ambassador Michel Kafando was appointed transition President on 16 November. On 18 November he was sworn in, took office and received the powers from Lieutenant Colonel Zida. Yet once in office, Kafando appointed Zida as his Prime

² In addition to the many scholarly works produced, a very important local literary genre on the popular insurrection has emerged in recent years (Oulon 2018a, 2018b; Sanon 2015; Sandwidi n.d.; Siguiré 2015, 2016; Tougouma 2016). The documentary film *Une révolution africaine: les dix jours qui ont fait chuter Blaise Compaoré* by Cine droit libre is a detailed narrative of the popular insurrection from within (Sangaré et Vink 2015).

³ Burkina Faso experienced two transitions: the military transition led by Zida for three weeks in November 2014, and the civil transition led by Michel Kafando with Zida as Prime Minister between November 2014 and December 2015 (Hagberg et al. 2018).

Minister. This decision was seen as proof of the continuing strong involvement of RSP in the civil transition. But Zida maintained the revolutionary language that he had adopted as *de facto* head of state, referring to his leadership being guided by “the will of the Burkinabe people”. In a public meeting on 13 December 2014, Zida marked a distance to the RSP and the former regime by declaring that the Burkinabe people want justice: “I can assure you that justice will be made for our comrade Norbert Zongo. Justice will be made for all those who fell under the murderous bullets of Blaise Compaoré. We’ll work on it” (quoted in Hagberg et al. 2018:62). A third key actor of the transition was the Speaker of the transition parliament (*Conseil national de la transition*, CNT), journalist Chérif Sy. The CNT was essential for power sharing and law making during the one-year transition. Many laws were passed by the CNT. Hence, the transition regime (President, government, and the CNT) initiated a series of actions and rules so as to make sure that in Burkina Faso, “nothing will be as before” (Hagberg et al. 2018). The days, weeks and months that followed the popular insurrection came to be a particularly productive period of political practice and democratic change. It was also a period of repositioning and remaking of political careers. A very interesting case is that of Djibrill Bassolé, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the last government of Compaoré, and General of the Gendarmerie. Bassolé emerged as a presidential candidate of the NAFA able to challenge the paved road to presidency of MPP’s Roch Marc Christian Kaboré (Hagberg et al. 2018).

For a long time, Djibrill Bassolé was a key figure in the Compaoré political system and an active member of the ruling party *Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* (CDP). Between January 1999 and January 2000, he was Deputy Minister of Security and in charge of the political repression of protesters in the aftermath of the assassination of the journalist Norbert Zongo in December 1998 (Frère 2010; Hagberg 2002; Loada 1999; Ouédraogo 1999). In November 2000, he was appointed Minister of Security, a position he held until 2007 when he became Minister of Foreign Affairs. In August 2008, Bassolé was appointed Chief Mediator between the Sudanese government and the Darfur rebels. He left the Burkinabe government, but returned as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2011 after the many protests that had shaken Compaoré’s power (Chouli 2012). He was deeply involved in the different mediation assignments that Compaoré undertook, particularly in Mali in 2012-2013. He was a loyal servant of Compaoré and remained Minister of Foreign Affairs until the fall of Compaoré in October 2014.

On the morning of 30 October 2014 when the National Assembly was sacked and set on fire, the MPs of the CDP/presidential majority sought to escape by jumping the wall of the courtyard of the parliament. Most MPs were evacuated to the adjacent courtyard where Djibrill Bassolé lived. Hence, his house became a temporary refuge for the fleeing MPs before they were evacuated by the Gendarmerie. One of the key actors discussed in the case-study, Assita Ouattara, at the time an MP of the CDP, jumped the wall of the National Assembly and ran to Bassolé’s courtyard. From there, she was evacuated first to the Gendarmerie’s headquarters in the Ouagadougou neighborhood of Paspanga from where a helicopter flew her and other MPs to Ziniaré, Compaoré’s hometown some 40 km north of the capital.

Bassolé played an important role when Compaoré was ousted from power. In the Burkinabe biweekly *L’Événement*, the usually well-informed journalists Germain Bitiou Nama and Newton Ahmed Barry argued that four high-ranked military officers reacted rapidly on 30-31 October 2014 in order not to lose power: Lieutenant Colonel Yacouba

Isaac Zida, General Honoré Nabéré Traoré, General Djibrill Bassolé, and General Gilbert Diendéré. According to the sources of the journalists, once the popular insurrection had attacked the National Assembly these military officers orchestrated the recuperation of the insurrection by one faction of the army (the RSP) to make sure that power was not lost (Nama et Barry 2014). As in any regime-breakdown former powerholders actively sought to save what could be saved and to maintain as much as influence as possible. And this was what these men sought to achieve.

After the fall of Compaoré, Bassolé remained in Ouagadougou in contrast to many other former ministers. Bassolé continued to play a role in the shadows of the revolutionary fever at the time. In early 2015, it became clear that Bassolé emerged as the presidential candidate of a new party, the *Nouvelle Alliance du Faso* (NAFA). In meetings and assemblies, he was presented as a leader seeking to mobilize Muslim voters (Hagberg et al. 2018). Given that in 2013, Bassolé had already been mediator of the *Organisation de la Conférence Islamique* (OCI), he sought to play on this image of a pious Muslim to convince Muslim voters representing some 70% of the Burkinabe population. At the time, things looked bright for him, and he seemed to be a major candidate in the presidential elections. The *Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progrès* (MPP) – a party founded already in January 2014 by prominent CDP leaders – and its presidential candidate Roch March Christian Kaboré admittedly saw Bassolé as a serious challenger to the presidency.

Yet Bassolé's career definitely changed direction with the voting of the Electoral Law on 7 April 2015, stipulating that those having worked for the modification of paragraph 37 of the Constitution pertaining to the limitation of presidential terms would not be eligible (cf. Hagberg et al. 2018). The background to the Electoral Law was that the transition regime faced a complicated dilemma. On the one hand, in principle any candidate should always be able to run for elections in a democratic system. On the other hand, there was a legitimate fear that former powerholders would return to power after the transition had ended. The Law states: "all persons having supported an anti-constitutional change that violates the principle of democratic turnover, notably the limitation of the number of presidential mandates having led to an insurrection or any other uprising".⁴ Discussions about the Electoral Law intensified in the months after its adoption. The court of ECOWAS⁵ declared that all candidates should be allowed to compete in the Burkinabe elections. As late as in August 2015, it seemed that Bassolé's candidacy would finally be accepted, because his name appeared on the list of presidential candidates' of the Constitutional Council (Burkina24, 29/8/2015), but in a decision on 10 September 2015, the council barred him from running. His name did not appear on the final list (Lefaso.net, 10/9/2015). Less than a week after the verdict of the Constitutional Council the coup d'état led by General Gilbert Diendéré reshuffled the political landscape. The events that followed finally turned out to be the definite fall of Bassolé (Hagberg 2015; Saidou 2018).

On 16 September 2015, the coup was led by the RSP, an elite corps with 1,300 heavily equipped and well-trained soldiers (Banégas 2015; Hagberg 2015). RSP soldiers interrupted the government council and took the President and the government hostage. After unsuccessful mediation attempts, the coup d'état was declared on the morning of 17 September. It was quickly condemned by most Burkinabe civil society organisations,

⁴ Paragraph 166, Law 005-2015/CNT on 7/4/2015, my translation.

⁵ The Economic Organisation of West African States.

trade unions, and political parties, as well as by the international community. The coupists declared that they had removed the president from office and dissolved the government and the CNT (Omega.bf 17/9/2015). Curfew was declared in the whole country. Across the country, however, people mobilised in popular resistance and civil obedience. RSP soldiers patrolled and shot live rounds in neighborhoods, where residents had built barricades, while popular resistance and civil disobedience gained momentum in the whole country. On 21 September when the regular army sided with the Burkinabe people, it became clear that the coup would fail. On 22 September, the RSP and the regular army signed an armistice, including the disarming and retreat of the RSP. President Kafando was reinstated and the government came back in office. The coup had failed and General Diendéré said he “regretted the coup” and did not “talk about it” any longer (Lefaso.net 25/9/2015). Two days later the government adopted three decrees: the first ended the functions of the General Commander of the RSP, the second ended the functions of the Minister of Security, and the third dissolved the RSP (Hagberg 2015). On 26 September, the government decided to freeze the assets of certain personalities, including Diendéré, and political parties (CDP, NAFA, etc.). On 29 September, Djibrill Bassolé was arrested on accusations of having supported the coupists with the help of Guillaume Soro, at the time the President of the National Assembly of Côte d’Ivoire. A long telephone communication was one of the key elements proving this. Bassolé was kept in the army prison, the *Maison d’Arrêt et de Correction de l’Armée* (MACA), with due respect to his grade as General. In 2019, the trial of the coupists finally took place and was mediatized live. The Court condemned Diendéré and Bassolé to 20 consecutive 10 year terms in prison. While Diendéré was judged as the prime instigator of the coup leading to 14 deaths and 270 wounded, Bassolé was judged as accomplice and condemned for treason (Jeune Afrique 11/9/2019).

To sum up, in October 2014 Bassolé was the very strong Minister of Foreign Affairs under Compaoré. With the latter’s fall Bassolé was one of those who managed to navigate maintaining influence and control, not the least thanks to his grade of being General of the Gendarmerie. In early 2015, he emerged as a full-fledged presidential candidate with enthusiastic support from the new party NAFA. Yet the Electoral Law of 7 April changed the game, and the Constitutional Council’s rejection of Bassolé’s candidacy on 10 September was the culmination of five months of political uncertainty. The implication of Bassolé in the failed coup led to imprisonment and later judgement, which in turn meant that his political career was definitely over.

In this kind of dramatic socio-political context, important questions include how local politicians navigate, and ways in which they seek to make do as political representatives of a party whose presidential candidate is accused of instigating a coup d’état and whose political future is all but uncertain. In what framing and timing do they explain political failure? In the remainder of this article, I first discuss some general features of the municipal elections in May 2016 and then focus on two local NAFA leaders during the electoral campaign: Assita Ouattara in Bobo-Dioulasso and Amadou Ouattara in Sidéradougou.

Municipal Elections in May 2016

Municipal elections took place on 22 May 2016. The electoral campaign officially opened for two weeks ahead of the Election Day and ended on 20 May. The voting was carried out in a peaceful manner, and many referred to the lack of financial resources to properly conduct the campaign (Hagberg et al. 2018).

A few features need to be described in the new political landscape that emerged after the one-year transition (Hagberg et al. 2018). First, the growing tendency for ethnic tension in party politics. On the one hand, there was a continuous allusion to Moose⁶ politics in the midst of democratic elections; hence, it was as if the power of the Moose (*naam* in Mooré) was the normal in Burkinabe politics.⁷ On the other hand, other ethnic groups seemed to take action to make sure that their own “sons” and “brothers” – and much more rarely “sisters”⁸ – were in the forefront. For instance, one CDP candidate who was second on the electoral list in his neighborhood felt that he had been badly positioned because he was Moaaga. He held that his fellow party comrades wanted to avoid making him candidate for central mayor, and felt challenged both from other parties and from within his own party. In Bobo-Dioulasso, there was a general feeling that the Moose were dominating Burkinabe politics,⁹ and that would explain why Moose candidacies were not to be on top positions in the city (cf. Hagberg 2007; Sanou 2010).

Second, there was the tendency of ambiguity of the so-called “renewal of the political class”. On the one hand, the new ruling party, the MPP, had clearly set out to a strategy to allow a new generation of politicians to occupy important political positions. Fewer of the old generation were on the electoral lists. On the other hand, the old political actors were still lingering around. Most spectacularly, the former mayor Alfred Sanou (1995–2001), and MP of the CDP, was leading the fight against his former challenger Céléstin Koussoubé, the CDP-mayor 2001–2006, now campaign director of the MPP. In February 2001, the fight between the two had led to bloodshed and ethnic tension, even hatred.¹⁰ In 2016, the old rivals once again dominated the political scene: Sanou was elected on the CDP-list, but he decided to leave his seat to the person that replaced him; Koussoubé was elected MPP-councilor but was later elected the president of regional council of Hauts-Bassins (Bobo-Dioulasso region), a very important and prestigious position of decentralised governance. Another example is the role played by Assita Ouattara in the NAFA’s campaign. She was not a candidate but was still one of the most outspoken political actors in Bobo-Dioulasso, especially when it came to women’s mobilisation. A few years ago, Céléstin Koussoubé, Alfred Sanou and Assita Ouattara had been party comrades in the CDP supporting Blaise Compaoré. But in 2016, they rallied for three different parties: the MPP, the CDP, and the NAFA. The splitting of former party comrades incited a strong moralistic discourse, where political morality was advocated in public discourse. The MPP was referred to as “the bad seeds of the CDP”, and CDP activists talked about that “the true people” had remained in the party whereas the opportunists and “fraud people” had left for the MPP.

Third, there were many attempts to build alliances against the MPP. The UPC, the NAFA and the CDP all aimed to counteract the MPP dominance. “All but MPP” was almost

⁶ In classical anthropological literature, the term Mossi is used. Nowadays, however, the linguistically correct Moaaga (sing.) and Moose (plur.) are more often used by scholars.

⁷ For a detailed analysis of local notions of power, see Beucher (2017).

⁸ Research on women in Burkinabe politics shows that women are continuously marginalized and evinced from electoral lists and high political offices (Hagberg 2013; Hagberg and Koné 2019; Hagberg et al. 2018, 2020 in press).

⁹ The Moose king Mogho Naaba played a key role during the one-year transition. Moreover, the involvement of Mogho Naaba’s influential traditional minister Larle Naaba in the presidential and legislative elections under the banner of MPP indicated traditional support to the party’s candidates (Hagberg et al. 2018).

¹⁰ In 2001, the political rivalry transformed into an issue of Koussoubé’s ethnicity; as a non-Bobo should not, according to many local leaders, lead Bobo-Dioulasso (Hagberg 2007; Sanou 2010).

a slogan put forward in public. In Péni municipality, 25 km southwards of Bobo-Dioulasso, the alliance building worked well, as the UPC and the NAFA councilors outnumbered those of the MPP when electing the new mayor. The NAFA got 19 councilors, the MPP 21, and the UPC 8 councilors. The new mayor was former CDP-mayor Abdoulaye Ouattara, now representing the NAFA.¹¹ For most people the NAFA victory in Péni municipality was the result of Assita Ouattara's political action. She had campaigned intensely, despite the fact that she was not a candidate herself. I heard intellectuals from Péni complaining, that "Assita has divided the population" as she did not limit her action to Bobo-Dioulasso but got heavily involved in the politics of Péni.

Fourth, a tendency was that all parties avoided big political meetings and favored a neighbourhood campaign. The justification was that people did not want to host mass meetings any longer. A big political meeting would cost money, and money was not available in these elections. Even for the ruling party since 2015, the MPP, the financial resources were lacking, and little money came from Ouagadougou. Accusations of fraud and vote buying were ventured, but less money seemed to circulate compared to the 2012 elections when the CDP was still at its height. Still, many local leaders denounced the MPP's money distribution.

NAFA – Value, Interest, Benefit

During the municipal campaign in May 2016, local leaders of NAFA often made a point that their party – in contrast to other political parties – had a name that people could understand. In Jula, the word *nafa* means "value", "interest" or "benefit". In Sidéradougou municipality, a campaign facilitator of the NAFA stated in a meeting: "we do not know what the other parties stand for: sedepe [CDP], emepepe [MPP], erdea [RDA], etc. But for the NAFA, that is clear". By this he wanted to signal that a vote for the NAFA was a vote for "our values, interests, benefits". In the following, I explore how two regional and municipal NAFA leaders (Assita Ouattara and Amadou Ouattara) maneuvered through a tumultuous political landscape, and I show that political failure is to a large extent a question of framing and timing

Assita: Political Transhumance in Practice

The first case is that of Assita Ouattara, a longstanding political actor in Bobo-Dioulasso and in Péni, the Houet Province. She was the 1st Deputy Mayor of Bobo-Dioulasso in 2007-2012, and the MP for the CDP in 2012-2014. She is a well-known mobiliser of women and was involved in a political battle over women leadership in Bobo-Dioulasso in 2009-2010 (Hagberg 2013; Hagberg and Koné 2019). After the fall of Compaoré when she was evacuated from the National Assembly, Assita returned to Bobo-Dioulasso. Her home had been devastated by insurgent youth, but her house had not been set on fire. Luckily, her family had been able to evacuate before the mob arrived at the house. The fact that her house was not burnt was "a good sign", she maintained, when we met in December 2014. She said that a destroyed house should be seen as "a collateral damage", that is, a damage that one has to accept when active in politics. But she also admitted that this was very tough and that she

¹¹ Abdoulaye Ouattara had been elected the CDP-mayor following the elections in December 2012 until November 2014 when the municipal councils in Burkina Faso were dissolved by the military transition. And now the same mayor came back, but under the banner of the NAFA this time.

had suffered financially as well as morally. She was thinking about how to position herself in the new political landscape. Should she abandon the CDP, the party of Compaoré? Her political future seemed uncertain, to say the least.

Then, in early 2015, Assita publicly declared that she supported Bassolé's candidacy as part of the NAFA. Assita led meetings and published lots of images and statements on Facebook the coming weeks. She quickly emerged as a key leader of the NAFA. The party was financially supported by Djibrill Bassolé.

In April 2015, however, when the transition parliament CNT voted the new Electoral Law, preventing former powerholders like ministers and MPs to run for the next elections, NAFA supporters were very upset. In particular, Assita published a comment on her Facebook page declaring that Bassolé would be presidential candidate in any case: "Djibrill Bassolé sera candidat pian" (Lefaso.net, 9/4/2015). Expressing herself like this indicated that she was convinced that Bassolé would be eligible for presidency. The reaction from the transition regime was immediate. Assita was arrested and put in the notorious prison Bolomakoté in Bobo-Dioulasso for "illegal political activities" (Lefaso.net, 15/4/2015) and for being a "threat to the security of the State" (Lefaso.net, 25/4/2015). She was imprisoned for a month, and her supporters published appeals on Facebook like this one:

La prisonnière politique du gouvernement de la transition. Elle s'appelle Sita OUATTARA.
Elle est secrétaire nationale adjointe de la NAFA. Motif d'incarcération : ATTEINTE À LA
SÛRETÉ DE L'ÉTAT. FREE SITA OUATT.

After one month, she was released on 7 May. Upon her release, people mobilised to greet her and show support (Lefaso.net 7/5/2015). Assita later told me that she was deeply moved by this popular support. However, one of Assita's closest party comrades – an old woman who has been in politics since the 1970s – more soberly pointed out that Assita's sojourn in prison "will train her politically", as to indicate that a politician must suffer to become a big leader.

During the coup d'état in September 2015, Assita's name was cited on a list of the planned government of the coupists. Accordingly, she would become Minister of Women's Promotion in a document circulated on social media. While the veracity of this list is highly dubious – and Assita herself claimed it was a lie – the rumor could be seen as a sign of political allegiance. The NAFA was one of the political parties that supported the coupists in a declaration made public a few days after the coup (FasoZine, 20/9/2015). And it was well-known that Assita was an outspoken supporter of Djibrill Bassolé, whose involvement in the coup was later revealed. However, the allegation of Assita supporting the coup was never substantiated.

In the 2015 legislative elections, Assita did not present herself as a candidate. The main reason was, she told me, that she feared being declared ineligible, and thereby destroying the chances of other NAFA candidates. She nevertheless mobilised for the NAFA candidates. She explained this strategy by underlining that it was very important for her to demonstrate loyalty to Bassolé, even though she was not a candidate. She regularly paid visits to him in prison. For her, it was central to make sure that the party "survived" despite its leader being imprisoned. Hence, Assita saw the greater long-term importance of the party, more than her short-term perspective of being elected there and then.

Assita did not run for elections in the municipal elections in May 2016 either. Still, she supported NAFA candidates, including the future mayor of Péni, Abdoulaye Ouattara. She mobilised voters in Péni municipality, and emerged as a counter-power to the traditional

chief Golotigi of Noumoudara who at least tacitly supported the MPP.¹² The NAFA did well in Péni municipality, where Abdoulaye Ouattara became mayor after a coalition between the UPC and the NAFA that succeeded in blocking the MPP's road to get the position as mayor. The subsequent election of the mayor was violent, and it had to be aborted, but it eventually confirmed NAFA's victory (Burkina24, 22/6/2016). However, in Bobo-Dioulasso, the municipal elections went bad for the NAFA, where the party only got one single councilor.

Once the municipal elections were over, Assita significantly reduced her involvement in political life, and concentrated more on her job as a dentist. But when I met her in December 2016 she confessed that she saw opportunities in the new party coalition of the *Coalition pour la Démocratie et la Réconciliation Nationale* (CODER) composed of former parties in power at the time of Blaise Compaoré: ADF/RDA, CDP, AUTRE Burkina/PSR, Les Républicains, NAFA, RSR, UNDD and Le Faso Autrement (Lefaso.net, 16/10/2016). In the years to come, Assita pursued a leadership position in the NAFA but encountered growing difficulties with another leader who tried to marginalise her from any politically significant position in the party. She felt that this complicated the pursuit of her political career. In November 2018, Assita finally left the NAFA and went (back) to the CDP, Compaoré's former ruling party. At the time of finalising this article (March 2020), she is preparing her political comeback in the legislative elections in 2020.

Amadou: To be a Candidate in Town

The second case is that of Amadou Ouattara, a political leader in Sidéradougou municipality in the Comoé Province. Amadou became involved in politics in 2002 and ran as a candidate for the first time in the municipal elections of 2006. He was the secretary general of the *Rassemblement pour le Développement du Burkina* (RDB), a party led by Célestin Compaoré, the cousin of President Compaoré. The RDB was a party of the presidential majority at national level and to a large extent a party set up to showcase that Burkina Faso's had political diversity. In local politics, such a party could nevertheless gather the political opposition. In the Comoé Province, the RDB was a local alternative – or opposition party – to the mega-party CDP. In the provincial capital of Banfora, the RDB held the position as mayor from 2006-2012, and again from 2012-2014.

In Sidéradougou municipality, the RDB was an opposition party. In 2006, Amadou's RDB lost the elections to the CDP, but many alleged that this was due to fraud. One of his main adversaries later admitted the fraud: "frankly, young brother, we stole the elections". In the municipal elections of 2012, the RDB once again scored well, but not sufficiently enough to get the majority of councilors for the position of mayor. At the time, Amadou emerged as the eternal opposition politician in Sidéradougou politics.

After the popular insurrection in 2014, however, the RDB fell into pieces. When Compaoré was ousted from power, his cousin Célestin Compaoré dropped the party altogether. Yet in the Comoé Province, the party had a stronghold independently of national stakes. In December 2014, I attended a strategic meeting at which the RDB leaders discussed where to go after Compaoré's fall. Salif Barro, the RDB leader in Banfora, insisted:

¹² The late Golotigi Badiori Ouattara who was Assita's uncle, at least tacitly supported the MPP. As a matter of fact, party politics in the Péni municipality became very much a community issue, as people of the main ethnic group in the municipality (the Tiefo) have for long time been strife with internal disputes and rivalries (Hagberg 2004).

“We need to stand united, because otherwise we will not succeed. We should change party [membership] as a group, not individually.”

In early 2015, the RDB leaders of the Comoé Province decided to join the NAFA. Locally however, the same political cleavage prevailed despite the fact that many former CDP followers now had joined the MPP, and that many RDB activists had joined the NAFA. In May 2015, I joined a sensitisation campaign launched by the NAFA to clarify to people that the RDB had metamorphosed into the NAFA and that people should support the NAFA. This was the time when Djibrill Bassolé was as a serious challenger to Roch Marc Christian Kaboré of the MPP. According to many NAFA informants, those staying with the CDP were “the noble” and “the upright”, compared to the opportunistic politicians who had joined the MPP. Therefore, the CDP and the NAFA soon initiated discussions of building an alliance.

Yet after the coup d'état and the imprisonment of Bassolé in September 2015, the activists sought to mobilise as much as they could. The MP of the ex-RDB Salif Barro, now a candidate for the NAFA in the 2015 legislative elections, sponsored most actions. Despite these efforts, he lost his parliamentary seat in the elections, which in turn meant that the NAFA in the Comoé Province was weak when the municipal elections arrived.

In Sidéradougou municipality, Amadou Ouattara funded the 2016 municipal campaign himself. The campaign staff was composed of a group of five people, driving on motorbikes to distant villages. In each village, the message was similar:

We cannot bring money to you. We do not come with the speech of politicians. Instead, we just want you to vote for us because you know who Amadou is. He is not someone who lives in the city, but he lives here. He respects people and he seeks to bring development to Sidéradougou.

It was a campaign based on “trustworthiness” and “honesty”, but with no substantial amounts of money to be distributed. In contrast, the MPP campaign was characterized by the distribution of money (pace: vote buying), very much in the same way as it was practiced at the time of Compaoré (Kibora 2019).

The NAFA did relatively well in the elections in Sidéradougou municipality, when considering the lack of resources to campaign, but Amadou himself was not elected. As was the case in 2006 and in 2012 he took a pride in being a candidate in the “town” of Sidéradougou rather than in his home village Tanga. “I always run in town where I live, while the leaders of other parties present themselves in small rural villages”. In the 2016 elections, Amadou lost his seat in the municipal council, and thereby some of his influence in local politics. Worse, he soon began experiencing financial difficulties, because he had neglected his work as an independent veterinary surgeon while doing politics. Still, for Amadou, it was a pride to be a candidate in town, facing heavy political artillery from the ruling MPP. He said this showed that he was feared, and thus respected.

To sum up, the cases of Assita and Amadou are examples of how politics are practiced locally in times of tumultuous national politics. The decisions of the two to join the NAFA could, in hindsight, be seen as a political failure. Both were hit financially by the changing times, and neither was elected. For the individual politician, there is an ambivalence in not being elected. On the one hand, this gives the politician a decent exit from politics; s/he has lost his/her political seat and can now concentrate on other things. On the other hand, this

gives the opportunity to prepare for a political comeback, because next elections are just a few years away.

Discussion: Political Failure and Democratic Culture

In the remainder of this article, I would like to reflect upon how local political leaders react and adjust to dramatic political changes at the national level, and how they re-appropriate and fill politics with meaning locally, when socio-political transformations leave them with uncertainty. Although I do not want to dismiss the importance of the resources and the political networks that mega-parties mobilise to win elections – for instance, the sums spent by the MPP campaign in 2015 and 2016 elections, and by the CDP until 2014 – it is also very clear that local leaders seek to do what they can, to practice politics efficiently in local arenas.

In the municipal campaign of 2016, the CDP had a strong message about the party representatives being the “true activists”, in contrast to those of the MPP who were named as “the bad seeds”. Many stated that “the CDP is noble”, and that “the CDP activists do not burn houses but show integrity”. In a similar vein, the NAFA campaigns were also about morality and nobility. “The NAFA is the party of Islam, of seriousness”, I heard at many campaign meetings, “but it is not a party of jihadism”. Both the CDP and the NAFA also made a point of political opposition. They did not fear to belong to the political opposition. “One shouldn’t be ashamed of belonging to the opposition”, a NAFA leader stated at a meeting I attended. Hence, people should not fear to be in opposition (*baanbaga* in Jula, approximately “the refuser”), because the country needs critique, and counter-power. This moral discourse combined with a sentiment of accepting being in opposition is interesting to observe among those who were previously rallying for the then ruling party CDP at the time of Compaoré. The discourse also gives us insights into the fabric of party politics in a semi-authoritarian regime that I have elsewhere called “*démocratie à double façade*” (Hagberg 2010; Hilgers and Mazzocchetti 2010).

NAFA leaders were campaigning as a trustworthy alternative. They may well have been in the CDP before – this particularly pertains to Assita Ouattara – but the NAFA leaders argued that they had been benefitting much less than those of the MPP (largely composed of former CDP comrades) who had been “eating” so much during the reign of Compaoré. A particular anger targeted the powerful President of the National Assembly, the late Salifou Diallo, the once loyal right-hand of Compaoré who fell from grace in 2008 and later returned as one of the founding fathers of MPP in January 2014.¹³

By looking at the May 2016 municipal campaign in Bobo-Dioulasso, Péni and Sidéradougou, the article has demonstrated that some political actors really experienced political failure as a consequence of the country’s political transition. This may well be considered unjust and unpleasant for those affected, but the failure gives us an opportunity to better understand the workings and prospects of democratic culture. Those previously in power now lived the sour experience of being in opposition, the ones who refuse (*baanbaga*).

¹³ Salifou Diallo was a central political figure of Blaise Compaoré’s power machinery since the late 1980s. For twenty years, he occupied a number of the most significant political positions. He was a heavyweight in Burkinabe politics, and a political animal in a division of his own. In December 2015, he became the president of the National Assembly, and the interim president of the MPP. On 19 August 2017, Diallo was found dead in his hotel room in Paris while on an official mission.

They had to accept that they were not in power any longer, and they had to prepare themselves for the next elections. In this way, a political failure could well clear the ground for future success.

The question of political failure has been an undercurrent throughout the article. Methodologically, I would like to argue that it is important to study failure – in this case, a political failure as experienced and dealt with by local politicians – as a counter-discourse to the pervasive production of success stories and ingenious political entrepreneurship. As stated in a recent volume on the material culture of failure, failure and success are not binary opposites, but exist on different scales and frames. The interesting aspect is thus to explore how failure works socially (Carroll et al. 2017: 7), and I would add, politically. Failure also exists in different temporalities. Past failure may well prepare the grounds for future success. Thus, the framing and the timing are central ingredients of how people deal with failure.

In this article, I have demonstrated the extent to which two local leaders handled the fall and subsequent imprisoning of Djibrill Bassolé, at the same time while these leaders were campaigning for the NAFA in the elections. While the party survived and did surprisingly well in some municipalities, the price to pay was high for local leaders. Socially, these leaders were back talked and even seen as losers in the local arena. Politically, their adversaries did what they could to make them fail, because they could not count on any support from significant powerholders or big men.

The two cases give different insights into how failure may function socially and politically. Assita turned the political failure into a success when the mayor of neighboring Péni municipality succeeded in becoming mayor despite fierce resistance from the MPP. She conspicuously avoided being a candidate and thus reduced potential exposure for herself. Amadou failed to be elected and spent large amounts of his own money in the municipal campaign. Since then he has been trying to withdraw from politics and focus on his work as a veterinary surgeon. Yet his key problem remains: how to exit from politics in a way that it is not perceived as treason (by his followers) or as failure (by his adversaries). The sentiment of treason (*janfa* in Jula) is a central feature of how politics is perceived in local arenas, and to call someone a failure (*amanya* in Jula) is a politically and culturally loaded statement.

To conclude, I would like to argue that political failure must be explored socially and culturally to make sense and that failure is fundamentally relational. Local political leaders invest discursively and practically in trying to transform the apparent political failure into a new beginning. If political failure is difficult to explain away – “you did not get many votes and were not elected” – local leaders resort to moral and social ways of transforming such a failure to a virtue. This is the fundamental reason why anthropological research could productively explore political failure socially and culturally.

References

- Banégas, R. 2015. Putsch et politique de la rue au Burkina Faso : Quand les étudiants débattent du Régiment de Sécurité Présidentielle. *Politique Africaine* 139: 147-170.
- Bantenga, M. W. (ed). 2016. *Burkina Faso: 30 et 31 Octobre 2014 : Au Cœur de l'insurrection Populaire*.
- Beucher, B. 2017. *Manger le pouvoir au Burkina Faso: La noblesse Mossi à l'épreuve de l'histoire*. Paris: Karthala.
- Bonnecase, V. 2016. Ce que les ruines racontent d'une Insurrection: Morales du vol et de la violence au Burkina Faso pendant les journées insurrectionnelles des 30 et 31 Octobre 2014. *Sociétés Politiques Comparées* 38, jan.-avr. 2016. Available at : http://fasopo.org/sites/default/files/varia2_n38.pdf
- Burkina24 29/8/2015. Présidentielle 2015: Le Conseil Constitutionnel Valide 16 Candidatures. Available

- at: <https://burkina24.com/2015/08/29/presidentielle-2015-le-conseil-constitutionnel-valide-16-candidatures/> Accessed 23/4/2017.
- Burkina24 22/6/2016. Elections de Maires: 'Violentes comme jamais', selon Le Balai Citoyen. Available at: <http://www.burkina24.com/2016/06/22/elections-de-maires-violentes-comme-jamais-selon-le-balai-citoyen/> Accessed 18/11/2016.
- Carroll, T., D. Jeevendrampillai and A. Parkhurst. 2017. Introduction: Towards a General Theory of Failure. In *The Material Culture of Failure: When Things go Wrong* (eds) T. Carroll, D. Jeevendrampillai, A. Parkhurst and J. Shackelford. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Chouli, L. 2012. Burkina Faso 2011: Chronique d'un Mouvement Social. Available at: <http://tahin-party.org/textes/Burkina-Faso-2011.pdf> Accessed 15/11/2016.
- Dégorce, A. et A. Palé. 2018. Performativité des chansons du Balai Citoyen dans l'insurrection d'octobre 2014 au Burkina Faso. *Cahiers d'études africaines* 2018(1), 229: 127-153.
- FasoZine.com 20/9/2015. CND : 13 partis en soutien. Available at: <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201509212017.html> Accessed 24/4/2017.
- Frère, M.-S. 2010. "Enterrement de première classe" ou 'leçon de droit' : la presse burkinabè et l'affaire Norbert Zongo." In *Révoltes et oppositions dans un régime sémi-autoritaire : le cas de Burkina Faso* (eds) M. Hilgers and J. Mazzocchetti Paris: Karthala.
- Frère, M. and P. Englebert. 2015. 'Briefing: Burkina Faso – the Fall of Blaise Compaoré'. *African Affairs* 114(455): 295–307.
- Hagberg, S. 2004. Ethnic Identification in Voluntary Associations: The Politics of Development and Culture in Burkina Faso. In *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa* (eds) H. Englund and F.B. Nyamnjoh. London and New York: ZED Books.
- . 2007. Traditional Chieftaincy, Party Politics, and Political Violence in Burkina Faso. In *State Recognition and Democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities?* New York : Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2013. Politique des partis, développement local et lutte de pouvoir des femmes à Bobo-Dioulasso. In *La ville de Bobo-Dioulasso au Burkina Faso : Urbanité et appartenances en Afrique de l'Ouest* (eds) K. Werthmann et M. L. Sanogo. Paris: Karthala.
- . 2015. 'Thousands of New Sankaras': Resistance and Struggle in Burkina Faso. *Africa Spectrum* 50(3): 109-121.
- Hagberg, S., L. Kibora, F. Ouattara, and A. Konkobo. 2015. Au cœur de la révolution burkinabè. *Anthropologie & développement* 42: 199-224.
- Hagberg, S., L. Kibora, S. Barry, S. Gnessi, and A. Konkobo. 2017. *Transformations sociopolitiques burkinabè de 2014 à 2016 : Perspectives anthropologiques des pratiques politiques et de la culture démocratique dans « un Burkina Faso nouveau »*. Uppsala Papers in Africa Studies 2. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Hagberg, S., L. Kibora, S. Barry, S. Gnessi, and A. Konkobo. 2018. 'Nothing will be as before': *Anthropological perspectives on political practice and democratic culture in 'the new Burkina Faso'*. Uppsala Papers in Africa Studies 3. Uppsala : Uppsala University.
- Hagberg, S., L.O. Kibora, and G. Körling. (eds) 2019. *Démocratie par le bas et politique municipale au Sahel*. Uppsala Papers in Africa Studies 4. Uppsala : Uppsala University.
- Hagberg, S., L.O. Kibora, B. Koné, A. Konkobo, E. Zongo, S. Barry, Y. Cissao, and P. Kaboré. 2020 in press. *Leadership féminin et décentralisation au Burkina Faso*. Uppsala Papers in Africa Studies 6. Uppsala : Uppsala University
- Hagberg, S. and B. Koné. 2019. "Si tu leur donnes ma chair ils vont la manger" : Ethnographie comparée des carrières des femmes politiques au Burkina Faso et au Mali. In *Démocratie par le bas et politique municipale au Sahel* (eds) S. Hagberg, L.O. Kibora and G. Körling (eds) 2019. Uppsala Papers in Africa Studies 4. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Harsch, E. 2017. *Burkina Faso: A History of Power, Protest, and Revolution*. London : Zed.
- Hilgers, M. and J. Mazzocchetti. (eds) 2010. *Révoltes et oppositions dans un régime sémi-autoritaire : La cas du Burkina Faso*. Paris : Karthala.
- Jeune Afrique 11/9/2019. Burkina : Diendéré et Bassolé condamnés, l'épilogue du coup d'État 'le plus bête du monde', by Benjamin Roger. Available at: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/826106/societe/burkina-diendere-et-bassole-condamnes-lepilogue-du-coup-detat-le-plus-bete-du-monde/> Accessed on 21/3/2020

- Kaboré, R.B. 2016. *Un peuple debout : Chute de Blaise Compaoré, coupe d'état de Diendéré au Burkina Faso*. Ouagadougou : Firmament.
- Kibora, L.O. 2019. Corruption, clientélisme et démocratie locale au Burkina Faso. In *Démocratie par le bas et politique municipale au Sahel* (eds) S. Hagberg, L.O. Kibora and G. Körling. Uppsala Papers in Africa Studies 4. Uppsala : Uppsala University.
- Lefaso.net 9/4/2015. Bobo : Assita Ouattara et Karim Barro sont aux arrêts. Available at: <http://lefaso.net/spip.php?article64166> Accessed on 24/4/2017
- . 15/4/2015. Le point des arrestations des dignitaires du régime Compaoré: Jérôme Bougouma, Jean Bertin Ouédraogo et Rasmane Ouédraogo libérés. Available at: <http://lefaso.net/spip.php?article64236> Accessed on 24/4/2017.
- . 25/4/2015. Arrestation des militants de la NAFA : les femmes du parti 'avocates' de Sita Ouattara. Available at: <http://lefaso.net/spip.php?article64393> Accessed on 24/4/2017.
- . 7/5/2015. NAFA : Assita Ouattara a été libérée. Available at: <https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article64581> Accessed on 22/3/2020.
- . 10/9/2015. Présidentielle 2015: Djibrill Bassolé et Yacouba Ouédraogo recalés sur les 16 présélectionnés. Available at: <http://lefaso.net/spip.php?article66794> Accessed on 23/4/2017.
- . 16/10/2016. CODER : Au nom de 'la réconciliation nationale', by Ignace Ismaël Nabile. Available at: <http://www.burkina24.com/2016/10/16/coder-au-nom-de-la-reconciliation-nationale/> Accessed on 13/11/2016.
- Loada, A. 1999. Réflexions sur la société civile en Afrique: Le Burkina de l'après-Zongo. *Politique africaine* 1999/4, 76: 136-151.
- Nama, G.B. and A.N. Barry. 2014. Bassolet, Honoré, Gilbert et Zida : Comment ont-ils agi pour faire partir Blaise et ne pas perdre le pouvoir. *L'Événement* 292: 8-9.
- Omega.bf 17/9/2015. Burkina : Le président de la Transition démis de ses fonctions. Available at: <http://omegabf.info/politique/burkina-le-president-de-la-transition-demis-de-ses-fonctions/> Accessed on 22/3/2020.
- Ouédraogo, J. 1999. Burkina Faso: autour de l'affaire Zongo. *Politique africaine* 74: 163-83.
- Ouédraogo, A. dit Damiss. 2016. *Blaise Compaoré : De l'ascension à la descension*. Ouagadougou.
- Oulon, A.S. 2018a. *Insurrection populaire d'octobre 2014 au Burkina Faso: Les trahisons*. Ouagadougou: Presses universitaires de Ouagadougou.
- Oulon, A.S. 2018b. *Le Général Gilbert Diendéré parle*. Ouagadougou: Presses universitaires de Ouagadougou.
- Saidou, A.K. 2018. 'We have chased Blaise, so nobody can resist us': Civil society and the politics of ECOWAS intervention in Burkina Faso. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 25(1): 39-60.
- Sandwidi, S. T. n.d. *Comment Blaise Compaoré a perdu le pouvoir: chronique de la chute d'un dictateur*. Ouagadougou: Les Éditions Arc-en-ciel.
- Sangaré, B. and G. Vink. 2015. *Une révolution africaine: les dix jours qui ont fait chuter Blaise Compaoré*. Cine droit libre. 60mn, film documentaire. Ouagadougou: Semfilms.
- Sanon, M. 2015. *Blaise Compaoré ou la fin non-glorieuse de 'Monsieur Bons offices'*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Sanou, A. 2010. La révolte des autochtones bobo contre les autorités municipales. In *Révoltes et oppositions dans un régime sémi-autoritaire : Le cas du Burkina Faso* (eds) M. Hilgers and J. Mazzocchi. Paris: Karthala.
- Siguiré, A.A. 2015. *Blaise Compaoré: le règne d'un ange ?!: Paroles d'un insurgé*.
- . 2016. *Burkina Faso: de la transition à la trahison: l'analyse d'un résistant*.
- Tougouma, J.-P. 2016. *La chute du sphinx de Koso-Yam ou les secrets d'une insurrection*. Ouagadougou: Editions Sidwaya.
- Zeiling, L. 2017. Burkina: From Thomas Sankara to Popular Resistance. *Review of African Political Economy* 44(151): 155-164.