



Wake-Up Calls in the Sahelian Region: Ibrahim Traore Re-Decolonisation Struggles in Extending the Frontier of African States Reputations and Economic Development

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Abstract

The Sahelian Africa has been contending with several challenges since the grant of political independence and not much has been relatively done to improve governance since decolonisation. At the close of 2015, Burkina Faso has experienced different forms of security challenges. With the emergence of President Traoré a 34-year-old captain, who has inspired his people and Africans across the continent and millions of Africans see his emergence as a timely reaction to centuries of imperialistic domination and economic retardation. The Government of Burkina under Traore initiated home grown mechanisms for strategic autonomy in the fight against terrorism. This strategy was done through massive recruitment of civilian volunteers in the country massive acquisition of military equipment to put an end to insurgency and all forms of threats to life. The paper advocates for supporting leaders like Traore to foster African resilience and sovereignty. Thomas Sankara was an outstanding leader whose integrity and forthright attack on corruption placed him head and shoulders above his contemporaries. The paper adopted a mixed methodology approach, Primary and Secondary sources, use of qualitative data, and the study of existing literature on media and diplomacy in order to arrive at its major findings. The findings of this research revealed that if all African leaders, Military of Democratically elected, will adopt some radical steps of Traore; African and Africans will wake up from slumber, with a renewed hope and the path to self-sufficiency and glory actualized.

Keywords: Wake-Up Calls, Sahelian Region, Re-Decolonisation, African States Reputations, Economic Development

1. Introduction

The image and reputations of African States have been colossally destroyed with the erstwhile dreadfully and phony varied colonial enterprises in Africa through inestimable trajectories. These included prolonged slavery and its abolition, orchestrated legitimate trade and commerce, the scramble for balkanization of Africa, colonialism and imperialistic mentalities, neo-colonialism, globalization matrixes and contemporary re-colonisation tapestry. These scoundrel activities in subsequent African States remained the

major contraption that Africans were captured in the web of continued exploitation of their credulities within the political whims and caprices of the Western World. Even with their existence in Africa, they intellectually through pseudo-intellectual knowledge could not decipher the truism of African tapestry, hence is the epistemologically distorts African tradition, cultural heritage, knowledge, technological know-how. The often claimed African lacked the political and administrative experience and wills,

and above all people bereft of history, except that of the European existence in Africa. Decker (2016) affirmed that from independence onwards, African States were meant to sustain inherited identities and thereafter reputations that were to be the consequences of such. It is accentuated that one of the significant ways in which this has, and is being done is through relationship strategy, or what is traditionally called foreign policy (Falola, 2007). Africa was developing politically, socially, culturally, technologically, scientifically indigenously according to its pace prior to colonial disruptions, which set the continent backwards.

In an attempt towards the protection of African image, identity and reputations, series of pockets resistance came to manifestation in African communities, towns and city-States through many remonstrations evident as Maji-Maji revolts spearheaded by Kinjikitile in Kenya in 1905–1906, the Mau-Mau in Tanganyika now Tanzania, the Satiru revolt in 1903, the Iseyin upheaval in 1918, and the Aba Women riot, 1927–1929 in Nigeria among others. In the colonial Southern Africa, the resistances were inundated with inestimable pugnacities, the axe war in 1836, the Boer war, and the Great Trek of 1836–1841, while in the Belgian Congo, the height of brutalities meted on the people was imaginable with the dreadful killing of Patrice Lumumba, a revolutionary leader whose body was mutilated and dumped in a pool of acid for radical extermination of his remains. These and quite numbers of European and Western brutalities created lingering anecdotes that called for increasing consciousness and wake-up calls for African elites, political and military rulers to effusively and genuinely plan for relentless and ceaseless appeals to Africans on the need for outright elimination of European and Western post-colonial dominations in Africa (Davidson, 1992;

Iliffe, 2007). These deplorable ambiances injected in Africa by the domineering powers consequently called for another wake-up call with African intellectuals and political intelligentsia to eradicate all forms of colonialism, protect their integrity and the territorial defence of African States at the immediate post-independence period. This development culminated in the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which sought to promote unity, sovereignty and cooperation among African States. However, the organisation was later perceived as limited in addressing emerging continental challenges. Consequently, in 2001 transformed into the African Union (AU) saddled with broader responsibilities of promoting peace, security, integration and sustainable development across Africa (Murithi, 2005).

By this ambience, the historic African leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, was brutally removed from power after being accused of possessing lethal weapons and violating international norms. Nevertheless, many African leaders and intellectuals continued to defend African image, identity and reputation through political and intellectual engagements. This is also discernible in scholarly responses aimed at debunking colonial misconceptions and European sentimentalized mentality about African peoples, cultures and civilizations. In Nigeria, prominent historians and literary scholars such as Kenneth O. Dike, Saburi Biobaku, J.F.A. Ajayi, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka made invaluable contributions toward reconstructing African history and identity from Indigenous African perspectives (Achebe, 1958; Soyinka, 1976). In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, J. E. Casely Hayford and later General Jerry Rawlings exhibited remarkable efforts against colonial and neo-colonial domination. Nkrumah wrote a

treatise on Africa Must Unite, this work remains one of the most influential intellectual works advocating for African unity irrespective of ethnic, religious and cultural differences (Nkrumah, 1963). In Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor's philosophy of Negritude celebrated African cultural values and identity. Similarly, Nelson Mandela, Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara and other South African nationalists tenaciously resisted apartheid and colonial oppression in pursuit of justice, equality and freedom (Mandela, 1994; Senghor, 1964, Loada 2024).

To assuage human confidence in the protection of African States' image, identity and reputations, the already demoralized Sahelian region of the erstwhile French colonies comprising Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger Republic among others orchestrated radical military revolutions leading to changes in governance from democracy to military administrations (Mathlouti 2026). These transformations were accompanied by increasing dissatisfaction with foreign influences and the perceived inability of regional institutions such as the ECOWAS to address insecurity and underdevelopment. This was the height of the withdrawal of some of the Sahelian States from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which further demonstrated a growing desire for autonomy and alternative pathways to development and regional cooperation (ECOWAS, 2023).

It is incontrovertible to construe the radical wake-up calls of Ibrahim Traoré a veteran military officer, who was become missioned to put in a strategic mechanism of raising the consciousness of African leaders and Africans to the continued effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism. His administration's emphasis on sovereignty, resource control, self-reliance and African solidarity attracted widespread

attention across the continent. Intrinsically, these developments reflect renewed aspirations for genuine independence, Afrocentric politics economic emancipation, restoration of peace and the protection of African dignity within the international system. Consequently, Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation struggles may be viewed as part of a broader African quest to redefine the image, identity and reputation of African States in the twenty-first century (Mensah 2023).

This piece therefore, is compartmentalized into chronologically connected subsections and segments which include; a reflection on colonial economic system, post-colonial bondage in the Francophone States, Ibrahim Traoré's Re-Decolonisation Struggles, a clarion call on other African states for a rethink, classical rebirth and finally conclusion and the forward.

Objectives and Significance of the Study

The motivation for this study stems from the significant political, economic, and geopolitical changes that have occurred in the Sahel region, particularly following the emergence of Ibrahim Traoré as the transitional leader of Burkina Faso in September 2022. His administration has attracted continental and global attention because of its emphasis on national sovereignty, resource nationalism, self-reliance, and the rejection of perceived neo-colonial influence. These developments have generated renewed scholarly and policy debates on the future of governance, democracy, Pan-Africanism, and African sovereignty. Consequently, there is a growing need to examine whether Traoré's policies represent a genuine process of re-decolonisation or merely another phase in Africa's evolving political landscape (Loada, 2024; African Development Bank [AfDB], 2024).

Another motivation for the study is the changing pattern of regional politics in West Africa. The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the subsequent formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) represent one of the most significant developments in the history of regional integration in Africa. These changes have raised important questions concerning the effectiveness of existing regional institutions, the future of ECOWAS, and the search for alternative models of political and economic cooperation among African states. Understanding these developments is essential for evaluating their implications for regional stability, continental integration, and Africa's international standing (ECOWAS Commission, 2024; African Union Commission, 2024).

The study is further motivated by the persistence of neo-colonial structures that continue to influence many African states despite decades of political independence. Existing literature has demonstrated that external political influence, economic dependency, foreign military presence, and unequal international economic relations remain major obstacles to Africa's development (Nkrumah, 1965; Rodney, 1972). Contemporary developments in Burkina Faso have revived debates on whether African states can attain genuine sovereignty through greater control of natural resources, independent foreign policies, and stronger regional cooperation. This makes the study both timely and relevant within contemporary African political discourse.

Finally, the study is motivated by an identified gap in the existing literature. While many scholars have examined colonialism, neo-colonialism, Pan-Africanism, military interventions, and governance challenges in Africa, relatively few studies have specifically analysed

Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation agenda and its implications for the image, identity, and reputation of African states. By examining his policies within the broader historical context of Africa's struggle for sovereignty and self-determination, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on contemporary African politics, international relations, and post-colonial state transformation (Thurston, 2020; Loada, 2024; AfDB, 2024).

2. Research Methodology

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design, in which qualitative documentary evidence and quantitative secondary data were collected and analysed concurrently to provide a comprehensive understanding of Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation struggles and their implications for the image and reputation of African states. The qualitative component consisted of historical and documentary analysis of scholarly books, journal articles, policy documents, speeches, and official reports, while the quantitative component relied on secondary statistical data obtained from the African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), African Union (AU), and ECOWAS reports on governance, security, economic performance, and regional integration.

Qualitative data were analysed using historical and thematic content analysis, whereas the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques to identify trends and support the qualitative findings. The results from both datasets were integrated during interpretation to enhance the validity, credibility, and comprehensiveness of the study through methodological triangulation. This convergent parallel mixed-methods design enabled the study to combine historical interpretation with contemporary empirical evidence in

explaining the significance of Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation agenda in the Sahel.

3. Review of Relevant Literature

Previous studies have extensively examined the historical and contemporary effects of colonialism, neo-colonialism, Pan-Africanism, and state-building in Africa. Foundational scholars such as Walter Rodney (1972), Kwame Nkrumah (1965), Frantz Fanon (1961), Basil Davidson (1992), and Toyin Falola (2007) provides comprehensive analyses of how colonial rule transformed African political institutions, economies, cultures, and international relations. Rodney (1972) argues that colonialism systematically underdeveloped Africa by restructuring its economies to serve European interests, while Nkrumah (1965) maintains that political independence did not eliminate foreign domination but rather transformed it into neo-colonial control through economic, political, and military mechanisms. These classical studies remain fundamental in explaining the historical origins of Africa's contemporary development challenges.

Beyond the historical literature, several scholars have examined Africa's image, identity, and reputation in international relations. Decker (2016) argues that African states inherited identities and reputations shaped largely by the colonial experience, which continue to influence their foreign policy and diplomatic engagements. Falola (2007) similarly observes that African intellectuals and political leaders have consistently challenged colonial stereotypes historical versions by reconstructing African history from indigenous perspectives and promoting a more positive global image of the continent. These studies demonstrate that Africa's international reputation cannot be separated from its colonial past and post-colonial experiences.

Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on governance, insecurity, military interventions, and political transitions in the Sahel region. Thurston (2020) analyses the complex relationship between armed insurgency, weak governance, and political instability in the Sahel, while Loada (2024) examines the emergence of military governments in Burkina Faso and the challenges of democratic governance. Reports by the African Development Bank (2024), the African Union Commission (2024), and the United Nations Development Programme (2023) further highlight the growing concerns over insecurity, economic vulnerability, regional integration, and institutional reforms in the Sahel. These studies provide valuable insights into the contemporary political environment within which Ibrahim Traoré emerged as Burkina Faso's transitional leader.

Although the existing literature provides substantial knowledge on colonialism, neo-colonialism, governance, and political transitions in Africa, there remains a significant gap concerning the specific role of Ibrahim Traoré's leadership in advancing the discourse on re-decolonisation and the restoration of African states' image, identity, and reputation. Most recent studies concentrate on military coups, terrorism, democratic transitions, or regional security without comprehensively analysing Traoré's political ideology, resource nationalism, Pan-African vision, and their implications for Africa's international standing. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation struggles as part of the broader African quest for sovereignty, self-reliance, and the redefinition of African states' reputations in the twenty-first century (Loada, 2024; African Development Bank, 2024).

Flashback on Colonial Exploitations and Resistances in Africa

The contemporary political awakening occurring in the Sahel cannot be adequately understood without examining the historical foundations of colonial domination in Africa. Colonialism was not merely a political system of foreign administration; it was a comprehensive structure of economic extraction, cultural domination, and political subordination designed to advance European interests. In the territories that later became Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and other Francophone states, French colonial authorities established administrative systems that enabled the systematic exploitation of local resources and labour. Colonial governments imposed taxes, compelled labor for public works projects, and redirected indigenous economies toward the production of commodities required by European industries. These policies and programs disrupted pre-colonial economic systems and entrenched patterns of dependency that continued beyond formal independence (Rodney, 2018; Young, 2021).

In the French dominated colonies or communes, the colonial economy was deliberately organized to benefit metropolitan France in Europe. Infrastructure such as railways, roads, and ports was developed primarily to facilitate the transportation of raw materials from the interior to coastal export points and onward to France rather than to promote balanced domestic development. For example, railway networks in French West Africa connected agricultural and mining zones to ports for export purposes, while local manufacturing industries received little support. This development has serious effects on local production, thereby consequent on famine and starvation with outright neglect on food production. This economic structure ensured that African territories remained suppliers of raw

materials and consumers of imported finished goods, thereby limiting prospects for industrialization and technological advancement (Cooper, 2022).

The exploitation of mineral resources was one of the salient factors that constituted another important dimension of colonial domination. Gold, cotton, groundnuts, and other valuable resources were extracted under arrangements that provided minimal benefits to local populations. The colonial State frequently collaborated with European companies to secure access to these resources, often disregarding the welfare of indigenous communities. The resulting concentration of wealth in metropolitan centers contributed significantly to Europe's industrial growth while simultaneously reinforcing poverty and underdevelopment in African territories (Rodney, 2018; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2022).

Beyond economic exploitation, colonialism also involved profound cultural and political transformations. Through the policy of assimilation, France sought to inculcate French language, values, and institutions among colonized populations. African cultural practices, indigenous governance systems, and local knowledge structures were frequently marginalized or portrayed as inferior. Educational curricula glorified European civilizations while minimizing African historical achievements. This process created an enduring psychological legacy that continued to influence perceptions of identity, governance, and development long after independence (Mbembe, 2022; Fanon, 2004).

The arbitrary boundaries established during the colonial era also generated long-term political challenges. Colonial powers drew borders without regard for ethnic, linguistic, or cultural realities, thereby incorporating diverse communities into single political units. In many instances, groups with historical rivalries were

compelled to coexist within the same state framework, while culturally related populations were divided across different territories. These colonial boundaries contributed to recurrent tensions, identity conflicts, and governance difficulties that continue to affect several countries in the Sahel today (Herbst, 2023). Examples of boundary disputes can be cited from Nigeria and Cameroon over Bakassi Peninsula in the past, Chad and Libya, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Morocco and Sahrawi Arabs, etc.

The economic exploitation in both Francophone and Anglophone Africa created deeply entrenched patterns of dependency, underdevelopment, and inequality. While administrative methods differed between French and British colonial systems, the outcome was fundamentally the same: the extraction of African wealth for European benefit. These historical patterns continue to shape contemporary debates on economic sovereignty, resource control, and development strategies in Africa, including current movements for re-decolonisation in the Sahel region (Rodney, 1972; Boone, 2014; Nkrumah, 1965, Loada 2024).

The cumulative impact of these colonial policies was the creation of states characterized by economic dependency, weak institutions, and limited capacity for autonomous development. Consequently, contemporary debates surrounding sovereignty and re-decolonization in the Sahel are deeply rooted in historical experiences of exploitation and marginalization. The political messages advanced by Ibrahim Traoré resonate strongly because they draw upon collective memories of colonial domination and the unfinished struggle for genuine independence (Falola & Mbah, 2023).

In African dominated societies, there were diverse efforts and movements by Africans in their efforts to oppose colonial conquest, foreign domination, racial oppression, and

economic exploitation. These movements began during the initial period of European colonisation in the nineteenth century, when many African societies resisted invasion through armed struggle in defence of their sovereignty and independence. Notable examples include the Maji Maji Rebellion in German East Africa and the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya, both of which showed strong African determination to resist colonial rule despite the military superiority of European powers. These resistance movements were more violent in nature in the settler colonies (Boahen, 1987; Iliffe, 2007).

As colonial rule became more firmly established, resistance gradually shifted from mainly armed struggles to organised political and nationalist movements. In addition to nationalism, Pan-Africanism strengthened resistance by promoting unity, solidarity, and shared identity among African peoples and the diaspora in the struggle against colonialism (Adi & Sherwood, 2003). In addition to nationalism, Pan-Africanism strengthened resistance by promoting unity, solidarity, and shared identity among African peoples and the diaspora in the struggles against colonialism (Adi & Sherwood, 2003). Educated elites, workers, students, and trade unions played key roles in mobilising mass support for independence through political parties, protests, strikes, and negotiations. Prominent nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Julius Nyerere became central figures in the struggles for self-rule and independence across the continent (Davidson, 1992; Meredith, 2013). Their efforts helped transforming the pockets of African resistance into coordinated nationalist movements that eventually led to the collapse of colonial administrations in most African countries. For examples Somalia attained its independence in 1960, Nigeria 1960, Tanzania 1961, Uganda 1962, Kenya 1963,

Ghana 1957, Niger Republic 1960, Sudan 1956, Mali and Burkina Faso 1960, etc. In Southern Africa, resistance continued in the form of liberation struggles against apartheid, led by the African National Congress (ANC) and figures such as Nelson Mandela, eventually leading to the end of apartheid in 1994 (Mandela, 1994). Although most African States gained independence in the twentieth century, these resistances have continued in modern forms against neocolonialism and external economic influence, with leaders such as Ibrahim Traoré arguing that true liberation requires economic sovereignty, cultural renewal, and control over national resources (Nkrumah, 1965; Englebert, 2023).

Post-Colonial Enterprise in the Francophone States

Although political independence was achieved across Francophone Africa during the 1960s, many scholars argue that colonial influence did not disappear. Instead, new forms of dependency emerged that allowed former colonial powers to maintain substantial influence over the political, economic, and security affairs of newly independent States. In a Kwame Nkrumah, he described this phenomenon as neo-colonialism, emphasizing that formal sovereignty could coexist with continued external domination through indirect mechanisms (Nkrumah, 1965).

The absence of financial autonomy was more practically evident in the Francophone, because the most prominent examples of post-colonial dependency have been the CFA franc monetary system. Established during the colonial period and maintained after independence, the CFA franc has been criticized for limiting monetary sovereignty and reinforcing economic dependence on France. Critics argue that the arrangement constrains the ability of participating countries to independently formulate monetary policies

tailored to their developmental needs. While supporters contend that the system promotes currency stability, opponents view it as a symbol of continued external influence over African economies (Sylla, 2021; Pigeaud & Sylla, 2021).

Furthermore, military relations have also constituted an important dimension of post-colonial dependency. France maintained military bases and security agreements in several African countries, often justifying its presence as necessary for regional stability and counterterrorism operations, for example, examples the operations Serval and Barkhane in Mali and the broader Sahel. However, despite years of foreign military intervention, insecurity continued to worsen across large parts of the region. This reality generated increasing public skepticism regarding the effectiveness and motivations of external security partnerships (International Crisis Group, 2024; Charbonneau, 2022).

It is instructive to construe that economic dependency is the most salient challenge confronting Francophone African States arising from aesthetic continuum of exploitations. Many countries continue to rely heavily on the export of raw materials while importing manufactured goods in an exponential quantity. Such economic structures expose them to fluctuations in global commodity prices and limit opportunities for sustainable industrial development. In Burkina Faso, for example, gold exports constitute a major source of national revenue, yet substantial portions of the value chain remain controlled by foreign interests. Similar patterns were also observed in Niger's Republics uranium sector and Mali's mining industry (World Bank, 2024). This deplorable economic exploitation spurred the surge for radical disinterest in continued relations with France, hence the remonstrations.

The persistence of insecurity, poverty, youth unemployment, and weak public

services contributed to growing disillusionment with established political elites. Large segments of the population perceived their governments as excessively dependent on foreign support and insufficiently responsive to local needs. This dissatisfaction provided the fertile ground and trajectory for political movements advocating for greater sovereignty for African States, resource nationalism, and institutional reform. Military-led governments in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger capitalized on these sentiments by presenting themselves as defenders of national dignity and independence (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2023; Mathlouti, et al 2025). This idea gained considerable supports from the rebranded erstwhile Organisation of African Countries (OAU) now African Union (AU) for formidable sustainable unity of African States.

It is incontrovertible to understand that the emergence of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) involving Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger on the 16th September 2023 represents one of the most significant manifestations of this re-decolonization agenda. The alliance reflects efforts to strengthen regional cooperation independent of traditional external influences and demonstrates a growing desire among some African governments to redefine their international partnerships on more equitable terms (ISS Africa, 2025).

Ibrahim Traoré's Re-Decolonisation Struggles

Captain Ibrahim Traore exemplifies contemporary African patriotism and pan-Africanism through ambitious development initiatives. His leadership mirrors historical figures like Gaddafi, Sankara, and Lumumba, emphasizing self-sufficiency and empowerment. Traore's government faces covert destabilization attempts from Western powers, including propaganda and economic pressures.

Despite challenges, Traore remains committed to improving Burkina Faso's infrastructure, education, and healthcare (Hassan & Adekaiyoaje 2026).

Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation struggle refers to his efforts to reduce what he considers the continued political, economic, military, and cultural influence of former colonial powers in Burkina Faso. Since taking power in September 2022, Traoré has argued that political independence without economic and strategic sovereignty leaves African states vulnerable to external control. His government has therefore sought to strengthen national sovereignty by ending military cooperation with France, requesting the withdrawal of French troops, expanding domestic security initiatives, and building new strategic partnerships, particularly with Russia and other non-Western states (Reuters, 2024; International Crisis Group, 2024).

Economically, Traoré has promoted greater state control over Burkina Faso's mineral resources, especially gold, while encouraging local industrialization, agricultural self-sufficiency, and value addition to reduce dependence on foreign companies and imported goods (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2023; Reuters, 2024). He also advocates cultural and intellectual decolonisation, emphasizing African identity, self-confidence, indigenous knowledge, and patriotism besides, inspired by the ideas of Thomas Sankara, Ibrahim Traorés wake up calls encourages Africans to reject dependency and embrace self-reliance through education, innovation, and regional cooperation (Englebert, 2023). His government has further strengthened collaboration with Mali and Niger Republic through the Alliance of Sahel States, presenting it as an African-led framework for security and development independent of traditional Western

influence (International Crisis Group, 2024). While supporters view these initiatives as an important step toward restoring African sovereignty and dignity, critics like Manzi (2025) argue that restrictions on political opposition, media freedom, and delays in returning to civilian democratic rule undermine democratic governance and human rights, making Traoré's re-decolonisation agenda both influential and controversial (Human Rights Watch, 2025; Reuters, 2024).

State of Affairs

The contemporary Sahel region is experiencing profound political, security, and socio-economic transformations that have significantly altered governance and regional politics. Since 2020, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have undergone military transitions following widespread public dissatisfaction with democratic governments over their inability to address terrorism, insecurity, corruption, and economic decline. These developments have generated intense scholarly debate regarding the effectiveness of democratic governance in fragile states and the growing appeal of military-led administrations as alternative mechanisms for restoring stability and national sovereignty (Thurston, 2020; African Development Bank [AfDB], 2024). The persistence of armed insurgencies and weak state institutions continues to challenge governance and sustainable development across the region (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023).

The security situation in the Sahel remains one of the most pressing concerns confronting African governments and the international community. Armed groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State continue to expand their operations across Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, leading to widespread displacement, humanitarian crises, and economic disruption. According to the United

Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 2024), millions of people remain internally displaced due to conflict, while access to education, healthcare, and agricultural production has been severely disrupted. The African Union Commission (2024) equally observes that insecurity has weakened state authority and undermined development efforts throughout the region. Another significant feature of the current political landscape is the resurgence of anti-neo-colonial sentiments and growing demands for national sovereignty. The governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have increasingly questioned the effectiveness of long-standing military partnerships with France and other Western countries, arguing that external interventions have failed to eliminate terrorism while limiting national policy autonomy. Consequently, these governments have adopted policies emphasizing resource nationalism, economic self-reliance, and Pan-African solidarity as strategies for reclaiming political and economic independence (Charbonneau, 2017; Loada, 2024). These developments have revived debates on neo-colonialism and Africa's search for genuine sovereignty in the twenty-first century.

Regional politics have also undergone significant changes following the deterioration of relations between the military-led governments and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Following sanctions imposed after the military takeovers, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger announced their withdrawal from ECOWAS and strengthened cooperation through the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). The alliance seeks to promote collective security, economic cooperation, and political independence among member states while reducing reliance on external actors. According to the ECOWAS

Commission (2024), these developments represent one of the most significant institutional challenges to regional integration since the organization's establishment in 1975, this is because, the African Union Peace and Security Council (2024) notes that the changing regional architecture presents both opportunities and challenges for peace building and continental integration.

Economically, the Sahel continues to experience severe developmental constraints despite its abundant natural resources. Rising inflation, food insecurity, unemployment, climate change, and declining foreign investment have compounded existing governance challenges. Nevertheless, Burkina Faso and its regional partners have intensified efforts to increase domestic resource mobilization, strengthen public financial management, and enhance state participation in strategic sectors such as mining and energy. The African Development Bank (2024) argues that improving governance, strengthening institutions, and promoting economic diversification remain essential for achieving sustainable development and reducing dependency on external assistance. Likewise, the World Bank (2024) emphasizes that inclusive economic reforms and improved institutional capacity are critical for long-term stability in the Sahel.

Within this evolving political environment, Ibrahim Traoré has emerged as one of the most influential political figures in contemporary Africa. Since assuming power in 2022, his administration has consistently advocated for sovereignty, resource control, Pan-African cooperation, and resistance to neo-colonial influence. His policies have generated considerable academic and political debate, with supporters viewing them as part of a broader movement toward African re-decolonisation and critics questioning their

implications for democratic governance and constitutional order. Recent studies suggest that Traoré's leadership represents an important case for understanding changing political ideologies and state-building strategies in the Sahel (Loada, 2024; AfDB, 2024). Consequently, the present state of affairs provides the immediate context within which this study examines Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation struggles and their implications for the image and reputation of African states.

A Clarion Call to Other ECOWAS Member States

The rise of Ibrahim Traoré has exalted him into one of the most influential political leaders in the 21st Century Africa. Since Traoré's assumption to power in 2022, Traoré has been prominent in his emphasis on issue of sovereignty, economic self-reliance, and stiff opposition against neo-colonial domination. "His speeches frequently invoke the legacy of revolutionary African leaders such as Thomas Sankara, whose commitment to self-sufficiency, anti-imperialism, and social justice continues to inspire many Africans" (Harsch, 2023). From the onset these actions manifested to harsh responses to ECOWAS leaders. Traoré's overall philosophy is to create a pathway for the Sahelian and by extension other African to bounce back to life.

Traoré's administration has pursued policies aimed at strengthening national control over strategic resources and reducing dependency on other countries for loans, grants and technical aid. His government has advocated greater domestic participation in mining activities, sought new international partnerships beyond conventional Western allies, and promoted initiatives designed to enhance national self-sufficiency. These actions have resonated with many young Africans who view sovereignty as essential for meaningful development and political

dignity (Falola & Mbah, 2023). These clarion calls became the centric petal force in the consolidation of unity and repositioning their socio economic, political and cultural and cultural identity. The popularity of Traoré across Africa illustrates a broader shift in political consciousness. Through social media platforms and public discourse, many Africans increasingly question the effectiveness of post-colonial political arrangements and advocate alternative development pathways. Demonstrations in support of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have occurred in various African countries, reflecting widespread frustration with perceived external interference and persistent underdevelopment (Adejumobi, 2024). These wake up calls, are discernible with many African states leaders ceasing to crop in the darkness of post-colonial mentalities.

For other members of the Economic Community of West African States, Traoré's message serves as a reminder of the importance of prioritizing national interests and strengthening domestic institutions. His political rhetoric encourages governments to invest in industrialization, agricultural modernization, educational reform, technological innovation, and youth empowerment. Such measures are viewed as essential for reducing dependency on foreign aid and creating sustainable foundations for economic growth (UNECA, 2024). Not only to the Burkina Faso government, but an outright advancement that instigate other Africa States radical, revolutionary positive policies.

The emergence of a new generation of African leaders advocating sovereignty and self-determination may also contribute to the revitalization of Pan-Africanism. Originally championed by figures such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Patrice Lumumba, Pan-Africanism

emphasizes collective action and continental unity as instruments for achieving development and global influence. However, the contemporary re-decolonization movements in the Sahel reflect many of these foundational principles (Tieku, 2022), and have the humongous strides and struggle to extricate from deep neck neo colonial dominations.

Furthermore, Traoré's leadership has contributed to efforts aimed at redefining Africa's global image. Rather than accepting narratives that portray the continent primarily through the lenses of poverty, conflict, and dependency, proponents of re-decolonization emphasize African agency, resilience, and innovation. This paradigm shift in narrative is increasingly important in an international environment characterized by competition for resources, investment, and geopolitical influence. By asserting sovereignty and promoting self-confidence, African States can enhance their international reputations and strengthen their bargaining positions within global governance institutions (Acharya, 2023; Mutiga, 2024).

However, Captain Ibrahim Traoré's political project has emerged as a symbol of broader aspirations for sovereignty, dignity, and self-determination. His emphasis on resource control, national independence, and institutional transformation resonates with many Africans who perceive neo-colonial structures as obstacles to genuine development. Although opinions differ regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of his policies, undoubtedly, his leadership has reinvigorated debates about the meaning of independence in contemporary Africa (Mbembe, 2022; Adejumobi, 2024).

The significance of the Sahelian experience extends beyond Burkina Faso to Niger and Mali. It also raises fundamental questions concerning Africa's

position within the international political system, the nature of external partnerships, and the capacity of African states to pursue autonomous development strategies. As countries across the continent seek to navigate an increasingly complex global environment, the lessons emerging from the Sahel reconfiguration of political policies, has the potentials to influence future approaches to governance, regional integration, and international cooperation (Acharya, 2023).

Ultimately, the re-decolonization struggle championed by Ibrahim Traoré triggers a wake-up call for African leaders on throne, living and unborn citizens alike. The struggle underscores the necessity of confronting historical legacies, strengthening domestic institutions, and promoting self-reliance as foundations for sustainable development. Whether these aspirations will translate into lasting transformation, this remains uncertain, but the strides have undoubtedly expanded the frontiers of debate regarding African sovereignty, economic development and international reputation in the twenty-first century.

4. Conclusion

The contemporary political developments unfolding in the Sahel represent one of the most significant challenges to post-colonial political arrangements in Africa since the era of independence. These developments are rooted in historical experiences of colonial exploitation, economic dependency, and external intervention that have shaped African societies for more than a century. Understanding the current re-decolonization movement therefore, requires a comprehensive appreciation of the historical structures that continue to influence governance and development across the continent (Young, 2021).

However, Traoré's policies are concrete initiatives for permanent control of

Burkina Fasso's God given natural resources; but the implementation of the policies becoming threatened by weak state institutions, existing investment treaties in the Francophone and lack of strong support from regional partners. This has become very clear because practical resource administration in Africa requires political and sustainable institutional reforms, prudent legal initiatives, people oriented policy initiatives and regional synergy.

This study examined Ibrahim Traoré's re-decolonisation struggles within the historical context of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the contemporary political transformations in the Sahel. The findings revealed that the legacies of colonialism and neo-colonial dependency continue to shape governance, economic development, and the international reputation of many African states. The study also found that the recent political changes in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger reflect growing public dissatisfaction with existing governance structures, external political influence, and regional security arrangements. These developments have revived debates on sovereignty, resource nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and the need for African-led solutions to the continent's development challenges (African Development Bank, 2024; Loada, 2024).

The study further found that Ibrahim Traoré's administration has contributed significantly to contemporary discussions on African sovereignty through policies aimed at strengthening national control over natural resources, reducing external dependence, and promoting self-reliance. While the long-term sustainability of these policies remains dependent on effective governance, institutional capacity, regional cooperation, and economic stability, they have undoubtedly renewed continental discourse on Africa's image, identity, and international reputation. The study therefore concludes that re-decolonisation

should extend beyond political independence to include institutional strengthening, economic transformation, and sustainable regional cooperation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- African governments should strengthen democratic institutions, accountability, and the rule of law to ensure that sovereignty is supported by effective governance and sustainable development
- Governments in the Sahel should implement transparent and accountable natural resource management policies to ensure that mineral and other strategic resources contribute directly to national development and citizens' welfare

- The African Union (AU) and ECOWAS should strengthen dialogue, mediation, and regional cooperation to address security challenges while respecting the sovereignty and developmental aspirations of member states
- African states should promote economic diversification, industrialisation, technological innovation, and regional trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to reduce dependence on external actors and strengthen economic resilience
- Future researchers should investigate the long-term political, economic, and diplomatic implications of Ibrahim Traoré's policies for Burkina Faso, the Sahel, and Africa's broader re-colonisation agenda, as these developments continue to evolve.

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