

“Fatherland or Death, We Shall Conquer”

Burkina Faso at the United Nations, 1983-1987

Wordcount: 20557

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Research Workshop: Rise and Fall of American Empire

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to scholarship surrounding the United Nations (UN) and postcolonial studies through analyzing Burkina Faso's membership to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It does so by analyzing this case in the context of anticolonialism and neocolonialism. By employing the concepts of Sankarism and Otherness this thesis illustrates the nature of postcolonial influences at the UNSC. These concepts are examined through UNSC meeting reports which in turn are analyzed using the Colonial Discourse Analysis method. Additionally, the discourse at the UNSC is compared to the discourse outside of the UNSC. Burkina Faso's membership to the UNSC is of particular interest as in the period between 1984 to 1985, which is the period in which Burkina Faso had a temporary seat on the UNSC, Burkina Faso's leader Thomas Sankara was a prominent voice of anti-imperialist rhetoric. However, the entire period of Sankara's presidency, from 1983 to 1987, is of relevance to this project.

In doing so, this project has shown how anticolonial discourse was featured at the UNSC, but also how it was limited as a result of the nature of the UNSC as an organization and as a result of the conduct of permanent members of the UNSC.

Introduction

This project was originally formulated in the context of Mark Mazower's book *No Enchanted Palace*. In this book Mark Mazower sets out to highlight how imperial interests influenced the formulation of important international institutions like the United Nations (UN). What Mazower's work showed was how remnants of the imperial world order influence the postcolonial world. However, Mazower's work specifically focuses on the UN's formation and its emergence as an international institution. How the colonial interests inherent in the UN's formation, as identified by Mazower, influence the UN later in history is not addressed by the literature. While the literature both on colonial legacies and on neocolonialism show the impact of colonialism on the world after the period discussed by Mazower, this is not reflected in the literature on the UN. If colonial interests were inherent in the formation of the UN and both colonial legacies and forms of neocolonialism influenced the world from the Second World War to the contemporary world, then how did these form of colonial influence continue to influence the UN? This is the gap in the literature this thesis seeks to contribute to. This is both the problem this project addresses, as well as the academic relevance of this thesis.

In order to address this gap in the literature, this thesis will focus on Thomas Sankara's Burkina Faso and its membership to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Thomas Sankara was an African leader and an influential postcolonial figure. Fiercely anti-imperialistic, Sankara had no problems with publicly confronting France and the United States with their alleged imperialistic behavior. Even though Sankara only led Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987, Sankara influenced many Africans through his powerful anticolonial stance and his ideas on Pan-Africanism. While Sankara and his government of Burkina Faso alone would be interesting to study, the period of Thomas Sankara introduces a platform of international relations relevant to this project. During Sankara's frankly quite short reign in Burkina Faso, the country got assigned a temporary seat on the UNSC. As a result, Burkina Faso was given a podium through which it could influence important international matters and therefore apply its anticolonial ideals. In addition to putting Burkina Faso into a position of international relevance, Burkina Faso's seat at UNSC also creates a research opportunity. There are vast records of UNSC meetings in which critical international situations were discussed. These records allow for an analysis of Burkina Faso's conduct at the UNSC. In addition, it allows for an analysis of the states Sankara and his Burkinabe government

frequently criticized and their behavior at the UNSC, those states being the United States and France. Therefore, this project is not only concerned with the period of Thomas Sankara's leadership in Burkina Faso, but specifically with the period of its participation to the UNSC from 1984 to 1985. Burkina Faso's membership to the UNSC is also where the societal relevance of this arises from. As the UNSC is one of the most powerful organizations within the UN it is necessary for the public to understand how this organization operates. This project will be able to both shine a light on how the UNSC functions, as well as discuss the way colonial legacies influence one of the UN's most powerful organizations. In addition, Thomas Sankara is an important figure in contemporary times, with many people in Burkina Faso being inspired by his legacy. This thesis will offer new insights into Thomas Sankara and the conduct of his government in the realm of international relations.

Chapter 1 – Research Structure

1.1 Research Questions

There are several essential elements to the formation of this research project. Firstly, this project emphasizes both anticolonialism and neocolonialism at the UNSC through the conduct of Burkina Faso and the United States and France. Secondly, in order to analyze the relationship between these states two theoretical concepts will be employed. These concepts are related to both the nature of anticolonialism and neocolonialism that is essential to this thesis. The concepts that are chosen are Sankarism and Otherness. These concepts are chosen as they apply to Burkina Faso's behavior, that being Sankarism, and can be used to understand the United States and France's discourse, through Otherness. In order to study the sources specifically colonial discourse analysis will be employed as methodology. Lastly, while this project is concerned with sources from Burkina Faso's participation in the UNSC, this is not the only period this project is concerned with. Burkina Faso was chosen as a subject for this research because of Thomas Sankara's public anti-imperial rhetoric. Therefore, this project is concerned with the entire period of Thomas Sankara's leadership of Burkina Faso. Therefore this research can be formulated as following: What factors contributed to features of anticolonial and neocolonial discourse at the UNSC during Burkina Faso's membership to the council from 1984-1985?

In order to accomplish this the following sub-questions will be employed

- *How did Burkina Faso and the France and the United States view each other?*
- *How prevalent were the concepts of Sankarism and Otherness outside of the United Nations Security Council?*
- *What was Burkina Faso's behavior at the United Nations Security Council?*
- *How prevalent was Sankarism in Burkina Faso's discourse at the United Nations Security Council?*
- *How and why did Sankarism at the United Nations Security Council differ from Sankarism outside of the United Nations Security Council?*
- *How did France and the United States conduct themselves at the United Nations Security Council?*

- *How prevalent was Otherness in France and the United States' discourse at the United Nations Security Council?*
- *How and why did Otherness discourse within the United Nations Security Council differ from Otherness discourse outside of the United Nations Security Council?*

1.2 Theoretical framework

1.2.1 Postcolonialism

This work is concerned with postcolonial theory as it builds on postcolonial thought. It does so in a variety of ways. First of all, this project is very literally postcolonial in the way it is set up. That is, this project emphasizes the postcolonial age and specifically analyzes the connotations the history of colonialism has in a decolonized world. However, it also includes postcolonial theory in the way it engages with eurocentrism. As Ananaya Roy emphasizes, postcolonialism is not just about studying postcolonial relations, it is about analyzing the West.¹ How this is interpreted in this thesis is that knowledge on colonial and postcolonial relations is essentially based on Western knowledge creation. While this thesis could be seen as a continuation of this, as the author is a Western born individual studying at a Western institution, by emphasizing Burkina Faso's agency this thesis does attempt to bypass eurocentrism to a degree.

Postcolonial theory is also the theory of international relations that is utilized by this thesis. As postcolonial theory assumes that the world system is influenced by the legacy of colonial relations, this theory is highly applicable to this research.² As this research itself focuses upon the legacy of colonial relations regarding the proceedings at the UNSC, this research falls within the realm of postcolonial international relations theory. This influences the way this research is conducted through the methodology, which assumes and takes into account the power dimensions between the subjects of this research.

1.2.2 Neocolonialism

Whilst this project builds on postcolonial theory, postcolonial theory is too broad to analyze the subject of this project through. Therefore, several other theoretical concepts are applied as

¹ Ananaya Roy, "Who's Afraid of Postcolonial Theory?" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40, no. 1 (2015): 205.

² Sanjay Seth, "Postcolonial Theory and the Critique of International Relations," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 40, no. 1 (2011): 168-70.

well, including neocolonialism. First established by Kwame Nkrumah during his time as president of Ghana neocolonialism was defined as the following: “The essence of neocolonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”³ There are several important elements to this definition. Nkrumah’s definition of neocolonialism includes the idea of neocolonialism limiting state sovereignty while upholding a veil of sovereignty for the state that is subject to it. In addition, Nkrumah defines neocolonialism from an economic standpoint. According to Nkrumah the state’s sovereignty is limited because of its economic system being influenced from outside.

Even though, Nkrumah was a foundational character in the origins of neocolonialism as a theory, the scholarship surrounding neocolonialism has since moved forward. Rahaman et al. take a broader definition to neocolonialism. According to these authors, neocolonialism is not just applied economically, but can also be applied politically and militarily.⁴ In their article Rahaman et al. establish four perspectives through which the effects of neocolonialism can be analyzed. These are economic, political, cultural and literary perspectives. Hereby Rahaman et al. illustrate how neocolonialism can be viewed more broadly than just an economic issue.

In addition to Rahaman et al. Godfrey Unzoigwe also discusses the broad causes and effects of neocolonialism. Specifically, Unzoigwe displays how there is also an important geopolitical angle to neocolonialism. While Nkrumah tried to unite Africa against the dangers of neocolonialism, Western leaders successfully used their geopolitical power and a strategy of divide and conquer to counter Nkrumah’s efforts.⁵

While Nkrumah’s first definition of neocolonialism may make it hard to see how this concept is applicable to this research project, further developments in the scholarship allow it to be tremendously useful. In contrast to Nkrumah’s very specific definition of neocolonialism, Unzoigwe offers a very broad definition. He states: “essentially, what is broadly called neocolonialism is the nature of relations after independence between European

³ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1966), 9.

⁴ Shafiqur Rahaman, Rawshan Yeazdani and Rashed Mahmud, “The Untold History of Neocolonialism in Africa (1960-2011),” *History Research* 5, no. 1 (2017): 10.

⁵ Godfrey Uzoigwe, “Neocolonialism Is Dead: Long Live Neocolonialism,” *Journal of Global South Studies* 36, no. 1 (2021): 69-70.

powers and their former colonies of the non-European world.”⁶ This research project will take a position between these definitions. Borrowing from both Nkrumah and Unzoigwe’s work this research project will take the elements of neocolonialism that emphasize the limiting of state sovereignty and the relationship between colonized states and Western powers.

1.2.3 Otherness

Otherness as a concept can first be traced back to Edward Said’s orientalism. More recently, Otherness as a concept is accurately described by Etienne Balibar. Balibar states that what is essential about Otherness is that the other is constructed not as a simple stranger but someone with “another completely different set of human values.”⁷ As Gayatri Spivak explains, it is this envisioning of the Other that allows the dominant party to Dominate the Other.⁸ This is where the relevance for this thesis comes into play. If the process of creating an image of the Other allows one to dominate another party, then the concept of Otherness must be of relevance to the spreading of neocolonialism. It is necessary to create an image of another as uncivilized to consider yourself civilized. This idea of a creation of Otherness is what this thesis will apply. Carmen Caldas-Coulthard shows a variety of ways through which one Otherness can be traced in discourse. Words like irrational, in contrast to the civilized and rational, can illustrate the presence of Otherness in discourse.⁹

1.2.4 Anticolonialism

On top of the inclusion of neocolonialism, anticolonialism is another theoretical concept that is included in this research project. While neocolonialism covers the limitations of sovereignty that former colonies are faced with, anticolonialism highlights the actions and agency that these states and individual thinkers had. In their article Adom Getachew and Karuna Marena summarize the goal of anticolonialism: “an attempt to reconstruct viable political futures in the aftermath of European domination.”¹⁰ Therefore, anticolonialism was not just about critique, as Getachew and Marena discuss the point of critique brought forward by anticolonial figures was to create opportunities for reconstruction. As the authors state,

⁶ Unzoigwe, “Neocolonialism is Dead,” 62.

⁷ Etienne Balibar, “Difference, Otherness, Exclusion,” *Parallax* 11, no. 1 (2005): 29-30.

⁸ Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In *Imperialism*, ed. Peter J. Cain and Mark Harrison (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 75.

⁹ Carmen Caldas-Coulthard, “Cross-Cultural Representation of ‘Otherness’ in Media Discourse,” In *Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 278.

¹⁰ Adom Getachew and Karuna Mantena, “Anticolonialism and the Decolonization of Political Theory,” *Critical Times* 4, no. 3 (2021): 361.

anticolonial thinkers attempted to pinpoint the sites through which new futures could be built.¹¹

Julian Go also discusses anticolonialism and what they consider to be essential elements of it. In addition to Getachew and Marena's elements, Go adds global hierarchy as another element he considers essential to anticolonialism. According to Go, imperialism and colonialism added a degree of hierarchy to the international system. Anticolonialism as a concept includes those at the bottom of that hierarchy.¹² However, according to Go there is then still differences within anticolonialism, that it includes the bottom of that international hierarchy does not mean that everyone within anticolonialism has the same level of agency and power. Yet it is still important to consider this element of international hierarchy.

Anticolonialism can thus be seen to include several important elements relevant to this research. First, anticolonialism relates to critique that is attempting to create opportunities for restructuring. Secondly, anticolonialism refers to those at the bottom of the international hierarchy, placed there as a result of imperial structures.

1.2.5 Sankarism

While the concept of anticolonialism itself is very broad, there are specific branches of anticolonialism that allow for a more in depth understanding and applicability. Thomas Sankara's specific form of anticolonial rhetoric has been described in the literature. Yimovie has defined Sankarism as follows: "Sankarism is a philosophy grounded by the imperative of self-sufficiency and sustainable development that emanates from within and not from without."¹³ Here Yimovie stresses the right to self-determination as an essential element of Sankarism. However, as Ouedraogo describes, Sankarism is also a rejection of neo-imperialism.¹⁴ On top of the emphasis on the right to self-determination, this thesis then also takes critiques of imperial and colonial behavior as essential to discovering traces of Sankarism. In this research there is no emphasis on subtle interpretations of anticolonialism and anti-imperialism. Instead, this research will consider direct critiques of imperial and colonial behavior.

¹¹ Getachew, "Political Theory," 361-362.

¹² Julian Go, "Anticolonial thought, the sociological imagination, and social science: A reply to critics," *The British Journal of Sociology* 74, no. 3 (2023): 350.

¹³ Yimovie, "Re-Reading Sankara's Philosophy for a Praxeology of Debt in Contemporary Times," *In A Certain Amount of Madness*, ed. Amber Murrey (London: Pluto Press, 2018).

¹⁴ Lassane Ouedraogo, "Mediated Sankarism: Re-inventing a Historical Figure to Reimagine a Future," *Africana Studies Student Research Conference* 2 (2017): 2.

1.3 Historiography

To understand the historiography of relevance to this project, first the work that inspired this thesis needs to be considered. This project was inspired by the literature showing how the UN contributed both to continuing legacies of empire, as well as how it contributed to challenging empires and colonialism. This is what Mark Mazower covers in his book *No Enchanted Palace*.¹⁵ In this book Mazower takes an approach in which he follows influential individuals to illustrate his points on the UN. Regarding the UN's role as an institution designed to defend the interests of imperial states, Mazower follows Jan Smuts and his ideas. Mazower shows how Jan Smuts first wanted to establish the League of Nations in order to create a British global order, after feeling the threats of decolonization. While showing the UN's problematic past and how imperial interests were inherent to its formation, Mazower also shows how the UN became an institution through which decolonizing discourse could prevail. By following Jawaharlal Nehru Mazower is able to illustrate how decolonizing actors intelligently used the UN charter to their advantage. As a result, Mazower is able to show how the UN was a vehicle for imperial interests, while also evaluating its role as a battleground for decolonization.

Another scholarly work examining the UN's role in maintaining legacies of empire is Jessica Lynn Pearson's work on "Defending Empire at the United Nations." In this work Pearson analyzes the UN's structure and role in defending imperial structures. Pearson shows how colonial powers fought to defend their colonial rule at the UN.¹⁶ Colonial states tried to defend their colonial systems through preventing the UN from demanding increased oversight over their colonial territories. On top of the colonial states, the United States was also put in a precarious position, as it tried to both build relations with decolonizing states as well as maintain its relations with European colonial nations. However, Pearson does not only show how empires were defended at the UN, but also how they were challenged. According to Pearson the UN and its charter were instrumental in demonstrating to the world what was going on in these colonies. There are many similarities between Pearson's work and Mazower's work. Both scholars establish the role the UN played in maintaining imperial

¹⁵Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 65.

¹⁶ Jessica Lynn Pearson, "Defending Empire at the United Nations: The Politics of International Colonial Oversight in the Era of Decolonisation," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, No. 3 (2017): 539-543.

interests, while also demonstrating how the UN became a battleground for decolonization. However, these two scholars do use different approach in coming to these findings. While Mazower focusses on following prominent individuals, Pearson utilizes official UN documents and the role of UN Special Committee for her research.

Both Pearson and Mazower not only discuss the way in which the UN served imperial interests, but also how the UN became a battleground to fight imperialism and colonialism. As Daughton puts it in his review of Mazower's book "one of the UN's most redeeming qualities is its ability to reinvent itself."¹⁷ While Mazower and Pearson show how the UN was able to change and offer a platform for decolonization, this does not mean that the imperial interests that were inherent to the formation of the UN had disappeared. As both Mazower and Pearson's work focus on the period of the UN's formation and shortly thereafter, their works do not sufficiently address how the imperial interests that influenced the design of the UN still affected the UN later in history.

Although Mazower and Pearson discuss legacies of empire within the UN, they analyze this through a very limited timeframe. This does not allow them to sufficiently address legacies of the colonial world in international relations. Brysk et al. choose to study legacies of empire more broadly and specifically researched the relationships between former colonizers and their former colonies.¹⁸ Brysk et al. noted that former colonizers keep close relations with their former colonies, even though this did not amount to further material gains. Brysk et al. take an essentially constructivist approach to this postcolonial relations.¹⁹ According to them, this colonial legacy has constructed a familial type of relationship between the former colonizers and their colonies. It is the identity and relationship that has been constructed between these states that functions as the motivation for the continued close ties between these states.²⁰ The close ties former colonizers have with their former colonies is also dependent on the culture of the state. While Britain's ties with its former colonies seem to be mostly based on language and education for example, France seems to emphasize military interventions.²¹ Brysk et al. thus explain postcolonial relations and the remnants of imperial

¹⁷ J.P. Daughton, "Review of Mazower, Mark *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nation*," *H-Human-Rights* (2010).

¹⁸ Alison Brysk, Craig Parsons and Wayne Sandholtz. "After Empire: National Identity and Post-colonial Families of Nations," *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 2 (2002): 268.

¹⁹ Brysk, "After Empire," 269.

²⁰ Brysk, "After Empire," 272.

²¹ Brysk, "After Empire," 296.

relations through constructivism, these relationships are a result of the identities that have been constructed by these former colonizers. Therefore, Brysk et al. also show how remnants of colonial interests still influence the contemporary world.

While Brysk et al. take a constructivist angle in which they initiate the notion that material gain is not a major influence in postcolonial relations, Ronen Palan choose to use monetary systems as a way to analyze the postcolonial world. Rather than focusing on the relationship between the former colonizer and its colonies directly, Palan looks at what kind of structures the colonial world, specifically the British empire, has left behind.²² According to Palan, because of its prominent status during the imperial period, London is the center of the international financial market today. Additionally, the remaining bits of empire still under the United Kingdom's influence offered significant advantages for the position of London in the international financial markets. Even though, Brysk et al. and Palan take very different approaches, their results do not contradict each other. What their works show is how multifaceted and interdisciplinary researching legacies of empire is. Additionally, Both Palan and Brysk et al. show how legacies of the colonial world are inherent to contemporary international relations. Although Brysk et al. discusses how the identities forged during the colonial period influence policy today in terms of interventions and foreign aid, Palan shows how the structure that the colonial times produced forms the contemporary financial world. What Brysk et al. and Palan both therefore discuss is how the colonial world still influences the contemporary world long after the period of decolonization that Mazower and Pearson focus on.

While not as explicit about its relation to legacies of empire as Palan or Brysk et al., Odd Arne Westad's 2007 book *The Global Cold War Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* is still very relevant for this research. Westad discusses the Soviet Union and the United States' approach to expanding their sphere of influence during the Cold War.²³ Westad's analysis then also includes how postcolonial states utilized the rivalry between the global superpowers to establish a more favorable position in the world order, which aligns with Burkina Faso's strategy of non-alignment. As decolonization gave the United States an opportunity to spread their own ideas across a new group of young states, questions can be

²² Sandra Halperin, Ronen Palan, *Legacies of Empire: Imperial Roots of the Contemporary Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 62.

²³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

asked about how this may also indicate a sign of postcolonial instances of empire. Regarding those interpretations of postcolonial empires similarities can be drawn between Westad and Palan, even though both scholars take very different approaches. Additionally, Westad shows, as have both Brysk et al. and Palan, how imperial behavior and postcolonial attitudes influenced international relations long after the period of decolonization that Pearson and Mazower focus on.

On top of the instances of the legacies colonial world discussed by Brysk et al., Palan and Westad, it is important to recognize literature surrounding neocolonialism. This concept has already been discussed earlier in this project, but the literature needs to be further discussed to both show the relevance of sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to address the limitations of Mazower and Pearson's work. Michael Odijie considers neocolonial relations between the European Union its predecessors and the West African region. Odijie attempts a critical analysis of neocolonialism. According to Odijie some of the economic neocolonialism during the 1960's wasn't necessarily intentional. As Odijie shows, agreements that are usually considered to have exploited Africa, did not include much financial gain for European states.²⁴ Hereby Odijie illustrates limitations of neocolonial claims. However, Odijie does state France did gain financially from these agreements. In that light Odijie's claim seems strange, considering France might be the most influential figure in Western-Africa because of its colonial history in the region. Regardless, it is necessary to consider whether all claimed neocolonial structures are indeed neocolonial. Odijie's article shows that neocolonialism might not always be the cause of problems in West-African states during the postcolonial age. In fact, Odijie puts the emphasis on the African ruling elite. According to Odijie some of the African elite stood to gain from neocolonial relations and structures and therefore did not work to change these structures.²⁵ While Odijie is right in this assertion, it is important to consider that African states can still be exploited, even if members of the African elite work with neocolonial powers. Additionally, it needs to be stated that European states sought to work with African elites that allowed them to further their neocolonial goals. In his approach Odijie seems to take Nkrumah's definition of neocolonialism as an economic issue as central, considering his focus on the financial side of conventions. In this way he differs from for example Unzoigwe, who attempts to show wider aspects of neocolonialism than just the

²⁴ Michael Odijie, "Unintentional neo-colonialism? Three generations of trade and development relationship between EU and West Africa," *Journal of European Integration* 44, no. 3. (2022): 359.

²⁵ Odijie, "Unintentional Neo-colonialism," 349-350.

economic element.²⁶

Another scholarly work on neocolonialism related to this research project was produced by Ian Taylor. In contrast to Odijie, Taylor takes a much more contemporary approach to neocolonialism in francophone Africa. Taylor utilizes the CFA zone, an African currency based financial zone influenced by France, to consider neocolonialism in historical and contemporary Western Africa. Throughout the entire history of the CFA, France has ultimately been the one to decide its value, as Taylor shows.²⁷ According to Taylor, this is an essential example of neocolonialism related to Nkrumah's definition of neocolonialism as the West African states are unable to decide their own fate. Taylor goes as far as to claim that the CFA is promoting corruption and underdevelopment in West Africa.²⁸ Like Odijie, Taylor takes an approach while emphasizes Nkrumah's definition of neocolonialism. However, he comes to a very different conclusion. This is probably related to the fact that Odijie focuses more on the possible gains for Europe and shared responsibility of the African ruling elite, while Taylor emphasizes the effect CFA policies have on West Africa.

Odijie and Taylor's work show how there still are wide debates held on the reality of neocolonialism in West Africa. However, as both Taylor and Odijie focus on the economic element of neocolonialism, they are also limited. This research project can contribute to the historiography surrounding neocolonialism in West Africa by, like Onzoigwe, focusing on broader aspects of neocolonialism. In addition, Taylor and Odijie illustrate how the neocolonial reality in Africa is still being discussed and has been influencing the African continent for a long time. Although Mazower and Pearson discuss the legacies of imperialism that influenced the formation and conduct at the UN in its initial years, their analyses do not account for the concept of neocolonialism. Taylor and Odijie also show the relevance of West Africa, as they show it's a region still being influenced by neocolonial factors.

The literature discussed above illustrate how Mazower and Pearson's work is not accounting for later influences of colonial legacies and forms of neocolonialism. However, although the works of Mazower and Pearson are some of the most important and most cited works regarding the UN and colonialism, they do not account for all research regarding this subject. An additional work on colonialization and the UN is that of O'Sullivan. O'Sullivan's

²⁶ Unzoigwe, "Neocolonialism is dead," 65.

²⁷ Ian Taylor, "France à fric: the CFA zone in Africa and neocolonialism," *Third World Quarterly* 40, no. 6 (2019): 1069.

²⁸ Taylor, "France à fric," 1077.

article shows the changing role of the United Nation's regarding Africa and the process of decolonization. O'Sullivan's piece is not just an analysis of the United Nation's role in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is also very much a critique of the UN and its approach to these situations with the purpose of facing similar challenges more effectively in the contemporary world.²⁹ Even though, O'Sullivan's work also addresses the UN and colonialism, it does not fill the gap left by Pearson and Mazower's work.

Langan's book chapter on the UN and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a piece of scholarship written in the Mazower and Pearson's work. It discusses how the UN SDGs focus on private sector development and therefore do not sufficiently address poverty reduction in Africa. Rather, the SDGs reinforce donor commitments to free market policies which the author then relates to Nkrumah's neocolonial critiques.³⁰ Langan therefore does include an analysis of neocolonialism, but does not place it in the context of Mazower and Pearson and the colonial legacies inherent in the UN's formation.

A piece of literature that does focus on colonial continuities is that of Bradley. Bradley builds on the work of Mazower and performs a similar analysis on the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Bradley states that the IOM as an organization featured racist and colonial factors both in its formation as well as in its conduct.³¹ Bradley's article shows not only how Mazower's analysis of the UN can be applied to different international organizations as well. It also illustrates the trend in the literature which builds on the work of Mazower to apply similar analyses to different cases, rather than provide further analysis of the UN and the colonial legacies identified by Mazower and Pearson.

Although this research project concerns the UN, neocolonialism and legacies of empire in a broad sense, it does so by utilizing Burkina Faso in Western Africa, and specifically Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara's leadership, as a case study. One of the leading works on Thomas Sankara is the book *A Certain Amount of Madness*. In this edited volume, Murrey seeks to explore Thomas Sankara and his politics. However what is different about Amber Murrey's book is that it includes a chapter by Brian Peterson in which Peterson

²⁹Christopher O'Sullivan, "The United Nations, Decolonization, and Self-Determination in Cold War Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960-1994," *Journal of Third World Studies* 22, no. 2 (2005): 116.

³⁰Mark Langan, "The UN Sustainable Development Goals and Neo-Colonialism," in *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of 'Development' in Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 177.

³¹Megan Bradley, "Colonial continuities and colonial unknowing in international migration management: the International Organization for Migration reconsidered," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 49, no. 1 (2023): 23.

analyzes Sankara's approach to international relations.³² Most of the academic literature surrounding Thomas Sankara focusses on his domestic policies, or his influence as a pan-African symbol. Peterson writes about how Sankara, who was originally inspired by Marxism, balances between the Soviet Union and the United States during his leadership. Additionally, Peterson explores Sankara's influence as Burkina Faso entered into its two year UNSC term. In his approach, Peterson emphasizes Sankara's personality and attempts at disrupting the political order. In doing so, comparisons can be drawn between Peterson's approach and Mazower's approach.

While Murrey's work, and by extension also Peterson's work, is related to Sankara his life, his beliefs and his actions, much of the academic literature surrounding Sankara is much more contemporary in nature. The scholarship on Sankara often describes what happened after Sankara had passed away and how his ideas influence contemporary Burkina Faso and its politics. Ernest Harsch for example covers the legacies of Sankara and why the people of Burkina Faso resonate so much with Sankara to this day.³³ Additionally, works like that of Ouedraogo discuss what Sankara exactly means to people in contemporary Burkina Faso, and how he has been reimagined as a historical figure.³⁴ While this scholarship is interesting and serves this project in understanding what Sankara his ideas were, they lack in an analysis in how Sankara used his platform during his time as leader of Burkina Faso. Therefore this research aligns itself with Peterson his approach to analyzing Sankara.

The historiography of relevance to this project covers several fields of study. Essentially this thesis builds forward on the work done by Mazower and Pearson in focusing on both the colonial and anticolonial features of the UN. However, both Mazower and Pearson do not take into account the continued relevance of colonial legacies and neocolonialism, as discussed by for example Palan and Odijie. Instead, work on the UN like that of O'Sullivan has focused had a limited focus, taking into account only the UN's role in decolonization for example. Therefore, this project builds forward on the work of Mazower and Pearson by emphasizing a later time period and thus taking into relevance of colonial

³² Brian Peterson, "The Perils of Non-Alignment: Thomas Sankara and the Cold War," In *A Certain Amount of Madness*, edited by Amber Murrey (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 36-38.

³³ Ernest Harsch, "The Legacies of Thomas Sankara: a revolutionary experience in retrospect," *Review of African Political Economy* 40 (2013): 359.

³⁴ Ouedraogo, "Mediated Sankarism," 2.

legacies and neocolonialism, which the literature on the UN has not sufficiently addressed outside of the works of Mazower and Pearson.

1.4 Source criticism

This thesis primarily utilizes official UNSC documents in order to answer the research question. Specifically, the most common document used are UNSC meeting records. This thesis considers the discourse utilized by the subject of this research in order to analyze features of anticolonialism and neocolonialism at the UNSC. UNSC meeting records are a very useful tool to achieve this. As UNSC meeting records offer an overview of discussions and debates at the UNSC, debates in which delegates are able to go back and forth and raise situations of importance to them, features of anticolonial and neocolonial language can appear. This thesis specifically uses the concepts of Otherness and Sankarism in order to trace anticolonial and neocolonial discourse at the UNSC. As the UNSC meetings were a forum for debates between delegates, the UNSC meetings are also able to show traces of these concepts. Sankarism emphasizes literal criticisms of colonial behavior and the right to self-determination, issues that can be focused on during the debates at these meetings. Additionally, Otherness is discourse which places the other as having an entirely different set of human values as oneself, therefore allowing for the domination of the other. As the UNSC meetings feature debates on contested issues, otherness discourse can arise during these debates.

All official UNSC documents are accessed through the UN Digital Library, an official part of the UN. Thereby confirming the authenticity of these documents. In addition, several different languages are spoken during UNSC meetings. For example, the Burkinabe delegation spoke French during UNSC meetings. All the different languages were translated to English by the UN itself. However, not all meeting records were translated to English, although the vast majority was. The primary source base for this project is therefore slightly limited. For this research about 150 UNSC documents were considered. These documents mostly consist of UNSC meeting records, but also features draft resolutions and letters sent to the UNSC. The 150 documents considered were reduced to 27 documents relevant for this research. The documents which were chosen to be relevant for this research were based on the appearance of Burkina Faso in the meeting. If Burkina Faso made a notable contribution to the meeting, for example by either speaking or initiating a draft resolution, the meeting record was chosen as relevant for this research.

A limitation of the UNSC documents for this research is that the UNSC is an organization that specifically focuses on security issues. This means that the states are only able to raise issues that are security concerns to the world. As a result, situations that might feature fierce debate and anticolonial or neocolonial discourse outside of the UNSC, may not be present within the UNSC, for example debates about economic policy cannot be featured prominently at the UNSC. However, as the UNSC still covers the most important security concerns in the world, there is still a plethora of debates over a variety of security issues.

On top of the UNSC documents that are used for the purpose of this research, this research also utilizes speeches by Thomas Sankara and Francois Mitterrand and an internal CIA document for the purpose of this research. The speeches from Thomas Sankara and Francois Mitterrand were published online through a variety of websites that strive to preserve Sankara and French history. As the original publisher of the speeches and interviews is mentioned, and there are videos available of the speeches in question, these sources are seen as legitimate. However, as these are public speeches and interviews it is important to consider the way in which the message of the speech serves a purpose for the one delivering a speech.

1.5 Methodology

This project does not only seek to analyze postcolonial relations through the concepts of neocolonialism and anticolonialism, it will attempt to do so through the discourse utilized by Burkina Faso and alleged neocolonial states at the UNSC. A connection needs to be made here between the political reality that is being analyzed, that being neocolonialism and anticolonialism, and the way that is analyzed, through discourse. To make this connection, first a definition of discourse needs to be made. The definition of discourse that this thesis uses is as follows: “a system of statements within which the world can be known.”³⁵ What is important about this definition is that it states that discourse is not simply talking about the world, rather, the world is brought into being through discourse. This influences this project in the sense that what is said, what can be said and what cannot be said says something about the political reality of the world. For the concept of Otherness, terms defined by Caldas-Coulthard are utilized for this project.³⁶ For example, Caldas-Coulthard states that displaying the other

³⁵ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial studies: the key concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 62-63.

³⁶ Caldas-Coulthard, “Cross-Cultural Representation,” 278.

as irrational is a form of Othering. What is important here is also the notion of power. Power is needed to control what is known. Those in a position of power who speak of the other as irrational, create an image in the world of that entity being irrational and therefore legitimizing domination over them, showcasing an element of neocolonialism. Additionally, as was stated, what cannot be said is also relevant in discourse analysis. If certain statements cannot be made in an environment because of the power dynamics, that reveals something about the political nature of that environment. Because this project therefore also considers power as an important element of this research, this project does not utilize discourse analysis. Instead, this project employs colonial discourse analysis as a methodology. In colonial discourse analysis specific pays specific attention to the power relations between subjects.³⁷ There are several power relations of relevance to this project. Most importantly there is a power difference between the subjects of this research in the UNSC itself. As Burkina Faso is a non-permanent member it only has two years on the UNSC to make an impact. Meanwhile France and the United States are permanent members to the UNSC. This not only gives them more time within the UNSC, but also means they have the right to veto any drafted resolution. This means there is an uneven power distribution within the UNSC.

In order to operationalize the research question two steps need to be taken. First they key concepts related to anticolonialism and neocolonialism need to be demarcated. These concepts are Sankarism and Otherness. In order to trace the concept of Sankarism, discourse related to the right to self-determination and literal critiques of colonial behavior are considered. Regarding the concept of, Otherness, terms as defined by Caldas Coulthard are taken note of. Second, in order to answer the research question and understand more about the discourse at the UNSC, it needs to be understood how these discourse functioned outside of the UNSC. Therefore, in the first chapter these discourses are traced throughout communication outside of the UNSC from the subjects of this project. This is then compared to the way the subjects conduct themselves and the discourse that is used within the UNSC.

³⁷ Tanmay Chatterjee, "Colonial Discourse Analysis: Foucault's Power/Knowledge Nexus and Said's Orientalism," *Pratidhwani the Echo* 7, no. 1 (2018): 203.

Chapter 2 – Public and Private interpretations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyze the discourse between Burkina Faso and the United States and France. Although this thesis is concerned with the way the UNSC served as a battleground for anticolonial and neocolonial rhetoric, this chapter will not discuss the UNSC. The reason for this is that this chapter will utilize different sources in order to illustrate the presence Sankarism and Otherness in discourse produced by the subjects of this research. By using public statements from Burkina Faso and France, it can become increasingly clear how the theoretical concepts used in this thesis were already utilized by the subjects of this study. Rather than public documents, an internal CIA document is used for the United States in this chapter. The reason for this is that there are no public statements by the United States administration on Burkina Faso in this time period. However, this internal document and still show how the United States thought of Burkina Faso and what kind of discourse it used to characterize this state. Through understanding how, and if, these concepts were present in the discourse produced by these states an understanding of the role of the UNSC in these discourses will become more clear. Through the examining of these sources this chapter aims to answer the following sub questions: “How did Burkina Faso and the France and the United States view each other” and “How prevalent were the concepts of Sankarism and Otherness outside of the UN Security Council.”

This chapter is structured as follows. First, Burkina Faso’s view and relation to France and the United States is illustrated. After this the view and relation to Burkina Faso from the perspective of France and the United States is discussed. After these analyses are complete, the prevalence of both Sankarism for Burkina Faso’s discourse and Otherness for France and The United States’ rhetoric will be considered.

2.2 Sankara on France

As has become quite clear throughout the introduction to this research and this topic the reason for choosing this time period is Thomas Sankara’s government’s anticolonial perspectives. When considering Burkina Faso’s relationship with France, its former colonizer,

the assumption is that these anticolonial views will also impact the relationship between these states. Sankara's anticolonialism stands directly in connection with his pan-African and internationalist ideas. Not only is the world still influenced by the grasp of colonialism, now neocolonialism, but the oppressed peoples of the world need to combine their strengths against this unfair world order. These are also the ideas Sankara shared in his most famous speech. In his 1984 speech to the UN General Assembly, Sankara demands the peoples of the third world, in particular Africa, to unite and mobilize against the monstrosity of imperialism.³⁸ While Sankara does not specifically mention France, he has also categorized France as an imperialist state in different public outings.³⁹ However, Sankara's criticism of France is not only limited to previous colonial relations and the world order. Sankara believes that France continues to act in a colonial and imperialist way. As stated in an interview with the French newspaper *L'Humanité*, Sankara says that the problem with France is that they continue to think of Africa in a similar way as in colonial times.⁴⁰ Sankara therefore also criticizes the contemporary actions of the French Socialist government. In a different interview, these criticism's take a more direct form as Sankara condemns the French government's relationship with South Africa and its decision to send troops to Chad.⁴¹ Even though, his disapproval of French decisions is contemporary, Sankara's criticism relates to the global struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism.

Although Sankara at times mounted verbal assaults aimed at the French government, he can also be quite supportive of France and its actions. As Sankara says himself in an interview with French media, his policies are not specifically meant to be anti-French.⁴² According to Sankara, combatting France's decisions that Burkina Faso considers unjust and supporting actions by France that are considered to be good actions is the best way to build a healthy relationship between the two nations.⁴³ Examples given by Sankara of actions made by France that Burkina Faso supports are its decision to withdraw from Lebanon and its decision to boycott the apartheid regime in Pretoria. In⁴⁴ addition to these political actions,

³⁸ Thomas Sankara, "Speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations," United Nations General Assembly, New York City, October 4, 1984.

³⁹ Thomas Sankara, "We vote for Le Pen too much in Ouagadougou," Interview by *Le Matin de Paris*. August 5, 1985.

⁴⁰ Thomas Sankara, "We Didn't Import our Revolution," Interview by André Brecourt. *L'Humanité*, January 23, 1984.

⁴¹ Sankara, interview *Le Matin*.

⁴² Sankara, interview *Le Matin*.

⁴³ Sankara, interview André Brecourt.

⁴⁴ Sankara, interview *Le Matin*.

Sankara is also not completely opposed to the French government in power. As a Leninist himself Sankara makes clear that he prefers the French Socialist Party to be in power over its adversaries on the right of the political spectrum. However, at times Sankara has also been disappointed with the actions of the French Socialists. Even though Sankara has been disappointed with them at times, overall he is more welcoming to their ideas.⁴⁵ Rather than just commenting on the political relations with France, Sankara also considers the cultural relationship between the states. While Sankara is quick to mention the colonial nature behind the usage of the French language in Africa, Sankara is not only critical of the spreading of the French language. At the first francophone convention in Africa, a message written by Sankara was spread in which he raised several positive points about the French language.⁴⁶ According to Sankara, the French language offers an opportunity for ideas to be shared and spread by likeminded individuals across the globe.

Burkina Faso and Thomas Sankara therefore share both positive and negative sentiments towards France. What is generally consistent about the mentality of the Burkinabe government towards the French government and French cultural elements is the colonial past. Even when talking positively about its relations to France, the colonial past is relevant. For example, when saying that Burkina Faso is not anti-French and welcomes actions by the French, the mentioned actions are only welcomed in relation to changing the colonial dynamics. A direct example of this is Sankara welcoming France's critique of the apartheid regime in South Africa and France's decision to stop its intervention in Lebanon. Additionally, while Sankara welcomes the possibilities the French languages offers for his internationalist goals, he also finds it necessary to comment on its colonial origins.

2.3 Sankara on the United States

Burkina Faso's relationship with the United States is entirely different from its relationship with France. Rather than having a direct relationship built upon the colonial past and continued interests, the relationship with the United States is based on both parties their position in global affairs. Not only does the United States not have a direct colonial relationship with Burkina Faso like France, but is also not a traditional European colonial power like for example the United Kingdom. However, it is important to consider that

⁴⁵ Sankara, interview Le Matin.

⁴⁶ Thomas Sankara, "French enables us to communicate with other peoples in struggle," First Francophone Summit, Paris, February 17, 1986

Burkina Faso's criticisms of the world order are not only linked to colonialism directly. According to Sankara the world order finds its origins in the colonial times, but his disapproval is still aimed towards his contemporaries, not the past.⁴⁷ Sankara's public denouncements of the United States are noticeably related to the United States' position on Israel. Sankara criticizes Israel for inflicting the same wounds onto others as the Jewish people themselves suffered during the holocaust.⁴⁸ In doing so, Sankara also refers to the United States its continued support and protection over Israel. While not strictly related to colonialism in its criticism, Sankara's statements on Israel and the United States are still consistent with his general rhetoric. In these declarations Sankara mentions the importance of the right to independence of states. Even when it is not directly linked to colonialism, Sankara's statements still emphasize the right to self-determination of states.

Even though Sankara's direct criticism of the United States is quite limited, the Burkinabe view of the United States becomes more clear when considering its position on capitalism. As Sankara was considered a Marxist and a Leninist it is no surprise he had problems with capitalism. In his speech to the general assembly Sankara clearly lays out some of his problems with capitalism. Sankara claims that it was the blood of his people that enabled the growth of capitalism which then led to the formation of the world order as it was known during his time.⁴⁹ While in the previous paragraph it was discussed how Sankara's criticism of the United States focused on contemporary problems, not specifically the past. Yet his analysis of capitalism shows that Sankara still draws the connections between the past forms of capitalism and how that shaped the world thereafter. Sankara also discusses how capitalism continues to influence the order of the world in his time. In a speech at the African Unity Organization Conference in 1987 Sankara made the case against debt. In this speech Sankara made the case for African nations to stop repaying their loans. According to him the debt African nations have been put in is a reconquest of Africa and neocolonial in its nature. In his comments on debt Sankara directly mentions the World Bank, a United States based organization.⁵⁰ Therefore, Sankara denounces capitalism both in the way it has led to the formation of the world order as well as how it continues to oppress the African peoples. As

⁴⁷ Sankara, "Speech General Assembly."

⁴⁸ Sankara, "Speech General Assembly."

⁴⁹ Sankara, "Speech General Assembly."

⁵⁰ Thomas Sankara, "A United Front Against Debt," Summit of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, July 29, 1987.

the main proponent of capitalism in the 20th century these criticisms can also be linked to Burkina Faso's view of the United States.

2.4 Mitterrand on Burkina Faso

Much has been said about Sankara and his discourse, specifically about his daring approach to foreign policy and public denunciations of Western states and courses of action. As discussed in this thesis, Sankara criticized France and its decisions stating that France continues to think of Burkina Faso in a colonial manner.⁵¹ These criticisms are not directed at a silent opposition, the French government had to reply to these claims. French president Mitterrand did so in his official state visit to Burkina Faso in 1986. In his official visit Mitterrand addressed Sankara, the criticisms he has faced and the Burkinabe people. In his response and speech Mitterrand stresses his agreements with Sankara and Burkina Faso. According to Mitterrand he and his government do not seek to meddle in Burkina Faso's domestic policy affairs. Instead France only seeks to support Burkina Faso.⁵² In addition to not influencing Burkina Faso's domestic affairs, Mitterrand also states that he supports the right to self-determination and gives numerous examples.⁵³ This is important as this is one of the major criticisms France faced regarding their international affairs. Mitterrand attempts to contextualize France's actions on the international stage by referring to its role in the international community and its strive towards similar ideals as that of Sankara. When considering the issue of Chad for example, a nation in which France had a military presence at this point in time, Mitterrand states that France's troops will leave as soon as the Chadian people can express their right to self-determination. On top of supporting efforts towards self-determination Mitterrand also shows the overlap between his ideals and that of Sankara regarding questions on capitalism and institutions. When discussing the state of Africa in an interview Mitterrand adds criticism on the World Bank, an institution also criticized by Sankara, and its lack of financial support regarding energy.⁵⁴

What makes Burkina Faso's relationship with France different than with other nations

⁵¹ Sankara, interview André Brecourt.

⁵² Francois Mitterrand, "On the right to self-determination of peoples and development aid in Africa," Dinner hosted by the president of Burkina Faso Thomas Sankara, Ouagadougou, November 17, 1986.

⁵³ Mitterrand, "the right to self-determination."

⁵⁴ Francois Mitterrand, "on Franco-African relations," Interview by Radio France D'Outre Mer, November 12, 1986.

is the colonial context between the two states. This is something that is obvious from the dealings between the two states, as well as from Burkinabe critique of France. However, this is not a one sided affair, meaning that callbacks to the colonial past are also part of France's view of Burkina Faso. In fact, as Brysk et al. discusses the colonial heritage between the past colonizer and colonized creates a unique family like relationship that influences the relationship throughout history.⁵⁵ This position is different from one that emphasizes neocolonialism. Regarding Mitterand's references to colonialism are a continuation of the trend in which he emphasizes the right to self-determination. As Mitterand had been involved in politics and foreign policy for a long time by 1986, Mitterand was able to callback to colonial times in which he states to have already believed in African nations their right to self-determination. Mitterand also goes as far as to denounce what he describes as the "colonial pact." This idea of the colonial pact can be compared to neocolonialism as was formulated by Nkrumah. Here Mitterand criticizes the decisions in which Africa is merely utilized as a way to gain raw resources which are then processed in different parts of the world.⁵⁶ Even Mitterand's references to the colonial past are therefore consistent with his other statements and support towards self-determination.

2.5 the United States on Burkina Faso

France and Burkina Faso share a specific connection through the colonial past. This influences the relationship between these states in a way that the relation between Burkina Faso and the United States cannot replicate. Yet this does not mean that Burkina Faso as a state is not of relevance to the United States and worthy of its attention. It does mean, however, that the United States does not have many, if any, public statements on Burkina Faso. Although Burkina Faso might not be relevant enough for the United States to discuss Burkina Faso in public matters, with regards to internal policy decisions Burkina Faso was worthy of attention. This is exemplified by the existence of a CIA document which discusses the state of Burkinabe affairs and the possible threats to Sankara's position in power. The CIA played an important role in the formulation and implementation of United States foreign policy, therefore the CIA's research on Burkina Faso was an incremental part of the United

⁵⁵ Brysk, "After Empire," 269.

⁵⁶ Mitterand, "the right to self-determination."

States' its vision on Burkina Faso and Africa in general.⁵⁷

Although Burkina Faso and its situation is the focus of the CIA's research, this is put in an international context. This is especially clear when considering the way the document is set up. Even though much of the document considers the way Burkina Faso is set up and the challenges it faces, the last pages of the document consider the interests other nations have in Burkina Faso. The nations United States discusses here are Libya, the Soviet Union, Algeria, Cuba and France.⁵⁸ The fact that the concluding statements of this document refers to states other than Burkina Faso itself shows that the importance for Burkina Faso for the United States lay in its international position. This becomes especially clear when considering one of the headers of the document "Opportunities for Libyan and Communist gains."⁵⁹ The United States also discusses Sankara's public criticisms of the United States and the West in the document. The document states: "While Sankara's proclivity is to attack the West verbally, he has nevertheless proved willing at times to compromise his views to achieve practical results."⁶⁰ In stating this, the document shows that the United States is not primarily worried about Burkina Faso's public criticism, as it is willing to compromise if necessary. Instead the focus on Burkina Faso remains the international community and possible rivals.

In addition to discussing the relevance of Burkina Faso, and its relationship with, other states, the document also speaks on the implications this has for the United States itself. One of the closing statements of the document illustrate how the United States considers Burkina Faso and its international position: "Regardless of who rules Burkina Faso, the country's desperate need for financial assistance will provide a source of leverage for France and the West."⁶¹ In this sentence the document shows several elements of the United States interpretations of Burkina Faso. First, it shows that the United States considers France to be the main Western actor in Burkina Faso. Second, it shows that the United States is weary of Burkina Faso possibly falling to a rival state. Lastly, the United States considers Burkina Faso a state it can possibly keep on its side thanks to the possibility of "leveraging" its economic situation for its own gain.

⁵⁷ Loch Johnson, "Covert Action and Accountability: "Decision-Making for America's Secret Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989): 82-83.

⁵⁸ United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Burkina: Pressures on Sankara," August, 1986, 9-11.

⁵⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Pressures on Sankara, 8.

⁶⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Pressures on Sankara, 2.

⁶¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "Pressures on Sankara, 13.

2.6 Sankarism and Otherness outside of the UNSC

As Sankara is the one doing the speaking for Burkina Faso in the sources analyzed in this chapter, it is to be expected that there is a close relationship between the concept of Sankarism as it has been identified in the literature and the trends that can be found in Sankara's public discourse. The most important element of Sankarism is its focus on the right to self-determination, both of states as well as of individuals. It can be even said that Sankarism as a concept and a philosophy embodies this idea.⁶² Regarding Sankara's public outings discussed in this thesis, the right to self-determination is a common occurrence. In fact, both in Sankara's criticism as well as in Sankara's public compliments towards France self-determination is the driving force. When France decided to send troops to Chad, Sankara criticized France's decision. When France decided to recall its troops from their mission in Lebanon, Sankara applauded the French their decision. In addition to Sankara's comments on France, Sankara's criticism of the United States and its relation to Israel also feature an emphasis on the right to independence – and therefore self-determination – of states.

On top of emphasizing the right to self-determination, it can also be said that Sankarism is an essentially anti-imperialist and anticolonial philosophy.⁶³ This can be noticed through Sankara's direct criticisms of colonial and imperial behavior. Sankara refers to France's decision making as still thinking of Burkina Faso in a colonial way.⁶⁴ Regarding the state capitalism in the world Sankara states that the African nations have been put into a position that is essentially neocolonial in nature.⁶⁵ Therefore anti-imperial and anticolonial rhetoric is also a reoccurring feature of Sankara's public discourse.

While the traces of Sankarism are obvious in Burkina Faso's public statements, the question remains whether Otherness as a concept is prevalent in the discourse of France and the United States. Regarding the concept of Otherness it is important to discover sites as which the dominant group, in this case France and the United States, construct the Other as different from themselves with, as Etienne Balibar puts it, "another completely different set of human values."⁶⁶ Throughout Mitterand's public outings regarding Burkina Faso, Otherness is not a

⁶² Yimovie, "Sankara's Philosophy."

⁶³ Yonathan Taye, "A Revolutionary Counterrevolution: Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso, and African Radicalism in Context, 1983-1987," *Global Africana Review* 8 (2024): 27.

⁶⁴ Sankara, interview André Brecourt."

⁶⁵ Sankara, "Against Debt."

⁶⁶ Balibar, "Otherness," 29.

recurring theme. In fact, Mitterand goes out of his way to draw the comparisons between himself when he was young and Sankara.⁶⁷ In addition to drawing comparisons between himself and Sankara, Mitterand also emphasizes the shared human values, rather than the difference in values. Mitterand speaks on the issue of self-determination and how much it meant to him at the start of his career. As a result, the sources used in this thesis do not point to a prevalence of Otherness in the discourse utilized by France when speaking on Burkina Faso.

While France's public outings may not include references to Otherness when discussing Burkina Faso, the United States private documents do. The CIA document refers to Sankara in a variety of ways that could be considered to be applicable to the notion of Otherness. Sankara is described in a variety of different ways by the CIA. This includes references to Sankara as "irrational," "impulsive and unpredictable," and "erratic." On top of these references to Sankara himself the document states that the document supporting Sankara's coupe in 1984 was "a vague political document" and includes "little substance."⁶⁸ In labelling the Burkinabe leader as irrational, as opposed to the Western positive image of rationality, the United States showcases Otherness in its interpretation of the Burkinabe president.⁶⁹

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the public, and private in the case of the United States, views of the Burkina Faso and France and the United States of each other. Regarding Burkina Faso's views on France, Thomas Sankara displayed both negative and positive interpretations of France. Even though Sankara criticized France when it came to actions that, according to Sankara, limited other states their right to self-determination, such as France decision to send troops to Chad, Sankara also carried positive sentiments towards France. When France pulled their troops from Lebanon for example, Sankara applauded the French decision.

Regarding its views of the United States Sankara proved more critical. While Sankara did not speak directly on the United States often, when Sankara did mention the United States it came in a critical context. Sankara criticized the United States' position on Israel and how

⁶⁷ Mitterand, "the right to self-determination."

⁶⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Pressures on Sankara," 1-2.

⁶⁹ Caldas-Coulthard, "Cross-Cultural Representation," 278.

the United States is limiting the right to independence of an entire people. However, Sankara criticized institutions and philosophies that are inherently related to the United States. By denouncing the capitalist world system and the neocolonial nature of institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, Sankara is indirectly criticizing the United States and its influence on the world.

Considering France's interpretation of Burkina Faso, Francois Mitterand acknowledges the criticism Sankara has delivered toward his nation. While Mitterand realizes the Burkinabe leader is critical of his action, Mitterand does not return critical remarks. Rather than being confrontational, Mitterand sought to contextualize his nations' actions and illustrate the mutual goals Burkina Faso and France have. According to Mitterand France and Burkina Faso share a strive towards the right to self-determination. Mitterand also does not shy away from the colonial past and uses it to illustrate how he as a young man fought against the colonial ideals. In fact, Mitterand shares much of the criticism Sankara brought forward. By criticizing the World Bank and the, what Mitterand refers to as, "colonial pact," Mitterand further shows the shared values between France and Burkina Faso.

The United States in an internal CIA document displayed their interpretation of Burkina Faso as a state and Thomas Sankara as a leader. The document analyzed shows how the United States is not primarily concerned with Burkina Faso itself, but rather Burkina Faso in an international context. Even though, the United States acknowledges the verbal attacks of Sankara, the document mentions how Sankara is open to compromises and how the United States considers Burkina Faso's poor economic situation to be an opportunity for leverage. This leverage is important in the context of the United States' interpretation of Burkina Faso as this leverage can be utilized to make sure Burkina Faso does not fall in the arms of rivals such as Libya and the Soviet Union.

The two concepts that are essential to the analysis in this thesis are Sankarism and Otherness. Regarding Sankarism, Sankara shows several elements of the concept in his public statements. As Sankara in both his criticism as well as his plaudits of France emphasizes the right to self-determination as the main contributor to his views, an element of Sankarism is present in Sankara's public statements. Another element of Sankarism present in Sankara's public statements is anti-imperialism and anticolonialism, considering Sankara's criticism of the neocolonial nature of the situation African nations have been put in.

The concept of Otherness, however, is not as obviously present in the sources analyzed in this chapter. As Mitterand emphasizes the shared values between Burkina Faso and France

it can be said there are no traces of Otherness in Mitterand's statements regarding Burkina Faso. On the other hand, the way the United States characterizes Thomas Sankara and his government does show traces of Otherness. This can be seen as Thomas Sankara is characterized as irrational and erratic, as opposed to the rational nature of the United States.

Chapter 3 – Burkina Faso at the UNSC

3.1 Introduction

After the previous chapter took a deep dive into the public and private discourses of Burkina Faso, France and the United States, this chapter will focus specifically on Burkina Faso. In addition, this chapter will rely on UNSC documents specifically for its analysis. Even though the focus of this chapter is on Burkina Faso specifically, the way Burkina Faso speaks on the United States and France will still be taken into account. As the purpose of the previous chapter was to increase the depth of the understanding of the UNSC and the discourse that was used within it, the findings of this chapter need to be compared to that of the previous chapter. This chapter will aim to answer the following questions: “What was Burkina Faso’s behavior at the United Nations Security Council,” “How prevalent was Sankarism in Burkina Faso’s discourse at the United Nations Security Council” and “How and why did Sankarism at the United Nations Security Council differ from Sankarism outside of the United Nations Security Council?”

These questions will be answered through the following structure. First the conduct of Burkina Faso at the UNSC will be examined. Here extra attention will be given to the issues that were of importance to the Burkinabe delegation and the ways in which it influenced the discourse at the UNSC. After analyzing this, the way in which Sankarism was used by the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC will be discussed. Finally, the differences between Burkina Faso’s public discourse and that at the UNSC will be examined.

3.2 The main issues

When considering Burkina Faso’s membership to the UNSC it becomes clear that several issues are at the heart of its participation. A notable one of the issues Burkina Faso continuously addresses is the issue of Israel and Palestine. While the period in question did not feature any major conflicts surrounding the issue of Israel and Palestine, the last of which was the 1982 Lebanon war, the situation regarding Israel and Palestine did see several developments during Burkina Faso’s membership to the UNSC. Notably, Israel attacked a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) headquarters in Tunisia on the first of October 1985.

Developments like this not only prompted debates in the UNSC, but also illustrates the continued relevance of the Israel-Palestine conflict during Burkina Faso's membership to the UNSC. Burkina Faso's contributions to the discussions surrounding this issue include both voicing support for Palestine and its place in the international community as well as criticism of Israel. Regarding its support for Palestine Burkina Faso's representative at the UNSC stated the following message during debates at the UNSC.

“The Establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East requires, first of all, the solution of the Palestinian problem. To that end, Israel should be realistic and courageous and decide to recognize the identity of the Palestinian people.”⁷⁰

In addition, Burkina Faso protested the exclusion of the PLO at the celebration for the 40th anniversary of the UN its establishment.⁷¹ On top of supporting the Palestinian people in its claim to self-determination Burkina Faso also used its platform to criticize the Israeli state and its actions. Referencing the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunisia, the Burkinabe representative stated: “Israel has shown once more that it does not deserve to be among us.”⁷² Therefore not only supporting the cause of self-determination for the Palestinian people, but also critiquing the Israeli state in the context of its UN obligations.

Furthermore, the issue of the apartheid regime in South Africa was considered an important issue for the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC. While apartheid had been an issue in South Africa for many years, the release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison in 1990 meant that the dismantling of the apartheid regime in South Africa had already commenced during Burkina Faso's membership to the UNSC. Like its approach to the Israel-Palestine situation, Burkina Faso's statements regarding the apartheid regime can also be separated into two categories. Burkina Faso's delegation at the UNSC appealed both for an end to the apartheid regime in South Africa itself, as well as criticizing its actions in neighboring countries. In reference to the domestic affairs of the South African state the Burkinabe delegation delivered the following comments.

⁷⁰ UNSC, “2605th meeting,” New York, September 13, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2605, 8.

⁷¹ UNSC, “Letter dated 27 April 1984 from the Permanent Representative of Upper Volta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General,” New York, April 27, 1984. UN doc: A/39/50.

⁷² UNSC, “2613th meeting,” New York, October 3, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2613, 4-5.

“Now, by means of the declaration of the state of emergency, the racist regime of Pretoria has entered a new phase in carrying out its programme designed to perpetuate its domination over the peoples which it has constantly been oppressing solely because of the colour of their skin.”⁷³

In doing so the Burkinabe delegation focused on the racist elements of the South African regime. Additionally, the Burkinabe delegation denounced the passive response of the international community to this violence. Therefore not only addressing the problem within South Africa, but also the lackluster attitude of the international community. Moreover, its criticism of the apartheid regime focus largely on its dealings with surrounding countries. Burkina Faso’s delegation denounced South Africa’s violation of Angola and Botswana’s territorial integrity. In doing so Burkina Faso did not only again refer to South Africa as a racist state, but also utilized the Charter of the UN and South Africa’s obligation to adhere to the Charter in its argumentation, just as Burkina Faso did regarding Israel.⁷⁴

Burkina Faso’s focus within the UNSC not only lay on the international situations it raised during its membership, but also featured criticisms of the UNSC itself and the international community as a whole. Rather than the regular Burkinabe delegation to the UNSC, Burkina Faso’s Minister for Foreign Affairs Basile Guissou got to speak during the 2608th meeting of the UNSC. During this meeting Guissou raised several issues regarding the UN, the UNSC and the international community. Concerning the UNSC itself Guissou refers to the credibility of the UNSC, which at times has been called into question according to him. To improve the effectiveness of the UNSC Guissou comes with several proposals. According to Guissou the membership of the UNSC needs to be enlarged to fit the enlargement of the UN as a whole. More importantly, Guissou criticizes the veto right of permanent members of the UNSC. Guissou states that the veto right of permanent members of the UNSC contributes to the “perpetuation of the domination of the few over the majority.”⁷⁵ On top of the criticisms of the UNSC, Guissou also raises issues about the UN as a whole. Specifically, Guissou mentions the UN Charter. However, Guissou’s criticism of the UN is not geared toward the UN Charter itself. Instead, Guissou acknowledges the failures of the UN and how these failures illustrate the survival of feelings of racial superiority, something that everyone implicitly acknowledges according to Guissou. Rather than criticizing the Charter, Guissou

⁷³ UNSC, “2600th meeting,” New York, July 25, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2600, 16.

⁷⁴ UNSC, “2600th meeting,” 17.

⁷⁵ UNSC, “2608th meeting,” New York, September 26, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2608, 23-25.

stresses the need for the Charter to be a flexible document, that should be transformed just as nations themselves transform. Therefore, Guissou criticizes the UNSC, the UN and the international community not for the mistakes they have made, but for their lack of reform in the face of mistakes.⁷⁶

However, Burkina Faso's participation in the UNSC cannot be characterized as only being of a critical nature, it also allowed for Burkina Faso to engage in international cooperation and generally positive interactions. Cooperation and positive interactions at the UNSC come in many different forms. A recurring example of positive interactions is interactions with the president of the UNSC. Within the UNSC the presidency is a position which is taken up by one of the representatives to the UNSC each month. When John Thomson, the representative to the UNSC from the United Kingdom, took this role for a month the Burkinabe delegation congratulated him on his assumption to the position of president of the UNSC and complimented him on his abilities as a diplomat and negotiator.⁷⁷ In addition to these congratulations, which seem to be part of diplomatic formalities, Burkina Faso cooperated with several states on draft resolutions.⁷⁸ On the issue of Israel and Palestine Burkina Faso worked together with the representatives of Egypt, India, Madagascar, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago to draft a resolution that calls for Israel to seize its repressive measures in Gaza and the West Bank.⁷⁹ This document was drafted together with multiple other nations from the Global South. However, Burkina Faso did not limit its cooperation to states from the Global South. On the issue of the apartheid regime in South Africa the Burkinabe delegation worked together with its French counterparts to criticize the South African regime. Not only did both states heavily criticize the South African regime, but the delegations also collaborated on the formal proceedings of the UNSC, in order to pass a draft resolution on the case of South Africa.⁸⁰ Hereby showing that the Burkinabe participation at the UNSC featured not only criticisms, but also genuine diplomatic collaboration with states from both the Global South and the Global North.

3.3 Burkina Faso and the proceedings of the UNSC

⁷⁶ UNSC, "2608th meeting," 23-25.

⁷⁷ UNSC, "2605th meeting," 8.

⁷⁸ UNSC, "2600th meeting," 20-21.

⁷⁹ UNSC, "Draft Resolution S/17459," UN doc: S/17459.

⁸⁰ UNSC, 2602nd meeting," New York, July 26, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2602, 9-10.

In order to analyze Burkina Faso's participation at the UNSC, it is important to not just consider what was said or done, but also the context and the methods that Burkina Faso had to impact the UNSC. Burkina Faso had several methods to take part in the discourse at the UNSC. The first and most reoccurring way in which the Burkinabe delegation took part in the discussions at the UNSC were the regular meetings of the UNSC. The regular meetings of the UNSC serve as a forum for debates on matters which the members wish to discuss. Although these meetings do not always amount to a decision or a resolution, they do take place to further a cause. In the context of the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC, the issues which were of importance of Burkina Faso have already been discussed before in this thesis. However, regarding Burkina Faso's participation in this meetings it is important to analyze the manner in which Burkina Faso acted during its membership to the UNSC. In discussions surrounding the apartheid regime in South Africa, the Burkinabe delegation made continuous references to the Second World War and the Nazi regime.⁸¹ In doing so the Burkinabe delegation not only compared the apartheid regime to the Nazi regime, but also compared the lack of response of the international community before the start of the Second World War to the lack of response to the apartheid question in South Africa. Specifically comparing these situations and appealing to the memory of the Second World War indicates that Burkina Faso recognized the need to convince the permanent members of the council, states who played a large role in the Second World War, of its own convictions.

In addition to the regular meetings and debates taking place at the UNSC, Burkina Faso was able to take part in the discourse in several other ways. In fact, rather than add to the ongoing discourse through the debates at the meetings, Burkina Faso was able to dictate the discourse through letters directed at the UNSC and the UN General Assembly. These letters were sent to address very specific situations and problems, while the meetings at the UNSC discussed issues at large. In response to the United States air raids on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986, Burkina Faso sent a letter to the UNSC and the UN Secretary-General strongly condemning the United States attack.⁸² The important thing to note about this letter is not just its contents, but also that it was sent to the UNSC after Burkina Faso was no longer part of the UNSC. Hereby showing that Burkina Faso sought to continue influencing UNSC matters after its participation had concluded. On top of the letter sent regarding the United States raid on Libya, Burkina Faso also sent several to the UN General Assembly and UNSC regarding the

⁸¹ UNSC, "2605th meeting," 8.

⁸² Antonin Ouedraogo, "Letter addressed to the Secretary General," April 18, 1986. UN doc: S/18024.

treatment of Palestine. These letters were again referring to very specific situations. For example, one letter called for the participation of PLO representatives at the international peace conference on the Middle East.⁸³ An additional letter sent by Burkina Faso was specifically a message sent by President Sankara, in which he stated that Burkina Faso would not attend festivities regarding the 40th anniversary of the UN, if PLO representatives were not allowed to attend.⁸⁴ These letters indicate several things about Burkinabe conduct at the UN and the UNSC. It shows that Burkina Faso attempted to influence UNSC discourse aside from its temporary membership, that Burkina Faso utilized these letters to address very specific matters and that Burkina Faso used these letters as a way to get others to speak toward issues rather than the usual delegates to the UN and UNSC.

While letters proved a way to influence discourse at the UN and the UNSC, drafting resolutions were among the most powerful tools Burkina Faso had during its participation at the UNSC. Submitting resolutions influenced the UNSC in several ways, both by driving the discourse as well as by forcing members to take positions on the matter. Regarding the resolutions drafted by Burkina Faso discussed in this thesis, these resolutions were not drafted by Burkina Faso alone. Like the draft resolution discussed earlier in this thesis, another draft resolution proposed by Burkina Faso was also written in collaboration with Egypt, India, Madagascar, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago.⁸⁵ What is notable about this partnership is not only that all of these states are from the Global South, but also that all of these states are members of the Non-Alignment Movement. What is important about the draft resolutions however is not only that they lead to debates, but also whether they are able to enact real change. This can only be done if the members of the UNSC agree with the drafted resolution and if permanent members of the UNSC do not vote against the drafted resolution. In the case of one of the drafted resolutions on South Africa the resolution was not accepted as two permanent members, the United Kingdom and the United States, voted against the proposed resolution. However, an amended version of the resolution was accepted, drafted by France and Denmark. This not only shows the difficulties Burkina Faso faced at the UNSC, but also how it forced states to engage in discussion surrounding certain issues.⁸⁶

Burkina Faso's influence in the UNSC is also not limited by its own statements in the

⁸³ UNSC, "Letter dated 22 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General," New York, October 22, 1985. UN doc: A/40/787.

⁸⁴ UNSC, "Letter dated 27 April 1984."

⁸⁵ UNSC, "Draft Resolution S/17013," New York, March 8, 1985. UN doc: S/17013.

⁸⁶ UNSC, "2602nd meeting," 9-10.

UNSC. A last method for Burkina Faso to influence the discourse in the UNSC is by inviting speakers from outside the UNSC to give their insights into specific matters. A notable case of this is the invitation of Peter Mueshahange by Burkina Faso.⁸⁷ This case is notable as it was Burkina Faso specifically that invited and facilitated his appearance. While in other cases Burkina Faso facilitated for example the appearance of members of the African National Congress from South Africa, these speakers were invited in collaboration with states like Madagascar and Egypt⁸⁸. While these invited speakers did not raise new issues, they continued the criticism of the apartheid regime in South Africa voiced by many UNSC members, they offer a different voice from the usual voices heard at these meetings. In addition to influencing the discourse at UNSC meetings, the invitation of non-UNSC speakers to the UNSC influenced the world outside of the UNSC as well, by giving a voice to those who otherwise would not have been able to reach this stage. Therefore it can be said that the invitation of different speakers to the UNSC by Burkina Faso was both a way for it to influence the discourse within the UNSC, as well as a way to give a voice to those outside of the UNSC.

3.4 Sankarism at the UNSC

A cornerstone of Sankarism is the promotion of self-determination. Both in the personal sense and on a national level, a core to Sankara's beliefs was the right for one to choose one's own direction in life. As formulated by Yimovie: "Sankarism is a philosophy grounded by the imperative of self-sufficiency and sustainable development that emanates from within and not from without."⁸⁹ Allowing nations to choose their own path and develop by themselves is what Sankarism promotes. In Burkina Faso's participation at the UNSC this ideal of promoting self-determination can be seen in a variety of different cases. As was discussed earlier, Burkina Faso's participation at the UNSC can be characterized as having two main discourses which it took part in and attempted to advance. Those are the conflict regarding Israel and Palestine and the conflict regarding the apartheid regime in South Africa. Both of these situations and the arguments made by Burkina Faso in the context of these situations include the promotion of self-determination. In the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict the Burkinabe delegation stated the following: "The only solution to the suffering of the

⁸⁷ UNSC, "2617th meeting," New York, October 7, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2617, 2.

⁸⁸ UNSC, "2592nd meeting," New York, June 14, 1985. UN doc: S/PV. 2592, 2.

⁸⁹ Yimovie, "Sankara's Philosophy."

Palestinian population in those territories is an end to the occupation.”⁹⁰ Thereby the Burkinabe delegation reinforced its believe in the Palestinian people their right to self-determination. In the case of South Africa part of its importance to the Burkinabe delegation is formulated as follows.

“We call upon them to ensure that the countries neighbouring South Africa will at long last be able to live free and in peace within secure boundaries and will also be able to devote their resources to their economic and social development.”⁹¹

Hereby the Burkinabe delegation is both denouncing the way in which the South African regime is limiting other nations their right to self-determination while also speaking out in true sankarist terms on the need for these nations to develop on their own in a sustainable way. However, Burkinabe criticisms of South Africa are not only in the context of the way it deals with its neighbors. The Burkinabe delegation also criticized the domestic situation within South Africa. As stated, a Sankarist philosophy on self-determination does not limit itself to nations, but includes the individual’s right to self-determination. In its criticism of the South African state this shines through. In reference to this the Burkinabe delegation stated the following.

“Pretoria has been doing violence to one of the most sacred rights of the South African black majority – the right to live in freedom and happiness in one’s own land, the land of one’s ancestors.”⁹²

Through this statement Burkina Faso not only showed an alignment with Sankarism in its proceedings at the UNSC, but also that the right to self-determination does not mean that a state can do as it wishes without consequences from the international community.

In addition to displaying Sankarism through the lens of self-determination. Burkinabe criticisms of South Africa include another element of Sankarism, anti-imperialism. Anti-imperialism here is not taken as subtle, there is no readying between the lines. Anti-imperialism is taken as literal critiques and mentions of imperialist and colonial actions. There are several cases in which this is displayed during the Burkinabe participation at the UNSC.

⁹⁰ UNSC, “2605th meeting,” 8.

⁹¹ UNSC, “2597th meeting,” New York, June 20, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2597, 5.

⁹² UNSC, “2571st meeting,” New York, March 8, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2571, 11.

After the United States performed an aerial raid of Tripoli and Benghazi Burkina Faso described the United States and its actions as imperialist whilst strongly condemning their actions.⁹³ In addition Peter Mueshihange, who spoke after being invited by Burkina Faso, called those who fought in the name of the apartheid regime imperialists.⁹⁴ There are also multiple occasions in which the Burkinabe delegation referred to the actions of the South African apartheid regime as colonial, for example during the 2600th meeting of the UNSC.⁹⁵ However, these mentions of imperialism and colonialism are fairly limited, especially when compared to other states at the UNSC. During the 2602nd meeting of the UNSC, in which one of Burkina Faso's drafted resolutions was discussed, the Syrian delegation warned their colleagues of "world imperialism." In the same meeting the representative of the German Democratic Republic called the United States an "imperialist ally" of the apartheid regime in South Africa.⁹⁶ Therefore it can be stated that, while the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC did feature anti-imperialist dialogue in its discussions, anti-imperialism did not feature as prominent of a role as its promotion of the right to self-determination. In fact, Burkinabe anti-imperialist dialogue was less prominent than that of some other members of the UNSC.

3.5 Sankara and Burkina Faso at the UNSC - Differences

There are notable differences between Sankara's public outings and Burkina Faso's action at the UNSC that need to be discussed. When considering Burkina Faso's relationship with France, there are major differences in Sankara's public discussions and the Burkinabe statements at the UNSC. Publicly, Sankara sought to criticize France on a variety of issues. Sankara denounced the sending of troops to Chad by France, publicly called them an imperialist state and lamented them for continuing to think of Africa in a colonial manner.⁹⁷ The UNSC not only offers a forum to engage in a debate with the international community, but especially to discuss matters of international security. As a result, the UNSC would offer a perfect platform to address the situation in Chad and France's involvement by the Burkinabe delegation. However, the issue was not raised by Burkina Faso a single time in the documents analyzed in this thesis, even though the situation in Chad was ongoing during Burkina Faso's

⁹³ Ouedraogo, "Letter to the Secretary-General."

⁹⁴ UNSC, "2617th meeting," 2"

⁹⁵ UNSC, "2600th meeting," 16-17.

⁹⁶ UNSC, "2602nd meeting," 5.

⁹⁷ Sankara, interview André Brecout.

participation at the UNSC. However, Sankara showed the ability to not only be critical, but also commended France at various occasions. The Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC follows a trajectory which emphasizes cooperation, rather than focusing on critique. It cooperated with France on a variety of UNSC matters relating to the situation in South Africa in which the Burkinabe delegation applauded France for its initiatives.⁹⁸ It is important to consider the power dimension that is inherent to the UNSC and the relationship between Burkina Faso and France. As France has a permanent seat at the UNSC it holds power over Burkina Faso, as it can veto any resolution Burkina Faso might wish to pass.⁹⁹ While this may influence Burkinabe conduct at the UNSC, there is also an unequal power relation between Burkina Faso and France outside of the UNSC. As Burkina Faso was reliant on France for the majority of its development aid, Burkina Faso had as much reasons to keep France as a close partner publicly as they had at the UNSC. Therefore, the power relation between France and Burkina Faso at the UNSC cannot be the explanatory factor in Burkina Faso's different conduct at the UNSC.

While Burkina Faso's criticisms of France did not feature prominently during its participation at the UNSC, criticisms of the United States were more common. Criticism against the United States was related to a variety of issues. Its relation to Israel and South Africa were grounds for criticism, which were also the two most important issues to Burkina Faso at the UNSC, but the United States was also criticized for its embargo of Nicaragua and its air raid on Libya.¹⁰⁰ There is significant overlap here between Sankara's public statements, in which he denounces Israel and the United States, and Burkina Faso's conduct at the UNSC. In his public outings, however, Sankara's critique of relevance to the United States also includes criticism on capitalism itself. This is not a critique that is found in Burkina Faso's statements at the UNSC.

A notable omission in Burkina Faso's discussions at the UNSC when compared to Sankara's public discourse is the criticism on neocolonialism. Both at the UN General Assembly as well as at the Organization of African Unity Sankara choose to directly criticize neocolonialism as well as the nature of debt as an instrument of neocolonialism. His criticisms of the World Bank and IMF as institutions that are incumbent to the situation the world had

⁹⁸ UNSC, "2602nd meeting," 11.

⁹⁹ Jess Gifkins, "Beyond the Veto: Roles in UN Security Council Decision-Making," *Global Governance* 27 (2021) 2-3.

¹⁰⁰ UNSC, "2579th meeting," New York, May 10, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2579, 2.

found itself in and the challenges that Africa faced show that Sankara not only sought to criticize a vague opponent, but knew and understood the problems at hand.¹⁰¹ Since Burkina Faso recognized and understood such a large problem which not only plagued Burkina Faso itself, but also many of its African neighboring states, it comes as a surprise to not see the same criticism leveled at an important international forum like the UNSC. While the Burkinabe minister for Foreign Affairs Guissou mentions the poor economic situation Burkina Faso found itself in during the 2608th meeting at the UNSC, there is not mention of the neocolonial nature of debt as it was described by Sankara himself at the Organization of African Unity, which was a contributor to the continuation of Burkina Faso's lack of development.¹⁰²

Another difference between Sankara's public discourse and Burkina Faso's discourse at the UNSC is simply the tone with which Burkina Faso's messages are spread. Sankara ends his famous speech at the UN General Assembly with the following message: "Fatherland or death: we shall triumph."¹⁰³ This message is passionate and displays Sankara's commitment to the issues at hand. This message can be contrasted to the way the Burkinabe delegation ended its participation at the UNSC. Here the following message was spread.

"I should like to extend to the entire world the message of peace of the Security Council, that peace that we all want to bring about for a better world, a world for which we have all worked tirelessly."¹⁰⁴

There are glaring differences between these two ending statements. While Sankara emphasizes his commitment to his cause through the mentioning of violence, he will either die or be victorious, the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC focuses on a message of peace. In addition, while Sankara states his message in the context of a battle, by mentioning the need for a triumph, the Burkinabe message at the UNSC stresses the cooperation that is at the center of the UNSC. There are several explanations for this difference. Firstly, there is the matter of Sankara's personal identity. As the United States notes in an internal document, Sankara is an eccentric man that can sweep up a crowd.¹⁰⁵ Sankara's message to the UN General Assembly and UNSC reveals his passionate nature. He ends his message on the

¹⁰¹ Sankara, "Against Debt."

¹⁰² UNSC, "2608th meeting," 23-25.

¹⁰³ Sankara, "Speech General Assembly."

¹⁰⁴ UNSC, "2639th meeting," New York, December 30, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2639, 56.

¹⁰⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "Pressures on Sankara," 2.

exclusion of PLO representatives at the UN by stating “Fatherland or death, we shall conquer.”¹⁰⁶ Even though this is not a speech which Sankara gives, but rather a message which is circulated as a document for discussion, Sankara utilizes the same rhetoric he did during his speech before the General Assembly. It is his personal traits that feature this strong brand of discourse.

In addition to Sankara’s personality, the nature of the UNSC as an institution influence the Burkinabe delegation’s conduct at the UNSC. As Hafriza Burhanudeen notes, the field of international diplomacy requires a different type of language to be used.¹⁰⁷ Rather than being of a confrontational nature, diplomatic language stresses the need for cooperation. An example of this is the way in which a speaker first congratulates the president on his position, before moving forward with his actual message. Take the Burkinabe delegation’s message to the United States representative to the UNSC, who presided over the 2613th meeting of the UNSC, as an example.

“My delegation wishes to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. You are a man of great and rich experience and a man who is open to dialogue. We are thus convinced that under your leadership our work will be crowned with success.”¹⁰⁸

Here the Burkinabe delegation compliments the United States delegation and stresses how together they will be able to successfully cooperate. Therefore, displaying the use of diplomatic language at the UNSC.

The usage of diplomatic language within the UNSC is an important contrast to Burkina Faso’s discourse outside of the UNSC. As stated by Burnahunadeen, the realm of international diplomacy requires a different type of language to be utilized. The reason diplomatic language needs to be used is because it is “the signature of a civilized nation.”¹⁰⁹ In order to be seen as a civilized nation, Burkina Faso needed to utilize diplomatic language at the UNSC. This is especially relevant in the context of the UNSC and the power dynamics inherent in its configuration. The permanent members of the UNSC, originally the victors of

¹⁰⁶ UNSC, “Letter dated April 27, 1984.”

¹⁰⁷ Hafriza Burhanudeen, “Diplomatic Language: An Insight from Speeches Used in International Diplomacy,” *Akademika* 67 (2006) 49-50.

¹⁰⁸ UNSC, “2613th meeting,” 4.

¹⁰⁹ Vilceanu Alina, “Diplomatic Language and International Relations,” *2008 Annals Constantin Brancusi University Targu Jiu* (2008) : 137.

the Second World War, have the ability to veto any resolution they disagree with. This does not only illustrate the legacy of the imperial interests rooted in the UN's formation, but also why Burkina Faso had to resort to diplomatic language within the UNSC. As Burkina Faso only had a limited time in which it was a member of the UNSC, it needed to use its time productively. However, in order to have permanent members agree with its resolutions, Burkina Faso needed to be taken serious at the council. Therefore, Burkina Faso resorted to the usage of diplomatic language, in order to appear as a civilized nation in the eyes of the permanent members of the UNSC.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter sought to analyze Burkina Faso's conduct at the UNSC and relate it to the concept of Sankarism. Burkina Faso's behavior at the UNSC can first be characterized as having two main situations of interest, those being the Israel-Palestine conflict and the apartheid regime in South Africa. While Burkina Faso delivered statements on a number of issues, such as the United States air raid on Libya and the United States embargo of Nicaragua, its emphasis on Israel-Palestine and South Africa were a reoccurring theme throughout the sources analyzed in this paper. In order to influence the discourse in the UNSC Burkina Faso utilized a variety of procedures and methods. On top of contributing to the regular meetings of the UNSC Burkina Faso influenced the discussions through inviting individuals from outside the UNSC to come speak, writing letters to the General Assembly and UNSC from the outside and drafting resolutions related to the issues within the UNSC. The drafting of resolutions was not a course of action Burkina Faso initiated alone, instead the Burkinabe delegation collaborated with other Non-Aligned states to draft resolutions.

In the previous chapter Sankara's public statements were analyzed to illustrate Sankarism as a concept and see how Sankara's public statements relate to this concept. This was then compared to Burkina Faso's conduct at the UN as characterized in this chapter. As was established in the introductory chapter of this thesis as well as in the previous chapter, an essential element of Sankarism is the emphasis on the right to self-determination. This was also something Sankara utilized in his public speeches and interviews. The right to self-determination was also prominently present in Burkina Faso's behavior at the UNSC. Examples of this are Burkina Faso's call for Israel to recognize the Palestinian people and

Burkina Faso defending the sovereignty of South Africa's neighboring states at the UNSC. However, the right to self-determination is not the only element of Sankarism, there is also an emphasis on anti-imperial and anticolonial discourse. While there were cases in which the Burkinabe delegation to the UNSC showed anti-imperialist rhetoric, it was much less prevalent than in Sankara's public statements. This was the case even though other nations did utilize anti-imperialist critique at the UNSC. Therefore, while Burkina Faso did utilize Sankarism at the UNSC, they did so in a less confrontational manner, mostly focusing on the right to self-determination.

Other differences between Sankara's public statements and Burkina Faso's behavior at the UNSC is the omission of criticism of neocolonialism and in general less passionate and confrontational critique. While this may in part due to Sankara's personality, which cannot be recreated by the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC, this is not the only explanation. The language used within the UNSC by the Burkinabe delegation can be characterized as diplomatic language. It was necessary for the Burkinabe delegation to use diplomatic language as this is "the signature of a civilized nation." In order to appear as a civilized nation to the permanent members of the UNSC and gather support for its resolutions, Burkina Faso needed to utilize different discourse at the UNSC than outside of the UNSC.

Chapter 4 – France and the United States at the UNSC

4.1 Introduction

This final chapter of this thesis will follow a similar structure as the previous chapter. UNSC documents will be the sources utilized in this chapter. However, this chapter will specifically focus on the way France and the United States conduct themselves at the UNSC. Similarly, as the previous chapter, specific attention will be paid to the way these actors utilize the different proceedings at the UNSC in order to influence the dialogue. However, in addition attention will be given to how the United States and France respond to potential criticism. As was observed in the first chapter, significant criticism was made toward the United States and France by Burkina Faso publicly. How the United States and France respond to this criticism is essential to the analysis provided in the chapter. The sub questions that this chapter will answer are the following: “How did France and the United States conduct themselves at the United Nations Security Council,” “How prevalent was Otherness in France and the United States’ discourse at the United Nations Security Council and “How and why did Otherness discourse within the United Nations Security Council differ from Otherness discourse outside of the United Nations Security Council.”

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, the behavior of the United States at the UNSC will be analyzed and compared to the document discussed in chapter two of this thesis. After this analysis, the concept of Otherness will be applied to the United States and its behavior at the UNSC. After this examination of the United States, an evaluation of France’s doings at the UNSC will be conducted. Finally, France’s behavior at the UNSC will be compared to the documents analyzed in chapter two and their discourse will be analyzed regarding the presence of the concept of Otherness.

4.2 The United States at the UNSC

The United States' relation to the UNSC is a particular one. The value the United States membership to the UNSC, and the UN at large, has for the United States has not always been obvious to the United States. With the end of the Cold War looming, the United States found itself in an incredible powerful position in the world. In fact, a part of its constituency has continuously argued that the United States "does not need" the UN.¹¹⁰ However, the legitimacy the UN and the UNSC are able to give its actions became a necessity for the United States and its proceedings regarding its foreign policy and the UNSC proved to be a useful stage for managing competing interest with rival nations.¹¹¹ Whatever the United States' specific feelings towards the UNSC and the UN in general may be, what is clear is that its relation to the UNSC is vastly different than that from Burkina Faso. This also becomes clear when considering the United States' conduct at the UNSC when compared to that of Burkina Faso. While Burkina Faso took an active role in drafting several draft resolutions in partnership with likeminded state during its membership to the UNSC, in the same period the United States only took part in the drafting of one UNSC resolution. This showcases already that the United States took a less proactive approach regarding its membership to the UNSC. When considering the draft resolution which the United States helped author, it furthermore shows the passive nature of the United States' membership. The resolution the United States helped draft was on the issue of hostage-taking and abduction in general, calling on nations to become part of the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages.¹¹² Although this is a noble cause, it also underlines how vastly different the conduct of the United States is at the UNSC. While the resolutions Burkina Faso drafted focused on specific problems which were occurring at that time relating to specific geopolitical locations, the resolution the United States helped draft refers to a very general issue.

The major power difference in the UNSC does not come from nations their individual power such as their economic strength or military might, it comes from the difference between permanent members and temporary members of the UNSC. As permanent member of the UNSC reserve the right to veto any resolution brought for the UNSC. When it comes to the voting behavior of the United States at the UNSC, the nature of United States conduct at the UNSC becomes more clear. Even though the United States was quite passive in the UNSC in relation to the amount of resolutions it drafted at the UNSC, the majority of its power did

¹¹⁰ Mats Berdal, "The UN Security Council: Ineffective but Indispensable," *Survival* 45, no. 2 (2003): 11.

¹¹¹ Berdal, "Ineffective but Indispensable," 10-11.

¹¹² UNSC, "Draft Resolution 17686," New York, December 17, 1985. UN doc: S/17686.

not stem from the drafting of resolutions, but from the possibility of vetoing resolutions. This means that while the United States did not take a proactive approach, this does not mean it sat as an idle observer at the discussions of the UNSC. Its voting behavior shows that it in fact generally deviated from the other members of the UNSC. In multiple cases it was either solely, or joined by the United Kingdom, abstaining or voting against the proposed resolution. An example of this is the resolution drafted by Burkina Faso and its Non-Aligned allies calling for an end of Israel's repressive measures in Gaza and the West Bank.¹¹³ This resolution was vetoed by the United States. While other the other Western states such as France and Denmark chose to abstain, it was only the United States that actively voted against the resolution. Therefore, while the United States did not take an active approach in drafting resolutions, it played a decisive role in the passing and blocking of resolutions.

The prominent role of the United States in geopolitics meant that the United States also received the brunt of the attention in terms of criticism at the UNSC. The two issues that were of most concern to Burkina Faso, and also were of large concern to its Non-Aligned allies, at the UNSC, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the South African apartheid regime, were also both issues in which the United States played an important role. Not only did the United States play a role in the protection of Israel in the international system, but this also seeped through regarding the United States' voting behavior at the UNSC. Therefore the criticisms aimed at the United States involve both its conduct outside of the UNSC, take for example its embargo of Nicaragua which was heavily discussed, as well as its behavior within the UNSC, for example when the United States vetoed the draft resolution authored in part by Burkina Faso regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

While the United States was criticized regularly throughout the period of Burkina Faso's membership of the UNSC, it did not always choose to respond. When at the 2588th meeting of the UNSC the United States was criticized by several members, those being the delegation of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Syria, on its conduct regarding the apartheid regime in South Africa, no response was heard.¹¹⁴ While the United States may not always have chosen to respond to direct criticism faced at the UNSC, more often than not it did face its opposition. Even though Burkina Faso was part of the criticisms leveraged against the United States, its criticisms at times drowned out in the sea of denouncements the United States faced at the UNSC. This also meant that many a time the United States choose to not

¹¹³ UNSC, "2605th meeting," 17.

¹¹⁴ UNSC, "2588th meeting," New York, June 13, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2588.

respond to any given member of the UNSC directly. After receiving criticism from a variety of members on the matter of Israel and Palestine the United States representative came with the following response.

“I must first point out that the confrontational debate we have witnessed here yesterday and today has done little to serve the cause of peace. In our view, the often intemperate and unwarranted language used by many members to criticize Israel has tended to distract and disrupt and to complicate the search for a just solution to the problems of the Middle East.”¹¹⁵

In this statement the United States showed both a willingness to respond to critical dialogue not only regarding its own conduct, but also that of Israel. Additionally, it shows that the United States did not always seek to address states directly, but rather responded to the criticism in general.

While the United States at times choose to respond to criticism in general as discussed before, the United States delegation did not shy away from addressing states directly either. Even though the United States never directly responded to criticism delivered by the delegation of Burkina Faso, it did address other delegations directly on numerous occasions. An example of this came during the 2613th meeting of the UNSC. In this meeting. After receiving criticism regarding its position on Israel from the delegations of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Libya, the United States choose to respond in the following fashion: “From states like Libya or Cuba we accept no lessons on international conduct, nor do we permit them to determine our foreign policy.”¹¹⁶ In response to criticism it received on its actions regarding Nicaragua, the United States responded as follows:

“It is interesting to note that the most vociferous defenders of the Managua regime, in particular Vietnam, Cuba and Iran, are charter members of the newest and I, regret to say, worst international organization, that of the organization of refugee-exporting countries – not OPEC, but OREC.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ UNSC, “2605th meeting,” 16.

¹¹⁶ UNSC, “2613th meeting,” 15.

¹¹⁷ UNSC, “2636th meeting,” New York, December 12, 1985. UN doc: S/PV.2636, 12.

In this quote the United States focuses its attention on three specific states, even though criticism was delivered by many members, including Burkina Faso. Therefore, the United States, when responding to criticism, either responded generally to the criticism or chose to respond to specific members.

The United States' conduct at the UNSC can be compared to the internal document analyzed in chapter two of this thesis. In this document, Burkina Faso's international relevance to the United States was put into the context of the international community. Specifically, it was put into the context of potential rivals that could influence Burkina Faso. These states were Libya, Cuba, the Soviet Union and Algeria.¹¹⁸ What can be noted from the earlier made observations about the responses to criticism from the United States is that the delegation specifically chose states to respond to, even when there were more that were criticizing them. Even though Burkina Faso criticized the United States as well, the United States representative chose to respond to Cuba, Vietnam and Iran alone. Even though many states criticized the United States for its conduct regarding Israel, the United States only responded to Libya and Cuba. The states the United States chose to respond to partially overlap with the states the United States discusses in its internal document on Burkina Faso. Therefore, the United States shows that its conduct at the UNSC focusses on what it considers to be international rivals.

What also became clear in the internal document analyzed in chapter one is that projections of Otherness were a common reoccurrence in the United States' characterization of Thomas Sankara and his government. While there are similarities between the United States' conduct at the UNSC and their interests as displayed in the CIA document on Burkina Faso, the question remains whether these similarities also extend to the concept of Otherness. Considering how the United States only directly mentions Burkina Faso once in the entirety of the UNSC sources analyzed in this thesis, there is no discourse with traces Otherness that can be found in these UNSC documents regarding United States statements on Burkina Faso.¹¹⁹ However, Burkina Faso was not alone in its criticism of the United States and the United States did respond to these criticisms at times. Therefore, these statements can still be analyzed on whether there are traces of Otherness in the United States' discourse at the UNSC. Criticisms against the United States regarding its position on Israel provoked the United States delegation to respond. In its response the United States representative

¹¹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Pressures on Sankara," 9-11.

¹¹⁹ UNSC, "2521st meeting," New York, March 27, 1984. UN doc: S/PV.2521.

mentioned the following interpretation of its criticism: “I had hoped to listen to and participate in a reasoned debate. I regret that, instead, I have heard the preaching of hate.”¹²⁰ While the United States representative does position himself as reasonable, in contrast to the unreasonable opposition, which is a sign of Otherness, it did so in a debate filled with criticism. In a different debate the United States responded to criticism by stating that “From states like Libya or Cuba we accept no lessons on international conduct, nor do we permit them to determine our foreign policy.”¹²¹ By stating “states like Libya or Cuba” and mentioning that these states shall not lecture the United States, the representative is acting in a way that can be seen as characterizing Otherness. This is the case because the United States representative chooses to state that a certain kind of nation, which is inherently different from the United States, of which their values regarding international conduct are of such a lower standard than that of the United States is not allowed to speak on the United States and its international conduct. Especially the emphasis on the inherent values of differing peoples which are of such difference those of oneself is a sign of Otherness. However, these examples are very limited and do not characterize the United States’ response to the criticism it received. Overall the United States’ response to criticism focused on the deeds and nature of the United States itself. The criticism on “states like Libya and Cuba” mentioned earlier was prefaced by the United States cementing itself as a nation of decency, stating the following: “My country has fought two great wars for human freedom in this century. We have annexed no territory, nor, have we enslaved any people.”¹²² Therefore, while there are limited signs of Otherness in the United States’ conduct at the UNSC, it is less prevalent than in the internal document on Burkina Faso itself.

Although the United States may not utilize Otherness discourse and display neocolonial characteristics through that. We can relate its conduct in the UNSC to the conclusions on the discourse utilized by Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso adjusted its discourse within the UNSC to appear as a civilized nation to the UNSC. While it was already stated that this was done to accommodate the permanent members of the UNSC, the US’s behavior shows why it was necessary. The US utilized its permanent seat and veto right to block resolutions, more so than other Western nations at the UNSC. In addition, when the US was faced with strong criticism, similar to the criticism uttered by Burkina Faso outside of the

¹²⁰ UNSC, “2605th meeting,” 16.

¹²¹ UNSC, “2613th meeting,” 15.

¹²² UNSC, “2613th meeting,” 15.

UNSC, it denounced such criticism. Specifically the US denounced “intemperate and unwarranted language.”¹²³ Hereby the US shows why Burkina Faso had to resort to diplomatic language at the UNSC.

4.3 France at the UNSC

France’s conduct at the UNSC differed from that of the United States in a variety of ways. While both nations have a permanent seat on the UNSC, the position both found themselves in at the international stage was inherently different. France followed the course of much of the UNSC members in its frequent denouncements of the apartheid regime in South Africa. While the United States played an active role in discussions on how to resolve the situation in South Africa, the United States also often functioned as an obstacle in the voting on draft resolutions. Even though on the matter of Israel and Palestine France took a more passive approach, by abstaining in the voting on resolutions regarding this situation, in the case of South Africa France took an active role in pursuing cooperation and working towards solutions.¹²⁴ When the United States vetoed a draft resolution, authored in part by Burkina Faso, it was France who in cooperation with Denmark looked to bring about an amendment that would be acceptable by all parties involved.¹²⁵ France’s more active role in pursuing the same goals that much of the UNSC members were working toward also changes the dynamic of the UNSC and leads to differences between the United States and France in how their membership is perceived. While the United States faced almost constant criticism regarding its conduct on the matter of South Africa, Israel, Nicaragua and Libya, France was not criticized once in any of the UNSC documents analyzed in this thesis. In fact, France was commended for its initiatives on South Africa by Burkina Faso. On top of this, France was also applauded by both Zaire, nowadays known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as by the Central African Republic regarding its criticism of the South African regime.¹²⁶

French president Francois Mitterand sought to find the mutual goals of France and Burkina Faso in his public statements regarding Burkina Faso. Mitterand himself puts an emphasis on one of the main tenants of Sankarism, the right to self-determination. In France’s critique of South Africa this emphasis on the right to self-determination is found as well. In

¹²³ UNSC, “2605th meeting,” 16.

¹²⁴ UNSC, “2600th meeting,” 21.

¹²⁵ UNSC, “2602nd meeting,” 9-10.

¹²⁶ UNSC, “2602nd meeting,” 2-3.

reference to South Africa's behavior towards its neighbors the French representative to the UNSC made the following statement at the UNSC

“The international community is in duty bound to denounce the behavior of a state that does not comply with the rules of international law and pursues a policy of force against its neighbors. I note with regret that this is yet again the case with South Africa. The States of Southern Africa are the victims of its aggressive behavior.”¹²⁷

Although this shows France's continued commitment toward the right to self-determination, at times France's commitment faltered. When many members of the UNSC were criticizing the United States and its embargo of Nicaragua, France remained silent.¹²⁸ When the members proposed a draft resolution to defend the Palestinian people against repressive measures by Israel, France abstained from the vote.¹²⁹ Therefore, whilst France shows similar interests in its conduct at the UNSC as in Mitterand's public statements, these commitments are limited.

Another conclusion made on Mitterand's public statements regarding Burkina Faso was the absence of representing Burkina Faso in a way can be construed as Otherness. Instead, Mitterand compared himself to Sankara and the Burkinabe values. As one of the main characteristics of Otherness is the representation of values between the occident and the other as being entirely different, the fact that Mitterand sought not only compare himself to Sankara, but to compare their values and stress their similarities shows the absence of the concept of Otherness in these statements. In the French delegation's conduct at the UNSC this behavior continued. As observed in chapter 2, Burkina Faso and France cooperated on the official proceedings of the UNSC in order to try and get a resolution passed. However, on top of the cooperation itself, it is important to note the nature of the discourse in this interaction. The French representative states the following on his Burkinabe colleague: “I am pleased by the statement of our colleague and friend from Burkina Faso.”¹³⁰ Whilst the French representative to the UNSC is not as strong in his statements on the mutual values between France and Burkina Faso as Mitterand, the French delegation stresses the cooperation between themselves and Burkina Faso by referring to the Burkinabe representative as a friend. Even though there are no further statements made regarding Burkina Faso by France at the UNSC,

¹²⁷ UNSC, “2597th meeting,” 2.

¹²⁸ UNSC, “2579th meeting.”

¹²⁹ UNSC, “2605th meeting,” 17.

¹³⁰ UNSC, “2600th meeting,” 21.

their shared strive towards self-determination illustrates shared values between these states. Therefore, it can be said that France does not display Otherness in its conduct at the UNSC.

4.4 Conclusion

While the previous chapter focuses on the conduct of the Burkinabe delegation at the UNSC, this chapter examines the behavior of France and the United States at the UNSC. As was done in chapter two, specific attention is paid to the concept of Otherness and its inclusion in discourse used by France and the United States. The United States its behavior at the UNSC can be characterized as one that is passive regarding the passing of resolutions. Both in the context of the drafting of resolutions as well as in the case of voting. The United States did not take an active role in authoring resolutions and additionally abstained or vetoed draft resolutions more often than other members of the UNSC. With regards to the discussions at the UNSC meetings, however, the United States took a less active role. Rather, the US functioned as a blockade that needed to be overcome. As many members of the UNSC regularly sought to direct criticism at the United States for its actions regarding Israel and South Africa, the United States often found itself defending itself against the criticism it received. While Burkina Faso at times voiced its disapproval of the United States its course of action, it did not receive responses from the United States concerning these denouncements. Instead, the United States directed its criticism towards similar rivals as it discussed in the internal CIA document discussed in chapter two, those being nations like Libya, Cuba and the Soviet Union. Even though in the internal CIA document analyzed in chapter two Thomas Sankara and his Burkinabe government are characterized in a manner which resembles Otherness, this is much less the case at the UNSC. Not only because the United States does not respond to Burkina Faso at the UNSC, but also because the discourse used by the United States to respond to criticism focuses on the United States itself, rather than its opponents. Whilst there are cases of discourse that could be considered as displays of Otherness at the UNSC, these are very limited. However, the nature of the US's behavior at the UNSC shows why Burkina Faso had to resort to the usage of diplomatic language.

In contrast to the United States, France's conduct at the UNSC is very similar to Francois Mitterrand's public statements. France also takes a more active role in the voting and drafting process regarding resolutions. France worked to amend resolutions that did not pass

in order to compromise between members of the UNSC. France also received no criticism in the UNSC documents analyzed in this thesis, unlike the United States. France showed its values considering the right to self-determination as stated by Francois Mitterand with its statements and actions regarding the apartheid regime in South Africa. However, with other cases, such as the case of Nicaragua and Palestine, the right to self-determination was not emphasized by France. However, similarly as in Francois Mitterand's statements, there was no sign of Otherness in France's discourse at the UNSC. Instead, the French delegation to the UNSC emphasized the shared values and friendship between France and Burkina Faso.

Discussion

This thesis has analyzed the role of the UNSC as a battleground for anticolonial critique as well as neocolonial rhetoric. It does so by focusing on Burkina Faso from the period of 1983 to 1987. From this period Thomas Sankara, a figure known for his public critiques of neocolonialism, was the leader of Burkina Faso. Additionally, during the period of 1984-1986 Burkina Faso was a temporary member of the UNSC, as a result Burkina Faso was given a position within the international community to emphasize its own goals. In order to analyze the anticolonial critiques utilized at the UNSC the concept of Sankarism was employed. Sankarism is a branch of anticolonial critique specifically related to Thomas Sankara. Sankarism's essential features are an emphasis on the right to self-determination and critiques of imperialist behavior. In order to analyze neocolonial behavior the concept of Otherness was used. This concept, originally introduced by Edward Said, illustrates the way discourse is used to project an image of Otherness on an entity by a dominant force. This dominant force seeks to show that the other is significantly different from themselves, especially when it comes to their essential human values, therefore allowing the other to be dominated. In order to trace these concepts colonial discourse analysis was used to analyze the sources. On top of the UNSC documents itself, public statements from Burkina Faso and France and an internal CIA document from the United States were used. These documents were used to contextualize these nations their behavior at the UNSC and illustrate how their discourse at the UNSC differed from their rhetoric elsewhere.

The first chapter of this thesis has shown how Thomas Sankara publicly criticized as well as complimented France on the international stage. A consistent factor in Sankara's remarks on France is France's adherence to Sankara's anticolonial rhetoric. An essential element of Sankara's discourse is the right to self-determination. Cases in which France respected this right, for example by recalling its soldiers from their mission in Lebanon, were met with compliments, while cases in which France did not respect the right to self-determination, when France sent troops to Chad for example, were met with criticism. Regarding the United States Burkina Faso criticized the United States directly for its involvement with Israel, while indirectly criticizing the United States for the neocolonial state

the world found itself in. Sankarism can be traced in Sankara's public statements through his emphasis on the right to self-determination as well as his criticism of imperialist nations and the neocolonial subversion of Africa. French president Francois Mitterand acknowledged Sankara's critique of his nations actions, but did not respond in a confrontation manner. Rather, Mitterand highlighted the shared values Burkina Faso and France have as well as stating how Sankara reminds Mitterand of a younger version of himself. As Mitterand emphasizes the way in which Burkina Faso and France are similar rather than different, the concept of Otherness is not applicable to his public discourse The United States however speaks of Sankara in a way that characterizes him as "irrational" and "erratic" among others. As a result the concept of Otherness is applicable to the United States' view of Burkina Faso.

The second chapter of this thesis has analyzed the way in which Burkina Faso conducted itself at the UNSC and has compared it to Sankara's public discourse. At the UNSC, Burkina Faso primarily focused on the issues of Palestine and the apartheid regime in South Africa. Regarding these issues, Burkina Faso used its influence to protect the right to self-determination, both through draft resolutions as well as through discourse. Although this element of Sankarism is thus applicable to the Burkinabe's delegation and its conduct at the UNSC, the Burkinabe delegation also mentioned less critiques against neocolonialism and imperialist tendencies than Thomas Sankara did publicly. As a result, this element of Sankarism is less applicable to Burkina Faso's behavior at the UNSC. Burkina Faso's discourse at the UNSC was also less passionate and strong than that of Thomas Sankara. This can be attributed to the need for Burkina Faso to adjust its language to come across as a civilized nation. As permanent members, specifically the US, used their permanent seat to block certain resolutions, the Burkinabe delegation needed to accommodate for their expectations and needs regarding the way to conduct oneself at the UNSC.

The final chapter of this thesis analyzes the way in which France and the United States conduct themselves at the UNSC. This chapter shows that France conducts itself in a similar way as in its public statements. By cooperating with Burkina Faso and expressing the similarities between the states France again does not display mentions of Otherness in its discourse at the UN. The United States, who did in fact show discourse which can be understood to be related to Otherness in its internal documents, also did not use language that can be construed as Otherness in its behavior at the UNSC. Although there are limited examples of the United States using language related to Otherness, the United States generally chose to speak on the nature of its own nation, rather than the nature of other nations. In

addition, the US used its seat at the UNSC to block several resolutions, more so than other Western nations. Through its behavior as an obstacle at the UNSC, the US shows why Burkina Faso needed to adjust its discourse within the UNSC.

This thesis has therefore concluded that elements of Otherness are not to be found in relation to the discourse utilized by France and the United States at the UNSC. Elements of Sankarism can be found in Burkina Faso's discourse at the UNSC. However, the Sankarism displayed at the UNSC is limited compared to the public statements made by Thomas Sankara himself. The factors that contributed to this discourse at the UNSC are the nature of the UNSC and the way states utilize the UNSC. The UNSC gives a great amount of power to permanent members. The US utilized this power to function as an obstacle at the UNSC. To accommodate for this, Burkina Faso needed to adjusted the discourse it used.

The implications for future research and the historiography are as follows. This thesis has discussed the need for Burkina Faso to utilize diplomatic language to be seen as a civilized nation within the UNSC. However, the connection between diplomatic language and neocolonialism has hardly been made within the literature. There are significant opportunities for future research regarding the connection of diplomatic language to neocolonialism. Regarding anticolonialism at the UNSC, this research has shown that Burkina Faso practiced a more limited form of anticolonialism at the UNSC. However, this thesis also notes that Burkina Faso's anticolonial critiques were also more limited than those of some other members. Research into other members of the UNSC could give a more complete image of anticolonialism at the UNSC. Additionally, an internal document of the United States claimed that Sankara privately appeased France by stating that his public anticolonial rhetoric was only utilized for populist purposes. Research into internal documents between France and Burkina Faso, something which this thesis did not have access to, could provide a new understanding of Sankara's anticolonial discourse.

This research also features a number of limitations. By focusing on Burkina Faso specifically, this research has created a scope fit for the purpose of this research. However, in doing so, this research has omitted discourse from other anticolonial and neocolonial states. Additionally, this research has relied on translations in order to analyze the sources used in this study. By studying these sources in their native language, new insights might be gained. On top of this, this study did is of a qualitative nature. As a result, it was not able to include all UNSC documents published by the UN. Some valuable insight may have been missed in the process, as a result of the scope and timeframe within this research needed to be

completed. A quantitative analysis of all UN documents in this time period might provide new insights.

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