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**An Analysis of the Burkinabé Resistance to French Military Cooperation in
Burkina Faso**

A Thesis

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, except where stated by way of reference or acknowledgment, and has not been presented to any university for academic credit.

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DEDICATION

First, I dedicate this work to the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, who filled me with peace and love and has granted me good health during my Masters program. Secondly, to the Society of the Missionaries of Africa that gave me this golden opportunity of doing peace studies and international relations. Thirdly, to my parents who taught me the value of peace in interpersonal relationships. Finally, to all those who, throughout the world, try their very best to build a peaceful world and, finally, to the FDS and VDPs who have lost their lives while trying to fight for peace in Burkina Faso.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSRT: African Center for Studies and Research on Terrorism

AFP: Agence France Presse (French cooperative news agency)

AI: *Ansaroul Islam* (Defenders of Islam)

AQIM: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

BBC: British Broadcasting Cooperation

CDP: Congress for Democracy and Progress

CSO: Civil Society Organization

FAF: French Armed Forces

FDS: Forces de Defence et de Sécurité (Defense and Security Forces)

FCFA: Franc of the French Colonies in Africa

FRELIMO: Liberation Front of Mozambique

G-5: Group of the 5 (i.e. Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger)

HIPSIR: Hekima Institute for Peace Studies and International Relations

ICG: International Crisis Group

IDP: Internally Displaced Persons

IGOs: Intergovernmental Organizations

IRF: International Religious Freedom

IS: Islamic State

ISGS: Islamic State in the Great Sahel

ISWAP: Islamic State in West Africa Province

JNIM: *Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin* (Group to support Islam and Muslim)

MPP: Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progrès (People's movement for progress)

NAF: National Armed Forces

NGOs: Non-governmental Organizations

NISD: National Institute of Statistics and Demography

OCADES: Catholic Organization for Development and Solidarity

RCL: Religious Community Leader

RFI: *Radio France Internationale* (France's International Radio Station)

RTB: *Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina* (Radio Television of Burkina)

RULAC: Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts

UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

VDP: *Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie* (Volunteers for the defense of the Country)

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to analyze the Burkinabé Resistance to the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation. The researcher carried out his research at Kamboince, one of the 11 districts that form Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso. Out of 153 targeted people, the researcher got 150 respondents (19 respondents to the questionnaire, 103 respondents for group discussions and 28 respondents for the interview) from many categories of people: activists of Civil Society Organizations (CSO), respondents from the Defense and Security Forces (FDS), respondents from the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), respondents from the Volunteers for the Defense of the Country (VDPs), leaders from the Christian, Muslim and Traditional Religious communities. The research design was descriptive. The researcher employed mainly the qualitative research method for data collection. The researcher was guided by the theories of cooperation and resistance to analyze his data: the necessity of cooperation and the expectations of partners in a multipolar world, and the key factors in a resistance movement. The researcher analyzed thematically the qualitative data and used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data acquired from the questionnaire.

The researcher articulated his study around 3 research questions. The findings revealed the following: first, the French armed forces' (FAF) presence in Burkina Faso was no longer acceptable. A social perception showed that a majority of the respondents believe that the French armed forces conspire with terrorist groups. Second, the findings showed that the majority of the respondents had high expectations from the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation which, unfortunately, were not met. This reality led a majority of the respondents to strongly disagree with the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso, therefore rationalizing the resistance against them. Third, the study revealed that the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation has undermined the sovereignty of Burkina Faso. A great majority of the respondents confirmed that they have been inspired by some ideals of Thomas Sankara and are now ready to count on themselves to solve the security challenges even if they are more open to new military cooperation with new partners like Russia. One of the key conclusions that can be drawn from the research is the strong conviction that justice, reconciliation and integrity are the key factors that can lead Burkina Faso to peace.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was to analyze the Burkinabé resistance to French military cooperation in Burkina Faso. Since 2015, the Burkinabé have been living in a very fragile security situation. The Jihadist groups are gradually gaining ground, forcing state officials out of several rural areas and increasingly some cities (Audet-Gosselin, 2019). The increasingly transnational and multifaceted nature of terrorism calls for a strong multilateral response even if States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations from the threats posed by terrorism (Rød-Larsen, 2009). After the involvement in a regional military cooperation with the other member countries of G5-Sahel (i.e. Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger), Burkina Faso has tried to strengthen military cooperation with France. However, it should be recalled that France and Burkina Faso had strong relations and that there was an extensive security and defense cooperation between France and Burkina Faso, particularly in the framework of “*Operation Barkhane*”, launched in August 2014, when France had a base of operations in Ouagadougou (Larivé, 2014).

Although the French armed forces had come with the mission of fighting against the jihadists (Stephen, 2018), they forces encountered a growing and worrying resistance, including some violent protests (France24, 2021). Finally, seeing France continue to have a dominant military and political role in the region and also realizing that some initiatives and programs are French-driven with little input from the partners becomes more and more difficult for people to understand (Lebovich, 2020). In January 2023, France received a request from the Burkina Faso authorities to withdraw the troops from the country within a month. For Antoine Glaser, a journalist and expert on Sahel studies, the Burkinabé no longer appreciate the presence of French

troops in the country. Antoine is convinced that the young people are calling for the withdrawal of the French soldiers on a politically nationalistic basis (Schwikowski, 2023).

The resistance to French politics in Burkina Faso, mainly the military cooperation between both countries, reached the highest level ever in 2023 (Jimoh, 2023). An angry crowd attacked the French embassy, cultural centre, and military post when the military government of President Captain Ibrahim Traoré openly confirmed the conflict with France by ending the broadcast of *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) in December of the same year due to allegations, which gave voice to militants. The same administration also demanded earlier the replacement of France's ambassador (Jimoh, 2023).

The coalition of over 72 Burkina Faso pan-Africanist civil society organizations organized the resistance and held a rally to call for the termination of military cooperation with France. Soumaila Nana, the Secretary-General of the coalition stated that they object the installations of foreign armed forces in Burkina Faso and therefore demand their cancellation (Africa News AFP, 2022). Based on the introduction, the researcher focused on analyzing the resistance of the Burkinabé towards the French military cooperation in the country.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the 1890s, during the European invasion in Africa, the territory of Upper Volta was grabbed by France, which established a colonial leadership that led to a war of conquest between 1896 and 1904. The territory that became part of French West Africa in 1904 was established on 1st March 1919, before becoming a self-governing colony within the French Community on 11th December 1958 until 5th August 1960 when it gained the independence (Family Search, 2022).

Terrorism has become one of the most worrying contemporary issues of our world, which implies committing criminal acts against civilians with the purpose of provoking a state of terror

in a given space (Weinberg & Eubank, 2008). In 2020, around 13,000 people were killed in nearly 5,000 acts of violence throughout the world. Seventeen designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations affected at least 22 countries (Esberg, n.d.).

The 2011 overthrow of the Qaddafi regime in Libya has caused some disastrous consequences like the mushrooming of armed groups and the proliferation of massive stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, which resulted in a safe haven for terrorist groups in the whole Sahel Region (Eljarh, 2016). The security issue resulting from the fall of the Qaddafi regime in Libya started in Mali in 2012 because Qaddafi had recruited a large number of Touareg fighters during the war. When Qaddafi was murdered, many of the fighters went back to Mali, and declared an independent republic in the northern part of the country, backed up by heavy weapons brought back from Libya into Mali and the rebellion became much more powerful (Eljarh, 2016). Since 2012, the sad reality in Libya has become an urgent security issue, a nightmare for the Sahel which was already challenged by many problems. Essentially, the instability in Libya and Mali had a clear impact on the already fragile Sahel Region and this regional atmosphere has strongly affected the security situation in Burkina Faso. The reference to failed states and state collapse (Von Hippel, 2002) becomes one of the key arguments in the explanation to the spreading of terrorism in the world.

Burkina Faso, which had previously been largely spared from the instability affecting the wider Sahel Region, has since 2015 become the target of a growing number of attacks by non-state armed groups. The jihadist attacks occurring in Burkina Faso have been carried out by '*Ansaroul Islam*' which is a local jihadist group operating in the country and by other armed groups that were already operating in Mali: the Islamic State in West Africa Province, the

Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, and the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2017).

Ansaroul Islam (AI) was founded by Malam Ibrahim Dicko, whose real name was Boureima Dicko (Audet-Gosselin, 2019). In 2009, Malam started preaching in villages in Soum Province (in the northern part of Burkina Faso). While local authorities were alarmed by the radical nature of the speeches, no action was taken against him. In September 2013, Malam was arrested by French armed forces during ‘*Operation Serval*’ in Tessalit, in northern Mali and was released from prison in 2015. Upon Malam’s return to Burkina Faso, the Emir of Djibo and the grand Imam disowned him and he decided to hide in the bush and went to Mali to train a small circle of loyal supporters (ICG, 2017).

Furthermore, there is the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), which is a splinter group of Nigeria’s Boko Haram. Abubakar Shekau, one of the leading figures of Boko Haram, had pledged allegiance to the “Islamic State” (IS) and renamed the group Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). One year later, a number of senior leaders left the group, retaining the name ISWAP and obtaining recognition from IS, while the group led by Abubakar Shekau retained the name Boko Haram (ICG, 2019). The armed group which was operating in a broad geographical area in Burkina Faso has expanded its activities in the neighbouring Oudalan Province (one of the 45 provinces of Burkina Faso) and conducted the first military attack in 2016, targeting a customs post in Markoy and from there expanded in other provinces of the Sahel region as well as in Eastern Burkina Faso (RULAC, 2023).

Besides, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) was founded in 2015 following a split within the Al-Mourabitoun group, a Mali-based jihadist group which joined al-Qaeda in 2015 (Philip, 2023). The group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in

2015 and had started expanding its military activities in Burkina Faso (Philip, 2023). Since 2019, the armed attacks committed by ISGS have been claimed by ISWAP (United Nations Security Council [UNSC], 2019).

Finally, the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (*Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin*, JNIM), which was founded by other extremist groups, namely Ansar al-Din, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Mourabitoun, and Katibat Macina. The group's inception was announced through a video published in March 2017 and is led by Iyad Ag Ghali, the Tuareg leader of Ansar al-Din. As explained in a letter by the Chair of the Security Council Committee concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals and groups, JNIM is considered the most dangerous armed group operating in the Sahel Region (Philip, 2023).

Faced with the power of the destructive forces (AI, ISWAP, ISGS, JNIM and AQIM), the government has deployed soldiers and special gendarmerie units and conventional military forces in the East and in the North. Burkina Faso found itself involved in a regional military cooperation conducted in agreement with the other member countries of G5-Sahel. In addition to this regional cooperation, Burkina Faso and France had good political and economic relations and have built cultural and scientific cooperation.

Even though France and Burkina Faso have historically had strong relations, it is worth noting that resistance is always mingled with the Franco-Burkinabé relationship. For instance, in the Northern part of Burkina Faso, under the instigation of Zulabal Yombié, people used weapons to drive the French colonizer out of their area (Bazemo, 2012). Ultimately, it is worth mentioning that popular resistance and revolutionary struggle have always been part and parcel of a long tradition in Burkinabé political culture (Hagberg, 2015).

In Africa, resistance movements occurred within the period of colonial sharing, that is, the second half of the 19th century. The French troops faced strong resistance forces in Africa, mainly from groups of peoples and kingdoms like the resistance from the “Serene” of Baol in Sénégal (1889-1891) and the “Samo, Markas, Bobo and Peuls” in Upper Volta, in the current Burkina Faso. During the colonial period, resistance was seen as a fight against economic, social and political exploitation (Wondji, 1993).

France, the former colonial power in the Sahel, which has 5,100 troops deployed across the whole region, had the mission of helping to support countries where governments are weak and threatened by islamist insurgency. Nevertheless, France's armed forces' involvement in the Sahel is encountering a growing and worrying opposition in the region (France 24, 2021). Nowadays, voices are being raised more and more by youth from many different civil society organizations to denounce the military cooperation between Burkina Faso and France (Soko, 2022). In November 2021, a convoy of French troops which was crossing Burkina Faso to Niger was blocked by thousands of protesters in many regions (Bobo Dioulasso, Ouagadougou and Kaya), demanding, with hostility, that the French troops must leave the country. The trucks, escorted by local forces, took more than a week to get through Burkina Faso, and several people were injured during demonstrations in the northern town of Kaya (RTB, 21 November 2021). The researcher thought it would also be important to explore the political and economic influence of France in Burkina Faso and the role of religion.

1.1.1 The Influence of France in Burkina Faso

Without any doubt, the Franc of the French Colonies in Africa (F.CFA) is one of France's influential tools in Africa. The CFA franc is what Kako Nubukpo (2017) rightly and fearlessly calls the tool of voluntary servitude. Historically, the Franc Zone (FZ) is a monetary cooperation

arrangement set up between France and her former colonies in West and Central Africa in the early 1960s after the so-called independence (Martin, 1986). Burkina Faso is one of the 15 subject countries of the CFA zone. On the one hand, the Franc Zone countries suffer from the negative impact of imported inflation on their economies, and, on the other hand, the countries suffer because of keeping the foreign exchange reserves in a constantly depreciated currency. Besides the CFA Franc issue, Burkina Faso, like many other countries, is facing another tool of domination: the presence of French armed forces, which is experiencing more and more resistance in Burkina Faso.

1.1.2 The Complexity of Religious Coexistence in Burkina Faso

Considered as a deeply-rooted religious pluralistic society (ICG, 2020), Burkina Faso is known to have a certain resilient model of religious tolerance. The constitution of Burkina Faso states that the country is secular, and both the constitution and other laws provide for the right of individuals to choose and change their religion and to practice the religion of their choice (International Religious Freedom [IRF], 2021). In contrast to the neighboring countries, the islamization of Burkina Faso began relatively late. Before the 19th century, and in some parts until well into the 20th century, many areas were predominantly inhabited by populations which were religiously non-Muslim, economically farmers and herders, and politically organized in largely autonomous units of localized kin groups. Muslim traders probably came to the Volta region from at least the 16th century (Werthmann, 2008). Around 1960, the percentage of Muslims in the then Upper Volta was estimated at 20-25% (Clark, 1982). During the 1980s, this figure rose to 40 percent (Werthmann, 2008), and according to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISD, 2010), 60.5% of the Burkinabé are Muslims, 23.2% Christians (19% Catholics and 4.2% Protestants), 15.3% animists, 0.6% other religions and 0.4% no religion.

Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that even though almost all people profess monotheistic religiosity, the same people simultaneously preserve native religious beliefs. African traditional beliefs are practiced throughout the country, especially in rural communities. There is a saying according to which the population of Burkina Faso consists of 60 percent Muslims and 40 percent Christians but 100 percent traditionalists (Hadnes, & Schumacher, 2012).

Burkina Faso has avoided religious violence and has maintained social harmony and religious tolerance up to 2015, despite its diverse religious population and close geographic proximity to countries with various levels of religious-based violence (Hart, 2019). When the terrorist attacks started, some so-called religious leaders like Malam Dicko (the founder of *Ansaroul Islam*) tried to give a religious dimension to the conflict. However, some religious people played a major moderating role in awakening consciousness and helping people not to be involved in a religious war.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Since the advent of Islamist insurgency in Burkina Faso in 2015, thousands of people have lost lives. Fighting against insecurity has become a national concern. Considering its complexity and the urgent need to address it globally, Burkina Faso has strengthened its relationships of cooperation with many partners. The military cooperation was reinforced in order to efficiently address the nightmarish situation of security. France is one of the countries with which Burkina Faso has undertaken military cooperation in the fight against terrorist groups. Despite the mission given to the French armed forces to fight against terrorism (Burgess, 2018), the Burkinabé are strongly and insistently claiming that they must leave their country. This study

therefore sought to analyze the Burkinabé resistance to French military cooperation in Burkina Faso.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to critically analyze the Burkinabé resistance towards the French military cooperation in Burkina Faso. The findings of the research helped in analyzing the full particulars of the strong resistance of the Burkinabé to the French military cooperation. In addition, the findings helped in understanding the tensions between agents of resistance movements and the French armed forces as well as in building and strengthening relationships between Ouagadougou and Paris.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To analyze the contentious issues between the military cooperation and the population.
- 2) To explore the main expectations of the Burkinabé towards the French armed forces.
- 3) To ascertain if Thomas Sankara's legacy had influenced the resistance against the presence of French armed forces in Burkina Faso.

1.5 Research Questions

- 1) What were the contentious issues between the military cooperation and the Burkinabé?
- 2) What did the Burkinabé expect from the French armed forces in the battle against the armed groups?
- 3) What were the key features of Thomas Sankara's legacy that had influenced the resistance against the presence of the French armed forces?

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Justification

Islamist insurgency has become a plight in the Sahel region, to the extent that attacks are happening almost daily, costing many lives, destroying the hopes of survivors and threatening the future of the entire country. Unarguably, islamist insurgency is a disaster for the country, a situation which the country seems unable to handle by itself. However, with the military cooperation with one of the best equipped armed forces in the world, the Burkinabé thought that violent islamism would have been over a long time ago. Unfortunately, that cooperation does not seem to be bearing the expected fruits. The study helped to analyse critically the effectiveness and the insufficiencies of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation. The findings helped in presenting a clearer and more complete understanding of the basis of the Burkinabé's resistance towards military cooperation with France. The researcher hoped that the study would help the government and policy makers to build fair and trustworthy relationships between both partners. The choice of the topic was based on the researcher's strong desire to promote the acceptability of military cooperation which is key in fighting against islamist insurgency in Burkina Faso.

1.6.2 Significance

The researcher intended to make a significant academic contribution to the question about the uneasy military cooperation between France and Burkina Faso. While there was abundant literature on the long relationship between France and Burkina Faso, the advent of violent islamism in the Sahel in general and precisely in Burkina Faso has necessitated the existence of military cooperation between both countries as part of the partnership. The study enabled us to explore first-hand the contentious issues that are spoiling the whole relationship between both partners, with the growing distrust and hostility between the partners. The researcher intended

that the findings will help the Burkinabé government and policy makers to communicate effectively and to speak in a clear language to the populations, especially concerning cooperation with other countries.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The resistance of the Burkinabé towards the French armed forces is being manifested in many places (rural areas and urban) throughout the country. The research was conducted at Kamboince, one of the 5 villages (others are Zoodnoma, Watinoma, Kossoghin and Silmiyiri) that make up the 38th sector in the 8th district of the city of Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso. The main reason for choosing Kamboince is that since 2022, this village of 7, 683 people has become one of the epicenters of the Burkinabé resistance to the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso, mainly because in this village, there is a military camp where the French armed forces were hosted. Moreover, the researcher conducted his research at Kamboince because it was very difficult to gather data outside the capital city due to security concerns. Safety is also a major issue in Burkina Faso, which meant limited movements for the researcher. The researcher would have loved to have access to a vast geographical area to collect his data but it was perilous because of the security context. However, the researcher has chosen 8 categories of people from Kamboince, with the aim of having a representative sample.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

One of the main limitations of this study was that the researcher could not have access to a vast geographical area to conduct his research because of security reasons. The researcher therefore tried to use representative sampling. Conducting the research in Ouagadougou was challenging for the researcher because he faced a language barrier. The researcher encountered mainly two categories of people, namely the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the Volunteers for the

Defense of the Country (VDPs) where the majority speak neither English nor French. They only speak Moore. Nevertheless, the researcher addressed the limitation by looking for a research assistant who was fluent in English, Moore and French.

1.9 Ethical Issue

The researcher made sure that he had the permission of the concerned authorities to get access to people from whom he needed permission before collecting the data. In addition, the researcher respected the results of the collected data as a sign of intellectual honesty and academic integrity.

The researcher dealt with people, some of whom have lost loved ones and are psychologically traumatized, emotionally wounded and physically hurt. The researcher tried to approach them in a very respectful and sensitive manner. The researcher clearly let the participants know that the data he was collecting was for academic purposes only. The researcher ensured confidentiality and so did not use the names of respondents. The researcher realized that approaching the respondents in a respectful manner and ensuring the confidentiality of the research helped him to gain the respondents' full consent and allowed them to freely and fearlessly express their views.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

Theories help to explain, predict and understand realities and give opportunities to challenge the existing knowledge about these realities (Abend, 2008). In this reflection, the researcher looked at two main theories: cooperation and resistance.

International Cooperation Theory defines international cooperation in terms of states and other actors like intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), when these diverse actors cooperate for different objectives (Martin, 1992). If we think

of non-conventional wars, like terrorism, which are destroying our world, we also realize that non-state actors are increasingly challenging the traditional understanding of national security. This reality makes international cooperation to become essential in advancing and defending national interests, like national security (Reveron, 2010; Lum, Kennedy & Sherley, 2006). If cooperation entails friendship, working together to achieve a common purpose, it is worth mentioning that cooperation is not always based on shared values, as asserted by Kaunert and Wertman (2019). It can also happen between enemies (Aaron, 2008) for a common goal or interest. In addition, in terms of cooperation, there might be an understanding among the involved parties that should also be influenced by one another's ideas and interests (Deutsch, 1949). The researcher tried to see in which way the ideas and interests of France and Burkina Faso meet in their fight against islamist insurgencies, whereas more and more Burkinabé are raising their voices calling for equitable partnerships (BF1 Television, 2022). Furthermore, since cooperation promotes seeking and giving information about groups' tasks (Zander & Wolfe, 1964), the researcher was also interested in exploring the depths of communication between the Burkinabé National Armed Forces (NAF) and the French Armed Forces (FAF).

Resistance is undertaken to condemn an unfair policy or institution in order to relieve or prevent the suffering of people. The focus of the agents of resistance is to transform or replace the system that is nursing the structural injustices (Delmas, 2014). But for structural transformation to happen we need to educate and raise awareness about the injustices and unfairness one society is going through as has been stated by Jean Harvey (2010). The relationship between justice and resistance reminds us of some great figures like Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas K. Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr., who even saw resistance to injustice as a matter of moral obligation (Suber, 1999). If the laws of military cooperation do not respect

the principle of fairness, the agents of resistance should therefore have the ardent declaration of the duty and 'moral responsibility' to disobey these laws, if we may use the language of Martin Luther King, Jr., in his letter from the Birmingham jail (Gosse, 2005).

The researcher critically analyzed the military cooperation between Burkina Faso and France and pointed out what could have been unjust in this partnership and what kind of transformation was expected from the agents of the resistance. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière (2010), while talking about resistance, points out its ambivalent dimension. According to Jacques, “to resist is to adopt the posture of someone who stands opposed to the order of things, but simultaneously avoids the risk involved with trying to overturn that order”. In short, the study helped to give a more complete understanding of how a just and fair military cooperation could have been made between Burkina Faso and France.

1.11 Definition of Terms

Colonialism: Refers to a practice of domination that involves the subjugation of one people to another (Kohn, 2012). The form of resistance to the different forms of domination is called decolonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Conflict: Conflict is associated with inconsistencies in purposes and claims of entities (political, physical, ideological, etc.). The word conflict originally comes from the Latin word *confligere* and is all about striking together, referring to situations where there is a current or a possible process for solving the inconsistency (Wright, 1951). Every definition of conflict implies known opposing interests (of which opposition can be solved peacefully or violently), an interactive process which is manifested through incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance between people or groups of peoples (Rahim, 2011).

Greed and grievance: Greed refers to the principle according to which combatants in conflict situations are purely motivated by opportunistic reasons (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). The “greed theory” is one of the most influential theories (or explanations) of civil war even if we should not undermine or ignore the other possible levels of analysis of civil war (Ratsimbaharison, 2011).

Grievance refers to complaints or claims that are, most of the time, caused by political exclusion, social inequalities or vengeance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000). As far as grievances theory is concerned, it is worth noting that ethnic heterogeneity, ethnic fractionalization, resources and even political instability can all lead to civil wars. Furthermore, we can also consider government policy as a serious issue when we talk of the causes of civil wars (Dixon, 2009). As Cramer (2002) has rightly argued, non-materialist grievances need to be taken more seriously.

Imperialism: Imperialism is understood as the desire of the state to expand its territorial possessions in other regions of the world. It is an ideology that was elaborated to define the dominant policy of the empire (Gudova, 2018).

Jihadism: Jihad literally means struggle. The intellectual father of jihadist Islamism, Sayyid Qutb, who was executed in Cairo in 1966, has defined Jihadism as a “permanent Islamic world revolution” aimed at decentering the West to establish “*Hakimiyyat Allah*,” or God’s rule, on a global scale (Mohanty, 2018). Jihadism is the means by which Islamism would establish an Islamic order for the world (Tibi, 2012). According to some Muslim jurists, there are four ways of performing jihad obligation: by heart, by tongue, by mind and by sword. The first one is about dealing with evil in oneself and that is what some scholars would call the greater jihad. The second and the third are about supporting what is right and correcting what is wrong. The

last one concerns fighting pagans and polytheists and that is what scholars would call lesser jihad (Mohammad, 1985).

Military Cooperation: When we talk of military cooperation, we refer to some specific strategies like transfer of military equipment, offers of training and scholarships, bilateral and multilateral exercises, and multiple forms of defense diplomacy (Walton, 2016). It is not a goal in itself but a better solution than others to problems that we have to solve (Brembs, 1996), like the security challenges in the Sahel. However, it is also worth noting that trust and mistrust can promote or undermine cooperation (Kydd, 2005). In other words, trust is a key enabler of cooperation (Wilke et al., 2011).

Nationalism: Nationalism is a spatial ideology. Even if concepts such as spaces, territories, and landmarks are not always explicitly mentioned, they are very meaningful for nationalist goals (Kaplan, 2020). If patriotism is being defined as love and commitment to one's country, nationalism refers to the sense of superiority over others (Kemmelmeier, & Winter, 2008), even if both can be correlated.

Pan-Africanism: The term 'Pan-Africanism' first entered the political dictionary in 1900, when a certain Henry Sylvester Williams called for a conference of black people to '... protest stealing of lands in the colonies, racial discrimination and deal with all other issues of interest to blacks' (Tunde, 1997). Racism and colonialism have somehow been the major causes of pan-Africanism's advent whose mission was mainly to fight for African unity and economic decolonization (Tunde, 1997). Essentially, pan-Africanism aimed at confronting the old race-based global consciousness, defending human equality, fighting against racial discrimination and organizing the process of liberation of Black people from all types of subordination around

the world (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1996) in the conception of building an Africanity which is not necessarily bound to territories.

Resilience: The term resilience derives from the Latin verb *resilire* which means to rebound or to “leap back” (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Resilience refers to the ability to adapt to changing conditions and to withstand and recover from deliberate threats (Van Geem, 2018).

Resistance: Two main distinctions need to be made when we talk of resistance. On the one hand we have the “confrontative and public challenge against power” like the union strikes and demonstrations (Baaz, Lilja, Schulz & Vinthagen, 2016). On the other hand, James C. Scott (1985) asserts that we also have another mode which is softer and hidden. But even if it is difficult to find any agreed definition, scholars think that action and opposition are two core elements that are common to nearly all uses of the term resistance (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).

Sovereignty: Sovereignty is one of the most complex concepts in political science. It refers to a supreme public power which has the right and capacity to impose its authority in the last instance. Moreover, it refers to the holder of legitimate power, who is recognized to have authority (De Benoist, 1999).

Terrorism: The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in its resolution 1566 of October 2004, states that terrorist acts are:

Criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act. (UNSC, 2004).

Terrorism is a complex and non-conventional warfare carried out by people who are basically political actors (Sinai, 2012). It is difficult to find an agreed definition of terrorism. For some scholars, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” (Jenkins, 1982).

War: There is a quantitative criterion for war because the threshold of war is crossed only when deaths go over 1000 (Singer & Small, 1972). It has a legal dimension that defines it as a disposition that allows two or more hostile groups to carry on a conflict by armed force (Deutch & Senghaas, 1973). The international law of war is codified by the Fourth Hague Convention of 1917 and applies to international wars only (Meron, 1994). According to international law, war, normally, can only take place between sovereign States as a means for resolving differences between them (Aron, 1966). This reality helps to understand the relationship between war and politics because, as Roman Szporluk (1985) stated, politics is viewed as a continuation of war by other means.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Whereas some scholars define literature review by its order (Machi & Mc Evoy, 2009), or categories, (Zorn & Campbell, 2006), others view it as a combination of analysis, synthesis, and summary (Hart, 1998). Cisco (2014) defined a literature review as “a thematic synthesis of sources used to provide readers with an up-to-date summary of theoretical and empirical findings on a particular topic”. The researcher recognized that this very issue of military agreements’ cancellation has been one of the major concerns in many other countries. Some movements of liberation like the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) ended their military cooperation with China (Niquet, 2006). Madagascar terminated its military cooperation with France in 1972 (Dominique, 2020). One of the most spectacular ruptures of military agreements occurred between Israel and Uganda (Golan, 2005). After 9 years of military cooperation, Mali called for the cancellation of its military cooperation with France in 2023 (Antouly, 2023). Niger ended its military cooperation with the United States of America in 2024 after cancelling its military agreements with France in 2023 (France 24, 2024). Many sources provide some insightful findings on these topics. However, the researcher mainly focused his study on the sources that could shed more light on the cancellation of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation.

The literature review of this study will be explored through 7 main points: The conflict in Burkina Faso, Islamism, Islamist insurgency in the Sahel region, French economic and military cooperation in West Africa, resistance, the plight of coloniality and the Fulani issue.

2.1 The Conflict in Burkina Faso

The theory of exclusion and frustration can largely explain the conflict in Burkina Faso. First, Politically, electoral periods are generally sources of tensions between supporters of different political parties and some of the frustrations that exist across the society are always expressed during these periods. The political field has always been very exclusive in Burkina Faso. Since the “so-called independence” in 1960, the country has had a long and varied experience of coups d'états (Adibe, 2015). From 1960 to 2022, it has experienced 8 successful coups-d'états and have always been big sources of frustration as some people have always felt excluded from the political game (Conférence épiscopale du Burkina Faso 15 July 2013). Essentially, political and social exclusion has fostered frustrations that have paved the way for violence in the country.

Second, the ‘greed versus grievances’ theory is a relevant argument that can be used to explain the conflict in Burkina Faso (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Economic inequalities and social exclusion explain convincingly why people in the Northern and Eastern parts of Burkina Faso have no access to economic opportunities or social services whereas these regions are naturally rich. This is an understandable source of frustrations that can lead to violence. As Soumahoro (2020) has rightly noted, radicalization and violent extremism have gained ground because of social and economic exclusion.

Third, good governance or lack of it should be taken into consideration. With bad governance, social injustices and corruption flourish, sowing the seeds of violence in the society. Because of corruption, frustrations were created, and where frustrations are, crises follow (Azar, 1990). Socio-political measures need to be taken to stop bad governance and promote social justice for all through the equitable sharing of the fruits of the meager natural resources of the country. Justice is the foundation of all peace (Alexia, 2008) and one cannot dream of building a

peaceful society without justice. The recent history of Burkina Faso has shown how some iconic cases of injustice have brought chaos and violence into the country like the case of Thomas Sankara, Norbert Zongo, Boukari Dabo and many others, who were murdered. The irresponsibility and greed of political leaders have worsened the conflict situation in Burkina Faso (Faso7 TV, 2022; RTB, 2023).

Economic disparities, socio-political exclusion, the social tensions between the central power and the regions alongside, the fight for resources, the sentiments of injustices, are some of the factors that can help to understand the nightmarish situation the country is going through. As Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (1999) have written, the deep-rooted conflicts are caused by the failure of social and political institutions to satisfy non-negotiable ontological human needs. However, it would be fair enough to quote Walzer who said every act of violence is a wrongful act (2006). Violence is evil and can never be justified. War is intrinsically hellish and cannot be justified. The late Pope John Paul II warned, before the invasion of Iraq, that "war is always a defeat for humanity" (Alexia, 2008). The study on the complexity of this conflict helped the researcher to analyze critically the resistance of the Burkinabé towards the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso.

2.2 Islamism

The concept of Islamism refers to a political ideology which seeks to enforce Islamic precepts and norms as generally applicable rules for people's conduct. The advocates of this concept, whom we call Islamists, strive for a state based on Islamic values and laws called *sharia* and they manifest a clear rejection of Western guiding principles such as freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, artistic freedom and freedom of religion (Volk, 2015). But some scholars refuse to admit to an agreed definition of Islamism and strongly point out the ambiguity surrounding its

definition. While some intellectuals see it as an ideology like liberalism, socialism or nationalism, others define it as a method of politics or as a religious manipulation of politics. Other scholars consider Islamism as a modern movement created to respond to and challenge modernism (Bulaç, 2012). The researcher used two key concepts of Islamism to analyze the Burkinabé resistance to the French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso.

First, the concept according to which Islamists think that there is an intrinsic fusion between politics and religion, in which case there is no separation between religion and the state in Islam. Most readings of 'Islamic fundamentalism' aver that since Islam fuses religion and politics, the idea of the state flows from the inner logic of Islam, which is why, during the early twentieth century we had a fully developed political theory of the Islamic state that emerged in the discourse of Islamism (Ahmad, 2009). The dichotomy between these two entities - State and Religion - fostered by the fact that some socio-economic needs are not being addressed by the State, pushed some Burkinabé who feel unjustly victimised by the State violence, particularly within the Fulani ethnic group, to join jihadist groups (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2020). If we consider Islamism as a political ideology which cites Islamic norms and precepts to justify its actions in the society (Volk, 2015), we can then understand and explain why the clash can continuously arise between the State and the Islamists' vision of the world.

Second, the concept of anti-Westernism which is one of the key concepts of Islamism. Given that Islamism was a response to the modern colonial state formation with its far-reaching consequences, it was only logical that the state became the centre of its discourse. As mentioned above, the Islamists' vision of the world completely rejects Western guiding principles, such as freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, artistic freedom, freedom of religion, and liberal

democracy (Volk, 2015). Therefore, any State, wherever it might be located, becomes an enemy to devotees of Islamism if it tries to implement western values.

In light of what has been said above, Islamism can be one of the key drivers of the situation Burkina Faso is going through. If some scholars like, Thomas Volk (2015), assert that they “don’t think much to the statement that Islam and Islamism have nothing to do with each other”, and think that rather than their “Western values having to submit to a religion, religions must submit to our Western principles – including Islam”, we can see the link between Islam and Islamism and we cannot therefore pretend anymore that it is possible to dissociate actions from the ideals that inspire them.

Critically the current security situation in Burkina Faso reveals indeed a certain relationship between Islam and Islamism. Even if the Islamic scholars make a distinction between the lesser and the greater jihad and think that Jihad is considered to be fundamentally virtuous in Islam and a communal duty in case of self-defense (Volk, 2015), the concept of jihad evokes human rights and dignity violation, horror and death in the minds of the Burkinabé. The four main armed groups in the conflict all operate under the banner of Islam: We have “*Ansaroul Islam*” (AI) (meaning Defenders of Islam), the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (*Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin*) (JNIM) (Deetlefs, 2022). The terrorist groups mainly use ideological, political and religious reasons to justify war. This ambivalence begs the question: “Why may religions which are supposed to preach peace end up perpetrating violence” as is the case of Islam in which peace and complete submission to God constitute its main doctrines (Ashraf, 2008). Nevertheless, this ambivalence can become an opportunity provided the “non-violent religious militants” are well educated and willing to teach what is right

to their fellow believers (Appleby, 2000). It would be intellectually honest to recognize that there are definitely sections in Islamic sources (like in Christianity or Judaism) that can be used to legitimize violence. But only those who see Islam's holy book of revelations critically in its historical context can detach themselves from these texts that legitimize violence to some extent (Volk, 2015). Islamic theology must face this debate, with free minds through education, because good education is key for a deep social transformation of the Burkinabé society rooted in peace and pluralism.

2.3 Islamist insurgency in the Sahel Region

Islamist insurgencies have been occurring in the Sahel region of West Africa since the assassination of Muammar Gaddafi and the downfall of his regime in Libya. In the narrative of the Burkinabé, the term 'islamist insurgency' is described as terrorism because it is a form of violence which is highly politically motivated (Weinberg, Pedahzur, & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2004). The terms 'insurgency' and 'terrorism' suggest a categorical distinction. However, in common usage, the Burkinabé scholars, political analysts and other observers routinely apply these terms interchangeably, as though they are synonymous (Duyvesteyn & Fumerton, 2009). Thus the researcher uses these two terms.

When we talk of terrorism, we are dealing with a very complex, nonconventional form of warfare which constitutes a real challenge to the just war tradition in all its three features "*jus ad bellum, jus in bello* and *jus post bellum*" (Bellamy, 2006). The researcher tried to explain islamist insurgency in Burkina Faso with the lenses of the political, ideological and religious theories and of the just war theory. Terrorism is seen as a random terror for political achievement (Walzer, 1980). Terrorism is ineluctably political, religious and ideological (Hoffman, 2006) and uses violence to intentionally target noncombatants with the objective of

achieving the greatest attainable publicity for a group, cause, or individual (Barnett & Reynolds, 2009). Ibrahim Malam Dicko, one of the well known figures of radical islamism, has used religious credentials as a Fulani preacher to promulgate his views. Ibrahim's movement (AI) has used grievances to foment discord between communities, inciting violence. Likewise, ISGS has exploited anger over cattle theft to exacerbate tensions between Tuareg nomads, seen as cattle rustlers, and the Fulani herders along the Niger-Mali border (Le Roux, 2019). Through the two terrorist groups it is clear political, religious and ideological lenses have been used to rationalize terrorism.

Terrorism has challenged the whole substance of the just war theory's ethics. Frequently, there is no legitimate authority who takes the initiative of dialogue and advocacy with the central power to address them. The condition of the "last resort" (Frowe, 2011) is therefore undermined. When it comes to the notion of the "right intention", we can see that terrorist groups like AI showed how social challenges should be addressed and how Islam should be practised in a very pluralistic and fast-changing world. This is a wrong intention used to wage the war. This poses the question of the notion of "just war" (Coates, 1997). As Saint Augustine argued, war must be waged with the right intentions; we should not act out of feelings of hatred, envy, greed or with the will of dominating but with the feeling of love and with the desire for just peace (Bellamy, 2006). In short, the principles of *jus ad bellum* are being challenged.

In addition, the principle of discrimination has been trampled upon by the main actors of the war. If the status of noncombatants should be clear in warfare and respected according to the conditions of *jus in bello* (Frowe, 2011) it is sad to recognize that the noncombatants are forming the highest part of the victims of violent extremism in Burkina Faso (ACSRT, 2022). Killings in market places and churches are becoming more and more recurrent and this shows how the

principle of discrimination is being violated. Still on the line of the just war tradition, people have dignity and rights to be respected. Unfortunately, in Burkina Faso, people are being subjected to dehumanizing actions like torture and maiming. Slaughtering an unarmed enemy while video recording their sufferings and spreading it on the internet is a manifestation of extreme violence that challenges and undermines the foundation of *jus in bello*. Human dignity and the right to life are thereby ignored.

Besides the fact that violent extremism has killed thousands and displaced nearly 2 million people since 2015, atrocities are still being intensified in this war-weakened nation where human rights and dignity are being trampled upon (Sam, 2022). The ideological, religious or political means that have been used to wage war are just pretexts which terrorists use to rationalize their evil deeds. Frustrations are morally justifiable, however, when we try to read them critically in the light of the just war theory, the blind and horrible use of violence to respond to these frustrations breaks, ignores and undermines the foundations of the just war principles. We can understand that the basic conditions of *jus ad bellum* (just cause, right intention, legitimate authority, proportionality and the principle of last resort) and *jus in bello* (Frowe, 2011) are being undermined: Violence is always evil and can never be justified. The advent of islamist insurgencies in Burkina Faso has sown the seed of suspicion amongst the Burkinabé and prevented its people from living together (Bissmillahi Bf, 2016), a phenomenon that undermined the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation.

2.4 The French Economic and Military Cooperation in West Africa

Even before the First World War, Africa was already organically linked to the heart of the French defense policy. According to Crocker (1974), Africa has quickly become the principal outlet for French imperial energies, the main source of imperial prestige and a free territory for soldiering

and recruiting. Since the so-called decolonization, France has maintained military accords with eight African countries and programs of military cooperation with 23 others with the aim of: "protecting the territory of France's African allies, protecting the local population, and building and keeping peace" (Gautier, 2007), an argument that many activists of civil society organizations do not believe (Africanews, 2022).

However, the good will of France in its military cooperation with Africa can be put into question. The main focus of France was to secure its investments after the independence of its colonies in Africa and to protect heads of state favorably inclined to the perpetuation of a French presence in Africa. That was a neo-colonial structure which was built by Jacques Foccart, the architect of France's policy on Africa under Charles de Gaulle's presidency (Vasset & Vasset, 1997). France sways its power over Francophone Africa culturally, linguistically, historically (soft power) as well as militarily and economically (hard power) (Gaudino, 2018; Rieker, 2017). As far as military cooperation with France is concerned, on the 24th of April 1961, Burkina Faso and some other West African countries signed the "*accord d'assistance militaire technique*" (technical military assistance agreement) with France, even though the first President of Burkina Faso, Maurice Yameogo refused to sign another agreement, the "*accords secrets de defense*" (Secret defense agreements) (Guissou, 1995). This technical military assistance agreement has been denounced by the Burkinabé government (Africa news AFP, 2022) on the 28th of February 2023, after another military agreement that allowed French military presence in Burkina Faso (signed on the 17th of December 2018) was earlier denounced on the 18th of January 2023 (Roger & Coulibaly, 2023). The French military presence in Africa, like the disastrous monetary cooperation arrangement through the Franc Zone (Martin, 1986), is being increasingly contested by Africans. The researcher therefore thinks that the theories of imperialism and democracy can

largely help to analyze the current troubled diplomatic relations between France and Burkina Faso.

The long historical relationship between France and Burkina Faso illustrates how France has, at certain moments, influenced the leadership of the country. Ouagadougou's relationship with Paris has been intense and steady, but occasionally difficult and forever tainted by the experience of colonisation (Englebert, 2018). We can remind ourselves how Thomas Sankara was arrested and placed under house arrest because of the anti-imperialist public speeches he gave in May 1983, after a short visit of French President François Mitterrand in Burkina Faso (Murrey, 2018). After the assassination of the Father of the Burkina Faso's Revolution in October 1987, it was only in 2017, under Emmanuel Macron's presidency, that a promise was made to deliver the "secret defense" documents surrounding the case, to allow the international investigation of the case of Sankara. Even if this promise of France to cooperate in Sankara's case was highly appreciated by some Burkinabé, others still think that France has been a huge obstacle to justice for having exfiltrated President Blaise Compaoré, using French special forces, after the 2014 popular insurrection, to avoid him facing his country's justice system (Burkina 24, 2022).

With the recent failures of French military cooperation and military reform, the future of the French military cooperation system is in turmoil (Vasset & Vasset, 1997), posing a serious problem of Burkinabé governance. A new political generation strongly believes in the concept of "African solutions to African problems" (Mngomezulu, 2019) and is ready to demand for accountability before their political leaders and those with whom they choose to cooperate. Even if many youths did not meet the anti-imperialist and anti-neocolonialist Thomas Sankara (Murrey, 2018) physically, his ideology and legacy are still alive in their memories (Droit Libre

TV, 2013). The youth want to take destinies in their hands and are burning with the desire to participate fully in choosing leaders without external interference.

Following carefully the evolution of the diplomatic relationships between Burkina Faso and France, France which was considered as the Gendarme of Africa (Vallin, 2015) is no longer welcome to the country of Thomas Sankara (Harsch, 2013). After the denunciation of the technical military assistance agreement of 1960 (Roger & Coulibaly, 2023), the end of the military cooperation with France of 2018 (Ndiaga, 2023), the popular demonstrations against the French military presence in Burkina Faso (Telecom Africa, 2023) and the request for France to substitute its Ambassador (Jeune Afrique, 2023); all the signs were clear that Paris' policy on Burkina Faso is no longer appreciated by Ouagadougou.

The military cooperation does not seem to have borne the expected fruits when France objected to selling sophisticated weaponry to Burkina Faso (Afrique Media, 2023). She was also accused of collaborating with terrorist groups (Uzk news, 2023; Africa Reloaded, 2023). The call for the French army to leave the country is being followed by a national recruitment of volunteers to defend the country. The current president of Burkina Faso, Ibrahim Traoré, demanded that the French armed forces must leave the country and called for the responsibility of the Burkinabé to defend themselves against the terrorist groups. However, these tensions should not prevent the Burkinabé from being grateful for the support received at the beginning of violent extremism (*Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina* [RTB], 2016).

France also has economic influence in West Africa and one of the ways in which France's economic influence is executed is through the use of the CFA Franc currency, guaranteed by the French treasury. This allows French enterprises to invest and gain benefits in West and Central Africa. French multinational companies, like Total (mineral exploitation), Bouygues (public

works) and Orange (telecommunication), which are big players on the market, also have great impacts in West Africa (Gaudino, 2018). This reality supports those who think that France is in Burkina Faso because of its natural resources as Bassolma Bazié (2023) stated during his allocution at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and to give orders to the Burkinabé political leaders on how the country should be led.

The unhealthy economic and military cooperation, seen by many West Africans as an imperialist behaviour, coupled with the worrying security situation in the Sahel Region have led the Burkinabé towards new partners (Le Monde, 2024) and have triggered the claim from the youths according to which the French armed forces must leave the country (Foka, 2023).

2.5 Resistance

Some of the most important resistances that have occurred in world history have been political and military. In Africa the resistances occurred during the period of the colonial occupation of Africa in the second half of the 19th century. During the colonial period, resistance was seen as a fight against economic, political and social exploitation. The French troops faced strong popular resistance forces in Africa, like the one from the Sereres of Baol in Senegal, and the one from the Samos, Markas, Bobo and Fulani (Peulh) in Upper Volta, current Burkina Faso (Wondji, 1993).

Thomas Sankara, who became president in 1983, renamed Upper Volta Burkina Faso which means the Land of Upright People (France 24, 1986). In 1984, one year after Thomas' assumption of power as President, Upper Volta was renamed Burkina Faso. "We have decided to change names," Sankara told an audience in Harlem two months later. "We wanted to kill off 'Upper Volta' in order to allow Burkina Faso to be reborn. For us, the name 'Upper Volta' symbolizes colonization."

In an anti-imperialist and nationalist move, Thomas Sankara chose a name that was inclusive of all citizens and said something about the national character. It means the “Country of Honest People,” combining the *Mooré* language, honest person (*Burkina*) with the *Jula* language, country or homeland (*Faso*) (Peterson, 2021). Burkina Faso is a landlocked country of 274.000 sq kilometers, with an estimated population of 20.5 million in 2021 (Family Search, 2022). Thomas Sankara was one of the most confident and vocal anti-imperialists of the late twentieth century. Thomas’ life and political praxis continue to influence millions of oppressed people demanding social justice from the governments worldwide (Gibson, 2017). In addition, Thomas marked the lives of millions of people throughout the world. He was an outstanding leader whose integrity and forthright attack on corruption placed him head and shoulders above his contemporaries (Louw, 2022). All over the world, people still remember Thomas as a Pan-Africanist, anti-imperialist, communist and anti-corruption crusader (Harsch, 2013) as well as someone who has taught his people to count on themselves.

Thomas Sankara is seen as one of the most inspiring figures of resistance towards the western domination in Africa and mainly in Burkina Faso. Some activists of civil society organizations see the CFA franc as a hopeless deal made with France to which Africans should resist because they are the only losers (Martin, 1986). This symbol of economic and political domination has been violently denounced by many activists like Kemi Seba who set fire to a CFA note in 2017 in Sénégal (Lynsey, 2017). In addition, demonstrations against the French armed forces in Mali, Burkina Faso and currently in Niger (three main countries strongly affected by terrorism), show how the resistance flame is still alive in many African countries.

Those who chose to fight against France’s domination know that imperialism always uses the cultural means to dominate because, as Thomas Sankara said, it is the softer, the cheaper and

the more efficient (*Les Archives de la Radio Télévision Suisse* RTS, 1984). Thomas Sankara already initiated an educational reform that included Mooré, Djoula and Fulfuldé, the three most commonly spoken indigenous languages in Burkina Faso, in the regions of their respective dominance, as languages of instruction (David-Erb, 2021). According to Basile Guissou (August 4 2014), renaming Upper Volta (given by the colonial masters) Burkina Faso was already a choice for indigeneity, an assertion of political identity, a fight for sovereignty, a refusal of any hypocritical partnership (Bassolma, 2024), and any kind of domination from any power (Droit Libre TV, August 4 2014; Traoré, 2023). Burkina Faso's council of ministers approved an amendment to the country's constitution which officializes the local languages' status while relegating French to the status of a working language (Faso TV 7, December 6 2023). Institutionalizing the national languages as official languages while French remains a working language (The New Africa Channel, 2023) is a very huge decision towards the weakening of France's influence over Burkina Faso.

Many Burkinabé started wondering why the French armed forces are in Burkina Faso (Foka, 2023) and the resistance to the presence of the French armed forces has given birth to new political initiatives like the call for contributions that have been made (*Service d'Information du Gouvernement* [SIG] Burkina Faso, 2023), the reorganisation of the army (*Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina* [RTB], 2024) and the launch of the VDPs' recruitment (Afrique Média, 2023; France 24, 2022; Lefasonet, 2020). These indicate that the Burkinabé are willing to defend the country solely (Philip, 2023). The study helped to analyze the resistance to French domination in Burkina Faso, specifically as far as the military domain is concerned.

2.6 The Plight of Coloniality

The concept of coloniality is considered by some African scholars as one of the most important tools that can help to comprehend the dynamics of violence in African history, from the time of colonial encounters to the present (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012). The roots of the African political, social, security and economic predicaments can be understood through the concepts of coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The sad reality of political instabilities, social crisis and insecurity in Africa obviously poses the thorny question of the relationship between African countries and the West. This situation could partially explain the tensions between France and its former colonies where the French foreign policy on Africa is more and more disparaged by the populations.

2.7 The Fulani Issue

The Fulani (Peulh) form the majority of the population in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso, bordering Mali and Niger through Tera and Tilabery respectively (Sangare, 2019). In 2015, some terrorist groups like Katiba Macina in Mali and Ansaroul Islam in Burkina Faso tried to ethnicize the islamist insurgency by exploiting the historical and intercommunal conflicts and idealizing the glorious past of the Fulani empires between the 18th and 19th centuries. For example, the empires of Fouta Djallon in Guinea, Fouta Toro, Bundu and Fouladou in Sénégal, Macina and Kassho in Mali; Liptako, Yagha and Jelgoji in Burkina Faso, Adamawa in the Northern part of Cameroun and one part of Nigeria and Sokoto between Nigeria and Niger. All these Fulani empires are key actors who brought Islam into West Africa through the jihad (Mesut, 2021) and through the establishment of an Islamic traditional system of education schools that are seen by scholars as a form of resistance to the western powers that have come to impose their system of education (Cobo, & González, 2020). The mythologized and sad past has been used by terrorist

groups to attract the Fulani to their ranks. The Islamic schools have isolated the Fulani youths from the rest of the society and this reality has given opportunities to extremists to recruit fighters among them by promising solutions to the social, political and religious challenges (RTB, 2022). The under-schooling of the Fulani in Burkina Faso, which is due to their lifestyle, has become a serious problem to job opportunities which can lead to radicalization (Gansaonré, Kobiané, & Boly, 2014).

Looking at the civil war literature where greed and grievances are some of the concepts that are the most used to explain the causes of war, the complexity of the Fulani issue helps then to understand why some of them are unfortunately involved in radicalized movements (Gansaonré, Kobiané, & Boly, 2014). As Sangare (2019) has asserted, the Fulani strongly believe they have been victims of discrimination from the leaders in terms of policies of development in their regions. This sentiment is still being shared by some Fulani (Droit Libre TV, January 12 2019; TV5 Monde, January 13 2019). Some misunderstandings have unfortunately led people to believe the whole Fulani community is an accomplice of the terrorist groups (Sangare, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The main focus in this particular chapter was about the methodology which the researcher used to respond to the research questions stated in chapter one. In other words, this chapter focuses on empirical and theoretical tools which the researcher used to carry out his research (McGrath, 1995). The methodology is understood as a science of studying how the research is done scientifically (Kothari, 2004). The researcher's main concern was to accomplish this inquiry in a safe and confidential atmosphere, due to the intricacy of the topic.

Therefore, the researcher used the descriptive research design with the aim of seeking to understand why the Burkinabé are resisting the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The researcher employed mainly the qualitative research method in order to have a broader and deeper understanding of the research topic. The researcher incorporated oral informants to give added voice and depth to his analysis. The researcher used 3 key research instruments, namely: a questionnaire, an interview, and a group discussion for his data collection. The sampling methods that the researcher used are: the purposive and simple random sampling according to the knowledge and the accessibility of the respondents.

3.1 Research Design, Methods and Instruments

The research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for a study (Sileyew, 2019). It is the strategy and the structure of investigation that the researcher used to look for answers to the research questions or to get a scientific response to the problem stated in his research (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Henry, 2008). Following this line of thinking, the researcher conducted a descriptive research study because he wanted to analyze a current phenomenon which is the resistance to the French armed forces and because the research design is used to gain an in-depth understanding of people's behaviors and motivations (Mbaka & Isiramen, 2021). The researcher

wanted to analyze the motivations of the Burkinabé when they resist the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The reason why the researcher chose this research design was to describe the conflict situation between the people and the French armed forces and to portray it as it is. The research design was relevant because it provided a broader framework in the sense that the researcher could use a mixed method.

With the qualitative method, the researcher was able to collect data based on interviews and group discussions. The researcher could also observe some reactions and feelings from the respondents. The researcher's aim was to have a more holistic picture and a more contextual portrayal of the topic under study (Jick, 1979). The researcher tried to profile and compare the participants' views according to participants socio-demographic characteristics. With the descriptive research study, the aim of the researcher was to conduct credible, efficient and reliable work.

The research instruments are the key means the researcher used to gather the data to answer the questions and test the hypotheses (Sunderlin, Larson, Duchelle, Sills, Luttrell, Jagger, Pattanayak, Cronkleton & Ekaputri, 2010). Questionnaires and interviews are two of the key instruments that are used in mixed method research. Questionnaires are one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research work. The second main source of obtaining data is the interview (Zohrabi, 2013). The researcher used these 2 research instruments (questionnaires and interviews) as well as group discussion, and made sure that the data collection was as inclusive as possible. The research instruments were translated in French and in Moore. The research assistant who helped in the instruments' translation was trained on the purpose of the study in order to ensure the reliability of the instruments. Moreover, the researcher made sure that

everything the respondents said that could identify them was removed, in order to protect their privacy.

3.2 Population and Sampling

In the social sciences, a population is the universe from which a sample is being selected, and the target population is the population that the researcher wants to sample (Burnham, Lutz, Grant & Henry, 2008). This study's target population included Civil Society Organizations (CSO), the National Armed Forces (NAF), the Volunteers for the Defense of the Country (VDP), the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and Religious Community Leaders (RCL).

In terms of research, sampling is important because, in most cases, it is difficult to study all the members of a population (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2008) due to lack of time and resources. Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected (Ogula, 2005). It has two major procedures: the probability and the non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling is a technique which is considered to be the best means of obtaining a representative sample. Probability sampling is more precise and cost effective (Etikan, & Bala, 2017). The aim behind using the sampling method was that the researcher wanted the study to be as inclusive as possible. The researcher used the simple random sampling method in which each member of the sampling frame has an equal chance of being selected as a study participant. By sampling frame we refer to the eligible members of the population (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Moreover, the researcher used the purposive sampling in which the probability of a selected subject is unknown (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013). These sampling methods were important for this study because they allowed the researcher to identify the most

relevant respondents who have deep knowledge and experience about the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation.

The researcher specifically used the simple random sampling (from the probability sampling methods) to target some activists from civil society organizations and the IDPs. The researcher used this sampling method because he wanted the research to be as inclusive as possible, since according to it, everybody in the population has an equal chance of being included (Jawale, 2012).

The researcher also employed the purposive sampling method (from the non-probability sampling methods) to target respondents from Muslim, Christian and the Traditional religious leaders. The researcher chose this purposive sampling on the basis that the respondents are being selected intentionally because of their availability, accessibility and their expertise about the research (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013). The researcher also used the purposive sampling to target some activists from civil society organizations, the army and the VDPs. In addition, the researcher used this method to target the respondents of the three categories, based on the participants deep knowledge and expertise on military issues. The researcher had to deal with a hard-to-reach population (Dusek, Yurova & Ruppel, 2015). The researcher did not have easy access to these categories of people because of security reasons due to the intricacy of the topic. This was the last category of respondents that the researcher encountered in his research.

The researcher had 8 disparate categories of respondents. The activists of the civil society organizations were chosen based on the deep understanding of the topic and the interest showed about it.

The personnel from the army were chosen because they were the first collaborators with the French armed forces and their professional experience brought profound insights to the

research. The Burkinabé national armed forces play a key role in the defence of the country and their experience and expertise on the topic motivated the researcher to choose them.

The VDPs were civilians who joined the army after a short military formation to fight against the terrorist groups. These civilians were mainly in the villages to protect the villagers from the terrorist groups. Their choice to join the army without any prior military formation shows how they are attached to the military values. Their views about the military cooperation between France and Burkina Faso were insightful. The researcher accessed them through the military hierarchy.

The IDPs were the direct victims of the armed conflict who fled from homes and were the most vulnerable people of the war-weakened Burkina Faso. The researcher approached them in a respectful and sensitive manner through the Catholic Organization for Development and Solidarity (OCADES). Through their challenging experiences, they freely shared on the topic.

The researcher also sampled some respondents from the religious community leaders because they were deeply involved in handling the difficult situation the country was going through. The leaders were also key stakeholders in curbing the tensions between the population and the French armed forces. In substance, all the categories of respondents were chosen based on expertise, experience, knowledge and the great interest to the research.

The researcher used the Yamane Taro formula to calculate the sample size. Here is the formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ where n = sample size, N= Population size and e= the margin error (0.08) with confidence level of 92%. Kamboince is populated by 7,683 inhabitants.

$$n = \frac{7,683}{1+7,683(0.08)^2} \quad n = \frac{7,683}{50.17} \quad n = 153.14 \quad n = 153.$$

Despite the calculated sample size being 153 respondents, the study was done with a slightly smaller sample size of 150 respondents because 3 respondents did not show up for

interviews. However, the researcher thought that the sample size of 150 can still be deemed sufficient to achieve the study's objectives and provide meaningful insights into the research phenomenon, especially considering the margin of error and confidence level specified in the study design. Although the 150 respondents may sound like very limited data, based upon the demography of the research field and the disparate categories of the targeted population, 150 was a good representative sample. The researcher got 19 respondents to the questionnaire, 103 respondents for group discussions and 28 respondents for the interview.

The distribution of the sample size was made according to the level of responsibility and accessibility of the respondents. The sample was widely distributed among a variety of groups. The researcher thought to have given a sufficiently representative sample. Here is the distribution of the sample size in the table below:

Table 1: Sample Size

Correspondents	Sample	Sampling procedure	Instrument
Activists from Civil society organizations	41 respondents	Purposive sampling + Simple random sampling	Questionnaire (19) + Group discussion (22)
Police officers	2 respondents	Purposive sampling	Interview
Gendarmes	4 respondents	Purposive sampling	Interview
VDPs	31 respondents	Purposive sampling	Group discussion
IDPs	50 respondents	Simple random sampling	Group discussion
Practitioners of the Traditional religion	9 respondents	Purposive	Interview
Muslims	4 respondents	Purposive	Interview
Christians	9 respondents	Purposive	Interview

3.3 Field Data Collection Process

By data collection we refer to a systematic process of gathering observations and information that would allow the researcher to gain first-hand knowledge and original insights about a

particular research problem (Bhandari, 2022). The researcher had 2 required permits for his research: one from Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR) and the other one from the Burkinabé Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and the Burkinabé abroad. These permits enabled the researcher to access the respondents. The researcher used a sampling frame to select participants for the simple random sampling. In this study, the researcher used 3 main research instruments which are questionnaires, interviews and group discussions and assured all respondents of the confidentiality of the study. The researcher had his research instruments translated into French and Moore by the research assistant because people were not able to speak English.

Due to the intricacy of the topic and the fact that the respondents did not know the researcher, it would have been impossible to access some categories of respondents without the research assistant. The Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation was one of the most discussed issues in the area where the study was conducted. The researcher felt that after his brief introduction in which he explained the purpose of the study and assured the confidentiality of the discussions, there was no more sensitive questions. The researcher realised that the respondents became free and open to discuss the topic. The researcher felt that the answers were honest even if some of them were given in anger by the simple fact of hearing about the French armed forces. All the interviews and group discussions were recorded except for some few interviewees who did not want to be recorded. In addition, the researcher used books, articles and social media sources as secondary data in order to have a better understanding of the findings.

3.4 Research Site and Time Frame

The researcher carried out his research at Kamboince, one of the 11 districts that form the capital city of Ouagadougou. He did this for two main reasons. First, Kamboince is a place where

people from different regions of the country have come because they have fled from insecurity in their home places. This reality gave a particular representation to the research. In addition, the researcher chose Kamboince because it is one of the symbols of resistance against the French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso, mainly because it is where the French armed forces were hosted in Burkina Faso. To facilitate his movements to meet the different respondents, the researcher used public means of transport (bus) and his motorbike. The researcher conducted his research from 19th October to 30th December 2023.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

During the thesis proposal and class presentation in March 2022, the researcher got an opportunity to conduct a piloting work on the same topic and had 19 respondents out of 25 persons contacted. The assignment helped the researcher to work harder on his research instruments with the help of his lecturers in order to ensure their reliability and validity. They were translated into French and Moore by the research assistant and were submitted to a specialist who helped ensure they are not ambiguous or non-ethical to be addressed to people. With relevant research instruments and with intellectual honesty in the data analysis, the result of the research should be generalizable.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher mainly used a qualitative research method. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data from interviews and group discussions thematically according to the research questions, by analyzing the narratives and including the direct quotes such as proverbs in order to keep the originality of their views. The data gained from the questionnaire were analyzed using version 23.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and presented in tables and graphs interpreted in terms of percentages and comparative analyses. The integration of these analytical

strategies allowed the researcher to mitigate the limitations inherent in any single method and provide a more holistic understanding of the research phenomenon through triangulation of data from multiple sources. The data collected helped the researcher to highlight the findings and to draw conclusions.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The main focus of this chapter is to present and analyze the findings of the research which was carried out in one of the 11 districts of Ouagadougou called Kamboince, in Burkina Faso. The research was about analyzing the Burkinabé resistance to the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The research was articulated around the following three research questions: What are the contentious issues between the military cooperation and the population? What did the Burkinabé expect from the French armed forces in their battle against the terrorist groups? What are the key features of Thomas Sankara's legacy that might have influenced the resistance to the presence of the French armed forces? The researcher thinks it is worth mentioning that the research topic bears the special mark of the predicaments of coloniality.

The researcher mainly used the qualitative research methods (interviews and group discussions) to collect his data. The analysis was constructed from the data collected in the interviews and group discussions. He also used the data gained through the questionnaire as oral informants to give added voice and depths to his analysis. The analysis was done by identifying the key variables raised by the 3 research questions. As mentioned above, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to analyze the data gained from the questionnaire. The data was analyzed in 4 main parts, enlightened by the theoretical framework stated in chapter one.

4.1 General Information about the Respondents

The researcher collected data from very different categories of respondents, using the simple random and purposive samplings with the aim of obtaining a very inclusive and representative sample. He obtained data from activists of CSOs (41 respondents), from the “VDP” (31

respondents), from the IDPs (50 respondents), from the RCLs (Christian, Muslims and Practitioners of the Traditional religion) (22 respondents) and from the army (6 respondents). The total number of respondents was 150, that is, 19 respondents to the questionnaire, 103 respondents for group discussion and 28 respondents for the interview.

4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

In this research, the gender distribution among respondents varied across different data collection methods and respondent groups, reflecting the diverse social contexts of the study population. Further insights from the group discussions shed light on how gender composition was influenced by social dynamics. For instance, among the activists of the civil society organization, known locally as "Waa-n-yiy-ya"¹ 20 out of 22 respondents were men. This gender imbalance reflects the nature of their activities, often conducted overnight in potentially unsafe areas, which may deter female participation. Similarly, within the VDPs, all 31 respondents were men, underscoring the male-dominated nature of this group's membership, possibly due to the nature of their duties and the perceived risks associated with them. Conversely, all respondents from the IDP group were women, reflecting the particular vulnerabilities faced by women in displacement situations, with some men caught or killed in the conflict whereas others were absent due to economic responsibilities.

In interviews, gender disparities persisted but varied across respondent categories. Community leaders, including Christians, Muslims, and practitioners of the Traditional Religion, were predominantly male, with 14 men and 8 women interviewed. This reflects broader gender imbalances in community leadership roles. By contrast, respondents from the army comprised 4

¹ *Waa-n-yiy-ya* refers to a group of activists of civil society organizations who are ensuring the citizen watch in some strategic places of the country and mostly in important cities. Their aim is to alert the population in case of suspected movements of destabilization of the regime. The term *Waa-n-yiy-ya* is in a language called Moore and it means “come out”.

men and 2 women, highlighting challenges in recruitment and participation, potentially influenced by security concerns and institutional requirements within the army.

In the questionnaire, Table 2 highlights that the majority of the respondents were female. This skew towards female respondents is likely attributable to the disproportionate impact of the current conflict on women.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents to the Questionnaire

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	9	47.4	47.4	47.4
	female	10	52.6	52.6	100.0
	Total	19	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2023

4.1.2 Education Level

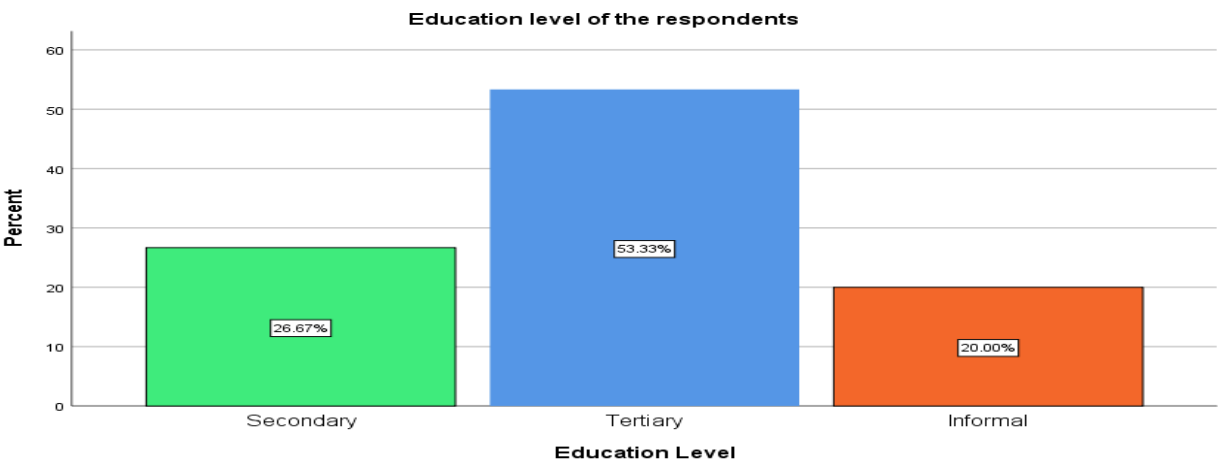
Delving deeper into the interview findings, a significant proportion of respondents (specifically 20 out of 28) from both community leaders and military entities possessed tertiary education. This prevalence of higher education among interviewees suggests a considerable level of understanding regarding the research's purpose and objectives.

Meanwhile, in group discussions, the educational background varied among different groups. The activists of civil society organizations demonstrated a high level of education, implying a strong grasp of the research topic. Conversely, a majority of the VDPs had only completed primary education (17 out of 31), potentially driven by economic circumstances and lack of stable employment. However, their frontline involvement in combating terrorist groups could offer valuable firsthand insights into the research topic despite their lower educational

attainment. Notably, the majority of IDPs lacked formal education, with 37 out of 50 having no educational background. This is unsurprising since all of them have fled from rural areas strongly affected by terrorist attacks, where education level in Burkina Faso is low.

In the broader analysis, the study found that a majority of the respondents to the questionnaire had tertiary education, while a minority had no formal education. This shows that most of the respondents who participated in the research have a high level of education and it suggests a higher ability to respond to the questions the researcher posed.

Figure 1: Level of Education of the Respondents to the Questionnaire



Source: Field, 2023

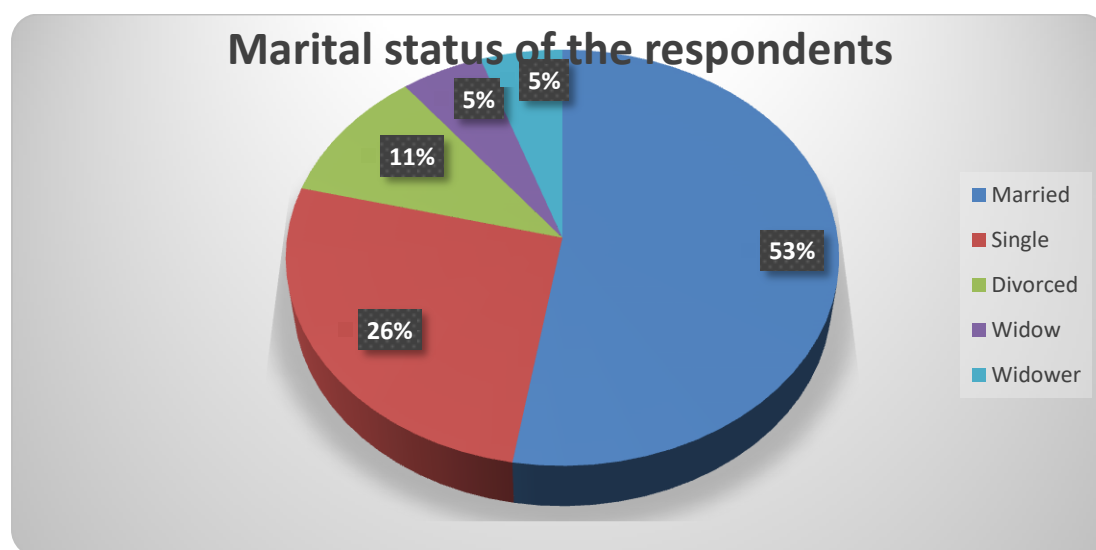
4.1.3 Marital Status of the Respondents

The majority of participants across these interactions were married. Specifically, 5 out of 6 respondents from the army, 12 out of 22 from the community leaders, 20 out of 30 from the VDPs, 17 out of 22 from civil society organizations, and 38 out of 50 from IDPs were married. This data underscores that the researcher engaged with individuals who hold significant social responsibilities, including the care of vulnerable populations like women and children likely

affected by or knowledgeable about the conflict situation in Burkina Faso. This understanding among the participants may contribute to their perspectives on the resistance against the presence of French armed forces in the country.

The findings in Figure 2 indicate that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire were married while the minority is reported to be widowed.

Figure 2: Marital Status of the Respondents to the Questionnaire



Source: Field, 2023

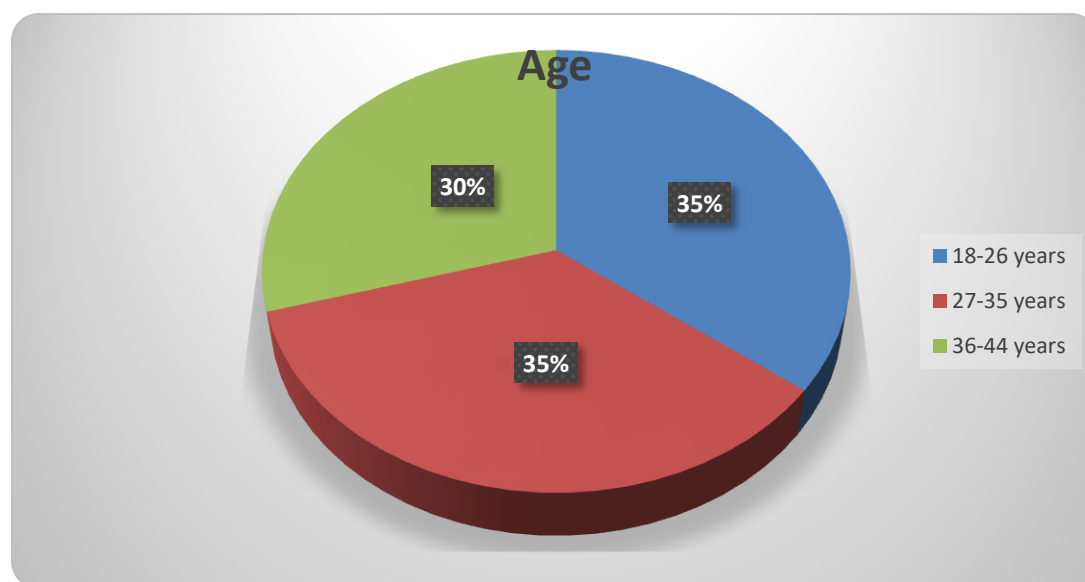
4.1.4 Age of the Respondents

In connecting the findings of the interviews and group discussions conducted by the researcher, it becomes evident that the age demographics varied across different respondent groups. For instance, the majority of the respondents from the army were within the age bracket of 45-53, reflecting hierarchy and experience within the military. On the other hand, community leaders predominantly fell within the age bracket of 54 and above, indicating the governance structure's reliance on older individuals. In group discussions, the majority of IDPs were from two main age brackets: 18-26 and 54 and above,

highlighting the vulnerability of both youth and elderly populations to displacement. Likewise, the VDPs primarily comprised individuals aged 27-35, reflecting the need for physically capable individuals to engage in ground operations against terrorist groups. Meanwhile, activists of civil society organizations were predominantly aged 36-44, reflecting the leadership and organizational roles undertaken by adults concerned about national and regional issues. These age distributions provide insights into the perspectives and experiences of different age groups regarding the presence of French armed forces in Burkina Faso.

The statistics in Figure 3 reveal that the majority of the respondents were in the age groups of 18-26 years and 27-35 years. The age bracket of 36-44 years was only represented by a minority. The higher percentage of youth in the study can be attributed to the role which the youth play in the country's army and in its defense.

Figure 3: Age of the Respondents to the Questionnaire



Source: Field, 2023

4.1.5 Religious Status of the Respondents

As far as the respondents to the interviews were concerned, Christians are the majority (13/28), followed by the followers of Traditional Religion (9/28) and Muslims are the minority (6/28). But concerning the respondents from the group discussions, Muslims were the majority (39/50 IDPs, 15/31 VDPs and 17/22 from the CSOs). The majority of respondents are Muslims which is not surprising given that the research was conducted in a Muslim populated area and that statistically, Burkina Faso has 60.5% Muslims according to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NISD) (2010). Religious community leaders are working hard to promote peace and are in touch with the victims of the conflict situation. Analyzing one of the key issues of this conflict (resistance against the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso) from this perspective seems to be particularly insightful.

Results in Table 3 indicate that the predominant religion in the study area is Islam. Only a minority of the respondents were Christians. Religion plays a key role in social life as well as in conflict situations. Analyzing the religion of the respondents was key to inform us about the contentious issues that are destroying the relations between the French armed forces and the Burkinabé.

Table 3: Religious Status of the Respondents to the Questionnaire

		Frequen cy	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Islam	15	78.9	78.9	Valid
	Christianity	4	21.1	21.1	
	Total	19	100.0	100.0	

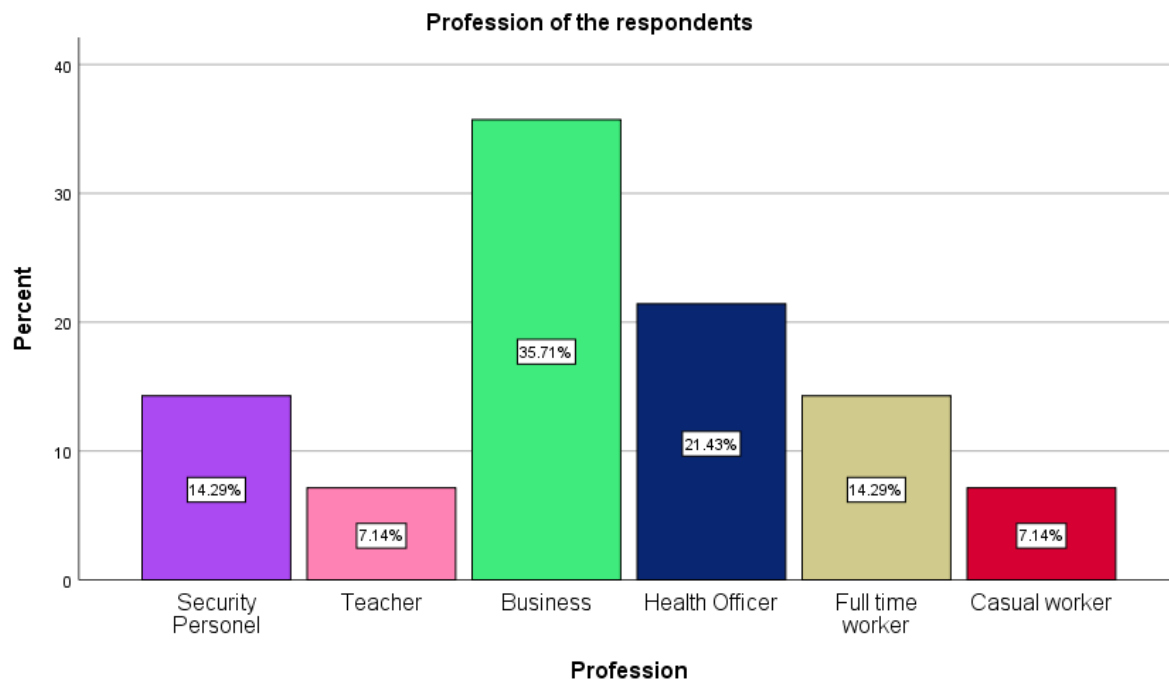
Source: Field, 2023

4.1.6 Profession of the Respondents

The majority of those who have participated in the interviews are also businessmen and women (from the community leaders) followed by security personnel (from the army). That shows how security and economy are key to understanding what the country is going through. Their views on this delicate topic the researcher was working on can be very helpful. As far as the group discussions were concerned, the majority of the respondents were farmers (from the IDPs), followed by security personnel (from the VDPs) and the business men and women (from the CSOs). The data can be explained by the fact that IDPs are among the most vulnerable entities of the Burkinabé society, that the VDPs are fully involved in securing the society and that civil society organizations are made by many people who do not have full time jobs. These are very different entities that represent the Burkinabé society and analyzing a social issue from their perspective is more inclusive and representative.

The study results in Figure 4 show that the majority of the respondents who participated in the research questionnaire were business people, followed by health workers and security personnel and full time workers. The higher number of business people participating in the research could be attributed to the negative impact the war has on business environment and performance.

Figure 4: Profession of the Respondents to the Questionnaire



Source: Field, 2023

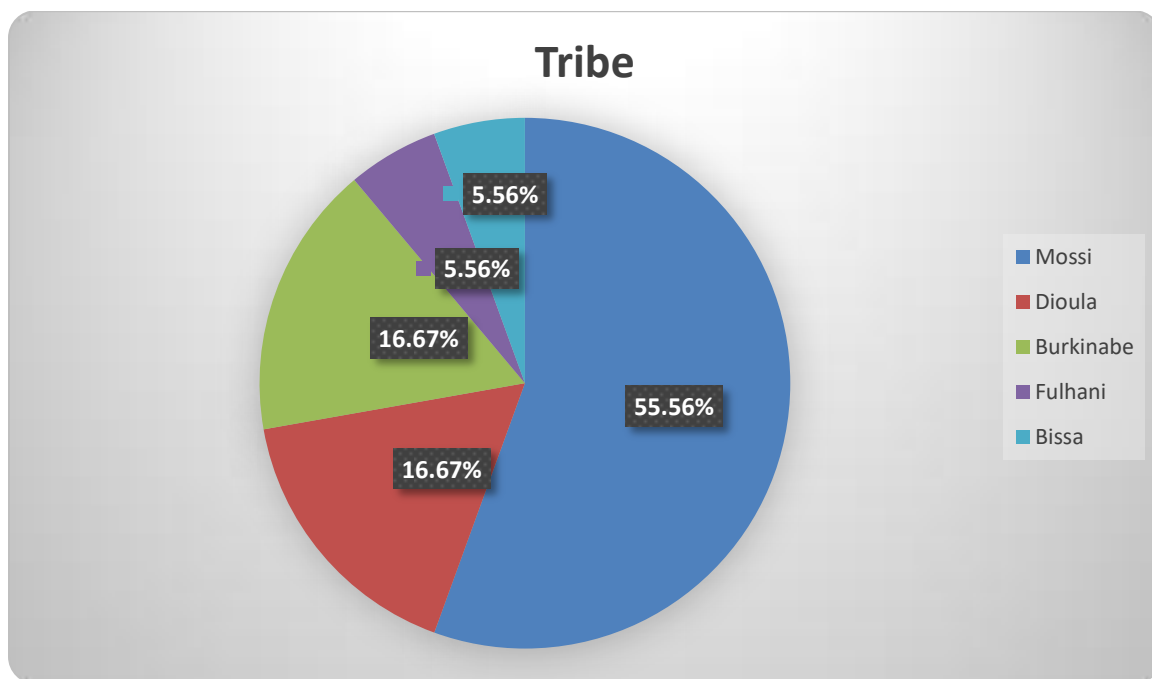
4.1.7 Tribe of the Respondents

As far as the interviews and the group discussions were concerned, the vast majority of the respondents were from the Mossi tribe and the above explanation still stands. However, all the VDPs refused to specify the tribes to which they belong. This decision came from a particular group of people who were ready to fight the terrorist groups on the field. They are civilians who received a brief military training before going to the frontlines to fight the terrorist groups. We wonder whether the refusal to name the tribes was not coming from the army or from the fact there might be some social challenges related to the tribal question in Burkina Faso.

The study results in Figure 5 show that the majority of the respondents who participated in the research were from the Mossi tribe, followed by those who didn't want to reveal their tribes and the Dioula tribe. The high number of respondents from the Mossi tribe can be

explained by the fact that they are numerically the largest ethnic group in Burkina Faso, almost half of the population (Barbier, 2020) and because the scope of the research is located in predominantly Mossi area. The reason why some Burkinabé did not want to mention their tribes to the researcher was that the security situation is so fragile that they did not feel secure to mention their tribe to anyone. This can also make us think of the tribal question as a real challenge in the social life in Burkina Faso. Analyzing this contentious issue about the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso from the understanding of people who are coming from different tribal backgrounds can be insightful.

Figure 5: Tribe of the Respondents to the Questionnaire



Source: Field, 2023

4.2 The Contentious Issues

The data collected from the interviews and group discussions have listed some key issues that have deteriorated the relationships between the Burkinabé and the French armed forces. A

religious community leader metaphorically asserted that “unless there are dead leaves in the bucket of water, this water will never go rotten”² (Religious Community Leader, RCL1, Interview, 10th September 2023). The data revealed that some historical facts have contributed to destroying the trust of the Burkinabé regarding the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The French interference in Burkinabé political affairs was no longer appreciated by many Burkinabé. A religious community leader stated as follows:

France never respected our revolution of 2014 when we chased their great friend Blaise Compaoré who reigned over us for 27 years. The proof, they have exfiltrated him to Côte D’Ivoire to exempt him from facing the justice of his country to account for his very long and sanguinary governance and we haven’t yet forgotten” (RCL2, Interview, 10th September 2023).

The failure of the French foreign policy about Burkina Faso, policy made of arrogance, disrespect, political interference, economic influence (with the cfa franc), military domination (with their presence on our soil) has destroyed our trust in them” asserted an activist from a civil society organization (CSO1, group discussion, 15th October 2023).

To analyze the contentious issues between the French military cooperation and the population, the study sought to understand how the population analyzes the level of acceptability of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation. Results in Table 4 reveal that the majority of the respondents confirmed that the presence of the French military in Burkina Faso is not acceptable while a minority thinks that their presence should be accepted. This confirms that the majority of the Burkinabé are unhappy with the military cooperation between the French armed forces and the Burkinabé national armed forces.

² This proverb explains that a military cooperation that has lasted for many decades couldn’t just be denounced without any objective reasons

Table 4: The Acceptability of the French Armed Forces' Presence in Burkina Faso

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Accepted	6	31.6	31.6	31.6
	Not accepted	13	68.4	68.4	100.0
	Total	19	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field, 2023

4.2.1 The Social Perception about the French Military's Cooperation with Terrorist Groups

As far as the interviews and group discussions are concerned, some respondents strongly supported this conspiracy theory and started wondering about the reasons why the French armed forces are in Burkina Faso: A VDP suspiciously wondered:

Did they ever help us fight the terrorist groups? The country is being attacked by terrorists and the French militaries are just roaming around with sophisticated weapons but without reacting. There might be a hidden agenda between them and the terrorists (VDP1, group discussion, 10th December 2023).

One key respondent from the Burkinabé army (A1) asserted that:

The French armed forces were especially well-treated by our political authorities to the extent that they don't even mind Burkinabé soldiers. We never go for mission with them and we were wondering what they were really bringing to our noble fight against the terrorists (A1, Interview, 5th December 2023).

A religious community leader found another way of expressing this:

The French armed forces were not really helping us. They were playing a double game. But as they say, unless your dog goes out with bones from your house, there isn't any possibility for another dog from outside to have the bones that are coming from your house³ (RCL5, Interview, 12th September 2023).

Some respondents even went further in their perceptions, asserting that the French armed forces are not only cooperating with terrorists while plundering their natural resources as already mentioned in chapter 2. All that has worsened the already complicated relationship between the Burkinabé and the French armed forces.

In conclusion, the researcher discovered the source of the contentious issues between the French military cooperation and the Burkinabé. Nevertheless, the researcher realized that the majority of his respondents was passionate about the research topic but has always situated it into the colonial, postcolonial and neocolonial contexts of the relationships between Paris and Ouagadougou. This contextual dimension of the situation only showed the darker side of all types of cooperation, including the military one. This position can lead to a subjective understanding of the historical ties between Paris and Ouagadougou.

In addition, the researcher also thinks that there might be a political irrationality that could lead the Burkinabé society to a sense of conspiracy in the sense that some arguments could be largely supported while nobody has any evidence about them. These two arguments are in full agreement with the sources the researcher referred to in chapter 2. Some secondary data collected by the researcher support these findings according to which, some contentious issues have led a majority of the Burkinabé to disapprove of the French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso.

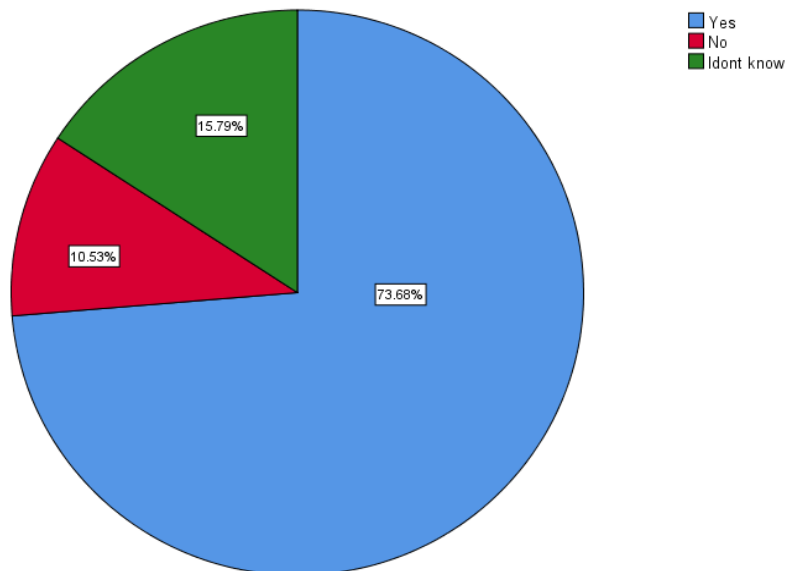
Furthermore, the study tried to analyze the social perception that French armed forces were cooperating with the terrorist groups such as *Ansaroul Islam* (AI), Islamic State in West

³

He meant that even if the French armed forces are collaborating with the terrorists, they are not the only ones to be blamed. They have some local collaborators that the current president Ibrahim Traoré calls the local valets of imperialism or parlor slaves (Traoré, 2024).

Africa Province (ISWAP), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Group to Support Islam and Muslims, *Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin*, (JNIM) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Burkina Faso. The results in Figure 6 show that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire responded yes while only a minority responded 'No'. This confirms that a majority of the respondents believe in the French armed forces' hypothetical cooperation with the terrorist groups (theory of conspiracy), as mentioned in chapter 2.

Figure 6: Social Perception about the French Military's Cooperation



Source: Field, 2023

4.3 The Main Expectations of the Burkinabé Towards the French Armed Forces

4.3.1 The Expected Role of the French Armed Forces in Burkina Faso

The researcher sought to analyze what the Burkinabé were really expecting from the French armed forces. The findings revealed that cooperation is a necessity in the fight against Islamist insurgency that the folks interviewed describe as terrorism. These findings support the

assumptions of our theoretical framework. So, the support from the French armed forces was to play a key role in the Burkinabé fight against terrorist groups. These findings reveal that the Burkinabé had high expectations of the French armed forces.

One key respondent from the army stated that the mission of the French armed forces was:

To help secure the Sahel Region, to ensure the formation of local soldiers, to bring some logistic help to our government, to facilitate our commands of weapons” (A2, Interview, 5th December 2023).

The data collected from the interviews and the group discussions have strongly confirmed that the respondents in their huge majority expected only logistic support from the military cooperation with France. They unanimously recognized that their high expectations have not been met. One key respondent from the VDPs narrated disappointedly:

With all the sufferings we endured under the fire of the terrorists for many years, we never encountered or even heard about French soldiers’ presence in our region. We unfortunately hoped to be helped by people who didn’t will to help us (VDP2, group discussion, 10th December 2023).

Another respondent from the “*Waa-n-yiy-ya*” group shared his point of view on the situation saying:

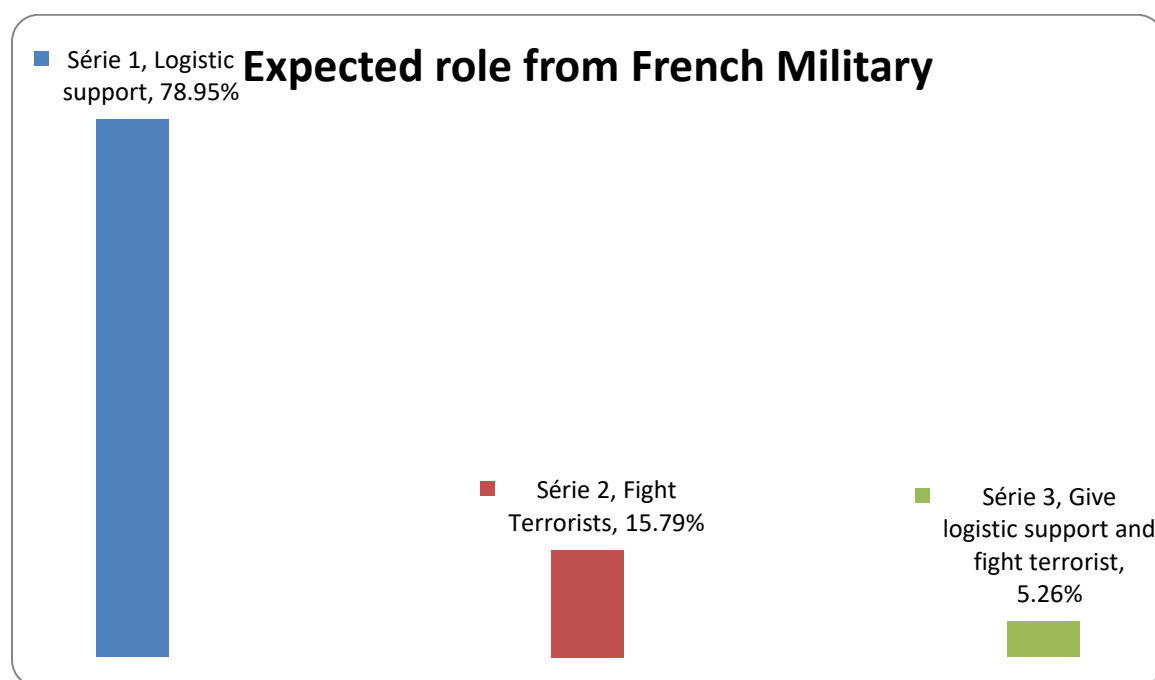
It’s just difficult for wise people to blindly believe that militaries from other countries would leave their countries, homes, parents and come to risk their lives for us” before concluding: “we naively expected too much from them, that is why our disappointment is too high (CSO3, group discussion, 15th October 2023).

A respondent among the IDPs claimed that those to be blamed first are their leaders who signed these “hopeless and useless” military agreements with France (IDP3, group discussion, on the 10th November 2023). A religious community leader (RCL6), noted with an air of desperation that: “We made a mistake to have had high expectations from our militatary cooperation with the French armed forces” (RCL6, Interview, 12th September 2023).

The results in Figure 7 reveal that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire expected the French armed forces to give only logistical support to the Burkinabé national armed forces. The minority (15,79%) expected the French armed forces to fight terrorists in the frontlines and only few respondents (5,26%) to the questionnaire believed the French armed

forces had a double mission; that is, to give logistic support and to fight the terrorist groups on the frontlines.

Figure 7: Role of French Army in Burkina Faso



Source: Field, 2023

4.3.2 Social Perception about the French Army's Presence in Burkina Faso

The study also sought to evaluate the perception of the respondents about the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The data collected through interviews and group discussions have confirmed that the majority of the Burkinabé disagree with the presence of the french armed forces in Burkina Faso. One practitioner of Traditional Religion strongly believes that:

The one who sleeps on the mat of another one is somehow sleeping on the ground⁴. (RCL7, Interview, 12th September 2023).

But a key respondent from the army balanced this argument by saying:

⁴ This proverb means it's wiser to count on oneself instead of counting on others.

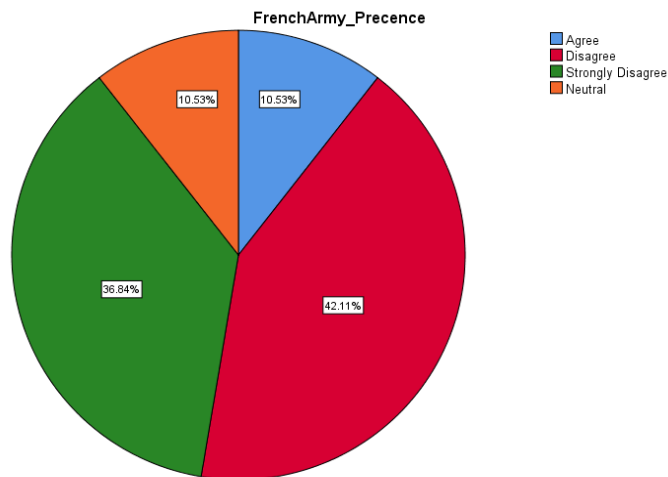
At the beginning of terrorist attacks, we humbly needed help from well-trained soldiers with sophisticated weapons and France was one of the military powers that could help us. On the ground we were really powerless in front of the well-trained and well equipped terrorist groups (A3, Interview, 6th December 2023).

Another key respondent from the army (A4) supported this argument saying:

Only civilians who never faced brainless armed terrorists can say we made a mistake to have called for military cooperation with France. It was even a visionary and wise initiative. Before adding: “The water we need to quench a fire doesn’t need to be drinkable,”⁵ he added in proverb (A4, Interview, 6th December 2023).

The results in Figure 8 indicate that most of them either strongly disagree or disagree that the French armed forces should be present in Burkina Faso. Only a minority supported their presence in Burkina Faso. This implies that more Burkinabé reject the presence of the French armed forces in their country. This issue is one of the most discussed topics to the extent that very few respondents seemed to be neutral about it.

Figure 8: Presence of French Army in Burkina Faso



Source: Field, 2023

⁵

This proverb means that when someone’s life is in danger, the beauty of the means he/she will use to save his/her life does not matter. What matters most is the efficiency of the means to be used.

4.3.3 Legitimacy of the Resistance to the Presence of the French Armed Forces

In essence, a huge number of respondents strongly disagree with the presence of the French armed forces because the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation has failed to produce the expected results. Many respondents were forming their own opinions about the expected role of the French armed forces however misinformed it might be (the French “collaboration” with the terrorists’ conspiracy theory). The researcher thinks this lack of communication (or miscommunication) has given a rationalization to the Burkinabé to demand that the French armed forces leave their country. These findings strongly support the assumptions of the resistance theory as explained in chapter 2.

One activist from a civil society organization stated as follows:

The French have come to us through violence (black trade, colonization, neo-colonialism), to exploit us and there wasn’t any other option than to fight against that and to even get them out of our country. To resist or to die were our two options and we have chosen the first option. This is the only language they knew and could understand. (CSO4, group discussion, 15th October 2023).

Another practitioner of the Traditional Religion justified the legitimacy of the resistance to the presence of the French armed forces in these terms:

We know they didn’t come to us because they love us but because of their interests. So we don’t expect them to accept to leave their interests peacefully. We therefore had to use the only means of protests they could understand, like burning their flag, blocking the access to their embassy...so that the whole world may see. (RCL8, Interview, 13th September 2023).

The high number of the respondents who stayed indifferent to the legitimacy of the resistance could be explained by the fact that, even if people in their majority did not want the French armed forces’ presence in Burkina Faso, they also denounced the violence that accompanied popular protests against them.

Results in Table 5 indicate that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire confirm that resistance to the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso is legitimate.

This could possibly be explained by their perceptible failure to keep peace and by the strong social perception according to which they support the terrorist groups.

Table 5: Legitimacy of the Resistance to the Presence of the French Armed Forces

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	42.1	42.1	42.1
	No	4	21.1	21.1	63.2
	I don't Know	7	36.8	36.8	100.0
	Total	19	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field, 2023

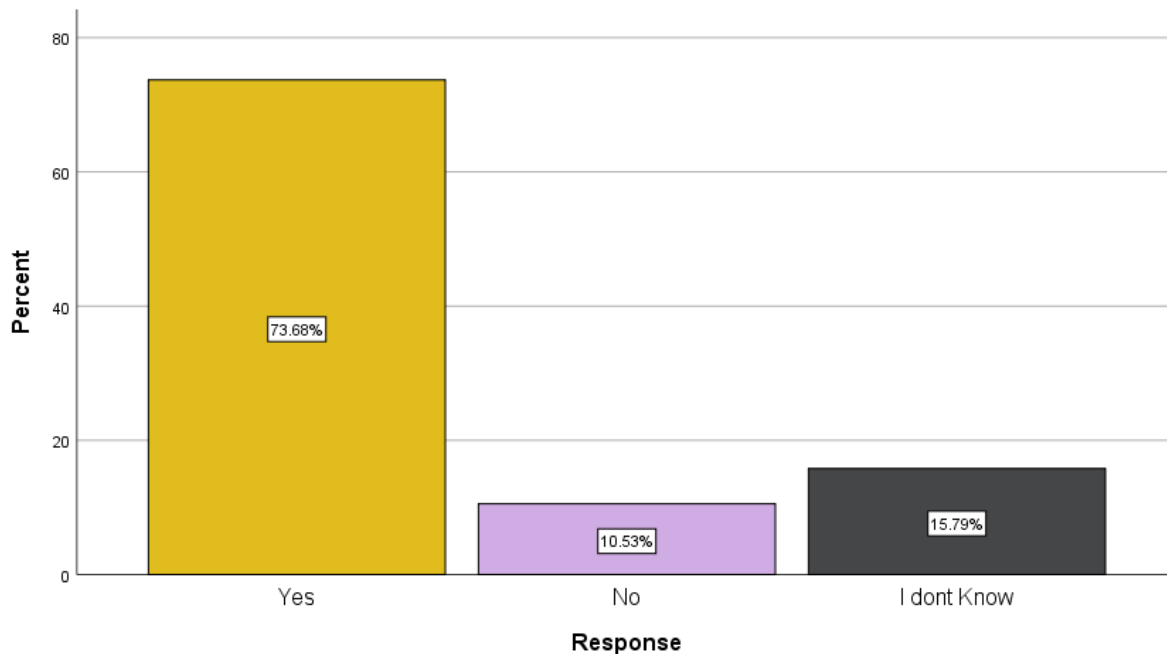
4.4 Thomas Sankara's Legacy in the Resistance of the Burkinabé

4.4.1 Military Cooperation and the Sovereignty of Burkina Faso?

The research aimed at investigating whether the military cooperation with France contradicted the sovereignty of Burkina Faso. During focus group discussions, a respondent from the *Waa-n-yyi-y-a* emphasized the importance of cooperation in international relations, advocating for fair and mutually beneficial partnerships (CSO5, group discussion, 15th October 2023). Another respondent from the army acknowledged the necessity of military cooperation with France, recognizing the need for sophisticated weaponry to safeguard the nation, particularly in the Sahel Region (A5, Interview 7th December 2023). This sentiment was echoed by some respondents in interviews who reiterated the importance of cooperation but emphasized the need for equitable partnerships, supporting some assumptions of the theoretical framework.

The findings in Figure 9 reveal that the majority of respondents to the questionnaire think that the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation undermined the sovereignty of Burkina Faso.

Figure 9: Sovereignty of Burkina Faso and the Military Cooperation with France



Source: Field, 2023

4.4.2 Respondents' Feelings about the Burkinabé Military Cooperation with New Partners

The study sought to find out the feelings of the Burkinabé towards these new partners. The findings fully agreed with what the researcher referred to in chapter 2. In recent years, with the cancellation of many military agreements with France, Burkina Faso has signed many military agreements with new partners like Niger, Mali, Russia, Brazil, Turkey, and Venezuela, as confirmed by some secondary data (Défis, 2023). During a group discussion with some VDPs, it was said:

“We don’t just call for any cooperation with any power. If people are calling for Russia, it’s because we have seen they are more serious. The proof is that, within one year, by cooperating with Russia, we acquired some very sophisticated weapons we couldn’t get with France after many years of military cooperation” (VDP3, group discussion, 10th December 2023).

However, some interviewees have brought other arguments about the quick trust that people have put into cooperation with new partners:

Let’s not flee from the lions in the bush and throw ourselves, hands and feet tied into the lake filled with crocodiles⁶ warned a religious community leader (RCL10, Interview, 13th September 2023).

Those we are welcoming today open-handed as our saviors (like Russia), they continued, may not be better than those we are chasing out now as demons:

*Time is another name of God*⁷, argued another religious community leader (RCL11, Interview, 10th September 2023).

Our best partners are our neighbors (Mali, Niger), who are living the same realities like us. We don’t absolutely need to go further (Russia) to call for help. Why are we chasing the French army while calling for Russia’s help...Is it not an eternal restarting? Wondered a key respondent from the army. (A6, Interview, 6th December 2023).

Another respondent, a religious community leader, seemed to be very sceptical about choices of new partners, saying:

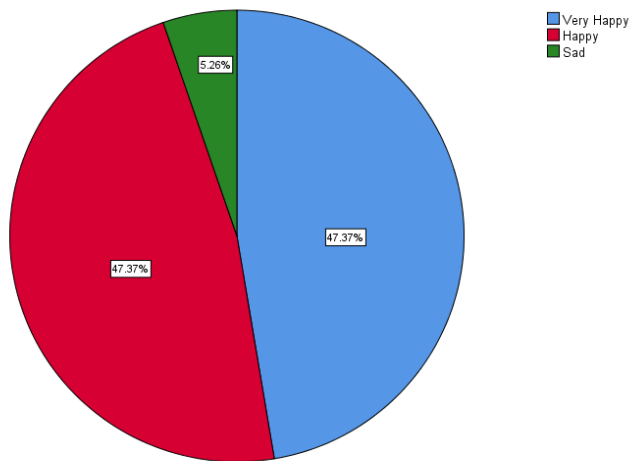
Partners are all the same. They shall come to us for their own interests. Let’s be responsible enough and look for human, fair and just agreements that are equally profiting all partners. (RCL12, Interview, 14th September 2023).

The study findings revealed also that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire were very happy or happy about the cooperation with new partners as indicated in Figure 10. This shows that people still believe in the goodness of military cooperation with new partners if it can go on with some new conditions like truthfulness, respect of sovereignty.

⁶ This proverb invites us to avoid compromises in choosing among evil ways. Evil is evil.

⁷ A metaphor used here to mean that only with time will we know the whole truth, whether we are right to chase France and welcome Russia.

Figure 10: Respondents' Feelings about the Burkinabé military cooperation



Source: Field, 2023

4.4.3 The Burkinabé Perception on their Military capacity to Defend their Country

The majority of the respondents in group discussions and interviews believed the Burkinabé have acquired enough sophisticated weaponry to fight terrorist groups by themselves. They said they have the military capacity to defend their country. In assessing the capacity of the Burkinabé military to defend their country against external attacks, the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire confirmed also that they have the capacity even without France, as noted in Table 6 below. This position might have influenced some citizens during the group discussions to have positive thoughts about the capability of their own military forces to restore peace in the country even after having cancelled military cooperation with an old partner like France. Similar thoughts were echoed during the focus group discussion with the VDPs where it was stated with some passion as follows:

Now we have the military capacity to defend our country. We have started counting on ourselves. Logistically, we are getting some sophisticated weapons from new serious partners and statistically, many Burkinabé are involved in fighting islamist insurgency as VDPs. We are ready now to fight against terrorist groups by ourselves (VDP4, group discussion, 10th December 2023).

Some religious leaders strongly argued that deciding to stop the military cooperation with France has even boosted the pride of the Burkinabé who started believing they could find local solutions to solve their problems:

After the cancellation of the military agreements with France, some institutional reforms are being made, a clear fight against corruption has been engaged, people are strongly contributing financially to support the Army, some VDPs have accepted to take arms and accompany the regular army to fight insecurity. (RCL13, Interview, 11th September 2023).

One key respondent from a civil society organization said:

Military cooperation with France was an obstacle to our fight against islamist insurgency. We have understood and have taken our responsibility of cooperating with other partners, in order to get smart weapons to fight terrorist groups and take back our country (CSO5, group discussion, 15th October 2023).

This opinion is shared by the current president, Ibrahim Traoré, who thinks that it was time for Burkina Faso to start cooperating with new partners in order to address the insecurity situation as suggested in the literature review. However, one religious leader astutely noted that the Burkinabé should have balanced their relationship with France:

We have found new partners with whom we are ready for new military cooperation and we have canceled the military agreements we had with France. That's fine. Why can't we try to continue working with France on other dimensions (economics, humanitarian...) that are also important for our country? (RCL14, Interview, 15th September 2023).

From the interviews and group discussions, a majority of respondents made clear allusions to Thomas Sankara's ideals in their resistance against the French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso. Many respondents evoked concepts and slogans that were dear to Sankara like: sovereignty, independence, responsibility, anti-imperialism and self-reliance.

During a group discussion with the VDPs, one of them quoted Thomas Sankara to justify his desire for joining the army on the frontline to fight terrorists:

It's better for me to die on the field while defending my homeland than to become landless because I was chased by terrorists. I have now understood Thomas Sankara when he said: The Homeland or death, we'll overcome (*La Patrie ou la mort nous vaincrons*) (Afrique Média, 2024). (VDP5, group discussion, 10th December 2023).

For some other respondents from civil society organizations, the Burkinabé had to fight responsibly for their own sovereignty if they really wished to get rid of Islamist insurgency. It is a matter of life or death:

If France wants to choose for us our military partners, there is something wrong in our relationships. We should be free to diversify our partnerships, to have military agreements with any power we want. We are a sovereign country and we are ready to pay the required price for our sovereignty (CSO6, group discussion, 15th October 2023).

Thomas Sankara's vision of sovereignty, true independence, and security has obviously influenced and guided the Burkinabé in their movement against the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. One activist of a civil society organization confessed:

For me, our commitment to fight against the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso is just the first part of our fight for true independence. We also have to break all the chains of their political and mainly economic domination through the use of the CFA franc (CSO7, group discussion, 15th October 2023).

But one key respondent from a religious community tried to balance these above-mentioned arguments in these terms:

Thomas Sankara was incontestably a Pan-Africanist who was fighting for the independence of Africa and he was an anti-imperialist who was strongly against the western domination. But he never cancelled any military agreement with France. I would say it is rather the passivity of the French armed forces towards terrorist groups (accusations of complicity with terrorist leaders), the disrespectful language of the French leaders, the exacerbation of the security situation, that have motivated the resistance against their presence in Burkina Faso (RCL15, Interview, 15th September 2023).

In substance, the majority of the respondents agreed that military cooperation with France has undermined the sovereignty of Burkina Faso. However, the participants are surprisingly in favor of military agreements with new partners like Russia. The researcher has realized that there are two sets of standards in the Burkinabé narrative about military cooperation

with these two military powers⁸. The respondents are highly critical and pessimistic when they talk about France, whereas their level of confidence goes higher and they become more optimistic when they refer to Russia. The researcher thinks it is necessary for the Burkinabé to analyze critically and assess wisely the types of cooperations they undertake with any partners based on objective arguments rather than subjective considerations. The researcher has realized that some respondents are full of energy and willing to support their army in the fight against terrorist groups. Even though the respondents recognize current hardships related to the insecurity situation, they are strongly convinced that all together, the Burkinabé will overcome terrorism. Some proudly assert they are being inspired by the ideals of the father of the Burkinabé revolution of 1983, Thomas Sankara.

Table 6: The Burkinabé Military Capacity to Defend the Country without France

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	57.9	57.9	57.9
	No	7	36.8	36.8	94.7
	I don't Know	1	5.3	5.3	100.0
	Total	19	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field, 2023

⁸

The researcher is pointing out the ambivalence in the Burkinabé narratives and sentiments about France and Russia, two influential powers and key players in international relations. From this study, the researcher has realized that, the same thing which the majority of the respondents are vehemently criticizing in France's relationships with other countries, they are approving and supporting with Russia. This poses questions about the sovereignty and independence of Burkina Faso. Even if international relations are a game over national interests, a certain sense of consistency in one's strategic and geostrategic positions would give chance to build sustainable and reliable relationships with the freedom of standing and fighting for what is just and right, with neither compromise nor complacency.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this chapter was to summarise the findings of the field work, to draw conclusions and make some recommendations on the basis of the data collected. The main objective of the research was to analyse the resistance of the Burkinabé to the French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso. The summary of the research focuses on analysing the three research questions around which the study was articulated. Moreover, it presents the researcher's interpretations of the data, while the conclusion synthesizes the key findings of the research. The researcher also suggests some recommendations to improve the relationship between the Burkinabé and their partners and to avoid creating contentious issues among them.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The main purpose of this study was to analyse the resistance of the Burkinabé to the military cooperation with France in Burkina Faso. To reach this goal, the researcher gathered data by means of questionnaire, interviews and group discussions addressed to some activists of civil society organisations, police officers, gendarmes, volunteers for the defense of the country, Internally Displaced Persons, practitioners of the traditional religion, Muslims and Christians. Here are the key findings.

The first research question was aimed at finding the contentious issues between military cooperation and the population. The research findings have revealed that most respondents of the questionnaire, group discussions and interviews do not accept the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The findings have also indicated that there is a very strong social perception that the French armed forces were collaborating with the terrorist groups. Two main

arguments may have fed this conspiracy theory: Firstly, we have the passivity of the French armed forces when Burkina Faso was suffering under the pressure of the terrorist groups. The research revealed that the French armed forces were not involved in fighting the terrorists on the frontlines. Secondly, France's objection to Burkina Faso's acquiring new weaponry from other partners like Russia. As noted in the literature review, this might also have fed the conspiracy theory in the Franco-Burkinabé relationship.

Some new variables have also helped the researcher to understand that some specific issues underlie and fed the contentious issues between the military cooperation and the population. The political context in the Sahel Region portrays a strong will of self-determination and a fight for true independence. This phenomenon is being carried out by a determined youth, led by some activists of the civil society organizations and Pan-Africanists, probably influenced by the current powerful pro-Russian lobby. Besides that, the French military presence in West Africa, the influence of the use of the CFA Franc and the domination of French multinationals as mentioned in chapter 2, are increasingly being seen by the youths of the Sahel Region as remnants of colonialism, symbols of imperialism and tools of domination.

These outdated types of cooperation (political, military and economic) are increasingly disparaged in many West African francophone countries, including Burkina Faso. In addition, some political leaders are reproaching France for having double standards in its diplomacy in Africa. These regional political, economic and military tensions between France and the countries of the Sahel Region (including Burkina Faso) have undoubtedly affected the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation.

The second research question aimed at exploring the main expectations of the Burkinabé towards the French armed forces. The research findings revealed that a majority of the

respondents expected only logistic support from France in their fight against insecurity. Secondary sources revealed that this expectation has not been completely met, confirming the content of the sources the researcher used in his literature review. That gives a certain consistency in the Burkinabé's strong disagreement to the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The findings indicated that the grounds for the resistance against the presence of the French armed forces is legitimate because the military agreements that were allowing that disposition have been legally denounced and cancelled by the government. The study found that even though the majority of the respondents disapproved of the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso, they approved of the presence of French civilians. The latter are welcome in Burkina Faso and the Burkinabé feel responsible to make them feel at home and safe, contrary to those who express anti-French sentiments. Some Burkinabé strongly emphasised that they were not against the French but against the French imperialist foreign policy in their country. Therefore, one can question how the proclaimed friendship with the French civilians can match the manifested anti-French policy.

The third research question sought to find out if Thomas Sankara's legacy has influenced the resistance against the presence of French armed forces in Burkina Faso. For the majority of the respondents, the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation was perceived to be undermining the sovereignty of Burkina Faso. Revisiting the context in which some of these military agreements were signed, the majority of the respondents found them as a means of domination from France. The majority of the respondents approve the cancellation of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation and are very happy that Burkina Faso has chosen to strengthen its military cooperation with other military powers. The findings also revealed that with the new partnerships and the local initiatives taken by the political power, the Burkinabé believe that they have the

military capacity to fight terrorist groups by themselves. The findings confirmed that Thomas Sankara's ideological legacy has inspired and guided the Burkinabé in their desire to rely on themselves in their fight against the terrorist groups and to resist the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The researcher could feel the strong conviction that the respondents were ready to fight for themselves and to achieve peace. The presence of any foreign armed forces in Burkina Faso seems to be unthinkable to the Burkinabé for the time being. The Burkinabé are aware that they have to count on themselves and fight for the survival of their country by their own means.

5.2 Conclusions of the Findings

This study analysed the resistance of the Burkinabé to the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. Since 2015, Burkina Faso has been challenged by terrorist groups. The existence of the military agreements between Paris and Ouagadougou was seen to be of great help to the Burkinabé's defence and security forces (FDS) in terms of intelligence and acquisition of weapons in their struggle to eradicate insecurity.

Based on the research findings, many contentious issues have affected the conception of the Burkinabé towards the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso. The wind of change which is blowing over the Sahel Region, the strong feeling against France's political, economic and military domination in West African countries and the relative passivity of the French armed forces in front of the terrorists' threat have worsened the relationships between the Burkinabé and the French armed forces in Burkina Faso.

Besides, the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation did not meet the Burkinabé's required basic expectations of military cooperation. The results did not live up to the expectations. The trust on which the cooperation between both parties should have been built has

disappeared, the intelligence sharing and the facilities in terms of weaponry acquisition have failed. This posed the question of respecting commitments in cooperation. This situation has therefore sown the seed of mistrust between the French armed forces and the Burkinabé, and it was worsened by challenges of regional context and international relations realities. The realities have ended up pushing the Burkinabé to demand the departure of the French troops from Burkina Faso. With the growing resistance, demonstrations ended up getting the better of negotiations. Military agreements were cancelled, and the French armed forces left Burkina Faso.

The findings of this study revealed that the military agreements were perceived to be against the sovereignty of Burkina Faso. The Burkinabé have therefore opted to get rid of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation and to build new partnerships with new partners. With their cancellation, the Burkinabé authorities have undertaken new initiatives in the fight against the terrorist groups. Some of these initiatives have made them become main actors in the fight against islamist insurgency in Burkina Faso. We can thus conclude from the findings that the Burkinabé have understood that sovereignty goes with responsibility. Once they engaged themselves in the risky fight for their sovereignty, they also accepted sacrifices to pay the heavy price of their choice through all kinds of contributions as mentioned above.

5.3 Recommendations

Although some may find the situation depressing and particularly disastrous, the researcher thinks that even in the midst of a complex situation, one of the major challenges of the researcher was to suggest a glimmer of hope. Based on that, here are the researchers' humble recommendations. The findings from this research have revealed the sensitivity of the security issue in Burkina Faso and the role of military cooperation with other partners. The security

challenges Burkina Faso has been facing since 2015 have unveiled the complexities of its military cooperation with France, mostly the military agreements that have been signed between both parties and their impact on the Burkinabé. Here are some recommendations that can help the political leaders to build fair and sustainable partnerships for the benefit of their population.

First, there needs to be transparent and consistent communication between the government and the people. The majority of the respondents neither heard of the French armed forces presence in Burkina Faso before the crisis, nor knew what their mission was supposed to be. The researcher thinks that the government should not have taken such highly sensitive initiatives without sufficient communication with the population. This lack of communication about the presence of the French armed forces and their clearly defined mission in Burkina Faso built a gap of mistrust between the Burkinabé and their leaders, and built a wall of suspicion between the population and the French armed forces. Regular communication would have helped to dissipate many misunderstandings and to create a better outcome for military cooperation. Currently some western media are reporting the construction of a Russian military base at Loumbila, around 20 km from the capital city Ouagadougou (*Le Monde Afrique*, 2024), yet, the Burkinabé have not been informed of this development by the government. Once again, we see the failure of communication between the state and its people.

Second, there is a necessity to build a reconciled Burkina Faso in dialogue with all Burkinabé. The insecurity situation has deeply divided the Burkinabé society. From the worrying rising tribal mistrust to the growing religious intolerance within the context of political tensions, there is an urgent need for dialogue and reconciliation among the Burkinabé. Through this study, the researcher has realised how the sensitive religious issue is making the social foundation of Burkina Faso more fragile, whereas it was known as a deeply-rooted pluralistic society and

appreciated for its resilient model of religious tolerance as noted in the literature review. The researcher encountered some respondents who asserted, without evidence, that some denominations in Islam have fostered the implementation of islamist insurgency in Burkina Faso. These suspicions arose since the beginning of insecurity in Burkina Faso as some sources of the literature review have revealed.

The researcher also noticed that some Burkinabé are pointing fingers at other Burkinabé for their presumed collaboration with islamists on the basis of their tribal membership. The researcher also felt a certain animosity of some political rivals who still believe others are the only source of the downfall of the country under the terrorist threat. As an example we have the regime of MPP⁹ accusing the previous regime of CDP¹⁰ of having collaborated with the terrorist groups that are attacking Burkina Faso. In analysing the issue of the Burkinabé resistance to the presence of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso, the researcher realised that the matter had also divided the Burkinabé. If a majority finds the French armed forces' presence unacceptable, a minority still believes in the goodness of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation and talking about this issue can immediately change the social atmosphere depending on which side one finds him/herself.

In fact, many issues have sown seeds of division in the Burkinabé society: justice, political governance, corruption, suspicion and mistrust linked to tribal, religious or political membership. The unity of the Burkinabé is being put to the test. Only the ingenuity of a good leadership will help to minimise the misunderstandings and listen to dissonant voices in order to

⁹ The People's Movement for Progress (*Mouvement du Peuple pour le Progrès MPP*) is a political party which was founded in 2014. It's one of the major parties that have led the country from 2015 to 2022 under the leadership of Roch Marc Christian Kaboré.

¹⁰ The Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) is the political party that has ruled Burkina Faso from 1996 to 2014, that is until the downfall of Blaise Compaoré's regime. The MPP's regime is one of the key actors that have organized the popular revolution that has led to the end of the CDP's regime.

reconcile the Burkinabé. The researcher therefore strongly appeals to the government to go beyond these divisions in order to build a united and reconciled Burkina Faso.

Third, we have the call for fair and intelligent partnership. Through this study, the researcher realised that according to many respondents, trust, interest and mutual respect are key pillars for any viable and sustainable cooperation. Even if a majority of the respondents approved the diversification of the Burkina Faso military cooperation with new partners like Russia, Turkey and Iran, other Burkinabé are more sceptical and have expressed their worries and fears about the unknown outcome of these partnerships. Their fear is to free Burkina Faso from one master and enslave it to another. The majority of the respondents expressed their wish of not experiencing such a scenario where the development and security of Burkina Faso will be subcontracted to partners. Rather, it should be the responsibility of the Burkinabé. What they expect from their leaders is to build an independent and prosperous Burkina Faso that will be able to cooperate with other countries in a respectful and responsible manner, without compromising its sovereignty.

Furthermore, the researcher recommends there be an appeal to the respect of freedom of speech, historically dear to the Burkinabé. Some people the researcher encountered confessed that they were not free to criticise the current political regime about its choices of new military partners or about its political governance, hence this current popular adage: “if you criticise the regime, you’ll be conscripted and sent to the frontline to fight against terrorists”. The historical background of Burkina Faso has largely shown that the resistance to foreign powers and to local leaders is part and parcel of the common legacy of the Burkinabé. Some historical figures have paid a heavy price, even with their blood, to make the Burkinabé proud of expressing their views to anybody, even to their leaders. Evidences of this include the fight against the colonial powers,

as noted in the literature review, the resistance against the regime of the first president that led to his resignation, the popular revolution that led to the downfall of the 27 year regime of Blaise Compaore in 2014, and recently, the resistance that pushed the French armed forces out of Burkina Faso. Political leaders should therefore be sensitive and courageous enough to open doors to critical thinking about their actions and initiatives and listen to dissonant voices that can help in building the country.

Besides, the researcher strongly appeals to the government to protect the legendary tolerance that has made Burkina Faso a pluralistic society. Stigmatisation due to tribal considerations, as already mentioned in the literature review, should no longer be tolerated and the religious radicalization which is feeding the growing intolerance should be criminalised. Some worried respondents think that once the Burkinabé will have won the military war in the rural areas, there is another fight to win in urban regions: the fight for a just and peaceful society where no tribe would feel unsafe anymore, as expressed in chapter 2. The society which the political leaders should help to build should be one with equal opportunities and justice for all no matter which tribe, region or religion to which they may belong. The expected society is the one where the claim for sovereignty is carried out by responsible commitments.

In addition the researcher calls the government to deeply reflect on how to find an appropriate transitional justice plan for Burkina Faso. The political leaders and many other citizens alike have recognized that bad governance and social injustices have led the country to the chaos it is currently experiencing. When the basic rights and dignity of people are not guaranteed in a society, frustrations likely arise and these lead to confrontations. It is high time for the political leaders to think of a transitional justice system for the country after this war. There are many areas where the principles of transitional justice are needed. For example, some

terrorists are giving up their fight and seeking to be reintegrated into the society; some political leaders did not assume their mission of protecting the Burkinabé for many years; some leaders in the army enriched themselves using the required means to fight terrorists, at the cost of their soldiers. If Burkina Faso really wants to build sustainable peace, it has to find a proper indigenous format for an adequate transitional justice to rebuild Burkina Faso after the war.

5.4 Conclusion

Security is the cornerstone and foundation block on which every stable and prosperous nation should be built. Burkina Faso's security has been under threat from terrorist groups since 2015. This has pushed it to strengthen its military cooperation with military powers, among which is France, to efficiently address the security challenges.

In recent years, the French dominant military and political role in the Sahel Region is no more irreproachable. The unfavourable regional context, marked by the stigmata of coloniality, has affected the relationships between France and some West African countries. This reality has echoed in the war-weakened Burkina Faso. The French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso has encountered a worrying and complex resistance from the Burkinabé. Between 2022 and 2023, the resistance to the French armed forces' presence in Burkina Faso reached its peak, as mentioned in chapter 2, creating a heavy relational atmosphere which has led to the termination of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation.

The main purpose of this research was to analyse the resistance of the Burkinabé against the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation. Some contentious issues have stretched out complicated relationships between the Burkinabé and the French armed forces. The research revealed that the unfulfilled expectations of the Franco-Burkinabé military cooperation has reached a point where it shouldn't be accepted anymore. The organised resistance has finally led

to its cancellation because it was seen as undermining the sovereignty of Burkina Faso. Claiming to be heirs of Thomas Sankara's ideological legacy, a very majority of the respondents recognized that as a local proverb says: "*If you are sleeping on the mat of someone, you are sleeping on the ground*"¹¹. The Burkinabé believe they are the main actors and agents who must build a peaceful and prosperous Burkina Faso. This strong conviction of membership has brought them to contribute in many ways to support the fight against the terrorist groups. The people seem to have understood that the claim to be sovereign goes with the will to be responsible. The denial of the need for military help from France has been accompanied by the strong conviction that the Burkinabé will make it by themselves.

But the reality of international relations has brought the Burkinabé to shift from their ideological thinking to thinking practically. Cooperation in international relations is necessary. What matters the most is how one finds one's place in this multipolar world. The proof is that as soon as Burkina Faso stopped its military cooperation with France, it immediately opened the room for military cooperation with other powers like Russia, Iran and Turkey. The ideological and political differences between the past and new partners are worrying to some Burkinabé, who ask worthwhile questions like: Are we leaving one master for another? What are the gains and losses of our new partnerships? Are we going to continue being the willing instruments of others? How healthy and sustainable is our sovereignty that we claim to have gotten after having cancelled our military cooperation with France? The Burkinabé need fair and respectful partnerships that will help to build a sovereign, peaceful and prosperous Burkina Faso. This is the heartfelt wish of the Burkinabé, revealed in this study. The current and future political

¹¹ This proverb means that to avoid disappointment and shame, one must be responsible and count on himself/herself and look for his/her own mat because the day that the owner of the mat will take it from him/her, he/she will be helpless and will start experiencing the hardships of sleeping on the ground.

leaders' assigned aim according to this research is to accomplish this exhilarating but risky mission.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF PRESENTATION

Nairobi, 27 April 2023

I am Fr. Michel OUEDRAOGO MAfr, a 2nd year post graduate student doing the Master of Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations at Hekima University College, a constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. I am carrying out my thesis research entitled **“An analysis of the Burkinabé Resistance to French Military Cooperation in Burkina Faso”**. I would like you to share some of your viewpoints with me, especially on your understanding on this very important issue. I’d also like to let you know the opinions you share are strictly for academic purposes.

I therefore promise that your name will not be shared or mentioned in the research. I’ll keep your identity and privacy secure during and after this academic exercise. Indeed, at no time in future, including should publication/s emerge from this research, will you be identified in any way. If you have any special enquiry about the research, you can kindly write to the Supervisor of this thesis (Dr Egan Anthony, SJ whose email is as follows: anthony.egan@hekima.ac.ke). Kindly accept my heartfelt gratitude in anticipation for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Michel OUEDRAOGO MAfr.

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

For my M.A research in Peace Studies and International Relations

Topic: **“An analysis of the Burkinabé Resistance to French Military Cooperation in Burkina Faso”.**

Researcher: **Fr. Michel OUEDRAOGO, MAfr.**

I have been informed of what research is, I have discussed with the one who wants to conduct this research and I have freely accepted to contribute because I have understood the use of the information the researcher is looking for: It will only be for the purpose of the thesis.

My participation in this research is free and voluntary. My name will not be mentioned in this document and will not be quoted in any other publication. I can also choose to refuse to participate in this research for personal reasons or to stop participating, and that would have no consequence on me.

By signing below, I consent to (please tick)

Completing a hard copy questionnaire []

Giving a recorded audio interview []

Signed

Date:

Name.....

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE ACTIVISTS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

I am a post-graduate student doing the Master of Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations at Hekima University College, a constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. My research is “**An analysis of the Burkinabé Resistance to French Military Cooperation in Burkina Faso**”. This research only has an academic purpose and you are kindly asked to share the information you might know and which I ensure you will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

Section A. Personal details

- 1. Gender:** Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ (specify)
- 2. Level of education:** Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐ No formal education ☐
- 3. Marital status:** Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow ☐ Widower ☐ Other ☐
- 4. Age bracket:** 18-26 years ☐ 27-35 years ☐ 36-44 years ☐ 45-53 ☐ Above 54 ☐
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Health ☐ Full time worker ☐ Casual worker ☐ Other (specify) ☐
- 7. Tribe:**

Section B. Objectives

- 1. To analyze the contentious issues between the military cooperation and sections of the population**

a. How would you rate the acceptability of the French military presence in Burkina Faso?

Highly acceptable ☐ Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐ Highly unacceptable ☐

b. In your opinion, do you agree with this social perception according to which the French armed forces were in contact with some terrorist groups in Burkina Faso? Agree [] Don't agree []

I don't have any opinion []

c. What do you think could have helped the Franco- Burkinabé military cooperation to be more successful?

2. To explore the main expectations of the Burkinabé towards the French military

a. What do you think should have been the role of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso?

To fight terrorists on the ground [] To give only logistic support to the Burkina Faso armed forces [] to give logistic support and fight on the ground [] Why?

b. What do you think about the French armed presence in Burkina Faso?

Agree strongly [] Agree [] Disagree [] Disagree strongly []

c. Do you think the resistance against the presence of French militaries in Burkina Faso is justified? Yes [] No [] I don't know [] Why?

3. To find out if Thomas Sankara's legacy has influenced the resistance against the presence of French militaries in Burkina Faso

a. In your opinion, the calling for military cooperation with France is contrary to respecting the sovereignty of Burkina Faso? Yes [] No [] I don't know [] Why?

b. How do you feel when you hear people calling for military cooperation with some military powers like Russia? Very happy [] Happy [] sad [] Disappointed [] Very disappointed [] Why?

c. Do you think the Burkinabé have the military capacity to defend the country by themselves?

Yes [] No [] I don't know []

d. Is it fair to assert that Thomas Sankara's ideals have motivated you in your resistance against the presence of the French armed presence in Burkina Faso? Yes [] No []

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMY

I am a post-graduate student doing the Master of Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations at Hekima University College, a constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. My research is “**An analysis of the Burkinabé Resistance to French Military Cooperation in Burkina Faso**”. This research only has an academic purpose and you are kindly asked to share the information you might know and which I ensure you will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

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Section B: Questions

1. How was your cooperation with the French militaries that were staying at Kamboince?
2. According to you, what was the mission of the French armed forces in Burkina Faso?
3. Do you think it was fair and responsible for the Burkinabé leaders to have called for military cooperation with France? Or was it a confession of powerlessness?

4. Could you understand why people were asking them to leave Burkina Faso?
5. Which other partner do you think would have helped Burkina Faso better than France? Why?
6. In your opinion, why do many youth use some slogans from Thomas Sankara when they are manifesting against the presence of the French armed presence in Burkina Faso?

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LEADERS

I am a post-graduate student doing the Master of Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations at Hekima University College, a constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. My research is “**An analysis of the Burkinabé Resistance to French Military Cooperation in Burkina Faso**”. This research only has an academic purpose and you are kindly asked to share the information you might know and which I ensure you will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

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Section B: Questions

1. Do you think the protests against the presence of the French militaries in Burkina Faso are justified?
2. What is your opinion about the defeat of the military cooperation with France?

3. Do you think that the contestations against the French armed presence in Burkina Faso have some religious backgrounds?
4. Do you think the Burkinabé can find solutions to their security issues without the help of France? If yes how? If not, why?
5. Do you think that some of the values taught by Thomas Sankara might have helped to defuse tensions arising between some Burkinabé and the French armed forces?

APPENDIX 6: GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION FOR THE VDPS

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7. **Tribe:**

Section B: **Questions**

1. What motivated you to join the national army in fighting the terrorist groups?
2. Have you met some French militaries on the ground? If yes, describe your collaboration with them.
3. According to you, what is the impact of the departure of the French armed forces from Burkina Faso in the fight against islamist insurgency ?

4. Do you think the Volunteers for the defense of the country are well equipped to fight against terrorist groups?

5. Do you think it was necessary for you to join the army without any prior training for that?

APPENDIX 7: GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION FOR THE IDPS

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Section A. Personal details

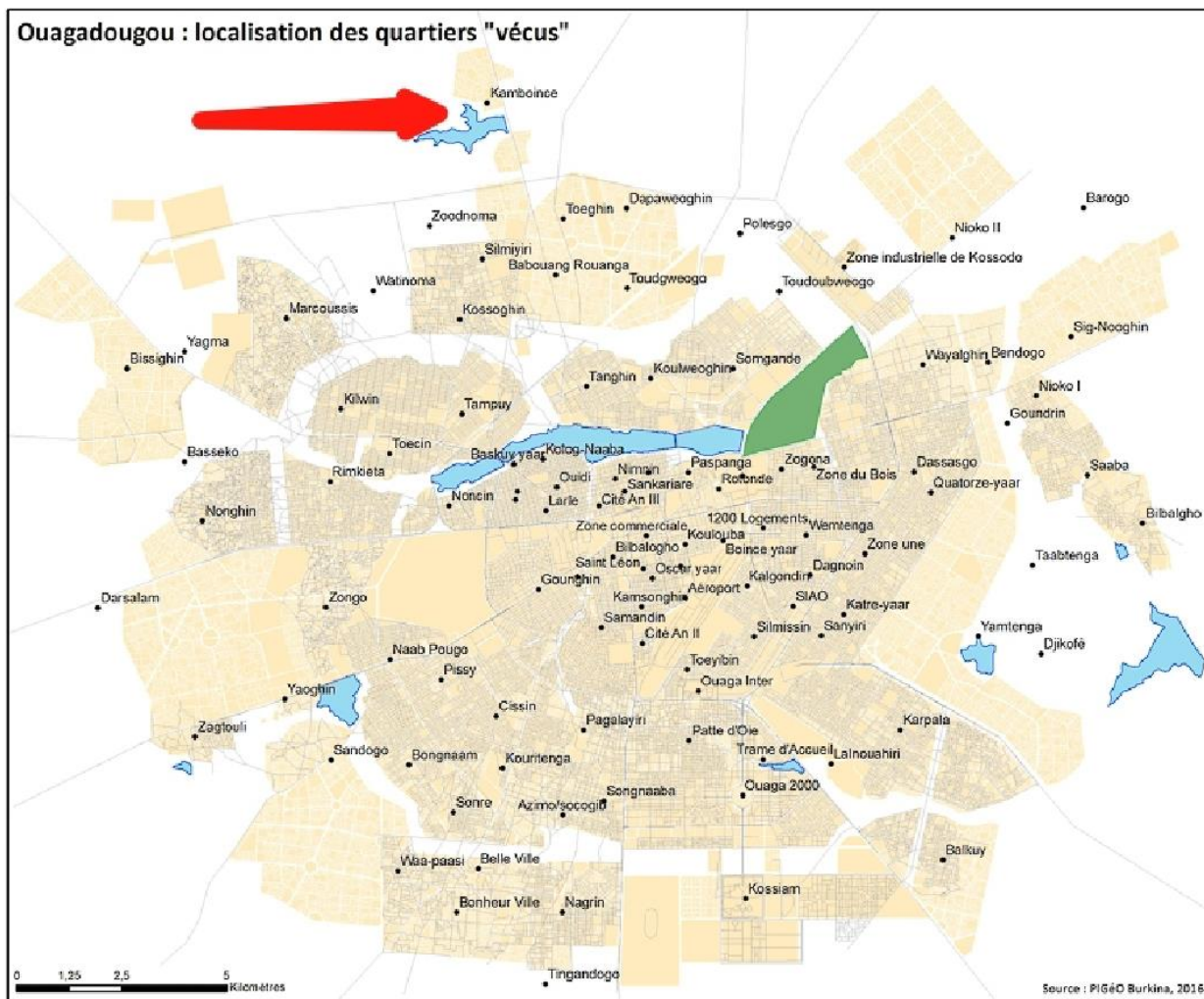
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7. **Tribe:**

Section B: Questions

1. Have you ever met some French militaries in your village and to which extend have they been of help to you?
2. Do you think the national armed forces and the VDP alone can ensure the security of the country?
3. What do you think about the presence of the foreign armed forces in Burkina Faso?

4. To which extent can you trust the foreign armed forces in Burkina Faso?
5. In your opinion, calling for military cooperation with military powers is a sign of responsibility or a confession of powerlessness?
6. With the diplomatic tensions between France and Burkina Faso, do you think Burkina is still a safer place for the French civilians?

APPENDIX 8: MAP OF OUAGADOUGOU



APPENDIX 9: RESEARCH PERMIT



HEKIMA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

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HEKIMA INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Date: September 1, 2023

OUAGADOUGOU (Kamboince)

Our ref: Our ref: 1/084/Dean/HIPSIR

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT

This is to confirm that **Fr. Michel Ouedraogo, MAfr** is a student at Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), Hekima University College is a constituent college of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Michel is pursuing an MA degree in Peace Studies and International Relations and is required to undertake a field research. His research is entitled: **An analysis of the Burkinabe resistance to the French military cooperation in Burkina Faso**. The Ethics Committee at Hekima University College has found no serious ethical issues that may undermine this research and has given a go ahead.

We would appreciate very much your support in approving Michel's research and issuing him with a research permit.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Elisee Rutagambwa

Dean

Institute of Peace studies and International Relations



JESUIT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (JST) AND HEKIMA INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (HIPSIR) FACULTY OF THEOLOGY OF THE JESUITS IN AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR (FTJAM) AND JESUIT HISTORICAL INSTITUTE IN AFRICA (JHIA) CENTRE FOR RESEARCH, TRAINING AND PUBLICATION (CRTP) AND JESUIT CENTRE FOR SAFEGUARING IN AFRICA (JCSA)

APPENDIX 10: LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Ministry
Of Foreign Affairs, Regional
Cooperation and Burkinabe Abroad

N° 2023 MAECRBE/SG/DRH/SDRH

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabe Abroad presents its compliments to the apostolic Nunciature (Embassy of the Holy See) in Burkina Faso. Following the verbal note N 3031/23/ of 04th October 2023, about the request for the research permit for Michel OUEDRAOGO, a priest from the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), the ministry kindly informs you of its agreement.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabe abroad conveys its acknowledgment to the Apostolic Nunciature (Embassy of the Holy See) in Burkina Faso for its kind cooperation and takes this opportunity to renew to it the assurances of its distinguished consideration.

Ouagadougou 19th October 2023

The apostolic Nunciature in Burkina Faso
(OUAGADOUGOU)

Translated by Hekima University College Office of the Deputy Principal Academic Affairs

I certify that this is an accurate translation of the original


Hekima College Nairobi