2.2.2   The United Nations Trusteeship System & Security

Following the atrocities of World War II, the maintenance of world peace and global security was the main impetus for the creation of the United Nations. The Trusteeship System, like the Mandates System before it, was a by-product of the preceding World War. Just as the League of Nations did before, the UN consequently integrated an institutional framework reflecting the existing balance of power, peacekeeping, and administrative organisation.

Colonialism & the Advent of the United Nations

Analysing the main debates at *United Nations Conference on International Organization* (UNCIO) outlined in the Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta proposals, Sylvanna Falcón follows African-American leaders who linked struggles against colonialism and racism, concluding that the UN was being created as a racializing and gender-specific institution, whilst its most prominent organ, the Security Council, is essentially undemocratic.[260] Although the UNCIO failed to bring all colonial territories under the umbrella of international trusteeship, the very threat of expanding international oversight shaped the relationship between colonial governments and international organizations.

The volume edited by Nicole Eggers, Jessica Lynne Pearson, and Aurora Almada e Santos examines how on the one hand, the United Nations was conceived as a tool to advance colonial interests, while, on the other hand, emphasizing its influence in facilitating the self-determination of dependent territories. Significantly, the volume explores the effect of the eleven territories within the Trusteeship System on the much larger list of 72 Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs).[261] Pearson argues that while *de jure* the UN Special Committee on NSGTs was not a monitoring system for dependent territories, it has become one *de facto*, which is why colonial powers banded together to defend colonialism at the United Nations, arguing that subject populations living in independent territories often endured worse conditions than those living in formal overseas empires.[262]

The 'Colonial Question' & Global Security

Comprehensive studies on the UN Trusteeship System all locate security at the heart of the trusteeship principle.[263] The Trusteeship Council, alongside the General Assembly and the Security Council, was one of the six main organs of the UN. Whilst the Security Council was the central response to global insecurity, the Trusteeship Council at this time

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260 Sylvanna M. Falcón, *Power interrupted: Antiracist and feminist activism inside the United Nations*, Decolonizing feminisms (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), p. 33.

261 Nicole Eggers, Jessica L. Pearson and Aurora Almada e Santos, eds., *The United Nations and decolonization*, Routledge studies in modern history 69 (Abingdon, Oxon, New York, NY: Routledge, 2020).

262 Jessica L. Pearson, "Defending Empire at the United Nations," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45, no. 3 (2017), https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2017.1332133.

263 H. D. Hall, "The British Commonwealth and Trusteeship," *International Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1946); Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*; Chowdhuri, *International Mandates and Trusteeship Systems*; Thullen, *Problems of the Trusteeship System*.

stood like no other UN organ for the question of decolonisation – a major ideational, material, and geopolitical transformation for years to come.

Duncan Hall, who due to his study's early nature could only compare the ending Mandates System with the beginning of the Trusteeship System, discussed the centrality of security and the 'sacred trust,' concluding "The dilemma of the Dominions at Paris was thus that of the United States at San Francisco: either make certain now of your strategic frontier or risk it becoming in other hands a threat to national security."[264] Security consideration are one of the aspects why Hall argues from a realist perspective that historians have exaggerated the extent to which humanitarianism and liberal idealism account for the establishment of mandates and trusteeship territories. He argues that they are "largely byproducts of the working of the state system of the world, of the political relations of the powers, and thus factors in the balance of power."[265] A similar argument is made by Susan Pedersen's study on the Permanent Mandate Commission. Her core argument is: "The League helped make the end of empire imaginable, and normative statehood possible, not because the empires willed it so, or the Covenant prescribed it, but because that dynamic of internationalization changed everything."[266] Mazower concluded that the League's Mandates System, as well as the United Nations Trusteeship System after it, was rather designed to defuse imperial rivalries and therefore "started out life not as the instrument to end colonialism, but rather [...] as the means to preserve it."[267] According to Gustavo Esteva, the post-World War II paradigm of "underdevelopment" began with American President Harry Truman's inaugural address in 1949, which revealed the apparent discovery of large-scale poverty in the "underdeveloped regions" of the world. Truman's inaugural address set out a vision for the post-war global order in a four-point agenda: first, the support and expansion of the UN; second, the continuation of the reconstruction of Europe; third, the establishment of NATO – Truman's fourth point, dealing with the rest of the world, was particularly illustrative:

> "we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of *underdeveloped areas*. [...] This should be a cooperative enterprise in which all nations work together through the United Nations and its specialized agencies whenever practicable. It must be a worldwide effort for the achievement of peace, plenty, and freedom. [...] The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans. [...] Slowly but surely we are weaving a world fabric of international security and growing prosperity."[268]

Post-development scholars, such as Esteva or Aram Ziai, assert that Truman's speech marked the "invention of the concept of underdevelopment," whereupon virtually

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264   Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*, p. 122.

265   Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*, p. 8.

266   Pedersen, *The guardians*, p. 406.

267   Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Lawrence Stone lectures (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 31.

268   Harry Trumann, "Inaugural Address," available from https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/inaugural-address-4.

overnight "two billion people became underdeveloped."[269] Truman's reference to "old imperialism," acknowledged that the apparent underdevelopment was not self-inflicted but a result of colonialism. But Truman did not use underdevelopment solely to call upon the West's altruism: the problem of underdevelopment was linked to a promise of *security* for the American nation and the international community. This promise was made in the context of a growing expansion of Soviet influence. Mark Mazower also hinted at a link between these larger trustee-like missions and notions of security: "The idea that America had a special mission to transform societies across the world was an integral part of this new conception of its role. In the great ideological confrontation with Soviet communism, the Truman administration believed it had to demonstrate that capitalism had the better tools for improving the lives of the world's poor and underprivileged."[270] Post-development scholars widely overlook this discursive security-relation, and in fact, the even critical state-building contributions, such as by Mark Duffield, in turn often present the *security-development nexus* as "new" development.[271] However, the development-security-nexus preceded the state-building debate as early as 1945, that is, at the very beginning of the concomitant decolonisation and Cold War era.

Black American scholars, such as Rayford Logan, who was the former mentor of the Trusteeship Division's Director-General, Ralph Bunche, found the submissiveness to the administering powers' security interests particularly worrying.[272] Chowdhuri takes a somewhat milder stance, concluding simply that "considerations of national security in this atomic age also demand the retention of dependent territories."[273] Thullen devotes considerable space to the discussion of American security arrangements in the emerging Trusteeship System, arguing that these American security considerations diluted the Trusteeship System and failed to provide a robust institutional framework for anti-colonialism.[274]

> "Within relatively few years *anti-colonialism nearly eclipsed security issues as the center of United Nations attention*, a development with considerable repercussions on the trusteeship system. The system was designed to deal with an aspect of the colonial question; yet, its form and purpose were determined during the earlier, *security-obsessed period*. These changes in the international environment make it clear that a study of the trusteeship system merely in terms of its established goals would evade the central thread determining its nature and development."[275]

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269   Gustavo Esteva, Salvatore J. Babones and Philipp Babcicky, *Future of development: A radical manifesto* (Britsol: Policy Press, 2013), p. 7; Aram Ziai, *Development Discourse and Global History: From colonialism to the sustainable development goals* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2015).

270   Mazower, *Governing the world*, p. 273.

271   Duffield, *Global governance and the new wars*.

272   Rayford Logan, "The System of International Trusteeship," *The Journal of Negro Education* 15, no. 3 (1946)

273   Chowdhuri, *International Mandates and Trusteeship Systems*, p. 303.

274   Thullen, *Problems of the Trusteeship System*, pp. 23–55.

275   Thullen, *Problems of the Trusteeship System*, p. 13.

Thullen remarks that while the League's Mandates System was designed to mitigate imperial rivalries, ensuring peace through idealistic and passive peacekeeping provisions, such as disarmament and non-militarisation, the Trusteeship System was imbued with emergent Cold War real-political considerations and active peacekeeping provisions, such as the authorisation of military bases and the introduction of strategic trusteeship territories. To put it differently, the ideological conflict dynamics of the Cold War equally found their expression in the UN Trusteeship System.

The 'Colonial Question' & the Cold War

Considering the broader context of the Cold War, Gordon Morell holds that the Trusteeship Council was criticised not least as a formal bulwark against Soviet influence in the former colonial territories.[276] John Hobson holds that the characterisation of the 1947–1989 era as that of the *Cold* War diverts attention from the struggle for decolonisation in the Global South.[277] In fact, for some states in the Global South the '*Cold* War' was not so cold after all, which for Hobson establishes "the racist decision by the superpowers to outsource war to the 'inferior' and expendable 'wastelands' of the Global South."[278] Similarly, Trevor Getz establishes that in the period from 1945 to 1975, for many movements, the Cold War and decolonisation (due to their simultaneity and interconnectedness) were one experience rather than two.[279]

The Soviet Union boycotted the Trusteeship Council in its founding phase, accusing it of being an imperial institution. State representatives of the Soviet bloc hardly missed an opportunity to denounce the exploitation endemic to Western colonialism, inadequate health provisions, lack of access to education and other social services in the trusteeship areas, and most critically, vehemently opposed the distinction made between trusteeship territories and NSGTs. Being forced at San Francisco to accept a limited Trusteeship System rather than having none at all, the Soviets endeavoured to revise the rules underlying the Trusteeship System, extending them to NSGTs.[280] Thus, alongside the Bandung states, the Soviet Union also took the lead in introducing what became the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*.[281]

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276 W. G. Morrell, "A Higher Stage of Imperialism? The Big Three, the UN Trusteeship Council, and the Early Cold War," in *Imperialism on trial: International oversight of colonial rule in historical perspective*, ed. R. M. Douglas, Michael D. Callahan and Elizabeth Bishop (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2006), p. 112.

277 John M. Hobson, "Un-Veiling the Racist Foundations of Modern Realist and Liberal IR Theory," in *Globalizing International Theory: The Problem with Western IR Theory and How to Overcome It*, ed. A. Layug and John M. Hobson, Worlding Beyond the West Ser (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), p. 58.

278 Hobson, "Unmasking the racism of orthodox international relations/international political economy theory," p. 13.

279 Trevor R. Getz, "Connecting Decolonization and the Cold War," 820L Khan Academy, accessed 27 December 2023, available from https://www.oerproject.com/-/media/WHP-1200/PDF/Unit8/WHP-1200-8-1-9-Read---Connecting-Decolonization-and-the-Cold-War---820L.ashx.

280 Morrell, "A Higher Stage of Imperialism? The Big Three, the UN Trusteeship Council, and the Early Cold War," p. 118.

281 General Assembly Resolution 1514, *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*, A/RES/1514(XV) (14 December 1960).

On the other side, by responding with counterattacks on human rights abuse and economic exploitation in the Soviet Union and its quasi-colonial satellite states, colonial powers joined the US in a campaign to invalidate Soviet efforts to gain legitimacy as leaders of the anti-colonial cause. In the trusteeship territories themselves, the Administering Authorities feared the fusion of nationalism and communism into an ideologically stronger anti-imperialism.[282] Communist activity was feared not only where there was an organised communist party or obvious overseas contacts, but especially within nationalist independence movements. In retrospect, what colonial powers constructed as a 'red menace' emanating from nationalist movements, in many cases turned out to be more the desire for independence from colonial rule than an affiliation with the Soviet camp. An issue which can be traced in the emergence of the non-aligned movement at the Bandung conference by which newly independent states sought to create a neutral ground and alliance structure outside of US-Soviet tensions.[283] Indeed both anticolonialism as well as anti-communism, can be traced in Trusteeship Council deliberations.

Anti-colonial movements sought assistance either from the United States, proclaiming democracy and the economic prospects of free markets, or the Soviet Union, promising to break capitalist and imperial rule (or both).[284] As the US was allied with the major imperial powers, many decolonisation movements sought the support of the Soviet Union, while more conservative independence leaders sought the support of the United States by promising to stop the spread of communism in their region. While the influence of the Soviet Union in the NSGTs would initially be a matter of bilateral relations, the trusteeship status protected against direct unilateral influence by the Soviet Union.

Yet, while both superpowers declared themselves as anti-imperial in the debates of the Fourth Committee and the Trusteeship Council, they expanded their global dominance in an imperial fashion: the Soviet Union treated its satellite states almost like colonies and the United States replaced undesirable leaders in its 'backyard.' In fact, anticolonial as well as colonial delegates argued with the *saltwater thesis* that the system set out in the UN Charter had failed to hold contiguous land empires, such as those of the USA or the USSR, to the same standards of accountability as colonial empires made up of overseas territories. In trying to be 'non-aligned,' the Afro-Asian bloc refused to be drawn into the logic of the Cold War and insisted on separating decolonisation from the East-West confrontation. At times, the colonial powers often found the criticism of the Afro-Asian bloc more dangerous than that of the Soviets. Yet, confronted with either Soviet or American interference in their struggle for independence, many decolonisation movements were forced to enlist the help of the other power and thus inevitably got caught up in the maelstrom of the Cold War. Thus, amid the geopolitical context of the Cold War, Western powers limited themselves merely to regime change when they perceived the threat that the foreign policy of a particular post-colonial state overly aligned with that

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282   Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994). https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300164473, https://www.degruyter.com/isbn/9780300164473, p. 32.

283   Morrell, "A Higher Stage of Imperialism? The Big Three, the UN Trusteeship Council, and the Early Cold War," p. 130.

284   Getz, "Connecting Decolonization and the Cold War."

of the Eastern bloc.[285] The coexistence of modernisation theory and realism, postulated that as long as the states did not pose a threat to each other in the international system of states, internal affairs simply remained internal affairs.

Decolonisation & Nation-State-Building

Latham argues that American foreign policy during the Kennedy administration was significantly shaped by modernisation theory in order to contain communism in the developing world and recast older Marxist and imperialist ideologies of "nation building."[286] The colonial powers were primarily concerned with nation-building, to unite the linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse populations of their colonies by creating higher national-territorial loyalties in order to link them in turn with the metropolitan regions created in confederations such as the British Commonwealth of Nations or the French Union. Yet, although the nation-state was a European export, which has been situated within the Enlightenment era,[287] it was feared as a vehicle for decolonisation because national consciousness and sovereignty could not be reconciled with colonial foreign domination.[288]

Mark Berger emphasis that the policies such as those of the two major colonial powers, France and Britain, which were reluctant to release their colonial territories into independence, was less one of "state-building" than of "nation-building."[289] Their goal was to integrate the ethnic, cultural, linguistical fragmentation of their colonial possessions into superordinate territorial loyalties. Before World War II, colonial powers were engaged in nation-building in colonies that were heterogeneous in terms of population. It was only with the end of World War II that there was a gradual shift from nation-building to state-building. While the strategy of nation-building in the decolonisation period still counted on the development of shared notions of political order and a collective sense of belonging, contemporary understandings of state-building are increasingly technocratic, as they focus on building legitimate state institutions such as bureaucracy and security structures to enable positive development of the economy, society, and political life. Though there is an obvious shift, Lemay-Hébert contends that it is impossible to conceive of state-building as a process separate from nation-building.[290]

Thus, overall, the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference established by the United Nations was used by the old powers and was upheld accordingly. The rationale

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285 Examples include Cuba, North Korea, Congo, and the Vietnam War. Wesley, "The state of the art on the art of state building," p. 370.

286 Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as ideology: American social science and "nation building" in the Kennedy era*, 2nd impr, The new Cold War history (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

287 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, [1983] 2006), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01609.0001.001

288 John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan, "Nation and Decolonization," *Anthropological Theory* 1, no. 4 (2001), https://doi.org/10.1177/14634990122228818.

289 See Mark T. Berger, *From Nation-Building to State-Building*, Third Worlds (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

290 Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, "Statebuilding Without Nation-Building?," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3, no. 1 (2009), https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970802608159.

and antecedent for UN peacekeeping interventions remained limited: UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld introduced the framework for "preventative diplomacy" in the 1950s, as a procedure for future UN mission aimed at preventing potential disputes between the parties.[291] Notable examples were the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960–1964) and the United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea (UNSF, 1962–1963).

One exception to this paradigm was France, which continued to intervene unrestrained in its former colonies, especially in West Africa. Tony Chafer establishes that the decolonisation of French West Africa was by no means trouble-free, and due to France's colonial policy of *assimilation*, was rather treated as a 'development internal to the French Union,' which prevented actual decolonisation. One indication is that since 1960, France has conducted over fifty military interventions in its former African colonies.[292] It is noteworthy, that France's military presence in Africa was based on the weak-states argument,[293] some 20 years prior to its surge in the 1990s and popularised in France by Jean-François Bayart's *politics of the belly*.[294] Lelouche und Moisi, for example, cite a 1976 speech by French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974–1981), in which he considered that France's security is inextricably linked to North-South relations: "Our world is an over-armed world in a case of an East-West conflict and a world which is looking for a North-South balance. On the other hand, it is a very unstable world regionally for a series of reasons ranging from ideology to under-development, which explains that everywhere we witness a general destabilization of security."[295] According to Nathaniel Powell, three motives guided French interventionism: the safeguarding of economic interests, the containment of a (miscalculated) threat of communist and rebel groups, and the spread of Anglo-Saxon imperialism.

In 1998, François-Xavier Verschave described this exceptional relationship of France to its former colonies under the contraction *Françafrique* to criticise the alleged corrupt and clandestine activities of various Franco-African political, economic, and military networks.[296] In the same work, Verschave propagated the already standing thesis that France was behind the assassination of the first head of state in postcolonial Africa: Togo's president, Sylvanus Olympio. According to Verschave, as Olympio wanted to lead Togo out of the franc zone and make his country independent of the former tutelary power, the General-Secretary for African and Malagasy Affairs, Jacques Foccart,

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291   Luc Reychler, "Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2017, p. 6, accessed 12 October 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190 846626.013.274, available from https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore /9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-274.

292   Commission des Affaires Étrangères, "Engagement et diplomatie: quelle doctrine pour nos interventions militaires?," Rapport d'Information 2777 (Assemblée Nationale, 2015), available from https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/rap-info/i2777.asp#P830_305195, pp. 115–33.

293   Nathaniel K. Powell, "Battling Instability?," *African Security* 10, no. 1 (2017): 52–54, https://doi.org/ 10.1080/19392206.2016.1270141.

294   Bayart, *L'État en Afrique*.

295   As cited in Pierre Lellouche and Dominique Moisi, "French Policy in Africa," *International Security* 3, no. 4 (1979): 121, https://doi.org/10.2307/2626765.

296   François-Xavier Verschave, *La Françafrique: le plus long scandale de la République* (Paris: Stock, 1998).

purportedly turned on him, commissioning the French Commander of the Togolese Gendarmerie, Georges Maîtrier, to initiate the plot. After the meeting that prepared the coup, Maîtrier is said to have taken Eyadéma aside and asked him to shoot Olympio for 300,000 CFA francs (6,000 French francs).[297] After learning from Ambassador Henri Mazoyer on the night of the 12–13 January 1963 that Olympio was hiding in the courtyard of the US Embassy, Maîtrier reportedly informed the coup plotters and encouraged them "to complete the work that has already begun."[298]

2.3 Togoland

In contrast to many other decolonisation processes, the independence of Togoland was granted under UN trusteeship. Although not as violent as the case of the trust territory of Cameroon, for example, the case of Togoland attracted enormous international attention. There are many detailed scholarly perspectives on the colonial history of French or British Togoland. The main strands of literature that have been included concern the rise and fall of (colonial) statehood and nationalism, particularly around the demand of Ewe and Togoland unification as well as contributions on colonial policing and security.

2.3.1 State- & Nationhood

German Togoland

Compared to other territories formerly under German colonial rule, literature on the German colonisation of Togoland is not very extensive and although Germany's colonisation of Togoland preceded the French and British mandate era, the literature on this period is less extensive than on the mandate period.

A handful of monographs are devoted to the study of the colonial state and administration in German Togoland, yet, in which Togolese themselves hardly make an appearance.[299] Literature that examines, with varying degrees of historical emphasis, the web of colonial relations between the German administration, its colonial crimes, indigenous resistance, and its aftermath is of rather recent nature.[300]

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297 Verschave, *La Françafrique*, 117–119.

298 Verschave, *La Françafrique*, p. 114.

299 Arthur J. Knoll, *Togo under Imperial Germany 1884 – 1914: a case study in colonial rule*, Hoover colonial studies 190 (Stanford: Hoover Inst. Press, 1978); Ralph Erbar, *Ein" Platz an der Sonne" ? Die Verwaltungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der deutschen Kolonie Togo 1884 – 1914*, Beiträge zur Kolonial- und Überseegeschichte 51 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1991); Trutz von Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft: Zur soziologischen Theorie der Staatsentstehung am Beispiel des "Schutzgebietes Togo"* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994); Dennis Laumann, "A Historiography of German Togoland, or the Rise and Fall of a "Model Colony"," *History in Africa* 30 (2003); Bettina Zurstrassen, *"Ein Stück deutscher Erde schaffen": Koloniale Beamte in Togo 1884–1914*, Campus Forschung 931 (Frankfurt/Main, New York: Campus, 2008).

300 Peter Sebald, *Die deutsche Kolonie Togo 1884– 1914: Auswirkungen einer Fremdherrschaft*, Schlaglichter der Kolonialgeschichte 14 (Berlin: Links, 2013); Rebekka Habermas, *Skandal in Togo: Ein Kapitel deutscher Kolonialherrschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer, 2016); Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft*.