CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Security Studies

Master's Thesis

2021 **František Novotný**

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Multiple peace operations in Mali

Master's thesis

Author: František Novotný

Study program: Security Studies

Supervisor: prof. Mgr. Oldřich Bureš, M.A., Ph.D.

Year of the defense: 2021

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on May 2, 2021 František Novotný

References

NOVOTNÝ, František. *Multiple peace operations in Mali.* Praha, 2021. 59 pages. Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Studies. Department of Security Studies. Supervisor prof. Mgr. Oldřich Bureš, M.A., Ph.D.

Length of the thesis: 104 155 characters with spaces

Abstract

In recent years, some scholars have turned their attention towards the problem of multiple simultaneous peace operations (MSPOs), but with little focus on state motivations for their initiation. This thesis examines the case of the conflict in Mali and the high amount of operations deployed there by different actors. It does so through an instrumental case study of the establishment of these operations and of the French role in this process. The thesis finds that France was at first eager to deal with the conflict by supporting regional actors, but with the crisis deteriorating, becoming ever more involved. Next to its own intervention, it led various international organizations to operate alongside it in order to share the conflict management burden while remaining critically influential and securing its goals. This approach allowed France to balance the interests of its domestic audience, western allies, as well as those of the governments in the region. Based on the analysis, the thesis suggests that the proclaimed logic of division of labor between different organizations deploying MSPOs might be a justification for primarily generating as much resources as available while reducing various kinds of costs, although without any explicit evidence for it being a conscious effort of using the organizations' comparative advantages.

Abstrakt

V nedávné době někteří výzkumníci obrátili svou pozornost k otázce vícečetných souběžných mírových operací, ovšem s nízkou mírou zájmu o motivace států pro jejich vznik. Tato diplomová práce prozkoumává případ konfliktu v Mali a velkého množství operací zde nasazených různými aktéry. Činí tak skrze instrumentální případovou studii vzniku těchto operací a vlivu Francie na tento proces. Práce dochází k závěru, že Francie nejprve stála o řešení konfliktu cestou podpory regionálních hráčů, nicméně s prohlubováním krize se stále více zapojovala do jejího řešení přímo. Vedle vlastní intervence přivedla řadu mezinárodních organizací k tomu, aby operovaly po jejím boku, s cílem sdílet břímě zvládání konfliktu, a přitom si udržet přímý vliv a zabezpečit své cíle. Tento přístup Francii umožnil balancovat mezi zájmy domácího publika, západních spojenců a vlád v regionu. Na základě této analýzy práce naznačuje, že deklarovaná logika dělby práce mezi různými organizacemi nasazujícími vlastní souběžné operace může být ospravedlněním pro vygenerování maximálního množství dostupných zdrojů při omezení

různého typu nákladů, ačkoliv není zřejmé, že by šlo o vědomou snahu využívat komparativních výhod organizací.

Keywords

AFISMA, Barkhane, EUTM Mali, France, G5 Sahel, Mali, MINUSMA, multiple simultaneous peace operations, peacekeeping partnerships, peacekeeping, Serval, UN

Klíčová slova

AFISMA, Barkhane, EUTM Mali, Francie, G5 Sahel, Mali, MINUSMA, operace na udržení míru, OSN, partnerství pro udržování míru, Serval, vícečetné souběžné mírové operace

Název práce

Vícečetné mírové operace v Mali

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to all those that have supported me in writing this thesis, as well as generally while pursuing my education. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, prof. Bureš, whom I unfortunately, during the whole writing process, did not get the chance to meet in person – representing the odd times under which this work has been done – especially for the trust and high demands that I felt. I would also like to expressly thank my family for supporting me throughout the course of my studies, both emotionally and materially, as well as to recognize the many other dear people who have challenged and motivated me intellectually. From the endless comfort of central Europe, matters of war can be addressed with a deceitful dose of ease. At least symbolically, I would therefore like to dedicate the thesis to all the people not just in the Sahel who are bearing the brunt of suffering resulting from violent conflict and the ensuing tragedies. This piece aspires to be but the tiniest of drops in the sea of scholarly contribution to its minimization.

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Introduction

When Mali fell into a crisis in 2012, it was immediately clear that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional organization of which Mali is a member, should deal with it and possibly deploy a peace operation to the country. The state soon lost control of a half of its territory and other actors started to pay attention, too. Within a year, the issue was intensely dealt with by the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), as well as directly by France, among others. Later, the worsening conflict even spurred the creation of a new regional organization, the G5 Sahel, bringing Mali and four other Sahelian states facing similar problems together. More or less all the possible international organizations (IOs) that deal with security issues in West Africa have therefore in some way participated in stabilizing the country. Yet as much as the affected countries and organizations tried to coordinate, after almost a decade, they did not settle on one military operation that would deal with Malian insecurity. Instead, each of the aforementioned actors deployed its own force, and most of them have been operating in the country at the same time.

What is more, this is not an unusual situation nowadays. Parallel peace operations conducted by different IOs in the same area struggling for similar ends are becoming increasingly common (Bah and Jones, 2008). In fact, a majority of peace operations between 1948 and 2009 may fit this description and their proportion is growing over time (Balas, 2011). This has been happening on the background of IOs active in the field of security, both regional as well as the UN, embracing cooperation in peace operations in various ways (Gowan, 2012). More broadly, the concept of peacekeeping has seen a major transformation from its traditional form, dealing primarily with cease-fire monitoring, to complex operations performing many different peace-building tasks (Diehl and Druckman 2017).

Why is that? Studies on this problem have started to be more systematic during the past decade. Drawing on previous research on the relations between the UN and regional organizations, and on state participation in peacekeeping, scholars have more or less settled on the concept of multiple simultaneous peace operations (MSPOs), focusing primarily on their initiation and effectiveness. Until today, the research has been dominated by inter-organizational perspectives, which focus on IOs themselves as the key subjects of study. This kind of research has tried to explain the phenomena's initiation largely through ideas of

division of labor between the organizations, but has mostly ignored interests of powerful member states in this regard.

Where this gap opens, this thesis attempts to begin. In order to help fill the gap, it examines the puzzle of state motivations for establishing multiple simultaneous peace operations, a research subject not yet sufficiently answered. It studies the already indicated and ongoing conflict in Mali, where the word "multiple" stands for a relatively large value, where France has played an outsized role in the establishment of the MSPOs, and which consequently provides us with a rich source of information. Therefore, the thesis more specifically answers the following research question: Why did France support the establishment of multiple simultaneous peace operations in Mali? As an instrumental case study, the thesis should offer a broader insight into the initiation of MSPOs, guided by the current limited theoretical explanation, but hopefully laying the groundwork for future more comprehensive theorization.

The argument this thesis presents is that French policies have indeed been critical for the initiation and establishment of all the peace operations in Mali, and it is, at least in this case, possible to locate the causes of the initiation of MSPOs at the level of individual states' policies. In Mali, it seemed to be a result of an attempt to achieve somewhat competing policies, but certainly with as little cost as possible: Passing primary responsibility for action on local actors but retaining direct influence, all the while sharing the resource burden with as many other third-party actors. The argument flows from the following thesis structure. First, it explores the current state of the literature on multiple simultaneous peace operations, including by locating it within the context of issues of regionalization and state participation in peacekeeping. Based on the gap in literature, it then develops the research question and research design, introducing the method and operationalizing the key concepts. Next, the general picture of the conflict in Mali is presented, with a particular focus on the period before the initiation of the peace operations. Crucially, the thesis then analyzes in detail the decision-making that led to the establishment of each of the peace operations, with a particular focus on the role of France. Finally, before concluding, the last chapter attempts to balance the lack of previous theorization by revisiting the ideas identified in the literature so far and connecting it with the empirical material.

1. Literature review

The topic this thesis deals with is part of the literature on relations between the UN and the many regional organizations that have come to being over the last century. Such a relationship has been understood as part of the polarity between "universalism" (or globalism) and "regionalism", exploration of which extends as far back as at least to the creation of the League of Nations, and re-emerging after the Cold war. Koops and Tardy (2015) find in their review of UN's inter-organizational relations in peacekeeping that it was mainly the mid-1990s surge in peace operations, the resource constraints and a risk of an overstretch what motivated the UN to first seriously approach the regional organizations as partners in practical burden-sharing. They further assert that there is an underlying assumption that the cooperation is a win-win-like situation where all participants benefit, even though there are dangers of "duplication, rivalry, and inhibited impact in a given conflict zone" between the organizations. They therefore conclude that what is at present emerging between the key peacekeeping actors is a culture of cooperation, even though significant political barriers in the form of divergent strategic visions or structural rivalry, as well as administrative and technical obstacles, still remain. The nature of this cooperation is also more ad hoc than strategic and driven by individual security actors' caution, although a process of formalization and institutionalization is happening.

This cooperation can take different shapes. Yamashita (2012) differentiates between two basic types of arrangements of the regional organizations-UN relationship: subcontracting and partnering. When UN subcontracts the peace operations, the regional organizations bear primary responsibility for operational duties, while they are still subject to decisions and oversight of the UN Security Council (UNSC), and the relationship is thus clearly hierarchically structured. A "partner" relationship is on the other hand more horizontal (equal), where capabilities of the UN and the given organization are typically more interconnected, possibly even creating a network of actors.

In the context of peacekeeping, both scholars as well as representatives of states (Angelov, 2010) have often discussed the regional approach in terms of its advantages and disadvantages. This might offer some initial ideas about motivations for the involvement of actors other than the UN in peace operations. Notably, the use of regional arrangements can be seen as a way of bypassing disagreements between, or indifference of, the great powers

not part of the given arrangement. These organizations are also able to provide legitimacy (through knowledge of local circumstances), speed in deployment, valuable information and natural affinity to the local actors in the spirit of "regional solutions to regional problems". Motivation of regional actors might also be stronger as they are more affected by the consequences of the conflicts. On the other hand, proximity to conflict also means lower likelihood of impartial interest in conflict resolution. Further, regional organizations, if at all existing in the given area, often are not well-developed, lacking the necessary capacities, experience and also a different kind of legitimacy that only the UN possesses, due to its global reach and the responsibilities for international peace and security entrusted to it by its Charter (Bellamy, Williams and Griffin, 2010, p. 310).

Since a large amount of peace operations has been, both historically and today, tied to the Sub-Saharan region, many researchers specializing in this geographical area have explored the relations between the UN and the many regional organizations there, including on the subject of peacekeeping. Tardy and Wyss' (2014) work is one such major recent example. They observe that the intensity of cooperation between the two levels is increasing and explain that it has been partly driven by the mantra of "African solutions to African problems", interpreted locally as non-interference, while in Western capitals as a way to reduce military commitments, leading to larger usage of various regional arrangements. Looking at the same issue through neoclassical realist framework, Olsen (2014) argues that Western governments nowadays are not less concerned about security matters in Africa, only shifting the direct military responsibility to other actors while paying the costs, echoing a general trend in UN peacekeeping (Kathman and Merlin, 2017). However, Coleman (2011) points out that the African regional peacekeeping operations have come to be used more as interim arrangements before a UN deployment and that African soldiers are increasingly participating in UN-administered operations.

Williams and Boutellis (2014) provide a slightly different take on the issue of UN cooperation with the African Union, arguing that besides great power politics and normative context, other bottom-up factors have also been significant drivers of the nature of the relationship. Namely, the shared pragmatic need to address major security crises has been accompanied by AU's limited capacities, which tends to bring both organizations to cooperate, sometimes in an innovative way. On the other hand, friction resulting from

bureaucratic politics in the context of a highly unequal relationship and differing organizational cultures complicates that.

Scholars have also devoted considerable attention to the issue of state participation in peacekeeping. Bellamy and Williams (2013) consider many possible explanations of state decisions on participating in providing peacekeepers, but avoid explaining that through one general theory. Instead, they opt for a comprehensive framework informed by the various theoretical standpoints as well as by their empirical case studies. They identify a wide variety of specific motivating as well as inhibiting factors for participation, which are categorized as political, security, economic, institutional and normative. They then argue that decisions on contributions to peacekeeping operations are either enabled or constrained by national strategic cultures and bureaucratic institutions, but they do not determine the decisions. What most immediately influences these decisions are general policy standpoints, demand-side factors and the political context. Similarly, based on her cases studies of the Czech, Slovak and Austrian participation in peacekeeping, Urbanovská (2012) argues that it does not have one monocausal explanation. When it comes to peacekeeping, states do not exclusively follow either the logic of appropriateness, understood as the commitment to the values of the international community, or the logic of consequences, meaning maximizing utility through the prism of national interest. These logics are instead mutually intertwined and the relative importance of each changes over time. Nevertheless, Kathman and Merlin (2017) do find that states are more likely to contribute troops to UN operations if they are engaged in a rivalry with another state, as well as when they face fears of a domestic coup from the military.

In line with the previously identified trends of increased cooperation and shifting responsibilities among and between different actors, some scholars have recently turned to the study of multiple simultaneous peace operations. Balas (2011) has first introduced the concept into the literature. According to him, the literature on peacekeeping operations had until then not addressed the issue and observed operations mostly separately from each other, even if they were happening within the same conflict. In his definition, MSPOs are two or more peace operations deployed at the same time, within the same conflict. Balas further argues that a concept of "peacekeeping partnerships", as previously used for example by Bah and Jones (2008) is different and less useful, as it only includes the cases where direct cooperation between operations can be observed. Bah and Jones categorize the types of

cooperation in peacekeeping operations as either sequential, parallel or (fully-)integrated, the latter closely corresponding to the idea of "hybrid" operations.

Bellamy and Williams (2009) have also referred to this phenomenon as hybrid missions, where forces from different IOs work in tandem within the same conflict, either sharing some command or institutional structure – or not. They suggest that "hybridization" is happening as Western forces are playing a decreasing role in UN operations as such, while being increasingly active through such hybrid operations taking place outside of the UN system. Tardy (2014) has similarly studied "hybrid" operations, defining them through a high level of integration among the conflict management actors, though the examples used suggest that, as Gleason-Roberts and Kugel (2014) also argue, fully-integrated "hybrid" operations are in fact quite rare, with the UNAMID African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur being the prime case.

The question that this thesis aims to answer relates to the reasons for initiation of multiple simultaneous peace operations, as opposed to their effectiveness – another possible research issue. Welz (2016) distinguishes between the two and suggests that the question of their initiation has not yet been much explored theoretically. Many authors have attempted to explain the proliferation of such situations from the perspective of the organizations themselves. One of the earliest explanations was suggested by Brosig (2010). His argument is that the type of cooperation results from local political dynamics rather than from a strategic choice by the IOs. But in general, insufficient institutional capacities, a demand for greater legitimacy and organizational interests can be the reasons for increased cooperation between organizations. Gleason-Roberts and Kugel (2014) also underlie that the UNAMID hybrid operation was essentially born out of compromise rather than a strategic decision. This then, according to them, applies to peacekeeping cooperation in general, as it is often driven by emergency action during crises. They also find that even if there is shared strategic vision, translation to coherent action on the operational level does not happen automatically, since different organizations deploying different operations often have different objectives, mandates and values. The multiplicity of operations thus understandably makes coordination difficult, as also seen for example in the analysis of peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo by Dursun-Ozkanca (2010).

These authors have also stressed the importance of the logic of division of labor based on comparative advantages for MSPOs (Gleason-Roberts and Kugel, 2014), emulating the UN itself, which embraced the logic in its relationship with regional organizations (Job, 2004). Brosig (2011) explains this behavior theoretically as organizations attempting to "occupy niches which provide them with a competitive advantage over others, which ensures institutional survival". They are thus keen to establish a division of labor arrangement in which their "niche" functionality and value are preserved. Such potentially burden-sharing arrangements would appear to be logical in conditions of resource scarcity, a point made for example by Brosig (2020). He argues that resource scarcity brings IOs to cooperate, as he applies the resource dependency theory on IO peacekeeping interaction in Africa. Nevertheless, Brosig and Motsamai (2014) also argue that resource scarcity is only a necessary, not a sufficient condition for explaining IO interaction. According to their research, the key variables are the organizations' degree of compatibility of security concepts, of institutional match and of the strife for institutional autonomy.

There is also a different approach to the study of inter-organizational relations, based on social network analysis. Oelsner and Dominguez (2018) have recently borrowed terminology from this method to study inter-regional (across-regions) organizational interactions, that is relations, links and connections between regional security organizations. They specifically explore the organizations' involvement and centrality in the network, the importance and density of their resulting links, or their role in agenda-setting. Taking the same perspective, Akbulut-Gok (2020) argues that IO peacekeeping cooperation can be understood as a network process. Factors affecting cooperation "on the ground" between organizations can be both exogenous to the network, such as their types and their resource capacity, as well as endogenous, that is, the structure of their interdependencies. Besides the social network approach, others have also highlighted explanations of MSPOs initiation that could be seen as of more superficial, or even irrational character. One is reputation-building by the individual institutions fearing a slide to irrelevance, another path-dependence, a self-reinforcing feedback process resulting from previous investments in an existing policy that actors have made and are reluctant to abandon (Binder, 2015).

Even within this strand of literature focusing on actions of IOs and their own interactions, the underlying interests of member states as their principals are in fact regularly invoked and their importance cannot be overlooked. One example is the case study by Welz (2016) on

the interactions of IOs in the Central African Republic (CAR). The article draws on the literature on institutional linkages and inter-organizational relations, while combining past theoretical and empirical discussions. Welz finds, inter alia, that strong member states with interests in the conflict area are a key factor in determining which organizations will be active in the conflict, which is in line with findings by Wyss (2017) on the relationship between France and ECOWAS. Aris, Snetkov and Wenger (2011, p. 263) moreover argue that in the case of relations between the UN and AU, their misalignment has been exploited in the past by member states to pursue their own interests. Regional and great powers generally seek to use these competing competencies to extend their own influence, namely through "forum-shopping", where the states choose from a range of institutions the one that at a given moment serves best to further their interests (Brosig, 2011).

Overall, the state-level perspective has been mostly downplayed when studying MSPOs. Nevertheless, Henneberg and Plank (2019) do at least deal with the question of why states choose one particular from a variety of possible IOs for their peace operations. They argue that the primarily institutionalist research on overlapping regionalism, forum-shopping and regime complexity should be supported by the inclusion of power-based notions, such as hegemonic behavior, insistence against external interference, and national-interest related factors. This is because "embedded rationality can override an issue–specific rational-choice logic", which is especially relevant when dealing with security matters. Such a perspective is still key in the study of international security and as seen above in the discussion of state participation in peacekeeping, state interests and the logic of consequences matter in this domain as well, albeit not exclusively or necessarily dominantly. It will therefore be worth exploring a similar question. Rather than asking why states prefer one organization from many, as Henneberg and Plank do, this thesis will explore why states ever more commonly do not limit themselves to using one organization only.

2. Research design

A clear puzzle therefore arises: What are the motivations of states for establishing multiple simultaneous peace operations? To make its relevance even clearer, it is possible to pose an opposite follow-up rhetorical question: Why do states involved in managing a given conflict instead not decide to more often pool their resources in a single integrated ("hybrid") operation, presuming that it would fulfil the necessary operational functions, with lower risks

of duplication or miscoordination? After all, previous literature has already hinted at such dangers with multitude of actors involved. Such a puzzle has not yet been directly tackled and there does not appear to be a specific theory which would explain the phenomenon of multiple simultaneous peace operations from the perspective of state actions. The thesis will therefore start with an empirical case with an unusually high amount of simultaneous peace operations, that is, the contemporary conflict in Mali. The focus of the analysis will be the policies and actions of France, a pivotal state in the context of the conflict and operations in Mali, and its effects on the initiation of multiple simultaneous peace operations there. The specific research question stands as: Why did France support the establishment of multiple simultaneous peace operations in Mali?The method of the thesis would therefore be a single instrumental case study. Following Stake's (1995) differentiation, the objective will be to not only understand this case intrinsically for its own sake. Instead, it should provide us with a broader insight about initiation of MSPOs with the analysis at the level of state actions and policies. The conduct of the analysis will be loosely inspired by the method of process tracing, as understood e.g. by Beach (2017), focusing on any evidence of mechanisms by which French policies and actions caused the initiation of MSPOs, but relying dominantly on secondary literature. While the subject of interest are French policies and actions, the analysis cannot ignore decision-making within the international organizations that have mandated the operations.

It is moreover important to underline that generalizability of results from a single case study using this method is necessarily limited. Subsequent research, possibly through the use of comparative methods, may be then better positioned to build a more robust theoretical explanation of such phenomena. Having said that, some of the ideas explored in the literature review will still understandably direct the focus of the analysis. Firstly, as already outlined, traditional states' interests are one factor that should be paid attention to (Welz, 2016). Another is the ability to influence or control the operations through forum-shopping behavior with the intention of increasing leverage (Brosig, 2011). The thesis will also focus on many different kinds of resource constraints (Brosig, 2020), manifesting either as inadequate amount of finance, troops, legitimacy or operational functions. The discussion section at the end of the thesis will then connect the empirical material back to the broader theoretical discussion and offer directions for the development of a comprehensive theory.

The rationale for choosing the case of the conflict in Mali is not very hard to understand. Since its beginning nearly a decade ago, more or less all the possible international organizations that deal with security issues in West Africa have in one way or another participated in stabilizing the country. There have been early efforts by the Economic Community of West African States, which were in the end not implemented, and only a slightly more successful operation led by the African Union, which was transformed to a still ongoing robust UN peacekeeping operation. The EU also has a military training mission in the country (along with a civilian capacity-building mission). In both of these last two organizations, France holds an important role, especially when it comes to matters of West Africa. Moreover, the French armed forces have themselves intervened in Mali in 2013, supported throughout the years by various regional and European allies (at present notably through the Takuba Task Force), and its adapted operation is deployed to this day. Finally, France has also contributed to the creation of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) regional arrangement of the governments of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, who operate a joint intervention force in the region, including in Mali (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020).

France is clearly key for understanding the MSPOs in Mali, and its role will be understood through the concept of a pivotal state. Bellamy, Williams and Griffin (2010, p. 43) define the concept as states which "initiate, lead and provide a significant material contribution to a peace operation, which may or may not be authorized by the UN or be conducted under the auspices of a regional arrangement", while the material contribution of other actors is "insubstantial". Henke (2019), who also uses the concept in a similar way, clearly identifies France as such a pivotal state in the case of Mali, with its long-standing interests in the Sahel and its influence there. She also argues that pivotal states are especially significant for ad hoc operations or those outside of the UN context, which could be seen here in the formation of the G5 Sahel alliance, besides the French interventions. Therefore, while not ignoring other noteworthy actors for necessary context, the thesis will pay primary attention to France and its interactions with the conflict in Mali.

The understanding of "peace operations" in this thesis comes from the foundational 1995 UN document An Agenda for Peace, as developed by Balas (2011) in his definition of multiple simultaneous peace operations. He understands it as a deployment of military and/or civilian personnel dealing specifically with a conflict, post-conflict or a potential conflict

situation. Its objective can be structural conflict prevention through peacebuilding activities, either pre- or post-conflict, monitoring and limiting violence through traditional peacekeeping, and peace enforcement. Balas therefore considers this conceptualization to be "maximalist", since it includes all these typically overlapping peace activities. Such a broad understanding will be useful for this thesis, since in the case of Mali, the range of tasks conducted by the operations is broad as well.

Differentiation of peace operations from counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism is an intricate issue and far from easy. Operations deployed by the UN, which have traditionally adhered to the principle of minimum use of force, are now more commonly mandated to use it both at a tactical, as well as strategic level (Mockaitis, 1999) – without the consent of the main parties to the conflict, in order to "neutralize" the so-called "spoilers". This shift has been especially pronounced exactly in the case of MINUSMA, the UN operation in Mali, which even has its intelligence gathering capabilities, and has been strongly cooperating with the other operations more clearly focusing on counter-insurgency tasks (Karlsrud, 2015). To argue that a UN operation "fighting spoilers" is still only and just a peacekeeping mission therefore relies on accepting that some actors are ontologically "other", not legitimate and worthy of peace, which is in fact a moral, not empirical claim. Given these overlaps of functions and mandates, where amid the talk of division of labor, the operations are rather converging on a standard of "counter-insurgency politics" (Charbonneau, 2019), all the operations in Mali will be included in the analysis, regardless of the extent to which they are truly "peaceful" in their activities, as long as their objective is stabilization of the country by military means.

3. Conflict in Mali

3.1 Sources of conflict

Before declaring the independent state of Azawad in 2012, Tuareg groups have been at odds with the government in Bamako on numerous occasions. The Tuaregs are a relatively small ethnic group living primarily in large parts of the Sahara Desert, including in the sparsely populated northern regions of Mali. They are distinct from the black majority of the south, and are traditionally characterized by nomadic lifestyle. Bearing limited autonomy under the French rule, Tuareg groups have repeatedly pushed for independence. Following the establishment of modern, black-south-dominated Mali in 1960, they have soon afterwards

unsuccessfully rebelled, which was met with a very militarized response from the government, and has only led to further alienation and worse societal status. Another rebellion came in the 1990s, organized under the Azawad People's Movement, Azawad being a name for the homeland of the Tuareg. This time, the rebellion formally ended in a negotiated settlement, but with limited attempts at real integration of the north. The 2012 crisis, generally understood as the beginning of the armed conflict, was also directly preceded by a Tuareg-led insurgency, emerging in 2006 and ending in 2009 with the Sebha agreements (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015).

The Malian north furthermore has a long track record of underdevelopment and governmental neglect, all the more striking given Mali's vast poverty even when taken as a whole (Shaw, 2013). Already the French colonial policies have focused on the agrarian south (Cocodia, 2017), deeming the desert region economically worthless, even though it was historically an important source of Malian wealth (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015). After the first Tuareg rebellion, the Malian government has introduced land tenure policies disadvantaging their traditionally nomadic lifestyle, only aggravating the underdevelopment of the north, and not investing in any major infrastructure. The northern regions are moreover naturally prone to extreme droughts and subsequent food crises, which have led people to flee, at times in massive numbers (Cocodia, 2017). The southern elites have also applied divide-and-rule strategies towards the northern populations, mainly consisting of the Tuareg and Arab minorities, in order to keep their power over the state, thus effectively excluding the minorities from political participation. All of this was exacerbated by the government being rife with nepotism and corruption, elite enrichment, and marginalization of political opposition (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015).

Jihadism in the Sahel is a more recent phenomenon, but it nevertheless plays a crucial role in the origin of the conflict. Since the 1990s, traditionally practiced Sufism and its proponents have been more commonly challenged by more radical Islamist preachers, often coming from Pakistan or Saudi Arabia and building relations with locals (Solomon, 2013). At approximately the same time, local Islamist movements have also started expanding across the Sahara region following the Algerian civil war and forging relations with al-Qaeda at the start of the millennium (Cocodia, 2017). Such Islamist groups, epitomized by the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), have further benefited from taking part in illicit activities, such as hostage-taking, human trafficking and drug trade (Solomon, 2013), which

enabled them to materially support local populations disenchanted with state corruption and neglect, to gain further affinity and to integrate within the society (Cocodia, 2017).

An often cited and more proximate cause of the conflict was also the regional instability generated by the fall of the Qaddafi regime in Libya, as Qaddafi previously recruited large groups of young Tuaregs from Mali to his Islamic Legion (Cocodia, 2017). Return of them and of other Tuareg workers back to Mali following the Libyan war thus meant not just an influx of looted arms – including many sophisticated ones originating from NATO – and other kinds of resources, but also more experienced and better organized soldiers (Shaw, 2013; Cocodia, 2017).

3.2 Before intervention

The presage of crisis came with the formation of a new Tuareg rebel group. In October 2011, various factions representing major Tuareg communities of northern Mali have united to form the secular National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), amidst a growing sense of a Tuareg national identity (Shaw, 2013). In mid-January 2012, the MNLA has then instigated yet another Tuareg rebellion, by launching a series of attacks on the positions of the Malian army in the north (Cocodia, 2017) and massacring some 150 soldiers in the town of Aguelhoc, which stirred public discontent (Théroux-Bénoni et al., 2012).

The crisis deepened when the Malian government itself collapsed. In late March 2012, just weeks before planned presidential elections, officers from the Malian army headed by Capt. Amadou Sanogo from the "green berets" regiment responded to popular anger against governmental officials, mutinied, seized power through a coup in Bamako, suspended all democratic institutions of the state and ousted president Amadou Toumani Touré (Boeke, 2016). The incoming junta called itself the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). The immediate sources of public discontent included the poor conditions in which Malian soldiers were fighting in the northern regions (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015), while the military itself was mired with nepotism, insufficient training, embroiled in criminal activities and reliant on tribal militias (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014).

Following pressure from ECOWAS, the junta agreed to stand down from power. As detailed by Okeke et al. (2014), an agreement from April 6 resulted in a lifting of sanctions, opening

of borders and a timetable of a return to constitutional order, which included the holding of elections, but which was nevertheless later not followed. The coup leaders have agreed on a power transfer in exchange for an amnesty. The role of the interim President came to be occupied by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Dioncounda Traoré, and Cheick Modibo Diarra became Prime Minister. On April 25, 2012, a new civilian government was formed, yet the army leaders have retained critical influence, namely through their links to the ministries of defense, interior and internal security. The junta also successfully withstood a counter-coup attempt in April from the elite parachute "red berets" regiment that functionally served as a presidential guard (Théroux-Bénoni et al., 2012).

Figure 1: Map of Mali (UN Department of Field Support, 2013)

Another major deterioration came with the declaration of independence of northern regions and increasing threat from jihadi groups. In direct aftermath of the coup, with the government in chaos, the MNLA declared the independence of Azawad, and managed to seize many of the key towns of the north, including Aguelhoc, Anderamboukane, Lere, Menaka, Tinzaouatene, Tessalit, as well as the larger cities of Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao.

Thus, the rebels came to control much of the northern half of the country – even if sparsely populated, still enormous in territory (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015). Following the proclamation of independent Azawad, jihadist groups began to challenge the position of the MNLA and hijack the uprising. After his failure to take power within the MNLA, Iyad ag Ghali, a leader of previous Tuareg rebellions, has taken an independent course. While apparently having personal ties with AQIM, he decided to create the local, though still much more radical Salafist movement Ansar Dine, which proclaimed seeking to establish sharia law within all of Mali. Even though Ansar Dine and MNLA soon agreed to form a transitional council for the Islamic State of Azawad (Solomon, 2013), their tactical cooperation did not last long and their power struggle culminated in the battle of Gao in late June 2012 (Shaw, 2013). Supported by AQIM and its regional offshoot Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which was established just months after the MNLA (Thurston and Lebovich, 2013), Ansar Dine became a dominant force of the latest rebellion (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015). The MNLA's position was also undermined by opportunism on the side of its soldiers, who regularly exploited the locals, as well as by perceived misrepresentation of the diversity of the Tuareg population (Cocodia, 2017).

During the second half of 2012, the conflict started to increasingly attract global attention and domestic political situation was not getting better. After taking control of Gao from the MNLA, Ansar Dine fighters launched a series of attacks destroying various parts of the ancient city of Timbuktu, and captured European hostages (Thurston and Lebovich, 2013). With the jihadist strength growing, thousands of fighters from around the world have come to join the jihad. The focus of western governments on the situation has also intensified, with their embassies adopting high levels of alert. While both regional organizations and the UN began to adopt plans and authorized an intervention, no soldiers were deployed in 2012 (Solomon, 2013). At the same time, the leaders of the coup have continued to hold influence in Bamako and in December, they arrested interim Prime Minister Diarra just before he was about to travel to Paris, forcing him to resign (IRIN News, 2012b). A month later, on January 9 and 10, 2013, the capital Bamako and Kati, a town hosting the ex-junta's military base, witnessed major demonstrations. The country was again spiraling into crisis, as the demonstrations have turned violent and another military coup was imminent (International Crisis Group - ICG, 2013) A group of soldiers mainly from Ansar Dine and MUJAO, probably without the consent of AQIM leadership (de Castelli, 2014), launched a southward

attack, thus breaking an implicit agreement with government on a ceasefire line set up during previous spring (Marchal, 2013). In this deteriorating situation, the rebels managed to capture the town of Konna in the central region of Mopti, sparking fears that the insurgents could soon get control of Sévaré, which hosts a strategic airport, and that the Malian army might thus be cut off from the theatre of operations. This move can likely be understood as a preemptive advance motivated by the recent decision of the UNSC to authorize AFISMA operation to reconquer the north while the UN publicly admitted this would not happen before September 2013 (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). The interim president Traoré then twice requested France to intervene, with Paris initially requiring a more precise reformulation (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015).

3.3 International interventions

The response to this course of action was rather decisive on the French part. On January 10, 2013, France deployed a robust operation Serval. It included around 5 thousand French soldiers at its peak, about 800 of which were already prepositioned in the region, and the participation of air- and special forces (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015). The operation was supported by the Malian army, a sizeable presence of elite Chadian forces on the ground, as well as by non-combat logistical support from different European allies and later the US (Boeke, 2016). The sudden intervention seemed unexpected since, until the Konna offensive, France sought to only support the African-led operation that was being prepared, more or less following the long-proclaimed policy of "African solutions to African problems" and it publicly denied it would plan on intervening (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015).

The initial phase of the operation has largely been considered a success for France and its allies. Within weeks, the operation succeeded in stopping the advance of the jihadi groups southwards, reclaiming control of major population areas in the north, and in clearing AQIM's sanctuary in the Adrar des Ifoghas massif (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015). Still, given the vastness of northern Mali, it would be an exaggeration to speak of full territorial control (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). Some areas like Kidal even came back under the control of the MNLA, although they cooperated with the intervenors against the jihadists. The operation resulted in a third of the about 2,000 jihadists being killed and 430 imprisoned, while the rest blended with the local population or fled to neighboring countries. On the other hand, the French have only lost 6 and the Chadians officially around 40 soldiers (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015).

During the first phase of the intervention, international peace operations also began to slowly deploy. The long-awaited African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) led by ECOWAS and authorized in December 2012, had been planned to deploy only in the summer of 2013. But the deepening of the crisis expedited that, with over 3,000 troops mainly from Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso arriving on the ground within two weeks of the French entrance (Cocodia, 2017). In mid-January, the EU also finally authorized its own long-prepared training force to capacitate and reform the Malian army, the EU Training mission in Mali (EUTM). Furthermore, in April, the UN decided to again change the path of the international effort, transforming ECOWAS' AFISMA to its own operation MINUSMA, the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as of the coming July (Boeke, 2016). MINUSMA started as one of UN's largest operations with about 11,200 mandated troops (Cold-Ravnkilde et al., 2017), but it also became one of its deadliest, now totaling 240 fatalities as of February 2021 (UN Peacekeeping, 2021). The establishment of these operations will be further elaborated on in the next chapter.

While operation Serval succeeded in its more narrowly-focused objectives, the underlying structural problems would take much longer to solve. Immediately following the intervention, the northern regions have become relatively quiet and attention turned to addressing the causes of instability and guiding Mali towards democratic elections (Boeke, 2016). At the same time, the number and variety of armed groups increased, with their membership and allegiances regularly shifting in the new conditions, some of them now even allying with the government, thus complicating the peace process (McGregor, 2017). The elections, taking place on 28 July 2013 and the second-round run-off on 11 August 2013, resulted in Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (also known simply as IBK) becoming president of Mali on a promise of reform and fighting corruption. Their relatively free and fair conduct ensured billions of euros in donor aid for Mali (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015). The turnout was higher than in previous elections, attracting about a half of the population. But already in the parliamentary elections, postponed until November, it again dropped to just 37 % (Boeke, 2016).

The security concerns also did not truly subside, leading the French drawdown to be much more gradual. While jihadists suffered huge losses, they managed to regroup rather quickly – not just in Mali, but also in neighboring countries – and suicide-bombing attacks became more common (Guichaoua, 2020). Therefore, even though France first planned on bringing

about a half of the troops back by the presidential elections, this only happened at the end of the year. In January 2014, there were thus still 2,500 soldiers on the ground, compared to the planned 1,000 (Boeke, 2016). Clashes also continued between the government and the MNLA, most notably in Kidal in May 2014, leading to the MNLA controlling the city and to around 50 battle-related casualties (Wing, 2015).

3.4 Regionalization and continuing insecurity

In 2014, the French policy changed to a more regionally oriented one. Although Serval officially ended in the summer of 2014, the insurgency nevertheless continued in low intensity and the mission was reconfigured as operation Barkhane. The new operation in effect combined Serval with the decades-long existing operation in Chad named Épervier, and was expanded to also cover Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Niger. These countries, along with Mali and Chad, have themselves created a new regional arrangement named Group of Five for the Sahel at the time of the creation of Barkhane. While the organization is not merely militarily-focused and does support development in the region, it now crucially has its own intervention force, the G5 Cross-border Joint Force (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020). The force cooperates with Barkhane and the other international missions in fighting security threats in the region – namely terrorism, cross-border organized crime and human trafficking – and at full capacity employs 5,000 soldiers within 7 battalions (France Diplomacy, 2020). The move from Serval to Barkhane, therefore, signified a shift to a more regional, cross-border approach, arguably more suitable to the challenges of the vast Sahel-Sahara environment (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020). Still, much like Serval, Barkhane itself has been almost exclusively French-staffed, nowadays with around 5,000 French soldiers deployed, and only small contributions from other European countries. It also continues to include significant aerial support (Ministry of Defence, 2020).

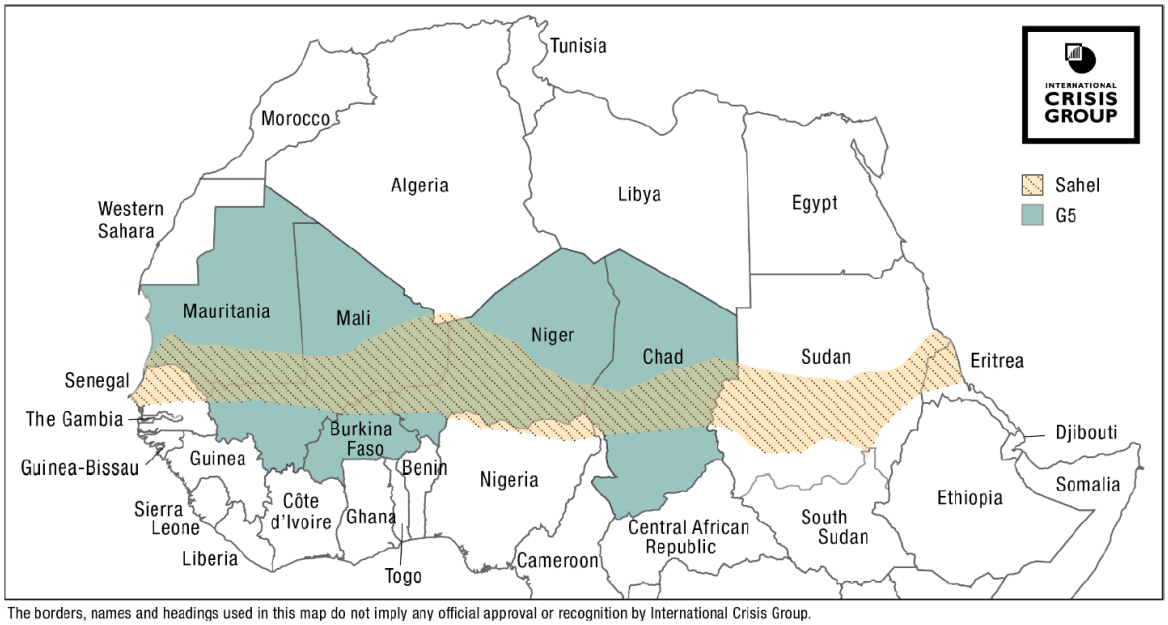

Figure 2: Map of Sahel (ICG, 2017)

As previously mentioned, the conflict has also seen a proliferation of various actors whose allegiances keep shifting. As shown by McGregor (2017), during 2014, most of the armed groups have allied with either of the large coalitions – the rebel/separatist Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) or the pro-government militias under the Platforme group. Some of the CMA-allied groups have nevertheless later left the coalition and jihadis were excluded from this integration and the peace process in general. Furthermore, there are also armed groups that are primarily ethnically oriented, completing a complex patchwork of actors in the country, many often cross-connected through family or tribal links. The jihadi groups have also gone through a process of (dis)integration and alliance formation themselves, with fault lines over time appearing based on their allegiance either to the al-Qaeda (locally led by ag Ghali) or the Islamic State, with its "Greater Sahara" incarnation, thus mirroring the global dispute (Baldaro and Diall, 2020).

In the years following international intervention, the local actors managed to negotiate a peace agreement, but its implementation and overall conflict resolution remain heavily in question. First major ceasefire, mediated by Burkina Faso, was signed in June 2013 as the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, and it allowed for the return of government presence to the north, the holding of elections and further dialogue. A formal peace process was initiated in January 2014 by Algeria, which attempted to position itself as a regional broker (Gorur, 2020). In large part due to strong international pressure, the Algiers process resulted

in the government signing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation with the CMA and Platforme in May and June 2015. As just outlined, it therefore did not include all the important local actors. Owing to the agreement, with their secessionist claims now withdrawn, the rebels were promised a process of decentralization. Furthermore, they agreed on processes of justice and reconciliation; of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants; and on economic support for the north. Nevertheless, occasional clashes and violations of the ceasefire have also continued even between the parties (ICG, 2015). Many details, including the DDR process, were originally not clearly specified (Gorur, 2020) and there has been little progress in its implementation over the years, especially regarding northern economic growth and post-conflict justice. The reason for the latter is mainly simple lack of political will (Mathieu, 2020), and it importantly remains perceived as a largely externally imposed peace (Charbonneau, 2017). Besides the formal process, peace has in reality definitely not been reached, since violence is visibly rising across the whole region. Insecurity has increased especially in the border regions south of the Niger river bend, with the central regions of Mali, and Burkina Faso being most severely affected (Dewast, 2020). In Mali, community-based self-defense militias have started to appear, especially in the central Mopti region (ICG, 2016), terrorist attacks are becoming increasingly common across the country (Chandler and Zogg, 2017) and hundreds of thousands have fled their homes (Dewast, 2020).

In recent years, the political situation has consequently also further deteriorated. Difficulties in the relations between France and the G5 countries have become more apparent, at least in part fueled by increasing local resentments against the international presence, which is often perceived by the populations as one and the same with the French operation (Guichaoua, 2020). Moreover, following disputed elections in 2020, Mali has seen large demonstrations against the rule of president Keita and his inability to solve the insecurity, once again ending in a successful military coup in August 2020 (Salaha and Kleinfeld, 2020). The conflict and insecurity are thus nowhere near being resolved while France is instead starting to hint at troop reductions and further burden-sharing with European allies. That is already happening within the Takuba Task Force, a complementary unit to Barkhane composed of elite soldiers from individual European countries (Campbell, 2021).

4. Peace Operations in Mali

This chapter will look in detail at the processes that led to the establishment of each of the operations in Mali, with a particular focus on the positions France, and to some extent other important states, took during the negotiating phases and how that affected it. The chapter will proceed mostly chronologically in relation to the first year of the crisis, from its start, over the negotiations with and within ECOWAS, to the raising of the issue to the level of the AU and the UN, concluding with the decision on the launch of AFISMA. It will then separately analyze additional information about the processes leading to the establishment of operation Serval and EUTM. Afterwards, attention will further turn towards how AFISMA developed into MINUSMA and Serval into Barkhane. Finally, it will follow the causes of the deployment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

4.1 ECOWAS and MICEMA

In the first months of the crisis, the responsibility for dealing with the crisis internationally lay primarily on ECOWAS. Being its member, it was expected that the situation of Mali would be dealt with through this organization. The West African organization moreover had a clear legal basis for a possible intervention, both in the founding treaty and in the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security from 1999. The latter's Article 25 stipulated that an intervention is legitimate in the case of a civil conflict, a humanitarian emergency, a threat to regional stability, or if a government has been overthrown – with Mali fulfilling all the conditions (Sandor, 2013). Therefore, ECOWAS' focus was directed not just at the security situation in the north, but crucially also at the restoration of the Malian constitutional order (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). At its extraordinary summit on March 27, 2012, the heads of state and government have decided to suspend Mali from all decision-making bodies of ECOWAS, authorized the activation of its Standby force for "any eventuality", signaled readiness to deal with the northern rebellion with the use of force, threatened the junta with a travel ban and financial embargo in case of a non-compliance, and established teams responsible for negotiating and mediating (ECOWAS, 2012a). Few days later, it then followed through with sanctions and cut transfers to Mali's bank accounts, and closed the borders between Mali and its member states. Furthermore, it aimed to deploy a military mission that was to include armed presence in the capital of Bamako, which was naturally not welcome by the new military leadership of the

country and only exacerbated the lack of trust between the two actors (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014).

Even though the ECOWAS' mediating team and the self-proclaimed National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State rather quickly signed a deal, their differences were not fully resolved and preparations for a military operation continued. On April 5, 2012, the French government came out if favor of an intervention by ECOWAS (Okeke et al., 2014). Just a day later, the junta and representative of ECOWAS have signed a Framework Agreement, which ended the direct stand-off between the two. Given the continuing crisis in the north, ECOWAS nevertheless adopted recommendation of its Military Staff Committee to mandate the Standby force to restore Malian territorial integrity by deploying MICEMA (ECOWAS Mission in Mali), still with plans of troops in Bamako (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). Contrary to its name, the force was however not a ready-to-deploy standing force and there were significant challenges to its interoperability (Francis, 2013).

The ECOWAS' efforts were supported by the United Nations Security Council and crucially its veto-member France, which has had a primary role on the issue there. On security matters relating to Mali and the other hotspots in the region, France is a "penholder" in the Council, leading the drafting of resolutions and commonly (co-)sponsoring them (Tardy, 2016). Following the Framework Agreement, France drafted press statement welcoming the agreement between junta and ECOWAS, and their efforts towards stabilization (Security Council Report, 2012a). The then-new president Hollande also later expressed readiness to support an ECOWAS military operation due to the terrorist threat in northern Mali, but stressed that it was "up to African nations to take the initiative in leading any military operation" (IRIN News, 2012a).

However, there was no clear political consensus, and a lack of coordination, among ECOWAS and the other regional actors like Algeria and Mauritania on how to proceed. Most ECOWAS countries strongly supported military action, but there was no clear agreement on how to negotiate with the northern armed groups and exactly which groups to target – whether to include the more local Ansar Dine, or even the other jihadi groups (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). Even though opposition to "negotiating with terrorists" was strong (Théroux-Bénoni et al., 2012), the ECOWAS mediator, President of Burkina Faso Blaise Compaoré, "has taken initial steps to meet with representatives of the MNLA and Ansar Dine" over the

summer (UN Security Council, 2012a). Algerian role in the management of the conflict stemmed not only from it bordering the contentious region, but also due to AQIM's roots in the Algerian civil war. Especially since the jihadis have established training and logistical bases in mountainous areas near Algerian borders, the North African country deemed the situation as threatening its own security and stability (Francis, 2013). As Mali's most militarily powerful neighbor, Algiers nevertheless likely tried to first maneuver itself into a position of a key player in the crisis, striving to maintain contacts with all the major actors. Unambiguity of its position was also likely complicated by internal differences among the various entities within the Algerian state (Arieff, 2012) and was thus not very supportive of military action, preferring a negotiated settlement. The position of Mauritania, the other neighboring country which was not a member of ECOWAS, was affected by the MNLA having a political wing present in the country. While it supported military action in Mali, it was not prepared to directly participate (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014).

4.2 The Road to AFISMA

The issue has been gradually raised to higher levels of responsibility and both the AU and the UN started to get more involved, at least in part in order to address Algiers' opposition to an ECOWAS operation (Cocodia, 2017). Besides the previously mentioned factors, there were logistical and financial constraints to an ECOWAS mission. Its budget was first estimated at 227 million USD per year needed for a sustained counter-insurgency engagement in the north (Sandor, 2013), which ECOWAS could hardly muster, let alone the Malian government itself. The AU thus tried to secure funding through UN-assessed contributions for the operation. On June 12 and 13, the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) held two meetings on the issue, the latter as a joint one with the UN Security Council. And at the start of July, the UNSC adopted its first resolution (2056) relating to the conflict. The key result of this series of meetings was a demand by the UN that the African organizations adopt a more comprehensive approach to the crisis and develop a clear plan for the intervention before any mandate authorization (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). The draft of the UN resolution was again introduced by France, and it sought to address three priority areas: Malian constitutional order, territorial integrity and fight against terrorism. It was adopted unanimously, expressed support for regional efforts and "readiness to further examine the request of ECOWAS (and the AU) once additional information has been provided regarding the objectives, means and modalities of the envisaged deployment and

other possible measures" (UN Security Council, 2012b). This again followed the French policy, which was in principle supportive of the ECOWAS deployment, but it seemed the problem was an absence of a credible military plan (Security Council Report, 2012b).

During the second half of 2012, the differences between the interim Malian government, ECOWAS and the key UN members were being slowly resolved. ECOWAS first sent a Technical Assessment Mission to the country in order to assess the feasibility of the envisaged operation (Security Council Report, 2012b), which resulted in a concept paper submitted to the UNSC on August 3. The aim was a three-phased deployment of 3,245 troops with large contributions from Nigeria, Togo, Niger and Senegal, which still did not fully satisfy the Security Council members. France additionally preferred that the Malian government attempts to negotiate with some of the northern groups rather than opting for military means immediately (Security Council Report, 2012c), with some suggesting the prospect of a military intervention was primarily meant to push the rebels towards negotiations (IRIN News, 2012b). The UN further favored that there be a clear request from the interim Malian authorities before it authorizes any military operation, which happened in September. Still, the request came against the wishes of the still influential coup leaders, who only supported air strikes, and logistical and air support, but not ground presence (Reuters, 2012a). Following the request from Bamako, all the Western members of the Security Council became supportive of the military assistance against the jihadi threat, with France the most active of them (Security Council Report, 2012d). On October 12, the UNSC then adopted Resolution 2071 and through it, expressed approval of "an international military force" to assist Mali in reconquering the North, while stopping short of a full mandate. It also requested the Secretariat to provide the AU and ECOWAS with military and security planners, signaling the regional actors might still not have all the capacities needed to undergo a successful intervention (UN Security Council, 2012c).

Final decisions within the African organizations on the deployment of a military operation came at the very end of 2012, though amid a lack of coordination and intra-organizational tensions. ECOWAS and AU together developed a "Strategic concept for the resolution of crises in Mali" in October 2012, and the AU PSC later adopted it. With that, the Malian government was now clearly considered a key actor within the military operation, instead of a potential target as before, and the AU would now be the primary platform for decision-making on the operation (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014), while the ECOWAS Standby Force would

still be the core military and police component of the mission (Security Council Report, 2012d). There nevertheless was a dispute between the organizations about who should bear primary responsibility for the mission (Weiss and Welz, 2014). On November 11, ECOWAS (2012b) then decided at its Extra-Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on a plan to deploy the African-led International Force in Mali (AFISMA), which was endorsed days later by the Peace and Security Council of the AU (AU Peace and Security Council, 2012). The original idea of the MICEMA mission therefore never got implemented. The AU also requested the UN to provide a "support package" for AFISMA to conduct offensive military operations, which raised some concerns in the UN Secretariat. The Secretary General instead saw the use of force in general as a "last resort" option in his report to the Security Council in November 2012. He also hinted at the possibility of a future UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, following end of major combat operations. However, he stressed that its aim would be "long-term stabilization and peacebuilding assistance", with a "a strong human rights presence", while counter-terrorism and offensive military operation should be done by other actors (UN Security Council, 2012d).

Nevertheless, negotiations on the final mandate authorization from the UNSC were complicated. On the one side, France and a majority of the Council supported the African plan, a rapid deployment of AFISMA, further motivated by the forced resignation of prime minister Diarra. This constituted a "two-track" approach – getting the country to elections, while at the same time conducting offensive military operations. On the other side, the United States held serious doubts about the plan and whether just over 3,000 African troops could succeed and enter the country sooner than well into the second half of 2013 (Lynch, 2012). Doubts about the possible speed of deployment came also from the UN envoy to the Sahel (Reuters, 2012b). The US ambassador Susan Rice even attracted significant media attention by semi-publicly calling it "crap". Instead, the US promoted first sticking to negotiations, persuading Algeria to support the plan and waiting with the military action until after elections, in order for the Malian government to gain legitimacy – a "two-phase" approach (Lynch, 2012). Negotiations were in fact happening at the time between the government, Ansar Dine and MNLA, mediated by President Compaoré, and led to these groups agreeing to respect unity and territorial integrity of Mali (Al Jazeera, 2012). In the end, UNSC resolution 2085 was adopted unanimously on December 20, authorizing AFISMA for one year and under the Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows military

action to “restore international peace and security”. Its tasks were mainly to train the Malian army in cooperation with the EU and other actors, support it in reconquering the north and stabilize the country. The resolution also confirmed “the Council’s satisfaction with the planned offensive operation”, but it again signaled that military planning activities will need to be improved (UN Security Council, 2012e), placed a heavy reporting burden on the two African organizations and did not guarantee the requested financial and logistical support through assessed contributions. (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). The mission was budgeted at a price much greater than first expected, 410 million USD annually, and an international Trust Fund was established to raise enough resources. Funding was therefore still voluntary-based and full deployment was not expected sooner than in September 2013 (Francis, 2013). This result came short of French expectations, as there was also no clear timetable and troop-generating commitments (Marchal, 2013).

4.3 Launching Serval

According to Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde (2020), the policy France held until January 2013 was strongly influenced by a preference for multilateralism in military interventions, which emerged in the decades following the experience from Rwanda, and by its role in the region. Even though it kept some unilateral instincts, France moved away from self-legitimation towards ensuring mandates from the UNSC and working with and/or through regional organizations. In line with that, France was focusing on engaging the African countries and their regional organizations first, and on providing them with capacity-building and resources. In Mali, France saw the possibility of the country collapsing as a threat to the stability of the whole West African region, which it sees as its sphere of responsibility/influence and which had already struggled with jihadist movements. It was therefore cautious about Mali emerging as a safe haven for terrorists, much like Afghanistan a decade earlier. Besides that, France was also motivated by important economic ties to the region, as it has for example imported 30 percent of its uranium supplies from neighboring Niger, a crucial commodity for French energy generation. An important caveat is that there are alternative sources for France and budgetary costs of the operations in fact exceed the volume of French trade with Mali (Powell, 2017). Security concerns have therefore likely been primary. Moreover, tens of thousands of French citizens are also living in the Sahel, and they have often been subject to kidnappings (Henke, 2017). During 2012, France thus

preferred to only support an African-led operation technically, logistically, and financially, as outlined above.

Even though the change in French strategy in January 2013 publicly seemed rather sudden, it was in fact long in the making. Although France had denied planning on intervening in Mali just months before it did, it had created contingency plans for providing military support, as well as a plan for direct intervention, if the insurgents struck before the deployment of an international mission (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015). This partly explains why the French military was able to react with an intervention so quickly after the Konna offensive (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). But the reasons behind the creation of the contingency plans can be better understood through the lens of French domestic politics. Henke (2017) has identified the role of the French minister of defense Le Drian as key in the change of strategy towards a direct intervention. While the French diplomacy and secret services were in general opposed, or at least skeptical, to a military solution until the very last moment and supported the "multilateral" plan, Le Drian's ministry of defense was apparently working behind the scenes to prepare for an intervention. This included a careful PR effort preparing the public to accept it when it happened or operational maneuvers such as pre-deployment of fighter jets in Chad. At least partially, the motivation stemmed from a domestic power struggle with a goal of strengthening the role of the ministry and reestablishing effective civilian control over military decision-making, which had previously been disturbed. When the Konna offensive "ticked the boxes" of a pretext that could justify a rapid intervention, Le Drian managed to convince president Hollande in a requested meeting on January 10, thanks to his personal closeness to the president and the well-prepared plan that could be readily executed. On top of that, doubts continued to exist about African capacities and about motivations of some of the regional actors who might want to benefit from the Malian crisis instead of solving it. With ECOWAS meetings ending inconclusively (Marchal, 2013) and the interim Malian government never actually favoring a regional intervention, it reached an agreement with Paris on the French operation (Weiss and Welz, 2014).

Following the agreement and a closed UN Security Council meeting, president Hollande publicly announced on January 11 that France would launch operation Serval. The main objectives were identified as stopping the advance of jihadists, preventing further endangering of Mali's stability and protecting European (especially French) nationals in the country (Shurkin, 2014). Likely following international support for the mission, the French

government later added the objective of restoration of Mali's territorial integrity, which meant that the operation would not be limited to the air force and special forces, but it would also include direct French ground operations. On the insistence of French president Hollande, the army was ordered to move fast and quickly reconquer key northern towns, even at the cost of higher military risk (Boeke and Schuurman, 2015).

4.4 The European training mission

Next to the preparations for the deployment of AFISMA, France was also pushing for a European training mission in Mali. Since the start of the millennium and the development of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the EU has had a steady track record of different kinds of military actions in African conflicts – in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Central African Republic, Sudan and Somalia (Francis, 2013). Referring to Chafer's (2016) study again, this was greatly encouraged by a French African policy of "Europeanization", which entailed an effort at burden sharing of its conflict management efforts with other EU member states, thus freeing up French capacities for other missions, while also helping to avoid images of French neo-colonialism and gain greater legitimacy. "Europeanization" is thus an important part of the above outlined multilateral turn. However, this approach has turned out to suffer from a lack of support from the other EU member states who were often not as willing to provide the necessary troops, as seen for example in the EUFOR Chad/CAR operation. France therefore switched to advocating for a "division of labor" multilateral approach, where the EU rather adopts a supportive role in the intervention.

The issue of a CSDP mission in the Sahel has been on the table much earlier than the present crisis in Mali. France, along with other member states like the UK, Spain and Denmark has been advocating for it at least since 2008. But even as the situation was deteriorating in 2012, France was still unable to convince the rest of the EU that northern Mali demanded a CSDP operation, partly due to inability to present clear evidence of the threat for Europe. The EU only launched a civilian capacity-building mission in neighboring Niger with the intention of fighting terrorism and organized crime (Dijkstra et al., 2017). Much like domestically, minister Le Drian's diplomatic efforts with his European counterparts were in the end pivotal in reaching an agreement on a CSDP operation. He made numerous visits to other European capitals, convincing them the operation would primarily benefit Mali rather than just serving French interests, which was the usual skepticism France had to face. This was greatly eased

by the fact that the interim Malian government had later asked for the mission (Rouppert, 2015), while France was effectively raising the issues of terrorism and migration (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020). The French diplomatic breakthrough came during fall 2012. In November, it became clear that the major European states favored a European intervention. For example, French and German foreign ministers Fabius and Westerwelle published a joint article in major French and German newspapers, advocating for European involvement in the Sahel, depicting the situation there as threatening to Europe, stressing terrorism and illegal trafficking, while at the same time as an opportunity for Europe to "demonstrate its ability to act in a crisis". Their favored solution was to follow the example of the operation EUTM Somalia and establish a training mission in Mali (Fabius and Westerwelle, 2012), which was generally considered a success in European corridors. Just days later, at a meeting in Paris, the ministers of foreign affairs and defense of the major continental powers of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain reiterated the message, agreeing to "to foster an ambitious European policy in the field of security and defense" and urging others to contribute to the mission in preparation (Dennison, 2012).

Formal procedures for the approval of the EUTM took around 4 months. The process originally commenced on October 15, with a request of the Foreign Affairs Council to work on a possible CSDP military training mission in Mali. The EU Council welcomed a presentation of a draft Crisis Management Concept for the mission on November 19, and on December 10, it approved the Concept, stressing the mission would be training in nature only, not involved in any operational actions (Council of the EU, 2013). Following the January 2013 French intervention, the bureaucratic process greatly accelerated. From an envisaged 200 men and women, the mission should have now counted 550 soldiers, trainers, chiefs of staff, medical units and logistical support, and its budget also nearly doubled (Rouppert, 2015). The mission was consequently quickly formally authorized on January 17, delimiting the objectives as training support to the Malian army, and "training and advice on command and control, logistical chain and human resources, as well as training on International Humanitarian Law, protection of civilians and human rights", all in close coordination with the other international actors engaged (Council of the EU, 2013). After further adopting a concept of operations, plan of the mission and rules of engagement, the EUTM was officially launched in the country on February 18. Once again, French imprint on the mission became very visible, both on the ground where it was headed by French

Brigadier General François Lecointre, as well as in Brussels where a significant number of the civilian staff were also from France. And already in the negotiating stages, France itself sent an evaluative mission to the country to consider the state of the Malian armed forces (Rouppert, 2015).

4.5 From AFISMA to MINUSMA

Even though AFISMA was expected to deploy rather slowly, its life soon turned out to be very tumultuous. After the unexpected change of strategy with French operation Serval, AFISMA's deployment was suddenly possible and like its European counterpart, it also dramatically accelerated. Within two weeks, over 3,000 soldiers entered Mali (Cocodia, 2017) and by March 2013, almost 6,200 of the total 7,727 pledged troops were on the ground, most of them from Nigeria, Togo and Niger (AU Peace and Security Council, 2013). This included a large elite contingent from Chad, which was at first organizationally not a part of AFISMA, but directly cooperating with Serval (ICG, 2013). With these developments, the issue of reliable funding continued to be intensely discussed during the first months of 2013 (UN Security Council, 2013a). A January donor conference in Ethiopia resulted in pledges roughly amounting to the budget envisaged before AFISMA's quick deployment, but therefore could not cover the sudden increase in costs (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). After discussions at the Support and follow-up group meeting on the situation in Mali, which included key representatives from Mali, ECOWAS, AU, UN and was hosted by the EU, the option of transformation from AFISMA to a UN peacekeeping operation became hotly discussed as a potential solution to the resource constraints (African Union, 2013). Later in February 2012, the interim President of Mali, Dioncounda Traoré, raised the possibility, though without much context, in a letter to the UNSC (UN Security Council, 2013b). The option was also supported by ECOWAS and the AU (Gorur, 2020), and in a month's time, it was more broadly developed in the UN Secretary General's report to the Council (UN Security Council, 2013c). An idea of a hybrid operation, perhaps modelled on joint AU-UN operation UNAMID in Darfur, has been "discarded by both the Council and the Secretariat" (Security Council Report, 2013).

The transformation to a UN operation was therefore motivated primarily by the need to assure reliable future funding, but there were other issues at stake, too. Both France and the United States quickly settled on the idea of a transition to a UN operation for the aforementioned reason. Additionally, France was motivated by a strong desire to very

quickly find its own exit strategy that could assure Malian stability (ICG, 2013), while the US had concerns about directly funding AFISMA or the still-interim Malian government (Security Council Report, 2013). The change was also supported by the UN Secretariat, considering that several UN operations were coming to an end soon and troops would become available (Weiss and Welz, 2014). There was nevertheless some friction with Russia and other members of the Council who were more cautious of a hasty transition, unlike France and its allies who prioritized solving the issue as quickly as possible (Gorur, 2020). Crucially, France also wanted to clearly delineate tasks that each force would have in Mali in order to prevent the UN assuming responsibilities it could not fulfill. UN peacekeeping would therefore focus on securing population centers and civilians in the north, and not conduct counter-terrorism, which some Council members worried about (Gorur, 2020). This was however somewhat in contrast to what regional actors were pushing for, as they were more worried about the operation having a sufficiently robust mandate in the continuously volatile environment (AU Peace and Security Council, 2013a). The UN Secretariat naturally shared the caution about mandating a UN mission for offensive operations, not seeing itself as at all configured for such a task and worrying about consequent constraints on its humanitarian, development and human rights duties. Instead, it advocated delegating the peace enforcement and counter-terrorism tasks to a parallel force (UN Security Council, 2013c).

The new operation MINUSMA was authorized in April 2013 by UNSC Resolution 2100. The operation would again grow in size, with up to 11,200 mandated soldiers, including a rapid-deployment reserve battalion, and 1,440 police personnel taking part, though these numbers took a while to translate into reality. Moreover, it authorized the French troops "to use all necessary means (…) to intervene in support of elements of MINUSMA when under imminent and serious threat upon request of the Secretary-General". Transformation of authority from AFISMA has been set to happen at the start of July, although subject to cessation of major combat operations and a "significant reduction in the capacity of terrorist forces to pose a major threat to the civilian population and international personnel" in its area of responsibility (UN Security Council, 2013d). Its first task was the stabilization of key population centers and support for the reestablishment of state authority throughout the country, while the second one was to support the inter-Malian political dialogue and the electoral process. The elections were the strongest political priority for the UNSC, driven

again largely by French domestic pressures on their quick organization (Gorur, 2020). Even though the AU and ECOWAS were the first to visibly promote the transfer to the UN, their reaction to the UNSC resolution was rather harsh, as they were concerned about the lack of their consultation (AU Peace and Security Council, 2013b) and likely also about the reluctance towards peace enforcement tasks, which the African organizations preferred MINUSMA to assume (Théroux-Bénoni, 2014). They were thus effectively sidelined instead of playing a central political role, as the AU had wished, and the transformation left "a lot of bad blood" between the UN and the AU (Weiss and Welz, 2014). Following the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement from June 2013 between the interim government and two Tuareg armed groups on a ceasefire, path to presidential elections and peace talks, the mission gained a foundation for its deployment and on July 1, it did take over from AFISMA (Gorur, 2020).

Figure 3: Location of forces of MINUSMA (United Nations, 2019)

Even though during its establishment, the UNSC members have gone to great lengths not to mandate it for counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism tasks, even within a conflict situation, the lines have somewhat blurred over the years. Already in 2016, MINUSMA's mandate was amended with new language, tasking it with an adoption of a "more proactive and robust

posture to carry out its mandate" (Gorur, 2020). From being a neutral presence, it has moved to operating alongside a military coalition conducting offensive operations, greatly aided by French pressure. All military actors are now in their own way working towards stabilization, only each with their own assets addressing different aspects of the conflict (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020).

4.6 Barkhane and the G5 Joint Force

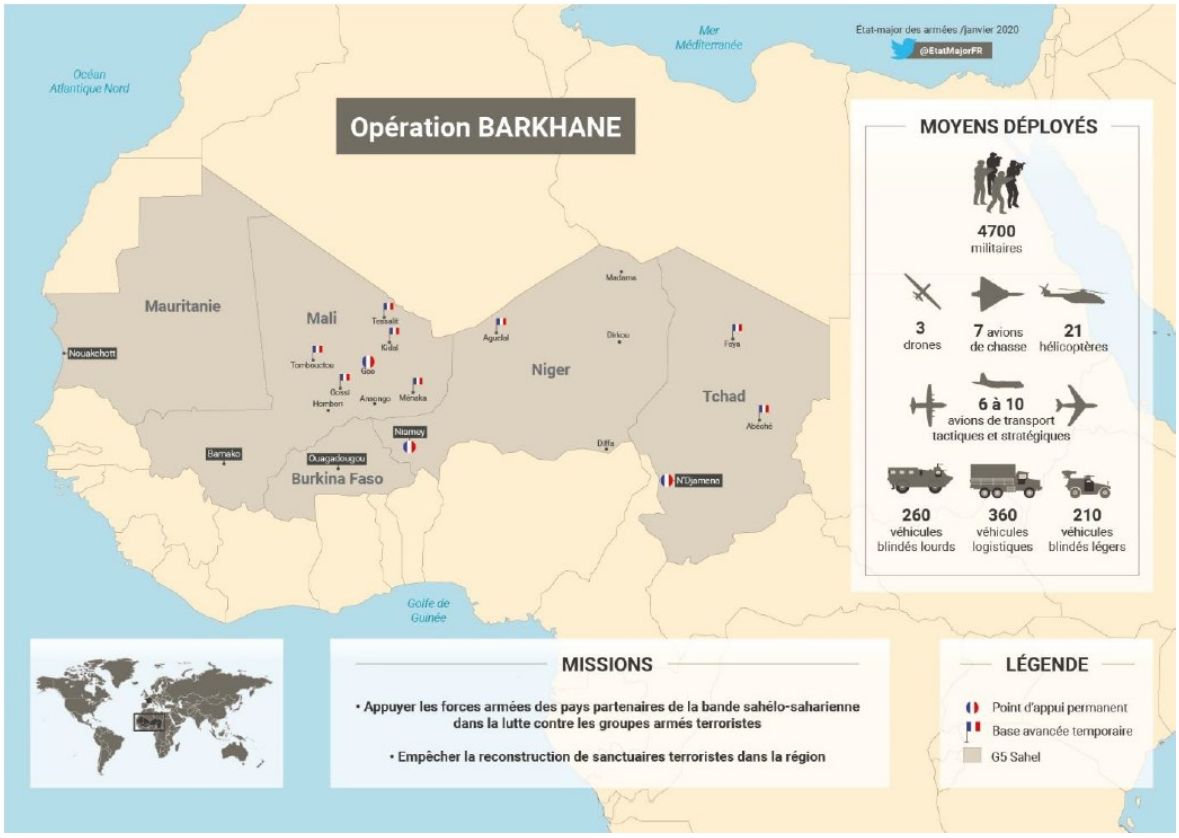

Figure 4: Location of forces of operation Barkhane (Ministry of Defence, 2020)

With a UN peacekeeping mission deploying to the country, new elected government and donor money flowing into the country, France has started to plan for its exit strategy. The solution was the transformation of Serval into a region-wide counter-terrorist operation, combining it with existing operation Épervier in Chad, and tying it to the newly created G5 Sahel organization. By regionalizing its presence, the French also attempted to prevent being drawn too much into internal political conflicts in Mali. Domestically, the transition to Barkhane was seen as a result of the military keeping an upper hand on Sahelian policy. Even though Hollande's presidency tried to move away from reliance on the military circles for its Africa policy, due to "lack of an institutionally embedded alternative" to old structures

advising the President, the military kept a significant influence even when shifting from Serval to Barkhane and the French diplomacy was mostly sidelined during the decision-making (Chafer, 2016). Barkhane is now moreover understood as a key part of the French Sahelian counter-terrorism policy, which has raised concerns about its over-militarization (Boeke, 2016).

Barkhane meant the French forces would spread regionally and would officially step into the background, but in reality, they kept a key role. When starting in August 2014, the operation has shrunk compared to the peak of Serval, employing 3,000 soldiers, but at the same time, it would also have to cover a much larger territory than just Mali (Boeke, 2016). The official mandate of Barkhane is now to primarily support the G5 countries in their counter-terrorism efforts and in their mutual cooperation, as well as in preventing the re-establishment of terrorist safe havens in the region. This is understood as restricting their freedom of movement and depriving them of combat capabilities (Ministry of Defence, 2020). In practice however, Barkhane troops do a lot of the fighting themselves, including the aggressive pursuing of jihadists, in part due to the inability or unwillingness of national militaries to operate beyond their borders and in part because the Malian army is not being trained or equipped for these tasks. Moreover, French forces provide tactical and operation training to the Malian army by accompanying them on operations and support the UN troops with firepower and intelligence when necessary (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020).

The Group of the Five for the Sahel, or simply G5 Sahel, has become another key part of the French strategy for stabilizing the Sahel. It has been first set up in 2014 alongside the transition to Barkhane, as a regional organization focused both on development and security of the five countries it encompasses. First announced in Nouakchott in February 2014, it has been greatly supported in its creation by Paris, even though it always tried to position itself as not being the primary engine behind the initiative, portraying it instead as a mostly home-grown organization. Over the years, the organization's priority has nevertheless clearly shifted from development to the more urgent security aspects (ICG, 2017). The intention to create a joint military force was first announced in November 2015 at the organization's N'Djamena summit (Lebovich, 2017), following the signing of a military partnership by the chiefs of staff of the countries' armed forces (UN Security Council, 2015). France along with its European allies promoted the idea, since it saw it as a possibly more effective addition to

its operation Barkhane, and in the longer-term as facilitating both its own and possibly the UN's exit strategy (Gorur, 2020; Lebovich, 2017). On the other hand, Algeria and ECOWAS, which now shares 3 members with the G5, seemed not to prefer this arrangement, instead promoting the Nouakchott process, which brings together a larger group of countries across much of the western and central parts of the Sahara, and both have considered it to be a more legitimate platform than G5. Algeria and France have therefore again supported competing ideas (ICG, 2017).

Deployment of the joint force has begun in 2017. As its precursor, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali have agreed to set up a joint task force under the Liptako-Gourma Authority in January 2017. But a month later, on February 6, 2017, this joint task force was expanded at an emergency G5 summit to include all of the member states and the G5 Cross-border Joint Force was therefore established. Even though it was ready to cover the whole region, Mali has clearly been its primary motivator and focus area (Lebovich, 2017). Furthermore, its objectives have been defined to be combating terrorist organizations operating in the region, tackling international crime and reducing migration flows (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020). As a result, the force is much closer to a counter-insurgency than a peace-enforcement operation, with very permissive rules of engagement (ICG, 2017), while it heavily relies on cooperation with operation Barkhane, even though the goal has been to reduce French commitments in the Sahel (Lebovich, 2017).

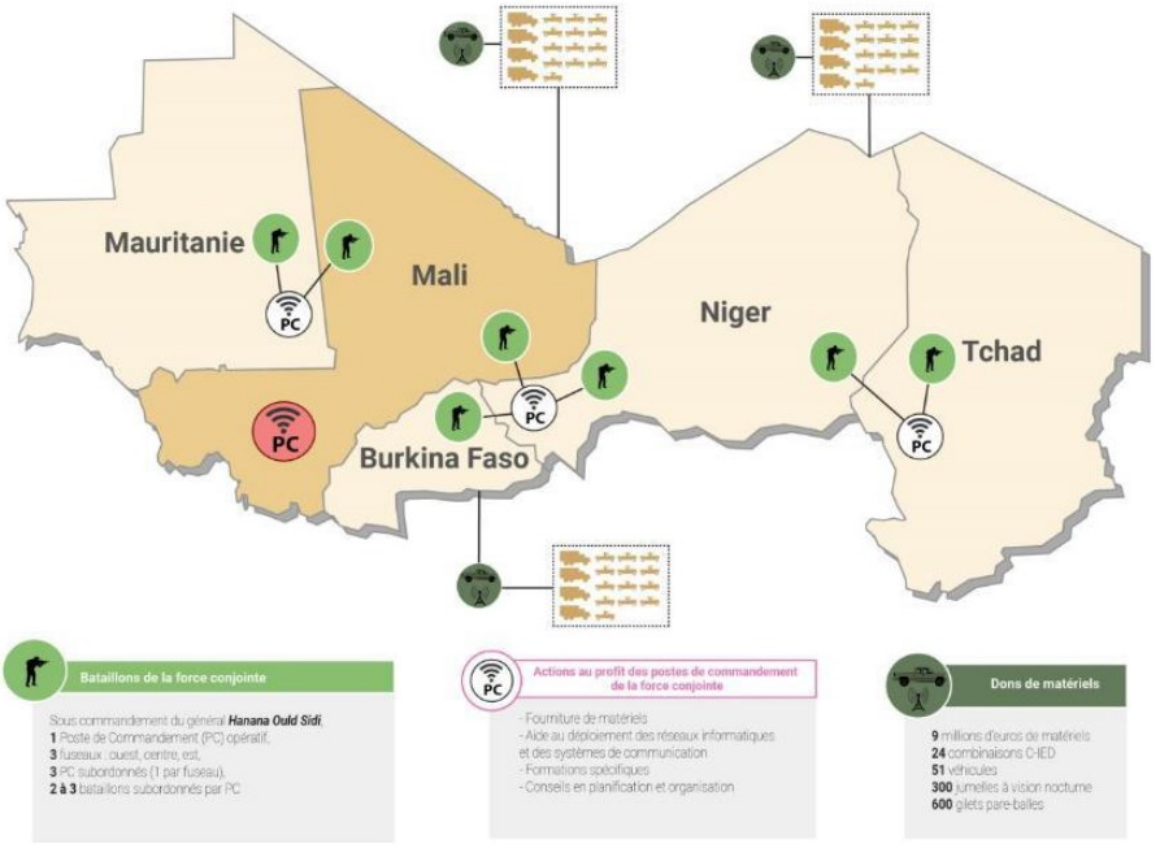

Figure 5: Location of forces of G5 Joint Force (Ministry of Defence, 2020)

In another round of UN discussion on the funding and authorization of a local African force, this time the G5 one, France has again taken the position of its strong supporter. The G5 countries have decided at the aforementioned summit in February 2017 to seek the UN authorization and European funding for the force (BBC News, 2017). France has come to support the UN authorization, although also the funding through a UN support package (Gorur, 2020). But this met a significant opposition from its western allies, as the US and the UK have, on the other hand, had doubts about the need for an authorization from the Council, did not support enabling the use of "any means necessary" for it to fight terrorism, drug- and human trafficking (Lebovich, 2017), and had strong reservations about granting it a regular and enduring funding (ICG, 2017), instead favoring bilateral assistance (Gorur, 2020). In the end, the Council expressed support for the Joint Force, and later even authorized UN peacekeepers in Mali to provide it with logistic and operation support (Chafer, Cumming and van der Velde, 2020). But France, even when supported by the Secretary General, did not manage to negotiate direct funding (France 24, 2018).

5. Discussion

The preceding chapters have followed the decision-making that led to the deployment of a number of different operations into the conflict in Mali. The role and positions of France have been at least indicated in each of them, throughout the crisis. The investigation has shown that it is indeed possible, and even useful, to locate reasons for the initiation of MSPOs at the level of the state, rather than to find them solely through the prism of inter-organizational relations. That is not to say that organizational interests do not play any role, or that the IOs do not adopt positions in line with their interests. But powerful member states, at least in the case studied, have seemed instrumental in what policy the organizations advocated. This chapter will further connect the information back to the literature and the theoretical discussions.

In general, the UN, heavily influenced by French policy, first attempted to subcontract the conflict management to regional organizations, but as the situation was growing more complicated, France got involved unilaterally and later led the UN to a more partnering arrangement with different regional organizations, as well as with its own operation. Thanks to its permanent membership in the UN Security Council and the associated veto power, its primary role within the EU's Common Defence and Security Policy, its post-colonial connection to – and influence over – the relatively poor and vulnerable governments of the Sahel, and its willingness to also intervene unilaterally, France has managed to practically control the international effort to stabilize Mali and fight jihadism in the Sahel. In a way, the French policy can be understood as a somewhat natural result of trying to achieve a bit of everything, even though none of its policies are achievable fully: To share the burden through Africanization, Europeanization and multilateralization, but also enjoy the benefits of direct intervention such as maintaining influence in its former colonies and being seen as a responsible great power that prevents terrorism, state collapse and migration. The French government has thus seemed to want to please the domestic audience, its western allies as well as the African governments, balancing between the interests of each.

The idea of "African solutions to African problems" has visibly played a role when constructing the French reaction. Nevertheless, it was even more visible that "African problems" are simply much larger than what "African solutions" may offer in Mali, especially in terms of state capacity and resources. Contrary to oversimplified notions of

neo-colonialism, African elites have in fact seemed not to at all mind outsourcing security concerns to powerful allies, especially when the security threats might threaten their regime, although they started to protest once they felt not consulted enough. There was furthermore a clear attempt on the side of the Western great powers to financially support local soldiers in their own military actions, although not without any reservations and conditions. The actual ability of local actors to achieve the military objectives needed has been the most visible limitation to this approach. Pragmatic need to address security concerns that could soon grow much larger and consequently threaten French interests in the region has therefore seemed to be the most basic motivator of its actions, while considerations about how specifically to achieve that have been important, but secondary. Since at least January 2013, France has been consistently willing to participate in the military operations on its own, but it was almost as consistent in its desire to find a different way. As Chafer (2020) has aptly put it, as a result of cooperation with and consent of the African governments, “France has become less afraid of criticism of its role as a ‘neocolonial’ actor in Africa, which has in turn facilitated the move back to more unilateral interventions.” All of this indicates that the logic of appropriateness for participation in international operations, likely supported by domestic political concerns, has played some role, but it was hardly dominant over the logic of consequences. Still, clear evidence of the French policy being motivated only by clear-cut power-seeking hegemonic intentions has not been found.

It is possible to see that the various actors present in Mali are aiming at cooperation and a form of division of labor. On the level of rhetoric, it has been a significant justification of the policy. However, it is doubtful whether division of labor among international actors is itself an intentional strategy on the French side or, more likely, an unintended consequence of trying to utilize as much of available resources as possible for a foreign policy priority, while reducing own costs. As seen most clearly in the case of the European training mission, the motivation to find a "niche" for the organization, where it would establish itself in the area of security, and perhaps build up its reputation, seemed present. But at the same time, it too served as an additional source of much-needed resources, not only in terms of "raw" money and troops, but also of expertise and legitimation. Resource-constraints have in fact been a constantly reoccurring theme in the discussions on the management of the conflict in Mali. What can in this regard be more precisely identified as a key driver of French strategy is the effort to systematically share its burden with other actors while retaining direct

influence, rather than a conscious attempt to construct a complex network of actors dividing labor, with each utilizing its competitive advantage. On the contrary, questions about sub-optimal allocation of resources due to duplication and potential for miscoordination have not been successfully resolved. Considering that this complex arrangement has evolved largely in the midst of a fast-developing crisis, with only minor adjustments later, and the long time it has then endured, the importance of rather banal path-dependence might benefit from further research. Moreover, clear accounts show that the domestic political context and inter-bureaucratic relations have influenced French decision-making regarding an intervention, but on the whole, it has not deviated from longer-term policy standpoints.

Besides France as the pivotal state for the peace operations in Mali, other individual states have also been shown to be relevant during the decision-making on the initiation of the operations, although not in a comparable way. The role of the USA as the preeminent great power has come to the foreground on a number of occasions, although owing likely to its alliance with France and relatively lower interest in the region, its own policy has not been as consequential. Therefore, other great powers have somewhat complicated the French efforts within the multilateral organizations, but this does not go beyond standard levels of international negotiations and in fact, France did not have to face much direct opposition from other veto powers within the UN Security Council. There is consequently no clear evidence that France would use the multiplicity of operations in order to bypass disagreement with other great powers and streamline its policies through fora where it can "shop" for conditions most suitable to its policies. On the other hand, it is likely that France did try to "buy" legitimacy for its endeavors by operating alongside multilateral actors which do not bring the same level of perceptions of neo-colonial domination. Furthermore, there is some indication that relations both among African regional powers, namely Algeria, Mauritania and key ECOWAS powers like Nigeria, and their relations with the Malian government, have affected the process of the establishment of a regional operation. Complicated relations between France and Algeria in particular have likewise affected the landscape of interventions. The creation of the G5 Sahel joint force has been at least in part a product of power-plays among the major regional actors.

Finally, there are some obvious caveats that need to be stated up front. The conflict and operations in Mali clearly show the limits of the term peace operations outside of the traditional understanding of peacekeeping. While there are definitions that cover a much

broader array of internationally-mandated operations, which allow for the reflection of current reality and its blurring lines between peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and counter-insurgency, the blurring may have gone so far as to leave the concept of peace operations superfluous for research. Instead, it may be simply more useful to speak of international interventions, perhaps limited each time through some of its characteristics, guided by theoretical needs. This study has in the end only excluded international civilian missions in Mali, such as those led by the EU. Regarding the breadth of the analysis, it would have also been beneficial to gather more information on the actual state of coordination between the various operations and the effects their presence has on each other. Nevertheless, the primary focus has purposefully been on the operations' initiation rather than on how well they are working together. This thesis would further no doubt benefit from an even broader grounding within the research on French foreign and security policy, instead of a more focused attention on its policy towards Mali and the theoretical puzzle. Moreover, the author's unfortunate ignorance of the French language has left the thesis reliant practically only on sources in English, which is an all the more relevant issue given not only the language's prominence in France itself, but in Mali as well. This may have possibly left the result devoid of information otherwise inaccessible, although hopefully not such that would fundamentally alter its conclusions.

Conclusion

By a detailed analysis of the conflict in Mali, where a multitude of various peace operations has taken place, this thesis has addressed the puzzle of motivations of states for establishing multiple simultaneous peace operations. Specifically, it explored why did France support the establishment of multiple simultaneous peace operations in Mali. The analysis has shown that in Mali, France sought to subcontract the conflict management to regional organizations, but with the situation growing worse and regional actors unable to address it, it got involved unilaterally while simultaneously leading the EU, the UN and the G5 Sahel to operate alongside it, likely as a form of generating as much resources as available while reducing in various forms of its costs, under the justification of division of labor, although without any explicit evidence for it being a conscious effort of using comparative advantages. It attempted to balance interests of its domestic audience, western allies, as well as the African governments, striving to achieve its policies of Africanization, Europeanization and multilateralization, while never ceasing to operate unilaterally in order to be seen as a responsible great power that prevents terrorism, state collapse and migration.

The thesis has first studied the broader causes of the conflict itself, linking it to persistent horizontal inequalities and consequent grievances, rising influence of jihadism, organized crime, as well as regional instability produced by the toppling of the Qaddafi regime. Further, the thesis has demonstrated how the outbreak of the crisis in Mali was spurred by Tuareg nationalist struggle but soon deepened due to the collapse of the Malian government and entrenchment of jihadi groups within the rebel movement. It has also shown that preparations for international interventions in the country were at first rather slow, and then very rapid following January 2013. While the first offensive phase of the international intervention soon achieved its limited goals, longer-term stabilization has taken much more effort, and following nearly a decade, did not succeed. Although the French operation has transformed into a regionalized counter-terrorist effort supported by African actors, and the Malian government has signed a peace agreement with some of the rebels, violence has only been increasing in recent years and democratization did not progress.

The analytical core of the thesis has been the study of processes that led to the initiation of multiple peace operations in Mali with a focus on French policies and actions. Immediately after the beginning of the crisis, responsibility for resolving the crisis internationally lay

primarily with ECOWAS. Even though it quickly managed to find a way to coexist with the Malian junta, preparations for a military operation which would reconquer the north of the country were under way. Its efforts were supported by France, including through its work in the UN Security Council, where it took a primary role on the issue. Differences within ECOWAS and with other regional actors like Algeria and Mauritania nevertheless complicated finding a common position. In part to address these issues, the problem has gradually been raised to higher political levels, where France had a more direct influence. Both the AU and the UN became more involved, which helped to resolve some of the issues between ECOWAS and the interim government in Mali, although problems kept appearing between ECOWAS and the AU on mutual responsibilities, and between France and the US on the appropriate way to proceed with the planned intervention.

Amidst a deteriorating political and military situation, the key actors managed to overcome their differences regarding mission capacity and funding, agreed on an African-led operation and then all rapidly changed plans as France decided to immediately intervene on its own. This happened following a Malian request, and went according to a contingency plan that had already been developed by French domestic actors who favored unilateral intervention almost from the beginning. The overall situation sped up the deployment of a European training mission to Mali, which was promoted by France, too. In the end, it also accelerated the African-led mission, which suddenly became much more practically feasible, but did not fully resolve the question of its funding, and with the support of France, who quickly started to seek an exit strategy, the mission would be transitioned under the direction of the UN. Over the next years, the French policy continued to be characterized by a simultaneous desire not to lose influence in the region, not to let insecurity run rampant, but to pass direct responsibility on other actors. It subsequently regionalized its presence and aided the creation of the new organization G5 Sahel, which excluded other regional powers and would fight jihadism alongside the French. France then again tried to guarantee its funding from the UN budget, yet unsuccessfully. Even though other actors have at times opposed French policies, none has shown enough willingness to fully block or otherwise seriously hamper them.

Summary

What are the motivations of states for establishing multiple simultaneous peace operations? This thesis shows that in Mali, France sought to subcontract conflict management to regional organizations, but with the situation growing worse and regional actors unable to address it, it got involved unilaterally while simultaneously leading the EU, the UN and the G5 Sahel to operate alongside it, likely as a form of generating as much resources as available while reducing in various forms of its costs, under the justification of division of labor, although without any explicit evidence for it being a conscious effort of using comparative advantages. France attempted to balance interests of its domestic audience, western allies, as well as the African governments, striving to achieve its policies of Africanization, Europeanization and multilateralization, while never ceasing to operate unilaterally in order to be seen as a responsible great power that prevents terrorism, state collapse and migration.

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