Synergies Between Military Missions in Mali

Elin Hellquist and Tua Sandman

FOI

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Sammanfattning

FN:s fredsinsats MINUSMA, EU:s kapacitetsbyggande insats EUTM, franskledda kontraterrorstyrkan Barkhane och de regionala trupperna FC-G5S är alla i Mali för att stödja den nationella regeringen att stabilisera landet. Trots deras ansträngningar är säkerhetssituationen mycket svår. Den här rapporten analyserar relationerna inom Malis multiaktörskonstellation, sett utifrån de svenska bidragen till MINUSMA och EUTM. Genom en kartläggning av 'engagemang' inom samexistens, koordinering och samarbete identifierar studien befintliga och möjliga synergier mellan insatserna. Analysen ger vid handen att insatserna *samexisterar* i relativ harmoni och ser sig som komplement till varandra. Arbetsfördelning är en grundpremiss för samexistens, vilken medvetet begränsar kontaktytorna mellan insatserna. Den *koordinering* av aktiviteter och resurser som förekommer mellan insatserna uppstår som svar på praktiska behov och är huvudsakligen av informell karaktär. *Samarbete* centreras kring försvar av förläggningar eller, när tillämpligt, gemensamma operationer mot motståndaren. Som helhet visar studien på att insatserna i Mali i huvudsak är upptagna med att uppfylla sina egna givna uppgifter på bästa sätt under mycket svåra omständigheter. Indikationerna om att 'funktionella synergier' existerar mellan insatserna relaterar endast i mycket begränsad omfattning till potentiella synergier för säkerheten i Mali.

Nyckelord: Mali, internationella insatser, insatsprojektet, fredsfrämjande, MINUSMA, EUTM, G5, Barkhane.

Summary

The United Nations peacekeeping mission MINUSMA, the European Union's capacity-building mission EUTM, the French-led counterterrorism force Barkhane, and the regional troops FC-G5S are all in Mali to support the national government in stabilising the country. Despite their efforts, the security crisis in Mali is severe and deteriorating. This report provides an analysis of the state of relations in the multi-actor constellation in Mali, as seen from the perspective of Swedish deployments to MINUSMA and EUTM. Through a mapping of engagements at the level of coexistence, coordination, and cooperation, the study identifies existing and prospective synergies between the missions. The analysis reveals that the missions *coexist* in relative harmony, presenting themselves as complementary pieces in solving the Malian security puzzle. Division of labour is a core premise of coexistence, which deliberately limits exchanges between missions. *Coordination* of activities and resources arises in reply to practical needs and is often informal. *Cooperation* is centred around camp protection and, when applicable, joint combat operations. As a whole, the study shows that each mission is mainly occupied with fulfilling its own given tasks under difficult circumstances. The existence of 'functional synergies' between the missions relates only faintly to potential synergies for Malian security.

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Abbreviations

AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AU	African Union
Barkhane	Operation Barkhane
CMATT	Combined Mobile Advisory and Training Teams
CONOPS	Concept of operations
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FAMa	*Forces Armées Maliennes*/Malian Armed Forces
FC-G5S	*Force conjointe du G5 Sahel*/G5 Sahel Joint Force
G5	*Groupe de cinq pays du Sahel*/Group of Five for the Sahel
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
LNO	Liaison Officer
LIPTG	Light Infantry Patrolling Task Group
MAF	Malian Armed Forces
MDSF	Malian Defence and Security Forces
MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
MINUSMA	*Mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali*/United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
P3S	Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
Takuba	Task Force Takuba
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

1   Introduction

'Mali is a sick patient with many doctors'. (Foreign Security Advisor, quoted in Tull 2019)

The security crisis in Mali has attracted the attention of numerous non-domestic actors, from the United Nations (UN), the *Groupe de cinq pays du Sahel* (Group of Five for the Sahel, G5, G5 Sahel), and the European Union (EU), to individual countries such as France, the United States (US), and Russia.[1] The military missions – MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), EUTM (European Union Training Mission), the *Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel* (G5 Sahel Joint Force, FC-G5S) and Operation Barkhane (hereafter Barkhane, consisting of France plus supporting nations) – are crucial examples of multinational foreign involvement in Malian security. These missions have overlapping membership and receive the bulk of their funding from the same sources. Moreover, they all explicitly aim at improving Malian security, and are dependent on informational and logistical exchange to carry out their respective mandates in a secure and effective way. However, their resources, mandates, and underlying motivations differ.

This picture is not unique for Mali, but an example of a broader trend of increasingly crowded mission landscapes. By being present in conflict zones around the world, external actors demonstrate a willingness to address severe security challenges. At the same time, it is far from given that the presence of several missions in the same conflict area facilitates building sustainable security. In a worst-case scenario, the plurality of actors adds self-centrism, confusion, and competition to an already difficult puzzle.

In the autumn of 2019, two additional military initiatives in Mali, both spearheaded by France, have come to public awareness. The first, Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel (P3S), is a French-German civilian-military collaboration. The second, Task Force Takuba, is envisaged as a European special forces structure outside of the EU framework. In January 2020, Sweden received a request to contribute to Takuba (Swedish Armed Forces 2020a). Although the precise contours of these initiatives remain to be seen, the fact that the number of 'doctors' is set to continue to increase is in itself noteworthy. Meanwhile, there are indications that in Mali public support for especially MINUSMA and Barkhane is decreasing. Recently, the central region of Mali has seen demonstrations organised at the initiative of civil society organisations and demanding that these missions leave. Demonstrators are reported as calling for Russia to play a more central role, as it is seen to be doing in the similarly conflict-ridden and fellow former French

colony, the Central African Republic (Forestier 2019). With the signing of a military cooperation agreement between Mali and Russia in the summer of 2019 (*DefenceWeb* 2019) and, since 2013, the latter's supplying of light weapons to the country (*Agence France Press* 2013); as well as rumours that the private Russian military company, Wagner, is offering training, and may even be participating in combat (*Daily Maverick/Scorpio* 2019ab; Stronski 2019; see Schmitt, E. 2019); there are indeed indications that Russia is boosting its posture in Mali.

With increasing competition from new actors, it is becoming imperative for military missions to think in terms of synergies between themselves. To contribute to this endeavour, this report disentangles the complex interdependencies and frictions between MINUSMA, EUTM, FC-G5S, and Barkhane – the most important multinational external military actors in Mali. The empirical analysis is delineated to engagements between missions, as perceived from the viewpoint of the Swedish deployments to MINUSMA and EUTM.

The Swedish government has instructed the armed forces to deploy staff to two missions in the cluster: up to 470 people to MINUSMA – actual deployment 2019-11-30: 277 persons – and up to fifteen persons to EUTM – actual deployment 2019-11-30: eight persons (Swedish Armed Forces 2019b). Starting from the premise that the mandates of these two missions include coordination and cooperation with other actors, this study asks:

- What experiences of engagements with other missions do staff deployed from the Swedish armed forces to MINUSMA and EUTM have?
- To what extent have these engagements created synergies of benefit to the Malian security situation?
- How could engagements between missions be modified for synergies to evolve?

The aim of this report is to contribute to a better understanding of the relational dynamics between the four main military missions present in Mali as of 2019: MINUSMA, EUTM, FC-G5S, and Barkhane. Mapping empirically observable engagements between the missions, as seen from the perspective of Swedish deployments to MINUSMA and EUTM, the report assesses the chances that synergies emerge between the missions. A central point of departure for this endeavour is that not all engagements lead to synergies, but most synergies follow from engagements. The study distinguishes analytically between three forms of engagements – coexistence, coordination, and cooperation – and discusses what types of synergies, if any, they produce. The report thereby not only contributes new knowledge of the specific conditions under which the missions in Mali operate, but also seeks to improve our general understanding of inter-institutional relations in a conflict environment that involves several international actors.

The Swedish experience of, and within, the multi-actor constellation in Mali is a relevant study object for at least two reasons. First, whereas the multi-actor

dimension is a contextual factor to be reckoned with for *any* country deploying staff to a mission in Mali, it is particularly important for small contributors who seek to leave a meaningful imprint despite limited resources. Recent research has underlined that "junior partners"[2] bring "differentiated contributions" to multinational military missions (Schmitt, O. 2019, 70). Constructive engagements between missions could make the contributions of junior partners with relatively small deployments more efficient and sustainable. Second, observing the multi-actor constellation from the outlook of Swedish contributors to MINUSMA and EUTM helps identify which spaces of engagement are worthwhile to prioritise, and which domains are particularly risk-prone. These insights are potentially relevant for anyone interested in the conditions for effectively supporting peace in a multi-actor environment.

1.1   Methodology

The Swedish Ministry of Defence commissioned this study, which investigates whether, how, and under which circumstances engagements between different military actors create synergies. A synergy refers to a combination of factors that together are more than the sum of their individual parts. It is not obvious that such a "mutual catalysis" (Abraham 1988, 18) exists for the multi-actor constellation present in Mali. Bertrand and Cheeseman (2019) describe the opposite of a synergy: "[T]he multiplicity of actors involved – each with their own set of interests and priorities – is undermining […] the capacity of any one actor to exert a coherent influence". Similarly, Tull (2019, 418) comments that "The sheer number of international partners in the security sector and their overlapping and uncoordinated activities generate significant criticism". Even the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) appears unconvinced, noting that MINUSMA should interact with ". . . other security presences that have the *potential* to be mutually beneficial instruments to restore peace and stability in Mali and the Sahel region" (United Nations Security Council 2019b, emphasis added).

It is impossible to know what the situation in Mali would have been like with another constellation of actors, and it is equally impossible to quantify and compare the individual and combined effects of the missions. Instead, this report takes inspiration from a broader understanding of the term synergy, as "a pan-disciplinary lingua franca for the functional effects produced by cooperative phenomena of various kinds" (Corning 1998, 133). As mentioned above, rather than focusing only on explicitly cooperative practices, this study distinguishes between three types of engagements: coexistence, coordination, and cooperation. The focus on these categories, which are discussed in more detail in Section 2.1, approximates the way the term synergy is applied within the missions themselves,

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[2] Olivier Schmitt defines a junior partner as any partner that does not *lead* a military coalition.

where it is often thought of in the general sense as being mutually beneficial contacts between missions (e.g. EUTM Mali 2019a; United Nations Security Council 2019b).

The concept of a synergy is by definition positively loaded, since it refers to an amplified value or effect resulting from interactions between units. Whereas a synergy is a normative concept, coexistence, coordination, and cooperation (as discussed below) are empirical phenomena that may or may not lead to desirable outcomes. This implies that the recipe for maximising synergies is not necessarily to maximise all engagements, of any kind, between missions. Synergies, in terms of increased capacity to conduct mission activities, can be expected to follow from the effective use of resources and intelligent division of labour. However, with regard to the security situation in the country, a much higher threshold needs to be crossed if synergies are to arise.

1.1.1   Material

For the purposes of this report, a series of interviews were conducted between September and December 2019, in Stockholm, Enköping, and Skövde, Sweden. All interviews were carried out and transcribed in Swedish. The interview segments referred to in the present text were translated into English by the authors, as applicable.

Eleven respondents, all of them Swedish military personnel with either current or recent (~2016) experience of working within MINUSMA or EUTM, were interviewed. The selection of respondents was guided by the broad scope of the research questions. To gain knowledge about the state of relations between actors in Mali, it was judged important to build a pool of interviewees who have experience from different types of roles in the missions. Consequently, the selection of respondents did not seek to identify persons who are or were maximally exposed to other missions through their roles (i.e. liaison officers). Instead, the aim was to capture whether and, if so, how the issue of synergies enters the daily work of different positions within the missions. Examples of positions represented in the pool of respondents are planning officers at the headquarters of the Swedish Armed Forces, chiefs of staff in the Swedish contingents, and staff officers in the mission headquarters. The diversity of backgrounds has proven helpful in defining realistic ways to improve the engagements between the different missions.

Seven of the respondents have experience geared towards MINUSMA, and three towards EUTM. Two respondents have experience from work equally related to MINUSMA and EUTM. "Institutional belonging" and "type of work performed" inform many of the statements given in the interviews. Yet, in the interest of preserving anonymity, affiliations are not mentioned here.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format.[3] Before the first meeting, the authors prepared a set of preliminary questions. This list was slightly modified between interviews, to account for individual circumstances. However, all respondents replied to questions that were thematically equivalent. On all occasions, the aim was to take stock of the respondent's direct exposure to engagements as well as his/her reflections on actual and prospective synergies.

Approximately halfway through each interview, the respondents were asked to plot their general impressions of the multi-actor constellation on five continuums describing dichotomous conceptual poles. All respondents, with one exception (interview 3), took part in this exercise. The exercise had three purposes: (i) to give respondents the chance to summarise their general impressions in a stylised manner, (ii) to collect more conceptually oriented reflections on the categories of analysis, and (iii) to introduce a moment of active reflection as a 'break' in the structure of the interview.

The interview material captures both objective realities and subjective perceptions concerning existing and potential synergies between the missions. Both parameters are crucial to exploring the ways that the multi-actor constellation may more fruitfully contribute to a secure Mali. The stocktaking of *actual engagements* is important, since it indicates in which domains contacts between missions are considered relevant, after several years of their being present in Mali simultaneously. *Perceptions* of other missions are crucial, because synergies are relational phenomena: they refer to situations where one plus one becomes more than two. Each respondent, in her/his role in a mission, takes part in constructing the multi-actor complex and affecting whether or not it is an environment prone to synergies. In the empirical analysis of the material, the authors have consistently taken the specific positions of each interviewee into consideration when evaluating the validity of factual statements and the weight of contextual perceptions provided during the interviews. To respect the anonymity of the respondents, these considerations are not disclosed in the text itself.

This report pays attention to the phenomenon of multi-actor presence at large, as well as to patterns of engagement between individual missions. The testimonies of engagements mirror the type of experience accumulated during the Swedish deployments to MINUSMA and EUTM. They are therefore conditioned by the geographical location and nature of the tasks carried out by staff within the Swedish contingents and by Swedish personnel at mission headquarters. Within

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[3] Most of the interviews lasted 75-90 minutes, whereas a couple of them came to an end after an hour (due to the availability of the respondent). Four of the interviews were carried out by both authors working together, while six were conducted by just one of us, and another was done by one of the authors and another defence analyst. Ten of the interviews took place as personal meetings, whereas one interview, with a respondent in Mali, was held by phone.

MINUSMA, Sweden has deployed staff to Sector West (Timbuktu) as well as to the MINUSMA headquarters, in Bamako. EUTM's mission area in Mali comprises Southern Mali, "up to the Niger river loop", as well as the cities of Timbuktu and Gao, and decentralised activities (EUTM 2019e). Since Swedish deployments have not been regularly active in the border areas, the potential points of contact with FC-G5S on the ground have been limited. None of our EUTM respondents were part of the efforts to advise FC-G5S. However, the respondents did include persons with strategic oversight of the mission area who were well-placed to assess the state of relations within the entire multi-actor complex.

Furthermore, the analysis makes use of official documentation from the missions. These sources supplement the insights collected from the interviews and confirm the main findings. Particular attention has been paid to the mandates and other documents that formally guide the missions.

Lastly, the analysis was further supported by employing the literature on the changing nature of peacekeeping in general, together with policy-oriented assessments of the conditions for external military missions in Mali and news reports on the situation there.

1.1.2   Outline

The next section (1.2) describes the basic features of the four missions analysed in this report. Thereafter, Chapter 2 situates the study among previous research on multi-actor peace support and presents an analytical framework that distinguishes between three types of engagements: coexistence, coordination, and cooperation (2.1). In Chapters 3-5, the engagements between the missions in Mali are clustered in these three categories. Chapter 6 draws conclusions regarding the existing and prospective synergies (6.1–6.2) and outlines the implications of the study for Swedish military deployments in a multi-actor setting (6.3).

1.2   Military missions in Mali

Among the multitude of international partners engaged in some aspect of Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Mali,[4] there are four multinational military missions: MINUSMA, G5, EUTM, and Barkhane. These share an explicit commitment to the overarching goal of restoring state authority. At the same time, they compete for both human and financial resources.

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[4] In 2017, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces found that "70 distinct projects were being implemented […] to revamp army, police and justice institutions" in Mali. Quoted in Tull 2019, 409.

1.2.1   MINUSMA

With 11,953 military personnel currently (December 2019) deployed, MINUSMA is by far the biggest military mission present in Mali. MINUSMA also includes a police and civilian component; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) – Mahamat Saleh Annadif – leads the entire mission.

The UNSC has authorised MINUSMA to defend its mandate, with "all necessary means" (last confirmed in United Nations Security Council 2019c). It is the most dangerous of the UN's current missions (ONU Info 2019), and the fifth-deadliest mission in the history of UN peacekeeping (United Nations Peacekeeping 2019). Carrying out stabilising operations is MINUSMA's core activity, largely performed through "active patrolling," in cooperation with Mali's armed forces, the Forces Armées Maliennes, or FAMa (S/RES/2295 2016, Gilder 2019, 53). As an example, MINUSMA's official Twitter account reported, on 28 November 2019, that 200 joint patrols had been carried out between 14–24 November 2019 (UN_MINUSMA 2019).

57 countries contribute troops to MINUSMA.[5] The Swedish Armed Forces may deploy up to 450 members to MINUSMA. Since the spring of 2013, Sweden has contributed a task force for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), as well as supporting functions and staff officers. As of 30 November 2019, the Swedish deployment consisted of 277 soldiers and officers (Swedish Armed Forces 2019b). In December 2019, the process of dismantling the ISR contingent began. The Swedish Armed Forces are currently preparing to establish a new contribution, this time in Gao, Eastern Mali.

1.2.2   EUTM

The EU distinguishes between non-executive military missions, and executive military operations. The former should "support[…] the host nation with an advisory role only", whereas the latter may "conduct actions in replacement of the host nation" (European Union Military Committee 2014, 9, § 14). EUTM Mali is a non-executive mission that is mandated to support the host nation with training and by advising the armed forces. It is one of three capacity-building missions under the European Union (EU) flag.[6]

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[5] The countries contributing troops to MINUSMA are Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cameroon, Chad, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Lituania, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Romania, Salvador, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and United States of America (MINUSMA 2019a).

[6] The other EU training missions are in Somalia and the Central African Republic.

EUTM's headquarters are located in Bamako, whereas training is carried out at a facility in Koulikoro, approximately 60 km northeast of the capital. Moreover, since 2016, "Combined Mobile Advisory and Training Teams" (CMATT) travel to the bases of the Malian armed forces (Forces Armées Maliennes – FAMa) to carry out "decentralised activities", i.e. training soldiers and giving advice to officers on location. By the summer of 2019, 14,000 soldiers, which amounts to almost two-thirds of the Malian army, had received training offered by EUTM (European External Action Service 2019a). Although focused on training FAMa, EUTM has a regional dimension, since its advisory team supports FC-G5S.

During 2019, the Malian interest in receiving training from EUTM decreased drastically, leaving two-thirds of the EU trainers unoccupied for most of the year (Interview 9). EUTM is still in the process of making sense of the decline. Likely, the drop can partly be explained by the deteriorated security situation: the normal training-combat cycle has been suspended, since Malian soldiers are urgently needed for combat operations (Interview 9).

Out of a total mission strength of 620,[7] the Swedish Armed Forces may deploy up to fifteen people to the mission, including the position of Head of J7 (Division for Training and Education), at the headquarters in Bamako (Government of Sweden 2019). During 2018-2019, a total of eight representatives from Sweden were working for EUTM (Swedish Armed Forces 2019b).

1.2.3 Barkhane

Barkhane is a French initiative that started in 2014, replacing the Serval mission that since 2013 had successfully pushed back an extremist insurgency in Mali. Like its predecessor, Barkhane is a specialised combat force that supports the Malian authorities in the fight against highly mobile armed terrorist groups. Barkhane presents its role as consisting of three interlinked parts: combat (aka tracking down terrorists across the territory), supporting FC-G5S, and civilian/military projects providing services to the Malian population (French Ministry of Armed Forces 2020a). A legislative report from the French Senate underlines that Barkhane is deeply integrated in its "3D" approach in Sahel: diplomacy, defence, and development. According to a more critical interpretation, Barkhane combines "martial practices" with "practices of social control and policing" (Frowd and Sandor 2018, 76).

Since the latest reinforcement, in early 2020, Barkhane consists of approximately 5100 soldiers for the entire Sahel region (French Ministry of Armed Forces 2020c).

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[7] The EU member states that contribute to EUTM Mali are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia, Spain, and United Kingdom. Five European non-EU countries also take part in the mission: Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, and Moldova (EUTM 2019).

At the end of 2019, around 1500 of those were deployed to Northern and central Mali, where Barkhane conducts joint operations with FC-G5S and the Malian armed forces. Although UNSC resolutions refer to Barkhane as "the French forces", the United Kingdom and Denmark contribute helicopter resources (including personnel) to the mission, and Estonia an infantry unit (Danish Ministry of Defence, 2020). Barkhane has no time limit. However, its stated "primary objective is to **support the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) partner countries in taking over the fight against armed terrorist groups** across the Sahel-Saharan strip (SSS)" (French Ministry of Armed Forces 2020b, 4; emphasis in original).

1.2.4   FC-G5S

The G5, which came into being in 2014, is a regional initiative of the five Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad. Its joint force FC-G5S was created in 2017, with the explicit aim of complementing MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane (Cooke 2017). Notably, next to their engagement in G5, Burkina Faso and Chad are also the biggest contributors with soldiers to MINUSMA (MINUSMA 2019a).

FC-G5S is mandated by the UN to conduct counterterrorism operations and combat transnational organised crime and human trafficking (UNSC Resolution 2391, 2017). As a regional organisation in the making, the idea has been that the mother organisation – G5 – would conduct an integrated approach, combining considerations of security and development. The aim has also been to form a force of 5000 soldiers, grouped in seven battalions and operating within 50 km of either side of the shared borders (France Diplomatie 2019). The task of these troops is to control the regions along the borders between the Sahel countries, isolating armed groups and limiting their agency (G5 Sahel 2015).

According to the European Commission (2018, 6), FC-G5S "reached its initial operational capability (IOC) on 17 October 2017 and conducted its first official operation (Hawbi) at the end of the same month". One and a half years later, in the UNSC, Burkina Faso's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, Alpha Barry, argued that the forces were "90 per cent operational in the west, 74 per cent in the centre and 75 per cent in the east" (United Nations Security Council 2019a). Notably, FC-G5S is a multinational mission in which national troops mainly act within their own territories. The novelty is the explicit additional right to operate within 50 kilometres of the borders of partner countries.

2 Peace Support in a Multi-Actor Landscape

In recent decades, the number of international and regional organisations involved in joint peacekeeping or stabilisation efforts has increased. Multi-actor peace operations, which involve at least two organisations or groups of states, have become the "standard approach", amounting to sixty percent of all peace operations between 1978 and 2009 (Balas 2011, 384; Welz 2016). Research on contemporary third-party military intervention and peacekeeping speaks of hybrid peace operations, which "bring together two or more international actors that operate simultaneously or sequentially" and where their activities "imply a certain degree of institutional cooperation" (Tardy 2014, 97). This web of dependencies and complementarities has been described as a "regime complex" (Brosig 2015), in which international and regional actors overlap and intersect both institutionally and operationally. MINUSMA, EUTM, FC-G5S, and Barkhane together form the regime complex of foreign military missions in Mali.

In the scholarly literature, multi-actor peace operations are classified as sequential, parallel, or integrated (Bah and Jones 2008; Brosig 2010; Tardy 2014). Sequential operations refer to arrangements when organisations intervene at different stages. Parallel operations are simultaneous operations in the same conflict environment. They normally share the same declared goals but have different command structures and more or less pronounced overlaps in their activities. Lastly, integrated or partially integrated operations refer to arrangements with joint planning and shared command structures.

Previous research points at various obstacles and risks embedded in multi-actor approaches – particularly parallel ones – to stabilising conflict areas. Actors who are simultaneously active in a mission area mostly remain organisationally separate and often act according to self-interest. Hence, missions do not necessarily serve complementary roles, but could come to compete (Brosig 2015, 5; Welz 2016). Furthermore, multi-actor operations allow states to push for and engage in those efforts that best suit their own agendas. If hybridity evolved to favour burden-sharing, efficiency, and strategic benefits, forum shopping between missions risks harming these same aspects (Brosig 2015; Tardy 2014). Relatedly, accountability is difficult to identify when responsibility is dispersed among several institutional frameworks. In the end, that actors do not feel fully in charge might affect the effectiveness of the missions negatively (Tardy 2014, 112).

Whereas these challenges are relevant to consider in any context, they will not play out the same way for all multi-actor constellations. The qualitative relations within a mission complex vary between different contexts. Consequently, the extent to which these risks turn into real-world problems is a matter to be settled through

empirical scrutiny. This report takes a step in that direction, seeking to elucidate the state of affairs for the 'family' of external military actors in Mali.

2.1   A pyramid of engagements

The military missions in Mali are parallel institutions. They are simultaneously present in Mali, do not have a joint line of command, and do not systematically plan activities together. Whereas organisationally parallel missions are as a matter of definition distinct, they share the role of being military actors on foreign territory. Through this shared role, missions are exposed to similar challenges. This study makes use of an analytical continuum to map out three types of engagement that follow from challenges specific to the missions' identities as external actors: coexistence, coordination, and cooperation. As the study elucidates, how relations between missions develop within these categories depends on factors integral to the mission structure, as well as on the local context in which missions operate.

Coexistence refers to the passive or active approval of the other actor's presence, without direct mutual engagements. Coexisting missions are like colleagues who know each other's names but whose interactions are limited to saying hi at the coffee machine.

Coordination requires missions to align and adjust their activities to the presence of other actors (see Gulati, Wohlgezogen and Zhelyazkov 2012). Coordinative missions are like colleagues who help each other out with carrying out specific tasks, without taking over responsibility or ownership.

Cooperation entails a common project where all involved are stakeholders. Cooperative missions are like colleagues who work together towards a common goal.

A sophisticated version of cooperation is collaboration, in which organisations share responsibilities, resources, rewards, and risks, and are willing to "enchance the capacity of another" (Himmelman 2001, 278). In this stage of advanced mutual commitment, "a structure of shared power is developed jointly by participants to address collective interests" (McNamara 2012, 393). Reconnecting with the characterisation described earlier in this chapter, a collaborative logic would approximate an integrated mission structure. Thus, collaboration is not expected as a possible outcome of parallel missions. Figure 1, below, visualises the above three categories.
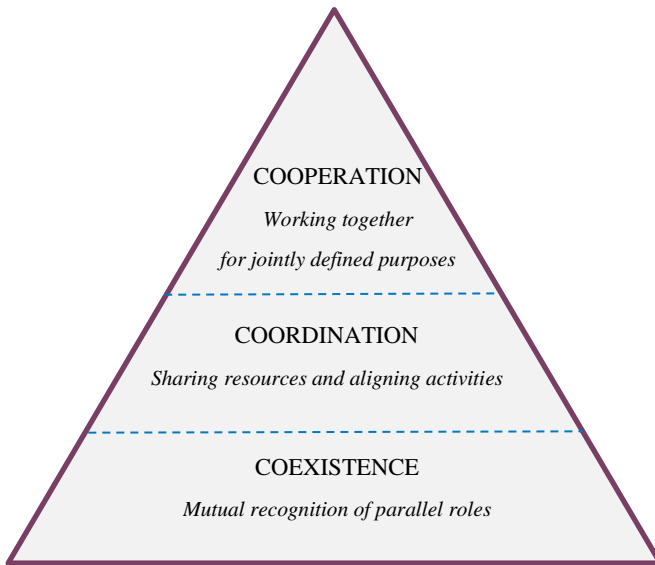
Figure 1. The Pyramid of Engagements (by authors)

Synergies may emerge at any level of the pyramid. An example of a synergy at the level of coexistence would be a beneficial division of labour: the actors deal with different dimensions of the security problem to increase the value for the host country. At the level of coordination, a synergy could be that mission *a* gets access to better medical care through a facility run by mission *b*, while mission *b* can improve its operational planning by knowing the whereabouts of mission *c*. Finally, at the level of cooperation, that mission *a* conducts joint operations with mission *b* could amount to synergy if their interaction amplifies the capacity to push back the antagonist.

These are examples of the theoretically possible synergies that could be created by coexistence, coordination, and cooperation, respectively. As is elaborated in the next chapter (3), the situation in Mali bears traits of all three categories of engagement. The emphasis for the group of actors as a whole lies on coexistence, with elements of coordination. Within specific areas and between individual missions, cooperation occurs. From these patterns, it is possible to conclude that there is no *coalition* of international actors in place in Mali (see Himmelman 2001). Instead, each mission is a coalition of its own. Therefore, they are often more occupied with internal coordination and cooperation than with reaching out to other missions.

Chapter 3 also demonstrates that far from all engagements lead to synergies. On the contrary, engagements that relax the boundaries between mission mandates put at risk the stability of the multi-actor constellation. On the one hand, foreign military missions wish to display a united front as representatives of the

international community, all working towards the aim of restoring state authority in Mali. On the other hand, their coexistence is premised on division of labour. The moment that coordination or cooperation leads to a – real or perceived – confusion of roles, the principled basis of the external intervention is shaken. This fundamental dilemma delineates which options for increasing synergies are feasible and which are unrealistic to begin with.

3 Coexistence

The most basic characteristic of inter-mission relations in Mali is coexistence. The missions constitute a parallel structure that delivers different types of military support to the Malian hosts. The parts in this structure are explicitly complementary, following a division of labour established in the mandates and the equivalent guiding documents of each mission.

The coexistence of external actors in Mali is not coincidental (see Welz 2016, 574 on accidental and deliberate plurality). On the contrary, it follows from (i) the Malian government's broad outreach to the international community for support, (ii) the actors' mutual endorsement (iii) the ensuring division of tasks and competences. These factors set the basis for a parallel coexistence that our respondents consider to be rather harmonious, as depicted in figure 2. A cross in a given colour signifies the self-placement of each respondent throughout figures 2, 3, 4, and 5.
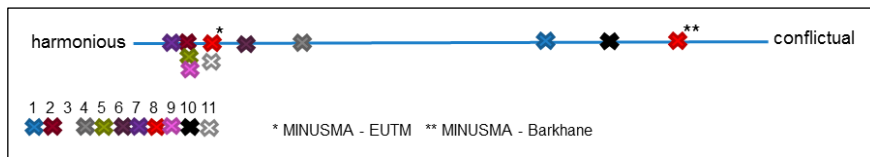
Figure 2. Harmonious or conflictual

For some respondents, the presence of multiple external actors is an obvious advantage, since it represents broad international commitment and a reasonable division of labour (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 8, and 11). A couple of respondents saw the plurality of actors as being a military disadvantage, but dismissed any other arrangement than the current parallel structure as utopian (Interviews 5, 9, and 10). "The alternative is no mission at all", as Respondent 5 put it. Similarly, Respondent 7 found it hard to think of an alternative to the current web of actors. Figure 3 shows how all respondents positioned themselves near the right-hand pole on a continuum between integrated and parallel missions.

Figure 3. Integrated or parallel

3.1 Intervention by invitation

As a first factor in establishing their coexistence, all four military missions are in Mali at the request of the Malian ho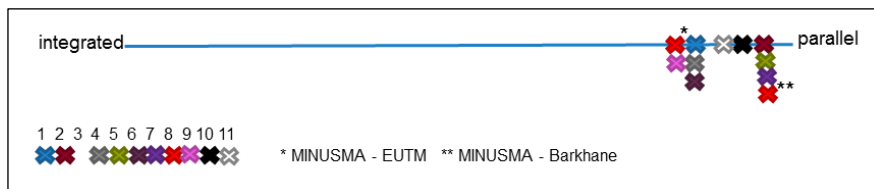sts. The primary source of legitimacy for each of the missions is an invitation from the Malian government. As stated by Respondent 1, the national government is the "given counterpart" to each of the missions (Interview 1). This recognition of local ownership – that the presence and activities of the missions are anchored in the host country and driven by local needs – is crucial if the missions are to avoid connotations of Western-centrism and imperialism. At least in theory, local ownership is a common denominator that bridges the different mandates of the missions.

According to Respondent 8, it would be a sign of success if the civilian population perceived the international community to be working together in Mali, since that would clarify that the government has invited all actors (Interview 8). However, important segments of the population still associate the missions with foreign intrusion. France's General Bruno Clément-Bollée predicted in *Le Monde* (2019) that it will be Malian popular discontent, not security, that will eventually force Barkhane to leave. According to research by Sabrow, (2017, 168, 176), despite being invited by the Malian government, MINUSMA tends to be seen as an "an instrument of global powers" and its official motives are put into question. Such perceptions imply that beyond the government the missions are not genuinely anchored locally. Wavering local acceptance creates a risk for the mission structure, since it puts into question the most basic factor establishing coexistence.

If, on the other hand, the invitation is insufficient to counter perceptions that missions are illegitimate external interveners, the missions can also be seen as being *too* closely implicated with the Malian government. For the invitation to function as a source of legitimacy, the institution behind it – the government – also needs to be at least minimally legitimate. That the government is weak is a given in the mission equation – otherwise the external actors would not be there. However, justifying one's presence with reference to a government that lacks even a rudimentary level of legitimacy, for instance because it either lacks popular support, is irrelevant, or commits human rights violations, risks putting the credibility and safety of missions at stake. In legal terms, a government guilty of systematic human rights crimes could be argued to have lost its right to extend an invitation for international military support (Kenny and Butler 2018).

3.2 Mutual endorsement

The coexistence that is established by the Malian government's outreach is confirmed through horizontal endorsement between the political principals of different missions. Mutual endorsement communicates the formal acceptance of coexistence in the mission structure. Although endorsement is a way of mutually

assigning legitimacy, not all endorsements carry equal weight. The UNSC is particularly important in this regard, as the designated peace-keeper under international law (Charter of the United Nations, Chapter 7). The legitimacy of its own mission – MINUSMA – hinges on this status. The other missions were born with the UNSC's consent (See United Nations Security Council 2012, 2017ab). The missions present themselves not as competitors to, but as enablers of, the UN. In line with the established code of conduct, the non-UN missions thereby express their respect for the UN's primacy under international law.

France made its intervention in Mali conditional on the quick arrival of MINUSMA (Karlsrud 2019, 12). In the official press package for Barkhane, the French Ministry of Armed Forces (2020b) underlines that its forces "are authorized [by UNSC/RES/2480] to intervene in support to MINUSMA units under imminent and serious threat". Besides this provision, in contrast to FC-G5S and EUTM, the counterterrorism activities of Barkhane are not explicitly authorized in UNSC resolutions. UNSC Resolution 2085 (from 2012), which requested that (among others) "interested bilateral partners" support the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and member states make "any necessary assistance in efforts to reduce the threat posed by terrorist organizations", was interpreted by France as amounting to UN authorisation of the Serval intervention, in 2013 (see Christakis and Bannelier 2013). Notably, French official sources still refer to Resolution 2085 (see, e.g., the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in New York 2019).

According to an analysis in the *Courrier Juridique de la Défense* (2014), there are five distinct legal bases for Barkhane. However, in the absence of a clear and encompassing mandate from the UN, Barkhane's main source of authorisation is bilateral agreements on defence cooperation with the Sahel countries (e.g. Mali: Sénat 2014). Its predecessor, Serval, was authorised through an operational agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the French and Malian governments (Journal Officiel de la République Française 2013). France, for its part, does endorse MINUSMA: it is "a key component of the international presence in Mali" (French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs 2019a).

Beyond recognising each other's existence, all missions commit to actively fostering good relationships with other actors. The initial EU Council decision from January 2013 states that the activities of EUTM "shall be conducted in close coordination with other actors involved in the support to the MAF" (Council of the European Union 2013). The most recent UNSC resolution on Mali (S/RES/2480) includes several wordings on expected coordination and cooperation with "other security presences in Mali and the Sahel region" (United Nations Security Council 2019c, 10). It "*requests* the Secretary-General to ensure adequate coordination, exchange of information and, when applicable, support, within their respective mandates and through existing mechanisms, between MINUSMA, the MDSF, the

FC-G5S, the French Forces and the European Union missions in Mali" (ibid.). As discussed by one respondent, the UNSC sets ambitious goals but does not offer much guidance on how missions are supposed to fulfil these, or how cooperative practices should be organised (Interview 7).

France declares that a "logic of partnership structures relations" with other military actors present in Mali. MINUSMA is highlighted as a "privileged partner", to Barkhane (French Ministry of Armed Forces 2020a). France is described as a "strategic partner" to G5 (ibid.), which indeed also presents Barkhane as its partner (G5 Sahel 2015). However, President Macron has complained that Sahel leaders, despite officially having endorsed France's presence, do not defend it against accusations of neo-colonialism: "I neither can, nor want to, have French soldiers on the ground in the Sahel, if the ambiguity [of Sahel leaders] towards anti-French movements persists, [and is even] sometimes transmitted by politicians in charge" (RFI 2019, translated from the French by the authors).

Engagements between in particular Barkhane and MINUSMA are complicated by the different character of the missions (see Section 3.1.3). The UN's traditional allegiance to impartiality and self-defence stands in contrast to the counterterrorism profile of Barkhane (e.g. Interviews 2 and 8; Charbonneau 2019). As noted above, the UN has endorsed Barkhane by giving it an explicit mandate to intervene in support of MINUSMA in the event it was seriously threatened (United Nations Security Council 2019c; Government of Sweden 2019). To closely associate with the Barkhane counterterrorism forces under less urgent circumstances is considered a credibility risk for the UN (Interviews 2, 5, and 8). In addition, for many of the contributing states, for instance Germany, participation in MINUSMA is conditional upon their soldiers' not being implicated in any active combat (Egleder 2018).

According to the UNSC (2017b, 2), MINUSMA and FC-G5S "have the potential to constitute a positive interaction". Yet, just as for Barkhane, the different mandates of FC-G5S and MINUSMA make extensive formalised exchanges unlikely (see Gasinska and Bohman 2017, 43-44). In addition, operational cooperation with FC-G5S also remains a distant prospect for MINUSMA, since "they do not do a lot on the ground" (Interview 7). According to Respondent 2, contacts are non-existent at the level of contingents.

That coexistence is mutually endorsed does not mean that all actors in the mission complex have equal standing. Perceptions of hierarchy influence relations between missions on the ground. Figure 4, below, maps respondents' perceptions of relations in the multi-actor complex on a continuum that spans from equality to hierarchy. As the figure shows, impressions diverge. To give a few examples, Respondent 6 meant that "Barkhane are the ones who decide" (Interview 6), and that French connections within other missions are crucial (also se, e.g., Interview 9). From a different perspective, it is the UN – and especially the civilian part of

MINUSMA – that "dictates the conditions" (Interviews 1 and 6). Another respondent described relations between MINUSMA, EUTM, and Barkhane as 'equal', whereas FC-G5S was dismissed as a non-player (Interview 2).
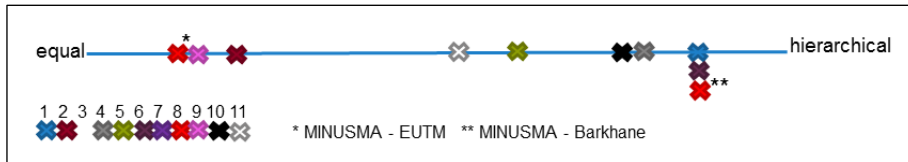

Figure 4. Equal or hierarchical

3.3 Division of labour

The third premise of coexistence is division of labour. Decisions on whom is entitled to do what, where, how, and with what resources define not only the operational everyday of each mission, but also the scope of interactions between missions. As is indicated in Table 1 (p. 27), there are important overlaps between the missions. The most fundamental overlap is in the declared aims of the missions. They are all in Mali to contribute to the re-establishment of state authority. The division of labour is set in the different mandates and other guiding documents, where the watershed runs between counterterrorism, on the one hand, and peace-keeping and non-executive capacity-building, on the other.

MINUSMA is mandated to support implementation of the peace agreement in a "proactive and robust" way and may use "all necessary means" to protect civilians. This comes close to peace enforcement (see Karlsrud 2017, 1224; Tull 2018).[8] Its proactive stance makes MINUSMA a prime target of rebel-group violence, put at parity with the Malian armed forces (see Tobie 2017). According to one respondent, MINUSMA's credibility as a peacekeeper could become compromised in an environment where "there is no peace to keep" (Interview 11). Despite this risk, according to one respondent's impression, some individual MINUSMA officers would have liked to have seen the mission move towards a counterterrorism mandate (Interview 2).

EUTM's mandate is closely linked to the aim of reestablishing state authority, since it deals with capacity-building of the armed forces. Given that the capacity-building process is slow and full of setbacks, while the insurgent threat is imminent

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[8] Many MINUSMA soldiers were – literally – re-hatted from the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA), the former's explicitly peace-enforcing predecessor, led by ECOWAS and AU, the African Union (African Union 2013). When AFISMA was about to transform into MINUSMA, Mali and the AU fought to have the UN mission receive a peace-enforcing mandateand that it had a counterterrorism profile (Karlsrud 2018). This attempt was unsuccessful.

and defies conventional military strategies, the counterterrorism missions – Barkhane and FC-G5S – offer the local owners crucial operational help in battle.

FC-G5S adds a regional component to the regime complex (Charter of the United Nations, Chapter 8). This is crucial given the transnational character of the Malian security crisis, which is increasingly spilling over into neighbouring states. FC-G5S brings the legitimacy of regional ownership to the web of non-African actors. Barkhane's partnership with FC-G5S can be seen as a mutually beneficial exchange, where the former brings its human and material resources and the latter its legitimacy advantage as a regional actor. FC-G5S's CONOPS include three domains: counterterrorism, the fight against transnational crime, and the fight against human trafficking.

Barkhane does not operate according to one formal 'mandate' in the same way as MINUSMA or EUTM do. Instead, the contours of what it is entitled to do emerge in agreements between the French government and the Sahel host countries (see 3.2). To Barkhane, flexibility is key, and this premise has been endorsed by the hosts. As noted in Section 1.2.3, the French Ministry of Armed Forces (2020ab) describes Barkhane's undertaking as tripartite: combining combat operations against armed terrorist groups with providing support to FC-G5S and civilian/ military projects to the benefit of the Malian population. Division of labour is an important component in the French official communication about the constellation of actors: MINUSMA's "mandate complements that of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, France's Operation Barkhane and the European mission, EUTM"; and the FC-G5S "does not replace but rather **supplements the operations of the UN Mission in Mali**" (French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs 2019ab, emphasis in original).

Table 1. Mission characteristics (latest available data from official sources, as of February 2020).

	MINUSMA	EUTM	BARKANE	FC-G5S
Military personnel	13,289 (authorised)	620 (authorised)	5100	5000[9]
Geographical scope	5 sectors: North, South, Central, West, East	South of the Niger River loop; FC-G5S Sector HQ in Niger, Chad, and Mauritania	Sahel	50 km within border areas of Mali/Mauritania, Mali/Niger, Mali/Burkina Faso, Niger/Chad
HQ	Bamako	Bamako	N'Djamena (Chad)	Bamako
Core aim	Re-establishment of state authority	Re-establishment of state authority	Re-establishment of state authority	Re-establishment of state authority
Core mandate (equiv.)	Robust peacekeeping, support implementation of peace agreement, protection of civilians	Capacity-building of the Malian armed forces and FC-G5S	Counter-terrorism, strengthening FC-G5S, supporting MINUSMA in case of emergency	Counter-terrorism; fight against transnational crime and human trafficking
Core activities	Patrolling, mine action, border monitoring, training Malian security forces, DDR/redeployment	Training and advice of FAMa; advise FC-G5S, DDR/redeployment	Operations against armed terrorist groups, accompanying and training FC-G5S, medical aid to the population, civilian-military developmental projects	Operations against armed terrorist groups, facilitation of humanitarian operations, criminal investigations
Budget	$1,221,420,600/ ~€1,119,297,600 (July 2019–June 2020) [10]	€59,700,000 (2018–2020)[11]	~€600,000,000 (yearly)[12]	Aim €423,000,000 (first year of operations)[13]

[9] This refers to military, police, and civilian personnel in the entire transnational border area.

[10] Source: United Nations Security Council 2019d (includes the civilian part).

[11] Source: European External Action Service 2019a.

[12] Source: The European Council on Foreign Relations 2019. This budget estimation refers to the entire operational area of five countries.

[13] FC-G5S is far from fulfilling its estimated yearly budget of €423 million, and it still lacks "heavy equipment" (United Nations Security Council 2019a). The EU is the biggest funder of FC-G5S, having provided €115.6 million and pledged another €138 million, in July 2019 (European External Action Service 2019b).

Despite the difference in mandates, the table displays important overlaps in the activities of missions. Such overlaps can be breeding grounds for either frictions or synergies.

To provide some examples, MINUSMA and EUTM share responsibilities in the DDR and redeployment process. EUTM trains FAMa, whereas Barkhane trains FC-G5S, to which EUTM provides advice. Barkhane and FC-G5S have a crucial shared activity in the field but highly different resources at their disposal. Structurally, all except for Barkhane have their headquarters in Bamako, which should – in theory – facilitate strategic coordination and holistic oversight. Moreover, the missions are concentrated in different geographical areas and have varying levels of mobility. For instance, MINUSMA is confined to Malian territory, and its activities are centred around thirteen locations in five sectors (MINUSMA 2019a). Barkhane, by contrast, has Sahel as its operational area and is mainly organised around small temporary bases.

As is indicated in the continuum below, six out of ten respondents found that the multi-actor constellation is predominantly defined by division of labour. Two respondents chose a position in between division and overlap of labour, whereas two characterised the mission complex as being closer to overlapping tasks.
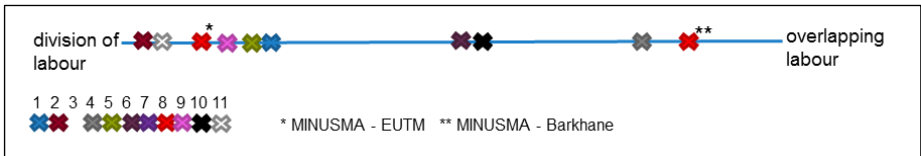

Figure 5. Overlapping, or division of, labour

That missions have different roles based on division of labour is not always obvious in the public eye. MINUSMA and Barkhane are the most well-known actors, and the public's perception of them is in decline. For EUTM, which keeps a low profile so as to build trustful relations with its local counterparts (Interview 9), being confused with either of these could amount to a security risk.[14] According to Respondent 11, keeping a discreet profile – for instance moving around in civilian cars – was a deliberate strategy from the EUTM force commander.

An incident during one of EUTM's decentralised activities in October 2019 illustrates what can happen if division of labour is not clearly understood by all parties. On that occasion, demonstrators prevented trainers from exiting the

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[14] Respondent 11 had also on several occasions handled situations in which EUTM was confused with bilateral training initiatives from European countries.

compound. The report from the event describes how the angry mass of people mistook EUTM for MINUSMA (EUTM Mali 2019c). Although this incident was resolved peacefully, EUTM has identified such confusion as a potential security risk for the mission (Interview 9). Another example concerns the relation between MINUSMA and Barkhane. Respondent 8 spoke of a situation in which Barkhane appeared, unannounced, to conduct an operation in an area in which MINUSMA was already active. Once Barkhane had retreated, the security of MINUSMA soldiers, as well its local trust, were jeopardised: "The risk is obvious that if one now cannot separate these operations, then we will lose what we are attempting to build with regards to dialogue and relationships" (Interview 8).

A final complication is that the division of labour in Mali is so strongly "premised on the ability and on the authority to distinguish between terrorist and non-terrorist actors, and between legitimate and illegitimate spheres of activities and politics" (Charbonneau 2019). Yet, not all challengers to state authority in Mali are terrorist groups. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), which was central in the 2012 rebellion in Northern Mali, is a secular separatist movement. The fact that the security crisis in Mali has many dimensions – "from terrorism to intra-state tensions, historical marginalization and discrimination of certain groups, and organized crime operations" (dal Santo and van der Heide 2018) – blurs boundaries within the division of labour.

3.4   Synergies from coexistence

Does the coexistence of military missions in Mali translate into synergies? At the very least, much thanks to the division of labour, coexistence is relatively harmonious. The separation between counterterrorism actors (Barkhane, FC-G5S), capacity-builders (EUTM), and robust peacekeepers (MINUSMA) does seem – in view of alternatives – to bring an added value to the structure. Each actor builds relations in the host country, depending on its mandate. To fuse these roles in one mission would not only be tricky in legal terms, it would put both the security and local acceptance of deployed troops at risk. Likewise, having four counterterrorism combat missions, or four training missions, in place would be a recipe for competition between actors and forum shopping for the recipient.

However, the precise contours of division of labour are up for continuous renegotiation. On the one hand, as is seen in the next sections, overlaps in mandates and derived activities create opportunities for engagements beyond coexistence, some of which amount to synergies. On the other hand, these overlaps – especially when they imply sharing the geographical space – insert uncertainty into the division of labour that is so crucial for coexistence. At present, it is not generally known among the Malian public that the different missions have distinctive roles. In the extreme case, that missions are mistaken may amount to a considerable security risk.

4   Coordination

Coordination includes actions taken to make use of available resources and assets that fulfil functional needs – as defined by each mission – in a more efficient manner. Scarce resources are coordinated for largely short-term purposes (Welz 2016, 574). Hence, coordination entails that missions actively consider the existence of other actors when planning and executing their activities.

In Mali, coordination follows from dependencies, the degree of which varies between missions. EUTM and FC-G5S are highly dependent on support from MINUSMA and Barkhane, respectively, to carry out their activities. MINUSMA "has in principle the resources required to solve the task", as expressed by Respondent 7 (also Interview 4). The same goes for Barkhane (Interview 4).

Furthermore, coordination is characterised by informality. Beyond the initial mutual stamp of approval discussed in 3.1.1, division of labour is implemented by actors on the ground, rather than formally established by the political principals (Interview 7). To formalise exchanges between actors with a counterterrorism profile and those active within peacekeeping and non-executive capacity-building would challenge the division of labour. Consequently, interactions between MINUSMA and Barkhane were "very, very informal" (Interview 5), hence often undocumented (Interview 2). Moreover, the clustering of contacts at "the lowest level" (Interview 2) made it difficult to know what types of exchanges are allowed or appropriate (Interview 5).

A third general factor shaping coordination patterns is geography. The vastness and infrastructural conditions in Mali both enable and constrain coordination between missions. On the one hand, distance limits the contacts between forces from different missions (Interview 2). Also between headquarters, the territorial split between actors is understood to hinder regularised exchanges and consolidates the parallel-tracks approach (Interview 5). On the other hand, the geographical division creates occasions for coordination (and, occasionally, cooperation; see 3.3) once mission members enter areas in which another mission is strongly present. This section highlights two such domains: logistical support, and medical care and evacuation (MEDEVAC).

4.1   Information-sharing

A first sphere of coordination is information-sharing, which has gradually become a prioritised area of engagement. This area includes two separate types of activities: (a) sharing information about one's own activities and (b) sharing intelligence about the opponent. For both categories, exchanges are a reply to the practical need within each mission to identify security threats and evaluate how conflict dynamics evolve. The deteriorating security situation on the ground has

propelled this process (Interview 1). Military missions have a clear interest in sharing information and intelligence. This is particularly evident in the field of operational planning, where a lack of information might put the other missions in direct danger. Hence, seen from the perspective of the missions, information-sharing is a sphere with an obvious potential for synergies. However, this section demonstrates that it is also a domain that needs to be handled with care, to avoid putting the lives of local informants, or the credibility of each mission, at risk.

Access to information and intelligence is considered necessary for developing a common situational awareness (e.g. Interviews 1, 6, and 7). According to Respondent 2, the different mandates equip the missions with complementary tools for extracting information. For instance, the fact that the UN has another relationship with the local population than Barkhane has enables MINUSMA to collect information in another way than Barkhane (Interview 2). In the same logic, FAMa supports MINUSMA with intelligence-gathering at the level of contingents (Interview 4). The local trust needed to collect intelligence is, however, highly vulnerable and requires that the anonymity of respondents is guaranteed. Information-sharing between missions could put trust at risk. As reported by Gasinska and Bohman (2017, 39) "Armed groups in Mali have threatened and killed local populations whenever there has been a suspicion of collaboration with French forces, the government, or the UN peacekeeping mission". Yet, informal exchange of information occurs between MINUSMA and Barkhane at the level of contingents (Interview 2). MINUSMA entrusts Barkhane as well as EUTM with intelligence reports (Interview 4; see Karlsrud 2017, 1220; Charbonneau 2019).

Lately, EUTM has acquired its own capability for collecting intelligence. This initiative originated within the mission itself, to mitigate increased security risks arising from the introduction of mobile training teams in the fourth mandate. According to Respondent 1, the build-up of their own intelligence capacity has helped to strengthen information sharing with MINUSMA (Interview 1). At present, next to MINUSMA's logistical support (see 4.2), its main point of contact with EUTM is information-sharing (Interview 7). Earlier, EUTM and MINUSMA exchanged briefings on a routine basis (Interview 1).

In Resolution 2359, the UNSC urged FCG5-S, MINUSMA, and Barkhane to: "ensure adequate coordination and exchange of information" (United Nations Security Council 2017a). However, Barkhane is hesitant to coordinate its activities (e.g. Interviews 7 and 8). It is seen as a secretive entity that has no trust in sharing information with the UN, which is reputed to leak (Interview 6). Notably, according to Respondent 8, not even those working within the Barkhane camps are necessarily informed of what specific operations they are planning for (Interview 8).

Consequently, information-sharing has mostly been from MINUSMA to Barkhane, not the other way around. This is not without risks. According to Karlsrud (2017, 1222; with reference to Khalil, former Senior Legal Officer, UN Office of

Legal Affairs), that MINUSMA has shared intelligence with Barkhane has already compromised the former's claim to impartiality. Institutionalised contacts with Barkhane could ultimately endanger the international legal protection granted to UN soldiers as peacekeepers (ibid.).

Until 2018, information-sharing between Barkhane and EUTM was channelled through exchanges between French officers in both missions (Interviews 9 and 10). Information exchanges have since then been regularised, as EUTM has started to provide Barkhane with details about their training activities (Interview 9). This information is valuable to Barkhane, which cooperates closely with EUTM-trained FAMa soldiers in combat operations. For it to be a genuine synergy, though, the information-sharing would need to mature into more of a two-way exchange.

EUTM would benefit from more systematic feedback from other actors on whether their training is commensurate to the needs in the field (e.g. Interviews 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11).). As reasoned by Respondent 11, anyone who has contact with FAMa in the field carries information of potential relevance to EUTM. Barkhane and MINUSMA do report back to EUTM on the combat technique of trained soldiers (Interviews 7, 10, and 11), but they can rarely assess units in a systematic way (Interview 11). A problem in this regard is that FAMa military units and companies often split up after completed training (Interview 2, Interview 11). To not know where trainees will be deployed is a major concern for EUTM. The dynamics of conflict differ greatly between different parts of the country – there is not one conflict but many in Mali. Hence, the training offered by EUTM could be significantly improved if tailored to specific local circumstances (Interview 8).

Information-sharing about operational activities is mostly aimed at creating geographical distance between missions (Interview 2). To not be active in the same areas could, according to this respondent, amount to a synergy effect in itself (Interview 2). Respondents referred to directives from their superiors prescribing that it was not allowed to synchronise common operative targets, but that they could "de-conflict" by declaring where activities would take place (Interviews 5 and 4). This was a matter of self-preservation, of ensuring the safety of the troops (Interview 5). However, as a result of informality, MINUSMA and Barkhane have occasionally found each other to be active in the same area (Interview 8). The consequences could be devastating for MINUSMA soldiers, who risk being confused with Barkhane and thus confronted with a threat level they are not prepared for.

The impressions from coordination of operations vary between different levels of the MINUSMA structure. Even if there is information-sharing at the level of operational planning, it does not reach the tactical level (Interview 8). Conversely, a well-informed MINUSMA respondent argued that coordination is already functioning quite well. According to this respondent, Barkhane and MINUSMA deliberately focused operations in the same geographical area, where each mission

acted according to its own mandate and with its own tools (Interview 7). However, to build stronger synergies and ensure adequate force protection, operational plans would need to be shared between the missions earlier (Interview 7).

4.2   Logistical support

The missions' geographical dispersion and varying levels of mobility create situations where logistical exchanges are necessary. To start with the most mobile mission, Barkhane is mainly organised around small temporary camps established for planning and logistics. It has only one so-called "permanent point of support"/"permanent support base" in Gao (Sundberg 2019, French Ministry of Armed Forces 2020ab). As declared by the French Ministry of Armed Forces (2020b, 18), "Barkhane's commitment is not fixed. The Force Command can deploy units anywhere on the theatre of operations in light of intelligence received, thereby maintaining operational pressure on armed terrorist groups". MINUSMA has few operationally mobile resources (Interview 1). FC-G5S lacks logistical infrastructure and would have difficulty acting without the support of Barkhane (Gasinska and Bohman 2017, 27, 29).

With the exception of the training facility in Koulikoro, EUTM lacks infrastructure outside of Bamako and is therefore dependent on logistical support to move around in the country (Interview 1).The third EUTM mandate (2016) approved movements of so-called "Combined Mobile Advisory and Training Teams" (CMATT) outside of Bamako (Interview 3). To be able to carry out these "decentralised activities", EUTM receives help with transportation from MINUSMA (interview 1). Moreover, the CMATT are dependent on logistical support from MINUSMA camps (Interview 7). This relation is reported to be functioning well (Interview 7). Mission staff display considerable will to find solutions adapted to the conditions on the ground. For instance, in one situation, MINUSMA did not want its camp's grounds to be used by EUTM to train (armed) FAMa soldiers. Therefore, it arranged matters so that EUTM trainers could sleep at the MINUSMA base, from where they were driven every day to a nearby FAMa camp to conduct the training (Interview 8). Likewise, EUTM praises the support it has received from Barkhane when active outside of its home base: "The professional and personal relationship with the Barkhane members was excellent which contributed greatly to the welfare and success of the CMATT" (EUTM Mali 2019b, 8). Hence, at least from EUTM's perspective, Barkhane brought added value in terms of facilitating its training session. This is an example of a functional synergy – the engagement helped EUTM to fulfil a function within its mandate. At the same time, the boundary between constructive synergy and problematic dependency is not always crystal clear. The EUTM reporting officer acknowledges that, had the French troops themselves encountered an incident, EUTM would

have been stranded without support from Barkhane's Quick Reaction Force (EUTM Mali 2019b, 7).

Transportation is pinpointed as a domain with potential for improved allocation of resources. The bottom line is that functions related to transportation are kept separate within each mission. There is considerable untapped potential to share resources in this domain, which the practicalities surrounding economic steering impede (Interview 6). In particular, support with helicopters and cargo aircrafts is highlighted (Interview 6). Respondent 1 emphasised that if EUTM could start assisting MINUSMA with air transport, that would be "a great thing" (Interview 1). However, increased transportation support between missions will only create synergies if the mission that lends its resources still has enough of the appropriate logistical arrangements left for itself (Interview 7).

4.3   Medical care and evacuation

Military personnel deployed to missions face medical risks that require quick access to advanced care. This is especially challenging in a country as vast as Mali, where urgent medical transportation is heavily dependent on helicopters. In reply to this shared need, coordination of medical services does occur between missions, and actors appear to help out to the best of their best ability. Importantly, the circumstances of accessing medical care vary from one part of the country to another. In one region, mission *a* will rely on mission *b* for urgent medical care, and in another region the relations will be reversed. In Timbuktu, MINUSMA's medical facilities are used by other missions, and the same goes for Barkhane's, in Gao, and EUTM's, in Koulikoro. EUTM has contracted a South African company for medical evacuation during decentralised activities (Interviews 9 and 10). They are reported to provide an excellent service, but they are so expensive that the mission sometimes prefers to fly in and out with helicopters rather than to bring the medical team onto location (Interview 10).

A commonality throughout the country is that the different missions often have to rely on informal contacts to establish trustworthy chains of medical care. For instance, access to advanced surgery through EUTM in Koulikoro was secured in advance through a handshake between a MINUSMA member and a doctor (Interview 6). This informal agreement proved essential only a week later, when a MINUSMA soldier was injured (Interview 6).

On the ground, MINUSMA has supported Barkhane with medical assistance (Interview 2). Likewise, Respondent 4 notes that "Barkhane was interested in MINUSMA's medical care". At the same time, within MINUSMA itself, there are doubts about whether the UN's helicopter system can be trusted for medical evacuation (Interview 5). The same respondent testified to how "there was always a way of thinking that if something goes really bad, we [MINUSMA] can trust

them [Barkhane]", for instance with qualified medical care (Interview 5). Another respondent spoke of the UN's medical services as insufficient (Interview 6). This respondent described how informal contacts with EUTM were forged to ensure access to their ROLE 2 hospital in Koulikoro (Interview 6). MINUSMA's medical facilities in Timbuktu are reciprocally available for EUTM when it carries out decentralised activities in the North (Interviews 9 and 10).

Lacking trust in the quality of designated medical services hinders engagements between missions. Individual countries – for instance Sweden and Germany – place higher demands on medical facilities than the missions are able to offer.[15] When the intended medical centres do not live up to these requirements, the possibilities for coordination of resources, and by extension for synergies, decrease (e.g. Interviews 6 and 9). If MEDEVAC is doubted, it can have direct operational consequences. One respondent (Interview 5) mentioned that operations have had to be cancelled due to lack of trust in the UN's helicopter system. Coordination of airborne resources could be a way to avoid such issues.

4.4   Synergies from coordination

Coordination characteristically takes place in response to needs that the missions are unable to handle themselves. As solutions to identified needs, coordinative practices have created synergies for the conduct of mission activities. Without coordination, missions would either have been able to do less, or they would have been forced to take more risks.

However, coordination practices are rarely formalised. This means that they are vulnerable to staff rotations and lack systematic accountability. Moreover, coordination is impeded by a lack of trust, both within and between missions, and only partly compensates for functional deficiencies. Mistakes in operational coordination and medevac could expose soldiers to immediate danger. Hence, better coordination of these activities, even if that simply means taking into account the distance from each other in areas of operation, is critical to ensure both the safety of the troops and the effectiveness of their activities. Still, the way the missions are organised gives little indication that this is going to be achieved in any systematic manner. As long as institutional steering is lacking, the future of coordination will remain dependent on the informal initiatives of motivated individuals.

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[15] The Swedish unit of MINUSMA has established a medical care chain, which establises that an injured soldier should receive help from a comrade directly ("tactical care during battle"); then, within ten minutes, medical care in the field; within an hour, care from a medical team; and, within two hours, life-saving surgery, either in the field or at the camp. Within forty hours, the injured soldier should be back in Sweden at a designated hospital (Swedish Armed Forces 2019a). For this chain to work, however, adequate resources for medical evacuation need to be available in the mission area.

5 Cooperation

Cooperation occurs when missions do things together for shared purposes. This commonality in action and purpose distinguishes cooperation from the coordinative practices discussed in the previous section, which are characterised by making use of each other's resources for individual purposes. With the exception of Barkhane and FC-G5S, the military missions in Mali mostly operate side by side rather than together. During most of their time as coexisting external military actors in Mali, cooperation between MINUSMA, EUTM, FC-G5S, and Barkhane has been marginal (Interview 1). This section shows that this is still the case. The two main spheres of cooperation – joint operations and camp protection – are motivated by shared security concerns. It is the common threat scenario that generates cooperation.

To understand the conditions for cooperation *between* missions, it is crucial to recognise that it is already a challenge *within* the missions. As one respondent argued, to cooperate with others, the internal cooperation has to work first (Interview 2). According to this respondent, MINUSMA has a long way to go: it is an "incredibly dysfunctional organisation" (Interview 2). The missions that this study centres on are all multinational entities that rely on contributors from different states. For instance, the very idea of FC-G5S is to establish a permanent coordination and cooperation mechanism in the border areas of Sahel (G5 Sahel 2015).

Respondents acknowledge that the theme of inter-mission synergies is only marginally present in their daily discussions (Interviews 2, 3, and 5). Instead of reflecting on how to make the most out of the actor constellation, each mission is pressured to prove its own relevance vis-à-vis its political principals, displaying clear and quick results (Interview 4 on MINUSMA). "Who does what in the story of success is important", reasons Respondent 1. This is perceived as an "inherent obstacle for cooperation" and long-term success (Interviews 1 and 6). EUTM Mali's mission assessment, ahead of mandate 5; focuses on proposals that aim at improving self-sufficiency (EUTM Mali 2019a). To solve the identified needs through increased cooperation with other missions only features in the margins.[16]

Throughout our interviews, experience of positive personal interactions with personnel in other missions was described as a catalyst for putting mutually beneficial exchanges in place. In this context, relations were thought to be most easily established between military staff from the same (or culturally similar)

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[16] At the same time, developing one's own activities could facilitate synergies by increasing relevant contact points with other actors. An example of this is EUTM's development of its own intelligence-gathering function, which has made EUTM an actor relevant for information-sharing with others (Interview 9).

countries. Within EUTM, a comparatively small organisation, nationality matters. Interviewees report that HQ staff from the same country tend to cooperate most closely, and sometimes hold their own meetings before formal decision-making takes place (Interview 9). This practice may diminish the chances for representatives of small countries to influence the mission. From the Swedish perspective, ties between 'Western' countries were described as enabling cooperation. Several respondents testified that constructive exchanges were easily established with other Swedes (Interviews 10 and 11). With the same logic, Respondent (9) reasoned about France's being advantaged by the presence of its officers in EUTM, MINUSMA, and, of course, Barkhane. This respondent argued that if one nation commanded both MINUSMA and EUTM, the setting-up of cooperative structures would be facilitated (Interview 9).

5.1 Joint combat operations

Barkhane carries out joint counterterrorism operations with FC-G5S across the Sahel and, when in Mali, usually with FAMa soldiers who are rotating into FC-G5S. The French Ministry of Armed Forces (2020b) presents the relation as one of a "real combat partnership with the local forces" – an "Operational Military Partnership (OMP)". After meeting with G5 Sahel member countries' heads of state in Pau, France, in January 2020, President Macron declared that Barkhane and FC-G5S would further integrate, becoming a coalition with a joint line of command (Elysée 2020). The relation is thereby evolving from cooperation in the direction of collaboration (see 2.1).

Hence, the predominantly French troops are in a cooperative relationship with FC-G5S, at a high level of intensity. As an example, between 25 August and 1 September 2019, Barkhane and Malian soldiers carried out a joint operation in Gossi, to which the partner forces stood for more than 30 percent of the total manpower (French Ministry of Armed Forces 2019a). The French press release spoke of "a very high level of participation from the Malian partners: a progress that does not cease to satisfy (ibid., author's translation from French). Between 1–17 November 2019, Barkhane, together with partner forces, performed Operation Bourgou IV, in Boulikessi, Mali, and Déou, Burkina Faso (French Ministry of Armed Forces 2019b). For the first time, the partner nations stood for the majority of the soldiers (a force of 1400) participating in combat (ibid.).

Nonetheless, among the respondents there is the sense that FC-G5S is barely active (Interviews 7 and 9). Although this impression is inflated by their geographical distance to FC-G5S operational areas, it is well-established that the joint forces are far from their intended operational capacity. The UN Secretary General's report from 11 November 2019 commented that FC-G5S has had a period of "low intensity activity", because of "the rainy season" and "the impact of persistent

equipment and training shortfalls on its operations" (United Nations Security Council 2019e).

As a non-executive mission, EUTM stands outside of cooperation in actual combat. However, respondents testify that there have been ongoing discussions about expanding the mission's mandate to include mentoring during actual combat operations (Interviews 9, 10, and 11). This would approximate a cooperative relationship in the area of operations with FAMa. By extension, mentoring would create a new space for coordination and cooperation with Barkhane and FC-G5S. Currently, EUTM training efforts end "when the soldiers exit the gate" (Interview 10). According to this respondent, mentoring would make it possible to evaluate the level, maturity, and equipment of Malian soldiers in battle, and to better adapt the training to the relevant conditions (Interview 10). Yet, given the dramatically enhanced risks for EUTM members, as well as political resistance to being involved in direct battle, the respondents judge it as entirely unrealistic for mentoring to be included in the next EUTM mandate (Interviews 9, 10, and 11).

5.2   Camp protection

A third, central, cooperative practice is camp protection. This practice highlights the external threat as the common denominator that brings missions together (Interview 6). Before an incident, camp protection often has a coordinative character. However, once an attack occurs, camp protection certainly becomes a joint activity with a shared goal.

In the interest of facilitating logistics and improving force protection, Barkhane often groups close to or together with the UN's "supercamps" (Interviews 1, 2, 4, and 7). One respondent commented on how opponents could move around freely outside of a radius around the MINUSMA camps (Interview 1), creating 'safe havens' for hostile action. Cooperating with Barkhane, which enjoys a higher level of mobility, is highlighted by this respondent as a way to diminish this problem (Interview 1). Indeed, Barkhane, MINUSMA, and FAMa have occasionally surveilled the area surrounding the camps together, to be jointly prepared to meet attacks (Interview 8).

Engagements generally increase when groups are deployed near another mission, which may also be when MINSUMA conducts an activity adjacent to a Barkhane camp (Interview 6). A respondent with a background in MINUSMA expresses that "they [Barkhane] were the only ones we really trusted" (Interview 4). Likewise, FAMa is often found in the direct proximity of the UN bases (Interview 1). The proximity stimulates close coordination of camp protection measures (Interview 6). To take one concrete example, after a complex attack on a base where Barkhane and MINUSMA were grouped together, they both cooperated in rebuilding camp

infrastructure (Interview 8). On the ground, pragmatism rules: "Everyone wants to survive" (Interview 2).

5.3 Training

Training is a domain with untapped potential for cooperation between different missions. EUTM has trained more than 14,000 FAMa soldiers and Barkhane more than 13,000 members of the FC-G5S partner forces across Sahel. EUTM has also, as of summer 2019, delivered three liaison officer (LNO) courses and three staff officer courses to FC-G5-S (European External Action Service 2019a). MINUSMA is involved in some training of local counterparts, while some of its own contingents are themselves in need of training. In addition, there are plenty of bilateral training arrangements. France's Takuba initiative will add a new type of mission to the cluster: a coalition of European advanced special forces that will provide cutting-edge expertise in training, advising, and mentoring in the field.

The considerable overlap in training activities stems from a pronounced shared interest in building Malian military capacity, as a crucial piece in the puzzle of re-establishing state authority. "Without the Malian army, one will never get anywhere", as Respondent 5 said. Similarly, Respondent 6 called EUTM's task in training "extremely important – otherwise all the others will stay forever" (Interview 6). Indeed, for the troop contributors to eventually be able to leave, responsibilities will have to be handed over to local authorities. A national defence with sufficient resources, a functioning chain of command, and civilian control are imperative for the establishment of a monopoly on violence that does not pose a threat to citizens, but is at their service.

Due to the joint interest in being able to leave Mali one day, capacity-building of FAMa/FC-G5S is a sphere in which cooperation could lead to synergies within the current division of labour and with a clear focus on the local recipient. MINUSMA and EUTM have conducted some training activities together and are in charge of different steps in the process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). Yet, the overall impression is that training is a sphere in which systematic cooperation between missions is wanting.

It is well known that training often fails to build capacity, and that capacity does not always translate into legitimate state authority. Training missions in general face huge challenges both in terms of basic conditions for trainees (e.g. food, lodging, salaries), their motivation, availability of equipment, and post-training planning (see Hellquist and Sjökvist 2019). Furthermore, the hierarchical relation inherent to capacity-building needs to be handled with care and respect for the recipients of training or advice. Trainees interviewed by Tull (2019, 405) deplored EUTM's "invasive and paternalistic behaviour" and expressed frustration that their own "expertise and agency" were not duly recognised.

Among the interviewees for this study, doubts have been raised about whether the Malian government truly wishes to build a unified army (Interviews 9 and 11). Since the 2012 military coup, there has been the suspicion that a strong army could turn against the government. If the intended end-beneficiary of capacity-building – the government – is hesitant, even extensive cooperation between missions will have trouble delivering synergies with regard to the security in Mali.

Whereas training has not in practice lived up to its theoretical promise as an exit strategy, cooperating in this domain could create synergies within the mission structure. Not only FAMa, but also FC-G5S troops as well as UN peacekeepers are in need of training. The overrepresentation of soldiers from developing – often fellow African – countries among those who have died in service for MINUSMA is blatant evidence that not all are deployed under equal conditions. These soldiers only have access to inferior equipment and have not always gone through the appropriate pre-deployment training. UNSC Resolution 2423 recognises "that fatalities can be a consequence of deficiencies in training, equipment and performance" (United Nations Security Council 2018, 5). Following a logic of division of labour, an idea would be that EUTM – as the designated training mission –extends its activities to national contingents within MINUSMA, or to Mali's neighbours in FC-G5S (e.g. Interview 7). According to Respondent 7, such training would preferably be carried out pre-deployment, outside of the mission area, where the focus must be on military operations.

5.4 Synergies from cooperation

Judging from the interview material collected for this report, cooperative engage-ments between military missions in Mali are confined to a few specific areas where there are mutual advantages for the missions in doing things together. Cooperation does not extend further, largely out of wariness that doing so could erupt the division of labour between missions. Such a scenario would be highly problematic in terms of security as well as political accountability.

Yet, there are clear synergies in helping each other with camp protection (although simultaneous presence may also increase the threat). Cooperation in training also has the potential to create synergies, provided that actors can agree on a suitable model.

Whether operational cooperation actually leads to synergies cannot be straight-forwardly established from the interview material or official documents. In any case, official French reports from the field communicate that partner forces do make valuable contributions. In addition, France's augmented commitment to building the capacity of Malian forces, as evidenced by the launch of the Takuba elite mission and the move to place Barkhane/FC-G5S under a joint command, does indicate optimism that combat cooperation will eventually lead to synergies.

6 Conclusions

This report offers a panorama picture of the current state of relations between the different external military missions in Mali. It shows that although actors present themselves as different facets of one international engagement, there are both principled and practical obstacles to coordination and cooperation. The missions depend on mutual endorsement from their political principals to be able to establish themselves, but once in Mali they are mainly concerned with fulfilling their own mandates under highly challenging conditions.

This concluding chapter further illuminates the picture drawn in Chapters 3-5 by distinguishing between functional synergies, which are internal to mission structure, and synergies with regard to the Malian security situation. Following these two sections, the third and final section outlines a few lessons of specific relevance for the Swedish deployments in Mali.

6.1 Functional synergies

MINUSMA, Barkhane, EUTM, and FC-G5S, as external military missions in Mali, share basic predicaments. They have to adapt to a severe and deteriorating security situation and protect themselves, at the same time as they keep their stabilising activities up and running. The conditions, in terms of climate and terrain, are extreme and require special attention to the well-being of the troops. The missions are under pressure, from political principals at home, to prove their raisons d'être, while also under pressure from the local population to prove that they are in Mali for the right reasons.

Functional synergies have arisen in reaction to some of these common predicaments. Sharing relevant information, helping out with transportation, and opening up medical facilities are all coordination practices that surely amount to synergies in the daily lives of military missions in Mali. These synergies could be even stronger if the issues of informality and lack of continuity in the mission structure were handled. There is a gap between the UNSC's explicit calls for coordination and cooperation between the missions (e.g. Resolution 2359), and the difficulty in institutionalising such engagements.

The inherent lack of continuity in the mission structure is a hazard to synergies. As was seen in Chapter 4, coordination to cope with this structural weakness arises informally. The informality, in turn, becomes a problem, because of the lack of continuity. Initiatives remain person-dependent and risk falling into oblivion when that person leaves Mali. In a classic Catch-22, institutionalisation could help overcome this vulnerability, but at the same time, the vulnerability prevents institutionalisation.

All missions in Mali, as well as international missions elsewhere, face the question of how to achieve long-term learning in systems where the personnel rotates. The constant fluctuations, uncoordinated rotations, and recurrent vacancies affect all mission personnel. Vacancies are particularly detrimental in a system built on quick rotations, in the worst case leaving incoming staff with little introduction or handover of tasks. Moreover, the few individuals who stay in a position for up to two years are by no means spared from the consequences of short tours of duty, since they will see many colleagues with different personalities come and go (Interview 4). As commented by one respondent, it is like "groundhog day"[17] every time a new colleague or contingent arrives (Interview 9). It is well-known that the quick rotations comprise a decisive structural constraint to military missions. However, it is a constraint that is likely to remain and that therefore needs to be featured in when thinking of ways to make missions more synergy-friendly. Formalising selected instances of coordination, for example in the domain of medical services and transportation, would be one step forward.

6.2 Synergies for Malian security

Even if the missions functioned as one perfectly oiled machine, there is no guarantee that the security situation in Mali would significantly improve. Yet, any truly meaningful added value or synergy ultimately has to materialise with regard to the Malian security situation. Synergies that help missions better fulfil functional needs are relevant insofar as they enable progress for Malian security. The analytical mapping of engagements in Chapters 4-6 depict a constellation of external actors that are on fairly good terms with one another. Yet, it remains difficult to substantiate that the plurality of actors has in any systematic way brought the missions any closer to their shared end-goal: re-establishing state authority in Mali.

External actors are not fully in control of whether their activities lead to achieving desired goals. Without the acceptance and actions of local owners, the military missions in Mali do not stand a chance of sustainably contributing to restoring state authority. Local ownership has indeed become a pillar of all military missions, at least in rhetoric. However, not only do parts of the Malian population doubt the motivations of external actors, there are also doubts within the missions about the motivations of the Malian government. One respondent reasoned that the host government's interest in international military missions may have more to do with the money they bring to the national economy, than with what they actually do as security actors (Interview 11). Similarly, Malian elites have been found to instrumentalise the conflict for their own interests (Tull 2019).

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[17] The respondent is not referring here to the old American tradition of "groundhog day", but to the 1993 movie in which the protagonist wakes up every morning to relive the same day.

In any case, the Malian government is still far from having a monopoly on violence across the country. Given that re-establishment is the shared aim of all missions, so far they have clearly failed. The government is almost entirely absent from the northern and central parts of the country, and public services are generally deficient. Close to half of the Malian participants in an Afrobarometer survey judged that most or all of those working for the political institutions are corrupt, and more than half thought the same about the judicial sector. 71% of Malian respondents thought that the government was doing "badly" in responding to corruption (Afrobarometer 2019). In rural areas, the main state actor is often the armed forces, which has been found to be repeatedly committing severe crimes against civilians (Human Rights Watch 2017; Interview 4).

Whereas the situation is obviously unsatisfactory by any standard, in terms of the role played by missions we can only speculate about the counterfactual. An optimistic assessment could argue that the spread of Islamist terrorism across the Sahel would have been even worse without external military involvement. However, the pessimist would instead claim that the presence of several external actors has added to polarisation and unrest in Mali.

6.3   Swedish deployments

Even if missions have trouble showing the desired results, due to the interlinkages between security and counterterrorism as well as migration policy, the Sahel region is likely to remain in the spotlight of European and, by extension, Swedish Africa policy for years to come (see Gasinska and Gunnarsson 2020). At the same time, Swedish defence policy is shifting its priorities away from international missions to rebuilding national capabilities. Where does that leave Sweden's engagements in Mali?

First, the Swedish government is advised to take into consideration that the Swedish contingent will meet a different multi-actor complex in Gao than in Timbuktu. Building up MINUSMA's intelligence mechanism in the midst of a complex conflict environment has been a ground-breaking experience for the Swedish armed forces as well as for the UN. Since 1 December 2019, the Swedish contingent has been in the dismantling phase ("Mali 11"). Sweden is setting up a new mission, to be completed by the second half of 2020, at Camp Castor, in Gao (see Government of Sweden 2019). In Gao, the Swedish contribution – a Light Infantry Patrolling Task Group (LIPTG) – will shift from ISR to performing securitising operations in support of MINUSMA's stabilising operations (Swedish Armed Forces 2020b). Considering that both the conflict and the activities of different missions are geographically defined, the change of location from Timbuktu to Gao will also change the circumstances for coexistence, coordination, and cooperation. In Gao, the Swedish deployment will not only be in another internal mission environment, this time sharing the camp with Germany, but also

in proximity to Barkhane's only permanent base in Mali. Considering that the Swedish Armed Forces have received a first request from the government to prepare for participating in French-led Takuba, the future of Sweden's engagements in Mali could become more closely linked to France than they are today.

Second, the case of Mali invites the Swedish government to reflect upon how it can best contribute to a multinational mission structure. As an experienced but small partner in international missions (see Schmitt, O. 2019), Sweden has a direct interest in promoting contacts, already during the preparatory phase, between those deployed from the armed forces to different missions. Given the centrality of informal exchanges, as revealed in this study, it would be sensible to conduct relevant parts of the pre-deployment training jointly between Swedish soldiers and officers set to join EUTM and MINUSMA. As emphasised by Respondent 3, the possibility to create synergies is already present at home during the planning stage (Interviews 3 and 5). Personal contacts between Swedes deployed to different missions set the basis for fruitful exchanges once in Mali, some of which might even be institutionalised if proven fruitful. Common pre-deployment training could also have the advantage of raising awareness of EUTM among the Swedish Armed Forces. At present, EUTM members have the impression that it is a "forgotten mission", both in Sweden and in Mali (Interview 10, Interview 11). In February 2019, when the EUTM training centre in Koulikoro became the target of a complex attack, not even a news item about the attack was published on the web page of the Swedish Armed Forces (Interviews 9, 10, and 11).

Third, and finally, the Swedish government may wish to assess the prospect of making capacity-building a prioritised area within its international deployments. The Swedish Armed Forces has long experience of building the military profession around a deep understanding of shared values, including gender equality. In addition, it employs a pedagogical approach that lends itself well to establishing trustful relations between levels within the military hierarchy (Interview 10). Moreover, the provision of training and advice is an activity that has proven to bring considerable added value back to the armed forces (Interview 11). A practical advantage is that, since EUTM performs highly diverse training and advisory tasks, it allows small groups of relevant staff to alternate without putting national functions on hold.

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This report provides an analysis of the state of relations between international military missions in Mali, as seen from the perspective of Swedish deployments to MINUSMA and EUTM. Through a mapping of engagements at the level of coexistence, coordination, and cooperation, the study identifies existing and prospective synergies between Minusma, EUTM, Barkhane, and FC-G5 Sahel. The analysis reveals that the missions coexist in relative harmony, presenting themselves as complementary pieces in solving the Malian security puzzle. Division of labour is a core premise of coexistence, which deliberately limits exchanges between missions. Coordination of activities and resources arises in reply to practical needs and is often informal. Cooperation is centred around camp protection and, when applicable, joint combat operations. As a whole, the study shows that each mission is mainly occupied with fulfilling its own given tasks under difficult circumstances. The existence of 'functional synergies' between the missions relates only faintly to potential synergies for Malian security.