



Breaking Down Barriers

Towards Improving Civil-Military Coordination in 'Robust' UN Peacekeeping Operations:

A Malian Case Study

Photograph Cover Page¹

¹ SOLTG in action, Northern Mali, e-mail correspondence, 07-07-2017.

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List of Acronyms

1 CMI CO	Civil-Military Interaction Command
ADC	Democratic Alliance of 23 May for Change
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
ASIFU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CIMIC	Civil-Military Coordination
CMI	Civil-Military Interaction
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CTITF	Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West-African States
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
HIPPO	High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations
HOMC	Head of Military Component
HOTO	Hand-Over-Take-Over
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISR-COY	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Compagnies
JMAC	Joint Military Analyses Centre
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West-Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
QIP	Quick Impact Project
SOF	Special Operation Forces
SOLTG	Special Operations Land Task Group
SMSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UN-DPKO	United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
UN-DSS	United Nations Department for Security and Safety
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

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Executive Summary

This study elaborates on the limiting factors regarding civil-military coordination (CIMIC) in 'robust' UN peacekeeping operations by drawing upon first-hand experiences of Dutch military CIMIC officers during their deployment within the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The UN peacekeeping operation in Mali illustrates the fact that peacekeepers are increasingly deployed to complex and dangerous operating environment where guns have not yet fallen silent. Currently, the UN is trying to adapt to the 'new' characteristics of contemporary conflicts, such as for example violent extremism and widespread terrorist attacks, while simultaneously safeguarding the principles of self-defense and impartiality.

MINUSMA brings to light the 'delusion of a doctrine' within the UN. This entails that, theoretically, key principles as consent, impartiality and the nonuse of force are underpinned, while in practice, contemporary peacekeeping operations such as MINUSMA are authorized with 'unprecedented robust' mandates. Several scholarly articles have voiced their concerns about the 'slippery slope' on which the UN finds itself. They highlight their worry about UN peacekeeping operations potentially being used as a tool to wage war. Based on interviews with military informants, one of the conclusions of this study is that the perception of the level of 'robustness' should be attenuated. The 'robustness' of troops present in Mali is limited by their mandate, which clearly states that they are not able to conduct counter-terrorism operations or actively pursue terrorists. In practice, as can be concluded from interviews, the 'robust' element about the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali is merely the fact that troops are taking on a 'robust' appearance to deter possible threats.

Furthermore, this study adds empirical information about the civil-military relationship within MINUSMA, from the perspective of Dutch CIMIC officers. This is to balance previous studies, which primarily highlighted the civil-humanitarian experiences of this relationship. Several limiting factors are conceptualized into three themes: the cultural differences between the civil and military component of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, the lack of knowledge about the operational structure and procedures of the UN among civil and military personnel, and the lack of knowledge about CIMIC among colleagues from other troop contributing countries.

Based on these limiting factors, several recommendations can be made to increase the effectiveness and use the full potential of CIMIC officers. First, an integral part of the UN culture are the short-term deployments of personnel. As a possible effective way to lessen the negative effects of this, an additional component could be added to the handover-takeovers, which would primarily be focused on 'handing over' personal relationships. This could for example entail an introductory round with the person who is taking over the function, to meet the most important points of contact. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge about the different sectors of the military component creates misunderstanding among the civilian and humanitarian workers within the mission. This can be mitigated by organizing classes and courses to provide a clear and constructive overview of the organizational structure of the military and how it operates. Additionally, this could potentially decrease the 'lack of trust' some military informants said to have experienced when interacting with civilians and humanitarians within the mission. To lessen the mismatch between people and the function they hold, which is another limiting factor to the civil-military relationship, it is important to stimulate troop contributing countries to adequately choose and train their people and compose stricter selection procedures and criteria.

Acknowledgements

This thesis not only marks the end of my master's degree in human Geography at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, it also symbolizes and reflects all the valuable experiences, conversations and friendships the past six years of university have brought me. For this, I am forever thankful.

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Benthe Guezen
Heerde, June 2018

Map of Mali



Figure 1: Source: UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2018.

1. Introduction



1. Introduction

Mali, one of the core countries of the Sahel region, finds itself at the heart of a perfect storm. Extreme poverty, rapid population growth, ethnic tensions, negative influences of climate change, systematic food crises, radicalization, increasing outbursts of violent extremism, illicit drug trafficking, terrorist-linked security threats, and a failing government illustrate the disintegration of what once was a 'model African democracy' (Reitano, 2014; Thurston, 2013).

In March 2012, mutinous Malian soldiers seized power and overthrew the elected Malian government. This coup d'état descended Mali into a political crisis and exacerbated an already serious humanitarian situation. The conflict caused a mass exodus of over 500,000 people, spurred by violent abuses, including acts of sexual violence, recruitment of child soldiers, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests (Oxfam, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2017; Amnesty International, 2016). Today, insecurity continues to be rife, as government-supported rebels, Islamist armed groups, and opposing ethnic Tuareg and Arab groups continue to attack each other, as well as civilians, humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

In 2013, two years before the signing of a peace agreement, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorized the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support transitional authorities of Mali in the stabilization of the country (Gorur, 2016; GGPAC, 2017). MINUSMA's deployment exemplifies the increased tendency to task United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations with promoting peace and stability in countries where there is no peace to keep. Peacekeepers are increasingly called upon to deploy to high-risk environments and volatile political contexts, while UN resources and capacities are stretched thin.

Consequently, as their operating environments get more dangerous, the number of casualties among UN peacekeepers increases. The latest available statistics reveal that since the start of the operation in 2013 at least 166 UN peacekeepers with MINUSMA have been killed by 'malicious acts' for which armed groups linked to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) took most of the responsibility (UN Report Fatalities, 2018). This makes MINUSMA the deadliest active peacekeeping mission in the world (Karlsrud, 2017: 1219; Dos Santos Cruz et al., 2015).

As the number of attacks against peacekeepers grows, and the threat of terrorist and insurgents attacks rises (ACAPS, 2017; Sieff, 2017), the debate surrounding the capabilities and mandates needed by UN peacekeeping forces to counter these kinds of threats flourishes. While Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), as well as the Malian government, are pressuring the UN to integrate counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities into UN peacekeeping operations (Sieff, 2017), others stress the need to hold on to traditional peacekeeping principles such as Consent of Parties, Impartiality, and Non-Use of Force. As UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, summarized in a recent statement to the UNSC: "Peace operations are at a crossroads" (Gienger, 2015: 1). Similarly, a report of the U.S. Institute of Peace states: "In the face of volatile, asymmetrical threats from Mali to the Democratic Republic of Congo, we know it won't be enough to make small changes, small tweaks around the edges of the existing system. We have to embrace big, bold thinking that fundamentally redefines peacekeeping for a new era" (Gienger, 2015: 1). This was also noted by the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, in his speech to the UN Security Council, on 28 March 2018:

"The history of peace operations has seen notable achievements. But it also has its dark pages. We in the Netherlands know that all too well. But that doesn't make us

want to look away. On the contrary. Modernizing and improving UN peace operations is one of the priorities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. First, good intel is one of the keys to a successful mission. Together with other countries, the Netherlands has developed a new intelligence capability in Mali. In this way the UN mandate can be carried out more effectively, and civilians and peacekeepers can be better protected” (Rutte, 2018).

Thus, MINUSMA is at the forefront of the debate surrounding the ‘new era’ of peacekeeping, which makes it an excellent case-study to further examine the implications. In this thesis, I specifically focus on how the increased complexity of contemporary conflicts together with the ‘robust’ response of the UN, influence opportunities and limitations for Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC). Within the context of UN peacekeeping operations, CIMIC is a “military staff function that contributes to facilitating the interface between the military and civilian components of an integrated mission, as well as with the humanitarian and development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN mission objectives” (UN-DPKO, 2010: 2). I will argue that the ‘new era’ of peacekeeping creates limitations as well as opportunities for CIMIC activities.

As Rinelli and Duyvestyn (2018) state, CIMIC is at the intersection of military and civilian environments, making it the boundary spanner between military and civilian entities. As the UN redirects its doctrine to peace enforcement, counter-terrorism, and robust mandates, this ‘politicized’ approach could potentially influence the neutral ‘humanitarian space’ (i.e. the operating environment conducive to effective humanitarian work) (Ferris, 2011: 176). It is argued that the explicit association of humanitarians with politically involved peacekeepers would put humanitarian organizations at risk by violating the humanitarian space (Lee, 2007: 90). This would pose considerable challenges to CIMIC activities. However, at the same time, new opportunities for CIMIC as a military function arise in relation to the increased hybridity of contemporary conflicts (Rinelli & Duyvestyn, 2018). CIMIC expertise is geared towards gaining an understanding and appreciation for the human dimension of the environment in which operations take place. This ‘deep knowledge’ of the environment could potentially help counter new hybrid threats.

The following research question will help in further exploring this:

How does the hybrid nature of the conflict in Mali, combined with the ‘robust’ response of the United Nations, influence CIMIC functions within the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)?

1.1 Scientific Relevance

The 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) highlighted widespread concerns about the ability of the UN to respond to the increasingly complex environment in which peace keeping operations are expected to deploy nowadays (Howard, 2015; Ramos-Horta, 2015). The report also states that “as UN peace operations struggle to achieve their objectives, change is required to adapt them to new circumstances and to ensure their increased effectiveness and appropriate use in the future” (Ramos-Horta, 2015: vii). The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN-DPKO) was said to be a ‘divided house’ between those who want the UN to respond to the threats on the ground by authorizing robust counterterrorism mandates, and those that hold on to more traditional beliefs of peacekeeping (Karlsrud, 2015; Sieff, 2017). This thesis adds

to this debate by examining the discrepancy between what is being asked of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, and what it is currently able to deliver.

Furthermore, Mali has been “a laboratory for exploration and innovation in UN peacekeeping” (Karlsrud, 2017: 1220), as it is one of the first missions to have a ‘proactive and robust’ mandate (Boutellis & Zahar, 2017). This makes it an ideal case to examine what ‘robust’ peacekeeping actually entails in practice, as it continues to be a ‘fuzzy’ concept. As such, this thesis will add empirical information and data to work towards a more comprehensive understanding of ‘robust’ peacekeeping.

Also, the implications of authorizing more ‘robust’ mandates are only just beginning to come into focus (Hunt, 2017: 114). The added value of my thesis lies in the fact that I primarily focus on the practical implications regarding CIMIC activities. I will examine how CIMIC activities as a military function are understood, shaped, developed and applied in practice within ‘robust’ peacekeeping operations. As I will argue, CIMIC activities can make a positive contribution to UN peacekeeping objectives if the military component’s good-will, energy and resources are put to good use, enabling them to complement the work undertaken by the humanitarian and development community (De Coning, 2005: 115). As in many conflict-affected regions, military forces, government agencies and humanitarian organizations share operational space, often uneasily. One of the major challenges within peacebuilding is the cooperation between these different actors. In my thesis, I will add to the debate on how to establish an appropriate coordination mechanism of peacebuilding efforts to ensure effective participation of a wide variety of stakeholders while ensuring humanitarian space. Within this debate, I will primarily focus on how to enhance possibilities and promote opportunities for CIMIC functions within UN peacekeeping operations now and in the future.

As the Dutch Colonel Mike Kerkhove, commander of the U.N. intelligence unit in Mali, stresses: “This is not the end of this type of mission. It is the beginning” (Sieff, 2017: 1). This is indeed the case when we take into consideration that in 2018 the Netherlands is seated in the UN Security Council, where it will “actively support the United Nations in modernizing and enhancing the effectiveness of its peace operations. ‘To that end’, said [then] foreign minister Bert Koenders, ‘we will make good use of our experiences as part of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, where we are making a key contribution in regard to intelligence’” (Koenders, 2017). This once again stresses the importance to examine the peacekeeping operation in Mali as there are indeed a few reasonable future scenarios in which the UN might consider deploying new missions that bear resemblances to (the Northern parts of) Mali (Boutellis, 2015). Countries with comparable characteristics, like Libya, Yemen or Syria, may present equally challenging climates. Thus, it is crucial that the UN continues to improve and review its capabilities, capacities, and doctrines in order to stay a relevant peacekeeping tool now and in the future (Smit, 2017).

Already, theses have been written about civil-military cooperation within the UN mission in Mali (see for example Tesfaghiorghis, 2016 and Willems, 2015). However, both theses have analyzed civil-military interaction from a humanitarian narrative. As Tesfaghiorghis states: “a study of this relationship from a military lens would be a future ground for research, giving a more balanced and nuanced understanding of the relationship” (Tefaghiorghis, 2016: 95).

1.2 Social Relevance

My thesis aims to complement existing literature on improving the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations. Improving the effectiveness of external efforts will increase the legitimacy of UN

peacekeeping operations among local actors and will significantly impact prospects of peace among the population of host countries. Unfortunately, the implementation of the UN Peacekeeping Operation MINUSMA so far merely increased the amount of mistrust among the Malian people, as many Malians look at the presence of international security forces with suspicion (Schirch, 2015; Sabrow, 2017), as exemplified by the next quote:

“The MINUSMA has been present in Mali since 2013 but a presence that serves no purpose. And voices are raised every day to ask for his departure. For despite their presence, Mali remains in a situation of neither peace nor war.” (Touré, 2017: 1)²

For MINUSMA, Malians are the primary beneficiaries of the peacekeeping operation, making it ethically essential to include their perceptions of the mission’s effectiveness. Additionally, improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations will not only benefit the people of Mali but also create a safer operational environment for all international stakeholders, making it a socially relevant and pressing study for both sides. The Improving Security Peacekeeping Project recently showed that MINUSMA is the world’s deadliest UN peacekeeping operation, despite multiple recommendations to improve the security (Dos Santos Cruz et al., 2017). According to this report, “there is no adequate explanation for why some basic measures have still not been taken to reduce fatalities. This indicates that a lack of will, determination, and accountability among the United Nations and Member States continues to put personnel at risk” (Dos Santos Cruz, 2016: 10). Hence, it is essential to investigate ways to make UN missions more efficient and less dangerous.

Furthermore, from a Dutch point-of-view, this study is socially relevant considering the controversial budget cuts of the Dutch Armed Forces which, according to a recently published study by the Dutch Research Council for Security, have contributed to a fatal incident in 2016 in which two Dutch soldiers lost their lives (Van Outeren, 2017; Leijten, 2016). The same report accuses the Dutch Ministry of Defense of ‘severe negligence’ considering the decision to knowingly deploy soldiers in a high-risk environment despite severe resource shortages (Van Outeren, 2017). Thus, it seems appropriate to consider the most effective way to optimize the use of limited resources within the Dutch armed forces, as it seems likely that European countries like The Netherlands will continue to contribute to UN peacekeeping operations by providing specialized niche capacities (Van Willigen, 2016: 717).

1.3 Methodological Considerations

In this section, I will critically discuss the different methodologies used in this thesis. The main question to be answered in this thesis to further explore the concept of civil-military interaction within the context of ‘robust’ UN peacekeeping missions is:

How does the hybrid nature of the conflict in Mali, combined with the ‘robust’ response of the United Nations, influence CIMIC functions within the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)?

1.3.1 Operationalization and Research Methods

I have divided this question into three sub-questions. Below, I will elaborate on the reasoning behind the choice to use certain research methods to find the answer to these questions, while I refrained from using other techniques.

² It should be noted that opinions regarding the legitimacy of the presence of the international community in Mali vary (Sabrow, 2017).

1. In what way does the character of contemporary conflicts differ from conflicts in the past?

The first sub-question will be answered using solely a theoretical approach. It will extensively review Mary Kaldor's 'new war thesis' by examining different perspectives of various authors through desk research and literary review.

2. How did UN peacekeeping operations evolve with the changing nature of contemporary conflicts?

To answer the second sub-question, I first look into the existing literature concerning the changing doctrine within UN peacekeeping operations. During my internship at the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), several colleagues worked on similar topics. They were able to recommend a lot of useful sources and scholarly articles I would not have been able to access otherwise. The main argument made in these articles revolves around the possibility of 'mission creep' in relation to the increased 'robustness' of UN peacekeeping operations. Worries are voiced concerning the current path of UN peacekeeping operations, which could entail that in the near future, peacekeepers become active combatants. However, during my internship at the Dutch Ministry of Defense I noticed the discrepancy in attitudes between the civilian and the military side of the debate, as the military side mainly focuses on the necessity of this new 'robust' approach related to the increase in dangerous operation environments. They even argue that the term 'robust' does not accurately describe their activities. As such, I have decided to add empirical information to this 'robustness debate' from a military point of view. During my internship at the Dutch Ministry of Defense, I had the opportunity to network, meet and speak with a lot of different people, including people who were part of the more 'robust' elements of the UN mission in Mali. My informants all have a military background and are thus able to shed a new and nuanced light on the argument of 'robust' UN missions. As such, I decided to include excerpts from the semi-structured interviews I conducted to underpin the argument that the 'robustness' of missions does not rightly describe the activities undertaken but is more focused on the deterring effect of a 'robust appearance'.

3. How does the approach of UN peacekeeping operations influence possibilities/create limitations for CIMIC functions?

To answer the third and last sub-question, I rely on interviews with informants, all with a military background, to add new perspectives to the civil-military debate. To get my research started, I used my own network of friends and family to get into contact with Dutch military personnel who had been deployed to Mali. At first, I used this as my only criterion to select people for a conversation or an interview. The data collected during these first interviews lacked the necessary quality, as these informants did not have the specific functions that were of interest to my research. However, it proved to be an excellent way of broadening my network through the snowball method, while it simultaneously helped me to get to know the military organizational structure of the mission. This helped me to specify the selection criteria for future informants. For an overview of interviewed informants, see Annex C.

I decided to use a semi-structured interviewing technique with the help of a list of predetermined questions, specified towards each informant, as all of them had slightly different functions (for an example interview guide, see Annex D). I decided to use this technique as this allows conversations to flow in a natural manner, addressing all necessary topics while leaving enough room for informants to elaborate on different aspects (Longhurst, 2016). Qualitative interviewing is a useful method to delve beneath the surface of superficial responses as this approach is flexible, open-ended and thus allows for

adaptations and alterations during the research process (Hammersley, 2013). This is also why I decided against the use of online survey questionnaires, as this limits the amount of personal interaction, non-verbal communication, as well as limits the possibility to add adaptations during the process. Taking all this into consideration, qualitative interviewing proved to be the best way to obtain information on the way in which concepts as CIMIC are understood, developed, implemented and approached by individuals. To optimally research this, I have chosen to include all the quotes used in this thesis in the original language (i.e. Dutch) as well, as the way individuals formulate their answer, the tone of the conversation and the specific words they use are sometimes 'lost in translation'. For the original excerpts, see Annex F.

The ideal method to collect 'deep knowledge' and understand personal relationships and interaction between civil and military components of the mission would have been to conduct ethnographic field research among civil-military functionaries within the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali. However, due to the security threats in Northern Mali (where most of the peacekeepers' activities are situated), I was advised against travelling to Mali. I have done my utmost to mitigate the practical limitations this posed, by substituting 'on the ground' field research in Mali with participative observation during my two internships at both a civil and military organization.

Both my internships at the Global Platform for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Dutch Ministry of Defense, were useful sources of information and allowed me to experience the differences between their approaches in practice. First, GPPAC is a global member-led network of civil society organizations (CSOs) that actively work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. GPPAC acknowledges the fact that peacebuilding organizations increasingly reach out to the security sector as part of their work but that to date, few guidelines exist on the complexities, benefits, and risks of this type of interaction. They highlight the importance of a 'humanitarian perspective'. This eventually led to the development of the Handbook on Human Security – A Civil-Military-Police Curriculum (GPPAC, 2016). Additionally, during my internship at GPPAC, the organization was actively involved in several research projects about civil-military cooperation, including one case study in Mali (Djire et al., 2017). During my internship at GPPAC I was fortunate enough to meet numerous bright minds who informed me thoroughly on the subject, from a civil society perspective.

Second, my internship with the Dutch Ministry of Defense, more specifically, the Civil-Military Interaction Command (1CMI Co), provided me with in-depth knowledge on how the Dutch military generally interacts with civilians, within the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali specifically. Furthermore, I was able to attend two 'role play' training days, organized by 1CMI Co for the Clingendael Institute, one of the largest diplomatic training centers in the world. During these two days, future diplomats were trained by way of different role plays to improve their intercultural skills as well as the overall civil-military interaction. In sum, interning at the Dutch Ministry of Defense has helped me to better understand the military side of the civil-military debate in various ways.

As my research revolves around the 'cultural difference' between civil organizations and the military component of UN peacekeeping operations, I approached my two internships as an undertaking of participant observation. Participant observation is a "method in which a researcher takes part in daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011: 1).

In some cases, depending on the amount of time the informants were able to make available, I was able to conduct more in-depth interviews. Interviews varied in length, ranging from 45 minutes to three hours. Most informants agreed to let me voice-record the interview on my iPhone. I chose to do so as this leads to the most thorough way of literary transcribing the interview as opposed to taking notes. One informant refused to be voice-recorded, so I asked permission to take notes instead. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed by a coding scheme, which can be found in Annex E.

1.3.2 Ethical Concerns

As some of my informants work in highly volatile environments where every little bit of information can be used against them or their families, conducting ethically correct research was of utmost importance to me. The art of gathering intelligence necessitates a covert way of life and anonymity allows people to do their jobs. I always clearly stated that I was gathering information for the purpose of my master thesis and asked permission to record conversations, while stressing that these recordings were only to be used for transcribing the collected data. Most of my informants were given the instruction by their commander to refrain from using their last name. While writing my thesis, I decided also to eliminate any first names and chose to only use function titles, therefore limiting the chances of breaching privacy and anonymity as much as possible. I always asked permission to voice-record the conversation and refrained from this when requested. I stressed that the recordings were confidential, and that all data would remain secure. Before I handed in my thesis, it was checked by some of my informants who requested to read the material I used before it ended up online. As such, I have tried to be as thorough and sensitive as possible.

1.3.3 Thesis Outline

Following Section 1, the introduction of this thesis, a comprehensive overview of the history of Mali will be provided. This will place the modern-day struggle in Mali in a historical, geographical, cultural and (geo)political context. This will allow for a more adequate analysis of the complex operating environment MINUSMA currently faces. After Section 2, the Context, each section will focus on answering (a) specific sub-question(s).

In Section 3, 'New Wars', the political and scholarly debate concerning the changing nature of contemporary warfare will be analyzed. An adequate understanding of the increased complexity of 'new wars' is necessary to further analyze the 'robust' turn of UN peacekeeping operations, which will be the main subject of the Section 4, 'A 'Robust' Turn'. This section will provide a short introduction on the evolution of peacekeeping operations. Here, it will analyze the historic failures of the UN and how this led to a balancing act between upholding traditional principles of peacekeeping on the one hand and the need to protect civilians on the other. Next, this Section will highlight specific 'robust' characteristics of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali as practical implications of the emergence of 'robust' peacekeeping as well as the perceived influence on 'humanitarian space'. In Section 5, the concept of CIMIC is explained and dissected. The last Section focuses on the factors of limitation as experienced by Dutch military personnel in Mali, concerning civil-military coordination. This section will thus add empirical information about the civil-military relationship from a military perspective.

All pictures I used on the front pages of the different sections are taken in Mali. Some of them were sent to me by informants, others I found on open source websites.³ As such, I hope to take the reader with

³ The picture on the front page as well as the picture used for the Context section were sent to me by the Unit Commander of the SOLTG-4. The other pictures were retrieved from <https://imgur.com/gallery/QVQaC>, and depict the Dutch Maritime Special Forces Operations (MARSOF).

me to Mali and experience the complex, 'robust' operating environment of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali.

2. Context



2. Context

2.1 Historical Context: The Past as a Prologue

The history of Mali has already been extensively described and analyzed, therefore this section will only provide a comprehensive overview of the most important events leading up to the current situation. A quick journey through time will take us from the once prosperous and influential Malian Empire, to the current socio-political crisis in which the country finds itself. The main goal of this section is to place the modern-day struggle in Mali in a historical, geographical, cultural, and (geo)political context. This will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the complex operating environment MINUSMA currently faces.

2.1.1 The Malian Empire – Fourteenth Century

From a 'Western' point of view, it is often forgotten that West Africa was a great cradle of civilization, in existence well before the Europeans 'discovered' Africa. Nonetheless, the ancient Empire of Mali, which thrived during the fourteenth century, is still an important source of national pride in modern day Mali. During the Middle Ages, while much of Europe was wrecked by famine and civil wars, the Malian Empire flourished. At its height, its territory covered four times the size of modern day France, spanning from the central parts of the Sahara Desert to the Atlantic Ocean, as illustrated in Figure 2 (Keita, 1998). The Empire controlled most of the southern parts of what we now know as Mali, as well as much of Mauritania and Senegal.

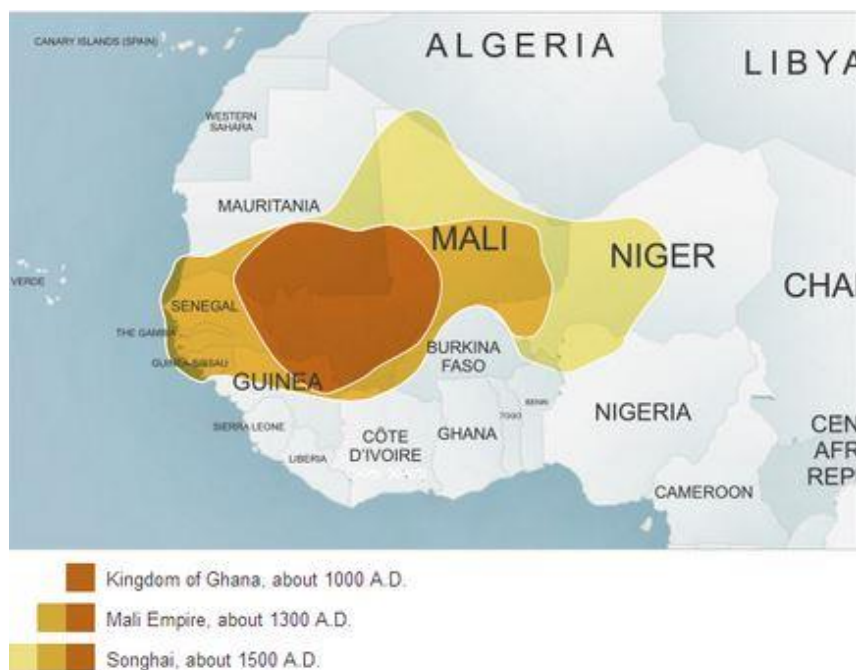


Figure 2: Kingdom of Ghana, Mali Empire & Songhai Empire. Source: <http://historum.com/middle-eastern-african-history/97959-wheel-ancient-ghana-mali-songhai-2.html>

During this time, Mali was a great powerhouse in Western Sahara, with the city of Timbuktu as one of the main trading markets of West Africa, linking the thriving Islamic world to places like Indonesia, India, and China (Nixon, 2009). The city became globally renowned for its rich culture, unique art, vast wealth, and great scholarship. The country's relative wealth was established primarily under the rule of Madingo Emperor Mansa Kanku Musa, nowadays raised to mythological proportions as the 'richest man to have

ever lived'. He used Mali's convenient position on the Trans-Saharan trade route to stimulate the trade in gold and salt (Nixon, 2009).

During the fifteenth century, a succession crisis within the ruling family caused ancient Mali to fracture into several successor states (Keita, 1998). The first blow to the Malian Empire was struck by the Tuareg and Songhai people, who around 1433 managed to capture Timbuktu in addition to several other Northern territories of Mali. This proved to be an advantageous move as they now controlled the Trans-Saharan salt- and gold trade routes (Ly-Tall, 1984). At the same time, the Western parts of the Malian Empire were threatened by the Fula, a nomadic people spread throughout Western Africa. Additionally, during the sixteenth century, Portuguese merchants arrived and were able to convert the leader of the Malian Empire to Christianity, which led to an internal conflict with Muslim and animistic chiefs (Ly-Tall, 1984).

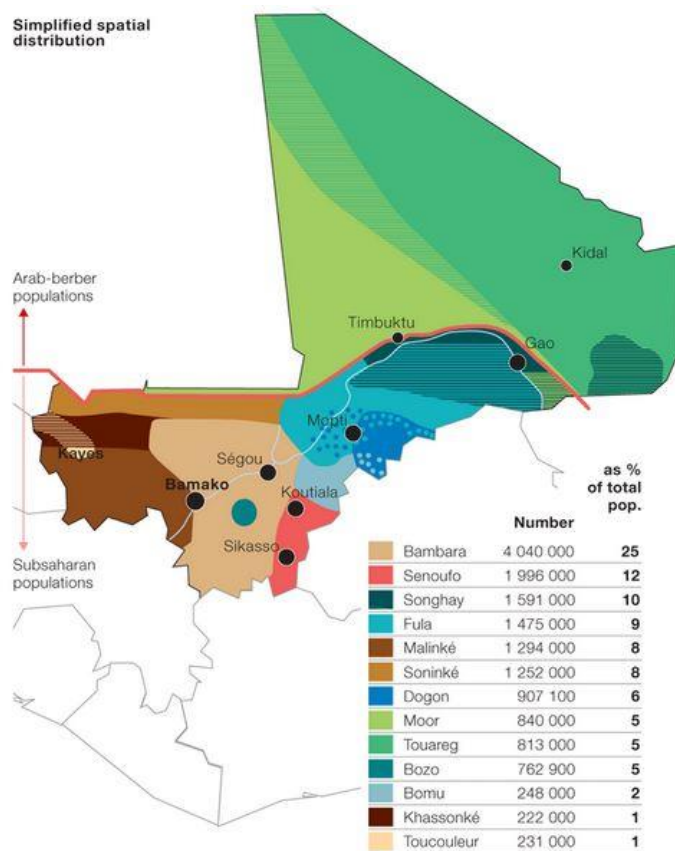


Figure 3: Source: 'Atlas Jeune Afrique 2010', in Bossard, L., op. cit., OECD, Sahel and West Africa Club, 2015, 191.

What is important to take away from this, is the geographical shaping of cultural history during these ancient Empires. Throughout pre-colonial times, exercising control over main trade hotspots such as Gao and Timbuktu, which are situated alongside the Niger River, was of utmost importance. South of the Niger River are the relatively greener plains of Sub-Saharan Africa, in contrast to the drier parts North of the river. This natural 'border' also delineates cultural differences between nomadic Berber populations, such as the Tuareg⁴ on the one side and the Sub-Saharan 'black' populations on the other. The latter enjoy a shared cultural history of ancient Malian and Songhai Empires in the South (Tesfaghiorgis, 2016, and also; Lecocq 2004). This division is illustrated in Figure 3. While no conflict

⁴ Or "Kel Tamasheq" as they prefer to be called.

can be explained purely on ethnic terms, the differences between Berbers and Arabs on the one side and the Sub-Saharan populations of the South is important to keep in mind during the next section, which addresses the process of French colonization and the Tuaregs' struggle for self-determination.

2.1.2 French Colonization – 1880s

Partly due to the fascination and intrigue regarding the rich trading world of ancient Malian and Songhai Empires, the French were determined to expand their colonial conquests in West Africa. The borders and administration of 'Afrique Occidentale Française' (French West Africa) changed frequently and eventually included territories we now know as Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Niger (Aldrich, 1996). Late nineteenth century, France stumbled upon a fragile broken-down Songhai Empire, pressured by several smaller kingdoms and other nomadic peoples spread throughout West Africa. The Tuaregs were able to resist the colonization as they put up a heavy resistance in Northern Mali, however they were slowly forced to eventually surrender to the French occupation during the early twentieth century (Lecocq, 2004). Here, one should take into consideration that pre-colonial Tuareg society was characterized by a hierarchy based on race and ethnicity, with fair-skinned noble families of Tuareg descent at the top, followed in rank by workmen and Muslim scholars, and completed at the bottom by slaves of black descent ('the Bellah') (Bøås & Torheim, 2013: 1282). The colonial conquerors classified the Tuareg as white-skinned and European descent, who had invaded and subdued the indigenous African people. This mirrored the colonial project and was mostly likely the root of the French appreciation for Tuareg society (Lecocq, 2005). The Tuareg response to the French occupation was one of withdrawal. Fearing that external forces would force the proud nomadic people to become sedentary led them to evade taxes and refrain from seeking education of French standards. Thus, enculturation by the French colonists was largely futile, stimulated by the tendency of nomadic pastoral Tuareg to ignore colonial borders (Keita, 1998).

As World War II critically weakened European military capacities and political resilience, France was unable to withstand nationalist independent movements supported by the Eastern Bloc. In 1946, a long bureaucratic decolonization process took off. The Tuareg were very rarely involved in post-World War II politics and were consequently randomly divided among five states: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger (Klute & Lecocq, 2013). In 1960, Mali gained independence.

2.1.3 The First Tuareg Rebellion - 1962-1964

After the country's independence in 1960, Modibo Keita became Mali's first president. He stressed the importance of industrializing and modernizing Mali and did so through an authoritarian Marxist socialism and developed close ties with the Soviet Union (Keita, 1998). Tuareg favoritism by the French during colonial times, had caused resentment among the (primarily black) Malian government (Lecocq, 2005). Additionally, the Malian government regarded nomadism as not corresponding with 'modern' society. Hence, this lifestyle was looked down upon and seen as a backward way of life. Consequently, Northern Mali was labelled 'le Mali inutile' (the useless Mali) (Benjaminsen, 2008). Instead, nomads had to become 'productive citizens', were forced to 'farm up' and basically to sedentarize (Benjaminsen, 2008; also Hagberg & Körling, 2012). From this, a modernization policy developed, which was perceived by the Tuareg as a new form of colonization, this time the external invading force came in the form of the Southern Mali government (Bøås & Torheim, 2013). As previously stated, in pre-colonial Tuareg society, hierarchy was mostly based on race and descent, being ruled by people they previously had used as slaves was a humiliation to the Tuareg population (Bøås & Torheim, 2013). The Tuareg, who considered themselves to be the 'Lords of the Desert', now found themselves to be minorities within an

externally imposed state system (Bøås & Torheim, 2013). These circumstances eventually led to the first Tuareg rebellion: the 'Alfellaga'⁵, lasting from 1962 to 1964 (Lecocq, 2004, and also; Tesfaghiorgis, 2016). The Tuareg could not understand why their cherished age old nomadic culture would have to subsume into a new state, ruled by black Africans who lived a few hundred miles away and had never proved their rights to become the new Tuareg's masters (Morgan, 2012).

However, the rebellion failed to mobilize much of the Tuareg population. While many Tuaregs in Mali and neighboring countries had begun to dream about an independent state of 'Azawad', Tuaregs have never demonstrated a unified political or military agenda, as their primary loyalty lies with their local community or clans. What is more, the Tuareg insurgents faced a lack of resources as they mainly depended on camels as their main form of transportation and were equipped only with outdated small arms (Keita, 1998). This made it easier for the government of Mali to crack down heavily in response to the uprising, as the army was armed with new Soviet weapons and was able to conduct a rigorous counterinsurgency operation (Keita, 1998). Many Tuareg fled to Algeria and Libya (Benjaminsen, 2008).

As such, the first Tuareg rebellion must be understood in relation to the newly gained independence from France and the resistance against growing post-colonial Malian nationalism, which was perceived as a threat by the Tuareg.

2.1.4 The Second Tuareg Rebellion – 1990

In 1968, Modiba Keita was overthrown by a small group of army officers led by Lieutenant Moussa Traoré. Under Traoré's government, Mali suffered from unemployment and was unable to implement efficient economic reforms (Keita, 1998). The droughts of the mid-1970s and 1980s caused many young pastoral Tuareg men to migrate to richer Northern African states, Libya in particular (Keita, 1998). Muammar Gaddafi incorporated Tuareg volunteers into his military forces as well as a Libyan-sponsored 'Islamic Legion', which dispatched Islamist militants to Afghanistan, Lebanon and Palestine (Benjaminsen, 2008).

Another negative effect of the droughts was the massive amount of relief aid, which was embezzled and misappropriated by government officials and used for the construction of private 'châteaux de la sécheresse' (drought castles) in the wealthier parts of Bamako (Southern Mali) (Benjaminsen, 2008). The once so triumphant 'Lords of the Desert', were now depending on relief aid, alongside those who they had always considered to be their social inferiors (Keita, 1998). The unrest among Tuaregs grew even stronger because even though the government always included a 'token' Tuareg minister, northern Mali had little to no influence on local policies (Benajmsen, 2008).

Inspired by the revolutionary discourses in Libya in combination with practical experiences of active warfare while fighting in Gaddafi's army, the Tuaregs started planning a second rebellion: the so called 'al Jebha'.⁶ In 1990 the Mouvement National de Liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA), attacked a prison in Menaka and stole large amounts of weapons after having freed six Tuareg rebels and killing 14 people in the process (Morgan, 2012, and also; Benjaminsen, 2008). This unleashed a campaign of 'indiscriminate violence' from the Malian army towards nomads in general (Benjaminsen, 2008) and created a few hundred new 'rebels', as no distinction was made between Tuareg and Moors; civilians who had never heard of any rebels were massacred randomly (Benjaminsen, 2008).

⁵ Literal translation: "the rebellion" (Lecocq, 2002).

⁶ Literal translation: "the front" (Lecocq, 2002).

Simultaneously, democratic forces in Bamako were gaining force and Traoré realized he was losing his grip on the Northern territories. He hoped to control the rebels through a diplomatic approach, which resulted into direct talks between traditional Tuareg chiefs, who had co-opted into a single party, the Malian government and rebel leaders (Benjaminsen, 2008). This resulted in the Tamanrasset Peace Treaty on 6 January 1991 and a National Pact in 1992, in which the north was given a certain amount of self-determination (Morgan, 2012) and the government agreed to respect the Tamasheq language and culture (Tsfaghiorghis, 2016). However, these promises were not upheld (Morgan, 2012). Massive protests eventually brought an end to the 23-year long reign of Moussa Traoré as he was toppled by a military coup on 26 March 1991 (Klute & Lecocq, 2013).

2.1.5 The Third Tuareg Rebellion – 2006

The next few years, Mali was able to develop into a more or less democratic state, which turned Mali into a 'poster child of democracy' (Lewis, 2012).

However, under the surface, previous unresolved issues and tensions kept simmering as the promises made in the National Pact were not kept. In 2006, the National Pact fell as a new rebel movement, the Democratic Alliance of May 23 for Change (ADC) attacked various Malian army installations and Mali experienced its third Tuareg rebellion (Morgan, 2012). This rebellion revealed the ethnic tensions, smuggling issues and Islamic fundamentalism that slowly grew out of the marginalization of the North (Tsfaghiorghis, 2016, and also; Chandler & Zogg, 2017). Algeria stepped in as a peace broker and initiated the Algiers Accords, which basically reinitiated the demands made in the National Pact. The next few years, Mali grumbled and groaned under an uneasy peace.

2.2 Fourth Tuareg Rebellion & Coup d'état – 2012

As previously addressed, secessionist sentiments are widespread among Tuareg society. The latest uprising began in October 2011, as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) launched another rebellion. On 17 January 2012, the MNLA attacked a camp in Menaka, a historically symbolic target as the Tuareg rebellion of 1990 started there as well, which set off its military operation to achieve self-determination (Remy, 2012).

This new rebellion was inspired by the events in Libya, where the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya in 2011 caused a shockwave and provided a fresh opportunity to reignite the simmering conflict about Tuareg self-determination in Northern Mali (Morgan, 2012). The MNLA allied itself with rebel groups in the north such as AQIM, Ansar Dine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). As such, this time the Tuareg were supported by well-trained Islamists fighters, who were driven from Algeria after the civil war in 2002 and had flooded into the Saharan region (Chandler & Zogg, 2017). Together, they managed to conquer half the country (Thurston, 2013).

In March 2012, the Tuareg revolt in the North sparked a mutiny of low-ranking military officers from a military camp located 15 kilometers outside Bamako, who eventually ousted the democratically elected President Touré as they accused him of failing to address the upheaval in Northern Mali as well as of corruption and anti-democratic behavior (Hagberg & Körling, 2012; also Whitehouse, 2012). The Malian military were dissatisfied with the inability of President Touré to adequately defend the Northern parts of the national territory and his unwillingness to send sufficient manpower and equipment to the North (Hagberg & Körling, 2012). Additionally, Malian soldiers were disgruntled and embarrassed about their failure to defeat the MNLA and directed their anger at President Touré (Thurston, 2017).

This coup spiraled Mali into a socio-political crisis where divergent ideologies and various rebel movements caused a de facto partition of the country as the region of Azawad was declared independent by the MNLA on April 6, 2012.



Figure 4: Separatist group, Northern Mali. Source: Unit Commander SOLTG-4, email correspondence, 07-07-2017.

Eventually, the MNLA fractured into various rebel groups. The MNLA was originally a secular movement that fought for an independent Azawad, while jihadist groups wanted to implement Sharia (Tsfaghiorghis, 2016). While they found a common goal in overthrowing the government, their vision concerning the future of Mali beyond this differed. As such, the fight for independence turned in to a jihadist insurgency (Hagberg & Körling, 2012, also Chandler & Zogg, 2017; Thurston, 2017) that slowly moved its way southward into Central Mali (Tsfaghiorghis, 2016).

2.3 International Interventions – 2012-present

In December 2012, following the surge of extremist forces and reports of abuses under jihadist rule in Central Mali, the UNSC authorized the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). After 'repeated appeals' by both the Malian government as well as Malian civil society, France subsequently deployed Operation Serval in early 2013, which consisted of airpower, special forces, and ground assaults to halt the advances of the rebels (Boeke & Schuurman, 2015). This military offensive successfully halted Islamist forces in Northern Mali.⁷

In 2013, as part of the exit strategy of France, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the deployment of a Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali. UNSCR 2100 states the mandate of MINUSMA as follows:

- “(a) Stabilization of key population centers and support for the reestablishment of state authority throughout the country [...]
- (b) Support for the implementation of the transitional road map, including the national political dialogue and the electoral process [...]

⁷ On August 1, 2014, Operation Serval was replaced by Operation Barkhane, a still ongoing counter-terrorism operation throughout the Sahel region.

- (c) Protection of civilians and United Nations personnel [...]
- (d) Promotion and protection of human rights [...]
- (e) Support for humanitarian assistance [...]
- (f) Support for cultural preservation [...]
- (g) Support for national and international justice [...]” (S/RES/2100)

Since 2013, the Security Council has regularly updated MINUSMA’s mandate, renewing as well as adapting it to the situation in Mali. The latest mandate, authorized by Security Council Resolution 2364, dates from 29 June 2017 and extends MINUSMA’s deployment until 30 June 2018.

2.4 Peace Talks

After several months of UN-sponsored peace talks between Mali’s government and Tuareg-led rebels and two years after the initial deployment of MINUSMA, a compromise was found in the ‘Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali from the Algiers Process’, also known as the ‘Bamako Agreement’. This agreement, signed and implemented on 27 June 2015, was supposed to usher in a new era of stability and peace in Mali (Boutellis & Zahar, 2017).⁸

⁸ For a comprehensive timeline of the events leading up to and the eventual implementation of the Bamako Agreement as well as an overview of the fragmentation of ‘compliant’ armed groups, see Annex A and B.

3. 'New Wars'



3. The 'New War' Thesis

The idea that contemporary conflicts are intrinsically different from the wars waged in the twentieth century is a widely debated subject within scholarly and political literature. Especially after the instability and conflicts in African and Eastern European countries during the 1980's and 1990's, many scholars began to theorize and examine the nature and characteristics of war in the post-Cold War era (Williams, 2014; Kaldor, 1999). Consequently, various terms have been coined in order to describe the so called 'new reality': 'wars among people', 'wars of the third kind', 'uncivil wars', 'low-intensity wars', 'hybrid wars', 'privatized wars', 'post-modern wars' as well as simply 'new wars' (Kaldor 2013, Duffield 2001; Hoffman 2007; Holsti 1996; Kaldor 2013; Munkler 2005; Smith 2005; Snow 1996; Van Creveld 1991). These terms all have in common that they try to describe how processes of globalization have influenced profound changes in the nature of warfare. In this section, I will untangle the conceptual shift in scholarly work regarding the nature of conflicts in the post-Cold War era. My aim is to highlight that the various terms describing 'new wars' seem to emphasize the domestic causes of post-Cold War conflicts and tend to obscure one of the most important characteristics of modern warfare: the increased presence of international stakeholders which inherently shape the nature of current-day wars.

The demise of the Cold War shifted scholarly attention to a new type of organized violence. Many scholars argue that contemporary wars are qualitatively different in nature than earlier wars and state that a distinction must be made in order to efficiently analyze current-day conflicts (Williams, 2014; Kaldor, 1999; Munkler, 2005; Duffield, 2001). This 'new war' thesis was made most famous by Mary Kaldor. In the next paragraphs, I will highlight different characteristics of 'new wars' as described by Kaldor (2006) and argue that a stark distinction between old and new wars is somewhat misleading.

First, Kaldor (2013) argues that Cold War conflicts differ from new wars because the actors are different. Old wars are characterized by vertically organized hierarchical units, whereas new wars feature a multitude of stakeholders, for example paramilitary units, rebel groups, warlords, criminal gangs, and mercenary groups, making contemporary conflicts far more complex (Kaldor, 2013). Nowadays, non-state actors challenge state authority, where in old wars state armies fought each other. Next, she states, the goals have changed. War used to revolve around geo-politics, territory and ideology (e.g. democracy or socialism), whereas new wars are fought in the name of identity (Kaldor, 2013). Most importantly, identity politics are used as a tool to mobilize people, as power is claimed on the basis of ethnicity, clan, religion or language (Kaldor, 2013:7). Furthermore, the methods of war changed. During 'old wars', capturing territory through battle was the decisive strategy. In 'new wars' the emphasis is more on controlling the population (Kaldor, 2013). As such, violence becomes more and more directed towards civilians (Eck & Hultman, 2007). Kaldor states that the ratio of civilian to military casualties has risen from eight combatants to one civilian to approximately eight civilians to one combatant (Kaldor, 2013). Scholars have argued that this is due to the fact that conflicts changed in nature, from interstate to intra-state, blurring the distinction between combatants, rebels and civilians (Van Leeuwen, 2008; Munkler, 2002).

As previously mentioned, many scholars have criticized the stark empirical distinction between old and new wars (Kalyvas, 2001; Henderson & Singer, 2002). For example, the use of paramilitary armies in conflict is not necessarily 'new'. During colonial wars, private militias were present as mercenaries played an important role by helping colonial troops in their conquests (Reyna, 2009; Killingray, 1989). Furthermore, the argumentation that new wars are characterized by an increase in non-combatant casualties is based on limited evidence. In addition, the argument about the increase of casualties in

conflict lacks evidential support as there is little indication that new wars are more 'bloody' (Duffield, 2014). As a result of this criticism, Kaldor revisited her earlier argumentation and states that the distinction between old and new wars is merely a contrast between 'ideal' types of war. Rather, she explains, the distinction provides a useful tool and integrative framework for policy analysis (Kaldor, 2013).

Although the stark distinction between new and old wars as made by Kaldor (2013) is indeed debatable, it is safe to conclude that the era of globalization does have a profound influence on the nature, dynamic and trends of contemporary wars. Not in the least due to the increased global presence in conflict settings, varying from international reporters, mercenaries, military personnel, humanitarian volunteers, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, etc. My point here, is that labeling post-Cold War conflicts as 'civil war' or 'intra-state conflicts' obscures the geopolitical context in which these conflicts arise. Although most 'new wars' are indeed localized, they do involve a 'myriad of transnational connections' (Kaldor, 1999: 2). In sum, post-Cold War conflicts create an increasingly complex context for different (international) stakeholders to operate in. In the next section, I will explain how the changing nature of contemporary conflicts has also profoundly impacted the nature of UN peacekeeping operations.

4. A 'Robust' Turn



4. A 'Robust' Turn in UN Peacekeeping Operations

Processes of globalization and the increased complexity of post-Cold War conflicts, as explained in the previous section, have heavily influenced the character of UN peacekeeping operations. Missions increasingly deploy and operate in high-risk environments, where peacekeepers face unprecedented threats and insecurities. Although peacekeeping has always been a risky activity, the number of fatalities among peacekeepers suggests that the current risks go beyond an acceptable level (Dos Santos Cruz et al., 2017). Expectedly, the UN has come under pressure from host-countries and faces critique from peacekeepers themselves who stress the need to implement more offensive mandates and deploy 'robust' forces to better respond to the needs on the ground (Boutellis, 2015; Karlsrud, 2015). In this section, I will first provide a short introduction on the evolution of peacekeeping operations. Here, I emphasize the influence of historic failures of the UN which led to a balancing act between upholding traditional principles of peacekeeping on the one hand and the need to protect civilians on the other. I will describe how this led to the emergence of a new generation of 'robust' peacekeeping. Next, I will highlight that the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN-DPKO) as well as the scholarly and political debate in general do not provide a clear consensus on how UN peacekeeping should respond to new challenges on the ground. While some authors claim that the UN should stick to traditional principles of neutrality and impartiality, others emphasize the need to respond to current hybrid threats such as violent extremism. There is, however, a clear sense that the changes in conflict are outpacing the adaptability of UN peacekeeping operations (Ramos-Horta et al., 2015). I argue that consequently, there is a widening gap between what is being asked of the UN and what it is currently able to deliver. I will use MINUSMA as a case study to examine how this conceptual struggle severely affects realities on the ground in Mali.

4.1 The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping – A Short Introduction

Over the past seven decades, UN peacekeeping has progressed into a complex and global endeavor. This development can roughly be dissected into three generations.

The first two missions ever deployed by the UN, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1948 and the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in 1949, consisted of unarmed military observers (UN History, 2018). The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) became the first armed test case for peacekeeping operations and was successfully deployed in 1956 to address the Suez crisis (Sanders, 2015). This mission established the basic principles for peacekeeping operations. The first principle acknowledges the sovereignty of states, and states that "conflicting parties must both agree to a peace or ceasefire and must agree to allow peacekeepers into their respective states to monitor the agreement" (Sanders, 2015: 4). Second, the use of force is only allowed in self-defense. Third, peacekeepers operate without prejudice, are not to become parties to the conflict but act as neutral observers for peace agreements. Fourth, peacekeepers' actions are restricted by the mandate given to them by the UNSC. Lastly, the UNSC's resolutions sanction and legitimize peacekeeping operations (Sanders, 2015: 4).

After the end of the Cold War, the second generation of peacekeeping missions emerged as the strategic context for UN peacekeeping changed dramatically. In his 1992 'Agenda for Peace', UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali outlined his recommendations about how the UN should respond to conflicts in the post-Cold War era (A/47/277 S/24111). The rise of intrastate conflicts, fierce nationalism and ethno-religious struggles were causing international instability. The UN responded by designing and

implementing 'multidimensional' enterprises that would have to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements (UN History, 2018). This meant that peacekeeping operations had to react to non-state armed actors, build sustainable institutions of governance, monitor human rights, reform security sectors and disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former combatants (UN History, 2018).

When the Cold War ended, the number of peacekeeping operations rapidly increased. The overall success of earlier missions had created expectations which UN peacekeeping operations were not able to deliver. With limited financial and political support, UN operational capabilities were stretched thin (Ramos-Horta, 2015). This was especially true during the mid-1990s, when the UNSC was not able to authorize sufficiently robust mandates or provide adequate resources (UN History, 2018). Unfortunately, this created circumstances that eventually led to the catastrophic events in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia.

Out of these challenges evolved the third generation of peacekeeping operations. Previous set-backs introduced a period of self-reflection. Shortcomings and recommendations were published in the 2000 Brahimi Report. This report recognizes that "no failure did more to damage the credibility of United Nations peacekeeping in the 1990s than its reluctance to distinguish victim from aggressor" (Brahimi, 2000: 2). It asked for "renewed political commitment on the part of Member States, significant institutional change and increased financial support" (Brahimi, 2000: 1). Also, to be effective, it was deemed necessary for UN peacekeepers to be properly equipped and operate under achievable mandates (Brahimi, 2000). Furthermore, according to the Report, the most pressing issue was that peacekeepers:

"tended to deploy where conflict had not resulted in victory for any side, where a military stalemate or international pressure or both had brought fighting to a halt but at least some of the parties to the conflict were not seriously committed to ending the confrontation. United Nations operations thus did not deploy into post-conflict situations but tried to create them" (Sanders, 2015: 7).

Indeed, until today, peacekeepers are increasingly deployed in high-risk environments where there is little to no peace to keep and guns have not yet fallen silent (Hunt, 2017; Dos Santos Cruz et al., 2017). This creates dilemmas for peacekeepers regarding the principles of self-defense and impartiality (Sanders, 2015, 8). Operationally, the need thus arises to identify threats to the mission itself as well as to the civilian population. In practice, this means that peacekeepers must delineate between taking an active defense strategy or be on the more offensive side against an aggressor (Sanders, 2015, 8).

4.2 The Delusion of a Doctrine

So how should the UN respond to 'new' characteristics of contemporary conflicts, such as violent extremism, widespread terrorist attacks and organized crime while simultaneously safeguarding basic principles as impartiality and neutrality? This exact question is causing a 'massive rift' within the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN-DPKO) (Karlsrud, 2015). As Karlsrud states, the UN-DPKO is a 'divided house' between those who want the UN to respond to threats on the ground and those that hold on tight to the traditional believes of peacekeeping:

"On the one hand, some see the core principles of the UN threatened – and by extension, the viability of UN peacekeeping as a tool in the future. On the other hand, others see new areas where the UN can engage and maintain market share, continuing to be relevant to challenges

on the ground and to member states that advocate for more robust peace operations” (Karlsrud, 2015: 4).

I will further explain the complexity of this question by taking a closer look at the current UN mission in Mali and how the UN doctrine moved away from peacekeeping towards peace enforcement and stabilization missions.

In April 2013, before a peace deal was signed, the UN authorized MINUSMA

“in support of the transitional authorities of Mali, to stabilize the key population centers, especially in the north of Mali and, in this context, to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas” (S/RES/2100).

Karlsrud (2015) and Peter (2015) argue that this mandate already implicates the violation of the core principles of peacekeeping: consent, impartiality, and non-use of force. UN peacekeeping operations should have the consent of the main parties to the conflict. In Mali this is not the case, as Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups, who operate mainly in the northern parts of Mali, find themselves labeled as ‘terrorist’ by Member States (Peter, 2015: 358). As such, they are not seen as legitimate negotiation partners. However, a lack of legitimacy of the international community does not necessarily equal a lack of legitimacy within communities in Northern Mali, some of whom are believed to sympathize with these groups. Furthermore, MINUSMA is clearly working in partnership with the Malian government, which highlights the limitations of a state-centric approach. The 2013 mandate, which emphasized the need to expand state authority in Mali, did not reflect the aspirations of many locals in Northern Mali, who traditionally assign certain ‘state functions’ to a “combination of informal, ad-hoc, traditional or religious entities” or local authorities (Mechoulam, 2016: 1). When the UN stated to support Malian authorities, it compromised the neutrality of the UN. Lastly, non-use of force is one of the cornerstones of UN peacekeeping missions. Since the end of the Cold War, the use of force is legitimized at a tactical level, in self-defense, in defense of the mandate or to protect civilians (Peter, 2015). However, then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon proposed to include a ‘quick reaction force’ for MINUSMA, targeting jihadist movements (Mechoulam, 2016: 1). Peter argues that this is a notable trend within new UN operations and provides us with the example of the intervention brigade which is part of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She states: “While past operations could use force to protect their mandates, now the use of force is an important part of the mandate itself. Not only do the objectives of the mission need to be protected through the use of force, but they cannot be achieved without it” (Peter, 2015: 360).

In June 2014, MINUSMA’s mandate was revised by “expanding [MINUSMA’s] presence in the North, assisting in implementing the peace agreement, and building the capacity of the Malian armed forces” (Rogur, 2016: 10).

In 2016, after the UN was attacked several times, MINUSMA’s mandate was significantly sharpened. The new resolution requests MINUSMA

“to move to a more proactive and robust posture to carry out its mandate [...] to stabilize the key population centers and other areas where civilians are at risk, notably in the North and Center of Mali, and in this regard, to enhance early warning, to anticipate, deter and counter threats, including asymmetric threats, and to take robust and active steps to protect civilians, including through active and effective patrolling in areas where civilians are at risk, and to

prevent the return of armed elements to those areas, engaging in direct operations pursuant only to serious and credible threats” (S/RES/2295).

The same resolution also stresses that

“terrorism can only be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving active participation and collaboration of all States, and regional and international organizations to impede, impair and isolate the terrorist threat” (S/RES/2295).

Various scholars have interpreted this as effectively mandating MINUSMA with the conduct of war-fighting against terrorist organizations such as AQIM (Karlsrud, 2015: 43; also Hunt, 2017: 113; Peter, 2015: 354). An argument that is raised in support of this statement is that the mandate of MINUSMA also authorizes a partnership with a French contingent, Operation Barkhane, which conducts counter-terrorism operations (Hunt, 2017: 113). The UN resolution states that the French parallel force is authorized “to use all necessary means [...] to intervene in support of elements of MINUSMA when under imminent and serious threat upon request of the Secretary-General” (S/RES/2364). Hypothetically, this opens the possibility to call in the French forces to militarily tackle any attack against the Malian government. This would mean active combat against clearly identified armed spoilers, legitimately acting under the UN umbrella. Furthermore, the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) has visited MINUSMA and offered funding for certain projects that align with its objective (Karlsrud, 2015: 3). Consequently, it is argued that the danger of mission creep lures as the funding of counter violent extremism programs could potentially skew priorities and jeopardize the core principals of a peacekeeping operation (Karlsrud, 2015: 3).

Indeed, in practice, cooperation is sought with French forces:

“Barkhane, is a French operation, with which there is a lot of cooperation. You just need each other, the French have a lot of fighting power there, of course, with all those terrorists. For instance, with all those attacks, they did a few raids. Look, the UN will not raid houses that quickly. And the French think, OK, we are not here under a UN mandate, so they just kick down doors and pull those leaders out [...]. As a UN military you cannot enter houses; Barkhane just has a different approach.”⁹

Troops are trained in counter-terrorism activities as well. Chances are limited, however, that those techniques are being called upon by the UN:

“This morning we had a counter-terrorist training, in Mali we work for the UN, so the chances are small that we will perform such kinetic operations in real life. But it belongs to the tasks we could be performing normally. So, it is important to keep on training.” (Dagboek van Onze Helden, 2017).

Furthermore, from a political point of view, the decision to deploy Dutch troops to Mali was also motivated by the perception of Mali as a breeding ground for jihadists, which could potentially pose a threat to European countries (Dutch Ministry of Defense, 2016). As then Dutch foreign minister Frans Timmermans stated: “It is no longer just about development, containment or whatever you want to call it. This is about the struggle to convince people that our way of life is better than the fundamentalist way of life” (Lewis, 2014: 1). He voiced his worries about the increasing sense of urgency, as radical

⁹ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 30-06-2017.

groups are targeting Europe: “Sooner or later, [it] will be a direct threat to our security” (Lewis, 2014: 1).

Another argument supporting this statement is that the UN is quite literally ‘going green’, as various TCCs have refused to paint their vehicles and helicopters white (Karlsrud, 2015: 43). This is quite understandable, given the high-risk environment and the fact that the UN is increasingly seen as a party to the conflict by various terrorist groups. Security reports have indeed stated that the blue helmets and the United Nations flag no longer offer a ‘natural’ protection (Dos Santos Cruz et al., 2017), but rather function as clearly marked targets.

The reality on the ground in Mali however, indeed suggests the need for a more robust character to respond to current threats. One of MINUSMA’s Force Commander’s, General Jean Bosco Kazura, stated that MINUSMA is in a “terrorist fighting situation without an anti-terrorist mandate or adequate training, equipment, logistics or intelligence to deal with the situation” (S/PV.7355). Furthermore, retired Major General Lewis MacKenzie, former commander of UN missions in Central America and Sarajevo stated recently that MINUSMA is much more a ‘counter-insurgency campaign’ than a traditional peacekeeping mission. He emphasized that in Mali, it is disingenuous to claim that the mission in Mali is deployed to aid the peace process, as there is no peace process in Mali and there “is an ISIS franchise in Northern Mali that is operating outside of the process” (Marlin, 2018).

According to Sanders (2015: 23), the Sahel region is “an inexhaustible breeding ground” for jihadists. Thus, the reality on the ground in Mali suggests an on-going counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environment (Sanders; 2015: 22). Not surprisingly, various African TCCs, like Chad and Niger, as well as the Malian government itself, are pushing for a UN brigade to combat terrorist groups and drug traffickers (Security Council Report, 2015). So far, the UNSC has resisted this. Various UN research reports as well as academic scholars have drawn a clear line against tasking the UN with counter-terrorism activities, arguing that the UN is steering away from peacekeeping toward conflict management and that it “lack[s] the specific equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and specialized military preparation required” to counter violent extremists (Karlsrud, 2015: 4). Furthermore, to properly execute counter-insurgency strategies the UN will need to implement offensive operations which undermines its impartiality (Sanders, 2015: 26).

Clearly, there seems to be a mismatch between doctrine and practice in current UN peace operations (Peter, 2015; Sanders, 2015; Karlsrud, 2017). As Peter states, currently the UN acts according to the ‘delusion of a doctrine’ in which theoretically, key principles as consent, impartiality and the nonuse of force are underpinned, while in practice, current peacekeeping operations like MINUSMA are tasked with ‘unprecedented’ robust mandates (Peter, 2015: 351; also, Karlsrud, 2015; Karlsrud, 2017; Hunt, 2017). As the HIPPO report (2015) states, UN peacekeeping has moved far beyond a clear peace to keep. As such, MINUSMA is seen as a ‘hasty’ mission, with a mandate that does not quite suit its operating environment (Charbonneau, 2017). Some argue that the DKPO overstepped its bounds by granting MINUSMA a mandate that jeopardizes the neutrality and impartiality of the mission (Sanders, 2015: 29). Evidently, the UN has come to a crossroads as it has been taking on tasks that bear more similarities to peace enforcement and counter-terrorism than to peacekeeping; and in doing so, widening the gap between traditional principles and the reality on the ground. As Charbonneau states, there is a “tension between those demanding the means for filling the capacity gaps for the purpose of fully assuming a robust posture, and those who criticize this posture as falling outside the mandate of UN peacekeeping missions” (Charbonneau, 2017: 7).

Understandably, UN peacekeepers on the ground in Mali request more ‘robust’ mandates, the authorization of offensive use of force and counterinsurgency operations to adequately respond to threats on the ground. Peter Yeo, a senior official at the U.N. Foundation, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that supports the goals of the organization, states that “It’s time for us to realize that [a] front-line role is central to the future of the United Nations” and that “without a counterterrorism capability, U.N. peacekeepers can’t operate productively in many of the world’s war zones” (Sieff, 2017: 1). This is also clear to Charbonneau, who states that military personnel operating in Mali emphasize the need for MINUSMA to have a mandate like the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. As the Danish commander of MINUSMA, Major General Michael Lollesgaard envisions, the UN will increasingly engage in similar missions, because “who else will do it?” (BBC, 2015). The appetite for coalition-led interventions has drastically decreased among Western states (Peter, 2015). Instability and terrorist threats in Mali are not about to disappear any time soon and the Security Council will most likely continue to deploy missions in high-risk environments where there is not yet a peace agreement in place (Boutellis, 2015). Not because it is a preferred option, but because it is a last resort (De Coning et al., 2015). As De Coning argues, when the UN Security Council authorizes an offensive stabilization mission, the UN “should not have to do so on the basis of the existing peacekeeping doctrine and its blue helmet identity” (Peter et al., 2015: 17). The UN lost its credibility by deploying in different high-risk environments as it got ‘sucked’ into conflicts similar to the ones in Afghanistan and Iraq (BBC, 2015).

As Dos Santos Cruz et al. (2017) emphasize, it takes major bureaucratic and legislative changes within the UN Headquarters to adapt to these modern high-risk operating environments. In the next section, I will provide several examples of how the UN has tried to adapt to realities on the ground through the introduction of ‘stabilization missions’.

4.3 The ‘Stabilization’ Mission in Mali

In contrast to traditional and multidimensional peacekeeping missions, stabilization missions are deployed mid-conflict. This leads back to the fact that the target of peacekeeping missions nowadays are non-state actors without any international legitimacy due to their affiliation with terrorists and/or their terrible human rights records (Peter, 2015: 353). As such, they are not understood as legitimate negotiation partners to peace agreements, turning them into potential ‘spoilers’.

MINUSMA, together with three other ‘stabilization’ missions, in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti, have several features in common (Karlsrud, 2015; Peter et al., 2015):

- They operate in high-risk environments within ongoing conflicts
- They are tasked to protect the government and citizens against (identified) aggressors
- They are mandated to operate alongside local security forces who have the primary responsibility to protect their government and its citizens
- They are authorized to operate robustly

Other than these characteristics, there is no broad consensus on the exact definition of stabilization, leading to a wide variation of understandings (Gorur, 2016). In New York, it is often understood to be involving military force. In the field, however, ‘stabilization’ is understood to primarily involve civilian led development-oriented activities (Gorur, 2016: 5). Gorur states that it is precisely the lack of definition which spurs the discussion about whether or not stabilization missions violate the core

principals of peacekeeping. Overall, there is a need for a new UN stabilization doctrine which clearly states when and how operations are mandated to stabilize (Boutellis, 2015).

These missions bear resemblance to the stabilization missions by NATO in Iraq and Afghanistan, where similar actors were confronted (Peter, 2015: 354). For example, the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali is the first to be attacked by jihadist forces on a regular basis. The following quotes illustrate the context of the current peacekeeping mission in Mali:

“[...] convoys are being torn apart by improvised explosive devices and [UN] compounds blasted by 1,000-pound car bombs. It is a crisis that looks more like the U.S. ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than the cease-fires traditionally monitored by U.N. missions” (Sieff, 2017: 1).

“On joint foot patrols with Malian and UN police [...] the strategy is similar to that in Iraq or Afghanistan: win hearts and minds, reassure the people and gather information.” (Sieff, 2017: 1).

The UN has tried to take advantage of the expertise of European Member States who have experiences operating in similar asymmetric environments. The past decade, European TCCs have mainly spent their time working in NATO oriented operations, such as ISAF in Afghanistan. European TCCs offer great potential learning opportunities for the UN regarding for example their experiences in gathering intelligence and working in high-risk environments (Karlsrud & Smith, 2015). This offers opportunities for the UN to learn how to adapt to and mitigate current security situations. On the other hand, it requests adaptability from European TCCs as they have grown accustomed to a more kinetic environment and have grown somewhat unfamiliar with the administrative rules of the United Nations¹⁰ as European Member States have only just recently ‘returned’ to UN peacekeeping missions (Karlsrud & Smith, 2015). In the next section, I will highlight specific ‘robust’ characteristics of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali.

4.3.1 All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU)

The first ‘robust’ characteristic of the stabilization mission in Mali I want to highlight is the formation of the All Source Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU). In 2014, the Dutch, together with six other countries, took the initiative to enhance the intelligence capabilities of the UN. Historically, UN peacekeeping operations have always evaded ‘the art of spying’: gathering intelligence (Lewis, 2014). Even more so, the use of the term ‘intelligence’ was prohibited in traditional peacekeeping operations (Rietjens & Dorn, 2017). As Abilova and Novosseloff (2016) state, “intelligence is often associated with covert means of collecting and sharing information and is thus considered incompatible with the UN’s multilateral and impartial character and its standards of transparency, information rather than intelligence has long been the preferred term” (Abilova & Novosseloff, 2016: 4).

The UN gradually has changed its approach towards intelligence as its operating environments became increasingly complex and the UN itself came under attack:

“In high-tempo, complex and dangerous environments, where asymmetric and transnational threats pose serious dangers to peacekeepers and negatively impact mandate implementation,

¹⁰ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 30-06-2017.

there is a need for peacekeeping missions to better understand their operating environments and contexts, maintain a strategic overview of developments, and predict specific threats and opportunities to enable peacekeepers to effectively execute their mandates” (UN-DPKO, 2017).

The 2000 Brahimi report, which evaluated the success of UN peacekeeping up until then, identified specific areas to improve: the lack of information provision, the inability to respond to the information, the absence of specialist intelligence sensors and the failure to handle sensitive information in a classified environment (Brahimi, 2000). The traditional UN organizations responsible for intelligence are U2 (the military intelligence staff of the UN), Joint Military Analyses Centre (JMAC) and the UN Department for Security and Safety (UNDSS).

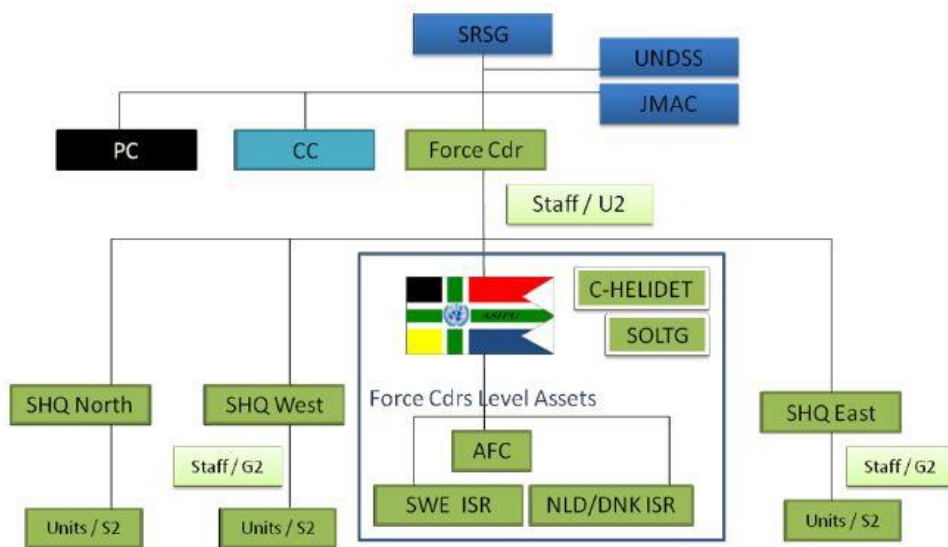


Figure 5: MINUSMA Force Intelligence Organizational Structure, Source: Van Dalen, 2015.

However, many Western countries were hesitant to make their advanced intelligence units available to the UN because of a lack of confidence in the organization. Second, the UN was overloaded by the many UN missions and therefore had difficulty generating sufficient quality of intelligence. Third, the intelligence capacity of the UN was damaged by the institutional tendency to send information mainly upwards instead of sharing it horizontally between the various mission organizations. In other words, the UN did not have a comprehensive modern intelligence process and architecture (Van Dalen, 2017).

As such, in Mali, ASIFU was introduced to coordinate, analyze, and process the total of all information flows to practically usable intelligence products:

“The main mission of ASIFU was to provide intelligence capacity and contribute especially to traditionally non-military intelligence analysis, such as illegal trafficking and narcotics-trade; ethnic dynamics and tribal tensions; corruption and bad governance within Mali and MINUSMA area of interest. This wide range of topics is often referred to as X-PMESII, indicating that information was to be gathered and analyzed on Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Information domains (following NATO conventions). The X implied that these domains are interconnected and cannot be seen separately” (Rietjens & Dorn, 2017: 201).

The innovative ASIFU concept was developed during the stabilization missions of NATO in Iraq and Afghanistan, drawing from European Member States’ experiences with counter-insurgency and

counter-terrorism organizations (Karlsrud, 2015). In these complex environments it proved necessary to enhance the human dimension of conflicts, investigate why people support their governments or not, how they organize themselves, how they understand their reality, and how their values and beliefs change over time (Flynn et al., 2012).

ASIFU was fed by two Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance companies (ISR-Coy), which focused primarily on intelligence gathering and analysis. These ISR-Coys included specific capabilities such as Human Intelligence (HUMINT), civil-military interaction and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) (Rietjens & Dorn, 2017: 202). In addition, the UN Force Commander had two other contingents under its command which were primarily tasked with gathering intelligence: the SOLTG as well as a Dutch helicopter detachment consisting of Apache and Chinook helicopters (Rietjens & Dorn, 2017). The level of intelligence gathering in Mali is unprecedented in UN peacekeeping operations. As the then Dutch Foreign Minister, Frans Timmermans, stated, the Dutch were “breaking new ground by providing human and electronic intelligence alongside air surveillance to blue helmets stationed across the vast desert” (Lewis, 2014: 1).

4.3.2 Special Operations Land Task Group (SOLTG)¹¹

One of the ‘tools’ that the Force Commander in Mali can make use of to collect necessary information and intelligence, are the Dutch Special Operations Land Task Group (SOLTG – ‘Scorpion’), a second ‘robust’ characteristic of the mission in Mali I want to highlight. SOLTG operated from April 2014 until December 2016. Then Dutch foreign minister, Frans Timmermans, stated that it was decided to deploy the Special Operation Forces (SOFs) to meet a ‘growing security threat’ which ‘softer’ approaches could no longer contain (Lewis, 2014). The utilization of SOFs not only illustrates the more ‘robust’ turn of UN peacekeeping missions, it also exemplifies a global trend to deploy SOFs to meet the current challenges regarding violent extremism, terrorism, and other asymmetric threats (Yoho et al., 2017: 1; Turnley et al., 2017). As argued before, the contemporary nature of conflicts is inherently different from earlier conventional ‘steel on steel’ wars. Today’s conflicts are characterized by small scale, diffuse, and sporadic struggles, often fought by non-state actors such as militias, informal paramilitary organizations and supported by illicit transnational networks (Yoho et al., 2014). As Yoho et al. state, SOFs have had an essential and increasing role in countering these threats. Another reason to deploy SOFs is that during the stabilization operations in Afghanistan, specific capabilities have been developed which are expensive to maintain and may seem unnecessary if sitting idle at home. In other words: “if you do not use them you lose them” (Karlsrud & Smith, 2015: 3).

The SOLTG in Mali was mandated with the following tasks:

- “1. Provide the Force Commander an early forward MINUSMA presence in outreach areas
2. Increase the understanding of development crisis, if required, set conditions for initial entry of conventional force

¹¹ The troops from 11 Airmobile Brigade (‘Desert Falcon’) have replaced the Special Operations Land Task Group (SOLTG) Scorpions. They currently function as the operational core in Mali.

3. Provide the Force Commander with a military response option that may not entail the risk of escalation normally associated with the deployment of inherently large or physical conventional forces”¹²



Figure 6: The Dutch SOLTG-4 in Northern Mali. Source: Unit Commander SOLTG-4, email correspondence, 07-07-2017.

The first two tasks relate to the SOFs specialty: their ability to operate independently for an extended period and as such gather essential information and intelligence in support of the mission objective. SOLTG Scorpion was robustly equipped and served as the ‘eyes and ears’ for MINUSMA’s All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), an innovative intelligence capacity which has been discussed in detail in the previous section. The third task, to “provide the Force Commander with a military response option that may not entail the risk of escalation normally associated with the deployment of inherently large or physical conventional forces” was explained by a unit commander as follows:

“So, it could be that the Force Commander asks you to strike a hard blow in the direction of the enemy, whomever that may be at that moment. To that intent you must always be prepared and equipped. And that was something especially for us, that was our mandate.

“Response” is of course just shooting back and escalating, and that is what is special about it; normally the UN would react with ‘self-defense’. Here for the first time we speak about escalation and that is a very important thing, because escalation means that we hit back harder, to prevent things from getting worse, but that in principle we hit back harder than that we were hit in the first place. And then it is about proportionality and subsidiarity, by which you must always comply to humanitarian martial law.

The violence which you apply must be proportional – enough but not too excessive, in accordance to the principle of subsidiarity – which means that it could not have been replaced

¹² Email Correspondence, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 07-07-2017.

by something else. If you let an Apache fire a Hellfire rocket on a building, then if that could have been replaced by shooting on the building yourself, you should have done so.

And here they say (according to the mandate) that you can escalate the situation yourself, you can go beyond the principle of proportionality, if you prevent things from getting worse in the future. In the near future; I am talking about the coming five minutes up to an hour. And that is special about SOLTG and the MINUSMA mission.”¹³

The next quote clarifies to what extent this mandate authorizes the use of force:

“[We did not have the permission] ourselves to start counter terrorism operations. We could operate robustly, but we did not carry out offensive operations, just defensive. Only if there was a threat against us, our partner countries or Mali civilians could we counter act. We gave the Force Commander the option of reacting quickly, efficiently, and robustly. The emphasis here lies on reacting. There is of course a difference in carrying out an operation between us and the ‘regular’ UN troops. Because we were better trained and better equipped we went on patrol more often and we also performed secret reconnaissance operations. This gave a clear signal to ‘spoilers’ of the peace process. You could say this was a deterrent to these parties. Again, we did not seek out the enemy by ourselves but by our actions they saw us as a professional and formidable unit.”¹⁴

Accordingly, the SOFs did not have an offensive mandate in Mali; however, their mandate does indeed indicate a decent amount of robustness, which exemplifies the changing doctrine of the UN in practice:

“Over the past ten years, the UN has become a more robust organization. Our mission was thus very sensitive because the SOLTG is the very first time the United Nations has deployed Special Forces. And the Special Forces are created to attack strategic targets, to actually eliminate a target deep in enemy territory. In a surgical way. The rest of the army must start somewhere from a starting line and slowly fight its way to a capital or whatever. Special Forces are flown in to eliminate targets, people, installations beforehand or to gather very specific information. [...] You can imagine that when the UN deploys Special Forces, that it produces some unrest. It is something completely different than standing in front of a door with your blue helmet and your blue vest, which is a peacekeeping approach. The Special Forces are a peace enforcement approach, it is the commanding of peace.

The UN has also given a mandate to the Special Forces for what we call: Direct Action. Direct Action is no more or less than: we know where there are terrorists, we kick down the door and eliminate them. [...] That was a task the UN saw, maybe we should do this. Because the UN is much too scared to bring in regular troops, because this will be accompanied by much more violence, then perhaps we should bring in the surgical special unit, the best of the best. And that is why the SF were chosen [...]. We thought it would be the same as in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan NATO invaded the country, wiped out the Taliban, then we came in and there was still a lot of violence. In Mali the French have eliminated the Tuareg rebels and forced them back across the border to Libya. Then we came in and thought it would be the same party all over again. Let’s just be careful and learn from the previous time. The UN knew that also. So, that’s

¹³ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 30-06-2017.

¹⁴ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 30-06-2017.

why Special Forces, because they are the best of the best. So, if something happens, we at least know that we did our utmost best to counter the attacks. Aim high, because there was a kind of fear that the same would happen again. After a couple of months this turned out better than expected.”¹⁵

4.4 Unintended Consequences of ‘Robustness’

However, the ‘robust’ characteristics of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, as depicted in the sections above, is understood to be a source of insecurity for humanitarian actors within Mali. A report about the current situation in Mali of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) contends that the “combination of integration, stabilization and counter-terrorism is a potentially explosive mix for humanitarian action, and Mali is the only country where the three rationales coexist and overlap” (Poza Marin, 2017: 13). As the current doctrine within UN peacekeeping operations seeks to integrate military, humanitarian, policing, and economic dimensions into one comprehensive approach, MSF argues that the principles of impartiality and independence become jeopardized and end up being subordinate to political objectives (Poza Marin, 2017: 10).

4.4.1 Implications for ‘Humanitarian Space’

One of the major challenges within peacekeeping is the cooperation and coordination between these different actors. The politicized nature of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali has negatively affected the willingness of civil components of the UN to cooperate with the military contingent (Poza Marin, 2017; Tesfaghiorgis, 2016). Additionally, humanitarian actors outside MINUSMA’s mandate perceive the presence of the peacekeeping force as being a threat to their own security (Tefaghiorgis, 2016). A report of MSF about the current situation in Mali states that “whereas one of the declared aims of these military operations is the ‘creation of conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance’, they may provoke precisely the opposite effect, and endanger the continuation of humanitarian action in wide areas of Mali” (Poza Marin, 2017: 5).

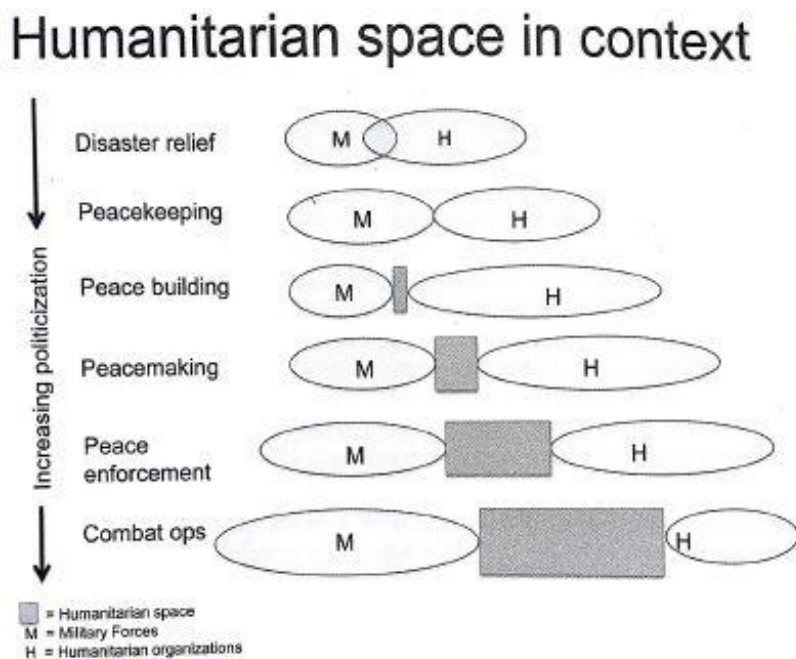


Figure 7: Humanitarian Space in Context. Source: Tesfaghiorgis, 2016.

¹⁵ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 30-06-2017.

As depicted in Figure 7, if humanitarian action is subordinated to, and associated with, political objectives, the principles of impartiality and independence are jeopardized. In her thesis, Tesfaghiorghis (2016) concludes that the ‘humanitarians’ perceive the presence of the peacekeeping force as a hindrance to their activities as well as to their own safety (Tefaghiorghis, 2016). Additionally, she states that it was “easier to conduct humanitarian activities in northern Mali before the deployment of MINUSMA” (Tefaghiorghis, 2016: vii). This is why humanitarian organizations stress the need for the military to respect ‘humanitarian space’. According to Hillhorst and Jansen (2010: 1117), ‘humanitarian space’ denotes the “physical or symbolic space which humanitarian agents need to deliver their services according to the principles they uphold”. Thus, humanitarian action is separated from the politicized nature of the operating environment by upholding areas that embrace the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence. Tesfaghiorghis (2016) concludes that, from a humanitarian perspective, “cooperation with MINUSMA is understood as a violation of humanitarian space, as it would put humanitarian actors at risk and also hinder humanitarian access (Tefaghiorghis, 2016). Therefore, Tesfaghiorghis states that civil-military interaction should be limited.

This sentiment is not felt among the military personnel I interviewed. During my research from a military perspective, informants stated that there is indeed a great need and willingness to share information, interact and coordinate (MINUSMA, 2017). A study among MINUSMA personnel within the military component of the mission, both at the Force HQ in Bamako as well as in Sector West level, also found that there is indeed a need to interact and coordinate with specific civilian counterparts within MINUSMA. However, this research focused on the interaction between the ‘civilian component of the Mission’, not necessarily on the interaction with humanitarians (MINUSMA, 2017). As shown in Figure

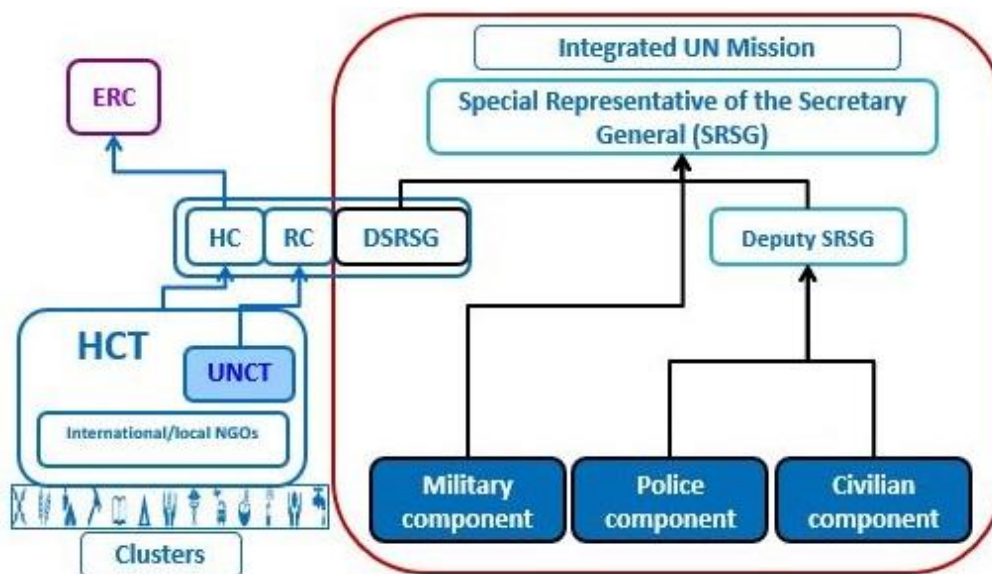


Figure 8: UN Structure MINUSMA. Source: PowerPoint Presentation: Humanitarian Actors and UN Missions, CIMIC Officer

8, an integrated UN Mission is divided in three components: a military component, a police component, and a civilian component. Humanitarian organizations (depicted as International/local NGOs on the left side in Figure 8), are a separate entity, as well as different UN clusters.

Nonetheless, during interviews with military informants it became clear that, apart from acknowledging the necessity to share information with the civilian component, they are fully aware of the added value humanitarian aid organizations can provide, especially considering the years of contextual experience

these organizations have. This is illustrated by the next quote about the importance of experiences and knowledge within humanitarian organizations:

“Those guys [personnel from humanitarian organizations] are spending three years, locally, with humanitarian aid organizations... you don’t have to tell them how things work, even more so, you have to take them out for coffee to see if they are willing to share their information with you. And that’s the way it should be, if you ask me. With MINUSMA, during my deployment, there were around 12,000 military personnel and around 800 civilians. And those civilians are in charge. And that’s the way it should be, because a safe environment is only a small component, but an essential one, for which a lot of people are needed, and on which a lot of money is spent. But if there is no safe environment, there are no investments, no reconciliation programs. On top of that, a lot of people from the military think that they are the core of the missions, which they are not. We are one of the six or seven pillars of the mission. The fact that we are with more personnel, doesn’t make us more important”.¹⁶

In Mali, humanitarian organizations are often well-established and development workers have a lot of knowledge about the situation on the ground. They have several decades worth of experience and knowledge about the country (Care, 2018). This once again, highlights the importance of liaison and Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) capacity of UN peacekeeping operations. Sharing contextual knowledge between the civil and military components is needed to improve the planning process of both components and prevent duplication.

In sum, the increasingly complex operating environment in Mali requires an adequate understanding of the context in which peacekeepers are deployed, especially considering the increase of direct attacks by terrorist organizations on the UN peacekeeping operation. Thus, a more ‘robust’ approach focused on gathering intelligence has become part of the current doctrine of the UN. A lot of information and situational understanding of the operating environment lies with the civil component of UN peacekeeping operations and the different humanitarian organizations. This is precisely one of the ‘lessons learned’ from ASIFU, according to Dutch Colonel Van Dalen (2016). He emphasizes the importance of liaison and civil-military interaction capacities within ASIFU. Van Dalen states that there is a lot of information available within the civil component, which could potentially be of great value, when analyzed adequately through the right military procedures.¹⁷ He also highlights the potential added value this information could have for JMAC, the intelligence-collection capability of the UN.

Hence, this is precisely where there is friction. On the one hand, the UN is trying to maintain its neutrality and impartiality and on the other, it is realizing the necessity of adequate intelligence gathering, using covert means of collecting and sharing information, thus impeding its transparency. This poses several difficulties for military personnel tasked with liaison with civil organizations and humanitarian aid organizations, who emphasize the need to maintain their ‘humanitarian space’ and refrain as much as possible from interfering with the military component. To further investigate this, it is first needed to understand what CIMIC as a concept entails within UN peacekeeping operations and how CIMIC officers understand and approach their job. Therefore, in the next section, I dissect CIMIC as a concept within UN peacekeeping operations.

¹⁶ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 15-11-2017.

¹⁷ The primary way of analyzing information is done through the so-called X-PMESII approach. Information is categorized according to the next factors: **P**olitics, **M**ilitary, **E**conomy, **S**ocial, **I**nformation and **I**nfrastructure. The **X** denotes the interconnectedness of the different categories.

5. UN-CIMIC



5. UN-CIMIC

To dissect the limitations UN-CIMIC'ers experience in the field, which will be done in Section 6 while using Mali as a case study, it is first necessary to understand UN-CIMIC as a concept and how UN-CIMIC policy offers a framework and puts down the core tasks of CIMIC officers in UN peacekeeping operations.

5.1 UN-CIMIC as a Concept

As previously explained, the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali is compartmentalized in different components; the military, police, and civilian component (see Figure 9). As Autesserre (2014) highlights, UN personnel are selected based on their thematic experience instead of their local expertise of the country. Different experts in various fields, ranging from human rights, economic development, political mediation to military skills, are working in the same environment. This thematic focus makes it difficult to consider all the different layers of the conflict and take on an overall comprehensive approach. The system of international intervention reflects this compartmentalization, as each component has its own actors, funding system, and meetings (Autesserre, 2014: 93). Even while UN missions are supposedly 'integrated', there are substantial difficulties which can subsequently lead to missed opportunities and decrease the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in general (Autesserre, 2014: 94).

To enhance the collaboration and cooperation between these different components, the UN developed a policy for Civil-Military Coordination in UN Integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC) (UN-DPKO, 2010). This guide outlines the operational and tactical coordination between the UN military and its civilian partners, including the UN civilian partners, UN police, UN agencies, funds and programs, host government, non-governmental organizations, grass-roots organizations, local populations, humanitarian, and development actors (UN-DPKO, 2010). Civil-military coordination in the context of UN peace operations is motivated by the need to maximize coordination between the military component and the civilian components of the same integrated mission, between the military component and the rest of the UN system, and between the military component of the UN mission and other non-UN external and internal civilian actors in the same mission area.



Figure 9: Definition UN CIMIC. Source: PowerPoint Presentation PowerPoint Presentation, CIMIC Officer, 2018.

The UN guideline defines UN-CIMIC as “the military staff function in UN integrated missions that facilitates the interface between the military and civilian components of the mission, as well as with the humanitarian, development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN mission objectives” (UN-DPKO, 2010: 14-15). Figure 9 depicts the exchange of information and the coordination CIMIC officers are expected to undertake. As shown, the coordination does not only focus on the sharing of information between the different components, but also on humanitarian actors, development actors, and UN agencies.

As military actors within UN peacekeeping operations have taken on more support roles, in addition to their primary goal of providing security, it is crucial to have a solid understanding of the civilian and police effort, as well as the broader strategic, political, and social context in which their activities take place. This awareness is necessary for the military to find ways to make a constructive contribution without entering the waters of humanitarian aid organizations.

Therefore, the core tasks of UN civil-military coordination are, according to the guideline, to create enabling conditions for civilian organizations and partners and overall to create an environment for the implementation of the mission. It functions as a ‘multiplier’ to civilian efforts, to improve local capacity and confidence rather than direct assistance to ‘win hearts and minds’. Within peace operations, winning hearts and minds is discouraged, as this has a short-term focus and reinforces local dependency on services and activities the military cannot sustain (Holshek & DeConing, 2017). This confusion was also evident during my interviews:

“By [...] carrying out projects you cultivate a lot of ‘goodwill’ in a village and in its surroundings, and then you bond better and they will talk more freely about the present situation. In the conversations we had we always tried to answer the ‘information request’ we got from our superiors. Like, ok guys, let’s try to answer the ‘information request’ and encrypt this in the normal conversations.”¹⁸

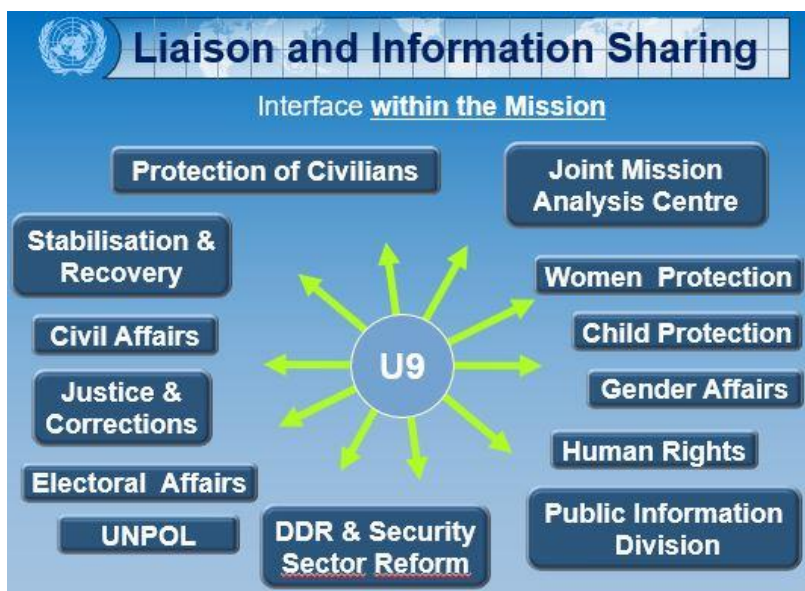


Figure 10: Liaison and Information Sharing. Source: PowerPoint Presentation PowerPoint Presentation, CIMIC Officer, 2018.

¹⁸ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer Gao, 22-11-2017.

Thus, civil-military coordination is often misconstrued as a tactical activity with a public relations agenda (Holshek & DeConing, 2017). UN-CIMIC'ers undertake the following two core activities: 'Liaison & Information Sharing' and 'Civil Assistance'. The first core task of Liaison & Information Sharing means that UN-CIMIC personnel are the first points of entry for police and civilian partners, they ensure that the military components are aware of benefits and sensitivities working with police components, civilian partners within the mission and humanitarian actors. It also ensures the transparent flow of information between military and civilian partners. The liaison function is implemented to provide support in the management of civil-military interaction with the aim of assisting the Head of Military Component's (HOMC) efforts to implement the overall mission mandate. The goal is to ensure that the military component has an adequate understanding of the theatre awareness for interaction with the civil environment. For an overview of the different liaison partners (within the Mission), see Figure 10. 'U9', as depicted in the middle, is the military term used to indicate the CIMIC part of a UN mission.

In addition to sharing information within the mission, UN-CIMIC'ers are also the point of entry for civilian partners, such as the different UN clusters of the humanitarian community. This is organized along an agreed upon framework; the 'cluster approach', in which UN-OCHA is the main point of contact for UN-

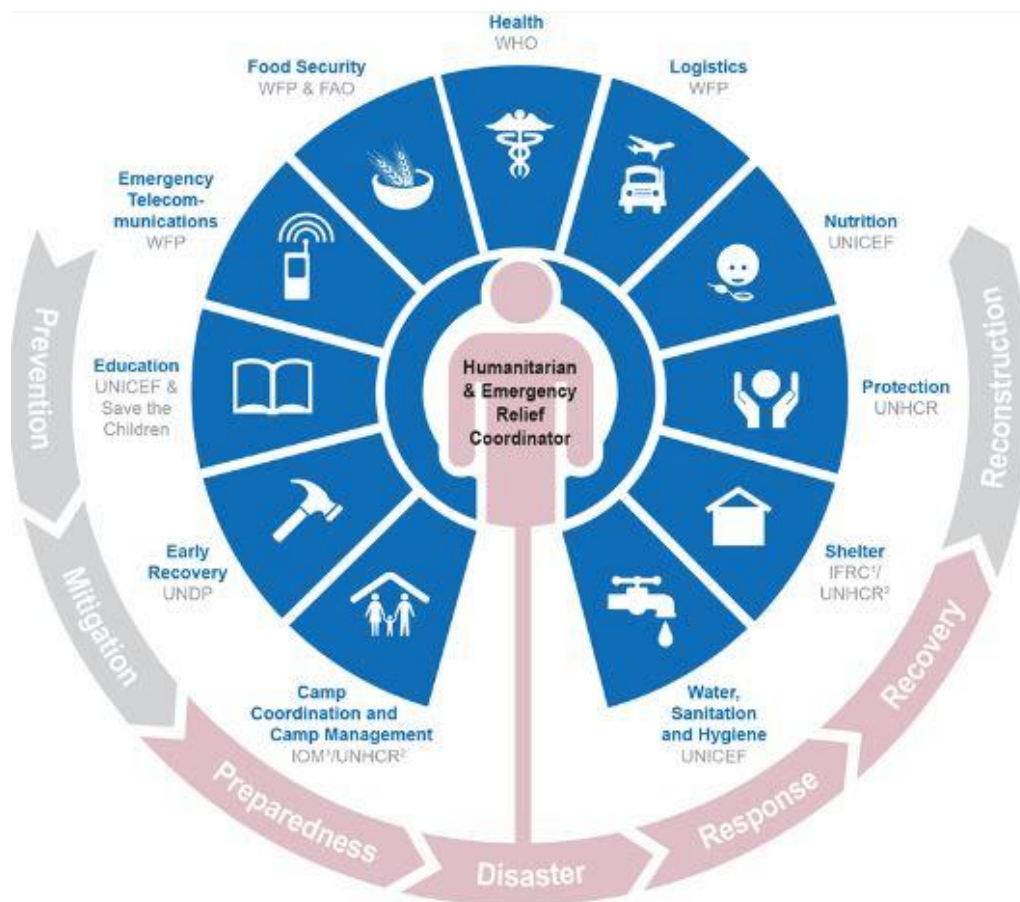


Figure 11: Cluster Approach. Source: Humanitarian Response, 2018.

CIMIC'ers. Through the 'cluster approach', several humanitarian areas, such as water/sanitation, nutrition, camp management and health, are covered by functionary leads. Among other issues, the lead is tasked with ensuring that assistance is delivered against a clear plan that is based on an assessment of humanitarian needs. This is important to the military component, as any activity

undertaken in an area that would be coordinated by a cluster lead should be consistent with (or at a minimum not detract from) the cluster plan.

The second core task is Civil Assistance, which is defined as “a support function undertaken by the military that includes two types of related activities undertaken by the military component of a UN integrated mission” (UN-DPKO, 2010: 6). Often, these activities are implemented as Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).

Overall, the functional description of CIMIC officers is indeed a very broad one:

“CIMIC is a broad definition. It is very difficult to describe specific tasks. That is what military would like, they want strictly outlined orders what to do and the way they do it. This is logical, they shoot people, you cannot aim a bit to the left or a bit to the right. But with CIMIC you are just talking, speaking with people.”¹⁹

5.2 Different Types of CIMIC

A complicating factor is that different definitions have been applied ad-hoc and in an unstructured manner within UN peacekeeping operations. For example, for NATO CIMIC is the “coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission, between the NATO commander and civil actors, including national populations and local authorities, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies” (Allied Joint Publication 9, 2003: 1). This is motivated by the need to establish a legitimate working relationship and cooperation mechanism between the military force and the civilian actors in that particular area of operation. As such, CIMIC is seen as a “tool for command and control” (Holshek & DeConing, 2017: 17). Hence, its primary goal is to serve the military commander and his or her military objective.

“The fact is, as a CIMIC’er I was then a means for my commanding officer, I am not there to please people, I am purely there to please my commanding officer. But the assignment for my commanding officer always is a ‘safe and secure environment’. [...]. For the military the assignment is ultimately to bring peace and security. If you do that by means of a more humanitarian level or by means of military force that does not matter, as long as you are effective.”²⁰

This quote illustrates a more NATO oriented approach towards CIMIC. As most CIMIC’ers are trained according to the NATO standards, this approach is not surprising. The UN guideline on CIMIC stresses that CIMIC should be conducted in support of a wider peace process and not solely support the military commanders’ intent (UN-DPKO, 2010). It should mainly focus on creating synergy between the military, police and civilian components of the mission and avoid duplication of efforts (UN-DPKO, 2010). Hence, the difference between NATO- and UN-CIMIC causes practical issues and confusion on the ground.

“There is a huge difference between NATO-CIMIC and UN-CIMIC. When you go there, you do not half realize that 80 percent you do as NATO-CIMIC’er within CIMIC is done by the civil part and the police part of the mission in Mali. The difference is in the wording; with NATO it says cooperation and with the UN it says coordination. This is a mega huge difference, it really says coordination and that is how it is interpreted at the headquarters. You are really just coordinating on staff level and trying to create the preconditions. Everything on a cultural level

¹⁹ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 22-11-2017.

²⁰ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 22-11-2017.

is done by the civil part, lots of projects. And just a small part is done by the military part [...]. You only do a very small part from what you would do within NATO-CIMIC.”²¹

Indeed, civil-military interaction in NATO operations focuses on establishing cooperation between the separately mandated military force and the various civilian actors in the operating environment (Holshek & DeConing, 2017). The essential difference between the approaches is that within UN peacekeeping operations, the coordination mechanisms are largely determined by the organizational structure of the UN.

“The difference is in many things. If you look at CIMIC in the UN, the focus lays very much on the Quick Impact Projects (QIP) and really deconflicting with OCHA and working together and tuning in to the civil part of the mission and the blue side. And the civil military liaison is much less because you have a large civil component which handles this. If you look at the NATO operations, the headquarters is a military operation. And we have contact with the UN organizations, so the liaison you have with these organizations is different. Plus, the fact that if you look at the doctrine between UN CIMIC and NATO CIMIC, it is definitely different. If you only look at the core functions, they are described different. The last ‘C’ is different. So, there is a definite difference between UN and NATO CIMIC. But I must confess, that I have tried to integrate the NATO CIMIC as much as possible into the mission. On the lowest tactical level then this is a lot of fun and in Bamako this was certainly the case. But in Kidal on the lowest tactical level it did not comply, because they were absent. Then there is a sort of vacuum where you are the only one who can do something for the civilian population.”²²

This section has focused on explaining the concept of UN-CIMIC as well as the corresponding tasks of CIMIC officers within UN peacekeeping operations. The next section will focus on the limiting factors as perceived by (Dutch) military personnel concerning civil-military interaction within the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali.

²¹ Structured Interview, Senior UN CIMIC Officer, UN Head Quarters Bamako, 15-03-2018.

²² Structured Interview, Deputy Chief U9, 23-04-2018.

6. Factors of Limitation



6. Factors of Limitation

In this section, I address my observations about several factors limiting CIMIC in Mali. Two theses have already been written about civil-military cooperation within the UN mission in Mali (Tsfaghiorthis, 2016; Willems, 2015). However, both theses have analyzed CIMIC from a humanitarian narrative. Tsfaghiorthis (2016) for example concluded that a clear distinction between military peacekeepers and humanitarian organizations is needed, to preserve humanitarian space. In her thesis, Tsfaghiorthis (2016) states that the military's presence is understood to be an obstacle for humanitarian activities as well as a threat to their security.

In this section, I add empirical information about the civil-military relationship in Mali from a military perspective to balance previous studies, as a study of this relationship from a military lens has been missing so far. All observations are based on interviews with informants within the Dutch military.

In this section I dissect three different 'limiting factors'. First, I will focus on the cultural differences between the civil and military component of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali. Next, I discuss the lack of knowledge about the operational structure and procedures of the UN. Lastly, I will highlight the lack of knowledge about CIMIC as a concept.

6.1 Cultural and Organizational Differences

Autesserre (2014) uses the term 'Peaceland' to describe the transnational community of expatriates who devote their lives to working in conflict zones. During her ethnographic research in various conflict zones she focused on the specific culture of these international interveners and the everyday elements of their social behavior. She found that everyday practices, habits, and narratives of peacebuilders often result in unintended consequences that are counterproductive in building sustainable peace (Autesserre, 2014). One of the most visible fractures, she notes, is the divide between civil and military actors, due to their 'unique culture' (Autesserre, 2014: 170). One of her arguments is that the approach of these interveners acts counterproductive, as their daily habits and practices construct and reinforce boundaries between interveners, local people, and the military component within the mission itself as well. As Autesserre mainly focuses her ethnographic gaze on the civilians within mission areas, in this section, I add the experiences and perspectives of this 'unique culture' from a military point of view.

6.1.1 Internal Competition Among 'Civilians'

One of the challenges on the ground, as noted by informants, is the frequency of rotations, within the military component as well as the civil pillar of MINUSMA. The fact that most of the civil personnel rely on short-term contracts stimulates rivalry among people as they feel the need to defend their turf and fight for a chance to renew their contracts. According to informants, this influences the culture within the civilian component as well as the way they interact with the military component. The main issue, in terms of promotion and status, is that information is 'gold' for civilians as it is often used to make yourself important and of value. One of my informants indeed stated that this influences the working relation with civilians:

"The culture within the UN is really a problem. What you see a lot is that people act on their own. And in the land of the blind, one-eye is king: if you have information you do not want to share that with your colleagues. Because at the instance that it is important, and the SRS needs something, then it is your chance to shine. I find that among the civilians there is a real sort of

competition culture in which I do not feel comfortable. Not really a feeling of solidarity and comradeship.”²³

Another big factor of influence is the competition between different aid organizations, which creates tension and uneasiness:

“There is also a lot of competition between NGOs, the more you accomplish, the more money you get.”²⁴

The relatively short deployments are a classic organizational technique in order to prevent local allegiances and biases on the ground to develop (Autesserre, 2014). However, the negative consequences of these short-term contracts outweigh the positive. Additionally, another negative consequence of short-term contacts is the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’, or civil and military personnel. As the contracts are shorter, there is less time to invest in personal relations, which are in fact the cornerstone of civil-military interaction and coordination. Rapid turn-overs influence the level of knowledge, as much institutional knowledge is lost during hand-over take-overs (HOTOs) and hampers the establishment of personal relationships. It is also noted on the military side that the current instruments to mitigate the effects of frequent rotations are not sufficient (MINUSMA, 2017). It takes time and effort to develop such relationships, which cannot be handed over easily.

6.1.2 Attitude Towards ‘The Military’

Misunderstandings and wrongful perceptions of ‘the other’ are fed by the lack of interaction between the different components. Civilian priorities are often not clear or are in conflict with military priorities. Simultaneously, the military feel as though civilians are more valued, specifically when looking at the loss of life (MINUSMA, 2017). Among military personnel, the frequent leaves of absences, for holidays or duty travels, are understood to be negatively affecting the necessary continuity to develop personal relationships with civilian counterparts:

“Civilians working within the mission [...] get extra recuperation leave. In Kidal they get it once in four weeks, extra leave, so on top of your normal leave. That means that you can leave the mission area, you can stay in Bamako or you say I’m going to Senegal for a week and the person going there gets another 500 or 600 dollars to spend. This means that as a civilian, say you are there for a year, every five weeks you have a week off. So, during that year you have ten weeks of leave on top of the two and a half days normal leave each month. That is another thirty days a year. So, in total you have sixteen weeks of leave as a civilian!”²⁵

Similarly, and understandably, civilians find it irritating that they have several military counterparts during their stay, as military personnel rotate more frequently. However, not only the frequent leaves of absences or the short-term contracts, but also a general uneasiness towards each other affects civil-military interaction, especially during the beginning stages of the UN peacekeeping mission, when the interaction between civilians and military personnel was non-existent. This did not help to enhance the perceptions of ‘the other’. Perceptions of military personnel only capable of violent solutions, still persist.

²³ Structured Interview, Deputy Chief U9, 23-04-2018.

²⁴ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 22-11-2017.

²⁵ Structured Interview, Senior UN CIMIC Officer, UN Head Quarters Bamako, 15-03-2018.

“A colleague of mine [...] tried within the mission to get people with the same goal, to talk to each other. The military thought they were not accepted by the civilians and the civilians thought that the military only had violence on their mind. For three months, he was setting up meetings, just to get people to talk to each other.”²⁶

6.2 Lack of Knowledge about UN Structure

The gap between civil and military components of the mission seems to be produced and reproduced primarily by a lack of knowledge about the organizational structure of UN peacekeeping missions. Currently, there are no designated points of contact within the mission who have knowledge about how both the civil and military component operate (MINUSMA, 2017). This is exacerbated by, again, the frequency of rotations, which contributes to a lack of knowledge about ‘the other’, as this compromises opportunities to establish personal relationships. An overall integrated coordination system, which would provide greater access to the civil component, is missing. Both on the military and civilian side, the level of knowledge about the UN structure among new personnel coming into the mission is insufficient. By enhancing the sharing of information, improving training on the structure and responsibilities of both the civil and military components, as well as clearly stating the goals and processes to each other, would improve contact and create opportunities to create synergy. Collaborating is difficult if you do not know what the other person stands for or if you do not know who your counterpart is.

“Ninety nine percent of the mission do not know how it works. Including the civilians. That was a real [...] eye-opener for me. They are part of the UN but have no idea how the UN works. Also, the people working in a UN mission know little about it. Let alone if you want to talk about civil military interaction. It is very difficult to do, if you do not know the rules. So, you have the umpteenth military person who knows nothing. They do not get educated enough on this topic. I often ask my military colleagues if they know the difference between the blue and the black lettering on the vehicles. They look at you as if to say: I have no idea what you are talking about.”²⁷

“I have noticed that 80 percent of the people working in such a mission is cooperative but ignorant. The building we use in Bamako, the HQ of the UN; you have one story with military and 11 stories with civilians, and they do not talk to each other.”²⁸

6.2.1 Hesitance Towards ‘Intelligence’

Another complicating factor to the civil-military interaction, in Mali especially, is the emphasis on gathering information and intelligence. The latest version of the so-called Art. 100 letter, which renews the Dutch contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, states that the focus will remain on the gathering and analyzing of intelligence in support of the mission.²⁹ This focus causes uneasiness with the relation between the military and the civilian part of the mission. As explained, humanitarian workers want to stay clear from the term ‘intelligence’ to safeguard their neutrality and humanitarian space. This influences the way they communicate and interact with military personnel.

²⁶ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 22-11-2017.

²⁷ Structured Interview, Deputy Chief U9, 23-04-2018.

²⁸ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 22-11-2017.

²⁹ Brief van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken, van Defensie, voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en van Veiligheid en Justitie. Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Nederlandse Deelname aan Vredesmissies. Den Haag, 11 September, 2017.

“Military are seen as spies. People told you so openly.”³⁰

Related to this belief is that, according to the military personnel I interviewed, most of the civilians lack the specific knowledge of how the military component is organized, structured and how it functions. That means that the difference between the various military sectors, are also relatively unknown. This makes it difficult to distinguish between those tasked with gathering intelligence and those whose job it is to enhance the military and civil synergy.

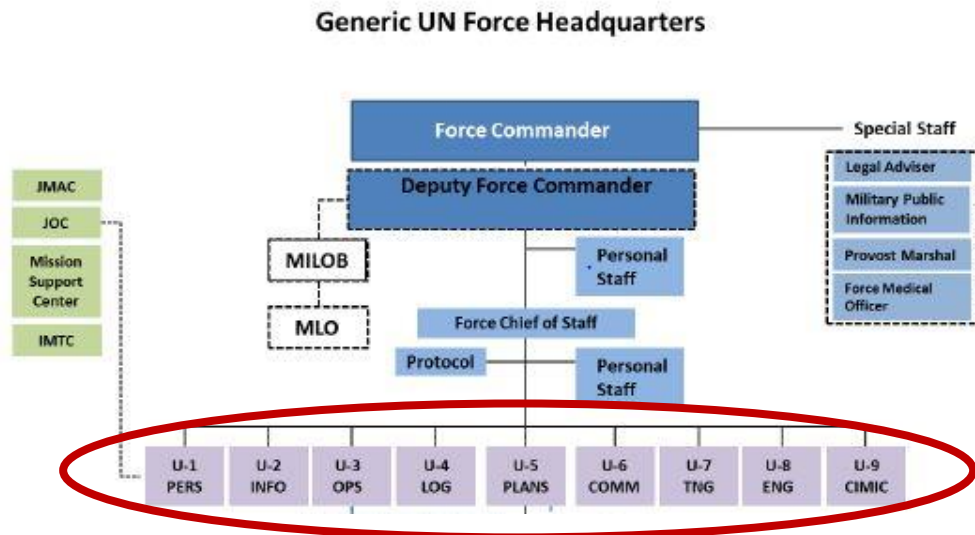


Figure 12: Generic UN Force Headquarters. United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Riverine Unit Manual.

As shown in the example of a generic UN Force Headquarters in Figure 12, there are several sectors within the military headquarters (depicted in grey), ranging from U-1 until U-9. This structures the Personal Staff and Advisory Group (U-1), the Military Information Staff Branch (U-2), the Operations Staff Branch (U-3), the Logistics Staff Branch (U-4), Plans and Policy Staff Branch (U-5), Communications Staff Branch (U-6), Training Staff Branch (U-7), Military Engineering Staff Branch (U-8), and the CIMIC Staff Branch (U-9). This structure is not something civilians are used to or understand.

“What I have noticed is that people without a military background, either within the UN mission or outside the mission, have no idea what the military do. Without exception. You can tell them, yes, I am from U-2....no idea. Distrust....it is just the unfamiliarity about what ‘intel’ does. But CIMIC, that word, civil-military interaction that sounds much more lenient. In the end the goal of U-2 and U-9 is the support of the mission so that we military can do our job better.”³¹

The tricky thing with the Dutch’ emphasis on ‘gathering information’, is that it is not always clear for what goal the ‘information’ is used. From my interviews, I have derived that lately the focus is on enhancing the sharing of available information, not only between the civil component and the military component, but between the different sectors of the military mission in Mali as well (MINUSMA, 2017). This would entail that information gathered by the U-9 component (CIMIC), can potentially turn into intelligence, within the U-2 or ASIFU. However, CIMIC’ers refrain from using the term ‘intelligence’ and do not want to be associated with it as much. Nonetheless, all kinds of ‘information’ is used to support

³⁰ Structured Interview, Negotiation and Liaison Officer – ASIFU, 26-03-2018.

³¹ Structured Interview, CMI Analyst - U2, 20-03-2018.

the mission objective. Noteworthy is that Dutch CIMIC'ers are currently deployed within 'information operations', described as follows:

"We collected intelligence in order to give our civil commander a predictive power to make the right plans based on this information. ASIFU originated from the previous missions where intelligence from the countries and about the conflict was minimal and it was a real shamble and one had to react on the spur of the moment. Now we could react proactive. A cell with analysts. CMI-sensor. Information Requests, sending small pieces of information to the analysts."³²

This suggests that CIMIC'ers are being used to actively gather 'information', which could end up as 'intelligence', which is a slippery slope.

"CIMIC is not a part of intelligence, not officially, but they operate under the same flag 'Information Operations', but officially it is a separate unit."³³

Nonetheless, gathering information from civilian components within and outside the UN peacekeeping mission, enhances the situational understanding of the military.

"In my opinion, if you do not understand where you are, you cannot act in the right way. So, you must first learn 'the pattern of life', this is understanding where you must go. That is why, in my opinion, HTA (Human Terrain Analysts) are so very important. I was there as a CIMIC analyst and they did the real cultural, the human component and I worked on the organizations which were there. And OCHA publishes bulletins. And how do they get their intelligence? Nine out of ten times it is an educational guess, but by people who have 20 years of experience."³⁴

6.3 Lacking Knowledge about CIMIC

Another complicating factor that surfaced during my interviews is that there seems to be a lack of knowledge about the concept of CIMIC. Obviously, there are a lot of troop contributing countries within the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali, which ideally, all work together according to the same understanding of CIMIC. In practice, there are a lot of different perspectives. Additionally, the quality of CIMIC personnel seems to be a recurring theme. Often, there seems to be a mismatch between the people and the position. The functions regarding 'civil-military interaction' are more than once filled with unqualified personnel.

"Most Western-European orientated countries have a far greater understanding. But I had a commander from Niger, and he really did not know what it was. But he was an anesthetist and placed there because he wasn't a military. So, they figured, he could do CIMIC."³⁵

Various times, during my interviews, the difference between 'skiing and non-skiing countries' was mentioned. Within Mali, these terms are used to describe the difference in work ethos and attitude between most Western countries and the African troop contributing countries. This was also something that my informants stumbled upon. The next quote illustrates that this sentiment was also felt among the Malian people themselves:

³² Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer (R), 22-11-2017.

³³ Structured Interview, CIMIC Officer, 22-11-2017.

³⁴ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 07-07-2017.

³⁵ Structured Interview, Senior UN CIMIC Officer, UN Head Quarters Bamako, 15-03-2018.

“The UN of course consists of countries like The Netherlands and the USA and China, countries which go for it in a reasonably professional way, maybe with contradicting interests, but go for it professionally. But the UN also consists of Nigeria, Algeria and that kind of countries, neighboring countries to Mali, but they really have their own agenda, but also countries which receive money from the UN to carry out a mission, and put the money into their own pocket, and they deploy military with as little equipment as possible. Malians make a difference between the black UN and the white UN, they mean this literally. The white UN and the black, negroid UN, the black UN does its job very badly.”³⁶

More specifically, this difference in quality also influences the way CIMIC functions are ran.

“A lot of countries come together and they all want to contribute, and it must then also be an African tinted mission. A lot of African military have key functions. And they just do things differently. They come from a different culture and that clashes with let ‘us’, say the ‘skiing countries’.”³⁷

The general sentiment is that people are randomly chosen to fill a CIMIC position as ‘a warm body is a warm body’³⁸.

“Yes, there is a CIMIC position, so then someone must fulfill that position. Then you get people varying from an administrator to a vicar, all very willing, but unqualified for what they should be doing. That is what we have been teaching and training and this must become structural. Then you see things starting to come together. That they are there for the commander, for that specific intelligence, depending on what the commander wants, and that they also must be able to supervise QIP. Naturally they are very keen to be able to learn this. It are certain processes and formats they have to complete in that system. That’s what we started teaching and training first.”³⁹

Hence, a lot of time is lost on training and educating people on concepts and processes they should have been able to do beforehand. From my informants’ point of view, it seemed as though the African troop contributing countries deployed people as a reward.

“What you often saw with our African colleagues, was that the holding of the function as an MSO [military staff officer] within the HQ was a kind of prestige. Because you earn quite a lot of money. Certainly, in comparison with the wages in those countries. Often from an African point of view it is also seen as a kind of reward. Regardless if they have the knowledge or competence to do the job. So, we consisted of someone from Niger, a Dutchman, someone from Ivory Coast, also with zero CIMIC background. So, again the same story, just as a reward, and an Italian also with zero background in CIMIC. Italy supplies just one position in the whole of the MINUSMA mission, they find it totally irrelevant, and a warm body is a warm body. Now you can start to understand what the issues are within such a mission.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Structured Interview, Unit Commander SOLTG-4, 07-07-2017.

³⁷ Structured Interview, Senior UN CIMIC Officer, UN Head Quarters Bamako, 15-03-2018.

³⁸ Informal Conversation, CIMIC Officer, 20-04-2018.

³⁹ Structured Interview, Senior UN CIMIC Officer, UN Head Quarters Bamako, 15-03-2018.

⁴⁰ Structured Interview, Deputy Chief U-9 (CIMIC), UN Head Quarters Bamako, 27-03-2018.

Hence, both military and civilian personnel sometimes lack the competence, knowledge and/or experience needed for their position, which hinders civil-military interaction. Additionally, the U-9 (the CIMIC sector) within the Force Head Quarters is understaffed (MINUSMA, 2017).

7. Conclusion



7. Conclusion

This study has discussed the way in which the hybrid nature of the conflict in Mali, combined with the 'robust' approach of United Nations peacekeeping operations, influences CIMIC functions, while using the Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as a case study.

It stated that the changing nature of contemporary conflicts has profoundly impacted the character of UN peacekeeping operations. It dissected the balancing act of the UN between upholding traditional principals of neutrality and impartiality on the one hand, and the need to evolve and fundamentally redefine peacekeeping operations. As UN peacekeepers are increasingly deployed in high-risk environments where guns have not yet fallen silent, the need arises for a more 'robust' approach and appearance of troops. This 'new era' of peacekeeping operations entails identifying threats, to the civilian population as well as to the operation itself, and being adequately equipped with the military needs as well as the appropriate mandate to respond to terrorist organizations. Doing so, peacekeepers must delineate between taking an active defense strategy or be more on the offensive side against an aggressor.

From its start, MINUSMA has been at the forefront of the debate concerning this evolution of UN peacekeeping operations, so it has been worthwhile to use Mali as a case study. Combatting threats such as violent extremism, terrorist attacks and organized crime while simultaneously safeguarding key principles as impartiality and neutrality, is challenging. As such, Mali has been a laboratory for exploration. This study concluded that MINUSMA brought to light the 'delusion of a doctrine' within the UN, as the department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is still a 'divided house' between those who want to hold on tight to the key principles and those who want UN peacekeeping operations to be able to adequately respond to the threats on the ground. Indeed, as sources within the UN peacekeeping state, the reality on the ground in Mali suggests the need for a more 'robust' mission character.

First, this study aimed to lift the fog concerning the term 'robust' peacekeeping. It found that the 'robustness' of UN peacekeeping operations is mainly centered around (1) the level of intelligence gathering, which is unprecedented in earlier UN operations, and (2) the presence of 'robustly equipped' Special Operations Forces. The decision to deploy Special Operation Forces was made to meet the growing security threats that 'softer' approaches could not contain. Furthermore, their ability to operate independently for an extended period and as such gather essential information and intelligence, is what makes them fit for the job. In Mali, the Dutch took on a leading role as they aimed to make a meaningful contribution to "modernize and improve UN peacekeeping operations"; one of the priorities of The Netherlands during its membership of the UN Security Council in 2018. Hence, the Dutch troops focus primarily on providing good intelligence capabilities to carry out the UN mandate more effectively. They are breaking new ground by providing human and electronic intelligence alongside air surveillance.

However, based on the analysis of the interviews with military informants who operated within MINUSMA, the perception of 'robustness' should be attenuated. Previous scholarly work concluded that the UN was on a 'slippery slope', as worries were voiced that UN peacekeeping operations might be used as a tool to wage war (Karlsrud, 2015). This study has tried to abate this conviction, based on interviews with military informants. The 'robustness' of the Special Operation Forces is limited by their mandate. Their most 'robust' task is that they provide the Force Commander with a "military response option that may not entail the risk of escalation normally associated with the deployment of inherently large or physical conventional forces". Still, the emphasis is on 'responding'. It is clearly stated that they

are not able to conduct counter-terrorism operations or actively pursue terrorists. In practice, as I concluded from interviews, the 'robust' element is merely taking on a 'robust' appearance to deter possible threats.

This is not to disregard earlier findings, which indicated that the 'robust' turn of UN peacekeeping operations is understood to be a source of insecurity by humanitarian actors within Mali. I merely aim to provide a clearer perception of the term 'robust' and how it is understood, perceived, developed, and limited. As previous studies have focused on the civil humanitarian perspective of 'robustness', it is important to add the military perspective to this as well. This enhanced comprehensive understanding enabled me to further investigate the implication of the 'robust turn' of UN peacekeeping operations for CIMIC officers.

Based on the analysis of interviews with military informants deployed within MINUSMA, this study has found that there are a few challenges CIMIC officers face. As stated, the 'robust' elements were not necessarily mentioned to be one of them. The first limiting factor as perceived by informants, is the 'cultural difference' between the civil and military component of the UN peacekeeping in Mali. Short-term contracts stimulate rivalry among civilians as they feel the need to defend their turf and fight for a chance to renew their contracts. Additionally, short-term contracts also reinforce the gap between 'us' and 'them', or civilian and military personnel. Shorter contracts mean there is less time to invest in personal relations, which are in fact the cornerstone of civil-military interaction and coordination. Rapid turn-overs influence the level of knowledge. Much institutional knowledge is lost during hand-over take-overs (HOTOs). Furthermore, a general uneasiness between civilian and military personnel negatively affects civil-military coordination. Perceptions of military personnel only capable of violent solutions and kinetic action, persist. The gap between civil and military components of the mission are also produced and reproduced by a lack of knowledge about the organizational structure of UN peacekeeping missions. Both on the military and civilian side, the level of knowledge about the UN structure among new personnel coming into the mission is insufficient.

Another complicating factor to the civil-military interaction, in Mali in particular, is the emphasis on gathering information and intelligence. This focus causes uneasiness with the relation between the military and the civilian part of the mission. Additionally, civilians lack the specific knowledge of how the military component is organized, structured and how it functions. That means that the difference between the various military sectors, are also relatively unknown. This makes it difficult to distinguish between those tasked with gathering intelligence and those whose job it is to enhance the military and civil synergy. Another complicating factor that surfaced during my interviews is that there seems to be a lack of knowledge about the concept of CIMIC. Also, there seems to be a mismatch between the people and the position.

In the next section, I will provide a few recommendations to mitigate the factors of limitation concerning civil-military interaction, as experienced by military informants.

7.1 Recommendations in Praxis

This research has shown that there are several factors that limit the civil-military relationship within the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali. Based on these factors, a few recommendations can be made to increase the effectiveness and use the full potential of CIMIC'ers. First, the lack of knowledge about the different sectors of the military component creates misunderstanding among the civilian and humanitarian side of the mission. This creates confusion and can potentially cause a sense of uneasiness.

This can be mitigated by organizing classes and courses to provide a clear and constructive overview of the organizational structure of the military and how it operates. Additionally, this could potentially decrease the 'lack of trust' some military informants experienced when cooperating with civilians and humanitarians within the mission. To lessen the mismatch between people and the function they hold, which is another limiting factor to the civil-military relationship, it is important to stimulate TTCs to adequately choose and train their people and compose stricter selection procedures and criteria. However, as concluded from the interviews, this means that there needs to be a switch in the understanding of some TCCs, which still deploy people to certain functions as a 'reward'. Another additional factor which can help to improve civil-military coordination, is a designated point of contact within UN peacekeeping missions; a person who has all the necessary knowledge about how both civil and military components operate. This will ease the communication, as this designated point of contact knows the right person to whom the question can be diverged to. Another limiting factor is the short-term deployments of personnel. As a possible effective way to lessen the negative effects of this, an additional component could be added to the HOTOs, focused on 'handing over' personal relationships. This could for example entail an introductory round with the person who is taking over the function.

7.2 Critical Reflection and Recommendation for Future Research

Reflecting on the execution of the research for this thesis, there are several positive aspects as well as limitations to be noted. First, one of the major contributing factors to the quality of this thesis has been the addition of participative observation as a methodological approach. Both my internships proved to be of great added value and provided me with a unique perspective, combining both the civil and military side of the debate. They also mitigated, albeit partially, the impossibility of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Mali. My four-month internship at GPPAC, as a global member-led network of civil society organizations, helped to understand the point of view of Malian civil organizations and their perception towards MINUSMA. GPPAC's workshops, research, and courses geared towards improving civil-military interaction from a civil-society point-of-view proved to be of great value. Additionally, my nine-month internship at 1CMI Co contributed in many ways. First, this internship enabled me to grasp the specific 'culture' within the relatively 'unknown' and sometimes 'alien' environment of the armed forces. Furthermore, I was able to learn from experiences and stories of colleagues during day-to-day tasks, meetings, workshops, and other events related to civil-military interaction, while also observing the attitude and approaches of informants. Finally, it helped to understand how the military component of UN peacekeeping missions is organized and structured.

Nevertheless, it still took quite some time to familiarize myself with the organizational structure of the Dutch military forces as well as the command structure within a UN peacekeeping operation such as MINUSMA. Understanding this proved to be crucial to find competent informants to conduct interviews with. CIMIC continues to be a niche capacity, which makes it hard to find people who were experienced and knowledgeable in the precise area of my interest. Fortunately, I had a lot of help from all contacts I gained during my internship at the Dutch Ministry of Defense, as well as the informants I found by extending my own network. The enthusiasm and willingness to share experiences with me encouraged my search.

Multiple times, I experienced the inability to travel to Mali as a limiting factor, as I was not able to experience, witness, and understand civil-military interaction in practice within the context of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali. One of the additional drawbacks I experienced during my research is that I found out quite late that The Netherlands does not deploy personnel on 'sector level' in Mali, but only

deploys personnel at Head Quarters level in Bamako. This limited the amount of people I was able to contact for semi-structured interviews. Eventually, I was able to speak to 13 people, which is not as many as I had hoped for. This decreased the level of representativeness of this thesis. I have mitigated this as much as possible by ensuring that the collected data was correct by verifying the information I gathered with later interviewees.

On few occasions, during my interviews and conversations, the sensitive nature of my research topic surfaced. As the military mandate for the Dutch troops within MINUSMA primarily focuses on gathering information and intelligence, some informants were hesitant to talk about certain topics. Also, informants were hesitant to use the term 'intelligence' but often ended up using the term 'intelligence' interchangeably with 'information', even though they stressed the difference between the two.

Taking this reflection into consideration, some recommendations can be made for future research. As previously stated, given the fact that The Netherlands mainly deploys people at the mission Head Quarters in Bamako, future research is necessary to better comprehend the consequences of 'robust' approaches for civil-military coordination and interaction at a tactical level.

Another valuable addition which will help to better understand the concept of civil-military interaction, that would be very interesting to take into consideration and has not been substantially researched, is military personnel perception of humanitarians. Often, studies like these are focused on the perception among humanitarians towards military personnel, but the other way around would also be interesting to research.

Hopefully, this study, together with future research, can make a valuable contribution to improve civil-military interaction within UN peacekeeping operations, as a good relationship is hugely beneficial. Successful civil-military interaction creates an enabling environment and can multiply the combined effort of military and civil personnel to work towards successful peacekeeping operation, now and in the future.

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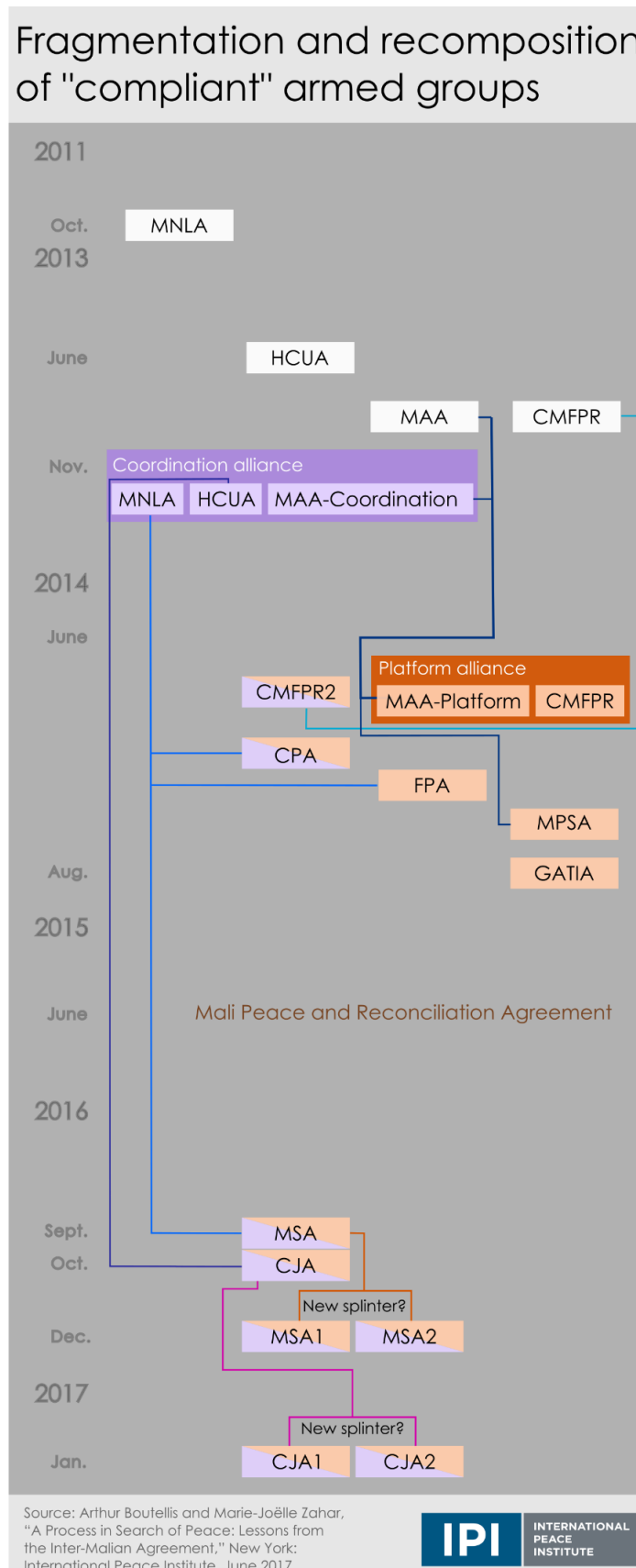
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Annex



A. Fragmentation and Recomposition of 'Compliant' Armed Groups



Timeline of lead-up to and implementation of Bamako Agreement

LEAD-UP TO PEACE AGREEMENT

Master Thesis

Benthe Guezen

June 2018

	Key Events	Peace Process	Armed Groups	
			"COMPLIANT"	"TERRORIST"
2007				AQIM
2011	Oct. - MNLA created (Zakak Congress) Oct. - MNLA launches rebellion		MNLA	MUJAO
2012	Jan. 17 th - MNLA rebellions attack Menaka camp Mar. - Army conducts coup d'état Apr.-Dec. - Islamist groups Ansar Dine, MUJAO & AQIM occupy northern Mali	Mar. - Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaoré is appointed ECOWAS mediator Attempt to facilitate negotiations between Malian interim government & MNLA and Ansar Dine fails		Ansar Dine Apr. - Aguelhok massacre
2013	Jan. - French deploy Operation Serval July - MINUSMA deploys Aug. - President Keita is elected Nov. - National radio & governor symbolically return to Kidal	June 18 th - Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement is reached after two weeks of negotiation between interim government and MNLA and HCUA; MAA and CMFPR also adhere to the agreement Oct. - Monitoring and Evaluation Committee & Joint Technical Commission for Security stop meeting	HCUA MAA CMFPR Nov. 2013 Coordination MNLA HCUA MAA-CMA	Al-Mourabitoun
2014	May 17 th -21 st - Clashes erupt in Kidal; cease-fire is brokered two day later July 14 th - Coordination & government release prisoners July - Clashes erupt between Coordination & Platform in Tabankort Aug. 1 st - Operation Serval becomes Operation Barkhane	Algeria initiates exploratory discussions with armed movements of northern Mali July - Algeria begins leading eight-month-long international mediation with government, Coordination & Platform July 24 th - Parties sign road map	June 2014 Platform MAA-Platform CMFPR CMFPR2 CPA FPA MPSA GATIA	
2015	New clashes erupt between Coordination & Platform/GATIA Apr. 27 th - Platform/GATIA capture Ménaka from Coordination	Mar. 1 st - Government and Platform initial peace agreement May 15 th - Government, Platform, CPA & CMFPR2 sign peace agreement at ceremony in Bamako June 20 th - Coordination signs peace agreement in Bamako		Macina Liberation Front (FLM)
IMPLEMENTATION OF BAMAKO AGREEMENT				
	Aug. 17 th - Platform/GATIA capture Anéfis from Coordination	July 27 th - Government creates National Committee for the Coordination of the Implementation of the Peace Agreement by decree July-Oct. - Multilateral development banks do joint needs assessment Sept. 27 th -Oct. 14 th - Coordination & Platform hold direct talks leading to the "Anéfis road map" Oct. 14 th - Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission is appointed Oct. 28 th -29 th - OECD hosts international conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali in Paris Dec. 20 th - Construction begins on two cantonment sites		Oct. 16 th - Ansar Dine leader Iyad Ag Ghali denounces peace process and threatens to intensify attacks against French forces and their allies in Mali Nov. 20 th - Al-Mourabitoun claims terrorist attack on Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako
2016	Feb. 2 nd - 250 Platform/GATIA troops enter Kidal June - MINUSMA mandate is renewed, giving it a "more robust and proactive posture" July 19 th -22 nd - Platform/GATIA & Coordination clash in Kidal Aug.-Sept. - Clashes continue around Kidal Nov. 20 th - Municipal elections are held	Jan. 18 th - Monitoring Committee holds high-level consultative meeting Jan. 25 th - Coordination & Platform reach agreement on representation in Monitoring Committee under auspices of AU high representative Buyoya Feb. 6 th - Coordination & Platform agree on progressive shared management of Kidal Mar. - Government creates two new regions in Ménaka & Taoudennii Apr. 18 th - Government hands over forty-two vehicles to the Operational Coordination Mechanism to launch joint patrols May 18 th - Government signs decree on interim authorities May 20 th - Coordination & Platform suspend participation in Monitoring Committee May 31 st - Coordination & Platform sign memorandum of understanding June 15 th - President appoints high representative for implementation of agreement June 19 th - Government, Coordination & Platform agree on modalities for establishing interim authorities in five northern regions on the return of administration and deployment of Operational Coordination Mechanism in five Mali regions Oct. 14 th - Government appoints members of interim authorities for Gao, Kidal & Timbuktu regions but faces opposition from Coordination & Platform Dec. - Coordination & Platform suspend participation in Monitoring Committee until Feb. 10 th	MSA Oct. 8 - HCUA military chief of staff Cheikh Ag Aoussa killed in Kidal CJA Dec. - New splinters? MSA1 MSA2	Feb. 12 th - Ansar Dine claims complex attack on MINUSMA base in Kidal Nov. 29 th - Al-Mourabitoun claims attack on Gao airport
2017	Mar. 5 th - Two factions of MAA and CJA occupy Timbuktu checkpoints for five days Apr. - Start of joint operations Barkhane-Mali-Burkina against FLM & Ansaru Al Islam in central Mali Apr. 11 th - New Malian government is announced Apr. 13 th - AU authorizes G5 Sahel force May-June - MINUSMA camps are hit by four mortar attacks June - MINUSMA mandate is renewed Oct.-Nov. - Local elections July - Presidential elections are held	Jan. 5 th - 113 Coordination forces arrive in Gao from Kidal to join first joint patrol Jan. 5 th - National DDR Commission becomes operational Feb. 9 th - MINUSMA hands over eight cantonment sites to DDR Commission Feb. 10 th - Monitoring Committee holds high-level meeting, resulting in agreement on new timeline for interim authorities Feb. 15 th - Parties agree on presidency of interim authorities Feb. 23 rd - First joint patrols are launched in Gao Feb. 28 th -Mar. 2 nd - Interim authorities are installed in Kidal, Gao and Ménaka Mar. 27 th -Apr. 2 nd - Conference of National Entente takes place in Bamako Apr. 20 th - Interim authorities are installed in Timbuktu and Taoudennii May 1 st - National Security Sector Reform Council is launched July 9 th - Constitutional referendum is held	Jan. - New splinters? CJA1 CJA2	Jan. 18 th - Al-Mourabitoun claims attack on Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao Mar. 2 nd - Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM) Al-Mourabitoun Ansar Dine AQIM FLM Apr. 4 th - Iyad Ag Ghali, now leading JNIM, reiterates intent to continue fighting Malian and international armed forces May-June - MINUSMA camps are hit by four mortar attacks
2018				

C. List of Informants

Informants	Military Rank	NATO Code	Respondents Reference
Informant 1:	Sergeant	OR-5	ISR-Coy
Informant 2:	Captain	OF-2	Unit Commander SOLTG-4
Informant 3:	Staff Sergeant	OR-6	ISR-Coy Kidal
Informant 4:	Sergeant	OR-5	ISR-Coy Kidal
Informant 5:	Major	OF-3	CIMIC Officer #1
Informant 6:	Major (R)	OF-3	CIMIC Officer #2 Gao
Informant 7:	Captain	OF-2	CIMIC Officer #3
Informant 8:	Major (R)	OF-3	CIMIC Officer #4 Gao
Informant 9:	Lieutenant Colonel (R)	OF-4	Senior UN CIMIC Officer #5 UN Head Quarters Bamako
Informant 10:	Captain	OF-2	CMI Analist - U2 / 'Liaison'
Informant 11:	Major	OF-3	Liaison and Negotiation Officer - ASIFU
Respondent 12:	Major	OF-3	Deputy Chief U9 (CIMIC) UN Head Quarters Bamako
Respondent 13:	Major	OF-3	CMI Analist – U2 / 'Liaison'

D. Interview Guide

Questions to CIMIC Informants:

- When did you arrive in Mali? How long did you stay?
- Where in Mali were you stationed?
- What was your function title during your time in Mali?
- How would you describe your function? What did your job entail?

CIMIC:

- Can you describe in your own words what CIMIC is?
- Wide variety of interpretations and definitions, how do you choose where you place focus?
- What is the difference between NATO- and UN-CIMIC and what are the implications in practice?
- What is the added value of CIMIC within UN peacekeeping operations?
- What are the main groups CIMICers focus on?
- Communication with local population?
- Was this your first CIMIC function?
- What other function did you hold? Where?
- How did this differ in relation to the 'robust' UN peacekeeping in Mali?
- Difference between CIMIC and 'winning hearts and minds'?

Limiting Factors:

- What was the level of knowledge/experience of colleagues in relation to CIMIC-functions within MINUSMA?
- What was the main response towards the military from civil entities?
- How did you experience the cooperation/coordination between civil and military entities?
- The 'neutrality' of the UN peacekeeping operation in Mali is topic of discussion, how does this influence your work?
- Does the focus of gathering intelligence in any way limit the way you do your work?
- What are the complicating factors related to civil-military interaction?

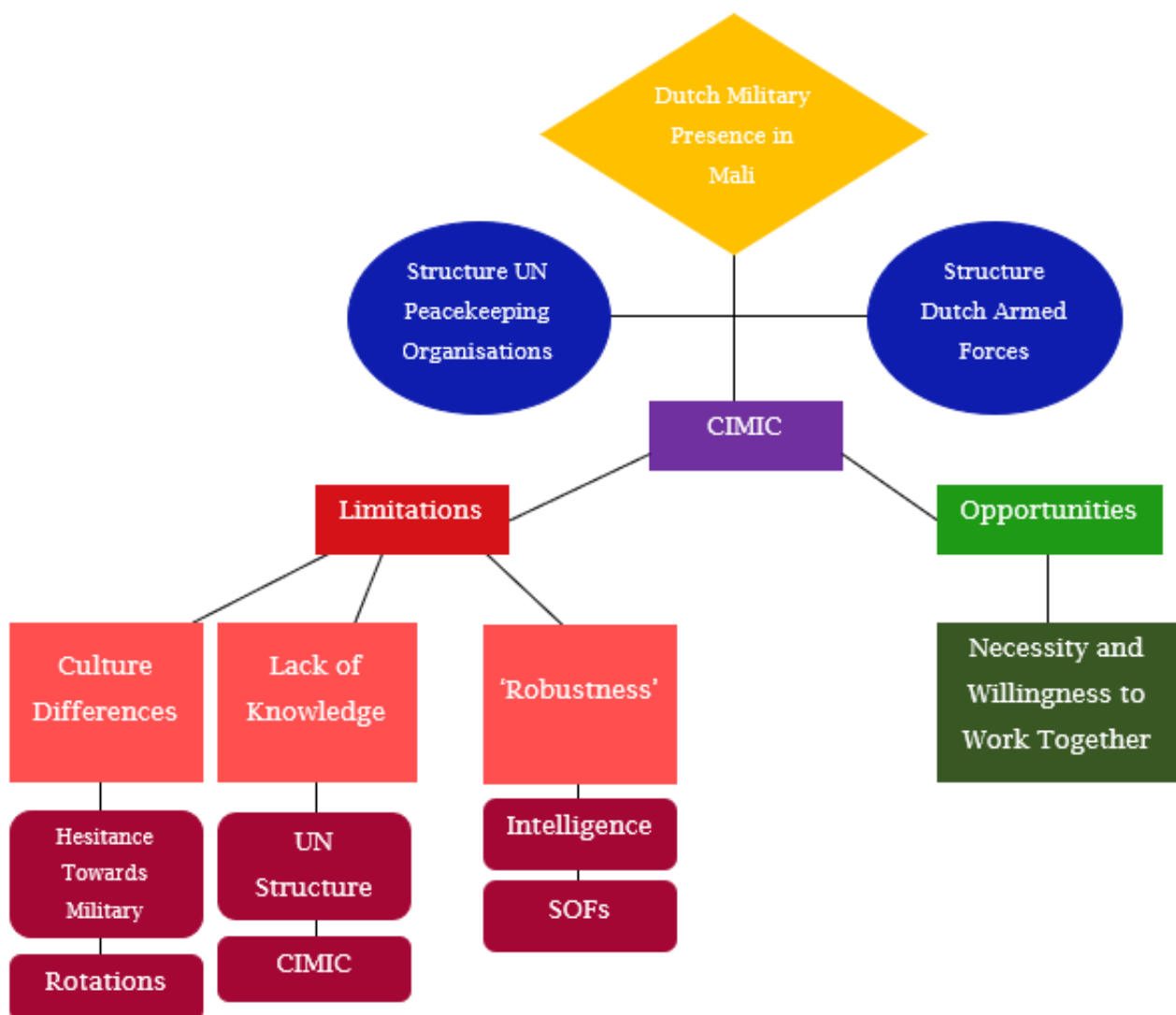
Robust Approach:

- How would you describe the threat level during your time in Mali?
- Did this influence your work in any way?
- Do you experience the mission in Mali as a 'robust' peacekeeping mission?
- Were civil organizations reluctant to share information with you?
- Did you experience any other limiting factors?
- What were these factors, how can this be improved?

Question to SOF & LRRPTG:

- How does your command structure/organization structure?
- Which place does the SOF/LRRPTG take on within the mission?
- Who commands this task group and what are the main tasks?
- What exactly is the 'robust' element of the SOF/LRRPTG?
- What is the difference between previous rotations of KCT, Marine Corps and 11LMB?
- 'Stevig mandaat' and 'robuuste verkenningscapaciteit', what does this entail?
- What is it like to operation within a UN peacekeeping mission, with restrictions on the use of force?
- How 'robust' is this commitment still?
- Does the military branch of the UN have the right mandate to operate in Mali? Or is it missing the opportunity of a 'hard blow to terrorists and spoilers'?
- I heard that people from CMI Command are also attached to Desert Falcon? Is this correct? If so, what is their task? Information Operations?
- How do Malians perceive the presence of the UN?

E. Coding Scheme



F. Original Dutch Quotes

Quote p.33

“Barkhane, van de Fransen, wordt ook veel mee samen gewerkt. Je hebt elkaar ook gewoon nodig, de Fransen hebben daar ook een stukje gevechtskracht zitten, met al die terrorisme natuurlijk. Bijvoorbeeld met die aanslagen die gebeurd zijn, dan hebben zij een aantal invallen gedaan, kijk de VN zal niet zo snel huizen binnen gaan vallen. En die Fransen denken, ja oke, wij zitten hier niet onder het VN-mandaat, ja die trappen gewoon deuren in en die trekken die leiders naar buiten, bij wijze van. [...] Je kan als VN militair niet zomaar ineens een huis binnen stappen, Barkhane staat er iets anders in.”

Quote p.33

“Vanochtend een contra/terreur training, in Mali werken we voor de VN dus de kans is klein dat we zulke kinetische acties in het echt gaan uitvoeren. Maar het behoort wel tot de taken waar we normaal gesproken voor ingezet kunnen worden. Dus belangrijk om te blijven trainen.”

Quote p.39

“Het kan dus zijn dat de Force Commander van jou vraagt een harde klap uit te delen richting wat de vijand dan ook moge zijn op dat moment. Daarmee moet je dus altijd toe bereid en uitgerust zijn. En dat was een dingetje van ons, dit was ons speciale mandaat.

“Response” is natuurlijk gewoon terugschieten en escaleren, en dat is het bijzondere eraan, de VN reageert normaal alleen: “self-defense” en hier wordt voor het eerst gesproken over escalatie en dat is een heel belangrijk dingetje, want escalatie wil dus zeggen dat wij harder terugslaan, om erger te voorkomen natuurlijk, maar dat wij in principe harder terugslaan dan dat wij worden geslagen. En dan gaat het begrip van proportionaliteit en subsidiariteit, waar je volgens humanitair oorlogsrecht altijd aan moet voldoen.

Het geweld dat je toepast moet proportioneel zijn – voldoende maar niet te veel, in verhouding staan met. Subsidiariteitsbeginsel – dat houdt in dat het niet met iets anders te vervangen was. Als jij een apache een Hellfire raket op een woning laat vuren, had dat vervangen kunnen worden door zelf op die woning te schieten, dan had je dat moeten doen.

En hier zeggen ze dus [in het mandaat] dat je zelf mag escaleren, je mag dus aan het proportionaliteitsbeginsel voorbijgaan, indien je daarmee in de toekomst erger voorkomt. In de nabije toekomst, komende 5 minuten tot een uur heb ik het dan over. En dat is dus het bijzondere aan het SOLTG en de MINUSMA-missie in zijn geheel.”

Quote p.40

“[Wij hadden geen toestemming] om zelf counter-terrorisme operaties te starten. Wij konden robuust optreden, maar wij deden niet aan offensieve operaties, alleen defensief. Alleen als er sprake was van een dreiging tegen ons, partnerlanden of de bevolking van Mali, konden wij ingrijpen. Wij boden de Force Commander de optie om snel, effectief en robuust te reageren. De nadruk ligt hierbij op reageren. Uiteraard is er wel een verschil in optreden tussen ons en 'reguliere' VN troepen. Omdat wij meer kunnen, beter getraind zijn en beter uitgerust waren patrouilleerden wij vaker en voerden ook heimelijke verkenningen uit. Hiervan ging een duidelijk signaal uit naar eventuele 'spoilers' van het vredesproces. Je zou kunnen spreken van een afschrikking. Nogmaals, wij gingen zelf niet de vijand opzoeken, maar door ons optreden zag men ons wel als een professionele en geduchte eenheid.”

Quote p.40

“De VN is de afgelopen 10 jaar een robuustere organisatie geworden. De missie van ons lag daarom ook heel gevoelig want de SOLTG is de allereerste keer dat de Verenigde Naties Special Forces heeft ingezet. En de Special Forces zijn met name gemaakt om strategische doelen aan te vallen dus om daadwerkelijk een dieperliggend doel in vijandig gebied, diep in vijandelijk gebied, uit te schakelen. Op chirurgische wijze. De rest van het leger, moet ergens aan de startlijn beginnen en langzaam vechten richting een hoofdstad of wat dan ook. Special Forces worden ingevlogen om van tevoren doelen, mensen, installaties, uit te schakelen of hele specifieke informatie te verzamelen van tevoren. [...] Je kan je voorstellen dat wanneer de VN Special Forces inzet, dat brengt nogal wat te weeg. Dat is wel even heel wat anders dan met je blauwe helm en je blauwe vest ergens voor de deur gaan staan, dat is een peacekeeping benadering. De Special Forces zijn een peace enforcement benadering, het afdwingen van vrede.”

Quote p.40

“De VN heeft ook een mandaat uitgegeven aan de Special Forces voor wat wij noemen: Direct Action. Direct Action wil niks anders zeggen dan: we weten waar er een terrorist zit, we trappen de deur in en we schakelen hem uit. [...] Dat was in het begin een taak die de VN zag, misschien moeten we dat wel doen. Omdat de VN veel te bang is om daar conventionele troepen voor in te zetten, want dat gaat het met veel meer geweld gepaard, dan moeten we misschien maar die chirurgische speciale eenheid daarvoor pakken, het beste van het beste. En daarom is er voor de SF gekozen. [...] Wij dachten namelijk dat hetzelfde zou zijn als in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan was de NAVO binnen gevallen, de Taliban omver geklapt, wij komen er achteraan en in een keer blijkt er toch nog vet veel geweld te zijn. In Mali hebben de Fransen de Tuareg rebellen weggevaagd en terug over de grens gedwongen naar Libië. Wij kwamen erachteraan en wij dachten, dit wordt weer hetzelfde feestje. Laten we nou even oppassen en leren van de vorige keer. Dat wist de VN ook. Dus, Special Forces, want dat zijn de beste van de beste. Dus als er iets gebeurd weten we in ieder geval dat we ons uiterste best hebben gedaan om dat zo goed mogelijk te counteren. Hoog inzetten, want er bestond een soort van angst dat het weer hetzelfde zou worden. Na een aantal maanden bleek dat mee te vallen.”

Quote p.42

“Die jongens uit de hulporganisaties zitten daar drie jaar, lokaal. Die hoeft je ook echt niks meer te vertellen, sterker nog, je moet daar op de koffie gaan en vragen of ze jou wat willen vertellen over het land. En zo hoort het ook in mijn ogen, zo moet het ook zijn. Bij MINUSMA in mijn tijd waren 12.000 militairen en 800 burgers ofzo. In dezelfde missie, en die burgers bepalen wat er gebeurt, en dat moet ook want die veiligheid is maar zo’n componentje van een van de vele componenten. Alleen een essentieel componentje, waar je heel veel mensen voor nodig hebt, wat heel veel kost. Maar als je geen veiligheid hebt, zul je ook geen investeringen, geen reconciliation programma’s. Wat je ook ziet is dat heel veel militairen denken, wij zijn de kern van de missie. Helemaal niet. Wij zijn 1 van de 6 a 7 pilaren van zo’n missie. Dat we toevallig met veel man zijn, betekent niet dat we belangrijker zijn.”

Quote p.46

“Door [...] projecten te doen kweek je heel veel ‘goodwill’ in zo’n dorp en zo’n omgeving, en dan krijg je een band en dan praten ze heel vrijuit over de situatie die er nu is. In de gesprekken die wij voerden proberen we altijd die information request die wij van boven kregen, zo van jongens probeer deze vraag te beantwoorden, die versleutelde in dat soort normale gesprekken.”

Quote p.48

“CIMIC is zo breed. Het is heel moeilijk om specifieke taken te omschrijven. Dat is wel graag wat militairen willen, die willen duidelijk omlind hebben wat ze moeten doen en hoe. Logisch want ze schieten op mensen, je kan niet een beetje naar links of een beetje naar rechts. Maar met CIMIC ben je eigenlijk alleen maar aan het praten.”

Quote p.48

“Feit blijft, dat ik als CIMIC-er toen, een middel van de commandant ben, ik ben er niet om mensen tevreden te stellen, ik ben er puur om mijn commandant tevreden te stellen. Maar de opdracht van mijn commandant is altijd, een ‘safe and secure environment’. [...] Voor militairen is de opdracht uiteindelijk om vrede en veiligheid te brengen. En of je dat doet door middel van meer op het humanitair vlak te zitten of door middel van het militaire vlak, dat maakt niet uit, als je maar effectief bent.”

Quote p.48

“Er zit een gigantisch groot verschil tussen NATO-CIMIC en VN-CIMIC. Als je daar heengaat besef je nog niet dat 80 procent van wat je als NATO-CIMIC-er doet binnen CIMIC, gedaan wordt door het civiele deel en het politie deel van de missie in Mali. Het verschil in bewoording, bij NATO staat er cooperation, en bij VN staat er coordination. Dat is een mega-groot verschil, er staat daadwerkelijk coordination en zo wordt dat ook geïnterpreteerd op het hoofdkwartier. Je bent eigenlijk op staf-niveau alleen maar aan het coördineren en proberen een beetje randvoorwaarden te scheppen. Alles op cultuurgebied wordt gedaan door civiele gedeeltes, heel veel projecten. Er wordt maar een heel klein beetje gedaan door het militaire deel. [...] Je doet maar een fractie van wat je zou doen binnen NATO-CIMIC.”

Quote p.49

"[Het] verschil zit in heel veel zaken. Als je kijkt naar CIMIC in VN ligt de focus wel heel erg op Quick Impact Projects (QIP) en eigenlijk deconflicteren met OCHA en samenwerken en afstemmen tussen de civiele kant van de missie en de blauwe kant. En is met name de civil military liaison is wat beperkter, omdat je een hele civiele component hebt die dat doet. Als je kijkt binnen NATO-operaties is het hoofdkwartier een militaire operatie. En wij hebben contact met VN-organisaties, dus dan is de liaison die je hebt met verschillende organisaties, die is anders. Plus het feit, als je kijkt naar de doctrine tussen VN CIMIC en NATO CIMIC is die wel degelijk anders. Als je alleen al kijkt naar de core functions zijn die anders omschreven. Alleen al de laatste C is anders. Dus er zit wel degelijk verschil tussen VN en NATO CIMIC. Echter moet ik wel bekennen dat ik ook NATO CIMIC zo veel mogelijk heb proberen te integreren in de missie. Omdat je met name op het lage tactische niveau, dan is dit verhaal hartstikke leuk en in Bamako klopte dit ook wel. Alleen in Kidal, op het lage tactische niveau klopte dit niet, want ze waren er niet. Dus dan is er een soort vacuum waar jij op dat moment de enige bent die iets voor de bevolking kan doen."

Quote p. 51

"De cultuur binnen de VN is echt een probleem. Wat je heel vaak ziet is dat iedereen een beetje voor zijn eigen hachje gaat. En in het land der blinden, is een oog koning: als jij informatie hebt, wil je dat niet delen met je collega's. Want op het moment dat het belangrijk is en de SRSg heeft iets nodig, ja dan kan jij 'shinen'. Ik vind, onder de burgers speelt er echt een soort achterdeurtjes politiek cultuur, waar ik mij totaal niet prettig bij voel. Niet echt een gevoel van saamhorigheid en collegialiteit. Individuen daargelaten, maar grosso modo was dat wel een beetje het gevoel wat heerste."

Quote p.52

"Er is ook veel concurrentie tussen de hulporganisaties, hoe meer je genereert hoe meer geld je krijgt."

Quote p.52

"Burgers die in de missie werken [...] krijgen extra recuperatie-verlof. In Kidal hadden ze dat één keer in de vier weken, éxtra verlof, dus buiten je standaard verlof-dagen. [...] Dat betekent dat je uit het missiegebied mag, dan mag je in Bamako blijven, of je zegt, ik ga een weekje naar Senegal, en dan krijgt diegene daar ook nog 500 of 600 dollar voor die je mag spenderen. Dat betekent dus dat je als burger, stel dat je er één jaar zit, elke vijf weken heb je een week verlof gehad, dan ben je er al tien weken uit, naast je normale verlof, want je hebt ook nog twee en een halve dag verlof per maand. Dus je hebt ook nog eens dertig dagen per jaar. Dus je bent er tien weken uit, en dertig dagen, dat zijn al zestien weken als je het allemaal gebruikt, ben je er al niet, als burger."

Quote p.53

"Een collega van mij [...] heeft bijvoorbeeld geprobeerd om binnen de missie, dus allemaal mensen met hetzelfde doel, de burgers met de militairen te laten praten, militairen dachten dat ze niet geaccepteerd werden door de burgers, en de burgers dachten van de militairen, nou die denken alleen maar in geweld. Drie maand is hij daar mee bezig geweest om vergaderingen op te zetten om mensen met elkaar te laten praten."

Quote p.53

"Negenennegentig procent van de missie weet niet hoe het werkt. Inclusief burgers niet. Dat was wel echt een [...] eyeopener voor mij, [...] dan ben je onderdeel van de VN maar je hebt eigenlijk geen idee hoe die VN werkt. [...] Ook mensen die in zo'n VN-missie zitten weten daar te weinig van. Laat staan als je dan moet gaan werken aan civiel-militaire interactie. Dan is het heel lastig om goed uit te voeren als je de spelregels niet kent. Dan heb je de zoveelste militair die van toeten nog blazen weet. Omdat zij hier gewoon niet voldoende in worden onderwezen, en ik vraag het wel vaker aan militaire collega's zo van, weet je eigenlijk wel het verschil tussen de blauwe en zwarte letters op de voertuigen en dan kijken ze je echt aan van, nou ik weet niet waar jij het over hebt."

Quote p.53

"Ik heb wel gemerkt, dat 80 procent van de mensen die in zo'n missie werkt welwillend is, maar onwetend zijn, zowel de burgers als de militairen. De flat in Bamako, het HQ van de VN, heb je 1 etage met militairen en 11 etages met burgers, en die kwamen niet bij elkaar."

Quote p.

“Militairen worden gezien als spionnetjes. Dat werd ook gewoon gezegd.”

Quote p.54

“Wat ik heb gemerkt is dat mensen zonder militaire achtergrond, of ze nou binnen de VN-missie zitten of erbuiten, die hebben geen idee wat militairen doen. Eigenlijk zonder uitzondering. Je kunt zeggen, ja ik ben van de U-2.... Geen idee. Wantrouwen... tja, het is gewoon een enorme onbekendheid over wat ‘intel’ doet. Maar CIMIC, kijk die term, civiel-militaire coördinatie, dat klinkt al wat soepeler, het doel van de U-2 en de U-9 uiteindelijk is het ondersteunen van de missie zodat wij als militairen ons werk beter kunnen uitvoeren.”

Quote p.55

“Inlichtingen verzamelen om onze civiele baas een voorspellend vermogen te geven om op basis van die informatie de juiste plannen te maken. ASIFU is ontstaan vanuit vorige missies waar de info van het land en over het conflict minimaal was waardoor het een reactieve bende werd. Nu konden we proactief handelen. Analisten cell met sensoren. CMI sensor. Information Requests, brokjes informatie, doorgestuurd naar analisten.”

Quote p.55

“CIMIC maakt geen deel uit van inlichtingen, officieel niet, maar ze gaan wel onder dezelfde noemer “Information Operations”, maar officieel is het een aparte entiteit.”

Quote p.55

“In mijn optiek, als jij niet begrijpt waar je zit kun je ook niet goed handelen. Dus je moet eerst het pattern of life leren kennen, dit is begrijpen waar je heen gaat. Daarom zijn HTA in mijn ogen ook super belangrijk. Human terrain analisten. Ik was daar CIMIC-analist, en zij deden dan echt het culturele, de menselijke component en ik echt de organisaties die daar zaten. En OCHA die brengt bulletins uit. Hoe komen zij aan die info? 9 van de 10 keer is het een educated guess, maar wel door mensen die 20 jaar ervaring hebben.”

Quote p.55

“De meeste West-Europees georiënteerde landen weten het veel en veel beter. Maar ik had een baas uit Niger, en die wist echt niet wat het was. Maar die was anesthesist en daar neergezet, omdat hij geen militair was, hij kon dan wel CIMIC gaan doen.”

Quote p. 56

“De VN bestaat natuurlijk uit landen zoals Nederland en Amerika en China, grote landen die er redelijk professioneel in gaan, misschien wel tegengestelde belangen hebben, maar er wel professioneel ingaan. Het bestaat ook uit Nigeria, Algerije en dat soort landen, buurlanden van Mali die dus eigenlijk een eigen agenda hebben, maar dus ook landen die geld van de VN ontvangen om een missie te doen, dat geld in eigen zak steken, die militairen met zo min mogelijk middelen daar neerzetten. Malinezen, maken een onderscheid tussen zwarte VN en witte VN, dat bedoelen ze in de meest letterlijke zin van het woord. De blanke VN en de zwarte, negroïde VN, de zwarte VN doet z’n werk gewoon slecht. Krijgen de kans ook niet om te doen vanwege hun regering, en dat straalt uit op de hele VN.”

Quote p.56

“Er komen allerlei landen bij elkaar en die willen allemaal bijdragen en dan moet het ook nog eens een Afrikaans getinte missie zijn. Heel veel Afrikaanse militairen die hebben key posities. En die doen dat toch gewoon anders. Die komen uit een andere cultuur, dat botst wel eens met de laten we zeggen de ‘skiing countries’.”

Quote p.56

“Ja, er is een CIMIC-positie, dan moet er iemand op die functie komen. Dan krijg je dus mensen, variërend van administratief tot een dominee, heel welwillend, maar echt nog een beetje los van wat ze daar moeten gaan doen. Dat zijn we ze dus gaan doceren en trainen en dit moet nu structureel worden. En dan zie je ook wel dingen van de grond afkomen. Dat ze er zijn voor de commandant, voor die bepaalde informatievoorziening, afhankelijk van wat de commandant wil, en dat ze ook QIP moeten kunnen begeleiden. En daar zijn ze natuurlijk heel ‘keen’ op, dat ze dat leren. Dat zijn bepaalde processen en formats die ze moeten doorlopen in dat systeem. Dat zijn we dan maar eerst gaan doceren en trainen.”

Quote p.56

“Wat je toch wel vaak zag is dat bij Afrikaanse collega’s is dat het bekleden van zo’n MSO [military staff officer] functie binnen zo’n hoofdkwartier een soort van prestigekwestie is. Omdat je daar natuurlijk best wel flink wat geld verdient. Zeker in vergelijking met de lonen in die landen. [...] Vaak vanuit Afrikaanse landen wordt het ook gezien als een soort van beloning. Er wordt niet echt gekeken naar of jij de kennis en de competentie hebt om dat soort functies te kunnen vervullen. [...] Dus wij bestonden uit iemand uit Niger, een Nederlander, iemand uit *Côte d’Ivoire*, ook met 0,0 CIMIC-achtergrond. Nou zelfde verhaal, gewoon als beloning, en een Italiaan, hij had ook 0,0 CIMIC-achtergrond. Italië levert 1 functie in die hele MINUSMA-missie, die vinden dat totaal niet relevant, en een warm lichaam is een warm lichaam. Dan zie je wel een beetje wat de problematiek is binnen zo’n missie.”