In Quest of Coherence
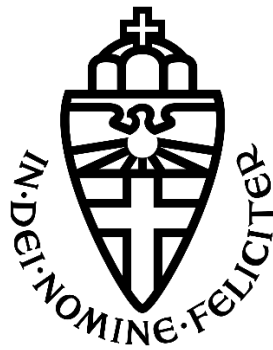
The Alternative to the Principal-Agent Approach in Understanding the (In)effectiveness of Light-Footprint Military Missions:

The Case of the EUTM Mali

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The Alternative to the Principal-Agent Approach in Understanding the (In)effectiveness of Light-Footprint Military Missions:

The Case of the EUTM Mali

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Sarah Neubauer – 1066097

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Abstract

After the failure of two costly interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Western policymakers have increasingly refrained from large ground deployments in fragile states. Hence, they have adopted a "light-footprint approach" which has become more and more popular as it permits Western nations to remain influential in defending their security interests in fragile states without deploying large numbers of ground forces. This light-footprint approach is reflected in training and advice missions through which Western nations train host-country security forces to improve their capabilities when facing security challenges. Yet, in recent years, these missions have been highly criticized by scholars and practitioners for reasons of ineffectiveness. The missions' ineffectiveness has often been explained by scholars through the Principal-Agent Approach to describe relations between provider and recipient. Yet, this approach is not sufficient to understand the complexities on the level of implementation. My research aims to fill this gap in two ways. First, I offer a new concept, namely "light-footprint military missions" to characterize Western countries' current intervention approaches in fragile states. Second, using the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali as a case-study, I examine the mission's internal efficiency using three effectiveness indicators and by drawing upon first-hand experiences of EUTM personnel during their deployment in Mali. The findings of this analysis provide an alternative explanation to the Principal-Agent Approach, revealing that interest misalignments between different training providers, in this case EU Member States, lead to incoherence within the theatre of operation, thereby impacting the efficiency of the training mission. Furthermore, I argue that another reason hindering the EUTM's efficiency is the mismatch between on the one hand, the political ambition of the Member States and on the other hand, the financial and logistical contributions offered by the Member States to the mission.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

CSDP   Common Security and Defense Policy

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West African States

EU   European Union

EUFOR   European Union Force

EUTM   European Union Training Mission

ISAF   International Security Assistance Force

ISGS   Islamic State in the Greater Sahara

JNIM   Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin

LFMM   Light-Footprint Military Missions

MAFs   Malian Armed Forces

MFC   Mission Force Commander

MS   Member States

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PA   Principal-Agent

SFA   Security Force Assistance

UN   United Nations

UNSC   United Nations Security Council

UNAMA   United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

US   United States

Chapter 1   Introduction

> I lived in terror, each minute, each second thinking it would be my turn to be taken away and executed. Even after being told to go, I feared it was a trap. As I walked away, slowly, I held my hand on my chest, holding my breath, and waiting for a bullet to pass through my body.
> - A Resident in Moura, Mali (cited in Human Rights Watch, 2022).

In March 2022, approximately three hundred civilian men were executed by Malian Armed Forces (MAFs), accompanied by mercenaries from the Russian Wagner Group, in the village of Moura, located within the Mopti Region. The Wagner Group is a private military company with close ties to Vladimir Putin and is used throughout the world to spread Russian influence by helping governments, as in the case of Mali, to fighting Jihadists while at the same time being known for their human rights violations against civilians and their brutality (Thompson et al., 2022). In parallel to these atrocities, other Malian soldiers are trained by European forces within the scope of the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) for the exact opposite reason, namely, not to conduct human rights violations as seen in Moura and to protect the Malian population from militant groups. Against the backdrop of two military coups in August 2020 and May 2021 and with the arrival of the Wagner Group, several troop-contributing countries of the EUTM Mali decided to reduce the number of soldiers deployed. As Josep Borrell, the EU's Foreign Policy Chief, stated: "There are not enough security guarantees from the Malian authorities over the non-interference of the well-known Wagner Group" (DW, 2022).

But these Member States (MS) are not the first ones to reduce their deployment in the country. In February 2022, France, which had been the first interventionist country with a continuous military presence in Mali since 2013, announced the withdrawal of its troops within the next six months. These troops were used for counterterrorism operations such as Operation Barkhane as well as Task Force Takuba to fight militants belonging to the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) but also the coalition of four Al-Qaeda affiliated groups called Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM). ISGS and JNIM control most of the rural areas in Northern and Central Mali, often by attacking and killing innocent civilians, but also spread violent extremism to neighbouring countries across the Sahel Region such as Niger and Burkina-Faso by "distort[ing] and exploit[ing] religious beliefs, ethnic differences and political ideologies to legitimize their actions as well as to recruit and retain their followers" (UNODC, 2018). Despite the increasing violence in Mali largely linked to the Jihadists, the French government decided to withdraw their troops due to a rapid escalation of tensions with the Malian government. Tensions not only arose from the arrival of the Wagner Group, but also because France demanded an immediate return to a civilian-led government after the two military coups were carried out (Jezequel, 2021) and the new military government postponed democratic elections. While many Malians are satisfied with France's

withdrawal due to an anti-French sentiment which has been present in the country since colonial times, many experts fear it will leave a power vacuum that will only increase insecurity, especially when leaving the MAFs alone in combatting militants.

The French withdrawal is particularly challenging due to internal problems the MAFs have been facing since the time of decolonization in the 1960s, making them less effective in dealing with national and transnational threats (Marsh and Rolandsen, 2021). On the one hand, the MAFs are dealing with structural problems such as a poor human resource management, poor availability of equipment and training. On the other hand, there is a resentment within the MAFs towards northern Malian communities contributing to the inefficiency as "[…] Mali's predominantly southern and "black" African force tends not to identify with northern Mali, resents serving there, and lacks motivation with respect to fighting […]" (Shurkin et al., 2017, p. 154). This reluctance to serve in the North is especially problematic as most militant activities take place there, particularly in the Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal regions. As a result, the MAFs "[…] are unable to use coercive force to effectively cope with armed challengers" (Marsh and Rolandsen, 2021, p. 619).

Since 2013, the EUTM has been active to precisely strengthen the capacities of the MAFs to in the end "being self-sustaining armed forces capable of contributing to the defence of their population and territory" (EUTM, 2020). The EUTM Mali is part of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to strengthening its role as a global security actor in the Sahel while at the same time pursuing its own interests and mitigating spillover effects coming from the region, including terror exports, migration, and organized crime (Nia, 2021). The EU's engagement in Mali has often been termed "[…] 'a lighthouse project' for the EU Common Security and Defence Policy" (Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen, 2020, p. 935). In the same way as lighthouses mark the shore to boats in the sea, the EU intended Mali to be a landmark showcasing the way the EU would intervene in conflict areas, especially in the Sahel region. For this particular reason, namely, to protect Europe's internal security, the EU decided to train host-country security forces to improve their capabilities when facing security challenges (Knowles and Matisek, 2019).

This type of external intervention is called Security Force Assistance (SFA) and has become increasingly popular after the failure of two costly missions in Afghanistan and Iraq which were known for their large ground deployments and therefore, had too many substantial casualties (Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen, 2020). Especially in the context of the EU, CSDP missions, including the EUTM Mali, pursue the goal of defending EU interests with the least number of soldiers on the ground through a "less boots on the ground" approach or also called "light-footprint approach" (Burgos, 2018). As Rolandsen et al. (2021, p. 564) state: "Policy makers view SFA as lower in material and political costs than a full-scale intervention, particularly in fragile states".

Ever since the EUTM started in 2013, it has been heavily criticized by scholars and policy advisors for lacking efficiency and training Malian soldiers who are involved in human rights abuses against civilians and who have been part of the recent military coups. Furthermore, the missions' non-coercive mandate has also been called into question for not achieving the goals it envisions, as "[…] being a non-coercive mission means that it cannot participate in combat activities, does not accompany Malian units on operations and provides Malian partners with only non-lethal equipment" (Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen, 2020, p. 943). In addition, criticisms related to the high number of European countries involved in the training mission have been frequent, as soldiers from different nations convey heterogeneous values leading to unclarity and confusion among the Malian soldiers (Tull, 2020a). The short duration of EUTM trainings, the non-provision of equipment, and the lack of a human resources system to track trained soldiers once their training is completed is highly problematic (Bøås et al., 2018). Therefore, the EUTM approach appears to be increasingly puzzling.

There has been a clear trend of the increasing use of SFA as an alternative to large deployments, yet SFA missions also seem to have their problems. The reason why these SFA missions are prone to failure has remained subject to little research. The complex nature of external interventions and their effects can be frustrating to research and external interventions should never be seen as a whole, since different operations and missions can be part of one big intervention. For this reason, it makes more sense to have a closer look at individual missions within an intervention and adequately assess their effectiveness, in this case by focusing on missions that choose a 'light-footprint approach' and which I coin as "light-footprint military missions" (LFMM). Carefully analysing LFMM is especially important because these missions are here to stay in the foreseeable future.

Focusing mainly on the European context, drawing attention to the problems within the EUTM and thereby attempting to improve the EUTM's effectiveness may make the EU more legitimate not only in the eyes of the partner countries' local population, but also in light of the heavy criticisms the EU has been confronted to. After years of intense European investment in the training and advising of the MAFs and regarding the current political situation in Mali, the participating MS' taxpayers question and doubt the necessity of LFMM missions. Furthermore, human lives are still at risk. Even if the deployments are smaller, lives can always potentially be lost through terrorist or rebel attacks. Therefore, "Families, and society as a whole, pay the price of participation in conflicts […]" (Corbetta, 2014, p. 10).

Considering a potential "EUTM Sahel" that is currently under discussion which would encompass all G5 Sahel states, namely Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali, the EU needs to draw its lessons from the EUTM in Mali to make its training missions more effective. As a result, this thesis aims at analyzing the underlying conditions why LFMM as part of external interventions in the context of the EU have not been successful, concentrating on the case of the EUTM Mali. Therefore, I try to answer the following question: *Why are external interventions in the form of light-footprint military missions prone to failure?*

The argument is two-fold. First, in the academic debate the (in)effectiveness of SFA is often explained with the help of the Principal-Agent (PA) Model as "SFA commonly involve large interest misalignments between the provider (the principal) and the recipient (the agent)" (Biddle et al., 2017, p. 94). In this thesis I aim at contributing to the academic debate by providing a new way of explaining the relationship between the principal and agent in the context of the EU. Before even considering interest misalignments between the provider and the agent, interest misalignments between the different providers should first be resolved to ensure more effectiveness on the ground. The PA Model is not sufficient to portray the complexity inherent to the EUTM. As Wilén (2021, p. 581) claims "[…] the principal-agent approach often only focuses on relations between one principal and an agent, while in reality, there are often several different principals providing assistance to the same agent, thereby suggesting a more complex relationship". The different principals are in this case the EU Member States (MS) who provide assistance to the MAFs.

Although the EUTM mandate serves as an umbrella framework for all participating nations, the MS can still decide on the national level how much they are willing to contribute to the mission. This diversity in contributions, the MS' varying degrees of political will and thereby different interests in the EUTM are partly where the complexity lies. Interest misalignments between the MS can lead to asymmetry within the theatre of operation and to complexities for military personnel to translate these different goals into military practice. Second, I argue that there is a mismatch between the political ambition of the MS and the resources that are available to the mission.

1.1. Concepts

To provide a common ground, this section intends to define the concepts external intervention, SFA, and "light-footprint military missions" to understand how these concepts are related, but also to what extent they differ. The term "light footprint military missions" is not yet an established concept and was coined by me to mark the difference between how external military interventions used to be and how they have evolved over time up until today. The way I define this term is therefore not meant as being all-encompassing, but as an approach to characterize Western countries' current intervention approaches in fragile states.

1.1.1. External Interventions

External interventions are known to all of us and our thinking about external interventions has been influenced by movies such as Forrest Gump in relation to the Vietnam War, Lone Survivor about the war in Afghanistan, or American Sniper about the war in Iraq. And often, we use different terminologies for what we see in these movies, such as 'foreign intervention', 'military intervention', 'third-party intervention' and many more. This plethora of concepts clearly indicates that we never take the time to

think what external interventions really are. When talking about external interventions it is important to know what type of external intervention is meant as it is a sweeping concept.

Starting from the very basis, from an international law perspective, external intervention means the "violation of the sovereignty of one state by another" (Lang, 2002, p. 3). External interventions can also be seen as a tool for conflict management with the goal of mitigating a conflict. As portrayed in the above-mentioned movies, external intervention is often imagined as a fully-fledged large-scale military intervention, also because the use of military force is often the most visible form of external intervention. Yet, different types of external interventions exist. Regan (1996) conceives of three types of intervention, namely military, economic, and diplomatic interventions. It must also be taken into account that each type of intervention is part of a larger intervention, often either launched by one country, several countries, or an international organization such as the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the EU. Therefore, the different types of intervention are inevitably linked to each other, which makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between them. As this thesis focuses on military interventions, it is important to define this term.

The least ambiguous definition of military intervention was brought by Pearson and Baumann (1974, p. 273) as they define it as "the movement of troops or military forces, under orders or with some official leadership, by one independent country (or concerted group of independent countries) across the border of another independent country (the target), or action by troops already stationed in the target country", but only include interventions that entail direct military action. This means that troops which are present in a country for interventionist purposes by being based in camps or military bases without the use of military action are not seen as military intervention. Economic intervention is mostly seen in the form of economic sanctions and is defined as "[…] coercive measures imposed by one country, an international organization or a group of countries against another government or any particular group with the purpose of bringing about a change in a specific policy (Ilgaz, 2019, p. 33). Diplomatic intervention is mostly associated with mediation, meaning third parties can be asked by domestic actors to help settle a dispute (Ilgaz, 2019).

These three types of intervention are not mutually exclusive as they are usually implemented in parallel to each other. Furthermore, the types mentioned are not the only types of intervention that exist, but they are the most common ones, not to mention the different intervention strategies that can be used by interveners, both military or non-military. In this thesis the main focus lies on external military interventions since LFMM involve the deployment of military personnel, even if these personnel only train, equip, and advise domestic troops.

The emergence of external military interventions dates back to the age of the Peloponnesian Wars where "[…] Athens and Sparta intervened in the internal conflicts of other city states and supported opposing

domestic factions" (Wolak, 2014, p. 1). Yet, the number of external military interventions has only sky rotted since the end of WWII, and especially during the Cold War Era, as intra-state conflicts, also referred to as civil wars, have become more prominent compared to inter-state conflicts. Pickering and Kisangani (2009) state that in the Cold War Era from 1946 to 1989, 690 external military interventions occurred. This means that 16 external military interventions were launched per year during the period of 1945 to 1989.

As a result, over the years, there has been a significant increase in the amount of academic works related to external military interventions and likewise an attempt to define this concept. Pearson and Baumann's (1974) definition of military intervention has often been criticized as being too narrow. Especially in light of the shift from large military deployments to small military deployments and the attempt to sustain a 'light-footprint approach' it is important to include more aspects of military activity under the umbrella term military intervention and not just the enforcement of military action. For this reason, this thesis adopts the definition exemplified by Woo (2017, p. 29) which defines external military intervention as "[…] the active and overt involvement of a country in foreign civil wars through the deployment of troops or naval or air forces, as well as through the provision of logistical aid, military advisers, or military forces". This definition not only takes into consideration the deployment of troops, but also less coercive measures such as logistical aid and the advisory role of soldiers. Therefore, this definition is more suited for the way military interventions have evolved over time.

1.1.2. Security Force Assistance

Security Force Assistance refers to the non-coercive part of external military interventions as the interventionists only intend to improve the ally's capabilities by strengthening their armed forces. Although it could be assumed that SFA is a new approach which emerged with the transition from a large deployment to a light footprint, in reality, it is not. For example, Regan (1996) has observed over 900 individual acts of SFA globally from 1945 to 1999. SFA was also one element of a larger military intervention as in Iraq or Afghanistan to reduce the number of soldiers deployed. At the time, a certain notion during these large-scale deployments developed, namely that Afghan and Iraqi armed forces needed to take responsibility and be able to fight opponents by themselves. Therefore, SFA was an additional option alongside the 'direct approach' of attacking enemy forces with one's own military forces (Rogers and Goxho, 2021). In recent times, SFA, or also referred to as 'indirect approach' (Rogers and Goxho, 2021), has become the prominent technique when it comes to intervening in a fragile state. SFA turns out being a more 'comfortable' approach for keeping a certain amount of influence in a country or region and to address violence and insecurity, while at the same time taking less risks for one's own soldiers.

The concept SFA has not yet been established as it is related to a range of overlapping or similar terms. These programmes, which intend to train and advise soldiers, are often also called 'Train, Advise, Assist (TAA)', 'Advise Assist and Enable (A2E)', 'Foreign Internal Defense (FID)', and others (Rolandsen et al., 2021). Following its increasing prominence, several attempts have been made at defining SFA. Biddle et al. (2017, p.90) define SFA as: "[…] help in training, equipping, and advising allied or 'partner' militaries to enable them to defend themselves". While this description is accurate it can still be expanded. Rolandsen et al. (2021, p. 566) describe SFA as: "a set of activities of an external actor (provider) equipping and training an armed unit (recipient) with a stated aim to strengthen the recipients' *operational capacity* and *professionalism*". Therefore, they widen the definition by adding 'operational capacity' and 'professionalism'. Operational capacity here means the provision of equipment for the recipient through more powerful weapons, improved medical assistance, communications and reconnaissance (Rolandsen et al., 2021). Operational capacity is also strengthened through the mentoring trainers give trainees. Nonetheless, these trainers do not accompany the trainees in combat, which is why SFA is non-coercive. Professionalism entails using coercive capability in a manner that is more ethical and that reduces the killing of civilians, thereby focusing on training that incorporates values such as gender equality, democracy, and human rights as in many cases security forces in fragile states are involved in human rights violations.

1.1.3. Light-Footprint Military Missions

The definition of light-footprint military missions incorporates SFA, meaning missions that mostly focus on training, advising, and equipping a partner's country armed forces, but for a specific purpose, namely to avoid coercive missions and reduce military force deployments using a light-footprint approach. Although LFMM are non-coercive, I choose to characterize these light-footprint missions as part of military interventions. There are two types of military interventions, namely direct and indirect military interventions. According to Gegout (2017, p. 29) indirect military interventions can be defined as: "[…] covert operations, intelligence, arms sales, and financing and training of armies and militias in another state", whereas direct military interventions are described as "[…] aerial bombing, the setting of no-fly zones, the creation of safe zones, the use of air space, or the sending of troops or mercenaries (from one to several military personnel" (Gegout, 2017, p. 29). As a result, light-footprint missions keep the military component due to the specific military personnel being deployed to strengthen the national army of the host state, therefore, being part of indirect interventions.

As seen above, many Western nations, including the EU, the United Kingdom, and the United States (US) have transferred the risks of war due to the failures that resulted from their heavy footprints in Afghanistan and Iraq. The risks of war have been shifted away from their own soldiers to civilians and armed actors from their 'partner' country (Demmers and Gould, 2020). Therefore, these nations have

predominantly removed their military troops from the theatres of war. Furthermore, many nations are not able to make large deployments due to budget cuts. For example, the US Department of Defense claimed: "[…] whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives" (Wiltenburg, 2019).

The term light-footprint was coined for the first time in the context of Afghanistan and was seen as a better option than the 'more is better' spirit which had been prevalent in previous missions. As stated by Suhrke (2010, p.2): "The international involvement in Afghanistan in late 2001 started in the spirit of a 'light footprint', as outlined by Lakhdar Brahimi to the Security Council in November 2001". The goal of the US and UN in 2001 was to keep a light-footprint approach. The US initially decided to rely on US airpower but pursued the approach of no US boots on the ground (Suhrke, 2010), as they did not want to be the next one's to fail regarding the Soviet invasion in 1979. Furthermore, the fear of "treacherous tribesmen" (Sukhre, 2010, p. 2) in an environment completely unknown to US soldiers motivated their decision not to deploy soldiers there.

Similarly, Brahimi, who was the chairman of the UN Panel on United Nations Peace Operations in 2000 and thanks to whom this light-footprint concept became known, was reluctant to agree on any large deployments in Afghanistan. Not only because he wanted to protect the principles of national self-determination and recognition, but also in light of the UN's failure in previous conflicts such as Somalia and the Balkan wars. Therefore, as stated in the Secretary General Report in relation to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA): "UNAMA should aim to bolster Afghan capacity (both official and non-governmental), relying on as limited an international presence and on as many Afghan staff as possible, and using common support services where possible, thereby leaving a light expatriate 'footprint'." (Security Council, 2002, p.16).

Although Brahimi mentioned this light-footprint approach in 2001, he did not specify its meaning. Today, this concept is part of a larger debate, namely that of 'remote warfare'. Remote warfare is an umbrella term for various approaches of military engagement but with the intent of pursuing a light-footprint. These approaches have been outlined by Watson and McKay (2021) and comprise the support of local security forces through the provision of training and equipment, the deployment of special operation forces (for training or sometimes to accompany local forces on the battle ground), private military and security contractors, air strikes and air support through drones and manned aircraft, and sharing intelligence. In the words of Watson and McKay (2021, p.7): "Rather than deploying large numbers of their own troops, countries use a variety of tactics to support local partners who do the bulk of frontline fighting". Therefore, a 'light-footprint approach' is part of remote warfare. For Watson and McKay (2021), military technologies are only secondary in defining remote warfare. For them, it is more about the aspect of "[…] distance, limited size, and intentioned remote character of military deployments" (Rogers and Goxho, 2021, p. 4).

1.2. Methodology

For this thesis I chose a qualitative research design. My primary objective is to shed light on the politicization of LFMM and show that much of its success depends on the political will of the principal. The PA Model has been the preferred theoretical framework when it comes to portraying the interest misalignment between the principal (the major power(s) that offer the training, equipping, and advising of military personnel) and the agent (the partner nation's armed forces that receive this training) and thereby presenting this as the reason why LFMM fail. This thesis aims at providing a different theoretical framework that measures the effectiveness of LFMM by analysing the interest misalignment between different principals. Therefore, the PA Model is briefly explained to comprehend its core argument and to grasp why a different theoretical framework is equally as important in understanding the failure of LFMM, especially in the context of the EU and other international organizations which largely depend on the consent of their MS.

I examine the effectiveness of LFMM with the help of the theoretical framework of coherence and effectiveness developed by Peters et al. (2021). This framework was designed specifically to measure the effectiveness of EU crisis management, but it can also be applied to other international organizations that consist of several MS, such as the UN or NATO. This framework has three main components namely effectiveness as actor coherence, effectiveness as process coherence, and impact effectiveness.

Actor coherence refers to actor unity, meaning to what extent there is a consensus among different MS of the EU concerning a certain policy, how this policy is adapted in the respective MS and whether this actor unity is reflected within the mission. To analyse actor coherence in the context of the EUTM in Mali, I examine different mandates and policy documents from different nations. The EU provides an umbrella mandate to give specific guidelines about what should be done within the mission by military personnel. However, this mandate is not binding as every MS participating in the mission can adapt this mandate depending on how much they want to contribute. Since this is a qualitative and not a quantitative study, I chose three MS, namely the three largest contributors to the mission which are Spain, Czech Republic, and Germany. I selected the three largest contributors because they are the ones who have the most influence on what happens on the ground and what objectives will be implemented. Depending on how different their amended mandates are, it may lead to incoherence on the ground if every country has different goals resulting in different resource provisions and trainings, thereby already indicating partial failure. For the analysis, I use primary sources such as official policy documents.

To examine process coherence, I look at the discrepancy between the EU's policy output and its policy practice, meaning what the EU wants to achieve in practice but also how it is constrained in achieving its goals for example through budget constraints or equipment shortages. I study different types of

documents, namely policy briefs, government reports, official EU policy documents, media reports, NGO assessments, and academic articles.

The last component, impact effectiveness, includes the EU's strategic and intermediate objectives, operational objectives, and local ownership. Here I draw a comparison between what the EU's objectives are strategically and operationally, and how these are realized on the ground based on academic articles, media reports, NGO assessments, and others. Local ownership is not considered in this study as this would again describe the interest misalignment between the principal and the agent, namely the local people and how they perceive the EU's engagement in Mali.

The data extracted through the primary and secondary sources is triangulated to "develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon" (Carter, 2014) and improve the validity of the research. Furthermore, the method I use for the case study is a desk-based within-case study, as this method is useful when analysing a current real-world phenomenon. As Robert Yin (2013, p. 16) writes: "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident". Focusing on this single case, which is "a single example of a larger phenomenon" (Gerring, 2011, p. 1136), I aim to draw conclusions for the EUTM Mali, but also to extend these conclusions to the larger phenomenon of the failure of LFMM. My objective is to draw conclusions from the discrepancy between political ambition of the MS and their contributions. This case study serves to identify how exactly this discrepancy is present to be able to examine how this can be prevented in future LFMM in other countries.

Part of the theoretical framework is complemented with semi-structured interviews by informants who are or were part of the EUTM in Mali, indicating that this thesis is not only theory-oriented but also practice-oriented. As Hermans and Schoeman (2015, p. 26) put it: "The strength of the practice-oriented research strategy is to develop knowledge about the improvement of practice". My choice of conducting semi-structured interviews with military personnel who are part of the EUTM in Mali is two-fold: First, the interviewees were present on the ground and could therefore evaluate the situation from another angle than someone from the outside who only observes the mission from a distance. Secondly, the problems of ineffectiveness of the EUTM are often outlined by various scholars and policy advisors but attention is never paid to the military perspective. Scholars and policy advisors point towards different types of recommendations of how to improve the mission, often not feasible in given times. However, it is primarily the military personnel who are executing the mandate, those who work with the MAFs and those who can see with their own eyes what can be realistically improved as often the goals of the EU Council do not suit the reality of staff on the ground. Furthermore, these interviews serve as an additional source of information besides the official national mandates. As stated by Deschaux-Beaume (2012, p. 103) interviews serve as:

> Obtaining first-hand information to the extent that most of the time the researcher does not have an extensive access to the grey literature or internal documents he or she would need, and having interesting access to military actors in a research context where secrecy and the very specific military language constitute an issue for the analyst.

Another reason for conducting semi-structured interviews is because they comprise the best of both worlds, meaning that while fixed questions can be prepared, there is also room for unplanned follow-up questions depending on how the interview evolves and depending on how much a soldier wants to disclose. This allows for the conversation to flow in a more natural way. Furthermore, having the opportunity for spontaneous questions and being more flexible also leaves room to go beyond superficial responses. As Berg (2001, p.70) claims: "questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress [and] probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions". Furthermore, concerning this research, it was also important to have a 'multiperspectival design' (Larkin et al., 2018) which means to have different perspectives on the same underlying phenomenon. It is of utmost importance not to interview military personnel from one particular nation but from the three largest contributors of the EUTM to receive their viewpoint on the situation on the ground and being able to draw meaningful comparisons. It was important to me to include the perspective of a Mission Force Commander (MFC), since he is the head of the mission. Unfortunately, I was not able to speak with a Czech, German, or Spanish MFC. Therefore, I decided to interview a MFC from a different nationality, which cannot be disclosed here.

The semi-structured interviews first contain broad questions about the interviewees' duration of their deployment in Mali and their role within the EUTM. Other questions focus on the national mandates and their implementation on the ground, the coordination of tasks between different MS and the complications within a multinational mission, the shortages of equipment and funding, the decision of the EU to extend the functions of the mandate, and the limitations that were experienced during their trainings and within the mission overall. The interviewees were selected based on several conditions, namely their nationality and military background. It was of utmost importance to me to interview informants who came from different military backgrounds, thereby encompassing different perspectives as different units can experience different challenges within the mission. I interviewed one Mission Force Commander, one Mission Deputy Commander, one Deputy Commander Training Task Force, one Human Intelligence Officer and Advisory Task Force Strategic Advisor, two Political Advisors to the Mission Force Commander, one Chief of the Logistics unit, one Chief of the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Unit, and one Public Affairs Officer. I contacted potential informants through LinkedIn and also used a snowball approach to get in touch with further interviewees. Lastly, I also had a personal conversation with Professor Adam Sandor, a renowned expert on armed conflict, stabilization, and armed groups in Mali to receive further insights into the problems present within the MAFs.

1.3. Ethical Concerns

Interviewing the defence field can be a challenging task as it is a non-transparent organization which must be approached with a lot of precaution. Therefore, taking ethical considerations into account was of utmost importance in this thesis. For this purpose, I considered several principles laid out by Bryman and Bell (2007). The first important principle is voluntary participation. Participation was voluntary and the interview could be called off at any time. In addition, the participants could choose not to answer a specific question whenever they were not willing to speak about a specific topic. Secondly, in accordance with Bryman and Bell's second principle, namely informed consent, all participants received all information concerning the interview and the interview questions before deciding whether they wanted to participate or not (Bhandari, 2021).

Thirdly, the protection of privacy, an adequate level of confidentiality, and anonymity of individuals needed to be ensured. In this context, one important challenge, but also limitation, when interviewing defence staff was not "leading them to breach their duty of confidentiality" (Deschaux-Beaume, 2012) while at the same time gathering meaningful information. One must bear in mind that military personnel can be reluctant or unable to share information, especially on subjects that concern potential failures within missions. Military personnel that is being interviewed may not want to talk about problems and obstacles that occured during their deployment in Mali as it is their employer who decides upon what is being done and they do not want to risk being in trouble. Since the participants that I interviewed were in active duty, some of their revelations about the situation on the ground could have been detrimental to their superiors or the national army in general, or to go further, even the EU. Therefore, it was of utmost importance to protect the participants and their respective country by offering full anonymity and not disclosing their first and last names, and their nationality. All information was handled in confidentiality and gathered only for the purpose of my master thesis. Lastly, permission was asked to voice record the interviews.

1.4. Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 2, I outline several existing arguments as to why external interventions and specifically LFMM fail. I then give a basic understanding of the PA Approach and how it is used to explain the efficiency of LFMM. I explain why the PA Approach is not sufficient to explain the failure of LFMM, thereby developing the theoretical framework I use to explain the lack of efficiency and problems of incoherence within the EUTM Mali. In Chapter 3, I apply the theoretical framework of efficiency and coherence to the case of the EUTM Mali and in Chapter 4, I contrast the results found in Chapter 3 with the results from the semi-structured interviews. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I provide an answer to my research question, summarize my main

findings, point to limitations encountered throughout my research and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2   Completing the Puzzle: The Alternative to LFMM as Principal-Agent Problem

In this chapter, I shed light on the thesis' theoretical background to create a basis for my argument. First, I discuss existing arguments provided by scholars as to why external military interventions are doomed to fail. Second, I connect this state of the art to a European perspective, elaborating on why European external interventions are prone to failure. Third, I point out existing arguments on why LFMM have not been successful so far, leading to the specific case of Mali and my contribution to this existing literature. Fourth, I present the foundations of the PA Model, then its relation to the inefficiency of LFMM and, lastly, why, despite being the dominant explanation, this model is still insufficient to explain the failure of LFMM. Finally, I present an alternative model that explains why LFMM is prone to failure. I then use this model for the analysis of my case in the next chapter.

2.1. Why External Interventions are Doomed to Fail

A certain ambiguity persists in the literature on external interventions. The dominant view is that intervening countries, namely economically and military advanced countries, only follow their own geopolitical interests and, therefore, further endanger civilians rather than helping them. Others argue that external interventions, especially military ones, can save many innocent people who fall victim to different kinds of actors, from armed non-state actors to dictatorial governments. Since the end of the Cold War, Western liberal states have frequently overridden the principle of sovereignty by intervening militarily into so-called fragile states, not only to stop human rights violations, but also to promote stability, peace, and security (Von Soest, 2018). The interventionism of Western liberal states has increased in the aftermath of 9/11 (Madej, 2018).

The Good Samaritan narrative has been more prevalent in the first post-Cold War decade, to justify interventions in Iraq (1990/1991), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995), and, partially, Kosovo (1999). The military interventions that followed in Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), or Libya (2011), have mostly contributed to the exacerbation of the conflict, thereby leading to an increase in civilian deaths. Besides, the US', Russia's, Iran's, and Turkey's decisions to intervene in Syria have been driven by their own interests instead of "[…] the devastating humanitarian costs of the conflict on the people in the country" (von Soest, 2018). The efficiency of these military interventions has decreased over the years as can be seen in the increase in civilian deaths and the escalation of the conflicts. But why is this the case? Based on experiences and mistakes made by interveners, should it not have led to an increase in efficiency?

Already the intervention in Kosovo was not considered a full success. Although the military intervention in Kosovo was often deemed as essential to stop the oppression of Albanians by the Serbian president Milosevic, it still faced major pitfalls (Morton, 2014). The Serbian army, which was occupying Kosovo at that time, was being bombed by NATO, which, eventually, accelerated the withdrawal of the Serbian

army. The bombings, however, did not result in immediate peace. The Serbians sought revenge. This revenge was not targeted at NATO due to the Serbians' inability to fire at NATO planes, but at Kosovar Albanians, thereby leading to a dramatic increase in ethnic cleansing. As seen above, military interventions therefore often generate a greater escalation of the conflict, causing even more civilian deaths and doing more harm than good:

> In the year before the intervention, around 1000 Kosovar Albanians were killed and 400,000 driven from their homes. During the bombings, however, the number killed dramatically increased to 10,000, whilst 863,000 were forced to leave Kosovo, with 590,000 internally displaced. (Morton, 2014, p.2)

A reason the efficiency of external intervention has decreased is that the goals and objectives set for the post-Cold War interventions were precise and narrow (Madej, 2018). The 'end state' was precisely defined with the strict objective of ending a specific situation, for example ending the oppression of Albanians in Kosovo. In addition, these goals were not only shaped by the idea of ending violence but focused on finding a political solution to the conflict through the enablement of an agreement that would incorporate all warring parties. A famous example is the Dayton Accords in Bosnia-Herzegovina which have been signed in 1995 by all parties involved, including Serbia, and heavily pushed by the US. Although the effectiveness of the peace agreement is disputed, at least it halted the violence between the three ethnic groups.

After 2001, interventions "[…] served to fulfil broader, far-reaching goals connected with a regime change and comprehensive reconstruction of the country" (Madej, 2018, p. 261). This makes these missions more complex and overly ambitious compared to those that were considered successful prior to 2001. Hence, incorporating a variety of ambitions into these post-2001 interventions without having a clear line or strategy has been extremely problematic. Likewise, Regan (1996) analyzes the conditions for a successful third-party intervention in intra-state conflicts and also emphasizes the need for a well-designed strategy.

One classic textbook example of a failed intervention after 2001 is the case of Iraq. While being driven by the US motivation to lead the 'war on terror' and to control Iraq's oil (Chapman, 2004), it turned out not being very successful. Firstly, the US had incomplete information. When suspecting Iraq of possessing weapons of mass destruction, the Bush administration failed to consider all the information available to them before the invasion. Weapons of mass destruction were never found in Iraq, meaning that the US invaded on false premises. Secondly, the US intervention in Iraq already failed before it even started. As O'Hanlon (2005, Missing: "Phase IV" in Iraq section, para. 10) claims:

> The war plan was seriously flawed and incomplete. Invading another country with the intention of destroying its existing government yet without a serious strategy for providing security thereafter defies logic and falls short of proper professional military standards of competence.

Thirdly, the US operated under the pretext of overthrowing the existing government to free the Iraqi people while at the same time, driven by the illusion of establishing a strong, democratic, and liberal state. However, Iraq's pre-invasion state capacity was completely dismantled by the US when eliminating Saddam Hussein. Many of the existing and competent civil servants had been supporters of Saddam Hussein's political party. Due to the US rejection of Hussein's government, these civil servants were suspended, leaving the country without any potential leaders within the government and the military forces (Fukuyama, 2005). The fall of Saddam Hussein and the destruction of the state apparatus without clear consistent plans and actions for the aftermath led to the destabilization of the whole country and a worsening security situation. This resulted in "[…] crippled Iraqi military forces, deep sectarian conflict and ethnic divisions, the empowerment of Sunni extremists, and the creation of a new war" (Cordesman, 2020, p.3).

Another prominent example of a failed military intervention is Afghanistan. In his article, Paris (2013, p. 538) tries to answer the question "What went wrong with the international effort to stabilize Afghanistan?" with the focus on why the US-led intervention in Afghanistan has failed. Initially, neither the US nor the UN intended to launch a large-scale intervention, meaning deploying a large number of soldiers into Afghanistan which would also include tasks such as nation-building. Yet, the intervention in Afghanistan by Western allies has turned out to be one of the largest military interventions in terms of economic costs and troop deployments besides Iraq and has nonetheless been coined the "failed war on terror" (O'Donnell, 2021), thereby showcasing the phenomenon of 'mission creep'. This phenomenon entails that operations that begin small, ultimately end big as "[…] the interveners' inability to solve the conflicts' root causes through military action led them to fall into investment traps wherein initially small military involvements turned into highly ambitious and long-lasting missions" (Malejacq and Sandor, 2020, p. 551). This phenomenon can be dangerous as deviating from the main goal and shifting towards a level of ambition that is simply not realizable may lead to an unwarranted complexity and a blurred end goal. For Paris (2013), the large-scale intervention could have been successful if it had used the window of opportunity at the beginning when Western states had a maximum of influence and local populations were still optimistic about the intervention. Therefore, the timing of large-scale interventions may be important in setting the conditions for its success.

Paris (2013) provides different and at the same time complementary insights as to why the external intervention in Afghanistan has failed. Firstly, Paris (2013) explains that the interveners did not only fail to understand the Afghan society, but that they did not even try to. Secondly, policymaking was hurried to find convenient solutions for each critical moment without considering the political context or thinking thoroughly about the long-term consequences of these decisions. One noticeable example was the choice of government the US and the UN wished to implement as part of an attempt of nation-building, namely a centralized government. This choice of government for Afghanistan, which had

already failed in the past, could have not been worse as Afghans severely demanded regional autonomy and wider political participation (Paris, 2013). This intervention was mostly based on pre-determined ideas striving for some degree of institutionalization. As Malejacq and Sandor (2020, p. 550) point out: "Foreign policy initiatives designed to respond to civil war situations almost inevitably draw on universalised templates familiar to most interveners".

In relation to this quote, Paris (2013) mentions an example made by Coburn (2011) which portrays how state legitimacy was not present in the town of Istalif. Local politics were organized differently and groups such as "[…] kinship groups and pottery guilds, religious leader, a new merchant class, and former militia groups" (p. 542) had more legitimacy in Istalif than the district governor and the police. This means that the Western idea of a unitary state which focuses on the formal, national state follows a different political logic than was present in Afghanistan, especially at the local level. Western ideas, not just in relation to Afghanistan, but also generally speaking, or goals that foreign actors consider 'good' (such as education) do not always equate peace (Autesserre, 2017). In turn, drug cultivation or corruption can provide positive outcomes depending on the context. This is why foreign interveners always need to acknowledge the context a country finds itself in and be open to any kinds of solutions, even if these options are against their liberal principles.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate that military interventions rarely contribute to the improvement of conflict-torn countries. The conflicts which sparked the military interventions initially, in many cases only become worse after foreign countries decide to intervene. According to some studies, military interventions even prolong the duration of civil wars (Sambanis and Elbadawi, 2000). Although each case is different, certain patterns of why external military interventions fail are clearly visible, namely the lack of a coherent strategy, the danger of mission creep resulting in overambitious objectives, the use of universal templates, the lack of local knowledge, and the pursuit of geo-political interests by interventionists having detrimental effects.

2.2. A Closer Look at European External Interventions

When we think of military or foreign intervention, we immediately think of the US and NATO, but less so of the EU. One reason may be due to the EU's low number of military missions. In total it has conducted 14 military missions since 2003. These military missions have changed throughout time. Firstly, military missions conducted by the EU started out with large deployments (Zajaczkowski, 2021), as with the European Union Force (EUFOR) Althea in Bosnia Herzegovina (7000 soldiers), EUFOR RD Congo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2259 soldiers) deployed, and EUFOR in Tchad (3700 soldiers). This changed with EUTM Somalia, the first military training mission initiated by the EU, with only 128 soldiers deployed. Today, EUTM Mali is the largest training mission with 640 soldiers compared to EUTM in the Central African Republic with 170 soldiers and EUTM Mozambique with

140 soldiers. Secondly, short-term operations evolved into long-term military training missions. EU military combat operations had short-term mandates with a duration of 3 months to maximum one year. Now, the mission mandates are implemented for two years and eventually renewed. Thirdly, the geographical scope of the mandates has changed. As Zajaczkowski (2021, p. 13) notes: "EU combat operations were geographically limited to one strictly defined area in their mandates, usually the capital city of a given country or region where the operation was stationed".

Today, the scope of the EUTM Mali for example has been extended not only across the country but also to other countries of the Sahel Region such as Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique. From 2008 on, when the European Security and Defense Policy changed to the CSDP, the EU's objectives concerning external interventions changed, focusing more on internal and border security. According to Zajaczkowski (2021), EU military operations have become more precautious concerning dangers during operations and therefore "[…] avoid risks, are limited in time, and generally are not very ambitious". He assigns this reluctance of deploying more soldiers and using battle groups on the ground to the internal pressure EU MS are confronted to.

Furthermore, EU missions have received a lot of criticism due to their lack of efficiency. This lack of efficiency can be accounted to a number of reasons, namely a lack of political will by the EU MS to increase their military capability, the discrepancy between what the MS want to achieve and what they are willing to provide in terms of material and personnel, and the ineffectiveness at the level of implementation. Understanding these factors will serve as a basis to comprehend why the EUTM Mali has also been considered unsuccessful.

Asseburg and Kempin (2009) look at how the EU can become a more effective actor regarding crisis management through strengthening its CSDP Missions and Operations. While the EU was effective in helping achieve peaceful settlements or in the management of conflicts such as in the Aceh Monitoring Mission and the EUFOR Dr Congo Operation, many other deployments conducted by the EU were less of a success. Already at the level of implementation of the missions and operations, the EU was not very efficient. Most of the times, the EU had major problems of rapidly deploying soldiers on the ground. Furthermore, deployments were often delayed as disagreements arose between MS concerning the mandates, the legal basis of deployments. Most importantly, MS showed a lack of political will to provide personnel. According to Asseburg and Kempin (2009), this was particularly present in missions that were pushed forward by one larger EU Member State while at the same time other MS were reluctant to realise these missions. These MS remained reluctant and expected the initiator to provide most personnel and resources to the mission as in the cases of EUFOR Chad/CAR and European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (Asseburg and Kempin, 2009).

Also, Nováky (2016) describes a mismatch of interests of the EU MS between on the one hand, wanting to be present in the missions but on the other hand, also being reluctant when it comes to investing in resources. Major and Mölling (2020) add that the EU is heavily under-equipped in military capabilities and has lost a minimum of 30% of its capabilities since the implementation of CSDP due to a lack of willingness of the MS to invest in it.

Fiott (2020) stresses that the EU's military level of ambition outlined by the Helsinki Headline Goals of 1999, namely to be able to deploy 60.000 ground troops within 60 days by the year of 2003, has never been achieved. Neither has a similar headline goal been set up for 2010. Fiott (2020, p. 116) blames the MS' lack of commitment for this failure, hinting to a clear discrepancy between rhetoric and reality, as "[…] no CSDP military operation or mission can be deployed without the Member States' capabilities". What seems quite paradoxical is that this goal has never been lowered by European leaders, it has always remained in place although MS show no political will.

2.3. Why Light-Footprint Military Missions are Set Up for Failure

The reasons mentioned above in the case of external interventions have shown why in recent years states have refrained from deploying large numbers of ground troops. While military interventions with a large footprint are often put in the spotlight regarding the violation of the principle of territorial integrity, LFMM have an advantage as they mostly focus on strengthening the national forces, thereby redirecting the responsibility to them rather than the other way around. As Williams (2021) claims: "By moving away from the negative connotations attached to large-scale interventions, [interventionists are] able to reproduce and relocate [their] war-making apparatus within the forces of local stakeholders involved in intrastate conflicts with minimal cost or risk". Yet, regardless of the increase in popularity of the LFMM, they have failed to be seen as a credible alternative. But why? This section presents several concerns that scholars have expressed.

Reno (2019) looks at the failures of SFA in fragile states, with Somalia as a case study. He argues that SFA is particularly problematic in states that lack a government willing to build effective security forces. In most cases, security forces in Somalia have links to terrorist or criminal networks, which, paradoxically, these security forces are supposed to counter. Due to these links, most Somalian soldiers are not willing to effectively reform the security forces, signaling an inherent problem in the Security Sector in fragile states which may not be possible to overcome simply through SFA.

Knowles and Matisek (2019) also add that in very fragile environments, armed forces can be part of a politicisation of armed groups, not influenced by the government as one would imagine, but by local strongmen, warlords, and militias. Since the armed forces may be connected to these powerbrokers, LFMM can potentially strengthen these actors instead, thereby resulting in further destabilization of the

state. One must also understand that soldiers who are part of the armed forces living in a fragile context first and foremost try to survive and be able to feed their families. Most of these soldiers already do not have fixed salaries, often times receive very low or late payments, in some cases even no payments, live in poor conditions, and lack basic supplies (Knowles and Matisek, 2019). As a result, they often try to survive through other possible ways, including "[…] bribery, corruption, extracting 'tolls' and 'fees' from citizens, selling war materiel, setting up informal business deals in conflict zones, abuse of prisoners, judicial/martial executions and 'liberal' (non-discriminatory) use of firepower around civilians" (Knowles and Matisek, 2019, p. 15). As a result, these activities ultimately weaken the fulfilment of the Western nations' main goal, namely to strengthen the capacities of the armed forces for them to be able to cope with armed challengers and protect civilians. Protecting civilians marks the last priority of armed forces in these fragile contexts.

Another but different point as to why LFMM fail is raised by Marsh et al. (2020). They claim that different SFA providers have different objectives, meaning there is no uniformity. Often, many different countries decide on providing training and advice to soldiers of the host state, all of which have different objectives in mind, leading to security force fragmentation. As Marsh and Rolandsen (2021, p. 617) claim, a large number of different SFA providers lead to "[…] tensions, rivalries and lack of coordination among diverse providers of Security Sector Reform to a variety of recipient states". Marsh et al. (2020) add that these providers may have diverging or often even overlapping goals, thereby leading the armed forces of the recipient country into different directions. Yet, these tensions between the different security providers are only part of the problem. A further problem is the discrepancy between what, on the one hand, politicians demand and, on the other hand, what military professionals can deliver (Enstad, 2020). As already mentioned, political aims often do not match with military practice on the ground. This is why this thesis aims at understanding where this discrepancy lies, especially within the case of the EU in order to formulate more realistic political ambitions.

2.3.1.   Short Overview of the Problems of Light-Footprint Military Missions in Mali

Several authors have examined why the EU potentially failed during its EUTM in Mali. Yet, these explanations are incomplete. Therefore, in this thesis, I provide a different explanation. For example, Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen (2020, p. 940) "examine how EU staff implement shifting policy objectives in their security practices in Mali". They view the EU as the sole implementor of policies and do not consider the different mandates provided by the various MS which are part of the EUTM. Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen (2020, p. 952) state: "[…] while the EU's activities in Mali reinforce the idea of the EU as a security actor, the limited character and impact of the EU's activities on the ground also reinforce the idea of it as a limited or even ineffective actor." Nevertheless, to fully understand the EU as a security actor and its ineffectiveness on the ground we cannot solely look at the EU as a whole. The EU's inefficiency must also be understood from the decisions and mandates the MS draw.

This also explains why the PA Theory is not sufficient to understand why LFMM fail as it only looks at one principal and one agent. The problem of ineffectiveness, however, also comes from the different principals, existing not only within the EU but also in Mali. For example, in 2018, troops from 64 countries were engaged in strengthening Mali's local forces (Marsh and Rolandsen, 2021). As stated by Marsh et al. (2020, p.23):

> There has been little coordination between the largest providers, the EU and US. Instead, in a rough division of labour the EUTM focused on improving infantry skills while the US built up military institutions by providing small numbers of officers with advanced training in the US.

Dennis M. Tull (2019) looks at the case of Mali and analyses the effectiveness of SFA by interviewing Malian military officials, government officials, academics, and civil society actors but also foreign interveners such as diplomats and former military advisers, trying to incorporate both perspectives, namely that of Malians as well as of foreign interveners, and provide a multifaceted view of the situation. It is important to have a full picture and to hear both sides to know what can be improved as a discrepancy between the two leads to less cooperation. This is also an important point policy-makers need to take into account when formulating the mandates in order to avoid a "dysfunctional partnership that none of the two sides has an incentive to leave" (Tull, 2019, p.1).

Unlike other authors (see Reno, 2019; Biddle et al., 2017), Tull (2019) does not explain SFA as a PA Problem characterized by interest asymmetries. He does not look at the interests misalignments but at how both parties perceive themselves and what kind of problems this creates. As he states: "Interveners tend to depict Malian counterparts as incompetent, corrupt, passive and in need of assistance, while Malians see foreign helpers as overbearing, paternalistic and self-interested". Malians perceive the EUTM training, for example, to be bound to elitist policies rather than to the needs on the ground (Marsh et al., 2020). Drawing on Tull's approach, it is important to look at this problem of perception and to have both sides presenting their views. Yet, within the scope of this research, it is also of great importance to look at one of the two sides in-depth to get a broader understanding of the situation. Putting both sides into one paper gives a good overview but is overall not detailed enough. Therefore, I aim to provide a broader knowledge at the side of the EU.

To understand why these LFMM are often situated in the same theoretical framework of PA Theory, the next section explains the general assumptions of this theory and its application to SFA, after which these will be challenged and presented with an alternative framework.

2.4. Principal-Agent Theory in Relation to Mali

The PA Problem is a theory that originates from microeconomics but can be applied to a different range of situations, also outside of economics, in which a principal delegates authority to an agent. This delegation is used as a cost-saving strategy, as it is cheaper for the principal to shift the authority to the

agent than by carrying out the work themselves. According to Gwinn (2022): "In such relationships between a principal and its agent or proxy, there exists an information asymmetry where the agent inherently has more information about their own capabilities, activities, and interests than the principal". The 'problem' is two-fold. First, it lies in the incentives of both the principal and the agent, as the principal's incentives are different from the agent's. Second, due to the information asymmetry, agents will exploit this benefit to their own advantage. The agents are often described as rational actors whose behaviour is guided by interest.

The PA Theory has been borrowed by political scientists to portray these relationships between "[…] elected officials and bureaucrats, legislators and committees, civil authorities and the military, domestic agencies and multinational organizations, or guerillas and state patrons, among many others" (Biddle et al., 2017, p.95). In the case of SFA, the principals, namely the foreign actors that train the soldiers or provide the material, delegate agency to the agents, that is, the local armed forces. The cost-saving strategy that is intended here is to strengthen the partners' military proficiency for them to be able to fight common threats (such as terrorism) without having to deploy many of their own soldiers who would then engage in combat. Even when the threats are disproportionate, since the partner country is directly affected by these threats and the provider country only indirectly, the Western states often deploy LFMM to prevent direct repercussions in their country. There is a widely-shared assumption among Western politicians and decision-makers that LFMM is effective because they serve the interests of both parties. However, this assumption is often mistaken. As Biddle et al. (2017, p. 100) explain in the US context:

> In fact, the kind of powerful, politically independent, technically proficient, noncorrupt military the US seeks is often seen by the partner state as a far greater threat to their self-interest than foreign invasion or terrorist infiltration. Increased military capability destabilizes the internal balance of power; diminished cronyism and corruption weaken the regime's ability to control the empowered officers.

In the case of Mali, this is not quite applicable as it has a military government which ultimately wants to increase the power of the military. Yet, it is also true that the stronger the MAFs become, the more likely it is that they will abuse their power and engage in even more human rights violations. This information asymmetry is even more problematic when the Malian soldiers are provided with material that they either resell (hence contributing to the war economy) or use in other contexts than training or combat. The more their military power is increased, the more it may lead to "[…] a privatization of violence, the rise of warlords, and the reproduction of exploitative, oppress statist disciplinary components intensified by militarized hierarchical systems of control" (Williams, 2021). Furthermore, as already stated, these soldiers may work closely with Jihadists. Enhancing their tactical and fighting capabilities may destabilize the power balance even more and lead to increasing the power of the Jihadists the SFA provider initially wanted to eradicate. As a result, the information asymmetry concerning Mali lies in the difficulties of monitoring how military training and equipment is used by the agents. As Malejacq and Sandor (2020, p.

555) state: "Interveners' knowledge is necessarily ambiguous and incomplete. This allows armed groups to position themselves as local experts and brokers with insider knowledge that interveners need but have a difficult time placing in context".

In this thesis, I do not aim at contradicting this view. It is certainly true that there are interest misalignments between the provider and the recipient and that this partly explains why LFMM are not effective. Nevertheless, this explanation is not sufficient to understand the whole picture. Another part of the puzzle is to consider that there is not solely one provider. In fragile contexts, such as in the case of Mali, many different providers co-exist on the ground. As Wilén (2021, p. 581) points out: "[…] the principal-agent approach often only focus on relations between one principal and an agent, while in reality, there are often several different principals providing assistance to the same agent, thereby suggesting a more complex relationship". In the case of the EUTM Mali, twenty-five members are participating (EUTM Mali, 2022). Each of these members constitute different providers to the MAFs and each of them can decide to what extent they want to contribute to this mission and how they want to contribute to it. Although the EU provides an umbrella mandate, the individual MS still have the freedom to pick and choose, potentially leading to a lacking coordination among the different participating nations, no homogeneity in the training and advice given to the Malian soldiers, and no homogeneity in the material provided to the MAFs.

In this thesis, I argue that a plethora of goals and ambitions coming from the different MS leads to a distressing situation on the ground, hence fostering ineffectiveness. Contrary to the PA approach, I do not look at the bilateral relation between the principal and agent but focus on the relation between the different principals. The ineffectiveness of LFMM and the limitations that the EUTM soldiers encounter during their deployment in Mali potentially stems from the decision-making process of the EUTM Mali. I take the middle ground, not analysing the relation between SFA providers and Malian soldiers, but the relation between the EU and its MS and what effect this has on the MS' soldiers who are executing the mandate.

2.5. The Alternative to the PA Approach – Coherence and Effectiveness

This section presents the theoretical framework used for this thesis, representing an alternative to the PA Approach which is usually used to study why LFMM fail. This theoretical framework of coherence and effectiveness was specifically designed by Peters et al. (2021) to measure the discrepancy between what the EU intends to achieve in fragile states such as Mali, Afghanistan, and Iraq as a global security actor and what it can possibly achieve.

2.5.1. How do Coherence and Effectiveness Serve as Alternative to the PA Approach?

As mentioned above, I aim to complete part of the puzzle as to why LFMM fail by providing an alternative to the PA approach. I do not intend to analyse the relation between the principal (the EU), and the agent (Mali), nor do I intend to study the relation between different non-EU SFA providers such as the US or Russia. In fact, I will analyse the relation between different principals, namely the different participating EU MS, thereby assessing the effectiveness of the EUTM in Mali. The goal is to understand that the problem of LFMM such as the EUTM Mali is not just the interest misalignment between the EU and the Malian authorities, but also the interest misalignment within the EU itself among the different MS.

To evaluate the EU foreign-policy effectiveness in the case of the EUTM Mali, I use the theoretical framework of Peters et al. (2021) of coherence and effectiveness. The primary aim is to examine to what extent the objectives within the EUTM Mali have been well-intended but, in turn, too overambitious compared to the MS contributions and thereby, have produced mixed results within the mission, leading to its ineffectiveness. This theoretical framework will also help to study how well the national mandates of the MS match the practices carried out by the soldiers on the ground to ultimately contribute to the improvement in capabilities of the MAFs.

2.5.2. Coherence and Effectiveness Explained

Before explaining this framework in detail and what the different indicators entail, we need to take a step back. The EU has often been portrayed as not acting effectively and coherently in its crisis management. But what exactly do effectiveness and coherence mean? Given that the EU consists of different actors, a high degree of coherence is even more important to guarantee synergy between the different policies, the different policy areas, and the different actors involved. There have been many attempts within the EU to improve their CSDP, one of them being the Treaty of Lisbon, as "[…] the main purpose of the treaty 'was to address the two points where we collectively were under-performing: to promote more unity amongst EU MS so that we have the necessary political weight; secondly, to forge more integrated strategies, so that we are more effective on the ground'" (Juncos, 2013, p. 42). Here the two concepts are already briefly mentioned: coherence as actor unity, meaning the different EU MS can agree more easily on specific policies and present themselves as one single voice; and effectiveness as being enhanced through clearer strategies. Thaler (2015, p. 29) in fact claims that coherence is a "[…] requirement towards more effectiveness in EU foreign policy". Yet, effectiveness is not automatically achieved through coherence (Juncos, 2013); the two are not mutually exclusive. The EU can achieve unanimity without achieving effectiveness and be effective without achieving unanimity of all MS on a given policy.

Juncos (2013, p. 46) defines coherence as "[…] the lack of contradictions between policies/institutions/instruments, plus a variable degree of synergy as a result of policies/institutions/instruments working together in order to achieve a common objective". For the theoretical framework used in this thesis, coherence is divided into two different categories, namely horizontal and vertical coherence. First, horizontal coherence means "coherence between EU policies" (Juncos, 2013, p. 47), meaning that different EU policies cannot contradict each other. Vertical coherence depicts "coherence between EU and Member States' policies" (Juncos, 2013, p. 47) and the extent to which the MS' policies reinforce EU crisis management by speaking through one voice. One must keep in mind that full coherence in these categories is practically impossible to achieve, not just within the EU, but in all centralized governments, even on the national level (Juncos, 2013). According to Nuttall (2005), full coherence would only be possible in a pure dictatorship.

While coherence can be clearly categorized, this is less the case for effectiveness, which is a fuzzy concept that can be defined differently depending on the eye of the beholder. Most of the literature (Thomas, 2012; Laatikainen & Smith, 2006) analyses effectiveness as an actor's ability to achieve the goals set on a given issue. For example, van Schaik (2013, p.9) defines effectiveness as "[…] the extent to which the EU reaches the main goals of its position in the results of international negotiations". Similarly, Thomas (2012, as cited in Mutluer, 2018, p. 8) defines effectiveness in the context of the EU as "[…] the Union's ability to shape world affairs following the objectives it adopts on particular issues". Effectiveness can therefore also be seen as how well the EU performs regarding the maintenance of its policy goals. . Therefore, effectiveness here is defined as to what extent the declared aims outlined by the EU in its mandate were achieved and see whether the EU's practice matches its rhetoric.

2.5.3. Effectiveness Indicators and Application to the Case of EUTM Mali

Having defined coherence and effectiveness, I can now move on to the theoretical framework outlined by Peters et al. (2021). The main goal of using this framework is to examine which promises the EU makes to both the recipient country, in this case Mali, and the citizens of the MS concerning the EUTM in Mali, and which promises it can keep in the end. I closely examine three effectiveness indicators concerning EU crisis management, namely effectiveness as actor coherence, effectiveness as process coherence, and impact effectiveness.

Actor coherence considers vertical coherence and is used first to investigate how united the EU is in formulating its foreign policy on the output level and, secondly, the evolution of mandates on the outcome level (Peters et al., 2021). As argued by Peters et al. (2018a, p. 6): "Since the EU is a multiple-actor policy maker this question aims at identifying and balancing relevant incidents (…) of vertical (in-)coherence/ (dis-)unity that is between EU institutions and EU Member States". Furthermore, as Peters et al. (2021, p. 169) put it: "Actor unity on the output level is an indispensable precondition for any

mission mandate". It is important that the different MS can agree on the mandate through a unified approach. Actor unity comes with a lot of compromises internally across the different MS but also between the MS and the EU institutions. Yet, the agreement on the EU mandate through the MS is only the first step. The EU mandate only serves as an umbrella framework for the MS' own national mandates regarding the EUTM Mali. Only afterwards do the MS decide which points of the EU mandate they include in their own mandate. Therefore, every national mandate can be different depending on the political will of the MS. With the help of actor coherence, I analyse to what extent the national mandates of the MS differ among themselves, but also between the EU mandate and the national mandates. This permits to see to what degree there is synergy between the Member States in achieving the common goal of making the MAFs more effective, and how much the MS preferences deviate from the one's of the EU. For the analysis of actor coherence, I compare the national mandates of the three largest EUTM Mali contributors, namely Germany, Spain, and Czech Republic.

Additionally, concerning the evolution of the mandates on the outcome level, it is important to consider that depending on how often a mandate is adapted or expanded, it shows that the EU is able to find a common response to changing security situations. Therefore, I examine how often the EUTM Mali has adapted its mandate concerning the changing security environment and its adjusting policy priorities.

Process coherence is only partly used in this thesis. The first part of process coherence looks at institutional coherence. Nevertheless, institutional coherence plays a smaller role within this thesis as CSDP largely remains under strict control of the EU MS for two reasons: First, training missions such as the EUTM Mali depend on voluntary staff contributions by the MS, and second, launching CSDP missions demand unanimity by all MS (Bergmann and Müller, 2021). The second part of process coherence incorporates the goals the EU sets out in the beginning during its policy formulation and questions how these goals are transformed into practice. Often, a successful policy implementation is hampered by the fact that there is little or no procurement of material and equipment. In addition, limited budgets and the lack of mission personnel create problems for the effectiveness of the missions (Peters et al., 2021). For this reason, in the next chapter I analyse whether the material, equipment, budget, and personnel the EU provides is suited in relation to what the EU wants to achieve with the EUTM Mali.

Lastly, impact effectiveness examines whether the EU is able to transform the conflict and has or had an impact. This impact is measured through analysing the EU's strategic and intermediate objectives, operational objectives, and local ownership and comparing these to what has been realized on the ground. As already mentioned earlier, local ownership is not considered here as this would describe the interest misalignment between the mission provider and the local population, portraying the PA Theory. Impact effectiveness measures "the overall impact on resolving the problems identified in mandates and designated to be "cured" by specific policy actions taken" (Peters, 2015, p. 26). Therefore, most importantly, I analyse to what extent the EUTM has improved the Malian soldiers' battlefield

effectiveness in fighting armed insurgents. Furthermore, I examine in which way the internal problems within the MAFs have posed an obstacle to the improvement of their capabilities and what kind of internal problems have hampered the EUTM Mali from achieving its goals.

This chapter lays the theoretical foundation for the third chapter in which I apply the theoretical framework presented here to the case of the EUTM in Mali. I have shown throughout this chapter that the PA Approach is not the sole approach to understand why LFMM in conflict-affected countries fail, thereby providing an alternative to the PA Approach. Instead of studying the interest misalignments between the principal (EU) and the agent (Mali), I have explained why it is necessary to take a closer look at the internal complications within the principal and to what extent they constitute a further explanation for the failure of LFMM.

Chapter 3   Coherence and Effectiveness Framework Applied to the Case of EUTM Mali

In this chapter, I apply the theoretical framework of coherence and effectiveness established by Peters et al. (2021) to the case of the EUTM Mali. The goal in this chapter is to examine whether the argument I set out in the beginning can be (dis)approved. The argument goes as follows: Up until now, as outlined in the previous chapter, several authors used the PA Approach to explain why LFMM fail, arguing that interest misalignments between the provider and the agent are the main cause of failure. In contrast, by using the theoretical framework by Peters et al. (2021), my goal is to see whether there is another explanation as to why LFMM are prone to failure, namely through the interest misalignments solely within the provider, which in this case is the EU. The interest misalignments within the EU are inherent to its multi-actor structure as the different MS have different policy interests, different priorities, and varying degrees of how much they want to contribute to a specific mission. These varying degrees of political will between the MS can lead to incoherence within the EUTM Mali, thereby affecting the effectiveness of the mission. To examine how exactly this incoherence is present within the training mission, I use the three effectiveness indicators presented within the theoretical framework, namely effectiveness as actor coherence, effectiveness as process coherence, and impact effectiveness.

3.1. Effectiveness as Actor Coherence on the Output Level

The first effectiveness indicator is effectiveness as actor coherence on the output level. In this chapter, a distinction is made between actor coherence on the output level and actor coherence on the outcome level. While the meaning of the outcome level is explained in the next section, the output level refers to the process of policy formulation.

In February 2013, the EU launched EUTM Mali, a CSDP military training mission (Council Decision 2013/87/CFSP, 2013) "[…] to help restore peace in Mali and curb the threats posed by the insurgent groups" (Ibrahim, 2019, p. 62), upon invitation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2085. Although the EU published a mandate which sets out specific objectives and describes how the EU intends to achieve these objectives, the mandate is not binding to the MS. It can serve as a framework but the extent to which the MS want to contribute to the mission in terms of resources and personnel ultimately lies within their national executive powers and voluntary commitments (Okemuo, 2017). It is during the policy formulation process of the training mission that it becomes visible why the MS participate in the mission, and how much they want to contribute to realize their policy objectives. Part of my argument is that the different interest misalignments are reflected in the differences in political will and contributions, and these may directly translate into how EUTM staff works on the ground, potentially leading to incoherence. Therefore, the first step is to analyse what Germany's, the Czech Republic's, and Spain's reasons are to participate in the EUTM Mali, what their political objectives are, and how much personnel and resources they contribute to the mission.

3.1.1. Germany

This section outlines Germany's reasons for participating in the EUTM Mali and its objectives, which afterwards are compared to the ones of Spain and the Czech Republic. Germany's level of political will and its respective political interest in Mali has shifted over the years. In 2011, Germany, along with other EU MS such as Poland, or Finland were resisting the idea of establishing a military mission in Mali while other MS such as France, Italy, and Spain pushed to deploy a CSDP mission in the Sahel (Ibrahim, 2019). One incident which made Germany, Poland, and Finland overthink their reluctance was in November 2011 when five Europeans were kidnapped by the so-called Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and one German tourist was killed. From then on, the MS realized that Islamist insurgent groups and Tuareg groups in Mali would soon outnumber the Malian Army if the EU would not intervene militarily. Yet, even with the outbreak of the Malian crisis whereby "[…] independentist Tuareg groups in Northern Mali started a campaign against the Malian government, which was further destabilized by a military coup in March 2012" (Lopez Lucia, 2017, p. 10), France was the only country which decided to unilaterally intervene militarily with Operation Serval to drive out Islamists from the North of Mali and gain back control of the territory.

Originally, the Sahel region was of little interest to Germany and the German population. Germany had no historical or colonial ties in the region and the Sahel region did not represent a direct terrorist threat nor was inhabited by a significant number of German citizens (Koenig, 2016). Before 2012, Germany only provided humanitarian and development aid to the region. With the deteriorating security situation in Mali in 2012 through the Tuareg uprising, the coup d'état and the following Islamist insurgency, German Chancellor Angela Merkel first expressed her concerns for the region in a speech, fearing Mali could become a safe haven for terrorism, and voiced "[…] Germany's willingness to contribute to the EUTM Mali" (Koenig, 2016, p. 128). The speech ultimately divided the debate into two camps. On the one hand were those in favour of contributing to EUTM Mali. For example, Development Minister Dirk Niebel feared that Mali would turn into a second Afghanistan and Foreign Minister Westerwelle warned that Mali could become a hotspot for terrorists (Koenig, 2016), thereby seeing it as a main priority to contribute to the EUTM in Mali.

On the other hand were those strictly against contributing to EUTM Mali. Many diplomats and politicians remained reluctant to Germany becoming part of the EUTM Mali, claiming that the threats in form of terror export and organized crime would not directly impact Europe at the time, that they did not want to support French interests in the region, and that deploying trainers to an open conflict area was too risky. Nevertheless, in the end, it was the French-German relationship, characterized by Germany and France being the two main pillars in the EU, that increased Germany's contribution in the region. Due to Germany's previous abstention from the UNSC vote on a no-fly zone over Libya, Germany had been

highly criticized by the international community as being the only EU country against this decision and therefore, seen as an unreliable partner. In the case of Mali, Germany decided on a different trajectory as opposed to the one in Libya, thereby assisting its main European partner, and proving alliance solidarity towards France. In the words of Koenig (2016, p. 129): "Germany's swift provision of two Transall aircraft for the transport of ECOWAS troops to Bamako thus represented an important political signal". From then on, Germany's position towards Mali and the Sahel region became clear.

As part of its own contribution towards EUTM Mali, the Bundestag decided, in February 2013, to deploy 180 of its own soldiers: "Of these, 80 soldiers were earmarked for training engineering units and up to 100 soldiers for logistical and administrative services on the ground and medical services" (Dicke, 2014, p. 102). With every year that followed, Germany increased its number of soldiers deployed, reaching 600 soldiers in 2021, thereby becoming the largest contributor to the EUTM Mali (Bundeswehr, 2022a). Germany's very first national mandate (17/12367) mentions three main reasons for intervening in Mali: terrorism, migration, and improving the capabilities of the Malian army, as demanded by Malian President Traoré. The German contribution is noted as follows:

> Within the multinational framework of EUTM Mali, the German share will assume the task of pioneer training. This can build on the military training and equipment support already provided to Mali in the past. The aim of the training support is to provide Malian pioneers with sufficient basic skills to enable them to perform tactical tasks within the Malian armed forces. In addition, Germany is also providing medical services for EUTM Mali and is supporting the area of medical training. (Bundestag Mandate, 2013, p.5)

Over time, the military capabilities that Germany was providing for EUTM Mali increased. These military capabilities were clearly outlined within the German national mandates concerning the EUTM Mali. Whereas in 2013 Germany provided "Leadership and leadership support, consulting and training, logistical and other support, clarification, medical supply and care, and safety and protection" (Bundestag Mandate, 2013, p. 2) for the EUTM in Mali, in 2021, Germany additionally issued "military intelligence, situation picture generation and provision, including situation picture exchange with all stakeholders and relevant organizations and institutions to fulfill the mission, operative communication, and liaison" (Bundestag Mandate, 2021, p. 2). Adding these types of military capabilities clearly shows the German willingness as part of the EUTM Mali to contribute to the fight against terrorism and enhance the MAFs' capabilities to gather intelligence. Another factor that played an important role from 2014 onwards was the arrival of the migrant crisis in Europe. Germany had no other choice but to increase its footprint in Mali to contain possible consequences on European ground. Its main concerns were the spread of terrorism through the influx of migrants and the increase in organized crime.

In May 2022, two years after the implementation of the 5th mandate, Germany decided to decrease its engagement in Mali for several reasons: First, the lack of a civilian-led government, second, due to the withdrawal of the French military in Mali, and third, due to the arrival of mercenaries from the

paramilitary Wagner group who are also involved in the training of Malian soldiers. As a result, the German Bundestag decided to decrease the number of German soldiers deployed in Mali, from 600 to 300 soldiers and thereby reduce its share to a minimum. For the time being, Germany will only provide staff – and advisory personnel, but no training personnel anymore (Bundeswehr, 2022a). Germany is reluctant to continue its engagement within the EUTM Mali and is increasingly shifting its focus to the neighbouring country Niger.

3.1.2. Spain

Spain was one of the countries, besides France and Italy, to show its firm commitment to the establishment of EUTM Mali and remained strongly involved throughout the years. Spain's main concern in the region, similar to Italy, is migration, followed by (and related to) the spread of terrorism. Gwennaël and Komena (2019, p.2) state: "The irregular sub-Saharan migration that arrives to Spain starts mainly from Mali, which today is – along with Niger – one of the vital knots of African migrations to Europe". For example, in 2013, Spain received 1,470 asylum applications coming from Mali (Heinemann, 2017). Mali is also on the main route for migratory flows coming from West African countries, especially from Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, as migrants pass through Mali to reach Morocco and then to Spain. The problem with migration is not just simply the current migratory flows, but rather that these migratory flows are connected to Malian migrants who came to Spain in the late 2000s. Migratory inflows from Mali may increase as families and friends want to join them, thereby enlarging these migratory networks (Sandor, personal communication, 2022).

On January 30th in 2013, the Spanish Congress authorized the deployment of approximately 50 soldiers to Mali. Six months later, the number of servicemen increased following the Council of Ministers agreement in June 2013 "[…] due to greater Spanish involvement in instruction and training activities" (La Moncloa, 2018). Therefore, Spain deployed 30 soldiers to Bamako and 152 soldiers to Koulikoro to protect European soldiers against external attacks (Alcalde, 2014) and an advisory team for training purposes as part of the Advisory Task Force.

Since 2013, the Spanish contingent within the EUTM Mali has proportionally increased, becoming the largest contingent in 2021 with 600 Spanish military personnel deployed in Mali to help with "security, training, protection, air transport and advisory tasks" (Spanish Defense Ministry, 2021). For example, to improve air transport, as set out in the missions' fifth mandate, Spain approved of sending three NH-90 helicopters in 2021. Although Spain is involved in most units within the training mission, Spain's main task within the EUTM Mali is to be part of the Protection Force, mostly in the training camp in Koulikoro.

Yet, despite its intensive engagement within the training mission, Spain decided to reduce its activity. While in December 2021, 600 Spanish soldiers were deployed, the Spanish government now decided to

reduce its number to 400. It is being rumoured that with the next rotation in November the Spanish government may even reduce the number by half for the same reasons as mentioned in the German case (Masoliver, 2022).

3.1.3. Czech Republic

One of the most surprising contributors to EUTM Mali is the Czech Republic. Making the Sahel, and in particular Mali, a priority in its foreign policy has been a strategic choice. The Czech Republic was previously engaged in CSDP missions in the East, such as EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia, and in the Middle East such as the NATO mission in Afghanistan (Horký-Hlucháň et al., 2021). What explains this increasing interest in the Sahel? Firstly, Czech decision-makers became aware that the security situation in Mali was deteriorating and that Europe would not remain unaffected by these developments. For example, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tomáš Petříček, labelled Mali as a "fortress of terrorists on our doorstep" and the Chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces, Aleš Opata, portrayed Mali as a "time bomb" (Řehák and Kučera, 2020, p. 11). Another contributing factor as to why Czech decision-makers wanted to increase their presence in the Sahel is related to the NATO mission in Afghanistan, namely International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Czech government reduced the number of Czech servicemen deployed in Afghanistan due to the ending of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Yet, the Czech military still had many resources available that were initially used for ISAF. These resources were more suitable for the type of mission in the Sahel, such as the EUTM Mali, than for the missions present in the Balkans (Horký-Hlucháň et al., 2021). In addition, it was important for the Czech Republic to be seen as a credible partner alongside Germany and France. Through its engagement in the Sahel, it proved to be a "[…] relevant and responsive contributor to the EU's security even outside the neighbourhood areas of Czechia's traditional interest as also vis-à-vis Germany and the Southern member states" (Horký-Hlucháň et al., 2021, p.12).

The Czech deployment started out with 50 soldiers sent to Mali, and increased yearly. In 2015, the Czech soldiers in EUTM Mali were mostly responsible for protecting the mission headquarters, escorting persons, and convoys, and only minimally responsible for the training of Malian soldiers (Rudincová, 2018). Therefore, the first Czech soldiers deployed in Mali were mostly on protection duty guarding the headquarters in Bamako. Only six months later did the Czech government send 16 more instructors for training purposes (Dicke, 2014).

In 2018, the Czech Republic published its strategy to support the stabilization and development of the Sahel countries for the period 2018-2021, thereby emphasizing its interest in the region. The Czech government's growing interest in the Sahel region was made even more apparent by its support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force, providing financial support and training (Rudincová, 2018). As a result, the Czech government has increased its focus on the region as a whole, while at the same time still focusing on

Mali. This is also evidenced by the country's financial contributions: in 2018, the Czech Ministry of Defence gifted 370,096 Euro to the Joint Forces of the G5 Sahel, specifically to the Malian battalion, to purchase light ballistic protection equipment; in 2018 it also donated 1 million euros to "[…] support the building of G5 Sahel Joint Forces units in the field of protection against the effects of improvised explosive devices" (Czech Parliament, 2020, p. 17). Compared to Spain and Germany, the Czech Republic maintains its current position within the EUTM Mali despite the political developments and the Russian presence within the country.

For now, with regard to actor coherence, there is no evidence for actor disunity between the different MS which would prove any incoherence within the EUTM Mali, except for the continuation of the Mission. During the decision-making process for the establishment of the EUTM Mali, the three MS had different reasons to engage in the training mission. Yet, overall, the three MS have the same overall goal, namely protecting Europe from any possible spillover effects that emerge through the conflict in Mali and thereby showing an increasing political will with regard to their contributions to the mission.

It is not possible yet to say whether certain difficulties were present between the three nations when carrying out their tasks within the EUTM Mali and to see whether these difficulties may have led to an incoherent structure on the ground and inconsistent training and advice for Malian soldiers. As a result, my goal for the next chapter is to complete this missing piece of the puzzle with the help of interviews with EUTM soldiers from Germany, Spain, and the Czech Republic who can share their experience.

3.2. Effectiveness as Actor Coherence on the Outcome Level

In this section I examine whether any incoherence was present between the MS regarding the renewal of the EUTM mandates on the policy level. At the same time, I outline what kind of changes were made throughout the years and what exactly the EU tried to improve.

Effectiveness as actor coherence on the outcome level is measured through the capacity of the EU crisis response to adapt to changing conflict environments through evolving mandates. In the words of Peters et al. (2018b, p. 35): "[…] changing mandates (…) may be taken as positive indicators of an intrinsic-lessons-learned approach and flexibility; but it could also be taken as indicating insufficient expertise (…) prior to engagement requiring policy adjustments". Adapting mandates can be seen in a positive light. It can mean that EU decision-makers realize that the security situation changed and that the mandate needs to be modified for a more efficient response to the new challenges. It can also mean that the MS can find a common response to changing contexts, thereby indicating a strong degree of coherence, especially since all countries in the Council need to vote unanimously (EU Monitor, 2022). Yet, altering mandates also means that the parameters set in the previous ones were not effective enough.

Over the period from 2013 to 2022, the Council of the EU adapted the EUTM's mandate four times in total. Firstly, because the mandate was only valid for a period of two years and needed to be renewed and, secondly, because the mandate was strategically reviewed by the Council of the EU and adapted to the current needs on the ground. The core of the overall mandate remained largely the same, namely, to provide training and advice to the MAFs with the main goal of making them self-sufficient to fight insurgent groups within the country and restore territorial integrity. The first mandate was adopted for a period of 15 months and only allowed for the provision of training in the South of Mali (Council Decision, 2013). As mentioned previously, this mandate was, and still is, a non-executive mandate, meaning that EUTM soldiers are not allowed to take part in combat operations. The EU hoped to improve the MAFs operational capacities through the provision of "training and advice on command and control, logistical chain and human resources, as well as training on International Humanitarian Law, protection of civilians and Human Rights" (EUTM, 2022). Lastly, the mandate also emphasized the importance of working closely with partners such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN). The second mandate was approved under Council Decision 2014/220/CFSP and remained largely the same with a prolongation of almost two years instead of 15 months (Council Decision, 2014).

The third mandate was adapted according to the changing security environment. The changes were made to respond to criticisms the mission encountered. One of these criticisms was that the mission was operating too far away from the unstable Northern areas of Gao and Timbuktu where most of the attacks were happening. The goal was to "[…] move closer to the [MAFs] troops and their areas of operations, effectively providing decentralized training activities to units and army headquarters of the various military regions" (Tull, 2020a, p. 4). What is more, there was an intensification of efforts in the whole Sahel region by the EU. These efforts were visible through the support for the newly established G5 Sahel, whereby the EUTM's mandate was broadened to not solely focus on Mali. This adaptation of the mandate showed that the EU recognized that extremism and violence were not only present in Mali, but that the whole region was increasingly affected by a surge of violent attacks by insurgents, including in Niger and Burkina Faso. The fourth mandate did not entail any changes except for a prolongation of the mandate until May 2020.

The fifth and last mandate has brought several other improvements and has been the outcome of intensive strategic review of the MS. First, the area of operation is no longer restricted to specific regions: it now includes all of Mali, thereby conducting decentralized training activities. Decentralizing the trainings means that Malian soldiers are not necessarily forced to come to the EUTM's training camps such as in Koulikoro but can receive training in their areas of operations where most of the violent incidents happen. This means EUTM soldiers can be more flexible regarding the Malian soldiers' needs and better evaluate what kind of training is needed in the specific environment the MAFs are operating

in. As Tull (2020b, p.1) claims, the purpose is "[…] to reduce transaction costs and to generate better knowledge in order to facilitate more appropriate, adapted and effective training and advice". Accompaniment into the field by EUTM soldiers is only allowed in secured locations. Furthermore, the mandate was extended for the first time for a period of four years which portrays a long-term instead of a short-term vision by the EU.

As seen at the beginning of this section, changing mandates can be perceived either in a positive or negative light, namely either as an intrinsic lessons-learned approach where the Council of the EU learned from its past mistakes and is willing to improve these, or as lacking necessary expertise. Yet, in the case of the EUTM Mali, the changes made throughout the years illustrate that there is an overall degree of political willingness to expand the activities of the EUTM soldiers to the advantage of the MAFs and to make their training more efficient. As all MS approved the change time and time again and could make a concerted political effort, it also means that a high degree of coherence was present between the MS to find a common ground in how to approach the criticisms directed at the EUTM Mali. The MS showed a proactive approach by identifying problems on the ground and working towards an improvement to potentially make the trainings more beneficial to the MAFs. In the next chapter, the interviews help me determine whether the changes in the mandates were really beneficial to the MAFs and to the overall training mission or not.

3.3. Effectiveness as Process Coherence

In this section, I examine whether there is a discrepancy between the material, equipment, budget, and personnel and the goals the EU wants to achieve, thereby hinting to a certain degree of incoherence. A lack of material, equipment, and personnel and a non-sufficient budget can impact the effectiveness of the mission and be disadvantageous for the EUTM soldiers when carrying out their tasks within the mission.

A consistent problem that has been known since the beginning of the EUTM is the MAFs' lack of equipment and at the same time also the poor quality of the equipment that they utilize in their own trainings and operations. Yet, if the EU wants the Malian army to become self-sustaining and capable of defending their territory and civilians, a provision of equipment would be highly needed. Nevertheless, the EU's funding mechanism has never allowed to provide equipment (in particular weapons) to the MAFs.

At the same time, since its inception, the EUTM Mali has been considered a well-financed mission, especially as the EU increased its budget with every new mandate. This opinion was shared by General François Lecointre, the former Chief of the Defence Staff:

On the European side, what I found great in the EUTM Mali mission was (. . .) once the contingents were set up, the Athena funding mechanism allocated us a lot of operating resources. This means that in reality, if we have a clear idea of what we want to do, if we have the sense of initiative and that we propose field solutions that work, Europe is ready to invest itself. (Assemblée Nationale, 2019, as quoted in Trichilo, 2019)

While the mission started out with a budget of 12,3 million euros in 2013, over the years, the EU steadily increased the missions' budget, reaching a sum of 133,7 million euros in the last mandate (2020-2024), thereby exhibiting a clear financial commitment. Especially compared to other training missions, EUTM Mali has a considerable budget. In 2020 EUTM Somalia had a budget of 22,9 million euros (Council of the European Union, 2018a) and EUTM RCA had a budget of 25,4 million euros (Council of the European Union, 2018b), which is almost five times smaller than the Malian EUTM's budget.

Lastly, in terms personnel, there is a gap between what has been mandated and what could be provided. Although financial resources were available, it was difficult to find enough soldiers to fill in all the mandated positions. For example, in 2019, the Advisory Task Force only had 28 out of 50 advisers (Tull, 2020a). Similarly, in its strategic review of the EUTM Mali in 2022, the European External Action Service pointed out important manning shortfalls, with the Advisory Task Force being manned at only forty percent (EEAS, 2022).

In this section, I have shown that, the EU shows a greater commitment to the EUTM Mali in terms of its budget compared to other training missions in other African countries. Yet, important shortages regarding personnel and equipment are present within the mission, thereby impacting the quality of the training of the MAFs. While the lack of equipment is a problem that does not solely depend on the EU as the Malian state is also responsible for providing its army with appropriate equipment and weapons, the lack of EUTM personnel is a problem caused by the individual participating MS who may not be willing to deploy enough personnel. Therefore, my goal in the next chapter is to shed light on why the MS seem reluctant to deploy a sufficient number of soldiers.

3.4. Impact Effectiveness

Impact effectiveness measures the impact the EUTM Mali has had on training the MAFs and improving their military capabilities. Impact effectiveness is an important part in assessing the overall effectiveness of the mission and to see how exactly internal, but also external factors have hampered the EUTM's efficiency.

The main goal of the EU is to train Malian soldiers to restore territorial integrity and increase their competence to combat armed militants. When solely looking at numbers, one could argue that EUTM Mali is a sensation. Over 15.000 Malian soldiers have been trained over the past nine years, "[…] not only combat battalions (GTIA) for immediate deployment but also smaller tactical units, company commanders and trainers" (Schmauder et al., 2020). Yet, it is less about the quantity of the training than

it is about the quality. The quality of training is not only hampered by structural problems within the Malian army, but also by the way the trainings are set up and the mission is organized.

For the most part, Malian forces have not managed to drive out militant groups out of their country and contain terrorism. For example, JNIM and ISGS have consistently reaffirmed their presence in Mali by attacking security forces as well as civilians, especially in the northern and central parts of the country where violent conflict has flared up repeatedly. Violent attacks have increased over the past years and "2020 has been the deadliest year of militant Islamist violence in the Sahel, with an estimated 4,250 fatalities, an increase of 60 percent from 2019" (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2020). The increase in violence makes it difficult for the MAFs to combat these militant groups, especially because of the MAFs lack of personnel.

Nevertheless, JNIM and ISGS are not the only militant groups located in the north. Confrontations between the MAFs and Tuareg rebel groups are also common. One example is an incident in Kidal in 2014 in which EUTM-trained Malian soldiers were attacked by Tuareg rebels. Instead of fighting, the soldiers decided to flee, not only because they were smaller in number, but also because their equipment was of a much lower quality than their attackers'. This incident resulted in the death of several soldiers, indicating a clear weakness within the MAFs. Yet, some EUTM Mali staff also remark small progresses. African army expert Laurent Touchard notes that "[…] since 2015 the [MAF] units show a better standing in fighting, for example expelling a night attack at the city of Boni" (Müller, 2018).

The short duration of EUTM trainings is a factor contributing to the insufficient quality of training and consequently, to the little improvement in battlefield effectiveness. The MAFs may be able to acquire basic skills, but these skills may not ameliorate their tactical competencies (Tull, 2020a). As stressed by Peters et al. (2018, p. 24): "What to accomplish within twelve-week courses in view of the challenges at hand? As training and creating leadership skills need time, these short 'train the trainer' or 'train leaders' courses are likely to fall short of sustainable changes of the culture of security management". This may not be entirely the EU's fault as the MAFs are extremely low in personnel and, as a result, need to be trained while remaining operational for when they are required in combat. It is therefore no surprise that the Malian soldiers who are receiving training within the training mission are often low in number and exhausted (Tull, 2020a). Having only approximately 16.500 active soldiers within the MAFs is quite problematic for a country of more than a million square kilometres bordering seven different countries (Colomba-Petteng, 2021). Even smaller countries like Senegal and Mauritania have much larger armies.

Nevertheless, 2020 has not only been the deadliest year regarding terrorist attacks but also attacks on civilians carried out by the MAFs: "Mali has an army – trained and financed by the EU and France – whose extrajudicial killings and human rights violations are driving the same radicalisation and extremism it is supposed to be combatting" (The New Humanitarian, 2021). The massacre in Moura is a clear

example of the ill-treatment of the civilian populace by the MAFs (see Chapter 1). Human Rights Watch (2017) has also reported that, since 2016, the MAFs: "[…] have committed extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary arrests against men accused of supporting Islamist armed groups". The consequence of this is a lack of credibility of the MAFs in the eyes of the population, which is the opposite of the EU's initial goal. Militants use the MAFs' alienation from the civilian population as a window of opportunity to recruit fighters.

Therefore, a gap exists between the EUTM's training and whether this training is successfully implemented afterwards by the MAFs or if they use their acquired proficiency against civilians. This gap is present as no monitoring and human resources system exists within the MAFs. As the Social Democratic Party of Germany (2021) argues in a position paper, informing about human rights is not enough and must be complemented with monitoring by EUTM Mali. EUTM Mali lacks a follow-up mechanism after training which thus prevents the trainers from assessing how the knowledge the MAFs acquired through the training is implemented (Colomba-Petteng, 2021). The lack of oversight by EUTM Mali allows the MAFs to be freer in their actions. The main concern arising from the lack of monitoring is that Malian soldiers trained by the EUTM may have helped in overthrowing the government. The training mission has been trying to convince the Malian government to implement a human resource system for several years now, but to no avail. Not only would such a system improve corruption, as one could trace who has received their salary and when, but also to observe their developments and improvements and where they are currently stationed.

What is more, the training mission is also restricted by its non-executive mandate. Being unable to accompany the Malian soldiers into the field, there is hardly any way for the EUTM trainers to evaluate how the training is implemented. By dint of being extremely protected, the missions' staff hardly has any liberties and have strict limitations of where they can go, which is another reason why they cannot watch the MAFs in the field (Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen, 2020). EUTM Mali also struggles with organisational problems within the mission. One such problem is the diversity of norms and standards conveyed to the MAFs by mission members from different nations with different norms and practices. The paradox here is that while the EU wants to harmonize norms within the MAFs, its mission members are not able to pass on identical norms. This is even more problematic with the change of the Mission Force Commander every six months. As a result, EUTM Mali contributes to "[…] the saturation of the Malian army with a multiplicity of military concepts and cultures of foreign origin that uneasily coexist" (Tull, 2020a, p. 8).

Likewise, the language barrier also causes a problem within EUTM Mali, which negatively impacts the quality of training. Most soldiers deployed in Mali have a limited knowledge of French, although French is the only possible way to communicate with the Malian soldiers. In 2013, the mission provided a French language course to its own soldiers (Besenyő, 2014) but, since most soldiers are not deployed for longer

than six months, they had to go back to their home country by the time they had learned the basics. This was not the biggest problem. At the time, the course was taught by a French teacher from Bamako, who spoke perfect French, but did not speak English. While teaching in French is beneficial for soldiers who already have a basic knowledge of French to achieve complete immersion, it is still problematic for soldiers who do not even have the basic knowledge in French. In the end, the training mission employed English-speaking French, Bambara, and Tuareg interpreters who would translate what the instructors would say, but this took double the time (Besenyő, 2014).

Impact effectiveness in the EUTM Mali is a grey rather than black-and-white matter. Yet, there is still a large gap between what the EU wants to achieve and what the soldiers on the ground can possibly do. Some improvements have been achieved in terms of basic operational skills and leadership skills, but human rights abuses are taking place increasingly. It should be no surprise that reforming an army takes time and patience. As stated by the French National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale, 2017) in a report concerning the EUTM Mali "[...] such a complex and considerable task will take years to generate results".

While it is difficult to overcome structural problems that are inherent to the MAFs, the training mission could be better organized and made more efficient. As seen in this section, factors such as the budget and the number of soldiers that were trained are misleading and do not reveal the real efficiency. Therefore, in the next chapter, I fill certain gaps that are still missing regarding actor coherence, process coherence, and impact effectiveness with the help of the interviewees who share their experience.

Chapter 4   Effectiveness and Coherence in the Theatre of Operation

This chapter couples the semi-structured interviews with the previous findings from the third chapter. Not only do the interviews serve as a complementation to some of the findings which are still incomplete, but also as a tool to delve deeper into the realities of the EUTM Mali through observations, experiences, and personal reflections of military personnel. Although the effectiveness of the EUTM Mali as such has been widely studied by outsiders, there is little to no information on the viewpoint of military personnel who have been direct participants in the mission. In this chapter, I aim to contrast the theoretical findings in the previous chapter with the practical knowledge of the EUTM military personnel to find out whether any incoherence regarding the MS, the mandates, and the logistics within the mission was present and to what extent internal and external factors have hampered the EUTM's efficiency.

4.1. Actor Coherence in Practice

Actor coherence represents the unity between the actors, in this case the unity between the troop contributing countries. The previous chapter shows that although the political interests of the three largest contributors differ, their interests are not incompatible. Yet, the first part of this section shows that although most of the times the different political interests of the MS were not conflictual, certain problems of incoherence were still present which have hampered the effectiveness of the EUTM Mali. The second part focuses on the adaptation of the mandates. While the previous chapter looked at the mandate changes made at the policy level, this section examines how these changes were implemented in practice.

Most of the interview participants agree that working in a multinational environment takes more effort, is more time consuming, and can at times be more complex when having to find a consensus on certain decisions regarding the mission. Finding a consensus was especially difficult concerning the common budget. In the early stages of the mission, there were two ways of funding the EUTM in Mali. On the one hand, every participating MS contributed to a joint EU fund in proportion to their Gross Domestic Product. This is only the minimum states had to contribute (Rouppert, 2015). On the other hand, all further costs were voluntarily covered by the MS, which again means, that their financial contribution was proportional to their political interests.

One interviewee (Interview #3) who was part of the J4 Logistics Unit gave the example of buying a fire truck. The discussion evolved around the type of budget, whether to buy it with the money of the common budget or depending on the size of the national contingents, meaning the contingents with the largest numbers of soldiers deployed should pay for it. The countries with smaller contingents, such as Italy and Ireland, were against the idea of using the common budget for the fire truck, whereas the largest contributors at the time such as Belgium, Spain, and Germany pushed for the idea of using the common

budget. Those nations that have little policy interests in Mali naturally want to contribute less to the mission's expenses, even if certain EUTM military personnel consider buying a fire truck as being necessary to improve the protection of all the EUTM soldiers within the camp. Due to its multinational character, one obstacle within the EUTM is that "[…] you do not have the liberty to carry out whatever you would imagine would be viable, you always have to find a consensus, a shared agreement, which may cause that the swiftness of the decision-making progress is slow and less efficient" (Interview #5).

Another factor that reflects the political will of the troop contributing nations are national caveats. In the words of Kingsley (2016) national caveats are: "national restrictions or constraints imposed by political decision-makers on national armed forces to constrict the actions of armed forces deployed to multinational security operations". National caveats are not unique to the EUTM Mali and have mostly been associated with NATO-led security missions. Most troop contributing MS within the EUTM Mali have imposed national caveat restrictions on their military forces which at times led to operational inflexibility and disunity throughout the mission as some nations had stricter restrictions compared to other nations. As stated by one interviewee:

> A multinational unit is always difficult to coordinate. Each country often has its warnings about what tasks they can perform or cannot perform or the safety conditions to do so. This mission was no different. Every country has its own caveats, so when you are planning a mission, you have to take all of these into account. (Interview #3)

Planning operations in more volatile circumstances while using troops from different nations with certain restrictions is not an easy task. One such example affected the decentralised training activities which were introduced from 2016 onwards. One interviewee (Interview #1) explains that the Germans were especially strict in maintaining the national caveats and that the decentralised trainings could only be at a distance of a maximum of two hours to retain the so-called 'golden hour'. The golden hour entails that the chances of survival of soldiers after an injury are best if they are treated in the hospital within one hour (Bundeswehr, 2022b). The interviewee (Interview #1) stressed: "If the golden hour is not respected, then the German soldier, regardless of the region, cannot be deployed everywhere within the country. The French and the British are a little more flexible about this, but the Germans have this requirement.". Other nations such as the Czech Republic try "[…] to place as few caveats as possible because obviously it is a limitation and a complication for the Mission" (Interview #8). As pointed out in the previous chapter, the German Bundestag has always been extremely careful with the deployment of its own troops and has paid great attention to their security and is therefore the strictest caveat-imposing nation within the EUTM. One interviewee (Interview #9) even claims that this urge for self-protection was visible in the strategic focus of the German Mission Force Commander. The need for placing caveats is due to the institutional set-up and the important role the German Bundestag plays. As Saideman and Auerswald (2012, p 78) mention:

> To maintain the mission and pass mandates with broad support, compromises must be made, and those compromises involve conditions placed on the behaviour of the German contingent rather than on reaching some sort of goal or outcome. Clearly, the priority here for both members of the Bundestag and the MoD is 'do no harm'.

I demonstrated in the previous chapter that the mandates show no direct sign of incoherence on the policy level as there has been a constant effort of trying to make the mission more effective through expanding its area of operation and the types of activities. Nevertheless, on the level of operation, the implementation has not always been easy. When reading about mandate adaptations, one may be illusioned by the idea that once the mandate has been adopted, everything falls into place automatically. Yet, the reality of putting everything into place in theatre looks different. One interviewee calls it "the typical problem of starting something new" (Interview #3). This problem occurred especially with the implementation of the third mandate and the approval of decentralized trainings through Mobile Advisory and Training Teams who were allowed to travel in seven different military regions. One interviewee argued that when the mandate was announced, those in charge of planning and organizing the decentralized trainings were very ambitious to train every Malian soldier in every place. They quickly realized that this was not possible as the necessary logistics and required manpower were not available from the start. As illustrated by one interviewee:

> When you go outside the training camp in Koulikoro, you have to plan. Not only the training, but also the transport of our troops, and we are talking about a distance of 600km. At the beginning it was a logistic problem because we had to contract planes and helicopters as the roads in Mali are pretty much not usable. Besides the logistic problem, we also had a manpower problem because you do not only send trainers but also a force protection unit to protect them. (Interview #3)

Part of the semi-structured interviews evolved around the question whether the adapted mandates have made the mission overall more effective. Yet, it is not simply about the mandate as such, but rather how the mandate is implemented. As one interviewee depicts concerning the fifth mandate:

> The mandate says that the EUTM Mali wants to support the MAFs, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and G5 Sahel countries' national armed forces in their fight against terrorism through non-executive accompaniment. But how do you implement the accompaniment? To what extent can you really support the other Sahel nations? You can do something with 1.000 troops, which was the size of the mission at that time, but with 5.000 troops it could have been much better and it would still be the same mandate. (Interview #8)

Therefore, the mandate gave enough space to make the mission more effective, especially through the non-executive accompaniments, but the available resources and tools were not sufficient.

While interest misalignments are not visible in the policy documents, they are still visible within the EUTM Mali, both in terms of budget and of national caveats. Yet, it must also be added that these interest misalignments do not heavily impede the efficiency of the mission. Interest misalignments cost more time and effort to find the lowest common denominator between the MS. Finding this denominator also

means that the mission achieves less than what it could achieve, which is also reflected within the mandates. Nevertheless, these interest misalignments have never escalated into conflicts.

4.2. Process Coherence in Practice

From a military perspective, especially from the EUTM trainers' perspective, there is and was a lack of coherence between what the EU intended to achieve with its goals throughout the mission and the material which was provided to the MAFs. As one of the interviewees puts it: "The core issue is that the mission was underfunded, from a military perspective" (Interview #9). As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the MAFs were and still are heavily under-equipped in terms of vehicles, logistical equipment, and weapons. Yet, the training mission as such cannot finance the MAFs which therefore affects the trainings the EUTM provides. One interviewee states that some days the Malian soldiers did not have enough gasoline to go to the training facilities of the EUTM and as a result, the trainings were cancelled. In the words of the interviewee: "When the Malian forces say 'we are not coming today because we are out of gas', that really hurts you as a trainer" (Interview #9). The interviewee criticized the EUTM for not helping the MAFs in these circumstances and not providing them with gasoline, thereby pointing out the lack of flexibility within the mission. Another interviewee underlines how diversely equipped the MAFs arrived at the training camp and the lack of equipment during the trainings: "We have had contingents of Malian soldiers who arrived very differently. From army pants to sandals to boots, everything was present. And we also had 30-40% replica wooden Kalashnikovs in some trainings because there was not a real weapon for every soldier" (Interview #1). Although every Malian soldier in that training could fire with a real Kalashnikov, it took double the time to carry out the training under these circumstances.

Equipping the MAFs was only possible through bilateral donations of the MS within the mission or so-called third-party projects. And this is also where the problem lies. Having the necessary political support to launch a mission is only one hurdle which must be overcome. An even greater obstacle in ensuring effectiveness of the mission is to find MS which are willing to contribute in terms of material, troops, and equipment. In the words of one interviewee: "[…] this is a common problem across all missions. There is always a high political ambition but then contributing resources is usually less ambitious, so all missions face shortages of contributions. It can be any NATO mission, any EU mission, it always has less than it needs" (Interview #8). The MS' effort to equalize their political support with the provision of material and equipment has become even more complicated after the coup d'état in 2020. According to one of the interviewees:

> All countries were rather careful in what they would give to the Malians, even sell. (…) And obviously, with the coup d'état this has become a much bigger problem because if there is no legitimate civilian government, the Western countries will have their limitations as to what they can deliver. (Interview #8)

Some countries such as Germany and Spain participated in certain third-party projects. One of them was the German provision of 29 mine-protected vehicles, also called Casspir vehicles (Interview #6). Besides, Germany also donated 4.100 bullet resistant vests, 4.300 combat boots and 2.700 ballistic helmets (Martin, 2019). The only problem with these military equipment donations was that they were not homogeneous, meaning that depending on who was participating in the training at that time would be 'lucky' to receive some of this equipment, whereas others who would not be there at the right time may go empty handed. One must not forget that most soldiers within the MAFs are extremely poor and equipping some and not others can create hostilities between them.

The previous chapter revealed that the EUTM Mali has a lack of personnel. Yet, according to one interviewee (Interview #5) the lack of personnel has not seriously affected the mission's operationalization as there were no cells that were completely empty, and all the tasks could still be carried out. Furthermore, a certain degree of flexibility also helped to overcome the problem of lacking personnel. In the words of the interviewee: "Based on the order by the MFC you can also shuffle the personnel a bit. If you have a lot of people that occupy the same position and there is lack of personnel in a specific cell, then you can assign a person from one position to a different one" (Interview #5). Yet, it must also be stressed that it is not an easy task, and the lack of personnel can at times be very frustrating as one interviewee claims: "We have a mandate ceiling and member states are allowed to send soldiers up to this limit, but no more. And then they make a compromise on this mandate ceiling, which means that there are always soldiers missing somewhere. We were sufficiently staffed to make it work, but not well enough" (Interview #9).

There is a certain degree of incoherence from the side of the MS when looking at the lack of equipment supplied to the MAFs and the shortage of EUTM personnel. While certain MS have high ambitions for the EUTM, these ambitions are not reflected in how much they contribute to improve the effectiveness, neither in terms of equipment nor in terms of personnel. Yet, it must also be stated that the EUTM personnel show a high degree of flexibility in executing their tasks and to always finding a solution internally.

4.3. Impact Effectiveness in Practice

In the previous chapter, I presented several internal and external factors that have impacted the EUTM's efficiency. This section complements the previous chapter by demonstrating how these factors are perceived by EUTM personnel, whether the factors mentioned really have an impact on the training and the functioning of the EUTM overall and to what extent the training mission can be a contributing factor to stabilize the situation in Mali.

One of the arguments presented in the previous chapter concerns the heterogeneous trainings provided to the MAFs by various MS which may have different military practices. As Dennis Tull (2020a, p.8) highlights in this context:

> The challenge of external coordination also comes into relief in the way that EUTM and its different national components work. To an extent, EUTM seeks to convey European standards to the [MAFs] and to homogenize norms and practices that should prevail inside the Malian army. However, these European standards do not exist as such, given that Swedes, Spaniards, Germans etc. all have their own standards, which they, as mission members, impart on their Malian partners.

Weber (2018) adds that before even engaging in the training of the MAFs, there should be an agreement between the different MS on the harmonization of military practices and uniform standards of how to conduct the trainings. Yet, none of the interview participants could approve of this argument, whether they were trainers themselves or just indirectly involved in the trainings by planning or observing them. First, several interviewees mentioned the fact that most MS are NATO members, thereby "[…] we shared the same doctrine and procedures" (Interview #3). Especially since in most cases the training incorporates basic infantry skills which are "the absolute military basics" (Interview #2) and which are the same in almost every MS. Another point stated is that "most of the training teams were composed by two or more nations. This guaranteed coherence" (Interview #3). Lastly, one of the interviewees explains that before the training even started there was a training lead time in which the different trainers agreed on what they have to train and the way they would conduct the training (Interview #2), thereby ensuring a maximum effort of standardization.

Another internal factor that presumably hampers the effectiveness of the mission and mentioned in the previous chapter is the overall language barrier, between EUTM personnel but also when communicating with the MAFs. First, there is no harmonization of language standards in English and French requested of the personnel sent to the mission. In the words of one interviewee: "In fact, the standards are very different in terms of the language prerequisites with which each country sends its soldiers to the mission" (Interview #6). This lack of harmonization is even more crucial when communicating with the Malian military heads of staff as they show a marked desire to only speak French. As one interviewee claims "The higher you climb in the hierarchy, the more important it is to speak French. A Malian general will listen to you in English, but he will not answer" (Interview #9). Most personnel within the EUTM does or did not speak French (Interview #9). Speaking French was not a prerequisite for participating in the EUTM, neither in the senior staff, nor amongst the trainers, which is why in most cases there was a problem of communication, even with the help of interpreters. As stressed by one interviewee: "We had language mediators, of course. But if you are looking for access to the Malian armed forces, you must be able to speak French yourself and not through language mediators" (Interview #9). For the trainers this meant that the lack of French could "[…] alter the trust building process quality of communication

between trainers and trainees, especially in a military context where the human dimension is so important and the vocabulary so technical" (Rouppert, 2015, p. 245) and therefore also reduce the quality of the training. Not speaking French meant for EUTM senior staff that they could not build trust towards the Malian authorities and could, at the same time, be perceived as disrespectful.

Another internal problem that was confirmed by different interviewee participants was the lack of knowing how the knowledge acquired through the training was implemented afterwards by the MAFs. As pointed out by one interviewee: "We didn't know what the soldiers applied in the field from what we taught them. That was the big criticism we had because of the mandate. We couldn't determine what would have been better or more necessary" (Interview #1). Therefore, because of this lack of feedback the trainers were not able to adapt the trainings (Interview #9).

The overall goal of the EUTM Mali is to improve the capacities of the MAFs in such a way that they become a self-sustaining army capable of defending their territory and protecting their population. Evaluating the impact the EUTM has had and still has on the MAFs is not an easy task, simply because too many factors play an important role, not just internal factors, but also external factors which the EUTM cannot control and which equally affect the improvement of the capacities of the MAFs.
The training mission has improved the tactical capacities of the MAFs. As mentioned by one interviewee: "From day 1 until after 12 weeks, significant improvements were noticeable" (Interview #1). This means that often when attacks occurred by insurgents such as JNIM the MAFs "[…] prevailed and managed to neutralize the terrorists or repel the attack" (Interview #8). Therefore, in that regard the EUTM could improve the capacities of the MAFs. Nevertheless, as stated by one interviewee: "[…] this is the difference the EUTM Mali can make but not more" (Interview #8). The MAFs are fighting a hardened enemy, which makes it especially difficult to fight them. Many fighters of the militant groups have fought in several places such as Palestine, Chad, Libya, and Niger (Sandor, personal communication, July 15, 2022). Although the MAFs have become technically more proficient, there is still a lot of room for improvement. In the words of one interviewee: "such a result is not achieved over night. It takes time to implement the required changes, resilience to assume setbacks, and perseverance to continue" (Interview #4).

The EUTM Mali can improve the operational capacities of the MAFs, but they cannot change the internal corruptive dynamics within the MAFs. As claimed by Baudais and Maiga (2022, p.16): "[…] training alone is not enough to ensure effective and accountable armed forces". Corruption is present at every layer within the hierarchy of the MAFs. As Sandor (personal communication, 2022) states:

> There is a saying in Mali, namely that 'the fish rots from the head to the tail'. That means that at every level of an organization, especially the MAFs, corruption starts at the top and every single layer down in the Chain of Command, every person will take a little bit until the lowest-ranking soldier has nothing.

For example, the Malian government has even instituted bonuses of 49€ per month for lower-ranking soldiers who go out into the field to cover on-the-ground expenses. Yet, these bonuses never fully reach them as "[…] officers often retain a portion of these bonuses before they reach the lower-ranking recipients. To make up for this shortage of funds, soldiers prey on the local population" (Picco, 2022). These dynamics cannot be solved on a military level, they must be solved on a political level. As highlighted by one interviewee:

> The mission can make a difference on a small scale, it can train soldiers and officers. But if there is corruption in the MAFs that leads to the ineffectiveness of the force, of stealing money and stealing equipment, this is not a thing that the training mission can resolve. This must be resolved on the political level. (…) If someone says that after ten years of mission the MAFs remain quite ineffective. Yes they do, but it is not because the soldiers are not trained, but because there is incompetence in their leadership, which is political. (Interview #8)

Often times, the Malian soldiers who arrive at the camp in Koulikoro lack equipment such as weapons or boots. The reason for this is linked to the corruption within the MAFs. If these low-ranking soldiers do not receive the bonuses, they are essentially starving. To be able to survive, they sell everything they have, including the equipment they receive.

When solely looking at the points written down within the EUTM mandate and how the capacities of the MAFs have improved, then it can clearly be said that the EUTM has served its purpose. The EUTM still has to overcome obstacles which have impeded the mission's efficiency, such as fights over the use of the common budget, the imposition of national caveats, the lack of willingness of the MS to contribute to the mission in terms of material, the limited availability of personnel, and the language barrier. It lies in the hands of the MS to overcome these hurdles as they are in charge of this mission on the political level. Yet, the EUTM has no impact on the internal dynamics of the MAFs, the corruption within the MAFs, and how this corruption translates into violence against the population.

Chapter 5   Conclusion

5.1. Results

In recent years, LFMM have become the preferred intervention tool of Western nations in contrast to large ground force deployments. Yet, these LFMM have exhibited their own internal obstacles which impede their effectiveness. The ineffectiveness of LFMM has often been demonstrated with the help of the PA Model to depict the interest misalignments between the provider and the agent. In light of answering my research question '*why external interventions in the form of light-footprint military missions are prone to failure*', I provide an alternative explanation to the PA Model. Instead of looking at the relationship between the provider and the agent, I solely focused on the relationship between the different providers, in this case the different troop-contributing MS participating in the EUTM Mali. To examine whether interest misalignments between the MS were present, I used the theoretical framework of coherence and effectiveness by Peters et al. (2021) and complemented this framework through semi-structured interviews with military personnel who were or are part of the EUTM in Mali.

I explained the partial ineffectiveness of the EUTM Mali through three effectiveness indicators, namely effectiveness as actor coherence, effectiveness as process coherence, and impact effectiveness. With regard to actor coherence, the findings show that achieving actor unity between the MS is a major prerequisite for a LFMM such as the EUTM to be successful. The more the political interests align between the various MS, the more efficient the mission is. Although the reasons for engaging in the EUTM Mali were different for Spain, Germany, and the Czech Republic, I showed that the MS' interests are not incompatible on the policy level. Interest misalignments are especially visible on the level of implementation between MS that wanted to contribute more to the mission and thereby had a larger contingent and MS that wanted to contribute less and naturally had a smaller contingent. The main reason for actor disunity between the MS was the use of budget. Another factor indicating interest asymmetries was the imposition of national caveats. While countries like the Czech Republic tried to place as little caveats as possible, Germany was the strictest caveat-imposing nation, thereby limiting the mission in its actions. Another finding with regard to actor coherence concerns the adaptation of the mandate. While the adaptation of the mandate is important to adjust to the demands in the field, the success of the mission ultimately depends on how the mandate can be implemented, what kind of resources are provided by the MS, and whether these resources are enough for the EUTM personnel to ensure a successful implementation.

I demonstrated that process coherence is not ensured within the EUTM Mali due to contribution fatigue of the MS in terms of deploying an adequate number of personnel and providing sufficient equipment. Due to the non-binding nature of the EU mandate, MS can freely choose how much they want to

contribute to the mission, often times resulting in shortages which have impeded the quality of the trainings provided to the MAFs and the work of the EUTM personnel. Despite the high political ambition of the MS at the outset of the mission, this level of ambition was not reflected in the contributions of the MS. Lastly, the EUTM's impact on improving the capacities of the MAFs was partly limited by internal obstacles such as language barriers or mandate limitations. Yet, external obstacles present within the MAFs in terms of corruption are one of the main reasons why the EUTM as such could not contribute to the improvement of the security situation in Mali. It is important to understand that LFMM in which many different MS are present as the provider, not only with regard to the EU, but also NATO and the UN, are prone to failure because first and foremost the MS stand in their own way. Therefore, I confirm the two arguments set out in the beginning of this thesis as to why LFMM are prone to failure: First, that interest misalignments between the MS lead to asymmetry within the theatre of operation and to complexities for military personnel to translate different goals into military practice. Second, that there is a mismatch between the political ambition of the MS and the resources that are available to the mission.

To conclude, the EUTM has partly served its purpose, namely to improve the tactical capacities of the MAFs. Up to this day, the MAFs are not a self-sustaining army capable of defending their territory and their population, mostly because of the structural problems within the armed forces. Yet, it is important to look at the bigger picture and to question to what extent the EUTM can stabilize the security situation in Mali and contribute positively. In the words of Adam Sandor (2022, personal communication): "Let's say the MAFs are better at killing, but are they getting better at defending their territory? It depends who deserves protection and who deserves to experience violence". No matter how effective the MAFs are in the end, this effectiveness does not contribute to the stabilization of the security situation in the country if their proficiency is operationalized against civilians. When solely looking at the numbers, 2020 has been the deadliest year in terms of attacks carried out by the MAFs towards the population, which means that these attacks are becoming more prominent. Therefore, the question remains whether LFMM such as the EUTM Mali can be part of the solution to help in the stabilization of a fragile security environment or if LFMM are ultimately part of the problem.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research has delved into and expanded the meaning of a "light-footprint approach", thereby offering a new way of conceptualizing contemporary military missions in contrast to past interventions with a large number of deployments. The concept "light-footprint approach" has become increasingly pervasive among practitioners and academics, especially in the context of remote warfare, but its meaning remains largely elusive. Therefore, I offer a new concept, namely "light-footprint military missions" to describe Western countries' current intervention approaches in fragile states.

This research has also contributed to the broader research on the effectiveness of external military interventions in fragile environments and offers an alternative explanation to the PA Approach in explaining why LFMM missions are prone to failure. I showed that while interest misalignments between the provider and the agent remain a major cause as to why LFMM are doomed to fail, interest misalignments within the provider itself are equally as important, especially when the provider consists of several different participating nations which all have different political interests and different degrees of political will to contribute to a mission.

Besides, my findings also have practical implications. As already mentioned, LFMM are here to stay. Mali is not the only country in which LFMM take place. Especially with regard to the current deteriorating relations between the EU and the Malian military junta, the EU is reconsidering its involvement in Mali. With regard to the 5th mandate, the EU expanded the EUTM's involvement to the G5 Sahel countries, with a clear focus on Niger. Due to the EU's strategic priority in the Sahel region, it is especially important for the EU to learn from its past mistakes and for the MS to have a more unilateral approach in the next training missions, thereby also considering overcoming the EUTM's internal challenges. To overcome these challenges, it is of utmost importance to consider which complications have been present in the theatre of operation, which is why, this thesis has provided insights into the military perspective of the problems directly encountered during the mission.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis has solely looked at interest misalignments between the three largest contributors to the training mission due to the limited scope of this research and has found with the help of the interviews that interest misalignments were mostly present between large and small contributors. Avenues for further research could thus include troop-contributing countries with varying levels of political will to examine to what extent interest asymmetries would be present between these countries and how these affect the mission's effectiveness. In addition, this thesis has paid close attention to LFMM in the form of the EUTM. Yet, it would also be interesting to see to what degree interest misalignments are present within other international organizations which pursue the light-footprint approach such as NATO.

Furthermore, the main focus of this thesis has been the actor (dis)unity between the different participating MS. Yet, one must not forget that the EU does not solely consist of MS but also various institutions have an impact on the decision-making concerning the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. Therefore, this research could be extended by examining the internal dynamics within the EU institutions and to see how their decision-making affects the level of implementation. It could be researched whether actor (dis)unity also persists between the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), and the Mission Force Headquarters (MFHQ) and investigate how detached these institutions are from the interests of the MS.

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Appendix

Number of Informant	Function Title	Date
Informant #1	Deputy Commander Training Task Force	05.07.2022
Informant #2	HUMINT Officer & ATF Strategic Advisor	05.07.2022
Informant #3	HQ J4 Training Task Force	09.07.2022
Informant #4	Mission Force Commander	11.07.2022
Informant #5	Political Advisor to the Mission Force Commander	12.07.2022
Informant #6	Public Affairs Officer	12.07.2022
Informant #7	Chief of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Unit	14.07.2022
Informant #8	Political Advisor to the Mission Force Commander	14.07.2022
Informant #9	Mission Deputy Commander	18.07.2022