MSc. Political Science, International Organization
Thesis Seminar: Critical Approaches in International Relations

Master Thesis

Malicious Intents?

A critical analysis of the EU mission in Mali

Universiteit Leiden

Name: Hannah Jones
Student number: 1729624

Supervisor: Dr. Francesco Ragazzi
Second Reader: Prof. Ingrid van Biezen

Date: 6 June 2016

Abstract

During the onset of outbreak of crisis 2012, the European Union (EU) launched a foreign policy mission in Mali with the stated aim of providing long-term development and stability in the country. The encompassing mission is underpinned by the understanding that development and security are mutually dependent and reinforcing, commonly referred to as the security-development nexus. The stated connection between the two is also associated with the promotion of liberal peace, in which Western actors forcibly attempts to transform societies into liberal democracies conducive to open market economies. The EU presents its involvement as beneficial for Mali and its citizens thus evoking an image of the EU actins as a force for good, yet a closer scrutiny of the official discourse and practices tell another story. Rather, in this article I argue that the EU is promoting a development project in Mali that is mostly beneficial for the union itself. By using a discourse analysis of EU documents, complemented by an analysis of secondary sources covering the facts on the ground, I further argue that the EU uses the concepts of 'partnership' and 'ownership' as code words to condition the kind of development it has in mind for Mali that also justifies a selective engagement. In practice, this has manifested itself in the bunkerization of its aid agencies. I conclude that the EU ultimately presents a development project that values the enactment of EU's security interests over development promotion for Mali and Malians.

Keywords: European Union, Mali, security-development nexus, liberal peace, partnership, ownership, bunkerization of aid

Introduction

During the onset of the outbreak of a constitutional crisis in Mali 2012, the European Union (EU) launched an encompassing mission with the stated aim of providing long-term development and stability in the country. The belief that development and security are intrinsically linked and can only be achieved together, known as the security-development nexus, serves as basis and guiding principle for the EU engagement in Mali. Security and development practices have in this manner become increasingly blurred and presented as interchangeable which in turn is also connected to the project of liberal peace, whereby Western actors aim to forcibly transform societies on the basis of liberal democracy and market economies. The EU emphasizes its commitment to provide sustainable development for Mali and presents their engagement as benefitting the country and its people since it will lead to stability and peace, yet the engagement is in practice more geared towards the enactment of security interests, which benefits mostly the EU. This is puzzling considering the prevalence 'sustainable development' is given in the justification of the EU engagement and as such it gives rise to the question of *what kind of development project can be discerned from the EU mission in Mali*? Through an analysis of the discourse and the practices on the ground, I argue that the EU is presenting a development project for Mali in which the EU is indispensable and prone to act on its security interests rather than provide development for Mali and its citizens. This contradicts with what the EU claims that they are doing in Mali and it questions the notion of the EU acting as a force for good.

The far-reaching mission consists of several tenets. Of primary importance in this article are the Sahel Strategy from 2011 and its updated version the Regional Action Plan from 2015, since they constitute the overall framework that guides all EU activities in Mali. They have the same overall goal of providing stability and development for the Sahel states, yet the latter has a more explicit focus on security issues and counter-terrorism practices (EEAS 2016). Additional sources include a speech made by then-president of the European Council, Herman von Rompuy in May 2013, since it addressed the topic of development to Mali in a high-level donor conference and specified how the EU perceived the situation and presented solutions. Apart from the two strategies, the EU has also deployed a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions that focus specifically on Mali, a training mission for the Malian armed forces (EUTM) in 2013. The factsheet on the mission will also

be considered as part of the EU discourse since it stipulates the EU's short to mid-term objectives in their overall strategy. Finally, council conclusions from 2012-2016 have also been included as part of the data since they have addressed the EU engagement in Mali.

The article is organised as follows. It begins with the background and object of study, which focuses on the constitutional crisis that unfolded in Mali and which changed the nature and intensity of the EU engagement. This is followed by a literature review that covers the foreign policy role of the EU before it proceeds with the theoretical framework of the security-development nexus and the concepts that will be used. The main part is divided into three sections, which respectively addresses how the EU justifies the engagement, how it acts on security responses and how its development engagement can be characterized. The article finishes with a conclusion that summarizes the main findings and suggests how this may be useful for further research.

Background and Object of Analysis

Since the mid 1990's considerable tensions had existed between Tuareg groups in the north of Mali and the government in the southern capital Bamako over issues concerning the economic development and autonomy of the north. Several peace agreement were made in which the Malian government committed to better integrate the northern parts by means of increased welfare policies, greater sub-national autonomy and the creation of a special Tuareg security unit to police the area, but they were never fully implemented. The failure to adhere to these agreements led in turn to a deterioration of the security situation and ensuing armed conflict between the north and the south in January 2012 (Raleigh and Dowd 2013:11). The fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 is also significant as many Tuareg fighters made their way back to their homeland and rekindled the conflict. After initial attacks in 2012 the separatist movement MNLA (Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad) joined forces with jihadist groups and eventually took over the north. In the wake of a coup d'état it seemed like the groups would "invade" the capital in January 2013 at which time the French intervened on the request by the interim Malian president (Andersson and Weigand 2015:526-527).

It is within this context that the EU changed the nature of its engagement in Mali and increased their activities in the country from 2011 and onwards. Notably,

prior to the outbreak of crisis the EU had been involved in Mali for a long time but was primarily conceived as an aid donor focused on managing technical development aid programmes (Davis 2015:278). During the crisis, the EU emerged as a much more political and security-oriented actor, which is particularly clear in the Regional Action Plan from 2015, but which can also be seen in the deployment of their military presence in the form of the EUTM. The overall aim to provide development for Mali has remained the same throughout EU's engagement, but the responses to the crisis has also been developed within a counter-terrorism framework. The empirics I intend to use have already been mentioned in the introduction, but I have chosen the timeframe of 2011-2016 for the EU documents because these were written during the years which the EU involvement changed character. As such, the documents are informative in telling what development project can be discerned, since the promotion of sustainable development and stability remains the goal even when though the EU has also presented an increased security focus from 2015 onwards.

Literature Review: the Foreign Policy Role of the EU

A common way of describing the foreign policy role of the EU in international relations is in terms of normative power. The general idea is that the EU differs significantly from other forms of powers that are more coercive in character. Rather, the EU promotes foreign- and development policies conducive to contributing global peace and stability, thus acting as a force for good in the world. Ian Manners (2002) is an ardent advocate of the label 'Normative Power Europe' and argues that there is something normatively distinct about the EU, whereby the promotion of norms like peace, liberty, rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights is the main feature of its foreign policy (2002:235). Accordingly, the EU has the ability to project these norms and will readily do so in both the promotion of development and in the enactment of security issues, which is part and parcel of what makes the EU a 'force for good' in the world (Manners 2002:238).

The perception of the EU as a normative power is however contested and has been criticised for various reasons. Part of the literature has addressed the notion of the EU as a normative power with regards to its role as a security actor. In analysing the narrative of the EU in the European Security Strategy, Maria Stern (2011) argue that the foreign policy objectives and security interests of the EU are based on differences between the 'self' and the 'other'. Specifically, notions of 'otherness' help

inform what, or who, is seen as threatening for the EU and these are imbued with gendered and racialised meaning that ultimately presents the EU as superior (2011:31). Stern focuses on the security identity that is being produced in the document, but this has implications for the foreign policy and forms of development that the EU promotes globally and it questions the self-presentation of the EU as force for good. The primary reason for this is that the narrative in the document serves to further divide the world into sharp spacial- and temporal distinctions, where some regions are described as underdeveloped in contrast to Europe and where its foreign policy conducts in both security and development matters legitimised because it is in the name of security.

Another strand of the literature pays attention to the relation between the promotion of norms and the pursuit of strategic interests. Among the critics, Thomas Diez (2005; 2013) argues that it is dubious whether the EU can be described as a normative power since it is difficult to distinguish between norms and interests in practice. The promotion of norms is usually expressed in "universal" terms, which masks the short-term focus of EU's self-interest. Moreover, the norms prescribed as central to the concept of "normative power Europe" can also be used as a means to achieve interests connected with power, similar to ways in which military and economic means can be used as instruments (Diez 2005: 615-616). In a similar line of argument, Jan Zielonka (2013) claims that the normative discourse of the EU is usually seen as the actor promoting certain norms and values but it is also used as a device to legitimize its policies in its neighbourhood.

The EU foreign policy mission in Mali has also been addressed, specifically with regards to security issues. There is a group of scholars who claim that the EU has launched a set of strategies in Mali because it is in a position where it can take a leading role in the region. This is related to an image of the EU as both a forceful and legitimate actor, which in turn enables the EU to act on strategic interests by promoting security in Mali (Boukhars 2013; Marchal 2012; del Sarto and Tholens 2013). Others argue that security issues are the sole motivator behind the involvement and that EU's concern with its image is at best secondary. Rather, the involvement is connected to the "Global War on Terror", since domestic groups have linkages with Al-Qaeda groups which started to alarm the international community (Bøås and Torheim 2013; Wing, 2013).

Consequently, the foreign policy role and objectives of the EU has been subject to extensive study and noteworthy criticism. The perception of the EU as a normative power and force for good has been questioned on different accounts, but the primary focus has been on how the EU promotes its foreign policy with regards to security enactments and interests. While forms of development are implicit in the foreign policy of the EU, how the promotion of development relates to security policy has not been the primary focus. This brings us to the theory of the security-development nexus. Similar to the literature mentioned above, the theory offers means to question the term normative power through different concepts, but it also points to an answer considering the foreign policy and development projects of the EU.

Theoretical Framework: The Security-Development Nexus

The security-development nexus refers to the perception that development and security are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. As such, the promotion of development has become synonymous with the pursuit of security and security is seen as a prerequisite for sustainable development. The stated linkage between the two has become commonplace within the realm of predominantly Western foreign policy-making, which has both political and structural implications. According to Mark Duffield (2001) the manner in which the nexus is presented reflects a new mode of liberal intervention whereby Western actors aim to forcibly transform entire societies in the 'underdeveloped world'. More importantly, the use of the security-development nexus in this way explains what constitutes a security threat and where it is located, it prescribes what the solution to the threat is and it stipulates who can do what in the name of security and development.

The notion that 'underdevelopment is dangerous' signifies the emergence of a new security framework for actors in the West. It represents the shift of focus from traditional inter-state warfare to the fear of underdevelopment and poverty as a source of conflict, criminalised activity and international instability (Duffield 2001:7). Put simply, underdevelopment becomes a global security threat that risks destabilising the world order and which requires prompt actions in order to resolve this problem. Additionally, the causes of conflict are presented as internal in nature and can be traced to the modalities of underdevelopment and its associated pathologies of crime and terrorism. This understanding reflects a developmental position and understanding that is shared by Western policy-makers and aid donors. The result is

that development aid has become radicalized and geared towards modes of conflict prevention (Duffield 2001:114-121). Significantly, the notion that poverty and underdevelopment is destabilising for actors in the 'developed world' provides justification for involvement and it catalyses change in the underdeveloped societies (Duffield 2001:28).

Furthermore, besides pointing out what the problem is, namely underdevelopment as a risk to global security, Western actors also stipulate what should be done and how development should unfold. The concept of 'liberal peace' is significant in this respect. Specifically, it represents the idea that 'undeveloped' and therefore dangerous, societies can be transformed to fit into a liberal model of development whatever the realities on the ground are. It is the embodiment of a new political humanitarianism that lays emphasis on conflict resolution and prevention, strengthening of civil institutions, the promotion of rule of law and security sector reform in the context of a functioning market economy (Duffield 2001:10-11). In so doing, development and liberalism are seen as different but interconnected, and development becomes a technology of security (Duffield 2010:54-55). Ultimately, Duffield stresses that the promotion of liberal peace is something that brings damaging consequences for actors in the underdeveloped world. This is because it reflects the existing consensus that conflict in these societies are best approached through a number of connected and transformational measures, in which states and people within them are expected to change their behaviour and attitudes in order to meet prescribed standards of what constitute stable and peaceful societies.

A distinguishing feature of the security-development nexus, as well as the promotion of project of liberal peace, is that it is informed by a power relation that works through both exclusionary and inclusionary logics. More to the point how the security-development nexus is presented and subsequently manifested in practice is in itself geared towards exclusion and is based on differences that serve to further distance the developed world from the underdeveloped. Meaning, the causes for the problem of underdevelopment are internalised, which make it exclusionary, but the threat of underdevelopment as well as the solution to it is presented as a common goal, which make it inclusionary (Duffield 2001:7-8). Specifically, the goal of securing stability by promoting a development in line with liberal peace is done through the developmental principles of partnership, participation and self-management. As such, underdeveloped societies are no longer order about what to but

are expected to do it willingly themselves. Power is implicit in the relationship, but it is much more nuanced, opaque and complex in this form. Logics of exclusion and inclusion work simultaneously, whereby actors in the underdeveloped states need to show themselves fit for consideration by meeting defined standards of behaviour and normative expectations in order to receive development support (Duffield 2001:7-8). Importantly, when Western actors refer to instances of partnership and participation it implies the mutual acceptance of shared normative standards and frameworks. Consequently, the project of liberal peace is geared towards conditional and selective engagement that is more likely to benefit actors in the West (Duffield 2001:34)

The issue of responsibility is also important with regard to the security-development nexus, as it stipulates who should do what. David Chandler (2007) argues that the Western policy behind the security-development nexus reflects a retreat from strategic policy-making and a transformation into a more inward-looking approach more concerned with self-image than the policy consequences in the areas affected by insecurity and underdevelopment (Chandler 2007:362). Rather than being a shared agenda shaped by the nexus, Chandler suggests that policy discussions around the issue reveal a lack of Western policy focus and a disconnection between rhetoric and practice. A consequence of this new approach is that there is a crisis in policy-making, whereby policy actors seek to evade any engagement with adequately dealing with issues of security and development by shifting responsibility for development to other actors (Chandler 2007: 364-369). It is related to the idea that while the root causes of underdevelopment and poverty are derived from the underdeveloped societies themselves, they also constitute a security threat for everyone. This in turn justifies intervention, while at the same time responsibility to handle development issues are placed on actors in the 'underdeveloped societies' (Duffield 2001:28). Put differently, the enactment of Western policies based on the security-development nexus can both justify international interventions but it can also justify a means of distancing and not taking responsibility, as the causes are made internal.

The main point to be derived from the theory and arguments by Duffield and Chandler is that a complex power relation that is ultimately geared towards exclusion imbues the use and presentation of the security-development nexus in foreign-policy making. This has two consequences. First, the blurring of security and development allows acting on security while promoting a specific kind of development, which is in

line with liberal peace and neoliberal values. Second, it justifies external intervention in underdeveloped societies whilst it also legitimises a form of distancing on behalf of Western actors, since responsibility for implementing development changes are placed on domestic actors. It is on the basis of this that I make my argument, which is that the EU is promoting a development project in Mali that is more beneficial for the EU, in that they can act on its security interests whilst simultaneously condition the development that should unfold in Mali.

Concepts and Operationalization

The concepts I will use in this article are 'partnership', 'ownership and 'bunkerization of aid' and 'remote management', since they all reflect the promotion of liberal peace and the logics of exclusion and inclusion that underpins it. Partnership and ownership are connected to one another in that the goal of transforming underdeveloped and dangerous societies is presented as both a mutual security threat to be addressed co-jointly in partnership and a development issue under sole responsibility and ownership for actors in the 'underdeveloped' world. Seen as such**,** the two concepts can be read as code words that are imposed by Western actors but presented as being a shared common goal of transforming into market economies in order to achieve security and development (Duffield 2001:5). By evaluating short-term and long-term objectives of the strategies that make up the EU mission, I will examine when the EU presents an issue as being a shared objective with EU and the state of Mali and when the EU presents an issue as being under the ownership of Mali. For the former, this includes references to the words 'we', 'our', 'shared' and 'mutual' and words to that extent. For the latter, it includes references to 'responsibility' and 'resilience', especially if these are written in combination with 'their' and 'its'.

'Bunkerization of aid' represents a different manifestation of the liberal peace project. It implies that liberal frontiers are collapsing, which the West tries to manage locally by bunkerization. Characteristics include remote management on the part of aid donors, as well as security measures undertaken by aid agencies like the establishment of 'safe zones', the constructing high walls and use of razor wire (Duffield 2012:477). The bunkerization of aid reflects current practices on the ground, and the operationalization for this has been derived from academic articles that have conducted fieldwork in Mali and used the same definition of 'bunkerization of aid'.

Method: Sociological Discourse Analysis and Data Generation

In order to conduct the operationalization and analyse the EU documents, I will primarily use a sociological discourse analysis to analyse the narrative and see what project of development can be discerned concerning the Mali engagement. A discourse analysis is the most useful in this respect, since it uncovers how something is being said and constructed in a given text. A sociological discourse is understood as means of understanding social reality, based on the subjective orientation of social action (Ruiz 2009:2). An added advantage with this kind of discourse is that it emphasises ideology and power in relation to the discourse. As such, it takes into consideration how social discourses are imbued by dominant discourses projected from sources of power (Ruiz 2009:10). The subject's particular viewpoint and discourse is understood to mirror mechanisms of ideological domination. The analysis consists of different dimensions: identifying themes and topics of the discourse, identifying discursive strategies used to portray certain worldviews and how verbal or written means are used to enforce arguments in the discourse (Reisigl and Wodak 2009:73). In addition, I will also complement the discourse analysis with secondary sources in order to support facts and arguments on what the EU is doing on the ground in Mali. These sources consists of newspaper articles, reports on human rights and development progress, but also academic articles. The reports and academic articles that I have chosen to use as secondary sources has been selected because the authors have conducted extensive fieldwork and interviews in Mali, both with regards to the working environment for aid agencies operating in Mali but also how the international diplomatic community perceive the security and development situation in Mali following international intervention as a response to the crisis. The secondary sources that I will primarily use are an article by Ruben Andersson and Florian Weigand (2015) as well as a report by Antonio Donini and Giulia Scalettaris (2016).

Justification for Engagement

Presentation as Self-Enhancing

When justifying their involvement in Mali, the EU is mainly presenting a positive image of itself on the basis of how it acts in a precarious environment. The notion that

underdevelopment is dangerous permeates the understanding of the situation and it is presented as it is EU who can provide the solution to the problem and bring forth development and stability in Mali. The EU became more actively engaged during the onset and immediate aftermath of the constitutional crisis in 2012 and a recurring theme in the framework and the related documents is that they evoke a sense of urgency that requires immediate action. This is specifically clear in a speech made by then-President of the European Council Herman von Rompuy in 2013:

> "We are currently at a crossroads in the history of Mali and the Sahel region. We must shoulder our responsibilities by tackling all dimensions of the problem. […] We need to extend democracy building and dialogue and work together to guarantee the development of the region's commitment. The harsh lesson learnt from Malian crisis in the short term is that nothing is possible without security"
>
> (European Council, Speech van Rompuy 15 May 2013:3).

The speech was directed towards the European Council during a donor conference on development aid to be allocated to Mali in the aftermath of social unrest in the country, and it was co-hosted by the Malian state and van Rompuy. The quotation is significant for several reasons. Starting with the word "crossroads" it helps convey a message of a dire situation that requires immediate action to be taken if things are not to take a turn for the worse. The constant reference to 'we' and 'work together' would indicate that the EU and Mali share the responsibility of tackling the problem, in so doing also presenting it as a form of partnership taking place, which would then benefit EU, Mali and the Malian citizens. However, it is questionable what kind of partnership is at stake, as it is first and foremost the EU who has a more active role to play in ensuring that a stable situation is restored in Mali. It is worthwhile pointing out that it is in the responsibility of the EU to 'extend democracy building' to guarantee the development of the region's commitment to this form of development. The message conveyed is that it is the EU possess agency in this situation and should not only lead by example but also be active in implementing this development, which are in themselves in line with liberal democratic values.

The notion that the EU is in a unique position to pass on solutions and provide stability is further expressed in other documents, most notably in the Regional Action Plan from 2015, which comes four years after the EU's initial Sahel Strategy. In explaining the launch of the plan, the following is stated:

> "[The plan] comes at a crucial time for the countries, [and it] reaffirms the EU's continued engagement and its support to sustainable and inclusive political and socioeconomic development, the strengthening of human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law as well as resilience."
>
> (Council of the European Union, 20 April 2015:2)

It is presented as it is the Regional Plan that will ensure stability for the countries in the region, as the EU steps in at 'crucial time' to continue its involvement and support to promote their resilience and development. The EU is seen to be in a position where it can pass on the 'liberal peace' values of human rights, rule of law and democratic governance, which Mali and the other Sahel states supposedly are lacking, as these are the values that are conducive to stability and sustainable development. As such, the dual functionality of the notion that underdevelopment is dangerous also becomes relevant in this respect. Meaning, one the one hand it serves as justification for the EU to remain involved in Mali, as underdevelopment brings with it a risk of conflict and the EU presence through the promotion of liberal values which will bring forth stability (Duffield 2001:122). On the other hand, the fault of unstable situation is attributed to internal root causes and the responsibility to provide a long-term solution to it is placed, indirectly, on Malian actors. This sentiment is strengthened further on in the Regional Action Plan, when the EU explains the situation in Mali but also evaluates its own efforts in handling the situation. First, The EU states that the current situation in Mali remains as delicate in 2015, if not more challenging as it was in 2011, which serves as reason for the renewed engagement:

> "Challenges are linked to the extreme poverty, lack of stability including economic fragility remain as acute as in 2011. Irregular migration and related crimes such as trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, corruption, illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime are thriving particularly where there is weak and/or little presence of any governmental authority".
>
> (Council of the European Union, April 2015:7)

Second, and more significantly, this reasoning becomes more interesting when compared to the self-evaluation of its own initiatives and performance in Mali. Accordingly:

> "The engagement of the EU, along with the activities of the Member States, has been impressive over the past four years in the Sahel […] There is no doubt that the EU has come a long way in addressing the challenges in the Sahel, overcoming the existing barriers and been able to ensure complementarity between the different EU instruments and missions/EDF as well as close coordination with Member States"
>
> (Council of the European Union, April 2015:13)

From the quotations above, the EU involvement and different actions in Mali is presented as "impressive", but at the same time the situation in Mali is the same, possibly even more challenging. Seen as such, the EU is distancing itself in that it is not their actions in Mali that are faltering: the EU engagement is commendable and the union has done what it could, it is the underdeveloped Mali that is source of challenges. At the same time, it also justifies their continued engagement since they are in a unique position to promote development in line with liberal peace.

Disregard of Alternatives

Apart from legitimising EU presence, the focus on underdevelopment as dangerous also means that the EU dismisses alternative ways of presenting the situation in Mali. This is seen in the solutions that the EU put forward, which are predominantly devoted to strengthening government capacity in Bamako, but also in what Malian actors are considered to be suitable partners for the EU and what domestic actors are attributed blame for the instability. First, through its presence and actions the EU aims to create a capable and stable Malian state that can itself provide security, stability and well-being to its citizens. The solutions that the EU propose does not only cast the EU in a leading role in implementing this development, they are also geared towards enhancing state structures and implementing liberal values:

> "The EU has a special responsibility and will continue to provide support to better governance including through public sector modernisation. Democracy and human rights will be promoted, including support to elections, local governance and decentralisation.
>
> (Council of the European Union April 2015:14-15)

> [The EU] commitment should take into account development, stability of state structures and the protection of civilians. The return to stability will only be sustainable through successful reform of governance and justice, areas in which the EU is involved with the Malian authorities"
>
> (Council of the European Union April 2015: 20)

Moreover, the EU claim that this development is under the full ownership of the states in the region, although this should be carried out with 'appropriate partnerships' with the UN, AU, ECOWAS, World Bank and civil society (Council of the European Union April 2015: 15). This indicates that the EU lays emphasis on liberal political processes and governance through public sector modernisation and elections as a solution to the situation, which the Sahelian governments should do in cooperation with predominantly international actors.

The dismissal of alternative ways of presenting the situation is most telling in consideration of how the EU portrays groups in the northern regions. Specifically, the understanding of underdevelopment as dangerous and its linkages to conflict and terrorism is prevalent in all of the documents, and while it is attributed to the state of Mali at large, the northern region and groups operating therein are singled out as particularly precarious. This is particularly clear in the Regional Action Plan, wherein the EU states that while the security situation in the entire Sahel region is extremely volatile, it is particularly acute in Northern Mali since it carries with it risks of spill-over effects (Council of the European Union April 2015:7). Moreover, the EU emphasise that terrorism is a security threat that has founds its sanctuary in Northern Mali that holds the country in its grip. Apart from condemning these actions, the EU solution is to reaffirm its support to Malian state authorities in order to put and end to the scourge of terrorism and re-establish peace and stability in the country (Council conclusion, 16 March 2015: point 1). Significantly, the extensive focus on terrorist threats in the northern regions, as well as the solutions aimed at strengthening state structures and governance in Bamako disregard the alternative option that the problem in Mali could be political and traced back to decade-long calls for increased autonomy and greater share of welfare services and development aid for the northern regions. The northern regions have long been subordinated, if not outright neglected, by the government in Bamako, which many have pointed out as contributing factor to the outbreak of crisis and conflict in 2012 (see Bergamaschi 2013; Charbonneu and Sears 2014; Davis 2015). State policies and the development aid the Malian state received

from international donors, including substantial support from the EU, have according to members of diplomatic and donor community been contributing factors to the conflict, but this is not recognised by the EU policy documents (Davis 2015:266). Rather, the Malian state is made unproblematic in the EU discourse that rather privileges unity and apparent consensus fitted to state building and globalizing neoliberal political and open market economies (Charbonneu and Sears 2014:207). The point is that when the EU present solutions that are almost exclusive aimed at enhancing state structures in Bamako, this dismisses the notion that the problem in Mali is not necessarily that underdevelopment in the north has resulted in conflict. Rather, the problem in Mali could also be presented as a *political* problem, in which decades of misused development aid and government policies have resulted in conflict and crisis.

Consequently, the understanding that underdevelopment is dangerous permeates the EU discourse, which in turn informs what kind of development project the EU promotes in Mali. It is a development project in which the EU is indispensable and can act as both model to follow and as catalyst to implement the necessary change that is in line with liberal values of enhancing democratic governance, the protection of human rights, the rule of law and market-oriented economies. The EU uses a prescriptive language that stipulates what should be done, who the appropriate partners are and where the problems derive from. In so doing, the EU is also dismissing alternative ways of presenting the situation in Mali. Notably, the extensive focus on underdevelopment as conflict-prone and its stated linkages to terrorism in the northern regions dismisses a more political explanation. Additionally, presenting the situation in Mali as unstable and threatening not only legitimises the EU presence, it also helps explain the security focus of the EU mission, which brings us to the following section concerning the security responses and what these can tell with regards to what kind of development project can be discerned in the EU mission.

Security as a Guarantee for Development

Security for the Common Good

The enactment of EU's security interests is presented as going hand in hand with the long-term development and stability for Mali. As such, security threats are presented

as common threats and when the EU acts on countering them, it is therefore beneficial for all. The security profile of the EU engagement has been heightened over time, which is seen in the difference between their first strategy, the Sahel Strategy, and its updated version the Regional Action Plan. The latter specified the urgent need for more specific policies in an enhanced security framework, which was subsequently done in the form of the deployment of the CSDP mission EUTM Mali. In explaining the mandate of the mission we are told that the situation in Mali is a threat to European security:

> ”The current political, humanitarian and security crisis in Mali creates an unacceptable situation for the country, and a grave threat for the region and for Europe. The situation increases the threat to the safety of EU citizens in the Sahel (hostage-taking, attacks) as well as in Europe, notably through the influence of extremists and terrorists networks over the diasporas, training, and logistical support from Al Qaida affiliates in the north of Mali. It also threatens the EU’s strategic interests, including the security of energy supply and the fight against human and drugs trafficking.”
>
> (EEAS 2015: EUTM Factsheet)

While the EU’s acknowledge that its own strategic interests in the form of energy supply and fight against trafficking are at stake, it is also emphasised that the mission is carried out in order to ensure the long-term stability in Mali. It is explicitly presented as a partnership, wherein acting on security threats is not only advantageous for the EU:

> ”The Mission is a significant part of EU’s approach to restore the state’s authority throughout Mali and bring a durable solution to the current crisis: The restoration of lasting peace in Mali is essential for the long term stability of the country and the Sahel region, and in a broader sense for both Africa and Europe. ”
>
> (EEAS 2015: EUTM FACTSHEET)

Moreover, the two above quotes are insightful as to what kind of development project the EU is presenting in the discourse. Notably, the notion of underdevelopment as dangerous is implicit in the above quote and it infringes directly with EU’s strategic interest. This is significant, because it conveys a message that the instability in Mali is a common threat for all that needs to be addressed, which in turn endorses an image

of the EU as acting as a 'force for good', since it will provide stability. Seen as such, the EU is presenting a development project in which the enactment of EU's security interests is the same as the long-term development in Mali. It also points to the idea that acting on security threats is a form of partnership, since the threat is a common goal. However, at this point it is worthwhile mentioning that the security dimension of the EU mission has been enhanced over the years and the EUTM mission has been stated to be particularly important in providing long-term stability and sustainable in Mali (EEAS 2016). The reason for this is the statement that long-term development is not possible without security (Council Conclusion May 2013; Council Conclusion April 2015). Considering the prominence given to the EUTM mission to provide long-term stability and development in Mali, the mandates to do so are notably short-term in nature and have been extended at least three times: at present the mission is mandated to operate until May 2018 (EEAS 2016). As such, this questions the stated commitment to long-term stability, and it also has consequences for the partnership between the EU and the Malian army. Interviews conducted with European military personnel, which I have obtained through secondary sources, revealed a widespread dissatisfaction with the short-term nature of the mandates, as it hindered both the work of providing long-term stability in the country and minimized prolonged engagement with the Malian security forces (Andersson and Weigand 2015:528). In addition, Human Rights Watch (2016) claim that a variety of international actors, including the EU, have been more concerned with obtaining security objectives and gains in Mali, which has been paralleled by little progress in security sector and justice reform, despite a promise to do so in the mandate.

Selective Partnerships

In upholding a partnership with the national security forces, other forms of development in Mali have been disregarded. Most notably, this concerns EU's selective condemnation of human rights violations in the country. This is worthwhile elaborating on since the promotion of human rights is such an important part behind the perception of the EU as a force for good in the world (Manners 2002) and is constantly referred to in the justification behind the EU involvement. Several authors have in reports and articles stated that human rights violations are a countrywide problem (Donini and Scalettaris 2016; Watling and Raymond 2015), yet the EU present the abuses as almost exclusively connected to the destabilising situation in the

north (Council Conclusion, 16 March 2015). In the EUTM objectives it is stated that the EU shall provide provision on International Humanitarian Law, protection of civilians and human rights in their collaboration with the national army and security forces, but this commitment has not been upheld in practice. Despite an extensive documentation on frequent abuses committed by the security forces, including extrajudicial of civilians since 2012, these instances have not been investigated (Dufka 2016). Rather, the EU have often turned a blind eye to these problems while simultaneously condemned the abuses performed by groups in the northern regions.

Taking the above into consideration, it questions what kind of partnership the EU value and it puts the relationship between security interests and development goals in a new light. First, from the justification section, I argued that the EU present the situation as though the EU is in a partnership with the state of Mali and its citizenship to address the issue of underdevelopment to gain stability and development. Second, the EU is also in partnership with the Malian security forces, which involves addressing security threats in order to provide sustainable development. Significantly, the protecting of civilians and human rights is a key objective of the mission. Therefore, when the EU does not condemn human rights violations committed by their partners in the security forces, it indicates that the EU value this partnership more than that of the partnership with Malian citizens and that the enactment of security interests is prioritized over development issues. Seen as such, we can discern a development project that prioritizes EU's security interest more than the protection of human right, which in turn questions the image of the EU acting as a force for good. Moreover, the following statement the EU made prior to launching the EUTM mission in Mali can also be challenged:

> "The EU will continue to address the needs of the victims of the crisis irrespectively of other political or CSDP action. [The EU] will continue to advocate for respect for humanitarian principles, for the protection of civilians and for unhindered access to population in need."
>
> (Council Conclusion, 5 December 2012:9).

In the end, the EU promotes a development project that will not necessarily address the need of the victims or protect civilians, but will rather prioritize the protection its own security interests. While it is presented as if acting on security threats will bring forward stability and development in Mali, concrete forms of development like the

protection of human rights are neglected in practice. Additionally, objectives of security and development have become blurred in other ways as well. This can be seen in how the EU has engaged in development practices and what the engagement can be characterized as, which will be addressed in the following section.

Development and Ownership

Conditional Development

Development is by and large presented as being under the ownership and responsibility of the Malian state, yet it is also clear that the EU can decide what kind of development model should unfold. The development programmes that they choose to provide funding for is one indication for this, but it can also be discerned from the discourse. The consequence is that while it is presented as it is the Malian state that can determine what kind of development is best for the country, it is a conditioned development that the domestic actors have the responsibility to carry out.

In the beginning of the engagement, particularly during the years 2012-2013, the EU donations was almost exclusively allocated to prepare for the presidential elections in 2013, which were stated to guarantee subsequent sustainable development and democratic consolidation throughout the country (EEAS 2016**)**. Following the election, the EU mobilised development funding to support justice and law enforcement, counter-terrorism initiatives as well as the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation initiatives and support for efforts to reduce radicalization and violent extremism (Davis 2015:271-272). Significantly, the 'State Building Contract' from 2013 can further exemplify the kind of development that EU promotes. The programme focuses predominantly on budget support for the Malian state. It aims to improve the financial capacity of the government and implement liberalizing policies conducive for a market economy (ECDPM 2013). This is presented as vital in order to foster development and democratic governance and while the EU state that their role is primarily to support, it is anyway the EU that decides that this development is best suited to provide stability in Mali

Moreover, the development funding that the EU provide for is being stated as being under the ownership of Mali, but the possibility of external 'intervention' is always present. In the factsheet on the Sahel Strategy, the EU state that development will be carried out under the full ownership and primary responsibility of the Sahel countries whilst also presenting the kind of development in mind:

> "The EU is implementing development programmes aimed at strengthening resilience, improving the functioning of regional markets and increase the regional and national capacity to reduce the risks of disasters."
>
> […] the EU continues to support inclusive socio-economic development, stability, building state capacity, governance, justice, fight against corruption and impunity, and regional integration including social services, especially health and education, resilience, sustainable agriculture rural development, food and nutrition security, infrastructure and private sector development."
>
> (EEAS; Factsheet on the Sahel Strategy).

The statements are noteworthy for two reasons. First, it stipulates what kind of development the EU endorse, which should both increase resilience and strengthen regional markets as to avoid problems of instability and instead produce good governance and socioeconomic development. This form of development includes both enhancing state capacity, rule of law and private sector development in order to promote stability. Second, it is also stated that this development will be implemented under full ownership of the countries, which is written in conjunction with "primary" responsibility. This leaves open the possibility that other actors than the Sahel states can intervene in the countries if they feel it is necessary, which in turn would seemingly legitimise external engagement. Seen as such, ownership and primary responsibility seems at odd with each other, as the EU not only condition the development, they also have the possibility to intervene in Malian development affairs at its behest.

Bunkered Presence

In practice this Malian ownership of development has resulted in aid programmes being externally conditioned and locally implemented, leading some to label it as a 'donor-driven ownership' (Bergamaschi 2014; Davis 2015). This is because international development funding has predominantly been allocated to state authorities in Bamako with the aim of enhancing state structures. This in turn has been paralleled by limited provision of welfare and social services to the population, particularly in the northern regions. While international donors are present on the ground in Mali, their involvement in the provision of aid is usually limited and more geared towards administrative tasks (Donini and Scalettaris 2016). While the EU has

provided staff towards their development programmes and some aid agencies, a clear division of labour between the EU staff and local workers also distinguishes these programmes, as the latter almost exclusively manned the operations of the agencies in the north (Andersson and Weigand 2015:531). In addition, from 2012 and onwards the EU begun evacuating their staff from the north and suspended their projects or supervised them from headquarters in Bamako, due to the stated prevalence of security threats, issues of cost-effectiveness and institutional obstacles (Bergamaschi 2014:354). These instances all have an effect on what kind of development project that the EU promotes in Mali. Specifically, it reflects a current trend in which aid and development programmes have become increasingly militarised and securitized. This in turn is manifested in the bunkerization of aid agencies and remote management on behalf of international donors, notably also the EU.

One notable finding from the research and fieldwork conducted by Donini and Scalettaris (2016) on the work and progress of aid and humanitarian agencies operating in Mali concerned the extent to which large agencies and donor presence are losing their field craft and are less and less operational (2016:16). In addition, aid agencies have to spend more time and effort on responding to the conditions and requirements of donors than providing development service to people in affected regions. They argue that the point for local actors and offices in the field is not only to do something meaningful on the ground, but also to be able to demonstrate the relevance of what they want to do to potential donors and portray themselves as credible actors to obtain funding. This entails developing and devoting increasing resources to non-operational activities such as communication, coordination, reporting, and demonstrating accountability to headquarters and donors, rather than to the people who the development aid is directed towards (Donini and Scalettaris 2016:16). Significantly, the EU is mentioned as being a prominent part of this international donor community operating in Mali, and as such this gives us an indication that the EU endorses a development project that is primarily devoted to 'upward reporting' and remote management. Further, this upward orientation is also reflected in the proliferation of more sophisticated data and reporting tools, seen in increased donor investment in tools as maps and remote sensing (Donini and Scalettaris 2016:16-17).

Apart from conditioning and managing development programmes at a distance, a related trend is that the EU aid agencies in Mali have also become

increasingly bunkered up and fortified. As argued by Andersson and Weigand (2015), a consequence of this is that risks have become transferred to local actors. This has often involved attempts at building a 'resilient' aid worker self in combination with increased physical bunkering and selective withdrawal (2015:522). During their fieldwork, they noted how international agencies were not only predominantly located in Bamako, far from the 'instability and underdevelopment' in the northern regions, they were also surrounded by barbed wire and armed soldiers patrolling the grounds. Local and international staff expressed dissatisfaction with this situation, as the bunkering and partial withdrawal in the field led to significant gaps in the international presence across Malian territory (Andersson and Weigand 2015:522).

Consequently, development is presented as if it is under the full ownership of Mali, but it is questionable what kind of ownership we can talk about. The reason being that EU conditions the kind of development to unfold, which is a development project primarily aimed towards enhancing state structures and make the state conducive to liberalizing economies and open to regional markets. Moreover, the EU also has the possibility to intervene in internal matters. Local actors have been assigned the responsibility to carry out development projects prescribed by the EU, whilst remote management and bunkerization characterize the EU presence on the ground. Seen as such, we can discern a development project in which the EU can decide the content and outcome of development whilst remaining at a safe distance from the problems of underdevelopment.

Conclusion: What kind of development project?

Throughout its involvement in Mali, the EU has constantly emphasised that it aims to provide sustainable development and long-term stability in Mali and has in so doing also presented it as beneficial for the country and the people within it. The understanding that security and development can only be achieved together is significant in this respect as it serves as a guiding principle for the mission and informs all subsequent EU action in Mali. However, the use of security-development nexus in this way can also tell another story that runs counter to the EU's self-presentation as a force for good. As stated in the framework, the use and presentation of the security-development nexus explains what constitutes a security threat and where it is located, it prescribes what the solution to the threat is and it stipulates who

can do what in the name of security and development, all of which we can also discern in the EU discourse and practices concerning the mission in Mali.

First, the notion of 'underdevelopment as dangerous' frames the understanding of the situation in Mali and it is presented as a security threat for virtually everyone. This legitimises EU involvement whilst also internalising the root causes of underdevelopment and poverty. As such, we are told that the problem is located in Mali and it is the EU that can provide a solution to the problem: in a self-enhancing manner the EU presents itself as indispensable in Mali, where it can act as both a model to follow and as catalyst to implement the necessary change that is in line with liberal values of enhancing democratic governance.

Second, the EU constantly refers to both instances of 'partnership' and 'ownership' in justifying and motivating both security and development practices, but I argue that we should question what kind of partnership and ownership is at stake. The EU state that they are in a partnership with Mali and its citizens to provide sustainable development but they are also in a partnership with the national army and security forces to address security issues in order to bring forth stability. In effect, the EU endorses a selective partnership that values security interests over promotion of development, which is exemplified by the non-condemnation of human rights violations by the national army and security forces. As such, the EU presents a development project that will not necessarily address the need of the victims or protect civilians, but will rather prioritize the protection of its own security interests. Moreover, the EU also promotes a conditional ownership of development oriented towards the creation of liberal democracies. Local actors have been assigned the responsibility to carry out development projects prescribed by the EU, whereas the EU presence in Mali is primarily characterized by remote management and bunkerization of its aid agencies. Consequently, this results in a selective engagement on behalf of the EU that values its own security interests over the promotion and delivery of development for the Malian citizens. It is a development project in which the EU can decide the content and outcome of development whilst remaining at a safe distance from the problems of underdevelopment. Ultimately, the EU promotes a development project that is more beneficial for the EU than for the state of Mali and the Malians.

My findings are first and foremost based on the discourse as seen in the official EU documents, whereas the arguments I made with regards to the facts on the

ground have been based on secondary sources. Seen as such, future research on this topic should focus on fieldwork, both observations and conduct interviews with relevant actors, to confirm what I have argued for in this article.

References

Andersson, Ruben and Florian Weigand (2015), 'Intervention at Risk: The Vicious Cycle of Distance and Danger in Mali and Afghanistan', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol.9, No.4, pp.519-541

Bergamaschi, Isaline (2013, March 31), 'The role of governance and aid in Mali's crisis', *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from:
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201331412468880930.html (Accessed 160520)

Bergamaschi, Isaline (2014) 'The fall of a donor darling: the role of aid in Mali's crisis', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 52, No.3, pp.347-378

Boukhars, A. (2013) *The Mali conflict: Avoiding past mistakes* [Online]. FRIDE. Available: http://www.fride.org/publication/1105/the-mali-conflict:- avoiding-past-mistakes, (Accessed: 160228)

Bøås, Morten and Liv E. Torheim (2013) 'The international intervention in Mali: "Desert blues" or a new beginning?', *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, Vol. 68, No. 3, pp.417-423

Chandler, David (2007) 'The Security-Development Nexus and the Rise of "Anti-Foreign Policy"', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 10, No. 4, pp.362-368

Charbonneau, Bruno and Jonathan M. Sears (2014) 'Fighting for Liberal Peace in Mali? The Limits of International Military Intervention', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 8, No.2-3, pp.192-213

Davis, Laura (2015) 'Reform or Business as Usual?', EU Security Provision in Complex Contexts: Mali', *Global Society*, Vol. 29, No.2, pp.260-279

del Sarto, R. and Tholens, S. 2013. *Conflict at the EU's southern borders: The Sahel crisis,* Available: http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/raffaella-del-sarto-simone-tholens/conflict-at-eus-southern-borders-sahel-crisis, (Accessed 130220)

Diez, Thomas (2005) 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering "Normative Power Europe" ', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.33, No. 3, pp.613-636

Diez, Thomas (2013) 'Normative Power as Hegemony', *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp.194-210

Donini, Antonio and Giulia Scalettaris (2016), 'Regional Humanitarian Challenges in the Sahel', *Feinstein International Center*. Retrieved from: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/sahel_case_study_final__09-05-16_.pdf (obtained 160518)

Duffield, Mark (2001) *Global Governance and the New Wars*, London: Zed Books Ltd.

Duffield, Mark (2010) 'The Liberal Way of Development and the Development-Security Impasse: Exploring the Global Life-Chance Divide', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp.53-76

Dufka, Corinne (2016, May 11) 'Confronting Mali's New Jihadist Threat, *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from:
https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/11/confronting-malis-new-jihadist-threat (Accessed 160516)

European Centre for Development Policy Making (2013), *The EU's State Building Contracts*. Retrieved from: http://ecdpm.org/wpcontent/uploads/BN-60-EU-State-Building-Contracts-Assistance-toFragile-States.pdf (Accessed 160515)

European Council (5 December 2012), *Revised draft Crisis Management Concept (CMC) for a possible CSDP military mission in Mali*, Brussels: European Union

European Council (15 May 2013), *Speech by the President of the European Council Herman von Rompuy at the high-level Donor Conference for development in Mali*, Brussels: The European Union

European Council (April 2015), *EU Sahel Strategy Regional Action Plan 2015-2020*, Brussels: The European Union

European Council (16 March 2015), *Council Conclusions on Mali*, Brussels: The European Union

European Union External Action Service (2016), *EU Relations with Mali*, retrieved from: http://eeas.europa.eu/mali/index_en.htm (Accessed 160304)

European Union External Action Service (2016), *European Union and the Sahel – Fact Sheet*, retrieved from: http://eeas.europa.eu/factsheets/news/sahel-european-union-factsheet_en.htm, (Accessed 160304)

European Union External Action Service (August 2015), *EUTM Factsheet*, Retrieved from:http://www.eutmmali.eu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/factsheet_eutm_mali_en.pdf (Accessed 160302)

European Union External Action Service (2011), *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*, retrieved from: http://eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf (Accessed 160301)

Manners, Ian (2002) 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, No.2, pp.235-258

Marchal, R (2012) *The Coup in Mali*: *The result of a long-term crisis or spill over from the Libyan civil war?* NOREF. http://www.peacebuilding.no/Regions/Africa/Publications/ The-coup-in-Mali-the-result-of-a-long-term-crisis-or-spillover-from-the-Libyan-civil-war, (Accessed 130326)

Maurizio, Carbone (2013), 'An Uneasy Nexus: Development, Security and the EU's African Peace Facility', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 18, No 4, pp.103-123

Raleigh, Clionadh and Caitriona Dowd (2013) 'Governance and Conflict in the Sahel's Ungoverned Space', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, Vol. 2, No 2, pp. Art-32

Reisigl, Martin and Ruth Wodak (2009) 'The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)' in Wodak Ruth and Michael Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed.), London: Sage Publications

Ruiz, Jorge Ruiz (2009), 'Forum: Qualitative Social Research', *Sociological Discourse Analysis: Methods and Logics*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp.1-21

Stern, Maria (2011) 'Gender and race in the European security strategy: Europe as a "force for good"?', Vol. 14, No. 1, pp.28-59

Stern, Maria and Joakim Öjendal (2010) 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?', *Security Dialogue* Vol.4, No.1, pp.5-30

Zielonka, Jan (2013) 'Europe's new civilizing missions: the EU's normative power discourse', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol.18, No. 1, pp.35-55

Wing, Susanna (2013) ‘Mali: Politics of a Crisis’, *African Affairs*, Vol. 112, No.448, pp.476-485

Watling, Jack and Paul Raymond (2015, 25 November) ‘The Struggle for Mali’, *The Guardian*. Retrieved from:
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/25/the-struggle-for-mali (Accessed 160516)