Multilateral Military Interventions: European intervention in the Sahel

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Introduction

After 10 years of international efforts through multilateral military interventions, (MMI) United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres voiced that he was "deeply concerned by the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the Sahel" (RFI, 2022). Guterres referred to the series of military coups that have taken place in the Sahel, a region characterized by instability and violence. The Sahel is geographically understood as the savannah at the southern end of the Sahara. In political terms it is defined by the Sahel G5, a regional organization to facilitate cooperation of counter-insurgency operations by Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad.

These interventions were meant to be ad-hoc and short-term by coalitions of powerful states and regional organizations to fight terrorist groups and quickly re-establish state control (Charbonneau & Sears, 2014; Dieng, 2019). These MMIs were initiated by France in 2012. Since 2013, they have been supported through international efforts by the UN mission MINUSMA and European Union (EU) missions. The European interventions have been described as a testing ground for the EU as an international security actor (Venturi, 2017). European states, including France and Sweden, are now withdrawing from Mali and restructuring their presence in the region. This puts into question whether states were ultimately able to reach their stated objectives.

Observers describe the region as the most dangerous area for UN peacekeeping. It is repeatedly named the "French Afghanistan", or "Sahelistan" (Baldaro, 2021; Cold-Ravnkilde & Nissen, 2020). In addition to intensifying extremist violence and resource conflicts, a series of coups have toppled civilian governments, resulting in a situation that, in terms of violence, is comparable to 2012, when insurgent groups had taken effective control over the northern part of Mali (Boas & Torheim, 2013). Skepticism among the Sahelian population, militaries and governments has produced a backlash against foreign forces that are increasingly seen as occupiers.

Therefore, a growing body of research has investigated the alleged self-interest of intervening actors, such as the EU and France in the Sahel (Cold-Ravnkilde & Nissen, 2020; Erforth, 2018; Maeresera, 2012; Olsen, 2015). They have found that there are inherent contradictions in liberal state-building between peacekeeping and violence (Charbonneau & Sears, 2014; Paris, 2018; Talentino, 1998). These contradictions have been exposed due to increasing attention at the worsening security situation despite the stated goal of stabilizing the

region. Scholars have found the explanation thereof in the lack of attention paid to the root causes of instability, that have enabled security to worsen (Harmon, 2015; Strydom, 2019).

There is growing interest in the range of actors active in the region (Baldaro, 2021; D'Amato, 2021) and their motivations (Finnemore, 2013; Maeresera, 2012; Olsen, 2015). However, research has devoted much less attention to the motivations for intervention of European partner states besides France. France is the most studied case because it has a long history in the region, as both the former colonial power, and "policeman of Africa" [Gendarme d'Afrique], intervening on average once a year during the Cold War (Chafer, Cumming, & van der Velde 2020; Erforth 2020). While it is often presumed that European interventions are in essence French projects (Chafer, 2016), other research assumes that the EU operates as a unitary actor in the Sahel (Miller, 2019). Nevertheless, following the Rwandan genocide, France has officially adopted a multilateral approach, seeking to deepen its cooperation with African and European partners (Chafer, 2020; Erforth, 2020). In spite of this multilateralization, other EU member states remain understudied in MMI research (Maeresera, 2012; Olsen, 2015).

Thus, the objective of this thesis is to analyze the motivations of multiple European states to participate in MMIs in the Sahel. The motivation is to compare perspectives of other European states to the scholarship-dominating French focus. The expectation is that this thesis can provide valuable insights into the complexity of European foreign policy cooperation. Hence, the research seeks to answer the question of "*What are the drivers of participation of European state in multilateral military interventions in the Sahel?*". This thesis employs the method of qualitative content analysis to categorize and analyze public government communications between 2018 and 2022. Based on a structural realist approach, the motivations of these actors are discussed tracing security, normative, and institutional arguments. The argument of this thesis is that the French perspective cannot be seen to equate European policy towards the Sahel. The main conclusion is that European states mainly prioritize institutional and security considerations – although each partner maintains differentiated arguments.

An Overview of Literature studying Multilateral Military Intervention in the Sahel since 2012

Contemporary literature presents the Sahel as space with undefined boundaries (Lucia, 2020) because the borders of the Sahel are constantly being redefined to fit the narrative of actors in the region (Baldaro, 2021). Led by a French effort, since 2012, European states have

increasingly intervened in this geographical space through external military intervention in African armed conflict. State actors are active through a mix of foreign and African militaries (Olsen, 2015). A diverse set of academic debates in international relations scholarship seeks to understand how and why European states are being driven to intervene militarily in the Sahel.

Research on the drivers of military intervention in the Sahel focuses on three dimensions: security threats, norms, and institutions. First, security threat arguments are analyzed through an understanding of threat that is posed by different insurgent groups, such as terrorists, transnational organized crime, jihadist extremists, as well as drug and human traffickers. The threat that these groups pose affects people in the Sahel, and emanates beyond the region, and subsequently endangers European states. There is disagreement whether security threats are an objective fact or subjectively created through a securitizing discourse. Structural realist scholars differentiate between 'hard core' security threats, and an expanded notion that includes normative, economic, or hybrid considerations (Erforth, 2020; Maeresera, 2012; Olsen, 2015; Weldes, 1996). Post-structural international relations scholarship regards security threats to be created through securitizing discourse that points out how an issue is securitized by a state actor (Buzan et al., 1998; Ehrhart, 2019; Harmon, 2015; Stritzel, 2007).

Second, normative arguments serve the purpose of justifying participation in MMIs through argumentation that is built on human rights and, thus, on international law (Ehrhart, 2019; Finnemore, 2013; Jayasundara-Smits, 2018; Strydom, 2019; Talentino, 1998; Williams, 2012). Scholars examine the discrepancy between human rights discourse and the effects of military intervention on local populations in peace-building processes (Recchia & Tardy, 2020). Moreover, scholars have questioned the normative aspect of multilateralism, pointing out how cooperation is seen as a normative goal in itself (Erforth, 2018; Kreps, 2008; Recchia & Tardy, 2020). The prioritization of individual rights over the principle of state sovereignty since the Cold war has established norms such as the responsibility to protect (R2P) that seek to prevent crimes against humanity (Plant, 1993; Talentino, 1998). In addition, scholars question the concept of liberal peace that has been attempted through a replication of Western institutions (Paris, 2018; Talentino, 1998). They argue that neoliberal structures reproduce violence and marginalize local forms of human organization (Charbonneau & Sears, 2014; Paris, 2018; Talentino, 1998).

Third, institutional arguments refer to stability, development, and climate change as the priorities of states. Central to these states' priorities are the pursuit of their interest on the basis of grand strategy (Simón, 2013; Lopez Lucia, 2016). For instance, research explores how states support the establishment of state structures and its inherent contradictions within this

concept that are disconnected from localized forms of governance (Ehrhart, 2019; Powell, 2017; Raineri & Strazzari, 2019). In addition, they establish the connection between (sustainable) development and security policies within the region (Duffield, 2014; Eizenga, 2019; Venturi, 2017). This research also points out how individuals (Cold-Ravnkilde & Nissen, 2020), and other actors, advocate for the EU to establish itself as a security actor internationally (Alexander, 2015).

The scholarship on contributions to MMIs in the Sahel has multiple shortcomings, as it falls into a narrow Franco-European focus (Jayasundara-Smits, 2018; Miller, 2019). Actors studied include the US (Maeresera, 2012), China (Maeresera, 2012), Italy (Dentice & Donelli, 2021) and Germany (Ehrhart, 2019), or even subnational actors (D'Amato, 2021). This research lacks an in-depth understanding of the contributions of smaller European states with little prior involvement in the region. Accordingly, scholars disagree whether military interventions are truly multilateral through their operations, or only in their legitimization through international organizations (Erforth, 2020; Recchia & Tardy, 2020). This disagreement is based on the argument that EU operations constitute a French led-project to reduce French resource spending and gain legitimacy through political approval by partner countries (Miller, 2019).

Thus, this thesis seeks to answer the question of *"What are the drivers of participation of European state in multilateral military interventions in the Sahel?"*. The researcher seeks to expand the neoclassical realist approach largely based on Olsen (2015) through the identified normative and institutional considerations, as most theoretical frameworks only address one or two of the three arguments (Hippel, 1999; Maeresera, 2012; Paris, 2018).

Theoretical framework

This section presents the theoretical framework, conceptualizations, and sub-questions. This requires the reconsideration and expansion of the neoclassical realist perspective used by Olsen (2015) by drawing on the above identified critical scholarship to provide for normative and institutional argumentative dimensions.

Theoretical frame.

The neoclassical realist framework of this thesis builds on the theoretical underpinnings of structural realism. Structural realists concentrate on the determination of outcomes on the basis of the constraints posed by the international system. Neoclassical realists incorporate individual behavior as a decisive factor (Maeresera, 2012) that includes ideas and norms as relevant factors for explaining behavior (Olsen, 2015).

Olsen builds on the work of Gegout (in Toje and Kunz, 2012), who conceptualizes national interest as 'hard core' security interests, and 'core' interests through security and economic interests. While it expands on the security dimension, this model still lacks an understanding of normative and institutional concerns on their own. Post-structural scholarship has pointed out how states create the justifications of participation through discourse that refers to normative considerations (Charbonneau & Sears, 2014; Finnemore, 2013).

Conceptualizations.

The thesis bases its conceptualization of *Multilateral military intervention* on the definition by the Oxford Bibliography which defines it as "interference in the affairs of a state" (Tsagourias 2020). Multilateralism, according to Keohane (1990), refers to "the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad-hoc arrangements or by means of institutions" (p. 731-764). There is disagreement on the relevance of the contribution of smaller European partner states (Erforth, 2020; Recchia & Tardy, 2020; Talentino, 1998.). Therefore, the definition here is based on operational, practice-based multilateralism, and not on institutional approval, because the operational definition points to the contributions of all participating states (Cold-Ravnkilde & Jacobsen, 2020; Kreps, 2008; Recchia & Tardy, 2020).

Security threat is traditionally the most important dimension of state justification for foreign intervention. This research uses the definition by Tham and Lindell (2014) who define security threats in the Sahel to include "violent separatism, armed Islamism and transnational organized crime". In addition, scholarship has pointed to irregular migration and terrorism, which will also be used in the definition of security threat in this thesis (Adeyemi & Mulugeta, 2021; D'Amato, 2021; Frowd, 2020).

Paris (2018) provides the conceptual basis for *normative arguments;* Paris includes democracy, rule of law, economic liberalization, active media and civil society involvement, and human rights to justify their participation in MMIs. The importance of normative arguments in state motivations is based on the frequent reference to the protection of human rights and lives (Finnemore, 2004), and on scholarly questioning of the rationalist actor assumption of structural realism (Talentino, 1998).

Institutional arguments refer to stability, state-building, supporting allies, furthering development and addressing global problems, such as climate change. This conceptualization is based on liberal peacebuilding, in which institutions are built to resemble Western states in

their economic and political systems (Paris, 2018; Charbonneau & Sears, 2014; Talentino, 1998).

Thus, this thesis expands the neoclassical realist framework by Olsen (2015). In a first step, this thesis acknowledges the 'hard core' interest as security arguments. In a second step, it expands the framework by assigning core interests to institutional arguments. Lastly, it adds a normative dimension to this framework. Hence, this thesis seeks to understand the relationship between the independent variables of security, normative, and institutional justifications (IVs), the 'drivers' of state behavior, in relation to the dependent variable of participation in multilateral military interventions (DV).

This expansion is justified by the fact that states may base their motivations less on realist arguments to justify their participation in MMIs, contrary to France (Ehrhart, 2019). As the objective of this thesis is to account for smaller European states, it is necessary for the theoretical approach to respond to their less securitized understanding of international politics. On this theoretical basis, the expectation is formed that states motivate their participation in MMIs with different prioritizations. Hence, this thesis employs the following sub-questions to understand the degree to which each argumentative dimension is prioritized:

Sub-question 1: To what extent is a state's participation in MMIs shaped by *security* reasons?
Sub-question 2: To what extent is a state's participation in MMIs shaped by *normative* reasons ?
Sub-question 3: To what extent is a state's participation in MMIs shaped by *geopolitical* reasons?

Methodology

Methodological background.

Research into MMIs in the Sahel is marked by a methodological divide between positivist-oriented realists and liberal institutionalist on one hand, and post-structuralist, critical scholarship on the other hand. It has been argued that the methodological variety contributes to the field (Halperin & Heath, 2020). Therefore, this thesis combines neoclassical realism with institutionalist/post-structural arguments on values and interests into its explanation of state behavior beyond security and economic arguments (Maeresera, 2012; Olsen, 2015).

Case selection.

The case selection of this research is based on a gap in literature, as smaller European states remain understudied. Therefore, it follows a comparative design to respond to the research interest in different European perspectives in MMI participation. Arguments for MMI participation are analyzed for the missions United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), European Union Training Mission Mali (EUTM), EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP), and Takuba between 2018 and 2022.

In this research, the case of France is chosen, as it is the most researched case in the region making it a crucial case (Chafer et al., 2020; Recchia, 2020). Germany is included as it resembles France as significant regional power in Europe and actively engages in multilateralism, although with reservation to the use of its military power (Ehrhart, 2019).

The scope of the literature is expanded through the inclusion of smaller European states that serve as innovative cases. The selection of Sweden and the Netherlands is based on their significant contribution to the aforementioned missions (Marsh & Rolandsen, 2021). Moreover, Sweden and the Netherlands, although smaller in comparison, provide a large enough availability of communications data to compare them with the two larger cases. Hence, the four case comparative design provides a mixture of small and big states with differing contributions to MMIs, directly responding to the initial puzzle in the research question.

Data collection.

The data collection for this thesis covers primary sources from several semantic domains. These sources include government communications covering the Sahel in the period of 2018 – 2022. This data, due to its unfiltered nature, is the best fitting publicly available source in order to analyze how states justify their presence in the Sahel. Table 1, presents the sources. Their variety accounts for the lack of communication that states provide justifying their participation in MMIs in the Sahel. It has to be noted that there are differences between data sources. Whereas France almost exclusively provides press statements, Sweden provides yearly foreign policy statements in their reference to their engagement in the Sahel.

Table 1.

Governmental communications sources 2018 -2022

France	Germany	Sweden	Netherlands

| Q&As and announcements from government press briefings, ministerial and joint governmental statements, strategy presentations | Government briefings in response to parliamentary questions, press announcements, ministerial statements and speeches, strategy presentations | Yearly government foreign policy statement, government briefings in response to parliamentary questions, strategy presentations | Government budget justifications, strategy presentations, mission evaluations, ministerial statements and speeches, policy frameworks, government briefings in response to parliamentary questions, ministerial magazine |

Note: This research analyzed a total of 50 governmental sources. The results of the QCA analysis are found in separate country tables in appendix A

Data analysis.

With the objective of qualitatively sound research, the researcher employs the techniques of triangulation, intense exposure and thick descriptions, and discrepant evidence to ensure high validity (Wesley, 2010). Triangulation refers to mixing methods, for instance by quantizing data, or using discourse analysis together with QCA (Gerring, 2011). Intense exposure and thick descriptions refer to gaining an overview of the material, systematic coding of documents and double-checking coding results, including raw data and several pieces of evidence for major interpretations (Wesley, 2010). Discrepant evidence covers the interpretation that helps recognizing the limitations of the research project (Platt, 1981).

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is chosen as the method of this research because it is used to test and further develop theories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), as this research further builds upon the neoclassical realist framework by Olsen (2015). It allows the researcher to include content evidence for and against their hypotheses, in order to make inferences regarding plausibility on the basis of diverse range of sources. Table 2 presents the framework that includes the operationalized conceptualizations from above and provides quotation examples from the original source material:

Table 2.

QCA Framework: Drivers of state participation

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
Security factors				
	Insurgency	I	Reference is made to a country's fight against unspecified insurgent groups. The political discourse refers to the fight between insurgents (Charbonneau, 2021) and counter-insurgents through prevention and suppression of armed insurgencies.	[not explicitly mentioned]
	Terrorism	T	Reference is made to the country's security need in counter-terrorism. The speakers mention terrorist threats as a major hazard to the country (Lavallée, Léonard, & Kaunert, 2018). Focus may be made on the specific transnational nature of terrorism in the Sahel (D'Amato, 2021; Cold-Ravnkilde & Nissen,	„International terrorism is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Since this threat has never been so strong, France is taking action at every level with its international partners to combat terrorist networks in France and abroad. >Reduce terrorist groups' regional hold;

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
			2020). Actions are taken against preparation, facilitation, and incitement of terrorism.	>Combat financial, human, logistic and terrorist propaganda networks; " (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022)
	Securitized prevention of irregular migration	SIM	Reference is made to emotional models in justifying migration as security threat to free movement of people, the economy, personal fear, othering, illegal border crossing, difference in appearance, general threat category, social homogeneity (Venturi, 2017; Frowd, 2020; Adeyemi & Mulugeta, 2021).	"Ook liggen met name in Mali en Niger routes die door migranten uit geheel West-Afrika worden gebruikt om Europa te bereiken." (Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, 2020)
	Transnational organized crime	TOC	Incites response to networks of transnational organized crime mentioning serious crimes, transnational nature, drug- counterfeit, cultural property, falsified medical products, persons and migrants, and arms trafficking, crimes	"Daarnaast wordt de Sahel geteisterd door terroristische groeperingen, criminele organisaties en gewapende groepen die eveneens van deze routes gebruik maken om wapens, drugs en mensen te smokkelen. […]" (Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, 2020)

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
			against the natural environment (Ravkilde & Nissen, 2020; Strydom, 2019; Harmon, 2015).	
	Jihadi Islamism/ extremism	CJI	Reference is made to combatting insurgent groups with militant Islamist ideology, may refer to terrorist attacks (Eizenga, 2019; Charbonneau, 2021).	[not a main argument}
	Instability/ weak governments	IWG	Reference is made to fragile states with limited governing capacity (Osland & Erstad, 2020)	The region is characterised by weak states. The situation is a breeding ground for radicalisation." (Linde, 2020)
	Show resolve and military strength demonstration	SRS	Reference is made to the state's military strength and ability to protect its population (Weldes, 1996).	[not mentioned]
Normative				

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
	Democracy	D	Reference is made to democratic values as a reason for intervention. This includes voting, free- and fair elections, participation, plurality, (Paris, 2018; Von Hippel, 1999)	"Sweden has a comprehensive and longstanding commitment to peace, democracy and development in Africa. […] The security situation in the Sahel is cause for great concern. In August, a military coup took place in Mali. A transitional government is now in place and general elections are due to be held in 2022. Sweden contributes to security and development in the Sahel." (Linde, 2021)
	Rule of Law	RoL	Reference to establishing a rule of law culture. Accountability for all public institutions, publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated. Consistency with international human rights norms and standards (Paris, 2018; Finnemore, 2005)	„ [Mali] befindet sich mitten in einem Übergangsprozess, der über die Zukunft Malis und seiner Bevölkerung entscheidet und darüber hinaus auch Auswirkungen auf die Stabilität der gesamten Sahelregion hat. In dieser so wichtigen Phase den Übergangspräsidenten Bah N'Daw und den Übergangspremierminister Moctar Ouane festzusetzen, sendet ein desaströses Zeichen an die Bevölkerung Malis und die internationale Gemeinschaft. Wir verurteilen das Vorgehen in aller […]" (German Federal Government, 2020)

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
	Active Media	AM	Reference to free press and media. Protection of journalists, and independent newspapers (Paris, 2018).	[not mentioned]
	Civil Society	CS	Reference to the value of an active civil society, strong institutions, engagement (Paris, 2018; Von Hippel, 1999).	The main objective of this policy framework is to strengthen civil society organisations in their role of lobby and advocacy. […] " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2019)
	Human Rights	HR	Rights and needs all parts of the population of the intervened countries. Specific reference to the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children, LGBT community, refugees and migrants. (Paris, 2018; Von Hippel, 1999; Finnemore, 2013).	"Human rights, democracy and gender equality are priorities in Sweden's Africa policy, along with migration and trade. It is important to support sustainable development in Africa. This can involve girls' schooling and increased access to electricity. " (Linde, 2020)
	Human Security	HS	Intervention is set to protect human lives from security threats, war, crime, terrorism, instability (Paris, 2018; Von Hippel, 1999; Finnemore, 2013)	"France is concerned by the increasing number of abuses that have taken place in central Mali since the start of 2022 and the impunity with which they are carried out. […] The fight against active terrorist

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
				groups in the Sahel must never under any circumstances justify human rights violations. Indiscriminate violence against civilians will only serve to strengthen these groups." (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022)
Institutions				
	State-building, sovereignty, stability	SB	Reference is made to the creation, institutional consolidation, stabilization of a state. Establishing sovereignty with reference to institutions, borders, authority over all territories, (political) stabilization (Osland & Erstad, 2020; Dieng, 2019; Donelli, 2021).	„Meine Damen und Herren, dieser Einsatz ist ein schwieriger, und er wird es auch bleiben. Es ändert aber nichts daran, dass unser Ziel, nämlich Stabilität im Sahel zu schaffen, auch eine der vielen Voraussetzungen ist, um die Sicherheit in Europa zu erhöhen." (German Foreign Service, 2021)
	Resolving conflict	CR	Conflict resolution, intervention between warring factions, addressing in-combability, address disputes, ceasefire, agreement, future prevention.	"France is, together with all of Mali's international partners, very attached and attentive to the implementation of the Algiers peace agreement by the signatory parties, which remains central to resolving

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
				the crisis in Mali and the Sahel. " (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021)
	Supporting allies	SA	Supporting allies through accountability between partners with regard to shared goals; new, innovative and more flexible modes of action; and a specific commitment to vulnerable and fragile zones.	"As part of the International Coalition for the Sahel, France is also mobilized in support of the G5 Sahel countries to bring a multidimensional response to the crisis in the Sahel." (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).
	Economic, human, infrastructure development	D	Focus on root problems in the Sahel: poverty, lack of good governance, corruption, inclusivity. Improve living conditions, reduce reliance on aid (Cold-Ravkilde, 2020; Helly, 2013; Donelli, 2021).	"As a trading nation and a development partner with considerable experience in promoting public cooperation with the private sector, the Netherlands contributes to sustainable and inclusive growth in other countries." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020)
	Frame as Sahel	FaS	Define the boundaries of the Sahel (Baldaro, 2021; Döring & Herpolsheimer, 2018; Lucia Lopez, 2020).	[not mentioned]

Category	Indicators	Code	Operationalization	Quotations
	Demonstrate actorness and capability	DC	Demonstrate its own actorness through formulation and achievement of policy objectives (Cold-Ravnkilde & Jacobsen, 2020; Erforth, 2020; Rieker & Blockmans, 2019; Weldes, 1996). Promote visibility, capability, coherence and presence as a security actor (Koops, 2011)	[not mentioned]

An Analysis and Presentation of the Drivers of Participation in Multilateral Military Intervention

This chapter presents the collected governmental communications for the countries of France, Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands along three sub-questions: "*To what extent is the country's participation shaped by security reasons?*", "*To what extent is the country's participation shaped by normative reasons?*", and "*To what extent is the country's participation shaped by institutional reasons?*". This chapter explores how, and whether these countries have a main driver that motivates their participation in MMI.

France – the main military actor.

Table 3.

France: Number of quotes per category of the QCA analysis

Security	Norms	Institutions	Total documents
11	2	9	22

Security serves as the main reason for French presence in the Sahel. France has developed a narrative of the fight against terrorism, deeming it "one of the most serious threats to international peace and security" (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs [FMEFA], 2022a). Terrorists not only threaten France, but also Europe, and Sahelian people: "We are engaged in the Sahel at the request of the countries of the region. France's resolve to continue the common battle against the terrorists who threaten us is absolute." (FMEFA, 2021a).

Normative reasons feature less in French communication. Humanitarian reasons are evoked as a central part of the French mission: "The fight against active terrorist groups in the Sahel must never under any circumstances justify human rights violations. Indiscriminate violence against civilians will only serve to strengthen these groups" (FMEFA, 2022c). The deteriorating security situation and military coups have led to condemnations of human rights abuses of terrorist groups and new military governments. These developments violate the objectives of the French mission in terms of security, stabilization, and civilian protection.

Institutional reasons follow security concerns: "France reaffirms its support for the authorities of the Sahel countries in their fight against terrorism as well as for MINUSMA, which plays a key role in Mali's stabilization." (FMEFA, 2020c). Stability is to be maintained

by state institutions and regional cooperation of the G5. States have the tasks of providing public services, establishing sovereignty, and allowing for democratic life and functioning justice systems. Besides stability, the French government cites efforts that focus on development, reconstruction, and cooperation with the state and local authorities.

In conclusion, France is mainly driven by security considerations and argues for a joint fight against terrorism with its European and African partners. The claim is made that stability is a precondition for security to "dry up recruitment" (FMEFA, 2020b). France rejects the military coups and calls instead for dialogue and civilian rule to "find a solution to the deep crisis in the country" (Le Drian, 2020e). In addition, these coups also undermine the normative human rights approach that would result from stability and government services. Overall, the approach is a securitized one, taking priority over multi-dimensional.

Germany – a civilian force?

Table 4.

Germany: Number of quotes per category of the QCA analysis

Security	Norms	Institutions	Total documents
3	3	16	22

Security reasons mainly relate to threats that emanate from the Sahel region to Europe: "What happens over there [in the Sahel] threatens not only the stability of our southern neighborhood, but also has effects […] up to Europe." [Was dort passiert, das gefährdet nicht nur die Stabilität unserer südlichen Nachbarschaft, sondern das wirkt […] bis nach Europa.] (German Foreign Office [AA], 2021d). The German foreign minister, Baerbock, aims "to create security for Europe as terrorist groups know no borders" (2022). Terrorism, transnational organized crime and illegal migration are viewed as security threats that emanate from the Sahel affecting German and European security – the instability of the region is seen as the precondition for security threats.

In the *normative* dimension, Germany evokes its constitutional mandate and humanitarian principles to protect Sahelian people (AA, 2020d). It is argued that only a safe environment enables the implementation of human rights. Hence, there is a need for solidarity with local humanitarian helpers countering insurgent groups. In addition, since 2020, the military coups have been "disastrous' to the rule of law (Baerbock, 2022). Coups constitute an

important juncture for international partners and locals. Therefore, she call for a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the conflict (Baerbock, 2022). Hence, German governments claim that their presence is based on humanitarian action to support their efforts.

Institutions are featured most in German arguments and center around state-building to establish a functioning political system by reinvigorating citizen's trust in the state and a strong civil society (Maas, 2021a). In addition, Germany focuses on supporting military training missions for Sahelian militaries to achieve capabilities for autonomous operative deployment. These conflict prevention initiatives seek to lay the foundation for the state and military to foster resilience and improved living conditions. This entails efforts towards economic and social perspectives for the local population with a special appeal to young people and women (German Federal Government [Breg], 2020). A desired side effect would be to steer migration and reduce sources of conflict that cause refugee movements (Breg). In the long-term, the approach towards climate change has changed from a policy of adaptation to conditions to one of addressing the emergence of the climate crisis (AA, 2020; Baerbock, 2022b).

In conclusion, the German Sahel approach covers foreign- security- and development policy. The main stated goal of this approach is to stabilize the Sahel region to achieve security for Europe through liberal state building: "The Sahel is a main focus of German foreign- security- and development policy. The commitment ranges from acute emergency relief to measures of civil and military stabilization to long-term developmental cooperation." [der Sahel deshalb ein Schwerpunkt der Außen-, Sicherheits- und Entwicklungspolitik. Das Engagement reicht von der akuten Nothilfe über Maßnahmen der zivilen und militärischen Stabilisierung bis zu längerfristiger Entwicklungszusammenarbeit] (AA, 2021). Germany focuses on providing non-military support and strives for a rules-based international order together with African governments. Overall, German governments have promoted a multidimensional approach that touches upon diplomacy, stabilization efforts, security, humanitarianism, and development.

Sweden – the human rights advocate?

Table 5.

Sweden: Number of quotes per category of the QCA analysis

Security	Norms	Institutions	Total documents
4	8	6	18

Regarding *security*, Sweden advocates for the provision of domestic and international security that concentrates on preventing conflict, refugee flows, and climate change – all threats to Swedish security. This approach aims at reducing radicalization and terrorism, while providing support for victims to prevent continued insecurity. The governments define their approach to follow 'human security', asserting both the importance of security provision for the state through peacekeeping and counterterrorism, as well as an understanding that is people-centered (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [SMFA], 2016). In addition to the terrorist threats, Sweden also criticizes the instability resulting from military coups and the danger from Russian mercenary activity.

Sweden's arguments are mainly *normative*. Human rights provide the base for Sweden's foreign policy agenda centered on peace, democracy, and development (Linde, 2020). Sweden is active in establishing reconciliation mechanisms, and in cooperating on migration movements and trade. Sweden addresses climate change and the ecological crisis, and connects these issues to human rights. Democratic backsliding is addressed by actively promoting democracy and calling out authoritarian leaders, such as for the coups in Mali in 2020 and 2021 (Linde, 2022).

Critical for an understanding of Swedish normative arguments is the Feminist foreign policy (Ffp) in Sweden's Africa policy (Linde, 2021). Sweden promotes Ffp in multilateral formats, for instance, in the partnership on women, peace and the establishment of women networks in conflict resolution and mediation (Wallström, 2018). It is argued that gender-related effects are crucial in key areas of conflict, poverty, and scarcity of resources. Thus, the Swedish government calls for consistency between foreign, security and development policy to achieve greater synergies and impact.

Regarding *institutions*, Sweden wants to address the root causes of insecurity and human rights abuses. The Swedish government contributes to development cooperation by advocating sustainability, good governance practices, addressing corruption and climate change. For instance, Sweden encourages using natural resources sustainably and establishing strong trade links (SMFA, 2016). In addition, the government addresses climate change through sustainability and adaptation measures, and solidarity-based aid and investment in climate and environment policies (Wallström, 2019). Overall, the institutional arguments refer to strengthening resilience on the basis of a social contract between the peoples of the Sahel and their states, and to reducing the vulnerability of local people, and to promote the rule of law.

In conclusion, Swedish arguments are based on Ffp, a gender-sensitive and human rights centered approach, with a commitment to peace, security, development and democracy.

These liberal institutions are seen as foundational to peace and security, as well as investments and growth for the Sahel region. Still, the Swedish government is set to withdraw from the region as one of the first (France 24 2022). The Swedish white paper on foreign policy 2021-2025 only vaguely references the Sahel in terms of "Europe's southern neighborhood […]", which, "give[s] little cause for hope regarding peace and stability. Weak states and domestic conflict, […] which [are] often fanned by foreign actors and violent groupings, have serious consequences in the region and also affect Europe." (The Swedish Defense Commission, 2019). It is therefore unclear whether normative concerns are the actual basis for Swedish intervention or if this is only the externally communicated argumentative basis.

The Netherlands – seeking long-term stability.

Table 6.

The Netherlands: Number of quotes per category of the QCA analysis

Security	Norms	Institutions	Total documents
10	2	16	28

The magazine of the Dutch ministry of defense [DMD] on *security* arguments summarizes the government's position: "Het strategische belang van de Sahel, als instabiele regio aan de randen van Europa, blijft voor Nederland onverminderd groot. Het tegengaan van terrorisme, instabiliteit en irreguliere migratie in de Sahel dient immers een direct Nederlands veiligheidsbelang." (De Veiligheidsdiplomaat, 2019). It points to the three main issues emanating from the Sahel that are said to threaten the Netherlands: instability, irregular migration, and insurgent groups. First, instability is the factor that enables irregular migration and activities of insurgent groups. Second, the Dutch government claims that the Sahel serves as a transit but for irregular migration and points to the danger of crossing the Mediterranean. The Dutch government does not specify how and why migration or refugees pose a threat, but labels them as 'irregular' (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs [DMFA], 2020). Third, the Dutch government refers to various types of insurgent groups – for instance terrorist, criminal, heavily armed, and jihadist ones who pose a security threat to Europe by facilitating arms- and human trafficking. Hence, the Sahel is a priority region for Dutch policy-making to prevent security threats to spread to Europe and coastal West-African countries.

Normative reasons feature throughout Dutch government communication of its participation in military interventions in the Sahel. The rule of law, empowerment of women and girls, and legitimate democratic government are seen as essential preconditions to development, stability, and security of the region in peace and conflict resolution (DMFA, 2020a). The Dutch government actively supports women's participation in government and advocates health and sexual reproductive rights. The Dutch support society reform and points out the Sahelian governments (DMFA, 2020c).

Institutional arguments focus on establishing long-term stability in the Sahel to provide security from threats to the Netherlands by addressing the root causes of instability with a preventative outlook. The Dutch authorities seek to incentivize good governance principles, rule of law and democratization – in essence establishing a social contract (DMFA, 2019). The lack of public services and state authority is considered as one of the major issues in the region. Repeatedly, the Netherlands point out the opportunities offered by the young and growing population (DMFA, 2020a). In addition, reforms are supported by strengthening civil society in their lobby and advocacy functions to push for citizens' needs and rights. The Dutch government promotes sustainable and inclusive development by strengthening the private sector to provide food, water, and economic security, considering themselves a strong trading and development partner. Consequently, the Dutch government focuses on providing a perspective to women and young people in their economic and political participation. By addressing development and governance, the Dutch governments want to address climate change and demographic trends (DMFA, 2020a). For instance, the government repeatedly points to climate change adaptation measures.

In the words of minister Sigrid Kaag, the Dutch approach to the Sahel is founded on two pillars in her address to the francophone ambassadors: "The first is the moral dimension: we have the responsibility of helping, in terms of what is possible, the vulnerable population of avoiding a real humanitarian disaster that threatens them. In the second dimension it is rational : the choice is in our proper common interests. The terms may seem contradictory but they are not in reality" (2020). The Dutch view their relationship with the Sahelian states through an integrated partnership covering the realms of development, security, governance challenges, as well as opportunities – aligning themselves with existing initiatives of other states and international organizations rather than duplicating efforts.

Discussion: Quo Vadis Europa? Shared Goals despite divergent Understandings

This section presents a discussion of the outcomes of the analysis, contextualizes the findings with scholarly insights and current developments in the Sahel, and evaluates the utility of the neoclassical realist theoretical framework. The goal is to point out how and to what extent the arguments motivate states to participate in MMIs, and where they might contradict each other.

The main findings of the analysis are summarized in table 7. They indicate that institutional arguments are the most frequently mentioned overall, followed by security and then normative concerns. However, this first observation needs to be qualified through a discussion of the meanings attached to the three areas by each of the states. The priorities in each line of argumentation, overall, display that, while France mainly refers to its fight against terrorism and provision of stability, Germany avoids a securitized discourse and instead focuses on their interest in stability in the Sahel. Similar to Germany, Sweden presents itself as a normative actor, but goes beyond the German approach by basing their decision-making on a human rights. The Dutch also build on norms, but remain more similar to Germany, as they mostly point to the benefits of stability for the Sahelian inhabitants and for European security. Hence, there is a need to further compare and contrast the results on the basis of the expectation that it will uncover a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of European cooperation.

Table 7.

Combined: Number of quotes per category of the QCA analysis

	Security	Norms	Institutions	Total statements
France	11	2	9	22
Germany	3	3	16	22
Sweden	4	8	6	18
Netherlands	10	2	16	28
Total cases	28	15	47	90

Note: The results of the QCA analysis are found in separate country tables in appendix A

Security: Counter-insurgency governance - Common approach or security traffic jam?

The activities of insurgent groups in the Sahel and the resulting instability has motivated all partners to become active in the region. Regarding the MMIs in the Sahel, Charbonneau (2019, 2021) terms their approach as "counter-insurgency governance". It refers to the permanent presence of foreign states who seek to minimize security threats through military presence.

This type of intervention is primarily displayed in French communication, that focuses on the fight against terrorism through peacekeeping. In comparison to France, the Netherlands prioritizes the threat of migration and refugee movements to Europe. It has been argued that this securitized approach has failed to end the instability of the region, resulting in terrorist groups and refugee movements (Powell, 2017).

In contrast to the former two countries, Germany shifts the focus to instability that enables these security threats that emanate from the region. Sweden similarly acknowledges that there is a need to address the root causes of instability and therefore prioritizes human security. This approach is less focused on pure military engagement and more preventative by focusing on people. In this regard, Sweden shares a commitment with the Netherlands to a long-term approach that goes beyond military activity to reduce the threat.

The security traffic jam model points out how these different security threat prioritizations lead to a multitude of approaches that contradict each other (Cold-Ravnkilde & Jacobsen, 2020). Scholars note how this complexity further exacerbates violence (Marsh & Rolandsen, 2021). Hence, the different prioritizations in the security realm can be understood through the security traffic jam, as all four countries have different understandings of what constitutes, and how to respond to different security threats.

Norms: On par with security and institutions or taking a back seat?

All four states share a basic commitment to implementing human rights norms in the Sahel region. This commitment, as Erforth (2018) argues, follows liberal interventionism, a type of MMI where actors seeks to establish liberal democratic practices in countries of intervention.

As the main normative actor, Sweden bases its intervention on its Ffp, that seeks to advocate for human rights with a special focus on gender equality in their Africa policy. The Netherlands, and to some extent Germany, share this commitment to a gendered understanding of intervention practices, but is most interested in establishing economic participation for

women and young people. The logic is that, through a strengthened position and more active civil society, these groups can more effectively claim their constitutional rights. Still, all countries share the view that only through stability, they are able to pursue their human-rights agenda.

Nonetheless, scholars have questioned whether states are fully committed to human rights, or instead fall short of normative objectives in the pursuit of their own interest (Charbonneau and Sears 2014). Although authors have pointed out that norms have become more important in MMIs (Finnemore, 2013; Recchia, 2020), others have pointed out how normative considerations have taken a back seat in the face of the military threat (Cold-Ravnkilde & Nissen, 2020; Erforth, 2020). An indication of this would be that France evokes norms much less than the other countries, rendering them secondary.

Regarding this tension in communication, Cold-Ravnkilde and Nissen (2020) observe that there is inherent tension in intervention between security and human rights concerns. Besides the French case, this tension is also observable by the conflict between intervention fatigue and normative justifications in Sweden. After almost ten years of peacekeeping operations, Sweden is leaving as its mandate is coming to an end although their human rights objectives have not been met. In conclusion, although human rights serve as the argumentative basis of MMIs, governmental communications show that overall security and institutional concerns are more frequent in justifying state participation.

Institutions: Self-serving interests or focusing on root causes of violence?

All four actors share a commitment to establishing strong institutions in the Sahel to combat sources of insecurity and human rights abuses, as has been discussed in the security section. States argue that the provision of state services can reduce sources of conflict. In this context, Sweden specifically elaborates how these institutions need to address the root causes of conflict of insecurity and resource conflict.

Contrarily, France focuses instead on how institutions prevent radicalization, but does not point to out as much how their approach seeks to address root causes in detail. Scholars have argued that this securitized approach of France has not worked because it does not address the root causes of radicalization (Boas & Torheim, 2013; Harmon, 2015).

The Netherlands and Germany agree with Sweden, sharing the view that the Sahelian states need to reform themselves and that they can only be supportive partners in this process. For instance, these states are working to implement programs in sustainable development to provide employment and wealth, strengthening civil society with women groups to advocate

their rights and contribute to mediation. The Netherlands differs in its argumentation from the other states because it argues that the Sahel also bolsters immense opportunities that its young population and resources offer. Thus, states cannot agree whether to prioritize securitized stability or a genuine multidimensional approach.

Limitations.

Now that states are withdrawing from Mali and shifting their focus to different parts of the Sahel (Aljazeera, 2022) it remains unclear how sustainable the impact of MMIs is. Although states claim to have elevated norms to the same status as security concerns (Finnemore, 2013), it lies beyond the scope of this research to judge to what extent there is a disconnect between the political ambitions communicated by states and the policy-implications during their intervention in the Sahel. Researchers point out that there is a disconnect between the willingness of states to deploy and invest resources in the Sahel, and their commitments in the region ten years into their missions (Cold-Ravnkilde & Jacobsen, 2020), resulting in inadequate cooperation and worsening security (Moe, 2021).

This thesis has expanded literature on MMI participation on European states but not of Eastern Europe. MMI research would also profit by including Global South actors, for instance the Sahel G5 or regional African powers, as their agency is often limited in the literature and most approaches focus on hegemonic powers despite their large contributions (Baldaro, 2021; Maeresera, 2012; Ricard, 2017).

It has to be acknowledged that state communication is mostly directed to domestic audiences. Expert and governmental interviews would have provided another level of depth for this research, although it can be assumed that the majority of statements reflect decision-makers' preferences (Snyder, Bruck, & Sapin, 1962). Interviews are regularly used in MMI research, as researchers continue to face a scarcity of in-depth governmental communication.

Conclusion

Using a neoclassical realist approach this research has attempted to determine the extent to which security, normative, and institutional considerations are the primary motivating factor, i.e. driver, that inform governments to participate in multilateral military interventions (MMI) in the Sahel.

The expectation has been met that European states have differentiated interests and motivations to intervene. Thus, expanding the categories of the neoclassical realist framework

has illustrated that, while states are in principle committed to similar goals, their specific motivations remain heterogenous. Overall, the findings indicate that European states are mostly driven by institutional and security concerns, following the security-development nexus (Venturi, 2017). This research has contributed to the literature by confirming the limited importance of normative arguments in the justification of state presence in the Sahel (Cold-Ravnkilde & Jacobsen, 2020; Olsen, 2015).

These findings are relevant as European states are in the process of withdrawing and restructuring their presence in the Sahel, following the rapid Western withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. Therefore, the findings have theoretical implications beyond MMIs in the Sahel for the study of grand strategy and of the discourse on the global war on terror.

Beyond academic research, the findings have critical implications for Sahelian populations that are often viewed through a detached Western lens (Charbonneau, 2017; Ricard, 2017). As the conflicts in the Sahel intensify, people will continue to be affected by worsening violence (Nsaiba, 2022). The withdrawal opens up room for insurgent groups and other powers, for instance the Russian Wagner mercenary group.

In conclusion, Western policymakers are faced with a situation in which they need to radically rethink their intervening practices in the Global South. The 'liberal peace' paradigm is only one competing normative order amongst others (Charbonneau & Sears, 2014; Baldaro, 2021). If the root causes of conflict remain unaddressed, this securitized approach will continue to fail (Strydom, 2019). A disconnect between long-term policy-making needs and a lack of willingness to deploy and invest will not stop the 'decent into hell' in the Sahel, in the words of French general Clément-Bollée '(in Boishuvier, 2019).

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List of Primary Sources

Table 8.

Data source list for the France

Date	Organization, Author	Type of Data	Title	Link
June 30th 2018	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian	Statement	Attack on G5 Sahel Joint Force HQ in Sévaré	Link
May 17th 2019	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Mali – Meeting between Jean-Yves Le Drian and his counterpart (Paris, 17 May 2019)	Link
July 2nd 2019	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Mali - Q&A - Excerpts from the daily press briefing (02.07.19)	Link
February 2nd 2020	French Ministry of the Armed Forces	Statement	Sahel – Increase in Barkhane force's troop numbers – Press release issued by the Ministry for the Armed Forces (02 Feb. 20)	Link
February 12th 2020	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Mali - Q&A from the press briefing (12 February 2020)	Link
May 10th 2020	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press Statement	Mali – Attack against MINUSMA (10 May 2020)	Link
August 10th 2020	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian	Statement	Niger - Statement by Jean-Yves Le Drian (10 Aug. 2020)	Link
August 19th 2020	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian	Statement	Mali - Statement by Jean-Yves Le Drian (19 Aug. 20)	Link
February 5th 2021	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Burkina Faso - Q&A from the press briefing (5 February 2021)	Link

April 14th 2021	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Mali - Q&A from the press briefing (14 April 2021)	Link
October 21st 2021	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Mali - Q&A - Press release (21 October 2021)	Link
December 9th 2021	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Press statement	Mali – Attack on MINUSMA (9 December 2021)	Link
2022	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Presentation	Terrorism: France's International Action	Link
February 1st 2022	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Statement	The Sahel - Q&A - (01 Feb. 2022)	Link
April 4th 2022	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Statement	Mali - France is gravely concerned by reports of large-scale abuses in central Mali	Link

Table 9.
Data source list for the Germany

Date	Organization, Author	Type of Data	Title	Link
December 9th 2018	German Foreign Office	Press statement	Außenminister Maas zu deutscher Unterstützung der Sahel-Staaten	Link
February 16th 2020	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Speech	Statement von Außenminister Heiko Maas anlässlich des erweiterten G5 Sahel-Gipfels in N'Djamena (Virtuelle Teilnahme)	Link
March 25th 2020	German Federal Government	Report	Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Lage und zum deutschen Engagement in Mali/Sahel Aktuelle Lage, Ziele und Handlungsfelder des deutschen Engagements	Link
April 17th 2020	German Federal Government	Statement	Das deutsche Engagement in den G5-Sahel-Staaten	Link
May 13th 2020	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Speech	Außenminister Heiko Maas im Deutschen Bundestag zum Antrag der Bundesregierung: „Fortsetzung der Beteiligung bewaffneter deutscher Streitkräfte an der Militärmission der Europäischen Union als Beitrag zur Ausbildung der malischen Streitkräfte (EUTM Mali)"	Link
May 27th 2020	Foreign Committee	Report	Beschlussempfehlung und Bericht Fortsetzung der Beteiligung bewaffneter deutscher Streitkräfte an der	Link

	German Bundestag		Militärmission der Europäischen Union als Beitrag zur Ausbildung der malischen Streitkräfte (EUTM Mali)	
June 12th 2020	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Press statement	Außenminister Maas zur „Partnerschaft für Stabilität und Sicherheit im Sahel"	Link
July 22nd 2020	German Federal Government	Statement	Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage Deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit bei militärischen Auslandseinsätzen	Link
October 20th 2020	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Speech	Video-Grußwort von Außenminister Heiko Maas anlässlich der Ministerkonferenz für den Zentralsahel	Link
December 9th 2020	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Press statement	Außenminister Maas zu deutscher Unterstützung der Sahel-Staaten	Link
December 9th 2020	German Foreign Office. State Minister Michelle Münterfering	Speech	Grußwort von Staatsministerin Michelle Müntefering zur Migration Conference der Global Perspectives Initiative; Thema des Panels: HOTSPOT AFRICA: How to solve problems of climate change induced migration for people, cities, countries on the continent	
February 16th 2021	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Speech	Statement von Außenminister Heiko Maas anlässlich des erweiterten G5 Sahel-Gipfels in N'Djamena (Virtuelle Teilnahme)	Link
March 19th 2021	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas	Speech	Rede von Außenminister Heiko Maas anlässlich der Außenministerkonferenz der Koalition für den Sahel	Link
April 21st 2021	German Foreign Office	Article	Gemeinsam für Sicherheit, Stabilität und Entwicklung: Deutsches Engagement in der Sahel-Region	Link
May 25th 2021	German Foreign Office	Press statement	Auswärtiges Amt zur Lage in Mali	
April 11th 2022	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock	Press statement	Außenministerin Baerbock vor ihrer Abreise nach Mali und Niger	Link
April 13th 2022	German Foreign Office. Foreign Minister	Speech	Rede von Außenministerin Annalena Baerbock an der Abdou Moumouni Universität, Niamey	Link

Annalena
Baerbock

Table 10.

Data source list for the Sweden

Date	Organization, Author	Type of Data	Title	Link
June 17th 2016	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden	Report	New strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Mali	Link
July 10th 2018	Ministry for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström .	Statement	Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the UN Security Council Briefing on Peace and Security in Africa	Link
May 14th 2019	Ministry of Defence of Sweden	Report	The Swedish Defence Commission's white book on Sweden's Security Policy and the Development of the Military Defence 2021-2025	Link
August 28th 2019	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström	Speech	Keynote speech by Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, to the High-Level Panel on Water Diplomacy during World Water Week	Link
February 12th 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde	Speech	The Government's Statement of Foreign Policy 2020	Link
February 16th 2020	Swedish Prime Minister's Office	Press release	Strengthened partnership between EU and African Union	Link
February 24th 2021	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde	Speech	Statement of Foreign Policy 2021	Link
November 21st 2021	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden	Government statement	Rådet för utrikes frågor den 15 november 2021	Link
February 16th 2022	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde	Speech	Statement of Foreign Policy	Link

Table 11.

Data source list for the Netherlands

Date	Organization, Author	Type of Data	Title	Link
May 1st 2018	De Veiligheidsdiplomaat. Elfferich, Wiesje and Huizenga, Marieke	Article	Bruggen bouwen in Gao, Mali	Link
May 20th 2019	De Veiligheidsdiplomaat. Offerein, Camille	Article	Mali: over maar nog niet voorbij	Link
August 18th 2019	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	Presentation	The Netherlands and Chad	Link
November 11th 2019	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	Policy framework	Policy Framework for Strengthening Civil Society Women, Peace and Security A framework for funding civil society organisations for 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025	Link
March 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	Presentation	Dutch efforts in the Sahel	
May 18th 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Sigrid Kaag	Speech	Discours de Sigrid Kaag lors de la réunion des ambassadeurs francophones du 18 mai 2020	Link
October 31st 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	Report	Finale du Programme Gouvernance Locale redevable au Mali	Link
December 10th 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands	Presentation	The Netherlands and Niger	Link
May 19th 2021	Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands	Annual Press Report	2020 Jaarlijkse Voortgangsrapportage kleine missiebijdragen	Link

Appendix A: QCA Coding Framework Analysis Tables

Table 1.
France

Category	Subcategory	Examples of quotes
Security factors		
	Insurgency	
	Terrorism	"France reaffirms its support for the authorities of the Sahel countries in their fight against terrorism as well as for MINUSMA, which plays a key role in Mali's stabilization." (FMEFA, 2020c)
		„at the country's request, it [France] has pledged to pursue two priorities: the interests of the Malian people and the fight against terrorism." (Le Drian, 2020a)
		"We are engaged in the Sahel at the request of the countries of the region. France's resolve to continue the common battle against the terrorists who threaten us is absolute." (FMEFA, 2021a)
		"France is engaged in the Sahel alongside its European and international partners at the request of the countries of the region in a common fight against terrorist groups." (FMEFA, 2021b)
		"It [France] renews its support to the authorities of the Sahel countries in their battle against terrorism." (FMEFA, 2021c)
		"As President Macron reaffirmed during his discussion with his Nigerien counterpart, every effort is being and will be made to clarify the circumstances of this deadly attack. Our two countries remain determined to continue the joint fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel." (Le Drian, 2020a)

		"International terrorism is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Since this threat has never been so strong, France is taking action at every level with its international partners to combat terrorist networks in France and abroad. >Reduce terrorist groups' regional hold; >Combat **financial, human, logistic and terrorist propaganda networks**; " (FMEFA, 2022a) "The fight against terrorism is our priority. France is on the front lines in the Sahel, but it must not stand alone. " (FEMFA, 2020b) "This attack strengthens our resolve to stand by our G5 partners in the fight against terrorism. " (Le Drian, 2018) "As Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian has stated on several occasions, France, together with its European, African and international partners, is in the Sahel to wage a joint war on terrorism and to support the local population. " (FMEFA, 2022a)
	Securitized prevention of irregular migration	
	Transnational organized crime	
	Jihadi Islamism/ extremism	">Prevent radicalization;" (FMEFA, 2022a)
	Instability/ weak governments	
	Show resolve and military strength demonstration	
Humanitarian		
	Democracy	
	Rule of Law	
	Active Media	
	Civil Society	
	Human Rights	"France is concerned by the increasing number of abuses that have taken place in central Mali since the start of 2022 and the impunity with which they are

	carried out. We call on the Malian authorities to take the necessary measures to stem this violence. We would like to see MINUSMA use all means at its disposal to shed light on these events and help protect civilians, in accordance with its mandate. The fight against active terrorist groups in the Sahel must never under any circumstances justify human rights violations. Indiscriminate violence against civilians will only serve to strengthen these groups." (FMEFA, 2022c)
Human Security	"France is determined to ensure that the imperative to protect humanitarian and health workers is respected." (Le Drian, 2020a)

Geopolitical

State-building, restoring sovereignty, providing stability	"The deployment of the state and Malian public services, the disarmament of militias, and the rapid response of the justice system are more essential than ever to ending the cycle of violence. […] Along with the EU and other Sahel Alliance partners, France is engaged in reconstruction and development efforts in Mali and will provide support for initiatives taken by officials to bring development and stability to the region." (FMEFA, 2019a) "France is determined to continue this fight alongside its Sahel and international partners. It is also working actively in support of G5 Sahel countries within the Coalition for the Sahel to provide a multifaceted response to the crisis that includes such areas as stabilization and development. Press release." (21 October 2021) "It [France] reaffirms its attachment to the sovereignty, respect for the institutions, democratic life and

	stability of Mali. It urges all political and social forces to engage in dialogue in order to find a solution to the deep crisis in the country and calls for an immediate return to civilian rule." (Le Drian, 2020b)
	"France reaffirms its support for the authorities of the Sahel countries in their fight against terrorism as well as for MINUSMA, which plays a key role in Mali's stabilization." (FMEFA, 2020c)
	"France pays tribute to the commitment of MINUSMA, whose role is essential for the stabilization of Mali." (FMEFA, 2021d)
	"Jean-Yves Le Drian reaffirmed France's strong commitment to security in the Sahel and his desire to support the efforts to stabilize Mali and other countries in the region, notably within the framework of the G5 Sahel. The ministers reaffirmed their desire to maintain close cooperation between our two countries on security issues, as well as with respect to economic and development issues." Meeting France-Mali (FMEFA, 2019a)
Resolving Conflict	"France is, together with all of Mali's international partners, very attached and attentive to the implementation of the Algiers peace agreement by the signatory parties, which remains central to resolving the crisis in Mali and the Sahel. " press briefing (FMEFA, 2021b)
Supporting allies	„at the country's request, it [France] has pledged to pursue two priorities: the interests of the Malian people and the fight against terrorism." (Le Drian, 2020b)
	"As part of the International Coalition for the Sahel, France is also mobilized in support of the G5

		Sahel countries to bring a multidimensional response to the crisis in the Sahel." (FMEFA, 2021a). "We are fighting armed terrorist groups in the Sahel at the request of nations in the region, and specifically Mali. This request, and the "shared determination to fight together against terrorist groups," were renewed at the Pau Summit on January 13. This collective action in the Sahel is also multidimensional, focusing beyond security on stabilization, development and reconciliation, and taking into account the needs of communities, in order to dry up the sources of recruitment for armed terrorist groups. " (FMEFA, 2020a)
	Economic, human, infrastructure development	
	Frame as Sahel	
	Demonstrate actorness and capability	"Protect French interests and nationals abroad." (FMEFA, 2022a)
Not applicable		

Table 2.

Germany

Category	Subcategory	Example of quotes
Security factors		
	Insurgency	
	Terrorism	„Grenzüberschreitend agierende terroristische Gruppierungen führen in Mali und in den angrenzenden Staaten Burkina Faso und Niger zu einer sich rasch verschlechternden Sicherheitslage. Der daraus resultierende Rück- zug des Militärs und staatlicher Institutionen aus der Fläche bedroht auch alle übrigen Entwicklungsdimensio- nen dieser Länder." (Breg, 2020a) „Die Bundesregierung wird deshalb auf Bitte der malischen Regierung ihr schon bislang breit aufgestelltes En- gagement in Abstimmung mit ihren internationalen Partnern abermals verstärken. Auch in anderen Sahel-Län- dern plant die Bundesregierung ein erweitertes Engagement. Eine Priorität des Handelns der Bundesregierung im Sahel-Raum sind dabei verstärkte Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Ursachen von Gewalt und Terrorismus. Voraussetzung dafür sind entsprechende Eigenanstrengungen der dortigen Regierungen im politischen, Sicher- heits- und Entwicklungsbereich, die nicht durch Unterstützung von außen ersetzt werden können." (Breg, 2020a)
	Securitized prevention of irregular migration	
	Transnational organized crime	
	Jihadi Islamism/ extremism Irregular migration	
	Instability/ weak governments	„4 000 Kilometer trennen Mali und den Sahel von Deutschland. Das reicht schon, dass einige der Auffassung sind, zu glauben, dass wir damit nichts zu tun hätten. Spätestens aber seit terroristische Gruppen im Jahr 2012 - vielleicht erinnert sich der eine oder andere noch daran - Mali zu überrennen drohten, sollte uns, und zwar als Europäern, eines klargeworden sein: Was dort passiert, das gefährdet nicht nur die Stabilität unserer südlichen Nachbarschaft, sondern das wirkt als Brandbeschleuniger für die Ausbreitung von Terrorismus, organisierter Kriminalität und illegaler Migration bis nach Europa." (AA, 2021b)

	Show resolve and military strength demonstration	
Humanitarian		
	Democracy	
	Rule of Law	„Die aktuellen Entwicklungen in Mali bereiten uns große Sorgen. Das Land befindet sich mitten in einem Übergangsprozess, der über die Zukunft Malis und seiner Bevölkerung entscheidet und darüber hinaus auch Auswirkungen auf die Stabilität der gesamten Sahelregion hat. In dieser so wichtigen Phase den Übergangspräsidenten Bah N'Daw und den Übergangspremierminister Moctar Ouane festzusetzen, sendet ein desaströses Zeichen an die Bevölkerung Malis und die internationale Gemeinschaft. Wir verurteilen das Vorgehen in aller Deutlichkeit und erwarten, dass N'Daw und Ouane unverzüglich freigelassen werden. Hierzu stehen wir auch in engem Kontakt mit der Regionalorganisation ECOWAS, die sich vor Ort um Vermittlung bemüht, und unseren Partnern in der Europäischen Union und den Vereinten Nationen." (AA, 2021a)
	Active Media	
	Civil Society	Ich freue mich sehr, hier Seite an Seite, Schulter an Schulter mit Jean-Yves deutlich zu machen, dass unser Engagement für den Sahel ein gemeinsames Engagement ist. Und dass es ganz wichtig ist, diese Anstrengung, die wir unternehmen, zusammen mit Ihnen vor Ort gemeinsam umsetzen zu können. Ein Staat muss seine Bürger schützen können. Deshalb stärken wir im Sahel gemeinsam Sicherheitskräfte, die Terroristen bekämpfen und die organisierte Kriminalität verfolgen. […] Menschen schützen, Staaten stärken und so ein Fundament legen für nachhaltigen Frieden. Das ist das Ziel des „Sursaut civil" – und dabei wird Deutschland Sie auch weiter nach besten Kräften unterstützen." (Maas, 2021b)
	Human Rights	„Dafür müssen wir uns erstens mit den Menschen sowie den humanitären Helferinnen und Helfern vor Ort solidarisch zeigen. Das heißt, dass wir zusätzliche, flexible und mehrjährige Hilfe zur Verfügung stellen müssen. Heute sagt Deutschland für 2020 und die darauffolgenden Jahre 100 Millionen Euro an humanitärer Unterstützung zu, die unsere Verpflichtungen in den Bereichen Resilienz und Stabilisierung ergänzt. […]chließlich müssen wir alle uns erneut zu prinzipientreuem humanitären Handeln

		bekennen. Und wir müssen sicherstellen, dass alle Konfliktparteien ihre völkerrechtlichen Verpflichtungen einhalten und humanitäre Helferinnen und Helfer schützen." (Maas, 2020c) „Ein sicheres Umfeld ist Voraussetzung für humanitäre Unterstützung und ein entscheidender Faktor, um nachhaltige Entwicklung zu ermöglichen. Die Bundesregierung unterstützt deshalb im Sahel eine möglichst intensive Koordi- nation ziviler und militärischer Maßnahmen und ist sowohl humanitär als auch zivil stark engagiert." (Breg, 2020c)
	Human Security	
Geopolitical		
	State-building, restoring sovereignty, providing stability	„Meine Damen und Herren, dieser Einsatz ist ein schwieriger, und er wird es auch bleiben. Es ändert aber nichts daran, dass unser Ziel, nämlich Stabilität im Sahel zu schaffen, auch eine der vielen Voraussetzungen ist, um die Sicherheit in Europa zu erhöhen." (AA, 2021b) „Wir wollen so die Ausbildung verbessern und vor allen Dingen auch noch praxisnäher machen. Es ist aber ausdrücklich keine Begleitung in Einsätze geplant. Das wäre auch widersinnig; denn es geht uns gerade darum, dass die malischen Sicherheitskräfte eigenständig agieren." (AA, 2021b) Die nachhaltige Wirkung erzielt unser gesamtes Engagement im Sicherheitsbereich - also die Ausbildung im Rahmen von EUTM und die Absicherung des politischen Prozesses durch die VN-Mission MINUSMA - nur in Verbindung mit Diplomatie, Stabilisierung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Dieses Zusammenspiel charakterisiert unser gesamtes Engagement, so wie es auch im Perspektivbericht der Bundesregierung an den Bundestag im März beschrieben worden ist. Diesen vernetzten Ansatz haben wir inzwischen auch auf europäischer Ebene verankert." (AA, 2021b) „Die Sahelregion braucht unsere Unterstützung! Wir stellen in diesem Jahr zusätzliche 25 Millionen Euro für die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit unserer Partner vor Ort bereit. Im Rahmen des Emergency Trust Fund for Africa der Europäischen Union wollen wir zur Stabilisierung der Region beitragen. Deutschland ist und bleibt ein verlässlicher Partner und begleitet die Sahel G5-Staaten auf ihrem Weg hin

zu mehr Sicherheit, Stabilität und Entwicklung."
(AA, 2018)

„Unser gemeinsames Ziel mit den Sahel-Staaten ist es, die internationalen Bemühungen im Sicherheitsbereich zielgerichteter zu koordinieren. Wir wollen die Sicherheitskräfte der Sahel-Staaten so ausbilden und ausstatten, dass sie eigenständig für die Sicherheit der Bevölkerung Sorge tragen können und das Vertrauen der Menschen in staatliche Autorität und Präsenz wieder wächst. Die Koalition setzt auf einen vernetzten Ansatz aus sicherheitspolitischen, stabilisierenden, humanitären und entwicklungspolitischen Maßnahmen, denn wir wissen: Sicherheit und Entwicklung bedingen einander." (Maas, 2020b)

„Der regionale Blick ist mir besonders wichtig, weil weder die Klimakrise noch Hungersnöte oder terroristische Gruppierungen an Schlagbäumen Halt machen. Und klar ist auch: Sowohl in Mali als auch in Niger können unsere gemeinsamen Bemühungen nur dann Erfolg haben, wenn die Rahmenbedingungen stabil sind – und das bedeutet für mich Verlässlichkeit in der Zusammenarbeit ebenso wie entschiedener Kampf gegen Terror und Gewalt und die Einhaltung grundlegender rechtsstaatlicher Prinzipien."
(Baerbock, 2022a)

„Sicherheit, Stabilität und Entwicklung bleiben unsere gemeinsamen Ziele für den Sahel. Der heutige Gipfel ermöglicht es uns, Bilanz zu ziehen und unser Engagement zu erneuern. […] Das meinen wir, wenn wir heute eine Stärkung der zivilen Fähigkeiten, eine „civilian surge", fordern. " (Maas, 2022a)

„Die Sahel-Zone ist ein Schwerpunkt deutscher Außen-, Sicherheits- und Ent- wicklungspolitik. Deutschland beteiligt sich an den internationalen Missionen MINUSMA, EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Mali und EUCAP Niger. Des Weite- ren hat Deutschland seit 2018 im Rahmen einer nationalen Ertüchtigungsiniti- ative unter der Bezeichnung

	„Gazelle" die Ausbildung von Spezialkräften in Niger übernommen." (Breg, 2020c)
	„Die Bundesregierung sieht die Zusammenarbeit mit Mali im regionalen Zusammenhang der gesamten Sahel- Region, deren Länder vor ähnlichen Herausforderungen für ihre Sicherheit und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung stehen. […] In diesem Sinne zielt die Bundesregierung mit ihrem Engagement auch darauf ab zu verhindern, dass die Krise sich in den südlichen Küstenstaaten ausbreitet. Hier unterstützt die Bundesregierung durch Wirtschafts- und Beschäftigungsförderung, Stärkung der lokalen staatlichen Einrichtungen und Kommunen, Bewusstseinsbildung in der Bevölkerung sowie durch bessere infrastrukturelle Anbindung." (Breg, 2020a)
Resolving conflict	„Dazu gehört auch, dass es den Regierungen der G5-Sahel-Staaten gelingt, den Menschen eine nachhaltige Perspektive für die wirtschaftliche und soziale Ent-wicklung ihrer Gesellschaften zu bieten. Die Bundesregierung unterstützt sie dabei auch mit verstärkter Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. In besonders fragilen Gebieten ist ohne sicherheitspolitisches Engagement eine Unterstützung durch Hilfsorganisationen schwierig, und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit aufgrund der herrschenden Sicherheitslage zum Teil nicht möglich." (Breg, 2020b)
Supporting allies	„Deutschland ist bereits heute umfassend im Sahel engagiert und wird aktiv zur Partnerschaft für Sicherheit und Stabilität im Sahel" beitragen. Unsere Ertüchtigung ausländischer Streitkräfte durch Ausstattung werden wir eng mit Ausbildung verknüpfen. Zivile Stabilisierungsmaßnahmen sollen die Handlungsfähigkeit und Glaubwürdigkeit der Partnerregierungen erhöhen und den Operationsradius sowie die Rekrutierungsgrundlage von bewaffneten Gruppen reduzieren." (Maas, 2020b) „Der deutsche Beitrag bei EUTM Mali werde unverändert Personal zur Beratung und Ausbildung der militärischen malischen Führungsstäbe, Ausbildungsperso- nal, Feldnachrichtenkräfte sowie einen Kampfmittelabwehrtrupp umfassen. Ein nationales Unterstützungselement übernehme Aufgaben in den Bereichen Perso- nal und Logistik. Eine Beteiligung an Kampfeinsätzen bleibe weiterhin ausge- schlossen. […] Die beiden strategischen Ziele „qualitative Steigerung der Ausbildung der malischen Streitkräfte" sowie „Unter- stützung der Herstellung

	der operativen Einsatzfähigkeit der Gemeinsamen Einsatzgruppe der G5-Sahel-Staaten und deren jeweiliger nationaler Streitkräfte" mit dem Schwerpunkt Burkina Faso und Niger sendeten ein deutli- ches Signal für eine ambitionierte Weiterentwicklung von EUTM Mali, so die Bundesregierung. " (Foreign Committee German Bundestag, 2020)
	„Die „Task Force Takuba" soll Anfang 2021 voll einsatzfähig sein. Eine aktive Beteiligung haben bislang Belgien, Dänemark, Estland, Frankreich, die Niederlande und Portugal in Aussicht gestellt. In Schweden be- finden sich Beteiligungsvorschläge im parlamentarischen Zustimmungsverfah- ren. Die Bundesregierung unterstützt die „Task Force Takuba" politisch, eine Beteiligung Deutschlands ist nicht geplant." (Breg, 2020b)
	„Es ist gut, dass der Generalsekretär der Vereinten Nationen eine globale Krisenreaktionsgruppe aufgestellt hat, die sich genau diesen Fragen, diesem Hurricane von Themen, besonders widmet: der Ernährung, der Energie und der Finanzierung. Deutschland – das ist meine Botschaft an Sie, Deutschland wird sich hier aktiv einbringen. Denn klar ist : Wir brauchen eine internationale Antwort, weil wir eine internationale Verantwortung haben." (Baerbock, 2022b)
Economic, human, infrastructure development	„Der deutsche Beitrag wird zur Stärkung der Resilienz und zur Verbesserung der Lebensgrundlagen in ländlichen, grenznahen Gebieten genutzt. Außerdem unterstützt Deutschland mit den zusätzlichen Mitteln lokale Ansätze zu Konfliktprävention und Mediation, um den sozialen Zusammenhalt zu stärken." (Breg, 2018)
	„Die Bundesregierung hat ihre Afrikapolitik mit der Fortschreibung ihrer Leitlinien vom März 2019 auf fünf Ziele ausgerichtet: Frieden, Sicherheit und Stabilität; nachhaltige wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, Wohlstand und Beschäftigung für alle, vor allem Perspektiven für Afrikas Jugend und Frauen; Migration steuern und gestalten, Fluchtursachen mindern und Flüchtlinge unterstützen; gemeinsam mit Afrika die regelbasierte Weltordnung stärken; zivilgesellschaftliche Partnerschaften in Afrika vertiefen." (Breg, 2020)

		"That is why Germany supports initiatives such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement. It is crucial that we work together multilaterally to ease the effects of climate change." (Maas, 2020d)
	Frame as Sahel	
	Demonstrate actorness and capability	
Not applicable	Multidimensional approach	„Für Deutschland ist der Sahel deshalb ein Schwerpunkt der Außen-, Sicherheits- und Entwicklungspolitik. Das Engagement reicht von der akuten Nothilfe über Maßnahmen der zivilen und militärischen Stabilisierung bis zu längerfristiger Entwicklungszusammenarbeit" (AA, 2021a) „Für Deutschland wie für Frankreich ist der Sahel ein außenpolitischer Schwer- punkt und beide setzen sich kollektiv mit den Regierungen der Sahel G5- Staaten für Frieden, Sicherheit und Stabilität sowie nachhaltige Entwicklung in der Region ein. […] Deutschland und Frankreich werben für eine enge Verknüpfung von humanitärem und sicherheitspolitischem Engagement sowie der Entwicklungs- zusammenarbeit." (Breg, 2020a)

Table 3.
Sweden

Category	Subcategory	Example of quotes
Security factors		
	Insurgency	
	Terrorism	"Terrorist groups have dramatically increased their activities in Mali. It is unacceptable that the Malian junta has postponed democratic elections and engaged in cooperation with Russian mercenaries. Sweden's military and civilian engagement in Mali aims to promote security, counteract terrorism and build sustainable development with respect for human rights." (Linde, 2022) "To fight terrorism, there is no doubt that we need to adopt a gender- sensitive and human rights based approach – whether we are talking about the prevention of radicalization, counter-terrorism operations or providing support to victims." (Wallström, 2018)
	Securitized prevention of irregular migration	
	Transnational organized crime	
	Jihadi Islamism/ extremism	
	Instability and weak governments	"The security situation in the Sahel continues to be very troubling, not least in Mali. The region is characterised by weak states. The situation is a breeding ground for radicalisation." (Linde, 2020)
	Show resolve and military strength demonstration	"Sweden's foreign policy is conducted with the aim of creating security in our country and around the world. The conflicts, climate emergency and refugee flows of recent years show that events far from our national borders also affect us in Sweden." (Linde, 2020)
Humanitarian factors		
	Democracy	"Sweden has a comprehensive and longstanding commitment to peace, democracy and development in Africa.

	[…] The security situation in the Sahel is cause for great concern. In August, a military coup took place in Mali. A transitional government is now in place and general elections are due to be held in 2022. Sweden contributes to security and development in the Sahel." (Linde, 2021)

"For the fifth consecutive year, we are seeing more countries moving in an authoritarian direction than in a democratic direction. Military coups in Myanmar, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso, the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, a deterioration in the situation in Belarus and the conflict in Ethiopia are dramatic examples of democratic backsliding." (Linde, 2022) |
Rule of Law	
Active Media	
Civil Society	
Human Rights	"Our new strategy focuses on human rights and peace and reconciliation mechanisms, at both national and local level. At the same time, we give priority to the transition to renewable energy," (Lövin, 2016)

"Human rights, democracy and gender equality are priorities in Sweden's Africa policy, along with migration and trade. It is important to support sustainable development in Africa. This can involve girls' schooling and increased access to electricity. " (Linde, 2020)

„The Government considers that human rights, gender equality and women's rights, like all other aspects of the rule of law and democracy, should be in focus when a stronger partnership with Africa is built. This establishes the actual foundations for achieving success in both peace and security, and in investments and growth." (Swedish Prime Minister's Office, 2022)

"Let us continue and intensify our efforts to support the countries in the Sahel on the issues we have discussed today. I |

		commend the African Union and the UN for joining forces and deepening their partnership on women, peace and security." (Wallström, 2018)
		"It is crucial to consider the gender-related effects of conflict, poverty and the scarcity of basic resources, such as water. My visit to the Sahel region clearly confirmed the need for consistency between foreign, security and development policy to achieve greater synergies and impact. To contribute to help tackle the effects of climate change in the Sahel region we decided to top up our assistance to climate- and security-related efforts there with approximately 40 million USD for the period 2018–2021." (Wallström, 2019)
	Human security	"The Government has adopted a new five-year strategy for Swedish development cooperation with Mali. The new strategy for development cooperation will focus on democratisation, human rights and human security, and climate change and environmental adaptation measures." (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016)
Geopolitical factors		
	State-building, restoring sovereignty, providing stability	"We are strengthening our partnerships with African countries and with the African Union." (Wallström, 2019)

"Proposed Swedish position [at the EU Council]: The Government emphasizes the importance of a broad approach to the region's challenges and works for an overall EU commitment to sustainable development in the Sahel. The EU's new Sahel strategy should be followed up with national action plans. It is important to address the root causes of the region's challenges such as climate change, |

		corruption and shortcomings in good governance. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as gender equality, must permeate the EU's involvement in the region." [Förslag till svensk ståndpunkt: Regeringen framhåller vikten av en bred ansats till regionens utmaningar och verkar för ett samlat EU-engagemang för hållbar utveckling i Sahel. EU:s nya Sahelstrategi bör följas upp med nationella handlingsplaner. Det är viktigt att hantera grundorsakerna till regionens utmaningar såsom klimatförändringar, korruption och brister i god samhällsstyrning. Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer samt jämställdhet ska genomsyra EU:s engagemang i regionen.] (Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021)
	Resolving conflict	"Sweden is a leader when it comes to giving greater attention to women, peace and security in the UN, the EU and the OSCE. Our network of women mediators is being expanded, and similar networks are being created, including in the African Union. They are pursuing conflict resolution in a number of countries." (Wallström, 2019)
	Supporting allies	
	Economic, human, infrastructure development	"The strategy shows Sweden's broad commitment to development, security and environment. We contribute to a strengthened social contract and reduced vulnerability to relapse into conflict. Sweden will also contribute to more sustainable use of natural resources and strengthened resilience against climate change," (Lövin, 2016)
	Frame as Sahel	
Not applicable	International order	"The Government is working for an international order based on international

law, with rules and agreements rather than 'might is right'. With our clear security policy line, solidarity- based aid, climate and environment investments, feminist foreign policy and strong trade policy, we not only safeguard our own country, but also contribute to peace, security and development, and democracy globally." (Linde, 2021)

Table 4.

Netherlands

Category	Subcategory	Example of quotes
Security factors		
	Insurgency	
	Terrorism	"De beperkte aanwezigheid van de staat voor het bieden van bescherming en het leveren van basisvoorzieningen aan de bevolking vormt daarnaast een voedingsbodem voor terreurgroepen die hun invloedssfeer weten uit te breiden." (Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands, 2021)
	Securitized prevention of irregular migration	
	Transnational organized crime	"Daarnaast wordt de Sahel geteisterd door terroristische groeperingen, criminele organisaties en gewapende groepen die eveneens van deze routes gebruik maken om wapens, drugs en mensen te smokkelen. De instabiliteit in de Sahel dreigt zich bovendien in toenemende mate te verspreiden naar de West-Afrikaanse kuststaten." (Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands, 2021)
	Jihadi Islamism/ extremism Irregular migration	"The 'Comprehensive Agenda on Migration' – the Dutch government's policy document on migration, adopted in 2018 – contains six pillars that cover the entire migration chain:

- Preventing irregular migration
- Improving reception and protection for refugees and displaced persons in the region
- Achieving a robust asylum system, based on solidarity, in the EU and the Netherlands
- Combating illegal residence and stepping up returns
- Promoting legal migration routes
- Encouraging integration and participation

As both Mali and Niger are transit hubs on the main migration routes towards Europe, these countries are considered important

partners in the area of migration. "
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands, 2020a)

"Only through international cooperation
can human trafficking be stopped and
traffickers brought to justice. […] . The
sanctions regime for Mali also enables the
targeting of those engaged in human
trafficking and migrant smuggling."
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands, 2020a)

"Ook liggen met name in Mali en Niger
routes die door migranten uit geheel West-
Afrika worden gebruikt om Europa te
bereiken." (Ministry of Defense of the
Netherlands, 2021)

Instability/ weak governments	" […] an Integrated International Security Strategy, which focuses strongly on the mounting levels of instability close to Europe's borders and the risk this instability poses to the sustainable development of these regions, as well as to Europe's security. The Sahel constitutes a priority region for the Netherlands in terms of stability and security. Combating terrorism and preventing irregular migration in the Sahel directly serves Europe's security interests." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020a)

"Voorbeelden van concrete dreigingen
voor de veiligheid van Nederland en
Europa zijn de […] slagkracht en
invloedssfeer van jihadistische
groeperingen in regio's rondom Europa en
de daaruit volgende terroristische dreiging
evenals irreguliere migratie richting
Europa.[6,7] Deze dreigingen maken dat het
kabinet de ogen niet kan sluiten voor de
instabiliteit in de wereld om ons heen. Het
bevorderen van de veiligheid en stabiliteit
in landen als Mali, […] is in het
veiligheidsbelang van Europa. Kleinere
bijdragen aan missies zijn eveneens van
belang, omdat ze bijvoorbeeld de
Nederlandse strategische informatiepositie
en invloed vergroten. Daarnaast zet

Nederland binnen de verschillende multilaterale organisaties zoveel mogelijk in op strategische functies die nauw aansluiten bij het Nederlands beleid. Op deze wijze beoogt Nederland met relatief kleine bijdragen kwalitatieve impulsen aan de effectiviteit van missies te geven." (Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands, 2021)

"De Sahel is een instabiele regio aan de rand van Europa. In de Sahel is sprake van een voortdurend slechter wordende veiligheidssituatie en toenemende instabiliteit. […] In Mali vond in augustus 2020 bijvoorbeeld een staatsgreep plaats, die het gevolg was van een lange periode van sociale onrust in het land en toenemende frustratie onder de bevolking over het politieke leiderschap." (Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands, 2021)

"Waarom levert Nederland een bijdrage aan MINUSMA? Wat er in de wereld om ons heen gebeurt, heeft directe of indirecte gevolgen voor onze eigen welvaart en de stabiliteit in eigen land. De Sahel is een instabiele regio in de nabijheid van Europa. De demografische trend, een verdriedubbeling van de bevolking tot 2050, in combinatie met een gebrek aan sociaaleconomische perspectieven, extreme armoede, corruptie en klimaatverandering vormen daarbij een katalysator voor instabiliteit.
Mali is een schakelland in de Sahel en ligt op een kruispunt van smokkelroutes voor drugs, wapens en migratie. De opbrengsten van deze criminele activiteiten zijn een belangrijke financieringsbron van terrorisme en jihadistische groepen. Daarnaast worden de routes gebruikt door migranten die via Noord-Afrika de gevaarlijke oversteek wagen naar Europa. Veiligheid en stabiliteit in de Sahel raakt dus direct aan de Europese en Nederlandse belangen. Een proactief buitenlandbeleid is daarom cruciaal om onze strategische belangen, vrijheden en welzijn te verdedigen." (De Veiligheidsdiplomaat, 2019)

		"De militaire inzet in MINUSMA is weliswaar beëindigd, Nederland blijft actief in Mali en de Sahel. Het strategische belang van de Sahel, als instabiele regio aan de randen van Europa, blijft voor Nederland onverminderd groot. Het tegengaan van terrorisme, instabiliteit en irreguliere migratie in de Sahel dient immers een direct Nederlands veiligheidsbelang." (De Veiligheidsdiplomaat, 2019)
	Show resolve and military strength demonstration	
Humanitarian		
	Democracy	
	Rule of Law	"The rule of law and a legitimate government are essential to sustained socio-economic development, stability and security. The key to improvement lies in the countries themselves. Change and reform must come primarily from the government and key local non-state actors. The Netherlands supports these processes together with partners such as the EU, the UN, the World Bank and non-governmental actors." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020b)
	Active Media	
	Civil Society	
	Human Rights	("The Netherlands is an international advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Strengthening the role of women in preventing conflict and in peace negotiations was an important priority during our membership of the UN Security Council in 2018. Our diplomatic and programmatic efforts in the Sahel continue to focus on increasing women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution, peace processes, (political) decision making and socio-economic development. " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020c)
	Human Security	
Geopolitical		
	State-building, restoring sovereignty, providing stability	"Main objective of Dutch efforts in the period of 2019 - 2022*: Growing instability in the Sahel and in the region

around Lake Chad is having a negative impact on Chad. In response to this, the Netherlands is striving for long-term regional stability by addressing violent extremism and human trafficking. We also seek to offer women and young people better prospects." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2019)

"A strong civil society,[1] in combination with legitimate, effective government and a private sector that does business responsibly, forms the basis for a well-functioning, inclusive society.
Within the broader SDG agenda, which is the main point of reference for Dutch government policy, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation focuses on SDG 5 in particular, since investing in women means investing in development and growth. The Minister is therefore committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and has identified this as a goal of all components of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (BHOS) policy and thus of all components addressed in this policy framework. " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2019)

"The rapidly deteriorating situation in the Sahel requires urgent interventions in order to restore public services, counter security threats and provide humanitarian assistance. In addition, long-term engagement is needed to address the root causes of poverty, fragility, violent extremism and irregular migration." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020)

"A greater focus on prevention is desperately needed. Greater efforts now will mean less human suffering in the future and will save billions in emergency aid, asylum in the region of origin and reconstruction. That's better for the world and better for the Netherlands," (Kaag, 2020)

	"The policy note is based on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which constitute the ultimate prevention agenda. Progress towards these goals can remove the breeding ground for conflict and radicalization, help to restore trust between citizens and the state, and thereby build more resilient states and societies. By addressing the root causes of interwoven challenges, such as poverty, conflict, terrorism and irregular migration, 'Investing in Global Prospects' contributes to the integrated approach underpinning Dutch foreign policy." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020)
	"The Netherlands seeks to strengthen the long-term stability of Niger. We are fighting poverty by investing in better education and employment opportunities for young people, in particular girls. We also invest in food security, water management, good governance and the rule of law. Moreover, the Netherlands and Niger cooperate in the area of security and migration. Niger plays a key part in regional irregular migration networks." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2019)
	"De Nederlandse veiligheidsinzet in de Sahel heeft als strategisch doel om duurzame en duurzame stabiliteit in de regio te bereiken. Stabiliteit en veiligheid in de Sahel zijn van directe invloed op de veiligheid van Nederland en Europa. Om de grondoorzaken van conflict, instabiliteit en armoede aan te pakken, ondersteunt Nederland Mali via een geïntegreerde benadering. De veiligheidsinzet gaat gepaard met ontwikkelingssamenwerking en programma's voor migratiesamenwerking. De Nederlandse inspanningen zijn bovendien gericht op het ondersteunen van de Sahellanden om in de toekomst de veiligheid en stabiliteit in hun eigen land te kunnen waarborgen." (Dutch Ministry of Defensie, 2021)
Resolving conflict	"De Nederlandse inzet in vredesmissies maakt bij voorkeur deel uit van een

	geïntegreerde aanpak. Ook in Mali is dit het geval. De Nederlandse inzet in Mali bestaat uit drie sporen: ontwikkelingssamenwerking, diplomatie en militaire inzet." (De Veiligheidsdiplomaat, 2018)
Supporting allies	"Expanding terrorist networks, organised crime, governance deficits, profound development needs and impunity in the Sahel can also have serious repercussions for the EU. Climate change and demographic trends further exacerbate these risks. The Sahel region and the EU have a joint interest in further developing a geopolitical partnership with equal coverage of development, security and governance challenges as well as opportunities. In light of the many international actors already present in the Sahel, the Netherlands seeks to align its resources (upscaling) and expertise (innovation) with existing initiatives, rather than duplicating ongoing efforts. " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020) « La première est d'ordre moral : nous avons la responsabilité d'aider dans la mesure du possible les populations vulnérables à échapper au véritable désastre humanitaire qui les menace. La seconde est d'ordre rationnel : ce choix est dans notre propre intérêt commun. Ces termes semblent contradictoires mais ne le sont pas dans la réalité. » (Sigrid Kaag, 2020)
Economic, human, infrastructure development	« Dans le cadre de son programme de coopération avec le Mali, l'Ambassade du Royaume des Pays-Bas a élaboré un Plan Stratégique Pluriannuel (PSP) couvrant la période 2019-2022. Ce PSP est bâti autour de 3 principaux thèmes de coopération : i) Droit et Santé en matière de sexualité et de reproduction ; ii) Eau et Sécurité alimentaire et secteur privé ; iii) Sécurité et Etat de Droit. Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du thème Sécurité Etat de Droit de son PSP, l'Ambassade a financé une proposition d'un consortium de 3 ONG néerlandaises (ICCO, OXFAM et SNV),

intitulée » (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2019c)

"The main objective of this policy framework is to strengthen civil society organisations in their role of lobby and advocacy. With this, a strong civil society which stands up for citizens' needs and rights and in doing so contributes to improving the social contract between government and citizens as to an inclusive, sustainable society, is supported.
Efforts under this policy framework will largely target countries in the focus regions, as well as countries that are mentioned in the BHOS policy document that have a development cooperation relation with the Netherlands.[8] " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2019)

« L'objectif général du programme [Programme Gouvernance Locale Redevable au Mali] était de mobiliser les jeunes dans leur dialogue avec le gouvernement local concernant la dépense transparente des fonds et des services, créant ainsi un mouvement politiquement actif. » (Ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, 2020c)

"As a trading nation and a development partner with considerable experience in promoting public cooperation with the private sector, the Netherlands contributes to sustainable and inclusive growth in other countries.

Key objectives:

- Economic sectors and value chains with a high potential for youth employment will be strengthened in the Sahel. Agribusinesses as well as urban entrepreneurs with a plan to invest, trade or provide services will be provided with (financial) advisory services. A credit fund to boost agri-food investments will be established. "

		(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020)
		"The Netherlands is making an important contribution to combating hunger and malnutrition and improving agricultural productivity, while using its expertise in the water sector to improve sustainable water management, drinking water and sanitation. The Netherlands is also helping developing countries to adapt to climate change and achieve the energy transition. " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020)
Frame as Sahel		
Demonstrate actorness and capability		" Together with the EU Special Representative for the Sahel, as well as Denmark and Sweden, the Netherlands has engaged with the political and military leadership of the G5-Sahel, Human Rights institutions, civil society, representatives of the justice sector, the Office of the High-Commissioner (OHCHR) and other multilateral organisations in order to encourage civil-military cooperation and build relations of trust and cooperation between local citizens and armed forces. " (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, 2020)
Not applicable		