



Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
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International
organizations in the
stabilization of Mali

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Abstract: In recent years, the Sahel has become one of the regions of the world with the highest number of active conflicts and a declining humanitarian situation. A clear example of this situation is Mali, one of the countries with high prospects of improvement and reference after its independence. Since then, Mali's political system has faced several uprisings against the government, all of them failed, through which attempts have been made to destabilize the normal order of the country. In 2011, the Tuaregs managed to carry out their first successful uprising, resulting in a deep political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis that the national institutions would no longer be able to cope with on their own. The intervention of regional and international organizations in 2012 and 2013 has allowed that, at present, the situation within the African country is stabilized and with hopes of improvement in the near future. This intervention has allowed, not only in this case, but in many others, to re-establish the national institutions and set a new framework through which to improve, guaranteeing at all times the safety of citizens.

Keywords: Sahel, Mali, conflict, international organizations, United Nations, European Union, crisis.

Abstracto: El Sahel se ha convertido en los últimos años en una de las regiones del mundo con mayor número de conflictos activos y cuyo estado humanitario ha ido en declive. Un claro ejemplo de esta situación es Mali, uno de los países con altas perspectivas de mejora y referencia tras su independencia. Desde entonces, el sistema político de Mali se ha enfrentado a diversos levantamientos contra el gobierno, todos ellos fallidos, a través de los cuales se ha intentado desestabilizar el orden normal del país. En 2011, los Tuaregs consiguieron llevar a cabo su primer levantamiento exitoso, derivando en una profunda crisis política, económica, social y humanitaria a la cual las instituciones nacionales ya no serían capaces de hacer frente por sí solas. La intervención de organizaciones regionales e internacionales en los años 2012 y 2013 ha permitido que, en la actualidad, la situación dentro del país africano esté estabilizada y con esperanzas de mejora en un futuro cercano. Esta intervención ha permitido, no solo en este caso, sino en muchos otros, que se reestablezcan las instituciones nacionales y se marque un nuevo marco a través del cual mejorar, garantizando en todo momento la seguridad de los ciudadanos.

Palabras clave: Sahel, Mali, conflicto, organizaciones internacionales, Naciones Unidas, Unión Europea, crisis.

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AFISMA – African-led International Support Mission to Mali

AQIM – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

AU- African Union

CMA - Coordination of Azawad Movements

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EUCAP Sahel Mali – EU Capacity Building Mission

EUTF – EU Trust Fund

EUTM – EU Training Mission to Mali

FAMA- Malian Armed Forces

MICEMA – The ECOWAS Mission in Mali

MINUSMA - UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

MNLA – National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH QUESTION, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. Research question

This end-of-degree paper seeks to analyze the intervention of the most relevant international organizations in conflict resolution, such as the United Nations or the European Union, in addition to other organizations of a military nature, in the stabilization of the African Sahel region, specifically Mali, a country which has faced a fragmentation of its political system since 2012 and which, together with the pre-existing humanitarian crisis, has served as a battleground between the government and non-governmental actors.

1.2. Objectives

The main objective of this project is to analyze, in an exploratory way, if the international organizations involved in the State of Mali contribute to the stabilization of the crisis situation existing in the region since 2012. Other objectives of a secondary nature are also established that will provide relevant information to achieve the main objective.

- To analyze and understand the evolution of the conflict in the region, as well as its current state.
- To understand the situation of the region through the analysis of its economy, society and other factors affecting stability.
- Analyze the role that international organizations have played in Mali, in particular the evolution of foreign aid.
- Define the variables contributing to Mali's stabilization and the achievements to date.
- Establish possible roadmaps that should be established in the region after a comparison exercise with those currently in place.
- Prescribe conclusions following the analysis.

1.3. Methodology

This paper employs inductive reasoning, as it starts from a case study of the conflict in Mali, which allows a conclusion to be drawn regarding the fulfilment of an initial

hypothesis. To this end, an exploratory, qualitative and descriptive analysis will be carried out, based on the analysis of available data and their reproduction in comparison with each other, in order to check whether this justifies the hypothesis put forward. All information used is qualitative, with some quantitative exceptions to highlight the relevance of some data.

In this qualitative study, use has been made of secondary and primary sources, in which a great variety of authors can be observed, the central axis being the work carried out by Christopher Hill in 1993. Primary sources include the Algiers Agreement and official documents provided by the United Nations and the European Union, among others.

The databases used were obtained from ProQuest, Dialnet, Google Scholar and the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE). With all this information, the role of international organizations in the stabilization of the conflict in Mali is analyzed, taking into account the serious humanitarian and political situation that the country was facing prior to the outbreak of the conflict.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the African region of the Sahel has positioned itself as one of the regions of the world with the greatest number of active conflicts, which have affected and transformed the system of the countries that comprise it. The Sahel, already weakened by the expansion and attacks of terrorist groups such as AQIM, in addition to the growing and persistent humanitarian crisis, has drawn the attention of third countries and international organizations which have developed intervention strategies for the peaceful resolution of these conflicts and with the aim of re-establishing order.

The magnitude of these conflicts has not remained within the limits of this region and has even affected other countries such as Algeria and Libya. This paper will specifically analyze the challenges Mali has faced since the military coup of 2012 combined with other internal difficulties the country has faced.

2.1.Purpose and contextualization

The purpose of this project is to analyze, in an exploratory way and from a sociological perspective, the role of international organizations in the stabilization of the current conflict in Mali given the current conditions in the area. The pre-existing situation in the Sahel at the time of the military coup in 2012 will be used as a reference.

The internal situation of the country, marked by the humanitarian crisis and identity conflict, together with the general situation in the Sahel marked by the slow processes of decolonization and the increase in terrorist movements and attacks, created the conditions for the opposition in Mali, one of the countries in the region considered a success story, to show its discontent with the Malian government in 2012. The opposition, in this case the various formations of the Tuareg Berber people, had a long history in Malian territory, which is why this prior knowledge and their role in the Sahel region have enabled them to continue with this identity and political conflict until the present day.

The crisis in Mali, if compared to the situation in the African Sahel region, presents certain characteristics and similarities which explain the instability of the whole area and in particular, the instability on its borders. The Arab springs served in turn as a motivating factor in this region to modify those situations with which the Saharan population was not in agreement both politically and sociologically. The crisis within the region shows us how discontent with political decisions taken before 2012, together with the absence of a sense of belonging and identity would draw the attention of the rebel groups in northern Mali, mobilizing to initiate change in the Azawad region and spreading their message from then until today.

This end-of-degree work is divided into six chapters, moreover, a series of annexes are presented which will serve to complement the contents, followed by the references used throughout this work.

The first chapter, the current chapter, will define the purpose of this project, as well as the reasons and purpose that lead me to choose this topic and the necessary contextualization of what will be dealt with throughout the work.

The second chapter provides a brief review of the history of interventionism by international organizations in international conflicts in recent decades, briefly indicating success stories and situations close to the region that are being addressed in this work.

In the third chapter, the theoretical framework of the work is presented; this framework will present the historical situation in Mali, followed by the evolution of the crisis and concluding with the intervention of international organizations in this territory prior to the period discussed, 2012.

The fourth chapter sets out the objectives and methodology used in the work and its subsequent analysis, as well as the research question to be discussed.

The fifth chapter provides an exploratory analysis, without providing quantitative data, using the theoretical framework as a reference for analyzing the internal elements that led to the crisis and analyzing the role of various international organizations in stabilizing the area, subsequently discussing the key internal and external elements and the future of this conflict.

The sixth chapter sets out the conclusions drawn from the analysis, completing the project with the section of annexes and the list of references used.

2.2.Motives and reasons

The role that certain international organizations have played in the stabilization of conflicts and their resolution is a phenomenon that, since the birth of the United Nations, has been favorable for developing countries and those immersed in conflicts where the escalation of violence was increasing. Furthermore, the social responsibility assumed by the main geopolitical actors of the 21st century after the decolonization process has produced a shift in recent decades towards the African region which, together with the increase in social movements, has suffered an increase in: extremist activities and human rights violations, domestic conflicts and political instability and an increase in the humanitarian crisis as a result of the lack of food and other basic necessities.

This scenario under which the territory of Mali finds itself shows us how Africa, and in particular the Sahel region, has managed to capture the attention of the international environment and will become in the coming years a relevant and strategic area for international security. Moreover, this region will shift the attention from the end of the cold war to the most persistent and important conflicts currently taking place in Africa. Its exceptional situation has been defined by the American philosopher David Lewis as "a toxic cocktail of rebels, weapons, refugees, drought, smugglers, and violent militants" (Steward, 2013), which, in contrast to its role as a democratic and stable country within the African continent, makes Mali one of the countries with the greatest international support at present.

The reasons why this topic has been chosen is because, as a recent graduate interested in security and defense issues, I consider that the Sahel region and in particular Mali is one of the most conflictive areas at present and that in the near future it will become an important point in the international agendas of different actors. In this respect, international organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations must increase their support for the stabilization of the humanitarian crisis, terrorism and other challenges facing the African Sahel region.

CHAPTER 3: STATE OF THE ART

International organizations have been, since the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the 21st century, one of the main actors in the stabilization of international conflicts, as well as in the maintenance of this stability in the short and long term. International organizations make a "multilateral, multidirectional and sustained" effort ("Strategy for external action", 2015) to achieve the above objectives, acting individually, together with other international organizations, regional actors or even international actors.

The effectiveness resulting from this cooperation cannot be the result of the action taken by external actors; in order to make this process successful, a series of actions and responses by the country, its government, its citizens and other internally affected actors must be concentrated in the country in question. In addition, it should be noted that international organizations must review the structures, capabilities and missions of the

actors in charge of stability in conflicts and other present threats, so that these external actors maintain their effectiveness and rapid response.

The competences of international organizations are not, despite the situation in which they operate, exclusive, but complementary to each other, given their capacities and characteristics. The European Union has, historically, the obligation to defend the principles and values to which its Member States have committed themselves. The European Union, which has a global projection and positioned itself as one of the most relevant international actors after the end of the Second World War, has as its central value the development and consolidation of democracy at national and international level, relying on multilateralism and the defense of rules such as those established in its agreements, defending the common values as set out in the United Nations Charter.

In the case of the United Nations Organization, its role in combating various international conflicts is clear. Its international scope, given its long history and international commitment, this international organization has managed to achieve a state of international legitimacy that other actors in the same field have not achieved to date. This body, created to promote peace, foster friendly relations among its participants and address global threats that are not necessarily sources of conflict, but do pose security problems, has managed to position itself since the beginning of the 21st century as one of the main international organizations in the stabilization of conflicts and in the maintenance of these in the long term.

Other international organizations to be discussed in this paper are North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the African Union (AU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). NATO is, to date, one of the most important global politico-military actors whose operations, mainly military and international in character, have since the end of the Cold War actively maintained the security of its members, its allies and globally. Compared to the previously mentioned organizations, NATO is possibly the international actor that can demonstrate its effectiveness and results through military measures, as well as through treaties ratified with other relevant actors or countries in the current geopolitical sphere. In the case of the African Union, this political union was created with the aim to promote the unity of its member after the colonial period in their history, while promoting and coordinating different strategies for development, democracy

and international cooperation. Lastly, the OSCE was created as a primary instrument to receive early warning signs of any type of conflict the European countries could be facing. This organization aims to prevent conflicts from happening, to manage the different crisis that might happen within the European territory or abroad (being either of their interest or affected by them) and to create a post-conflict rehabilitation program in order to successfully face any obstacle or difficulty while delivering long-term plans for the future in order to avoid a relapse. It must be said that these last-three organizations have different focus and missions, nevertheless, their intervention in the Malian territory makes them valuable and relevant within the discussion of security and stabilization.

Security is a broad concept, encompassing military, political, social and economic elements, among others. The principle of corporate advantage should be taken as a reference in the stabilization of crises such as the one discussed in this paper. These problems must be solved through coordination between the agencies involved in the conflict, by means of regional, bilateral or international cooperation, applying a comprehensive strategy adapted to the country in question.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1.The crisis in Mali

4.1.1. The begging: 2011-2013

Although Mali has been an example of a stable, democratic and advanced nation in the African Sahel territory, the disruptive events of 2012 turned regional and international attention from exemplary to worrying, reaching the point where we are today. The historical background of this conflict is mainly developed between January 2012 and January 2013, where a chain reaction like a domino, made the legitimacy of the state, its structure and its functionality to be questioned (d'Errico, Grazioli and Mellin, 2017)

In January 2012, the Tuareg MNLA revolted against Mali's president at the time, President Amadou Toumani Touré (Haysom, 2014). This revolution, which took place mainly in the north of the country, was not the only spark that started the fire of trouble in the region. The combination of the Tuareg rebellion, together with the AQIM insurgencies

resulted in March of the same year in a military coup, led by members of the country's military, in which the structures of the state were fragmented.

Despite its dominant position in the Sahel, Mali's government did not have the logistical capabilities to deal with this coup d'état which “established a non-democratic regime, which further distanced governance in Mali from the population and their concerns” (Marchal, 2012). Although the decision to take control of the government and the country seemed the best option available to stabilize the situation that Mali had been facing since January 2012, days after this takeover three rebel groups (AQIM, MNLA and Ançar Dine) occupied three regions in the north of the country, making this the fourth insurgency in the northern territory of Mali since the country's independence in 1960.

A year after continuous disagreements between the (military) government and the rebels, as well as disagreements with citizens in both large cities and rural areas, intervention from outside the country began to arrive. It is worth noting that the conflict and crisis in Mali did not remain centralized in the north, this is, instead, the starting point from which the conflict provoked by deeply rooted causes in its history makes its way to the south of the country and vice versa¹. Since 2016, 45% of the conflicts and fatalities in Mali have occurred outside the northern region of the country, in contrast to the period 2011-2013 when the violent conflict took place there.

4.1.2. The aftermath: 2013- ongoing

The situation in which Mali finds itself from 2012 to the present has been referred to as "a long 2012" both in the history of the country and its citizens. This crisis is compared to the one experienced in the territory in 1963² or 1990³, which leads us to realize that the situation that, to date, Malians live is serious and cannot be defined only as an isolated crisis of the northern territory of the country (Sánchez, 2018)

¹ Although most of the movement flows in Mali occur from the north of the country towards the center, it has been observed that movements related to illegal activities and terrorism have mainly taken place from the southern border of the country towards the center of the region.

² First Tuareg rebellion against government targets. It lasted from 1962 until 1964, being 1963 the year with higher degree of conflict.

³ Mali's civil war took place between 1990-1996 when Tuareg separatists attacked government buildings in Mali, leading to a full-blown rebellion as a result of the reprisals from the army.

The 2012 crisis is an example of how the country's structure has for years borne the weight of other problems of greater caliber, which, from the outside, appeared to be simple internal fractures. The deep problems with the country's institutions, the political fractions between the northern and central territories, or the expansion of extremist and criminal networks on the country's borders, among others, have allowed a conflict that at the beginning seemed like a simple national revolution, to end in one of the most serious crises that the territory and the Sahel are facing today and in its history.

The continuation of the conflict can be framed from 2013 to the present. Despite the fact that the situation in the region seems, from an external point of view, negative and with no way out, in terms of stabilization and peace agreements there has been some progress. In June 2015, the "Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali" was signed, followed by the Algiers Process whose duration would be two years (Lindberg, 2013). This period would mark a margin for the government and the rebels to dialogue and put the country on the road to peace and stability.

It should be mentioned that, despite the existence of such documents, attacks and disagreements between the government and the rebels continue to take place to date. The election of President Boubacar Keita in August 2013 brought Mali's citizens the peace of mind they had hoped for after the previous years of conflict. The candidate, who won with a clear majority, fought in the run-up to the elections for the restoration of the integrity of the territory as well as the fight against the problems of trafficking and corruption they were facing. These fronts are, from the outside, the most important to cover after a prolonged and complex process of crisis that Mali was facing, but the concern of its citizens diversified towards the agreements and interventions that external actors were making. This suspicion towards external aid caused organizations such as the UN or the EU to be indirectly affected, lowering their popularity and support in the region.

Given this situation, we can see how the situation in Mali remains delicate and complex, but with hopes of improvement. Today the country continues to suffer attacks, the most recent on 26 April 2021 in which three blue helmets from the MINUSMA mission were wounded in an attack on the military base in the north-east of the country (Cortés, 2021). In parallel to other countries in the region, Mali has suffered an increase in jihadist and other rebel attacks, which has increased inter-communal violence and led to the

displacement of tens of thousands of people, a situation already aggravated after the COVID-19 crisis, what makes of the situation in Mali a complex one.

4.2. About the conflict

Before 2012, Mali was recognized internationally as a free democracy, nevertheless the reality showed that, in reality, its democracy was shallow and fragile (Wing, 2013). The conflict that Mali is currently facing, despite being categorized as a civil war, involves a combination of interconnected micro-conflicts making it a complex conflict to analyze. For the sake of understanding, this section will analyze the type of conflict in Mali as well as the set of aspects that define it.

After the end of the Cold War, conflicts begin to adapt to different variations that arise as a result of globalization and the conditions of the environment at the time they occur. John Paul Lederach explains how, after this period, today's armed conflicts have in their group cohesion and identity distinctive elements from other types of conflicts (Sánchez, 2018). On the one hand, we find that the cohesion of armed groups is based on the feeling of belonging or identity to the geographical region, ethnicity or even religion, as in the case of armed groups in Mali. On the other hand, within the same region, the feeling of belonging to the north or south, as in the case of the region in question, makes it a key element in the construction of identity and an element of mass mobilization. Since 1960, Mali has been divided in two regions (see annex 1), different between them but equally affected by this situation: the northern region, mostly belonging to the Tuareg population and the African Sahel, and the southern region, shaped by the post-colonial order and its legacy.

It must be highlighted that the crisis of Mali is a combination and succession of events rather than a specific type of conflict, making of it an example of how history has shaped conflicts and combined them. It has been defined as an arm conflict which combines a series of uprisings in the north of the country at the beginning of 2012, a coup d'état and its usual post-coup volatility (Haysom, 2014) the emergence of Islamist groups in the south of the region as well as an influx of internal migration from the country accompanied by another wave of rebellions and conflicts. It should be mentioned that the armed insurgencies, which have taken place and are currently taking place throughout the country,

have varied in terms of their objective and methodology, revolving around terrorist activities in the south of the country, while in the north they have maintained a more revolutionary and politically focused character, without necessarily involving terrorist groups or trafficking activities.

This series of events, which coincided in the time period indicated above as "the beginning", shows how the African country weakened in the face of the political decay and humanitarian crisis already present at the time. The confrontation that takes place between the armed groups and the government makes of this conflict a clear inter-state conflict. Inter-state conflicts tend to be a response to past confrontations that affect the people involved in the conflict who react to this one after a long-standing period of time within the same territory. Mali is a clear example on how the discrepancies over the control of the territory, along with the control over the economic and social resources, lead to conflict as will we further see in this paper. Apart from the political-orientated character inter-state conflicts tend to have, we should highlight how the ideological factor has equally contributed to the degree of tension in the crisis. Scholars such as Bencherif, Campana and Stockemer have referred to the crisis in Mali as a "new war" where elements such as the religion or the ethnic have contributed to the country's deep social division by involving several non-state armed groups that aimed to impose their cultural and ideological ideas over the state's ones.

Even though the majority of attacks and events have taken place in the Malian territory, the people affected by it come from different countries has cast doubt on the strictly internal character of this conflict. This paper will analyze the conflict in Mali on the basis of the geopolitical position in which it is taking place, leaving aside the element of nationality as well as the attacks provoked by rebel and terrorist groups on the country's borders.

4.3.Intervention of International Organizations in Mali

The conflict in Mali has demonstrated the ability of regional organizations to respond to this type of threat, as well as making visible the weaknesses and obstacles they face. In the face of these weaknesses, regional organizations have needed the support of international organizations in order to cope with security, political and humanitarian emergency constraints. The existing internal fractions and problems faced by Mali could

not be solved in the period when external intervention was minimal, making this case similar to that seen in other movements such as the Arab Spring.

The lack of resolution of these small problems increases the likelihood that they will resurface over the years, accumulating strength and having a greater impact than expected. When a conflict reaches a point of no return and merely accumulates disruptions and frictions, as in the case of the conflict in question, the role of regional organizations begins to be questioned, leading us to wonder about the role of the different actors that have become and may become involved and what role they will assume in the conflict.

The beginning of the assistance offered in Mali can be likened to what happens in any other type of conflict. In a first step, we are faced with more internal or even regional aid, in which organizations with conflict resolution capacity close to the area are looking for ways out or alternatives to slow down the advance of the conflict. In a second step, given the lack of success of regional intervention, third countries or international organizations such as the United Nations seek to intervene in the region. This type of intervention will be the object of analysis of this paper, trying to understand their role in the stabilization of the crisis in Mali by different means.

As mentioned above, the first wave of aid that Mali received was from regional organizations and neighboring states that sought to mediate and seek a rapid solution to the political situation facing the country. Through this type of intervention, as in a zero-sum game, regional actors managed to approach Mali as a "friend" and at the same time guarantee themselves the stability that a prolonged conflict was putting at risk.

The first aid that the Malian state received after the coup came from ECOWAS, which denounced this act, called on the MNLA to lay down its arms and tried to establish economic and diplomatic sanctions in the country. This ECOWAS action was supported by neighboring states who closed their borders, blocking the country's access to external resources and preventing the flow of people between regions. This strategy, initiated by ECOWAS, sought to stabilize the conflict through political negotiations and the reduction of the military presence and rebel groups in rural and weakened areas.

The regional intervention in Mali is considered to have failed in certain respects. The ECOWAS mission in Mali did not bear fruit. The lack of political support as well as the absence of funding necessitated the support of international organizations. Due to the delicate situation facing Mali, international organizations initially provided logistical support to regional actors through joint missions such as AFISMA, previously MICEMA, or the support that the former colonial power, France, offered to this mission prior to the full intervention of more international organizations.

4.3.1. Evolution of external aid

The evolution of foreign aid in Mali could be defined through the "capabilities-expectations gap" that Christopher Hill presented in 1993. In this article, the professor of international relations at the University of Cambridge explained the international role played by the European Community, differentiating between what was promised and what could be achieved.

Although Christopher Hill's theory would provide an adequate basis for analysing the intervention of international organizations in a third country through their missions, unfortunately, it is focused on the European Union, so that when other international organizations are considered, as is done in this paper, the functionality of this theory would be limited.

Therefore, taking as a reference Hill's analysis of European aid in international conflicts, in this paper, and in relation to the conflict in Mali, we could identify two interrelated scenarios: first, a scenario of **intention-implementation** and, secondly, a scenario of **implementation-reception/local perception**. These scenarios will serve as a reference to understand the evolution of international aid in Mali prior to an in-depth analysis of its effectiveness.

First, there is the **intention-implementation** scenario, which refers to the decision-making capacity of inter-national organizations. In this aspect, we analyze the first intentions of these actors in the territory in conflict, as well as the intervention plans planned to face the obstacles on the ground. In the case of Mali, each international organization that has intervened in the conflict to date, as well as states or regional actors,

have developed alternative plans, one from the other, but always in line with what was happening internally in Mali. For this scenario to be successful, it is necessary that prior to the implementation of any solution or policy, there is a collaboration between the interested parties, exchanging information and jointly analyzing the context in which Mali can be helped.

Following this first scenario, in a second place, we find the **implementation-reception** process in which we observe how the established policies fit into the country's situation. Given that each international organization will tackle different aspects of the crisis, the objective of collaboration between them is that the affected aspects of Mali's society are covered and supported by foreign aid. As already presented above, public opinion does not always support the missions of external actors, in this case showing its dissatisfaction with the international presence on Malian territory.

Although the implementation has been successful in many respects, as will be seen in the analysis of this paper, Malian citizens have presented problems in the aspect of reception of the measures and the approach of international organizations. The interpretation of these has sometimes been compared to a "new colonial wave" in which international actors have tried to take control of the country's borders without necessarily wanting to change the crisis situation facing the country. With this situation in mind, this paper seeks to understand the role of certain international organizations in stabilizing the conflict in Mali, analyzing the pillars of their country and what other measures can be taken to ameliorate the crisis.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

5.1. Understanding the situation in Mali Policy

An in-depth analysis of the reasons behind the crisis in Mali, depending on the source, will yield a different answer, which occurs as a result of the prominent elements analyzed in terms of the chosen point of view. This paper will seek to analyze the economic, political, social and national security reasons prior to the crisis per se and which, in certain cases, are aggravated in the course of the crisis.

5.1.1. Economy

In 2019, Mali ranked 184th on the United Nations Human Development Index. This indicator is used to classify countries into four different levels of human development: very high, high, medium and low, analysing elements such as education, per capita income and life expectancy ("Mali - Human Development Reports", 2021). Although Mali's position has improved since the 2011 crisis, when it was ranked 182nd, this indicator analyses a total of 189 countries, so that, although an improvement in Mali's situation has been observed, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world and its progress is slower (see annex 2).

Prior to the crisis, poverty in Mali affected 50 per cent of the country's population, with a greater impact on the northern parts of the country (European Parliament, 2014: 21). Although Mali has a structured economic sector, its activity to date is highly dependent on primary activities such as agriculture and mining, which, in turn, have very limited natural resources. Sectors such as the secondary and tertiary sectors do not have a major impact on the economy; the industrial or secondary sector generates only 4% of the country's GDP, while the service or tertiary sector accounts for a larger share of Mali's GDP than the secondary sector, at around 40%. All this means that Mali will achieve an economic growth rate of 4.9% in 2019 compared to 2018 ("Malí - Índice de Desarrollo Humano - IDH 2019", 2020)

Although the improvement of the situation in Mali after the crisis is positive, there are a number of economic factors that led to the crisis. On the one hand, in Mali prior to the Tuareg intervention, there was a great inequality in the distribution of economic resources, with large economic differences between the north and south of the country. In terms of economic distribution, basic services provided by the state were limited to those close to the government, with discrimination in access to basic needs such as health and education. This inequality between the north and south was not only limited to the actions taken by the government, since the French colonial system in Mali, centered on the trade routes to the Atlantic, saw a partition of traditional lands in which elites from the south of the region were favored. This situation, together with the central government's lack of initiative in the distribution of basic services, triggered an increase in criminal activities as a result of the lack of alternatives for obtaining economic resources in Mali.

Historically, the northern regions of Mali have shaped the region to the political and economic position we find today. In terms of the economy, in the 11th century, northern Malian cities such as Gao or Timbuktu were the economic engine of the country, a prominent position that was lost after the Moroccan occupation in the 16th and 17th century as a result of the fragmentation into small kingdoms and city-states. This division is the same as that seen in Mali today and which, along with subsequent colonization by the French, shifted the focus of economic interest to the southern region. Today, the northern regions have lost their power as a result of their peripheral position vis-à-vis the contemporary southern cities that have managed to adapt with foreign influence. Although, at first glance, this historical division does not result in a major problem for the country, the exclusion of the northern regions from economic programs as well as day-to-day facilities encouraged the uprising of the Tuareg groups and the persistence of the conflict over a prolonged period of time (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015).

On the other hand, the humanitarian crisis under which Mali found itself is also positioned as one of the key elements within the economic aspect that motivated the conflict. During the first decade of the 21st century, the West African region witnessed an increase in droughts, which raised the risk of crisis and food insecurity in Mali (d'Errico, Grazioli and Mellin, 2017). Similarly, other sectors such as the service sector have seen a decrease in the number of available jobs, particularly those available to young Malians. The widespread dissatisfaction of young people with this situation, who make up almost 50% of the population, as well as the rapid increase in Mali's demographics has generated fractions between the older and younger sectors (Chauzal and van Damme, 2015). The result of this fragmentation has not only had an impact on the country's economy, generating a higher number of unemployed, but has also affected the way in which this sector of the population decides the country's political future.

Clearly, there is a great inequality between the humbler and less well-off north of the country and the westernized south, which has managed in recent years to position itself as the country's economic engine. Although the economy is an important pillar of any society, it is Mali's management of the government at the time and the growing general dissatisfaction with its decisions that led to increased tension in the region and thus the outbreak of the conflict.

5.1.2. Politics

The unbalanced political representation between the north and south of Mali is, together with the inequality suffered in the economy, one of the pillars on which the outbreak of the conflict rests.

The colonial system promoted by France during the nineteenth century divided the territory into different administrative regions with the aim of optimizing activities in each of them and thus facilitating the improvement of the economy. Although this regional project came into effect during the protection and guidance of Mali by its French colonizers, in the long run the project eventually led to decentralization as a result of the rise of political interests and elite ambition (Chauzal and Van Damme 2015: 17). The marginalization of the northern regions of the country created a sense of the creation of a new country completely alien to the one that had gained independence in 1960. Undoubtedly, the continued marginalization and underdevelopment of the northern regions fueled the various revolts from 1960 to 2012.

The Berber Tuareg people have provoked as many as three uprisings in Mali: the first in 1962, following Mali's independence, the second in 1990 and the last prior to the Mali crisis in 2006, all of them controlled by the government, but the last one to date could not be controlled in the same way. As a result of the first three uprisings, more than one million Malians were forced to live in the diaspora (Laczko, Appave, Haque and Helke, 2013) and their radicalization against the government became a political reality in the face of the fourth uprising.

These armed clashes, together with the dysfunctional political participation observed in Mali as a result of discontent towards political management, have not favored the government, which has been seen as the main enemy and affected by these uprisings. Furthermore, the distribution scheme within Mali's institutional configuration and representation in 2011 meant that any concession attempted to be granted to the counterpart was understood by the northern region as yet another loss. As a result of this lack of representation of the poorest sectors of the region, the different groups in the north, both

Tuareg and otherwise, struggled to democratically increase their influence in a political system that was corrupt from within.

This corrupt system is characterized by its construction on patronage, where Bamako elites cooperated with the leaders of the northern regions, as well as with terrorist groups, in exchange for profit and a prolongation of false peace and stability. The uprising observed by the Tuaregs and other inhabitants of the north of the country arose not only because of the economic problems the region was facing, but also because of the government's neglect to address the different grievances the northern population had manifested before but, which ones, did not receive any solution to. In addition, the fall of Gadhafi had a greater regional impact than expected but was not as influential in Mali as is widely believed. The situation in Libya led to an acceleration of the conflict in northern Mali, which in turn led to increased militarization of its counterparts who went into exile in the region after the fall of their leader. Among these exiles are mostly Tuaregs, who, after the opening of Gadhafi's military arsenal, acquired the weapons with which they empowered their groups and militants for the uprising in the north (Lecocq, 2013).

The advent of political Islam in the entire Sahel area has not been in Mali either. The mixing of politics and religion has been identified as another reason for the Tuareg uprising against the government. Political movements associated with religion are perceived as being close to the more extremist groups in the north who, through the justification of a "just war" or the establishment of a new caliphate, act in the name of religion in order to expand their sphere of power. Such actions have been reflected in groups such as AQIM or Ansar ed-Din, which have in turn justified illegal actions in the name of Islam, making Islam another grievance through which the uprising has been justified.

Various scholars, such as Dowd and Raleigh or Wing, have described the political situation in Mali as the result of a "misgoverned" region. They explain how the Malian state has difficulties in dealing with the various problems within its borders, as well as in controlling the various actors that unevenly compete for power and influence across the region. These actors include not only politicians, but also traditional authorities recognized for their religious influence, traffickers and, as previously discussed, insurgent groups. Although this definition is close to the reality that Mali was experiencing prior to 2011, for the reasons given above, it is hard to believe that this territory suffers from misgovernment,

rather than a decentralization of power inherited from Mali's independence and the end of French influence. The various political causes that have prompted the insurgent uprising have been analyzed above, all of which show that the perception of a misgoverned territory is in fact a struggle to acquire greater power at the expense of citizens, not necessarily a lack of centralized government. While it is true, as the authors point out, that the Malian government has put forward a variety of strategies to control instability in the north of the region, none of these strategies have been successful given the lack of their ultimate implementation. In this respect, although the ideas presented by the authors may partially justify the events in Mali, they do not show the reality that was finally experienced: if there was a power ruling the territory, therefore if it was governed, the difference lies in the fact that the power that was controlling the different regions was not the adequate one.

The failure of the state of Mali in 2011 came about as a result of a combination of historical, political and economic factors, together with social and humanitarian factors. It is therefore necessary to analyze the social and humanitarian causes that led to the escalation of violence in the years leading up to its outbreak.

5.1.3. Society

So far, a variety of political and economic causes have been put forward as pillars of the revolution, through which attempts have been made to justify the onset of the conflict. To a lesser extent, some scholars argue that there are other causes of a social nature which in turn have led to an increase in violence in recent years.

As mentioned above, elites occupy a privileged position in Mali, particularly in relation to politics in the north of the country and the economy in the south, with all this power centralized in Bamako. Central to the crisis, it has been discussed how this conflict arises as a result of ethnic differences between the country's different elites. Although, at first glance, this situation does not seem alarming in the face of the outbreak of the crisis, nor does it justify it, it is their alliance with extremist groups to maintain power and their social strata within Mali that makes this situation a dangerous one. As a result of the high number of extremist groups in the north of the country, Bamako lost any chance of stabilizing the situation, thus prolonging the conflict until groups such as the MNLA were excluded from negotiations with other elites. Although this situation reflects the central government's

preference for certain elites in the north of the country, the reality is that ethnic and discriminatory issues are part of Mali's conflict dynamics, which is why, in addition to highlighting the lack of centralization and democracy in Mali, it is important to highlight the discrimination that power has towards certain regions in the north, where poverty is pressing.

5.1.4. Safety: special reference to terrorism and organized crime

Insecurity in Mali is a reality that national and international citizens have been facing since the turn of the century. Although this problem affects the whole country in general, certain parts of Mali have been affected to a greater extent by the economic conditions previously discussed or by the proximity to the outbreak of conflict.

Northern Mali is now recognized as the region of the country where drug trafficking and criminal activities are part of everyday life. The growth of criminal networks in the region, as well as smuggling, has in turn led to an increase in the presence of armed groups associated with terrorism, who have not hesitated to establish themselves in the area, making it their center of operations. Other activities, such as kidnapping and trafficking of women and children, have been on the rise in recent years (Bleck, Demele, Guindo, 2016).

In a survey conducted by Alexandra Lamarche, a total of 460 respondents answered what, in their view, were the causes of the crisis in Mali and their departure from the country. Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated that insecurity related to insurgent groups, such as the MNLA, caused them to flee the country. In addition, other factors such as food insecurity due to lack of resources, the quality of available resources and droughts, as well as the increase in the price of basic necessities also contributed to this decision. Although these statements do not initially have a cause related to the outbreak of the conflict, the majority of respondents (70%) answered that they fled after the outbreak of the crisis, but they considered their departure prior to the period from March to June/July 2012 (Lamarche, 2019).

The Bamako government's collaboration based on false stability and security, discussed above, allowed rebel groups based on the country's northern borders free access to carry out drug trafficking activities for the entire Sahel region. Organized crime in Mali

is a business through which rebel groups or insurgent actors attempt to control economic routes, to make these routes smuggling routes, and through which insurgent groups blackmail state security figures into obviating what is going on. Along with the organized crime industry, the kidnapping industry has become increasingly influential in the region, becoming one of the main reasons why tourism and other economic activities have been affected. The first kidnapping experiences came out to light in 2013, where 32 European citizens were captured by rebel groups in order to gain international attention and a reward. As a result of this first action in 2003, insecurity increased in the region, leading in turn to a drop in jobs during 2009 and 2011, which among other reasons fueled the uprising due to the lack of economic resources that many young people and Malian citizens experienced as a result of illicit activities.

5.1.5. Conclusions of the causes

The conditions in the northern region, such as the socio-economic problems, in particular, the pervasive sense of marginalization of the region, the lack of opportunities for the younger generations and the endemic poverty they faced before the beginning of the uprisings in the region made of the occasion a perfect one for the citizens and minority groups, the Tuaregs, to raise their voices and take action against the government.

Although the situation in Mali has been defined as the result of a lack of governance in the region, it is clear from the analysis of the economic, political, social and security causes that the uprising and the beginning of the crisis in 2011 have a deeper background. What happened is not necessarily justified by the government's actions around the division of power and the failure to implement strategies and new dynamics, but also by the fact that the combination and interconnectedness of the above-mentioned causes have fostered the increase in violence and the crisis per se. Moreover, the need for elitism meant that a country like Mali, which after decolonization positioned itself as an African power, ended up in a worse regional and global position than expected.

The increase in illegal activities has generated, in addition to instability in the area, an increase in economic problems, leading to social problems that, as a result of the decentralization of power in Mali, could not be solved in time. In this situation, the lack of

joint solutions throughout the territory, without discriminating by north, south or ethnicity, limited the government's intervention.

Tackling organized crime and other activities that threaten the security of Mali's citizens is a task that requires the intervention and participation of regional actors, not only in Mali in particular, but also in neighboring countries, in order to address the situation. Reforms in the national and regional security sector and the creation of alternative activities that contribute to the country's economy would allow Mali, together with the peace agreements, to recover from this crisis and reform its internal structure. All of these causes, in the face of the government's refusal to address them, prompted the intervention of international actors with the aim of stabilizing the situation, actions that will be analyzed below.

5.2.The external action in Mali

The vast majority of effective conflict resolution strategies in recent times have been centered on the intervention of a third actor with the objective of the latter adopting the role of mediator. Although some scholars have questioned the effectiveness of this strategy, in reality the position is usually filled by a regional or international organization who, through missions or dynamics adapted to the conflict, attempts to end the escalation of violence that the conflict projects.

Academics such as Pinder have argued that regional actors in conflict mediation processes are effective because of their high degree of intervention and seriousness in resolving what internally or more directly affects them. In fact, these organizations not only intervene in the conflict as mere mediators, but, after the stabilization of the conflict, they adopt sufficient knowledge to be able to create conflict management strategies for future occasions. Regardless of the nature of the conflict, whether it is of an economic or security nature, when confronting and controlling a conflict, all of them end up adopting measures that are adjusted to the reality of the situation (Alcalde, 2012).

Mali has been involved in the intervention of both regional and international actors who, individually or jointly, have tried to stop the escalation of violence and put an end to the conflict. Through the theory of intention and implementation, we will analyze how the

strategies proposed by different international organizations were effective in their final implementation on the ground. This theory is based on the premise that all of them, in their role as mediator and stabilizer, have the capacity to make decisions (either individually or jointly) and have the necessary resources to make that initial intention effective.

It will analyze in detail how the UN and the EU have intervened in the stabilization of the situation in Mali since 2012. It will also analyze other regional organizations, such as the African Union, and the role that military organizations such as NATO may have played in the territory (Alcalde, 2012).

5.2.1. European Union

The EU's intervention in the Sahel with the aim of restoring stability is not a novelty born out of the crisis in Mali. Since the end of the colonization of some European member states on African territory, the EU has tried to repair the 'damage' done through specific strategies or actions without much success. In 2011, a year before the outbreak of conflict in Mali, the EU launched the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel with the aim of helping the region recover from all the humanitarian crises it was involved in while putting an end to the rise of violence and illicit activities.

The outbreak of conflict a year after the implementation of this strategy meant that, despite its recent nature, it was high on the agenda of EU institutions. Although the EU had no direct intention of intervening directly, some of its member states did intervene, as in the case of France through the Serval operation and the United Nations mission, in addition to two military and police training missions authorized by the EU: the EU Training Mission to Mali (EUTM) and the EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP Sahel Mali).

Following the failed intervention of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the recovery of Mali, France decided to intervene through a military operation based on a request for international support from the authorities in Bamako. In this period of time, from late 2012 to mid-2013, a greater presence of international organizations and actors began to be observed in Mali whose aim was to tackle the problems the country was facing with the objective to stabilize the security issues. In this case, the aid granted by the EU to Mali is not strictly focused on the

moment when the conflict breaks out. EU member states have provided financial aid to Mali since its independence, with the value of this aid increasing between 2007 and 2013 (EEAS, 2016a).

In contrast to its initial aid approach, the programs designated since 2012 by the European Union have a security-focused approach and are key to the EU's strategy in the Sahel. On the one hand, the EU Training Mission to Mali (EUTM) was established following a request for assistance from the Malian government in February 2013. This mission, based on United Nations Resolution 2085, sought to support the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) in the political improvement of the country by restoring normality and authority. As its name suggests, the mission's strategy was to train FAMA to improve its capabilities (Cisse, Drange, Kvamme, Stambøl, 2018).

EUTM, unlike EUCAP, focused its strategy on education rather than action, limiting its actions to training and basic education. EUCAP was established two years after the start of the previously explained mission, with the objective of assisting the Malian authorities in the process of re-establishing authority. Through assistance provided to the state's security forces and main political bodies, the EU helped the state to implement security reform in parallel to the arrival of the new government. To date, this mission remains present in the territory, assisting the political authorities to re-establish security in the region, with a greater emphasis on the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and illicit activities. During its second mandate, EUCAP also took control of the country's borders, extending the European Union's scope of action not only to activities focused on restoring security, but also on border control in Mali and its mandates, being funded by the EU Trust Fund (EUTF).

Through the analysis of EU missions in Mali, it can be observed that their main objective and method of intervention is to contribute to the restoration of security and state authority in the country. These missions, while fulfilling the EU's objective, contribute directly to the restoration of Mali's military and security capacity by teaching and implementing strategies. Although well-intentioned and in line with what Mali needed during and after the crisis, the EU's long-term policies have not achieved the desired goal but have been limited to building links with local institutions and certain actors in the case of its border control.

The European contribution focused on the EUTM Mali military mission, whose main objective was to train and advise the Malian armed forces and improve their operational capabilities, without direct involvement in combat. These missions, which had a good strategy from the outset, have focused on terrorism and trafficking control. An improvement in these two activities has been observed as a result of greater control of the security organs, which, after the crisis, have been controlled in terms of corruption (Slobodchikoff, 2012). In short, the strategy applied by the European Union has partially helped Mali's post-conflict stability: these missions have allowed for greater control and knowledge of the problems beyond the country's borders, but they have not managed to re-establish security and normality within the country, which was necessary. In this case, we can identify that the EU's intentions have had a purpose other than the desired one, and its implementation, focused on its intention, has been as expected (Toje, 2008).

5.2.2. United Nations

The United Nations was one of the international organizations whose intervention in Mali can be considered successful. From the beginning of the conflict, the UN Security Council included this conflict among its agenda items under the heading of "The situation in Mali". Among the actions carried out by the United Nations were twelve sessions, the adoption of four resolutions and two recommendations regarding Mali and its relationship with them, all of which were examined within the framework of "Peace and security in Africa". These sessions could be described as actions of intent, whereby the Security Council raised the problems faced by Mali through its special envoys, and sought alternatives to help them, moving from that intent to the implementation phase explained above.

The Security Council closely followed the evolution of the crisis in Mali from the outbreak of the conflict to its improvement after the signing of the peace agreement. The activity carried out by the United Nations culminated in the authorization of the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and, secondly, in the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in 2013 along with the transfer of responsibilities from the African-led mission to the United Nations mission in June 2013 (Sarkin 2009). Finally, in a further sideline of

reviewing the process, the UN followed closely the political process in the country without directly intervening in it, from the holding of the presidential and legislative elections in Mali, to the implementation of the peace agreement and the political prosperity agreement between the government and armed rebel groups in the north of the country.

The situation of instability and unpredictability in northern Mali confirmed the need for UN intervention. In his briefing to the UN Security Council on 8 August 2012, the Secretary-General stated that the suspected instability and unpredictability was indeed a threat to international peace and security. With this statement, the Secretary-General confirmed the limited progress made to re-establish constitutional order up to that point, noting positively the return of Mali's president to Bamako by that time.

The UN's intentions began to become public on 12 October 2012, when the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2071 welcoming the appointment of a national government. Along with this, the Malian government was to present a logical roadmap detailing the various steps to be taken in the transition. In addition, the Council took note of the sanctions imposed by ECOWAS, considering this action as a future action to be endorsed in the Mali strategy.

The UN Council declared its readiness to respond to Mali's request for an international military force to assist the country's armed forces with the aim of promoting the rapid and effective recovery of the occupied regions of northern Mali. At this meeting, the representative of Mali also confirmed and declared his support for the creation of an international military force, covered by Chapter VII of the Charter, which had been supported and proposed by ECOWAS and the African Union in earlier requests for troops.

Since the implementation of Resolution 2071 in October 2012, the United Nations had intensified its presence on Malian territory, an act that shows the transition from intentions to implementation on its part. This statement, made on 5 December 2012 by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Affairs to the Council, showed how the implementation of this strategy had accelerated efforts in Mali by boosting the political process, and by supporting ECOWAS and the African Union. Furthermore, the involvement of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel in broader issues demonstrated the need to address Sahel issues as issues that affect Mali as a whole.

One of the aspects most pointed out by the Malian representative was the need for international intervention to stabilize the conflict, as long as it was in support of Mali's government forces. One of the most striking aspects of intervention in Mali is the reluctance that any international actor faces in reaching out to help. This is seen above all as a legacy of colonialism and the subsequent fall of Gadhafi and the impact this has had on the Sahel. Given this sense of reluctance, one of the aspects to note is that the purpose for which this international intervention was requested was not to fight ethnic minorities or to destabilize any neighboring country, but to ensure the security of the country. All of this was to be agreed with the Malian government in order to avoid any exploitative situation, thus allowing it to give its consent to the intervention.

Following the requests for intervention expressed by the representative of Mali, the representative of ECOWAS and the representative of the African Union, on 20 December 2012 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2085 in which it decided to authorize the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) for a period of one year. This resolution was welcomed by the Malian representative as a reflection of the international community's commitment to assist Mali in combating transnational organized crime and terrorism (Sarkin, 2009).

AFISMA faced critical shortfalls in a number of logistical areas that called into question the mission's capacity for self-sustainment. This decline called into question the true utility of the UN's intervention in the region, which from the outset had focused on a military offensive rather than a broader approach. Following this situation, the Malian representative appealed to the international community to mobilize financial resources for the deployment of AFISMA. In April 2013, the Security Council confirmed that, although there had been a marked improvement in the situation in Mali due to the UN's intervention, much of the credit was due to France and its excellent management. As a result, the UN, on the recommendation of the African Union and ECOWAS, would take control of AFISMA with the aim of projecting the presence of a parallel force with the necessary capacity to deal with extremist groups and actors.

On 25 April 2013, the Council adopted Resolution 2100 establishing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

MINUSMA was authorized to use all necessary means within the limits of its capabilities and mandate areas to carry out its mandate, and this authorization was also extended to French forces in order to act jointly in the face of the same offensive.

This simple but logical decision allowed for a gradual improvement of the situation in Mali. Despite its fragility, the territory had seen an improvement in security partly thanks to UN intervention. At the Council meeting in June 2013, the improvement was expressed not only in terms of security, but also politically; the Malian government was beginning to take the first steps by holding elections and negotiations with the rebels in the north of the country.

All in all, there was a gradual improvement of the situation in Mali thanks to UN intervention. Although the process of intention was much longer than that of implementation, the latter was successful in achieving greater stability in the area. It is true that the UN mission has not managed to improve other aspects of the crisis, such as the humanitarian aspects, but from the outset the UN has remained faithful to its objective: to re-establish security in the region and achieve political neutrality that would allow the situation and society to advance in parallel.

5.2.3. Others

During the conflict in Mali, a variety of regional and international actors have intervened in the region to stabilize it. Regardless of the nature of the organizations, all of them aimed to help the region without necessarily intervening directly on national matters: either the help was provided through missions such as the European Union, or they worked jointly with other organizations in order to secure that the help they were providing was accepted by the government and the citizens rather than seeing it as a threat. In the following, the intervention of the African Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will be analyzed.

The African Union is a political union created with the aim to promote the unity of its member after the colonial period while promoting and coordinating different strategies for development, democracy and international cooperation. Following the escalation of violence and the outbreak of conflict, the AU mediated with ECOWAS for greater

international intervention and coordination of the aid that was being offered. The AU stressed that all assistance should focus on restoring political authority in Mali, as well as the country's sovereignty, security and political projection towards elections. As discussed above, the United Nations and the European Union assisted through security and political stability strategies, but all of these needed the authorization and approval of the Malian authorities (Cisse, Drange, Kvamme, Stambøl, 2018). In this way, the African political union acted not only as one of the regional actors that allowed the crisis to progress, but also managed international aid. Similarly, the AU adopted an observer role whereby it provided actors such as the United Nations with up-to-date information on what was happening on the ground and formulated requests for their consideration (Caparini, 2015). The latter served a useful purpose, as, thanks to these requests, the UN approved the creation of an international force to focus on restoring the territorial integrity while securing the boarder areas. Finally, the African Union's intervention was also reflected in the coordination of AFISMA, together with other international actors, even though this mission was later delegated entirely to the United Nations.

In contrast to the African Union, other organizations such as the OSCE and NATO have played a lesser role in the region, although their role and policies have, in recent years, had a greater focus on Africa and, in particular, the Sahel region. In the case of the OSCE, the assistance provided by the security organization has been focused on logistical capacity. Its presence in Mali has been limited to offering assistance through other international organizations, such as the United Nations or the European Union, rather than through a presentiality in the region per se. In part, this offered assistance is in line with that requested by the African Union on Mali's behalf: greater logistical assistance but not necessarily greater presentiality on the part of various international organizations. The latter option would have complicated relations with Mali, which was initially reluctant to accept international assistance, and would have made the resolution of the conflict more complex due to the variety of plans and the overlap between them. The OSCE on this occasion provided military logistical assistance to Mali in coordination with the UN. Specifically, the OSCE Army played an active role in MINUSCA, in the case of the assistance provided to the UN, and provided, in the case of the EU, logistical support for security reform in its missions. Air support was also provided by the OSCE through Portugal, which contributed to the projection of stability and security in the region (OSCE, 2018).

Similar to the OSCE, assistance provided by the politico-military alliance, NATO, was limited to logistical support for military operations. It should be noted that, to a greater extent, the actions carried out by NATO member states such as France have been much greater. Indirectly, NATO takes credit for the actions carried out by the French on Malian territory, although publicly, the organization has limited itself to congratulating its member on the success of the intervention and stressing its decision not to intervene (Europapress, 2013). Although it is surprising that an organization such as NATO, which has a track record of success in conflict neutralization and resolution, has not intervened in the Mali conflict, NATO's assistance was not directly requested (Morken, 2020). Thus, although neither NATO nor the OSCE directly intervened in Mali, both organizations were indirectly involved in stabilization in the area thanks to the capabilities provided.

5.3.Roadmap

5.3.1. The key variables in the stabilization of Mali

There are several variables in the stabilization of Mali, which have been developed throughout this paper. In particular, the role played by international organizations in this specific case of crisis and conflict has been analyzed.

One of the key characteristics observed was the peacebuilding approach followed by these actors. In any conflict, regardless of its nature, the main objective to be achieved is the neutrality of the conflict and the period of stability in which, implicitly or not, peace is declared. It is essential for actors involved in any conflict to make use of a peacebuilding approach in their planning and analysis. Past interventions in Mali have shown the insensitivity that was sometimes observed in conflict mitigation. In order to avoid such negative conflict resolution, more intervention and dialogue with regional actors is necessary. It is here, in the process of negotiation and intervention on the ground, that organizations such as the United Nations have done excellent work.

In addition to dialogue and negotiations, cooperation between the different actors involved has allowed the desired stability to be achieved in Mali. The intervention of all the actors involved meant that when the capacities of one became insufficient, as in the case of the African Union, they were able to request greater assistance from other actors.

It is important to note that, thanks to the parallel collaboration between international organizations and the Malian government, it has now been possible to observe a general improvement, especially in the economic and political causes that structurally weakened the country and incited the uprising of rebel groups.

Although aid in Mali has been provided by organizations and actors from diverse backgrounds, ultimately, the sum of all of them in different fields has allowed for the stabilization of the conflict. This intervention has indirectly included the country's need to develop a new security strategy focused on the protection of the entire territory without limiting protection to the commercial regions of the south. Joint action by France, the African Union and the United Nations has seen the country's security situation improve, regardless of its humanitarian situation. The focus of support for the restoration of the country's sovereignty has also been a key variable, resulting in the convening of elections and negotiations with the rebel groups, which has seen a step towards renewed stability and democracy in the country, with the support of the United Nations. Although this is a prolonged process, to date it has been possible to observe that the casualties, as well as difficulties, have been less than those witnessed between 2012 and 2017, meaning that the objective implemented by foreign actors in their missions has been significantly achieved.

Finally, the most important variable to highlight is the respect that both regional and international organizations have shown towards the situation in Mali. This respect has been reflected in the authorizations and dialogues established, through which Mali's needs have been discussed, respecting at all times their interest in outside intervention or not. Without this mutual commitment, none of the achievements discussed below would have been achieved.

5.3.2. Achievements

The achievements in Mali, although they have not been perceptible until later in the post-conflict development, have been several and in line with the objectives established in the national and international missions.

In short, the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali, reached between the Malian authorities and northern armed groups in negotiations in Algeria in June 2015, has been

one of the greatest achievements in the aftermath of this crisis. Thanks to the cessation of hostilities agreed between the government and the rebels, Algeria was able to measure the outcome of the negotiations by reaching an agreement between the parties concerned. During this period, discrepancies between the actors could be observed as a result of clashes between the rebels and loyalist militias, but on 15 May several organizations and states, as well as the rebels and the Malian government, signed the peace agreement. The culmination of the agreements is reached in June 2015 after the signing of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) of the agreement.

Since the signing of the agreement, a decrease in the clashes between the signatory movements (CMA, MNLA and HCUA) and the security forces of Mali has been observed. This stability in terms of security has allowed other sectors of the country to participate in an improvement, such as the re-establishment of political sovereignty in the region and its total control over the territory, avoiding the decentralization that initially weakened the political structure. As a result of this political reform, there has been an improvement in the country's institutions, as well as the reforms implemented by them.

To a lesser extent, one of the achievements of the post-conflict period has been the restoration of the confidence of Mali's authorities and citizens in international organizations. Through their missions and the dialogue established, they have been involved in the capacities they have, respecting at all times national interests and coordinating activities. This small achievement would lead to greater advantages for Mali in the future, such as its readmission as a member state of the African Union in 2020 and the lifting of the sanctions imposed on it (Abeba,2020).

At the economic and humanitarian level, there has been a slight improvement in the country's conditions. To date, there is still a need to improve the country's economic structures in order to address the chronic humanitarian crisis they face. Nevertheless, it has been possible to educate the population on health issues, improve conditions and support the country's primary sector, on which the majority of the population depends, and as a result of these actions, the food shortages observed before and during the crisis have been reduced.

Finally, the international commitment offered to improve the situation in Mali has been sustained to date. In addition to France, many other NATO member countries and other international organizations have intervened in the country, whether through logistical or educational aid, or by deploying military or humanitarian missions.

5.3.3. Policies to be developed

As has been seen throughout this paper, Mali's evolution from the outbreak of the conflict to the present has been favorable. Part of this good result stems from the coordinated assistance provided by the various regional and international organizations that have intervened, however, up to date, there is still some room for improvement in the face of future crises or in order to achieve full stability in all pillars of Malian society. There are a variety of changes that could enable the country in question to achieve full stability, and the following recommendations are based on the achievements and the aftermath of the conflict.

Malian actors, such as the government or other relevant actors after the signing of the peace agreement, should be able to create institutions and policies based on transparency, avoiding the corruption and elitism previously observed in the country, in particular in the southern region. To this end, a roadmap would make it easier for the bodies and actors in charge of projecting such a task to be clear about the steps to be taken and the efforts to be made to achieve the objective (Neriah, 2013). Unfortunately, since the implementation of the peace agreement in 2015, very little improvement has been seen in relation to what was agreed, which is why greater transparency and a roadmap to clarify the functions would make it possible to achieve the objective established in that agreement. In addition, the creation of a body for the control and implementation of these measures could challenge the government whenever the country is stuck in the process of implementation. Rather than giving them the work done, and not learn from the practices, through this organ Mali could establish a strategy for the long term with the aim of controlling and strengthening the peace agreement implementation. Moreover, the role that security organs play in conflict stabilization, of any conflict, must be separated from the political aspects, and a government faithfully composed of civilians rather than military figures could be established (Armstrong, 2013).

In order to address the structural causes that led to the outbreak of the conflict, Mali's national authorities should, among other things, promote the creation of jobs, particularly for young people, priorities the education of young people and avoid the intervention of radical elements in the process, and create a strategy to protect the security and defense of its citizens, focusing particularly on illicit activities in the north of the region (Reeve, 2018). The exchange of information between the different communities and regions would play a very important role in the aftermath of the crisis, which is why the creation of mechanisms for information exchange and transparency of the main bodies is recommended (Armstrong, 2013). Furthermore, through the empowerment of society, Mali could, in the long term, increase the involvement of the development measures created by the different regional actors, avoiding the decentralization and fragmentation that initially prompted the Tuareg uprising.

The proposed recommendations focus not only on what the Malian government could do to improve stability, but also on those actors that intervened during the conflict. In the case of the UN, greater coordination between its missions and national objectives would allow Mali in the long term to dispense with the aid offered and act individually by adopting the knowledge gained. Similarly, the end of missions established during the conflict would allow Malian society to feel less international pressure (Neriah, 2013). In humanitarian matters, international actors should adopt measures focused on the reality suffered in the country, not necessarily security or defense strategies, but strategies previously negotiated with internal information (either with humanitarian actors or with the government) that allow for the implementation of strategies in line with what is needed. This recommendation follows a similar format to that established by the United Nations during the crisis, who, without prior knowledge of the cause, did not intervene on the ground. Negotiations with local authorities prior to any intervention are key to ensuring that any measures are tailored to their needs.

Future aid measures should not only focus on military capabilities but should also include greater investment in other areas such as education, health and infrastructure rehabilitation. In addition, as in any other after-crisis, the international community must educate the region's institutions in the creation of crisis containment plans. Mali has been able, prior to 2012, to contain other uprisings. Given the structural reasons for the increase in violence, the government, with the help of international actors with established

strategies, should be able to develop a crisis plan to prevent future episodes. In the medium term, international actors must recognize Mali's democratic capacity, if successful, and its ability to evolve. Through development policies, Mali can demonstrate to the international community its capacity to regain the title of democratic power it gained after independence.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

The initial response to the conflict in Mali came from regional organizations close to the conflict, who, once the conflict became more advanced and complex, requested the intervention of third actors to achieve stabilization. Using the theory of intention-intervention developed by Christopher Hill, the intervention provided by the European Union, the United Nations and other organizations such as the African Union, the OSCE and NATO has been analyzed. The principle of non-intervention has been present for many years in Africa as a result of colonization. Moreover, this principle has extensively involved issues of human rights protection and promotion since the beginning of the 19th century.

The intervention of various organizations, both regional and international, has allowed the situation in Mali to stabilize, at least partially, after the end of the crisis until the signing of the peace agreement. Sectors such as the economy and politics have undergone structural reforms that have allowed progress to be made towards a more centralized, democratic, transparent and egalitarian state in which all regions have equal power. In addition, the agreement has also succeeded in bridging social gaps that existed prior to the outbreak of the conflict, such as discrimination against ethnic minorities in the north.

Unfortunately, security issues remain on the agenda of both Mali and the international organizations involved in the country. Through reforms in security structures and plans and the creation of missions, the problems the country was facing in relation to illicit activities have been tackled. Although greater collaboration with neighboring regions would allow for a decrease in the rates of these activities, to date the changes introduced have seen some improvement, but not enough to guarantee stability in the security area as a whole.

Analysing the theory of implementation intent in terms of conflict stabilization in Mali, we can confirm that, although the United Nations had an extensive process of intention through the various discussions and Council sessions held, the final implementation from 2013 onwards can be considered a success story. Through the roadmap approved in January 2013, the UN's strategy was well on track to achieve the imagined and desired stability. Through its actions, the UN succeeded in restoring territorial integrity and organizing free and fair elections in the country under its supervision. Although humanitarian access had improved, the human rights situation remained precarious at the time, with an increase in human rights violations that required greater and more focused attention from the UN. In short, the UN, in its responsibility for security and stabilization, achieved its objective: to neutralize the conflict, establish collaborative ties and improve the security situation, even if the humanitarian situation did not improve in parallel.

In the case of the European Union, although its intention was appropriate for the situation in Mali, the development of these policies and missions has clearly been carried out without prior consultation with actors in Mali. In the case of the United Nations, we have seen how the numerous sessions held and the exchange of opinions with actors from different regional and international organizations, as well as the establishment of a special envoy, have allowed the missions to be adjusted to the reality of the situation. The response offered by the European Union has not allowed for stability in the area, but has allowed this international organization to have a presence in the region to verify the effectiveness of its policies. The lack of consultation with local actors has limited the pace of policy implementation, as on the ground, theory was not adjusted to reality. It has also been observed that Mali is still facing a humanitarian crisis with an increase in illicit activities, so that missions that may have been effective in the past in terms of security have now lost their effectiveness.

The AU allowed the strategy in Mali to move from a regional to an international level by requesting the intervention of foreign actors and managing the AFISMA mission during its period of regional control. Although the role of the African Union, unlike the role played by the other actors discussed, was merely logistical, in the long term this actor has created various crisis management plans such as the African Capacity for Immediate Response Crises (ACIRC), which allow for quicker and more effective action in conflicts

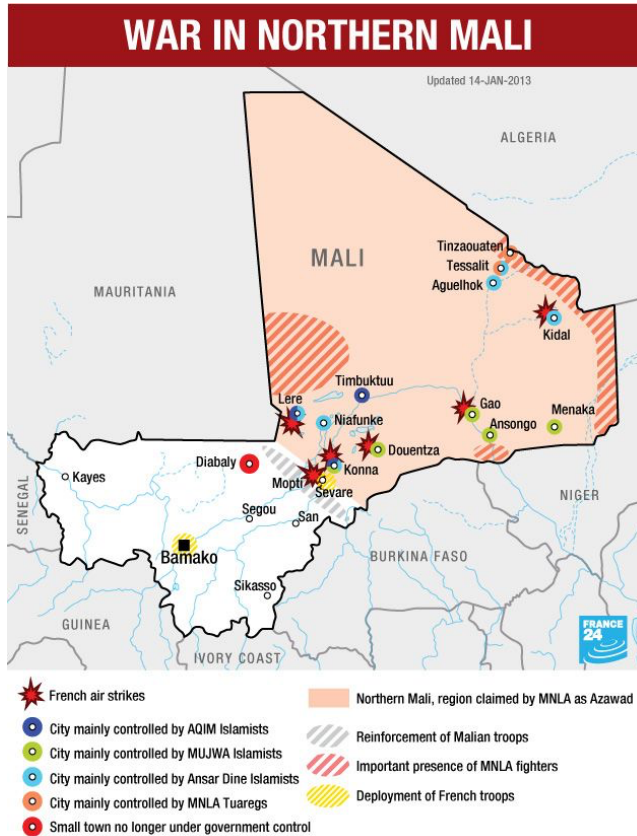
such as the one in Mali. In terms of intention and implementation, we can say that the African Union's intervention was limited to the intention of managing everything, without getting directly involved through agents. It is true that, unlike the United Nations or the European Union, the African Union's presence in Mali was much greater, and thanks to this presence, the stability of the situation was optimal.

It has also been observed that the intervention of organizations such as the OSCE and NATO has not been direct, but has materialized through the participation of member states or through resources provided to other organizations in their missions.

The intentions of the organizations that have intervened in the country in question have been favorable. Through the missions and actions discussed, it has been possible to observe how Mali has achieved greater stability in the conflict compared to the situation in the country prior to the outbreak of the conflict. In terms of implementation, although the intentions of all actors are good in the debates and development of their policies, when it comes to adjusting them to real needs, there is a big difference. This is why, with cases such as Mali, we can see that the role of international organizations in conflict stabilization is valid and necessary, but it must be based on real information obtained from the country in question, establishing a constant dialogue between the actors involved and having the authorization of the country in question so that any steps taken are in the right direction and in accordance with the country's wishes, which would complete the implementation-reception idea. As long as all decisions taken and carried out are based on dialogue with stakeholders, the final reception of the implementations will be approved. Through dialogue and negotiation, a greater allowance for the reception of any implementation would be achieved, and the Mali crisis is an example of how through this process, all actors gain, and the region is stabilized.

ANNEXES

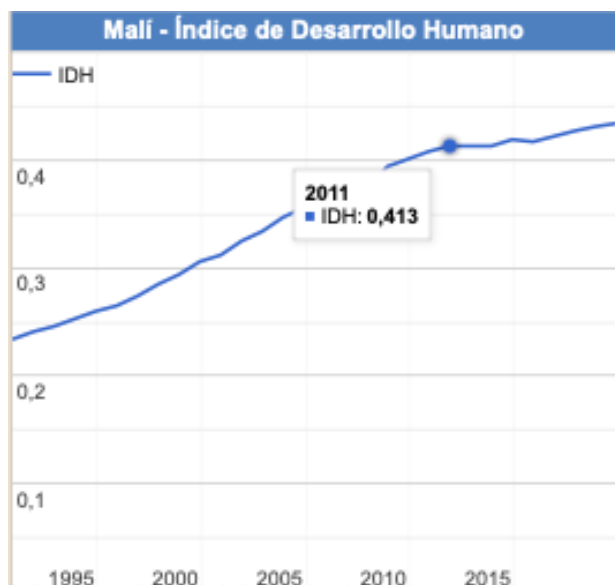
ANNEX 1: MAP OF THE WAR IN NORTHERN MALI



Northern Mali – section in orange
Southern Mali – section in white.

Mali islamists “better equipped” than expected (2013). Retrieved 26 april 2021 from <https://www.france24.com/en/20130118-french-army-mali-islamists-better-equipped>

ANEXO 2: HDI OF MALI IN 2020



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