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Leadership Dynamics in Foreign Interventions: *Russia and France in Mali 2012-2022*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the leadership dynamics within foreign intervention, utilising the identity leadership framework set out in The New Psychology of Leadership (Haslam, Reicher, Platow, 2020). Utilising the case study of Russia and France's interventions in Mali, the work tests the assumptions of the framework to ascertain its applicability in large-scale, distant settings, finding that identity leadership is feasible in foreign intervention, but the approach is not comprehensive in its explanation of intervenor successes and failures. The approach taken was a desk-based, qualitative, comparative case study research. The work advances understanding about the nature of the exchange of influence between foreign intervenors and recipient states and maintains a recipient perspective throughout. The study has implications for the validity of identity leadership theory outside of traditional leadership, and approaches to studying foreign intervention. The work suggests that studying a broader conceptualisation of foreign intervention from a recipient perspective provides a richer understanding of leadership dynamics.

Keywords: Foreign intervention, Mali, Russia in Africa, Identity Leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper assesses the feasibility of the identity leadership framework[2] in application to foreign intervention and seeks to answer theoretical questions to add to the understanding of the nature of influence within foreign intervention. Identity leadership theory evaluates contexts as social groups, the identity of which a leader represents, champions, creates and embeds.[3] Utilising a desk-based, case study approach, the paper aims to better understand through comparison why and how Russia and France came to be seen as successful or otherwise in Mali in the period January 2012-August 2022. This includes France's unlikely advent as a leader

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[2] Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., & Platow, M. J. (2020), *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, influence and* power. Routledge.
[3] Haslam et al., 2020, p.98

in 2012 and subsequent downturn in support,[4] Russia's apparent emergence,[5] and accounts for the evolving geopolitical competition for which sub-Saharan Africa is once again becoming a stage.[6]

The paper finds that the identity leadership framework is not *comprehensive* in explaining recipient judgements of triumph and failure, but that factors in perception can be tentatively attributed to an ability to build and maintain a shared identity. Russia's strategy in the following evidence appears to follow some of the key elements of identity leadership, and the trajectory of the perception of France appears to track with violations of group identity. These findings support the argument that identity leadership's tenets are relevant within international interactions (which has implications for the validity of identity leadership theory in non-traditional spheres). Examination of identity aspects within exchanges of influence between large, international groupings is critical but is not sufficient for explaining the breadth of mutuality between entities. The study supports studying foreign intervention from a recipient perspective to provide a richer understanding of leadership dynamics within interventionism and its increasingly complex and hybrid nature.[7] This introduction is followed by four sections. The below sections incorporate a literature review within its discussion of the theoretical framework, case study background for the research and methodology. Four analytical sections follow, corresponding with the four tenets of identity leadership.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND CASE STUDY

Social Identity Approaches to Leadership

The present study uses the identity leadership approach as a framework through which to analyse Russia and France's interventions into Mali's conflict from January 2012 to August 2022. , of The identity leadership framework is drawn from the social identity approach and antecedent theory the social identity model of leadership (SIMOL). The underlying assumptions of the identity leadership framework and key concepts are summarised here, as derived from the social identity approach developed by social psychologists Tajfel and Turner.[8] The theory's central idea is that individuals have a personal and a social identity - a sense of 'us' and 'we'. This results in three key assumptions. Firstly, groups' social meanings are derived in relation to other groups;[9] social comparison is undertaken whilst in-groups seek to establish positive distinctiveness from out-groups to pursue positive self-esteem[10] and to order social environments.[11] Secondly, self-categorisation theorising describes a process by which prototypes are cognitively assigned to in-groups and out-groups.[12] Finally, these psychological processes impact on behaviour.

As described by Haslam, Reicher, and Platow, if self-interest was the only basis for group membership, then losing teams would not maintain support.[13] SIMOL literature and approaches stress the importance of prototypicality to leadership. Prototypes are a 'context-specific, multidimensional, fuzzy set of attributes that define and prescribe feelings, and behaviours that characterize one group and distinguish it from other

[4] Doxsee, C., Thompson, J., & Harris, M. (2022, March 2), The End of Operation Barkhane and the Future of Counterterrorism in Mali. C*enter for Strategic & International Studies.* https://www.csis.org/analysis/end-operation-barkhane-and-future-counterterrorism-mali

[5] Thompson, J., Doxsee, C., & Bermudez, J, S. (2022), Tracking the Arrival of Russia's Wagner Group in Mali. *Center for Strategic & International Studies.* https://www.csis.org/analysis/tracking-arrival-russias-wagner-group-mali

[6] Pichon, E., Russell, M. (2019), Russia in Africa: A new arena for geopolitical competition. *European Parliamentary Research Service.* Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2019)642283 ; Schmidt, E. (2018*), Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War: Sovereignty, Responsibility, and the War on Terror.* Ohio University Press.

[7] Bjola, C., Cassidy, J., & Manor, I. (2019), Public diplomacy in the digital age. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy,* 14(1-2), pp.83-

101.; Nye, J. S. (2008), Public Diplomacy and Soft Power. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), pp.94–109; Varin, C., & Abubakar, D. (2017), Violent Non-State Actors in Africa. *Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan*.

[8] Hogg, M. A. (2001), A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and social psychology review*, 5(3), pp.184-200; Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979), An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of inter-group relations*. (pp. 33–47), Brooks/Cole.

[9] Hogg, 2001 p.186

[10] Hogg, 2001, pp.186-7

[11] Tajfel, Turner, 1979, p.40

[12] Hogg, 2001, p.187. See further detail: Haslam et al., 2020

[13] Haslam et al., 2020, p.46; Van Knippenberg, B., Van Knippenberg, D., De Cremer, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2005), Research in leadership, self, and identity: A sample of the present and a glimpse of the future. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(4), p.496

groups'[14] and a leader's embodiment of this prototype makes them prototypical.[15] The first element of the four-part identity leadership typology is concerned with prototypicality – that leaders gain influence from being perceived as 'one of us'.[16] The subsequent elements of the typology extend previous empirical SIMOL research[17] beyond the dominant emphasis on prototypicality.[18] The second element is that followers should perceive leaders to be 'doing it for us', advancing the group's collective interest.[19] The third rule of effective identity leadership is that leaders must be entrepreneurs of identity.[20] This is related to the fourth rule which is that leaders must ensure identity is embedded into material reality.[21]

From the identity leadership framework, the Identity Leadership Inventory was developed, a scale which assesses the four identity leadership dimensions.[22] The scale has been validated thoroughly,[23] but gaps remain in its application to multicultural, non-business environments. SIMOL research has begun to analyse mass categories such as 'nations, religions, and ethnicities',[24] but largely stays within the boundaries of well-defined identities, like nationalities.[25] A notable exception to the lack of research into international social groupings in the SIMOL canon is evidence comes from Reese and colleagues' study which examines constructions of developing and developed as social groupings.[26] The methodology of much of the SIMOL and identity leadership research is also predominantly quantitative,[27] which contributes to the research not being able to account for more ambiguous social identities that are present in real world settings.[28] The present study's qualitative approach was selected to fill this gap, using a case study to further allow retention of 'the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as leadership processes'[29] and also, to test the theory's ability to be an analysing framework of large units.[30] Social identity leadership perspectives are beginning to be applied in peace and security research,[31] but research is inadequate in its lack of reference to

[14] Hogg, 2001, p.187

[15] Van Knippenberg, D. (2011), Embodying who we are: Leader group prototypicality and leadership effectiveness. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(6), pp.1078-1091.

[16] Haslam et al., 2020, p.69

[17] Reicher, S., Haslam, S. A., & Hopkins, N. (2005), Social identity and the dynamics of leadership: Leaders and followers as collaborative agents in the transformation of social reality. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(4), pp.547–568.

[18] Steffens, N. K., Munt, K. A., van Knippenberg, D., Platow, M. J., & Haslam, S. A. (2021), Advancing the social identity theory of leadership: A meta-analytic review of leader group prototypicality. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 11(1), pp.35–72.

[19] Haslam et al., 2020, p.69

[20] Haslam et al., 2020, p.70

[21] Ibid

[22] Steffens, N, K., Haslam, S, A., Reicher, S, D., et al. (2014), Leadership as social identity management: Introducing the Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI), to assess and validate a four-dimensional model. *The Leadership Quarterly,* 25(5), pp.1001-1024

[23] van Dick, R., Lemoine, J. E., Steffens, N. K., Kerschreiter, R., Akfirat, S. A., Avanzi, L., et al. (2018), Identity leadership going global: validation of the identity leadership inventory across 20 countries. J. Occup. Organ. Psychol. 91, pp.697–728.

[24] Haslam et al., 2020, p.148

[25] Rosenmann, A., Reese, G., & Cameron, J. E. (2016), Social identities in a globalized world: Challenges and opportunities for collective action. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 11(2), pp.202-221.

[26] Reese, G., Berthold, A., & Steffens, M. C. (2012), We are the world—And they are not: Prototypicality for the world

community, legitimacy, and responses to global inequality. *Political Psychology, 33*(5), pp.683–700

[27] Densten, I, L. (2020), Identifying with Leaders from Another Race: The Impact of Pre-existing Leadership Assumptions and Eye Fixations. In Osland, J.S., Szkudlarek, B., Mendenhall, M.E., Reiche, B.S. (Eds.), *Advances in Global Leadership (Vol. 13),* (pp.57-83), Emerald Publishing; Steffens et al., 2021; Steffens, N, K., Kessler, T., Haslam, S, A., (2013), Leader performance and prototypicality: Their inter-relationship and impact on leaders' identity entrepreneurship. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(7), pp.606-613

[28] Brewer, M, B. (1996), When contact is not enough: Social identity and intergroup cooperation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20(3–4), p.301

[29] Klenke, Martin, S., & Wallace, J. R. (2016), *Qualitative research in the study of leadership* (2nd ed.), Emerald Publishing

[30] Small unit example please see Jansen, Delahaij, 2020; Please also see large unit example (Muslim's being united around a sense of illegitimate persecution by Western leadership), in Haslam et al., 2020, p.86

[31] Hogg, M, A. (2016), Social Identity Theory. In McKeown, S., Haji, R., Ferguson, N. (Eds.), *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory*. (pp.3-17), Springer. ; Reicher, S., Haslam, S, A., Platow, M., Steffens, N. (2016), Tyranny and Leadership. In McKeown, S., Haji, R., Ferguson, N. (Eds.), (2016), *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory*. (pp.71-87), Springer.; Lapwoch, G., & Amone-P'Olak, K. (2016), Social identity and conflict in Northern Uganda. In *Understanding peace and conflict through social identity theory* (pp. 185-198), Springer, Cham.

atypical leadership[32] in international-level identity dynamics.[33] Previous literature claims that the positive influence of leader group prototypicality on leadership effectiveness is unequivocal.[34] By exploring the feasibility of an international identity within the framework, the present study tests the literature's emphasis on prototypicality, or 'being one of us', in the context of more abstract social groupings.

Process-based leadership

The present study conceptualises leadership as a *non-normative process* where an exchange of influence takes place between leader and follower[35] (non-normativity is crucial to avoid subjectivity in evaluating leadership, which is remiss in transformational leadership theorising).[36] Leadership defined as a process draws from 1960s theorising regarding the importance of context to leadership, either the adaptability of a leader to a situation[37] or the match of the leader to the situation.[38] Burns' transformational leadership[39] and House's charismatic leadership[40] theories introduced to the field of leadership discussions of follower motivation. This laid the foundation for the relational aspect of process-based approaches.[41] This study finds that the relation between leader and follower is based on

a bidirectional exchange (in line with transactional approaches),[42] but that the exchange is mediated by mutuality.[43] An important boundary-defining element of leadership is that its central process of influence is non-coercive.[44] Modern process-based approaches to leadership emphasise the mutual nature of influence[45] - mutuality describes elements (often 'intangible'),[46] shared between followers and leaders (such as mutual interests, goals,[47] stimulations,[48] needs and ambitions).[49] Mutuality also has degrees, in type, longevity, and outcome.[50] Leadership theories such as Raven and French's bases of power (one of which is referent power, related to social identities – 'a feeling of oneness'),[51] and Leader-Member Exchange theory[52] recognise the variation in the content of influence. The present study evaluates the content of mutuality between foreign intervenors and recipients.

The essential characteristics of process-based leadership approaches are context, followers, and leaders. However, approaches are far from homogenous. A significant limitation in much of leadership scholarship is the lack of acknowledgment for the role of group processes. Critique regarding dyadic-centric approaches is well-founded in the literature, arguing that these

[32] Gaffney, A. M., Rast III, D. E., & Hogg, M. A. (2018), Uncertainty and influence: The advantages (and disadvantages), of being atypical. *Journal of Social Issues*, 74(1), pp.20-35.

[33] Liang, H., Jiwen, S, J., Guoyang, Z., Bei, L. (2021), Linking Identity Leadership and Team Performance: The Role of Group-Based Pride and Leader Political Skill. Frontiers in Psychology, 12. DOI10.3389/fpsyg.2021.676945

[34] Van Knippenberg, 2011, p.1081

35 Fasakin, A. (2017), Leadership and national security: an interrogation of the Boko Haram violence in Nigeria. African Security Review, 26(1), pp.87-108; Jago, A. G. (1982), Leadership: Perspectives in Theory and Research. Management Science, 28(3), p.315.

[36] Grint, K. (2010), *Leadership: a very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, p.97; Northouse, P, G., (2013), *Leadership: theory and practice.* SAGE publications, pp.171-204; Yukl, G. (1999), An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *The leadership quarterly*, 10(2), p. 286

[37] Hersey, Blanchard, 1969, as cited in Northouse, 2010, p.89

[38] Mitchell, T. R., Biglan, A., Oncken, G. R., & Fiedler, F. E. (1970), The contingency model: Criticism and suggestions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 13(3), pp.253-267.

[39] Burns, J.M, (1978), *Leadership*. Harper and Row

[40] Shamir, B., House, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1993), The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organization Science*, 4(4), pp.577-594.

[41] Grint, 2010, p.12

[42] Bass, B.M. (1985), Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations, Free Press, New York.; Tavanti, M. (2008), Transactional leadership. *Leadership: The key concepts.*

[43] Cornell, 2018

[44] Rost, J, C. (1993), Leadership Development in the new millenium. The Journal of Leadership Studies, 1(1), pp.94-110

[45] Haslam, S, A., Reicher, S, D. (2016), Rethinking Psychology of Leadership: From Personal Identity to Social Identity. *Daedalus* 145(3), pp.21–34; Olonisakin, F. (2017), Towards re-conceptualising leadership for sustainable peace. *Leadership and Developing Societies*, 2(1), pp.1-30.

[46] Cornell, M. A. (2018), Mutuality on a spectrum: Ownership and Buy-In. Leadership and Developing Societies 3(1), p.1

[47] Cornell, 2018, p.1

[48] Miller, M. (2007), Transformational Leadership and Mutuality. *Transformation,* 24(3), pp.180-192.

[49] Haslam, Reicher, 2016, p.22

[50] Cornell, 2018

[51] French, J, R, P., Raven, B. (1959), The Bases of Social Power. In Cartwright, D. (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp.150-167), Michigan: Univer, p.265

[52] Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995), Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX), theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The leadership quarterly*, 6(2), pp.219-247.

cannot account for large, diverse contexts,[53] or for inherently group-based processes.[54] Scholars that emphasise the role of group processes alongside SIMOL proponents[55] include classic followership proponents such as Hollander[56] and Meindl.[57] Despite clear similarity between SIMOL's prototypicality concept and Hollander's idiosyncrasy credit concept (both describe leaders emphasise influence derived from being part of a group), the scholars disagree on follower motivation. Although the group is seen as important, what binds it is different, SIMOL arguing it is shared identity, and Hollander arguing it is transactional.[58] This research contributes to this area of literature by testing the feasibility of shared social identity as the basis for conferring leader effectiveness within a global interaction, or if an Olson-like interpretation is more accurate.[59] Ground has only recently been broken regarding the link between process-based approaches to leadership and security studies.[60] This work is positioned within the international sub-section of this emerging field of research.[61] The global leadership body of work places complexity as dominant[62] but fails to divert from a focus on global leader competencies.[63] This implies that the field is still contending with the same issues as traditional leadership scholarship, namely, leader-centrism and subjective descriptions.

Foreign Interventions

Foreign intervention is understood in this study as more diverse than standard military-technical definitions and therefore explores various aspects of intervention without prescribing a singular category[64] in alignment with literature calling for a wider definition[65] that accounts for contemporary intervention's 'civil-military 'assemblages'[66] and hybridity in the form of private military company (PMC), involvement, cyber strategies, and multilateralism.[67] Foreign intervention and leadership's key common process is influence.[68] Predominant cross-cutting themes within the literature on foreign intervention into African conflict settings are:

[53] Küpers, W. (2007), Perspectives on Integrating Leadership and Followership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies,* 2(3), pp.194-221.

[54] Yukl, 1999; Haslam et al, 2016; Küpers, 2007, p.196

[55] Hogg, 2016

[56] Hollander, E, P. (1964), *Leaders, groups and influence*. Oxford University Press.

[57] Meindl, J. R., Ehrlich, S. B., & Dukerich, J. M. (1985), The romance of leadership. *Administrative science quarterly*, 30(1), pp.78-102; Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B., & Carsten, M. K. (2014), Followership theory: A review and research agenda. *The leadership quarterly*, 25(1), pp.83-104.

[58] Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S, D., Platow, M, J. (2015), Leadership. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences,* 13(2), pp.648-654; Hollander, E, P. (1978), *Leadership Dynamics: A Transactional Perspective*. (Publication no. 6), State University of New York at Buffalo. Retrieved from: https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA050820.pdf

[59] Olson, M. (2012), The logic of collective action [1965]. *Contemporary Sociological Theory*.

[60] Olonisakin, 'F. (2015), Re-conceptualising leadership for effective peacemaking and human security in Africa. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 37(1), pp.122-151.

[61] Mahmoud, Y., & Albert, M. (2021), *Whose Peace are We Building?: Leadership for Peace in Africa*. Bloomsbury Publishing; Rivas, J. M., & Tarín, A. (2017), Leadership style and war and peace policies in the context of armed conflict: The case of Maskhadov and Umarov. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 64(1), pp.1-19.

[62] Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall, Osland, 2017 as cited in Osland, J, S., Reiche, S, B., Szkudlarek, B., Mendenhall, M, E. (Eds.), (2022), *Advances in global leadership*. Emerald Publishing Limited, p.xxxi

[63] Hassanzadeh, M., Silong, A, D., Asmuni, A., Abd What, N, W. (2015), Developing Effective Global Leadership. Journal of

Educational and Social Research 5(3), pp.15-24; Park, S., Jeong, S., Jang, S., Won Yoon, S., Lim, D, H. (2018), Critical Review of Global Leadership Literature: Toward an Integrative Global Leadership Framework. Human Resources Development Review, 17(1), pp.95-120; Reiche, B, S., Bird, A., Mendenhall, M, E., Osland, J, S. (2016), Contextualizing Leadership: A Typology of Global Leadership Roles. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(5), pp.552–72.

[64] Olugbade, K., & Olugbade, K. (1987), Foreign Intervention In African Politics Revisited : The Paradox Of African Self-Determination. *India Quarterly*, *43*(1), pp.15–28. Regan, P. M., & Aydin, A. (2006), Diplomacy and other forms of intervention in civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50(5), pp.736-756; Schmidt, 2018

[65] Olsson, C. (2015), Interventionism as Practice: On 'Ordinary Transgressions' and their Routinization. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *9*(4), pp.425-441

[66] Olsson, C. (2007), The politics of the apolitical: private military companies, humanitarians and the quest for (anti-), politics in post-intervention environments. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *10*(4), p.333

[67] Doyle, M. W. (2006), The ethics of multilateral intervention. *Theoria*, *53*(109), pp.28-48; Olsson, C. (2007), The politics of the apolitical: private military companies, humanitarians and the quest for (anti-), politics in post-intervention environments. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *10*(4), pp.332-361; Tsagourias, N. (2020), Electoral Cyber Interference, Self-Determination, and the Principle of Non-intervention in Cyberspace. In Broeders, D., & Van Den Berg, B. (Eds.), *Governing Cyberspace: Behavior, Power and Diplomacy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

[68] Moore, J. (1969), The control of foreign intervention in internal conflict. *Virginia Journal of International Law, 9(2)*, p.212; Rosenau, J. N. (1969), Intervention as a scientific concept. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *13*(2), p.159.

impact on duration of civil war,[69] motives and political interests of the intervenor,[70] legality,[71] morality, assessments of the effectiveness of intervention,[72] postcolonial perspectives[73] and on Cold War impacts on African conflicts.[74] Empirical research has established that military interventions prolong civil war duration, often a symptom of prioritising the interests of the intervenor.[75] Since the end of the Cold War, the principle of non-intervention has been weakening, and a normative focus has emerged. This has been criticised for making the debate around intervention a partisan one, obstructing analysis of long-term dynamics that encourage or restrain interventionary practices.[76] MacFarlane's argument that legal, ethical prominence led to the neglect of analysis of political motives and interests marked a new era of academic assessment of foreign intervention into African conflicts. The main debates in foreign intervention literature now centre on motivations and outcomes.[77] Critical evaluation of motivation is required as interventionary behaviour is inconsistent in response to international crises, often along lines of national interests.[78] The focus in the present study given to the receptiveness of Malians at both a state and population level to the foreign interventions and associating effectiveness with the local reception, rather than self-interested strategic objectives of the intervenor, attempts to redress the intervenor-centric perspective of much of the literature.[79]

After an initial withdrawal from the continent in the Yeltsin era following the period of Cold-War proxy conflicts, Russia is back in Africa.[80] This is emblematic of a change in era for foreign interventionism, from a War on Terror and R2P focus,[81] to accounting for geopolitical competition defining the current state of international affairs, and a 'New Scramble for Africa'.[82] Academic debate about Russia's presence in Africa often discusses motivation, from economic to geopolitical.[83] Russia's primary strategic objective is to challenge Western influence, [84] and to promote an 'alternative to democracy as a regional norm.'[85] This study contributes to literature investigating Russia's *means* of intervention, such as studies of Russia's use of the Wagner Group, informational tactics,[86] and soft-power activities in Africa.[87]

France and its allies' approach is increasingly multilateral.[88] In examination of change and continuity

[69] Cunningham, D. E. (2010), Blocking resolution: How external states can prolong civil wars. *Journal of Peace Research*, *47*(2), pp.115–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343309353488

[70] Guichaoua, 2020

[71] Albert, I. O. (2020), Back to the Future: Rethinking Alternatives to External Intervention in African Conflicts. In *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development in Africa* (pp. 159-183), Palgrave Macmillan, Cham; Bannelier, K., Christakis, T. (2013), Under the UN Security Council's Watchful Eyes: Military Intervention by Invitation in the Malian Conflict. *Leiden Journal of International Law, 26*(4), pp.855-874.

[72] Regan, P. M. (2010), Interventions into civil wars: A retrospective survey with prospective ideas. *Civil Wars*, *12*(4), pp.456-476.

[73] Charbonneau, B. (2014), The imperial legacy of international peacebuilding: the case of Francophone Africa. *Review of International Studies*, *40*(3), pp.607-630.

[74] Peterson, G., & Atal, M. R. (2015), Introduction: a 'place-in-the-world'—foreign interventions in Africa. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *28*(2), pp.205-209.

[75] Cunningham, 2010

[76] Lawson, G., & Tardelli, L. (2013), The past, present, and future of intervention. *Review of International Studies*, *39*(5), pp.1233-1253.

[77] Bere, M. (2017), Armed Rebellion, Violent Extremism, and the Challenges of International Intervention in Mali. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review, 7*(2), pp.60-84.

[78] MacFarlane, S. N., & Weiss, T. (2000), Political interest and humanitarian action. *Security Studies*, *10*(1), pp.112-142.

[79] MacFarlane, 1984; Stone, M. (2009), Security according to Buzan: A comprehensive security analysis. *Security discussion papers series*, *1*, pp.1-11.; Peterson, Atal, 2015, p.206

[80] Matusevich, 2019

[81] Bere, 2017

[82] Carmody, P. (2017), *The new scramble for Africa*. John Wiley & Sons

[83] Lacher, 2022

[84] Tsygankov, A, P. (2016), *Russia's Foreign Policy. Change and Continuity in National Identity Edition* (4th Eds.), Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, p.238

[85] Siegle, J. (2022), The future of Russia-Africa relations. *Brookings.* Retrieved from: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/02/02/the-future-of-russia-africa-relations/

[86] Akinola, A. E., & Ogunnubi, O. (2021), Russo-African Relations and electoral democracy: Assessing the implications of Russia's renewed interest for Africa. *African Security Review*, *30*(3), pp.386-402; Marten, K. (2019), Russia's use of semi-state security forces: the case of the Wagner Group. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *35*(3), pp.181-204

[87] El-Badawy, E., Munasinghe, S., Bukarti, A, B., Bianchi, B. (20220), Security, Soft Power and Regime Support: Spheres of Russian Influence in Africa. *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.* Retrieved from: https://institute.global/policy/security-soft-power-and-regime-support-spheres-russian-influence-africa

[88] Lounsbery, M. O., Pearson, F., & Talentino, A. K. (2011), Unilateral and Multilateral Military Intervention: Effects on Stability and Security. *Democracy and Security*, *7*(3), pp.227–257.

in French intervention strategy, many authors have attributed French motivations to great power status seeking and postcolonial legacies, despite multilateralism.[89] Several studies have investigated contextual dynamics but not in leadership terms as this study does.[90] Searches on academic databases for articles on France's soft power or public diplomacy in Africa garner more results about China[91] and Russia,[92] particularly in English-language academic journals. Little agreement on what constitutes hybrid warfare and how to define it can be found in literature.[93] This study uses the term hybrid intervention to mean an intervention that is a combination of restrictive typologies of foreign interventionism (such as direct, indirect, military, humanitarian), including excise of soft power instruments through public diplomacy[94] and influence operations. The present study is novel in its use of leadership theory to assess, from a recipient perspective, international intervention.

The term 'the West' is heavily contested and arguably outdated. Definitions of the West are based on characteristics rather than geography, and therefore the term changes its definition according to who is using it.[95] O'Hagan summarises multiple popular conceptualisations, from Fukuyama's universal model of development to Said's understanding of the West as an imperial identity.[96] It is important to acknowledge that the use of the term throughout the thesis appreciates these associations and uses it because of its' utilisation by African and Russian interlocutors.

3. METHODOLOGY - DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS APPROACH

A qualitative, desk-based, case study approach was used (circumventing lacking accessibility to research subjects)[97] to answer the extent to which intervening foreign actors practice identity leadership. Both the SIMOL and foreign intervention canons have focussed on quantitative methods,[98] so the qualitative approach builds on previous work by adding a richer understanding of meaning, culture, and complexity.[99] Iterative,[100] analytical[101], hierarchical coding combines elements of documentary, content, and thematic analysis to account for the range of sources and complex context.[102] The ability to track change and development[103] through annually available documents underscores the usefulness of document analysis in this project given available resources. The primary issues with this kind of approach is that data is not attuned to research purpose,[104] always of verifiable quality[105] and risks reliance on counterfactual validity.[106] Therefore, the overall approach taken is defined by a triangulation of a variety of data sources and (primary[107] and

[89] Henke, 2017, p.308. Charbonneau, 2008

[90] Bere, 2017; Chafer, T. (2016), France in Mali: Towards a new Africa strategy?. *International journal of francophone studies*, *19*(2), pp.119-141; Tull, D. M. (2019), Rebuilding Mali's army: the dissonant relationship between Mali and its international partners. *International Affairs*, *95*(2), pp.405-422.; Wing, S, D. (2016), French intervention in Mali: strategic alliances, long-term regional presence? *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27(1), pp.59-80.

[91] Rønning, H. (2016), How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?. In Zhang, X., Wasserman, H., Mano, W. (Eds.), *China's media and soft power in Africa* (pp. 65-78), Palgrave Macmillan; Huang, Z. A. (2021), The Confucius Institute and relationship management: uncertainty management of Chinese public diplomacy in Africa. In Surowiec, P., Manor, I. (Eds.), *Public Diplomacy and the Politics of Uncertainty* (pp. 197-223), Palgrave Macmillan.

[92] El-Badawy et al., 2022; Kulkova, O. S. (2021), Russian "soft power" in the north-east Africa. *Politics and Religion Journal*, *15*(1), pp.105-130.

[93] Wither, J. K. (2016), Making sense of hybrid warfare. *Connections*, *15*(2), pp.73-87.

[94] Filipec, O. (2019), Hybrid Warfare: Between Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism. *Central European Journal of Politics*, *5*(2), pp.52-70; Nye, 2008.

[95] McNeill, W, H. (1997), What We Mean by the West. *Orbis*, 41(4), pp.513-524

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[103] Bowen, 2009, p.32

[104] Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015), *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.

[105] Bassor, 2022

[106] Pierce, 2008, p.79

[107] Green, A, H., Cohen, D, K. (2021), Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of "Desk Research" on Political Violence, *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 6(2), https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa029

secondary)[108] analysis techniques. The impact of bias, interpretation and researcher positionality were reflected on throughout.[109]

Data sources

UN mission reports and reliable international news sources are used as evidence of specific events, actions and statements. In recognition of organisational bias, where possible, data extracted is value free. Also used throughout is academic and grey literature,[110] and field-work derived evidence. Survey data is referenced

throughout to ascertain population level perspectives, which has [111,112,113] and Afrobarometer sampling does not include three of Mali's regions (Kidal, Méneka, Taoudénit[114,115] - Afrobarometer's donors include

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[108] Pierce, 2008, p.79

[109] Mwambari, D. (2019), Local Positionality in the Production of Knowledge in Northern Uganda. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, pp.1-12

[110] Graphika., The Stanford Internet Observatory. (2020), French and Russia influence operations go head-to-head targeting audiences in Africa. Retrieved 2022, March 01 from: https://www.graphika.com/reports/more-troll-kombat/ ; Lebovich, A. (2019), Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel. European Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from: https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping/ ; Sahel 2021: Communal Wars, Broken Ceasefires, and Shifting Frontlines. (2021), ACLED. Retrieved from: https://acleddata.com/2021/06/17/sahel-2021-communal-wars-broken-ceasefires-and-shifting-frontlines/ ; Mali: Massacre by Army, Foreign Soldiers. (2022), Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers ; Tracking Conflict Worldwide (2022), International Crisis Group. Retrieved from: https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=26&date_range=latest&from_month=01&from_year=2022&to_month=01&to_year=2022

[111] Afrobarometer (2021), *Résumé des résultats. Enquête Afrobarometer Round 8 au Mali, 2020* Retrieved from: https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/resume-des-resultats-enquete-afrobarometer-round-8-au-mali-2020-0/ ; Afrobarometer (2018), *Résumé des résultats. Enquête Afrobarometer Round 7 au Mali, 2017.* Retrieved from: https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/mali-summary-results-2017/ ; Afrobarometer (2016), *Résumé des résultats. Enquête Afrobarometer Round 6 au Mali, 2014.* Retrieved from: https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/mali-round-6-summary-results-2014/ ; Afrobarometer (2013), *Résumé des résultats. Enquête Afrobarometer Round 5 au Mali, 2012.* Retrieved from: https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/sommaire-des-resultats-de-round-5-enquete-au-mali-2012/ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2022), *Enquete d'opinion: Avril 2022* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2022-13.pdf Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2021), *Enquete d'opinion: Mars 2021.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2021-12.pdf

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2020), *Enquete d'opinion: Octobre 2020.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2020-octobre.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2019), *Enquete d'opinion: Novembre 2019, No.11.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2020-11.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2018), *Enquete d'opinion: Octobre 2018, No.10.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2018-10.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2017), *Enquete d'opinion: Novembre 2017, No.9.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2017-09.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2016), *Enquete d'opinion: Novembre/Décembre 2016, No.8.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2016-08.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2015D), *Enquete d'opinion: Décembre 2015, No.7.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/index.html#:~:text=2015-,No.%207,-%3A%2021%2D30%20d%C3%A9cembre ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2015M), *Enquete d'opinion: Mai 2016, No.6.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2015-06-1.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2015J), *Enquete d'opinion: Janvier/Février 2015, No. Special.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2015-no-special-01.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2014), *Enquete d'opinion: Août/Septembre 2014, No.5.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2014-05-20141215.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2013S), *Enquete d'opinion: Septembre 2013, No.4.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2013-04.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2013M), *Enquete d'opinion: Mai 2013, No.3.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2013-03.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2013F), *Enquete d'opinion: Février 2013, No.2.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2013-02.pdf ; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. (2012), *Enquete d'opinion: Novembre 2012, No.1.* Retrieved from: https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mali/10100/2012-01.pdf

[112] Afrobarometer, 2021; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. 2020

[113] Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012

[114] Afrobarometer, 2021

[115] Bowen, 2009, p.32

USAID and the [116,117,118,119] The pieces were drawn from a relay news site MaliWeb[120,121,122] however the newspapers themselves are reflective of elite perspectives (distribution is concentrated in the capital and written in French). To answer in which ways Russia and France influence Mali's social identity (correspondent with identity [123,124,125,126,127] and academic literature.

Case Study Background

Mali's history as one of the largest empires in precolonial West Africa mean the present-day nation has a long association with a plurality of religious, ethnic and linguistic groups.[128] Although Mali is now largely religiously homogenous, there are over 12 ethnic groups and associated languages.[129] Ethnic tension has played a central role in Mali's modern history, with successive Tuareg rebellions (1916-17, 1962-64, 1990-95, 2007-09, 2012).[130] Establishing a Malian identity that celebrates 'unity in diversity' has been a concern of Malian governments since the 1992 transition to democracy.[131] However, communitarian violence between pastoralists and agriculturalists has persisted,[132] inflamed by the 2012 crisis. The complexity of the conflict has deepened as a result of the 'proliferation of community-based self-defence groups and local militias'[133] including Dan Na Ambassagou, Ganda Koy, Ganda Izo[134] and The

[116] Afrobarometer, 2021

[117] Wright, N. (2018), No longer the elephant outside the room: Why the Ukraine crisis reflects a deeper shift towards German leadership of European foreign policy. *German politics*, 27(4), pp.479-497

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[120] Cumming, G. D., Van Der Velde, R., & Chafer, T. (2022), Understanding the public response: a strategic narrative perspective on France's Sahelian operations. European Security, pp.1-22.

[121] Audinet, M., Dreyfus, E. (2022), A Foreign Policy by Proxies? The Two Sides of Russia's Presence in Mali. Report 97, IRSEM, p.36, p.44 Retrieved from: https://www.irsem.fr/en/institut/news/report-irsem-no-97-2022.html Sangaré, B., Diallo, F. (2021, November 25), Russia-Mali: Who is spreading Moscow's soft power in Bamako? The Africa Report. https://www.theafricareport.com/150126/russia-mali-who-is-spreading-moscows-soft-power-in-bamako/

[122] Ghosh, A., Choudhury, S., Basu, A., Mahintamani, T., Sharma, K., Pillai, R, R., Basu, D., Mattoo, S, K. (2020), Extended lockdown and India's alcohol policy: a qualitative analysis of newspaper articles. International Journal of Drug Policy, 85, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2020.102940.; Baché, D. (2021, May 11), Tiébilé Dramé, du Parena, veut un «Premier minister rassembleur, moins clivant» Pour le Mali. RFI. Retrieved from: https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/invit%C3%A9-afrique/20211105-ti%C3%A9bil%C3%A9-dram%C3%A9-du-parena-veut-un-premier-ministre-rassembleur-moins-clivant-pour-le-mali

[123] Pierce, R. (2008), Research Methods in Politics. SAGE Publications

[124] Fu, Y. (n.d.), UN View: United Nations General Assembly Voting Patterns (1946-2019), Retrieved from: https://dataviz.yiqinfu.com/unview/

[125] Guichaoua, Y. (2020), The bitter harvest of French interventionism in the Sahel, International Affairs, 96(4), pp.895–911, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa094

[126] Mali. (n.d), Ministére de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangéres. Retrieved from: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/mali/

[127] The head of Russian diplomacy praises the "good dynamic" between Moscow and Bamako. (2022, May 20), RFI. Retrieved from https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20220520-le-chef-de-la-diplomatie-russe-loue-la-bonne-dynamique-entre-moscou-et-bamako

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[130] Alesbury, A. (2013), A society in motion: the Tuareg from the pre-colonial era to today. *Nomadic peoples*, 17(1), 106-125.

[131] Potter, 2019.

[132] Benjaminsen, T. A., & Ba, B. (2009), Farmer–herder conflicts, pastoral marginalisation and corruption: a case study from the inland Niger delta of Mali. *Geographical Journal*, 175(1), 71-81.

[133] Moderan, O. (2021, March 03), Proliferation of Armed Non-State Actors in the Sahel: Evidence of State Failure? *ISPI.* Retrieved from: https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/proliferation-armed-non-state-actors-sahel-evidence-state-failure-29329

[134] Wing, 2016, p.68; de León Cobo, B. (2020, October 05), The problem of the "ethnicity" of the self-defence militias in the Sahel, the main perpetrators of violence in Burkina Faso and Mali. *Atalayar.* Retrieved from: https://atalayar.com/en/content/problem-ethnicity-self-defence-militias-sahel-main-perpetrators-violence-burkina-faso-and

Plateforme.[135] The marginalised Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad (MNLA)briefly forming a coalition with Islamist militant groups[136] has fuelled deep-seated resentments[137] in Mali, particularly between north and south.[138] This fractured picture within the context of poor governance has posed a challenge to cultivation of national identity – demonstrable in the largely unsuccessful peace accords.[139]

In addition to a crisis of national unity is a governance crisis in Bamako. The first of three coups within a decade occurred as a result of leadership's inability to stem the violence associated with the 2012 uprising. The second in August 2020 (led by General Assimi Goïta) ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta for largely the same reasons. The third coup (also led by Goïta), took place on 24th May 2021, overthrowing a civilian transitional government that attempted to reduce military influence,[140] demonstrating the erosion of democratic principles in the once 'model democracy' of Africa.[141] The Goïta-led government has made and broken multiple promises regarding elections which are now planned for February 2024 despite significant pressure from ECOWAS.[142] Mali has been characterised by intensive foreign intervention, persistent high levels of poverty, insecurity, and lacking government control of

much of the country.[143] This brief history represents the complexity of the concept of a 'Malian' identity or perspective. Within the scope of this study, it is not feasible to represent this breadth or intricacy, thus it is acknowledged that the use of the term 'Malian' is somewhat problematic despite the variety of sources used to attempt to address this.

Intervention

Due to colonial ties, France's presence in Mali has been significant for centuries. Since 2012, France has launched two full-scale military interventions, been the second-largest troop contributor to the UN MINUSMA,[144] and was leader of the EU Takuba Task Force. This represents the multiple layers of foreign intervention that have become embedded since the outset of the crisis.[145] The relevance of soft power also cannot be understated - France is Mali's largest bilateral donor; Mali and France have established diplomatic relations; there is a large Malian diaspora in France[146] and state-owned *France Médias Monde* broadcasters were followed by a third of Mali's population prior to country-wide ban.[147] The heralding of France's 2013 Operation Serval by crowds in Mali[148] marked France as an emergent leader.[149] In August 2022, France departed amidst a total breakdown

[135] Lebovich, A. (2019), *Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel.* European Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from: https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping/

[136] Instability in Mali. (2022, May 12), *Council on Foreign Relations.* Retrieved from: https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/destabilization-mali

[137] Ananyev, M., & Poyker, M. (2021), Identity and Conflict: Evidence from Tuareg Rebellion in Mali. *Institute for New Economic Thinking Working Paper Series*, (97).; Keita, K. (1998), Conflict and conflict resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg insurgency in Mali. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *9*(3), pp.102-128.

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[139] Pellerin, M. (2020), Mali's Algiers Peace Agreement, Five Years On: An Uneasy Calm. *International Crisis Group.* Retrieved from: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/laccord-dalger-cinq-ans-apres-un-calme-precaire-dont-il-ne-faut-pas-se-satisfaire

[140] Jezequel, J. (2021), Mali, a Coup within a Coup. *International Crisis Group.* Retrieved from: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/mali-un-coup-dans-le-coup

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[143] United Nations Security Council. (2022, June 2), Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General. Retrieved from: https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/n2236094eng.pdf , p.4

[144] MINUSMA Fact Sheet. (2022), United Nations Peacekeeping. Retrieved from: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma

[145] Bruno Charbonneau (2017), Intervention in Mali: building peace between peacekeeping and counterterrorism, Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 35:4, 415-431, DOI: 10.1080/02589001.2017.1363383

[146] Mali. (n.d), France Diplomacy. Retrieved from: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/mali/

[147] FRANCE 24 and RFI contest 'definitive' broad-casting suspension in Mali. (2022), *France24.* Retrieved from: https://www.france24.com/en/france/20220427-france-24-and-rfi-contest-definitive-broadcasting-suspension-in-mali

[148] Cumming, 2022

[149] Northouse, P. (2010), Leadership: Theory and Practice. *SAGE publications*

in relations between the nations[150] and public rejection of the colonial power's presence.[151] A deciding factor in this breakdown was the arrival in Mali of the infamous Russian mercenary group Wagner in late 2021.[152]

Russia's current influence in Mali is described as two-sided, exhibiting both unofficial and official channels to wage influence using informational and military campaigns.[153] However, military-technical cooperation supplemented by soft power elements is not new in Russia-Mali relations. Diplomatic relations were established in 1960, and the Soviet era saw the USSR provide economic and educational support to Mali, as well as enacting active measures in the West African country.[154] Analysis reports that Wagner's strategy in Mali follows a three-step template seen elsewhere in Africa: a disinformation campaign has been launched publishing pro-Russian opinion polls; military-to-military cooperation has increased; and Russian companies have begun seeking mining investments in the country.[155] Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, official military cooperation between Mali and Russia has continued,[156] and just days after the invasion the chairwoman of RT France confirmed the intention to open an office in Africa and bid for capital in a Malian media company,[157] demonstrating that the war has not dampened Russia's interest in Mali.

This overview demonstrates the hybridity of both interventions. Comparing the leadership strategies of Russia and France in Mali make an appropriate choice for a comparative case study because it offers the opportunity to contribute to broader knowledge of foreign interventionism in African conflict settings,[158] as they begin to represent an emerging trend of Africa as a 'new front' in the clash between the West and Russia.[159]

[150] Doxsee, C., Thompson, J., Harris, M. (2022, March 2), The End of Operation Barkhane and the Future of Counterterrorism in Mali. *Center for Strategic & International Studies.* https://www.csis.org/analysis/end-operation-barkhane-and-future-counterterrorism-mali

[151] Why are French troops leaving Mali, and what will it mean for the region? (2022, April 26), *BBC News.* Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-60419799

[152] Thompson, 2022

[153] For further detail please see: Audinet, M., Dreyfus, E. (2022), A Foreign Policy by Proxies? The Two Sides of Russia's Presence in Mali. Report 97, IRSEM. Retrieved from: https://www.irsem.fr/en/institut/news/report-irsem-no-97-2022.html

[154] Audinet, Dreyfus, 2022, p.17-21

[155] Parens, R. (2022), The Wagner Group's Playbook in Africa: Mali. *Foreign Policy Research Institute.* Retrieved from: https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/03/the-wagner-groups-playbook-in-africa-mali/

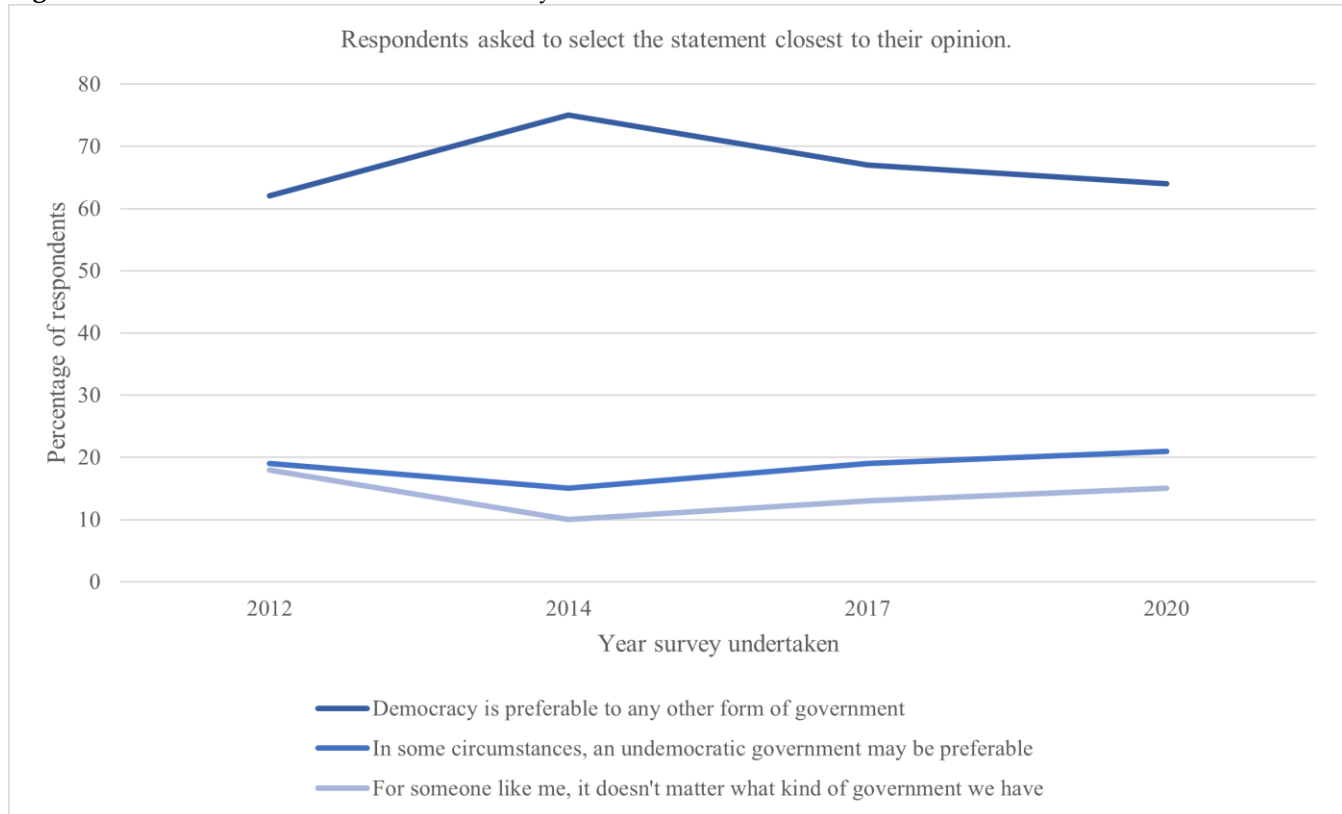[156] Lynch, C., Mackinnon, A., Gramer, R. (2022, April 14), Russian Mercenaries fill Mali vacuum as European powers pursue an exit. *Foreign Policy.* Retrieved from: https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/14/russia-ukraine-mali-wagner-group-mercenaries/. ; Mali strengthens ties with Russia, receives six more Soviet-era warplanes. (2022, August 10), *RFI.* Retrieved from: https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220810-mali-strengthens-ties-with-russia-receives-six-more-soviet-era-warplanes ; Paquette, D. (2022, March 9), Russian Mercenaries have landed in West Africa, pushing Putin's goals as Kremlin is increasingly isolated. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/09/mali-russia-wagner/

[157] [self-translated] "Russie-Afrique: bloquée en Europe, Russia Today veut émettre en Afrique de l'Ouest." (2022, March 16), *Jeune Afrique.* Retrieved from: https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1326178/politique/russie-afrique-bloquee-en-europe-russia-today-veut-emettre-en-afrique-de-louest/

[158] Gerring, J. (2006), *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[159] Burke, J. (2022, July 25), Lavrov's African tour another front in struggle between west and Moscow. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/25/sergei-lavrov-africa-tour-russia-foreign-minister-analysis

Figure 1: Malian attitudes towards democracy.[160]

4. BEING ONE OF 'US'

To ascertain if foreign intervenors can be seen as prototypical[161] group members,[162] the content of mutuality between Malians and intervening states is identified, by establishing and cross-referencing key interests and values.

Malian interests

Opinion polls undertaken by FES and Afrobarometer in Mali reveal the population's interests through the answers to various iterations of a similar question - what is the most important challenge facing Mali (variation in the question demonstrates the limitation of using amalgamated data from multiple sources).[163] Consistently, the three most important issues highlighted in surveys were security, food insecurity and unemployment.[164]

Conversely, political issues were not prioritised - on average, just 5.6% of people surveyed by FES selected corruption as a major challenge from 2015-2022.[165] Mali is historically a state that values sovereignty, both in the precolonial,[166] post-independence,[167] and current era of

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[160] N.B:, Afrobarometer surveys publication dates differ from data gathering date in figure. Afrobarometer 2013, p.23; Afrobarometer, 2016, p.21; Afrobarometer, 2018, p.21; Afrobarometer, 2021, p.25

[161] Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, Lord, 2016, p.114; van Knippenberg, 2011

[162] HASLAM

[163] For exact wording see: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022, p.21; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2021, p.22; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2020, p.16; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019, p.27; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018, p.27; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p.22; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2016, p.22; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015D, p.15; Afrobarometer, 2021, p.11; Afrobarometer, 2018, p.43; Afrobarometer, 2016, p.42; Afrobarometer, 2013, p.43

[164] Ibid

[165] Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022, p.21; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2021, p.22; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2020, p.16; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019, p.27; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018, p.27; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p.22; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2016, p.22; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015D, p.15.

[166] Wise, C. (2017), Sovereignty in Pre-colonial Mali and Northern Africa. In Afolayan, A. & Falola, T. (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy* (pp.417-430), Palgrave Macmillan.

[167] Craven, M. C., & Englebert, P. (2018), A Potemkin state in the Sahel. *The empirical and fictional in Malian state reconstruction. African Security*, *11*(1), pp.15

military governance.[168] As demonstrated in figure 1 most surveyed state a preference for democratic governance, but FES's 2020 survey responses revealed that 54% of respondents said they would prefer a military leader of the transition,[169] demonstrating that this preference may not be strongly held. In answer to survey questions about which countries from a list represent the best development model, China was identified in both 2014 and 2020.[170] This could imply that non-Western identity proponent nations and the Westphalian sovereignty model of development and intervention is preferred in Mali.[171]

Malian interests on an elite-level range from Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta's (widely known as IBK), apparent self-interest[172] to valuing the history of Mali, which is strongly present in the country's imaginary.[173] The military junta that deposed IBK in 2020 is still in power today. Its key aims outlined in a *Plan d'Action Gouvernmental*: strengthening of security, implementation of political reforms, the organization of general elections, and good governance.[174] Beyond these

openly stated aims, Goïta's military government is clearly interested in seeking new international allies[175] which is closely related to the clearest value expressed by the junta – sovereignty.[176] Similarly to the president the junta deposed, regime security is paramount. Suppression of the ability to express opposition,[177] and the overthrow of the transitional government briefly instated in 2020 demonstrate this. Goïta's junta is paradoxically interested in a degree of insecurity to justify military governance but is also seeking to yield results to maintain support.

Intervenor interests

Russian motives are often identified as financial[178] but difficulty accessing Mali's natural resources[179] discounts this as a significant interest. Russia's stated aims are to protect Mali from terrorism,[180] and economic and foreign policy cooperation.[181] Russia's aim to create a multipolar world[182] make replacing France in its sphere of influence a strategic interest. Relatedly, Russia is a proponent of Westphalian, classical sovereignty and

[168] Rich, D. (2021, September 29), *Mali junta's sovereignty push arouses hope, fear amid troubled anti-jihadist struggle.* France24. Retrieved from: https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210929-mali-junta-s-sovereignty-push-arouses-hope-fear-amid-troubled-anti-jihadist-struggle ; Guichaoua, 2020; Tull, 2019
[169] Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2020, p.32
[170] Afrobarometer, 2016, p.59; Afrobarometer, 2021, p.22
[171] Wang, F. L. (2015), From Tianxia to Westphalia: The evolving Chinese conception of sovereignty and world order. In *America, China, and the struggle for world order* (pp. 43-68), Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
[172] Profile: Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Mali's overthrown president. (2020, August 19), *Al Jazeera.* Retrieved from: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/19/profile-ibrahim-boubacar-keita-malis-overthrown-president ; Malians march against constitution referendum. (2017, July 16), *Al Jazeera.* Retrieved from: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/7/16/malians-march-against-constitution-referendum
[173] Craven, Englebert, 2018, p.19; Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta wins Mali presidential election. (2012, August 13), *BBC News.* Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23677124
[174] Chahed, N. (2021, August 3), Mali: the Government's Action Plan validated by the CNT. *Anadolu Agency.* Retrieved from: https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/mali-le-plan-daction-du-gouvernement-valid%C3%A9-par-le-cnt-/2322702
[175] Diallo, A., Roger, B., Diallo, F. (2022, February 1), Mali: Who really is Assimi Goïta, the man who said 'No' to France? *The Africa Report.* Retrieved from: https://www.theafricareport.com/172328/mali-who-really-is-assimi-goita-the-man-who-said-no-to-france/

[176] Address to the nation by H.E Colonel Assimi Goita, President of the Transition, Head of State of Mali. (January 10, 2022), *La Republique du Mali en Belgique et en Europe.* Retrieved from: https://www.amba-mali.be/index.php/14-sample-data-articles/240-address-to-the-nation-by-h-e-colonel-assimi-goita-president-of-the-transition-head-of-state-of-mali-january-10-2022 ; Diallo, et al 2022.
[177] Mali: Rights Reforms Crucial for Civilian Rule. (2022, August 9), *Human Rights Watch.* Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/09/mali-rights-reforms-crucial-civilian-rule
[178] Lacher, 2022; Gopaldas, R. (2018), Russia and Africa meet again. *Institute for Security Studies.* Retrieved from: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/russia-and-africa-meet-again
[179] Parens, 2022, p.10
[180] Moscow vows military support for Mali, denies links to Wagner mercenary group. (2021, November 11), *France24.* Retrieved from: https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20211111-moscow-vows-military-support-for-mali-denies-links-to-wagner-mercenary-group ; Joint news conference with President of France François Hollande. (2013, February 28), *President of Russia, Kremlin.* Retrieved from: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/17597
181 Telephone conversation with Interim President of Mali Assimi Goita. (2022, August 10), *President of Russia, Kremlin..* Retrieved from: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69139
[182] Fidan, H., & Aras, B. (2010), The Return of Russia-Africa Relations. *Bilig,* 52, pp.47-68; Tsygankov, A, P. (2016), Russia's Foreign Policy. *Change and Continuity in National Identity Edition* (4th Eds.), Rowman and Littlefield Publishers

related principles of non-intervention outside of its 'near abroad'.[183] Interest in multipolarity has been linked to the Russian state's identity, due to its association with values of 'sovereignty, self-assertiveness and self-sufficiency.'[184]

Containing terrorism is France's primary stated interest[185] and strategically it is seeking to advancing liberal democracy and associated values globally.[186] Well-founded in literature is France's interest in maintaining its presence in Africa because it constructs its position as a great power.[187] Macron's presidency was set to depict a transition (as previous French presidents have attempted),[188] to a partnership between France and Africa, abandoning the 'human-rights centred rhetoric about the defence of democratic values beyond Europe'.[189] However, the withdrawal of troops in Mali because of delayed elections demonstrates the conditionality of French support. Economic and strategic interests are also relevant to France's intervention in Mali.[190]

Alignment of interests

Russian official discourse describing the Western engagement in Mali as resting upon 'long-obsolete postulates of colonial thinking'[191] emphasises the value of sovereignty it uses to maintain its own regime security. Malian regime security is also bolstered by enhancing Russia's official presence,[192] hiring the Wagner Group,[193] and opposing the liberal democratic model by refusing to adhere to election timelines prescribed by France and ECOWAS. Though this alignment could be an expression of transactional leadership[194] based on 'benefits which are given and received',[195] the 92% of the Malians surveyed (notable are regions such as Timbuktu, Taoudénit, Gao and Kidal where results were less strongly supportive)[196] that expressed trust in Russia[197] despite high levels of associated civilian deaths[198] could imply that prototypicality (genuine shared principles of Westphalian sovereignty), has contributed to a subjective judgement of Russia.[199] Previous literature has found that states use social identities on an interstate level to understand international politics.[200] Therefore, it is feasible that some Malians self-identify with the Russian state's global social identity as a non-interventionist, non-Western power.

'France and Mali are an old couple, there may be disputes, but there's no divorce.'[201]

Mutuality transcendent of interest-based interaction is clear in Mali's former prime minister, Choguel Maïga's quote summarising the historical, cultural ties between

[183] Deyermond, R. (2016), The uses of sovereignty in twenty-first century Russian foreign policy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68(6), pp.957-984.
Siegle, 2022; Toal, G. (2017), *Near abroad: Putin, the west, and the contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*. Oxford University Press.
[184] Makarychev, 2011, p.17
[185] Ministère de la Défense. (2013), French White Paper, Defence and National Security. [White paper]. *Republique Française.* Retrieved from:
http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/pdf/the_white_paper_defence_2013.pdf
[186] Ministère de la Défense, 2013, p.23 & p.28
[187] Henke, 2017; Chafer, 2016; Charbonneau 2008
[188] Cumming, G. (2013), Nicholas Sarkozy's Africa policy: Change, continuity or confusion? *French Politics,* 11(1), pp.24-47
[189] Cohen, C. (2022), Will France's Africa policy hold up? *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.* Retrieved from: https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:2e99f8f1-f2d8-42be-a417-4d2702c3718b, p.7
[190] Chafer 2016, p.21
[191] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. (2021, December 30), Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, Moscow. [Press Release]. Retrieved from:
https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1792974/#7

[192] Russia and Mali sign military cooperation agreement. (2019, June 27), *Defence Web.* Retrieved from:
https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/russia-and-mali-sign-military-cooperation-agreement/
[193] Thompson et al., 2022
[194] Tavanti, 2008
[195] Hollander, 1978
[196] FES, 2022, p.72
[197] Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022, p.71
[198] Clionadh, R., Linke, A., Hegre H., & Karlsen, J. (2010), Introducing ACLED-Armed Conflict Location and Event Data. *Journal of Peace Research* 47(5), pp.651- 660 ; Doxsee, C., & Thompson, J. (2022), Massacres, Executions, and Falsified Graves: The Wagner Group's Mounting Humanitarian Cost in Mali. *Center for Strategic & International Studies.* Retrieved from: https://www.csis.org/analysis/massacres-executions-and-falsified-graves-wagner-groups-mounting-humanitarian-cost-mali
[199] Steffens et al., 2013
[200] Kahl, 1998; Rosenmann et al., 2016; Reese et al, 2012
[201] Laplace, M., Sangaré, B. (2021, October 19), 'France and Mali are an old couple, there may be disputes but there's no divorce.' Says Choguel Maïga. *The Africa Report.* Retrieved from: https://www.theafricareport.com/137705/mali-whats-surprising-about-us-wanting-to-strengthen-our-collaboration-with-russia-says-choguel-maiga/

the two nations.[202] France and Mali share interest in establishing Malian security but motivations and methods are not congruent because the values prioritised are different, for Mali – sovereignty, and for France – democracy. Despite the preference for democracy expressed in Afrobarometer surveys,[203] France's insistence on short transition timelines to elections is at odds with the current junta (who blame rushed elections in 2013 for Mali's instability)[204] and the population (the 2022 FES survey found that just 6% of respondents considered elections to be an important issue for the government to tackle). Follower ownership of and buy-in to the shared element between leader and follower is relevant to degree of mutuality.[205] Liberal democracy is exogenous from Mali - despite agreement in principle, mutuality is thin. France's comprehensive aid and humanitarian support to Mali[206] is in line with the human security interests at the forefront of population-level concerns, but dwindling support for the French development model,[207] outlines a rejection of French development practice.

Identity leadership theory argues against individualistic theorists by presenting[208] empirical evidence of commitment to failing groups,[209] and of group formation without factors of personal interest or mutual needs.[210] Within the examination of the mutuality between Russia or France, and Malians at population- and elite-level there is evidence that cannot be explained by a transactional, individualistic approach. France's emergence as a leader in 2012 with high levels of support appears to have been contingent on principles of an identity that was based in a 'spirit of partnership',[211] summarised in a statement by Hollande: '"We're

winning this battle, and when I say 'we', I mean the Malian army, the Africans backed by the French."'[212] Operation Serval was seen as 'one of us' because the accompanying French narrative placed Mali's security as the driver of its mission.[213] The intervention was seen as necessary, (Serval was 'welcomed as a way of preserving sovereignty')[214] and both Malian (normatively opposed to external intervention), and French (Hollande's initial Africa strategy was emphatically anti intervention)[215] leaders were seen to make a compromise for the good of the *group*. By 2013-14 results-based metrics (elections, peace negotiations, and re-establishing government control of major cities),[216] Operation Serval had been a success, but favourability for the French intervention had dropped 41 percentage points.[217] The significant reduction in approval can be explained better by the identity leadership framework's definition of ineffective leadership (rooted in follower perception).[218]

Evidence presented has demonstrated that Malian identification with intervenors was contrary to transactional interest fulfilment. [219] Circumstantially, this implies that France and Russia were a part of a shared social group with a significant part of Mali's population. The following protest evidence is presented to demonstrate identification with these international social identities. Mali's 'culture of public protest'[220] mean protests are a useful site for analysis to indicate to some extent that parts of the population in Mali have self-categorised as part of a group with Russia and France in the last decade. France's colonial history with Mali is relevant but did not deferentially prevent a sense of shared identity. French and Russian flags[221] have been

[202] House, R. J., Wright, N. S., & Aditya, R. N. (1997), Cross-cultural research on organizational leadership: A critical analysis and a proposed theory. In P. C. Earley & M. Erez (Eds.), *New perspectives on international industrial/organizational psychology* (pp. 535–625), The New Lexington Press/Jossey-Bass Publishers.
[203] See figure 1.
[204] Laplace, Sangaré, 2021
[205] Cornell, 2018
[206] Mali (n.d), Agence Française de Développement. Retrieved from: https://www.afd.fr/en/page-region-pays/mali
[207] Afrobarometer, 2016, p.59; Afrobarometer, 2021, p.22
[208] Haslam et al., 2020, p.46
[209] Ibid p.47
[210] Ibid p.48
[211] Cohen, 2022; United Nation Security Council (UNSC), 8006th Meeting. (2017, July 19), UN Doc S/PV.8006. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1291459?ln=en
[212] Chrisafis, A. (2013, January 30), Mali conflict: French troops retake Kidal airport without resistance. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from:

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/30/mali-conflict-french-troops-retake-kidal-airport
[213] Cumming, et al., 2022, pp.13-14
[214] Ibid, p.15
[215] Chafer, 2014
[216] Stewart, D. J. (2013), What Is Next For Mali?: The Roots Of Conflict And Challenges To Stability. *Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College*. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11807; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. (2014, December 23), UN Doc S/2014/943, p.6
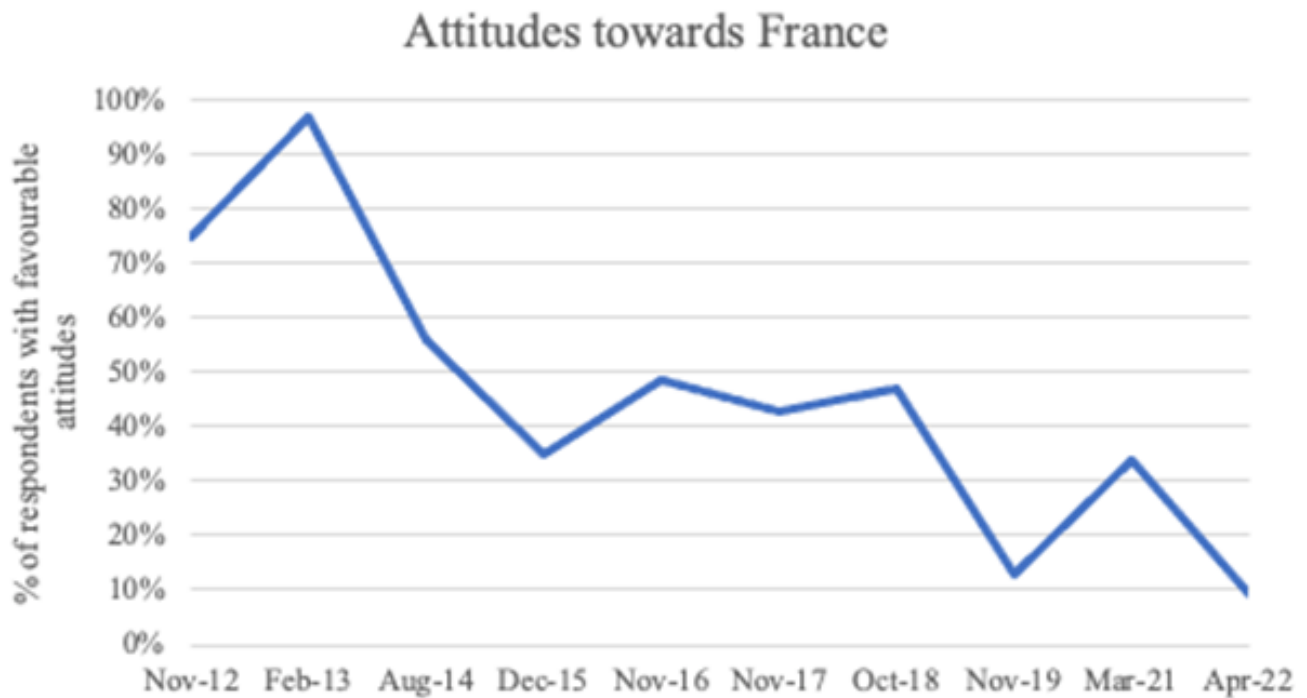[217] See figure 2
[218] Haslam et al., 2020
[219] Hollander, 1978
[220] Mali Country Report (2022), Bertelsmann Stiftung. Retrieved from: https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/MLI
[221] Knowlton, S. A. (2012), Applying Sebeok's typology of signs to the study of flags. *Raven: A Journal of Vexillology*, *19*,

used as part of the national-group normative behaviour[222] of protest, serving as a demonstration of self-categorisation.[223]

Figure 2: Favourable attitudes towards France in Mali over time.[224]

Attitudes towards France

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pp.57-97.; Taşdemir, N. (2019), Meanings Attributed to the Flag: The Role of Social Identity Motives. *Turk Psikoloji Yazilari*, 22(44), pp.103-105

[222] Hogg, 2016

[223] Tajfel, Turner, 1979

[224] N.B., survey questions and responses varied year on year. In 2012 and 2013 the question was to assess if the French military intervention is essential, necessary or unacceptable. In 2014 the survey asked if respondents trusted France in Mali, and 2015 respondents answered levels of confidence in France's ability to fight terrorism. From 2016-2022 (excluding 2020 as the question was not asked in that year's survey), the question was retrospective, asking if respondents were satisfied with the performance/work of Barkhane. Data obtained from (combination of favourable responses e.g. very satisfied and somewhat satisfied): Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2022, p.58; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2021, p.54; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019, p.65; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2018, p.87; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017, p.84; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2016, p.69; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015D, p.10; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014, p.57; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2013F, p.27; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2012, p.18

Images 1: Images from Malian rallies during Hollande's visit 10th February 2013. 'City residents greeted the French leader with cries of "Vive la France," and "Vive Francois Hollande," reports the BBC, which says Hollande's reception was "rapturous." It was a startling scene, given that France was Mali's colonial occupier until 1960, when Mali gained its independence.'[225] Images left to right, Image 1,[226] Image 2,[227] Image 3 'Welcome the saviour François Hollande'.[228]

[225] Coleman, K. (2013, February 2), 'Vive Francois Hollande!' France's President Visits Mali. NPR. Retrieved from: https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2013/02/02/170929981/vive-francois-hollande-frances-president-visits-mali?t=1660316250726

[226] Copyright: Joe Penney @ Reuters. Slideshow: Mali welcomes Hollande in Timbuktu and Bamako. (2013, February 3), RFI. Retrieved from: https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20130203-slideshow-mali-welcomes-hollande-timbuktu-and-bamako

[227] Ibid

[228] Ibid

Image 2: Image from May 2021 protests against French influence in Bamako.[229]

Image 3: Image from January 2022 protests, 'Demonstrators shouted: "Down with imperialism, down with ECOWAS, down with France.''[230]

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[229] Copyright: Michelle Cattani @ AFP. From: Rich, D. (2021, September 18), France and Russia make a stand over which country will have the greater influence in Mali. France24. Retrieved from: https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210918-in-mali-france-and-russia-are-facing-off-over-who-will-have-the-greater-influence-in-the-country

[230] Copyright: twitter/swimming_free. From: Diallo, K. (2022, February 10), Why Protests Erupted in Mali, With People Demanding France Out and Thanking Russia for Support. Toward Freedom. Retrieved from: https://towardfreedom.org/story/archives/africa-archives/why-protests-erupted-in-mali-with-people-demanding-france-out-and-thanking-russia-for-support/

Global Identity Salience

Having established non-transactional mutuality between Mali and intervenors, and an extent of identity-based arguments for follower perception of foreign intervenors, prototypicality of the respective global identities must be identified. What impact prototypicality has on intervenor effectiveness tests if prototypicality is as impactful in foreign intervention as it is in established literature that generally focusses on small group experimentation. The implication of the findings is that global identities appear to have less salience, and therefore prototypicality is less relevant in distant leadership scenarios. *The New Psychology of Leadership's* meta-contrast ratio is derived from the average difference between in- and out-group members, relative to the difference between the in-group member and other fellow in-group members,[231] and describes how a leader's prototypicality can 'vary as a function of the broader social context' and who the Other is defined as.[232] Group identification on a population-level was altered by War on Terror policy that united 'Muslims around a sense of illegitimate persecution.'[233]

Russia's actions in Ukraine may increase its prototypicality, because the non-Western and Western social groupings are structurally interdependent[234] and extremist leadership can benefit from conflict.[235] Russia's growing prototypicality reduces the salience of the France-Africa partnership identity by reinforcing dyadic groupings that ensure France is outside of category boundaries. Protest evidence demonstrates how France was seemingly perceived to be in-group prototypical at the debut of the intervention, as the context of the crisis defined the group identity as in counter position to the immediate threat from terrorists,[236] which France were best equipped to fight. As the conflict continued, non-state armed groups were seen as more threatening at a population level[237] while France's enemy remained terrorist groups.[238] The case of France demonstrates how the quality of mutuality impacts the longevity and salience of group identities.[239] Hollander's concept of idiosyncrasy credits is an

interesting framework for analysis, because France's lack of perceived effectiveness could be as a result of the colonial history between the nations requiring France to build up idiosyncrasy credits through demonstrated service to the group for a significant period before being allowed licence to act contrary to group expectations.[240] However, this hypothesis fails to explain why France's influence reduced when it *had* delivered on security expectations (regaining control of 'most' of the north).[241] Loss of prototypicality was more likely as a result of the violation of group norms or the changing perception of conflict, which supports the identity leadership approach rather than exchange approaches such as Hollander's.

Mutuality with between both intervenors and Mali has been identified. The evidence presented showing rapid changes in approval for France and strong approval for Russia within its short intervention imply that these shared, international identities are less intrinsic. This is supported by research finding the impact of prototypicality is moderated by the strength of follower identification with identities.[242]

5. DOING IT FOR 'US'

The second tenet of the identity leadership (advancing the group interest within 'the terms specified by the group's own norms and values')[243] is explored through the analysis of UN statements and Malian op-eds using the framework as an analytical tool. It was found that France's attempts were perceived as self-interested and inconsistently in-group preferential, whereas Russia's acted within group norms and was fair in international settings. This exploration centres on the Malian perspective, as follower perception determines if a leader has 'done it for us', rather than a results-based analysis, which much of the foreign intervention literature uses to assess effectiveness.

Research that suggests leadership is perceived to be fair results in better outcomes,[244] but note that fairness perception is not an intrinsic characteristic of leadership.

[231] Haslam et al., 2020, p.79
[232] Haslam et al., 2020, p.80
[233] Haslam et al., 2020, p.86
[234] Reese, et al., 2012
[235] Haslam et al., 2020, p.86-7
[236] Haslam et al., 2020, p.78
[237] Wing, 2016
[238] Wing, 2016
[239] Van Knippenberg, 2011

[240] Hollander, E. P. (1958), Conformity, status, and idiosyncrasy credit. Psychological Review, 65(2), pp.117–127. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0042501
[241] MINUSMA (2013, June 10), Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. [S/2013/338]. United Nations Security Council . Retrieved from: https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/n1335298_eng.pdf , p.5
[242] Van Knippenberg, 2011, p.1080
[243] Haslam et al., 2020, p.119
[244] Haslam et al., 2020, p. 102-106

Being 'unfair' can be perceived as 'doing it for us'[245] when it is within intergroup scenarios[246] (so long as this is according to group principles), and can lead to positive leadership outcomes.[247] The fairness research thus far has proven that promoting group interests on group identity-affirming terms translates into follower-perceived leader effectiveness.[248] The literature has also demonstrated the importance of intra-group fairness.[249]

Application of this reasoning to the case study qualitatively tests these assumptions, however the methodology does not have the same causative implications given limited generalisability in case study research.[250]

Perceptions of the French Intervention

France's actions were seen as acting in self-interest, and unfairly preferential. It is widely reported in literature that the Malian perception of France's foreign intervention took a sharp turn from an initial euphoric heralding as a 'hero' and 'messiah'[251] after Operation Serval's failure to return the town of Kidal in 2013 to the Forces Armées Maliennes (FaMA), as it had with other liberated towns.[252] Despite tactical and military successes of Operation Serval, Kidal became a point of great contention as the MNLA retook the town and a battle between the rebel group and the armed forces in 2014 led to a humiliating defeat for the army, who did

not retake the town until 2020.[253] Additionally, the French forces worked alongside Tuareg rebels, utilising their expertise of the terrain in operations[254] expressing colonial-era style preferential treatment[255] and ignoring local viewpoints on the source of insecurity.[256] Malian journalists report France's actions in Kidal negatively consistently, using terms such as 'plot',[257] and depicting France as the 'culprit' of the town being under the control of armed groups.[258] The transition from Operation Serval to Barkhane developed a more explicit counter terrorism focus,[259] and therefore provided reasoning to not strike the MNLA (as it was not a designated terrorist group). The intervention's impetus was also reformulated, on the safety of France itself, rather than Mali. France's self-interest was clear in its dealings with the MNLA to release French hostages,[260] and Serval forces being perceived as more concerned with own safety than the inhabitants' security during protests in Gao.[261] A tweet sent by the French embassy in Mali demonstrates the secondary priority placed on Malian security:

> 'Their (the French military), mission was, above all, to fight against terrorist groups, and in doing so, to improve the security of Malians.'[262]

The perception of France being self-interested is palpable in media data - the French presence 'was not for the Malian people, nor to save them, nor to save

[245] Haslam et al., 2020, p.107

[246] For further experimental evidence see: Haslam et al., 2020, p.109-112

[247] Haslam et al., 2020, p.115-117

[248] Kershaw, T. S., & Alexander, S. (2003), Procedural fairness, blame attributions, and presidential leadership. *Social Justice Research,* 16(1), pp.79-93.; De Cremer, D., van Dijke, M., & Mayer, D. M. (2010), Cooperating when "you" and "I" are treated fairly: The moderating role of leader prototypicality. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 95, pp.1121–1133.

[249] Haslam et al, 2020, p.104; De Cremer et al., 2010

[250] Jansen, Delahaij, 2020

[251] French president visits Mali, given hero's welcome. (2013, February 2), *USA Today.* Retrieved from: https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/02/02/french-president-heros-welcome/1885737/ ; Sidibe, B., (2013, February 6), Visite du Président Français au Mali : Hollande comme un messie à Tombouctou. *Le Progrès.* Retrieved from: https://www.maliweb.net/economie/cooperation/visite-du-president-francais-au-mali-hollande-comme-un-messie-a-tombouctou-125340.html

[252] Tull, D.M. (2021), Contesting France: rumors, intervention and the politics of truth. *Critique internationale,* 90 (1), pp.151–171; Wing, 2016

[253] Mali army returns to former rebel bastion Kidal in symbolic move. (2020, February 13), *France24.* Retrieved from:

https://www.france24.com/en/20200213-mali-army-returns-to-former-rebel-bastion-kidal-in-symbolic-move

[254] Wing, 2016

[255] Jacinto, L. (2013, February 5), Will romanticising the Tuareg threaten peace in Mali? *France24.* Retrieved from: https://www.france24.com/en/20130205-mali-france-tuareg-romanticising-mnla-islamist-war-peace

[256] Wing, 2016; Henke, 2017

[257] [Self-translated], Complot de la France contre l'armée malienne à Kidal 21 mai 2014… (2016, August 1), *La Sirène.* Retrieved from: https://www.maliweb.net/la-situation-politique-et-securitaire-au-nord/complot-de-france-contre-larmee-malienne-a-kidal-21-mai-2014-letat-va-t-livrer-mara-1708802.html

[258] Goïta J., (2016, October 3), Kidal sous contrôle des groups armés: La France, seule coupable. *Le Pouce.* Retrieved from: https://www.maliweb.net/la-situation-politique-et-securitaire-au-nord/kidal-controle-groupes-armes-france-seule-coupable-1808452.html

[259] Chafer, 2016, p.134

[260] Wing, 2016, p.66

[261] Ibid

[262] [Self-translated], La France au Mali [@FranceauMali] (2022, August 17), 5), 53 soldats français sont morts au Mali au cours des 9 dernières années. [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/FranceauMali/status/1559986036717064194

Mali.'[263] The Kidal narrative is strongly and consistently represented in media and elite-level data[264] as a significant reason for the perception of France violating the principles of partnership and Mali-first strategy.[265] Analysis found that France's initial success in 2013 was scuppered by numerous contradictions within French policy perceived as favouring Tuaregs, who many Malians viewed as the out-group. France's initial strategy was 'framed by President Hollande as repayment of the country's historical debt towards Mali'[266] but ultimately violated the 'spirit of dynamic partnership'.[267] Actions in Kidal that were seen to favour the Tuareg ethnic group are represented strongly over time in survey data on reproaches to Barkhane.[268] The incongruity between French statements that argued 'that the priority was to fight terrorist groups, "not to intervene in Mali's domestic affairs"'[269] versus activities such as sanctions, advocation for rapid election timelines,[270] and support for IBK (the intervention was 'accused of propping up a civilian government that many saw as lacking in legitimacy')[271] led to confusion about the French presence. In FES's 2022 survey it was noted that proportionally to previous surveys, there were less 'don't know' responses.[272] The inconsistency of the French approach demonstrated to Malians that France favours whichever group serves its own interest

and therefore is not deferentially preferential to the in-group as the identity leadership framework suggests is effective.

Perceptions of the Russian Intervention

Russia can be seen as fair to the ingroup in its consistent championing of non-intervention in relation to fellow non-Western nations in Africa[273] and elsewhere,[274] per the principles of the non-Western identity.[275] Its actions in its 'near abroad'[276] contradict these principles, but as the Ukrainian government can be expressed as a member of the outgroup,[277] this does not threaten intra-group fairness. Experimental evidence has found that leaders advancing personal interests versus those who are promoting a collective interest are perceived to offer less authentic leadership.[278] This finding is supported by the case study here, as France's motives and self-interest are often questioned,[279] whereas Russia's presence is seen as 'sincere'.[280] Other factors (predominantly historical), also clearly play a role.

Russia's advocacy for Mali's right to freely select international partners, describing it as 'fully understandable' that Mali seek these partners out in the event of France's withdrawal[281] is demonstrable of how Russia has championed Mali's and Russia's shared

[263] Sommet de Pau: La France reste mais… (2020, January 16), *Nouvelle Libération.* Retrieved from: https://www.maliweb.net/insecurite/sommet-de-pau-la-france-reste-mais-2855354.html

[264] United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 7179th meeting. (2014, May 20), UN Doc S/PV.7179. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/772203?ln=en p.4

[265] Cumming, et al., 2022, p.13

[266] Wing, 2016, p.72

[267] United Nation Security Council (UNSC), 8006th Meeting. (2017, July 19), UN Doc S/PV.8006. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1291459?ln=en

[268] FES, 2017, p.84-5; FES, 2018, p.88; FES, 2019, p.67-8; FES, 2022, p.61

[269] Tull, 2021, p.9

[270] UNSC 8765, 2020

[271] Pilling, 2022

[272] FES, 2022, p.102

[273] United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8893rd meeting. (2021, October 29), UN Doc S/PV.8893. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3946446?ln=en, p.10; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8080th meeting. (2017, October 30), UN Doc S/PV.8080. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1311815?ln=en, p.18; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8024th meeting. (2017, August 15), UN Doc S/PV.8024. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1300985?ln=en, p.14; United Nations Security council (UNSC), 7727th meeting (2016, June 29), UN doc S/PV.7727. Retrieved from:

https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/833216?ln=en, p.3; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 7335th meeting. (2014, December 11), UN Doc S/PV.7335. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/784975?ln=en, p.11; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 6952nd meeting. (2013, April 25), UN Doc S/PV.6952. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/748444?ln=en, p.2

[274] Chen, Yin, 2020

[275] Deyermond, 2016; Garwood-Gowers, A. (2013), *The BRICS and the 'responsibility to protect': Lessons from the Libyan and Syrian Crises. In Responsibility to protect in theory and practice: papers presented at the Responsibility to Protect in Theory and Practice Conference 2013* (pp. 291-315), GV Zalozba.

[276] Toal, 2017

[277] Kuzio, T. (2016), Soviet and Russian anti-(Ukrainian), nationalism and re-Stalinization. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *49*(1), pp.87-99.

[278] Steffens, N. K., Mols, F., Haslam, S. A., & Okimoto, T. G. (2016), True to what we stand for: Championing collective interests as a path to authentic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly,* 27(5), pp.726-744
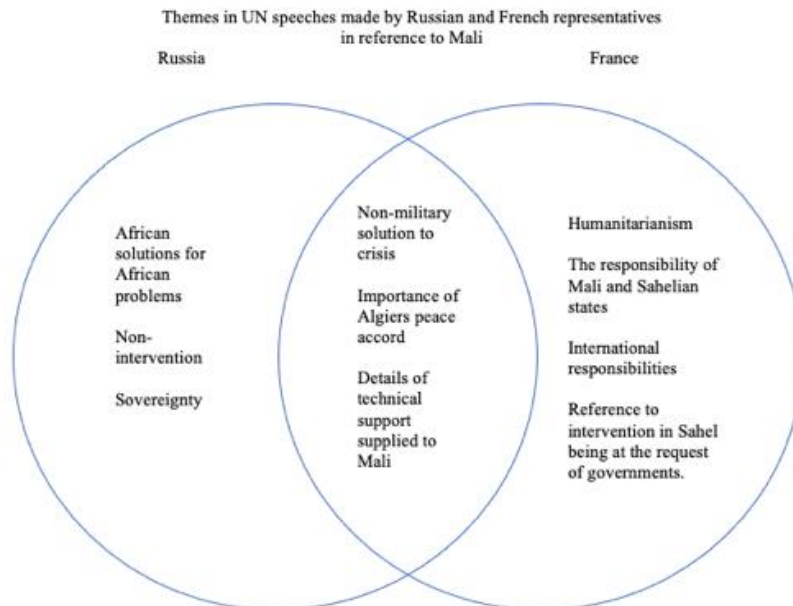
[279] Cumming, et al, 2022, p.14; Tull, 2021

[280] [self-translated] Doubmia, Y. (2019, July 2), Coopération militaire : La France et la Minusma bientôt délogées par la Russie. *Le Débat.* Retrieved from: https://www.maliweb.net/armee/cooperation-militaire-la-france-et-la-minusma-bientot-delogees-par-la-russie-2826512.html

[281] UNSC 9061, 2022, p.18.; See also: UNSC 8893, 2021, p.9-10

interests (and related identity), within the superordinate international group. Russia's statements on the rights of Mali to solicit the services of a PMC and Russia's UNSC spokesperson relating this right to the fact that PMCs operating in Africa has 'long been the preserve of

Themes in UN speeches made by Russian and French representatives
in reference to Mali

Russia   France

African solutions for African problems

Non-intervention

Sovereignty

Non-military solution to crisis

Importance of Algiers peace accord

Details of technical support supplied to Mali

Humanitarianism

The responsibility of Mali and Sahelian states

International responsibilities

Reference to intervention in Sahel being at the request of governments.

Western' companies,[282] is a strategy that underlines the principle of holding Western and non-Western states to the same standards. The non-Western grouping's normative group behaviour involves championing fairness internationally due to the emphasis on multipolarity[283] and the rejection of Western 'hypocrites'.[284] Mali's perception of Russia's activities is not as directly ascertainable due to limited availability of datasets available, however, statements made in the UNSC chamber by the Malian representative[285] imply concordance of views between Malians and Russians, as do surveys.[286] Actual favourability rather than advocacy for fairness is notable and is recognised in Malian discourse, as one op-ed states that Russia has 'always

voted for the resolutions in the UNSC in favour of Mali.'[287] In data analysing UN general assembly voting patterns Mali is 61% in agreement with Russia for the period 2012-2019.[288] Voting congruence could imply that the impact of more effective followership detected in identity leadership research[289] is present. Russia's stance on Malian elections in the UN Security Council (UNSC), in 2020 was to favour 'speed' and 'strict'[290] adherence to an 18-month election timeline. This position was altered in 2021, when Russia pivoted to support a longer timetable.[291] The change also demonstrated preferential deference to Malian (in-group), interests,[292] in a forum where Russia is a leader. Russia's repeated defence of non-Western nations[293] who fit into the non-Western identity and grouping corroborate Russian championship of identity-related group goals.

Normative Themes in Russian and French UNSC Discourse

The terms upon which the interests of the group are championed are highly relevant. Both Russia and France have championed group interests through direct intervention, military support and training, and humanitarian support to varying degrees. Through identifying codes in UNSC data over the period, multiple patterns were identified in Russian and French discourse. These themes taken together broadly represent the normative terms on which each intervention was delivered, for Russia an emphasis on sovereignty and for France an emphasis on shared responsibility and humanitarianism.

Figure 3: Themes in UN speeches made by Russian and French representative in reference to Mali

[282] UNSC 9061, 2022, p.18
[283] Makarychev, 2011, p.17
[284] Collins, T. (2022, June 6), New Wave of anti-colonial populism sweeps Francophone Africa. *Quartz Africa*. Retrieved from: https://qz.com/africa/2173650/new-wave-of-anti-colonial-populism-sweeps-francophone-africa/ ; UNSC, 2021, (UN Doc S/PV.8893), p.10
[285] UNSC, 9061, p.22
[286] FES, 2022
[287] [Self-translated] Touré, S, E, H. (2016, October 16), Envoyé spécial de Poutine: « la Russie est disposée à aider le Mali ». *Info Matin.* Retrieved from:

https://www.maliweb.net/politique/envoye-special-de-poutine-russie-disposee-a-aider-mali-1832692.html
[288] Fu, n.d
[289] Haslam et al, 2020, p. 116-117
[290] United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8765th meeting. (2020, October 8), UN Doc S/PV.8765. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3886127?ln=en, p.13
[291] UNSC, 2021, (UN Doc S/PV.8893), p.9.
[292] Please see p.35 for data on attitudes towards election timelines.
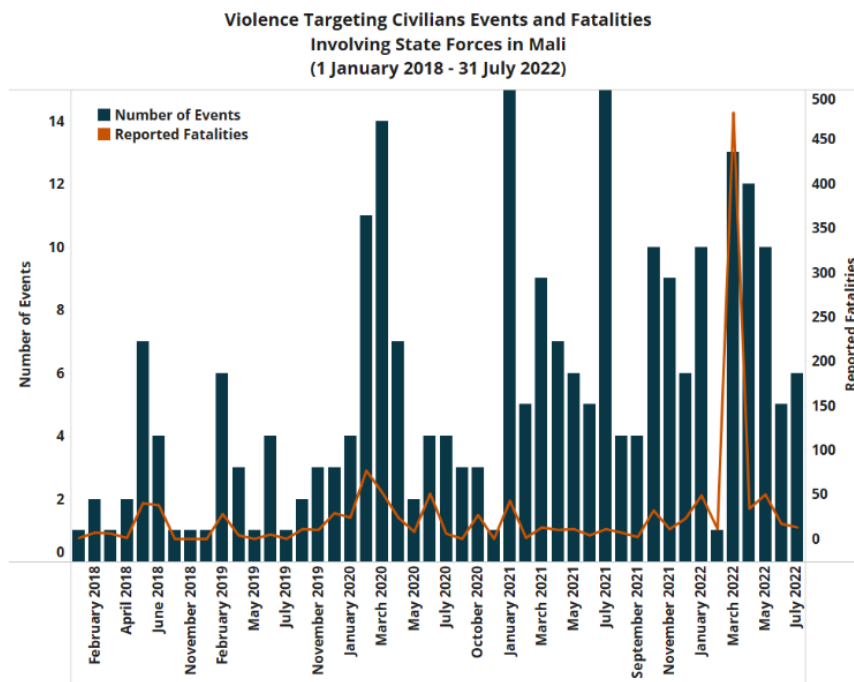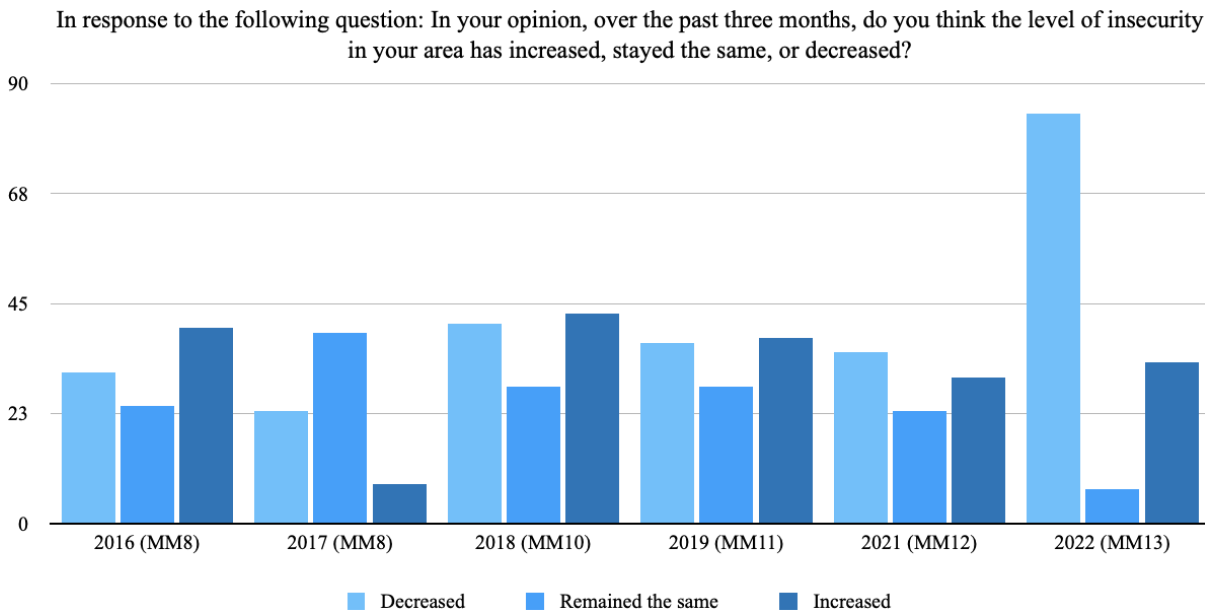[293] Chen, Yin, 2020

Figure 4: ACLED analysis of violence targeting civilians events and fatalities involving state forces in Mali[294]

[294] Serwat, L., Nsaibia, H., Carbone, V., Lay, T. (2022), Wagner Group Operations in Africa. *ACLED.* Retrieved from: https://acleddata.com/2022/08/30/wagner-group- operations-in-africa-civilian-targeting-trends-in-the-central-african-republic-and-mali/

Figure 5: Evolution of the perceived level of insecurity in local region (data retrieved from FES survey comparing responses over period 2016-2022, excluding 2020).[295]

In response to the following question: In your opinion, over the past three months, do you think the level of insecurity in your area has increased, stayed the same, or decreased?

Legend: Decreased | Remained the same | Increased

High levels of migration[296] and increasing conflict and civilian fatalities[297] contradict the perception of the level of insecurity in surveys (see figure 3) and are associated with an uptick in disapproval of all international partners bar Russia.[298] A regional caveat must be made – the perception of diminished security was least strong in Kidal, where 13% of respondents said insecurity had diminished (further regionalised analysis would be beneficial in an article with more breadth.) This data is not contextualised (i.e., security disinformation distributed by the military junta is clearly an influential

factor)[299] and cannot make causative claims but the correlations emerging support the concept that despite material success or failure, a leader can be perceived as acting in the group interest. Acting on the terms normative to the group plays 'a critical part in drawing category boundaries.'[300] These boundaries are flexible and context-specific - who 'we' are is dependent on who 'they' are.[301] The French intervention and Malians having different designations of the enemy, the 'other' (for many Malians, the MNLA, for the French, jihadists)[302] was contrary to the group principle of collaboration that the initial Mali-first strategy

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[295] [self-translated] Data retrieved from: FES, 2022, p.47

[296] CARE International (2021), Mali sees highest level of displacement in its recent history due to a dangerous combination of conflict and climate change. Retrieved from: https://www.care-international.org/news/mali-sees-highest-levels-displacement-its-recent-history-due-dangerous-combination-conflict ; International Organization for Migration. (n.d.), Mali. *DTM Mali.* Retrieved from: https://displacement.iom.int/mali ; Roll, N. (2022, June 28), Russia's Wagner Group in Mali Spurs Refugee Spike in Mauritania. *Al Jazeera.* Retrieved from: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/6/28/russias-wagner-mercenaries-in-mali-drive-refugees-to-mauritania

[297] Clionadh, 2010; Doxsee, Thompson, 2022; United Nations Security Council (UNSC), (2022), Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary General. UN Doc: S/2022/446. Retrieved from: https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/n2236094eng.pdf

[298] Serwat, L., Nsaibia, H., Carbone, V., Lay, T. (2022), Wagner Group Operations in Africa. *ACLED.* Retrieved from: https://acleddata.com/2022/08/30/wagner-group-operations-in-africa-civilian-targeting-trends-in-the-central-african-republic-and-mali/ ; FES 2022, p.102 ; UN Security Council (UNSC)l (2023), Situation in Mali: Report of the Secretary General. UN Doc: S/2023/21/21. Retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/situation-mali-report-secretary-general-s202321 , p.9

[299] The Africa Center for Strategic Studies. (2022, April 12), Debunking the Malian Junta's Claims. *The Africa Center for Strategic Studies.* Retrieved from: https://africacenter.org/spotlight/debunking-the-malian-juntas-claims/

[300] Haslam et al., 2020, p.120

[301] Haslam et al., 2020, p.64

[302] Jacinto, 2013; Wing, 2016 p.67

implied.[303] Emerging intergroup leadership research demonstrates that constructing a relational identity is more effective in group-conflict scenarios than collective identity building because the dissolution of group boundaries that collective identity requires causes identity distinctiveness threat and can raise 'suspicions regarding the loyalty and agenda of the leader promoting identity dissolution.'[304] This approach supplements analysis of France's intervention that suggests it violated the normative terms (such as its actions in Kidal), Suspicion regarding France's presence in Mali is rife, and this could be in part as a result of French representative UN speeches of French interlocutors framing the threat in Mali as one that threatened 'us all'[305] and as an 'international'[306] threat repeatedly.[307] This attempt at collective identity forming 'fails to recognize important and relevant intergroup divisions that exist between subgroups'[308] between the population of Mali and the rebels groups who instigated violence.

A key narrative in Russian UNSC discourse data was Libya. The collapse of the state was instrumentalised as the cause of Mali's crisis, as a current issue in Mali, and in reference to the ills of 'violent'[309] and 'crude'[310] foreign intervention by 'the West'[311]. The narrative featured in the majority of speeches by Russian UN representatives analysed, however language used transitioned from constrained (Libya's collapse 'to a large extent served as a catalyst'[312] for Mali's conflict and was caused by 'The so-called Arab spring and outside military intervention')[313] to direct ('Mali, and the entire Sahel region, is a victim of the irresponsible, unjustified and Council-unauthorized intervention in Libya in 2011')[314] over the period under study. This narrative is not only reflected in the junta-period of Malian UNSC speeches,[315] but is also dominant in Malian media, interwoven into conspiracies ('Within Malian opinion, we are convinced that the Tuareg rebels have made a compromise with NATO and France by abandoning Gaddafi in the midst of the Libyan crisis.'),[316] particularly in relation to France's motives.[317] The Libya narrative is demonstrative of how Russia has framed[318] the conflict in Mali as a consequence of Western actions. This has assisted Russia in creating an us-them dynamic, mobilising a wide category.[319] It also places the non-Western global social group in conflict with the out-group, 'the West'. In doing so, Russia could be seen as more genuine, as authentic leadership research suggests differentiation from rival out-groups can enhance perceived leader authenticity.[320] Additionally, the West-rest conflict that is depicted by the Libya narrative is demonstrative of the group value of Westphalian sovereignty. Research supports these ideas, as it is claimed that in Mali 'anger towards the foreign military presence is arguably not primarily about violations of human rights, but about sovereignty',[321] therefore demonstrating why Russia's focus on this value is more attractive than French military successes that are seen to violate this principle.

France's promotion of group interests was perceived negatively after 2013, and the negative trajectory of perception is associated with the intervention strategy's actions being self-interested, inconsistently in-group preferential and contrary to group norms. Russia's greater success in terms of perception could be related to the genuine intersection of shared values and goals between the two nations that has fostered a more salient group identity, and the actions of Russia being perceived to be fair, in-group preferential, and within the terms of a more salient group identity. The evidence

[303] United Nation Security Council (UNSC), 8006th Meeting. (2017, July 19), UN Doc S/PV.8006. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1291459?ln=en

[304] Rast, D. E. III, Hogg, M. A., & van Knippenberg, D. (2018), Intergroup leadership across distinct subgroups and identities. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 44(7), pp.1091

[305] United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8402nd meeting. (2018 November 12), UN Doc S/PV.8402. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1653489?ln=en , p.9

[306] UNSC 8080, 2017, p.9

[307] UNSC 8024, 2017, p.5; UNSC 6882, 2012, p.18

[308] Rast, D. E. III, Hogg, M. A., & van Knippenberg, D. (2018), Intergroup leadership across distinct subgroups and identities. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 44*(7), p.1092

[309] United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8670th meeting. (2019, November 20), UN Doc S/PV.8670. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3837018?ln=en , p.11

[310] UNSC 8402, 2018, p.10

[311] UNSC 9061, 2022, p.19

[312] UNSC 6882, 2012, p.20-21

[313] UNSC 7335, 2014, p.11

[314] UNSC 9061, 2022, p.19

[315] UNSC 9061, 2022, p.20

[316] Sanogo, M. (2021, November 1), De Servale à Barkhane : Choguel : « La France a créé une enclave au Mali ». L'Aube. Retrieved from: https://www.maliweb.net/economie/cooperation/de-servale-a-barkhane-choguel-la-france-a-cree-une-enclave-au-mali-2950252.html

[317] Tull, 2021

[318] Altheide, 1996, pp.291

[319] Haslam et al., 2020, p.65-66

[320] Steffens, et al., 2016, p.727

[321] Guichaoua, 2020, p.909

suggests that features of identity leadership can outweigh transactional cost-benefit analyses made by populations.[322] However, investigation into championing of interests does not account for other significant factors within bilateral relations, such as arms trading, and cannot attribute causatively approval ratings for France and Russia to abilities to champion shared identity.

6. CRAFTING A SENSE OF 'US'

The first of identity leadership's 'active'[323] tenets - identity entrepreneurship - describes how a leader develops the shared understanding of what it means to be a group member. This section and the next explore the identity leadership assumption that leader's vision is successful when it demobilises support for the opposition,[324] which provides a theoretical opportunity to explore Russia-France competition in Mali in the context of 'overwhelming' informational access.[325] These sections are largely descriptive because a judgement of successfulness requires field work. Leaders shape perceptions of group values and ideals by defining category prototypes, boundaries, content,[326] and group aims 'in ways that make the case for their own relative in-group prototypicality.'[327] This section contains category analysis[328] of speeches made by Emmanuel Macron[329] and Sergey Lavrov[330] which address the February 2022 announcement of withdrawal of French forces from Mali. The analysis process involved quantitative content analysis prior to qualitative analysis.[331] Codes created using identity leadership's dimensions of identity entrepreneurship – category

prototype, boundary and content definition,[332] which locate how narratives in the speeches 'mark out identities, […] differences […] 'the other''.[333] The speeches contain hallmarks of identity creation which supports the argument that active identity leadership is feasible in foreign intervention, but infer that they are largely co-dependent on the other identity leadership tenets and factors external to the framework.

Category Prototypes

Defining category prototypes involves a leader crafting an ideal-type prototype they are representative of, therefore defining their relationship with the group identity. By framing France's withdrawal as a result of 'a relapse of colonial thinking', Russia becomes category prototypical in its opposition (Lavrov utilised personal recollections, reflecting on how he 'rejected those claims' and Russia 'more than once' telling France about dangers of withdrawal).[334] This defined the category prototype through explicit reference to the out-group rather than the in-group, with central values of the identity being strength and defiance in opposition to the 'other' (namely, 'the West'). This lodges conflict into the group identity and is consistent with prominence in Mali of sovereignty values outlined previously. Reference to sanctions not only frame the Other as 'illegitimate' but also emphasises shared experience ('We know about sanctions from our own experience')[335]

[322] Haslam et al., 2015, p.650; Tavanti, 2008

[323] Slater, M. J., Coffee, P., Barker, J. B., & Evans, A. L. (2014), Promoting shared meanings in group memberships: A social identity approach to leadership in sport. *Reflective Practice,* 15(5), pp.672-685. doi: 10.1080/14623943.2014.944126; Reicher, S. D., Haslam, S. A., & Platow, M. J. (2018), Shared social identity in leadership. *Current opinion in psychology*, 23, p.130
[324] Haslam et al., 2020, p.162
[325] Nye, 2008, p.99
[326] Haslam et al., 2020, pp.131-142
[327] Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S, D., Platow, M, J. (2015), Leadership. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences,* 13(2), pp.653
[328] Reicher, S., & Hopkins, N. (1996), Self-category constructions in political rhetoric; an analysis of Thatcher's and Kinnock's speeches concerning the British miners' strike (1984–5), *European journal of social psychology,* 26(3), pp.353-371.
[329] [self-translated]. République Française Direction de l'information légale et administrative. (2022, February 17),

Déclaration de M. Emmanuel Macron, Président de la République, sur la lutte contre le terrorisme au Sahel et le retrait militaire du Mali de la France et des États participants à la task force Takuba , à Paris le 17 février 2022. Retrieved from: https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/283876-emmanuel-macron-17022022-terrorisme-au-sahel
[330] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. (2022, May 20), Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement and answers to media questions at a news conference following talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali Abdoulaye Diop, Moscow, May 20, 2022. Retrieved from: https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1814190/
[331] Peirce, 2008, p.227.
[332] Haslam et al., 2020, pp.131-142
[333] Pierce, 2008, p.255
[334] Lavrov as cited by: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2022
[335] Ibid

which has been found in literature to be a fundamental aspect of cultural grouping formation.[336]

Macron's reasoning for the withdrawal is twofold, firstly because the G5 coalition's 2020 Pau and 2021 N'Djamena summits agreed upon reduction of France's regional military footprint. Secondly, the acceleration of this in Mali is due to irreconcilability with the military junta and its strategies.[337] The issue and the Other are highlighted immediately and explicitly in the speech: 'the threat which the countries of the Sahel and the region confronts has a name, Al Qaeda and Daesh.'[338] France is outlined as the ideal-type prototype and leader through descriptions of itself as the 'framework nation' in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, overviews of its success, and the emphasis on its experience in the field,[339] which attempts to personify France as the solution.[340] Beyond its capacity, the speech depicts the in-group as the coalition of states defeating terrorism, that values unity, partnership and democracy. Macron describes France as prototypical of this coalition, playing the 'unifying role'. This strategy is poorly conceived because of two interrelated factors. France's category prototype argument rests on terrorists and the junta being the Other. This is inconsistent with experiences of many Malians[341] and this framing is the antithesis of the norm of partnership which is essential to the category content.

Category Boundaries

The following outlines Russian and French interlocutor's representations of the breadth and inclusivity of groups.[342] Lavrov's articulation of 'us' is largely implicit ('friend' describes Russia's relations with African nations, 'colleagues' for Western nations), within out-group references, but this lack of structure could be a feature of the group value of sovereignty and therefore on heterogeneity. Repeated remarks about colonialism (five within the fifteen-minute speech), draw the in-group boundary as non-coloniser countries. Multiple references to disagreement with 'the West' delineate Western nations as the out-group within the superordinate 'international community', and reference

to 'Paris and Western allies' places France explicitly into the out-group.[343]   The central argument within the speech is for Mali's freedom of choice regarding its international partners. This argument is category-based because relies on the depiction of the West as 'neocolonial' and creates an in-group boundary of nations who seek autonomy.

Macron's speech contains category arguments that place France, 'African', and 'European' partners into the category who are fighting 'terrorism in the Sahel.' Macron regards the 'de facto authorities' and mercenaries as oppositional to the in-group partnership aim. When describing the evolution of partner expectation, Macron recognises opposition as 'sensitivity of public opinion', but states that the continuation of the Sahel alliance is 'alongside the Malian population', and the allusion to the authorities (the out-group), potentially diverting this finance away from the population implies that the junta is not. The connection between France and Mali is described as a 'brotherhood of arms' that is 'tied' in the liberation of the respective nations.[344] This rhetorical use of history could be an attempt to 'eternalise'[345] France's leader role and the countries' shared identity. Lavrov's reference to 'traditionally friendly Russian-Malian ties' is also in keeping with the idea that historical credentials seek to put forward a vision of a group that has 'always' been.[346] These examples represent attempts to include Malian people within the in-group category of the coalition, despite recognition of resistance to this and support for the junta,[347] which could be perceived as paternalistic. As previously explored, France viewing terrorists as the enemy was inconsistent with popular Malian perceptions,[348] therefore category boundaries were incompatible.

Category Content

Category content refers to the principles, values and attributes associated with the 'we' demarcated above. Macron described France's presence, 'in a word, […] partner'.[349] France's coalition in-group is associated with the value of partnership throughout Macron's speech ('collectively', 'in support', 'a collective movement') and

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[336] Bergey, B, W., Kaplan, Avi. (2010), What do social groups have to do with culture? The crucial role of shared experience. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 1(199),

[337] Macron as cited by: République Française Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2022

[338] Ibid

[339] Ibid

[340] Haslam et al., 2020, p.131

[341] Wing, 2016

[342] Haslam et al., 2020, p.137

[343] Lavrov as cited by: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2022

[344] Macron as cited by: République Française Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2022

[345] Haslam et al., 2020, p.154

[346] Haslam et al., 2020, p.154

[347] Garland, 2022

[348] Wing, 2016

[349] Macron as cited by: République Française Direction de l'information légale et administrative, 2022

these references are linked to a conceptualisation of foreign intervention by 'request' 'according to the needs' of recipients. Macron articulates the values of 'courage', 'sacrifice', 'freedom' and unity. This starkly contrasts the depiction of the junta and Russian mercenaries, who are described as both illegitimate ('de facto'), and antidemocratic ('indefinite retention of power […] not framed by any role or convention'). Macron expresses that the group category content also relies on the stringency of the values themselves, as the main objective of fighting terrorism 'cannot justify everything.'[350] This makes the category argument that the French withdrawal is as a result of the Other, which defines the in-group as democratic and legitimate.

Lavrov underlines the value of cooperation between the nations based on mutual respect, and conceptualises Westphalian sovereignty ('Africans themselves should primarily settle domestic political crises in Africa in the interests of Africans.')[351] By underlining Russia and Mali's shared experiences and values, Lavrov's critique of 'them' highlights a lack of commonality. The West's actions (including the withdrawal), are described as bad-mannered, 'unacceptable' and 'illegal'[352] which implies the in-group category content as oppositional due to the dyadic nature of the speech's narrative. The contradictions in Lavrov's speech when Lavrov discusses its own intervention into Ukraine reduce the impact of the category content argument.

Both speakers employ category arguments, which implies an attempt at mobilising identities. Russia uses construction of the Other to define Russia and Mali as part of a group to maintain the mutually beneficial elite-level exchange of influence. France attempts to mobilise its liberal democratic partners by calling on the

uncompromising nature of the principles that define the group. However, France's conditionality is at odds with Malian sentiments, conceptualisation of sovereignty and partnership norms.

7. MAKING 'US' MATTER

Leaders can use activities, events, and structures to embed shared identity in 'material reality'.[353] Despite embedding research[354] being less extensive than identity entrepreneurship research,[355] foreign intervention[356] and leadership literature[357] corroborate these activities' significance.[358] This section analyses evidence of structures (UN advocacy), activities (public/regular diplomacy), and events (summits), to ascertain salient narratives and themes that demonstrate whether the political 'performances'[359] of foreign intervenors constitute identity performances.[360] This section finds that that both Russia's and France's attempt at gaining influence in Mali are to some extent identity based but that identities require prior salience and are impacted by a variety of factors.

Structures

External group structures 'allow the group […] to be effective, […] successful and to have an impact on other groups and the world at large'.[361] On the international level, UN fora (particularly 'the world's town hall')[362] are external structures where leaders can embed identity through advocating for identity-related principles. Russia has statistically done this more successfully as it has been 14% more aligned with Mali in UNGA votes than France.[363] France's activities in the UN in relation to Mali have not embedded group identity as they

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[350] Ibid

[351] Lavrov as cited by: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2022

[352] Ibid

[353] Haslam, 2015; For examples see Haslam et al., 2020, p.156; Steffens et al., 2014, p.1004-5

[354] Evans, A. L., Slater, M. J., & Edwards, M. (2021), The effects of embedding social identities on perceived leadership outcomes and the intentional mobilization of group members. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 53, 101879.

[355] Steffens et al., 2013, pp.607

[356] Nye, 2008, p.103. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699

[357] Schinoff et al., 2016 In Swenddel, H., Nkhoma, M., Gumbley, S. (2022), Reinforcing "We": Organizational identity Custodianship in Global Leaders' Boundary-spanning. In Osland, J, S., Reiche, S, B., Szkudlarek, B., Mendenhall, M, E. (Eds.), Advances in global leadership (pp.125-140), Bingley, US: Emerald Publishing Limited

[358] Haslam et al., 2015, p.652; Steffens et al., 2014, pp.1001-1024.

[359] Bliesemann de Guevara, B. (2017), Intervention theatre: Performance, authenticity and expert knowledge in politicians' travel to post-/conflict spaces. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* 11(1), pp.58-80.

[360] Haslam et al., 2020, p.157

[361] Steffens et al., 2014, p.1005

[362] UN General Assembly: The world's 'town hall' remains open during COVID-19 crisis. (2020, April 7), UN Affairs. Retrieved from: https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061302

[363] Note: data derived from Fu, n.d., based on data from 2012-2019; Kim, S. Y., & Russett, B. (1996), The New Politics of Voting Alignments in the United Nations General Assembly. International Organization, 50(4), pp.629–652. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2704240

advocate conditionality (at odds with the equal partnership norm), such as imposing sanctions.[364] Russia, conversely, has advocated for sovereignty and non-interference consistently from 2005 on various issues.[365] Russia's noted reluctance when voting for sanctions in Mali in 2018 at Mali's request, which underlines the priority assigned to the value of sovereignty.[366]

Activities

Diplomatic visits between two nations are politically performative,[367] and could serve as internally facing (largely elite level), group activity that allow group members to derive meaning from a group membership.[368] The speech made by Lavrov analysed earlier made during one of Abdoulaye Diop's two visits to Moscow since 2020[369] emphasising shared values could be assessed as an effective identity performance. French-Malian diplomatic visits have appeared to violate group values rather than 'encapsulating'[370] them. During Macron's visit to Mali in May 2017, the President discussed terrorism and visited Barkhane soldiers,[371]

which could be symbolic of the mismatch of 'perception(s), of security priorities and sovereignty'[372] between France and Mali. This case study demonstrates the blurred lines in practice between public diplomacy and information operations.[373] The 'changing nature of diplomatic practice in the communication age',[374] means foreign interventions can influence population-level social identity through public diplomacy[375] and state-sponsored disinformation campaigns. Russia's soft power is growing in Mali, which has the highest monthly Russia Today visitors in sub-Saharan Africa.[376] France has a large Malian diaspora,[377] and thousands of Malians are [378] educated in Russia.[379]

Russia and France are both linked to disinformation campaigns in Mali[380] but analysis of Russia's irregular intervention strategies is more widely undertaken.[381] Reports in and outside of Mali have shown Russia and France's influence operations in conflict.[382] The 'communication war' raging in Mali 'between Barkhane

[364] France backs regional sanctions against Mali as junta calls for protests. (2022, January 11), *France24.* Retrieved from: https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220111-france-backs-ecowas-sanctions-against-mali-as-junta-calls-for-protests

[365] Deyermond, 2016, p.960; Miliband, D. (2022, July 8), Russian veto of UN Security Council cross-border aid for Syria: David Miliband responds. *IRC.* Retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/russian-veto-un-security-council-cross-border-aid-syria-david-miliband-responds ; Gilmore, J. (2021, February 15), The rise of Cyber Sovereignty: Russia, China, and the Future of Internet Gvoernance. Young Professionals in Foreign Policy. Retrieved from: https://www.ypfp.org/the-rise-of-cyber-sovereignty-russia-china-and-the-future-of-internet-governance/

[366] United Nations Security Council (UNSC), 8229th meeting. (2018, April 11), UN Doc S/PV.8229. Retrieved from: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1482889?ln=en

[367] Bliesemann, 2017

[368] Evans et al., 2021, p.2; Steffens et al., 2014, p.1005

[369] The head of Russian diplomacy praises the "good dynamic" between Moscow and Bamako. (2022); Klomegah, K, K. (2021, November 15), Russia Agrees to Strengthen Military Regime in Mali. Horn Observer. Retrieved from: https://hornobserver.com/articles/1447/Russia-Agrees-to-Strengthen-Military-Regime-in-Mali

[370] Evans et al., 2021, p.2

[371] Daldorph, B. (2017, May 23), Macron pledges to be tough on terrorism during Mali visit. *RFI.* Retrieved from: https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20170519-macron-pledges-be-tough-terrorism-during-mali-visit

[372] Guichaoua, 2020, p.896

[373] Jack, C. (2017), Lexicon of lies: Terms for problematic information. *Data & Society*, 3(22), pp.1094-1096.

[374] Melissen, J. (2011), Beyond the new public diplomacy. *Clingendael Institute.,* p.2

[375] Nye, 2008, p.95

[376] Audinet, M. (2021), Le Lion, L'ours Et Les Hyènes Acteurs, Pratiques Et Récits De L'influence Informationnelle Russe En Afrique Subsaharienne Francophone. *IRSEM*, 83, p.35-36. https://www.irsem.fr/institut/actualites/etude-de-l-irsem-n-83-2021-audinet.html

[377] Mali. (n.d), Ministére de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangéres. Retrieved from: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/mali/

[378] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2022 https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1814190/

[379] Smirnova, T., & Rillon, O. (2017), Quand des Maliennes regardaient vers l'URSS (1961-1991), Enjeux d'une coopération éducative au féminin. *Cahiers d'études africaines,* (226), pp.331-354.

[380] Graphika., The Stanford Internet Observatory. (2020), French and Russia influence operations go head-to-head targeting audiences in Africa. Retrieved from: https://www.graphika.com/reports/more-troll-kombat/ ; Thompson et al., 2022

[381] Audinet, 2021; Parens 2022

[382] Audinet, Dreyfus, 2022; Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020; Le Roux, J. (2022), Pro-Russian Facebook assets in Mali coordinated support for Wagner Group, anti-democracy protects. Digital Forensic Research Lab (Atlantic Council), Retrieved from: https://medium.com/dfrlab/pro-russian-facebook-assets-in-mali-coordinated-support-for-wagner-group-anti-democracy-protests-2abaac4d87c4

and Wagner'[383] is depicted in the furore over a video of foreign soldiers burying bodies in a mass grave in Gossi.[384] France's information operation (activities in Mali connected to the French military), [385] focussed on 'the struggle between Malian, French and UN forces and the Malian people, on one side, and terrorist groups on the other',[386] relevant to category boundaries presented earlier. It also used memes to portray Russians as 'drunken, violent neocolonialists.'[387] The content is largely posted onto local groups with thousands of members,[388] which could be attempt to engage in online forum structure of identity embedding.[389] Russia's opportunistic informational campaign amplifies pre-existing sentiments remaining from the colonial period, social tensions and grievances against current military presences.[390] The key features of rhetoric in one Facebook campaign were pro-Russian, 'liberation' narratives and anti-French, conspiratorial sentiment.[391] Russia's campaign dates back further than Wagner's physical presence to 2016 through suspected Russian-linked civil society organisations.[392] Both leaders could be using social networks as a structure within which to gain influence through fostering hatred for the respective out-group.[393] Evidence of the success of these attempts can be evaluated to some extent by comparing followings garnered. Russia's pages are more widely followed (one page had more than 90,000 followers)[394] than France's (the most followed page had 4,759 followers and most associated pages had less than 150).[395] Probable explanations are lack of support in Mali for France's social identity and Russia's experience. This implies that identity-embedding exercises are reliant on established and salient identities.

Image 4: Graphika and Stanford Internet Observatory's report demonstrating examples of pro-French, anti-Russian narratives. 'Posts defending the French presence and the Barkhane operation in Mali. The left-hand post claims to "set the record straight" on French allies, and criticizes the Russians. The right-hand post claims the French army saved Mali from Jihadis by sharing an article entitled "Operation Serval: France to Mali's rescue."'[396]

Events

France regularly 'performs'[397] identity through summitry in Africa. The primary value of Sahel African-European coalition group is purportedly partnership. Macron's unprecedented 'demand(s)'[398] to the heads of state to clarify their positions[399], and palpable 'annoyance' of French diplomats[400] characterising the summit were at odds with the initial French intervention narrative of a 'framework of gift and counter-gift between states and peoples''.[401] Heads of state and the public appeared to reject the performance.[402] The

[383] [self-translated] Mali: entre Barkhane et Wagner, la gueere de communication fait rage. (2021, December 10), MaliWeb. Retrived from: https://www.maliweb.net/insecurite/mali-entre-barkhane-et-wagner-la-guerre-de-communication-fait-rage-2956151.html

[384] Bensimon, C., Le Cam, M. (2022, July 28), Sahel: In the information war, the French army retaliates and accuses Wagner. Retrieved from: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/04/23/sahel-in-the-information-war-the-french-army-retaliates-and-accuses-the-wagner-group_5981369_4.html ; Wagner Group, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, and Russia's Disinformation in Africa (2022, May 24), *US Embassy in Mali.* Retrieved from: https://ml.usembassy.gov/wagner-group-yevgeniy-prigozhin-and-russias-disinformation-in-africa/

[385] Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020, p.47
[386] Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020, p.52
[387] Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020, p.57

[388] Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020, p.51
[389] Haslam et al., 2020, p.165
[390] Audinet, 2021, pp.59-60
[391] Le Roux, 2022
[392] All Eyes on Wagner. (2022, November 20), One Year of Wagner in Mali. *All Eyes on Wagner.* Retrieved from: https://alleyesonwagner.org/2022/11/20/one-year-of-wagner-in-mali/ ; Le Roux, 2022
[393] Haslam et al., 2020, p.164
[394] Le Roux, 2022
[395] Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020, p.48
[396] Graphika, The Stanford Internet Observatory, 2020, p.73
[397] Haslam et al., 2020, p.151
[398] Guichaoua, 2020, p.899
[399] Guichaoua, 2020, p.895
[400] Guichaoua, 2020, p.900
[401] Chafer, 2016, pp.147
[402] Guichaoua, 2020, p.908-9

outcome of Pau being an escalation of troop numbers[403] did not account for viewpoints expressed in Mali around foreign military presence.[404] Russia established its Russia-Africa forum in 2019.[405] The Sochi summit's focus was on Russia's status as an in-group member of the global non-Western identity, demonstrated through the principal themes being Russia's difference from the 'West' and the value of sovereignty.[406] Symbols of Russian-Africa relations were observed, such as the heavy presence of defence[407] and historical references made by Putin to Russia's role in the liberation of Africa.[408]

The research doesn't assess if distant leaders successfully embed a 'sense of us' but evidence demonstrates attempts are made by Russia and France. Russia's identity-embedding relied on structural interdependence with 'the West', emphasising the identity's conflictual nature. France's neglect of local priorities violated the partnership identity, which could be a factor in popular resentment. The framework served as an interesting lens through which to evaluate the evidence, but the application to distant leadership settings revealed some drawbacks. The claim that the tenets have 'no natural starting point'[409] in response to the framework's temporal paradox (influence is dependent on success, but success is reliant on influence)[410] is insufficient. Salience and authenticity according to wider policy are required to embed an identity – the framework doesn't fully acknowledge these contextual factors (such as Russia's wider foreign policy better 'matching' Mali's).[411]

8. CONCLUSION

Evidence demonstrated that identity leadership was practiced to some extent by Russia and France in Mali,

with varying degrees of success. This tentatively suggests that identity leadership is feasible within international intervention, somewhat surprisingly suggesting that identity dynamics remain relevant within atypical and distant leadership scenarios. This contribution assumes that large units can execute leadership,[412] which is in line with public diplomacy research, that explores how a nation is regarded by other populations, outside of individual representatives (i.e., traditional leaders like a President).[413] The case study provides an example of followers rallying around Russia as an entity (see images 2-3) and not just high-profile leaders. A particular idiosyncrasy identified in this global application of the framework is the weakened salience of multinational identities demonstrated by the brevity of global identities. The relevance of the framework's tenets in explaining aspects of the case study implies that identity is a key factor in leadership, supportive of identity leadership theory and in contrast with transactional leadership approaches.[414] The failure of the French intervention is not wholly attributed to identity-related factors, but the incompatibility of Malian interests and values identified here are likely to have played a role. Conversely, Russia's intervention appeared to successfully attach meaning to its shared status as a non-Western power.[415] The present study was limited in its ability to ascertain cause and effect because of the desk-based approach. Actual receptiveness to global identities and attendant meanings promoted by foreign intervenors could only be confirmed by thorough field work.

The identity leadership framework proved to be relevant in this cross-cultural, atypical leadership scenario. However, the distinction between and actions constituting the tenet of championing group interests and embedding group interests are not clear in *The New*

[403] Moderan, O., Hoinathy, R. (2021), G5 Sahel: N'Djamena summit should redefine France-Sahel cooperation. *Institute for Security Studies.* Retrieved from: https://issafrica.org/iss-today/g5-sahel-ndjamena-summit-should-redefine-france-sahel-cooperation

[404] Guichaoua, 2020, p.909

[405] The Russia-Africa Event. (n.d.), Retrieved from: https://summitafrica.ru/en/

[406] Gershkovich, E. (2019, October 26), At Russia's Inaugural Africa Summit, Moscow Sells Sovereignty. *The Moscow Times.* Retrieved from: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/10/26/russias-inaugural-africa-summit-moscow-sells-sovereignty-a67916

[407] Gershkovich, 2019

[408] Vladimir Putin as cited in: Russia-Africa Summit. (2019, October 24), *President of Russia (Kremlin),* Retrieved from: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61893

[409] Haslam et al., 2020, p.127

[410] Reicher, Haslam, Platow, 2018, p.130

[411] Nye, 2008, p.102-3

[412] Further research should engage with collective leadership research in more detail. Please see: Contractor, N. S., DeChurch, L. A., Carson, J., Carter, D. R., & Keegan, B. (2012), The topology of collective leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *23*(6), 994-1011.

[413] Nye, 2008

[414] Haslam et al., 2015, p.650; Tavanti, 2008

[415] Ziegler, C. E. (2012), Conceptualizing sovereignty in Russian foreign policy: Realist and constructivist perspectives. *International Politics*, *49*(4), pp.400-417.

Psychology of Leadership and require clarifying. The framework also fails to address the intersectionality of identity which would be instructive in investigating the kind of distant scenarios addressed here. This further demonstrates the framework's issue with being too rooted in easily defined identity and leadership scenarios. The study of mutuality is supported by the varied content of mutual goals, interests and identities identified. The framework's assumption that all successful leadership is identity leadership is an overstatement, rather, identity leadership is a type of leadership that represents a certain kind of mutuality (one that is based in shared identity and values).

Due to time and space constraints, many aspects of foreign intervention and the conflict in Mali were not addressed. The role of non-state actors[416] is a particularly rich area for further work, and further identity leadership studies regarding Mali would require more in-depth research into Malian social identity. The present study focussed on recipient-ascertained success of foreign intervention, but application of the framework to other foreign interventions, quantitative and field work would provide better generalisability of findings.[417] Continued recipient-oriented investigation into leadership intervention dynamics in the Sahel region are a rich source for further research and could have a lasting impact upon interventionist strategy.[418]

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[416] Badi, D., & Klute, G. (2022), Jihadi governance in northern Mali: Socio-political orders in contest. In *Local Self-Governance and Varieties of Statehood* (pp. 157-175), Springer, Cham.; Nsaibia, H. (2022), Actor Profile: The Islamic State Sahel Province. *ACLED*. Retrieved from: https://acleddata.com/2023/01/13/actor-profile-the-islamic-state-sahel-province/

[417] Jansen, M. M., & Delahaij, R. (2020), Leadership Acceptance Through the Lens of Social Identity Theory: A Case Study of Military Leadership in Afghanistan. *Armed Forces & Society*, 46(4), pp.657–676

[418] Tschörner, L., Tchangari, M. (2022), Niger's civil society in protest: "Europe should take the opinions of the people seriously." *MegaTrends Afrika.* Retrieved from: https://www.megatrends-afrika.de/publikation/mta-spotlight-15-nigers-civil-society-in-protest

List of abbreviations

Economic Community of West African States	ECOWAS
Forces Armées Maliennes	FAMA
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung	FES
Group of 5 Sahel	G5
Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta	IBK
Private Military Company	PMC
Responsibility to Protect	R2P
Social Identity Model of Leadership	SIMOL
The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project	ACLED
The Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad	MNLA
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stablization Mission in Mali	MINUSMA
United Nations Security Council	UNSC
United Nations General Assembly	UNGA

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Afrobarometer (2021), *Résumé des résultats. Enquête Afrobarometer Round 8 au Mali, 2020* Retrieved from: https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/resume-des-resultats-enquete-afrobarometer-round-8-au-mali-2020-0/

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