G5 SAHEL EXTERNAL INFLUENCE COMPARISON:
THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

Michelle Miller: G5 SAHEL EXTERNAL INFLUENCE COMPARISON: THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND SAUDI ARABIA
(Under the direction of Donald Searing)

The five West African states making up the G5 Sahel rely on foreign contributions to support the nascent regional organization. In February 2018, the European Union (EU) and Saudi Arabia were the top contributors to the G5, each pledging 100 million euros. The investment from the EU builds upon previous agreements and missions for regional development and security. The equal contribution from Saudi Arabia is unprecedented. The partnership with the Sahel G5 emerged about the same time as another Saudi Arabian initiative, the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC). The IMCTC serves as the construct for the G5 Sahel partnership. Another relevant actor and investor with the IMCTC is the United Arab Emirates, contributing 30 million euros to the G5, and backing Saudi regional plans. The emergence of a new regional power acting in the Sahel motivated a comparison study with the EU. The research question will answer which external partner(s), the European Union, or SA with the UAE, is more influential over the political, economic and security goals and activities of the G5 Sahel. To determine the effect of EU, Saudi and UAE investment in the G5 Sahel this thesis will include a review of the respective partnerships and the comparison of a series of indicators to determine which partner, and to what extent they influence the region.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
ADFD Abu Dhabi Fund for Development
AGFUND Arab Gulf Program for UN Development Organizations
AQIM Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BADEA Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
CAEMU Central African Economic and Monetary Union
CSDP Common Security and Defence Policy
CTF Combat Terrorism Financing
ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
EEAS European External Action Service
EU European Union
EUCAP EU Capacity Building Mission
EUTM EU Training Mission
FC-G5S G5 Sahel Joint Force
GCC Gulf Cooperation Council
IMCTC Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition
JAES Joint Africa-EU Strategy
MINUSMA UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MNJTF Multinational Joint Task Force
OFID OPEC Fund for International Development
RIP Regional Indicative Program
SDG Sustainable Development Goals
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Full Name</th>
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<td>SFD</td>
<td>Saudi Fund for Development</td>
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<td>WAEMU</td>
<td>West African Economic and Monetary Union</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The Sahel is a land of transition. Geographically, it is the transition from the Sahara Desert to the savanna and forests of sub-Saharan Africa. The populations that live there are also in transition. They are tribally affiliated and move with herds of livestock and caravans of goods. The zone is arid and vulnerable to desertification. Culturally, the region shares a common history of Arabization and French colonialization in the central and western Sahel. The artificial borders created during colonialization remain porous. Sahelian states are underdeveloped with weak democracies, underemployed youth, and ungoverned territory creating safe havens for illicit activity. Consequently, the Sahel is a tumultuous region, rife with militant groups, drug, human and arms trafficking. The compilation of conflict in Libya to the north, the Tuareg rebellion in Mali, and Boko Haram encroaching on the Lake Chad Basin, coupled with environmental pressures, make the Sahel a lightning rod for instability.

In light of the commonalities shared by states of the Sahel, the G5 Sahel political regional organization formed to address issues of transnational insecurity and development challenges. Established in 2014, it is made up of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. The organizational goals all address insecurity or development, or more accurately human development to address insecurity challenges. The organization groups activities into the following categories: security and defense, governance, infrastructure and resilience. In 2017, the G5 Sahel security force became operational with the political backing of international organizations. The African Union Peace and Security Council approved the implementation of a regional Sahel security force for the G5 in July and the decision was ratified by UN Security Council Resolution 2359 for
international concurrence and legitimacy.\(^1\) The three on-going security missions are all trans-border, operating across the territory of each G5 member state. They function as a counter-terrorism force and work in conjunction with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the French Sahelian Operation Barkhane. The capabilities of the G5 Sahel are limited by the strained resources of the member states and their competing priorities.

The international community applauds the G5 Sahel as an independent African regional organization to address regional concerns. However, the G5 Sahel as an independent regional body is far from the reality. All planning and operational functions rely on external funding, and there is no shortage of international interest in the Sahel. The Arab Gulf States, China, the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) all have increasing presence. The Arab Gulf states invest in social capital, supporting religious and educational enterprises. China is interested in raw resources and foreign direct investment through bilateral agreements. The US since 2001, invests in security and counter-terrorism partnerships. The EU is likewise concerned with insecurity and the destabilizing effects of migration. Apart from China, all fund the initiative of the G5 Sahel. The most substantial international investors include France, the EU, Saudi Arabia (SA), the US and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).\(^2\)

The dependence of the G5 Sahel on foreign funding, puts these actors forefront in relations with the nascent regional organization. The EU and SA are the top contributors, they have the most

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at stake financially if not politically, in the success of the G5 Sahel. Although the US also invested, it is more interested in continuing bilateral military partnerships than further involvement with the G5.\(^3\) The UAE aligns with the geostrategic position of SA concerning the Sahel. Qatar is another Gulf state that is active in the region, but it diverges from the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in its relations with the Sahel. Qatar’s support of militant groups branded as terrorist organizations in Mali, is a reason for the recent rupture with the UAE and SA.\(^4\) The remaining international players strongly behind the G5 are the EU, SA and the UAE. This study will measure and compare the influence of these primary investors. The research question is which external partner(s), the European Union, or SA with the UAE, is more influential over the political, economic and security goals and activities of the G5 Sahel? To determine the effect of EU, Saudi and UAE investment in the G5 Sahel, this thesis will include a review of the respective partnerships and a comparison of a series of indicators to determine which partner, and to what extent they influence the region.

The results of this study seek to explain the political, economic and security alignment of the G5 Sahel. Alignment refers to coherence in goals and activities between the G5 Sahel and the three chosen external partners. The following section will include a brief background of international relations between the chosen actors including the context of the Saudi and the UAE partnership with the Sahelian states since the 1980s, and the EU’s increasing involvement in the wake of the migration crisis. The background will inform why the selected partners make for a telling comparison. Following the background will be the methodology. The methodology will


explain the choice of indicators, how they will be compared, and how influence will be ultimately assessed. Next, will be the analysis of indicators in the three categories of influence. The data will determine the existence and degree of influence. The analysis and comparison of external partners with the G5 make this thesis research relevant to current international relations in this strategic geopolitical region. Understanding the level of real influence by the most invested players, can provide insight to the current and future alignment of the G5 Sahel.

**Background**

The many acronyms associated with the organizations and initiatives active in the Sahel and relevant to this study, are organized by actor and the sector in which they engage in charts in the Appendix for reference. Prior to the creation of the G5, political-economic unions created a space of interdependence with integrated markets in Central and West Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) include Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Chad is part of the Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CAEMU).  The WAEMU and CAEMU dating from the 1960s, created a precedence for regional coordination dependent on external backing. ECOWAS has a secondary function in multilateral cooperation as the “regional gendarme” assisting in mediations and peace operations. In Mali, it was ECOWAS that started the multinational peacekeeping mission after the French intervention. The ECOWAS peacekeeping mission ultimately failed. The accords signed were not respected, and member states did not work well

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6 Clément, Roquet and Jambard, 49.
together, each defending separate interests. The failings of ECOWAS at regional cooperation hastened the creation of the G5 Sahel.

The organization is intergovernmental, with heads of state directly engaged. It formed in Nouakchott, Mauritania at a summit with the executive leaders from the five states. Multiple crises spurred its formation in the absence of an accepted regional body to respond. From the north, the eruption of conflict and disorder in Libya sent arms and experienced militants into northern Mali and elsewhere in the Sahel, facilitating the Tuareg rebellion and arrival of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali in 2013. From the south is the Boko Haram conflict spilling over from Nigeria into the Lake Chad Basin. Transnational trafficking is a source of funding for subnational militants perpetuating conflict. The lack of a peaceful resolution in Mali, and the efforts by Chadian and Nigerien militaries to contain Boko Haram, motivated requests by Sahelian states for foreign support. Likewise, foreign powers wanted to intervene to prevent spillover of conflict, the second-order effects of instability, and also to serve their own geostrategic interests.

The very existence of the organization is an ironic juxtaposition of regional autonomy and external dependence. Included in its mandate is coordination with the efforts of existing international organizations, including the UN, EU, World Bank, International Monetary Fund,

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African Union, and ECOWAS. While at the same time, their first objective is “to preserve the territorial integrity of its states and to lead.” In 2017, the creation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) overshadowed any development initiatives. The Force’s first mission occurred in November 2017 operating across the borders of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. The FC-G5S is small, split over three geographic zones and equaling about 4,550 soldiers. By comparison, the French had 9,000 soldiers deployed in the Sahel in 2014.

The FC-G5S is strained for many reasons. First, the member states already commit forces to the MINUSMA mission in northern Mali, and Chad and Niger support operations against Boko Haram with the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Second, there is political competition from rival organizations, such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Nouakchott Process which includes the Sahel states. The G5 has limited internal resources. Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad rank within the five lowest states in the world as determined by the UN Development Program’s Human Development Index. Another challenge is the great expanse of territory. The Sahel is under-governed, and borders are difficult to secure. In addition, harsh desert conditions and weak state logistics hinder sustained surveillance. Therefore, the G5 is in a difficult position, it cannot function autonomously and to function must work with foreign partners with professed similar motives.

10 Desgrais, 213.


The Arab Gulf states have deep roots and a growing footprint in the Sahel. Due to early Arabization, the Arabian Gulf shares a cultural connection with North Africa and the Sahel. Additionally, SA considers the region within its sphere of influence. Since the 1980s, SA expanded its influence in the Sahel with the Islamic Development Bank a Saudi creation supported by the Saudi King, and the formation of sponsored non-governmental organizations (NGOs) promoting religious education proselytizing Wahhabism, in which the UAE and Qatar are also active. The timing with the region’s post-colonial political reorientation beyond Europe, hastened a welcoming of Gulf investment. Besides SA and the UAE, other GCC member states have a presence in the Sahel, but there is no common regional foreign policy towards the region. The UAE is another substantial player, both in funding the G5, and in its similar social and economic investments to member states. SA and the UAE’s stated objectives and supported programs, along with their actions within the member states of the Sahel, will provide a fuller picture of their involvement and influence after the evaluation of political, security and economic indicators.

For the Sahel, Europe and predominately France is the most present external partner since independence. The EU participates in the Sahel to counter terrorism, curb arms trafficking from Libya, stop the movement of drugs to Europe, counter migration to Europe, maintain ease of trade for natural resources, and counter US influence. Before their commitment to the G5 Sahel, Europe was already the highest contributor for development aid. The 2007 EU Strategy for

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17 Réveillard, 98.
Africa broadened European interests beyond development and trade to include security and governance. The Strategy includes a three-part support plan to the G5 Sahel to include political partnership with dialogue between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Sahelian foreign ministers, development assistance with a substantial amount committed to reversing irregular migration, and security support with the three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions. The EU through the EEAS intervenes multilaterally, with a soft power approach that has a political, economic and security impact.

**Methodology**

Influence is difficult to ascertain concretely and even more difficult to prove. There will always be unknown variables, whether they are motivations, pressures or personality dynamics of the actors involved. The combination of visible and invisible motives for an action or decision make labeling any one causal factor unrealistic. For that reason, this research measures and compares perceivable indicators that can yield influence with political, economic or security aims. It is admittedly not all inclusive and cannot provide a formula explaining actual influence exerted by an external actor. What the indicators offer are plausible, comparable explanations for external influence on the G5 Sahel. The compiled data will provide a picture of professed support and objectives (political), tangible or pledged material support (economic), and hard power initiatives through training and coordinated missions (security). The analysis of influence indicators will show how the EU, SA and the UAE use soft or hard power in their relations with the G5 Sahel, and to what extent. The indicators represent different elements of potential influence in the political, economic and security sectors.

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To start with, overt political influence manifests through published organizational or national objectives, international relations policies, and legal frameworks for intervention. It is visible through official diplomatic communiqués and public statements. In order to choose indicators that are measurable, comparable and reliable, this study uses data from academic sources, and official press releases covering governmental conferences that document commitments for engagement, organizational constructs, and actual agreements between the EU, SA, and the UAE with the G5 Sahel. If published objectives align with those of the G5 Sahel it implies either common interests, or the possible orientation of the G5 towards the objectives of a key partner. Additionally, if actions correspond with published objectives, then there is a consistency that builds the political credibility of the organization. A table will facilitate comparison of stated objectives, showing congruence or incongruence across key focus areas of the G5 Sahel. What the objectives for the Sahel are expected to show are the goals of the three external partners for the G5 Sahel, and the timing of the established objectives. If they published their objectives before the G5 Sahel and they correspond, then there is a potential to influence the political goals of the regional organization.

The amount of financial support, trade and investment may not equate to influence, but it does show the level of interdependence or dependence that can become a leverage factor impacting the G5. The economic indicators include direct funding of the G5 Sahel, bilateral funding to G5 member states, and also trade contributions and development aid. The importance of funding to the G5 is obvious, as it relies on foreign funding of operational costs. Yet, bilateral contributions are also important because G5 heads of state commit to and lead the organization. If there is a strong bilateral partnership with the EU, SA or the UAE, that can weigh in on the state’s decisions concerning the G5. Foreign funding of essential state services, social and
development projects are therefore important. NGOs and private enterprises can also have state funding or support state functions, especially in the Gulf states.

The data relies on EU reported trade figures, economic commitments and program spending in the Sahel. Data for SA and the UAE comes from public statements, government sources and development agencies allied with the two Gulf states. The analysis will compare total financial contributions by the EU, SA and the UAE to the G5 Sahel and its members. It will also look at which sectors are funded, and whether the economic exchange is short or long term. Long term investments and trade deals, the funding of essential G5 operations, and essential state functions have the most potential to influence. Long term investments and trade deals indicate an enduring partnership and interdependence. The funding of essential G5 operations, makes the foreign contributions a necessity to the organization. Supporting member state functions is a competing priority because of the role of heads of state. The economic data will be compiled into a table showing financial contributions by type including development aid, loan assistance and G5 Sahel regional support for the three external partners to provide as complete a picture of donor economic activity as possible. Accompanying charts will allow for a visual comparison.

The security capabilities of the G5 Sahel, the FC-G5S, are recently rapidly expanding, which has several implications. If the FC-G5S becomes a primary security provider in the region, G5 member states will need continued support from their external partners and their influence can grow. For the perspective of external partners there is a motive to influence for security purposes. The EU intends to transition active EU missions to the FC-G5S, and in that case, the EU would come to rely on the Force to bolster regional stability. SA and the UAE through its security partnership IMCTC, use operations in the Sahel with the FC-G5S as their first publicized initiative by the organization. The security sector indicators include training of the FC-G5S by external
actors, joint operations, equipment provided, and military and police presence by SA, the UAE and EU. The training indicator will look at the scope and longevity of the training missions. If there is participation in joint operations, both combat and advise and assist missions are important indicators. Combat operations show greater investment and involvement. However, advise and assist missions present an opportunity to influence the focus and abilities of the security force. If equipment greatly advances the capabilities of the FC-G5S that can also be a reason for influence. Military and police presence expresses a level of commitment by external partners. What the analysis of the security indicators will provide is a description of the ways external partners are supporting security capabilities of the FC-G5S to determine if they fulfill their security interests, bolster their position in the region, or create a dependence of G5 member states on the FC-G5S for their security.

Influence Indicators: Data Comparison and Analysis

Political Indicators

The stated objectives of the G5 Sahel and of external partners’ involvement in the Sahel, are general and altruistic. However, they are worth considering and comparing because they show where the focus differs, including the exclusion of certain G5 functions. Where the language is similar there is an alignment of stated political goals which could be the result of external influence. Table 1 in this section displays the published objectives of the three external partners for the Sahel and compares them with the organizational goals of the G5. Objectives alone can be empty, political relevance depends on the actors’ commitments and actions supporting their objectives, evidence of which is an indication for influence. The reaction of the G5 to the political pressures of its partners is an additional indicator of influence when it causes a
change in diplomatic relations. The political indicators are organized by actor: G5, EU, SA and the UAE.

To start with the G5, the G5 Sahel Convention signed by member states in 2014 lists the following: to guarantee conditions for development and security of member states; offer strategic leadership intervention in order to improve life conditions of civil populations; the alliance of development and security, supported by democracy and good governance for regional cooperation and mutual international benefit; and promote inclusive and durable regional development.19 The Permanent Secretariat has four departments that address the stated objectives which are security and defense, governance expertise, infrastructure, and resilience.20 The organizational construct shows consistency between published principles and the functioning organs of the organization. The Defense and Security Department lists Operation Barkhane as a partner, indicating the importance of external partners and coordinating foreign military operations.21

Notably, the official G5 Sahel website acknowledges the EU as the sponsor of the site, whether that is acknowledging financial and technical support for the site or content is unclear. The Permanent Secretariat publishes a biannual review titled “Sécurité et Développement” with articles on G5 activities organized by the four departments. The official messaging in this publication fits with stated organizational objectives describing projects and programs in each of

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the four departments and highlighting progress being made. An article within the periodical, attributes resilience of economic projects to foreign partners. It also describes a bilateral meeting between Niger and Chad for seven transborder development projects financed by the EU. The article is either crediting its external partners to appease them, or to draw attention to the commitment of external partners in the Sahel.

EU objectives and conditions for intervention in the Sahel are outlined in several agreements predating the G5 Sahel, and mirror those communicated at the International High Level Conference on the Sahel in February of 2018. In 2007, the EU Directorate-General for External Policies developed the Joint-Africa EU Strategy. It builds on the previous Cotonou Agreement from 2000 which linked development in Africa, within the Africa Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region, to political stability and security. Article 1 promotes and expedites economic, cultural and social development in the ACP, whereas Article 11 attributes development to furthering peace and security, while promoting a stable and democratic political environment. The EU’s Action Plan for Support to Peace and Security in Africa specifically lays out criteria for the EU CSDP to conduct executive missions in Africa in the framework of African led or UN peacekeeping missions. Article 43 from the Lisbon Treaty provides the legal

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framework that specifies reasons for CSDP external civilian and military operations for joint
disarmament, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict
prevention and peacekeeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including
peace-making and post-conflict stabilization. Nearly all tasks can be applied to conditions in
the Sahel and justify EU operations.

In July, 2017 France and Germany established the Alliance for the Sahel to coordinate
regional development cooperation. The Alliance for the Sahel is consistent with former
external action policies towards Africa but lists goals specific to the Sahel. It takes the political
stance of describing external action objectives in the Sahel as a European priority. The Alliance
also lists those objectives which fall within the security, development and governance categories.
Objectives for the Sahel are youth employment; rural development, agriculture and food
security; climate, notably energy access, green energy and water; governance; support for return
of basic services throughout the territory, including through decentralization; and security. The
2018 International High Level Conference on the Sahel mobilized funding and commitment to
the G5 Sahel echoing CSDP priorities for the region along three lines political support, financial
assistance for security and coordination of development efforts.

27 Okemuo, 227.
28 European External Action Service, “Alliance for the Sahel will reinforce EU work for stability and development
of key region,” European External Action Service Press Release, 14 July 2017, accessible at
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/29876/alliance-sahel-will-reinforce-eu-work-stability-
and-development-key-region_en.
2018-feb-23_en.
To illustrate how the programs materialize, EU reports describe activities linked to priorities. In Mali, the Youth and Stabilisation Programme restores and strengthens access to essential services. The associated joint security program aims at improving border security, internal security forces, and rule of law.\(^{31}\) The Hybrid Solar Centre in Niger, supporting sustainable development, is to increase power availability and create jobs. The Emergency Programme for the Sahel’s activities in northern Burkina Faso are for security and local governance with an accompanying undefined, social-economic development plan.\(^{32}\) There’s a designated border security program for Chad, and a rural development project for Mauritania to address food insecurity.\(^{33}\) The program descriptions are anecdotal and only a sampling of EU supported initiatives, but they nonetheless communicate tangible efforts. The linking of financial commitment and projects to specified objectives in the Sahel adds weight to the EU CSDP for the Sahel.

The political objectives of SA and the UAE are less delineated. The Kingdom of SA and the UAE Foreign Affairs Ministries, the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) led by SA, and Arabic Development Agencies, are all players in the Sahel with possible political impact. Saudi development government agencies include the International Islamic Relief Organization, the International Muslim World League and the Saudi Fund for Development.\(^{34}\) The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development directly supports the G5 Sahel. The new Saudi-Emirati political and military


\(^{32}\) European Commission, “The EU’s Partnership with the Sahel.”

\(^{33}\) European Commission, “The EU’s Partnership with the Sahel.”

\(^{34}\) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, official website: \url{http://www.mofa.gov.sa/sites/mofaen/aboutKingDom/SaudiInitiatives/Pages/ServingIslam36145.aspx}.  

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alliance is expected to supplant the GCC, weakened since relations soured with Qatar. Critics view the new alliance as consistent with a more active Saudi foreign policy to garner African support, indicated by its increased presence in the Sahel through military and development aid.35

One apparent response to Saudi and Emirati political influence was the reaction of Sahelian states after the removal of Qatar from the GCC. In June 2017, SA and the UAE cut ties with Qatar because of its open support of Islamist political movements, and the its use of the Red Cross to supply and aid terrorist groups in Mali. In response, Chad and Mauritania also broke diplomatic ties with Qatar.36 The reactions of Chad and Mauritania were likely due to political pressure by SA and the UAE due to the timing of the decision and the GCC split. The most recent foreign policy shift is towards counter-terrorism. The UAE closely resembles the Saudi approach in economic partnerships, Wahhabi religious proselytization, and the recent investment in the G5 Sahel Joint Force.37 Since the Saudi-Emirati alliance does not have published objectives for relations with the Sahel, the IMCTC strategic objectives provide the security goals of SA and the UAE and are the most compatible for cross-regional comparison to EU goals for security.

The IMCTC has six strategic objectives. The first is to strengthen the contribution of Islamic countries towards global security and peace. Second, is to reinforce solidarity and collaboration among coalition member countries to present a unified front against terrorist organizations. The third is to counter radical ideology in Coalition member countries through


36 Malka.

37 Malka, 7.
strategic communication campaigns to refute the radical and extremist narratives and propaganda. Fourth, is reaffirm the moderate values of Islam and its principles of peace, tolerance and compassion. Fifth, is to combat terrorism financing (CTF) in collaboration with Coalition member countries and international CTF authorities, and promote compliance with international agreements and advance legal, regulatory, and operational frameworks. The last goal is to establish strategic partnerships between member countries, supporting nations and international organizations to share counter terrorism information and expertise. All objectives reference counter-terrorism, stability and collaboration.

State sponsored development agencies are also part of the SA and the UAE’s strategy in the Sahel. SA founded the Islamic Relief Organization and the Muslim World League which have principles based on religious tenets. The Muslim World League has a charter with founding principles. The principles of the charter all appeal to the goal of unifying Muslims. Additionally, it surveys mosques around the world to collect and publish religious data. While the mission of the Muslim World League is clearly religious direction under Saudi Wahhabi ideology, it does share the characteristic of collaboration and social justice found within the objectives of the G5 Sahel and EU Alliance for the Sahel. The Muslim World League publications and website do not offer information on development programs or activities by location, instead press releases make political statements supporting the Saudi position.

Additionally, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) acts in accordance with Saudi and Emirati foreign policy in West Africa. It has a mandate with three

objectives: participate in financing economic development in African countries, stimulate the contribution of Arab capital to African development, and provide the technical assistance required for the development of Africa. The bank’s coordinating group has five members that work on joint development projects and co-finance programs. Those relevant to this study include the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Gulf Program for UN Development Organizations (AGFUND), the Islamic Development Bank, and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), the last of which is supplemented by bilateral institutions including the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) and Saudi Fund for Development (SFD).

The bank funds development in four states of the G5, all except Mauritania. Investment and aid are for infrastructure, institutional support, health and social sectors. Although BADEA is a multinational banking institution, the heavy involvement of SA and the UAE make it a notable organization regarding their influence in the development domain of the Sahel. The ADFD includes in its strategy UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SFD objectives are less value focused and address the means of development through loans, technical assistance, institutional support and guaranteeing national non-crude oil exports. The section on economic indicators will provide more information on development programs. The table below compiles published objectives of the three external partners compared with those of the G5 Sahel.

42 Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa.
43 Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa.
**Table 1: Comparison of Objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>G5 Sahel</th>
<th>European Union</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia &amp; UAE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>1. guarantee conditions for development and security of member states</td>
<td>1. Security in key areas such as migration, border management, youth, prevention of radicalization</td>
<td>1. strengthen the contribution of Islamic countries towards global security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. alliance of development and security</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. counter radical ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>1. supported by democracy and good governance</td>
<td>1. good governance</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Services</td>
<td>1. offer strategic leadership intervention in order to improve life conditions of civil populations</td>
<td>1. energy access, and water</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>1. promote inclusive and durable regional development</td>
<td>1. rural development, agriculture and food security</td>
<td>1. participate in financing economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. sustainable development</td>
<td>2. provide the technical assistance required for the development of Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. promote stability and cross-border cooperation</td>
<td>1. reinforce solidarity and collaboration among coalition member countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. establish strategic partnerships between member countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. combat terrorism financing in collaboration with Coalition member countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* these objectives are not supported

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Comparing political objectives is straightforward concerning the EU and G5 Sahel. Both organizations have official websites with listed goals for the region. There is remarkable overlap between their respective objectives. The overlap may be explained by the similar timeframe. The objectives of the G5 Sahel date back to 2014. Very similar objectives, or priority areas, were laid out during the 4th EU-Africa Summit in 2014. By 2017, the EU Alliance for the Sahel included all areas of the G5 Sahel objectives with the addition of youth employment. The coherence and timing of objectives could likely be the product of joint Africa-EU conferences. Although, principles of both sets of security and development objectives are largely international. UN SDGs have the same development goals, which also mention peace and stability. It is therefore difficult to determine how much the similarity is political influence by the EU, and not the international community at large.

SA and the UAE required research into multiple domains for a comprehensive understanding of political goals and influence. Most notable here are the differences. There is no reference to governance or support to civil services as objectives. The two countries professed support to the G5 Sahel for security and development with a heavier emphasis on security through the IMCTC. The UAE does not have an independent set of objectives towards the Sahel. Instead, it is incorporated into several Gulf partnerships, which is why the IMCTC and BADEA objectives are equally applicable to the UAE and SA. Considering the principles set forth by the IMCTC concerning the Sahel, the counter-terrorism goals fit security objectives of the G5. There is less compatibility between the development objectives of the G5 and those listed by BADEA.

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and national Saudi and Emirati development agencies. The development principles from BADEA only discuss development broadly and mention providing technical assistance.48

Evaluating political influence, the EU developed its objectives for the Sahel building off of existing partnerships with the Sahel, expanding from trade to development, and more recently including governance and security. The compatibility of objectives, several of which predate the G5 Sahel, make the EU a likely influencer in shaping G5 objectives. The EU and G5 objectives are taking on the character of international norms specifically adapting language used in the UN SDGs. SA and the UAE are less interested in domestic management of resources, with technical assistance instead of sustainable development, and no reference to governance. One exception is the ADFD’s reference to UN SDGs in its strategy. SA’s and the UAE’s political aims are not to adapt to G5 goals, but to pull the Sahel states further into its sphere of influence through its coalition. They cite pan-Islamic motivations for their expanding presence and development activities. SA uses the IMCTC platform to assume leadership in a new domain in the Gulf and project that image outward. In summary, EU influence is an extension from former ACP relations which emphasized political relations through trade and aid, to include sustainable development with an environmental focus, security and governance. SA and the UAE are strengthening relations with the G5 to bring the Sahel states into a closer alliance and expand their activities.

**Economic Indicators**

The motivation behind this study was interest in the high amount of investment pledged by the EU, SA and the UAE to the G5 Sahel in February 2018. Apart from direct investment in the G5, there are multiple additional sources of financing for the Sahel states. Member states of

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48 Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa.
the EU make bilateral contributions. Similarly, SA and the UAE invest in the member states of the Sahel individually as foreign direct investment, social and development funding. Altogether, private commercial firms, NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations are all sources of financing for the states of the G5 Sahel. This section will identify to the extent possible, the sources and amounts of funding to the member states of the G5 and the G5 itself, from the EU, SA and the UAE. Any type of funding to a state government from external actors has the potential to motivate national leaders and can therefore be influential. Funding source and purpose are important; and will be quantified for the three external actors by type (G5, bilateral) along with the sector funded.

To start with the source of initial interest, the International High Level Conference on the Sahel occurred 23 February 2018 with a 100 million euro pledge by the EU and SA, and 30 million euro from the UAE to fund the G5 Sahel.49 The operating budget of the FC-G5S is 115 million euro per year.50 Effectively, the EU, SA and the UAE pledged enough at the Conference to fund two years of operations. SA and the UAE are new security investors in the Sahel. The FC-G5S partnership is the first initiative of the IMCTC since its creation.51 As such, the outcome of that investment will be telling for Gulf partners. The EU on the other hand, funds three missions in the Sahel and contributes to the peacekeeping mission in Mali. The EU is indirectly supporting French military operations through the FC-G5S. The FC-G5S closely coordinates with French Operation Barkhane, and so funding the FC-G5S allows the French to delegate some responsibility to African partners.52 The growing economic investment in security with the

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49 Gorman and Chauzal.
50 Gorman and Chauzal.
51 Irish.
52 Gorman and Chauzal.
financing of the FC-G5S was the key outcome of the International High Level Conference on the Sahel.

Trade relations are of great importance to the Sahel’s external partners. Economic influence by means of trade arrangements is nothing new to the region. The EU maintains ACP privileged trade relations reaffirmed with the Cotonou Agreement, which includes Sahel states. The ACP partnership allowed access to the common market, price protections, and a guaranteed European market for raw materials. It also created dependencies and a lack of economic diversification in ACP states. The 2000 Agreement maintains “trade for aid” but the 2010 updates discuss gradual European market preference erosion to enable integration into the world economy. ACP relations are indeed transforming, but France especially ensures continued access to natural resources in the Sahel. Uranium is a key resource for French energy power from Niger, gold is the top resource in Mali, and the new petrol basin of Taoudeni located in northern Mali, is also of interest. Sahel resources will likely remain an important element of the EU-Sahelian relationship. Additionally, the EU is the largest contributor of financial aid in the region. Most recently, in December 2018 the EU added 125 million euro for security and development programs to the four billion euros already committed for the 2014 to 2020 time

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53 Hugon, 106.


period for the five Sahel states. Development is a key aspect of the EU-Sahel relationship. The enormous amount of funding is often aligned with conditions for improving governance, integrating into the world market, and stability. The conditionality is a manner of influence, for Sahel states to implement development funds, they have to make progress towards governance and development goals agreed with the EU.

The Gulf states are also interested in maintaining trade deals with the Sahel and over the last ten years they have strengthened economic ties. The UAE alone is now home to more than 10,000 African companies. Africa provides an enticing market for the Gulf states to diversify their oil-based economies. The UAE is investing heavily in telecommunications contracts in the Sahel, whereas SA is investing in agriculture in Mauritania, utilizing the sparse arable land. Throughout North and West Africa, Gulf investment is in the form of real estate. The two Gulf partners are becoming competitive in securing influence through trade, described as playing the role of gatekeepers for Africa’s rising economies. However, in the Sahel states trade contributions by SA and the UAE remain far behind the EU.

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58 Réveillard, 98.


60 STRATFOR.

61 Malka, 5.

62 STRATFOR.

Saudi and Emirati banks are active in the region. The line is sometimes blurred between national bank and development agency as “aid” which is most often in the form of loans. For example, the UAE’s ADFD invested 59.9 million dollars in Niger for electricity and water projects but, all in the form of loans. Burkina Faso is a very similar case. Yet in Mali, it is a much higher amount; 294 million dollars in total aid, of which 263 million are loans.

Concerning actual development programs in the Sahel, the ADFD announced a new initiative in Chad in December 2018 for water accessibility, livestock and agricultural projects. Additional Sahel projects are for infrastructure in Mali constructing dams, similar dam projects in Burkina Faso plus a solar energy project, and a dam and electrical power project in Niger. SA’s development spending in the Sahel states is all in the form of loans. In 2016, SA awarded a loan to Chad for vocational education amounting to 30 million dollars and 50 million dollars to Mauritania. The SFD website lists projects by country covering health, education, infrastructure and food security in Niger, infrastructure, agricultural and livestock projects in Mali, 11 infrastructure projects in Burkina Faso, and water distribution, education, mining and infrastructure projects in Mauritania. Economically, through loans for development, trade, and security partnerships, SA and the UAE are expanding their presence in the Sahel states.

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65 Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

66 Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

67 The Saudi Fund for Development.


To compare the economic impact of SA with the UAE and the EU, Table 2 below tallies up the amounts of economic contributions to the Sahel member states and the G5 Sahel since 2014 and projected through 2020. Important to note, the EU contributions do not include separate bilateral contributions from individual EU Member states, which is approximately four billion euro during the same time period. Separate contributions by EU member states were not included to keep the integrity of presenting the EU as a unique regional entity. Also excluded are Emirati and Saudi development contributions through regional and international development agencies such as OFID.

Table 2: Economic Contribution Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>UAE</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G5 Sahel</td>
<td>100.0 million EUR</td>
<td>30.0 million EUR</td>
<td>100.0 million EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Aid</td>
<td>3,811.5 million EUR</td>
<td>80.6 million EUR</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>257.6 million EUR</td>
<td>376.2 million EUR</td>
<td>963.0 million EUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,169.1 million EUR</td>
<td>486.8 million EUR</td>
<td>1,063.0 million EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No funds committed

In Table 2, contributions to the Sahel includes development aid for multiple programs, loans and separate funding to the G5 Sahel. The EU’s Regional Indicative Program (RIP) is for trade and development in the five Sahelian states. It is for further integration into the world

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70 European Commission, “The European Union’s partnership with the G5 Sahel countries.”

market in partnership with ECOWAS. RIP “aims to strengthen regional integration notably by boosting trade relations between countries in the sub-region and between the EU and the sub-region. This should enable the West African region (WAEMU and ECOWAS) to increase its trading activities in the region.”72 RIP funding for the Sahel is divided into several categories with different purposes. The European Development Fund is made up the largest component of RIP and supports health, food security, agriculture, water, and sustainable health initiatives. The Emergency Trust fund for Africa is for regional projects, loans (or loan-grant blending mechanisms) are for infrastructure projects, and humanitarian aid makes up the final category. 73

From the collated data, the UAE and SA are far behind the EU when it comes to development and trade contributions. In 2018, the EU remains the region’s largest trade partner at 28.5 percent of total trade, the UAE was the tenth trading partner at 1.5 percent.74 However, for the G5 Sahel organization, SA and the EU are on equal footing, and the addition of the UAE pledge puts the SA and the UAE ahead in organizational funding. Figure 1 below is the graphical depiction of the combined development aid and loan contributions to the five Sahel states comparing the EU with the two Arab Gulf states.75 Figure 2 depicts separate organizational funding to the G5 Sahel.76


73 European Commission, “The European Union’s partnership with the G5 Sahel countries.”

74 European Commission, “European Union, Trade in goods with ACP -- West Africa.”

75 Percentages are of the total contributed by the three external partners. Figure 1 sources: Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, The Saudi Fund for Development, The European Commission.

76 Percentages are of the total pledged by the three external partners. Figure 2 source: European Commission, “International High Level Conference on the Sahel,” Deutsche Welle (2018).
In terms of economic support, there is no question that the EU contributes the most to the Sahelian states. The EU member states also match the EU institutional contributions reported here in development financing.\textsuperscript{77} If taken into account, the EU and its member states’ separate contributions come to approximately eight billion euro, which is over four times that of SA and the UAE combined. However, the increase in trade and counter-terror financing from SA and the UAE is also relevant to note. SA is now an equal contender with the EU in G5 Sahel support. Since they both have an equal stake in the organization’s investment, that gives the G5 multiple external partners of significance. The governments of the five states likewise depend on development and “aid for trade” funding to run their administration and provide essential services.\textsuperscript{78} Both avenues of funding to the G5 organization and to its member states are relevant. Another indicator of direct economic influence is the oversight committee designed to monitor G5 funds.\textsuperscript{79} The oversight committee would be answerable to external partner financiers, which

\textsuperscript{77} European Commission, “The European Union’s partnership with the G5 Sahel countries.”

\textsuperscript{78} Clément, Roquet and Jambard, 166-167.

\textsuperscript{79} Continental Alignments, 20736.
naturally, gives them a level of organizational control if they choose to oppose how funds are employed.

To conclude, the data from the economic indicators points to the EU as having the most potential influence, with the emerging SA and UAE as new actors of interest. The EU commits most to development and trade, whereas SA and the UAE are contributing to security financing, and loan investments. The trade partnership and the amount of development financing reveals a steady commitment from the EU. Since the G5 Sahel as an organization cannot be separated from its member states, their financial dependence on the EU should not be discounted in how they direct the G5. SA and the UAE are taking up an interest in the G5 Sahel, and if treated as a forerunner of a more assertive foreign policy, more investment will likely follow.

Security Indicators

The G5 Sahel started out as a regional political organization for cooperation, development and security. Early on, more emphasis was placed on governance and development. Now with the creation of the FC-G5S in 2017, and the funding that came pouring in from external partners, security operations captured international attention surrounding the G5. International partners identified security concerns in the Sahel region since the early 2000s, augmented by the crisis in Mali in 2012. The security response continues to grow with external partners worried about spillover effects.80 Spillover within the Sahel as militant groups disperse to recruit and find safe haven in remote border regions. Spillover beyond the Sahel to Europe includes human, arms, and drug trafficking which often finance conflict. Years after the initial military intervention in Mali, the MINUSMA mission stagnates without tangible progress, as

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80 EEAS, “Visit by High Representative and Vice-President Federica Mogherini to Paris,” 13 July 2017.
peace agreements fail and violence against peacekeepers continues. Meanwhile, the Lake Chad Basin is affronted by the Boko Haram conflict. The limitations of the affected states, and multilateral missions, drove the demand for a greater security focus by the G5.

Hard power has a tendency towards overuse by the governments of the Sahel, something in common with sub-Saharan Africa in general. The prevalence of military coups and the close relationship between political power and a strong security apparatus in the Sahelian member states, make hard power initiatives easy to criticize. However, the rise of non-state militant groups with connections to terrorist organizations was the justification for foreign interventions that opened the door to hard power solutions. International organizations, the US, the French, the EU and now the IMCTC, are all involved in military operations to address insecurity in the Sahel. The G5 Sahel presents the opportunity for a Sahelian led force, which is preferred politically by external partners. Propping up the security apparatus of the G5 can be a short-term means of influence, or a continued security partnership can yield long-term influence.

Security indicators include influence through training, conducting joint patrols, and equipping the FC-G5S. Indicators also include military and policing presence in the G5 states for coordinating military operations. Cooperation with existing security operations is a part of the FC-G5S mandate.\footnote{G5 Sahel “Sécurité et Développement” Revue Semestrielle d’Information du G5 Sahel, no. 4, (February 2018), 1-28, accessible at \url{http://www.g5sahel.org/images/Docs/G5_SAHEL_revue_N4.pdf}.} There is an inherent degree of influence from the actors guiding the enduring security operations. As long as they continue, the FC-G5S will have a supporting role. For direct involvement with the FC-G5S, the greater the foreign presence and longer the duration, the more influence is expected. Additionally, if operations depend on equipment and specific training to operate, the provider is likewise expected to exert more influence.
For Europe, the Sahel is of particular interest for domestic security. Germany and France consider the Sahel to be a potential base for terrorists to train and plan attacks in Europe. Since the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) of 2007, there is ever increasing emphasis on defense and security operations. It opened the door to the three current EU missions in the Sahel. The EU is engaged in two civilian and one military mission. The longest duration is the EU Capacity Building Mission, EUCAP Sahel Niger, since 2012. EUCAP Sahel Niger’s purpose is to train and support Nigerien authorities for counter-terrorism and crime prevention. The civilian mission has as much a focus on governance as on security. Successful counter-terrorism and crime prevention depend on the judicial system, anti-corruption measures, and effective intelligence and information management. To support the mission, the EU keeps security and legal experts stationed in Niamey, Niger. The experts engage in train the trainer programs, with internal Nigerien security forces, the Nigerien Army, and judicial authorities. The civilian mission has a transnational focus targeting trafficking and militant facilitation networks and containing migration, which ultimately benefits the EU. It is a product of the EU’s Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel published in 2011. The EUCAP Sahel Niger civilian mission is one of the external missions with which the G5 Sahel is expected to coordinate. The

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82 International Crisis Group, 9.


85 EEAS, “About EUCAP Sahel Niger.”

86 EEAS, “About EUCAP Sahel Niger.”
transnational nature of the mission and the purpose of the EUCAP Sahel Niger, closely resemble that of the FC-G5S, which could indicate EU influence on the Sahel Force in setting its agenda.

The EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali supports the French Operation Barkhane and the UN MINUSMA mission since 2013. EUCAP Sahel Mali is an accompanying civilian mission. While civilian missions still involve training of security forces, and the EUCAP Mali mission “provides experts in strategic advice and training to the Malian Police, Gendarmerie, National Guard and the relevant ministries in order to support reform in the security sector.”

It addresses all sectors of internal security, implying both reorganization of the administrations and anti-corruption measures. The renewed mandate extends the mission until 2021 and includes instructions for inter-operability and coordination with G5 Sahel countries.

EUTM Mali is similar in that it is a train and advise mission that does not participate in combat. An interesting stipulation in the EUTM’s mission statement is to train and operationalize the G5 Sahel Joint Force. EUTM is therefore taking responsibility for the preparation and action of the FC-G5S. The inclusion of the FC-G5S in the EUTM strategic objectives is an assertion of influence, as it seeks to prepare the FC-G5S to share its mission. The EU renewed mandates for the three missions, and at this point they can be considered long-term. They will likely remain a means of influence through the commitment set with the G5 Sahel. The summary table below consolidates the three EU missions in the region presenting the sectors that they support. All missions either coordinate with the G5 Sahel or train the FC-G5S.

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88 EEAS, “About EUCAP Sahel Mali.”
### Table 3: EU Missions in the Sahel 89

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Provides:</th>
<th>Sectors Supported:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUTM (Mali)</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUCAP Sahel Mali</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUCAP Sahel Niger</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA and the UAE see security in the Sahel as an opportunity to engage the G5 and forge a positive reputation for their regional security organization. Specifically, they are increasing their involvement with the FC-G5S through the IMCTC. Prior to 2015, SA and the UAE were involved only in trade and development through banks and religious based social projects. The emergence of the IMCTC occurred as GCC cohesion crumbled. The IMCTC is a political-military alliance of 40 Islamic countries that includes all G5 member states.90 Although the IMCTC is a multinational organization, it was founded under Saudi leadership and continues to be a project guided by the Kingdom. The IMCTC claims four domains for its activities: ideology, communications, CTF, and Military.91 The ideology component includes “to align and correct the understanding of religious principles”92 in its objectives which is consistent with the Saudi assertion of religious authority on Islam and underlines SA’s role as leader of the IMCTC. The initiative with the FC-G5S is the first IMCTC endeavor since its creation. The FC-G5S

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90 IMCTC, “Member Countries,” accessible at [https://imctc.org/English/Members](https://imctc.org/English/Members).

91 IMCTC, “Domains,” accessible at [https://imctc.org/English/FocusAreas](https://imctc.org/English/FocusAreas).

92 IMCTC, “Domains.”
provides an opportunity for the new Saudi led coalition to operationalize and project its influence abroad.93

SA and the UAE are implementing the bulk of pledged G5 funds through the IMCTC which manages the dispersion of funds instead of the G5 Sahel itself. The IMCTC keeping the control of funds means less autonomy for the G5 organization and more G5 member state participation in the IMCTC. Earmarked funds are for hard power application specifically, logistics, training, intelligence and air support.94 The direct investment in the tangible capabilities of the FC-G5S, provides the operational resources for it to function, and fits the expectation for short-term influence on security activities of the G5. So far, there is no published plan on what IMCTC, Sahel G5 cooperation will look like beyond FC-G5S capacity building. The UAE is similarly investing in the security capabilities of G5 member states. For example, in Mauritania it has projects for a “School of War” military training center.95 The emphasis of SA and the UAE on the security functions of the G5 increases the FC-G5S operational budget. It will also give the Sahel states another external partner with funding available, willing to prove the capabilities of the nascent IMCTC for international credibility.

In determining overall influence on security for the G5 Sahel, the EU is the partner in the lead. The EU has an established, well-funded presence through its missions with UN and African partner backing. The EUTM even has the mission to train and operationalize the FC-G5S as part of its mandate. It is clear that the EU is a strong proponent of the Joint Force and has even taken some responsibility for it. The FC-G5S is an integrated part of the EU security plan for the Sahel,

93 Irish.
94 Irish.
in the hopes of transitioning the EU mission to Sahelian partners. It has already invested heavily in the security of the region with the three active missions. A strong FC-G5S would allow the EU to highlight the success of its African regional partnership while still seeing to its own security concerns. The EU provides non-lethal equipment, and while it does not conduct combat operations nor joint patrols, it trains police and military forces to perform the functions of its missions. The FC-G5S is also committed to coordinate with the EU missions, a sign of enduring influence. Although not as evident, the influence of Saudi and Emirati partners is not to be discounted. SA and the UAE’s presence in the security domain are still new, and they are gaining traction. They provide equipment for the FC-G5S, and also support bilateral security programs with G5 member states. The IMCTC is an important initiative to follow because the G5 Sahel represents both Coalition members and its pilot project. If the G5 makes progress with the amount of investment by SA and the UAE, it is likely that both their security presence and influence will grow in the region.

Conclusion

Europe, the Arabian Gulf and the West African Sahel come from very different geopolitical positions. Their histories, capabilities, geostrategic positions, and economic circumstances all vary as do their relationships. To compare and assess the influence of these external partners on the G5 regional organization, political, economic and security areas were evaluated. Social influence was excluded from this study due to a perceived shortage of academic material for social indicator research and comparison. Nonetheless, cultural ties to the Arabian Gulf, educational exchanges, NGO social and religious activities have a

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96 International Crisis Group, 7.
transformational impact on communities in the Sahel and merit further study. Gulf sponsored religious centers introduced a Wahhabi interpretation that conflicts with indigenous Sufi practices.⁹⁷ At the same time, the vestiges of colonial influence from France are diminishing and at times actively rejected. One example of this cultural shift is the changing of official language from French to Arabic by government ministries in Mauritania.⁹⁸ Meager anecdotal evidence was not sufficient for developing and analyzing social indicators, such an undertaking deserves a future research project.

The conclusion from the data analysis determines that overall the EU is the most influential when considering the results of political, economic and security indicators. The EU’s transparency in its agreements with G5 member states, its commitments and missions in the region facilitated data compilation. Conversely, SA and the UAE do not have consolidated platforms explaining their agreements, commitments and missions. Official statements, governmental and nongovernmental sources provided the information for the indicators, but it is possible that there is missing applicable information. The G5 Sahel regional organization is still organizing, program funding is still materializing, and programs are not succinctly defined, which provided a challenge to evaluating external influence. The political indicators relied on published objectives and diplomatic statements. The comparison in Table 1 shows near perfect alignment between EU and G5 Sahel objectives. The similar timing of the EU and G5 Sahel’s definition of objectives and the EU-Africa Summit all in 2014 makes influence likely, although it is difficult to determine if influence was one directional. The table also shows a relevant gap in

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⁹⁷ Jida Mohamed Abdul Carrol, Bureau of Islamic Affairs, in discussion with the author 09 November 2016, N’Djamena, Chad.

⁹⁸ The language change was observed by the author in interactions with the Mauritanian Ministry of Defense in 2015.
Saudi and Emirati objectives concerning governance and civil services. Their absence illuminates another key difference between the partners, the EU applies conditionality in its assistance for progress towards good governance while the two Gulf states do not. The inclusion of the IMCTC and regional Gulf development organizations looked beyond the governments to the activities they sponsor to provide a holistic picture of SA and the UAE political objectives. The results identify areas of apparent compatibility with the G5, but not in all categories, and not to the extent of the EU.

Economic support has a strong potential to influence the G5 because of its dependence on external partners. Financiers can direct how funds are spent, giving them a position of control over the organization and its activities. One such mechanism is the oversight committee for management of funds earmarked by partners. Actual direct funding of the G5 was the start of the economic comparison, but the contribution of development agencies, trade contributions and foreign direct investment in the Sahel region, are equally important when measuring external influence impacting the G5. Concerning the pledged financial commitment to the G5 Sahel, SA and the UAE together surmount the EU. However, when adding additional funding through development and security programs, the EU contributes far more than Gulf external partners. The UAE and SA contributions are still significant and may in fact grow, if the IMCTC intervention is determined a success.

The last area of comparative analysis was the security domain. The G5 Sahel organization started with a focus on development as a means to combat insecurity, but in the years following, the organization shifted more towards the security interests of its international partners.99 Security interests are now forefront in both G5 operations and international attention.

99 International Crisis Group, 6.
The EU Alliance for the Sahel asserts that security, stability and development in the Sahel are first in the interest of Africans, but also in the interest of Europeans.\textsuperscript{100} The extent of its security and defense related activities in the Sahel make it the primary external partner. The EU is concerned with irregular migration and to that purpose, invests funds and personnel for stabilization and development in the Sahel. The longevity of the three active missions show the level of EU commitment. However, there is political will to transition security responsibility to the G5 Sahel apparent in the EUTM mandate and in that case, one can expect EU influence to diminish. Saudi and Emirati security intentions are to empower the IMCTC. SA is staking its image on the new Coalition as its creator, and the UAE is a prominent supporter as well. The Sahel is the first area of engagement for the IMCTC. For SA to keep up its new self-asserted role in counter-terrorism and Islamic leadership, it wants to have a favorable effect on the FC-G5S which can motivate further involvement.

The sustained position of the EU as an external influencer in the Sahel helps explain its relationship with the G5 organization. The G5 Sahel is dependent on all external partners for funding, but the EU outstrips all other actors in the amount of support to G5 member states. Political and security imperatives are also relevant. Europe wants to maintain its geopolitical position in the region while eventually drawing down its commitments to actual missions. The FC-G5S is postured to enable the EU to achieve that end. The EU seeks to influence the Sahel for two primary purposes, to curb irregular migration in the short-term, and support French regional interests in the long-term. The Sahel is both an area of origin and transit for migrants. The growing security emphasis of EU missions is on border security and countering trafficking, the development and governance goals remediate emigration “push” factors. The EU explicitly

\textsuperscript{100} EEAS, “Visit by High Representative and Vice-President Federica Mogherini to Paris.”
added the objective to counter irregular migration to the mission mandates in 2015.\textsuperscript{101} The process of French foreign policy shaping EU policy in West Africa is beyond the scope of this study. However, the overlap between French and EU operations is relevant. EU CSDP supports French Operation Barkhane. France initiates EU partnerships with the Sahel, dating back to the start of ACP trade relations and continuing to the EU Alliance for the Sahel in 2017. The EU provides France a multilateral platform to protect its political and economic interests while avoiding appearances of neo-colonialism.

SA and the UAE are rising partners. They have a cultural tie to the region that may support greater political influence. SA and the UAE see the G5 Sahel as an opportunity to strengthen ties with the region and project an image of responsible global leadership. The IMCTC allows SA to place itself at the head as first among equals. The goals of the IMCTC defend the assertion of Gulf religious authority, while also stipulating that intervention requires members’ invitation giving it a cooperative approach.\textsuperscript{102} The increased involvement of SA and the UAE in political and security domains affirms growing Gulf leadership in developing countries. They have the political will and financial ability to be alternatives to competing external actors. The next five years may see geostrategic re-posturing in the Sahel. The G5 Sahel itself may become a stronger independent regional power. However, that can only occur after the G5 assumes mission control and can sustain its operations. This study serves as an initial analysis of Gulf and European influence over the G5.

\textsuperscript{101} EEAS, “About EUCAP Sahel Niger.”

\textsuperscript{102} IMCTC, “Domains.”
## APPENDIX 1: ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES AFFILIATION CHART

### ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>European Union</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>UAE</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>EEAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>BADEA</td>
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