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Doctorado

PhD Tesis

**EL ROL DE LA GUARDIA CIVIL EN EL SAHEL: EL
PROYECTO GAR-SI**

THE ROLE OF THE GUARDIA CIVIL IN THE SAHEL: THE GAR-SI
PROJECT

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DEDICACIÓN Y AGRADECIMIENTOS

Dedicación

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EL ROL DE LA GUARDIA CIVIL EN EL SAHEL: EL PROYECTO GAR-SI.

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RESUMEN

Ante el riesgo de seguridad que supone para Europa la migración irregular y el terrorismo procedente del Sahel, la Guardia Civil presentó a la Unión Europea un proyecto denominado GAR-SI Sahel (Grupos de Acción Rápida, Vigilancia e Intervención), desarrollado en los países del G-5 Sahel (Mauritania, Malí, Níger, Burkina Faso y Chad) y Senegal. Con un presupuesto inicial de 41,6 millones de euros y tras cinco años desde su lanzamiento en diciembre de 2016, una evaluación de su efectividad es oportuna y necesaria. ¿De qué manera cumple el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel con sus objetivos? ¿Qué opciones de mejora presenta el mismo? Por ello, esta tesis doctoral proporcionará 1) una primera evaluación empírica del Proyecto, orientada a conocer la efectividad de su política desde el prisma de los actores involucrados en el mismo, y 2) una evaluación conceptual, dirigida a revisar la coherencia del Proyecto en relación con sus objetivos iniciales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Guardia Civil, GAR-SI, Sahel, terrorismo, Unión Europea.

ABSTRACT

Faced with the security risk posed for Europe by irregular migration and terrorism from the Sahel, the Guardia Civil presented to the European Union a project called GAR-SI Sahel (Rapid Action, Surveillance and Intervention Groups), developed in the countries of the G-5 Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad) and Senegal. With an initial budget of 41.6 million euros and five years after its launch in December 2016, an evaluation of its effectiveness is timely and necessary. How does the GAR-SI Sahel project meet its objectives? What improvement options does it present? Therefore, this doctoral thesis will provide 1) a first empirical evaluation of the Project, aimed at knowing the effectiveness of its policy from the perspective of the actors involved in it, and 2) a conceptual evaluation, aimed at reviewing the coherence of the Project in relative to your initial goals.

KEY WORDS: Guardia Civil, GAR-SI, Sahel, terrorism, European Union.

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ABREVIACIONES Y ACRÓNIMOS

CAE	Centro de Adiestramientos Especiales
CSPD	Common Security and Defence Policy
DAFO	Debilidades, Amenazas, Fortalezas y Oportunidades
ESDS	Estrategia para la Seguridad y Desarrollo del Sahel
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building Mission
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FOC	Full Operational Capability
GAR	Grupos de Acción Rápida
GAR-SI	Grupos de Acción Rápida - Vigilancia e Intervención
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
G-5	Grupo de Cinco (Mauritania, Malí, Níger, Burkina Faso y Chad)
HK	Heckler & Koch
HUMINT	Inteligencia Humana
IOC	Initial Operational Capacity
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
OIM	Organización Internacional de Migraciones
OSINT	Open-source Intelligence
PIB	Producto Interior Bruto
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
TE-SAT	Terrorist Situation and Trend Report
UAR	Unidad de Acción Rural
UE	Unión Europea
UNMAS	Naciones Unidas de Acción contra las Minas
USA	United States of America

*“The Sahel is everybody’s business and not only France’s. It is a European priority. The time when we could circumscribe the threats or the dangers to one specific territory is over.”*¹

Josep Borrell

*“We all know the future of the Sahel can’t be decided in Brussels. Our Brussels friends agree with us on that. What we are asking for is to be listened to better, to be trusted more by our partners. A pragmatic spirit would no doubt make the EU and other partners more effective and coherent.”*²

Maman Sambo Sidikou

¹ En: (Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, 2020, 12 de Enero).

² En: Palabras de Maman Sambo Sidikou, Secretario Ejecutivo del G-5 Sahel (Friends of Europe, 2021, 13 de Febrero).

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

La pobreza extrema, el desgobierno, la desertificación, la escasez de recursos o la porosidad de sus fronteras han favorecido la proliferación de múltiples organizaciones terroristas y bandas criminales en el Sahel. Por su proximidad geográfica, la Unión Europea se encuentra especialmente expuesta a problemas derivados de esta situación a consecuencia de la emigración irregular y del terrorismo procedente de esta región.

Para hacer frente a este desafío, la Guardia Civil presentó al Fondo Fiduciario de Urgencia de la Comisión Europea un proyecto denominado GAR-SI Sahel (Grupos de Acción Rápida de Vigilancia e Intervención en el Sahel), ejecutado en colaboración con la Gendarmería Nacional francesa, el Arma de Carabinieri italiano y la Guardia Nacional Republicana portuguesa.

Desde su aprobación el 13 de junio de 2016, y con un presupuesto inicial de 41,6 millones de euros, se han creado en los países del G-5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania y Níger) y Senegal, trece unidades GAR-SI a imagen y semejanza del ya existente en España, Grupo de Acción Rápida (GAR) de la Guardia Civil. Asimismo, más de 1800 gendarmes GAR-SI han sido formados por expertos españoles y europeos con el fin de contribuir a la mejora de los niveles de seguridad y del control de fronteras en zonas especialmente aisladas y con escasa presencia estatal.

Sin embargo, a pesar de la cuantía, repercusión y dimensiones del Proyecto GAR-SI, no encontramos ninguna aportación relevante desde la Ciencia Política, las Relaciones Internacionales ni los Estudios de Seguridad, que permita aproximarse a una evaluación de este proyecto.

De lo anterior se dedujo que era necesario desarrollar esta tesis doctoral con la idea de establecer una evaluación continua, empírica y conceptual, del Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel para conocer qué se estaba haciendo, qué se podía hacer y proponer posibles procesos de mejora, redefinición o reestructuración del mismo. Lo anterior se hizo tras una primera fase de exploración, en la que se tuvo en cuenta las posibilidades que este estudio de caso podía tener. En especial, la combinación entre el acceso al campo (Stake, 1995) y las capacidades metodológicas de las que me pude beneficiar a través de los medios que el Instituto Gutiérrez Mellado puso en mis manos.

La inquietud anteriormente planteada por maximizar la aplicabilidad práctica del proyecto GAR-SI, derivó en el establecimiento de las siguientes preguntas de

investigación: ¿De qué manera cumple el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel con sus objetivos?
¿Qué opciones de mejora presenta el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel?

Ante tales preguntas, una de las claves de esta investigación fue ser rigurosos con el andamiaje (King, Keohane y Verba, 1994). El director de esta tesis puso mucho énfasis en la posibilidad de que esta investigación pudiera ser replicada y, sobre todo, que se pudieran deducir conclusiones metodológicas a partir de este estudio. De hecho, la última publicación final de esta tesis, versará sobre la aplicación de la metodología de la investigación en Ciencias Sociales a esta evaluación de políticas públicas con un trabajo de campo tan significativo.

En la segunda etapa, puse mucho énfasis en el análisis bibliográfico de los antecedentes y métodos utilizados por otros investigadores, en trabajos similares de evaluación de programas en seguridad.

En consecuencia, y teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, consideré apropiado el uso de una investigación aplicada de tipo mixto que acopiara como base de partida datos sumamente cualitativos, siendo éstos, complementados y triangulados posteriormente con datos cuantitativos.

De la misma forma, me permití considerar a los actores intervinientes en el Proyecto GAR-SI como artífices del mismo y no tanto el paisaje institucional existente. Por ello, la evaluación del programa se asienta sobre una base eminentemente cualitativa amparada por un acceso al campo idílico y por una observación participante, como sujeto activo del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel. Consciente de los aspectos no positivos que muchos investigadores han destacado en este particular, (Rodríguez, Gil y García, 1996) en la última contribución de la tesis se desarrollará de qué manera esto puede haber tenido algún efecto a la hora de que haya sesgo de la información recibida. Las conclusiones preliminares descartan esta posibilidad ya que no existirían intereses que lo pudieran justificar. La evaluación no mide el desempeño de una compañía en particular ni de la Guardia Civil sino del proyecto en su conjunto.

A razón de estos hechos, creí pertinente que el diseño de la investigación se desarrollara de manera desestructurada, permitiendo que me sorprendiera en todo momento el desarrollo de la misma, abierto a cualquier modificación inesperada (Denzin, 2017), incluso significativa, sin importar dejar rastro de la agonía y la incertidumbre sufrida durante la construcción y desarrollo de la investigación. Además, igual que ocurre

en otras evaluaciones similares de políticas públicas, consideré preferible profundizar en los detalles, en este caso sobre los actores intervinientes en el Proyecto, y realizar una investigación más intensiva que extensiva, sin olvidar el objetivo último de mis preguntas de investigación.

Para ello, supuse acertado asignar al primer capítulo una evaluación cualitativa de la fase I de formación del Proyecto, desarrollada íntegramente en el Centro de Adiestramientos Especiales (CAE) de la Guardia Civil, por el especial interés que revierte el hecho de que en ella se desarrolla la formación de los futuros mandos y formadores de las unidades GAR-SI Sahel.

A través de varias rondas de entrevistas semi-estructuradas y de una clasificación categórica de la información obtenida resultante de la aplicación del método Delphi, este capítulo inicial ansía ofrecer una primera evaluación empírica, orientada a conocer la efectividad del proyecto y las metas de desempeño del mismo a través de diferentes testimonios de expertos europeos formadores del Proyecto.

De igual forma, he tratado además de profundizar en la evaluación de la fase I de formación recibida en el CAE, mediante la elaboración de un segundo capítulo que abordara una investigación tipo mixta con datos del registro administrativo aportados por el propio Centro, entre los que se incluyen valoraciones y encuestas de satisfacción. De esta manera, pretendo ampliar el espectro de la evaluación y tener en cuenta el prisma de los propios formandos como actores intervinientes directos del Proyecto.

A continuación, a fin de no dejar tampoco de lado el marco conceptual del Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel y orientar también la investigación hacia una revisión aplicada del diseño de su programa en cuanto a solución de un problema de seguridad público, se ha procedido en los capítulos tercero y cuarto a efectuar una evaluación conceptual del mismo.

Con tal propósito, el capítulo tercero aborda una evaluación de carácter prospectivo asociada al proceso de diseño y formulación del Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel como pieza de ensamblaje en el complejo puzzle regional de seguridad que afronta la región del Sahel.

De igual forma, se evaluó conceptualmente el Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel como respuesta a los múltiples esfuerzos europeos de desarrollar capacidades de inteligencia en las gendarmerías del Sahel. Para ello, a través de una discusión de grupo focal, el capítulo cuarto pretende responder al nivel de desempeño de inteligencia de las unidades GAR-

SI, y cómo pueden éstas afectar en las relaciones internacionales y a los canales de inteligencia entre el Sahel y Europa.

Seguidamente, mi investigación abandona el marco conceptual y retorna nuevamente, en su capítulo quinto, a la evaluación empírica, a fin de conocer la efectividad del Proyecto GAR-SI en una fase más avanzada como es la formación de gendarmes fuera de las fronteras europeas. Utilizo para tal efecto, un diseño de estudio de antes y después, realizado en Burkina Faso, que explore los efectos de la acción en las habilidades de tiro y la condición física de los gendarmes GAR-SI.

A fin de cuentas, el objetivo es que esta investigación sea capaz de identificar aquellas áreas de oportunidad y fortalezas tanto en el diseño como en la ejecución del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel e impulse a su vez a más investigadores a continuar con el estudio del mismo, dada su aprobada prolongación en el tiempo.

Cabe destacar también, que se trata de una tesis doctoral con mucha exposición a actividades académicas entre las que destacan la presentación de un panel titulado “El rol de la Guardia Civil en el Sahel: el Proyecto GAR-SI” durante las XIII Jornadas de Estudios de Seguridad del Instituto Universitario Gutiérrez Mellado, la presentación de la ponencia “La Inteligencia en el Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel” en el Congreso Anual de la Asociación Española de Ciencia Política, que será complementada por otra, en el panel ofrecido por International Studies Association que se desarrollará en Nashville (USA) en abril del año 2022.

Igualmente, esta tesis doctoral se ha dotado de un carácter internacional con la realización de una estancia de investigación en el Instituto de Estudios Internacionales de la Universidad de Chile, finalizando ésta con la presentación de una conferencia que lleva por título: "Capacitación de Fuerzas de Seguridad: La experiencia de española en formación de Grupos de Sección Rápida (GAR) para el G-5 de Sahel, como instrumento de cooperación internacional".

2. FASE I DEL PROYECTO GAR-SI: EVALUACIÓN CUALITATIVA DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DE LOS EXPERTOS FORMADORES EUROPEOS

Autores como Echeverría (2019) o Grégorie (2019) han indicado que la región del Sahel es una zona actualmente en crisis en la que concurren una serie de circunstancias extremas, que hacen de su territorio una «tormenta perfecta», como así apuntó recientemente el representante especial de la Unión Europea (UE) para el Sahel, Ángel Losada Fernández. La pobreza extrema, el desgobierno, la desertificación, la escasez de recursos o la porosidad de sus fronteras son algunos de los elementos desestabilizadores que han propiciado la proliferación de múltiples organizaciones terroristas y bandas criminales a lo largo y ancho del vasto territorio del Sahel.

Compendiando datos concretos, puede observarse como el PIB per cápita medio de los cinco países que forman el G5 Sahel a precios corrientes fue de 921,74 dólares en 2019. Esta cifra apenas supone el 8% de la renta per cápita mundial. Igualmente, según la publicación bienal de Naciones Unidas, the World Population Prospects, de los 2.0 billones de personas que se añadirían al total de la población mundial entre el año 2019 y 2050, 1.05 billones (52%) serían aportados por los países del Sahel.

Dada su cercanía, la Unión Europea sufre en consecuencia problemas de seguridad a colación de la emigración irregular y del terrorismo procedente de esta región. Para hacer frente a este desafío, la Guardia Civil española presentó al Fondo Fiduciario de Urgencia de la Comisión Europea un proyecto denominado GAR-SI Sahel con la idea de crear en los países del G-5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania y Níger) y Senegal, unos Grupos de Acción Rápida de Vigilancia e Intervención en el Sahel a semejanza del ya existente en España con el fin de contribuir a la mejora de los niveles de seguridad y del control de fronteras en zonas especialmente aisladas y con escasa presencia estatal.

El proyecto GAR-SI Sahel se desarrolla en varias fases consecutivas (diagnóstico, formación: fase I, II, III y IV, mentorización, interoperabilidad y cierre), y es ejecutado en colaboración con otras gendarmerías europeas como son la Gendarmería Nacional francesa, el Arma de Carabinieri italiana y la Guardia Nacional Republicana portuguesa.

Dada su entidad y relevancia, este artículo pretende conocer el desarrollo de la fase I de formación y realizar una evaluación cualitativa de la misma, a través de la confección de entrevistas semi-estructuradas y la aplicación de la técnica Delphi. Para tal efecto, el artículo se compone de los siguientes apartados:

En primer lugar, el artículo se inicia con una breve introducción de cómo la Guardia Civil exporta su experiencia en materia antiterrorista, liderando un proyecto multinacional europeo que pretende dar respuesta a la inestabilidad del Sahel. A continuación, el texto se distribuye en cuatro partes diferenciadas: una primera parte empírica en la que se exponen las causas que han motivado la elección de un método cualitativo para la evaluación de la fase I de formación, una segunda parte de desarrollo e implementación del proceso, una tercera en la que se presenta la clasificación categórica de la información recopilada, y una cuarta etapa en la que se analizan los resultados obtenidos mediante la aplicación de un análisis DAFO. Por último, se exponen las conclusiones obtenidas relativas a la identificación de debilidades, fortalezas, oportunidades y amenazas del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, así como el planteamiento de propuestas de mejora que permitan su durabilidad en el tiempo.

2.1. La Guardia Civil. De su origen decimonónico a herramienta de la Unión Europea en el mundo global

La Guardia Civil es constituida en el año 1844 como respuesta al bandolerismo de principios del siglo XIX (Ruiz, 2010). En respuesta, la reina Isabel II acuñó el nombre de Guardia Civil por tratarse de guardias armados a las órdenes de autoridades civiles, designando al Duque de Ahumada, D. Francisco Javier Girón y Ezpeleta, como persona de confianza para organizar la nueva Institución. A través de una severa reglamentación recogida en la conocida como Cartilla del guardia civil, el Duque de Ahumada imprimió su sello personal en el Instituto Armado granjeándole una gran eficacia en el ejercicio de sus funciones, mediante la práctica del «culto al honor y rigor en el desempeño de su servicio» (Aguilar y Espino, 2012, p. 117).

Desde su origen decimonónico, la Guardia Civil ha ido evolucionando con el trascurso de los tiempos, adecuándose y adaptándose para combatir las diferentes amenazas que la sociedad española ha tenido que enfrentar. Sin embargo, como así indica De Miguel (2019, p. 109), «la lucha contra el terrorismo ha sido una de las señas de identidad de la Guardia Civil [...] si bien, de entre todas ellas, destaca la lucha contra ETA».

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) se constituye en 1958 y ha asesinado a un total de 829 personas durante sus 53 años de existencia (De la Calle y Sánchez-Cuenca, 2004). Varios fueron los factores que provocaron el cese definitivo de su actividad armada el 20 octubre de 2011 (Corbí, 2016). Sin embargo, en palabras del propio dirigente de Herri Batasuna

Txema Montero (2012), fue la Guardia Civil quien constituyó «el instrumento más efectivo en la lucha contra ETA».

Según exponen expertos en terrorismo como Corbí, (2016, p. 36), la «capacidad de adaptación y evolución del Cuerpo» fue uno de los principales factores que hicieron posible la derrota de ETA. Ejemplo de ello, fue la constitución de la Unidad Antiterrorista Rural, hoy Grupo de Acción Rápida GAR, en respuesta a la escalada terrorista del año 1978. Sánchez Corbí (2016, p. 37) afirma en sus testimonios que «su actuación tuvo unos efectos inmediatos», recuperando el dominio del terreno, dificultando el movimiento de terroristas y evitando la comisión de atentados. Asimismo, el GAR tuvo también una «enorme incidencia en el campo de la psicología», alcanzando años después la «excelencia en su trabajo», y convirtiéndose en «la herramienta más eficaz de los Servicios de Información». Esa combinación de capacidad operativa junto con la obtención y el procesamiento de información resultaron clave para el éxito de los objetivos.

Años después de que Bustos (2010) subrayara que el GAR había sido la mejor vacuna contra el virus de ETA, la Guardia Civil, en su permanente adaptación, continuó exportando el modelo GAR hasta nuestros días, como vacuna para hacer frente a otros escenarios más actuales como son el narcotráfico, el crimen organizado o el terrorismo yihadista. De igual modo, los más de cuarenta años de lucha contra ETA unidos a su amplia experiencia internacional (González, 2015), han hecho de la Guardia Civil un «actor fundamental» en la materialización de las estrategias de seguridad de la Unión Europea (Rojo, 2017, p. 10).

El advenimiento de la conocida como «nueva frontera sur de Europa» (Fagín, 2017, p. 1) y la «dimensión transfronteriza» (Anguita y Gómez del Miño, 2019) alcanzada por los conflictos sufridos en los países del Sahel, han propiciado la implicación de la UE sobre el cinturón africano.

Así, en marzo de 2011, la UE adoptó un enfoque integral para la región del Sahel, con su Estrategia para la Seguridad y el Desarrollo del Sahel (ESDS)³ al objeto de apoyar a Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania y Níger en ámbitos de interés común como la seguridad, la migración, el terrorismo, la situación humanitaria y el desarrollo a largo plazo. Sin embargo, la crisis de Mali de 2012 dificultó el desarrollo de la mencionada

³ Texto completo disponible en: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf

hoja de ruta obligando a la UE a confeccionar, tres años más tarde, un Plan de Acción Regional (PAR) en «respuesta a las dificultades que el personal había encontrado durante la aplicación de la Estrategia del Sahel sobre el terreno» (Mora, 2015, p. 5). Ambas acciones, ponen de manifiesto la intención de la UE de luchar contra las amenazas a la paz y a la estabilidad que afectan a la región del Sahel. (García, 2017).

2.2. Parte empírica, desarrollo e implementación

Por su proximidad geográfica, la UE, y España en particular, se encuentran especialmente expuestas a problemas derivados de la inseguridad en el Sahel, (Pareja, 2015) haciendo frente a una crisis migratoria (Estevens, 2018) y al terrorismo procedente de la región (Díaz y Rodríguez, 2015). Por ello, la Guardia Civil ha querido contribuir en la estrategia europea, diseñando y liderando el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel.

Como así lo define uno de sus creadores (Rojo, 2017, p. 37-38), se trata de un proyecto multinacional europeo liderado por la Guardia Civil, cuyo objetivo es la creación y despliegue de seis unidades GAR tipo compañía, a imagen y semejanza de las ya existentes en España, en los países africanos del G5 Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Níger, Chad, Burkina Faso) y Senegal. Estas unidades GAR-SI estarán «completamente formadas, equipadas y operativas, para cooperar en la estabilidad de la zona y reforzar las capacidades operativas de las autoridades nacionales mediante un control efectivo del territorio que permita extender la acción del estado de derecho a la totalidad del Sahel».

PRIMERA PARTE: PARTE EMPÍRICA.

A la hora de abordar esta investigación, la parte empírica se erige como piedra angular de la evaluación del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, dada la oportunidad de acceso a un campo, en ocasiones hermético, como resultan ser los programas de seguridad.

Planificación y reflexión

En el primer período de exploración del proyecto se observó que éste se encontraba estructurado en varias fases: diagnóstico, formación (fase I, II, III y IV), mentorización, interoperabilidad y cierre. Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, se realizó un estudio previo de planificación y búsqueda, al objeto de explorar las alternativas hacia una evaluación del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, con la intención de conocer lo existente y plantear mejoras.

Se estipuló finalmente la fase I como la etapa más indicada para la evaluación por tratarse de la única fase desarrollada íntegramente en España y por el especial interés que revierte el hecho de que en ella se desarrolla la formación de los futuros mandos y

formadores de las unidades GAR-SI Sahel. Dicha fase, comprende un programa formativo de dos meses de duración en el Centro de Adiestramientos Especiales (CAE) de la Guardia Civil, sito en la ciudad de Logroño, a la que han asistido un total de 16 mandos y 12 formadores de cada país beneficiario. Asimismo, los respectivos cursos para mandos y formadores GAR-SI han sido impartidos por personal docente de la Unidad de Acción Rápida (UAR) (GAR-CAE) auxiliados por tres expertos: un experto francés en intervención operativa y técnicas pedagógicas, un experto portugués en armas y tácticas especiales y un experto italiano en planeamiento operativo.

El segundo período consistió en la revisión teórica de los procesos de evaluación cualitativa de las políticas públicas en relación a lo descrito por King, Keohane y Verba (1994), al objeto de conocer de qué manera se podría maximizar la aplicabilidad práctica de la investigación, teniendo en cuenta el objetivo final que debe de guiar la investigación en Ciencias Sociales (Firebaugh, 2008). Para lograr tal efecto, se debe desarrollar la problematización del objeto de la investigación y reconocer, en una primera impresión, la brecha entre la realidad empírica y las teorías.

De lo anterior se dedujo que era necesario llevar a cabo esta investigación acerca del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel para conocer qué se estaba haciendo, qué se podía hacer y proponer procesos de mejora. Concretamente, la evaluación de programas de enseñanza es uno de los casos expresamente mencionados por Rodríguez Gómez, Gil Flores, y García Jiménez (1996; 92), donde establecen como única exigencia la disposición de algún límite físico o social que le confiera entidad.

La inquietud anteriormente planteada por maximizar la aplicabilidad práctica del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, derivó en el establecimiento de la siguiente pregunta de investigación: ¿de qué manera se desarrolla la fase formativa I?, así como en la formulación de objetivos como la identificación de debilidades y fortalezas del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel y el establecimiento de propuestas de mejora.

Teniendo en cuenta todo lo expuesto, se planteó que la metodología cualitativa podría ser la más adecuada en relación a lo establecido por Stake (1995), quien estipula que la elección del tipo de diseño ha de venir determinada por lo que él denomina la «oportunidad» para aprender lo más posible sobre el objeto de investigación. De ahí que, se detectara como oportunidad el hecho de que uno de los investigadores hubiera participado durante el proceso de formación en todas las etapas del mismo disponiendo, por lo tanto, de una «observación participante» (Guest et al. ,2013) y de un acceso al

campo que le permitía integrarse en la situación estudiada, de forma que las personas informantes dejaran de alarmarse o autocontrolarse por su presencia.

Asimismo, el hecho de optar por una metodología cualitativa en la evaluación del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel permite profundizar en aspectos específicos relativos al análisis contextual a los que no accederíamos de otra forma y ofrece la oportunidad de generar datos sobre la variedad de perspectivas de los distintos actores sociales dentro del contexto del fenómeno estudiado.

SEGUNDA PARTE: DESARROLLO E IMPLEMENTACIÓN

En este apartado, se definen los procedimientos e instrumentos llevados a cabo, así como el universo participante objeto de estudio utilizado para el desarrollo y la implementación de una evaluación capaz de arrojar respuesta a los objetivos planteados.

Procedimiento

Basándonos en los análisis realizados por Maxwell (2020) para la evaluación de políticas y programas públicos, se ha optado por una evaluación cualitativa que aglutine los posibles efectos producidos por las perspectivas de los participantes, el contexto en el que se desarrolla, así como el proceso llevado a cabo. Para ello, se ha dividido la investigación en cuatro fases: una fase previa consistente en la realización de entrevistas semi-estructuradas con preguntas abiertas como así exponen Hung et al. (2008, p. 197) de aproximación general primero y de aspectos específicos después, una segunda fase que alberga el diseño y la aplicación de la técnica Delphi como método prospectivo de recogida de información; una tercera etapa centrada en la clasificación categórica de la información obtenida y, por último, una cuarta fase descriptivo-exploratoria y evaluativa asentada sobre una matriz DAFO para el análisis de resultados.

En referencia al proceso iterativo en rondas se ha tenido en cuenta el estudio realizado por Worthen y Sanders (1987, p. 312) en el que indican que «los resultados comienzan a disminuir y a estabilizarse rápidamente después de la tercera ronda». Por lo tanto, se han desarrollado tres etapas Delphi y, en segunda y tercera ronda, se ha ido incorporando información teniendo en cuenta las respuestas de la ronda anterior para ir refinando la investigación.

Así, se ha estimado la finalización del Delphi una vez alcanzada la «estabilidad del panel» (Martínez, 2003, p. 456) a través de la «saturación de la información» (Morse,

1995) y de la convergencia entre las opiniones de los participantes o «member checking» con una proporción de expertos que modifican su valoración inferior al 20%.

Además de lo anterior se triangula también la información a través de las reflexiones y experiencias del propio investigador como parte activa del proyecto, ya que, como así expone Quinn Patton (1990, p. 475), «es realmente trágico aquellos científicos que rehúsan de atender a su propio comportamiento como dato del cual se puede aprender»⁴. Se hace lo anterior a través del método de observación participante en la versión en la que éste es más actor que observador. De esta manera se observa que, además de la validación de la información obtenida en cuanto a su veracidad, también se destacan las consecuencias positivas de un acceso al campo idílico a nivel de investigación cualitativa.

Por último, para el análisis de resultados y la implementación de propuestas de mejora se ha utilizado el análisis DAFO como herramienta de gestión para facilitar el proceso de planeación estratégica del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, puesto que facilita la apreciación objetiva de su desarrollo y proporciona la información necesaria para la implementación de acciones y medidas correctivas (Olivera y Hernández, 2011).

Participantes

La selección y conformación del panel de expertos ha sido realizada en base a los atributos expuestos por Pill (1971), procurando especial importancia a sus antecedentes y experiencia previa en unidades de intervención policial, así como su disposición a revisar su juicio inicial en el desarrollo del estudio.

Asimismo, sobre la base de estudio realizado por López-Gómez (2018, p. 24) en el que se indica que el panel de expertos «no suele ser inferior a una decena», se ha constituido un panel compuesto por un total de trece expertos, donde todos ellos, han sido informados previamente del anonimato y la voluntariedad del proceso. Igualmente, la elección del panel ha precisado de una «aproximación contingente» (Landeta, 1999) que tenga en cuenta la naturaleza de un proyecto como el GAR-SI Sahel, que aglutina en su seno cuatro nacionalidades europeas distintas. Por ello, en el panel de expertos se han incluido las experiencias aportadas por los siguientes formadores: seis guardias civiles,

⁴ La traducción ha sido realizada por el propio autor de la cita en idioma original: «scientists to refuse to treat their own behavior as data from which one can learn is really tragic»

dos carabinieri italianos, un componente de la Gendarmería Nacional Francesa, así como cuatro miembros de la Guardia Nacional Republicana portuguesa.

Tabla 1:

Representación del universo participante por institutos armados del Consorcio europeo

	Número de formadores fase I	Número de formadores entrevistados	Representación %
Guardia Civil	6	6	46,16%
Guardia Nacional Republicana Portuguesa	4	4	30,77%
Arma de Carabinieri italiana	5	2	15,38%
Gendarmería Nacional Francesa	6	1	7,69%
Total	21	13	100%

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de la información de la base de datos del proyecto.

Igualmente, a la hora de seleccionar el panel de expertos, también se ha tenido en cuenta la heterogeneidad del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel y la necesidad de individualización por países al objeto de que todos los Estados beneficiarios del programa de formación queden representados:

Tabla 2:

Representación del universo participante por países beneficiarios del proyecto

	Número de formadores fase I	Número de formadores entrevistados	Representación %
Burkina Faso	8	6	75%
Chad	8	8	100%
Mali	8	6	75%
Mauritania	8	7	87,5%
Níger	8	6	75%
Senegal	8	7	87,5%

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de la información de la base de datos del proyecto.

La calidad del panel de expertos ha sido también tenida en cuenta, eligiendo aquellos que arrojaron un mayor índice de «competencia experta» (Cabero y Barroso, 2013) y utilizando, como fundamentación de criterios, su grado de intervención en el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, su participación previa en misiones internacionales de formación policial y su experiencia profesional en centros de adiestramientos especiales. Teniendo en cuenta que se trata de una investigación enmarcada dentro de los estudios de seguridad (De Castro y García, 2018) se han desarrollado los procedimientos bajo un estricto protocolo que asegure el anonimato y la fiabilidad de la información.

Instrumentos

Para la realización de las entrevistas semi-estructuradas se ha confeccionado un «árbol de categorías apriorístico» (Cisterna, 2005, p. 64) que contuviera los aspectos formativos más destacados incluidos en el programa docente del curso GAR-SI para mandos y formadores. A medida que avanzaban las entrevistas se ha procedido a la re-categorización e inclusión de otras categorías y subcategorías emergentes dada la suma importancia que los entrevistados han procurado a los aspectos culturales y a la heterogeneidad de los países. Igualmente, a fin de establecer una correcta categorización, se ha utilizado una «estrategia de verificación» (Morse, 2002) cimentada en la triangulación por parte de un experto en metodología de la investigación cualitativa. Posteriormente, a través de un proceso inferencial se ha procedido a aglutinar entre sí las diversas categorías según pertinencia temática y teórica arrojando como resultado final el siguiente árbol de categorías:

Tabla 3:

Relación de categorías identificadas durante las entrevistas

ÁRBOL DE CATEGORÍAS	
ASPECTOS CULTURALES (1)	ASPECTOS FORMATIVOS (2)
CREENCIAS (1.1)	CAPACITACIÓN (2.1)
COSTUMBRES (1.2)	Motivación (2.1.1)
IDIOMA (1.3)	Liderazgo (2.1.2)
	Concepción de la amenaza (2.1.3)
	Interoperabilidad (2.1.4)
	Deontología profesional (2.1.5)
	DESARROLLO (2.2)
	Programación (2.2.1)
	Metodología (2.2.2)
	Capacidades previas (2.2.3)
	Coordinación del consorcio (2.2.4)
	Perfil del formador (2.2.5)
	ADIESTRAMIENTO (2.3)
	Intervención operativa (2.3.1)
	Técnicas especiales (2.3.2)

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de la información obtenida durante las entrevistas.

2.3. Clasificación categórica de la información

Esta fase es denominada «de cierre» por Tójar (2006) puesto que se llega a ella al tomar, de forma justificada, la decisión de concluir la investigación por una serie de motivos, entre los que se encuentra generalmente la saturación de la información. Así, una de las fortalezas de esta investigación es que se proporcionan datos originales, aportando la fuente primaria, de forma que los datos queden abiertos a la interpretación de otras personas (Rodríguez, Gil y García, 1996).

El resultado se ha planteado con lo aportado por Miles y Huberman (1994) sobre la reducción de los datos, presentación de datos, extracción y verificación de conclusiones y se ha tenido en cuenta también el desarrollo de Ruiz e Ispizúa (1989), donde apunta que la categorización en metodología cualitativa se realiza a través de un proceso de transformación de un texto a un dato. De este modo, a medida que se examinan los datos, las categorías son definidas siguiendo un procedimiento inductivo iniciado con la proposición de categorías provisionales, las cuales, evolucionan paulatinamente en su codificación pudiendo ser consolidadas, modificadas o suprimidas conforme avanza el proceso.

A lo anterior se añade la contribución de Strauss y Corbin (1990) sobre la «codificación abierta» y la disposición y presentación de datos de forma ordenada de Miles y Huberman (1994) y Rodríguez Gómez, Gil Flores, y García Jiménez (1996). De igual manera, se ha utilizado un sistema de indización consistente en una estructuración de conceptos jerarquizados en forma de árbol invertido que admite cruzar la información de nudos y exportar la tabla, los propios nudos y otras propiedades a programas diferentes (Rodríguez, Gil y García, 1996; Tójar 2006).

TERCERA PARTE: CLASIFICACIÓN CATEGÓRICA

Sobre las bases de todo lo anteriormente expuesto se ha extraído la siguiente clasificación categórica:

En primer lugar, la categoría 1 aspectos culturales destaca por su frecuencia tras obtener un 100% de menciones en los datos obtenidos, proyectando la máxima importancia al cultural awareness como método para acortar las barreras culturales entre instructores y alumnos. En concreto, presentan mayor frecuencia las subcategorías creencias (1.1) con un 100% y costumbres (1.2) con un 88,89% como aspectos más determinantes, donde resultan ilustrativas las expresiones siguientes: «desconocemos

tanto la cultura musulmana que muchos alumnos se aprovechan de ello [...] tenemos una concepción muy equivocada» (u.t. A1) o, también, «me hubiera gustado que me avisaran de que son tan cariñosos entre los hombres, me chocó mucho que pasaran contigo de la mano o te acariciaran» (u.t. A4).

Resulta también de interés en la subcategoría creencias (1.1) la alusión de la figura de policía religiosa, como elemento existente en algunos países de mayoría musulmana. «entre ellos traían una persona que se notaba los ataba en corto» (u.t. A9) «había uno que, al parecer, era un responsable religioso [...] tenía bastante influencia sobre muchos de ellos y se dedicaba a evaluar a los propios gendarmes, [...] esa fue mi impresión. [...] él era el que quería imponer los horarios de rezo de manera más estricta» (u.t. A6). De acuerdo con los datos, la influencia de este componente en el grupo es mayor cuanto menor sea el conocimiento de la religión y cultura por parte de los formadores europeos, poniendo de nuevo de manifiesto la importancia del cultural awarness.

En el caso de la subcategoría costumbres (1.2), los datos contribuyen a identificar la existencia de otra figura conocida como «el machaca» (u.t. B8). Se trata de «una especie de ayudante para los oficiales que les hacía funciones de todo tipo: corre ve y dile, les limpiaba los zapatos, preparaba el té [...]» (u.t. A9). De igual modo, para los entrevistados, los países del Sahel ofrecen una cultura de contrastes, donde la generosidad de su religión y el colectivismo étnico contrasta, en ocasiones, con el interés personal de cada uno. Por un lado, «si tienen una sola chocolatina no dudan en compartirla [...] son muy solidarios» pero también «allí rige la ley del más fuerte y la de la supervivencia diaria o el interés [...] si tienen que pegarte un tiro no van a dudar».

En contraposición, la subcategoría idioma (1.3) obtuvo un 44,44% de citas entre los informantes, quienes, no consideraron el idioma como hándicap cultural, desaconsejaron el uso de traductores durante las formaciones y centraron el principal interés sobre las subcategorías antes mencionadas (1.1 y 1.2), como así puede apreciarse en las siguientes manifestaciones: «el no compartir el mismo idioma no es un impedimento. [...] Más impedimento es la barrera física que a veces los extranjeros ponemos. [...] En ocasiones, los prejuicios de la mentalidad occidental y el no empatizar con ellos y su cultura suponen una verdadera barrera.» (u.t. A4).

Trasladándonos a la categoría 2 aspectos formativos, los datos señalan un 100% de menciones entre los informantes, suscitando especial relevancia la subcategoría capacitación (2.1) con una frecuencia del 44,26%. Dentro de ella, es la sub-subcategoría

motivación (2.1.1) la que genera especial interés entre la muestra, con una reiteración del 33,33%. Concretamente, destaca la «contribución por rendimientos» (u.t. C3) como mejor forma de motivación durante la formación «si se realiza de manera objetiva, global y con unos mínimos incentivos» (u.t. C3). Asimismo, para garantizar una motivación sostenida en el tiempo una vez terminado el período formativo, el 66,67% de los informantes señalan otros conceptos a tener en cuenta como son la «remuneración económica por parte de los países del Sahel acorde con la dedicación y peligrosidad de la Unidad GAR-SI» (u.t. B6), o «incentivos de régimen de descaso y de prioridad a la hora de elegir un destino después de cumplir el tiempo de permanencia de la unidad» (u.t. B7).

En menor medida, los informantes destacan que a pesar de que la mayoría de los componentes GAR-SI no son voluntarios y no obtienen ventaja alguna de pertenecer a la Unidad, se ha logrado un sentimiento de pertenencia gracias «a la motivación técnica y al hecho de pertenecer a una unidad especial» (u.t. B6) caracterizada por signos propios como «el simple hecho de llevar todos el mismo parche en el uniforme» (u.t. B1), o «la disponibilidad de medios que les distinguen al resto de gendarmes» (u.t. B3). Igualmente, el sentimiento de orgullo y pertenencia a la unidad se ve incrementado dada la seguridad que ofrece el hecho de pertenecer a una unidad como el GAR-SI según el 77,78% de informantes. Tal afirmación puede verse ilustrada en expresiones como: «ellos no son tontos, se dan cuenta que cuando los mandan a una zona de acción o de conflicto van como unidad reunida y no van tirados por ahí; forman parte de una unidad que se desplaza en unas condiciones medianamente aceptables, y eso les da seguridad» (u.t. A3).

Otra sub-subcategoría que se presenta mayoritariamente en las manifestaciones de los encuestados es liderazgo (2.1.2) con un 25,93% de menciones. Según muestran los datos obtenidos, las gendarmerías del Sahel se caracterizan por disponer de un estilo de mando autoritario, «simplemente mandan a base de impartir miedo» (u.t. A7). Este hecho podría suponer un impedimento en la formación dadas las diferencias jerárquicas que, en ocasiones, existen entre formador y formado. No obstante, entre los datos analizados, resultan representativas cualidades como «las capacidades técnicas» (u.t. B6) (66,67%), «el respeto mutuo» (u.t. B4) (55,56%), el «cultural awarness» (u.t. B1) (44,44%) y «la humildad» (u.t. B2) (33,33%) como herramientas clave para solventar tales diferencias.

De igual manera, el análisis de los datos realza también en un 25,9% de frecuencia la sub-subcategoría concepción de la amenaza (2.1.3) como elemento diferenciador en los países del Sahel ya que, según el 55,56% de los informantes, «su cultura ha normalizado

la violencia» (u.t. A5) y ha hecho del terrorismo «un problema más de criminalidad» (u.t. C1). Además, según los datos, algunos componentes GAR-SI ven la amenaza terrorista «muy lejana» (u.t. A3). No obstante, existen testimonios que afirman que «el futuro despliegue de las unidades GAR-SI en zona de conflicto provocará una mayor toma de conciencia» (u.t. C7).

Asimismo, la sub-subcategoría interoperabilidad (2.1.4), supone un reto para el proyecto GAR-SI según el 22,22% de los informantes. Además, la totalidad de los informantes coinciden en que uno de los mayores aciertos en cuestiones de interoperabilidad fue la realización de una formación conjunta bajo los criterios de fronteras compartidas. Este hecho se percibe en expresiones como las siguientes: «La distribución de los países se realizó de manera lógica [...] teniendo en cuenta que estos fueran fronterizos, al objeto de poder llevar a cabo acciones conjuntas en el futuro» (u.t. A1) y «el hecho de ser fronterizos ayudó mucho» (u.t. A9).

Igualmente, los datos arrojan que países como Senegal, Mali o Níger destacan en la subcategoría interoperabilidad (2.1.4) debido a que la mayor parte de sus cuadros de mando han recibido cursos o formaciones en el extranjero: «Me decantaría por la formación común que tienen los mandos en los cursos de Estado Mayor realizados en el extranjero» (u.t. B8). Al respecto, se observan también otras manifestaciones referidas a otros ámbitos como son las sinergias previas creadas con otras fuerzas internacionales en el marco de otras misiones internacionales, véase: «Al fin y al cabo, el hecho de trabajar en coaliciones obliga a desarrollar capacidades de coordinación y cooperación» (u.t. B1).

Se destaca también con una frecuencia del 11,11% la sub-subcategoría deontología profesional (2.1.5) y, en especial, el papel de la mujer en el GAR-SI como aspecto más representativo según los datos recopilados. Según (u.t. B8), «sólo tres mujeres realizaron la fase I de formación GAR-SI» y actualmente «son empleadas para tareas de apoyo y no en los operativos cotidianos» (u.t. B8). No obstante, el 77,78% de los informantes muestra su desacuerdo a la hora de imponer o forzar criterios de igualdad de género en el proyecto GAR-SI, ya que, «no van a ser bien recibidas, ni aceptadas» (u.t. B4) y «podría generar graves problemas tipo violaciones o agresiones sexuales» (u.t. B1). Asimismo, los datos muestran que se deben dar pasos para conseguir una igualdad en derechos en el Sahel. Sin embargo, «fomentar la figura de la mujer en unidades reunidas en la lucha contra terrorista, no es quizás el primero, ni el más acertado» (u.t. B7).

Los resultados del análisis arrojan igualmente una alta frecuencia del 37,70% en la subcategoría desarrollo (2.2) con especial alusión a la sub-subcategoría programación (2.2.1), en la que los datos recogidos manifiestan un interés por parte del 26,09% de los informantes en la realización de actividades culturales post-instrucción durante los programas de formación como «forma de implementación del cultural awareness» (u.t. C6).

Con un 26,09% de reiteración, la sub-subcategoría metodología (2.2.2) suscita especial interés dado que, según los datos recogidos, un 66,67% de informantes erigen como buena praxis el hecho de que el proceso formativo de la fase I se desarrollara en el Centro de Adiestramientos Especiales de Logroño. Este hecho queda referido a través de expresiones como: «los alumnos se encuentran fuera de su zona de confort y se esfuerzan más por seguir el programa» (u.t. B6), «la facilidad de tener todas las infraestructuras y apoyos necesarios» (u.t. B4), «los alumnos recibieron un plus en la formación ya que las instalaciones son mejores que las que se poseen en los países destinatarios» (u.t. B7), o también, «permitió diferenciar a los mandos y formadores de aquellos que dieron el curso base, dándoles un ascendiente frente al resto» (u.t. B7) y «ayudó a que se conocieran los miembros de dos países que en un futuro trabajarían de forma conjunta» (u.t. B7). Del mismo modo, el hecho de recibir una formación en terreno europeo «suele ser visto como una marca de calidad [...] lo que contribuye al prestigio de la futura unidad GAR-SI». (u.t. B3)

Dentro de esta subcategoría, también se reitera con frecuencia del 21,74% el concepto capacidades previas (2.2.3) donde el 66,67% de los informantes destaca como ejemplo negativo de gestión la selección de personal efectuada por Mauritania, ya que contempló personal «a punto de jubilarse» (u.t. A1) y «con familia» (u.t. B8) para evitar deserciones. En contraposición, los datos recopilados avalan como forma correcta de selección la designación de «gente joven y mandos con proyección» (u.t. B8) y destacan como ejemplo a seguir el caso de Níger con una proporción de alumnos convocada para su selección de ratio 1/3.

A continuación, los datos destacan en escala de frecuencia con un 13,04% de menciones, la sub-subcategoría coordinación del consorcio (2.2.4), entendiéndose por el 88,89% de los informantes como una falta de equidad en el reparto de las tareas entre los países europeos conformantes del mismo. Asimismo, los datos muestran la alusión de otros conceptos que indican una falta de coordinación interna del consorcio, en

expresiones como: «Hemos tenido que romper la estructura inicial del curso para intentar darle gusto al resto de países y que todos quedaran satisfechos» (u.t. A3). De igual manera, los informantes reiteran con frecuencia del 13,04% la sub-subcategoría perfil del formador (2.2.5) como concepto a tener en cuenta para el buen devenir del proyecto GAR-SI.

Otra subcategoría que redonda interés por frecuencia de alusiones es adiestramiento (2.3) con un 18,03% de las menciones, donde la sub-subcategoría intervención operativa (2.3.1) se erige entre los informantes con porcentajes del 72,73%. En ella, el análisis de datos estipula una necesaria priorización en la instrucción de tiro de arma larga frente al arma corta, ya que el uso de ésta se encuentra «restringido a Oficiales y algunos Suboficiales» (u.t. B4) en la práctica totalidad de países del Sahel. Igualmente, el hecho de realizar la formación en suelo europeo permitió según los datos obtenidos «una amplia disponibilidad en armas, municiones, campos de tiro y siluetas conformes» (u.t. B8), «difícil de recrear en el Sahel» (u.t. B6). Igualmente, el hecho de realizar los ejercicios de tiro con un arma diferente a la utilizada no ha sido visto por los el 77,78% de los informantes como un impedimento si el formador dispone de las habilidades necesarias para transmitir correctamente los fundamentos del tiro, ejemplo de ello es la expresión: «quien automatiza de una manera eficaz estos conocimientos, debe ser capaz de hacerlo con un HK, un FAMAS o un AK-47» (u.t. B4).

Bajo la sub-subcategoría intervención operativa, destaca a su vez la práctica inexistencia del uso proporcionado de la fuerza en los países del Sahel, como elemento repetitivo entre los datos analizados. No obstante, para el 77,78% de los informantes es un concepto que «debe formar parte del cuadro jurídico de cada país» (u.t. B4) y «no de las cuestiones ético-morales europeas» (u.t. C7).

Por último, se subraya la sub-subcategoría técnicas especiales (2.3.2) como parte representativa de la formación GAR-SI con un 27,27% de las alusiones. Al respecto, el estudio de datos ensalza las actividades de control del territorio y la interacción con la población con labores de obtención de información a través de la Inteligencia de Fuentes Humana (HUMINT), como prácticas que deben ser continuadas en el tiempo. En contraposición, encontramos entre nuestros datos un detrimento de otras actividades como el franqueamiento operativo, ya que resulta «de difícil aplicación en los países del Sahel» (u.t. B5), al igual que la topografía cartográfica no arroja especial relevancia dado que «la mayoría de estos países carecen de mapas» (u.t. B5).

CUARTA ETAPA: DAFO

2.4.Resultados: Análisis de datos

Como metodología más adecuada para el análisis y diagnóstico de los datos obtenidos se ha elegido el análisis DAFO por tratarse de un instrumento de síntesis analítica de singular importancia ya que pone de relieve los distintos elementos del escenario de partida de una actuación o proyecto (Colás y de Pablo, 2005). En consecuencia, este análisis ha arrojado la siguiente presentación sintética de los puntos fuertes y puntos débiles de la fase I del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel desde una perspectiva sincrónica y de las oportunidades y amenazas que se le presentan desde una visión diacrónica:

Tabla 4:

Resultados análisis DAFO

DEBILIDADES	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Deficiencias en la coordinación por parte de los países europeos conformantes del Consorcio y falta de precisión en el reparto de sus tareas.2. Insuficiencia de conocimiento de las particularidades culturales (cultural awareness) en el cuadro de formadores del proyecto.3. Falta de adaptación del programa formativo a las necesidades de seguridad de cada país beneficiario.4. Obstáculos culturales en la inclusión de género.5. Dificultades en la selección del personal GAR-SI.
AMENAZAS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. La implantación de un proyecto de seguridad común en países del Sahel, donde los aspectos culturales suscitan especial importancia, podría suponer dificultades en su desarrollo.2. Desmotivación gradual en el personal GAR-SI.3. Falta de concienciación del personal GAR-SI frente a las amenazas del Sahel.
FORTALEZAS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. La interoperabilidad del proyecto.2. Un plan de formación conjunta que favorece la coordinación y la cooperación.3. El desarrollo de las actividades en el CAE ofrece oportunidades tanto para la programación como para la metodología de las actividades previstas.4. Alto sentimiento de pertenencia a las unidades GAR-SI.

5. Amplia capacitación técnica de los componentes GAR-SI.

OPORTUNIDAD	1. Alto interés mostrado por parte de los países beneficiarios.
ES	2. Voluntad por parte de los Estados beneficiarios de establecer una respuesta regional frente a la inseguridad del Sahel.
	3. La formación de las unidades GAR-SI incrementa las labores de obtención de información y del control del territorio en el Sahel.

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir del análisis de los datos obtenidos.

2.5.Observaciones finales

Las observaciones finales y propuestas han sido construidas a partir del análisis de los datos obtenidos en las entrevistas realizadas a los informantes clave y a la interpretación de los resultados del análisis DAFO, pudiendo así obtener una respuesta a la pregunta de investigación planteada, así como a la formulación de los objetivos propuestos.

En la línea de lo anteriormente destacado y teniendo en cuenta las características de la investigación cualitativa (Denzin y Lincoln, 2015) se desarrollan propuestas de mejora que, una vez realizada esta investigación, pueden contribuir a mejorar la situación de seguridad del Sahel y de la Unión Europea.

Propuestas de mejora

Las hemos clasificado en tres apartados en función de los diferentes ámbitos en los cuales las propuestas pueden llevarse a cabo:

1. **Ámbito institucional:** Este ámbito involucra cuestiones político-administrativas y hace referencia a iniciativas provenientes de la propia oficina del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel; es aquí factor fundamental el desarrollo de normativas orientadas a fomentar la durabilidad del proyecto. En este ámbito aportamos las siguientes propuestas:

- A fin de dar respuesta a los problemas de motivación del personal GAR-SI se hace necesaria la implementación de un cuadro normativo interno propio de cada país en el que sus respectivas gendarmerías se comprometan a ofrecer las siguientes condiciones:
 - o Una remuneración salarial acorde con la dedicación y peligrosidad de la unidad GAR-SI Sahel.

- o Establecimiento de un régimen de descansos propio que permita la conciliación familiar.

- o La inclusión de componentes GAR-SI en unidades SWAT de la Unión Africana en misiones internacionales una vez cumplida la mínima permanencia en la Unidad.

- o Inclusión de la condición preferente a la hora de elegir destino una vez cumplida la servidumbre GAR-SI.

- Para mejorar la coordinación entre los países conformantes del consorcio, se considera de interés la realización de una fase previa, de al menos una semana de duración, que garantice la puesta en marcha de una línea de trabajo común entre los formadores europeos basada en una doctrina ad hoc para el GAR-SI que promueva un reparto equitativo de las tareas formativas a desempeñar.

2. **Ámbito estratégico:** hace referencia a la configuración de los recursos, del diseño y de la planificación de los contenidos y actividades desarrolladas durante la fase I del Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel para la mejor sostenibilidad del mismo. En este ámbito ubicamos las siguientes conclusiones y propuestas:

- Se refleja la necesidad de realizar una mejor selección del cuadro de instructores a fin de prevenir el distanciamiento entre instructor y formando. Según los datos obtenidos, el perfil adecuado del instructor debe comprender, con igual importancia, tanto capacidades técnicas como capacidades lingüísticas, teniendo en cuenta, que el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel no es sólo formativo, sino que engloba además un trabajo representativo, logístico y organizativo, en el cual, la destreza lingüística juega un papel fundamental.

- La necesidad de promover por parte de las unidades GAR-SI actividades que favorezcan el contacto con la población a través de actividades tipo jornadas de puertas abiertas, la organización de talleres con la población local o entrevistas con los dirigentes locales. Según los informantes, la inexistencia de bases de datos por parte de las gendarmerías del Sahel supone que el contacto estrecho con la población se erige, en ocasiones, como única fuente de información existente.

- Se debe promover la presencia de la mujer en el proyecto GAR-SI en concordancia con el desarrollo social de cada país. Para ello, el proyecto debe dar pasos previos incluyendo personal femenino en diversas funciones empezando por las logísticas, sanitarias, policía judicial o información, para, en una fase posterior, discutir su inclusión en las unidades operativas GAR-SI.

- En referencia a la mejor concepción de la amenaza, los datos señalan como propuesta de mejora la inclusión en el programa formativo de charlas y reciclajes que informen de la situación actual de las amenazas existentes. Según los informantes, estas charlas deben ser impartidas por especialistas originarios del propio país, debido a que conocen la casuística de la región y considerándose más enriquecedor e ilustrativo el hecho de recibir la información de manos de alguien que trabaja en las mismas condiciones que el alumnado. A tal efecto, los datos arrojan además que el despliegue de las unidades GAR-SI en zonas de conflicto provocará una mayor toma de conciencia de la amenaza. Sin embargo, resulta necesario fomentar que los respectivos gobiernos de los países del Sahel ofrezcan una especial protección a los componentes GAR-SI frente a los actos terroristas que puedan sufrir mediante indemnizaciones de carácter individual y familiar.

- Se considera positivo la realización de la fase I de formación en el Centro de Adiestramientos Especiales sito en Logroño. No obstante, los datos arrojan una necesidad de adaptación del programa formativo GAR-SI a los servicios a prestar específicos de cada país. Igualmente, el estudio muestra como propuesta de especial interés la creación de un “Centro GARSÍ” en uno de los países del Sahel, donde pudieran tener lugar los futuros cursos de formación y reciclaje de todos los países, así como las reuniones periódicas de los jefes de las compañías para el intercambio de experiencias y la coordinación de acciones conjuntas entre países. Este hecho favorecería igualmente la autogestión, la propia sostenibilidad del proyecto y ayudaría a la creación de unas técnicas, tácticas y procedimientos realmente adaptadas a la situación del Sahel.

3. *Ámbito de interacción social: búsqueda de sinergias.* La sostenibilidad del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel puede verse mejorada por las sinergias entre todas las partes participantes en el mismo; en este sentido se exponen como conclusiones del estudio:

- La importancia que entraña romper con la barrera cultural entre instructor y formando, señalando el cultural awareness como herramienta más adecuada para tal efecto. En consecuencia, todos los informantes ven acertada la inclusión de planes de entrenamientos previos específicos de cada país para los propios instructores, al efecto de tomar conciencia de la cultura propia del alumnado y de enfrentarse de manera correcta a situaciones nuevas como son las figuras de “policía religiosa”, del “machaca” o a la solicitud de dádivas por parte de los formandos.

- Para garantizar un mejor cultural awareness, se considera de interés la inclusión de actividades culturales post instrucción que favorezcan el acercamiento cultural entre formadores y formados.

- Los datos obtenidos destacan que las formaciones conjuntas entre países del Sahel bajo el criterio de “fronteras compartidas” han favorecido notablemente la interoperabilidad del proyecto, debiendo ser por tanto una práctica continuada en el tiempo. En concreto, los datos señalan de interés la propuesta de implementar jornadas comunes entre mandos GAR-SI de diversos países al objeto de compartir experiencias y lecciones aprendidas. Según los informantes, estas actividades conjuntas también podrían tener un componente positivo de integración y concienciación, ya que los países pueden ver cómo sus vecinos reciben la misma formación para luchar contra una amenaza común.

3. EVALUATION OF THE FORMATIVE TRAINING OF AFRICAN GENDARMES IN THE CENTER OF SPECIAL TRAINING OF THE SPANISH GUARDIA CIVIL

The international cooperation of the European Union with the African continent considers that the training of public officials can represent one of the main engines for long-term development (Wolter & Leiberich, 2017). It is in this context that the training project for Rapid Action Groups for Surveillance and Intervention in the Sahel (GAR-SI Sahel) arose, an initiative of the Spanish Guardia Civil. This project, financed by the Emergency Trust Fund of the European Union, developed under Spanish leadership and with the participation of France, Italy and Portugal, aimed to provide specialized training to security forces from African countries in the Sahel region, with known problems of extreme violence and terrorist activities that transcend the borders of the countries in the area (Baldaro, 2020; Villaverde, 2020; Núñez et al., 2009). Once the European Commission determined that the project responded to the needs of the Sahel countries, it was decided that a training phase would be developed at the Special Training Center (CAE) of the Guardia Civil in Logroño (Spain).

This article offers the first evaluation available to date of the GAR-SI Sahel program, specifically, identifying the degree of fulfilment of the objectives pursued by the program based on information from trainers and participants. The relevance of the work is given by the total absence of previous evaluations of this training action, also embedded in the international community cooperation with Africa, and considering, furthermore, that unlike other scenarios (Bartkowiak-Théron, 2019; Herrington & Pope, 2014; Koerner & Staller, 2020; Lalonde, 2019; Rógerio Lino, 2004), there is a striking scarcity of research in the field of training of security forces in the Sahel.

Likewise, it should be noted that the main characteristic of the program resides in its interoperability as a key factor for a regionalization of the response, an element that has received increasing attention in the literature, and that arouses special interest given the idiosyncrasy of the GAR-SI Sahel project.

The rest of the work is divided into four sections as follows. First, we briefly describe the features of the program. The second section describes the databases and the methodology used in the analysis. In the third section, we present the results of our evaluation, while the last and fourth section summarizes the main conclusions of the work.

3.1. The GAR-SI training program

The project Rapid Action Groups for Surveillance and Intervention in the Sahel consists of an action financed by the European Union with an initial budget of 41.6 million euros. It is led by the Spanish Guardia Civil and executed with France, Italy and Portugal and, to date, has led to the training of more than 1800 gendarmes from African countries. Its objective is to contribute to the improvement of security conditions in the geographical area, characterized by the uncontrolled movement of extreme crime or terrorism between the borders of its States. To this end, the program's roadmap contemplates the creation of six GAR-SI units, each one of them, in the African countries of the G5 Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso) and Senegal. The regional dimension of insecurity in the Sahel forces the GAR-SI Sahel project to establish a pedagogical training plan that promotes «the culture of interculturality» as a result and not as a task (Marí Ytarte, 2007; Touriñán, 2008), understood as an action strategy in which the project's beneficiary countries mutually nurture their differences and, simultaneously, lay the foundations for a cooperative learning and security project in the face of a common threat.

The GAR-SI Sahel project began to develop in March 2017 with an expected duration of four years, and consisted of the following phases: diagnosis, training, mentoring, interoperability and closure. In turn, the training phase was subdivided into four stages. Due to its investigative interest, this work analyses phase I of this stage, as it addresses the preparation of future managers and training personnel of the GAR-SI Sahel units, in a European Special Training Centre.

Given that one of the priority objectives of the GAR-SI Sahel project is to guarantee the interoperability of its units, phase I comprises a two-month training program at the Special Training Center (CAE) of the Guardia Civil in Logroño (La Rioja, Spain), aimed at managers and trainers from two border countries benefiting from the project. The participants were divided into 4 batches. The first one was attended by participants from Mauritania; the second and third were joint trainings for attendees from two countries (Mali and Burkina Faso and Senegal and Niger, respectively) and, finally, the program welcomed participants from Chad. To this end, a total of 28 components (16 command teams, divided in hierarchical order into officers, non-commissioned officers, corporals and gendarmes, as well as 12 trainers destined to train human resources in the country of origin) receive a training program of 324 teaching hours with a cadre of instructors made

up of six Spanish trainers belonging to the CAE and three experts from France, Italy and Portugal respectively.

The training program comprises a general module divided into two branches: the first, focused on individual instruction with a total of 85 teaching hours distributed in the following subjects: physical education (24 hours), personal defense (24 hours), gun handling and shooting (37 hours). Second, another branch of 224 teaching hours aimed at training in operational procedures that include training activities in movement in patrols, operational techniques, tactics and special devices, explosives, tactical health, operational clearance and close quarter battle. In a complementary way, it includes, on the one hand, a specific module of personnel management and direction of 15 teaching hours taught exclusively to future control panels, with subjects of motivation, leadership, communication, management of human and material resources, management of stress, conflict management and planning methodology. On the other hand, a specific pedagogy module aimed at a trainer of trainers also consists of 15 teaching hours distributed as follows: preparation and development of a class, teaching aids, use of didactic material, communication and stress management.

Likewise, the GAR-SI Sahel training program includes joint activities that promote interoperability using cooperative learning and «Contact Theory» (Allport, 1954/1962) with the support of international institutions that support and help improve inter-ethnic relations (eg , DeVries & Edwards, 1974; Goikoetxea & Pascual, 2012; Slavin, 1978; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). It should also be noted that the teaching staff of the GAR-SI Sahel project has been made up of a panel of European experts with different backgrounds in technical assistance and capacity building, which has led to the articulation of a diverse model of intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et al., 2003). This fact has led to the coexistence of trainers and those trained with wide cultural divergences, which arouses great research interest when facing projects such as GAR-SI Sahel in which a pluralistic pedagogical perspective is necessary when addressing a unique regional response. It should also be noted that the results of the GAR-SI Sahel project have led all the beneficiary countries to request the extension of the project, the formation of more units, as well as its extrapolation to other countries such as Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mozambique, Nigeria or Ivory Coast, demanding a similar training. This fact highlights the need to evaluate the results obtained ¿from an educational prism? in order to detect

possible pedagogical deficiencies and establish proposals for improvement for the coming phases.

3.2. Materials and methods

In order to carry out the aforementioned evaluation, the data collected, provided directly by the CAE, as well as the methodology used for its analysis, are set out below.

Data

The evaluation of the training program associated with the GAR-SI Sahel Project has two different sets of statistical information: a registry of evaluations of the participants by the CAE trainers and a satisfaction survey that includes questions scored with a Likert scale and another open question.

The first set, the record of the trainers' evaluations on the performance of the universe of participants, includes the universe of attendees in all editions of the program held so far. First, it includes a series of demographic and occupational characteristics of the participants: sex, age, employment (officers, NCOs and corporals and gendarmes), role played in the security forces (trainers or commanders) and the country of origin (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad). It also includes the global note on the performance and evolution of the attendees (which can take the values of negative, stable or positive), a battery of 22 questions related to the evaluation of behaviors and an evaluation of a technical nature (whose possible answers are insufficient, medium or good). This extensive system of indicators is organized as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Participant evaluation dimensions and items

Dimension	Subdimension	Item
Behavior assessment	Satisfaction with services	Integration capacity
		Attitude in the group
		Availability
	Satisfaction with the information system	Punctuality
		Listening ability
		Respect for instructions

	Attitude in the face of difficulties
	Participation
	Self-control
	Pedagogical competences
	Operational techniques
	Special devices
Competencies	Weapons handling
	SWAT
	First aid
Technical evaluation	Surveying and crossing
	Physical form
	Organizational sense
Organizational capabilities	Sense of responsibility
	Steering ability
	Adaptive capacities

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the project database.

Table 6 shows the characteristics of the participant population. We have 167 observations, corresponding to 28 individuals per country, with the exception of Chad, with 27 participants. The participating group is highly masculinized, has an average age of approximately 36 years, includes 12%, 49% and 40% of officers, non-commissioned officers and corporals and gendarmes, respectively, and, in terms of function performed in their place of origin, are distributed practically evenly between managers and trainers.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics of the variables that collect the characteristics of the participants in the GAR-SI Sahel Project

Variables	Average / proportion	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sex				
Men	0,98	0,13	0	1
Women	0,02	0,13	0	1
Age	35,94	6,96	22	55
job				

Officers	0,12	0,33	0	1
Non-commissioned officers	0,49	0,50	0	1
Corporals and gendarmes	0,40	0,49	0	1
Function				
Trainers	0,47	0,50	0	1
Controls	0,53	0,50	0	1
Country				
Burkina Faso	0,17	0,37	0	1
Mali	0,16	0,37	0	1
Mauritania	0,17	0,37	0	1
Niger	0,17	0,37	0	1
Senegal	0,17	0,37	0	1
Chad	0,17	0,37	0	1

No. of observations = 167

Note: The figure in the mean / proportion column corresponds to the average in the continuous variable (age) and to the proportion in the case of each category in the rest of the variables, which is coded as a binary variable 0/1 (eg, the variable woman takes the value 1 if in the case of female participants and 0 otherwise). The proportion, therefore, corresponds to the relative frequency of each category.

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the project database.

The second set of available data is given by the responses to the satisfaction survey carried out by the participants at the end of the program. This instrument comprises 28 items that the respondent values according to a Likert-type scale between 1 and 10 and that are organized in four dimensions as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Dimensions and items of the satisfaction survey carried out at the end of the program

Dimension	Item
Satisfaction with services	Accessibility
	Accommodation comfort
	Cleaning
	Common spaces
	Catering

Satisfaction with the information system	Reception of personnel and equipment
	Communication with the centre staff
	Treatment provided by centre staff
	Overall evaluation of the centre
Satisfaction with training	Required prior knowledge
	Physical education and sport activities
	Training quality
	Psychological training
	Work environment
	Quality of trainers
	Material and equipment
	Vehicles
	Duration
	Pedagogical techniques
	Adequacy of training to the work performed
	Satisfaction with subjects
Special techniques	
Special devices	
Knowledge of opponent's weapons	
Interpellation techniques	
	River fording
	Physical training

Source: Own elaboration

This information is complemented by an open question in which the participants can indicate which aspects they consider to be more susceptible to improvement. Unfortunately, the microdata of the survey is only available for 56 participants (28 from Niger and 28 from Senegal) and, for reasons of anonymity, it is not possible to know the characteristics of the surveyed attendees regardless of the country of origin.

Methods

In order to evaluate the program and make the best possible use of the available information, we use a mixed methodology, which incorporates tools of a quantitative and

qualitative nature (Firebaugh, 2008; Hernández et al., 2014). In this sense, it was decided to use a parallel convergent design in the questionnaire, whereby the collection of quantitative and qualitative data take place at the same time and are compared once the process is completed (Johnson et al., 2007). Although once the research was completed, the decision was made to contrast quantitative data with qualitative triangulation in the sequential explanatory model (Creswell, 2012).

Quantitative methods

In the first place, to analyze the global qualifications from the evaluation of the participants of the training program, we used descriptive and inferential statistical methods and the Pearson χ^2 test to determine if there were significant differences between the participants by sex, employment, function and country of origin. Given that we have 22 indicators associated with specific areas of the program, we proceed to reduce the dimensionality of said database through multiple correspondence analysis (PCA), appropriate for treating categorical variables (Hjellbrekke, 2018). Specifically, we carried out a PCA for the variables of each of the four categories mentioned above. We used the first component of the PCA to explore the existence of differences between the participants by means of the corresponding analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Second, in order to take into account the existence of confounders in our analysis, we performed a multivariate analysis to study the determinants of the probability of obtaining a positive score in the global evaluation using a logit model. The model includes the following covariates: sex, age, employment, function, and country of origin.

Third, to address the evaluation of the program by the participants, in order to make the analysis manageable and facilitate the interpretation of the results and the obtaining of conclusions, we calculate the average of the variables that make up each dimension and carry out a descriptive analysis. of the resulting indicators, exploring the existence of differences by country of origin (which represents the only variable available in this case, since it was intended to preserve the anonymity of the participants).

The quantitative analysis was carried out with the statistical package Stata 16.

Qualitative methods

In relation to the tools used for qualitative analysis, we have followed the processes established by Denzin and Lincoln (2015), especially in the first phase and at the time of categorizing the qualitative part of the satisfaction questionnaire completed by the participants at the end of the course, which yielded data that are shown after Table 8 and that allow quantitative information to be triangulated. In a second phase, the importance of studying the reports that the instructors had prepared on each of the participating countries was considered, as well as of systematizing the result of the participant observation, carried out by one of the authors of the work that acted as a trainer within the project. This aspect results in the credibility and applicability of qualitative data (Merriam, 2009).

3.3. Results: Data analysis

Table 8 shows the results of the descriptive analysis of the qualifications received by the course participants from the CAE trainers. In the first place, it is possible to observe that, for the total sample, the percentage of attendees who obtained an overall score of medium and positive amounted to 47.9% and 34.7%, respectively, which constitutes an indicator of the satisfactory development of the project. The differences between the participants are limited and are only statistically significant in the case of the country of origin, an area in which the participants from Mali, Niger and Mauritania stand out for their positive global evaluations. In relation to each of the four dimensions considered (capacity for teamwork, motivation, behavior and perseverance, competencies and organizational capacities), we obtain a similar result: the only variable for which there are significant differences in the qualification given by the trainers is the country of origin. Although of undoubted interest, the differences between countries are not easily interpretable. First, it appears that the percentage of participants in countries with higher levels of human development in 2019 (United Nations Development Program, 2021) would exhibit a lower proportion of participants with positive evaluations. This could be related to a higher motivation on the part of the poorest countries, as shown in the qualitative triangulation in the reports of the instructors' cadre, in which all the teachers agree on the high motivation shown by the students from Niger and Niger. Mali. However, with only four states it is risky to venture a solid hypothesis in this regard. Thus, for example, in three countries the training coincided with Ramadan (Niger, Senegal and Chad) and this could have affected the results associated with the dimension of motivation, behavior and perseverance.

Table 9 shows the results of the multivariate model proposed for the study of the determinants of obtaining a positive overall score (compared to receiving a negative or stable score). The average of the marginal effects (in percentage points) obtained for all the members of the sample are presented. The logistic model largely corroborates the results of the descriptive analysis presented above, although there are some differences. In the first place, when we take into account all the available variables, it is evident that the probability of obtaining a positive rating from corporals and gendarmes is more than 20 percentage points lower than that of officers. Possibly, this result is due to the fact that most of the officers have previously received command courses abroad and, consequently, have better prior preparation. Likewise, participants from Mali, Mauritania and Chad are more likely to obtain a positive evaluation than participants from the reference category (Burkina Faso).

The results of the descriptive analysis of the satisfaction of the participants with the project are shown in Table 10. First, it is evident that the program receives a very high valuation in the four dimensions considered (above 8 out of 10). Similarly, the levels of satisfaction with the training of the participants are very high. This is reflected in the high scores obtained by the group of instructors in the specific question on the quality of the training staff, which is one of the questions that feeds the dimension of satisfaction with training (9.7 out of 10). Second, our results indicate that satisfaction with the program is higher among Nigerian participants in terms of information received and the subjects that make up the training process. This could be associated with a higher level of demand associated with several factors. First, Senegal exhibits a higher level of human development - a Human Development Index of 0.512 in 2019, compared to 0.394 for Niger. Secondly, Senegal, together with Mauritania, stands as the only country in the Sahel with access to the sea, which gives it a plus that has historically allowed greater international openness, resulting in a well-known tourist destination on the African continent. Finally, Senegal has numerous bilateral security projects, which could be one of the causes that motivate the high level of demand of its students.

Finally, we present the results obtained in the textual qualitative analysis of the main suggestions for improvement made by the participants in Table 11. Those demands that the attendees mention most frequently are a longer duration of the course (46.4% of the participants do so). include in the comments), more practices and more crowd control equipment (37.5 and 23.2%), more target practice (33.9%), more hours of personal

defense (21.4%) and the possibility of going on study trips (21.4%). It is also noteworthy the low percentage (1.8% of the attendees) that suggests that the program would benefit from an increase in the pedagogical capacity of the trainers, in line with what is shown with the results of the previous table in relation to the quality of the personnel in charge of the instruction. Likewise, the differences between the participants from Niger and Senegal are evident. In particular, it stands out that the number of proposals for improvement of the program is substantially higher in the second of these groups. These differences, although of undoubted interest, are not easily interpretable, even more so considering that it is not possible to link the questionnaires with other types of information, although, as mentioned above, it would be expected that, for various reasons, the levels of demand of the participants and Senegal were higher. Finally, due to the multicultural nature of the program, the low percentage of participants (3.6%) is positive, who, in these anonymous questionnaires, suggest that greater respect for religious beliefs would be advisable.

Table 8
Descriptive statistics of the variables that collect the characteristics of the participants in the GAR-SI Sahel Project

Variables	Overall evaluation				Behavioral assessment				Technical evaluation			
	Negative	Stable	Positive	χ^2 test	Capacity for teamwork		Motivation, behavior and perseverance		Competencies		Organizational capabilities	
					Average	ANOVA	Average	ANOVA	Average	ANOVA	Average	ANOVA
Sex												
Man	17,1	48,2	34,8	$\chi^2(2) = 0,6$	0,000	$F(1,165) = 0,00$	0,008	$F(1,165) = 0,63$	0,024	$F(1,165) = 0,95$	0,002	$F(1,165) = 0,04$
Woman	33,3	33,3	33,3	$p\text{-value} = 0,746$	-0,004	$p\text{-value} = 0,995$	-0,456	$p\text{-value} = 0,429$	-0,548	$p\text{-value} = 0,330$	-0,108	$p\text{-value} = 0,817$
Rank												
Officer	25,0	30,0	45,0	$\chi^2(4) = 3,8$	-0,297	$F(2,164) = 1,00$	0,147	$F(2,164) = 1,06$	0,278	$F(2,164) = 0,95$	0,095	$F(2,164) = 0,19$
Enlisted	17,3	46,9	35,8	$p\text{-value} = 0,430$	0,044	$p\text{-value} = 0,370$	0,075	$p\text{-value} = 0,349$	0,022	$p\text{-value} = 0,386$	-0,044	$p\text{-value} = 0,830$
E-1,E-2	15,2	54,6	30,3		0,037		-0,137		-0,076		0,025	
Function												
Trainers	13,9	55,7	30,4	$\chi^2(2) = 3,7$	0,002	$F(1,165) = 0,00$	1,016	$F(1,165) = 0,80$	-0,004	$F(1,165) = 0,05$	0,047	$F(1,165) = 0,36$
Managers	20,5	40,9	38,6	$p\text{-value} = 0,154$	-0,002	$p\text{-value} = 0,980$	0,066	$p\text{-value} = 0,3727$	0,030	$p\text{-value} = 0,831$	-0,042	$p\text{-value} = 0,5691$
Country												
Burkina Faso	14,3	75,0	10,7	$\chi^2(10) = 21,1$	0,590	$F(5,161) = 12,43$	0,735	$F(5,161) = 18,44$	0,262	$F(5,161) = 3,75$	-0,136	$F(5,161) = 4,78$
Mali	7,4	40,7	51,9	$p\text{-value} = 0,020$	0,527	$p\text{-value} = 0,000$	0,609	$p\text{-value} = 0,000$	0,345	$p\text{-value} = 0,008$	0,605	$p\text{-value} = 0,000$
Mauritania	10,7	50,0	39,3		0,440		0,357		-0,268		0,306	
Niger	17,9	32,1	50,0		-0,372		-0,759		0,195		0,029	
Senegal	28,6	42,9	28,6		-0,714		-0,731		0,063		-0,404	
Chad	25,0	46,4	28,6		-0,451		-0,190		-0,503		-0,377	
Total	17,4	47,9	34,7									
No. of observations	167											

Source: Own elaboration based on the information from the evaluation registry of the participants.

Table 9

*Determinants of the probability of obtaining a positive evolution at the end of the program
(logit model, average of marginal effects)*

		Coefficients (robust standard errors)
Sex (reference = man)		
Woman		0,153 (0,226)
Age		0,003 (0,007)
Rank (reference = officers)		
Enlisted		-0,074 (0,122)
E-1,E-2		-0,217 * (0,131)
Function (reference = trainers)		
Managers		0,049 (0,081)
Country (reference = Burkina Faso)		
Mali		0,432 *** (0,109)
Mauritania		0,296 ** (0,126)
Niger		0,495 (0,113)
Senegal		0,149 (0,096)
Chad		0,173 * (0,102)
No. of observations		167
Wald $\chi^2(10)$	21,8	(p -value = 0,016)
McFadden Pseudo- R^2		0,10
Correctly classified		
Total (%)		67,1
Positives (%)		29,3
Rest (%)		87,6

Note: *** p -value < 0.01; ** p -value < 0.05; * p -value < 0.1. The coefficients reflect the average of the marginal effects (in percentage points) of the members of the sample. Heteroscedasticity robust standard errors are shown in parentheses.

Source: Own elaboration based on the evaluation record of the participants.

Table 10*Analysis of participants' satisfaction with the GAR-SI Sahel program*

Dimension	Total			Participants from Niger			Participants from Senegal			ANOVA for comparison of means of participants from Niger and Senegal
	Average	Standard error	95% confidence interval	Average	Standard error	95% confidence interval	Average	Standard error	95% confidence interval	
Services	8,7	0,1	8,5-9,0	9,1	0,1	8,9-9,2	8,4	0,2	8,0-8,7	$F(1,54) = 12,9; p\text{-value} = 0,007$
Information	8,2	0,2	7,9-8,5	9,1	0,2	8,7-9,4	7,4	0,1	7,2-7,7	$F(1,54) = 56,92; p\text{-value} = 0,000$
Training	8,7	0,1	8,5-8,9	8,8	0,1	8,5-9,0	8,7	0,1	8,5-8,9	$F(1,54) = 0,19; p\text{-value} = 0,688$
Subjects	8,8	0,1	8,6-9,0	9,2	0,1	8,9-9,4	8,4	0,1	8,1-8,7	$F(1,54) = 16,42; p\text{-value} = 0,000$
No. of observations	56			28			28			

Source: Own elaboration based on the information from the participant satisfaction survey.

Table 11

Analysis of participants' comments of the GAR-SI Sahel program

	Total			Participants from Niger			Participants from Senegal			Difference of proportions test (p-value)
	Percentage of mentions	Standard error	95% confidence interval	Percentage of mentions	Standard error	95% confidence interval	Percentage of mentions	Standard error	95% confidence interval	
Longer course duration	46,4	6,7	33,4-59,5	32,1	8,8	14,8-49,4	60,7	9,2	42,5-78,8	0,000
More crowd control practices	37,5	6,5	24,7-50,2	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	75,0	8,2	59,0-91,0	0,004
More shot	33,9	6,3	21,5-46,2	7,1	4,9	-2,4-16,7	60,7	9,2	42,5-78,8	0,007
Upgrade crowd control gear	23,2	5,6	12,1-34,2	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	46,4	9,4	28,0-64,9	0,040
Study trips	21,4	5,5	10,6-32,2	42,9	9,4	24,5-61,2	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	0,051
More hours of self defense	21,4	5,5	10,6-32,2	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	42,9	9,4	24,5-61,2	0,051
Best Vehicles	19,6	5,3	9,1-30,0	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	39,3	9,2	21,2-57,4	0,064
More practices in inhabited places	17,9	5,1	7,8-27,8	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	35,7	9,1	18,0-53,5	0,081
Improve catering service	14,3	4,7	5,0-23,5	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	25,0	8,2	9,0-41,0	0,127
Congratulate the quality of the CAE staff	12,5	4,4	3,7-21,2	10,7	5,8	-0,6-22,2	17,9	7,2	3,7-32,0	0,157
More days of strength in physical education	10,7	4,1	2,5-18,7	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	21,4	7,8	6,1-36,5	0,195
More operations on public roads	10,7	4,1	2,5-18,7	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	21,4	7,8	6,1-36,5	0,195
Increase the number of washing machines	7,1	3,4	0,4-13,8	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	14,3	6,6	1,2-27,2	0,299
Congratulate the staff delivering the operative intervention	7,1	3,4	0,4-13,8	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	14,3	6,6	1,2-27,2	0,299
More operative intervention	5,4	3,0	-0,5-11,3	10,7	5,8	-0,6-22,2	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	0,373
Observers with more pedagogical capacity	5,4	3,0	-0,5-11,3	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	10,7	5,8	-0,6-22,2	0,373
More GPS	3,6	2,5	-1,2-8,3	7,1	4,9	-2,4-16,7	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	0,471
Take into account religious beliefs	3,6	2,5	-1,2-8,3	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	7,1	4,9	-2,4-16,7	0,471
Encourage students more	3,6	2,5	-1,2-8,3	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	7,1	4,9	-2,4-16,7	0,471
More physical education sessions	3,6	2,5	-1,2-8,3	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	7,1	4,9	-2,4-16,7	0,471
Suppress franking	3,6	2,5	-1,2-8,3	7,1	4,9	-2,4-16,7	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	0,471
Provide documentary support	1,8	1,8	-1,7-5,3	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	3,6	3,5	-3,2-10,3	0,614
More pedagogical capacity in instructors	1,8	1,8	-1,7-5,3	0,0	0,0	0,0-0,0	3,6	3,5	-3,2-10,3	0,614
No. of observations	56			28			28			

3.2. Final remarks and notes

This work represents the first attempt to evaluate the training program of the GAR-SI Sahel Project, a community initiative for international cooperation with the African continent for which, to date, we did not have any empirical evidence. Likewise, we do not have a wide range of investigations that reveal the results of the training programs on security forces in the Sahel. In this sense, it is urgent to urge the program organizers to collect in a more systematic way - possibly under the advice of educational experts - higher quality information on the participants and their results, which will allow a much more in-depth evaluation to be carried out. and robust of its training actions. In this sense, carry out an experimental design, in which participants are randomly selected from a set of candidates who meet the requirements to participate in the program.

Our analysis has shown that, both from the point of view of the CAE trainers, and from the point of view of the satisfaction of the attendees with their participation in the program, the results are very encouraging. However, there are some aspects that merit further investigation. Thus, for example, the differences in the use of the course depending on the rank could suggest the convenience of establishing differentiated training actions based on this variable. Likewise, given the intercultural nature of the program, we believe that it would be extremely interesting to have more evidence about the interaction between this dimension and the results of the project.

Finally, as mentioned in previous pages, another indication of the success of the program is linked to the fact that all the countries involved have requested its extension. This fact, moreover, may open the way to deeper evaluations of specific aspects of the project.

NOTES

¹ In cases where there are cells with few observations and the degrees of freedom allow it, we also perform Fisher's exact test. The results, available upon request from the authors, are identical to those obtained with the Pearson χ^2 test.

² Detailed ACP results are omitted for space reasons and for the sake of readability of the article, but are available to readers upon request. The first component of each of the groups of variables adequately collects the total inertia of each group of variables — teamwork capacity (64%), motivation, behaviour and perseverance (77%), skills (70%) and organizational capacities (65%).

³ The use of a logistic model facilitates the interpretation of the results, compared to alternatives such as the ordinal logit or multinomial logit, which, in addition, is subject to the assumption of independence of irrelevant alternatives. The results obtained under these models are qualitatively similar and are available on request.

4. EU'S GAR-SI SAHEL PROJECT: A CRUCIAL PIECE IN THE REGIONAL SECURITY

PUZZLE

The growing insecurity in the Sahel and the porosity of its borders has favored the proliferation of multiple terrorist organizations and criminal gangs throughout its vast territory. Due to its geographical proximity, the European Union (EU) is especially exposed to problems derived from this situation as a result of irregular migration and terrorism from this region. To meet this challenge, the EU has long engaged on the Sahel in a broad range of missions supporting security sector reform (SSR). The existing studies, however, show that the implementation of these programs has been far from the expected objectives. As well as they have received numerous criticisms due to the fact that building military capacity in Africa does not per se guarantee that it is done consistently with democratic norms (Beswick, 2014). It is in this context that GAR-SI Sahel project arises. It is intended to be one more tool of the EU to add the critical but potentially polemical component of capacity building of the defense sector to the increasing instability of the Sahel.

However, despite its topicality and the magnitude of this project, there are no studies about this new European multinational project, which is being carried out in six beneficiary countries (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso and Senegal) since it was approved by Brussels in June 2016.

To fill this gap in the scholarly literature, this study first contributes to outline the dimensions of the GAR-SI Sahel project as well as its peculiarities which differentiate it from previous EU security programs.

Secondly, the inclusion of this project on the delicate security puzzle raises the question of the position of the GAR-SI Sahel project within the framework of the SSR and if its innovative design could help or hinder the EU's purposes.

Third, and taking into account the lessons learned about how capacity building within the defense sector can, and repeatedly has, gone wrong, this article aims to conclude which are the positive contributions and challenges inherent to GAR-SI Sahel project.

To do that, and following what was initially achieved by Müller and Bergmann (2020) for the generalizability of single-case studies at an early development, we have also aimed for a «plausibility probe» (Levy, 2008) instead of theory testing, since it is the first time that this specific project is assessed academically in a context where there is a strong need

for academic research. We have built an analysis on triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sources and seventeen interviews with Spanish Guardia Civil, as well as members of the Portuguese, French and Italian gendarmerie forces. These interviews were conducted in several places of the Iberian Peninsula and the majority of them took place online under condition of anonymity.

The article proceeds as follows: the first section describes the EU's measures as an international actor to face the conundrum of how to engage with unstable states who are able to dictate some of the terms of external involvement, ultimately strengthening their hold on power. In the second section, the article sets three dimensions of the GAR-SI Sahel project identity and operationalizes them along its differential points in comparison with the rest of the security framework programs. Next section outlines the role and position it occupies in the SSR. Fourth section expose an overview of the short-term results according to data provided by the central office of the project. In conclusion, the article argues that despite its prosperous short-term results, the GAR-SI Sahel if certain policies are not implemented it may bring negative side effects for long-term SSR efforts.

4.1. A complex regional security puzzle in the middle of a perfect storm

The special representative of the European Union (EU) for the Sahel, Ángel Losada Fernández, stated that the vast territory of the Sahel is facing «a perfect storm» where various factors such as seasonal hunger, expansive demography, environmental degradation or scarcity of resources suggest a fateful outcome for the end of the storm (Locchi, 2020; Benjaminsen & Hiernaux, 2019; Joffé, 2016).

In addition, police forces in the area have long undergone a series of common shortcomings and weaknesses, including the lack of a permanent presence and effective control over the entire territory (Marenin, 2009, 2014). Increased insecurity has directly caused a deterioration of socio-economic conditions, population displacements, the aggravation of inter and intra-community conflicts, as well that the development of organized crime and cross-border organized crime (Alemika, 2013).

The Sahel has gradually become a lawless zone in which goods and people cross the borders without control. Such a combination makes this region a fertile ground in which insurgencies that can find a way to insert themselves between competing systems of governance to install their form of hybrid order will thrive (Bøås & Strazzari, 2020).

Traditionally, the EU's relation to the Sahel was defined as a «donor–recipient» relationship (Bøås, 2021). However, this has recently been transitioning since the conflict that erupted in Mali in 2012 and the European refugee crisis of 2014–2015 propelled the issue of the Sahel further up on the EU agenda (European Parliament, 2020). These concerns about terrorism and irregular migration have come to drive the EU's policies and action in its extended neighborhood, changing the types and tools of the EU's external engagement towards Sahel (Osland, 2020; Stambøl, 2019) and staking its claim as an important international player in the fight against the storm.

Consequently, the EU has put in place multiple military-centred tools aimed at guaranteeing the security of the Sahel, highlighting among them, the EUCAP Sahel Niger and Mali missions, the EUTM Mali operation, or direct funding from the G5 Sahel Joint Force using this vast territory as a «laboratory of experimentation» (Lopez, 2017).

Nonetheless, the EU's ambitions and heightened activity have repeatedly been subject to criticism for having a short-term and a narrow military approach in the aim of seeing swift results on the ground. As well as for trying to achieve European interests through political stability instead of focusing on a sustainable investment in peace, reconciliation and the creation of a development agenda for the Sahel (Raineri & Strazzari 2019; Lebovich, 2018; Trotignon, 2016).

All this, together with the «fragility dilemma» of the Sahelian states (Bøås, 2019) shows that they absorb limited donor capacity which impact has shown to be unforeseeable, tremendously volatile and vulnerable to changing conditions. As a result, it has reopened a lively academic debate on the character of the EU's international actorness (Palm & Crum, 2019) which brings back what was already highlighted by Brattberg and Rhinard (2012), Smith, (2005) and by Bailes, (2008) who focuses more on militarization, but has researched how donor assistance may therefore unintentionally buttress and prolong corrupt and illegitimate regimes.

There are many contributions which point out that the annals of external support to national militaries are rife with examples of unintended negative side effects, which tend to manifest themselves over the medium term to long term (Bøås & Stig, 2010; Mobekk, 2009; Hood, 2006). All these past mistakes have prompted authors like Nilsson and Zetterlund (2011) to state that the type of military capacity building carried out by the

EUTM missions under the common security and defense policy (CSDP) might potentially have damaging consequences for Security Sector Reform.

Along the same lines, other authors like Emma Skeppströma, Cecilia Hull Wiklunda and Michael Jonsson (2015) argue that EU military missions, if solely conducted, tend to be tactically and militarily efficient in the short-term, but may turn out to be strategically and geopolitically counter-productive over time. Likewise, in their analysis show that the unintended side effects may be ameliorated if the military missions are done in parallel and coordinated with other activities aimed at the security sector. Such situation is also reflected in the European strategy that enhanced security and law enforcement capacity must be connected to «measures of good governance in order to ensure state control» and that «promotion of good governance and improvement of the security situation need to be carried out in appropriate sequence and in a coordinated manner» (European External Action Service 2011a, p. 2, 7).

The line of all these arguments shows the existing complex regional security puzzle in the Sahel, where a «Traffic Jam» of military interventions has been created (Cold-Ravnkilde & Jacobsen, 2019) with too many pieces on the board unable to put a stop to the Sahelian storm.

4.2. An incoming piece in the puzzle: The GAR-SI Sahel project. The what, who and how dimensions

In the midst of this complex puzzle of actors, the GAR-SI Sahel project (Rapid Action Groups for Surveillance and Intervention in the Sahel) arises as a multinational European tool whose aim is to boost to calm the storm, by strengthening the operational capacities of national authorities, the improvement of effective control of the territory and the scope of the action of the Rule of Law for the whole of the Sahel.

The project was approved in June 2016 by the Executive Committee of the Emergency Trust Fund of the European Commission with an initial endowment of 41.6 million euros, which has been increased to 66.6 million euros in a second expansion phase.

To this date, the EU has tackled security problems in Africa by proxy based on the operational idea namely the buzzword «African solutions to African problems» (Olsen, 2014), however, authors like Gardachewgh (2021) and Williams (2008) call into question if the African solution is enough.

Taking this argument into account, the EU launches the GAR-SI Sahel project on a new concept following its past experiences. As it has done on other occasions, rather than developing new instruments from scratch in a time of crisis, the EU «copied» an existing successful policy tool to apply to a new situation (Bosilcă, Stenberg & Riddervold, 2020). Thus, this incoming European project aims to create and deploy six company-type GAR-SI units, robust and self-sufficient, like those already existing in Spain following the experience of the fight against domestic terrorism (ETA), in the African countries of the G5 Sahel (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso) and Senegal. With this, instead of searching for African solutions the EU bet on a new piece that aspires to become an effective solution to help complete the security puzzle. It could be defined as an European expertise tailored to Africa as a way to achieve longer-term results.

In order to facilitate the understanding of this novel European project, the dimensions of the GAR-SI Sahel project will be now presented by highlighting its innovative aspects compared to the pieces already existing on the Sahelian board.

What

The GAR-SI units will be characterized by their multidisciplinary nature and will be able to develop a double functionality: preventive and reactive support. That is, they will be instructed to be engaged in the fight against terrorism and organized crime, but also as environmental police, proximity police, logistics and maintenance of material, judicial police and intelligence, also including specific modules on human rights, gender and drug trafficking.

Taking into account these characteristics, the project defines an innovative police unit concept⁵, based on the GAR units of the Spanish Guardia Civil, which have been adapted to the needs of each beneficiary country, always taking local proposals into account.

Likewise, one of the frequent complaints of the security forces in the area is that cooperation programs, both European and those promoted by other countries and international organizations have been limited to specific training or sporadic supplies of material⁶. Consequently, the project avoids becoming a one-off training or a sporadic supply of material by offering a comprehensive approach. In that regard, during the process all the elements considered necessary from beginning to end are included once the unit is

⁵ Interview #10

⁶ Interview #3

deployed: personnel selection, high-quality training, equipment, support, mentoring etc. And, finally, the creation of technical standards: employment doctrine and permanent training plans. All of this forms a complete package⁷ that allows the Sahel gendarmerie to be delivered a fully operational unit ready to be deployed where each country deems most convenient.

Furthermore, one of the cornerstones of the growing insecurity in the Sahel is to build interoperability that guarantees the regionalization of the response. As Barrios and Koepf (2014) point out, it is necessary to «re-map the Sahel» since, by solving security problems at the local or national level, the problem ends up moving from one country to another. The regional dimension of terrorist organizations implies coordination between states that is even more difficult to carry out than the training itself⁸. As a result, GAR-SI Sahel project foresees facing this challenge by creating units with joint training and under a common working doctrine, which are expected to favor joint operations and active information exchange⁹.

Who

This new piece in the puzzle is developed by several European gendarmeries (the Spanish Guardia Civil, the French National Gendarmerie, the Italian Carabinieri and the Portuguese Republican National Guard (GNR), which, due to their idiosyncrasy, have endowed the GAR-SI units with their character of being police forces with a military status. Consequently, this dual nature suggests that the further model of unit as gendarmerie-type forces could be well suited as a crucial piece in the regional security puzzle in the Sahel by acting as a connecting axis between «purely military duties» and «purely’ civilian/police ones»¹⁰ (Arcudi & Smith, 2013). As well, these GAR-SI units are constituted with the hope of generating medium or even long-term solutions compared to the short-term nature of military combat operations, which, as we have already stated before, seems to be one of the common challenges in the aftermath of a conflict.

The creation of robust, flexible, mobile, multidisciplinary and self-sufficient police units in the Gendarmeries of the Sahel was necessary to decrease the risk of deploying soldiers in law enforcement roles¹¹ (Lutterbeck, 2004; Gazit & Levy, 2020). Thus, the GAR-SI

⁷ Interview #3

⁸ Interview #4

⁹ Interview #3

¹⁰ Interview #2

¹¹ Interview #15

Sahel units pretend to be the solution to the past mistakes regarding previous deployments tagged by scholars as «militarization of the police» (Delehanty et al. 2017; Lawson 2018; Roziere & Walby, 2017) and «policization of the military» (Robinson, 2018) which, as Harig (2020) point out, may carry a considerable risk for principles of human rights protection and the rule of law.

In addition, the fact that the project is carried out by countries whose interests are jointly affected by the Sahel crisis – France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain – increases the inter-European interdependence and, in turn, «makes cooperation less risky» (Haroche, 2017). In the end, they all share a similar vision of problem they face and have had a historical or cultural presence in the zone¹².

How

As the OECD DAC Handbook on SSR (2007) exposes its purpose is to ensure that donor support to SSR programs is both «effective and sustainable». Nonetheless, creating sustainable armed forces has been one of the EU's challenges no matter what the field of operations was (Brzoska, 2006; Simons, 2012).

In reference to this, to improve the sustainability of its units the GAR-SI Sahel project foresee an integral approach¹³ divided into the following phases:

- **Diagnosis:** This first phase of the project is built in alignment with what the European strategy calls resilience-building alongside an emphasis on flexibility, tailor-made approaches and the need for local ownership, capacity-building and comprehensiveness (Juncos, 2017). Consequently, it carries out a complete study of the country's situation, including the security structure, threats, available infrastructures, etc. This phase ends with the presentation of a Situation Study and an Action Plan for the development of the project.

- **Training:** Once the Action Plan has been approved, the personnel selection and training phase begins. Experts from the four partner countries participate in it. This is articulated in turn in four phases:

¹² Interview #7

¹³ Interview #9

1. Phase I and II: Training of managers and trainers. For a period of three months, of which two months are taught at the Special Training Center of the Guardia Civil and the third month in the country of origin.

2. Phase III: Basic course for all unit personnel with a multidisciplinary training. It takes place entirely in the beneficiary country.

3. Phase IV: In it, specialties cells are formed: information, logistics and judicial police, depending on what is requested by the countries.

- Mentoring: After the training, the unit begins to work in the field supported by experts from the project. This phase lasts nine months and begins with an initial capacity assessment, IOC, (Initial Operational Capability) in which it is decided whether the unit is in a position to be handed over to the Gendarmerie for the start of operations and, furthermore, weaknesses and aspects to be improved are identified during the mentoring phase. The mentoring phase ends with the final evaluation, FOC (Full Operational Capability) in which, through a previously established table of indicators, their operational level and the degree of fulfillment of objectives and capabilities are evaluated.

- Interoperability: For the purposes of the project, interoperability means the ability to act jointly with other forces within and outside the national territory, including the possibility of carrying out joint operations.

- Closing: closing phase of all project documentation and evaluation of results.

4.3. What place occupies this new piece of the puzzle?

The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) explicitly established SSR as an objective in the EU's overall security framework and underlined that it should be «part of a broader institution building» process (Council of the European Union 2003, p. 14).

This article tends to illustrate what place does GAR-SI Sahel project play within the framework of European Union missions in the Sahel region.

In this regard, we highlight a previous research done by Emma Skeppströma, Cecilia Hull Wiklunda and Michael Jonsson (2015) which has identified three aspects that may create unintended side effects in the framework of EUTM missions: civilian oversight and control, legitimacy, and sustainability of the armed forces.

There have been many relevant contributions about the concept of Security Sector Reform, both in its definition and also regarding its practical implications in the field. We

salute the contribution by Bruneau and Matei (2008) in which they point out the difficulty to assess what kind of institutions should be subjected to SSR. Also, the ambiguity of the term, with «at least 15 definitions» (Bruneau & Matei, 2008: 7)

They point out the three elements of the theoretical core of Civil Military Relations theory by Linz and Stephan (1996) which have to be assessed: democratic civilian control, effectiveness in fulfilling roles and mission, and efficiency in the use of resources. About the first, they claim that «is basic and fundamental, but is irrelevant unless the instruments for achieving security can effectively fulfill their roles and missions». As well as «And, both control and effectiveness must be implemented at an affordable cost or they will vitiate other national priorities». They criticize that most of the attention has been traditionally put on control forgetting the other two elements, stressing the role of legitimacy (Bruneau & Matei, 2008)

In the specific aspect of the appliance of SSR to missions on the field and especially when linked to the African reality, Oksamiytna (2012) criticizes that EUTM Somalia for reproducing «the shortcomings of the liberal peacebuilding project by trying to contain rather than resolve conflict» (Oksamiytna, 2012:3). He points out that in 2012 out of 28 CSDP missions, three were SSR missions and emphasizes that these types of missions must be carried out «in countries where hostilities have ceased» and «where some functioning security sectors already exist».

Another key contribution in this regard is the article by Sarah Detzner (2017) in which she lists the failures of certain SSR cases including the one in Guinea Bissau and Liberia and she stresses the importance of the support from the national government for the success of the project. Another one of her main contributions is that in many cases the intelligence services and the elite guard units are left out of SSR to prevent coups. This is very relevance in the connection to what has already been developed by Bruneau and Matei regarding the efficiency of the security apparatus (2008).

In this regard, how is GAR-SI Sahel project different from other training missions that the EU conducts in the Sahel? and how can efficiency be guaranteed without negatively affecting SSR efforts by the EU?

GAR-SI Sahel is designed to contribute to strengthening their security apparatus through a more technical approach and more tactic as opposed to political-strategic¹⁴. Spanish

¹⁴ Interview #11

Guardia Civil as the leader of the project does not influence how Sahel countries organize their strategic defense but is rather focused on assuring good tactical training which includes gender equality, human rights and other key relevant issues¹⁵.

While doing so, GAR-SI Sahel project does not interfere with SSR reform. Nor does it engage with it. It is rather a complete neutrality which allows the EU and the partner country to boost their tactical capabilities which would benefit whatever framework might be decided. That is the biggest strength of the program¹⁶.

Likewise, to deal with the aspects defined by the study by Skeppströma, Hull and Jonsson (2015) in which they identified three aspects that can generate unintended side effects, we must ask ourselves the following question:

Civilian oversight and control, legitimacy of the armed forces Civilian. What can GAR-SI Sahel do about this?

Certainly, the lack of civilian control can have dire consequences. However, to answer this question, it is first necessary to question whether the GAR-SI Sahel Project intends to spread democracy or build technical forces. Maybe, transformation, development or construction could be more appropriate terms than the concept "reform" when defining the objectives of the GAR-SI Sahel Project.

Moving away from lexical discussion, however, past experience has also shown that successful outcomes of police reform efforts can have significant implications for democratization, the rule of law, and justice and security in the long run (Dursun-Ozkanca & Crossley-Frolick (2012); Bayley, 2001; Call & Cook, 2003; Marenin 2004).

4.4. An overview of the results

As it has been shown, the GAR-SI Sahel project is at an early development. Although the final results cannot be shown until the long term, through the analysis of the data obtained to date it is possible to glimpse preliminarily productive results in the short term.

According to the project planning previously studied, the expected results are:

-Strengthening the operational capacities of national authorities, the improvement of effective control of the territory and the scope of the action of the Rule of Law for the whole of the Sahel.

¹⁵ Interview #4

¹⁶ Interview #3

- To make GAR-SI units a sustainable police unit over time.
- To build interoperability that guarantees the regionalization of the response.

By analyzing training data, it is possible to argue that the GAR-SI Sahel project has achieved the proposed objective of strengthening the operational capacities of national authorities. First, the project has provided specific police training to more than 1800 gendarmes to date, including appropriate modular and specialized training. Second, the results of the respective IOCs exposed that while capability had certainly improved, the trainees still lacked many of the skills required to function properly beyond the individual or company level. This deficiency was partly solved during the mentoring phase, as shown by the results of the final evaluations (FOC’s)¹⁷. Third, technical training together with the purchase of material (3.6 million euros per country) has enabled the formation of 13 companies fully trained and equipped.

The terrorist attacks suffered by the GAR-SI units reflect their high degree of preparation and courage, being congratulated by the national authorities¹⁸. Furthermore, another proof of the degree of satisfaction and trust that the local authorities have placed in these units is the fact that they have been designated to be used in specific operations of great risk or complexity, in which the high preparation of the same. All this has contributed to the fact that they are currently considered as true elite units within these gendarmeries¹⁹.

In reference to the materialization of the objectives, a palpable short-term success in improving an effective control of the territory can be thrown. Table 12 reports the operational results obtained by the GAR-SI units deployed in the respective Sahel countries. The figures show a quite satisfactory balance in short-term, reaping excellent results in the area of irregular migration and the fight against terrorism, and have intervened large quantities of drugs, weapons and all kinds of contraband goods.

Table 12

Operational results obtained by the GAR-SI Sahel units

	Mauritania	Niger	Burkina Faso	Senegal	Chad	Mali
Knives	31	25		141		10
Firearms	271	17	28	15	4	3

¹⁷ Interview #6

¹⁸ Interview #5

¹⁹ Interview #17

Wars' weapons	53	12	16		2	
Ammunition (cartridges)	233		2.900	3.500		
Arrests	669	123	398	792	87	
Immigrants	611		176		19	
Money (CFA)	1.000.000	3.213.410		1.955.650	5.213.000	

Source: Own elaboration based on the information from the GAR-SI Sahel Project Office.

Regarding the scope of the action of the Rule of Law, it is still too early to determine the effectiveness of the project. Taking into account previous studies from other security programs, to rendering GAR-SI units legitimate in the eyes of the population, it would be crucial the behavior of the gendarmes in the field. The abuses of human rights hurt the legitimacy of the police forces in the eyes of the population and at least indirectly the legitimacy of the project as well (Mobekk, 2009). To date there is no evidence of abuse of human rights among GAR-SI forces. However, whether or not these were committed is very difficult to verify.

Another important aspect that could negatively affect the achievement of that could negatively affect the achievement of the Rule of Law is how well the trained soldiers actually represent the overall population. Poor representation of varying ethnic groups among those trained might have negative consequences for the forces' long-term legitimacy. According to the data analyzed, the diagnostic phase favored this fact given the lessons learned from similar security projects.

In relation to interoperability, «poor coordination may result a duplication of efforts», wasting resources (Barley, 2008), or a «failure to address critical functions» (Brzoska, 2006). That said, since its launch, the GAR-SI project has carried out multiple coordination activities with other programs such as EUCAP Sahel (Mali and Niger), EUTM Mali, OIM, UNMAS or International Red Cross²⁰.

As regards the sustainability of GAR-SI units, an appropriate and intact chain of command is crucial for the viability and sustainability of gendarmerie structures, especially in fragile states. Based on past experiences, the GAR-SI project has planned specific training and mentoring to ensure an adequate chain of command as well as a cyclical

²⁰ Interview #3

training process. According to figures provided by the project, a total of 358 trainers of trainers and command has been trained in specific tasks of leadership, command and control, as well as teaching.

The SSR literature also emphasizes the importance of supporting human resource management structures to ensure the payment of soldiers. Non-payment of wages seriously undermines morale and contributes to soldiers seeking alternative, often illegal, sources of income (OECD/DAC, 2007). Furthermore, several insurgent groups offer wages as an incentive to recruits, and former soldiers presumably constitute an attractive recruitment pool. Against this background, the GAR-SI Sahel project needs to learn from past failures since salaries and bonuses seem to be one of the main complaints among GAR-SI components²¹.

All the beneficiary countries of the project have requested its expansion and the formation of more companies. This fact, together with the demand from African third countries to be part of it, is further proof of the short-term successes achieved by the project.

4.5. Final remarks

This article worked towards a multi-dimension approach for understanding the development of the GAR-SI Sahel project. It provided the first theoretical literature of the topic, and through the study of the what, who and how dimensions, argued that the GAR-SI project has three aspects that differentiate it from previous security programs in the Sahel: firstly, it provides the Sahelian states with technical and multidisciplinary units capable of carrying out territorial control tasks, enhancing rule of law, and favoring the interoperability of operations. Secondly, the fact of creating robust units within the gendarmerie acts as a link between exclusively military tasks and civil or police tasks, reducing the risks inherent in enlisting the military in police functions. Third, its integral approach aims to promote sustainable police units especially in countries with fragile societies and a history of coups.

Turning toward the where dimension, this work aimed to understand the role of the GAR-SI Sahel project in the framework of the SSR. By investigating the position that it occupies allows us also to shed light on how security and defense issues are addressed by the EU and the complex regional security puzzle existing in the Sahel. The findings confirm that the GAR-SI Sahel project is not included in the framework of the SSR. However, it

²¹ Interview #3

does not affect negatively or block the SSR objectives since it focuses on building technical forces and providing technical advancements.

Another main argument of the paper stated that the GAR-SI Sahel project furnish an appealing policy tool, by ostensibly being low-cost and low-risk. On the contrary, with this project, the EU has ventured into partially new territory, providing a robust police unit with technical capacity building in a lawless zone, while having a limited ability to influence how its trainees subsequently conduct themselves with the rest of the population.

As the GAR-SI units has been recently deployed, it would be precipitous to consider the pros and cons of their final impact on the Sahel and there is to date limited evidence that negative side-effects have manifested themselves. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the number of recruits trained, the level of knowledge acquired and the operational results obtained in the field, the GAR-SI Sahel project can justly be described as at least modestly successful in the short term.

In contrast, a preventive strategy should be addressed given past experiences from similar endeavors. In addition, against what could be expected from a straightforward reading of the major documents addressing GAR-SI Sahel, the interviews of the observers participating in the GAR-SI Sahel project point out that it needs to be expanded functionally and extended over time, or else risk failing in achieving overarching goals.

In light of its findings, this article suggests that GAR-SI Sahel units show great potential for addressing the lack of a permanent presence and effective control over the Sahelian region in short-term, but maximizing the likelihood for positive outcomes requires learning from past failures and continuous improvement of existing practices. Hence, additional steps are needed to make the GAR-SI Sahel project fully consistent with the strategic interests of the EU in the Sahel.

Despite the efforts and progress made to date, the GAR-SI Sahel project should keep vigil over a sufficient coordination between relevant actors, clarifying roles and responsibilities to ensure that the entire SSR spectrum is covered by their joint efforts. According to this study, GAR-SI project needs to continue making technical advancements in coordination with other actors. If this is not done, there is a latent risk that what is tactically and technically efficient in the short term, may turn the tables to be strategically and geopolitically self-defeating over time.

In other words, whilst the GAR-SI Sahel project is not intended as full-fledged SSR missions, failing to achieve these aims means that short-term capacity building may become detrimental to medium-term SSR and state-building efforts.

NOTES

- Interview #2 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, online, January 2021.
- Interview #3 Project Manager GAR-SI Sahel, Madrid, February 2021
- Interview #4 GAR-SI Sahel Project Office Officer, Madrid, March 2021.
- Interview #5 GAR-SI Sahel Project Office Officer, Madrid, March 2021
- Interview #6 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, online, March 2021.
- Interview #7 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, Logroño, February 2021.
- Interview #9 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, online, January 2021.
- Interview #10 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, online, January 2021.
- Interview #11 GAR-SI Sahel Project Office Officer, Madrid, March 2021.
- Interview #15 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, Logroño, February 2021
- Interview #17 European expert GAR-SI Sahel Project, Logroño, May 2021.

5. INTELLIGENCE IN THE GAR-SI SAHEL PROJECT

The transnationalization of terrorism, revealed during the 9/11 attacks, has led authors such as Richard J. Aldrich (2002) to argue that intelligence agencies are more connected with each other than ever. In particular, it highlights the Post-9/11 international significance of the European Union as an actor in the fight against terrorism (Argomaniz, Bures & Kaunert, 2015).

After the attacks suffered in New York and later experienced more closely in Madrid and London, the EU has gone from having a position of almost total irrelevance to wanting to be an active part of international intelligence relations and counter terrorism. The change in mentality is not surprising if we take into account the so-called migration crisis suffered by Europe in 2005 and the number of terrorist cells coming from external borders that have been dismantled.

This pressing scenario has forced the EU to emerge as a real international actor in this field, increasing its «presence» (Bretherton & Vogler, 2006) as a provider of capacitybuilding in a range of third-countries. In particular, one of the areas that has attracted the most interest from the EU due to its geographical proximity and growing insecurity is the Sahel. According to authors such as Jörg Monar (2015) or reports such as the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) of 2011 and 2012, radical Islamist organizations operating in the Sahel area pose a persistent risk for the EU.

Consequently, as EU policymakers become increasingly aware of the «regional security gaps» (Cline, 2007) and the impact of «international intelligence ties» (Svendsen, 2008), the number of projects aimed at building operational capacity and addressing limited resources in areas such as the Sahel it has increased exponentially in recent years.

However, despite the great explosion and variety of these European initiatives, political science continues to neglect these relationships as a field of study. In fact, reviewing the existing bibliography, we have been able to verify that only a handful of post-9/11 edited volumes and special issues have focused on specific aspects of the EU counterterrorism and intelligence capacitybuilding efforts.

For example, some of the most recent ones, such as Sophia Hoffmann 's (2021) study, point out that international intelligence relations have become ever more visible. However, as she herself specifies, the intelligence liaison phenomenon remains largely under-studied and substantially under-theorized.

For this reason, in order to shed some light on the matter, the objective of this article is to analyze one of the latest projects developed by the European Union in the Sahel aimed at creating operational and intelligence capacity, the GAR-SI Sahel project.

This project led by the Spanish Guardia Civil and developed in collaboration with the Gendarmeries of France, Italy and Portugal, aims to create multidisciplinary operational units similar to those already existing in Spain known as Rapid Action Groups (GAR). With them, it is intended to strengthen the operational capacity of the beneficiary countries and they hope, in the not too distant future, to be useful in international intelligence relations.

With the help of an access to the idyllic countryside and the development of qualitative research, the study of this project aims to fill some of the gap in the existing literature on international intelligence relations and answer such important questions as: do capacitybuilding projects like GAR-SI Sahel help build intelligence relationships and, if so, how? How important are different factors of the project, such as institutions, intelligence models, operational training, technology, material resources and information, in these relations? Can a European institution influence the intelligence model of the Sahel? How?

To achieve these objectives, the article proceeds as follows. Firstly, we use the history of the Guardia Civil and its fight against the terrorist organization Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and its so-called «northern model» as a tool for building intelligence capacity in the Sahel. Secondly, we address the intelligence training program and material resources of the GAR-SI Sahel project on the subject as an influential factor in the intelligence relationship. Thirdly, we develop a performance pyramid as a useful theoretical framework that details the necessary accomplishment of four specific levels to achieve an efficient international intelligence channel. In addition, the article addresses the realization of a Focus Group discussion that with its synergistic nature leads us to a unique type of data (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) capable of measuring the intelligence performance of these GAR-SI units.

5.1. The «northern model» of the Guardia Civil: From learned with ETA to the stabilization of the Sahel

Despite the fact that the fight against ETA has received some attention from historians and very little attention from political scientists, it has had a direct impact on the design of the Spanish institutional intelligence model. Today, ten years after the end of ETA, it also intends to have an impact on the operational construction of the Sahel gendarmeries and on its institutional intelligence model.

Thus, before knowing the intelligence capacitybuilding of the GAR-SI Sahel project, it is necessary to know the intelligence model of the Guardia Civil and the units that constitute it since they are the mirror on which its program is based. To do this, we must go back to the origins of the institution and to the fight against ETA as a sign of its entity.

In 1844 the founder of the Spanish Guardia Civil, the II Duque de Ahumada Francisco Javier Girón Ezpeleta, in his deontological synthesis of 35 articles known as «la Cartilla de la Guardia Civil» (Calvo, 2020, 61), highlighted, already at that time, the work of mandatory information attached to the condition of Guardia Civil. According to article 26 of it, the guardia civil must «try to acquire news, and to make use of what may be useful to him, for the best performance of the obligations that the service of the Corps imposes on him».

Since its founding origin, information and intelligence work has been closely related to the Guardia Civil in the exercise of its functions during its more than 176 years of history. However, it will not be until the end of the sixties that the Guardia Civil will experience the approval of the use of information with the arrival of the terrorist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna. Formed in 1959, the terrorist band ETA in its quest for the independence of the Basque country has targeted Spain with an intense campaign of violence that has left a total death toll of 858 in its wake (Alonso, 2011, 696).

The beginnings of the Guardia Civil in the fight against ETA were characterized by a real incapacity and a total ignorance of how to deal with a separatist terrorist group, mainly motivated by the lack of preparation and quality information on the ground. However, the adaptation of the Guardia Civil over several decades of attacks led to the creation and restructuring of units aimed at obtaining information and achieving the highest profitability and synergy of means and capabilities (Corbí, 2016, 38).

In this context, the Rapid Action Group (GAR) of the Guardia Civil was born. A special operations group created in 1978 with the objective of regaining control of the land, hinder and prevent terrorist movements and actions and, especially collaborate with the

Information services in obtaining data for the detection and detention of terrorists (de Miguel, 2019, 118). Consequently, the more than forty years of fighting terrorism have given the Guardia Civil and the GAR their hallmark (de Miguel, 2019) creating a model, known as «northern model», based on the perfect symbiosis between the conjunction of operational work and research which has been a milestone within the police investigation services (Sánchez, 2016, 38).

According to one of its creators, the Colonel Sánchez Corbí (2016), the success of this “northern model” against the terrorist group ETA was characterized by the confluence of several factors, the following standing out among them:

In the first place, the conquest of the land and the recovery of freedom of movement by the GAR unit had an immediate effect and led the Guardia Civil to make the leap from a passive and defensive attitude towards an offensive fight against ETA terrorism. This recovery of land and initiative, helped to promote and strengthen again the bonds and trust of the population in the institutions of the State, opening the door to multiple information opportunities. Likewise, as in all Guardia Civil units, among the GAR components, an ambitious mentality of obtaining information and «going further» prevailed, giving the investigation units a large amount of basic intelligence that will soon be saw translated into great police successes (Corbí, 2016, 39).

Secondly, the leap made to France through bilateral relations and mutual knowledge ended with ETA's «sanctuary» in the neighboring country (Wieviorka, 1991, 160). Thanks to joint planning and decision-making, an effective and satisfactory collaboration between the Guardia Civil and the French security forces was obtained, resulting in abundant police results (Morán,1996; Corbí, 2016, 44).

These successes achieved by the Guardia Civil in the field of intelligence through its «northern model» and the active participation of units such as the GAR in the fight against ETA (Bustos, 2010) gave rise to the establishment of tactics, techniques and specific procedures. It is now, since the beginning of the GAR-SI Sahel project in 2016, that the EU is betting on this particular model of the Spanish Guardia Civil and units such as GAR as a useful tool to stabilize the Sahel given the certain similarity of scenarios and threats.

On the one hand, the northern Spanish model characterized, as already stated, by the struggle against a criminal phenomenon with social support, the loss of control of the terrain by State institutions and by a regionalization of the threat. On the other hand, the

omnipresent format in the Sahel called by Daniel E. Agbiboa (2018) as «eyes on the Street» to face a scenario with similar characteristics of the Spanish case with the added challenge of an absence of media and technology. Consequently, and as a common denominator of both, the EU is committed to the creation of multidisciplinary units of the GAR-SI type, trained in common tactics, techniques and specific procedures, that guarantee interoperability, in order to regain control of the terrain and the trust of the population.

5.2. A new proposal

Numerous terrorist groups roam freely in the Sahelian strip of the African belt. The weak and ungoverned States of the Sahel, characterized by «fragile institutions» (Bøås & Strazzari, 2020) and unstructured police forces, are unable to implement a common security and intelligence policy capable of dealing with terrorism and the insecurity of the region (Rotberg, 2002). The limited presence of the state in a large part of its vast borders has forced its police forces to double its effort to rebuild relations with the local population, since this is considered as a critical component in intelligence gathering that may assist in dismantling terrorist organizations (Nyadera & Agwanda, 2019)

For all the above, together with the conclusions obtained by Lawrence E. Cline (2016, 463), where he states that the limited resources of African countries require an «expanded and continued external support» to make intelligence cooperation more effective, the Guardia Civil intends to lend its experience in the fight against terrorism through the GAR-SI Sahel project.

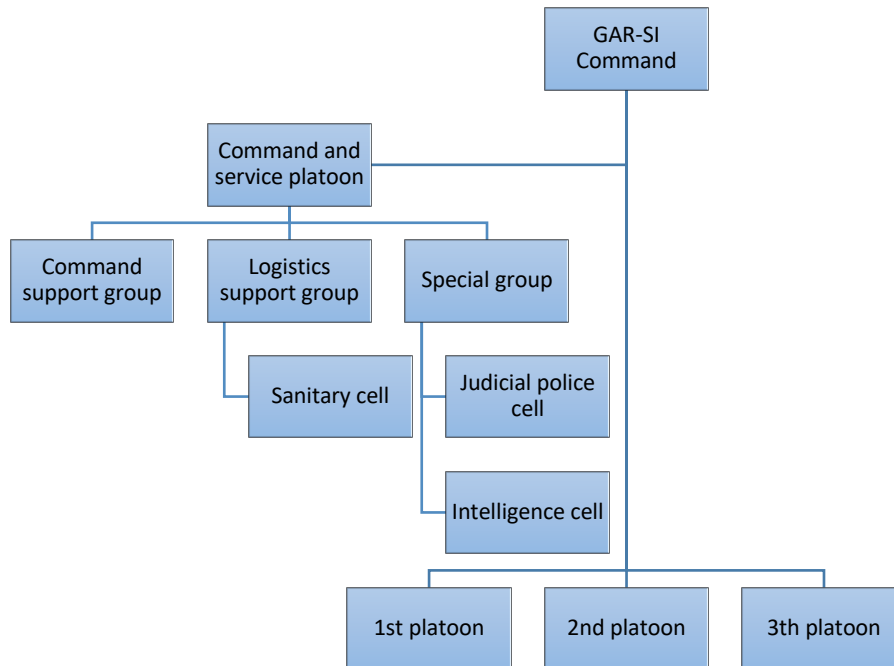
This European security project led by the Spanish Guardia Civil in collaboration with the French Gendarmerie, the Italian Carabinieri Corp and the Republican National Guard of Portugal, aims to create GAR-SI units, in the image and likeness of those already existing in Spain, in the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali Mauritania, Niger) and Senegal.

With the creation of these units characterized by their robustness, flexibility, mobility, autonomy and multidisciplinary, (Ávila, 2020, 27) it is intended to strengthen the operational capacity, both preventive and reactive, of the national security forces and improve and encourage cross-border cooperation through interoperability between counterpart forces (GAR-SI units) of beneficiary countries (Rojo, 2017, 45).

To achieve these objectives, the GAR-SI Sahel project is very aware of the lessons learned by the Spanish GAR in its «northern model» of the fight against ETA and focuses its efforts on training aimed at recovery control of the territory and an active attitude when it comes to obtaining information and basic intelligence.

For this, based on these lessons learned, the GAR-SI units have the following organic:

Figure 1: GAR-SI units' organic



Source: Author's own elaboration based on information provided by the GAR-SI Project Office.

According to the organization of the unit, the training program of the GAR-SI project, in addition to a basic course lasting two months in which subjects related to shooting, operational intervention, clearance, special tactics or personal defense are taught, receive in turn, two weeks of specialized training in intelligence and judicial police matters.

Specifically, the intelligence cells receive a 50-hour training session divided into five blocks:

Table 13
Training blocks of the intelligence cells of the GAR-SI

1st block Intended for the study of the terrorist threat in the Sahel with emphasis on the terrorist groups in the area, their connection with the world jihadist

movement, modus operandi, as well as international and European organizations for the fight against terrorism. Likewise, this block presents the experience of the Guardia Civil in the field of counterterrorism and its «northern model» of integration of the GAR and the Intelligence Service.

- 2nd block** Intended for the intelligence cycle in all its phases: obtaining, elaboration and dissemination, as well as the most common mistakes made in intelligence analysis.
- 3th block** Oriented to obtaining information through sources, specifying types (HUMINT and OSINT) and their treatment.
- 4th block** Intended for obtaining, processing and security of information. During it, operational activities aimed at obtaining information, managing, conserving and transmitting it, databases and files, as well as activities related to counterintelligence and information security are addressed.
- 5th block** It relates intelligence to security and judicial investigation. For this, intelligence is exposed as a starting point for the planning of services and information as a security and deployment element. Likewise, human rights matters are addressed in counterterrorism activity and the preservation of information before judicial proceedings by providing reports and evidence to the judicial process.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on the information provided by the trainers of the intelligence cells of the GAR-SI Sahel Project.

In addition to training, the project has financial resources to purchase material from the beneficiary countries. As other experts such as Michael Levi and David S. Wall (2004) or David Lyon (2003) state, the 9/11 attacks, in addition to increasing international intelligence connections and relations, connected intelligence agencies with new technologies. However, the African continent and especially the Sahel states are seeing as exceptions to the modernity that underpins surveillance techniques: bureaucratically enfeebled, lacking capacity, or altogether absent (Donovan, Philippe & Martin, 2016).

Therefore, the GAR-SI Sahel project aims to shorten the connection of the Sahel gendarmeries with technology through the provision of financial resources for the purchase

of various material and technological resources such as drones. Specifically, according to data provided by the GAR-SI Project Management Office, the average budget item per country earmarked for this purpose is 3.7 million euros.

However, authors like Mirco Göpfert (2016) expose that drones and high technology can see but not know. Therefore, to achieve what he calls «see things» it is necessary that the components of the GAR-SI units also have personal contacts and relationships with the population in order to verify and contextualize specific pieces of intelligence. According to his research, friends and acquaintances potentially multiply the gendarmes «eyes and ears on the ground».

With these bases, the GAR-SI project must therefore work on the unified implementation on the day-to-day of its units, of technological resources, operational training and the particular way of doing things in the Sahel, often spontaneous and with makeshift practices. All of this, and going back to what was concluded in Göpfert 's work, it is because surveillance does not so much appear as a calculated action conceived of by a powerful surveillance dispositive—a strategy—but rather as a tactical way of operating.

5.3. Pyramid of operational intelligence performance of GAR-SI Sahel units

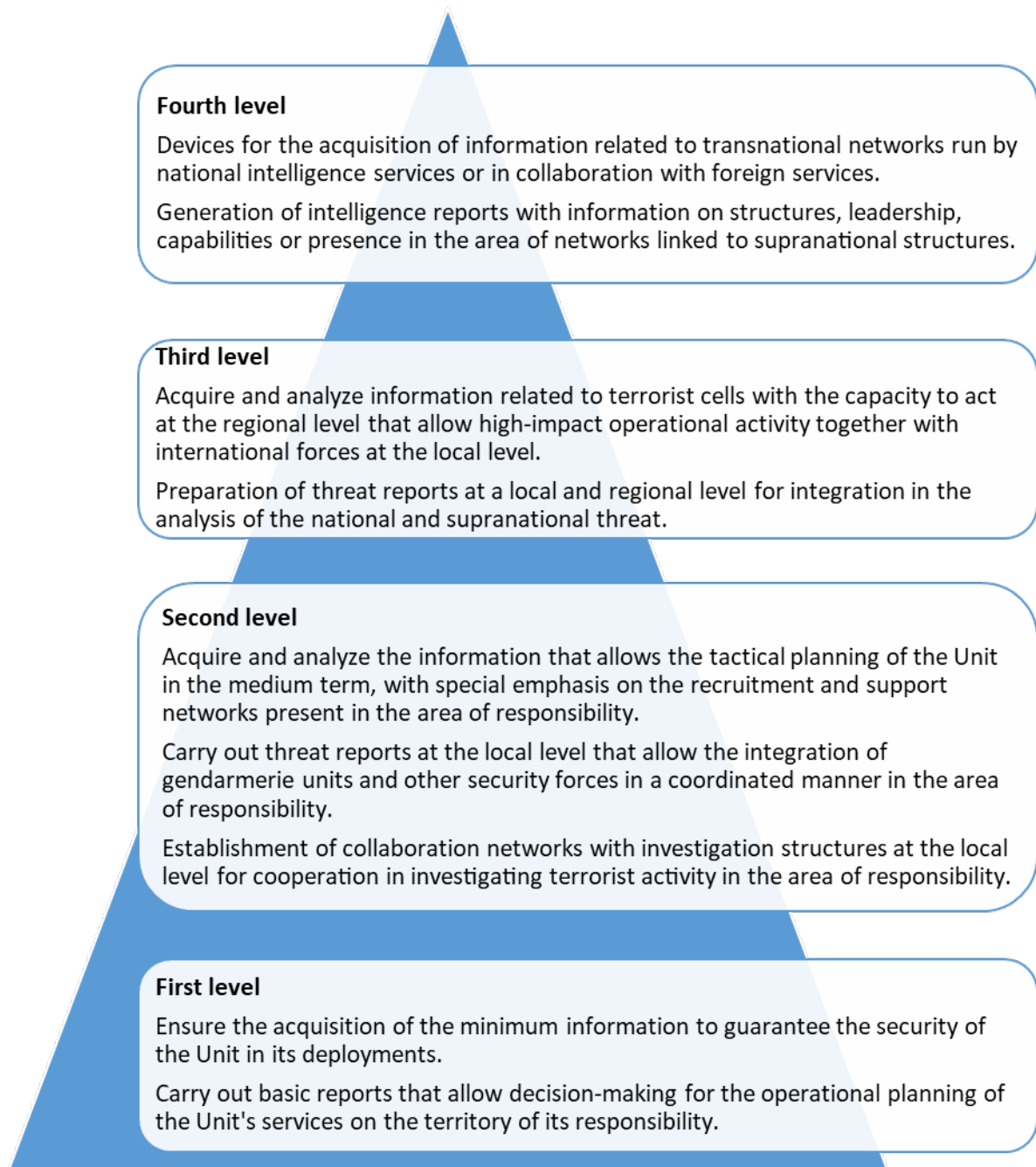
The GAR-SI Sahel project is a sample of the effort that the EU makes in matters of Intelligence capacitybuilding in the Sahel. The success of this project could shorten the international intelligence relations of the beneficiary countries, as well as the establishment of an effective intelligence channel between Europe and the Sahel.

In order to gain an understanding of the situation in which these relationship channels find themselves from the perspective of the participants themselves (Hennick, 2014), a focus group of five days was held in Logroño (Spain) moderate by a Senior Officer of the Guardia Civil. It was attended by a total of nine participants: An Officer from the Guardia Civil expert in Intelligence, an Officer from the Rapid Action Group of the Guardia Civil, an Officer from the GAR-SI Sahel Project Directorate, as well as the Officers at command of GAR-SI units deployed in Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad.

Based on the study by David R. Thomas (2003), through a process of inductive coding and the definition of categories extracted from multiple interviews with two guardias civiles officers who are experts in intelligence, four operational levels have been obtained after the execution of Stakeholder checks. Consequently, and in order to serve as a starting

point to know the level of performance achieved by the GAR-SI groups, the four levels have been exposed in the following pyramid:

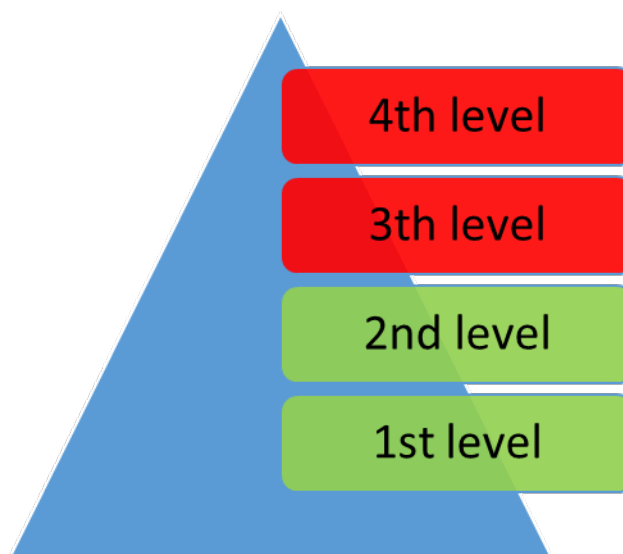
Figure 2: Operational intelligence levels to be achieved by the GAR-SI Sahel units



Source: Author's own elaboration based on information provided by the trainers of the intelligence cells of the GAR-SI Sahel Project.

With the previous performance pyramid as the starting point used by the focus group moderator and through the return of operational experiences in intelligence provided by the group members, the following qualification was obtained:

Figure 3: Operational intelligence levels achieved by the GAR-SI Sahel units



Source: Author's own elaboration based on the information obtained after conducting the focus group.

First Level

GAR-SI units are capable of collecting basic information to ensure their self-protection. According to various statements by the officers in command of the units, before each operational deployment, «the intelligence cells are sent to obtain information for self-protection with favorable results». Likewise, they affirm that the ability to collect basic information on this matter comes from the «trust created with the population». According to the Commanding Officer in Senegal, «there are peoples who only know the GAR-SI, and who have never seen another gendarme or another uniform before».

Despite this, the GAR-SI units have already received a total of 15 attacks that have caused the death of 37 components and more than 40 wounded. Most of them caused by IEDs or ambushes with particular frequency in Burkina Faso (7), Mali (5), or Niger (2).

Consequently, the focus group raised as one of the main causes of the problem «the close establishment of the GAR-SI bases to the territory controlled by the terrorists» (...) as is the case in Burkina Faso. This fact makes it difficult to obtain minimum information for self-protection in their movements since «the activities of the GAR-SI units are always controlled». They also demand «more material resources» such as camouflaged vehicles or drones with greater autonomy.

In reference to this level, GAR-SI units also routinely issue reports or «Intelligence Bulletins» that help the commanding officer to establish a «GAR-SI monthly action plan». As a concrete example and good practice, the GAR-SI Senegal Officer plans the services based on the information obtained dividing the land into three areas of action: «responsibility zone», «interest zone» and «back zone».

Second level

According to the focus group, the GAR-SI Sahel units are capable of acquiring information from networks for capturing and supporting terrorism through civic-military actions through their health cell. Specifically, the Senegal unit has carried out a total of 4,776 free medical interventions and consultations, as well as the delivery of large quantities of medicine. These actions are giving «great results» so they request «more financing» in this regard. As various GAR-SI officers affirm, in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, «the one who gives the most is the one who receives the information».

Also, regarding this level, the GAR-SI units have prepared threat reports at the local level, as well as multiple information sheets. In the specific case of Burkina Faso, 128 objective sheets have been produced to date. Consequently, these works have resulted in the formation of collaboration structures at the local level with other national bodies such as the National Police, Customs Police or Forest Police, as the Senegalese official stated.

Third level

Despite not having been reached according to the conclusions obtained during the focus group carried out, various actions stand out. In the particular case of Senegal and Burkina Faso, multiple information related to terrorism has been acquired and analyzed after the dismantling of terrorist cells in the daily operational action of the GAR-SI units.

Specifically, Burkina Faso has interrogated 135 people and tapped a total of 210 mobile phones, of which 122 were related to terrorist activities.

However, the leap in action at the regional level has not yet been achieved and communication between GAR-SI units in the different countries is practically non-existent. Once again, the historical regional differences that cause the problems exposed by Lawrence E. Cline (2016) in the regional intelligence cooperation are highlighted.

Forth level

This level has not been reached either according to the focus group. In this regard, only «simultaneous patrols» have been carried out on the border of Senegal and Mauritania. Likewise, the GAR-SI of Mauritania stands out at this level after having prepared and shared reports with European police units of networks with supranational structures linked to clandestine immigration.

5.4. Final remarks

The GAR-SI Sahel project is one more example of the EU's efforts for intelligence training in the Sahel and to establish an effective intelligence channel and relationships that help combat the problem of terrorism and illegal immigration.

Based on the «north model» that the Spanish Guardia Civil used in the fight against ETA terrorism, the EU is committed to the creation of mobile, flexible, robust, self-sufficient and multidisciplinary units, in order to control the territory and with capacity to obtain operational information in the most isolated areas without a state presence. In this way, GAR-SI units are intended to be a useful tool for building the intelligence capacity of their gendarmerie and for establishing effective intelligence relationships in the Sahel.

The operational training and the material and technological resources of these units allow them, in addition to performing operational services, to have the ability to obtain, analyze and disseminate operational intelligence for self-protection, threat assessment or the execution of their own operations. However, in settings such as the Sahel, sometimes technology or specific training are not enough but are matched and adapted to the efficiency of the particular way of doing things there, often improvised and makeshift ways of dealing with the problem.

In addition, the GAR-SI Sahel project, despite having improved intelligence capacitybuilding and the information performance of the Sahel gendarmeries, must

continue to take steps to achieve building effective intelligence relationships. The scope from the activity at the local level to the supranational level and the consequent creation of an effective channel of international intelligence depends on the own capacities, the integration of the GARSIS in the national system and the relevant activity in the area of operation.

In this regard, the study of the focus group discussion included in this work has made it possible to establish the following actions considered to be of interest to achieve an increase in the performance levels of the GAR-SI units in matters of intelligence:

- Encourage the establishment of bilateral coordination agreements between the beneficiary countries of the project.
- Propose the creation of coordination bodies in border areas such as a GAR-SI Sahel Regional Intelligence Center.
- Increase material and financial resources for obtaining operational information and creating platforms for communication and information transfer.
- Establish a schedule of training and joint operational actions of the GAR-SI units.
- Promote civic-military actions through the coordination of the GAR-SI Project with other projects of a social nature within or outside the EU.

6. EVALUATION OF THE IV PHASE IN BURKINA FASO: A BEFORE-AFTER STUDY

Physical condition and shooting skills constitute core components of police training (Anderson et al., 2001, Chappell, 2008; Donner & Popovich, 2018; Ligestad, 2012; Rostker et al., 2008). Furthermore, shooting abilities and physical condition seems to behave as complementary skills (Anderson & Pecas, 2000; Brown et al., 2013; Kahiyan et al., 2013). They are particularly relevant for security forces specialized in counter-terrorism activities and territory control, where office work is limited. Within this framework, the aim of this work is to evaluate the impact of a short, intensive, live-in, and onsite training program targeted at African gendarmes on these two dimensions in Burkina Faso. This action is part of the Rapid Action Groups for Surveillance and Intervention in the Sahel Project (hereafter, GAR-SI Sahel Project) of the European Union (EU).

Apart from widening the literature that documents the effects of short-term physical and shooting training programs (Charles & Copay, 2011; Crawley et al., 2016; Čvorović et al., 2021; Dimitrijević et al., 2014; Vučković et al., 2008), our main contribution is to provide solid evidence on the positive short-term impact of this training action on physical condition and shooting skills. To our knowledge, this is first attempt to evaluate the performance of this sort of international cooperation initiative. Given that the program is short, intensive and live-in, we provide credible estimates of its effects using a before-after study design. Previous research on this program limits to an analysis of subjective instructors and participants' assessments of training stages in European soil (Gaona-Prieto et al., 2022).

The rest of the paper unfolds as follows. The second section that follows this introduction describes the GAR-SI Sahel Project and the context and the main characteristics of the training action carried out in Burkina Faso. In the third one, we go through the main features of the database and the methodology used in the study. In the fourth place, we present and discuss the results of our statistical analysis, whereas the last section summarizes the main findings and implications of the work.

6.1. The GAR-SI Sahel Project and the onsite training program in Burkina Faso

The GAR-SI Project is a EU funded security program that aims to provide stability to the Sahel area and to promote the control of its sovereign territory, mostly in its border areas. In that regard, the original idea was to create and develop Rapid Action Surveillance and Intervention Groups in the G5 Sahel countries (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and

Burkina Faso) and Senegal. The intention was to benefit from the experience gathered by the Spanish Guardia Civil in its fight against domestic terrorist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), dissolved in 2018. In that historical context, the Guardia Civil developed units called Rapid Action Groups (Grupos de Acción Rápida, GAR, in its Spanish acronym) to be able to have presence in rural areas in its struggle against terrorism. After the disappearance of ETA terrorist group, the Spanish Ministry of Interior managed to assign new tasks to GAR so that other countries could benefit from their experience in counterterrorism.

Under those premises, the EU considered the possibility of collaboration among several member states to cooperate with African nations in order to deal with several severe security challenges in the Sahel region. Since its inception in March 2017, the Project trained more than 1,800 gendarmes (police officers with a military structure) in tactics, techniques and procedures to combat terrorism thanks to the work of instructors from the Spanish Guardia Civil, the French National Gendarmerie, the Italian Carabinieri Corp, and the National Republican Guard of Portugal. These actions are usually, short, intensive, and live-in and take place both in European soil and African countries who benefit from the Project. Preliminary evidence on the results of training stages carried out in Spain, based on the subjective assessment of both instructors and participants, are fairly positive (Gaona-Prieto et al., 2022).

This research aims to evaluate for first time one of training actions run in Africa drawing on more objective indicators than the ones reported in earlier studies. Specifically, the focus lies on the training program developed in Burkina Faso between the 5th July and the 27th August 2021 with aim of creating the last of the three GAR companies in this country. Within an eight-week live-in schedule of 320 contact hours, ten EU experts (four Spanish, two French, two Portuguese, and two Italians) provided specialized training in intervention techniques, topography, motorcycle combat, demining, intervention in inhabited places, tactical health, personal defense, and special tactics to 151 agents of the Burkina Faso Gendarmerie Force organized in four groups (three with 38 agents and another one with 37).

Two of the cornerstones of the action were firearm and physical training. On the basis of the available evidence on injury reduction (Brandl & Stochine, 2012), improved accuracy, and, overall, gendarmes' performance (Abbaspour et al., 2021), the program included nine training sessions in shooting with a total of 54 contact hours. Drawing on

literature supporting the positive impact of physical condition on shooting efficiency (Kayihan et al., 2013), the program allocated 24 contact hours for sessions for that aim. As a result, these two dimensions represented more than a quarter of the total workload. We describe the details of each of the types of training below.

The shooting training applied modern methodological approaches and technological procedures (Lewinski et al., 2015; Taylor, 2021) in order to improve the capabilities in handling weapons and the development of a specific long gun shooting program. It took place at the shooting range of the Burkinabe National Gendarmerie Training Centre located in Loango (North of Ouagadougou, the capital city). The long and short guns used in the firing exercises were the Avtomat Kalashnikova model 1947—a service weapon of the GAR-SI Sahel unit of Burkina Faso—and the Brazilian made Taurus model TH9, respectively. Having safety as a priority, all gendarmes had to wear bulletproof vests and ballistic helmets to carry out the shooting exercises. The course was very intensive, which allowed monitoring the progression adequately: it comprised seven sessions with 22 exercises and a total of 270 cartridges were fired per person (Table 14).

Table 14
Description of the shooting training program

Exercise	Rounds	Distance	Position	Time limit	Change of magazine	Description
1	5	15m	Free	No	No	Initial Test
2	10	15m	Standing	No	No	Precision shooting exercises
3	10	15m	Kneeling	No	No	Precision shooting exercises
4	10	20m	Lying	No	No	Precision shooting exercises
5	10	20m	Standing	5"	No	Precision shooting exercises
6	10	25m	Kneeling	5"	No	Precision shooting exercises
7	10	25m	Lying	5"	No	Precision shooting exercises
8	10	20m	Standing	5"	No	Combat shooting exercise with 90° static movement
9	10	20m	Standing	5s	No	Combat shooting exercise with 180° static movement
10	20	50m	Standing	Yes	Yes	Combat shooting exercise with dynamic straight movement
11	10	20m	Sitting	Yes	No	Combat shooting exercise with lateral movement from a vehicle
12	10	15m	Standing	3"	No	Combat shooting exercise from behind cover (right side)
13	10	15m	Standing	3"	No	Combat shooting exercise from behind cover (left side)

14	10	15m	Kneeling	3"	No	Combat shooting exercise from behind cover (right side)
15	10	15m	Kneeling	3"	No	Combat shooting exercise from behind cover (left side)
16	20	50m	Standing	Yes	Yes	Buddy team combat shooting exercise with dynamic straight movement
17	20	5m	Standing	Yes	Yes	Buddy team shooting exercise (enter and clear a room)
18	25	50m	Free	Yes	Yes	React to ambush shooting exercise
19	10	6m	Standing	No	No	Precision pistol shooting drill
20	10	6m	Standing	No	No	Precision pistol shooting drill
21	20	20m	Standing	3"	No	Night combat shooting exercises
22	5	15m	Free	No	No	Initial Test

With aim of evaluating the firearms training, the instructors conducted two shooting tests, before and after the course. It consisted in a precision shooting exercise performed with free position in which five cartridges were fired at a target of 84.1×59.4 cm of a black silhouette of a human figure against a white background located at a distance of 15 meters without a time limit.

The results were calculated based on the value of the target's shooting rings, taking into account that the impact on a circle with a diameter of 10 cm thick corresponds to 10 points and that the rings decrease in score every five centimeters. The final shooting score was represented in values 0–10 taking into account the percentage of the hypothetical maximum result.

As in the case of shooting skills, recent studies show that a progressive physical training program that incorporates mesocycles can have a positive impact on the fitness of trainees even when undergoing an intense training program (Čvorović et al., 2021), which is the case of the GAR-SI training. The program selected for Burkina Faso consisted in an initial test, eight weeks of physical training (described in Table 15) and a final test. It unfolded in 24 sessions between 6 and 7:30 AM that began and ended with a warm-up and cool-down phase, respectively. Each session put gathered roughly 75 gendarmes (two groups) under the supervision of three European instructors. The objective of each training session differed, and they combined exercises of endurance workout, total body strength training routines, cardio and core workouts, and flexibility and agility exercises. Likewise, and, in order to prevent injuries, the training program was developed gradually, taking into

account both the extreme weather conditions of the country and the high physical load of the rest of daily training activities.

Table 15.
Description of the physical training program

No. of session	Schedule	No. of session	Schedule	Session	Schedule
Session No. 1	WU (10') SSR (25') CD (10')	Session No. 9	WU (10') TR (35') SE (10') CD (10')	Session No. 17	WU (10') TR (45') CD (10')
Session No. 2	WU (10') SSR (25') CD (10')	Session No. 10	WU (10') HI (35') SE (15') CD (10')	Session No. 18	WU (10') HI (40') SE (15') CD (10')
Session No. 3	WU (10') SSR (25') SE (10') CD (10')	Session No. 11	WU (10') SC (40') CD (10')	Session No. 19	WU (10') CC (40') SE (15') CD (10')
Session No. 4	WU (10') SC (35') CD (10')	Session No. 12	WU (10') SSR (40') CD (10')	Session No. 20	WU (10') TR (45') CD (10')
Session No. 5	WU (10') SSR (30') CD (10')	Session No. 13	WU (10') SE (35') SSR (20') CD (10')	Session No. 21	WU (10') SC (45') SSR (20') CD (10')
Session No. 6	WU (10') SW (35') CD (10')	Session No. 14	WU (10') SW (40') CD (10')	Session No. 22	WU (10') TR (45') SE (15') CD (10')
Session No. 7	WU (10') SSR (30') SE (15') CD (10')	Session No. 15	WU (10') SSR (45') SE (15') CD (10')	Session No. 23	WU (10') SW (45') SE (15') CD (10')
Session No. 8	WU (10') CC (35') CD (10')	Session No. 16	WU (10') SW (40') SSR (20') CD (10')	Session No. 24	WU (10') SSR (60') SE (15') CD (10')

CC = cardio circuit; CD = cool down; HI =hills running; SC = speed circuit; SE = strength exercises; SSR = steady state run; SW = strength workout; TR = Total Running; WU = warm up.

The participants took a test before and after the training program under the same conditions. It consisted of four physical tests: maximum sit-ups in two minutes, maximum

push-ups in a minute, pull-ups and a 3-kilometres run. The selection of these exercises drew on the fact that they did not require complex equipment and they were cost-effective and viable with large groups like those involved in the program. They measured physical abilities related to muscular endurance, power, and endurance (Esco et al., 2008). Furthermore, all of them provided GAR-SI gendarmes with basic physical skills for future police work (Lagestad & Van Den Tillaar, 2014). Table 16 shows the process of translating the results in the different exercises into 0–10 numeric scores. The instructors also obtained an overall mark consisting in the simple average of the score obtained in the four elements.

Table 16
Physical condition assessment chart

Pull-ups		Push-ups		Sit-ups		3-km run	
Reps within one minute	Points	Reps within one minute	Points	Reps within one minute	Points	Time	Points
0	0	14 or less	0	29 or less	0	Above 19:00	0
1–2	3	15–19	1	30–39	1	18:31–19:00	1
3–4	4	20–24	2	40–49	2	18:01–18:30	2
5–7	5	25–29	3	50–54	3	17:31–18:00	3
8–10	6	30–34	4	55–59	4	17:01–17:30	4
11–13	7	35–39	5	60–64	5	16:31–17:00	5
14–16	8	40–44	6	65–69	6	16:01–16:30	5.5
15–19	9	45–49	7	70–74	7	15:31–16:00	6
20 and over	10	50–54	8	75–80	8	15:01–15:30	6.5
		55–59	9	81–90	9	14:31–15:00	7
		60 and over	10	91 and over	10	14:01–14:30	7.5
						13:31–14:00	8
						13:01–13:30	8.5
						12:31–13:00	9
						12:01–12:30	9.5
						Below 12:00	10

6.2. Data and methods

Data

We exploit the data collected by the instructors on results of the 151 Burkinabe gendarmes in the shooting and physical condition assessments and a participants’

satisfaction survey implemented at the end of the program. We employ the latter solely for the sake of determining whether the results of the quantitative analysis based on the tests scores are coherent with the subjective participants' views.

Table 17 shows the descriptive statistics of the 151 participants' characteristics. Roughly 9 out of 10 gendarmes are marshals of lodging, around 10%, sergeant chiefs, and 4%, adjutants. The average years of service are slightly below 6 and the majority of participants, almost 65%, is between 26 and 30 years old. While roughly 70% of them are volunteers, the percentage of gendarmes that have earlier participated in national and international missions' amounts to roughly 90 and 10%, respectively.

Table 17
Descriptive statistics of the sample of participants in the training program

	Proportion/mean			Standard deviation
	Proportion/mean	Standard error	95% interval confidence	
Rank				
Marshal of lodging	0.861	0.028	0.795–0.908	0.861
Sergeant chief	0.099	0.024	0.060–0.158	0.099
Adjutant	0.040	0.016	0.017–0.088	0.040
Years of service (continuous)	5.695	0.285	5.132–6.258	3.502
Age group				
21–25 years old	0.185	0.032	0.130–0.258	0.185
26–30 years old	0.636	0.039	0.555–0.708	0.636
31–35 years old	0.126	0.027	0.081–0.188	0.126
36–40 years old	0.053	0.018	0.026–0.108	0.053
Volunteer	0.689	0.038	0.609–0.758	0.689
Participation in international missions	0.106	0.025	0.065–0.168	0.106
Participation in national missions	0.907	0.024	0.848–0.948	0.907
No. of observations = 151				

The training staff evaluated both shooting skills and physical fitness according to a 0–10 scale according to the procedures described in the previous section. In the latter case, the results in each of the four elements of the test are available.

Methods

The main parameter of interest is the average gain in the program for police officers who participated in the training program. The evaluation literature refers to this concept as the average treatment effect on treated (TT). In order to estimate the TT, we use a before-after research design. This approach only requires two time periods (one pre-program and one post-program) and is implementable when only information on participants is available. As argued above, we focus on the results of the shooting test and the physical condition assessment. Then, we link this information with the results of participants' satisfaction surveys.

In this set-up, we consider two time periods, t' (pre-intervention) and t (post-intervention). Y_{1it} and Y_{0it} denote the outcome measures of the individual i at time t in the treated and untreated state. Following Todd (2008), we assume that we can split the outcomes into a function of observables (X) and an unobservable (U):

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{1it} &= \varphi_1(X_{it}) + U_{1it} \\ Y_{0it} &= \varphi_0(X_{it}) + U_{0it} \end{aligned} \quad [1]$$

Consequently, it is possible to write the outcome of an individual as

$$Y_{it} = D_{it}Y_{1i} + (1 - D_{it})Y_{0i} = \varphi_0(X_{it}) + D_{it}\alpha(X_{it}) + U_{i0t} \quad [2]$$

where

$$\alpha(X_{it}) = \varphi_1(X_{it}) - \varphi_0(X_{it}) + U_{1it} - U_{0it} \quad [3]$$

and D_{it} is a binary variable that takes the value one if the person receives the training and zero otherwise.

From the previous expression, we express the TT as

$$\alpha_{TT}(X_{it}) = E(\alpha(X_{it}) | D_{it} = 1, D_{it'} = 0, X_{it}) \quad [4]$$

The change in the outcome of the individual i between t' and t

$$Y_{it} - Y_{it'} = \varphi_0(X_{it}) - \varphi_0(X_{it'}) + \alpha_{TT}(X_{it}) + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [5]$$

where

$$\varepsilon_{it} = U_{1it} - U_{0it} - E(U_{1it} - U_{0it} | D_{it} = 1, D_{it'} = 0, X_{it}) \quad [6]$$

One can obtain the before-after estimator estimating equation [5] by ordinary least squares. It is consistent if $E(U_{it} - U_{it'} | D_{it} = 1, D_{it'} = 0, X_{it}) = 0$. A special case that satisfies this condition is when we can decompose U_{0it} into a fixed-error structure, $U_{0it} = f_i + v_{it}$, and v_{it} is an independent and identically distributed perturbation that satisfies $E(v_{it} - v_{it'} | D_{it} = 1, D_{it'} = 0, X_{it}) = 0$.

The characteristics of the training program examined here (live-in, short, and intensive) make these assumptions on unobservable reasonable. In sum, the before-after estimate will be consistent if there are no time-varying relevant omitted variables.

In the absence of time-varying observable covariates, $\alpha_{TT} = E(Y_{it} - Y_{it'})$. We can therefore estimate the TT employing a paired means test or regressing the pre-post change on a constant, that is,

$$Y_{it} - Y_{it'} = \Delta Y_{it} = \alpha + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [7]$$

In order to explore whether the program impact varies across different groups, we first assess if the change in a certain outcome is different across different groups using descriptive techniques (analysis of variance [ANOVA] for categorical variables and Pearson correlation coefficient for continuous ones). Then, in order to allow for heterogeneous effects across different types of participants in a multivariate framework, we can modify the previous expression. For instance, if one wants to consider a categorical variable R_i (e.g., rank) with K values, we plug $K - 1$ dummy variables (one for each category, with the exception of the reference one) into the equation displayed above. We can also alter such a formulation to include a continuous variable Z_i (e.g., years of service) and assess whether the program impact varies with experience. The resulting expression is

$$\Delta Y_{it} = \alpha_b + \sum_{k=2}^K \beta_k G_i^k + \delta Z_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [8]$$

where G_i^k is a dummy that takes the value one if the participant i belongs to group k and zero otherwise. α_b captures the average treatment effect on treated of the base category and $Z_i = 0$ and $\alpha_b + \beta_k$ denotes the same type of effect for the category k and $Z_i = 0$. Therefore, each coefficient β_k show the differences between the impact of the program on the

participants of the category k and the base category and δ captures how the impact of the program varies with an additional year of service.

We perform all our calculations using Stata 16.1.

6.3. Results

Table 18 displays the main results of our analysis. It shows the before-after estimates of the effect of the training program on participants' shooting skills and physical condition. Regarding the latter, we present the results for each one of the individual elements considered in the score (which is an average of all items' scores). Overall, the program has a statistically significant and positive impact at the 1% level on all the outcomes considered. It raises the score in shooting by 1.4 points, which means around 0.6 standard deviations of the pre-training score. The results on physical condition are also remarkably positive: the effect of the program amounts to 2 points, roughly 1.6 standard deviations of the pre-treatment score. This latter finding just reflects the outcome of each of the individual items. We observe a large and statistically significantly improvement in the performance levels in pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, and the 3-km race. The size of the effect is above a standard deviation in all cases but the push-ups.

Table 18

Before-after estimates of the impact of the training program on shooting and physical condition

	Before		After		Difference (final outcome – initial outcome)			
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean difference	Standard error	t -statistic (degrees of freedom)	Two-side test p -value
Shooting test score (0–10)	6.8	2.3	8.3	1.4	1.4	0.2	7.66 (150)	0.000
Physical test score (0–10)	4.6	1.2	6.5	1.0	2.0	0.1	31.40 (150)	0.000
Pull-ups in a minute	7.9	2.9	10.6	3.6	2.6	0.2	13.17 (150)	0.000
Pull ups score (0–10)	5.6	1.0	6.5	1.3	0.9	0.1	11.85 (150)	0.000
Push-ups in a minute	33.5	5.6	41.2	4.7	7.7	0.4	17.58 (150)	0.000
Pull-ups score (0–10)	4.3	1.2	5.9	0.9	1.6	0.1	17.67 (150)	0.000
Sit-ups in a minute	52.5	10.4	67.9	9.3	15.3	0.8	19.44 (150)	0.000
Sit-ups score (0–10)	3.4	1.8	6.2	1.7	2.8	0.1	19.41 (150)	0.000
3 km run (seconds)	987	120	850	86	–137	6	–22.26 (150)	0.000
3 km run score (0–10)	5.0	2.4	7.6	1.6	2.6	0.1	19.54 (150)	0.000

In relation to the differences by participants' characteristics, we limit our analysis to the overall shooting and physical scores (Table 19). Our analysis points out that there are no significant differences by rank, age group, or past participation in missions. Nevertheless, it suggests that non-volunteers benefit more than the program than volunteers. The increase in the score of the shooting test is higher in volunteers, with such a difference being significantly different from zero at the 10% level. The same applies to the outcome of the physical test (the change is significant at the 5% level). Finally, we look at the correlation between the change in the score in shooting and the years of service (a continuous variable). We find that the change in the score is positively correlated with the years of service (Pearson correlation of 0.14, with a p -value = 0.086), while there seems to be no relationship between the latter variable and the improvement in the physical score (a correlation coefficient of -0.01 , with a p -value = 0.885).

Table 19

Change in the score of the shooting and the physical test by participants' characteristics

	Change in the score of the shooting test			Change in the score of the physical test		
	Mean	Standard error of the mean	ANOVA	Mean	Standard error of the mean	ANOVA
Rank						
Marshal of lodging	1.42	0.20	$F(2,148) = 0.10$	1.99	0.07	$F(2,148) = 0.28$
Sergeant chief	1.53	0.66	p -value = 0.901	2.08	0.22	p -value = 0.281
Adjutant	1.83	1.08		1.50	0.39	
Age group						
21–25 years old	1.14	0.40	$F(3,147) = 0.70$	1.81	0.14	$F(3,147) = 1.11$
26–30 years old	1.38	0.24	p -value = 0.553	2.00	0.08	p -value = 0.348
31–35 years old	2.00	0.59		2.20	0.17	
36–40 years old	2.00	0.85		1.80	0.35	
Volunteer						
No	1.98	0.36	$F(1,149) = 3.70$	2.17	0.13	$F(1,149) = 4.23$
Yes	1.20	0.22	p -value = 0.056	1.89	0.07	p -value = 0.041
Participation in international missions						
No	1.43	0.20	$F(1,149) = 0.05$	1.98	0.07	$F(1,149) = 0.00$

Yes	1.56	0.61	p -value = 0.829	1.98	0.21	p -value = 0.988
Participation in national missions						
No	1.21	0.61	$F(1,149) = 0.15$	1.81	0.28	$F(1,139) = 0.71$
Yes	1.47	0.20	p -value = 0.670	2.00	0.06	p -value = 0.399
No. of observations = 151						

As argued in the previous section, we perform a multivariate regression with the aim of controlling for third variables (Table 20). The results of this analysis slightly differ from the ones of the univariate framework. Firstly, the correlation of volunteering with the extent of improvement in both indicators vanishes. In the second place, regarding shooting, the positive impact of the program is lower on sergeant chiefs than on enlisted (that coefficient is significant at the 10% level) and it is larger for the 31–35 years old group (at the 10% level) and the participants with longer years of service (at the 5% significant level). Concerning the outcome in the physical condition test, the improvement seems to be lower among adjutants and higher among the oldest group of participants, 36–40 years old (in both cases, the coefficients are significantly different from zero at the 10% level).

Table 20
Heterogeneous effects of the program (ordinary least squares estimates)

	Shooting test score	Physical test score
	(I)	(II)
Sergeant chief	-1.481 *	-0.356
	(0.866)	(0.508)
Adjutant	-1.053	-1.392 *
	(1.504)	(0.718)
Years of service	0.242 **	-0.026
	(0.104)	(0.037)
21–25 years old	0.132	-0.230
	(0.488)	(0.168)
31–35 years old	0.985 *	0.387
	(0.850)	(0.285)
36–40 years old	1.165	1.009 *
	(1.570)	(0.567)

Volunteer	-0.685 (0.444)	-0.248 (0.151)
Previous participation in international missions	-1.660 (1.210)	0.231 (0.453)
Previous participation in national missions	0.809 (0.686)	0.157 (0.304)
Intercept	-0.042 (0.912)	2.160 *** (0.350)
No. of observations	151	151
Adjusted R ²	0.082	0.024

*** p -value < 0.01; ** p -value < 0.05; p -value < 0.1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. The reference category is a marshal of lodging, aged between 26 and 30 years old, non-volunteer, without previous experience in other missions.

Finally, we compare our findings with the results of the participants' satisfaction survey carried out by the training staff of the program (Table 21). Mainly, it is relevant to highlight that the gendarmes' valuation of the items related to shooting (Q20) and associated with physical training (Q7 and Q23) are well above the average satisfaction with the program. Furthermore, the scores in these items, between 8.5 and 9 over 10, are among the highest ones in all the battery of questions. Although they obviously represent a subjective participants' perception of training quality, they contribute to reinforce our trust on the positive results shown in the quantitative analysis above.

Table 21
Participants' satisfaction with the training program

	Mean	Standard error	95% interval confidence
Centre services			
Q1. Centre accesibility	7.55	0.18	7.19–7.90
Q2. Comfort of dormitories	6.39	0.19	6.01–6.77
Q3. Common areas	6.20	0.19	5.82–6.58
Q4. Catering quality	5.07	0.21	4.65–5.48
Q5. Overall assessment of the centre	7.43	0.14	7.16–7.70
Content of the training program			
Q6. Previous knowledge required for the subjects	7.48	0.13	7.21–7.74
Q7. Physical and sport education	8.74	0.12	8.50–8.97
Q8. Quality of training	8.51	0.12	8.27–8.76
Q9. Psychological aspects of the training	7.97	0.12	7.72–8.21
Q10. Social environment	8.57	0.13	8.31–8.84

Q11. Quality of instructors	8.99	0.11	8.77–9.22
Q12. Material and equipment	5.68	0.20	5.29–6.08
Q13. Vehicles	5.93	0.19	5.55–6.31
Q14. Length of this training	7.32	0.17	6.99–7.66
Q15. Pedagogical methods	7.99	0.13	7.74–8.25
Q16. Adequacy of training to job	7.31	0.15	7.01–7.61
Overall satisfaction with the content of the training (average of Q6–Q16)	7.68	0.10	7.48–7.88
Subjects of the training program			
Q17. Combat moto	8.74	0.13	8.49–9.00
Q18. Intervention techniques	8.31	0.14	8.03–8.59
Q19. Topography/GPS	6.94	0.21	6.52–7.36
Q20. Arms and shooting	8.92	0.11	8.70–9.15
Q21. SWAT	8.21	0.14	7.94–8.49
Q22. Minesweeping	8.29	0.17	7.96–8.62
Q23. Physical training	8.88	0.11	8.66–9.10
Q24. Subduing an adversary with no use of weapons	8.23	0.14	7.96–8.50
Q25. First aid strategies	9.00	0.12	8.75–9.25
Q26. Special tactics	8.09	0.13	7.85–8.34
Q27. Foot patrol	8.05	0.15	7.75–8.35
Q28. Convoy escort/convoy movement	8.04	0.15	7.75–8.33
Q29. Reaction in the event of a terrorist attack	8.15	0.15	7.84–8.45
Q30. Roadblocks	7.26	0.17	6.92–7.60
Q31. Route clearing	8.08	0.15	7.78–8.37
Q32. Siege and raid	8.02	0.14	7.73–8.30
Overall satisfaction with the subjects (average of Q17–Q32)	8.21	0.10	8.01–8.41
Q33. Overall satisfaction with the training program	8.22	0.10	8.03–8.41

No. of observations = 151

7. CONCLUSIONES

Siguiendo un diseño de investigación aplicada de tipo mixto en el que se incluyen datos cualitativos-cuantitativos, esta tesis doctoral pretende realizar una evaluación del Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel que permita ofrecer una visión fáctica de en qué medida esta iniciativa europea cumple con sus objetivos y, a su vez, proponer aquellas posibles opciones de mejora o reestructuración del mismo. Para ello, se ha desarrollado una evaluación continua de las sucesivas fases que componen el proyecto en la que se incluyen evaluaciones propiamente empíricas, así como conceptuales que pretenden ayudar al estudio y teorización del GAR-SI Sahel.

En primer lugar, se comienza con una evaluación empírica de la fase I de formación por el especial interés que revierte el hecho de que en ella se desarrolla la formación de los futuros mandos y formadores de las unidades GAR-SI Sahel. Este análisis, desarrollado sobre una base de entrevistas semi-estructuradas y de una clasificación categórica de la información obtenida resultante de la aplicación del método Delphi, arroja a través de la herramienta DAFO las debilidades, amenazas, fortalezas y oportunidades de esta primera fase de formación, a través de los ojos de los propios formadores europeos como parte activa e interviniente del mismo.

En concreto, entre sus conclusiones se destaca la necesidad de un mayor «cultural awareness» por parte de los instructores europeos, a fin de favorecer la formación y de poder adaptar correctamente el programa formativo a las necesidades concretas del Sahel. Asimismo, como amenaza generalizada, sobresale la desmotivación del personal GAR-SI, el cual, según la totalidad de los formadores, debería ser compensado a través de primas o beneficios profesionales que garanticen una fidelización del personal. De igual forma, el desarrollo de la formación en el Centro de Adiestramientos Especiales (CAE) en Logroño es vista por los expertos europeos como una fortaleza puesto que favorece la interoperabilidad entre los países y genera un sentimiento de unidad y de pertenencia a la marca GAR-SI. Por último, este primer análisis presenta como oportunidad que el gran interés mostrado por la totalidad de los países beneficiarios ayuda a promover una respuesta común y regionalizada a la inseguridad de la zona.

A continuación, la evaluación de esta primera fase es completada por un análisis mixto que pretende ampliar el espectro de nuestro estudio teniendo en cuenta el prisma de los

propios formandos como principales beneficiarios del programa. Para materializar esta nueva visión, se han utilizado métodos estadísticos descriptivos e inferenciales y la prueba de χ^2 de Pearson para evaluar la satisfacción de los participantes y determinar la existencia o no de diferencias significativas entre ellos. Como resultado de este proceso, destaca como indicador de éxito del proyecto, el alto grado de satisfacción de los formandos tras su paso por el CAE y su positiva evaluación técnica tras la finalización del curso de mandos GAR-SI.

Posteriormente, el estudio oscila hacia una evaluación más conceptual y prospectiva del Proyecto GAR-SI Sahel, realizando una revisión aplicada del diseño de su programa en cuanto a su posición en el marco de la Reforma del Sector de la Seguridad de la Unión Europea. De sus resultados se puede entender que el Proyecto GAR-SI no forma parte de dicha reforma, pero tampoco la afecta de manera negativa o la bloquea. En otras palabras, los objetivos del proyecto se centran en mejorar las capacidades técnicas de las gendarmerías del Sahel.

Además, la creación de unidades GAR-SI multidisciplinares pretende favorecer el control del territorio, preservar el estado de derecho y ofrecer, a los países beneficiarios del Sahel, una alternativa frente al riesgo que supone el uso del ejército en aquellas funciones estrictamente policiales. De igual manera, el enfoque integral de su diseño favorece a la durabilidad de sus resultados en el tiempo, haciendo del proyecto GAR-SI una atractiva herramienta para la UE en la Estrategia de Seguridad en el Sahel, dado su bajo riesgo y coste.

No obstante, a pesar de esta seductora carta de presentación, y según nuestro estudio, aún es pronto para definir el éxito del proyecto o determinar la inexistencia de efectos negativos. De hecho, teniendo en cuenta experiencias anteriores, el proyecto debe prever en su seno una estrategia de durabilidad que garantice también unos efectos positivos a medio y largo plazo. Igualmente, se hace necesario continuar dando pasos para que el proyecto se encuentre en total alineamiento con la estrategia de la Unión en el Sahel, especialmente en lo referente a la coordinación con otros actores intervinientes en la región.

Conjuntamente, siguiendo con la evaluación conceptual, el estudio evoluciona hacia el ámbito de la inteligencia ya que el proyecto GAR-SI podría tener la respuesta a algunas de las múltiples cuestiones y esfuerzos europeos por desarrollar las capacidades de

inteligencia de las gendarmerías del Sahel. Concretamente, a través de una discusión de grupo focal se determina que las unidades GAR-SI contribuyen a establecer el inicio de un canal efectivo de inteligencia en las áreas más aisladas del Sahel. En contraposición, a pesar de que estas unidades han alcanzado un desempeño de inteligencia que permite favorecer su autoprotección, establecer informes de inteligencia básica para la toma de decisiones o el establecimiento de redes y colaboraciones a nivel local, aún es necesario dar pasos para integrarlas plenamente en los respectivos sistemas de seguridad nacionales. Tras conseguir esto, el proyecto GAR-SI Sahel estará más cerca de construir capacidad de inteligencia efectiva que permita amplificar los resultados desde un nivel local a uno regional o supranacional.

Por último, el estudio retorna de nuevo a la evaluación empírica del proyecto en una de sus fases formativas más avanzadas en la que los gendarmes reciben la formación fuera de las fronteras europeas. Para ello, se ha diseñado un estudio comparativo de antes y después, realizado en Burkina Faso durante los meses de julio y agosto del 2021, en el que se define los efectos de la acción formativa en las habilidades de tiro y la condición física. Con su desarrollo, se concluye que la formación GAR-SI mejora notablemente las capacidades técnicas y físicas de los gendarmes del Sahel, lo que verifica de nuevo que el proyecto cumple con sus objetivos previstos a corto plazo.

Ante tales resultados, y en vista a determinar si el éxito del proyecto GAR-SI Sahel se mantiene también en un medio y largo plazo, este estudio sugiere y anima a seguir teorizando sobre el desarrollo y la ejecución del mismo. De igual forma, y en base a las conclusiones obtenidas durante la evaluación, se considera acertado tener en cuenta las siguientes propuestas:

- 1) En primer lugar, se expone que la creación de un Centro común de formación GAR-SI ubicado en el Sahel podría favorecer la durabilidad del proyecto y ayudaría a mantener las capacidades técnicas de las unidades GAR-SI a medio y largo plazo. Asimismo, se contribuiría a mejorar la interoperabilidad de estas unidades y a ofrecer una respuesta regionalizada al problema. Del mismo modo, los enlaces y las capacidades de inteligencia del Sahel podrían verse favorecidas, dado el caso, ya que el mencionado Centro ofrecería un canal de inteligencia común, tanto regional como internacional, no existente hasta la fecha.

- 2) De la misma forma, se considera de interés confeccionar una estrategia centralizada que garantice la promoción de acciones cívico-militares en el contexto operacional de las unidades GAR-SI. El hecho de mantener un alineamiento coordinado del proyecto GAR-SI con otros proyectos de carácter militar o civil de la UE ayudaría a mejorar el impacto operacional de las unidades GAR-SI sobre las zonas más aisladas y, a su vez, impulsaría los canales de inteligencia a nivel nacional o supranacional. Este tipo de acciones también permitirían al proyecto GAR-SI posicionarse como ejemplo de buena práctica en el marco de la Reforma del Sector de la Seguridad.
- 3) El estudio arroja que para hacer frente a la paulatina desmotivación que sufren los componentes de las unidades GAR-SI, a través de las Oficinas de Coordinación del proyecto o bien de las respectivas Delegaciones Europeas, se debe comprometer a las gendarmerías beneficiarias a establecer una estrategia de primas y/o beneficios para el personal GAR-SI. Este hecho supondría un factor positivo a la hora de garantizar la durabilidad del proyecto y un elemento determinante para disminuir los posibles efectos negativos a medio y largo plazo.
- 4) Finalmente, el estudio expone la necesidad de establecer un canal y/o un programa de intercambios dilatado en el tiempo que permitiera el retorno de experiencias entre los mandos GAR-SI y los expertos formadores europeos. Este hecho beneficiaría la mejor adaptación del programa formativo de sus unidades a las necesidades reales del Sahel y supondría una motivación añadida para los mandos de las unidades GAR-SI. Asimismo, su hipotética creación, acortaría la barrera existente referente al cultural awareness entre formador y formando y supondría también un paso más a la hora de lograr un canal efectivo de inteligencia entre el Sahel y Europa.

8. LIMITACIONES DE DATOS Y SUGERENCIAS PARA INVESTIGACIONES FUTURAS

La obtención de datos en el marco de la seguridad supone un esfuerzo añadido a la hora de realizar estudios evaluativos. En este caso concreto, el hecho de evaluar un proyecto de la Unión Europea desarrollado mayoritariamente en los países del Sahel dificulta aún más, si cabe, esta tarea. La escasa transparencia por parte de las administraciones en materias de seguridad, la ausencia de canales de comunicación eficaces con las zonas aisladas del Sahel y, por supuesto, la amenaza terrorista y de seguridad de la zona hacen ardua esta tarea de campo. Sin embargo, y a pesar de tales restricciones, los datos obtenidos aún arrojan conclusiones importantes.

No obstante, y a pesar de la dificultad mencionada, estudios posteriores deberían teorizar sobre el impacto de las unidades GAR-SI en su medio y largo plazo. Asimismo, otro esfuerzo que podrían emprender futuras investigaciones, y que no es el propósito de esta tesis doctoral, es la teorización acerca del «cultural awareness» como característica necesaria del formador. Además, a aquellos interesados en la construcción de la capacidad de inteligencia les animo a establecer un estudio evaluativo que compare el rendimiento en materia de inteligencia de las unidades GAR-SI con el grado de desempeño de la coordinación de cada país beneficiario con otros proyectos de carácter civil.

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