



A "New" Old War

The Wagner group in the Central African Republic

Fanny af Petersens

Peace and Conflict Studies
Bachelor Thesis
12 credits
Spring 2024
Supervisor: Mateo Villamil Valencia
Word count: 13948

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the conflict landscape in the form of a case study of the Central African Republic, with a specific focus on the involvement of the private military company Wagner Group, framed within Mary Kaldor's theory of New Wars. The theory emphasises that since the 1990s wars have been carried out in the name of identity politics, are between the state and non-state actors, that violence is directed at civilians and that the global economy is a driving condition. These characteristics are generally true for the conflict in CAR. The Wagner Group's role remains largely unexplored within academic circles, necessitating a closer examination of its impact on conflict dynamics to better understand the broader implications for regional stability and global power dynamics. Since CAR became independent in 1960, CAR has been imprinted by armed conflict and widespread violence against civilians. In 2018 the government ceded parts of its monopoly on violence to the Wagner group through an agreement where the group protects the state in exchange for access to natural resources. The Wagner group's presence also contributes to increased regional conflict dynamics and can lead to increased violence and criminal activity.

Keywords: CAR, Exploitation, Monopoly of Violence, New Wars, PMC, Wagner Group,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	1
ABBREVIATIONS	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	4
1.2 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION.....	6
1.3 THE PAPER'S POSITION WITHIN PACS.....	7
2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH	9
2.1 PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES.....	9
2.1.1 <i>PMCs in Africa</i>	11
2.1.2 <i>Wagner Group</i>	12
3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	17
4 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN	21
4.1 SINGLE CASE STUDY.....	21
4.2 MATERIAL.....	22
5 ANALYSIS	25
5.1 CAR A "NEW" OLD WAR.....	25
5.2 UNRAVELLING DYNAMICS.....	30
5.3 THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, THE WAGNER GROUP AND ILLEGALITY	32
5.4 REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE GLOBAL SECURITISATION	35
6 CONCLUSIONS	37
7 REFERENCE LIST	40

ABBREVIATIONS

ALCED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
CAR	Central African Republic
CPC	Coalition of Patriots for Change
EO	Executive Outcomes
FPRC	Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic
PACS	Peace and Conflict Studies
PMC	Private Military Company
PMSC	Private Military and Security Company
PSC	Private Security Company
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Programme
UPC	Union for Peace in the Central African Republic
WG	Wagner Group
3R	Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Research Problem

This paper will deal with the dynamics between the state and the armed oppositions in the Central African Republic (CAR) with a particular focus on the external actor Wagner Group (WG). The conflict in CAR touches on conflict dynamics at three levels, the first is the individual and societal level, the second is at a regional level in Africa where a conflict in one state often spills over to neighbouring countries and where there is now, more specifically, a struggle for power and influence in the entire Sahel region. The third level is the global one, which is linked to the global political economy and the hunt for natural resources that states want to access and control, and in the case of Wagner, an outside actor also by soldiers with economic interests enters the state. In this thesis, the Wagner group will serve as an example of how PMCs and their connection to external actors can influence local and regional conflict dynamics. Furthermore, these levels will be further explored.

The Central African Republic is located in the centre of Africa, bordered by Chad to the north, Sudan and South Sudan to the northeast, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Congo to the south, and Cameroon to the west. The country is rich in natural resources such as diamonds, gold, oil and uranium, but the population lives mainly on subsistence farming (BBC News, 2023). Since the Central African Republic gained independence from France in 1960, political life has been characterised by internal conflicts in which government power has been challenged by regionally based armed oppositions as well as coups d'état from within the state. Until the early 1990s, the country was ruled by various French-backed leaders from the south of the country. This pattern was broken when the first multi-party elections took place in 1993, bringing Ange-Félix Patassé from the north of the country to power. This was followed by a decade of internal political instability, organised violence and interference from the states of France, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as from international economic interests (UPCD, 2022; Globalis, 2022). The internal conflicts have included armed groups fighting both the government and each other and also attacking civilians (UPCD, 2022). 1996 also saw a mutiny within the army and a failed military coup in May 2001. This was put down with help from Libya but was followed by further fighting which ended with the dismissal of the army chief, François Bozizé. However, Bozizé managed to rally forces for an uprising and

took the capital almost unopposed in March 2003. The Bozizé regime has been accused of favouring its own ethnic group (the Gbaya people) and of failing to uphold a peace agreement with the armed opposition (Globalis, 2022).

The trigger for the current conflict in CAR is the coup d'état against the Bozizé regime that came to power in 2013. The widespread discontent led to various rebels joining together to form a group known as the Séléka rebels who quickly took control of areas in CAR and staged a coup d'état against the Bozizé regime in 2013, forcing President Bozize to flee (Globalis, 2022; BBC News, 2022). The Séléka rebels' rise to power triggered a civil war between Muslim (Séléka) and Christian groups (Anti-balaka) (ibid.). The 2013 civil war has been internationally described as a religious conflict, which has meant that causes such as poor governance and poverty have been overlooked in the analysis of the conflict in CAR (Globalis, 2022). The Séléka group was not long in power and in 2014 the self-proclaimed president Djotodia resigned due to pressure from neighbouring countries and France, however, Séléka soldiers formed new groups that are still causing unrest (ibid.). In February 2016, Faustin-Archange Touadéra was elected Prime Minister of CAR and also won re-election in 2020, campaigning as a peacemaker between the religious divides in the country (UPCD, 2022; Globalis, 2022). However, Touadéra's government only controls part of the country and the armed opposition is challenging his authority (BBC News, 2023). Together, the opposition forces control about 80% of CAR (ibid.). In addition to the internal conflicts, the conflict in CAR in recent years has also been characterised by the presence of Private Military Companies (PMCs), particularly the Russian Wagner Group (Rampe, 2023). The group has been contracted by the state power to secure the government's hold on power in exchange for contracts in the country's mining industry (ibid.).

This arrangement has further strengthened the global links of the conflict but also risks complicating conflict resolution in CAR and affecting regional stability in a situation where several African countries have suffered coups d'état in recent years and where Africa is once again threatening to become an arena for global great power conflict. These characteristics, identity politics, the low-intensity nature of the war, the network of state and non-state actors and its global linkages, especially economic ones, are features that Marry Kaldor sees as characterising a new type of war and a new type of warfare that has emerged since the Cold War (Kaldor, 2012).

Since the end of the Cold War, the groups that have held state power and those that have challenged it have increasingly based their political goals and support on what Kaldor describes as identity politics (Kaldor 2012, p, 7-8). The struggle between state power and non-state actors has mainly been low-intensity and with unclear geographical boundaries and has, in addition to identity politics objectives, been about economic and political control of all or parts of the country (Glawion & Le Noan, 2023). Not infrequently, war and organised violence have been directed directly against the civilian population (Global Engagement Center, 2024). Through the involvement of other states and actors, the war has taken on a regional character that has been elevated to the global level, mainly through the interest in the natural resources available in the country.

1.2 Aim and Research Question

This essay aims to examine the conflict in the Central African Republic and, particularly the role of the Wagner group, through Mary Kaldor's theory of New Wars (2012). This theory takes its point of departure in the observation that armed conflicts in general after the Cold War are primarily between the state and non-state actors, take place in the name of identity politics to usurp power and are partly financed by illegal means such as looting, kidnapping, smuggling and bribery (Kaldor, 2012). Furthermore, the underlying aim of this is a study of the consequences in terms of violence against civilians, exploitation of natural resources and loss of civil authority, which threatens the safety of the individual and society in CAR through the relationship with the private military company Wagner Group and by extension Russia, which could also be applied to other African states where the Group is present.

To achieve this purpose, this study will focus on the following questions:

- 1. What are the dynamics between the Central African Republic, the armed oppositions and the Wagner Group?*
- 2. In what way does the relationship between CAR and the Wagner group affect the origin and development of illegal means in particular violence against civilians and plunder?*
- 3. Given the increased impact of globalisation on security dynamics, could the experience of the Central African Republic's relationship with the Wagner Group influence other African states where the Wagner Group is present?*

1.3 The paper's position within PACS

Studies on civil war, its causes, actors and resolution, are a prominent field of research in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS). Research shows that states with weak state structures are particularly vulnerable to civil war and that non-state actors such as PMCs have played a clear role in several such conflicts (Doboš & Purton, 2024; Kaldor, 2012; Lindner, 2014; Musah & Fayemi, 2000). This is particularly true in post-colonial Africa. A state can be weak due to several reasons, it can be weak due to internal contradictions such as leadership deficiencies or conflicts or due to inherent constraints such as economic or geographical or a mixture of all (Rotberg, 2023, p. 4). A 'weak' state's main characteristics are its weak control over territory and legitimate monopoly of force (Herbst, 1996). Weak states are usually composed of a heterogeneous population with a mix of national, ethnic and/or religious groups that contribute to intra-state violent conflict (Rotberg, 2023, p. 4.). In weak or failed states, violence is often directed against the government and wars are often what are described as civil wars with a background of ethnic or religious hostilities (ibid, p. 5). The definition of a weak or failed state is problematic as it has arisen from the West's perspective of what a state 'should' look like and what it should not (Herbst, 1996, p. 120-122). While it is caused by the West in response to decolonisation (ibid), the problem of being labelled as a weak or failed state can also contribute to the state not escaping the label. This study will therefore use the definition of weak state structures which refers to the weakened authority and monopoly of violence of the state.

Moreover, the study will focus on this relationship in a case consisting of the Central African Republic. The country has one of the world's most impoverished populations despite being rich in natural resources such as diamonds, gold and oil (BBC News, 2023). The Central African Republic, according to UCDP definitions and data (UCDP, 2022), has been plagued by intra-state, urban-based, non-state and other organised violence since 1989. As a result, governmental authority in CAR has been weak and challenged, and many international actors have been involved, such as the former colonial power France, neighbouring countries and regional actors such as the Republic of Congo, Sudan, South Africa, Chad and Uganda, but also major powers such as China and Russia. Alongside these, the country's natural resources have attracted private actors such as natural resource companies (UCDP, 2022; Globalis, 2022).

States with weak state structures such as CAR are generally more exposed to state capture by another state for, for example, financial gain or influence (power) in the state (Lindner, 2014).

This makes it important to study the dynamics that exist in CAR and the importance of external actors such as the Russian private military company Wagner Group, which is hired by the state. The Wagner Group is a PMC that clearly serves the interests of its client (CAR) but also operates under the patronage of the Russian state, acting in part in line with its regional and global interests (Arduino, 2024; Doboš & Purton, 2024; Kelly, 2020). The Wagner group is not a well-studied group in Peace and Conflict Studies (Mussa & Dubianskij, 2023, p. 210). Although PMCs have been researched within PACS, the group is a fairly new phenomenon, partly because the group has only been active for a few years and partly because of their clear links to Russia despite being "secret". This study will also use Mary Kaldor's (2012) theory of New and Old Wars to analyse the conflict in CAR and then add a dimension of the Wagner group, which can be seen as both a non-state actor and an actor that acts on behalf of a state (both Russia and client states) (Mussa & Dubianskij, 2023, p. 223).

2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

2.1 Private Military Companies

From a general perspective, private military companies (PMCs) are private companies that offer military services and security against payment. In this paper, PMCs are of central importance as they constitute one of the main actors, the Wagner Group. Research on private military companies mainly focuses on specific post-war conflicts where PMCs have been involved (especially in Africa) or on the recruitment and organisation of different PMCs (See: Avant, 2013; Musah & Fayemi, 2000; Singer, 2001; Spearin, 2017). The definition of what a PMC is and how they are labelled varies depending on whether, for example, legal, historical or political science problems are at the centre (See: Avant, 2005; Singer, 2001; Spearin, 2017). Singer (2001, p. 186) uses the term 'Privatised Military Firm' (PMF) and assumes that they are profit-driven companies that trade in services such as military skills, strategic planning and training. Furthermore, Singer argues that the role of PMFs in contemporary warfare is increasingly important to examine and that they are the most significant addition to the contemporary battlefield (Singer, 2017, p. 187). Another term is "Private Military and Security Company" (PMSC), which refers to private business entities that offer military and/or security services, including services such as advising and/or training local forces, but also armed surveillance and protection of both individuals and places, tasks that would otherwise be the responsibility of the state (Spearin, 2017, p. 2, 11, 59). Spearin also underlines the relevance of seeing PMSCs as legally organised for-profit private non-state companies seeking long-term contracts (Spearin, 2017, p. 1, 11). While Avant (2005) employs "Private Security Companies" (PSC) or "PMSC" (Avant, 2013) and O'Brien (2000) employs "Private Military Companies" (PMC) in his research to describe the actors offering different types of military services on the international market. Despite the different concepts, the terms mean essentially the same thing: private companies that are profit-oriented and not ideologically driven that offer military and security services.

PMCs have historically always existed, although the role of the 'soldier' and the degree of organisation and the tasks has varied over time (Avant, 2013, p. 425; Singer, 2001, p. 191; Spearin, 2017, p. 59). Spearin describes how mercenaries, defined as "individuals who work in the military service of a foreign organisation for financial gain", played a major role since the Roman Empire and have thus been significant in military history (Spearin, 2017, p. 58).

Mercenaries are individual-based and self-profitable soldiers, providing only the service of "guns for hire", which played a clear role in, for example, 16th and 17th-century wars that were more between elites and interests than regular states (Singer, 2001, p. 191). Mercenaries therefore declined drastically with the Napoleonic Wars' mobilisation of citizen armies (ibid.). PMCs in the form we know them today emerged primarily with decolonisation in Africa in the 1950s and 60s, where mercenaries protected business interests and participated as military reinforcements in conflicts over state power or economic control. In addition, PMCs took on a partly new role in the context of the so-called *war on terror* after 9/11, when the groups came to play both an increased and changed role (Avant, 2013, pp. 226-434; Singer, 2001, pp. 188, 193; Spearin, 2017, pp. 3-5). In response to these events, the urgent need for security increased globally, something the PMC was able to exploit (ibid.). After the Cold War, Western states in particular downsized their militaries, which meant that many experienced professional military personnel were available for work, while the demand for security or military services and skills increased in the private sector, which is linked to the market of supply and demand (Avant, 2013, p. 434; Singer, 2001, p. 193; Spearin, 2017).

In addition, Kaldor explains that globalisation has contributed to the emergence of non-state actors that include both various armed oppositions, cooperations and PMCs (Kaldor, 2018, p. 47-48). The New Wars are thus a change from the civil wars that developed during the Cold War, where the non-state actors seek to gain state-like power and resources, such as natural resources (ibid.). Scholars also agree that today's PMCs should be seen as businesses first and foremost, trading and competing in the global market and bound by rules and laws both to their customers and to their home state through registration and licensing (Avant, 2013; Singer, 2001, pp. 191-192; Spearin, 2017, pp. 3, 59). At the same time, the rise of PMCs, for example in the aftermath of the second Iraq war, can be seen as a way of creating military units that are not directly linked to the state (the US) and, therefore, neither to the laws, rules and command structures that apply to US military units. With the increased privatisation of military companies, scholars argue that the role of the state in security has been diminished (Singer, 2001, p. 187). O'Brien states that "By privatising security and the use of violence, removing it from the domain of the state and giving it to private interest, the state in these instances is both being strengthened and disassembled" (O'Brien, 1998, p. 80). The private military companies that set the security gap in this atmosphere have been able to effectively increase and manage their economic interests and political opportunities in the world through, for example, mining

and energy-focused subsidiaries, allowing them to strengthen their foothold in the states and "disassemble" the state (Singer, 2001, p. 192; Spearin, 2017, p. 3).

Furthermore, when a state hires a private company, the state's control is reduced, especially if the private company is to protect a state with weak state structures since it also has no real reason to check that the PMC and its employees follow rules and therefore there is a possibility that the PMC may violate national and international laws, especially when it comes to human rights violations and exploitation of natural resources (Avant, 2013, p. 428). Kaldor argues that this is linked to the political economy that is fundamental to the authority of the state and the legitimate monopoly of violence (Kaldor, 2012, p. 7). Without the political economic security of the state, violence is privatised due to the emergence of paramilitary groups. In addition, corruption also arises when the state's political economy is weak, which is common in the new wars (ibid.).

2.1.1 PMCs in Africa

Musah and Fayemi (2000) explain how poverty, corrupt weak political leadership and religious strife during and external interference after the Cold War exacerbated the security vacuum in Africa (pp. 4-6, 19). As a result, Africa is considered a key region where PMCs have been able to establish themselves, also due to its wealth of natural resources that actors in the global economy want to control or exploit (Musah & Fayemi 2000, p. 4). The role of PMCs in Africa has also involved training national armies and combat operations to protect natural resources and to carry out operations that national armies have not been able to do or have not been deemed reliable enough to carry out, but they have also been active in helping armed oppositions to overthrow the state for extractive companies with which they co-operate to get a better deal (Musah & Fayemi 2000, pp. 4, 17; O'Brien, 2000, pp. 43, 78).

At the same time, private military companies have 'dangerous' relationships with states and in some cases act as government-inspired fronts for their activities in the search for power to achieve the state's foreign policy objectives (Musah & Fayemi 2000, p. 18). Musah and Fayemi also explain how payments to PMCs are not only in cash but mostly in the form of commercial contracts for long-term mining and oil concessions, which seems to be one of the main objectives of PMCs as they can more easily establish themselves in the state as they not only have a contract and business with the state but also their own business in the form of a dispersion of nature and mineral resources (Musah & Fayemi 2000, p. 23) But natural resources are also often

those that groups and states in need of urgent services cannot pay for as many states in Africa remain impoverished despite their large natural resources (ibid.). An example of such a deal is Executive Outcomes (EO) which was/is one of the best-known PMCs that had a contract with the Angolan government where it was speculated that it included that EO's subsidiary could conduct activities linked to the diamond mines (Musah & Fayemi 2000, p, 24).

When PMCs are contracted by a country's government, it is usually for two reasons: the conflict is low-intensity and involves armed opposition and natural resources are central (O'Brien, 1998, p. 78). Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the state does not have the means to handle the oppositions. EO, for instance, had more than thirty different subsidiaries specialising in everything from military and security services to mining, and in many of the places where they had mining or oil contracts, they were also active in PMC services (O'Brien, 1998, p. 87) EOs strategically focused on contracts in regions with natural resources, which allowed them to exercise power in and against most countries in Africa as they were able to build strong networks of economic interests in the region (Musah & Fayemi 2000, p, 24; O'Brien, 1998, p. 87). Since then, several different interest actors have been involved in Africa and since 2017, a new Russian private military company has emerged in Africa and expanded its services around the region (Rampe, 2023). The Wagner group has been active in the Central African Republic, Libya, Sudan, South Africa and Zimbabwe, among others (Kelly, 2020).

2.1.2 Wagner Group

The Wagner Group is a Russian PMC formed in 2014 by Yevgeny Prigozhin, an oligarch with strong ties to the Russian President (Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 8). In Russia, no such company can be formed without state approval, although Russian PMCs are against Russian law (Perovic, 2021; Rampe, 2023). Initially, WG mainly offered security services to companies, governments and states with weak urban structures in Central Asia and Africa. Since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and later their invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, the previously 'unknown' Wagner Group has become increasingly well-known in the media (Rampe, 2023). The Wagner group is also known for having contributed to the Russian war in Ukraine with units that often were more skilled and disciplined than the regular Russian army.

The Wagner Group has also been involved in Syria to support the Assad regime in order to protect Russia's interests, which also helped the WG gain access to Syria's oil and gas (Blazakis

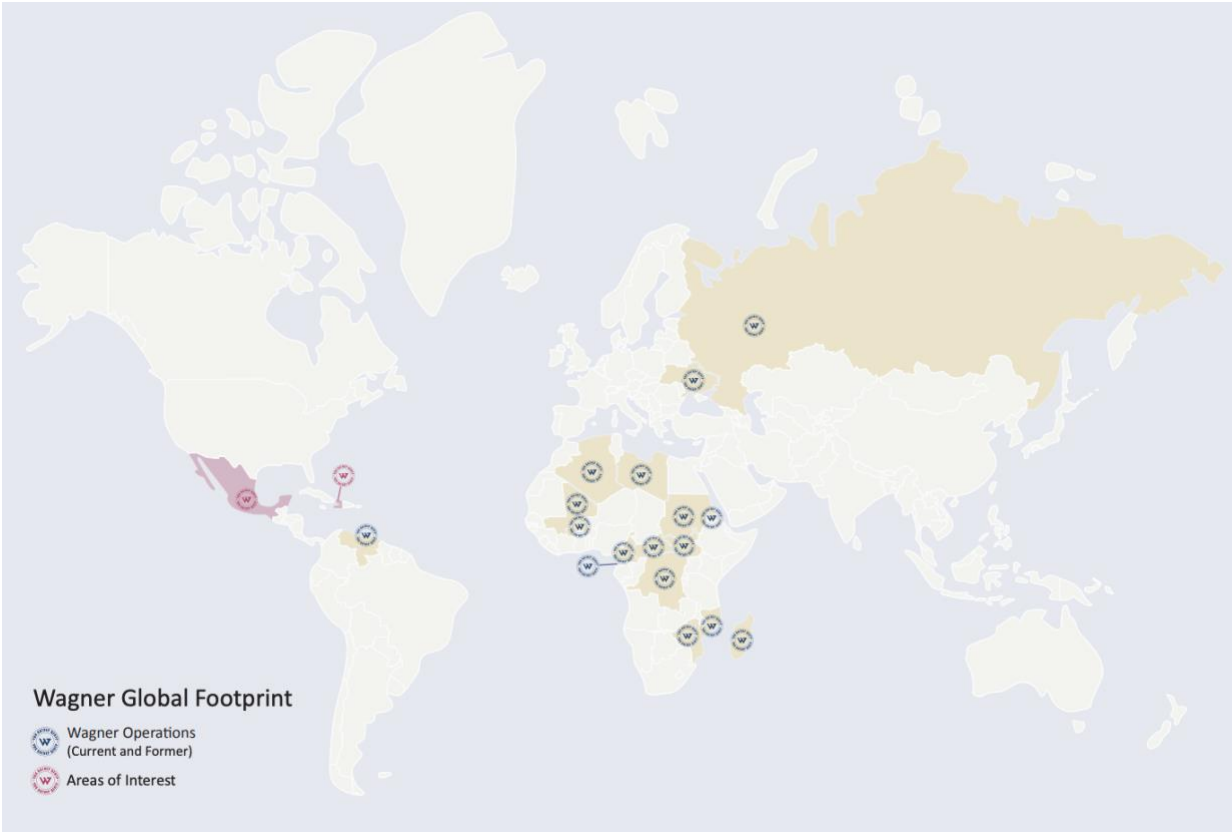
et al., 2023, pp. 17-18). The group also took advantage of Libya's security situation to provide security for its energy infrastructure (ibid.). But also, the group has business connections in Asia and was active in Venezuela in 2018 to support their leaders where the group has interests in terms of energy and the Russian arms industry (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp.15, 16). One of the most recent countries where the Wagner group is active and which has received international attention is Sudan (Blazakis et al, 2023, pp. 18-19). The WG established its presence in the country in 2019, well before the conflict in 2023, and the group has been able to get funded for its security services with access to the country's gold mines (ibid.). Another country where the Wagner group operates that has received a lot of attention recently is Mali where the group has been implicated in the Maura massacre where several hundred people were executed (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 21- 22).

Since Prigozhin died in a plane crash in 2023, the company has been partially restructured and tied more closely to the Russian state through the 'dissolution' of the Wagner Group and the formation of the Afrika Korps, which is intended to take over WG's activities (Arduino, 2024; Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 8). Blazakis et al. (2023, p. 12) argue that the Wagner Group is significant to Russia after all the sanctions in response to their invasion of Ukraine. The focus of the WG's activities therefore now seems, to an even greater extent, to be on building long-term economic relationships and providing services outside Russia (ADF, 2024; Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 12; Bobin & Le Cam, 2023; Fasanotti, 2022; Smith, 2024; Sukhankin, 2023). Despite the formation of the Africa Corps, this study will continue to use the name 'Wagner Group' for the Russian private military company that has been and is involved in Africa since 2017.

The Wagner Group can be explained as a 'Swiss army knife' with its wide range of services, such as military training, offensive combat operations, regime security, advice to governments on political issues, natural resource extraction (Blazakis et al, 2023, p. 4, 6) The Wagner group has also engaged in information and electioneering campaigns, as well as propaganda campaigns in Africa and CAR to glorify Russia (CrisisWatch Database, 2022; Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 21; Faulconbridge, 2023). The group is not a single unit but rather a complex network that operates through a network of soldiers and shell companies, reflecting the global economy, which is involved, among other things, in the extractive industries, their activities being both global, regional and local (Arduino, 2024; Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 9-10, 17; Rampe, 2023). So, their services vary greatly depending on the needs of their clients, which can range from armed opposition to regimes (Rampe, 2023). The Wagner Group's military force consists of

contracted soldiers and has been augmented during the war against Ukraine with prisoners who have been released early in exchange for enlisting (Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 8). The Wagner Group thereby differs from the PMCs that existed in Africa during decolonization, through its breadth and its connection to a great power and the global economy.

The Wagner Group has had such a great opportunity to expand in Africa partly due to the security vacua described earlier, but also due to France's withdrawal from the region, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger in 2022 and, according to Blazakis et al., the United States disinterest in Africa (Aljazeera, 2022; Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 23; Lawal, 2023). The countries involved in Africa all share a common discontent with the West due to the colonial legacy (Kelly, 2020; Rampe, 2023). This discontent has been exploited by Russia and the Wagner group, playing on the positive image and relations in Africa of the Soviet Union as an anti-imperialist counterforce during decolonisation, as well as on what is seen as the West's double standards in relation to Russia's war against Ukraine (African Digital Democracy Observatory, 2024; Antoniuk, 2024).



Caption: A map showing where the Wagner group is and has been and the countries the Wagner group is interested in (Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 21).

In 2018, Wagner was hired by the government of the Central African Republic to, among other things, protect the government of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra against armed opposition attacks (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 20-21; Rampe, 2023). In exchange for protecting the government, Wagner was given mining concessions in CAR, such as the Ndassima gold mine, as well as forestry rights (ibid.). In addition to protecting the government, the group trains CAR's military and conducts combat operations with state security forces and on its own (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 20-21; CrisisWatch Database, 2022; Rampe 2023). According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ALCED, 2022), WG has been involved in political violence against civilians in CAR. Between December 2020 and July 2022, the Wagner group without the presence of the state has been involved in 70% of political violence against civilians in CAR, compared to 27% when the group operates alongside state forces (ACLED, 2022).

According to Inwood and Tacchi (2024), the Wagner Group's operations are most well-established in the Central African Republic. This can be seen with the Wagner Group's mining concession over, for example, the Ndassima Mine, whose operations have been estimated to be able to produce up to 290 millions USD of gold annually (Berlin et al., p.23). The mine that is operated by WG's subsidiaries that have expanded their operations in the mining area since 2020 when they first took over the mine (ibid.). It provides the group with an opportunity to develop its role in Africa, not only protecting its economic interests in the form of natural resources but also creating opportunities for them by carrying out the mission of the CAR government (Arduino, 2024; Blazakis et al, 2023, p. 23; Inwood & Tacchi, 2024; Kelly, 2020; Rampe, 2023) Wagner is in turn linked to Russian geopolitical interests in the form of power and control over critical natural resources that could expose the West to Russian "energy blackmail" (Arduino, 2024; Inwood & Tacchi, 2024). It could also become a problem for the West in the long term if Russia strengthens its political influence in a region that forms Europe's southern neighbourhood.

The Wagner Group is an armed non-state actor, and that can be problematised given the group's strong connection to the Russian state, because the group operates both openly and in the shadows, making not all information available (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 8-9, 13-14). This is good for those who hire the Wagner group as they do not know what they are doing, and if it becomes known they can blame the WG and not have to take responsibility themselves for example the US use of Blackwater in Iraq (Avant, 2013, pp. 426-431). One reason why states

with weak state structures hire a PMC like the Wagner group for their private military services is that they can defend the regime without having to follow rules. They are invited to try to stabilise the conflicts, but their activities contribute to further instability, making the states even more in need of the services (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 10, 13).

3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In Mary Kaldor's book *New and Old Wars* (2012), she contributes a new perspective to analyse warfare, which differs from the old view of how war is conducted, usually state against state or between states and political groups (Kaldor, 2012, p. 1-2). New Wars are a result of a change that has been made possible due to globalisation in the 1980s and 1990s which changed warfare and created a new form of organised violence that can be seen especially in Africa and Eastern Europe (Kaldor, 2012, 4). Globalisation has connected the world and contributed to the blurring of national borders (Kaldor, 2012, p. 3-4). This has brought about various changes in the world that have made the new wars possible, i.e. the change in political authority and the economic, military and cultural intensification of global interconnections (ibid.). Kaldor studies the dynamics between state and non-state actors in her analyses of the new wars where most of the violence is directed against civilians (Kaldor, 2012, p. vi). Globalisation is also evident in the new wars with the global presence of everything from non-governmental organisations, international institutions, and international reporters to mercenary troops and military advisers (PMCs) and volunteers (Kaldor, 2012, p. 5). This contributes to a global or local divide in what Kaldor describes as the global classes, separating those who have benefited from the globalisation process and can travel freely, and have access to the internet, television and money on a card (ibid.). As opposed to those countries excluded from the globalisation process that receive humanitarian aid and cannot move freely around the world or are victims of sieges, famine and war (ibid.).

According to Kaldor, the new type of war is characterised by a new type of organised violence that can be seen in the world and has a political character (Kaldor, 2012, p. 2). The idea of New Wars implies that the bold distinction between internal/external and public/private has blurred, that they are both global and local, and that they differ from classical civil wars and interstate wars (Kaldor, 2012, p. vi, 2). They can range from wars between states, between states and political groups to private organised criminal groups with economic motives or violence against civilians by either states or politically organised groups (ibid.). Kaldor argues that the privatisation of violence is a major part of the New Wars, which can be difficult to identify as the boundaries between what is private and what is public have been blurred (Kaldor, 2012, p. 2). The New Wars that Kaldor argues are low-intensity and/or small-scale wars that occur when the state's autonomy deteriorates or in some cases does not exist, which can be seen when a

state no longer has the monopoly on violence and has, for example, privatised it (Kaldor, 2012, p. 5-6). One reason why the state does not have a monopoly on violence and where new wars occur is when the state's economy and political legitimacy are weak (Kaldor, 2012, p. 6). One of the main reasons for the labelling of new and old wars according to Kaldor is to show the differences between the types of wars rather than historical differences (Kaldor, 2012, p. 219-220). Kaldor's (2012) theory can help to increase understanding of states with weak or failed state structures that have not benefited from the globalisation process. By "weak state" Kaldor means states that have weak or non-existent authority, where the state no longer has a monopoly on violence which contributes to the state no longer having control over the territory, controlling the population and collecting taxes which further weakens the state (Kaldor, 2012, p. 95-96). Furthermore, Kaldor argues that the "weakness" of the state goes hand in hand with privatised violence, as states with weak state structures often hire private companies that claim the state's already weak economy, which leads to a downward spiral and creates the context in which New Wars arise (Kaldor, 2012, p. 95-96)

The New Wars can be explained by four main characteristics that are strongly linked, the first is that they are driven by identity politics, which is a language of power based on identity labels such as national, religion and ethnicity where the ultimate goal is power for one's group, where continued violence is what makes the state survive (Kaldor, 2012, p. 7, 91). Identity politics has emerged in response to globalisation with the increased communication and migration between countries and as a reaction to the weakness of urban structures (ibid.). Kaldor describes that there is a difference between the old and new 'identity politics', where the old was more focused on the state and geopolitical interests which differs from the new where the language of power is more complex and where different expressions of identity are mixed and intertwined (Kaldor, 2012, p. 7-8). With waves of globalisation, new identities and ideologies will always be created in response to political and social changes in society (Kaldor, 2012, p. 8). Identity politics is both local and global, made possible by technological advances and new ways of spreading political values (Kaldor 2012, p. 8, 71-72). Unlike the old wars whose objectives were territorial, geopolitical and ideological, even the methods (in the form of counterinsurgency and guerrilla attacks, for example) and financing distinguish the old and new wars, one of the objectives of the New Wars is identity-political power (Kaldor, 2012, p. 7, 164).

The second characteristic is that the New Wars differ from the old wars in the way they are fought, from territorially based battles to politically based manoeuvres, where globalisation is

of utmost importance as wars can no longer be limited geographically (Kaldor, 2012, p. 185-186). Groups gain political control rather than physical control through non-state violence, mainly targeting civilian populations (Kaldor, 2018, pp. 47-48, 50-51). The new wars are fought in what in old wars was seen as an illegitimate way of waging war and the new wars reveal a new global class divide that separates those advantaged and disadvantaged by the globalisation process (Kaldor, 2012, p. 5, 106). Kaldor argues that the new wars increasingly consist of hired groups and paramilitaries spreading fear among the civilian population rather than 'professional' armed forces (2012, p. 164). It is not surprising that there has been a new way of waging war, according to Kaldor, as states are nowadays in military alliances and cooperation that have contributed to a new form of global military integration that means that states prefer not to wage war for fear of a "full-scale" war (Kaldor, 2012, p. 6).

The third characteristic can be described through the globalised war economy as a cause of the New Wars. Kaldor (2012) describes how the war economy of the Old Wars was linked to the autocracy of the state while the new type of war economy is based on the privatisation of military forces, patterns of violence such as the financing of crime, aid from states and international organisations and that there is a high propensity for this new type of warfare to spread (Kaldor, 2012, p. 7). When the political economy is weak, the authority of the state is also weak, which contributes to the failure of the state's legitimate monopoly on state violence. The monopoly of violence can be weakened both from above through global military power and institutions and from below through the privatisation of security (Kaldor, 2012, p. 5-6). There are two important principles that Kaldor raises regarding the globalised war economy. On the one hand, the privatisation of military forces leads to the state losing control and the monopoly of violence which is common in states with weak state structures and, contributes to a reduced opportunity to, for example, collect taxes and create social cohesion (Kaldor, 2012, p. 10). On the other hand, in the new wars, money is both an end to increasing economic assets and a means to continue waging war (Kaldor, 2012, 107-110, 164; Kaldor, 2018, p. 47-48).

The final and fourth characteristic of new wars is that the violence takes place between different networks of state and non-state actors (such as militias, criminal gangs and mercenaries) as well as global and local actors using stolen or imported weapons (Kaldor, 2012, pp. vi, 215; Kaldor, 2018, pp. 47-48). By mercenaries, Kaldor means both 'mercenaries' on contract (for example, to PMCs) and as individual contractors (Kaldor 2012, p. 99). The new actors of war can also be described through Kaldors' Security Culture "The War on Terror" where she argues that the

focus has shifted from the military as an entity to a combination of private security companies and intelligence services (Kaldor 2018, p. 51).

The theory of New and Old wars has been critically debated within the research community as scholars believe that the theory does not present a new concept in the understanding of war (Kaldor, 2012, p. 202ff). As wars between states and non-states such as militias have always existed, so have different sizes and types of wars, which can make it difficult to determine whether a war falls into the category of being "New" or "Old" (ibid.). Kaldor argues that although it is not necessarily war, it is something that is happening, a new type of organised violence, which needs to be studied (Kaldor, 2012, p. vi-vii). Therefore, this study will analyse the dynamics of CAR following Kaldor's reasoning on the four main characteristics of the 'New Wars', Identity politics, Warfare, the Global Political Economy and State and Non-State Actors.

4 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Single Case Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the conflict in the Central African Republic with a focus on the role of the Wagner group through the theory of New and Old Wars by Mary Kaldor (2012). To best analyse the dynamics of the CAR, the design and methodology of the study will be in the form of a qualitative case study as it provides the opportunity to develop an in-depth analysis in one case, in this case, the conflict in the CAR and the dynamics between the actors. Therefore, the study will be limited to the three main actors, the government, the domestic armed opposition and the Wagner group, and will not do an in-depth analysis of the group's impact in the Sahel and the history of the region, which could be possible with another type of design and research aim. The study covers the period from 2018 when the Wagner Group was established in CAR until now.

In qualitative case study research, there are discussions about the generalisability of case studies. Creswell believes that generalisability can only be achieved by using broader theories (Creswell, 2014, p. 236-237). This study is based on Kaldor's theory, which is broad, making it possible to apply generalisability to this case study. In the study, the approach is a qualitative method where the use of the study's theoretical framework in the form of Kaldor's theory of New and Old Wars (2012) is a tool to structure the conflict dynamics in CAR and put it in a larger theoretical and empirical context. Furthermore, the material (see 4.2 on the material) is analysed in the form of abductive reasoning, i.e. an empirical approach with a theoretical reasoning approach. The empirical approach will be in the form of a secondary data analysis that summarises, analyses and interprets the material to see patterns, relationships and trends. The data analysis will be partly based on the four characteristics, identity politics, warfare, political economy and state and non-state actors that characterise the New Wars. The use of these methods not only allows the case study to seek a closer empirical understanding of how these factors look and function in CAR, but also to identify, if possible, other factors that characterise developments in CAR (George, & Bennett, 2005, p. 34).

4.2 Material

The paper draws on previous research, reports from think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and The Soufan Center, academic institutions and independent organisations such as ACLED (Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project), CrisisWatch Database, Globalis and UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program). As a central part of the empirical analysis, news reports from, among others, BBC News on CAR and the Wagner Group have also been used.

The previous research and several reports from think tanks have been read, partly to provide a historical and contemporary context for developments in CAR, and partly as a secondary source that offers direct empirical support for the analysis. The Wagner group is relatively unexplored (Mussa & Dubianskij, 2023, p. 210), which also applies to the new type of PMCs, with a wide range of tools and clear political links, to which WG belongs. This can be explained by the fact that both the Wagner group and the phenomenon are relatively new and that the analyses have therefore mainly been made by think tanks with the aim of explaining current events, rather than creating a broader understanding of the problems that PMCs create. However, news and reports are of great importance for studying the group and its behaviour.

The news coverage used comes mainly from Western news channels with global coverage, in particular the BBC. However, it is important to note that Western media, in general, have little interest in developments in Africa, and mainly report on wars, disasters and highly anomalous events (Bunce, 2015; Chavis, 1998). News reporting also often focuses on the individual event without providing a broader context, and uses simplistic concepts and categorisations, such as ethnic divisions or describing societies or governments as weak, without specifying in what way. These ways of describing conflicts in Africa and especially developments in CAR may have influenced the material in two ways. Firstly, the sensational nature of the fighting, with mainly civilian deaths and with what can be described as an ethnic or religious connection, possibly gives this news a predominance. Secondly, the Western perspective of the media, especially in cases where countries have a history as colonial powers, tends to lead to countries and events being portrayed as anomalous from a Western perspective. At the same time, this problem has been of less importance for this study, as the purpose of the media coverage has been first and foremost to establish the occurrence of violence, not to seek deeper explanations for it.

Another limitation concerns the reporting on the Wagner Group, which is generally described in Western media as a tool of the Russian state in Africa. Negative reporting on the group has probably also increased since Russia's war against Ukraine and the group's role as a combatant on the Russian side. At the same time, there are few counter-narratives, e.g. TASS Russian News Agency (2018) describes developments in CAR but not the role or presence of the Wagner group. The Wagner group's own endeavours to influence the image of its own presence seem to be primarily directed towards the local context and not global media. The endeavour has been to use Al Jazeera, among others, as a counterweight to the Western description, but without this offering any great contrast. An additional problem exists in the effort to describe the use and development of crime, as boundaries, definitions and statistics on what is or is considered criminal vary greatly between different societies (Newburn, 2017, p. 10). In the work, it has therefore been important to relate to the definitions of crime used in previous research and the various reports and to limit the description to broad if less contentious categories such as murder and looting. Reporting on CAR and around WG has been scrutinised and triangulated as far as possible to ensure validity. Reports from ACLED, CrisisWatch Database, Council on Foreign Relations, Globalis, The Soufan Centre and UCDP have been used as an important part of this triangulation, as e.g. ACLED, Globalis, and UCPD in their reports avoid normative statements and values and carefully check their statistics.

Because war creates an unstable environment, it has contributed to a grey area between political violence and criminal violence, which has contributed to the misclassification of violence statistics, as violence carried out by the government in anti-crime campaigns is often included in the statistics on unilateral violence against civilians although the violence is committed in the context of conflict (Stepanova, 2016, p. 55-56; Kalyvas, 2015). Interesting to note here is that both the Wagner group and the state in CAR fill in these statistics against civilians in CAR (ACLED, 2022). Running anti-criminal campaigns or anti-armed opposition campaigns can both be problematised as it is the state that has the power and authority to classify groups. As such, it is not surprising that groups that are a threat to the state are classified with terms such as rebel, opposition, criminal or terrorist as there is a certain stigma and value attached to these labels internationally. Equally, it is the state that has the power to classify what is legal and what is not (Ruggiero, p. 144). Because it is difficult to know what violence constitutes the Wagner group via UCPD's data and classifications of violence. Therefore, data from both the UCPD and the total number of conflict-related deaths, the state-based and non-state lethal violence have been studied and compared with ACLED's data describing the Wagner group's

distribution of violence against civilians (ACLED, 2022; UCDP, 2022). Therefore, news stories describing Wagner's violence have also been used to complete this data.

5 ANALYSIS

5.1 CAR a "New" Old War

Since the Central African Republic gained independence in 1960, political life has been characterised by coups d'état and a situation where armed oppositions have fought both the government and each other, and where organised violence has also been directed against civilians (UPCD, 2022; Globalis, 2022). According to UPCD, intra- and inter-state conflicts and other types of organised violence have also increased in the region since 1989 (UPCD, 2022), which is partly due to the power vacuum that has arisen since the end of the Cold War. In this chapter, the conflict in CAR will be described based on Kaldor's theory of New and Old Wars (2012).

The armed opposition in CAR consists of several different groupings. The largest is the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), which was created in 2020 with the common goal of challenging the results of the 2020 elections and thus Touadéra's hold on power and driving the Wagner group out of the country (Mondafrique, 2024). The group consists of, for example, the Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC), the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic (FPRC) and Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (3R) (ibid.). But there are also groups that define the struggle against the central government and each other primarily in terms of ethnic or regional identity markers. Prominent among these is Azandé Ani Kpi Gbé, which is a regionally and ethnically based militia that sides with the government and is trained by the WG to fight against the UPC, but which has also fought against the Central African Armed Force (CrisisWatch Database, 2022; Mondafrique, 2024; Globalis, 2022; BBC News, 2022; Kaldor, 2012, p. 7, 9). In addition, there are groups such as Anti-Balaka, which is a coalition of mainly Christian groups that in recent years has splintered into groups that both support the incumbent government, and directly collaborate with Wagner, but also groups that instead support the CPC (UCDP, 2022). This paints a picture of a political landscape with many underlying interests and where the identity politics goals are linked to political goals such as power over territory and economic assets and profit opportunities (Glawion & Le Noan, 2023). The tendency to describe the conflicts in CAR as religiously based has led to factors such as misrule or poverty sometimes being overlooked in descriptions and analyses (Globalis, 2022).

Despite the fact that the conflict dynamics in CAR should primarily be seen as a series of intra-state conflicts, external actors such as the former colonial power France, regional actors such as Chad, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, and in recent years global actors such as Russia and China have endeavoured to influence development for their own purposes. This is also true; even private actors such as natural resource companies have interests in CAR (Edelen, 2015; Globalis, 2022; Ojewale, 2023; UPCD, 2022).

The conflict in CAR can be read in terms of what Kaldor describes as the nature of the new war. The presence of multiple armed oppositions with identity-based but unclear objectives has meant that the conflict and fighting have not been geographically confined to individual conflict areas or fronts but rather have flared up around economically or politically important locations (IPIS, 2018; Kaldor, 2012, p. 74).



Caption: Map over mineral-rich regions where Wagner has been accused of targeting miners (Berlin et al., p. 23)

Since the Wagner Group was contracted by the CAR government in 2018, the total violence in the country first decreased from 640 deaths in 2018 when the Wagner Group established itself, to 299 deaths in 2020 (Berlin et al., 2023, p. 23; UCDP, 2022). However, it is difficult to determine what part of this violence was practised by Wagner, but it shows the overall level of violence in society after Wagner was contracted. After the Wagner-associated Midas Resources took over the operation of the Ndassima mine in 2020, violence increased again to 1080 deaths

in 2021 before decreasing in 2022 to 773 deaths (UCDP, 2022). Overall, one can see that violence in CAR has remained constant at a figure between 300-1000 dead per year since 2015. In contrast, state-based violence, in which Wagner is a prominent actor, has increased since 2018 (ibid.). From 103 deaths caused by state-based violence in 2018 to 906 deaths caused by state-based violence in 2021 (ibid.). In 2022, state-based lethal violence accounted for 677 deaths, which corresponds to about 87% of fatal violence in that year (ibid.). The state and the Wagner group are thus responsible for the largest part of the violence since 2018. The places where the state-based violence is the greatest are also in the regions that have the greatest mineral extraction such as Ouaka, where the Ndassima mine is located, Nana-Mambere, Ouham and Vakaga. The Wagner Group has also been accused of at least 10 attacks in those regions against miners (Berlin et al., 2023, p. 23; UCDP, 2022). Thus, it is clear that the government, by contracting the Wagner group, has sought to strengthen its control and security with the help of military force. At the same time, the Wagner group has used violence to strengthen its economic control over the mining industry in CAR.

Warfare has therefore often been small-scale and, within the context of identity politics, has been directed at controlling, displacing or killing civilian populations. These characteristics are all found in what Kaldor defines as 'the new war' (Kaldor, 2012, pp. 47-51). However, no war entirely follows an ideal type. The party in power has repeatedly endeavoured to control as much of the territory of the Central African Republic as possible, although not necessarily in terms of physical power as in the Old War, but rather in terms of political influence and control over the political and economic resources that the government needs to strengthen itself and the groups that support it, but also to strengthen the state and thus consolidate its hold on power. The government's ambition to strengthen the legitimacy of the state can possibly be explained by the fact that, under international law, other states and the international community expect the government to have control over its territory. It is thus not only a matter of strengthening the government's legitimacy in CAR, thereby strengthening its influence, but also of strengthening CAR as an actor vis-à-vis external regional and global actors.

The presence of the Wagner group in CAR can possibly be seen as a result of the government's failure to maintain its own position in society, and thus also failing to strengthen the state's domestic and foreign policy legitimacy. Instead of this legitimacy, the government has chosen to strengthen its role through hired military means.

The relation between the CAR government and the Wagner group could be explained as a coalition force, between a state and its support groups and a PMC. Because the Wagner group possesses a range of means of influence from military force to information influence and the existence of a range of groups with partially different interests, the conflict is rather conducted between networks and with different methods in a way that can be applied under the definition of New Wars (Kaldor, 2012, p. 161).

The group has been tasked with protecting the central government and its interests, primarily by fighting the armed opposition and training regional groups and the domestic military (Rampe, 2023). Unlike the other actors, the Wagner Group does not have its own identity-political objectives or long-term claims to power in the country. Instead, the group is driven by economic objectives, where the individual soldiers are primarily driven by the remuneration, they receive from the CAR government via the Wagner group and where the group is also driven by the economic assets that they have been able to exploit. This means that the Wagner group can also be seen as an actor whose presence has been made possible by and is part of the global economy. PMCs are certainly nothing new in Africa. At the same time, the clear link to both geopolitical interests, such as Russia's interests in Africa, and global economic drivers, for example the need for natural resources, is changing (Kaldor, 2012, p. 117-118). In addition, the Wagner group is likely to be driven by a political objective by acting as a proxy for the Russian government (Doboš & Purton, 2024). This means that the group's goals are also partly in line with the Old Wars, in the form of geopolitical goals with influence in the region (BBC News, 2023; Kaldor 2012).

Despite the lack of its own identity politics objectives, the Wagner group can use and appeal to overarching identity politics objectives such as the anti-colonial and anti-western movements in parts of Africa. These are mainly based on perceptions that the old colonial powers, in CARs' case, France, have taken their natural resources and made it difficult for them to develop. This has been further reinforced by the Ukraine war, where the West is seen as giving disproportionate support to Ukraine while historically overlooking wars in Africa. A perspective that suits the Russian view of the West and the war against Ukraine (CrisisWatch Database, 2022; Seshadri 2023). It is worth noting that the Russian image in Africa is probably also strengthened by the fact that the Soviet Union historically had a strong anti-colonial rhetoric and supported several liberation movements, but then with an ideological, rather than identity-political narrative.

As mentioned earlier, the economics of globalised war is one of the characteristics of the 'new wars'. In addition, what are commonly referred to as weak states are particularly vulnerable as targets of the globalised war economy. Such states are often characterised by an interaction in which the state has little opportunity to effectively tax its own population or otherwise finance its activities. This means that the state has few opportunities to stimulate the domestic economy, assist citizens and create legitimacy for common laws. Instead, it leads to actors other than the state providing citizens with economic and legal protection, which undermines the role of the state.

According to Kaldor, new wars also arise when the authority of the state is weakened and, in particular, when the legal monopoly on violence has been weakened or does not exist (Kaldor, 2012, p. 5). A legitimate monopoly of violence means that the state has control over violence and physical coercion (Kaldor, 2012, p. 122). The legal monopoly of violence in CAR was weak long before the Wagner group became involved as the armed oppositions have over time controlled most of the country's territory and with this have significantly hampered the state's creation and maintenance of authority in society. Violence between the state and the opposition and the violence directed against the civilian population has fuelled more violence and distrust and CARs and constantly demonstrated the complicity and inability of the urban apathy to control the unrest and violence, which has undermined the legitimacy of the state in the long term (BBC News, 2023).

It is almost impossible for any of the actors to re-establish legitimacy where the legitimate monopoly of violence does not exist (Kaldor, 2012, p. 122-123). Rather, it can be assumed that hiring the Wagner Group reduces the government's opportunities for this in the short term. This is because they have brought an actor into the country that they do not control and that has extensive violent capital and thus does not have to comply with the government or the laws enacted by the government. In addition, the group's presence has been financed by giving it access to financial assets that the government could otherwise use to strengthen the government's legitimacy.

5.2 Unravelling Dynamics

The dynamics in CAR can be seen as a triangle drama, where the actors studied in the Central African Republic are: the Government, the armed oppositions and the Wagner Group. The background to the dynamics between the CAR government, the armed oppositions and the Wagner Group is, as mentioned, the intra-state conflict between the armed oppositions that at various times after independence have held government power in CAR. It has been made clear in the past that CAR has weak urban structures despite the problems surrounding the name. The CAR government does not have economic control over the country and has limited ability to finance itself through taxes, for example. Instead, in order to finance its need for security, the government has ceded the rights to operate the Ndassima gold mine to Midas Resources, a company with strong links to the Wagner Group, as payment for the group's military services (Rampe, 2023; Spearin, 2024, pp. 117-118). For the Touadéra-led CAR government to try to strengthen its authority, power and influence in CAR, the ruling group has turned to the private Wagner group and their associates for support and protection. The protection is in the form of military protection by the government and training of soldiers to try to take control of the areas containing natural resources that the armed opposition control (Spearin, 2024, p. 117).

Previously, CAR had an agreement with the Canadian company Axmin, that Midas Resources took over (Spearin, 2024, p. 117), this could mean that the Wagner Group did not need to invest in the short term, but only take over the operation as the mine was probably relatively modern. From 2010, Axmin had exclusive rights to the Ndassima mine, but in 2013 had to abandon the site when armed groups took it over in connection with the city coup (Globalis, 2022; Globalis, 2022). The Wagner Group and associated companies are involved both in gold mining but also in the management of the mine (Spearin, 2024, p. 117-118). There are also reports that WG personnel have repeatedly attacked miners in several places in CAR to take over other mines or to loot them (Burke & Salih, 2022). This can be linked to Kaldor's argument about the global political economy of war (Kaldor, 2012, p. 10, 117).

An agreement to exchange security services for natural resources is not new (Musah & Fayemi 2000, p. 23), but it creates a special dynamic between CAR and the Wagner Group. The CAR government becomes dependent on the WG in the long term, and the group is also dependent on supporting the government to remain in CAR and engage in mining. Developments over the past year also suggest that the Wagner group is trying to create long-term stability around its

economic interests (Arduino, 2024). Despite allegations of human rights violations, WG seems to care about its reputation in Africa and wants to show (both regionally and internationally) that it gives back to the local population by, for example, building a church (Adegoke, 2023). This could be explained within the framework of what Kaldor means by identity politics, as Russia has made itself popular in Africa by showing that it is on their side against the West and above all the colonial states, and then symbolically wants to show that they are different (Adegoke, 2023; Kelly, 2020). But it could also be a business decision as it could cost the Wagner group more to be in conflict with the local population than to get along with them. However, this does not mean that Wagner is spreading profits to larger parts of the community than those around the mines, while the support they provide is probably quite small in relation to the profits. But it could also be due to the change that the Wagner group has undergone, where the most criminal and undisciplined soldiers have been sent to Ukraine to fight and those who remain in CAR are the more 'businesslike' and 'worldly' ones.

CAR's former Socialist Prime Minister to the former President Patassé, Martin Ziguéle has said in an interview with the BBC that he considers the government's relationship with the Wagner group to be dangerous as the group is involved in the state's economic, and security and political spheres, which means that they now lead the country and are free to move and decide freely in the country (Adegoke, 2023). Although Ziguéle has his own interests, his statement indicates that the Wagner group has many of the functions of the state but does not have to fulfil the requirements of international law for a national government. Thus, the Wagner Group has turned instability into a tool. The group can control areas and exercise power in them without being held accountable for their actions. Although they can provide a degree of stability, they can also indirectly threaten not to provide stability, thus making the local community dependent on their presence by threatening not to provide protection.

With the agreement and the exchange between the actors, CAR has given up the possibility of exploiting the mines themselves or selling the right to exploit to someone who would involve the community in the enterprise to a greater extent so that the community would gain from it, which only confuses their political economy (Kaldor, 2012, p. 145-147). This is probably a sign that the CAR government sees its own security as more important than that of the civilian population, so they prioritise paying with the mines for their own security. The relationship between the Wagner group and CAR may also contribute to the government turning a blind eye to, for example, human rights violations and illegitimate violence against civilians (Global

Engagement Centre, 2024). But it may also be the case that the CAR government can do nothing as it no longer has a monopoly on violence, as it has handed it over to the Wagner group by hiring the group for government security. Therefore, the government cannot control the Wagner group and, through its dependence on their services in the form of security, probably has little interest in going against the group.

From an economic point of view, it can be assumed that the Wagner group is primarily interested in making a quick profit from the mines, which could affect the long-term prosperity and development of the mining industry in CAR (Arduino, 2024, Kelly, 2020). The dynamic between the Wagner Group and the CAR government is also affected by the fact that the group acts as an agent of Russia, to strengthen Russian power and influence in the region (Kelly, 2020). The CAR government therefore has an interest in maintaining its power, while the Wagner group's interest is to make money and, secondarily, give Russia influence and thus gain Russia's patronage (Arduino, 2024).

5.3 The Central African Republic, the Wagner Group and Illegality

The lack of state power in CAR that can control the legal system and the legal means of violence leads to an increased risk of increased violence in society and raises the question of individual security (UPCD, 2022; Globalis, 2022; Avant, 2013, p. 428; Kaldor, 2012, p. 5). As mentioned, the government's agreement with the Wagner group and the government's inability to control the group has also effectively ceded part of its monopoly on violence to an external actor. This is underlined by reports showing that violence against civilians is a pattern in the inter-group conflict in CAR and that since 2018 the Wagner group has regularly been involved in much of the political violence against civilians, including abductions, sexual violence, robberies and looting of shops, mines and marketplaces (ACLED, 2022; Global Engagement Centre, 2024; Serwat, et al., 2023, p. 24-32). This can be explained from the individual's perspective, where the individual's financial gain and lack of social control act as a motivation to commit crimes (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2019).

The state, by inviting the Wagner group into the CAR, has given an external group the task of exercising or the possibility of exercising violence that no one can control, thus contributing to another group that undermines the state's monopoly on violence and does so with an 'invitation'

in the form of a contract by the state. Civil wars are more likely in countries with weak urban structures but rich in natural resources. That can lead to criminal activities flourishing in climates that can be described as new wars (Kaldor, 2012, p. 6; Kalyvas, 2015, p. 1521). This is because armed oppositions use criminality as a tool to control and intimidate the population (Glawion & Le Noan, 2023, pp. 24-25; Kalyvas, 2015, p. 1517; Stepanova, 2016). But also, to strengthen the economy of individual soldiers and the opposition (ibid.). It is important here to distinguish between criminality that is encouraged by an actor, and thus used as a tool, and criminality that arises from the lawlessness of war.

From an individual perspective, the Wagner group's soldiers use violence for their own gain. There are also similar historical descriptions of how mercenaries have acted in Africa (ACLED, 2022; Global Engagement Centre, 2024; Singer, 2001, p. 191; Spearin, 2017, p. 58). From a tool perspective, the Wagner group's violence against civilians can be seen as a way of gaining control and exercising control. Not only does the violence instil fear in the community and cause people to avoid taking action and resisting but acts such as looting also force the population to be close to their homes and property in the first place to protect it if possible. This also makes it difficult for civil society to organise itself. However, this is only possible when Wagner has taken over the monopoly on violence from the state (ACLED, 2022; Global Engagement Centre, 2024; IPIS, 2018; Kaldor, 2012, p. vi). The incidence of violence has also been concentrated in the areas where there are mines linked to Wagner like the Ouaka and Nana-Mambere regions (Berlin et al., 2023, p. 23; Serwat, et al., 2023, p. 30). This can be interpreted as meaning that since Wagner has its own economic interests in CAR, the group may have prioritised securing these areas in the first place. The third is that it can also be explained by the lack of social control from the state and that the soldiers from the Wagner group act rationally in their own interests in accordance with criminological control theory (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2019, p. 7ff). The fact that the Wagner Group can carry out illegal acts in CAR can therefore be explained by the fact that the state has accepted the group's methods and sees that it is to strengthen the government's hold on power, or that the state has no ability to control the WG's actions and no ability to protect their population. Because the Wagner Group is in CAR to protect the state and not the population, despite the group promoting their involvement in CAR as contributing to stability (Global Engagement Centre, 2024).

The Wagner group is also involved in the smuggling of gold and looted goods, via third-party countries where border controls are not as strict and where the goods can change hands for cash

transfers (Berlin et al., 2023, p. 24-25). One of these routes is from the CAR to the *Congo market* in Douala, Cameroon where International Global Logistic a Wagner-associated company handles the gold-to-money exchange (ibid.). Wagner has a network of middlemen to smuggle goods. Because the Wagner group already has functioning smuggling routes for gold and looted goods, it also opens up opportunities for the group to be able to smuggle other things and for further criminality. This can be seen through Cohen and Felson's (1979) criminological theory, the routine activity theory which holds that crime occurs if there is a suitable object, in this case, gold and looted goods. One or more motivated perpetrators, which the Wagner group is, and there are no capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The lack of guardians manifests itself both in the lack of control from CARs with their weak state structures and the lack of social control in society which is linked to the criminological social control theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2019). It can also be explained through Bandura's (1986) criminological theory regarding social learning which explains that criminal behaviour is learned in their environment and where the positive reinforcement of the crimes leads to increased crime. In this case, it is either Wagner who sets the possibilities according to the routine activity theory and then teaches to colleagues in the group or the Wagner group learns from the already criminal environment in CAR and therefore starts smuggling goods and looting due to the low control (Bandura, 1986; Berlin et al., p. 23-25; Cohen & Felson, 1979).

The Wagner Group's relationship with CAR does not necessarily encourage the use or emergence of illegal means such as looting by the armed opposition, as they were already using such means before the WG entered CAR (Glawion & Le Noan, 2023, 30-31). However, the violence against civilians is not reduced by the fighting between the armed oppositions or by the presence of the Wagner Group in CAR. But when it comes to the relationship between the Wagner group and CAR, it can both contribute to the emergence and development of illegal means. Ruggiero (2007) argues that the privatisation of violence, which is becoming increasingly prevalent, should be seen as 'corporate crime'. Furthermore, Ruggiero argues that violence and material interest have merged to become one, a commodity, a service (2007, p. 135-136). This can be understood through the wide range of services provided by WGs and their economic motivation in states they choose to enter with their security services (Blazakis et al., 2023, p. 4, 6). The presence of PMCs and in this case, WGs thus increases the possibility of crime against individuals, of an area (CAR) being used for crime and of organised violence and crime against communities.

5.4 Regional Implications in the Global Securitisation

The dynamics between CAR and the Wagner Group show that the presence of the WG is also likely to influence regional conflict dynamics. The Wagner Group has also established itself in neighbouring countries such as Mali, where it is involved in, for example, the Ndassima gold mine operated by Midas Resources, which is linked to the Wagner Group (Singer, 2001, p. 192; Spearin, 2017, p. 3). In Mali, Wagner has also been reported to have used violence against civilians in its warfare, including in the Maura massacre, where several hundred civilians were executed, and other reports of the group's clashes with armed forces and violence against civilians in Mali (Blazakis et al., 2023, pp. 21-22; CrisisWatch Database, 2024). Through its presence in CAR and Mali, the group has gained an important foothold in the region and can thereby facilitate the advancement of Russian foreign policy objectives in Africa. The presence allows Moscow to promote three main objectives: to achieve recognition of Russia as a great power by demonstrating global networks, which has become particularly important as Russia has become increasingly isolated from the West; to undermine Western interests by building a Russian sphere of influence; and to strengthen Russian soft power and the image of Russia as a positive force in the region. The historical anti-imperialist projects of the Soviet Union in the post-colonial era have facilitated contemporary Russian endeavours in Africa, where Russia has been able to benefit in part from this image (Mondafrique, 2024).

Moreover, Wagner's strong position in CAR and Mali has probably also enabled the group's and Russia's increased influence in, for example, Niger, where the group has played a significant role since the coup d'état in 2024. The increased Russian influence has, among other things, meant that both France and the US have been forced to withdraw the forces they had in the country for regional counter-terrorism (Armstrong, 2023; Johansson, 2023; NEWS WIRES, 2024; Steinhäuser & Bisserbe, 2024). The external international actors' interest in CAR such as France and now Russia could be because of the state's geographical position in Africa which is militarily strategically located. But it could also be because of the rich neighbouring countries in the region such as Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. CAR is also conveniently placed for the Wagner group's smuggling routes through Cameroon and Sudan (Berlin et al., 2023, p. 25). CAR is therefore practically besieged to reach out into Africa but also to more easily gain influence and possible extraction in the region.

Furthermore, Wagner has trained militia groups such as the AAKG, potentially leading to regional issues. This increases the risk of tensions in the region if the group decides to target Fulani (an indigenous group in CAR), Muslims or civilians accused of supporting the opposition (CrisisWatch Database, 2022). These groups rarely operate within the nation's borders, posing the risk of conflicts spilling over into neighbouring countries, aligning with Kaldor's concept of globalisation and the blurring of state borders (Ingerstad, 2014; Kaldor, 2012). Additionally, the Wagner group can be seen as an expression of the globalisation of the conflict through the involvement of soldiers from other nations, mainly Russia and Central Asia, who lack clear objectives or interests in the region, apart from the economic interests that are part of a global PMC economy (Rampe, 2022).

Another example of the Wagner Group's expression of the globalisation of the conflict is how countries in the region are used to circumvent the sanctions imposed on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. These sanctions include import and export restrictions on goods and services in several economic sectors such as high technology, gold, diamonds and energy (European Commission, 2022). Russian business in Africa may therefore be a way for Russia to circumvent the sanctions against it to continue to do business and gain influence in the region. This contributes to an even larger global phenomenon of great power conflict, pitting East and West against each other on yet another level, only this time on African territory. In response to Western sanctions, Russia is also seeking to strengthen its ties with countries that are not involved in the war in Ukraine or have not taken a stand. Russia has skilfully exploited the image of itself as an actor that has historically fought against colonialism and that stands against Western exploitation and therefore supports Africa. This raises the question of identity politics again, even if the Wagner Group or the soldiers there are not driven by identity politics, there could be a connection between Russia and the countries they are interested in and are using the WG to get closer. Russia is also trying to strengthen ties with other countries under Western sanctions, although it is not necessarily identity politics as Kaldor (2012) describes it, it is a search for like-minded people with similar values/history who consider unfairly treated by the West (Ferragamo, 2023).

6 CONCLUSIONS

This paper deals with the dynamics between the state, the armed oppositions and the Russian private military company Wagner Group in the Central African Republic. The paper addresses conflict dynamics at three levels; the first is the individual and societal level; the second is at a regional level in the Sahel region where a conflict in one state often spills over to neighbouring countries and where there is now, more specifically, a local and regional struggle for power and influence throughout the Sahel region. The third level is the global one, which is linked to the global political economy and the hunt for natural resources that the state, and in this case Wagner, want to access.

The conflict is analysed through Mary Kaldor's theory of New Wars (2012). According to Kaldor, the New Wars are the result of a change that has been made possible by globalisation since the 1990s, which has changed the conduct of warfare and created a new form of organised violence that can be seen particularly in Africa and Eastern Europe. According to Kaldor, these wars arise when the authority of the state is weakened and in particular when the legal monopoly on violence is weakened or non-existent. According to Kaldor, the New War is characterised by the fact that wars are fought in the name of identity politics, that wars are fought without clear fronts and that the war is directed against the civilian population, that wars are mainly fought between the state and non-state actors, and that the global political economy is a significant driving force.

The study shows the complex and multifaceted nature of the conflict. Since CAR's independence in 1960, political life has been characterised by a situation where armed oppositions have fought both the government and each other. The CAR government has struggled to maintain its legitimacy and monopoly on violence in the country due to civil war and weak political and economic support in society.

The conflict in CAR is characterised by a political landscape where identity politics are used to mobilise the different sides, but where underlying interests such as political and economic influence and control over territory and resources play a crucial role. The fighting has mainly taken place around sites and regions of economic or political value and the violence has been directed against civilians as part of the warfare. It specifically applies to the regions where there are mineral-rich mines in Ouaka, Nana-Mambere, Ouham and Vakaga. The mines are also one

of CAR's biggest economic assets that the state must have control over in order to control the country. But it is also one of the Wagner Group's biggest financial interests. Even though the conflict dynamics in CAR should be seen primarily as a series of intra-state conflicts, external actors such as the former colonial power France, regional actors and, in recent years, global actors such as Russia have endeavoured to influence developments for their own purposes. The conflict in CAR therefore shares many similarities with the characteristics identified by Kaldor regarding the role of identity politics and the nature of warfare.

The weakness of state power in CAR has led the government to seek contracts from the external private military company Wagner Group since 2018 to strengthen its power and authority. It is also reasonable to assume that Wagner offered its duties due to the government, as a part of the Russian foreign policy drive towards Africa. The group has been tasked with protecting the central government and its interests, notably by fighting armed opposition and training regional groups and the domestic military. The presence of the Wagner group in CAR can be seen as a result of the government's failure to maintain its own position in society, and thus also failing to strengthen the state's domestic and foreign policy legitimacy. Even though the government in CAR has a history of low legitimacy, its position was weakened even more by the political turbulence after 2013. Instead of this legitimacy, the government has chosen to strengthen its role through hired military means.

In contrast to the role of identity politics and the quest to control the economic and political power in the country, the Wagner group is instead driven by specific economic objectives, whereas the individual soldiers are primarily driven by the compensation they receive from the CAR government via the Wagner group. But the group is also driven by the economic assets they have been given the opportunity to exploit. Both through the mining resources but also the lack of social control that made it possible for the group to be able to loot and smuggle goods. This contributes to a pattern where crime leads to increased crime due to economic profits. The violence and crimes committed by the Wagner group should also be understood as a tool to control the local society through fear and uncertainty. With the agreement and the exchange between the actors and the difficulty for the CAR government to maintain a monopoly of legitimacy, CAR has given up the possibility of exploiting the mines themselves or using the funds to strengthen society in CAR, leading to increased suffering for the civilian population and undermining the country's future. The presence of the Wagner Group has changed the

regional conflict dynamics and has enabled Russia to advance its foreign policy objectives in Africa through the Wagner Group.

This analysis also highlights how the conflict in CAR is part of a wider globalisation of war, with economic interests and geopolitical rivalries driving the violence and destabilising the region. The globalised war economy plays a major role, with economic assets being exploited by both state and non-state actors. Given CAR's geographic position, linking several countries which are rich in resources, it is reasonable to estimate that the presence of the Wagner group and other external actors is not only due to the recourses in CAR, but to get access to assets in neighbouring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and to trade routes for trade and smuggling. Since 2023 the Wagner group has increased its presence and activities in the Sahel and other parts of Africa, such as Mali and Niger. The group's actions and policies are most certainly adapted to local conditions, but the overall strategy of using violence against civilians and establishing long-term relationships with governments by controlling economic assets and natural resources, will most likely also be applied in these countries. Further research should be done in this area to gain a deeper understanding of how external actors such as the Wagner Group influence conflict dynamics and the global economy of the world.

7 REFERENCE LIST

ACLED (2022, August 30) Wagner Group Operations in Africa: Civilian Targeting Trends in the Central African Republic and Mali. <https://acleddata.com/2022/08/30/wagner-group-operations-in-africa-civilian-targeting-trends-in-the-central-african-republic-and-mali/> [Accessed- 2024-04-1].

Adegoke, Y. (2023, December 11) Why Wagner is winning hearts in the Central African Republic. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-67625139> [Accessed- 2024-04-15].

ADF (2024, January 16) With New Name, Same Russian Mercenaries Plague Africa. Africa Defence Forum. <https://adf-magazine.com/2024/01/with-new-name-same-russian-mercenaries-plague-africa/> [Accessed- 2024-04-28].

African Digital Democracy Observatory (2024, April 23) Wagner: Using economics and disinfo to grow influence in Africa. Medium. <https://disinfo.africa/wagner-in-africa-military-conflicts-economic-interests-and-disinformation-campaigns-ad04aff234cd> [Accessed- 2024-04-26].

Aljazeera (2022, August 16). Last French troops leave Mali, ending nine-year deployment. Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/16/last-french-troops-leave-mali-ending-nine-year-deployment> [Accessed- 2024-05-3].

Amoah, M. (2023). Private Military Companies, Foreign Legions and Counterterrorism in Mali and Central African Republic. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 48(2), 133-150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754231155754>.

Antoniuk, D. (2024, March 28) *Wagner-linked influence operations remain active after leader's death*. The Record Media. <https://therecord.media/wagner-group-linked-influence-operations-continue> [Accessed- 2024-05-13].

Armstrong, K. (2023, August 8). Niger coup: Wagner taking advantage of instability - Antony Blinken. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-66436797> [Accessed- 2024-05-08].

Avant, D. (2005). *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatising Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Avant, D. (2013) Private Security, in P. D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (ed. 2). Routledge. P. 425-438.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

BBC News. (2023, August 22). Central African Republic country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13150040> [Accessed- 2024-04-16].

Berlin, J., Clement, D., Elufisan, L., P., Hicks, E. & Kész, Z. (2023). *How the Kremlin is using Wagner to launder billions in African gold*. The Blood Gold Report.

Blazakis, J., Clarke Naureen, C., Fink, C., & Steinberg, S. (2023) WAGNER GROUP: The Evolution of a Private Army. The Soufan Centre. <https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/TSC-Special-Report-The-Wagner-Group-The-Evolution-Of-Putins-Private-Army.pdf> [Accessed- 2024-04-15].

Bobin, F. & Le Cam, M. (2023, December 17). "Africa Corps": Russia's Sahel presence rebranded. *Le Monde*. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/le-monde-africa/article/2023/12/17/africa-corps-russia-s-sahel-presence-rebranded_6352317_124.html [Accessed- 2024-05-07].

Bunce, M. (2015) International news and the image of Africa: New storytellers, new narratives? In Gallagher, J. (ed.) *Images of Africa: Creation, Negotiation and Subversion*. Manchester University Press, University Press, pp. 42-62.

Burke, J., & Salih, Z. M. (2022, June 21) Russian mercenaries accused of deadly attacks on mines on Sudan-CAR border. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/21/russian-mercenaries-accused-of-deadly-attacks-on-mines-on-sudan-car-border?> [Accessed- 2024-05-10].

Chavis, R. (1998, October 2). Africa in the Western Media. University of Pennsylvania, African studies Centre. www.africa.upenn.edu/Workshop/chavis98.html [Accessed- 2024-05-12].

CrisisWatch Database (2022, August 30) Central African Republic. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location> [Accessed- 2024-05-3].

CrisisWatch Database (2024, April 30). Mali. https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=26&crisis_state=&created=&from_month=1&from_year=2024&to_month=1&to_year=2024 [Accessed- 2024-05-6].

Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach. *American Sociological Review*, 44, 588-608.

Creswell, J. W. (2014) *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th edition). Sage Publications.

Doboš, B., & Purton, A. (2024) Proxy Neo-colonialism? The Case of Wagner Group in the Central African Republic, *Insight on Africa*, 16(1), 7-21.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/09750878231209705>.

Edelen, K. (2015). *Natural Resource Management as a Key to Peace in the Central African Republic*, Building Peace. <https://buildingpeaceforum.com/2015/02/natural-resource-management-as-a-key-to-peace-in-the-central-african-republic/> [Accessed- 2024-05-14].

European Commission (2022) EU sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine. Eu-Solidarity-Ukraine.ec.europa.eu. https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-sanctions-against-russia-following-invasion-ukraine_en [Accessed- 2024-05-08].

Fasanotti, F. S. (2022, February 8) *Russia's Wagner Group in Africa: Influence, commercial concessions, rights violations, and counterinsurgency failure*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/russias-wagner-group-in-africa-influence-commercial-concessions-rights-violations-and-counterinsurgency-failure/> [Accessed- 2024-05-08].

Faulconbridge, G. (ed.) (2023, February 14). Russia's Prigozhin admits links to what U.S. says was election-meddling troll farm. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-prigozhin-admits-links-what-us-says-was-election-meddling-troll-farm-2023-02-14/> [Accessed- 2024-05-06].

Ferragamo, M. (2023, December 28). Russia's Growing Footprint in Africa. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/background/russias-growing-footprint-africa> [Accessed- 2024-05-13].

George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005) Case studies and theory development in the social sciences. MIT.

Glawion, T., & Le Noan, A. C. (2023). Rebel governance or governance in rebel territory? Extraction and services in Ndélé, Central African republic. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 34(1), 24-51. <https://doi-org.proxy.mau.se/10.1080/09592318.2022.2137282>.

Global Engagement Centre (2024, February 8). The Wagner Group's Atrocities in Africa: Lies and Truth. United States Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/the-wagner-groups-atrocities-in-africa-lies-and-truth/> [Accessed- 2024-04-25].

Globalis. (2022, November 24). Central African Republic. <https://globalis.se/konflikter/centralafrikanska-republiken> [Accessed- 2024-04-22].

Gottfredson, M. R. & Hirschi, T. (2019) 'Self-Control Theory and Crime', in *Modern control theory and the limits of the criminal justice*. Oxford University Press.

Herbst, J. (1996) Responding to State Failure in Africa. *International Security*, 21(3), 120-144. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539275>.

Ingerstad, G. (2014) Central African Republic - Trapped in a Cycle of Violence? Causes, Conflict Dynamics and Prospects for Peace, FOI-R--3877--SE.

IPIS (2018) Central African Republic: A Conflict Mapping. <https://ipisresearch.be/publication/central-african-republic-conflict-mapping/> [Accessed- 2024-05-15].

Johansson, P. (2023, December 11). Niger breaks with EU - has turned to Wagner. Omni. <https://omni.se/niger-bryter-med-eu-har-vant-sig-till-wagner/a/Kn5JRG> [Accessed- 2024-05-07].

Kaldor, M. (2012). *New and Old Wars* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kaldor, M. (2018). *Global security cultures*, Polity Press.

Kalyvas, S. N. (2015). How Civil Wars Help Explain Organised Crime-and How They Do Not. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(8), pp. 1517-1540.

Kelly, K. (2020, April 21). IntelBrief: The Wagner Group: A Russian Symphony of Profit and Politics. The Soufan Centre. <https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-the-wagner-group-a-russian-symphony-of-profit-and-politics/> [Accessed- 2024-04-23].

Lawal, S. (2023, December 31). Au revoir, Sahel: Did 2023 crush France's influence in Africa? Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/31/au-revoir-sahel-did-2023-crush-frances-influence-in-africa> [Accessed- 2024-05-10].

Lindner, S. (2014). *State Capture: An Overview*. Transparency International.

Mohamedou, K. (2024, March 6). The Wagner Group, Russia's Foreign Policy and Sub-Saharan Africa. GCSP Publication. <https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/wagner-group-russias-foreign-policy-and-sub-saharan-africa> [Accessed- 2024-05-15].

Mondafrique (2024, January 27). The incredible constellation of armed groups in Central Africa. Mondafrique. <https://mondafrique.com/a-la-une/lincredable-constellation-des-groupes-armes-en-centrafrique/> [Accessed- 2024-05-07].

Musah, A.-F., & Fayemi, K. (Eds.) (2000). *Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma*. Pluto Press.

Mussa, M., & Dubianskij, M. (2023). "Black Cat in a Dark Room": Examining the Impact of Russia's Wagner Group in the Central African Republic and Mali. *Journal of International Affairs*, 75(2), 209-232.

Newburn, T. (2017) *Criminology* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

NEWS WIRES (2024, April 12). *Russian military instructors, air defence system arrive in Niger amid deepening ties*. France 24.

<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20240412-russian-military-instructors-air-defence-system-arrive-in-niger-amid-deepening-ties> [Accessed- 2024-04-13].

O'Brien, K. (2000). "Private Military Companies in Africa 1990-1998", in Musah, A.-F., & Fayemi, K. (eds), *Mercenaries in Africa*. Pluto Press.

O'Brien, K. (1998) Military Advisory Groups and African Security: Privatised Peacekeeping? *International Peacekeeping* (5:3), pp. 78-105.

Ojewale, O. (2023, August 1). Conflict and organised crime are razing CAR's rainforests. ISS Africa. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/conflict-and-organised-crime-are-razing-cars-rainforests> [Accessed- 2024-05-14].

Perovic, Z. (2021, March 23) What Laws Constrain This Russian Private Military Company? Default. <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/what-laws-constrain-russian-private-military-company> [Accessed- 2024-04-15].

Rampe, W. (2023, May 23). What is Russia's Wagner Group doing in Africa? Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/what-russias-wagner-group-doing-africa> [Accessed- 2024-04-10].

Ruggiero, V. (2007) Privatising International Conflict: War as Corporate Crime. *Social Justice*, 34(3/4 (109-110)), pp. 132-147.

Rotberg, R. I. (2003) Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators, in R. I. Rotberg (Ed.), *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Brookings Institution Press, pp. 1-26.

Serwat, L., Nsaibia, H. & Gurcov, N. (2023, August 2). *Moving Out of the Shadows: Shifts in Wagner Group Operations Around the World*. ACLED.

Seshadri, C. (2023, November 23) *Western Sanctions on Russia and the Global South's Stance*. RUSI. <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/western-sanctions-russia-and-global-souths-stance> [Accessed- 2024-05-12].

Singer, P. W. (2001) Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatised Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security, *International Security*, (26:3), pp. 186-220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3092094>.

Smith, E. (2024, February 12). *Russia's Wagner Group expands into Africa's Sahel with a new brand*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/02/12/russias-wagner-group-expands-into-africas-sahel-with-a-new-brand.html> [Accessed- 2024-05-10].

Spearin, C. (2017) *Private Military and Security Companies and States: Forces divided*, Palgrave MacMillan.

Spearin, C. (2024) Wagner Group-A Tool and Target of Great Power Competition in Africa: Implications for Canada. *International Journal*, 79(1), pp. 111-125.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020241232988>.

Steinhauser, G & Bisserbe, N. (2024, January 9). How France Fumbled Its Africa Ties and Fueled a Geopolitical Crisis. WSJ. <https://www.wsj.com/world/africa/france-macron-africa-sahel-terrorism-27d037ab> [Accessed- 2024-05-15].

Stepanova, E. (2016). Armed conflict, crime and criminal violence. In SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook 2010: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sukhankin, S. (2023, September 6). *Moscow Reconsiders the Wagner Group's Role in Africa*. Jamestown. Eurasia Daily Monitor (20:136). <https://jamestown.org/program/moscow-reconsiders-the-wagner-groups-role-in-africa/> [Accessed- 2024-05-02].

TASS Russian News Agency (2018). TASS. <https://tass.com/> [Accessed- 2024-04-20].

UCDP (2022). Country Profile: Central African Republic. <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/482> [Accessed- 2024-04-18].