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Transnational criminal networks and extremist groups in west Africa: Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram

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The American University in Cairo

Transnational Criminal Networks and Extremist Groups in West Africa:

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram

A Thesis Submitted by

Mustapha Bawa Bwari
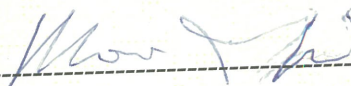
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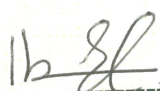
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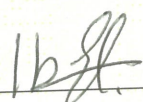
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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Transnational Criminal Networks and Extremist Groups in West Africa:

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram

A Thesis Submitted to

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the degree of Master of Arts

by

Mustapha Bawa Bwari

Under the Supervision of Dr. Marco Pinfari

December, 2015

CHAPTER 1

Introduction.

1.1 Objective:

The overarching focus of this research will be on regionalized conflict and security, specifically in West Africa. For a long time, West Africa has been the hub for transnational organised crime such as human trafficking, arms dealing, drug trafficking and other illegal transborder activities; but it was not until recently that the international community recognized organized crime as a key issue in the region. These activities have inevitably affected the region and have had a negative impact on the international relations between countries in general. The problems that West Africa faces, although mostly internal, have recently become a threat to regional security for reasons that I will identify and critically analyse.

Although Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) has been recognized as a major phenomenon in West Africa, it is important to study why this phenomenon persists and how that perseverance is providing a breeding ground for Islamist extremist groups like Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) operating in Southern Algeria/Northern Mali and the more notorious *Boko Haram* (BH) operating in Northern Nigeria. The blurring of lines between transnational crime and terrorist groups have become more apparent in recent times and is precisely the dynamic between the two that will be explored. Being a West African from Nigeria, the sudden rise of extremist groups in West Africa has become a personal interest of mine and this thesis aims to venture and explore the possible reasons why the region has become a hotspot for extremist activities and why the governments of affected West African states have been unable to contain or rid themselves from these groups. Additionally, the research aims to locate Nigeria's experience in a comparative perspective with Mali.

Figure 1: Map of West Africa

Source: Google Maps.

The countries I chose to focus my research on are Mali and Nigeria. These are the two West African countries that have been overwhelmed lately with terrorist activities: (1) Al Qaeda In the Maghreb (AQIM) and (2) *Boko Haram* in Nigeria (BH). The originality of my research rests on its comparative nature and draws upon information and resources to support my claim that these two groups are negatively affecting the regional stability of West Africa.

1.2 Research Puzzle:

From 2002, West Africa saw a resurgence of Islamist movements cutting across transnational borders from Mali through Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Nigeria. This, however, does not mean that extremist Islamist movements are new to the region; they predate back to post independence period (1960s) and have been part of West African societies. During their infant stage, some of these Islamist Movements were relatively peaceful and confined to preaching their scripts to the local population. Soon however, the military of countries like Nigeria and Mali engaged in violent confrontations with these movements, hence igniting a series of crisis between these movements and the governments of the countries they occupy. Some of these movements like *Boko Haram*

in Nigeria and Al Qaeda in Mali managed to breed extremist groups that have established a stronghold in the region.

Mali and Nigeria are the two main West African countries that have been plagued by extremist activities. These countries are not equal in terms of wealth and natural resources; Nigeria, a major oil exporter, is wealthier than Mali, a landlocked country lacking all but agricultural and pastoral resources and which is ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world.[1] Both countries have a respected military, with resources and infrastructure that has enabled them, as are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to participate in foreign military and peacekeeping missions in other West African countries. Yet, both countries seem incapable of tackling the insurgency they face within their boundaries.

Nigeria saw the founding of the *Maitatsine* sect by Mohammed Marwa in the 1960's, which culminated in a fierce battle between 1980-85[2] when Marwa was killed; the *Maitatsine* ideology challenged the basic tenets of Islam, particularly the legitimacy of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) as the last prophet of Allah. Then came the foundation of 'The Islamic Movement of Nigeria', a Shiite fundamentalist group founded in the 1980's by Mallam Ibrahim El-Zak-Zaky after a group of Muslim students travelled to Iran to acquire training to emulate the 1979 Iranian revolution in Nigeria;[3] they returned with the goal of a regime takeover and creation of an Iranian-style Islamic state headed by El-Zak-Zaky himself. Nigeria saw the emergence of the *Boko Haram* group founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002[4] and which adopted the *Maitatsine* sect's ideological template from the 1960's. *Boko Haram* members became increasingly visible and violent in 2009 when their leader Muhammad Yusuf was killed in police custody;[5] their new and present leader Abubakar Shekau has condemned many (regardless of religious backgrounds) as Infidels (as did Mohammed Marwa).

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[1] Francois Heisbourg, A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy.* 2013.

[2] Roman Loimeier. Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria, *Institute of African Affairs at GIGA.* 2012.

[3] Brenda, Brown Schoonover. A Glimpse at Nigeria's Ongoing Islamic Terrorist Challenges, *American Diplomacy* 2013.

[4] Freedom C. Onuoha, "Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect" *Aljazeera Center for Studies* 2012

[5] Farouk Chothia, "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?" *BBC Africa Service* 2012

In 2007, Abdelmalek Droukdel, the leader of a group called Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat/Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) that was founded in 1998[6], renamed the organization to AQIM to link with Al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden. Droukdel and Bin Laden's views of jihad were compatible; namely, to engage the "far enemy" of Islam in reference to the West and Europe.[7] Bin Laden's sudden death in 2011 weakened that link, and the group focused on operations that sought effectiveness in North Africa and the Sahel.[8] This involved participating in lucrative trade in contraband, kidnapping of Westerners for ransom and engaging in attacks on security forces from the governments of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The GSPC has its origins from another group called the Groupe Islamiste Arme/Armed Islamic Group (GIA), consisting of Algerians who went to Afghanistan and Pakistan to wage armed jihad against the Soviet Union,[9] the GIA was one out of two armed resistance movements Algerian Islamists formed at the wake of a coup d'etat by the Algerian military, the other movement was called the Armee Islamique du Salut/Islamic Salvation Army (AIS).[10] A successful counterterrorism program launched by the Algerian government to infiltrate and repress the GIA led to fractures within the group and caused the leader of the GSPC Hassan Hattab to lose control of the group; under a new leadership, the GSPC designed plans to extend their operations into southern Algeria; their operations engulfed southern Algeria but, eventually, enlarged itself to include remote regions in Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad.[11]

This research analyses the elements that have made the West African region the milieu for terrorist organizations since the beginning of the 21st Century. The research compares Mali and Nigeria and explores the main factors that explain the recrudescence of terrorist activities in these two countries since the early 1920s. I also examine possible reasons why these terrorist organizations are able to operate almost unhindered across borders, to such an extent that their respective states are rendered almost irrelevant.

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[6]Ricardo Rene Laremont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel" *African Security*, 4:4, (2011) 242
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

1.3 Research Question:

What combination of domestic and regional factors best explains the strength of transnational extremist groups in West Africa?

1.4 Hypothesis:

The bolstering of AQIM and recrudescence of _Boko Haram_ in the region is aided to a large extent on the domestic level by corruption and, on the transnational level, by the presence of informal linkages.

Out of the variety of issues facing the region, the key factors that explain this dynamic on the domestic level are political corruption in the government socioeconomic deficits prevalent in both northern Mali and Nigeria, and underfunded/undertrained armies all of which are a consequence of widespread corruption. On the transnational level, the aura of informal linkages in the region - especially between groups - has set an atmosphere where domestic conflicts have the capacity to spill over the border; border security dynamics is another avenue to be explored.

In both countries, the northern parts lag behind in terms of development and are evidently derelict by their central governments; this is associated with high levels of corruption in those governments. Following the implementation of the National Pact in Mali, for example, the town and region of Kidal populated mostly by traditional Tuareg settlements saw an outbreak of an internal power struggle between the traditional leaders and a generation of emerging leaders made up of ex-rebels and drug traffickers.[12] In theory, the National Pact was supposed to integrate Tuareg combatants into the armed forces, demilitarize the north, economically integrate the northern population and provide a detailed special administrative structure for the three northern regions.[13] In reality however, it created a new local state administration and paved the way for informal trade,

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[12] David Gutelius, "Islam in Northern Mali and the War on Terror" _Journal of Contemporary African Studies,_ (2007)
[13] Devon DB, "The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People" _Centre of Global Research on Globalization,_ 2013

narco-trafficking and opportunities for regional Islamic rebels[14] to exploit the internal conflict and tensions to their own advantage.

The National Pact created an atmosphere for corruption to flourish; it enabled some regional 'big men' to gain positions of power and privilege thus, enabling them extract lucrative rents from the State and return rents to Bamako political elites who were allowing such practices to happen.[15] The inability or unwillingness of these central governments to properly police their borders due to limited manpower and a properly funded standing army set the precedence for trans-border crime to occur almost unhindered. Kidal is informally and illicitly connected to the world through Trans-Saharan trade. Trafficking of drugs and people has become increasingly important in terms of cross-border smuggling and offers new economic opportunities.[16] Evidently, corruption coupled with poverty and government neglect will and has manifested into social frustration and the desire for people to engage in lucrative across-border smuggling, creating endless opportunities for trafficking and racketeering. It is this kind of environment that has facilitated criminal activities and violent-extremism in those parts of the countries.

West Africa's notoriety as a major trafficking route helps to facilitate revenue for transnational criminal groups. The porosity of the borders in this context is a consequence of the problematic nature of Africa's colonial heritage making transnational crime endemic and difficult to control. Geographically, the nature of borders in the Sahel region makes it difficult to enforce control over transnational groups, adding to the complexities of the region.

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[14] David Gutelius, "Islam in Northern Mali and the War on Terror" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* (2007)
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

1.5 Methodology:

An analysis of each linkage in Mali and Nigeria will enable this research to draw a comparison between AQIM and *Boko Haram* by showing how the increase in the risk of conflict in one country has a direct correlating effect on another. This analysis is vital to measuring the degree to which conflict in one country can carry a domino effect to another country and eventually, the region.

A historical analysis of the history and development of violence in Mali and Nigeria is fundamental to this research; In order to understand the main driving force behind violent extremist groups, an understanding of their motivation is necessary. Likewise, a historical assessment provides readers with an understanding of the past and present situations.

Some primary sources will be used in the case of Nigeria; however, this research will rely predominantly on secondary sources. They will be used for mainly qualitative research and will include, books, newspaper articles and specialized journals. The primary sources will include, YouTube videos of interviews and speeches from Heads of States and prominent politicians, activists, militant and leaders of extremist organizations from Mali and Nigeria. Furthermore, eyewitness accounts and testimonies of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), so-called 'Run-Away soldiers' and survivors of vicious terrorist attacks will be used in order to maintain an unbiased approach to the research.

The next chapter will bring into perspective the literature review and conceptual framework of the research followed by an overview of Transnational Organized Crime. The research goes on to discuss the interplay between Transnational Organized Crime and extremism. Chapter three focuses on the geopolitics of West Africa, looking in-depth at transnational trafficking activities across the Sahel/Sahara region; this will be followed by a discussion of transnational extremist/rebel groups in Mali and Nigeria. Chapter four is an analysis of the domestic politics of Mali and Nigeria, which will be done in a comparative perspective of both countries. It analyses the selected domestic factors that best explains the bolstering of extremist groups in both countries. Chapter five discusses the informal transnational linkages present in the context of both Mali and Nigeria. The chapter argues that these informal linkages are responsible for cross border extremist

activities. Chapter six is the concluding chapter and also talks briefly about the limitations of the research.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Literature Review:

The literature review will be organized thematically in terms of: 1) Persistent Internal Conflict and Local Insurgencies. 2) Entrenchment of Jihadist Terrorism: embodied by AQIM and *Boko Haram*. 3) Organized Crime: A Global Phenomenon Engulfing West Africa.

2.1.1 Persistent internal conflict and local insurgencies

Mali and Nigeria have a history of internal conflicts stemming mostly from religious and ethnic lines. In Mali, clashes have been reported between the government and Tuareg rebels for decades. According to a report by Aljazeera Centre for Studies, clashes between the two parties predates to 1963 during the reign of Mali's first communist president, Modibo Keita; then in 1990-1996 under former president Moussa Traore, and then again in 2006 and 2012 under the current president Amadou Tomani Toure-[17] Evidently, Mali has a history of conflicts along ethnic lines. An in-depth analysis will show how identity and ethnic minorities pose a threat to the unity and stability of the Sahel.

In Nigeria, the history of internal conflict is significantly different. Due to its military past, Nigeria went through several military coups starting in 1966 and ending in 1999 with the return of democracy in the Fourth Republic. According to B.Salawu, there is a history of ethno-religious conflicts that claimed many lives and property; among those crisis are, Jimeta-Yola religious disturbances in 1984, Zango Kataf crisis in Kaduna State in 1992, Bulumkutu Christian-Muslim riots in 1982, and the ethnic tensions between Tivs and Iunkuns in Plateau State in 2001.[18] A number of regions in Nigeria have become avenues of war since independence characterized by rising ethno-religious crisis. In 2003 however, the Ijaws, who are the predominant indigenous people in the Niger

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[17] Elhadj Ould Brahim, "Conflict in Northern Mali: Internal Facts and Regional Impacts" *ALJAZEERA CENTER FOR STUDIES.* 2012.

[18] B.Salawu, "Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies" *European Journal for Social Sciences.* 2010.

Delta[19] began militia attacks against oil facilities in the Niger Delta leading to a halt in oil production and a military intervention by the government.[20] This led to the formation of The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, the umbrella militant group in the region. Michael Watts in his article "IMPERIAL OIL: The Anatomy od a Nigerian Oil Insurgency" states that, after claiming responsibility over the 2006 and 2007 kidnapping of foreign oil workers and sabotaging oil installations, MEND became the highlight on the international scene.[21] The group managed to disrupt oil supply and temporarily cripple the Nigerian economy.

2.1.2 Entrenchment of jihadist terrorism: Embodied by AQIM and *Boko Haram*

The role of Islamist groups in the development of transnational extremist networks has been studies by various authors. Among them, Abdelkérim Ousman has argued that the potential of terrorism in African Islamic movements in several African countries including Nigeria, Mali, Chad, and Niger "are fashioned by their social and political environment and their local challenges, obstacles, community interests and political agendas... the objectives, strategies, experiences and doctrinal inclinations of their leadership differ largely from one place to another.[22]

[19] Polububo Community Development, "Brief History of The Izon (Ijaw) Tribe In The Niger Delta." 2014.
[20] Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations"* 2007.
[21] Michael Watts, "IMPERIAL OIL: The Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency." *Institute of International Studies, 17.*2008. 2.
[22] Abdelkérim Ousman, "The Potential of Islamist Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 18.1/2(2004): 66.

Figure 2: Map of the Tuareg region.
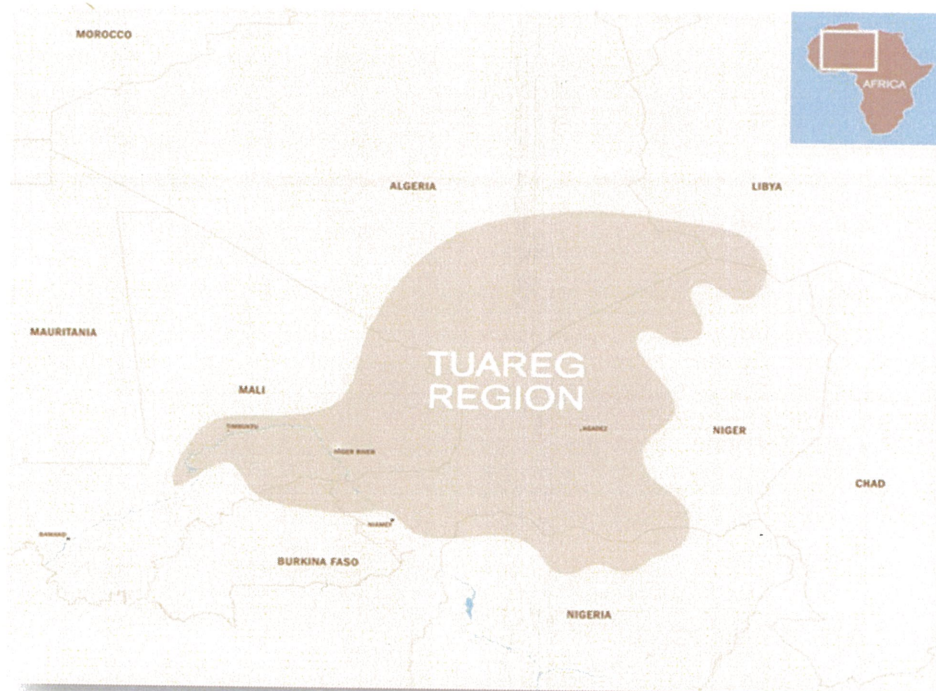
Source: Stephen A. Emerson, "Desert Insurgency: Lessons from the Third Touareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*22:4 (2011) 671.

A very important area of focus is on Mali, and Francois Heisbourg argues that,

> Landlocked Mali is one of the world's poorest countries, ranking 175th on the Human Development Index, framed by artificial colonial-era boundaries and lacking all but agricultural and pastoral resources… Mali's sixteen million inhabitants are overwhelmingly Muslim and are linguistically and ethnically diverse.[23]

Being one of the case studies in this research, Mali has been rigged with internal fighting between the Touareg rebels and the government for decades. Francois Heisbourg supports this argument and states that, "[t]he overthrow of Mali's military government in 1992 was followed by a decade of democratic rule, which has since soured into a combination of kleptocracy and fecklessness in the face of deteriorating regional

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[23] Francois Heisbourg, "A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali" *Global Politics and Strategy* 55:2 (2013) 7.

security."[24] Francois goes on to argue that traditional trans-Saharan smuggling, modern drug-running and the spread of jihadist terrorism spearheaded by militants expelled from Algeria during the country's civil war; these factors combined with an unhappy relationship between an incompetent government and unfulfilled aspirations of the Touareg minority,[25] marked the beginning of Mali's turbulent future with extremist Islamic groups.

The genesis and development of AQIM in northern Mali has been examined and discussed by some authors including Ricardo Rene Laremont. He discussed and examined AQIM's strategic objectives, tactical operations, leadership and financing, as well as the destabilizing effects of Libya's new civil war in the region.[26] In addition, Pal Ahluwalia has argued that "the present crisis in Mali has its origins in a coup that had its roots not only in disgruntled soldiers alarmed at the handling of a crisis in the north, but also a widening gap between the rich and the poor of the country".[27]
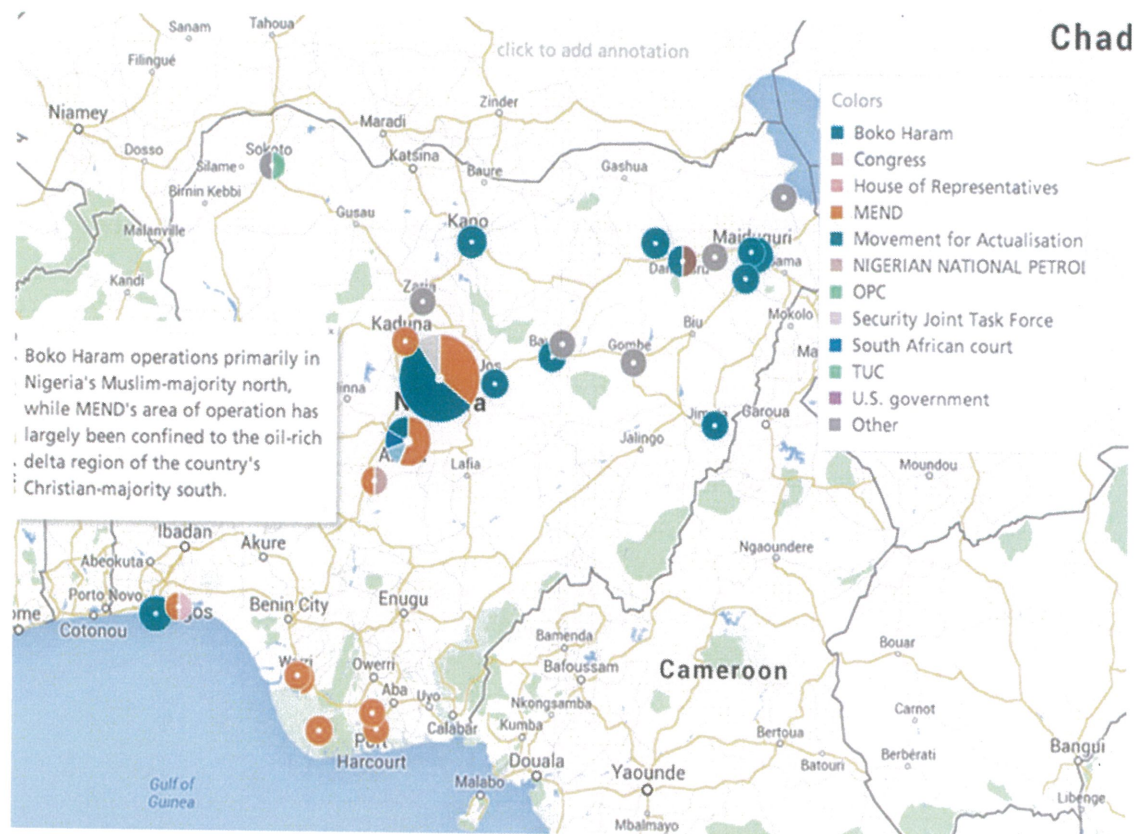
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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ricardo Rene Laremont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel" *African Security,* 4:4, (2011) 242.
[27] Pal Ahluwalia, "The Mali Crisis" *African Identities,* 11:1, (2013) 1.

Figure 3: Map of Nigeria showing *Boko Haram* and MEND activities

Source: https://www.recordedfuture.com/boko-haram-mend/

In Nigeria, a radical Muslim movement known as *Boko Haram* has been terrorizing the northern part of the country. *Boko Haram* became notorious for its militant actions against the army, the police, the government and later, civilians. Roman Loimeier states that "[s]ince 2009, *Boko Haram* has become widely known in Western media for both its militant and ultra-fundamentalist programme: *Boko Haram*, often translated as 'Western education is forbidden'…*Boko Haram* activities have been reported not only in northern Nigeria, but also in neighbouring Chad, Cameroon, Niger and even Mali."[28] He also states "…not all violence was and is linked to *Boko Haram*. It is equally misleading to view *Boko Haram* exclusively as a terror organization. Such a narrow-minded approach is not particularly useful in fathoming the true character of the movement and

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[28] Roman Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria" *Africa Spectrum* 2:3 2012: 138.

understanding why *Boko Haram* has managed to attract considerable popular support in northern Nigeria despite harsh police and army repression."[29]

According to Farouk Chothia, "Nigeria's militant Islamist group *Boko Haram* – which has caused havoc in Africa's most populous country through a wave of bombings – is fighting to overthrow the government and create an Islamic state...*Boko Haram* promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram" or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society."[30]

Though many authors agree on the nature and motive of *Boko Haram*, not all agree on the literal translation of the name of the group. Freedom C. Onuoha emphasized this point with the declaration that "*Boko Haram* does not in any way mean 'Western Education is a sin' as the infidel media continue to portray us. *Boko Haram* actually means 'Western Civilization' is forbidden. The difference is that while the first gives the impression that we are opposed to formal education coming from the West...which is not true, the second affirms our belief in the supremacy of Islamic culture (not education), for culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by Western Education."[31]

Freedom elaborates further on the descent of extremist violence by the group by stating that, in the aftermath of the July 2009 revolt, *Boko Haram* had evolved from a group that waged poorly planned open confrontation to one that uses guerrilla warfare, targeted assassination, and suicide bombings in its violent campaigns thus, making the sect a subject of serious concern.[32]

These violent campaigns managed to destabilize some northern states and have heightened tensions between Muslims and Christians in the country. Andrew Walker notes "Since August 2011, *Boko Haram* has planted bombs almost weekly in public or in churches in Nigeria's northeast...Tactics employed by the government security agencies against *Boko Haram* have been consistently brutal and counterproductive. Their reliance on extrajudicial executions as a tactic in "dealing" with any problem in Nigeria not only

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Farouk Chothia, "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?" *BBC Africa Service* 2012. 1.

[31] Freedom C. Onuoha, "Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect" *Aljazeera Center for Studies* 2012. 3.

[32] Ibid.

created *Boko Haram* as it is known today, but also sustains it and gives it fuel to expand."[33] Measures taken by both governments of Mali and Nigeria to tackle the insurgencies within their borders have to a large extent failed due to their overreliance on excessive force to deal every problem.

2.1.3 Transnational Organized Crime: A global phenomenon engulfing West Africa

Extremism in West Africa is a relatively new and ongoing phenomenon, and this limits the availability of certain resources (especially primary ones) that would be needed for a project like this one. There is also the language barrier that puts a limit on the kind of sources to be used in the case of Mali because it is Francophone country. Despite these limitations, there seems to be a consensus among authors about the rise of Islamic Extremism in the sub-region of West Africa. The use of that region as a smuggling route by organized criminal networks mostly from South America en route to Europe is also widely recognized. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) emphasized that, "West Africa has long been the focus of United Nations attention, but it is only recently that the international community recognized organized crime as a key issue for the region."[34] This recognition was realized mainly through the flow of cocaine. According to the UNODC, the wholesale value of cocaine upon arrival in Europe surpasses the national security budgets of numerous West African countries. Cocaine flow is one out of a number of elements that threaten the regions stability. Other forms of organized crime threaten the region and are both a cause and consequence of weak governance.[35] Many have argued that the use of the West Africa as a smuggling route provides a source of income for many non-state armed groups in the region and this is a nexus that is destabilizing the region.

West Africa still remains one of the worlds most volatile regions with records of low standards of living despite endowment of natural resources and a diverse ethnicity. Antonio Mazzitelli touches upon this by stating that:

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[33] Andrew Walker, "What is Boko Haram" *United Stated Institute for Peace* 2012
[34] UNODC. "Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Analysis," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime* 1-68.(2013).
[35] Ibid.

Thirteen out of fifteen members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are among the bottom thirty countries in the 2006 Human Development Index compiled by the UN Development Programme… wide inequalities in the distribution of wealth, unchecked population growth and the associated rapid, uncontrolled urbanization are all common features across West African Countries.[36]

The frustration and hardship suffered by majority of the population of these countries drives many of those seeking to break away from hardship into criminal networks and gangs. All these factors coupled together "contribute to the increased salience of crime and criminal activities among the options available to individuals seeking to break out of poverty."[37]

Transnational Organized Crime is not a new phenomenon; however, with the wake of globalization, it has taken a new, complex, and deadly dimension.[38] Sawadogo analyses this phenomenon from an African perspective with a focus on the causes and consequences of transnational human trafficking on the domestic and regional security framework in West Africa. Sawadogo ventures on stating that,

> …globalization has ironically increased the power vacuum by empowering criminal networks so much that assaults on human dignity continue to increase proportionally to the growing globalization. Such a claim can be supported by the realist perspective according to which weakening of state power has resulted in the empowering of criminal activities, because with the wake of globalization, political boundaries and national loyalties are no longer as relevant.[39]

To understand Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa, it is important to look back in history and examine the factors responsible for making the region vulnerable to these crimes. The UNODC shares the same opinion: "any analysis of organized crime in the region must take into account the specific historical contest and socio-economic conditions that have given rise to it."[40]

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[36] Antonio L. Mazzitelli, "Transnational Organized Crimes in West Africa: The Additional Challenge". *Royal Institute of International Affairs* 1071-1090 83:(6) 2007
[37] Ibid.
[38] Wilfred Relwende Sawadogo, "The Challenges of Transnational Human Trafficking in West Africa". *African Studies Quarterly* 95-115 13(2012)
[39] Ibid.
[40] UNODC, "Transnational Organized Crime in The West African Region" *United Nations Vienna Office on Drugs and Crime* 9:(2) 2012

West Africa, a region blessed with abundant natural resources still remains plagued by internal conflicts, deadly outbreaks of disease and numerous forms of organized crime. In order to have a better understanding of the challenges in todays West Africa, it is important to assess some threatening challenges and their negative correlation to development, economies and stability of the region. In a study conducted by the OECD, three concurrent factors that threatens the West African region were identified: 1) Persistent internal conflict and local insurgencies; 2) The entrenchment of jihadist terrorism, embodied by AQIM and 3) The spread of organized crime as a global phenomenon that has also embraced West Africa.[41]

Transnational organized crime flourishes in West African at an alarming rate. This phenomenon has been discussed by the President of the United Nations Security Council in his statement during the 6717th meeting of the Security Council, when he stated that "The Security Council expresses concern about the serious threats to international peace and stability in different regions of the world, in particular in West Africa and the Sahel Region, posed by transnational organized crime…these growing international threats…contribute to undermining governance, social and economic development and stability…while threatening to reverse peace building advances in the region." [42] For better comprehension, transnational crimes are criminal activities involving individuals, regimes or organizations that cross two or more countries. The distinctive component is the breach of territorial sovereignty and the connection between source, transit and destination countries in contrast to organized crime, which may be limited within borders.[43] Therefore, organized crime that operates across national borders is termed as transnational organized crime and their syndicates are referred to as transnational criminal organizations.[44]

Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa thrives because of the presence of several factors and conditions such as weak democratic culture and institutions; weak state capacity and capabilities; poorly policed borders; and the absence or ineffective

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[41] OECD, "Global Security Risks and West Africa Development Challenges" *West African Studies,* 2012
[42] Statement by the President of the Security Council: *United Nations Security Council.* 2012. 1
[43] Etannibi E. O. Alemika, Organized and Transnational Crime in West Africa: Analyses of a Global Challenge. *Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung.* 2014. 128.
[44] Ibid.

cooperation among the border security agencies of ECOWAS countries.[45] Certainly, security among ECOWAS is extremely weak and is a clear threat to stability, prosperity and development of these states and as well as their national and regional security. Organized crime to a large extent can be blamed for these conditions because in their capacity, they inflict great harm on people, their society, psychology and economy.

West Africa consists of a multiplicity of cultures and languages with great similarities. Most of the countries are former colonies of Great Britain and France that gained independence in the second half of the twentieth century.[46] These colonial powers still have influence in their former colonies, as evident from the fact that the official languages of ECOWAS are mainly French and English. Numerous West African countries exhibited signs of political instability after several military coups were executed following their independence. The majority of them adopted a one-party system of government often justified by the rulers as the necessary step in ensuring economic development, political stability and social harmony.[47] With the exception of Nigeria, which was the only oil producer in the region at that time, the rise in oil prices in 1973 and 1979 was a major problem for most West African states because "more expensive oil increased their import bills at a stroke."[48] This marked a new era of structural adjustments policies imposed by the international financial institutions namely, the IMF and World Bank on West African countries that went to them to solicit loans to deal with their financial difficulties.[49] SAPs had devastating effects on West Africa because most if not all the states in the region had to succumb to these programs. According to the UNODC, this meant "a rapid dismantling of pretensions to industrialization, huge currency devaluations and a decline in state employment and state spending."[50]

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[45] Ibid.
[46] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in the West African Region, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: 2005. 3
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

2.2 Conceptual Framework:

West Africa has seen a mushrooming of extremist groups and attacks mostly from Mali and Nigeria, two epicentres for extremism in West Africa. Attacks have been targeted at both government institutions and civilians, which impends on individual sovereignty and regional stability of West Africa. The conceptual framework of this thesis will adopt a state-based approach to Civil War by looking into domestic causes for the emergence of criminal transnational groups and consider them alongside a number of transnational ones. This will be done in line with works of Kristian Skrede Gleditsch et al.

Some of the domestic causes considered relate to traditional concepts in the analysis of developing states such as corruption, poverty, geography and their connection to civil unrest. Studies on causes of insurgencies have shown the role of poverty and low income. In the comprehensive study of poverty, Paul Collier has argued that:

> The first link we found was between risk of war and initial level of income. Civil war is much more likely to break out in low-income countries: halve the starting income of the country and you double the risk of civil war... while civil war reduces income, low income indeed heightens the risk of civil war.[51]

The concept of Transnational Regionalized Civil War will is be based on the work of Kristian Skrede Gleditsch; Unlike most existing literature that links civil war primarily to country-specific factors, he argues that, "civil wars display a transnational character, where actors, resources and events cross national boundaries."[52] Gleditsch's "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War" challenges the 'closed polity' approach to the study of civil war. He argues that linkages and transnational factors that exist between states can exert strong influences on the risk of violent civil conflicts or to put it in his own words, "...the risk of civil war is not determined just by a country's internal or domestic characteristics, but differs fundamentally, depending on a country's linkages to

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[51] Collier, Paul. *The Botom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are failing and What Can Be Done about It.* Oxford: (2007). 19

[52] Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War" *Journal of Peace Research* 44;3 (2007)

other states."[53] These linkages can be categorized under economic, political and ethnic dimensions.

The broad framework of transnational civil wars stands behind the idea that conflicts that can be described as ethnic or civil wars are not just domestic conflicts. This idea of domestic conflict is too limited. In the context of West Africa, ethnic or civil wars tend to be a regional rather than a domestic problem due to their ability to spill over into neighbouring states. Transnational Civil War is a 'hybrid' war, the type capable of spreading across state boundaries because of issues ignored by neighbouring states. For the purpose of this research, a hybrid war or conflict will mean a multi-layered subversive effort designed to destabilise a functioning state through clandestine actions targeted at the population in order to polarize the society.[54] Gleditsch highlights some transnational linkages related to civil war and they include I) Transnational Conflict Linkages meaning the "likelihood of Civil war is directly increased by the presence of wars in connected states"[55] and II) Transnational Ethnic Linkages meaning that the same ethnic group in two countries affect their propensity for violent conflict.[56] In addition to border security dynamics, both these linkages are present in the context of Mali and Nigeria; these dynamics will be used in analysing the hybridity of AQIM and the *Boko Haram* conflicts in a regional context.

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Peter, Pindjak. Deterring Hybrid Warfare: a chance for NATO and the EU to work together? *NATO Review Magazine:* N.p. 2014. Nov 18, 2015.

[55] Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Transnational Dimensions of Civil War" *Journal of Peace Research* 44;3 Jan 5 2003.

[56] Ibid.

2.3 Transnational Organized Criminal Networks:

I would like to acknowledge the difficulty in researching "transnational organized crime" and the transnational informal linkages suggested in this research are speculative to an extent. However, I have, to the best of my ability, reconstructed fluxes of licit and illicit goods, smuggling networks and their activities in West Africa.

The United States National Intelligence Council has noted that criminal networks around the world expand the scope of their activities by forming loose alliances with each other and with extremist groups in order to corrupt leaders of failing states, insinuate themselves into troubled banks and businesses and cooperate with insurgent political movements to control substantial geographic areas.[57] This suggested that not only was organized crime operating through a fluid network structure, but that it also involved affiliations through patron-client relationship between criminals and those in positions of power politically and economically[58] that allowed criminals to maximise opportunities and decrease risks. There is a growing recognition among researchers that there is a 'New Order' of organized crime that does not fit the traditional hierarchical structure but rather, consists of loose, temporary networks.[59] Certain characteristics such as the ability to coexist within and outside hierarchies, their pervasiveness and their ability to efficiently facilitate direct market flow of goods, information and knowledge gives them an elusive quality.[60] This in many ways gives networks a liquid-like character in light of their ability to alter their configuration subject to the situation they find themselves in; this capability has been aided mainly by globalization. It is important to discuss some dimensions of networks in order to paint a clearer picture of why criminal find them attractive.

Organized crime, according to Gavril Paraschiv, "is a problem affecting global system and international relations of countries and cooperation in the field of security, and the varying structures and fields of activities of transnational criminal organizations

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[57] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy.* Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 61. .
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy.* Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 65. .

affects the national sovereignty of states."[61] This means that transnational organized crime pose a serious threat to societies and, until recently, this threat seemed to have been downplayed by many governments. For the purpose of this research, an "organized criminal group shall mean a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this convention, in order to obtain , directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefits."[62] The existence of a criminal market for organized crime and "the demand side of this market is responsible for the existence and spread of transnational organized crime."[63] The existence of a criminal market results in organized criminal groups being enthused by profits hence the reason why activities of transnational criminal groups have been increasing at an alarming rate and has spiralled in some cases into a global threat. Paraschiv reiterates this point by stating that "transnational organized crime is a phenomenon that has emerged in different cultures and countries around the world: it is a new category of crime, being a significant global threat.[64] Jennifer M. Smith in her article "An International Hit Job: Prosecuting Organized Crime Acts as Crimes against Humanity" supports this argument by accentuating that, despite domestic and international countermeasures, transnational criminal syndicates still thrive due to their structured nature and economic and political power which has prevented states from effectively combating their activities… this is a major threat to global security and stability.[65]

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[61] Gavril Paraschiv, Conceptualizing Transnational Organized Crime: *Economies, Management, and Financial Markets*. 2013. 175.

[62] UNODC. United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto: 2014. 01 Nov, 2015.

[63] Gavril Paraschiv, Conceptualizing Transnational Organized Crime: *Economies, Management, and Financial Markets*. 2013. 175.

[64] Ibid. .

[65] Jeniffer M. Smith, An International Hit Job: Prosecuting Organized Crime Acts as Crimes against Humanity: *The Georgetown World Journal*. 2009.

Dimensions of Criminal Networks

Networks can be formed and directed by a core of organizers for specific purposes or can develop naturally as a machinery to add efficiency to the performance of a market;[66] this can also be referred to as a "direct network"[67] and a "transaction network"[68] respectively. An example of a direct network is the Columbian cocaine trade in the 1980s and early 1990s that came into existence to transport cocaine to the United States;[69] a direct network can also be part of a larger transaction network while a cited example of a transaction network is the heroin trade from Southeast Asia, whose brokers play a vital role in the processesing and moving of the products until it reaches the retail market.[70]

Networks range in size and scale[71] and move licit and illicit goods across national boundaries whose membership can be open or determined by specific characteristics such as ethnicity.[72] An example of an extensive transnational criminal network revolves around Semeon Mogilevich; based in Hungary, he operated through a company called Magnex YBM in the United States and Canada, engaging in money laundering and stock fraud, and also operated a network of companies in the Bahamas, the British Channel Islands and the Caymans.[73] He is reputed to have close ties with several criminal networks such as the Russian criminals in Israel, the Genovese family in New York, the Solntsevo criminal organization in Moscow and with prostitution activities in Frankfurt;[74] interestingly however, Mogilevich has never been convicted of any crime despite continued allegations about his role. This is an illustration of the possibility of identifying both key individuals and companies through which larger criminal networks operate and shows how criminals advance and use front companies to facilitate their activities. These

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[66] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 69. .

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security." *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1997. 321. .

[72] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 69.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

types of companies are created when opportunities arise and are abandoned when they become targets of law enforcement investigations.[75] Thus, networks can be highly structured and enduring in nature with members coming and going based on particular needs and opportunities.[76]

Networks can be focused narrowly on a single purpose or product or can supply a broader range of illegal products and criminal activities;[77] for example, the typical portfolio of a Mexican and Columbian drug trafficking organization would comprise of drug trafficking businesses and little else, compared to Russian and Chinese criminal organizations whose portfolio contains a range of activities such as drug trafficking, arms and antiquities trafficking, prostitution, extortion and financial fraud.[78] Networks provide criminals with flexibility, diversity and endurance and network structures have become exceptionally predominant in contemporary organized crime around the world and awards them certain characteristics make them extremely difficult to combat.

Characteristics of Criminal Networks

Networks generally have a core and periphery, reflecting asymmetries of power, influence, and status within the network.[79] The core is characterized by dense connections among individuals which creates a high degree of trust and cohesion thus providing the steering mechanism of the network, while the peripheries features a less dense pattern of interaction than the core but in effect, the periphery allows the network to operate at a far greater distance, facilitating more diverse and extensive operations and the capacity for effective intelligence gathering.[80] This is a critical characteristic for criminal networks because it serves as an early warning system that enables them predict and pre-empt any law enforcement initiatives on them hence, allowing them adapt in ways that reduces their exposure.

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security." *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1997. 321.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 69. .

[80] Ibid.

2.4.2.1 Criminal Networks as Defensive Structures

While law enforcement can infiltrate the periphery of a network, infiltrating the core is much more difficult partly because it is dependent on high level of trust based on bonding mechanisms rather than functional utility.[81] Infiltrating the periphery however is not much of a problem because compromised members can easily be discarded and replaced by new recruits. Having said that, networks tend to be very good at protecting themselves. Criminal networks classify knowledge and information, making it difficult for law enforcement to have more than localized effects on their operations.[82]

2.4.2.2 Criminal Networks as Facilitators of Cooperation

Collaboration between different criminal networks is a major feature of organized crime and this has led to the creation of a network of networks that come into existence for specific reasons and operate at a variety of levels. Criminal networks cooperate with each other when it becomes convenient for them without compromising their activities and this can be characterized as a strategic alliance that is mutually beneficial to the various networks involved. These strategic alliances create an atmosphere of co-operation rather than competition with locally established criminal groups, enhancing their ability to avoid law enforcement agencies and giving them access to local distribution channels.[83] These networks develop steady supplier relationships for an assortment of services ranging from transportation, money laundering, and security to contract killings.[84]

2.4.2.3 Criminal Networks as Boundary Spanners

The ability of criminal networks to move across physical legal boundaries is a strategic advantage for them; this ability facilitates business operations in a world where responding to the opportunities and challenges posed by globalization has become

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[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security." *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1997. 328.
[84] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 76. .

imperative;[85] market globalization has created new profit making opportunities for criminal groups.[86] It will not be wrong to suggest at the very least the existence of a harmonious relationship between transnational activities and network structures irrespective of their mode of operation in licit or illicit goods and services. The capacity to cross national borders awards them supply markets with the largest profit margins,[87] and enables them operate in and from countries with the least amount of risks, commit crimes that cross jurisdictions thereby increasing complexity and adapt their behaviour to counter law enforcement initiatives.[88]

2.4 Transnational Organized Crime and Extremism: The Interplay.

Extremist groups and Transnational Organized Crime share organizational and operational characters and sometimes collaborate with each other;[89] this is due to several reasons including political pressures and realities. The pressure from the U.S to block all forms of funding to extremist groups[90] has pushed some groups to seek in-house revenue generation; this has led to the transformation of their operational structure to engage in criminal activities or in some cases, to simply collaborate with organized criminals with expertise in those activities. Globalization and the growth of weak or failing states has exacerbated the trend with striking similarities between both groups includeing: the use extreme violence and reprisal threats, kidnappings, assassinations, and extortion, defiance of the state and Rule of Law. Both are highly adaptable, innovative and resilient—they provided social services.[91]

There are also significant differences between these groups; an organized group for example is not built around religious or ideological principles while an extremist

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Sabrina Adamoli, Andrea Di Nicola, Ernesto U. Savona and Paola Zoffi. Organized Crime Around the World, *European Institute for Crime Prevention Control affiliated with the United Nations*, 30: 1998. 23..,

[87] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security." *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1997. 328.

[88] Phil, Williams. "Transnational Criminal Networks." *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Ed. John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001. 76.

[89] Thomas M. Sanderson. Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring Lines. *SAIS Review*, 2004. 49.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

group like Al Qaeda follows an ideology.[92] Another important example is that criminal groups use terror tactics while criminal activities could be a permanent necessity for extremist groups. This is a significant dynamic to keep in mind because, the same way a "hybrid civil war" may intersect and cross boundaries, "hybrid groups" may adopt each other's tactics making it difficult to distinguish between acts carried out by criminal groups and extremist groups. However, extremist groups are more likely to evolve into a hybrid group since in-house revenue generation is necessary for their survival.

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[92] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

GEOPOLITICS OF WEST AFRICA

3.1 Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa and The Sahel Region

West Africa became plagued by wars and political violence after the fall of the Berlin Wall, creating an avenue for organized crime to flourish under the guise of political struggle. Demonstrating the ways organized crime and wars can be intertwined, ECOWAS peacekeeping forces that were drafted to conflict zones like Sierra Leone during this period were accused of involvement in the trafficking of diamonds and drugs.[93] Violence, unemployment, poverty, social and economic problems coexisted in West Africa with the growth of democracy, and it can be fairly argued that the widespread decline of state services, along with changes in the general political climate and insufficient funding had a demonstrable effect on the police and other law enforcement agencies and on the judicial systems;[94] such a climate can explain the unhindered proliferation of organized crime in the region. Despite an abundance in natural resources, many West African countries have failed in developing their economies, recording some of the lowest standards of living in the world and ranking among the bottom thirty in the 2011 Human Development Index.[95] In West Africa, organized crime is entrenched in the social, economic and political fabric and the region is well known as a source, transit and destination for transnational trafficking. These elements pose a serious threat to the stability and development of the region and although many West African countries have carried out political initiatives to address this phenomenon, it is difficult to say they have produced positive and concrete results.[96]

As already established, there are striking similarities within West African states on patterns of organized crime consisting of the increase in use of the region as a transit hub for international drug trade, and the aforementioned link between armed conflict and organized crime. Reiterating the phenomenon of West Africa as a transit hub for

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[93] Ibid. .

[94] Ibid.

[95] Wilfred Relwende Sawadogo, The Challenges of Transnational Human Trafficking in West Africa. *SAIS Review of International Affairs:* 2004. 95

[96] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment. United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime: 2013. 8

international drug trade, it is significant to this research to mention that foreigners (Non-Africans) also patronize the region as a transit zone for illicit cargo.[97] This is as a result of the failure for various West African countries to provide effective policing and law enforcing services and thereby made the region attractive to international criminal elements as an operating centre. The map below shows the diversity and nature of the activities by organized criminal groups in West Africa as identified by the UNODC as most imperative. This research will focus on the following forms of organized crime in West Africa, namely: arms trafficking, drug trafficking and human trafficking. These activities have created the most concern regionally and internationally; these crimes were selected because they are the order of the day in terms of organized criminal activities in West Africa especially in Mali and Nigeria were extremist groups make use of child soldiers.

Figure 4: Map of West Africa with selected regional trafficking patterns
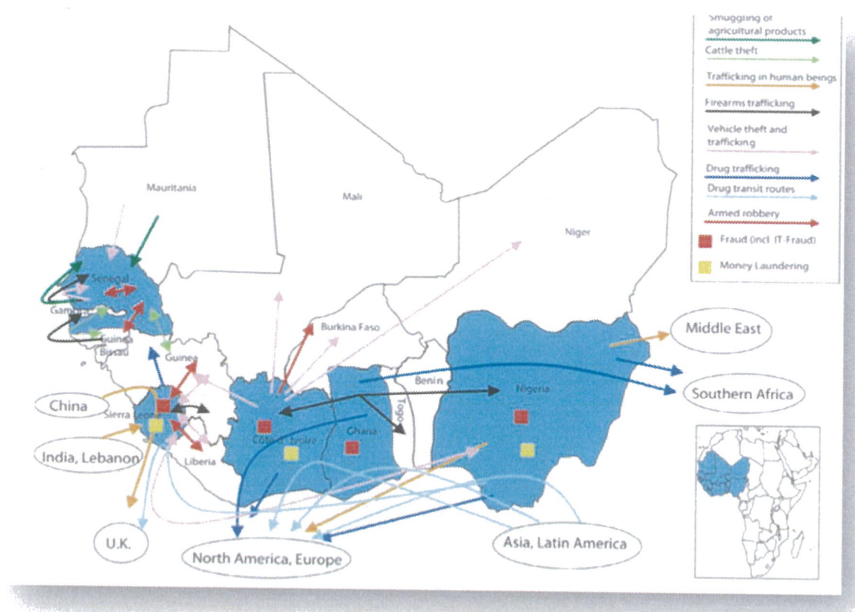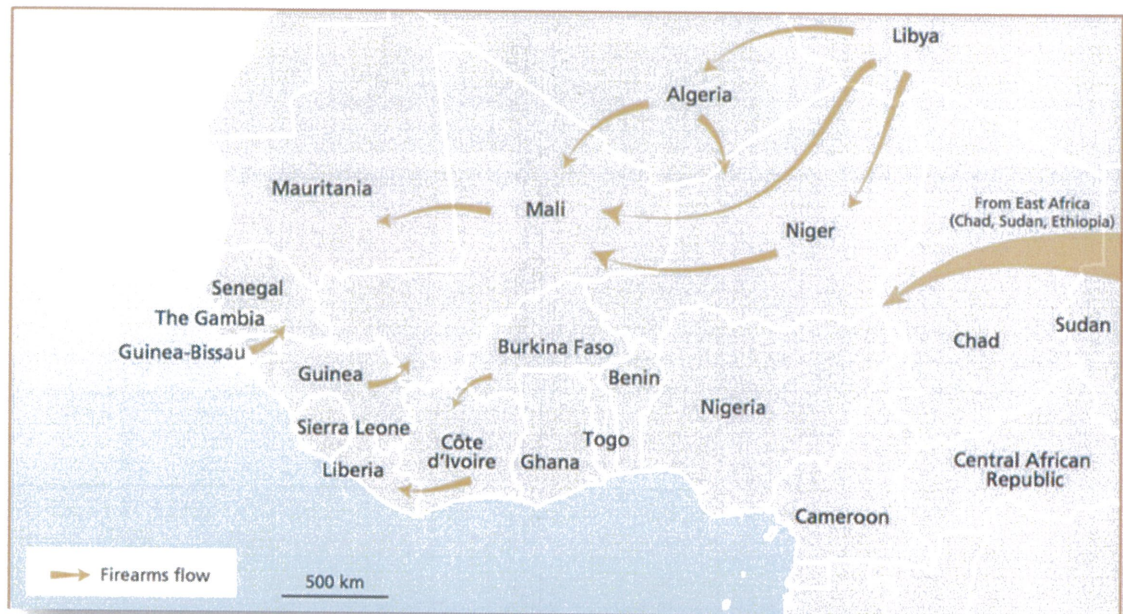

Source: Transnational West African Crimes in the West African Region[98]

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[97] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in the West African Region, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: 2005. 19
[98] Ibid.

Figure 5: Map of West Africa illustrating arms trafficking routes

Source: UNODC, Transnational Organised Crime in West African

3.1.1 Arms Trafficking

With the region's most sophisticated firearms manufacture capacity, Ghana has a booming artisanal industry of firearms manufacture. These firearms are smuggled out to other West African countries making Ghana's artisanal manufacture increasingly transnational.[99] Local smiths are able to produce a number of firearms in small-specialized workshops, which are then exported through middlemen into neighbouring states to be used in violent crimes. On April 1st 2004, a man coming from Benin Republic was arrested in Nigeria by authorities in possession of 16 firearms purchased and in Ghana with the motive of selling them in Onitsha market (the largest market in West Africa) to be used by criminals in Nigeria.[100] This does not mean firearms' trafficking is limited to regional dynamics. After the Cold War, West Africa received tons of

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

armaments from outside the continent.[101] Civil wars in Africa have declined generally but the firearms used during these wars (in the 1990s) are still in circulation and regional supply is still able to satisfy local demand[102] hence, there remains a flourishing market for illicit firearms.

Despite the lack of comprehensive reports on firearms interceptions, dangerous weapons flooding the Gulf of Guinea and in countries like Nigeria and Benin Republic, porous borders have enabled this trade to flourish unchecked.[103] The figures below indicates the magnitude of arms interceptions in Nigeria between 2001 and 2009:

ILLEGAL FIREARMS INTERCEPTED IN NIGERIA (2001-2009)

Year	Number of intercepted arms	Round of Ammunition
2001	1,103	
2003	5,405	
2004		420,281
2005	6,348*	
2006	225**	
2009	41	364

*Destroyed ** Discovered

Source: Ed. Etannini E.O. ALEMIKA, The Impact of Organized Crime in the Governance in West Africa: *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,* 2013. 40

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[101] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:* 2013. 33
[102] Ibid.
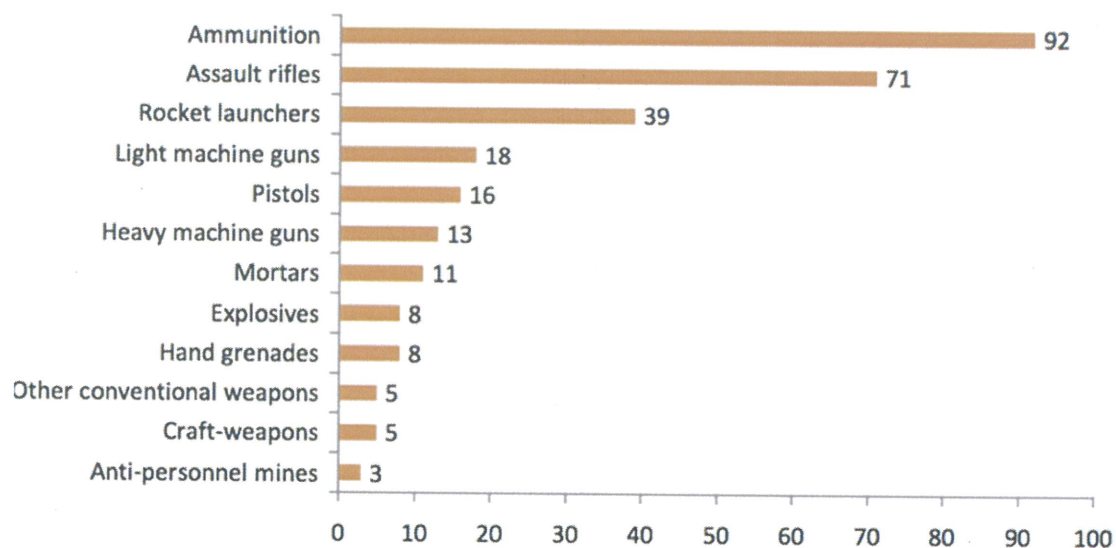[103] Ed. Etannini E.O. ALEMIKA, The Impact of Organized Crime in the Governance in West Africa: *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,* 2013. 40

Figure 6: Graph showing seizures of weapons in West Africa (2008-2011)

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment.

Criminals seem to have the ability to procure their weapons from corrupt elements in the local security forces. Accordingly, the UNODC has stated, "Their primary source of arms appears to be official state stocks, legitimately procured but diverted to the illicit market… the imports are made through mainstream commercial channels, and then directed through corrupt officials or complicit governments to criminals and rebel groups."[104] Analysts have characterized this firearm circulation in Nigeria as a two-way street; weapons change hands from legal to illegal possession (intrastate movement) for example in 2008, a Nigerian army Major and five other soldiers sold 7,000 army guns for 100 million Naira to Niger Delta militants[105] and through illegal cross-border movements of arms (interstate movement).[106] International vessels that bunker oil bring arms and ammunition in exchange for bunkered oil. In July 2010, 13 containers were seized by Nigerian security agents containing assorted arms including mortars, grenades and light ammunition disguised as glass, wood and pallets of stone *en route* to Gaza strip.[107] The

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[104] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:* 2013. 33

[105] Ed. Etannini E.O. ALEMIKA, The Impact of Organized Crime in the Governance in West Africa: *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung,* 2013. 40-41

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

fall of Gaddafi's regime in Libya in 2011 further weakened needs for extra-regional supply; evaluated reports by the U.N indicated that Libya's arsenal, which were looted after the fall of Gaddafi, was both huge and sophisticated.[108] Sold at low prices, these arms could have been bought by any of the rebel or criminal groups in West Africa like the various factions of the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, *Boko Haram* and the Niger Delta militants in Nigeria bringing about further instability and long-term conflicts in the region.

Figure 7: Major seizures of illicit weapons and direction of movement in West Africa, (2008-2011)
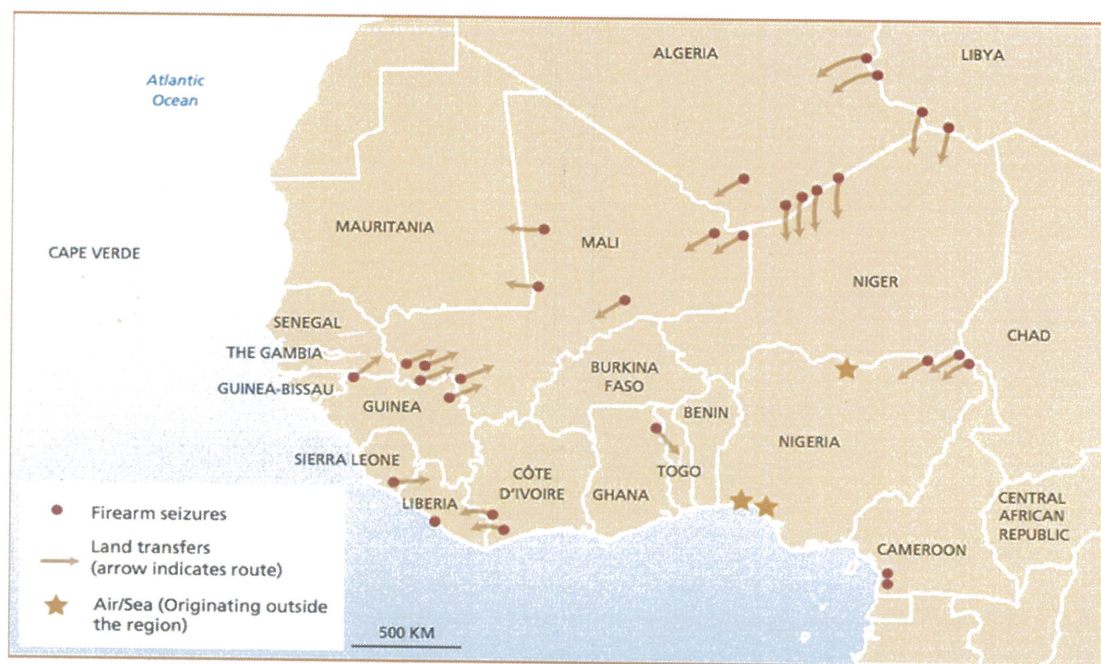
Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

According to the UNODC, there are five main sources of illicit firearms in West Africa, namely: legacy weapons from past conflicts in the region; weapons from recent conflicts in neighbouring regions; weapons sold by or rented from corrupt security officials; weapons transferred from sympathetic governments; and a relatively small

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[108] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:* 2013. 33

number of weapons imported from outside Africa.[109] Because law enforcement seizures are rather sporadic, examining recent seizures is the best way to determine the source, pattern and destination[110] of arms flow in West Africa especially because of the presence of rebel and extremist groups. As the map above illustrates movements and seizures of illicit weapons are executed around conflict prone regions many of which occurred in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. These seizures included weapons from decade-ended conflicts such as the second Liberian civil war and ammunitions from Sierra Leone,[111] weapons from Sudan, and most recently from Libya. The President of Niger has warned about the dissemination of Libyan weapons across the region with escalating seizures southern Algeria transiting through northern Niger and northern Mali.[112] In northern Niger, there are elements like MNJ, FLAA, FLT, secessionist groups that operate in that territory in northern Mali, there are non-state armed groups like AQIM, MNLA and the MUJAO.[113] These kinds of firearms are of primary interest to these groups.
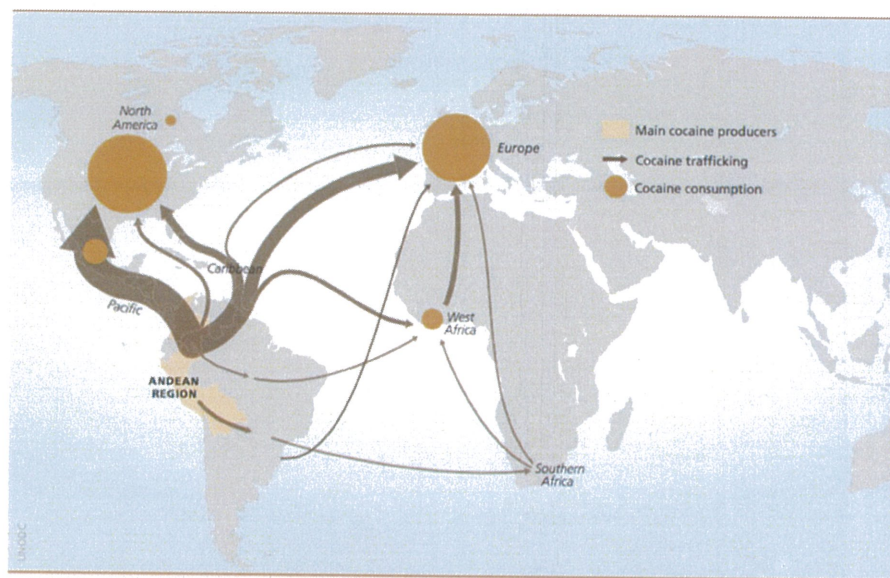
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

Figure 8: Main global cocaine flows 2010

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment
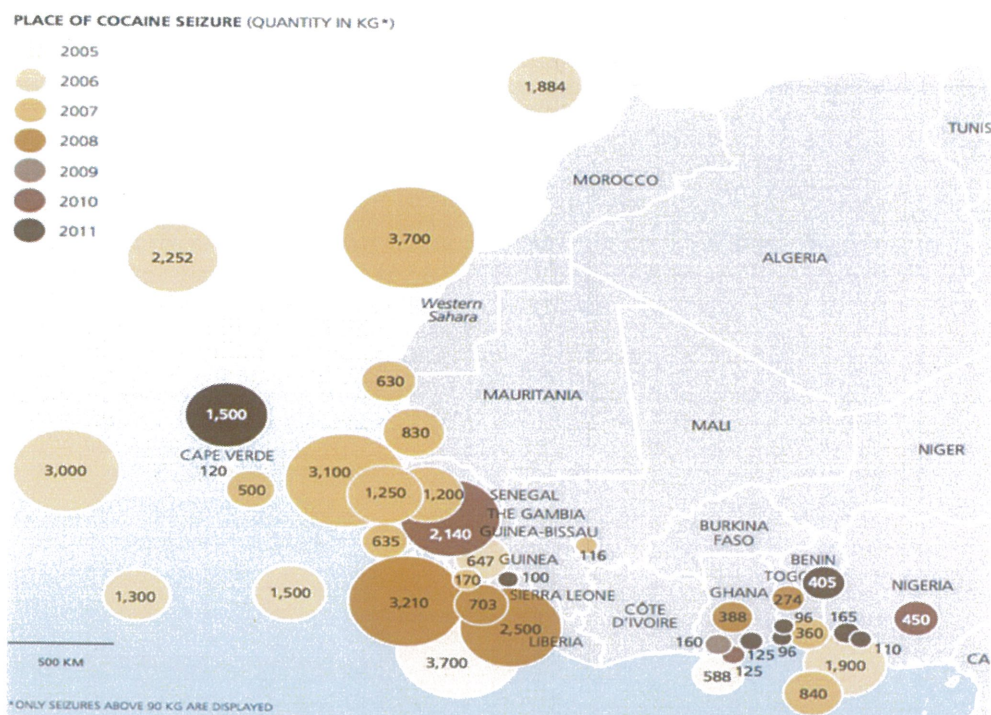
3.1.2 Drug Trafficking

Many have argued that drug trafficking in West Africa dates back to the 1930s and only became a serious problem in the 1980s pioneered by Nigerians, and since Nigeria. Allegations were made by the police forces of Ghana and Sierra Leone that Nigerian criminals looking for new operating hubs introduced drug trafficking to their countries.[114] Since Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, it is fair to say that it will crop-out more criminals than other African countries. Inevitably, however, criminals from other West African countries have joined the drug trade. Cocaine and heroin are the two main transnational contraband flows that have generated much alarm in the region and the international community and are a proliferating form of organized criminal networks in West Africa. There is no proof that cocaine is produced in West Africa and much of the literature on Cocaine trafficking points to South American countries like

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[114] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in the West African Region, *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*: 2005. 21

Colombia, Peru, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia for producing cocaine.[115] Nonetheless, there are common interests between West African and European groups.

Figure 9: Major cocaine seizures in West Africa (2005-2011)

PLACE OF COCAINE SEIZURE (QUANTITY IN KG*)

2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011

500 KM

*ONLY SEIZURES ABOVE 90 KG ARE DISPLAYED

TUNIS
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
Western Sahara
MAURITANIA
MALI
NIGER
CAPE VERDE
SENEGAL
THE GAMBIA
GUINEA-BISSAU
GUINEA
SIERRA LEONE
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
LIBERIA
BURKINA FASO
GHANA
BENIN
TOGO
NIGERIA
CA

1,884
3,700
2,252
630
1,500
830
3,000
120
500
3,100
1,250
1,200
2,140
635
647
116
170
100
1,300
1,500
3,210
703
2,500
160
3,700
388
96
165
360
405
274
450
125
96
110
588
125
840
1,900

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

3.1.2.1 Cocaine

Between 2005 and 2007, thousands of kilograms of cocaine were seized mostly at sea and some on land while hundreds of commercial air couriers were intercepted *en route* to Europe from West Africa. Upon arrival to Europe, the retail value of these drugs will exceed the GDP of some of the countries they transited[116] and because criminal syndicates involved in the trade possess more resources, they represent a threat to governance and stability[117] in the political sphere of these countries and the region. There is also the risk of insurgent and extremists groups such as AQIM and *Boko Haram* using their positions to aid drug trafficking hence, procuring a flourishing source of funds,

[115] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:* 2013. 11
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.

which can then be used to purchase weapons.[118] Unfortunately, this risk has been realized after repeated allegations were made that extremists in the Sahel are procuring funds by trafficking cocaine across regions they control, a phenomenon that contributed to the 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali.[119] In 2008, there were indications that the cocaine trafficking in West Africa had started to decline. According to a UNODC report, in 2007, more than 11 seizures of more than 100kg of cocaine were made and 59% of cocaine couriers detected in the second quarter of 2007 were West Africans. However, in 2009, only a single seizure of 160kg was made and in the third quarter of 2009, no courier from West Africa was detected.[120] There are several possible explanations to the sudden decline such as the disruption of corruption channels that facilitated trafficking due to political turmoil; there is also the increased attention on West Africa by the international community on the flow of drugs. To understand the European market for cocaine and its benefits to traffickers, it is vital to note that "one kilogram of cocaine at wholesale purity of 65% was priced at an average of around US$53,000 in 2010…18 tons would have been worth about US$1.25billion"[121] enough for immense fortification of violent groups and enough for traffickers to induce corruption in West Africa. 18 tons was an estimate of European seizures of pure cocaine transiting Africa in 2010.
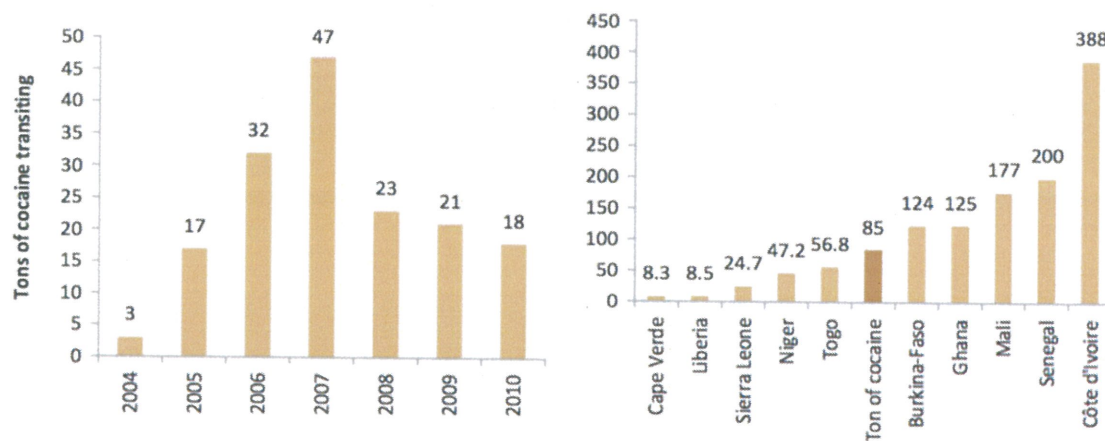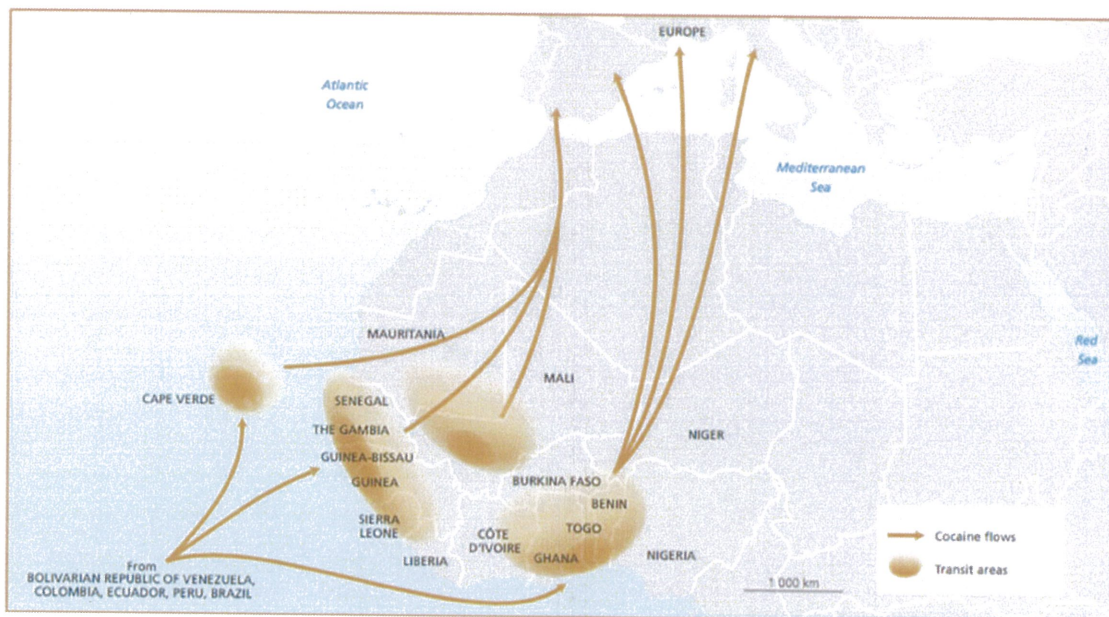
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[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

Figure 10: Tons of pure cocaine transiting West Africa enroute to Europe (left) and National military budgets in 2010 vs value of one tone of pure cocaine in Europe (right).

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

Figure 11: Cocaine flow from Andes to Europe through West Africa

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

Drug flow has persisted despite the fall in seizures and courier detection and large seizures were still occasionally made, including "a two-ton seizure in The Gambia in

2010, 1.5 tons in Cape Verde in 2011, and 1.6 tons in the canary Islands (destined for Benin) in 2012."[122]

ECOWAS allows free movement of goods and services between West African countries. Therefore, drugs that enter from one point can exit from another without going through border control; this however does not explain the drug flow from West Africa to Europe. Bringing into context the revival of old smuggling routes in the Sahara Desert, drugs can move across the Sahara desert by land or air into North Africa and then by sea or air across the Mediterranean.[123] Some literature calls into question the use of the Sahara desert as a smuggling route. At first glance, the terrain is extremely harsh and passing would involve going through politically unstable areas controlled by extremists and insurgents, crossing multiple borders hence, multiple security structures and upon reaching the Mediterranean, crossing into Europe would mean evading tight security.[124] However, history shows that the Sahara desert was navigated for centuries by merchants and that both migrants and contrabands make the journey in high volume each year.[125] Although the largest seizure ever made in Mali was hashish, a few interceptions were made of cocaine moving from Guinea and Burkina Faso of 116kg and 49kg respectively by land into Mali in 2007. [126] This was an indication that the Sahara desert routes are still in use. Although only a few seizures of cocaine were made in North Africa, this has not been attributed to the lack of enforcement capabilities; in 2010, 119 tons of hashish and 73kg of cocaine was seized by Morocco[127] where the authorities are familiar with the market. So if cocaine is advancing to North Africa in high volumes without proper detection, one possible explanation is the existence of a grey area, which is unknown to law enforcement agencies. And yet, similar ratios between hashish and cocaine seizures in other North African countries[128] casts doubts on such claims. There are two possible explanations here, either the law enforcement agencies have been unable to detect the

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[122] Ibid.
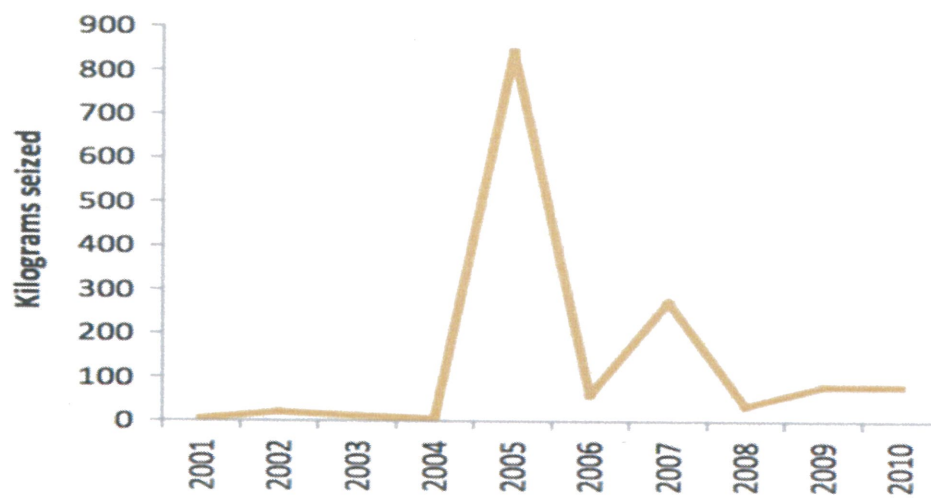[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
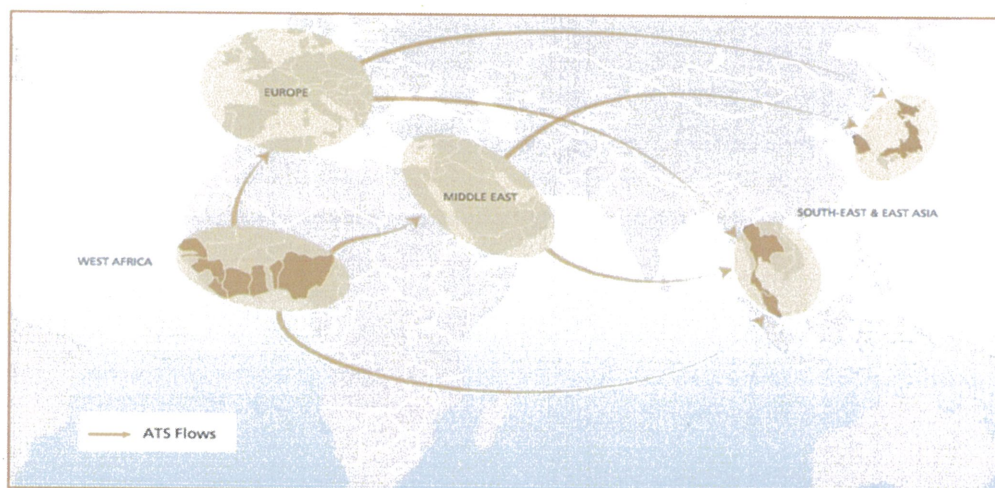[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

movement of cocaine which is unlikely, or that cocaine is smuggled through North Africa but not in large quantities as hashish.

Figure 12: Cocaine seizures in Morocco, Algeria and Egypt.

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

Figure 13: Methamphetamine from West Africa to East Asia.

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment
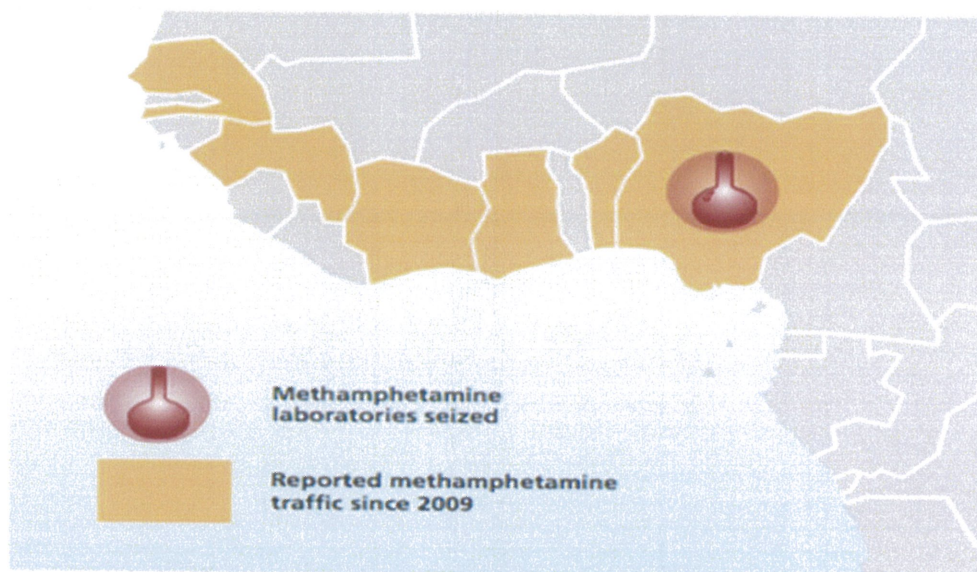
3.1.2.2 Methamphetamine

The decline in patronage of West Africa as a transit hub for trafficking cocaine has caused profits in that market to ebb encouraging traffickers to source out a new stream of income. According to a UNODC report, evidence of large-scale drug production emerged for the first time in West Africa[129]and with low start-up cost and production ability anywhere, it has an immense advantage over plant-based drugs.[130] Drug traffickers from West Africa have acquired the necessary skills, networks and expertise in transporting and distributing drugs; coupled with production capabilities in the region, the drug trade took a new dimension evolving from a transit hub for cocaine from South America to a production centre for methamphetamine. In 2008, large numbers of methamphetamine couriers were detected on flights between West Africa and Asia since - two years prior to the detection of the first production sites;[131] this was a cause of great concern became worrisome because it indicated the establishment of another drug running trade in the region.

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[129] UNODC, Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:* 2013. 19
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.

Figure 14: Methamphetamine in West Africa

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

Ephedrine produced in East and South Asia is exported to West Africa to be converted into methamphetamine and then re-exported back to East Asia[132] mainly by air couriers from West Africa. However, it is still unclear which West African countries host production because departure from any West African country does not necessarily mean that nationals of that country are overseeing operations, since the drug could have been supplied through Nigeria. Although heroin has been detected in other West African countries, the only confirmed production sites were associated with Igbo Nigerians.[133] Large seizures of heroin have also been made in West Africa in shipping containers; in November 2010 and April 2011, 139kg was seized upon entry to Nigeria from Iran and 108kgs was intercepted by Pakistani authorities destined for Benin respectively, another 266kgs was discovered hidden in the warehouse and another 202kgs was seized a week later at Benin destined for Nigeria.[134] In Japan, the street value of a kilogram of methamphetamine is over US$100,000, 10 times the price in Thailand.[135] This has an incentive for drug traffickers in West Africa to increase their activities to such

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

destinations. While trafficking heroin was problematic for West Africa, regional output was considered modest in global terms[136] due to factors such as stiff competition from East Asian drug traffickers, the availability of ephedrine and their geographical location (the extreme distance between Nigeria and Japan)[137] giving them an advantage over West African traffickers. In light of this competition, West African drug traffickers will look to supply the local market and limiting prospects to amplify larger smuggling techniques.[138]

Figure 15: Heroin seizures in West Africa
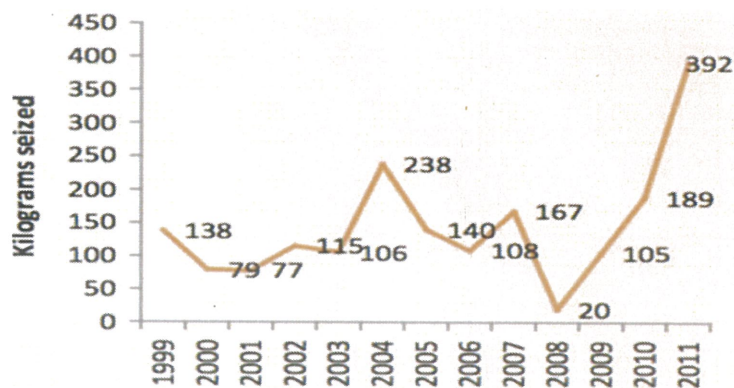
Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

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[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.

Figure 16: Human Smuggling from West Africa to Europe.

Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

3.1.3 Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a prevalent problem in West Africa. In the pursuit for better living, many West Africans try to migrate north towards North Africa and Europe but prefer to use the 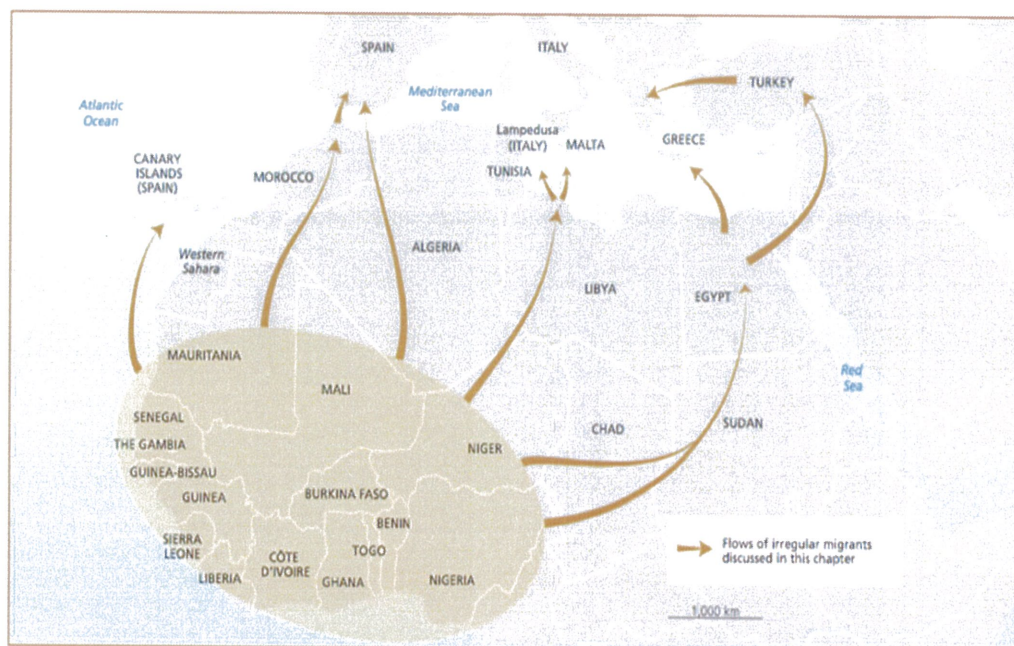illegal means to escape formalities of embassies. In some cases however, West African cultural patterns have played a decisive role [139] for example; ethnic associations pushed some parents in search for better working opportunities and education to entrust their children with extended family members with little to no knowledge about their morality – a practice significantly dominated by Nigerians with operational bases in neighbouring West African countries and South Africa.[140] Many Nigerian girls were recruited and taken to the Middle East and Europe where prostitution was a booming trade.[141] Human trafficking according to the UNODC happens frequently

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[139] Wilfried Relwende Sawadogo, The Challenges of Transnational Human Trafficking in West Africa: *African Studies Quarterly*. 2012. 97
[140] Ed. Etannini E.O. ALEMIKA, The Impact of Organized Crime in the Governance in West Africa: *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, 2013. 41
[141] Ibid.

between the fault lines of two regions with different levels of development [142] - a phenomenon seen between North and South America and between West Africa and Western Europe. Between the fault lines of West Africa and Western Europe lay two main obstacles, the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert but these were considered minor obstacles compared to the determination of migrants in search for better livelihood. These obstacles did not deterred migrants from embarking on the journey (assisted) in search of better pastures. There is a perception in Africa that unlimited opportunities are available in Europe and those seeking to live in better conditions than they are accustomed to seek the assistance of smuggling services to make their journey. About 9% of irregular migrants uncovered in Europe are West Africans but there has been a significant decline in the flow due to economic downturns. [143] However, the fall of Gaddafi's regime in Libya swiftly increased the demand for smugglers. This point was supported at the wake of the Arab Spring in 2011 when established points of entry experienced an increase in migrant arrivals out of which a handful were West Africans. [144]

Figure 17: Region of origin of irregular migrants detected in Europe
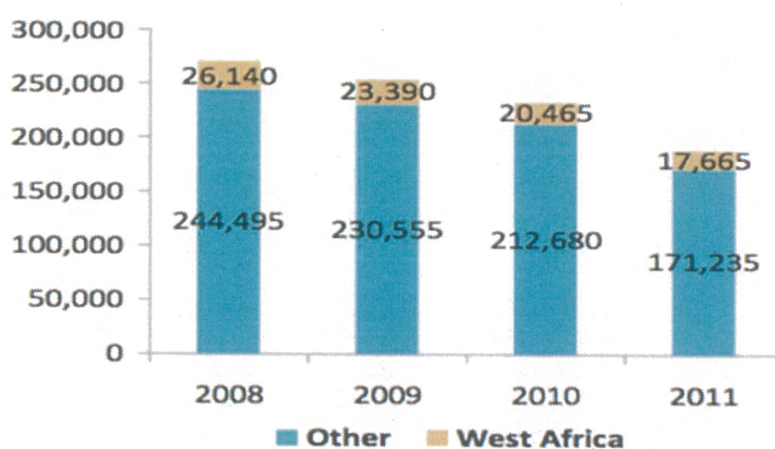
Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

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[142] Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A threat Assessment. *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:* 2013. 25
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.

Human traffickers fed on irregular migration by exploiting migrants who were extremely vulnerable both during their journey and upon arrival to their destination;[145] many of them who were victimised with impunity were unwilling to report abuses to authorities were victimised with impunity. An unknown number of deaths have occurred during these irregular migrations with reports of migrants dying in their hundreds while trying to cross the Mediterranean.[146] History has it on record migrants intentionally turned themselves in to local authorities because that usually meant transportation to major cities in mainland Europe. As European governments became more strict, migrants preferred to avoid detection[147] making it harder to ascertain the number of migrants entering Europe without proper documentation. It is significant to this research to understand why there is such a flow of migrants from West Africa despite the harsh terrain and dangers associated with crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean. According to the UNODC report, irregular migrants move to coastal towns like Saint Louis (Senegal) or Nouadhibou (Mauritania) to access the Canary Islands, while those embarking towards the Mediterranean need to cross the Sahara rallying at key locations such as Gao (Mali) and Agadez (Niger) known as the gateways to the Sahara. Those heading to the Strait of Gibraltar go via Tamanrasset (Algeria) while those heading to the coast of Libya transit through Sebha (Libya) and Dirkou (Niger); to reach Greece, migrants use the north-eastern channel of Nigeria and Chad to Egypt, then proceeding to Greece by sea.[148]

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[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

Figure 18: Irregular and Mixed migration routes (2012)
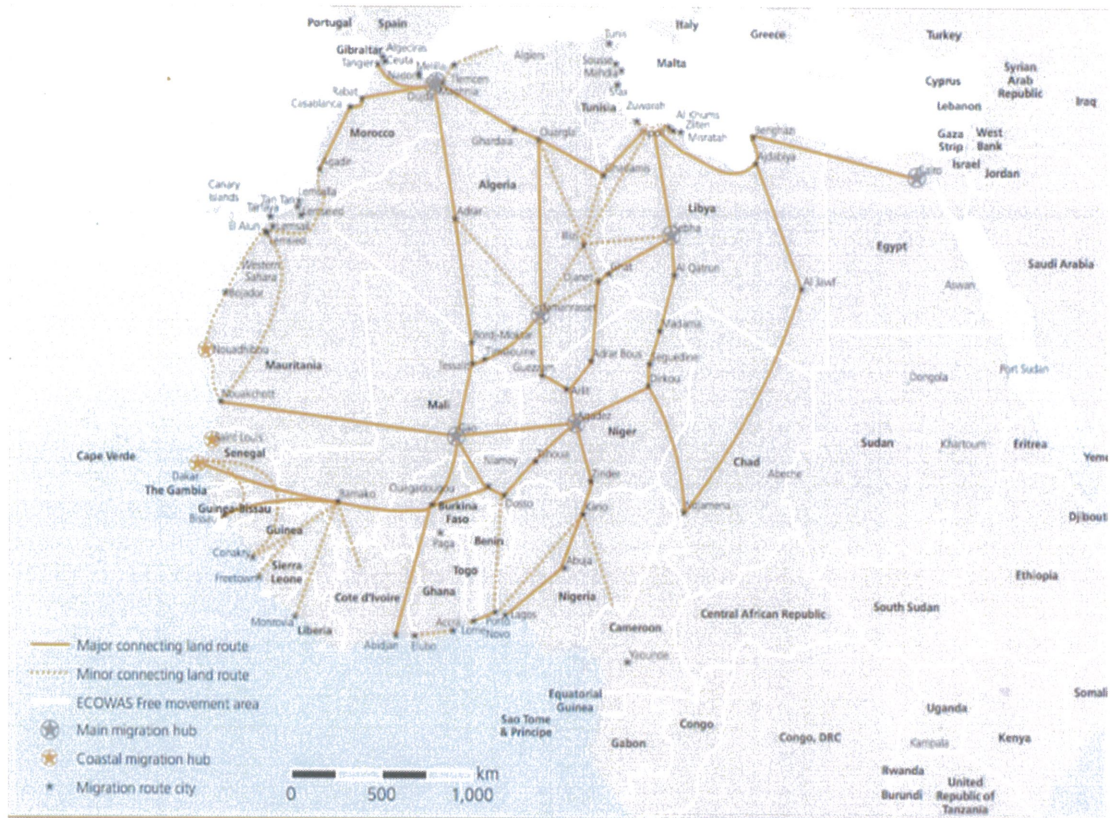
Source: Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment

A fast growing West African population coupled with an uncontrolled urbanization, poor security and economic hardship associated with wide inequalities in wealth distribution make up a recipe of increased human trafficking as an option to break out of poverty.[149] Also about 200,000 to 300,000 children are trafficked yearly for sexual exploitation or forced labour in West Africa.[150]This practise can be attributed to a cultural pattern in West Africa of parents entrusting their children with families to secure good working opportunities and a better education. A sad reality to many young victims trafficked in West Africa was their forceful enrolment as child soldiers in conflict zones like the case of Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire in 2010 and 2002 respectively.[151] Transnational human trafficking in West Africa is also fostered by the porosity and lack

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[149] Wilfried Relwende Sawadogo, The Challenges of Transnational Human Trafficking in West Africa. *African Studies Quarterly:* 2012. 96
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.

of well defined and managed regional borders. Traffickers took advantage of this phenomenon to move victims and migrants in their hundreds across borders without detection and due to the lack of trafficking legislation in many African countries, the reluctance of victims to report their experiences to authorities, and the lack of a data collection structure, a lot of these activities carry on undocumented. According to Wilfried Relwende Sawadogo,

> Transnational crime in the form of trafficking human is primarily caused by limited economic alternatives, disparate socio-economic conditions, feminization of poverty, discrimination against women, shortage of employment and professional opportunities… facilitated by cultural pervasion; lack of accurate information; illiteracy and partial literacy; and the unregulated enticement and movement of human capital via use of the internet.[152]

Transnational human trafficking without doubt has had negative effects on West Africa not only by impeding on the promotion and implementation of good governance, but also as a means for supporting extremist activities. This is because with the illegal flow of people across the region, extremist groups are able to send weapons and fighters transnationally to other groups for training virtually undetected, allowing new recruits to join from all over the region.

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[152] Ibid.

3.2 Transnational Extremist and Rebel Groups in West Africa

Figure 19: Map of the Sahel/Sahara region
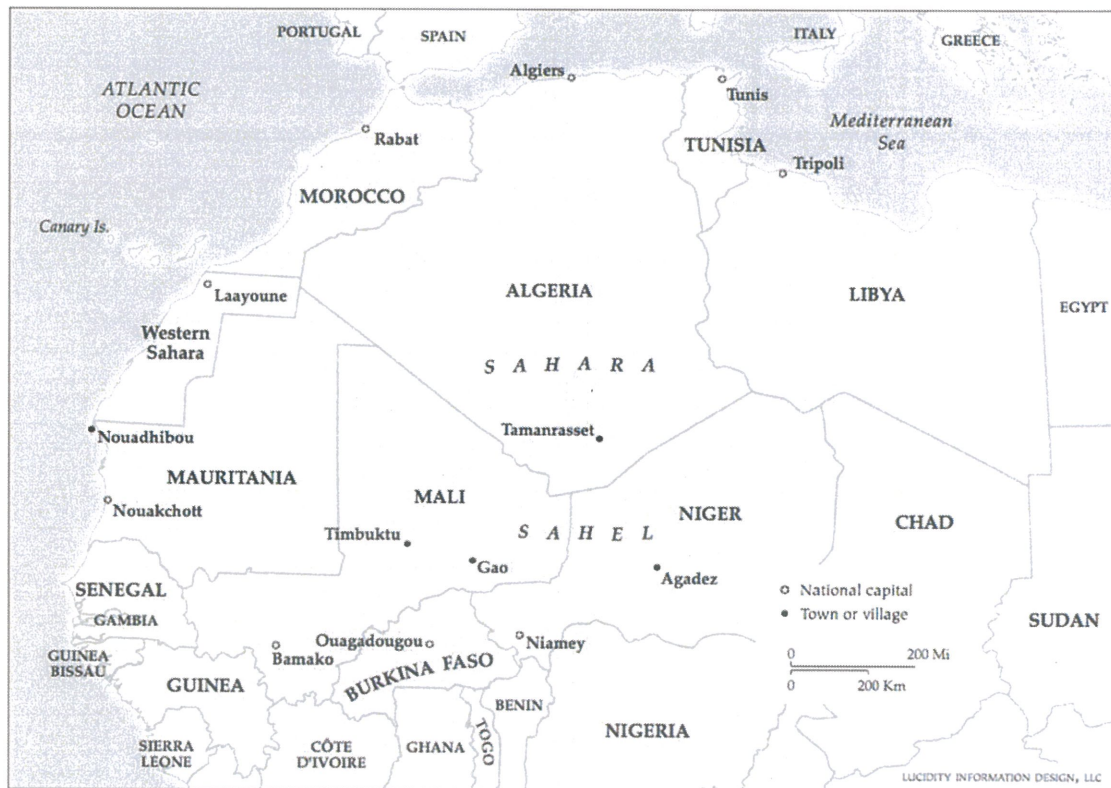
Source: Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region

The inability or failure of Nigeria and Mali's military to combat *Boko Haram* and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb respectively, despite the fact that their militaries have developed reputations for their effectiveness as proven in peacekeeping missions in other African countries. The presidential candidate of the major opposition party in Nigeria 'The All Progressives Party' and a former Nigerian military Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari stated in an interview that, "the misappropriation of resources provided by the government for weapons is the reason why the Nigerian military was unable to defeat *Boko Haram*."[153] Poverty in northern Nigeria is at a record high, coupled with low unemployment and a growing population, giving groups like *Boko Haram* the opportunity to recruit members from rank and file of the very poor and unemployed.

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[153] Muhammadu, Buhari. "General Buhari's Interview with CNN, Amanpour CNN Full Video" *YouTube*, 11 Feb. 2015

Geographic historians such as Professor Ibrahim L. Bashir in his presentation at the Nigerian centenary colloquium in Abuja stated, "The desertification of the Sahara has not only proletarianized the people, but has radicalized them."[154] He acknowledged that desertification of the Sahara is something that is on-going, and that this has affected the people of North-eastern Nigeria in so many ways disposing them of their land, hence making them candidates for insurgency.

3.2.1 Mali:

Mali, a landlocked country ranking 175th on the Human Development Index, is framed by artificial borders and lacking all but pastoral and agricultural resources;[155] it is one of the worlds poorest countries. Most inhabitants of Mali are Muslims and are linguistically and ethnically diverse. French is the official language and is used by less than one-sixth of the population.[156] The northern half of the country is mostly of Berber and Arabic origins who make up about one-tenth of the population.[157]

Historically, there has been a deep divide within ethnic lines between the northern and southern inhabitants of Mali, divided by tribes and clans, the Tuareg have a highly stratified caste system of nobles, freemen and slaves.[158] The Tuareg relied on other groups for agricultural needs and extracted taxes from more settled groups but relationships soured when Sahelian states tried to abolish taxation charging it as extortion.[159] The Tuareg had a superiority complex with other ethnicities viewing West Africans as lesser beings to them. This was best cited in a letter sent to the French government prior to Mali's independence in which they stated, "…We, the white people of the Sahara, will never accept being governed by blacks who used to be our slaves."[160] As a natural response to what was a condescending attitude, other ethnicities reinforced their stereotypes of the Tuareg as lazy, prone to violence, criminal minded, opportunistic,

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[154] T. Ngarka, Public Lecture at the Nigerian centenary colloquium. *Historical Society of Nigeria.* 2014
[155] Francois Heisbourg, A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali, *Global Politics and Strategy.* (2013): 7.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013. 617.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.

ethnically chauvinistic and unpatriotic.[161] Banditry, cigarette, fuel and weapon smuggling is ingrained among the Tuareg as a way of life, earning them an infamous reputation as thugs and thieves; According to an Arab saying, "the scorpion and the Tuareg are the only enemies you meet in the desert."[162] They view borders more as technicalities rather than a particular reality[163] because post colonial boundaries cut across their traditional trade routes; This in fact has led to a series of armed conflict in the Sahel area between security forces and bandits operating in those areas. For many, this is their ultimate source of survival and increased security measures in those areas are likely welcomed with hostility.

The overthrow of the military government in 1992, the revival of trans-Saharan smuggling routes, the spread of Jihadist terrorism by Algerian militants and an unhappy relationship between an incompetent central government and unfulfilled aspirations of the Tuareg[164] was the perfect recipe for disaster in the wake of deteriorating regional security. This marked the beginning of Mali's turbulent future with extremist groups. Unfortunately, economic hardship and drought forced many Tuareg tribes deeper within the region in search of basic survival materials and this dispersion made national borders more difficult to control.

In 2012, cities in northern Mali fell under the control of AQIM and MUJAO (a splinter group of AQIM),[165] something which brought a lot of regional and international focus on the security of the Sahel and Sahara region; it became apparent that the region was prone to become a safe haven for extremist groups and their elements. Simultaneously, organized crime flourished almost unhindered while relationships were created between criminal groups and state officials.[166] To understand the situation in northern Mali and its contribution to the instability of the region, it is necessary to

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[161] Ibid.

[162] Stephen A. Emerson, Desert insurgency: lessons from the third Tuareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies.* 2011.

[163] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013.

[164] Francois Heisbourg, A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali, *Global Politics and Strategy.* 2013. 9

[165] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region, *Carnegie Endowment for international peace.* (2012): 3.

[166] Ibid.

mention that rivalries and the tolerance of criminal activities by political allies and the willingness of Western governments to pay ransoms over kidnapped citizens enabled extremist groups to flourish.[167]Smuggling of Moroccan cannabis resin, cocaine and kidnapping for ransom were some of the activities that produced profits and rapid enrichments;[168] Those profits and enrichments were converted into military might and political influence.

The line between licit and illicit trade in the Sahara are blurred given that most trade consist of licit goods that often relies on informal arrangements between security services and traders,[169] bypassing the official custom checks. This trade thrives on subsidized contraband goods coming from North African countries, while camels were exported from Niger and Mali to Libya and Algeria.[170]Arms, cigarettes and drugs are some of the commodities smuggled through the Sahara[171] and while the conflict in Libya bolstered regional trade of arms with growing demand from Mali since 2012,[172] the conflict in Algeria, northern Niger and Mali in addition to the embargo imposed on Libya turned the Sahara into a major arms trafficking hub and stimulated contraband flow.[173]The conflict in Northern Mali has a direct correlation with the demand of food and petrol from Algeria and this illegal sale of supplies to Mali is to a large extent managed by officials in the Algerian administration and security apparatus.[174]

The cocaine trade from South America and Moroccan cannabis resin rapidly expanded in 2005-2007 due to increased demand in Europe and the Mashrek. Tightened border controls along the Moroccan-Algerian border and in European airports,[175] a variety of overland routes and the lack of proper border control made routes in the Sahel region more appealing to smugglers. Drug smugglers transport cocaine from coastal hubs

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[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security*. 2011. 250.

[172] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region, *Carnegie Endowment for international peace*. (2012): 3.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security*. 2011. 251.

of Guinea or Mauritania overland or with aircrafts to northern Mali and on to Algeria, Morocco and Libya.[176]Cocaine smuggling in the Sahel and Sahara region has drastically declined since early 2011. However, there are reports of unabated flows of Moroccan cannabis resin towards Egypt, Libya and the Arabian Peninsula.[177] This unabated flow of Moroccan cannabis through the Sahel can be attributed to the need to bypass the Algerian-Moroccan borders, which as mentioned earlier had been tightened. To fully understand the scope of these smuggling operations, it is vital to this research to mention the mixture of organized networks involved. The cannabis resin trade is dominated by mixed networks of Moroccan, Mauritanian, Sahrawi, as well as Algerian army officers until it arrives northern Mali, from there, it is run by Malian Arab communities; Sahrawi cannabis resin smugglers with close ties to Polisario have been reported to take cocaine to Morocco on their way back from Mali. From northern Mali, cannabis resin smuggling routes partly overlap cocaine trade, negotiating through northern Niger or southern Algeria towards Libya before the drugs are either exported to Europe via the Balkans or transported to Egypt and Israel.[178]

3.2.1.1 The Tuareg Rebels:

The Tuareg are the inhabitants of northern Mali from as early as the fifth century BCE,[179] where they traded, travelled and conquered throughout the Sahara and eventually converted to Islam after establishing the city of Timbuktu.[180]They are the indigenous people of the Sahara, which is the world's largest desert and are an animal herding people. In a dying world of drought, their lands has an outstanding deposit of natural wealth, holding the largest energy deposits in Africa[181] divided by colonial history between Mali, Algeria, Niger, Libya and Burkina Faso. With a living dream of an independent state in the Sahara, the Tuareg have engaged in a series of rebellions in pursuit of their dream for autonomy, posing a serious threat to five neighbouring

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[176] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region, *Carnegie Endowment for international peace.* (2012): 3.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Devon Gouglas-Bowers, The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People. *Centre for Research on Globalization.* 2013.
[180] Ibid.
[181] *Orphans of the Sahara,Youtube.* Al Jazeera, 09 Jan. 2014. Web. 17 Sept. 2015.

countries and a world super power: France.[182] France colonized Mali when they defeated the Tuareg and established borders and administrative districts to rule the area until its independence in 1960.[183] Former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi[184] contained Tuareg activities by employing them as mercenaries to fight in his wars but in his absence, they were thrown out of Libya and the Tuareg had no choice but to return home with nothing but an abundance of combat experience in warfare. Tuareg mercenaries flooded the streets of Agadez in Niger, many of them homeless and jobless in what seemed like a foreign land because they had lived most of their lives in Libya.[185] Their animals and earnings from Libya was the lifeline for their survival; Libya's wealth enabled them rebuild herds wiped out by decades of drought. In Mali, thousands of Tuareg fighters were also returning to their improvised homeland but unlike the Tuareg in Niger, they brought back with them arms and ammunitions from Gaddafi's arsenal and with those guns, they planned to create their independent state.[186]

3.2.1.1 The First Tuareg Rebellion (1962-65)

The Afellaga rebellion as it came to be known was the Tuareg struggle for autonomy during the independence movements in Africa in the 1960s.[187] At the time, demands were made for a separate state called "Azawad" which was envisioned to include southern Algeria, northern Niger and northern Mali,[188] all Tuareg populated areas. As the independence of Mali drew closer however, the Tuareg aspirations appeared to have lost momentum and support from their populace waned – with their loyalty reserved by their local Tuareg community and they were never able to present a unified political agenda.[189] The first Tuareg rebellion was in 1962[190] after the independence of Mali but it lacked a unified leadership and vision, which is why in many cases, it was

[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Devon Gouglas-Bowers, The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People. *Centre for Research on Globalization.* 2013.
[188] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013. 618. .
[189] Kalifa Keita. Conflict and conflict resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg insurgency in Mali, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 9:3, 2007, 108,
[190] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013. 618. .

seen more as a tribal uprising rather than a struggle for autonomy. At the time, Mali was under the leadership of Modibo Keita[191] whose government came to power after the French left; the government moved swiftly to crush the rebellion by launching a major counteroffensive and restored stability to northern Mali. The Tuareg populated north was put under a repressive military administration[192] whose heavy-handed policies including destruction of Tuareg villages, and reported massacres[193] further alienated those Tuareg who did not support the insurgency. Also the government failed to adhere to their promises of increased economic opportunity and improved local conditions (in part due to budgetary problems).[194] This, coupled with the severe drought from 1968 to 1974[195] disrupted Tuareg livelihood and dissatisfaction. Their grievances were left unaddressed hence, cultivating an atmosphere for another rebellion in the near future; as for the Malian government, they had won the battle but had failed to win the war.

3.2.1.2 The Second Tuareg Rebellion (1990-95)

Unrest between the government and the Tuareg broke out on June 27, 1990[196] sparked by old unaddressed grievances. The Tuareg remained under the occupation of Malian forces decades after the first rebellion; Resentments were fuelled by continued dissatisfaction with the government, exclusion from political power and harsh repression.[197] Although the second rebellion was relatively short-lived, many Tuareg believed the Malian government had deliberately refused to render them with assistance in order to force them to emigrate Mali.[198] The droughts disrupted Tuareg social structures forcing younger Tuareg to split from the elders into new areas mostly within the North African state of Libya in search for economic gains. A number of Tuareg found

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[191] Ibid.

[192] Kalifa Keita. Conflict and conflict resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg insurgency in Mali, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 9:3, 2007, 109,

[193] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 2013. 618.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Kalifa Keita. Conflict and conflict resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg insurgency in Mali, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 9:3, 2007, 110,

[196] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 2013. 618. .

[197] Devon Gouglas-Bowers, The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People. *Centre for Research on Globalization*. 2013.

[198] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 2013.

jobs in the oil industry in Libya while many joined the Libyan Islamic Legion or the regular Libyan forces;[199] This equipped them with training and organizational combat skills, which was their foundation for establishing an insurgent movement. It is important to mention that the goal of the legion was to further Gaddafi's territorial ambitions in the interiors of Africa and the cause of Arab supremacy.[200] In 1985, world oil prices declined and Libya's economic hardship began, bringing about the end of the legion because Gaddafi could not afford to train and support his fighters.[201] Many of the Tuareg members were forced to return to Mali with nothing but some weapons, combat experience and an exported philosophy of radical Islam.

Distrust and fear of the Tuareg towards their non-Tuareg neighbour grew due to old grievances rooted in Tuareg conviction that the Malian government was still hostile towards them as displayed during the first rebellions' coercive counterinsurgency campaign.[202] The 1990 rebellion was led by four major groups and several smaller ones but although they lacked a unified movement and strategic vision, they were reported to be more combat effective;[203] They inflicted significant damage and casualties on the Malian forces sent to fight them. Battles during the rebellion remained fierce until an Algeria mediated cease-fire was brokered between Malian forces and the two major Tuareg factions—The Azaouad Popular Movement and the Arabic Islamic Front of Azawad, leading to the Accord Tamaanra set of 6 January 1991.[204] As part of the conditions of the accord, the Malian government agreed to the removal of some military bases in northern Mali, the naming of a formal peace commission and the establishment of a temporary security force consisting of both Malian military and rebels to provide garrison for the north.[205] It is important to take note of two points here—first, that not all Tuareg factions signed the Accord and second, that the introduction of the Arabic Islamic

[199] Devon Gouglas-Bowers, The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People. *Centre for Research on Globalization.* 2013.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Kalifa Keita. Conflict and conflict resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg insurgency in Mali, *Small Wars & Insurgencies,* 9:3, 2007, 111,
[203] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.

Front of Azawad to the rebellion constituted the introduction of radical Islam to the Tuareg fight for independence.[206]

In 1992, the National Pact was finalized and it was aimed at integrating a number of Tuareg into the Malian army and public service,[207] enabling confidence building between the army and the Tuareg communities. Despite this agreement, some Tuareg groups continued fighting; by 1996, hostilities stopped but integration of the Tuareg into the political, social and economic systems remained weak.[208] The peace agreement of 1996 cut off some cities such as Timbuktu, Goa and Kidal from the rest of the country and the desert saw a desert bloom in local Muslim grassroots self-help organizations and schools across Mali, seeded and actively supported by Middle Eastern interest groups. Some focused on needed economic development within a specific Islamic structure. Others including the Saudi Da'wa and Pakistani Da'wa al-Tabligh came with the sole purpose of spreading particular interpretations of Islam to counter what they saw as an African bastardisation of religion.[209]

3.2.1.3 The Third Tuareg Rebellion (2007-09)

Fighting between the Malian government and Tuareg rebels flared up again in 2006 when about sixty former Tuareg rebels deserted the Malian army under the leadership of Lt. Col. Hassan ag Fagaga and began launching attacks on army outposts in northern Mali to seize arms and supplies.[210] Mistrust brewed within rank and file of Malian army, with Tuareg officers and troops within the unified armed forces complaining primarily of discrimination against the Tuareg within the Malian military.[211] The Tuareg deserters regrouped at their old stronghold in the Tigharghar Mountains of

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[206] Devon Gouglas-Bowers, The Crisis in Mali: A Historical Perspective on the Tuareg People. *Centre for Research on Globalization.* 2013.

[207] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Stephen A. Emerson, Desert insurgency: lessons from the third Tuareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies.* 2011. 673

[211] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013.

the Kidal region[212] but lessons from the second Tuareg rebellion forced the Malian president to seek a diplomatic resolution to this crisis. In July of 2006, an Algerian-brokered peace deal called Democratic Alliance for Change (ADC) or *Alliance democratique pour le changement* addressing Tuareg concerns on economic development and local empowerment was reached and signed in February 2007.[213] Like in the second rebellion, a faction of Tuareg fighters called the Alliance of Niger-Mali Tuareg or ATNM broke away under the command of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga[214] and began launching attacks on government positions, supplies and kidnapping of soldiers. As fighting in Mali gained momentum, a Nigerien Tuareg group called the "*Mouvement des Nigerien pour la Justice* (Niger Movement for Justice or MNJ in French)"[215] also launched attacks on government positions sighting the governments' inability to address Tuareg socio-economic grievances. An MNJ representative said "The movement was created because nothing had been done by the government. There is no work, no schools, not even drinking water in all Niger. It's terrible, it's a genocide, and the government is corrupt..."[216] By the end of 2007, the revolts had gained regional momentum and experts like Jeremy Keenan warned of "the threat of a wider almost trans-Saharan conflagration of the rebellion."[217] To reinforce this point, MNJ possessed and used some weapons seized by the ATNM or ADC from raids on Malian military arms stock; this is significant because it signalled cross-border cooperation between the groups.[218] On October 6, 2009, a final peace accord spearheaded by Libya was reached,[219] bringing an end to hostilities.

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[212] Stephen A. Emerson, Desert insurgency: lessons from the third Tuareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*. 2011. 673

[213] Ibid.

[214] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 2013. 621

[215] Stephen A. Emerson, Desert insurgency: lessons from the third Tuareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*. 2011. 674

[216] Ibid.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 2013. 621

[219] Ibid.

3.2.1.4 The Fourth Tuareg Rebellion (2012)

Intense fighting between Malian forces and Tuareg fighters was reignited in the beginning of 2012 after Tuareg fighters launched their war for independence.[220] Their aim was to separate from Mali and create an autonomous state of Azawad in the Sahara, with a goal of ruling their land while securing and using its resources to the benefit of their people. The genesis of the 2012 rebellion laid in a coup staged by disgruntled soldiers from the south in protest of the Presidents' handling of the rebellion in the north coupled with widening gap between the rich and the poor.[221] Within hours of the coup, the officers seized power away from President Amadou Toumani Toure in Bamako[222] while northern Mali fell to the Tuareg rebels and AQIM. This sent a panic wave to regional and international communities because of "the strong Islamist linkages of the rebels in the north with Al-Qaeda."[223] Within Mali however, locals were out on the streets celebrating the coup - clearly discontent with the toppled government. According to Captain Sanogo who was the Malian coup leader, "…I saved the country, you can feel it in Malian eyes how I saved this country"[224] but in the north, the entire region had fallen to Tuareg rebels and Al-Qaeda elements operating within it.[225]

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[220] *Orphans of the Sahara. Youtube*. Al Jazeera, 09 Jan. 2014. Web. 17 Sept. 2015.
[221] Paul Ahluwaia, The Mali Crisis, *African Identities*. 2013. 1
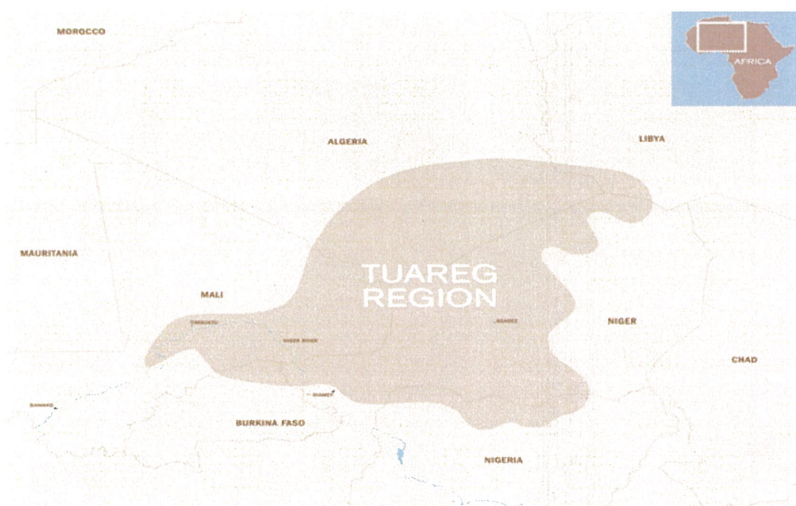[222] Military, Tuareg-Mali-2012, *Global Security*. Oct 2015.
[223] Paul Ahluwaia, The Mali Crisis, *African Identities*. 2013. 1.
[224] *Orphans of the Sahara. Youtube*. Al Jazeera, 09 Jan. 2014. Web. 17 Sept. 2015.
[225] Ibid.

Figure 20: Tuareg Inhabitation in the Sahel/Sahara region

Source: Stephen A. Emerson, "Desert Insurgency: Lessons from the Third Touareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22:4 (2011) 671.

The non-sectarian MNLA, which was the conventional Tuareg political organization was formed by merging two movements—the *Mouvement national de l'Azawad* and the *Mouvement du Nord Mali*[226]--had joined forces with jihadist groups. The most severe interpretation of Sharia law was enforced in areas under their control and with a flush of money from ransom payments and contraband smuggling, the jihadists contemplated expanding their activities with groups from the region like the notorious *Boko Haram* based in Nigeria.[227] Military posts and barracks in the north were abandoned by the soldiers who fled leaving behind a cache of weapons at their enemies disposal; But despite MNLA's claim of using weapons captured from the Malian army, photos show crates of weapons in MNLA stocks with Libyan government markings.[228] Al-Qaeda took over Timbuktu while Tuareg rebels took over Gao, which is the largest city in northern Mali putting an area larger than France under Tuareg control: They named it Azawad and made Gao its capital. [229]Tuareg rebels continued to overrun and capture positions in the north raising their flags to signal their independent Sahelian state

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[226] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 2013. 621.

[227] Francois Heisbourg, A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali, *Global Politics & Strategy*. 2013. 9

[228] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. (2013): 622.

[229] Ibid.

of Azawad. With a breakdown of law and order, looting and chaos became the order of the day; The Tuareg had no idea how to secure peace and stability in the society. The Tuareg collaborated with militant Islamists as a temporary measure to secure their objective but discretely, they resented the Salafist conception of Sharia ban on soccer, smoking and unveiled women.[230] Local Tuareg residents also disliked the idea of being governed by what they considered outsiders or even being told how to practice their faith. But, because of shared common grievances and hatred for the government, some people opted to join Tuareg Islamist factions.

The French-led Malian liberation force comprising of the army and forces from ECOWAS sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council in December 2012[231] changed the security dynamics in Mali. The French intervention code named "Operation Serval"[232] signalled not only the broader implications of the Mali crisis on regional stability of West Africa but also, but also sought to protect French national interest of uranium mining[233] in Northern Niger; The mining area under the self-declared state of Azawad. A prediction of how northern Mali will be is almost impossible and although relative stability had been restored, the crisis has contributed to major security problems regionally and would require major international attention.

3.2.1.2 Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

AQIM is a product of two Algerian groups namely, the *Groupe Islamiste Arme* (GIA) and the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat* (GSPC)[234] both active during the Algerian Civil War. The GIA was made up of Algerian jihadists who fought the Soviets in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[235] Upon their return, the group formed the GIA to challenge Algeria's military after it nullified the parliamentary election.[236] They also

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[230] Lt Col Rudolph Atallah, The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup. Web. 17 Sept. 2015.
[231] Paul Ahluwaia, The Mali Crisis, *African Identities.* (2013): 1.
[232] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* (2013): 629.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security.* 2011. 242.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.

targeted Western and French citizens in Algeria and sometimes in France[237] because of France's support of theAlgerian military. The military action was triggered when the Islamist party *Front Islamique du Salut* won 188 seats in the parliament[238] and emerged victorious; Faced with the coup, the Islamists formed two armed resistance movements—the *Armee Islamique du Salut* (AIS) and the GIA.[239] The AIS however accepted an Amnesty from the government in exchange for putting down their arms but the GIA carried on with their resistance targeting the Algerian police, military, civilians and foreign workers.[240] This strategy of attacking civilians caused friction within the GIA because not all members agreed with the strategy and eventually those aggrieved members broke away from the GIA to form the GSPC founded in September 1998.[241]

AQIM have three tactical aims: 1) the overthrow of the Algerian government, 2) the establishment of a safe haven among Tuareg tribes in the entire Sahel/Sahara region to gain refuge and encourage Tuareg rebellion against central states, and 3) the targeting of specific European states through planned bombings by its affiliate members in those countries.[242] Though the January 2012 rebellion exhibited all the trademarks of a genuine Tuareg rebellion, it was "usurped by the jihadists…due to their financial and military strength…as well as rivalries between local warlords…"[243] The MNLA sparked the rebellion and groups like Ansar al-Din led by ag Ghali (a prominent Tuareg leader, a rival of the MNLA and a veteran of the 1990s rebellion) and al-Ansar brigades, an offshoot of AQIM[244]both of which are extremist groups, fought together with the MNLA. However, after the defeat of the Malian army in the north, the three groups mutually turned against the MNLA by side-lining the group and dividing the north amongst themselves.[245] The

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[237] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 53.

[238] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security.* 2011. 242.

[239] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 53.

[240] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security.* 2011. 242.

[241] Ibid.

[242] Ibid.

[243] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 78.

[244] Ibid.

[245] Ibid.

MNLA voiced their discontent and opposition to AQIM and its offshoots referring to them as "narco terrorist groups"[246] probably because of the groups' deep involvement in drug trafficking across the Sahel/Sahara. This point was reiterated in a MNLA press release on 15 July 2012, in which they said the MNLA refused to respond to constant provocations by AQIM, Ansar Eddine and MUJAO that parasitized their legitimate struggle visibly with a mission to divert Tuareg conquest for autonomy.[247] From their established safe haven in northern Mali, AQIM and its offshoots led and carried out two assaults on targets in southern Algeria in 2012.[248] This takeover of northern Mali knotted regional extremist groups and local interest.[249]

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[246] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013. 622.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 78.
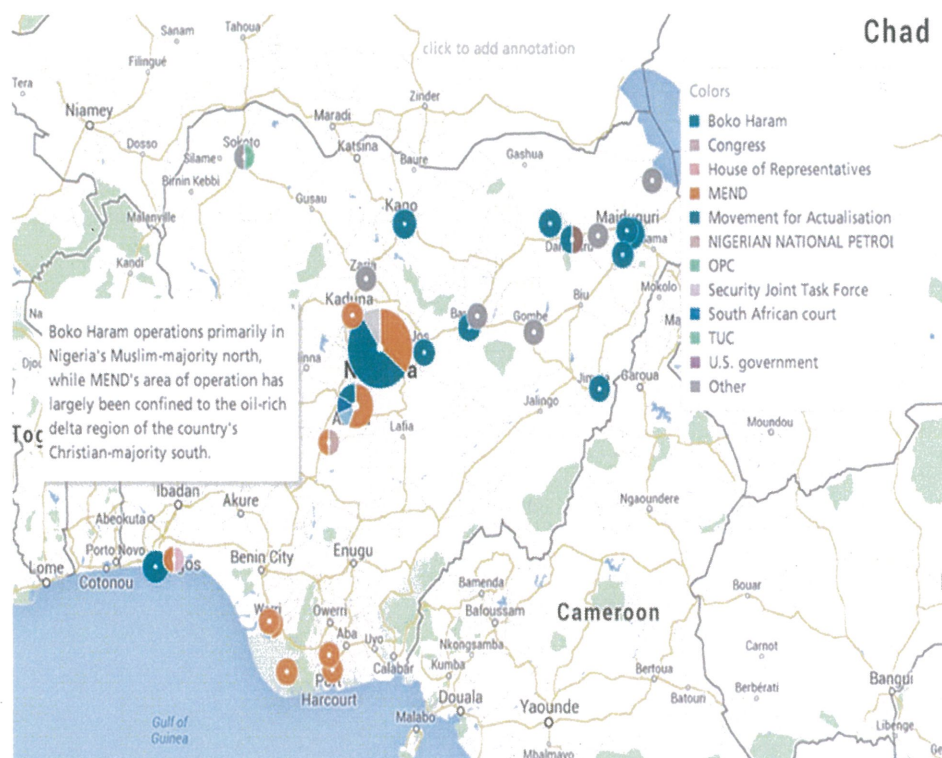[249] Ibid.

Figure 20: *Boko Haram* and MEND Activities

Source: https://www.recordedfuture.com/boko-haram-mend/

3.2.2 Nigeria:

With a population of over 180 million and over five hundred indigenous languages,[250] Nigeria is the most populated African nation and is the economic hub in the Gulf of Guinea;[251] it is rich in oil and natural gas and holds massive productive agricultural lands.[252] Its borders with Cameroon, Chad and the Republic of Niger to the northeast[253] has proven difficult to secure, often times used by criminals to facilitate cross-border crimes.[254] Nigeria is fractured along political, ethnical, and religious

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[250] "Nigeria." *CIA World Factbook*. N.p, Oct. 20 2015, Oct. 25 2015.
[251] Etannibi E. O. Alemika. Organized and Transnational Crime in West Africa: Analyses of a Global Challenge. *Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung*. 35, 2014. .
[252] Clarence J. Bouchat. The Causes of Instability in Nigeria and Implications for the United States, *Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press:* Aug 2013. 1.
[253] Etannibi E. O. Alemika. Organized and Transnational Crime in West Africa: Analyses of a Global Challenge. *Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung*. 35, 2014. .
[254] Ibid.

lines[255] mainly between the Muslim north and Christian south. Until the transition to democracy in 1999, northern Muslim generals ruled Nigeria's central government.[256] From 1999, the country was led by President Olusegun Obasanjo (a southerner) until 2007-2010[257] when former President Umaru Yar'Adua (a northerner) took over but died in power. The north felt marginalized and disadvantaged economically; the poverty rate in the north is considerably higher than the south.[258] Nigeria had gone through many strives emanating from the fractured lines of its society, it went through a bloody civil war in 1967[259] and internal turmoil with the Niger Delta militants in the oil rich south and *Boko Haram* in the improvised northeast. Despite huge oil revenues the government failed to maximize the country's potential and address the complex challenges of poverty, cultural and religious conflicts hindering its progress. Some northerners (probably due to low literacy level) translate tensions with the south as conflict between Muslims and Christians,[260] pushing many northern Muslims to follow Islamist/extremist ideas.

The Niger Delta is Nigeria's economic lifeline, generating about 90% of the country's foreign exchange earnings[261] because of the abundance of oil. Ironically, the region is one of the poorest in the country with unemployment as high as 70%.[262] Underdevelopment and heavy environmental degradation due to oil exploration has fostered resentment and resistance from the local population of the area culminating in the formation of rebel groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Militant groups made up of young men thrived and caught international attention beginning in the 1990s under a group called Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP).[263] The group launched a nonviolent protest against Royal Dutch/Shell and the Nigerian government to cease production in Ogoni in 1993 due to

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[255] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 85.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Clarence J. Bouchat. The Causes of Instability in Nigeria and Implications for the United States, *Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press:* Aug 2013. 1.
[260] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 87.
[261] Mark Davidheiser and Kialee Nyiayaana. Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta. *African Security,* 4:1, (2011): 47.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.

economic neglect and environmental degradation[264] but this led to the capture and execution of their leader Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members by the military regime in of General Sani Abacha.[265] In recent times, militant groups have become more violent, sophisticated and share a common goal of resource control over a share of the oil wealth their region yields. [266] Faced with massive environmental degradation and underdevelopment of their communities, militants and the local population, many of whom are fishermen, began staging assaults against oil companies due and their extensive oil exploration; violence seemed like the only way to attain concessions since peaceful protests were crushed with brutal force. Oil spills and installations annihilated the fish population and destroyed their source of livelihood.

3.2.2.1 Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)

In 2004, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, head of a militant group known as the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), threatened the Nigerian government with war[267] citing the government's inability to address their grievances of poor living conditions, environmental degradation, underdevelopment and the lack of basic social infrastructure in the region.[268] Later that year, Royal Dutch/Shell, one of the world's oil giant lost productions of up to 370,000 barrels per day due to the presence of armed insurgency and attacks targeted at their installations.[269] Following its emergence in 2006, MEND unveiled themselves onto the international stage after kidnapping foreign oil workers in the same year.[270] By launching attacks on oil pipelines and installations, they managed to reduce oil output in the region and disrupting global oil supply. Oil pipeline sabotage and its implications hold out serious threats for Nigeria since the country is heavily dependent on it; bunkerers stole oil worth between 100 to 250 million barrels each year, at an average of US$60 per barrel, that translates to about US$15 billion

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[264] Mark Davidheiser and Kialee Nyiayaana. Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta. *African Security*, 4:1, (2011): 48.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations"* 2007.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Michael Watts, "IMPERIAL OIL: The Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency." *Institute of International Studies, 17.* 2008. 2.
[270] Freedom C Onuoha, "Oil Pipeline sabotage in Nigeria: Dimensions, actors and implications for national security." *African Security Review,* 17:3, 99-115, 2010.

annually.[271] Nigeria became an icon of rampant political corruption due to the absence of checks and balances, lack of accountability on state spending, weak institutions and corrupt government officials. Members of MEND exploited these weaknesses in conjunction with heightened insurgency in the Niger Delta by staging attacks on oil installations. Given that oil is the lifeline of Nigerian economy, it crippled the nation.[272] Nigeria has a revenue-sharing plan between the federal government and the 36 state governors; the governors get roughly half of the country's oil revenue, and yet these funds do not in physical or social terms trickle down to the roughly 30 million residents of the Delta.[273]

Attacks on Nigeria oil facilities continued with devastating costs to the economy and by Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) estimates, between 1998 and 2003, four hundred vandalizations were recorded, five hundred and eighty one between January and September 2004 and in the first six months of 2006 nineteen were recorded amounting a total loss of over $3.187 billion.[274] The government under President Olusegun Obasanjo did not take the threat of the militants seriously and refused to enter a dialogue or respond to any of the groups' political demands.[275] Instead, the government sent in the army to put an end to the insurgency, a move which worsened the situation. The army suffered heavy casualties and it soon became apparent that the governments' strategy was ineffective. With cash from ransom payments, oil bunkering and other illicit activities, the militant's acquired superior weaponry to those in the possession of Nigerian soldiers; they also had better geographic knowledge of the region, gaving them an added advantage over the army. The horror suffered by Nigerian forces compelled the government to request the presence of U.S. Marines in the Delta region[276] but that request was denied, probably to avoid getting tangled in the local conflict. Illegal oil bunkering fuelled insecurity in the Delta region, and together with poverty and unemployment, the

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[271] Ibid.

[272] Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations"* (2007).

[273] Ibid.

[274] Michael Watts. "IMPERIAL OIL: The Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency" *Institute of International Studies,* 17, (2008): 2.

[275] Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations"* (2007); 7.

[276] Ibid.

perfect environment for criminality, violence and arms proliferation was created. This frustrated efforts by the federal government to check oil-bunkering activities.[277]Effects of oil pipeline sabotage resonated across the country; it created shortages in the supply refined petroleum products causing nationwide price hikes on commodities. This had a domino effect: an increase in the price of petroleum automatically increased transportation prices thus, increasing the price of basic day-to-day necessities. In 2007, Nigeria went to the polls and Umaru Yar'Adua emerged as the new president; he immediately took drastic steps to address the Niger Delta issue by setting up a Niger-Delta committee, which was mandated to collate and review all previous reports and recommendations on ways to resolve the conflict.[278]The final result was the Federal Government Amnesty Program for the militants.

3.2.2.1.2 The Amnesty Program

The Federal Government Amnesty Program was an appeasement package for rebels who put down their arms; it was designed to disarm, demobilize and establish a framework of rehabilitation of the militants in order to encourage non-state combatants in the Delta to renounce violence. [279] Militants numbering around fifteen thousand surrendered over two thousand sophisticated weapons and three hundred thousand rounds of ammunition.[280] The amnesty package included monthly stipends and payments of millions of dollars to militant leaders who gave up their weapons, enrolment in educational and vocational classes in foreign countries and NNPC contract and the payment of ex-militant leaders millions of dollars annually to protect and maintain their oil pipelines.[281] These were the same pipelines the militants were attacking; this to a large extent was a mistake with long-term consequences for the Nigerian state. The Implementation of the amnesty program brought about cessation of hostilities and restored relative stability, violence dropped and crude oil production resumed. However,

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[277] Freedom C. Onuoha. "Oil pipeline sabotage in Nigeria: Dimensions, actors and implications for national security" *African Security Review,* 17.3, 99-115, (2008).

[278] Oscar Edoror UBHENIN, "The Federal Government's Amnesty Programme in the Niger-Delta: An Appraisal" *Yonetim Bilimleri Dergisi,* 11.21, 179-203, (2013).

[279] Ibid. .

[280] Mark Davidheiser and Kialee Nyiayaana. Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta. *African Security,* 4:1, (2011): 51.

[281] Oscar Edoror UBHENIN, "The Federal Government's Amnesty Programme in the Niger-Delta: An Appraisal" *Yonetim Bilimleri Dergisi,* 11.21, 179-203, (2013).

it was seen as a temporary rather than a permanent solution addressing only short-term issues; "The amnesty program has attracted unpleasant comments from the oil industry watchers and conflict analyst… the amnesty process opened the door for stabilization but did not reduce the long-term potential for violence or deal with root conflict issues."[282] To reinforce this point, oil theft in the region is still reported. About 50,000 barrels per day were stolen and between January and August 2012, 2,700 illegal refineries were discovered by the JTF after a raid on illegal oil bunkering sites in Bayelsa and Rivers states.[283]Dissatisfied or in many cases greedy rebels found their way back to the creeks and continued the practice of oil bunkering; the so-called repentant militants who surrendered their weapons in exchange for government incentives later regrouped and returned to the creeks, and hostilities resumed.[284] In many cases, the amnesty failed to address some vital issues. For example, it failed to identify the real perpetrators of violence in the region, and it failed to disarm the militants and thus increased the chances of future conflicts. The presence of politically motivated rebels cannot be ignored; politicians used these rebels to rig elections.[285] To elucidate this argument, in 1999, armed groups in the Niger-Delta were sponsored and used by three Niger-Delta state governors to unleash violence and intimidate their political opponents and voters but were then abandoned once the politicians had the election.[286] Likewise, during the campaign period of the 2015 elections, the leader of the NDPVF Dokubo Asari, an ex-militant who made very provocative statements and even threatened the countries existence on live TV was seen at the rally of former President Goodluck Jonathan, clearly showing his support for the candidate. In one of his interviews, Asari Dokubo said "he is not afraid of arrest but they will never arrest me because if they do, the consequences of my arrest, Nigeria will be history… we will match violence with violence, we will match

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[282] Ibid.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Mark Davidheiser and Kialee Nyiayaana. Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta. *African Security*, 4:1, (2011): 51.

[285] Oscar Edoror UBHENIN, "The Federal Government's Amnesty Programme in the Niger-Delta: An Appraisal" *Yonetim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 11.21, 179-203, (2013).

[286] Cyril I. Obi. "Oil Extraction, Disposition, Resistance, and Conflict in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Niger Delta" *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 30.1, 219-236, 2010.

bullet by bullet and blood by blood…"[287] This was his message to those opposing then President Goodluck Jonathan's second term election bid.

Figure 21: *Boko Haram* attack and violent deaths (2006-2013)
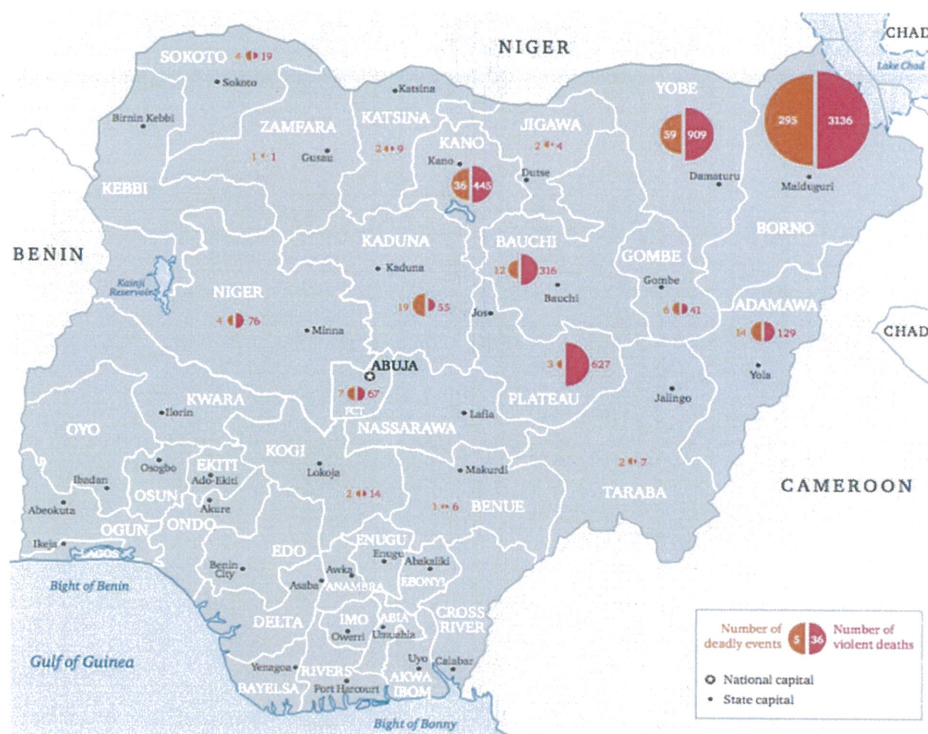
Source: Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the *Boko Haram* Crisis. *Chatham House.* Sept 2013.

3.2.2.2 *Boko Haram* in Northern Nigeria:

Mohammed Yusuf founded *Boko Haram* in 2002.[288] A member of the Izala movement in Nigeria (a non-violent, state-supporting movement originated on the pro-regime Wahhabi scholars in Saudi Arabia)[289]he established his group following a fallout with the Izala because of his radical views.[290] *Boko Haram* in Hausa language means

[287] "Exclusive Interview With Asari Dokubo (8th May, 2013)." Interview. YouTube. May 08, 2013. April 03, 2014.

[288] Freedom C. Onuoha, "Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect" *Aljazeera Center for Studies* (2012):

[289] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* (2015) 87.

[290] Ibid.

"Western education is forbidden or Western education is sinful"[291] *Boko Haram* believed northern politics has been hijacked by corrupt and false Muslims and by waging war against them they intended to achieve their objective which included an overthrow of the Federal Government, the creation of a pure Islamic state governed by Sharia law,[292] and ridding the country from Western influence. He criticised western education as the root of evil and by the end of 2003, the group started attacking police stations[293] leading to confrontations with security forces. To avoid capture by security agents, he fled to Saudi Arabia but returned in 2005[294] and continued preaching with relative success in northern Nigeria. Crisis erupted in 2009 when security forces fired at a funeral gathering of *Boko Haram* members who died in an auto crash, injuring seventeen members.[295] Following the incident, Yusuf presented an open letter, giving the government a forty day ultimatum to approach him otherwise he would declare Jihad against them.[296] The governments response was an all-out offensive on the group resulting in the death of over one thousand people[297] and the detention of many more including Yusuf himself who was later killed while in custody.

Remaining members of the group went underground, regrouped and in August 2009 under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, *Boko Haram* declared war against the Nigerian state;[298] the group evolved in both strategy and tactics over the years, and reigning havoc in the north-eastern part of Nigeria specifically Borno and Yobe state, its attacks became more vicious in scope and intensity, moving from using local weapons to using large and effective improvised explosive devices and suicide bomb attacks.[299] A suicide bomber detonated inside the United Nations Nigerian headquarters in Abuja in

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[291] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies.* (2014): 5.
[292] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* (2015): 87.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Theo Brinkel and Soumia Ait-Hida. Boko Haram And Jihad in Nigeria. *Journal for Military Studies,* 40;2, (2012): 10.
[298] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* (2015): 87.
[299] Andrew Walker. What is Boko Haram?, *United States Institute of Peace.* (2012). 2.

2011,[300] making the first suicide attack of the group and the first operation beyond their stronghold in the northeast. The style of attack was an indication that the group had established links with foreign jihadist groups especially AQIM.[301] Their activities have destabilized not just northern Nigeria but have put the stability of the country and region in jeopardy. *Boko Haram* has been classified as one of the most dangerous extremist groups in the world causing over ten thousand deaths in 2014 alone.[302] The groups attacks are largely aimed at Nigeria but its sphere of operations now include attacks in bordering countries like Niger, Chad and Cameroon.[303] With control over vast areas of land along the borders, it poses a serious threat to the stability of these countries.

Nigeria is deeply fractured along ethnic, religious, socioeconomic and political lines but the economic difficulties especially in the north and propagation of Islamist and Salafist ideas among Nigerian Muslims fostered the rise of *Boko Haram*.[304] The group has been able to draw members from different parts of Nigeria and from Niger, Chad and Sudan and are mainly unemployed graduates, disaffected youths and Almajiris (street children or emigrant child).[305] There are striking similarities between *Boko Haram* and the *Maitatsine* sect. These include: 1) Military confrontations; 2) Use of preachers as recruiters; 3) dissatisfaction with the state and 4) Appealing to the young, unemployed and underprivileged.[306] Attention must be drawn to point number 4 because it has served as the social roots of both *Boko Haram* and the aforementioned *Maitatsine* sect.[307] *Boko Haram* have deliberately targeted the Almajiri because of their rural origins and impoverished living conditions making them easy prey for radical groups.[308] The

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[300] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, "Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis." *Chatham House.* Sept 2013.

[301] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies.* (2014): 8.

[302] Andrew Walker. What is Boko Haram?, *United States Institute of Peace.* (2012): 2.

[303] Ibid.

[304] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 86.

[305] Freedom C. Onuoha, "Boko Haram: Nigeria's Extremist Islamic Sect" *Aljazeera Center for Studies* (2012): 2.

[306] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies.* (2014): 6.

[307] Roman Loimeier, Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria, *Africa Spectrum.* (2012): 140.

[308] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies.* (2014): 6.

Nigerian Ministry of Education estimated the number of almajiris in 2010 at 9.5 million concentrated mainly in the north.[309] Boys, as young as six are sent away by their parents to travel between various teachers (usually Islamic) but end up in poverty and horrendous conditions.[310]

[309] Ibid.
[310] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

Mali and Nigeria Domestic Politics: A Comparative Analysis.

In this section, the research draws on a number of domestic factors that bolsters extremist groups in West Africa; this will be done in a comparative perspective between Mali and Nigeria. Some key factors that can explain this dynamic on the domestic level are political corruption, socioeconomic deficits and underfunded armies, which are as a consequence of widespread systematic corruption in the government. Corruption is defined here as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain."[311]

4.1 Political Corruption

Political corruption is the "manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth."[312] Grievances emerge as a result of bad governance caused by political corruption; these grievances are present in the context of both northern Mali and northern Nigeria.

4.1.1 Mali:

Mali produced 52.4 tonnes of gold in 2010 making it the third gold producer in Africa and recorded a 5.8% steady annual economic growth[313] yet, despite these economic milestones, economic policies favoured connected elites while the standards of the poor majority kept deteriorating. For example President Amadou Toumani Toure granted preferential resources to agro-investors connected to the ruling party;[314] keeping in mind that Mali is a pastoral and mining state with industries in food processing and solid mineral mining like gold,[315] pastoral land becomes a scare and vital resource.

After the 2012 Tuareg rebellion AQIM and their offshoots dominated northern Mali, who were already integrated with local Tuareg tribes, and were able to mobilise

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[311] Transparency International. Anti-Corruption Glossary, Nov 19 2015.
[312] Transparency International. Anti-Corruption Glossary, Nov 19 2015.
[313] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal.* (2013): 14. .
[314] Ibid.
[315] "Mali." *CIA World Factbook.* N.p, Oct. 20 2015, Oct. 25 2015.

local manpower using proceeds from ransom.[316] AQIM grew in strength and numbers, reinforced themselves in northern Mali, and conducted two attacks on targets in southern Algeria in 2012.[317] Their strength raises questions on how the group was able to establish itself in northern Mali despite the presence of the Malian army in the north. One plausible answer is collusion between the Malian government and AQIM; this is not farfetched as the evidence below reinforces assumptions of collusion between the two parties.

Figure 22: Corruption perception index (2014)

CORRUPTION
PERCEPTIONS INDEX
(2014)

?
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RANK: SCORE:
115 /175   32 /100

Source: Transparency International

Corruption and the proliferation of criminal networks during the Presidency of Amadou Toumani Toure became institutionalized[318] and set the ground for the emergence of jihadist groups in Mali.[319] During this period, to join the military required not your skill sets but a connection with top military officials.[320] This alienated the

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[316] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 78.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal.* (2013): 14.
[319] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 78.
[320] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal.* (2013): 15.

Tuareg minority because it was almost impossible for their unemployed but qualified youths to integrate with the state, marginalizing them further; this can be a reason why the Tuareg adopted transnational trafficking as a way of life. This marginalization was not limited to the Tuareg ethnicity, as nepotism became the order of Toure's government appointing mostly friends and family members from its own ethnicity to prestigious positions in the government while co-opting the rest.[321] Collusion between officials of Toure's government and organized crime was present in varying degrees; for example, in 2003 small Algerian extremist groups took control of part of the Sahara regions[322] under indirect state control. To exercise control in those regions, the government used allied militias organized by local rivals of the rebels[323] who were allowed to freely exploit the regions thriving illicit market, creating close relations with criminal networks, armed groups and Toure's local allies, who in turn maintained relations with AQIM.[324] Leaders of these militias established a network of interest around these criminal activities and got engaged in regional drug smuggling, including cocaine. The head of State Security in Timbuktu is recounted to have successfully mediated over a local conflict involving the delivery of cocaine in 2007, and arranging the return of the shipment in exchange for large payments.[325] These government allies also received cuts for mediating ransom payments for hostages.[326] Another serious weakness of President Toure's democratic government was his lack of accountability as well as that of the executive branch as a whole [327] and this impediment in the highest level of government affected the development of strong government institutions.

An MNLA commander Col Al Salat ag Habi, once a top officer in the Malian army in charge of a town in northern Mali stated that, AQIM operated openly for ten years[328] and when he asked for permission to expel them, the Malian army ordered him to

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[321] Ibid.

[322] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*. 2015. 78.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Ibid.

[325] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region, *Carnegie Endowment for international peace*. 2012. 12

[326] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*. 2015. 70

[327] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal*. (2013): 15.

[328] *Orphans of the Sahara*. Al Jazaeera, 2014. *Youtube.com*. 17 Jan. 2014. Web. Oct 12 2015.

leave them alone.[329] Another MNLA fighter said the army knew where they were (AQIM members) and were allowed to roam freely most times armed, marry and conduct illicit activities with no one to deter them.[330] It would not be implausible to suggest that the Malian army turned a blind eye to AQIM in the north, allowing them to settle-in and operate as a counter to the Tuareg rebels. The Malian government came under fire for conniving with AQIM when Algeria and Mauritania refused to cooperate with Mali on counter-terrorism operations because sensitive information shared with Mali officials often found its way to AQIM and its offshoots.[331] To emphasize more on the connivance of Malian officials and AQIM, in 2009 AQIM assassinated Col. Lamana Ould Bou after an arms deal with AQIM failed.[332] Bou alongside other Berabiche officers were known to leak intelligence reports to AQIM. This allegation of collusion not only implicates Malian state institutions with extremist groups and transnational organized criminals but also erode the legitimacy of their institutions in its totality especially with the Tuareg who with deep conviction, believe the central government is against them. This not only explains AQIM's ability to consolidate its position in northern Mali but also the grievances of the Tuareg against the central government especially after extremist groups hijacked the 2012 Tuareg rebellion.

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[329] Ibid.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 71
[332] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region, *Carnegie Endowment for international peace*. (2012): 13.

4.1.2 Nigeria:

Nigeria's foundations of institutional framework are very fragile and have caused a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability.[333] Governance here means:

> A concept that goes beyond the traditional notion of government to focus on the relationships between leaders, public institutions and citizens, the processes by which they make and implement decisions…characterized as being participatory, accountable, transparent, efficient, responsive and inclusive, respecting the rule of law and minimising opportunities for corruption.[334]

The state of insecurity in Nigeria can be linked to the failures of the government to deliver equal development and public services to the people[335] due to the existence of political corruption in public institutions. Although Nigeria earned massive revenues from oil exports, it failed to properly and evenly develop local infrastructure[336] instead, politicians and public office holders engaged in systematic embezzlement of public funds. Embezzlement here is termed as the process "when a person holding office in an institution, organization or company dishonestly and illegally appropriates, uses or traffics the funds and goods they have been entrusted with for personal enrichment or other activities." [337] These massive embezzlements leave little to no resources for government development projects as it is in the case of north-eastern Nigeria and the Niger Delta; this undermines state authority and legitimacy[338] while infesting the local population with perceptions of being marginalized, resulting in grievances of a large number of people against the government and "grievances give rise to holy war."[339] This

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[333] I.C. Achumba and O.S. Ighomereho, M.O.M. Akpor-Robaro. Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development.* 2013. 81.

[334] Transparency International. Anti-Corruption Glossary, N.p, 19 Nov 2015.

[335] I.C. Achumba and O.S. Ighomereho, M.O.M. Akpor-Robaro. Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development.* 2013. 81.

[336] Ibid.

[337] Transparency International. Anti-Corruption Glossary, N.p, 19 Nov 2015.

[338] Asfura-Heim, Patricio, and Julia McQuaid. *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria.* No. CNA-DOP-U-009272-FINAL. Center for Naval Analysis Alexandria VA, 2015. 13.

[339] Theo Brinkel and Soumia Ait-Hida. Boko Haram And Jihad in Nigeria. *Journal for Military Studies,* 40;2, (2012): 10.

led many aggrieved youths to join armed movements as can be seen in the north-east with *Boko Haram* and in the Niger Delta with the militants.

Nigeria lacks strong institutions to ensure good governance and is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world[340] scoring 27/100 and ranking 136/175[341] on the corruption perceptions index (2014). Public perception of Nigerians illustrates the lack of confidence in the government and its institutions (see below).

Figure 23: Global Corruption Barometer (2010/2011)

The extent to which the following institutions are perceived by the public to be most affected by corruption:
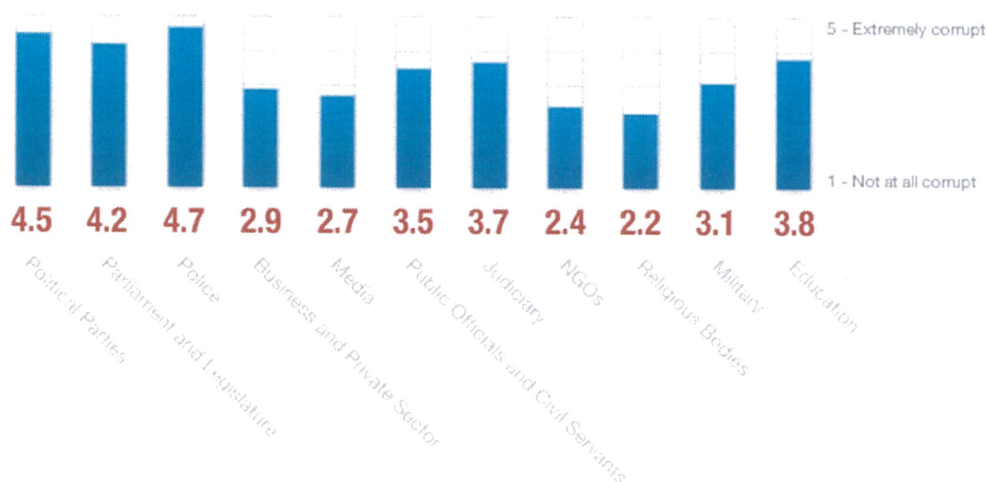
Source: Transparency International.

The diagram above is self-explanatory but in addition to this, it is important to notice that Nigeria has a bad culture of political corruption where political and government jobs are viewed as a means of generating private wealth;[342] this can explain why some politicians in Nigeria take all necessary measures to safeguard their positions in power and often use illegal militias to coerce or eliminate their opponents.[343] Nigerians have been deprived of good governance and the most affected are the youths as demonstrated by those who,

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[340] Ibid.

[341] Transparency International. Corruption by Country, N.p, 19 Nov 2015.

[342] Asfura-Heim, Patricio, and Julia McQuaid. *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria.* No. CNA-DOP-U-009272-FINAL. Center for Naval Analysis Alexandria VA, 2015. 15.

[343] Ibid.

probably out of frustration from the government, discard their university certificates and join groups like *Boko Haram*.[344] In addition to political corruption there is also mistrust between Nigerians and the political and legal institutions because of the governments lack of accountability and ineptitude.[345] The inability of the government to bring peace and order to the country is a sign of state weakness, a state unable to prioritized and exert legitimate power effectively. In Nigeria, the government has failed in many cases to provide adequate policing of remote border areas in the country and this worked in favour of *Boko Haram* and militants alike, giving them safe havens and avenues to recuperate. With a growing population in the north, there is an absence of industries to absorb the youths and address the chronic unemployment deficit. There is a consensus among Nigerians that as long as corruption is part and parcel of the government and is left unchecked, there can be no substantial development in the nation and so far, there is little to suggest that corruption in Nigeria is on a decline. (See figure 24).

Figure 24: Global Corruption Barometer (2010/2011)

Percentage of people who feel that from 2007-2010 the level of corruption in the country has:

73% Increased

10% Stayed the same

17% Decreased
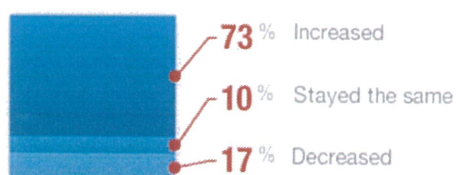
Institution(s) perceived to be most affected by corruption:

POLICE

Source: Transparency International.

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[344] N.D.Danjibo, Islamic Fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence: The "Maitatsine" and "Boko Haram" Crises in Northern Nigeria. *Institute of African Studies*, 16.

[345] Asfura-Heim, Patricio, and Julia McQuaid. *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria*. No. CNA-DOP-U-009272-FINAL. Center for Naval Analysis Alexandria VA, 2015. 15.

4.2 Socioeconomic Deficits

4.2.1 Mali:

Mali's government struggled with Tuareg rebellions for about five decades and the level of corruption in the central government has left them without the will, capacity and capability to develop the north; the entire country came to the point of collapse because of the government mismanagement of the north. Occupied by Tuareg and Berabiche tribes, the socioeconomic vacuum created in the north from lack of basic infrastructure had to be filled; beside Tuareg covert smuggling operations, AQIM through their process of integration with local tribes filled the socioeconomic void created by the state.

With a flush of money from illicit activities, AQIM members engaged in charity work by distributing food packages, building clinics and supplying medicine to people,[346] buying themselves trust and goodwill from the onset. By offering a combination of economic, military, religious, political and humanitarian assistance,[347] AQIM members were able to swiftly penetrate local tribes from the grassroots without resistance. They paid residents $3,000 to move cocaine, $600 each for a family member to signup with AQIM, and monthly stipends of $400.[348] In an atmosphere plagued by socioeconomic depression and poverty, AQIM stood in contrast of the insensible government who for decades did not fulfil the governments old promises to develop northern Mali.

AQIM exploited the unbearable socioeconomic conditions of the area by linking economically and symbiotically with local Tuareg and Berabiche tribes, collaborating in covert trafficking activities.[349] For example, Belmokhtar married four women from prominent Tuareg and Berbabiche families whose clan in turn provided him with refuge and protection.[350]AQIM also focused on the covert trafficking of cocaine and hashish[351] and this opened up new opportunities for the group; their collaboration with South

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[346] Morten Boas & Liv Elin Torheim. The Trouble in Mali—corruption, collusion, resistance, *Third World Quarterly.* (2013): 1287.
[347] Ibid.
[348] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal.* (2013). 14.
[349] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security.* (2011): 242.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Ibid.

American drug traffickers increased their potential of raising revenues for their activities, it enabled them adopt more professional methods of smuggling contraband and most importantly, opened up access to light/medium-weight arms bundled along with cocaine shipments from South America.[352] Proceeds from these activities enabled AQIM and its offshoots to buy support and form alliances with local businessmen from different Tuareg tribes and clans; their wealth also "placed them in a position to expand their arsenal and recruit in northern Mali, Mauritania and other states of the Maghreb and Sahel...The ransoms...were the single most important factor behind the groups' growth in northern Mali, and their eventual takeover during the conflict of 2012."[353]

Although Mali had been sold by the West to the world as a beacon of true democracy in West Africa, Toure's consensus government muffled all opposition to his rule. [354] Feeling marginalized and frustrated as Toure's government became more authoritarian, his opposition started adopting an Islamist discourse;[355]Muslim clerics also lost their legitimacy because of their relationship with the government, providing a political vacuum once again for radical Islamist groups to exploit.

4.2.2 Nigeria:

It is without doubt that northern Nigeria is less developed than the south, which was influenced by Western politics, education and economic linkages. In fact, 71.5% of the population in north-eastern Nigeria live in abject poverty with the north-east ranking highest in the poverty rate of all the six geopolitical zones.[356] Literacy rate in Lagos state (southern commercial capital), Kano state (northern commercial capital and second biggest city in the country) and Borno (the epicentre of the *Boko Haram* insurgency) are 92%, 49% and less than 15% respectively.[357] Socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment and lack of social infrastructure all play decisive roles in bolstering *Boko*

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[352] Ibid.

[353] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015.

[354] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal.* 2013. 14.

[355] Ibid.

[356] Asfura-Heim, Patricio, and Julia McQuaid. *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria.* No. CNA-DOP-U-009272-FINAL. Center for Naval Analysis Alexandria VA, 2015. 16.

[357] Leena Koni Hoffman. Who Speaks for the North? Politics and Influence on Northern Nigeria, *African Program, Chatham House.* Jul 2014. 5.

Haram's presence in the country. The disparity between the north and south of Nigeria is further stark with a GDP comparison; the GDP per capita in southern Nigeria is about double that of the north[358] with 72% of northerners, 35% in the Niger Delta and 27% of southerners living in poverty.[359] These factors are some of the main underlining elements that describe parts of northern Nigeria especially the north-eastern states of Borno and Yobe, the two *Boko Haram* epicentres. In addition, the state governments in the north-east also failed in providing basic social infrastructure to the population; their inability to provide sufficient security, good roads, healthcare, water, employment and education caused resentments against the political status quo and fuelled rejectionist thinking.[360] Chromic energy shortages in addition to influx of imported goods forced as many as 75% of manufacturers out of business in the north,[361] and finding a public job was leveraged by the type of connection a person had in government.

Despite Nigeria's wealth of natural resources and high levels of economic growth in recent years, making it Africa's biggest economy,[362] many northern states are underdeveloped and, in most cases, the government failed to improve resource sharing of that growth with the majority of the population instead, there has been an absorption of wealth in the hands of the elites.[363] This reduced the availability of resources for the provision of infrastructural amenities. Resources allocated do not trickle down to the bottom of the pyramid, which constitutes the largest part of society. This phenomenon along with groups of unemployed youths angered and frustrated with minimal employment prospects,[364] turned young people into easy recruits for extremist groups who pay them to fight.[365] With 70% of its population living under the poverty line[366]coupled with unemployment, an environment where extremist groups can exploit is

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[358] Asfura-Heim, Patricio, and Julia McQuaid. *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria.* Central Naval Analysis Alexandria VA, 2015. 16.

[359] Ibid.

[360] Ibid.

[361] Ibid.

[362] Paul, Rogers, Nigeria: The Generic Context of Boko Haram Violence, *Oxford Research Group,* Apr (2012): 3.

[363] Ibid.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Robert Crowley and Henry Wilkinson. Boko Haram: A New Threat in West Africa. *OECD, Conflict over Resources and Terrorism: Two Facets of Insecurity, OECD Publishing,* (2013): 102.

[366] "Nigeria." *CIA World Factbook.* N.p, Oct. 20 2015, Oct. 25 2015.

created; hence, violence in northern Nigeria is attributed to high rates of poverty.[367] Captured or injured *Boko Haram* fighters affirmed that they were paid to participate in violence[368] and this only proves that socioeconomic deficits contributed to the *Boko Haram* insurgency because financial motivation is one of the main reason the group is attractive to improvised Muslim individuals in the north. [369] *Boko Haram* "is a symptom of decades of failed government and elite delinquency finally ripping into social chaos."[370] Nigeria's misappropriation of its wealth and unemployment among the youths must not be underrated, they are attracted to crime and extremism because "Nigeria's poor see poverty not just in material terms but as an overwhelming denial of the right to a quality of life which is enabling and empowering.[371] Illiteracy is also rampant in northern Nigeria; young children lack access to basic formal school education, and instead, many improvised children attend informal religious schools used in some cases as radicalization centres by preachers. The north has the lowest school attendance rate,[372] and groups like *Boko Haram* exploit these vulnerable children by absorbing them with their interpretation of Islam.

Militants in the Niger Delta had carried out attacks on oil installations and kidnapped oil workers in the past. After those attacks and kidnappings took place, MEND ordered foreign oil workers operating in the area to evacuate, threatening more violent attacks on them if they lingered.[373] The militants engaged in hostage negotiations for payments of large sums of money as ransom, and as militant attacks escalated, oil drilling companies were forced to cut back or shut down production and withdrawn their workers. Oil companies awarded contracts to security companies owned by militant leaders for the

[367] Oluwatosin Babalola, Combating Violent-Extremism and Insurgency in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Boko Haram Scourge. *Center for Global and International Studies and the Faculty of Graduate School of University of Texas,* (2013): 34.

[368] Danjibo, Nathaniel Dominic. "Islamic fundamentalism and sectarian violence: the 'Maitatsine'and 'Boko Haram'crises in northern Nigeria." *Peace and Conflict Studies Paper Series* (2009): 16.

[369] Robert Crowley and Henry Wilkinson. Boko Haram: A New Threat in West Africa. *OECD, Conflict over Resources and Terrorism: Two Facets of Insecurity, OECD Publishing,* (2013): 102.

[370] Mohammed Aly Sergie and Toni Johnson. Boko Haram, *Council on Foreign Relations*, Mar 5 2015. Nov 19 2015. N.p.

[371] Paul, Rogers, Nigeria: The Generic Context of Boko Haram Violence, *Oxford Research Group,* Apr (2012): 3.

[372] Unicef. Oct 12 2015

[373] Michael Watts, "IMPERIAL OIL: The Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency." *Institute of International Studies, 17.*2008. 2.

protection of their oil installations.[374] This is noteworthy because it demonstrates the notoriety of thee militant groups and the magnitude of their illicit activities. Ransom and security payments from oil companies became one lucrative source of revenue for the militants; alternatively, they were also engaged in "oil bunkering".[375] These were sold in the black-market[376] or transported offshore and sold to a neighbouring country or international cartels run by foreigners.[377] Asari's militant group was so notorious for oil bunkering, that their product was branded "Asari fuel.[378] It is important to note the transformation of these groups; they started off as rebel groups with a cause, seeking better socioeconomic benefits but transformed into groups engaged in illicit activities. Bunkering and selling oil to foreign cartels makes them a transnational organized criminal group.

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[374] Stephanie Hanson, "MEND: The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group." *Council on Foreign Relations"* (2007); 4.
[375] Ibid.
[376] Freedom C. Onuoha. "Oil pipeline sabotage in Nigeria: Dimensions, actors and implications for national security" *African Security Review*, 17.3, 99-115, 2008.
[377] Paul Ushang Ugor. "The Niger Delta Wetland, Illegal Oil Bunkering and Youth Identity Politics in Nigeria." *Postcolonial Text 8*, no.3&4 (2014): 8.
[378] Ibid.

4.3 Underfunded Armies

4.3.1 Mali:

The Malian army has been greatly underfunded and under-resourced. Reports by the BBC suggest that the government of President Toure, possibly out of fear of a coup, promoted legions of officers to high ranks while lower ranking soldiers retained positions in the armed forces past their retirement age. [379] The army was underequipped and possessed out-of-date military equipment and in the liberated north, they would only patrol on days they were given fuel by French led Operation Serval; most times, they stayed confined in their bases. [380] The corruption under President Toure's government left the army in disarray, and their incapacity was displayed in January 2013 when extremists captured the town of Konna in central Mali; [381] the Malian army without hesitation fled.

General François Lecointre the head of the EU training mission to Mali, said that Mali is poor, but their army is more than poor and are in dire need of equipment from vehicles to weapons, uniforms and communication gadgets. [382] The poor state of the army was once more exposed during the battle for Gao on January 21st 2013 [383] when Islamist fighters raided the town in an attempt to capture it. After battling the Islamists for hours, the Malian army had made no progress until French troops arrived and took out all the Islamists. [384] The Malian soldiers were clearly humiliated especially after the realization that the Islamists they fought were thirteen in number and some of them just teenagers.

This army was poorly led and clearly demoralized, and with old Tuareg officers defecting the army to join jihadist groups, it was of no surprise that jihadists had no hesitation launching attacks against them. Knowing that they were dealing with a fractured under-sourced army became a morale booster; this can be attributed to President Toure's massive corruption that became institutionalized; the military inclusive.

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[379] Alex Duval Smith. Turning Mali's Army into a Fighting Force, *BBC News*. N.p, 3 May 2013, 22 Oct 2015.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Hussien Solomon, Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan. *The RUSI Journal*. 2013. 14
[382] Pascal Fletcher, French general urges EU to equip improvised Mali army, *Reuters. N.p*, 20 feb 2014, 24 Oct 2015. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/20/us-mali-rebels-eu-idUSBRE91J1B320130220
[383] Vice News, *Ground Zero Mali*, 2013, 27 Oct 2015.
[384] Ibid.

Underfunding and lack of discipline could also be a reason why officers in the rank and file were colluding with extremist groups

4.3.2 Nigeria:

The issue of an underfunded army in the case of Nigeria is surprising, being one of Africa's largest militaries, an oil producer and an army with outstanding peacekeeping records it was almost disbelief that the Nigerian army is underfunded and incapable of ending the *Boko Haram* insurgency. It is important to note that underfunding the army means that the military personnel are also undertrained and ill equipped, and this hampers their ability to accurately discharge their duties.

The year 2014 saw *Boko Haram* on rampage abducting girls, ransacking entire villages, military post and capturing territory almost on a daily basis. On August 25th 2014, Abubakar Shekau declared the town of Gwoza an Islamic State after seizing it.[385] Soldiers fighting in northern Nigeria have often voiced dissatisfaction with equipment given to them before battles, most times outgunned and outnumbered by *Boko Haram* fighters who carry sophisticated weapons with longer range and accuracy. In terms of equipment and training, the Nigerian army is woefully under-resourced and underfunded,[386] which begs the question—what happened to all the money from the security budget? According to reports from PremiumTimes a Nigerian media organization, between 2011 and 2015 the Nigerian government spent 4.62 trillion

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[385] BBC News, Boko Haram declares 'Islamic State' in northern Nigeria, N.p, Aug 25 2015, Oct 20 2015.
[386] Pamela, Dockins. "Army, Boko Haram Working Together in Parts of Nigeria?" *Voice of America.* Oct 12, 2015.

naira or \$236 billion on National Security[387] however, the country was witnessing more vicious and devastating attacks by *Boko Haram*. The Islamist group attacked an entire army regiment in their barracks with little to no resistance, soldiers simply melted away. All 480 soldiers ran away into neighbouring Cameroon[388] leaving a cache of arms and ammunitions at the disposal of the enemy. The army claimed it was a "tactical manoeuvre" but leaked videos of the attack, shot by *Boko Haram* members proved otherwise. On November 18 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the arrest of Sambo Dasuki who was the National Security Adviser of former President Goodluck Jonathan and oversaw the fight against *Boko Haram*.[389] Mr. Dasuki is accused of stealing two billion dollars[390] meant for procurement of weapons for the military to fight *Boko Haram*.

Soldiers have given testimonies about the their ordeal at the battle ground. In an interview with Cable Network News (CNN) a soldier from the frontline said they lack the morale to fight because they are not given basic kits, the soldier had to buy his uniform, ammunition and kit with his own money; nor did the army pay for their injuries.[391] Another soldier said some of his comrades ran away after recognizing that the fighters had superior weapons; left with no choice, he had to run too.[392]

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[387] Joshua, Olufemi. Nigeria Spends N4.62 trillion on National Security in 5 years, yet widespread insecurity remains, N.p, *Premium Times.* 18 Jun 2015, 20 Oct 2015.
[388] Ruth Maclean, Nigerian soldiers "ran away from Boko Haram." *The Times Africa.* N.p 27 Aug 2014, 22 Oct 2015.
[389] BBC News. Nigeria's Dasuki stole \$2bn' from anti-Boko Haram fight, *BBC News,* N.p, 18 Nov 2015, 18 Nov 2015.
[390] Ibid.
[391] *Nigerian Soldiers Talk to CNN in Boko Haram Fight,* Youtube, Awomusi Oluwole. 16 Jan 2015, 22 Oct 2015.
[392] Ibid.

With a defence budget gulping 340 and 358 billion naira in 2014 and 2015 respectively ($1 to N199), it is unclear why the army cannot supply the soldiers with proper weapons and medical services. Security chiefs also claimed that funds given to them were insufficient to adequately equip the military [393] but the figures on paper distorts those claims instead, the 2015 budget allocation for security was the highest in the year. [394] A systematic embezzlement of funds allotted to the security sector has been going on. In recent years, the Defence Ministry refused to make their spending public [395] making it difficult to track and monitor their spending. This was the kind of systematic corruption that helped fuel the *Boko Haram* insurgency. No amount of resources allocated to the security sector was sufficient to equip the military, leaving the soldiers with depleted fighting morale, miserably underfunded and undertrained and the National Security of the country in jeopardy; all this at the expense of a well connected ring of corrupt government officials who pocket the funds. This lack of morale and fear was displayed after the kidnapping of over two hundred schoolgirls in Borno state, when Amnesty International authoritatively reported

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[393] Joshua, Olufemi. Nigeria Spends N4.62 trillion on National Security in 5 years, yet widespread insecurity remains, N.p, *Premium Times*. 18 Jun 2015, 20 Oct 2015.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.

that the Nigerian military was notified of plans to kidnap the Chibok schoolgirls four hours prior to the event, but the military did nothing to stop it.[396]

As a direct effect of a crunch in funds, the soldiers are not only left untrained for guerrilla warfare which is the tactic used by many insurgent groups but they also lacked the morale to fight their enemies and in most cases, had little to no respect for rule of law. Rule of Law here means "legal and political systems, structures and practices that condition a government's action to protect citizens' rights and liberties, maintain law and order, and encourage the effective functioning of the country."[397] The U.S allegedly refused to sell weapons to the Jonathan Administration citing bad records of Human Rights abuses; this is not farfetched because according to Amnesty International, seven thousand young men and boys died in military detention and more than one thousand two hundred were unlawfully killed since March 2011.[398] On June 1, 2011, the government of President Goodluck Jonathan launched a Joint Task force (JTF) called "Operation Restore Order"[399] however, after recording some success, reports emerged of the JTF in probably an act of retribution against suspected local sympathizers of *Boko Haram*, shot haphazardly killing as many as two hundred civilians and burning over two thousand homes and businesses;[400] there is also evidence of extrajudicial killings by military personnel. This disregard for Rule of Law and Human Rights abuses is a breach of the social contract between the people and the security agents who are representing the government, leading to mistrust between the two parties and opened a recruitment channel for *Boko Haram*. The JTF heavy-handed approach internally displace people from their homes, one displaced person said "we want to leave because yesterday morning military men came shooting in our places…A woman was hit by a stray bullet in her breast. We don't know where to go… Nobody is cautioning the JTF, they arrest anybody and have been breaking into our houses."[401] It must be understood that inciting

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[396] Amnesty International. Amnesty International stands by claims about Chibok raid, N.p, 12 May 2014, 22 Oct 2015.
[397] Transparency International. Anti-Corruption Glossary, N.p, 19 Nov 2015.
[398] Amnesty International. Nigeria: Senior members of military must be investigated for war crimes, N.P, 3 June 2015, 22 Oct 2015.
[399] John,Tully Gordon. The Scourge of the Sahel: Examining the Rise of Boko Haram and Modern Violent Extremism in West Africa, *Fordham University*. Jan 2014. 75
[400] Ibid.
[401] Ioannis Mantzikos (Ed). *Boko Haram Anatomy of a Crisis.* Bristol: E-international Relations, 2013. . 57

fear and burning peoples' homes and means of livelihood forces them to look for alternatives and with nothing left but anger and mistrust, which is the case with many victims of military brutality, they sign up with groups like *Boko Haram*; who also offer cash incentives to their fighters.

CHAPTER 5

Regional Dimension.

Transnational linkages between groups are double-edged swords, with advantages and disadvantages influenced by the specific type of linkage. Kristian Gleditsch emphasized the importance of not only understanding that conflict in one state increases the risk of conflict in another state, but what mechanisms are responsible for those increases. For the sake of this research, two linkages will be explored, namely: 1) Political and 2) Ethnic Transnational linkages in this regard will be viewed as "regular interactions across boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or intergovernmental organization."[402]

5.1 Transnational Conflict Linkages

5.1.1 AQIM:

The civil war in Algeria saw the birth of GSPC (see chapter 2), which ultimately spread to southern Algeria during its expansionist phase and, slow but sure, moved to northern Mali since there was little to no government interference or surveillance. Eventually, AQIM was created and they have been supplying jihadists from neighbouring Maghreb states and the Sahel with training and firearms.[403] Their movements are usually in peripheral areas where central government authority is weak and close to international or regional boundaries. This was how the GSPC inserted themselves in Mali turning the north into a safe haven for regional extremist groups.

The GSPC led by Hassan Hattab, Abderrazek al-Bara, Nabil Sahraoui, Abdelmadjid Dishu and Ammari Saifi[404] mounted successful paramilitary attacks in Algeria; this made the Algerian government initiate a successful program to infiltrate and destabilize the group leading to Hattab's loss of control[405] and eventual replacement by

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[402] Sarah A. Radcliffe. Development, the state, and transnational political connections: state and subject formations in Latin America. *Global Networks.* Jan (2001): 21.
[403] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* (2015): 64.
[404] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security.* 2011. 242.
[405] Ibid.

Nabil Sahraoui and two deputies, including Abdelmalek Droukdel and Ammari Saifi.[406] Under the new GSPC leadership, the group expanded its operations into southern Algeria led by Ammari Saifi and Mokhtar Belmokhtar[407] who eventually expanded operations into remote regions in northern Mali, Chad, Mauritania and Niger,[408] areas with little to no government control allowing them to mobilize and carry out attacks at their discretion without much interference or surveillance. Saifi masterminded and executed a daring abduction of thirty-two Europeans in southern Algeria in 2003[409] but was sentenced to life imprisonment after Chadian rebels in northern Chad caught him. They turned him over to Libya's Gaddafi who turned him in to the Algerian government.[410] This signifies not only the kind of influence Gaddafi had on rebel groups in West Africa and his distaste of Al Qaeda and its affiliates but also the transnational dynamics of these conflicts. Nabil Sahraoui, the other leader of the GSPC was killed in a shootout with Algerian forces in 2004[411] and Droukdel took control of the group; he had a new philosophy to engage the far enemy of Islam, namely the United States and Europe, a view of jihad that was compatible with those of Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.[412]

In January 2007, Abdelmalek Droukdel declared a name change of the GSPC to AQIM[413] swearing allegiance to Bin Laden linking it to Al Qaeda central. AQIM elements adopted a pattern for kidnapping European tourists and workers that raised questions on how much of their activities are related to criminal activities as opposed to ideology.[414] Thirty-nine Western citizens were kidnapped between 2008 and 2012 in the Sahel region.[415] These hostages were released after substantial ransom payments were made, ranging from thirty-five to fifty million Euros,[416] by their respective European countries often in secret. This was one lucrative source of revenue for the group. Another

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[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Ibid.
[411] Ibid.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Ibid.
[414] Lawrence E. Cline, Nomads, Islamists, and soldiers: The Struggles for Northern Mali, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 2013. 629.
[415] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 71.
[416] Ibid.

substantial revenue method was contraband trade, which included cocaine, hashish, undocumented workers and cigarettes. [417] Mokhtar Belmokhtar funded many of his activities by smuggling cigarettes on a grand scale earning him the nickname "Mr Marlboro."[418] His notoriety in these activities caused him accusations by rivals within AQIM of being a profit-driven criminal instead of a committed jihadist.[419]

Boko Haram has a history of having links to other extremist groups from across the region like AQIM. Muhammad Yusuf, the founder of *Boko Haram*, was a proponent of Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban[420] but after his death, members of the group dispersed across the region seeking training from other groups. The leader of *Boko Haram* Abubakar Shekau supposedly spent considerable time in Gao (Mali) and in 2010, he officially linked *Boko Haram* to Al Qaeda and the international jihadi movement.[421] According to a local witness in Mali, *Boko Haram* members fought during the 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali claiming that two hundred members joined AQIM;[422] In March 2015, *Boko Haram*'s leader, in an audio statement, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)[423] after the MNJTF carried out a major offensive against the group to win back lost territory. With strongholds and camps in Cameroon and Niger,[424] the Nigerian group has been able to infiltrate and expand its illicit activities and networks across the border.

5.1.2 Boko Haram:

Boko Haram, in north-eastern Nigeria, has evolved over the years both in strength and numbers. They have been involved in cross-border movements and *Boko Haram* transnational recruitment operations in neighbouring countries that includes paying money to those who do not follow their ideology. They have prompted those states to

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[417] Ricardo Rene Laremont, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel, *African Security*. 2011. 249.

[418] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*. 2015. 74.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis. *Chatham House*. Sept (2013): 11.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Ibid.

[423] "Nigeria's Boko Haram pledges allegiance to Islamic State." *BBC*. N.p, Mar 7 2015. Oct 12 2015

[424] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies*. (2014): 11.

respond by engaging in joint counter-terrorism efforts. It is clear that *Boko Haram* has infiltrated bordering states marked by their coordinated attacks, and kidnappings in Mali, Chad and Niger; the most worrying issue however is the fact that, by the boldness and sophistication of their attacks, their ability to draw confidence from external attention brings external support.[425] *Boko Haram* is not a local insurgency anymore, although they were able to strike at targets in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, their activities were largely focused within Nigeria.

 Boko Haram has engaged in a number of criminal activities to acquire funds. In February 2013, though an isolated case, the group kidnapped seven members of a French family in Cameroon who were released in April after a ransom payment and the release of nineteen *Boko Haram* prisoners.[426] In May and July 2014, *Boko Haram* members carried out a daring assault in northern Cameroon kidnapping ten Chinese workers and the wife of Cameroon's Vice Prime Minister respectively.[427] They also carried out a failed attack on *Diffa* in the Republic of Niger.[428] These massive attacks suggests an escalation of cross-border attacks by the group not only in Cameroon but also in Niger and Chad; These are seen as reprisal attacks at countries whose armies form the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) created and mandated to battle with battling the *Boko Haram* insurgency in northern Nigeria. These attacks can also be seen as a change in the groups' dynamics evolving from a national to a regional aggressor. There is little to no evidence to suggest funding of the group by wealthy Saudi or Qatari individuals since the group does not follow the orthodox Salafi model;[429] instead the group conducted a number of bank robberies to compensate the loss of revenue from local sponsors.[430]

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[425] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis. *Chatham House.* Sept (2013): 30.

[426] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* (2015). 95.

[427]"Boko Haram Kidnaps Wife of Cameroon Vice PM." *Aljazeera.* N.p., 22 July 2014. Web. 12 Oct. 2015.

[428] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos. Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis. *Chatham House.* Sept (2013): 12.

[429] Ibid.

[430] Ibid.

On 14 April 2014, members of *Boko Haram* raided a boarding school in Chibok (Borno State) kidnapping almost three hundred schoolgirls.[431] More than a year later, these girls are still under captivity with little information on their health or whereabouts. Over time, *Boko Haram* escalated its attacks on military posts and public places. In March 2014, the group attacked the *Giwa* barracks in Maiduguri which serves as the main prison for *Boko Haram* prisoners and freed them,[432] giving them access to an abundance of arms and ammunitions. They also carried out attacks in Abuja in April, May and June of 2014, killing about one hundred and ten people in total.[433] Unverified information presented to the Nigerian media by a US general of Nigerian descent, says that *Boko Haram* secured a total of USD 70 million between 2006 and 2011;[434] the group also received considerable amount of financial, military and training support from AQIM and MUJAO.[435] A significant source of revenue for the group was through the trafficking of cocaine and heroin, arms trafficking and begging.[436] Although there is little knowledge about the whereabouts of the kidnapped Chibok girls, the leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau in one of his videos claimed to have sold them. If this is accurate, then it suggests the groups' involvement in human trafficking too.

The cases of AQIM and *Boko Haram* have displayed their ability to spill over boundaries, supporting Gleditsch's claim that "the likelihood of civil war is directly increased by the presence of wars in connected states. The consequence of one state can induce spill-over effects and alter the prospects for violent conflict in other states."[437]

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[431] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 95
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies.* 2014. 11
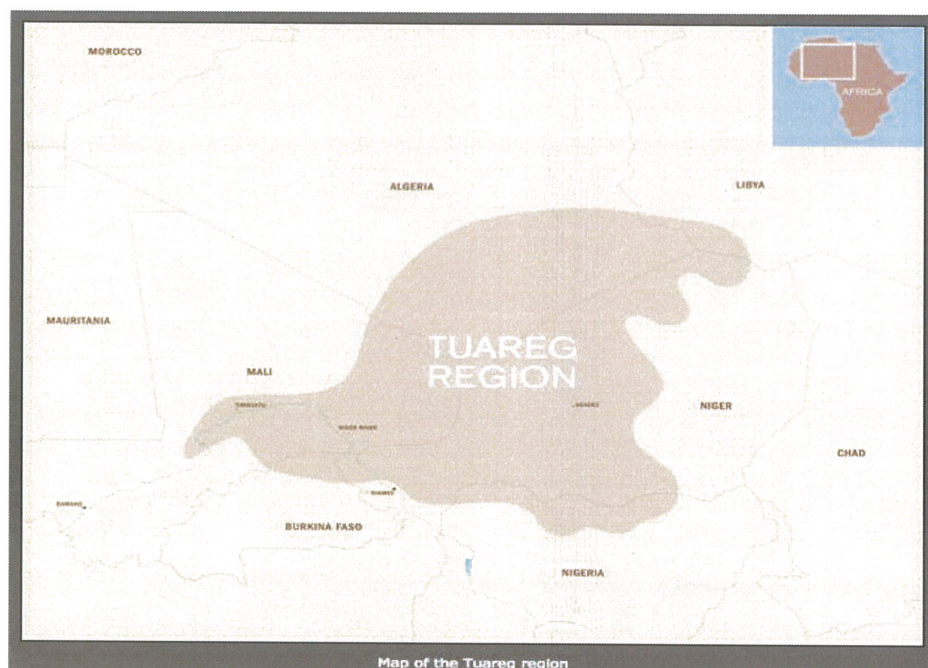[435] Ibid.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and David Cummingham. Transnational Linkages and Civil War Interactions, *Typescript, University of Essex.* Pg 6.

5.2 Transnational Ethnic Linkages

5.2.1 Mali:


Map of the Tuareg region

Source: Stephen A. Emerson, "Desert Insurgency: Lessons from the Third Touareg rebellion, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22:4 (2011) 671

The above map shows Tuareg inhabitancies across West Africa; they have risen up against both governments of Mali and Niger. The Malian Tuareg rebelled and clashed with the Malian government in 2006 but instead of using force like in the second rebellion, former President Toure used diplomacy; A year later in 2007, a deal was signed between the government and some of the Tuareg tribes. As fighting raged between the splinter Tuareg fighters and the government, another Tuareg group in Niger Republic also launched attacks on government positions using arms seized by Malian Tuareg groups (see chapter 2). The important fact to note here is that a revolt had broken out in both Mali and Niger at the same time by similar ethnic groups fighting for similar causes; this is a very good example of a 'hybrid civil war', the type that can spill across national borders because of the existence of "ethnic linkage" between the groups. Although the focus of the research is on extremist groups, Tuareg as a rebel group has been infiltrated by AQIM and are deeply imbedded within their society; This blurred the line between

them, and made it difficult to distinguish a jihadi from a local Tuareg fighter. There are suggestions that after the French intervention in Mali, AQIM has gone underground and has probably relocated to Libya where the state structure has crumbled.

5.2.2 Nigeria:
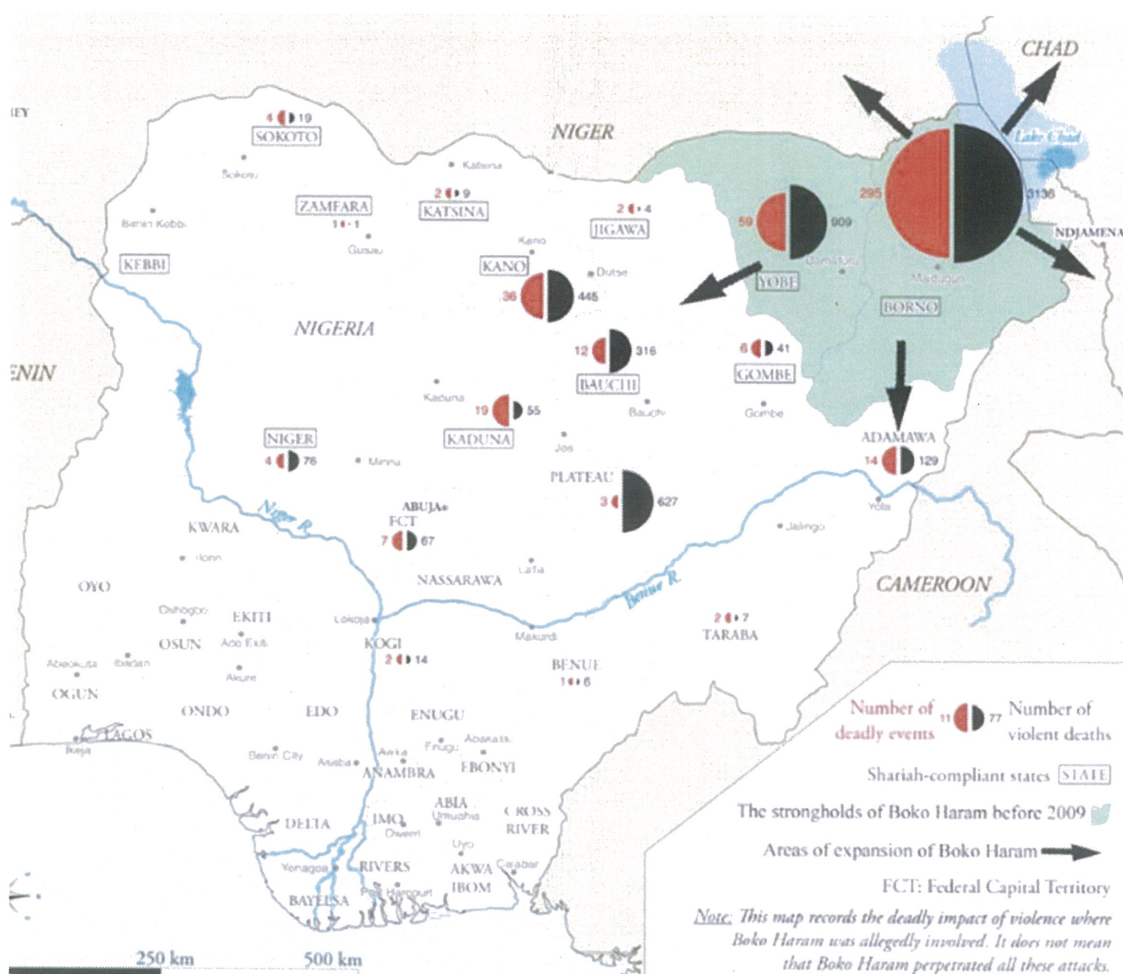
Source: Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (Ed). *Boko Haram*: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria, *French Institute for Research in Africa.* 2014.

Boko Haram's birthplace is in the north-eastern state of Borno, a state bordering Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republic. Between 2001 and 2005, ethnic conflict between Hausa-Fulani herdsmen and Mambila farmers drove the Hausa-Fulani population to flee

in masse to the neighbouring Cameroon.[438] *Boko Haram* is in the centre of a largely Hausa and Kanuri-speaking population with linguistic, cultural and ethnic ties to its neighbours.[439] The second highest-ranking member in the *Boko Haram* leadership was a Chadian called Mamman Nur,[440] and there was evidence of foreign fighters in *Boko Haram* videos mostly Chadian youths but sometimes, Tuareg fighters as well. It is important to note that a number of *Boko Haram* members are either foreign born or have travelled outside the country for a long period of time;[441] this includes Mamman Nur who reportedly went to Somalia in 2009, returned in 2011 and masterminded the UN building attack in Abuja.[442] Abubakar Shekau also travelled and spent some time in Mali;[443] all these ethnic linkages increase conflict spill over as seen in the *Boko Haram* attacks in Cameroon, Chad and Mali. The Islamist group *Boko Haram* had strongholds in both Cameroon and Niger and had conducted recruitment campaigns;[444] cross-border ethnic and family ties helped fuel the insurgency and this was obvious when hospitals in southern Niger Republic were unknowingly treating *Boko Haram* fighters.[445] Likewise in Cameroon, *Boko Haram* had for years infiltrated communities and business by expanding their illicit activities there.[446]

This reinforces Gleditsch' observation that transnational ties related to ethnicity are not limited to a single state, but across boundaries are likely to influence the willingness of groups to mobilize for violent conflict. Hence grudges between ethnic groups against a central government will escalate in violence.

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[438] Blessing U. Mberu and Roland Pongou. Nigeria: Multiple Forms of Mobility in Africa's Giant, *Migration Policy Institute*. N.p, 30 Jun 2010, 26 Oct 2015.

[439] Benjamin S. Eveslage. Clarifying Boko Haram's Transnational Intentions, Using Content Analysis of Public Statements in 2012. *Terrorism Research Initiative*. N.p, 2012. 26 Oct 2015.

[440] J. Peter Pham. Boko Haram's Evolving Threat. *African Centre for Strategic Studies*. Apr 2012. 6.

[441] Benjamin S. Eveslage. Clarifying Boko Haram's Transnational Intentions, Using Content Analysis of Public Statements in 2012. *Terrorism Research Initiative*. N.p, 2012. 26 Oct 2015.

[442] J. Peter Pham. Boko Haram's Evolving Threat. *African Centre for Strategic Studies*. Apr 2012. 6.

[443] Judit Barna, Insecurity in Context: The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, *Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies*. 2014. 11

[444] Ibid.

[445] Ibid.

[446] Ibid.

5.3 Border Security Dynamics

Border security dynamics played a significant role in bolstering regional extremist groups and, as AQIM and *Boko Haram* are located near international borders, they increased chances of a spill-over into neighbouring states. It is seen as a strategic move by extremist groups because not only does it allow them to conduct activities in bordering countries, but it also enabled them manoeuvre between boundaries and escape attacks by security forces since they know pursuing fighters across international borders is a violation of the states' sovereignty and will be met with fierce resistance.[447] Organized criminals and extremist groups alike have exploited the porosity of the ECOWAS borders, which aids in reinforcing their strength.

5.3.1 Mali:

On January 2013, an Algerian gas plant in In-Amenas, close to the Libyan border was occupied by a group sent by Belmokhtar;[448] "the attackers came from not only Mali and Algeria, but also Egypt and Tunisia...several dozen jihadists from Derna, Benghazi and Ajdabiya in north-eastern Libya travelled to Mali to fight with AQIM... after Belmokhtar established contact with Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi in 2012."[449] Tagged as a reaction to French intervention in Mali, the attack carried a strong political dimension because it was aimed at the Algerian gas industry and Western presence in the Sahara.[450] Likewise, a twin attack in Niger carried out by a group called "Mourabitoun"[451] also ordered by Belmokhtar, struck a uranium mine in Arlit and an army base in Agadez in May 2013[452] and with these attacks, Belmokhtars' claim to leadership among the regions extremist groups was emphasized.[453] These attacks were without a doubt political in nature but most importantly, it is obvious that these extremist groups have integrated themselves transnationally throughout the region and, to a large extent, this was made

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[447] Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and David Cummingham. Transnational Linkages and Civil War Interactions, *Typescript, University of Essex.* Pg 6.
[448] Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds), Jihadism in Africa: Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances, *German Institute for International and Security Affairs.* 2015. 78
[449]Ibid.
[450]Ibid.
[451]Ibid.
[452]Ibid.
[453]Ibid.

possible only after the takeover of northern Mali. The collapse of northern Mali allowed regional extremist groups like *Boko Haram* to use it as a refuge and training ground.[454]

The French intervention in Mali destabilized and weakened extremist groups in northern Mali, breaking most of the alliances they established and probably forced many of them to relocate to neighbouring countries like Libya where the government had collapsed. This however does not mean extremist groups have been completely expelled from northern Mali, but as long as the region remains prone to conflict with a destabilized Libya, extremist groups will be able to mobilise their deep rooted bases; for example, "late 2014 saw a resurgence of attacks by MUJAO in the Niger-Mali border region and AQIM splinter groups around Timbuktu, suggesting that the groups were regenerating. Their stubborn resistance demonstrated how deeply rooted the jihadist groups have become locally."[455]

The movement of large numbers of jihadi fighters and weapons from Libya to Mali is a perfect scenario that magnifies border porosity within the Sahel. This is significant because Mali does not share a border with Libya; therefore, the ability for so many Tuareg fighters and Libyan military equipment to flow from Libya to Mali, zigzagging through Niger and Algerian territory, reinforces the porosity of borders in the region. This dynamic was also seen during the In Amenas gas plant attack in southern Algeria (see chapter 3).

AQIM also levied taxes on goods transiting their areas of control and with collaboration from the Tuareg, coordinated the movement of undocumented workers from the northern edge of the African savannah (Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso) to intermediary cities of the Saharan region[456] from where they find transportation to their final destinations (usually Europe). By imposing taxes on local tribes, executing justice on their own terms and carrying out planned attacks and activities such as kidnapping of foreigners directly or in collaboration with local Tuareg tribes, AQIM is clearly functioning as a government which poses serious regional threats to state sovereignty.

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[454] Ibid.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Ibid.

MUJAO, a splinter cell of the AQIM made up of marginalized black African members from AQIM,[457] were reported to use English and Hausa language in some of their first videos. These languages are not generally used in Mali but in Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.[458] With a number of sightings of Nigerian based *Boko Haram* group,[459] in Mali with groups like MUJAO, it reaffirms the border porosity dynamic showing the movement of fighter from Nigeria to Mali whom do not share a common border.

Smuggling cocaine from South America and coordinating the trafficking of illegal migrants from the ECOWAS through the Sahara by AQIM (see chapter 2) also brings border porosity (airspace and land) into perspective.

5.3.2 Nigeria:

Boko Haram, from inception, has always spanned across borders making it as international as Nigeria's north-eastern borders are,[460] hence heightening insecurity in the country as international boundaries are difficult to monitor and control. The combinations of poorly trained, under-resourced and underpaid border policing agencies and agents weakened state capacity. Also, the lack of boundary demarcations and ineffective cooperation and intelligence exchange between the ECOWAS opened a gateway for arms proliferation with severe security implications for the country. Hosting over 70% of about eight million illegal weapons in West Africa,[461]transnational recruiting operation by *Boko Haram* and porous borders, helped sustain the Nigerian insurgency.

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[457] Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and David Cummingham. Transnational Linkages and Civil War Interactions, *Typescript, University of Essex.* 6.
[458] Ibid.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis. *Chatham House.* Sept 2013. 9
[461] I.C. Achumba and O.S. Ighomereho, M.O.M. Akpor-Robaro. Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development.* 2013. 82,

The Nigerien army arrested and released Abta Hamidine, a former Arab rebel leader and Aghali Alambo a former Nigerian Tuareg rebel leader in Gaddafi's army,[462] after the army intercepted their weapons convoy from Libya destined for northern Mali. They were later released in what seems to be an attempt to prevent reprisal attacks from associates of the rebel leaders.[463] In January 2012, seven *Boko Haram* members with names and contact details of AQIM fighters were arrested in Niger after receiving training in Mali;[464] this shows the ease at which fighters travel between West African countries enabling the exchange of resources, ideas and training. According to the Nigerian Immigration Service, 1,487 illegal and 84 legal smuggling routes had been discovered;[465] the use of these routes by *Boko Haram* members for their logistics cannot be dismissed.

The Chibok schoolgirls that were kidnapped are yet to be found. The government claimed that some of the girls were moved to other *Boko Haram* camps in Cameroon or Chad; however, there is no concrete evidence to prove this. What has been proven how relatively easy *Boko Haram* members were able to infiltrate neighbouring states to carry out attacks; the kidnapping of seven French nationals, ten Chinese, the wife of the Vice Prime Minister in Cameroon[466] and some failed raids in Niger, are concrete instances on cross-border activities carried out by *Boko Haram* members, which to a large extent, is associated with the regions porous borders.

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[462] Wolfram Lacher, Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region, *Carnegie Endowment for international peace*. (2012): 11.
[463] Ibid.
[464] J. Peter Pham. Boko Haram's Evolving Threat. *African Centre for Strategic Studies.* Apr 2012. 7.
[465] Ioannis Mantzikos (Ed). *Boko Haram Anatomy of a Crisis.* Bristol: E-international Relations, 2013. . 68
[466] "Boko Haram Kidnaps Wife of Cameroon Vice PM." *Aljazeera.* N.p., 22 July 2014. Web. 12 Oct. 2015.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In summary, chapter one is a basic introduction of the research and its structures while chapter two discusses the dynamics of transnational organized crime in West Africa in a thematic manner for a better understanding of the region bringing into perspective a background history on Mali and Nigeria and their struggles with extremist groups in a timeline fashion. It also discusses the structures of TOC networks and their basic tenets. Chapter three discusses the geopolitics of West Africa specifically with regards to the region as a major hub for transnational organized criminal activities especially smuggling. The chapter proved that West Africa has been a major transit hub for South-American drug cartels whose associates in West Africa move their drugs through the Sahel/Sahara eventually to Europe where they are worth a fortune. The trafficking is handled by criminal groups who are able to acquire large sums of money and arms to carry out criminal activities or pursue their political agenda as seen with the Tuareg rebels in Mali. It also argues that the Tuareg in their capacity as inhabitants of the desert are deeply involved in different forms of trafficking across the desert.

The chapter looked in-depth at the internal insurgencies in Mali and Nigeria for the readers better understanding of each country's' setting. This chapter introduced individual rebel/extremist groups that have plagued Mali and Nigeria over the years. It discussed the four Tuareg rebellions and their grievances towards the Malian government alongside the encroachment of Jihadi fighters from Algeria into northern Mali. With regards to Nigeria, the chapter looks at the oil rich Niger Delta and the insurgency that crippled Nigeria's oil production. It also looks into the prehistoric events after independence that led to the formation of the first extremist sect in northern Nigeria, whose ideological blueprint is used by *Boko Haram*; *Boko Haram*'s formation and evolution was also discussed.

Chapter four in line with the research looks at some domestic factors present in Mali and Nigeria that bolster extremist groups. It discusses political corruption, socioeconomic deficits and underfunded armies as some of the elements responsible for fuelling the insurgencies in those countries putting in perspective the role of corruption in

fuelling these insurgencies; the chapter also discussed the adoption of transnational organized criminal activities by insurgent groups such as kidnappings and smuggling to sustain themselves.

This research was aimed at analysing on the domestic and regional context of West Africa, what combination of factors aid in bolstering extremist groups in West Africa. The research was able to show the evolving scope of extremist groups into hybrid groups; as part of their evolution, extremist groups that do not form alliances with organized criminal networks have absorbed criminal activities as an essence to their existence. The need for extremist groups to have in-house revenue generating capacity is vital to their existence due to lack of state or individual sponsorship, this has forced them to engage in criminal activities as a source of funding. Likewise, organized criminal groups adopt certain tactics (terror) during their activities but this is usually limited, used only when necessary; although extremist groups seem more likely to evolve into hybrids; without immediate attention given to this dangerous interplay between these groups, the possibility of seeing sophisticated transnational criminal-extremist cartels in the future cannot be ruled out.

In the analysis of domestic factors that contribute to the strengthening of extremist groups in Mali and Nigeria, all the three elements political corruption, socioeconomic deficits and underfunded armies were present in both contexts; since all these were results of widespread systematic corruption in the governments, no significant progress can be recorded without proper reforms to tackle this predicament. Socioeconomic deficits lead to socioeconomic frustration and although this research does not confirm these deficits as leading causes of extremism in Mali and Nigeria, they are vital mechanisms that fuel the insurgencies. Extreme poverty provokes and promotes violence against a government that has lost sync with its populace and sown very little benefits, the lack of strong impartial establishments to execute checks and balances on government officials and security agencies/agents have created an environment of impunity and bad governance that fuels these insurgencies. The inability of politicians to adequately allocate resources to the north especially in Mali but also in Nigeria has left them

marginalised deprived of benefits from government funded infrastructure and development projects.

On the transnationality of extremist insurgencies in Mali and Nigeria, the linkages discussed in chapter four reinforce the dynamic of conflict spill over across borders. The case of Mali although limited in literature, showed the evolution of an extremist group (GSPC later renamed AQIM) from Algeria that spilled into northern Mali and later hijacked a popular Tuareg uprising to solidify its ground in northern Mali. In the case of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, its evolution from a local to national to regional threat has caused great concern within affected states. The inability of Nigeria to properly address the insurgency and also possible lack of support from locals has pushed the group to expand into neighbouring Chad, Cameroon and Niger to recruit and bolster its strength; this expansion includes getting support from regional extremist groups such as AQIM and Al Shabab. Border porosity in West Africa is a major mechanism that fuels insurgencies in the sub region; the ability of people to move freely unchecked between borders had serious detrimental effect on the fight against extremist insurgencies in the region. Extremist groups were able to reinforce their weapons and fighters regardless of their location due to easy mobility between states; seen as either the inability of governments to patrol and safeguard their borders or as a wider West African heritage of arbitrary borders by colonial masters, the fact remains that ECOWAS has made it easier for people to move around in order to facilitate trade but without prioritizing their regional security especially on border control.

As at time of writing, both Mali and Nigeria had made significant advances in their war with extremism groups. The French intervention in Mali in 2013, degraded and pushed out AQIM and their elements from captured territories but Mali's liberation is the beginning of a possibly, long war with extremist groups. Mali still witnessed attacks by Islamist group members in towns and cities; On November 20, 2015, Islamist gunmen attacked the Radisson Blue hotel in Bamako (Mali's capital) killing a number of people.[467] AQIM might have been driven out and defeated but these attacks prove that they still maintain a covert presence around Mali. Nigeria has also marked significant

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[467] "Mali Attack: Special Forces Storm Hotel to Free Hostages - BBC News." BBC News. November 20, 2015.

successes in its fight against *Boko Haram* militants. Most, if not all the towns *Boko Haram* once controlled have been recaptured by the Nigerian military. Certainly, the Nigerian government have stepped up their fight against *Boko Haram.* The military were able to degrade and capture some top *Boko Haram* leaders; they had been forced back into their stronghold deep in the *Sambisa* forest but occasional suicide attacks aimed at the public still occur. The new regime of President Muhammadu Buhari has promised to end the *Boko Haram* insurgency but this is a war that cannot be won using military tactics alone. Nigeria battled the *Maitatsine* sect in the 1980s and defeated them militarily but decades later, *Boko Haram* emerged and this was only possible because the government failed to address other socioeconomic issues, which are the root causes of the conflict. Regardless of the trajectory the fight against Boko Haram and AQIM, these groups will continue to pose a significant threat to the regional stability of West Africa. The populace of both countries are relatively frustrated with their governments and the ability of these governments to address the underlying grievances and a total reversal of current dynamics is the best way to tackle the insurgency. These governments must reassess the mandates of their armed forces and better cooperation and assistance from the international community is needed. These conflicts must be fought with pure sincerity and the armed forces must discipline themselves on making the protection of civilian lives and property a high priority. Although relative stability has been restored in both Mali and Nigeria, the psychological trauma inflicted on the populace by these groups is one that will not be easily forgotten. The battle against extremist groups may have been won at the moment but the war is not over.

Limitations to the Research

Obtaining relevant information on West Africa was difficult especially on Mali. Existing literature on Mali regardless of the topic was extremely limited especially with regards to their military; likewise literature on the geopolitics of the Mali proved to be hard primarily because of the language barrier since Mali is a Francophone country. Gathering useful statistics on fatalities resulting from the insurgencies in Mali and Nigeria was difficult therefore reliance on public statements by governments and news media outlets was adopted.

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