WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF AL QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB AND
WHERE DOES IT DERIVE ITS STRENGTH IN THE SAHELIAN-SAHARAN
REGION: A CASE STUDY OF NORTHERN MALI

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Strategic Studies

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2012-01

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 30-05-2012	2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)* AUG 2011 – JUN 2012

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

What Is The Extent of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Where Does It Derive Its Strength in the Sahelian-Saharan Region: A Case Study of Northern Mali

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

M. Al Moustapha Touré, Major, Malian Army

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
What Is The Extent of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Where Does It Derive Its Strength in the Sahelian-Saharan Region: A Case Study of Northern Mali, by MJR Mohamed Al Moustapha Touré, 131 pages.

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The Author used the RAND study's variable of ungovernability and conduciveness to analyze AQIM in northern Mali. The importance of kinship relationship in Somalia supported the emergence of a new variable called "Fortified Relationships". The objective of the study was to use the RAND's variables to do an analysis of AQIM's center of gravity. The conduciveness variables constitute AQIM's center of gravity critical capabilities and "Fortified Relationships" constitute its critical vulnerabilities. This emergent variable of "Fortified Relationships" seems to be a critical factor, at least in an African context, and warrants further study.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Ansar Al Dine, Ungovernability, Conduciveness, Fortified Relationships

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)	(U)	130	19b. PHONE NUMBER *(include area code)*

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major M. Al Moustapha Touré

Thesis Title: What Is The Extent of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Where Does It Derive Its Strength in the Sahelian-Saharan Region: A Case Study of Northern Mali

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ABSTRACT

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While Algeria was facing internal security issues with illegal Islamist armed groups in the 1990s, some Sahelian-Saharan states were reducing their institutional presence in their border region with Algeria. Mali was demilitarizing its northern region in application of the peace agreement with the Arab-Tuareg rebellion, opening a large corridor to all kinds of smugglings and illegal activities.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This last decade has seen the Sahelian-Saharan region being reported by the media as the new sanctuary of the terrorist group Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The Sahelian-Saharan region, located in northern Africa, is bounded in the north by the Mediterranean Sea, and in the south by the Sahel region roughly along the 14th parallel North. In the west, it is bounded by the Atlantic Sea, and Egypt in the east. Northern Mali, located in the western part of the Sahelian-Saharan region, is regularly cited as being a sanctuary for terrorists affiliated with Al Qaeda since it has one of the world's largest ungoverned spaces. The region is also characterized by endemic rebellions against local governments as in Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania. The different peace agreements, insecurity, and economic concerns of the local governments have led to the withdrawal of the armed forces in the region. Consequently, security has decreased, school teachers, health care personnel, public administration and business men abandoned many areas that were considered unsafe. As nature hates empty spaces, different criminal and rebel groups filled them. Armed groups from these former rebellions progressively replaced the regional security forces. Each of these groups controls its own space.

Over the past six years, this expansion of the relatively ungoverned region of northwestern Africa has increasingly become of concern to many key members of the international community. This is due to the gradual upsurge of AQIM activities in the region, especially in Mali and Mauritania. The Government of Mali is attempting to develop and implement a regional strategy to deal with this challenge. The purpose of

this study is to analyze the phenomenon and then make recommendations to a

comprehensive strategy in dealing with it.
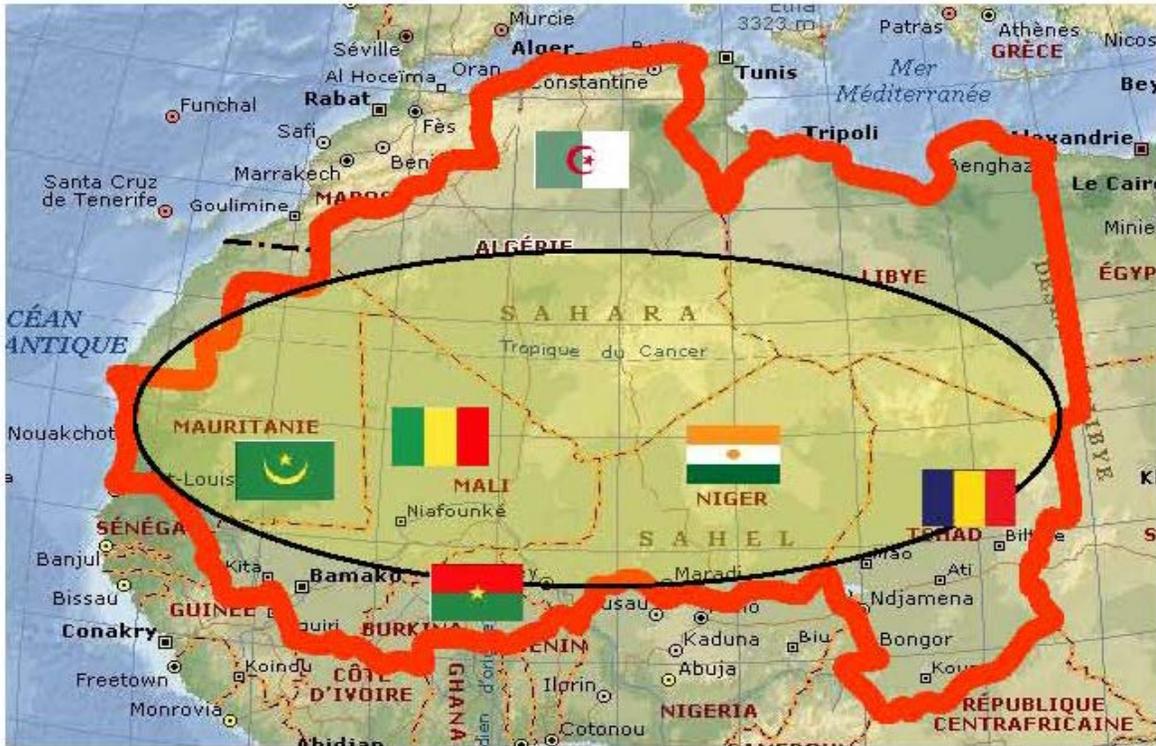
Figure 1.   Map of AQMI area of operation and the countries members of CEMOC

Source: Map overlay was created by author. Map obtained from Microsoft Encarta
Collection, "Map of north and west Africa." Note: Comité d'Etat-Major Operationnel
Conjoint (CEMOC) is a multinational Command Post located in Tamanrasset (Algeria)
and regrouping Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. It was set up in 2010 to coordinate
the military operations against AQIM in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

This study will conduct a qualitative case study comparing AQIM against the

evolution of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas

Revolucionarias de Colombia-FARC) and will analyze the cultural similarities of

northern Mali with Somalia. It will also assess the geographic and human aspects of the

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Sahelian-Saharan region which make it conducive to the establishment of AQIM. The use

of a qualitative study can often lead to discovering a new variable which could be

significant in better analyzing the phenomenon in question.

<div align="center">Background</div>

This specific study is focused on the AQIM groups active in the Sahelian-Saharan

region, particularly in northern Mali. The AQIM appeared for the first time in 2007.

However, it was a splinter group from several other Algerian organizations such as the

Armed Islamic Group (AIG)[1] and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).

In order to understand AQIM's historical evolution, some explanation is necessary.

The historical roots of AQIM come from the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF), an

Algerian Islamist political party which won the local and regional elections in 1990 and

1991.[2] The military leadership nullified the results of the elections and conducted a

severe repression against the militants of the Islamic Salvation Front, forcing many of

them to operate underground. Consequently, the Armed Islamic Group (AIG), a new

insurgent group, appeared in 1992 with a clear choice of the indiscriminate use of

violence to overthrow the government. From 1992 to 1998, the AIG conducted several

deadly guerilla and terrorist acts which alienated its popular support. The Salafist Group

for Predication and Combat (GSPC) emerged from the AIG in reaction to the civilian

massacres it considered illegitimate in regards to the Islamic laws.

The GSPC would re-appear in 2003 with the taking of thirty-two European

hostages bringing a focus on the forgotten northern region of Mali. Algerian security

forces liberated sixteen of the hostages in southern Algeria, one died of dehydration in

northern Mali, and the others were freed after several months of negotiations with some

Malian mediators. The GSPC used to make incursions in northern Mali before 2003, through one of its leaders, Mokhtar Belmokhtar.[3] The GSPC defined itself as "a military organization, following the Salafist creed and ideology, fighting in jihad against the Algerian regime."[4] That statement confirms the GSPC's will to continue the insurgency against the Algerian government and its attachment to the Salafi-Jihadist ideology.

Salafism is a Muslim movement belonging to the Hanbali theological school. It is a very conservative theology which preaches the return to a strict application of the Koran and the Sunna (Islamic traditions) without any interpretation. This Salafi-Jihadi ideology was developed by Sayyd Qutb between 1954 and 1964.[5] The ideology considers that the religion being ignored by a government makes the regime apostate. Therefore, Muslims living in such a country are obligated to carry out a jihad to replace the apostate government with an Islamic state. Finally, the claim of Salafi Jihadist ideology by the GSPC confirms that it is effectively an insurrectional group seeking to overthrow the Algerian government in order to establish an Islamic state.

In September 2006, the GSPC joined the Al-Qaeda network and changed its name to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in January 2007. That was a considerable shift for the GSPC. The change was not only about the name, but also its status. It meant that the Algerian Salafi Jihadist insurgent group would become a transnational anti-western insurgency group belonging to Al Qaeda's network. That same year, northern Mali and the Sahelian-Saharan region would become a major theatre of operations for AQIM.

Two AQIM's Katiba (battalion, in Arabic) are currently active out of the Algerian territory. A Katiba is an autonomous AQIM unit in charge of an area of responsibility. A

Katiba has under his control a Seryia. Seryia (company, in Arabic) is the smallest operational AQIM's unit. Seryias are extremely flexible. They do not have a dedicated number of personnel and vehicles. Two Seryias are active in the Sahelian-Saharan region. Some other Katiba are active in southern Algeria but they have not been identified in any activity in the rest of the region to date.

By 2007, AQIM conducted multiple kidnappings in Tunisia, Niger, Mauritania, Mali and Algeria. All the western hostages had been brought into northern Mali. The first case occurred in the spring of 2003 with the kidnapping of thirty-two European citizens by the GSPC.[6] Fifteen of this first group of western hostages to be brought into northern Mali by the group led by Amari Saifi, alias Abdel Razak El Para, chief of GSPC's Saharan region. In January 2004, GSPC's activities along the Mali-Mauritania border forced the famous Paris-to-Dakar race to alter its initial route.[7] The Sahelian-Saharan region had been the theater of several GSPC-AQIM's activities ranging from ambushes and attacks against local security forces to kidnappings and assassinations.

In March 2008, two Austrians were kidnapped in southern Tunisia. They were released in northern Mali in November. In December 2008, two UN envoys were kidnapped in Niger. They were released in northern Mali in April 2009. On January 22, 2009, two Swiss, one German and a Briton were kidnapped near the Mali-Niger border.[8] The Briton was assassinated on May 31, 2009, after the expiration of an ultimatum asking to free an Al Qaeda terrorist in custody in England. In November 2009, a French citizen was kidnapped in northern Mali. He was released in February 2010. Three Spaniard volunteers were kidnapped in Mauritania in November 2009. They were liberated in northern Mali in August 2010. A seventy-eight-old French man and his driver were

seized in southern Algeria in April 2010. He was reported to have been executed on July 25 in northern Mali after a Franco-Mauritanian attempt to liberate him. Seven foreign workers of AREVA, a French energy technology company, were kidnapped in Niger in September 2010. Three of them were released in February 2011. Two other French citizens were kidnapped in Niger in January 2011. They died a few hours after an unsuccessful intervention by French Special Forces along the Mali-Niger border. An Italian woman was kidnapped in southeastern Algeria in February 2011. Her location is still unknown.[9] The Ambassador of the POLISARIO (POLISARIO is the southern Moroccan government in exile in Algeria) in Algiers accused AQIM of kidnapping two Spaniards and an Italian in the vicinity of Tindouf, southern Algeria, in October 22, 2011.[10] Two other French geologists were kidnaped on November 24, 2011 in their hotel in Hombori in the center of Mali. The following day in Timbuktu, two Australians and a Dutch were kidnapped and a German tourist killed while he was attempting to resist. AQIM claimed responsibility for these two kidnappings on December 10, 2011. However, a dissident group called *Jamat Tawhid Wal Jihad fi Garbi Afriqqiya* [Movement Unity for Jihad in West Africa], claimed detaining the Europeans kidnapped near Tindouf. Many observers reported that ransoms are the main source of financing for AQIM, hence, the probable use of kidnapping as a major activity. The Algerian government estimates that more than 90 percent of AQIM's budget comes from ransoms.[11]

Besides these kidnappings, AQIM conducted several violent actions in Mali in 2009 and 2011. A group suspected to belong to AQIM assassinated a Malian Intelligence officer in his house in Timbuktu on June 10, 2009.[12] A Few weeks later, the main AQIM

unit operating in the Mali-Mauritania border attacked a Malian military patrol, causing twenty-two casualties. The sudden increase of AQIM activities in northern Mali called for more focus on the region. The President of Mali, Amadou Toumani Toure, appealed for a regional conference on the Sahelian-Saharan threats that had increased since 2006. The first meeting was held on August 12, 2009 in Algeria. That meeting involved the General Chiefs of Staff of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, to draft a regional counterterrorism strategy.[13] A combined multinational command post CEMOC (*Comité d'Etat-Major Opérationnel Conjoint*) was set up in Tamanrasset, in southern Algeria, to plan and monitor regional military operations against terrorism in the Sahelian-Saharan region. Planning officers of the "field" are composing the CEMOC personnel. The "Field" represents Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, the four countries were AQIM is the most active. Furthermore, Malian government implemented the multinational military operations with a national interagency program called "Programme Spécial pour la Paix et le Développement du Nord"[14] (PSPSDN) on October 22, 2010. This translates into "Special Program for Peace and Development in the North."

Above all, AQIM is a metamorphism of the Islamic Salvation Army (ISA), the military wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF). The Islamic Salvation Army (ISA) evolved into Armed Islamic Group (AIG), Salafist Group for Predication and Combat (GSPC), and finally Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The GSPC established links with Al Qaeda and became part of the network in September 2006. Before 2006, the Islamist insurgency was particularly violent in northern Algeria while the southern part was mostly a smuggling zone. After September 2006, AQIM made a shift in much more transnational direct actions with a particular interest in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

Kidnappings are the main activities of the Katiba in charge of the Sahelian-Saharan region.[15]

In response to AQIM's activity, and the accumulation of many other transnational threats, the Government of Mali developed a major national interagency strategy for governance, counterterrorism, and wide area security. This new strategy, known as the PSPSDN, reinforces the bilateral and multilateral collaboration between Mali and the other nations. The multinational combined command post in Tamanrasset is the beginning of an integrated regional response to the terrorist threat, the first of this kind in the region.[16] Despite all the national and regional efforts, AQIM continues to pose a threat to the regional and international security.

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this study will be to compare the case studies of the FARC and AQIM, and analyze them through the analytical framework used in 2007 RAND study on *Ungoverned Territories*. The analysis will compare the evolution of the two different groups in Colombia and Mali. With Colombia's strategy in dealing with FARC being viewed as quite successful, the goal is to determine the differences between the two strategies. The Somali society's case, by its cultural similarities with some northern Mali's tribes, may support the sociological piece of the study.

<u>The Issues</u>

The issues are the possible destabilization of the Sahelian-Saharan region by AQMI while the different Sahelian countries are still making efforts to develop their economy and democratic governance.

The problem is to understand which variables the local governments can act upon to leverage regional security.

Primary Research Question

How is the Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly northern Mali, conducive for AQIM to establish itself and operate out of the region and what could be done to minimize its presence and influence by determining its center of gravity.

Secondary Research Questions

To further investigate the primary research question, the following secondary questions need to be addressed:

1. What characteristics make northern Mali a non-governed area attractive to the AQIM?

2. What strategic interest does AQIM have in northern Mali and the surrounding region?

3. For which reasons do some local tribes support AQIM?

4. Why is AQIM transitioning to governed spaces, much more to the south-east of its traditional area of operation?

5. What is the current AQIM strategy in northern Mali?

6. What changes could be made to that strategy to make it more effective?

Assumptions

The researcher sees the following assumptions as being valid for his thesis:

1. Preexisting social, geographical, economical, and political conditions favor

   AQIM's attraction to some of the populations in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

   These conditions will likely continue to exist.

2. The local governments don't have the means to control their Saharan regions.

3. The recurrent instability characterized by the rebellions in Chad, Mali, Niger,

   and the insurrection in Libya strengthen all the regional insurgent and criminal

   groups.

<u>Definition of Terms</u>

<u>Center of Gravity</u>: A COG is a source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. An objective is always linked to a COG. In identifying COGs it is important to remember that irregular warfare focuses on legitimacy and influence over a population, unlike traditional warfare, which employs direct military confrontation to defeat an adversary's armed forces, destroy an adversary's war-making capacity, or seize or retain territory to force a change in an adversary's government or policies.[17]

<u>Da'wa</u>: "Da'wa" literally means "appeal" (to become Muslim). Some radical Islamic organizations and networks concentrate on the jihad (in the sense of armed combat) and some others focus on "Da'wa" (as the propagation of the radical-Islamic ideology), yet some other groups combine both. The Da'wa-oriented forms of radical Islam are not necessarily violent by nature, but nevertheless they generate important security risks. Da'wa is usually interpreted as "re-Islamisation" of Muslim minorities in the West. These minorities are seen as "oppressed brothers" who should be liberated from the "yoke of Western brainwashing." The groups focusing on Da'wa follow a long-term

strategy of continuous influencing based on extreme puritanical, intolerant and anti-Western ideas. They want Muslims in the West to reject Western values and standards, propagating extreme isolation from Western society and often intolerance towards other groups in society. They also encourage these Muslims to (covertly) develop parallel structures in society and to take the law into their own hands. What they intend is that Muslims in the West should turn their back on the non-Islamic governments and instead set up their own autonomous power structures based on specific interpretation of the Sharia.[18]

Indicator: An indicator is an item of information that provides insight into a measure of effectiveness or measure of performance. Indicators use available information to inform a specific measure of performance or measure of effectiveness. A single indicator can inform multiple measures of performance and measures of effectiveness. Valid indicators are measurable, collectable, and relevant to a specific time.[19]

Insurgency: The US Department of Defense defines insurgency as the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority.[20]

Katiba: Means Battalion in Arabic. Katiba is the highest autonomous unit in the GSPC-AQIM in charge of an area or an activity. Two khatiba are active in the Sahelian-Saharan region. They are Katiba Al Mulathamun and Katiba Al Fatihine (former Tarik Ibn Ziad). Mokhtar Belmokhtar leads Al Mulathamun and Mohammed Ghadir leads Al Fatihine.

Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs): A *measure of effectiveness* is a criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied

to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. MOEs help measure changes in conditions, both positive a negative. MOESs help to answer the question "Are we doing the right thing?"[21]

Measures of Performance (MOPs): A measure of performance is a criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment. MOPs help answer questions such as "Was the action taken?" or "Were the tasks completed to standard?" A MOP confirms or denies that a task has been properly performed. MOPs are commonly found and tracked at all levels in execution matrixes. MOPs are also heavily used to evaluate training. MOPs help to answer the question "Are we doing things right?"[22]

Radical Islamism: The war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in 1979 brought together, for the first time, all sorts of Islamic groups together to under the umbrella of jihad. Radical Islamist groups from many Islamic countries, including Egypt and Algeria along with Wahhabi and salafist fighters from diverse Muslim regions, including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, fought alongside the Afghan mujahidin. The Arab Afghans blended together Salafism of Abdallah Azzam, the Wahhabism of Osama Bin Laden, and the radical Islamism of Ayman al-Zawahiri.[23]

Razzia: (Plural rezzu) are raids conducted by nomadic tribes against populated areas for economic or political reasons or vengeance.

Salafism: Salafism is a very diversified and complicated ideologically and religiously motivated trend and is thus not constructed by one unified discourse or group or authority. Salafism started as a trend that finds in the concept of *al-salaf al-salih* (the pious predecessors) the instrument to either understand the true interpretation and

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practice of Islam or to reject the cumulative experience of the Muslim community. All formations of salafism are based on reforming individuals and communities on the basis of returning to the pure Islam of the Qur'an and prophetic s*unna* as understood and practiced by *al-salaf al-salih*.[24]

Seryia: Means Company in Arabic. Seryia is the smallest autonomous tactical GSPC-AQIM unit. It is usually at maximum strength a roughly 40-man size unit with approximately seven vehicles (Toyota station L200). AQIM deliberately choose agility, speed, and maximum fire power in the Seryia reinforced these last months with Libyan military equipment. The two Seryias in the Sahelian-Saharan regions are *Seryia Al Vurkane* and *Seryia Al Ansar*. The Seryia Al Vurkane is led by Yahia Abu Hamam (Algerian citizen) and the Seryia Al Ansar is led by Abdel Karim Ag Mama (a Malian from the Erryakane franction of the Ifoghas tribe). A third Serya, Jamat Tawhid wal Jihad fi Garbi Afriqqiya, claimed to be a splinter group from AQIM.

State: An independent political entity that controls a geographical territory with clear boundaries and that defends itself from external threats with an army and from internal disorder with police. States have specialized institutions to raise revenue by collecting taxes and to carry out other public duties, such as maintaining roads and markets. All those tasks become possible because the state monopolizes the legitimate use of physical force.[25]

Ungoverned territory: RAND defines ungoverned territory both with respect to physical space and to the level of state control, the degree to which the state has control of normal government functions. Ungoverned territories can be failed or failing states; poorly controlled land or maritime border or airspace: or areas within otherwise viable

states where the central government's authority does not extend. Ungoverned territories can thus be found along a continuum of state control.[26]

Limitations

The limitation of this research is the inability of the researcher to conduct interviews with locals from the Sahelian-Saharan region on the subject matter from Fort Leavenworth.

Delimitations

There is no direct connection between the Colombian FARC and AQIM but both of them historically started as popular insurgent groups and became involved in illegal activities such as weapons and drug trafficking, in order to fund their insurgency. Furthermore, the FARC is a much older group which started guerilla activities in 1964 while AQIM historically started as an insurrection against the Algerian government in 1992, through the AIG. However, the pattern of the FARC's evolution compared to AQIM's path may provide an effective methodology through which to recommend a more effective strategy in dealing with this phenomenon. In another African region, Somalia has similar tribal organization as some communities of the Mali-Algeria border region. The trends observed in Somalia may support a better understanding of the complexity the communities living in the Mali-Algeria border region. The study will be particularly focused on AQIM groups of the Sahelian-Saharan region in the timeframe of 1997-2012. The main focus will be on the *Adghagh* region of north-eastern Mali, along the Algerian border. Other radical Islamist groups in West Africa like the *Boko Haram* in Nigeria will not be considered.

<u>Significance</u>

The Sahelian-Saharan region is characterized by a variety of transnational threats. The region is a strategic intersection. A west-east route links South America to the Middle East. It is an important trafficking route for the cartels and other local organized criminal organizations. A Boeing 727 landed in northern Mali in early November 2009 with a suspected cargo of cocaine.[27] The south-north route links sub-Saharan Africa to Europe through Libya, Algeria, and Morocco. These routes are shared by criminal organizations and migrants as well. In addition, the entire region faces recurring social disturbances and rebellions all the way from Mauritania to Sudan.

Furthermore, the Sahelian-Saharan region has become even more important resulting from the civil war in Libya and the spread of former Libyan government's soldiers and major armaments throughout the region and especially in northern Mali. The Government of Mali is trying to implement a strategy to defeat AQIM and organized crime at both the national and regional levels. The benefits expected to come from this study may be significant as they will not only provide a clearer understanding of the current status of AQIM in northern Mali but will also assess the effectiveness of the government' strategy to address the threat.

<u>Summary and Conclusion</u>

This first chapter was an introduction to the thesis. It provided the context of AQIM's presence in the Sahelian-Saharan region and the efforts which are being done to minimize their influence. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature which will provide a review of relevant research and articles as it applies to the study. Chapter 3, Methodology, will focus on the description of the qualitative study using a comparative

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case study of the Colombian FARC to analyze the research resources and products.

Chapter 4 will be the analysis part of the study. It will process the issues addressed in the

thesis statement and the secondary questions through the methodology described in

chapter 3. Finally, chapter 5 will present a conclusion and a recommendation for further

studies.

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[1]Jess Colvin, "Insurgency Organization Case Study: Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, 2006-Present" (Thesis, University Military Intelligence, Ft. Huachuca, AZ, August 2008), 5.

[2]Khalifa Hajji, "The Origin and Strategic Objective of the Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb" (Master Thesis, Naval Post-Graduate School, Monterey, CA, September 2005), 16.

[3]Mokhtar Belmokhtar is the first member of GSPC-AQIM to arrive in the Sahel region. He is the most influential member of AQIM in the region and leads one of the two Katiba.

[4]Ibid., 2, 3.

[5]Richard H. Shults, "Global Insurgency Strategy and the Salafi Jihad Movement" (USAF Institute for National Security Studies, US Air Force Academy, CO, 2008), http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA482684 (accessed May 9, 2012), 69.

[6]Jonathan Schanzer and Dennis Ross, *Al Qaeda Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror* (New York: The Washington Institute for the Near East Policy, 2004), 112.

[7]Stephen Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian terrorist Group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its implication for the Sahara-Sahel region," *Concerned African Scholars,* Bulletin no. 80 (Spring 2010): 12-29, http://concernedafricascholars.org/docs/bulletin85harmon.pdf (accessed May 9, 2012)

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[9]Sahara Overland, "Saharan Kidnappings Map," http://www.sahara-overland.com/routes/kidnappings.htm (accessed May 9, 2012).

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[11]Diogo Noivo, *AQIM's hostage taking and the ransom dilemma* (Portugal, Lisbon: Portugese Institute of International relations and Security (IPRIS), October 2010).

[12]State.gov, "2009 Human Rights Report: Mali," http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135964.htm (accessed May 12, 2012), 19.

[13]Ibid., 12, 19.

[14]Malian Presidency website, TRAORÉ Modibo Naman, "Programme spécial pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement dans le Nord: Les Grandes Orientations" [Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development of the North: the Main Guidances]," http://www.koulouba.pr.ml/IMG/article_PDF/article_a2251.pdf (accessed May 9, 2012).

[15]Katibats are the equivalent army battalions. They are AQMI autonomous units in charge of an area of responsibility.

[16]Comité d'Etat-Major Operationnel Conjoint [Combined Strategic Command Post] located in Tamanrasset (Algeria).

[17]Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), xxi.

[18]Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations, Netherlands-General Intelligence and Security Service, "From Dawa to Jihad: The Various Threats From Radical Islam to the Democratic Legal Order" (Report, The Hague, December 2004).

[19]Department of the Army, Field Manuel (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 4-13.

[20]Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 161.

[21]Ibid., 17, 6-2.

[22]Ibid., 17, 6-3.

[23]Ibid., 18.

[24]Dr. Ahmad Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who Is The Enemy?" (American University of Beirut, January 2009).

[25]Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz, *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology,* 3rd ed. (Columbus, OH: Mc Graw Hill, 2007), 112. 316.

[26]Angela Rabasa, Steven Boraz, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Theodore W, Karasik, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Kevin A. O'Brien, and John E. Peters. "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks" (Research Paper, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 1.

[27]Scott Baldauf, "Air Al Qaeda: Are Latin America's Drug cartels Giving Al Qaeda a Lift," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 15, 2010, http://www.csmonitor. com/World/2010/0115/Air-Al-Qaeda-Are-Latin-America-s-drug-cartels-giving-Al-Qaeda-a-lift (accessed May 12, 2012).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The southern part of Algeria and the Sahelian-Saharan region was considered for many years an empty space with only a few nomadic tribes. The Paris-to-Dakar sport race brought the region under the media's spotlight during every winter since 1979. The media had limited interest in the region between 1990 and 1994 with a rebellion in northern Niger and Mali. However, in 2003 the European media appeared when Amari Saifi's (alias Abderazak El Para) Katiba kidnapped thirty-two European tourists in southern Algeria and brought fifteen of them into Mali. By 2007, the kidnapping rates of European citizens increased in the region calling for more interest by politicians, journalists, and scholars. This growing interest from journalists and scholars was proportional to the growing threat of GSPC-AQIM in the Sahelian-Saharan region. There is abundant materiel on the subject and the literature for this study which will be broken into five categories:

1. A comparison of the non-governed area's characteristics of the Sahelian-Saharan region, Colombia and Somalia

2. AQIM's interests in northern Mali and the surrounding region

3. The expansion of AQIM in northern Mali

4. Malian government's strategy to defeat AQIM

5. RAND Corporation's study on ungoverned territories

Chapter 2 also contains a comparative literature review with the FARC. Despite the ideological and cultural differences between the FARC and AQIM, the two groups have some points in common. Each of them was perceived originally by some locals as

an opportunity for political change. Both of them used insurgency and terrorism to effect

the socio-political change after failed elections. Both of them are also linked to illegal

activities such as drug trafficking and hostage taking. The purpose of this study will be to

compare the case studies of the FARC and AQIM, and analyze them through the

analytical framework used in 2007 RAND study on *Ungoverned Territories*. The analysis

will compare the evolution of the two different groups in Colombia and Mali. With

Colombia's strategy in dealing with FARC being viewed as quite successful, the goal is

to determine the differences between the two strategies. The Somali society's case, by its

cultural similarities with some northern Mali's tribes, will support the sociological piece

of the study regarding the aspect of Tuareg society.

<u>A comparison of the non-governed area's characteristics</u>
<u>of the Sahelian-Saharan region, Colombia and Somalia</u>

The environment is a key determinant for an insurgent movement which wants to

endure and reach it goals. Bard E. O'Neill, in *Insurgency and Terrorism*, states that the

environment, composed of the physical geography and the human aspect, provides

opportunities for insurgents and places constraints on their strategies.[1]

<u>The physical geography</u>

In reference to Bard E. O'Neill, the aspects of physical geography include the

terrain, the climate, and the transportation-communications system. The terrain's

characteristics are an operational multiplier for the insurgents. The terrain allows for

more effective mobility for insurgents while the national security and armed forces'

mobility capability and knowledge of the terrain give the insurgent the home field

advantage. The FARC and AQIM live in different types of terrain; jungles and swamps in Colombia, and sand dunes and mountains in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

Historically, the geography of Colombia caused the dispersion of the population during Spanish colonization and created isolated pockets. Major Jon-Paul N. Maddaloni, in his monograph on the FARC, refers to the existence of uncontrolled areas in Colombia which were called "independent republics." These "independent republics" were located in the mountainous region of Tolina and south of Bogota in 1964.[2] These were the main areas of operation of the communist insurgents who would create the FARC in 1966. Much later, the FARC extended in some other areas such as the departments of Putumayo, Cuaca, Caqueta, Guaviare, Meta, Choco, Santander, and Antioquia.[3] Putumayo is the most famous of all the departments cited. It is located in southern Colombia, at the Peruvian border. There are very few communication capabilities and no highways. The terrain is characterized with a scattering of air strips, jungle zone and plains. The Colombian Government has never really governed the department of Putumayo nor the entire southern part of the country.[4] Besides the geographical and infrastructure aspects, Colombian national armed forces had a ratio of 2:1 against the insurgent group, far from the 10:1 ratio commonly stated counterinsurgency formula.[5]

Figure 2.   Map of Colombia

The Sahelian-Saharan part of Mali covered by this study concerns three administrative regions which are Kidal, Timbuktu, and Gao. The region of Kidal is 260,000 square kilometers and has less than one habitant per square kilometer. It constitutes little more than 21 percent of the national territory. The road network is

composed of dirt roads only. In 2010, the regional administration of Kidal stated in its

official region's monograph the existence of seven hundred eighty nine kilometers of

national roads, one hundred and eleven kilometers of regional roads, and four hundred

and sixty five kilometers of county roads. The main economic activity is cattle and goat

breeding. The area is arid and water and pastures constitute a considerable stake. During

the raining season, between July and August, the tracks in the large wadis become muddy

and impassable for vehicles. The only practicable routes are on the dunes and in the

mountainous areas. For many centuries, mountains and dunes areas have constituted

refuges for the bandits.

<div align="center">The human terrain</div>

The human terrain in Colombia was shaped by permanent and endemic warfare.

Gonzalo Sanchez stated in 1985 that since its independence, Colombia faced civil wars

for reasons of rivalries within the ruling class, the position to be assigned to the church,

the abolition of slavery, and the nature of political organization. The agreements ending

these civil wars focused mostly on property because the oligarchy was also the military

leadership. In the mid-twentieth century, a new type of warfare appeared with *La

Violencia*. It was no more a warfare among rulers, but social and political unrest based on

agrarian inequalities. The peasants of the *Llanos* were well organized in guerilla warfare

against the rulers and the owners of the properties, or haciendas. The twenty years of

unrest and violence caused between 100,000 and 300,000 deaths. The immediate

consequence was a weakened government presence and control in southern and eastern

Colombia.[6]

Central and southern Somalia are the geographical areas which pose the greatest problem. Virginia Luling described in October 1971, the people of this region as homogeneous in origin and culture except for some sub-groups. People's life in central and southern Somalia had much more external influence than the northern part during the Italian colonialism. Somalis are a clan-based society and the nation is mainly divided in two groups. These are groups are the *Samaale* and the *Sab*. Each of them is divided into sub-clans. Before the colonial era, the central and southern regions' people did not have an idea of belonging to a nation that included northern Somalia. Another division occurred in the southern regions between the nomadic herdsmen and the sedentary farmers. They are also a feudal organized society with nobles, religious groups, and servants (former slaves).[7]

Figure 3.   Map of Somalia
Source: LonelyPlanet.com, Map of Somalia, interactive map website, http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/ africa/somalia/map_of_somalia.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa /somalia/&h=350&w=466&sz=48&tbnid=LvZga649Mv_TXM:&tbnh=90&tbnw=120&p rev=/search%3Fq%3Dmap%2Bof%2Bsomalia%26tbm%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1 &q=map+of+somalia&docid=EbUWGsV91MQXFM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=c0hIT-7eJc- ksQKHxdXqCA&sqi=2&ved=0CD4Q9QEwAQ (accessed October 10, 2010).

Elsewhere, the Sahelian-Saharan region was historically characterized by the difficulty to exercise sovereignty on a region marked by sub-Saharan rivalries and North-African interactions. The empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhoï, followed by the French Colony of Sudan and the Republic of Mali, experienced it. Several analysts, researchers, and scholars, such as Charles Toussaint and Jean-Luc Marret, wrote on that subject. The governments of Mauritania, Mali, and Niger don't have a strong presence in the Saharan parts of their countries.[8] As developed by Jean-Luc Marret in his book *Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb*, the Saharan part of Mali comprises three zones.[9] The first zone is composed of isolated little urban areas with minimal government presence such as the civil administration protected with a symbolic National Guard, schools, health centers and few hospitals, and embryonic law enforcement. The population is concentrated in the urban areas. The second zone is composed of the clans' nomadic areas with few and dispersed population. The main government presence was symbolized by the military platoon-size outposts. Many of these military outposts were providing local health care, basic education level and local security with the few means they had. However, the 1992 peace agreement between the Government of Mali and the rebels caused the dismantling of many military outposts.[10] Consequently, by 1994, the Malian government lost control of the choke points, the wells along the historical Sahelian-Saharan trade routes, and left isolated the nomadic populations. The third zone is composed of inhospitable areas within the second zone where local bandits have been hiding for centuries. This zone is a severely restricted terrain in wooded areas, like the Wagadou forest in the Mali-Mauritania border, the sand dunes of Arakcheche in northern Mali, and the mountainous areas along the Algerian border.

Charles Toussaint in his article "A New Euro-Sahelian Partnership for Security and Development," observes that Mali, Mauritania, and Niger have a common problem, which is providing basic services to their populations. These populations are growing exponentially at a rate of almost 3 percent per year. That rate of growth may double the population in fifteen years. Each of these countries has no less than one million square kilometers within the region which is impacted by AQIM activities and other transnational threats. This region is nine times the size of Germany. Furthermore, as claimed by Charles Toussaint, most of the people living in this area have more reasons to collaborate with the criminal groups than their own governments. The youth's unemployment also exacerbates the social climate in some areas. The notion of governance's effectiveness in the Sahelian-Saharan region is linked to two problems. Toussaint identified them as capability and political problems. The capability dimension is the government's capacity to sustain its presence in the region in matters of human, financial, and materiel resources. The weakness of this capability has a negative impact on the operational level of all government services. The political dimension concerns the ability of the government to balance and guarantee the interests of the different social actors.[11]

Comparatively, northern Mali and south-eastern Colombia have similarities which hinder the central governments' capacities to fully claim their sovereignty in these zones. The physical characteristics of the two regions provide less natural hospitality than the rest of the country. They have a poor road network restricting the movement of people and goods. The human dimension of the environment has been shaped by endemic socio-political crisis and violence.

<u>AQIM's interests in northern Mali and the surrounding region</u>

Jesse Colvin in his paper "Insurgency Organizations Case Study, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb," developed in his insurgency case study of the AQIM the fact that AQIM has its roots in Algeria but expanded into the Sahelian-Saharan region.[12] The African Union gave three reasons for AQIM's presence outside its original borders. They are the search of safe haven, the need for new logistic and financial resources, and the necessity to recruit militants for transnational goals.[13] AQIM, having experienced serious operational setbacks, had to expand its activities outside Algerian borders. It gave itself a new perspective in the Sahelian-Saharan region and later joined al-Qaida's network. As time went on, the Sahelian-Saharan region, without effective governmental control, became a logistics and expansion base. That expansion is done through extremists elements who infiltrated the Da'wa. Da'wa means, in Arabic, to invite to do something. It is a Muslim movement consisting of small groups of people travelling and preaching to invite to the way of submission (Islam) and surrender to God (Allah). The Da'wa is active along the Kidal (Mali)-Maradi (Niger)-Katsina/Kano/Kaduna (Nigeria) route. That region is also a place for creating relationships with criminal elements and former rebel groups.
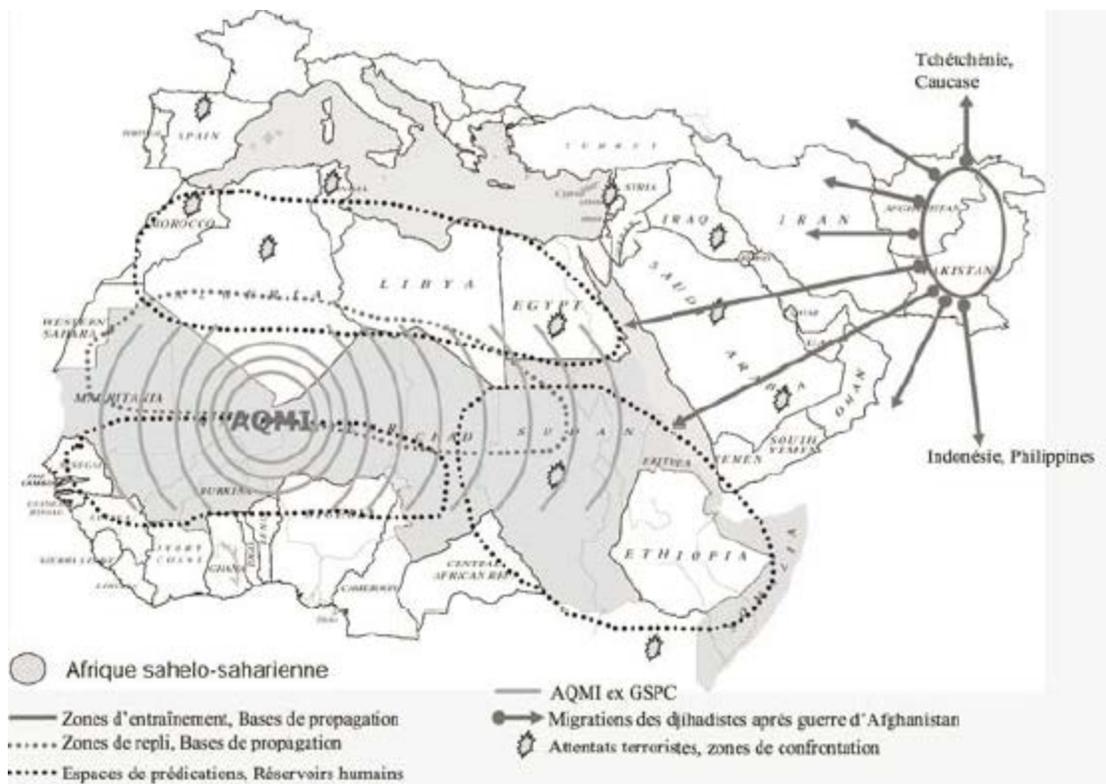
Figure 4.   An incrustation in the heart of the Muslim sphere of African continent which constitutes a threat for states and societies.

Source: Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, "La Sécurité dans le Sahel: des Enjeux Multiples, un défi commun" [Security in the Sahel: Multiple Stakes, Common Challenge], *African Journal for the Prevention and combating Terrorism* (June 2010): 23. Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga was director of State Security and later minister of defense in Mali, His currently minister of foreign affairs in Mali.

Translation for figure: *Zones d'entrainement, de propagation* [training zones, propagation centers]; Zones de repli, bases de propagation [retreat zones, propagation centers]; Espaces de prédication, reservoirs humains [preaching spaces, human reservoirs]; *AQMI ex GSPC* [AQIM former GSPC]; Migration des djihadistes après guerre d'Afghanistan [jihadists' migration after Afghanistan war]; Attentats terroristes, zones de confrontation [terrorist attacks, confrontation zones].

The expansion of AQIM in northern Mali

Alfredo Molano described the expansion of the FARC as a consequence of the

Pastrana government's program. From 1970 to 1974, Pastrana implemented a new

economic model which concentrated land ownership by expelling peasant tenants from the land. Many of these peasants migrated into the cities, increasing urban unemployment. Many others went in the areas in which the guerrillas had a strong presence. That allowed the FARC to gain influence in the cities and open some new areas in the countryside. Between 1970 and 1982, the FARC grew from five hundred to three thousand people. The desperate peasants' situation pushed them to embrace the culture of coca, the basis of cocaine. The guerrilla leadership realized that the protection of the illegal crops would enhance the peasant's support. Therefore, it expanded its area of responsibility in the coca growing areas.[14]

On the other hand, AQIM's case in Africa is different. AQIM roots are in Algeria and its main Katibats are still active there. However, the Salafist group has two Katibats operating outside Algerian borders. Dr. Carlos Echeveria Jesus, an analyst on Jihadist-Salafist terrorism at the Strategic Studies Group (GEES) in Spain in his article titled "The Recent Terrorist Activities in Sahel-Sahara Area," considers northern Mali as the most important support base for AQIM. The Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly northern Mali constitutes also a convergence zone "between an ambitious terrorism and a myriad of illegal activities (drug and arms trafficking, money laundering or illegal migration, among others" [15] Dr. Liess Boukra, Deputy Director of the African Center of Study and Research on Terrorism (Centre Africain d'Etude et de Reserche sur le Terrorisme-CAERT), developed the idea that the main interest of AQIM in northern Mali is the security that the region provides to the Salafist group. Dr. Boukra emphasizes in the same article, the will of the jihadi-salafists to fight the crusaders in the Sahelian-Saharan region. A speech by Mebrek Yazid, second in command of AQIM, stated on the internet

AQIM's will to invest much more effort in sub-Saharan countries. The main reason was to fight the Judeo-Christian crusade under AFRICOM, a project whose objective is to colonize the Muslim soils and confiscate its resources.[16]

Malian government's strategy to defeat AQIM

The review of the Colombian government's strategy against the guerrilla movement is based on Major Maddaloni's monograph on the FARC. From 1966 to 1970, the fifty to five hundred FARC's combatants were spread throughout the rural areas of central and southern Colombia. The combined Colombian and US operations crushed them to the edge, forcing them to barely survive. In the 1970s, the FARC grew exponentially. The newly elected Colombian president, Julio Cesar, established the *National Security Statute* in 1978. That legislative act gave more freedom to the military to detain, interrogate, and judge suspected guerrillas and criminals. The government believed that it could defeat the guerrilla force by using its own violent tactics. The immediate consequence was the loss of the Colombian government's legitimacy. The operational results against the ELN and the M-19, the two other Colombian guerrilla groups, were positive. The two guerrilla groups lost numbers of their key leaders and supporters. However, the FARC grew in size during the same period and gained even a romantic image. In the 1980s, the FARC forces were able to directly challenge military platoons and companies. On the other hand, after 1982, many land and business owners, allied with some drug traffickers, decided to organize a conservative front against the leftist guerrillas. Thus, they founded security forces and death squads. The new paramilitary forces had the support of the Colombian military through supplies and manpower. Furthermore, the government reinforced the existing security shields by

creating the *Convivir Program*. The Convivir Program consisted of armed neighborhood watch groups. Most of their members were victims of the guerrilla attacks. The bloodiest consequences of these paramilitary groups' actions strengthened the FARC. The FARC had more than ten thousand members in 1990. They also had active support in six hundred and twenty two of one thousand ninety eight municipalities. Operationally, they were able to challenge battalion-sized Colombian Army units for a limited amount of time. In 1991, the government conducted an impressive political reform in emphasing human rights, ecological concerns, a participative civil society, decentralization, and demilitarization.[17]

<div align="center">RAND Corporation's Study on Ungoverned Territories</div>

Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks is a RAND Corporation analysis of ungoverned areas that can become terrorists or insurgents sanctuaries.[18] The authors seek to understand the conditions that make some ungoverned areas more conducive to organized criminal and insurgent group presence. Two of the authors, Angel Rabasa and John E. Peters give the following definition.

> We define an *ungoverned territory* both with respect to physical space and to the level of state control, the degree to which the state has control of normal government functions. Ungoverned territories can be failed or failing states; poorly controlled land or maritime borders or airspace; or areas within otherwise viable states where the central government's authority does not extend. Ungoverned territories can be found along a continuum of state control.[19]

The authors contend that ungoverned spaces pose a threat to the US interests only when they respond to some criteria which give them a specific hierarchical level. The first level is areas which harbor terrorists affiliated, associated, or inspired by al-Qaeda. The second level concerns areas where there are established terrorist, insurgent, or criminal elements

that threaten US regional interests and the security of US friends and allies. Finally, the third level is areas that can produce humanitarian crises that generate demands for US resources. They also observed that these destabilizing elements of society operate in two dimensions: ungovernability and conduciveness. Each of them has four indicators of their presence.[20]

They defined ungovernability as the extent to which the state has the ability to govern these territories. They claim that ungovernability is composed of four indicators: level of state penetration of society, the extent to which the state has the monopoly on the use of force, the extent to which the state can control its borders, and whether the state is subject to external intervention by other states.[21]

The second dimension is conduciveness. Conduciveness characterizes the likelihood for an ungoverned area to provide safe haven to criminal and insurgent organizations. It is also divided in four indicators. These indicators are adequacy of infrastructure and operational access, source of income, favorable demographic and social characteristics, and invisibility.[22] All the indicators above will be further developed in the methodology chapter.

<center>Summary and Conclusions</center>

To summarize, many scholars and researchers have written about AQIM's activities in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The comparative literature review with the FARC showed some similarities between the two groups. Both southern Colombia and the Sahelian-Saharan region's governments had historically had many difficulties in controlling these vast territories. Each of these two insurgent groups were perceived by many of the local populations as an economic opportunity in their respective areas of

<center>32</center>

influence. They expanded in areas which offered them financial and operational advantages. However, the difference is that AQIM seems much more active out of its main area of operation in Algeria while the FARC maintained their core activities on Colombian soil. Finally, AQIM, as an Algerian insurgent group, shifted gradually to a Jihadist-Salafist group with a goal of fighting the Judeo-Christian's interests in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

This research will analyze AQIM through the variables developed by RAND. These variables are related to the extent to which the Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly northern Mali, could inhibit its conduciveness to AQIM's establishment and further development. The RAND indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness have the advantage to integrate the strategies easily. The objective of this study is to allow the Malian leadership and its partners to understand the Sahelian-Saharan environment, particularly the Mali-Algeria border region. The RAND study's indicators will provide the proper framework through which identification of the underlying sources to AQIM's strengths could aid in developing a more effective strategy in dealing in it.

Having reviewed literature from various sources, the next chapter will outline the methodology that will be used in the analysis of the indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness to answer the secondary questions.

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[1] Bard E O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse,* 2nd ed. (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2010).

[2] Jon-Paul N. Maddaloni, Major, "An Analysis of the FARC in Colombia: Breaking the Frame of FM 3-24" (Monograph, School of Advance Military Studies. Ft Leavenworth, KS, 2009), 10.

[3]Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, "Colombia," Last updated April 12, 2012, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html (accessed May 9, 2012).

[4]Linda Robinson, "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Colombia and Latin America's Tier of Turmoil," *World Policy Journal* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1999/2000), http://www.worldpolicy.newschool.edu/journal/robinson.html (accessed May 9, 2012).

[5]Ibid., 4.

[6]Sanchez Gonzalo, "La Violencia in Colombia: New Research, New Question," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no. 4 (November 1985): 789-807.

[7]Virginia Luling, "The Social Structure of Southern Somali Tribes" (Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy, University of London, October 1971).

[8]Colvin, "Insurgency Organization Case Study: Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, 2006-Present," 7.

[9]Jean-Luc Marret, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31, no. 6, (2008): 541-552, http://www.frstrategie.org/barreFRS/publications/dossiers/aqmi/doc/Dossier_FRS_AQMI.pdf (accessed May 9, 2012).

[10]1992 National Agreement [Pacte National] between the Government of Mali and the Unified Movements and Fronts of Azawad [Mouvements et Fronts unifies de l'Azawad-MFUA].

[11]Charles Toussain [pseudo], "A New Euro-Sahelian Partnership for Security and Development," http://www.afri-ct.org/vers-un-partenariat-euro-sahélien (accessed October 2010).

[12]Ibid., 8, 7.

[13]*Centre Africain d'Etudes et de Recherche sur le Terrorisme* [African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism], June 2010, http://www.caert.org.dz/ACSRTDocs/journaux/journal.pdf (accessed May 9, 2012).

[14]Alfredo Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History," *NACLA Report on the Americas* (September/October 2000).

[15]Ibid., 13, 27.

[16]Ibid., 13, 54.

[17]Ibid., 2, 9-30.

[18]RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve decision through research and analysis on issues such as health, education, national security, international affairs, law and business, the environment. http://www.rand.org/about.html

[19]Rabasa, et al., "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks," 1.

[20]Ibid., 20.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 1 of this thesis was an introductory chapter which covered the general background of AQIM and how it evolved from the ISF in Algeria to develop its area of influence in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The chapter also highlighted the preexisting conditions in northern Mali which facilitated AQIM's presence in the region. Next, chapter 2 reviewed and discussed relevant available literature, which is related to the research secondary questions. This includes the non-governed area's characteristics of the Sahelian-Saharan region, the human terrain, AQIM's interests in northern Mali and the surrounding region, and the expansion of AQIM in the northern Mali.

Chapter 3 presents the research design methodology. It will be a qualitative methodology using comparative case studies. That methodology aims to evaluate the AQIM phenomenon in the Sahelian-Saharan region by using the comparative cases study of the FARC in Colombia and the central and southern regions of Colombia. By using both primary and secondary materials, the thesis seeks answers to the secondary questions that will facilitate the answering of the primary question. The comparison of the FARC and AQIM will highlight the similarities between the two groups. With the FARC being much older than AQIM, each secondary question answer will allow a better analysis of AQIM's trends. In addition, the Somali social structure is similar to the Tuareg community in northern Mali. An analysis between them will become significant when analyzing northern Mali social groups and their relations with AQIM.

The qualitative method is a research methodology that will be applied to the topic, which is relatively new in Mali. Very few Malian researchers and scholars have analyzed

the AQIM phenomenon through an objective and scientific method in order to produce findings that were not pre-determined. Most of the local materials are newspaper articles which provide pieces of information on a specific event. The qualitative comparative case study will address two insurgent groups existing in two different continents, and influenced originally by two different types of ideologies, Marxist-Maoist and Jihadi-Salafist. It can assist in understanding the complexity of AQIM through the historical evolution of the FARC and identify common trends. The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology gives the following definition of case study: "The detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases."[1]

<center>The qualitative research: Goals and procedures</center>

This study will respect the qualitative method characteristic which seeks depth rather than breadth. First, the method will be applied to the AQIM phenomenon by studying the behavior of the Katiba deployed in the Sahelian-Saharan region and not the organization as a whole. Second, the aim of the qualitative research in this study is to learn how and why AQIM is developing its activities in the Sahelian-Saharan region. Third, the goal of this qualitative research can be situated on two levels. These levels are the specificity of northern Mali and, the regional and international dimensions. It is suited to analyze the local and regional processes which are profoundly interlinked. Fourth, the qualitative research method falls within the context of discovering. That applies to the lack of knowledge on AQIM in the Sahelian-Saharan region. An additional aspect of

using a qualitative methodology, especially when involving case studies, is that often times new variables emerge that have not been previously considered. These "emergent variables" can aid in gaining a greater understanding thus leading to a more conclusive analysis.

In describing the qualitative method, Ellen Taylor-Powell and Marcus Renner explained the five steps of the analytical process: get to know your data; focus the analysis; categorize information; identify patterns and connections within and between categories; and interpretation-bringing it all together. The first step consists of understanding and giving value to data. All information may not provide any particular value. Therefore, it is important to understand the value of each piece of information. The second step aims at identifying the questions the analysis should answer. There are different approaches to focus the analysis. The focus can be by question or topic, time period or event, and by case, individual or group. This study will combine the focus by group, question, and time. Then the third step will be to categorize information by identifying themes or patterns and organizing them into coherent categories. The fourth step logically follows the third one by identifying patterns and connections within and between categories. The final and fifth step will interpret or bring it all together. To conduct that step efficiently, it is important to stand back and think of the major and new lessons learned, the implications, and what new knowledge to is provided to those who are interested in the results of the study.[2]

Analysis

This paper will follow an analytic induction model. The researcher will be guided by the variables identified in the analytical framework developed by RAND in

Ungoverned Territories and by Barth E. O'Neill in *Insurgency and Terrorism,* and those

developed in the FARC case study by Maddoloni. The result of the analytical process

should contribute to the understanding of the AQIM phenomenon in the Sahelian-

Saharan region. It may either support or challenge the existing theory on the topic. The

results would certainly lead to additional questions and hypotheses for further research.

<u>Samples</u>

The AQIM Katiba and the diverse actors in the Sahelian-Saharan region

constitute a part of the sample. The FARC and its interactive actors in Colombia

constitute the second part of the sample. The choice of the FARC is due to the common

denominator with AQIM. That common denominator is the original insurgency nature of

the two groups and their relation to illegal trafficking. The second reason of the FARC

choice as part of the sample is due to the long period of observation of that group. The

FARC had been observed over decades shifting from a pure insurgency line into criminal

activities. AQIM followed almost a similar pattern but in a shorter time period. The case

study of Somalia, being culturally similar to some social groups of northern Mali, will

allow a better understanding of the human terrain. The purpose of this research is not to

develop nor generalize a theory but rather to understand the new phenomenon of AQIM

in the Sahelian-Saharan region and find seams within its structure or organization that the

Government of Mali could exploit to reduce AQIM's presence and capabilities.

In summary, the researcher will use the qualitative comparative case study. The

FARC case study will be compared to the AQIM case study. The knowledge accumulated

on the FARC will facilitate the development of hypotheses for AQIM's case. These

hypotheses will be processed through the analysis of the data available on AQIM in order

to confirm, deny, or develop new hypotheses. It is anticipated that the researcher will discover some answers but other hypothesis and questions that may arise as a result of that analysis.

<div align="center">Criteria Selection and Explanation</div>

The first step in the development of the hypothesis will be to examine available background material on AQIM in the Sahelian-Saharan region and that of the FARC of Colombia. The characteristics developed by the RAND study, *Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks*, are credible and will constitute the foundation of the research criteria. Angel Rabasa and John E. Peters brought up the characteristics of ungovernability. Before discussing each of the characteristics, they analyzed the phenomenon of ungoverned territories via the following four aspects:

1. The level of state penetration of society;

2. The extent to which the state has a monopoly on the use of force;

3. The extent to which the state can control its borders;

4. Whether the state is subject to external intervention by other states.[3]

The first indicator describing ungoverned territory is the lack of penetration by state institutions into the society. The institutions are law enforcement, health and welfare services, and education. These institutions may be present in a main city but not everywhere in the region or state. Since nature abhors a vacuum, other organizations occupy the space and determine the new rules. The level of state penetration of society is influenced by some variables such as the lack of physical infrastructure, the corruption of officials, the prevalence of the informal economy and the social and cultural resistance to penetration by state institutions.[4]

The second indicator, the monopoly on the use of force, concerns the state's monopoly over the means of coercion. When the state does not have a monopoly on the use of force, it is interesting at what level it competes with other organizations to protect or coerce the local population. That indicator is influenced by other variables such as the presence of organized armed groups outside the state's control, the presence of criminal networks linked to terrorist or insurgent groups, and the population with access to weapons.[5]

The third indicator is the control over borders. That indicator is very important and has an influence on the lack of state penetration of society and the following indicator which is external interference. Borders are functional barriers where states control transnational movement of people and goods.[6]

The fourth indicator is external interference. External interference is any outside interference that prevents or diminishes a state's ability to control its territory. The interference could be direct when a neighboring state conducts any action unrespectful of one state's sovereignty. It could also be indirect through organizations, state-sponsored or not, which interfere in the national or local policy. In that case, it is very difficult to make a difference between a state and foreign network interferences.[7]

The first criterion which will shape this research is ungovernability and its four indicators and their influencing variables cited above. The second criterion is conduciveness. Conduciveness is another dimension which characterizes ungoverned areas in relation with the likelihood armed, criminal, and insurgent groups would use them as safe haven. Angel Rabassa and John E. Peters defined four indicators for conduciveness. They are adequacy of infrastructure and operational access, sources of

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income, favorable demographic and social characteristics, and invisibility.[8] These, combined with the indicators of ungovernability, will be assessed by using the comparative cases study of FARC and AQIM. The ability of the governments to influence them through the conduct of their national and combined strategies will be also assessed in chapter 4.

The first indicator of conduciveness, adequacy of infrastructure and operational access, is comprised of three variables. These variables are communications facilities, an official or unofficial banking system allowing transfer of funds, and a transportation network that provides access to urban centers and potential external targets. The insurgent and criminal organizations need a minimum existing infrastructure to take advantage of an ungoverned area or region.[9]

The second of conduciveness' indicator is sources of income. Unless external financial support exists, insurgents need to finance their activities from local sources. There is a link between areas producing high-value commodities and the growth of insurgent movements. The insurgents can trade the commodities themselves, or they can protect and tax them in their area of influence.[10]

The third conduciveness indicator is favorable demographic and social characteristics. The co-existence of ungoverned areas with complex societies favors insurgent penetration. The presence of extremists groups or vulnerable communities, and supportive social norms among the population make the ungoverned area attractive to insurgent groups. The preexistence of violence or ethno-religious cleavages and criminal networks are also exploited by insurgent groups to establish in ungoverned territories.[11]

The last RAND conduciveness indicator is invisibility. Invisibility is a persistent condition that insurgents need to escape the local authorities, if there are any, and international counterterrorism forces. Insurgents attain invisibility by the combination of appearance, language and behaviors that allow them to blend within the local population. The low level of local authorities' attention on ungoverned areas increases the insurgents' ability to blend in the population. They can leverage invisibility by staying away from population centers. Invisibility is weakened by the necessity to communicate, to recruit, and to access targets.[12]

Chapter 4 will analyze in detail the case studies of FARC and AQIM in order to make recommendations to better mitigate the rising trends of AQIM and other related groups in the Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly in northern Mali. The analysis of the comparative case studies will be displayed in matrix form to be able to more clearly see the similarities and differences between the two cases. The matrix will demonstrate the presence or not of the key indicators selected to analyze the FARC and AQIM case studies. The concept is to use the RAND analysis of the FARC case study, which is the more mature insurgency and has been disrupted in a certain way by the Colombian Government. The next step will be to conduct the same analysis of the AQIM, a less mature insurgency in northern Mali, with an eye toward discovering which indicators are present or not in each case study. Ungovernability and conduciveness will be assessed in tables summarizing the indicators and their components. The values will go from zero to three with the following meanings: 0 = nil, 1 = low, 2 = medium, and 3 = high.

Table 1. Assessment of the Criteria Ungovernability			
Indicators	Colombia	Somalia	Northern Mali
Level of State penetration of society:			
- Lack of physical infrastructure			
- Prevalence of informal economy			
- Social and cultural resistance			
State's monopoly on the use of force:			
- Presence of organized armed groups			
- Presence of criminal networks			
- Population with access to weapons			
State's control of its borders			
Foreign interference			

Source: Modified by author, data from Angela Rabasa, et al., "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks" (Research Paper, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 98.

Table 2. Assessment of the Criteria of Conduciveness			
Indicators	Colombia	Somalia	Northern Mali
Adequacy of infrastructure:			
- Communications			
- Financial infrastructure			
- Transportation			
Operational access			
Sources of income			
Favorable demographics:			
- Presence of extremist groups			
- Supporting social norms			
- Preexisting state of violence			
- Criminal syndicates			
Invisibility			
Fortified Relationships			

Source: Modified by author, data from Angela Rabasa, et al., "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks" (Research Paper, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 140.

The data on Colombia are already available in the RAND study of ungoverned territories. This thesis analysis will provide data for the Sahelian-Saharan region and compare them to Colombia. The analysis will identify AQIM's center of gravity by conducting an analysis on it. Further studies may develop possible lines of effort and lines of operation to affect AQIM's critical vulnerabilities. These actions will make AQIM ineffective in the region, making its center of gravity (COG) ineffective.

Table of Summary of AQIM's Strategy in the Sahelian-Saharan region

After analyzing through the indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness, Table 3 will summarize AQIM and its affiliates' strategy to undermine Sahelian-Saharan

states' authority. The results presented in the table should be considered as hypotheses

and would need further studies either to confirm, deny or develop them. *The Theory of*

War and Strategy defines "End, Ways, and Means" as follow:

- Ends (objectives) explain "what" is to be accomplished that if accomplished create, or contribute to, the achievement of the desired end state at the level of strategy being analyzed and, ultimately, serve national interests. Ends are expressed with verbs (i.e., deter war, promote regional stability, destroy Iraqi armed forces).

- Ways (strategic concepts/courses of action) explain "how" the ends are to be accomplished by the employment of resources. The concept must be explicit enough to provide planning guidance to those who must implement and resource it. Since ways convey action they often have a verb, but ways are statement of "how," not "what" in relation to the objective of a strategy. Some confusion exists because the concept for higher strategy often defines the objectives of the next lower level of strategy. A simple test for a way is to ask "in order to do what?" That should lead to the real objective. Some concepts are so accepted that their names have been given to specific strategies (containment, forward defense, assured destruction, forward presence are illustrations).

- Means (resources) explain what specific resources are to be used in applying the concepts to accomplish the objectives and use no verb. Means can be tangible or intangible. Example of tangible means include forces, people, equipment, money, and facilities. Intangible resources include things like "will," courage, or intellect.[13]

Table 3. AQIM and Affiliates' Ends, Ways, and Means			
Variable	**Ends**	**Ways**	**Means**
Strategic			
Operational			
Tactical			

Source: Created by author.

Finally, tables 4 and 5 will present a summary of AQIM's center of gravity

analysis. That summary will also be based on the results of the analysis of the indicators

of ungovernability and conduciveness. The JP 5-0 (Joint operation Planning process)

states:

> One of the most important tasks confronting the Joint Force Commander's staff during planning is identifying and analyzing friendly and adversary centers of gravity. A center of gravity is a source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. It is what Clausewitz called the "hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends…the point at which all our energies should be directed." An objective is always linked to a center of gravity. There may also be different centers of gravity at different levels, but they should be nested. At the strategic level, a center of gravity could be a military force, an alliance, political or military leaders, a set of critical capabilities or functions, or national will. At the operational level, a center of gravity often is associated with the adversary military capabilities-such as a powerful element of the armed forces-but could include other capabilities in the operational environment. In identifying centers of gravity it is important to remember that irregular focuses on legitimacy and influence over a population, unlike traditional warfare, which employs direct military confrontation to defeat an adversary's armed forces, destroy and adversary's war-making capacity, or seize or retain territory to force a change in an adversary's government or policies. Therefore, in an irregular warfare environment, the enemy and friendly center of gravity will most likely be the same population.[14]

The study of the AQIM phenomenon through the indicators of ungovernability

and conduciveness will help to develop the center of gravity analysis. The center of

gravity analysis will present the center of gravity of AQIM, its critical capabilities,

critical requirements, and critical vulnerabilities. The Joint Publication 3-0 defines the

critical capability as follow: "an aspect of a means that is considered a crucial enabler for

a center of gravity to function as such and is essential to the accomplishment of the

specified or assumed objective (s)."[15]It also defines the critical requirement as:

"An essential condition, resource, and means for a critical capability to be fully

operational."[16]

And the critical vulnerability is also defined as: "An aspect of a critical

requirement which is deficient or vulnerable to direct or indirect attack that will create

decisive or significant effects."[17] In other words, the critical vulnerabilities are the objectives to target, in otherwords "decisive points", in order to defeat AQIM in northern Mali. The analysis will concern both strategic and operational levels.

Table 4. Analysis of AQIM'S Strategic Center of Gravity			
CRITICAL CAPABILITIES	**CENTER OF GRAVITY**	**CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS**	**CRITICAL VULNERABILITIES**

Source: Created by author.

Table 5. Analysis of AQIM'S Operational Center of Gravity			
CRITICAL CAPABILITIES	**CENTER OF GRAVITY**	**CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS**	**CRITICAL VULNERABILITIES**

Source: Created by author.

<u>Summary</u>

The methodology used in this research aims to do a comparative study of AQIM with the FARC and Somalia through the RAND's variables of ungovernability and conduciveness. AQIM and the FARC have in common some similarities in that both started as insurgent groups before shifting into criminal activities. The comparison with Somalia will facilitate highlighting some significant sociological aspects. Using the variables of ungovernability and conductivity, it may be possible to discover the

requirements, capabilities, and vulnerabilities of AQIM in the Sahelian-Saharan region

identifying AQIM's current center of gravity which is critical to any strategy being

developed to counteract AQIM's power and presence in the region.

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[1]Bent Flyvberg, Aalborg University of Denmark, "Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research," *Quantitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (April 2006): 219-245, http://vbn.aau.dk/files/3790172/BF_Qualitative_Inquiry_2006_vol__12_no__2_April_pp __219-245.pdf (accessed May 9, 2012).

[2]Ibid., 1.

[3]Rabasa et al., "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks."

[4]Ibid., 3.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Harry R. Yarger, "Towards a Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the U.S. Army War College Strategy Model," *in Theory of War and Strategy*, vol 1, ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 47.

[14]Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 5-0, III-22.

[15]Ibid., 14, GL-8.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the characteristics which make the Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly northern Mali, an ungoverned region and attractive to AQIM development. In doing so, the indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness described in the previous chapter will be analyzed in relation to evidence adduced in the Sahelian-Saharan region with a view to ascertain any emerging trends which can substantiate or unsubstantiate the development of AQIM in that region. The comparison with the Colombia-Venezuela's border and Somalia will assist in deducing the trends and the hypotheses in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

This chapter is organized in four parts. First, it provides a historical context of these three regions. The second and third parts examine the indicators that make the regions "ungoverned" and conduciveness to the presence and development of insurgent and illegal armed groups. Finally, the implications of the analysis will drive in making recommendations.

Historical Context of the Colombia-Venezuela border, East Africa,
and Sahelian-Saharan Regions

The RAND study on *Ungoverned Territories* presented the one thousand four hundred mile-long border between Colombia and Venezuela as region of extreme poverty. The government of the two countries did not pay enough attention to that region for a long period of time, giving the opportunity to the insurgents of the FARC and the ELN, and the para-military groups United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) to establish roots and strengthen them. The neglect of the border region finds its reason in

the early history of the two countries. Colombia and Venezuela's governments' authorities were contested since their independence in 1830. They frequently faced civil wars during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and their common border region was ignored unless for tangible economic reasons.[1]

The discovery of oil in Venezuela in the twentieth century permitted its government to consolidate its authority and presence in the country. However, that was not the case of Colombia. The twentieth century was characterized in Colombia by ten years of violence known as *La Violencia*. That period began in 1948 leading to more than two hundred thousand killed in politically motivated massacres between liberals and conservatives. The FARC and the ELN emerged from Marxists self-defense groups of *La Violencia*'s period. The two groups had a strong presence along the borders with Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. The military capability of the FARC to challenge the Colombian armed forces in the 1980s and 1990s forced President Andrès Pastrana to negotiate and give the FARC a forty-two thousand square-kilometers territory known as the *Despeje*. This peace process failed as the FARC took advantage to strengthen its military capability through the drug trade. In 2002, the Pastrana government ended the talks, abrogated the *Despeje* agreement and conducted *Plan Patriota* military operations to reestablish control on Colombian territory.[2]

The paramilitary group AUC appeared in the mid-1980s in reaction to the FARC and ELN kidnappings. It had ties with landowners, cattle ranchers, and drug cartels. Soon, the AUC challenged the FARC and the ELN for the control of areas where the coca could grow. In many areas, AUC, FARC, and ELN acted as the local governments by collecting taxes, dictating social norms, and controlling the coca growth. The three

groups have been fighting each other in the border region for the control of drug

laboratories and the transit routes of drug, weapons, and gasoline. The conflict led to

more than one hundred thousand killed in twenty-five years and three and half million of

internally displaced population. The AUC has been in peace talks with the government

since 2002 and many of its combatants had been demobilized.[3]

The Colombian conflict affected its neighboring countries. The violence increased

along the border with Colombia. Beyond the violence, the Colombian military operations,

and the competition between the armed groups, the two governments of Colombia and

Venezuela still have a tense relationship due to a border dispute and presumption of

Venezuela President's support to the FARC.[4]

Elsewhere, in the African continent, the eastern corridor is described by the

RAND study on ungoverned area as a region where some states are unable to exercise

control over their territory. Moreover, some Islamist groups of that region established

links to the Jihadist organizations. The countries studied by RAND are Sudan, Somalia,

Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. The study considered that much of

Africa eastern corridor derives his high level of dissatisfaction of the local populace from

poor leadership, rampant corruption, socioeconomic mismanagement, and manipulation

of ethno-religious differences.[5]

A viable sense of national identification and cohesion are an important issue in

the eastern corridor of Africa. The national identification and cohesion find their origins

in the colonial period, the competition among European powers in the 19th century to

control the region. Colonization established states' boundaries regardless of the former

ethnic, political and socioeconomic boundaries. Europeans ruled through a small military

force and the co-option and subsidization of local powerholders. At independence, the new governments inherited states with an insufficient sense of nationality and very little knowledge of how to govern and administrate a nation. They preserved the new boundaries inherited from the colonial administration and provided support to the segments of the society which facilitated their rule. This study will focus on the particular case of Somalia to analyze the indicators conducive to the establishment and the development of insurgent and criminal groups in ungoverned areas.[6]

The Sahelian-Saharan region also had a similar colonial experience and faces several challenges. The European Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, developed by the High Representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy on March 8, 2011, stated that the challenges that the Sahelian-Saharan region faces are governance, development and conflict resolution.[7] To understand that statement, it is important to make a historical overview of the Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly northern Mali. The region is roughly Mauritania, Mali, Niger, southern Algeria, southern Morocco, and northern Chad.

Northern Mali is the home of several ethnic groups such as the Songhoys, the Moors, the Tuaregs, the Fulanis, and the Douhsahaks. Historically, the Tuaregs (security) and the Moors (trade) managed the Sahelian-Saharan's trade routes for centuries. The Institute for Security Studies analyzed northern Mali throughout the Tuareg rebellion. The Tuareg population is spread in northern Mali, northern Burkina Faso, Niger, southern Algeria, and southern Libya. They are estimated less than three million persons and the majority of them live in Mali and Niger. The Tuareg society is fundamentally feudal, including nobles, clergy, vassals, artisans, and labourers or servants (former slaves). Pre-

colonial rivalries and conflicts often occurred in the Sahelian-Saharan region for the control of the trade routes, political power, and grazing and water resources. These conflicts continued even after independences in some areas.[8]

Northern Mali is a strategic region which was for centuries the trade link between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. The control of the Sahelian-Saharan's trade routes made part of the economic strength of the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhoy. These routes lost their importance by the seventeenth century when the European ships started discovering the world. After the fall of the Sahelian empires, some local tribes took over control of the trans-Saharan trade routes. Judith Scheele described the Algerian-Malian border as a region of political complexity. It is a buffer zone between northern and sub-Saharan Africa. Algerian traders dominated the trans-Saharan business sector since the beginning of the twentieth century. They were successful by establishing matrimonial relationships within the Tuareg and Arab Factions (sub-tribes) of northern Mali.[9]

The French conquered northern Mali from 1894 to 1916. The Ullimiddens, a tribe which was leading the Tuareg confederation in Mali and part of Niger, provided a strong resistance to the French troops. Lacking of means and terrain knowledge, the French decided to use auxiliary forces in 1898. Their main allies were the Arab tribes of Kounta and Shaamba (the current leaders of AQIM Katiba in the region, Mokhtar Belmokhtar and Mohamed Ghadir - pseudo Abdel Hamid Abu Zeid, are from the Shaamba tribe), and some Tuareg tribes such as the Kel Ahaggar and the Ifoghas. That initiative became of a general strategy of the colonial administration. In fact, in reason of the lack of resources and the range of the lines of communication, the colonial administration had tendency to rely on some local powers and militias to control the in-lands. Moreover, the colonial

administrator in Timbuktu went beyond by providing modern rifles to some militias disrespectful of the 19th century European agreement which forbade selling or giving weapons to the indigenous populations of Africa.

The pacification period took place from 1917 to 1960, date of the independence of Mali and Niger. Many *rezzu* occurred during that period. *Rezzu*, plural of the word *razzia*, are raids conducted by nomadic tribes against populated areas for economic or political reasons, or vengeance. Countering the *rezzu* became the colonial administration's priority. Therefore, the northern part of the actual territory of Mali came under a military administration. The colonizers decided to overcome the lack of human resources by developing an efficient "indirect administration." The indirect administration consisted of using devoted local tribe leaders who would administer the territory in their area. The militias of these local leaders supported the French in conducting minor police duties.[10]

The French auxiliaries in the Adghagh region, under the leadership of the Ifoghas tribe, went beyond the police missions. They effectively participated in combat against those conducting the *rezzu*. In reality the Kel Adghagh (people from the Adghagh region), in particular the Ifoghas, were working for their own interest. They took advantage of their collaboration with the French to strengthen their political and economic power. Being a "partisan" or member of an auxiliary force provided many advantages such as camel, a salary, and a rifle. Despite the collaboration with the Kel Adghagh, the French remained wary of a possible insurgency due to the quantity of weapons they distributed.[11]

When Mali was newly independent, the new administrator in charge of the Adghagh region, Bakara Diallo, conducted a mission in Kidal. He met several times with

Attaher Ag Illi, the leader of the Ifoghas tribe, and his son Intalla. The Ifoghas and their allies were worried about the attitude the new Malian government would adopt toward their community. Under French rule, they progressed from simple advisors and diplomats between the different Tuaregs tribes which were in constant conflict, to a political and military leadership over a region as big as Maryland. Bakara Diallo, the new administrator, reassured them that the government would not touch their leadership contrary to all the other traditional leaders who supported colonization in southern Mali (their colonial title was "chefs de canton"). However, he did not support maintaining an Ifoghas militia in charge of policing the Adghagh region. Moreover, based on the recurrent insecurity that the area had suffered before, Bakara Diallo asked to reinforce the military presence on choke points controlling the transsaharan trade routes.[12]
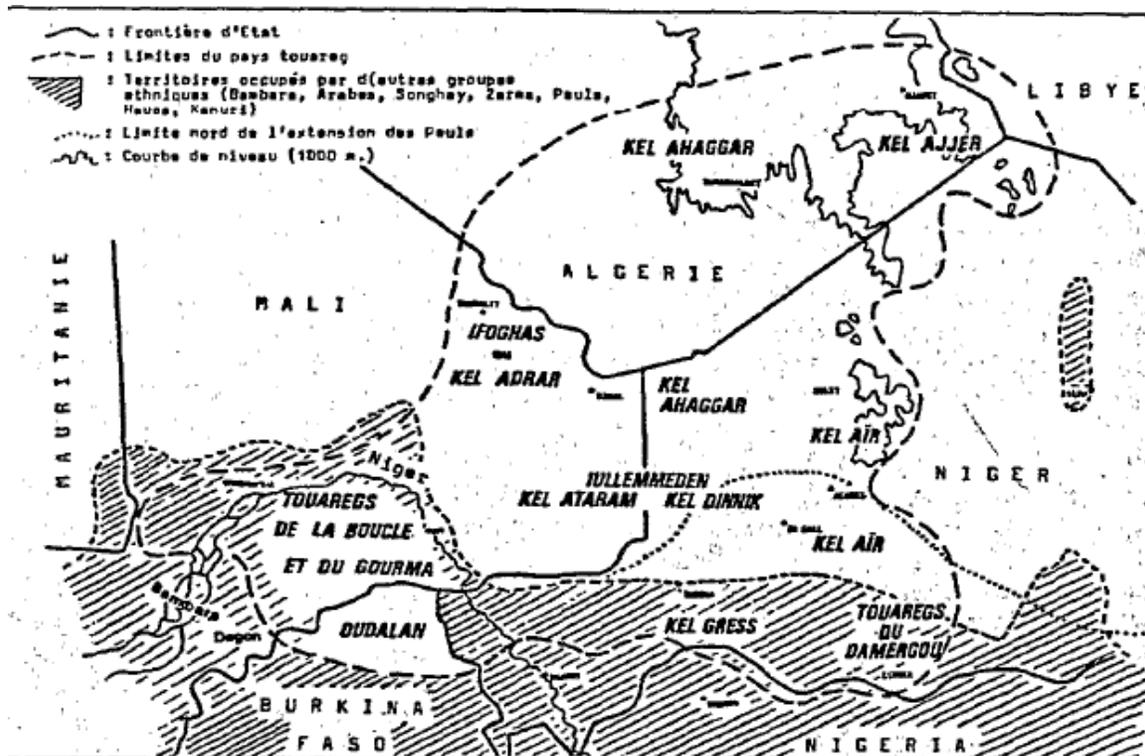
Figure 5.   Map of Tuareg areas in the salian-Saharan region

Source: Edmond Bernus, *The Tuaregs*, 8, http://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/pleins_textes_5/b_fdi_18-19/25007.pdf (accessed December 19, 2011). Note: Adghagh is also written Adrar. Translation: Frontière d'Etat [State border]; Limites du pays Touareg [Limits of the Tuareg country]; Territoires occupés par d'autres groupes ethniques [Territories occupied by other ethnical groups (Bambara, Arabes, Songhoy, Zarma, Fulani)]; Limites nord de l'extension des Peuhls [northern limit of Fulani expansion[.

As the new Malian government replaced the French colonial power, an insurgency started in the Adghagh region. It started as vengeance by an Irreyakane individual called Illadi Ag Alla. The Irreyakane faction, or sub-tribe, is part of the large Ifoghas tribe. Illadi Ag Alla assassinated two meharists, former members of the French auxiliary forces, and at that time part of the Malian security forces. That act of vengeance was exploited by Zeid Ag Attaher (first son of the leader of the Ifoghas tribe) and some other influential Ifoghas living in Algeria, and became the first rebellion faced by the

Malian government. The insurgency, which was limited to the Adghagh region of Kidal was severely fought by Mali from 1962 to 1964.[13]

In 1973, a severe draught in the Sahelian-Saharan region caused widespread famine. Many Malians of the rural areas migrated abroad. The Tuareg and Arab communities, who depended more than the others on the climate, lost most of their livestock and migrated into Algeria and Libya. The Islamic Legion, a Libyan-sponsored non-Arab military force established by Momar Quadaffi, was an opportunity for many of them to find a job in the early 1980s. They participated in different military operations in Lebanon and in Chad. In 1990, some of them came back to Mali and Niger to create the Azawad State (comprising more than 60 percent of Malian territory) with military means. As a result of the Tamanrasset Agreement (Algeria) of 1991 and the National Agreement (Mali) of 1992, about two thousand former Tuareg and Arab former rebels were integrated in the Malian armed forces and much more in civilian administration. The Tamanrasset agreement also significantly demilitarized northern Mali resulting in the loss of security control of most of the smuggling routes. The rebellion officially ended in 1994 but remnants of insecurity continued in the Northern regions of Mali.[14] 1997 saw the increase of vehicles theft and the first kidnappings of some officials by the group of Ibrahim Bahanga, a member of the Iffirgoumissène fraction (Ifoghas' subclan).[15]

In the same period, Algeria was facing some political instability with the Islamic Salvation Front. After 1991, the local population in northern Mali claims that some Algerians found refuge in the area of Tessalit, in northeastern Mali. By 1996, they observed the movements of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the future chief of AQIM Katiba Al Mulathamun. Al Mulathamun means those who wear the turban. Mokhtar Belmokhtar is

an Algerian of the Shaamba tribe which supported the French in colonizing the Sahelian-Saharan region. He used to be more involved in business (cigarette, cars, and weapons smuggling). Mokhtar Belmokhtar's group was member of the GSPC and himself was closed to Hassan Khattab, the emir (commander) of the GSPC. He was actually involved in all the AQIM kidnappings and attacks in the region.[16]

Dr. Liess Boukra, deputy director of the African Center of Studies and Research on Terrorism (CAERT), described the evolution of the Algerian insurgent group as a global Salafi-Jihadist group after the invasion of Iraq in 2004. In the same period, the GSPC, weakened by the Algerian military operations, and loss of religious legitimacy and financial support, chose to take fewer risks and searched for more gains. It shifted to urban terrorism, rural guerrilla operations, and banditry (kidnappings, robbery, and racket). By order of importance, banditry was the most common activity of the GSPC. In 2002, it found, through Abdel Razak El Para, northern Mali very attractive as zone of refuge with western hostages.[17]

The Adghagh region experienced a new insurgency again in May 2006 in the town of Kidal. Some former rebels of the Ifoghas community looted the military camps and assembled in the mountainous area of Tighargar (northern part of the Adghagh region). They took the name of *Democratic Alliance of the 23rd of May for Change* [ADC- Alliance Démocratique du 23 Mai pour le Changement] under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghali. The ADC and the Malian Government signed the Algiers Agreement on July 4, 2006. The main points of this agreement were the withdrawal of the few units from the countryside to the urban areas, the return of the deserters from the security forces, and the creation of the *Special Unit*, composed of at least 50 percent of the

militaries from northern Mali. This unit would be in charge of Kidal's administrative

region's (Adghagh) security. Despite the talks between the Malian government and the

ADC, a fake dissident group commanded by Ibrahim Bahanga, continued to conduct

several attacks against isolated military units. He was finally defeated on January 22,

2009.

Taking advantage of the insecurity, AQIM established in zones of the Adghagh

which were traditionally occupied by the ADC. These areas are located in the triangle

Tighargar, Boureissas, and Abeibara, at the Algerian border. AQIM could not have been

able to occupy this area without the authorization of the local tribes, the Ifoghas and their

allies and sub-tribes. The Malian government's construction contractors have been

threatened several times by AQIM and other armed groups to abandon the infrastructure

building in the area. In the same period, the number of European citizens' kidnappings

increased considerably. On December 2011, AQIM officially held six French, one Italian,

one Dutch, one South African (who had also the British citizenship) kidnap victims.

Some former members of Qadaffi's foreign militaries returned to the same region after

the fall of his regime. Many civilians, who flew from Libya, joined different cities of

northern Mali, such as Timbuktu, Kidal, and Tessalit.

In summary, Colombia, eastern corridor of Africa, and the Sahelian-Saharan

region have in common the existence of areas which had been marginalized for some

groups by political will or simply by neglect. These areas are the D*espeje* (Colombia) and

the Venezuelan border region in Colombia, southern Somalia, the Adghagh in northern

Mali, northern Mauritania, and the demilitarized zone of southern Morocco in the

Sahelian-Saharan region. Insurgents and different armed groups are established there and

have tried formany years to prevent the governments to restore the State's authority. Many criminal and illegal activities are conducted in these regions and they constitute the main focus of the local governments.

The following step of the study will focus on the ungovernability indicators. The analysis of these indicators will bring a better understanding of northern Mali environment in order to help the planners to address all the variables that AQIM and other illegal armed groups exploit to strengthen their presence in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

Lack of State Penetration of the Society

Absence of state institutions

The RAND study on Ungoverned Territories presented most of the border region of Venezuela, on the Colombian side, as poor, underdeveloped, under-populated, inaccessible by road, and abandoned by the government. The environment is insecure with large scale of murders, kidnappings, armed conflicts, and attacks against government institutions. As a result, two hundred forty six mayors were governing their municipalities from Bogota (capital city of Colombia). In 2004, the national institutions were absent in almost two hundred municipalities. The State increased its military presence after that year as part of plan Patriotica. Despite the government efforts these last years, the lack of its presence and the extreme poverty left large part of the population vulnerable to illegal groups. The situation was worsened by government interservice rivalry and poor coordination and information sharing. However, the state penetration is better in Venezuela.[18] The Rand study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Colombia.

In eastern Africa, Somalia is officially ruled by the *Transitional Federal Government* (TFG). The TFG is a coalition of political factions, businessmen, and warlords. It does not control any military force and therefore does not control more than some areas of Mogadishu and the city of Baidoa. The former rulers of Mogadishu and southern Somalia, the *Union of Islamic Courts*, had more support of the population due to their ability to bring a minimal level of order. In fact, Somalia' society is clan-based and that reflects on the territorial control. For example, the Islamic Courts of Justice find their support in the Hawye clan in Mogadishu's area. In the North, the *Isaaq* control the semiautonomous and stable region of Somaliland. The coalition of the *Harti*, *Sool*, and *Sanaag* clans administer the Puntland region in eastern Somalia. That situation is the result of the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) inability to police its peripheral regions. The immediate consequence of the government's absence in the peripheral regions is the lack of acceptance of the institutions and the laws by the local leaders and population.[19] Therefore the Rand study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Somalia.

Northern Mali constitutes more than 65 percent of the country and is lightly populated with only 9 percent of the population. The World Bank's 2011 report on development states that the Malian state is militarily and administratively weak. There are about 600,000 square kilometers in northern Mali which are challenging to govern.[20] The weakness of the institutions is not the only reason of the lack of state penetration in the communities. The lack of state penetration finds its roots in the colonization. Before colonization, sedentary people were in a symbiotic relationship with the Tuareg and Arab nomadic tribes. The Tuaregs, under the leadership of the *Illumidens*, were securing the Saharan regions of the Songhoy Empire and the sedentary communities were providing

agricultural products. Mohamed Gareyane, in his geography doctoral thesis, stated that

the colonial policy was to divide the sedentary (Songhoy, Fulanis) from the nomadic

(Tuaregs) communities. French considered the division of sedentary communities from

nomads was the best way to dominate politically and militarily the region. The policy

consisted of creating tensions between sedentary and nomadic communities as well as

within the nomad tribes themselves. It also consisted of disrupting tribal entities and

giving the territorial leadership to some of them. [21] The case of the Adghagh region is a

perfect example of the colonial policy. The Adghagh region was ruled by the Illumidens.

The Adghagh was given to the Ifoghas community by the colonial administration and

given the name "Iforas Adrar." Kare Lode of the Norwegian Church Aid and PRIO also

described the French colonial policy as follow:

> The Tuaregs were organized in loose confederation, sometimes called tribes. The colonial power systematically broke down the authority of the tribe/confederation leadership and worked through the chiefs, who were granted increased power. The French also drew up administrative sub-division along the river Niger parallel to the river, thereby splitting the transhumance routes of the nomads into two subdivisions. By contrast, the sedentarists generally had all their resources in one subdivision. [22]

As a consequence of the colonial policy, the Tuareg confederation was disrupted.

Some communities, in particular the Ifoghas, were in charge of an important piece of

territory in support of the colonial administration. They strengthened their feudal

leadership over some communities, such as the *Irreyakane* (the warriors of the Ifoghas),

the *Taghat Malates*, and the *Iffirgoumissenes*. In some other communities, the vassals

(*Imghads*) and the former slaves (*Bellahs*) arrived to take their independence from their

feudal leaders during colonization and much more after independence in the Gao region.

However, the individuals of many Tuareg fractions (sub-tribes) continued to serve their

fractions first, then their tribe. The personal attachment to a national identity is vague in their mind, particularly in the Adghagh region. Therefore a value of 3 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

Lack of Physical Infrastructure

Many areas of the Colombia-Venezuela's region are isolated by poor infrastructure. The consequence of the lack of infrastructure is the difficulty for rural population to access to telephone, potable water, and sewage treatment services. The existent infrastructure suffered also from insurgent attacks and sabotage. The Colombians reacted by establishing an "energy and road" plan to limit the attacks. In 2004, attacks and sabotages decreased by 44 percent as a result of the "energy and road" plan.[23] Therefore, the RAND study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Colombia.

The transportation system in Mali is very basic in general. Only 12 percent of the 15,100 kilometers of roads are paved. The only paved roads in northern Mali are the highway joining Bamako to Gao (national road), the one joining Gao to Tilabéri in Niger (national road), and the one joining Timbuktu's downtown to the airport (county road). Only two airports exist in the towns of Gao and Timbuktu. The Adghagh region which is 11.75 percent of the Malian territory has only one air strip which is not suitable for commercial jets. The railroad is limited to southwestern Mali, from Dakar (Senegal) to Koulikoro (Mali). The statistics of Kidal's monograph indicates that 4.30 units had access to electricity in the Adghagh region against 145,479 units at the national level in 2004. However, the rate of electrification increased in the Adghagh urban areas to 14.30 percent from 1998 to 2004. Thirty-five percent of the Adghagh urban areas have potable water. The number of phones for one hundred inhabitants is O.57 for the Adghagh region

against 1.2 at the national level in 2004. That shows the lack of access to modern communication for the people living in the region compared to the rest of the country. The Adghagh region, as many other administrative regions, had only two post offices in Kidal and Tessalit in 2004.[24] Despite the former rebels' claims of the lack of state investments in northern Mali, they try to disrupt the government's efforts to build infrastructure. As an example, the construction contractors were threatened several times and the new infrastructure blown up by locals of the county of Abéibara. Few days later, on December 29, 2011, another site was attacked in In Halid (north of Kidal region) by individuals suspected to be members of AQIM.[25] The buildings in construction were part of the *Special Program for Security and Development of the North [Programme Special pour la Sécurité et le Dévelopment du Nord]*. That program aims to build infrastructure which will host security forces, law enforcement, civil administration, education, and health care services in order to restore governance, security, and development in the areas where AQIM and criminal groups are gaining influence.[26] Locals consider AQIM and an armed group of the *Irreyakane* fraction (a fraction of the Ifoghas tribe) as being responsible of this sabotage. Furthermore, the vehicles of the NGOs are frequently stolen, impending the development programs in northern Mali. On January 24, 2012, a combined group of insurgents and AQIM, calling themselves *Mouvement National de Liberation de l'Azawad* (National Liberation Movement of Azawad), attacked the village of Aghuelhoc, slaughtered the prisoners, and looted all the shops and houses. The local populace was displaced d in the surrounding camps and villages. They committed the same acts in Lére (Mali-Mauritania border) and Andéramboukane (Mali-Niger border), pushing into exile almost fifteen thousand of civilians. The NGO *Doctors without Borders* [Médecins Sans

Frontières] suspended its activities in northern Mali in February 2012. The United

Nations announced the number of forty-five thousand refugees and sixty-five thousand

displaced persons in Mali on February 20, 2012.[27] As a consequence of the constant

disruption of the government and NGOs' effort to be present in the region, AQIM and

criminal networks become important providers of social welfare and jobs for the local

communities.[28] Therefore a value of 3 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

It appears that for different reasons, going from the lack of resources to sparse

populations in large regions, the governments of Colombia and Mali did not build enough

infrastructure in some of these regions. The presence of insurgent and criminal groups in

these regions is another challenge in protecting the existent infrastructure and the future

ones. There is a clear will of the insurgent and criminal groups to conduct attacks and

sabotage against infrastructure in order either to extort from companies or to disrupt

governance in their area of influence.

Social and Cultural Resistance

Colombia has more than eighty indigenous groups and they are often victims of

the fighting. Among the indigenous, the *Wayuu* people are well armed and they

participate significantly to the contraband trade. That situation enforces the cultural

resistance to the rule by a central power. Furthermore, the inability of the local

government to collect taxes demonstrates social resistance. Less than thirty 7 percent of

the eligible populace pays income taxes. Land taxes are generally ignored by land owners

because the local governments are too weak to exert coercive action against local elite

and armed groups.[29] Therefore the Rand study assigned a value of 1 to this variable for

Colombia.

The clan-based society in Somalia and the regional control of the country by some groups caused a social and cultural resistance to any kind of central government (TFG). Individuals, identify with their tribe before the country. This sentiment causes local officials to force the local populace follow national institutions and laws. Finally, the inability of the TFG to provide social services and coerce those who do not follow the law causes a greater identification with the tribal and regional identities. Moreover, taking advantage of kinship relationships, some Somali Jihadi groups used the local tribes as a shield to protect themselves. The International Crisis Groups' Africa Report of December 2005 highlighted the use of kinship relationships by the Jihadi groups to strengthen their base into particular clans.[30] Therefore the Rand study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Somalia.

Based on the importance of kinship relationships in Somalia, a new indicator of conduciveness could be added to those already identified by Rand study. It can be called "Fortified Relationships." This indicator shows the need of local criminal and insurgent groups to coopt a bigger illegal group which would participate is protecting them and incorporating them into their illegal trade network. The interests of the local illegal groups are increased military capacity building through training, the security that larger organization provides to their sanctuary, combined operations against the local governments, and their influence on the population. That indicator may not be important in the Colombia-Venezuela border region but it could be significant in the Sahelian-Saharan region which is also a feudal and tribal based society.

Social and cultural resistance is particularly noticeable in the Kidal region (Adghagh) and in northern Niger. The concept of *Essuf* describes best social and cultural resistance in the region. The Essuf is a theatrical and poetic production which expresses the stressful experiences the communities of Adghagh and northern Niger have lived through since colonial time. The theme is usually about the lack of development of the Saharan regions, the exile, the sedentization of nomads, the armed conflicts, and exploitation of local resources (Uranium). From the Essuf, the new concept of Ishumar is derived. Ishumar means unemployed ("chomeur" in French). Large parts of the youth in the Adghagh and northern region of Niger identify themselves with the Ishumar. The Ishumar developed the sentiment of being abandoned by their governments.[31] The phenomenon is cristalized in the music of *Ishumar Rock* through the *Tinariwene* and its singer Ibrahim Ag Lahbib (alias Abareibone). The cultural Essuf concept is exploited by the Ifoghas insurgent leadership to develop the Ishumar sentiment within the youth, a sentiment of permanent revolt against the central government and the foreign companies. On the other hand, the Ishumar sentiment of permanent revolt is balanced by the Malian culture of communication and consensus. Independent of the political organizations, the civil society always sets the conditions for peace talks between the government and the insurgents. That cultural behavior still exists also in northern Mali and always keeps a door open for peace among Malians.[32] Therefore a value of 1 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

Lack of Monopoly of Force

There three main illegal armed groups in the Colombia-Venezuela border region, the FARC, the ELN, and the AUC. The FARC, which was established in 1964, has

between 12,000 and 15,000 members. It gained significant control of the Colombian territory due to the increased revenues of the drug trade and the establishment of the autonomous region of *Despeje*. The ELN, with approximately 3,500 members, was founded in 1965. Most of their income derives from oil company extortion. The group was undermined and weakened in the 1990s by their losses to Colombian military forces, FARC and the AUC, and their limited involvement in the drug trade. The third group, the AUC, finds it roots in the self-defense groups created in 1981. It has approximately 10,000 to 13,000 members. It succeeded in displacing the FARC from key coca-growing areas by attacking their infrastructure. The AUC has joined in a peace process with the Colombian government since December 2002. The demobilization is not fully applied in all the areas because the group is not really united. The FARC, the ELN, and the AUC are all involved in illegal activities in the Colombia-Venezuela border region and compete with the Colombian government in matters of coercive actions and territorial management.[33]

Somalia's warlords rule their own fiefdoms to the detriment of the TFG, Islamic radicals and non-religious militias who monopolize coercive power and the use of violence.[34] Jason P. Sorens and Leonard Watchekon observe that Somaliland maintained stability and security within its local borders. The Islamic Courts also made the streets of Mogadishu safer without any central government security force involvement.[35]

No central power really has had the monopoly of force in northern Mali since the fall of the Songhoy Empire in 1592. Under the Songhoy empire of Gao (the Askia dynasty), the central power was ruled by sedentary Songhoy and the security in the Saharan region of the empire was maintained by the Illumidens Tuaregs. The Illumidens

had their own forces within the Tuareg confederation (part of the Songhoy empire).

Charles Grémont, a French researcher and writer, clearly understood the absence of

monopoly of force in northern Mali before colonization. He states as follow:

> The Illumidens therefore were "master" of the area, but they did not have a monopoly of violence, still less that of the control of resources. In the river valley in particular, their authority was taken over by other groups which reproduced actually a tributary system to a more restricted level. In a way, each according to its place in the political configuration, and in its way, exercised authority over a weaker one. It was particularly the case of Alkaydo Gao, head of Gao's Arma.[36]

> There was a unity of effort from both Songhoy and Tuareg to keep security and

order in the Saharan region of the empire. However, some fractions of different Saharan

tribes such as *Reygaybat* and *Kel* Ahaggar conducting rezzu. After, the fall of the

Songhay empire, the rezzu increased in the region. Later during the colonization, France

supported different Tuareg tribes against each other by providing weapons. The Ifoghas,

the Kel Ahaggar, and the Kounta were armed against the Illumidens.[37] The Lieutenant

Governor, Lieutenant-Colonel Audéoud sent a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Louis de

Trintinian, commanding the northern region of Timbuktu in September 13, 1892, about

Tuareg and Moorish tribes of northern Mali:

> Since we could never succeed to make friends with or allies of these tribes [Tuareg and Moorrish] as a result of religious and racial hatred they have developed toward us, and the impossibility in which we put them to live on plunder and theft, which is their only means, we must eliminate them if we can, and this by starving them, by preventing the men from buying the cereal they need and by refusing the river bank access to their cattle. As a result, either these tribes will die of misery, or they will flee to other regions, or finally feeling powerless they will surrender to our mercy, and only then we could impose on them a lifestyle that will prevent them from harming us… to achieve this result, we must set up a number of posts on the river that will inspire confidence. At these posts, there will be weapons depots for use by people; villages will be fortified and where necessary, we will distribute old model rifles to residents. We will put in place militias which we will train together with skirmishers; we will teach them how to shoot.[38]

The government of the newly independent Mali was able to restore the state monopoly of force after 1962-64 rebellion. However, the rebellion of 1990-1994, the weapons trafficking from the different West Africa foyers (Liberia and Sierra Leone) of war, and the withdrawal of the Malian military outpost controlling the transsaharan trade routes, lead to an increase in banditry. The different crisis in the Kidal region of 2006-2009, the rebellion followed by the coup and change government in Niger, and the war in Libya caused a large spread of military weapons and the establishment of different armed groups within different communities. Kofi Aning stated in his research paper:

> The use of violence and force is "respected" in the regions of Tombouctou and Kidal in northern Mali. As a result, terrorist acts are condoned. This long standing view of the use of force has contributed to the rise of criminal gangs and illegal activities. Historically, arms and weapons have long been exchanged between Malian and Nigerien rebels. When a rebellion ends in one country, weapons are hired to active rebels in another for a fee. [39]

The different insurgencies in Mauritania, Mali, and Niger since the early 1990s caused the establishment of different armed groups in the Sahelian-Saharan region. Later, drug escorts along the transsaharan routes and the permanent threat of bandits and security forces also caused a gradual development in the quantity and type of armaments used by illegal armed groups. In December 2011, the main illegal armed groups were AQIM along with a so-called dissident group called "Al jihad wa Tawhid fi Gharbi Ivrighya" (The Real Jihad in West Africa), the former rebel movement MPA and affiliated criminal and insurgent groups, and former members of the Libyan Army.

The evolution of the former Patriotic Movement of Azawad (Mouvement Patriotique de l'Azawad-MPA) is particularly interesting. That movement is considered to represent most of the Ifoghas leadership of the Adghagh. It took the name of "Alliance Démocratique du 23 Mai pour le Changement" (Democratic Alliance of the 23rd May for

the Change) in June 2006, then Islamic Movement for the Liberation of Azawad in November 2011. Azawad designates more than 65 percent of Malian territory where sparse Tuareg communities live among other ethnic groups. And finally there is the Djamaat Ansar Al-Din (Movement of the Religious Partisans).[40] Part of the former Libyan military forces is allied with Djamaat Ansar Al-Din. The traditional military leadership of that movement since the early 2000s are members of the Islamist movement "Da'wa," a religious organization which is very close to AQIM. These groups currently challenge the Government of Mali for the control of the Algeria-Mali region in the Adghagh. New construction projects for the improvement of governance (security, administrative, law enforcement, health and education which are part the Special Program for Peace and Development of Northern Mali) in the region were blown up and the workers threatened by unidentified groups. Civilian testimony indicates that Islamist-Jihadists of AQIM participated in the attack of the village of Aguelhoc (north of the town of Kidal) with other Tuareg insurgent groups in January 24, 2012. That day, they slaughtered forty-four military prisoners, destroyed the water reservoir, looted all the shops, houses, and vandalized all the public services. The civilians were displaced in the neighboring nomadic camps and in towns of Mali and Algeria.[41]

It appears that the existence of insurgencies and criminal activities coupled to a wide circulation of arms favor the establishment of illegal armed groups. The weakness of the state's security and military forces allow these groups to challenge the state's authority in some areas. They take advantage of the lack of infrastructure to establish themselves as local authorities. Their ability to compete with the state as a coercive force is a challenge for the governments in the matter of the monopoly of force.

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Criminal Networks

The FARC and other illegal armed groups of Colombia act as criminal networks. They are linked to international drug trafficking networks. They are mostly involved in drug, weapons, and gasoline trafficking. These groups monopolize the buying and selling from cultivation areas to the cities. The criminal networks were reinforced by 200 to 400 "baby" cartels after the dismantling of the cartels of Medellin and Cali. The border region of Colombia-Venezuela is particularly important for the criminal networks.[42]

A variety of criminal networks exists in Somalia. The prominent one is the group in the Gulf of Aden. They are well armed and usually operate in predetermined and mutually agreed spheres of influence. They are involved in piracy at sea, but some others are engaged in looting, ransacking, and hostage taking.[43]

Judith Scheele gave a general overview on smuggling activities along the Mali-Algeria border after one year of investigation. The smuggling as an organized criminal organization started in the Algerian-Malian border line in the end of the 1970s. It was mostly cigarette smuggling. A decade later, illegal migration was an important criminal activity involving networks of different countries coordinating their actions together. In the mid-1990s, weapons and stolen cars were a lucrative business for the criminal networks. The final criminal network concerns drug trafficking. The drugs escorted in the Sahelian-Saharan region are mainly cannabis and cocaine.[44] There is no doubt AQIM is involved in drug trafficking at a certain level. Some Jihadists think that drugs are *Haram* (religiously forbidden and impure). Others think that being intended for the European markets, it should be promoted, transported, and commercialized directly or indirectly. Thus some networks linked to AQIM were established but the states do not have

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evidence on AQIM participation in drug trafficking.[45] Judith Scheele claims an important leader of a family of Arab smugglers in Gao region as member of the Da'wa religious movement. It appears that many traders who made their wealth through the transsaharan trade between Algeria and Mali are members of the Da'wa movement and they even built a Da'wa mosque in the 4th neighborhood area in the city of Gao.

<div align="center">Population with access to arms</div>

One weapon for four and half people is the minimum rate in Colombia. The weapon owners include illegal armed groups, criminals, and ordinary citizens. There more than one hundred arms smuggling routes from neighboring countries to Colombia. Twenty one of these routes come from Venezuela. The FARC are experts in using explosives, mines, and gas-cylinder mortars through their contacts with the *Provisional Irish Republican Army*. All of the illegal armed groups, and the FARC in particular, have enough arms to challenge the government.[46]

The existence of militias within each main tribe and other organizations in Somalia makes the region a ready supply of weapons. The demand and the access to arms are high and easy. Important shipments of weapons travel from South Asia and Middle-East to Somalia either directly or through Eritrea.[47]

As described before, as a consequence of the multiple wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Libya, and the recurrent insurgencies in northern Mali and Niger, the local population has an easy access to arms. Individuals have their own arms and armed groups leaders have their own arsenals ranging from light machine guns to light artillery rockets. The rise of criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and the need to protect drug shipments against local security forces and other bandits, increased the arms

circulation. Finally, the war in Libya drove hundreds of Khadaffi's former troops and their equipment back into Mali. Therefore a value of 3 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

<center>Lack of Border controls</center>

The 1,400 mile border between Colombia and Venezuela is difficult to monitor. Criminal groups' activity along the border makes the region very dangerous. The US Department of State contends that the Government of Venezuela can provide a better control of the border if it wants. The Wayuus (a Colombian ethnic group that usually has dual citizenship) conduct the transfer of contraband gasoline and many other products across the border. The AUC increased its presence by constructing roads, purchasing lands, and by using its military capabilities. The Colombian military command in the border region considers it impossible to control it without air support.[48] Therefore the Rand study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Colombia.

A large number of land crossings along the 424 mile border of Somalia with Kenya are uncontrolled. Coastal surveillance is lacking due to the weakness of the TFG. The militias and the pirates took charge and control of Somali waters.[49] Therefore the Rand study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Somalia.

As a consequence of the demilitarization process stated in the National Pact of April 11, 1992 (peace agreement between the Malian government and the rebels), the government lost a large part of its control of a territory which is as big as Texas. Mali has an extremely long and porous border. That situation is not unique only to northern Mali, but also to the Sahelian-Saharan region going from Mauritania to Chad. The difficulty of controlling the illegal migration and the drug traffickers' escorts is a transnational threat.

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The unpaved landing area near Tarkint (region of Gao) in 2009 of a Boeing 727 probably containing cocaine, highlights the freedom of movement in air and ground in northern Mali.[50] The difficulty in monitoring the air and the ground borders are due not only to the demilitarization of the region but to the lack of equipment and infrastructure such as surveillance aircraft. Therefore a value of 3 is assigned to this variable for Mali.

<u>External Interference</u>

The RAND study on Ungoverned Territories considers that Venezuela's president, Hugo Chavez, as being closely aligned with the FARC's ideology, ignored its cross-border activity. The group may benefit of freedom of movement on the Venezuelan side. However since mid-2004, there has been a shift in the Venezuelan government's attitude towards the FARC. It conducts more arrests and operations against the FARC. That may be due to the FARC's involvement in Venezuela's internal affairs.[51] Therefore the Rand study on ungoverned spaces assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Colombia.

Markus Virgil Hoehne described how external interference helped to produce militant Islamism in Somalia by 2006. He explained that the Ethiopian military's intervention and US counter-terrorism operations epitomize the external interferences in Somalia. These external interferences strengthened the Islamic radicals in central and southern Somalia.[52] Therefore the Rand study on ungoverned spaces assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Somalia.

The transnational nature of the threats in northern Mali leads one to conclude that there are obviously external interests at play there. These external interests take many forms with criminal organizations, AQIM, armed groups from Mauritania, Niger, and Chad. Foreigners of the Da'wa organization also proselytize in the region. The Sahelian-

Saharan region, particularly northern Mali, constitutes a strategic zone for AQIM and other transnational actors. Beyond the transnational illegal trade, there is a clear will to radicalize the population through Da'wa proselytism in the Adghagh region. Many leaders of the former Ifoghas rebellion, and AQIM's two Katiba, are members of the Da'wa. That last point concerns the control of people's beliefs which indicates the long term goal of the Islamists in the region. Therefore a value of 3 is assigned to this variable for Mali.

Summary of Ungovernability Indicators Analysis

The indicators of ungovernability discussed above are summarized in Table 6. They are graded according the following scale: high=3; medium=2; and low=1; N/A=Not Available. The RAND study provided the values for Colombia and Somalia while the author assigned a value to northern Mali's indicators based on his comparative analysis with Colombia and Somalia. The absence of state institutions is high because of the withdrawal of all state's institutions including security and armed forces from northern Mali by April 5, 2012. Since the beginning of the armed conflict in January 17, 2012, it became clear that AQIM progressively took control of all the rebel groups and substituted itself for the Malian state. That substitution is made under the name of Jamaat Al Ansar Al Din, to preserve international legitimacy and neutrality through an Ifoghas rebel group. The indicator of social and cultural resistance is low (value of 1) because the irredentism is really limited to some fractions' (sub-tribes) leadership in the Adghagh (region of Kidal). The youth of these sub-tribes are influenced through the *Ishumar* sentiment to challenge state authority. The criminal organizations and AQIM try to take advantage of the socio-economic crisis to strengthen and develop their roots in areas of

the Adghagh controlled by the former Ifoghas rebels. That point is confirmed by the high number of refugees and displaced people in all northern Mali despite limited reaction of the Malian armed forces to Jamaat Al Ansar Al din's attacks. The absence of state institutions is at the highest level (a value of 3) because of the withdrawal of the Malian security and armed forces from the region since April 1, 2012. Consequently, that caused the collapse of all the other local institutions. In summary, the indicators of ungovernability in northern Mali are similar to those of Colombia but it is clear that the foreign interference is greater in northern Mali. It is obvious that the foreign interference, mostly through AQIM and the neutrality of the international community to support Mali against what was considered as the "Tuareg Irredentism" (an internal affair), allowed AQIM to easily and rapidly gain terrain.

Table 6. Assessment of Ungovernability			
Variable	Colombia[53]	Somalia[54]	Northern Mali
Level of State penetration of society:			
- Absence of state institutions	3	3	**3**
- Lack of physical infrastructure	3	3	3
- Social and cultural resistance	1	3	**1**
State's monopoly on the use of force:			
- Presence of organized armed groups	3	3	3
- Presence of criminal networks	3	3	3
- Population with access to weapons	3	3	3
State's control of its borders	3	3	3
Foreign interference	2	N/A	3

Source: Modified by author, data from Angela Rabasa, et al., "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks" (Research Paper, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 159, 249.

The following step of the study will focus on the conduciveness indicators. The analysis of these indicators will bring a better understanding on what makes northern Mali attractive for AQIM and other illegal armed groups and facilitates its establishment in the region.

Adequacy of Infrastructure and operational access

The Colombia and Venezuela border region, despite its lack of infrastructure, still has sophisticated communications architecture, banking networks, and transportation hubs. There is one international airport in the Colombian part of the region (Cucuta) and three others in the Venezuelan's part (Maracaibo, Valencia, and Puerto Ayacucho).

Existing infrastructure such as the ports, the airports, and the Pan-American Highway give the opportunity for insurgent and criminal networks to move materiel.[55] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Colombia.

Financial infrastructure is essential in the matters of money transfers in Somalia. There is a money transfer system connecting cities, rural areas, and refugee camps outside of Somalia. It consists mostly of an informal network. That piece of the informal economy is viewed as associated with corruption, criminality, and terrorism. The *xawilaad*, specialized money transmitters, are playing a major role in the Somali war economy since the collapse of the classic banking system. In order to protect the movement of large amounts of money, money transmitters recruit agents through the clan networks. By indirectly creating jobs in the communities, the xawilaad establishes a network of networks which overlaps the traditional political and military alliances in Somalia.[56] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Colombia.

Northern Mali has a concentration of infrastructure in the region's capital (Tombouctou, Gao, and Kidal). Banks are present in these cities; however, there is an informal money transfer in these three regions. Local businessmen and transport companies allow money transfers for a fee. Businessmen and transport companies usually find a way to safely conduct their operations within the boundary of some specific communities. The lack of paved roads does not disturb insurgent and criminal groups. Criminals and insurgents commonly use GPS to travel in the Sahelian-Saharan region, avoiding inhabited areas, and coordinate their supplies with satellite phones. Some of

them stay traditionalist as stated by Ambassador Fowler who was kidnapped by AQIM in December 2008:

"Omar was a traditionalist. He navigated by the sun and the stars… sometimes stopping and walking around to get his bearings but always finding the track or direction he was seeking."[57]

The terrain consists mostly of dunes, mountains, and plains some of which becomes swampy terrain during the raining season. The overall terrain does not favor government's the security forces during the pursuit mission in matters of navigation, knowledge of the routes, and supplies (water and gasoline). In matters of communication, private GSM companies are usually represented in the main regional cities since GSM systems require relay towers, but network coverage is not extended to the rural areas. The lack of GSM networks combined with smuggling activities, facilitate the promotion of the use of satellite phones in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The facility to get access to the GSM chips favors the insurgents and the criminals. Existing banking infrastructure such as Western Union, high performance Toyota station vehicles, and phone networks favor insurgents and criminals for money transfer, personnel and equipment displacement, and communication. Mali therefore reviews a score of 1 for communication, 0 for financial infrastructure and 0 transport infrastructure. Therefore a value of 1 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

<div align="center">Sources of Income</div>

Illegal groups in Colombia most notably, the FARC, produces substantial income through the drug trade. The FARC is considered to be present in 90 percent of the coca-growing regions. Its leaders are said to finance the farmers and buy the production. The

FARC's sources of income not only originate from the drug trade but also from kidnapping, extortion, arms trafficking, and gasoline smuggling.[58] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 3 to this variable for Colombia.

Somalia, as part of the eastern African corridor is pervasive to criminal activity. Piracy has been the principal "industry" since the early 2000s when no less than 174 attacks occurring, 35 vessels hijacked, and 587 crewmembers taken hostage as of January 2010.[59] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Somalia.

Judith Scheele showed the importance of smuggling in her study on the Algeria-Mali border. It was mostly a family activity in the Arab community. The concerned goods were mostly the subsidized milk of Algeria and other agribusiness products.[60] In the mid-1990s, *Mokhtar Belmokhtar* (Commander of the GSPC's Katiba *Al Multhamun*) was very active in the region. He was mainly involved in cigarette smuggling, arms trafficking, and illegal immigration. The US Department of State confirmed that the GSPC is engaged in smuggling activities and the group is able to move without hindrance in northern Mali because of the peace agreement with the former Tuareg rebels. The peace agreement (Tamanrasset Agreement) gave freedom of action to the illegal groups by maintaining a limited Malian military presence in the region.[61] Dr. Modibo Goita, a Malian researcher, believes AQIM is developing ties with regional drug traffickers, criminal organizations, and rebel groups to augment their resources.[62] Furthermore, some locals consider that AQIM provide jobs. A well informed northern Malian said in January 2011 that one vehicle participating in the drug escort sector beyond the three crewpersons, provide jobs to at least fifteen people providing, gasoline, spare parts, food, and intelligence. Each of these people can sustain a family of thirty people considering

the standard of living in the region. This testimony, if verified, shows the strong ties that AQIM and the other criminal organizations have with some locals in the Sahelian-Saharan region. They are usually reinforced by the marriage that AQIM leaders perform with local women along the Mauritanian and Algerian borders. Many armed groups in the region (Chad, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania) linked to AQIM are not trying to overthrow their governments but seek to disrupt states' authority along the routes of the drug trade. The corridor going from the demilitarized zone of southern Morocco, northern Mauritania, the Algeria-Mali and the Algeria-Niger border regions, and Tibesti (northern Chad) is essential to the drug and arms traffickers of the region. Therefore a value of 1 is assigned to northern Mali.

Insurgent groups in Colombia, Somalia, and the Sahelian-Saharan region, are all involved in illegal activities to augment their resources and financing. The FARC controls each step going from financing the planters, purchasing the coca production, selling it to specific cartels, and protecting laboratories. As the FARC, AQIM may find an important part of its revenue in hostage taking. However, there is not enough evidence on the level of AQIM involvement in drug trafficking, but it appears that most of the armed groups are partners with AQIM in escorting drug shipments or find income by providing services to AQIM.

<center>Favorable Demographics</center>

Favorable demographics refer to the presence of extremist groups, a preexisting state of violence, and the existence of criminal networks. The FARC and the other illegal groups are not popular in Colombia. A Gallup poll conducted in 2001 revealed that it had the support of only 2 percent of the population. The FARC might have received much

support before but after more than forty years of activism, most Colombians have grown to dislike the FARC. Some others extremist organizations are active in the Colombia-Venezuela border region through the Middle-East diaspora.[63] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Colombia.

The Somalis are traditionally *Sufis* and do not support the version of radical Islam preached by Al Qaeda. By 2009 when Ethiopian military forces invaded Somalia, the Somali extremist group, *Al Shabab,* became the first military force in the central and southern parts of the country. The failure of the warlords to keep order in the country also increased Islamist popular support.[64] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Somalia.

The Sahelian-Saharan region provides the best demographics to the establishment of criminal and insurgent groups. The borderline region between Morocco, Mauritania, and Algeria was a zone of war until the mid-1980s. Southern Morocco is a demilitarized zone allowing freedom of movement to the illegal groups. Besides that region, northern Mali, Niger, and Chad also experienced insurgencies which gave some locals an opportunity to express any grievance or take advantage of illegal business opportunities. The collapse of Libya and the spread of former Libyan militaries with their equipment gave the opportunity for important armed groups to reinforce their capabilities. AQIM and the former insurgent groups of the Adghagh region are currently challenging the Malian government for control of the Algeria-Mali border region.

The case of northern Mali is crucial because of the demilitarization caused by the Tamanrasset Agreement (peace agreement between the Government of Mali and the rebels in 1991) and its strategic position in the center of the Sahelian-Saharan region. The

lack of resources for the local governments of the region (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad) to monitor their borders and disrupt illegal groups' freedom of movement set the conditions for AQIM to strengthen their roots. Therefore a value of 2 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

<center>Invisibility</center>

Invisibility has two dimensions. The first one is western intelligence and counterterrorist agencies' attention on a region. The second is the ability of members of an organization to blend in with populations. The political will of the Colombian government and the western priority in maintaining intelligence on the global jihadi movement makes the first dimension low. However, the second dimension is still high because FARC members are Colombian. Their connections and their knowledge of the region allow them to evade the security forces.[65] Therefore the RAND study assigned a value of 2 to this variable for Colombia.

The presence of groups favorable to the global jihadi movement in Somalia keeps the region under the surveillance of the western counterterrorist agencies. The inability of the Transitional Federal Government to pursue criminals and insurgents and the relative control of Al Shahab in central and southern Somalia keeps the invisibility indicator at the highest level of 3 as stated by the RAND study.

The Sahelian-Saharan region has the attention of western and African counterterrorism agencies due to AQIM threats against different governments, western hostage takings, and the spread of Libyan arms. The cultural and family ties (religious and ethnic) allow AQIM and criminal groups' members to easily blend in with the population. AQIM deliberately choose to have very few Algerians in its units in the

<center>85</center>

Sahelian-Saharan region. It usually tries to recruit supporters and militants in all the communities. The presence of members of some locals communities in the group and their social activities prevent AQIM from being perceived as a foreign entity. Therefore a value of 0 is assigned to this variable for northern Mali.

<div align="center">Fortified relationship</div>

A fortified relationship is a new indicator of conduciveness that the author identified. That indicator is not defined by the RAND study on ungoverned spaces. It assesses the need for local insurgent and criminal organization to establish ties or being protected by a stronger organization. The alliance's purposes are usually to provide training, protect a sanctuary, and establish illegal trade agreements. There is no study or paper on the invitation of AQIM by local groups to establish itself in some specific areas of northern Mali but the testimony of different people posted on Internet may help to understand the phenomenon.

Markus Virgil Hoehne, in his study on counter-terrorism is Somalia, explained how Al Qaeda progressively gained ground in Somalia after 2006. Al Qaeda failed in the 1990s to forge an Islamist alliance and established an operations and training base in Somalia which could cover all the eastern region of Africa. It failed because the Somalis considered the Jihadist organization as a foreign organization. Somali Islamists were very diverse and heterogeneous, without any ideological and political agenda. However, the intervention of the US backed Ethiopian Army in support of the Transitional Federal Government in 2006, and the unwillingness to compromise, caused a dramatic shift of the Al Shabab into Jihadi-Islamism. The successes of the Ethiopian Army accelerated the cooperation of Al Shabab with Al Qaeda and the Eritrean government after 2006.[66] The

RAND study didn't assign any value to this variable. However, the analysis of different sources allowed the author to assign a value of 3 to this variable for Somalia.

The *STRATFOR* article of February 2, 2012 explains how the Tuaregs' traditional territories became a sanctuary for Jihadi-Islamists and some Tuareg groups linked with AQIM in the mid-to-late 1990s.[67] The same document cites the Chamber of Commerce President of Kidal on the young Tuaregs' involvement in the lucrative business of kidnapping Westerners for AQIM.[68] It also points out on the Tuaregs' links with AQIM mainly for economic interests rather than ideological reasons.

The recent armed conflicts in northern Mali, in January 2012, showed the relationships between the former Ifoghas insurgency and AQIM. The Internet forum *kidalinfo*[69] presented the opportunity to several contributors to provide insight into what was happening in the Algeria-Mali border region. A participant of the forum indicates that the armed combat was between a Malian task force and a coalition of AQIM and other Malian insurgent groups in the vicinity of the military camp of Tessalit on February 14, 2012.[70] A few weeks before, the civilians who escaped from the village of Aguelhoc, testified of the presence of AQIM jihadists within the insurgent groups. The Mauritanian website *ANI* confirmed the death of three important leaders of Al Seryia Al Vurkane (AQIM), Elmeimoun Ould Meinnouh (alias Khaled Chinghitty) and Salem Ould M'Bareck (alias Khaled) in Aguelhoc on January 18, 2012.[71] Another Mauritanian website, *Mauripress*, discussed the combined movement of AQIM combatants and Tuareg "revolutionaries" at the Mali-Mauritania border in January 27, 2012.[72] There are no more doubts on the collaboration between the insurgent groups and AQIM. Moreover, the American magazine *The Weekly Standard* expressed the necessity to understand the

extent to which Ifoghas insurgents and AQIM are working together.[73] Finally, the

presence of several leaders of AQIM was confirmed in Timbuktu and Gao after the

Ifoghas and their allies seized these two major cities of northern Mali. In Gao, Sultan

Ould Badi, chief of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, a supposed break-

out of AQIM, is in charge of the city. Sultan Ould Badi was in charge of AQIM

kidnapping, arms trafficking, and network building missions in the Sahel region. Omar

Ould Hamaha, the father-in-law of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, is the new islamist governor of

Timbuktu. He personally conducted the kidnapping of the UN diplomats Robert Fowler

and Louis Gray, in Niger in December 2008.[74] The French media network, Agence

France Presse (AFP) notes the presence of one of the main leaders of AQIM, Mokhtar

Belmokhtar, in the town of Gao on April 7, 2012.[75] These reports indicate that AQIM and

the Ifoghas insurgent groups have had a strong relationship for a long time to allow them

to conduct combined simultaneous attacks in a territory as big as Texas. Therefore a

value of 3 is assigned to this variable in northern Mali.

Based on the facts cited above, it appears that the AQIM khatibats have been

welcomed by some Tuareg groups in their territories for financial reasons. Later, both

Ifoghas insurgent groups and AQIM conducted combined attacks against Malian military

camps in the cities of Aguelhoc, Tessalit, and Léré. That last point shows the need of the

Tuareg insurgent groups to take advantage of AQIM military expertise.

<div align="center">Summary of Conduciveness Indicator Analysis</div>

Table 7 summarizes the conduciveness of the Colombia-Venezuela border region,

Northern Mali, and Somalia. Indicators are graded according to the following scale: 0 =

Inexistent; 1 = low; 2 = medium; 3 = high, N/A= Not Available. The significance of the

table is that northern Mali could be very attractive for criminal organizations because it is as easy to make money as it is along the Colombia-Venezuela border region. The difference with Colombia may be due, in one hand, to the fact that all planters and other people of the informal economy benefit much more from the FARC and other criminal networks' financing. In northern Mali, as in the rest of the Sahelian-Saharan region, only a little group profits from AQIM and the other criminal groups by participating in illegal activities. On the other hand, the low level of operational access in northern Mali is due to the lack of paved roads, the harsh terrain consisting of dunes, mountains, and plains which become swampy terrain in the rainy season. That characteristic does not favor heavy security forces against agile and light units moving in Toyota pick-up trucks. Moreover, the withdrawal of all the security and armed forces from northern Mali by April 1, 2012, caused naturally the collapse of the local governance (education, health, law enforcement) but also the banking and the economy. The presence of criminal groups in northern Mali will increase as the illegal activities such as drug escorts will continue to develop in the region. Finally, the Fortified Relationships indicator shows the new trend in Africa. That trend indicates that the local insurgent groups are searching to host important and skillful Jihadist organizations to help them to defeat conventional military forces. As the government military forces and institutions are pushed out of entire regions, the Jihadist organizations take control of the local societies and neutralize the insurgent groups which invited them. The Malian case is the first to clearly highlight that phenomenon.

Variable	Colombia[76]	Somalia[77]	Northern Mali
Adequacy of infrastructure:			
- Communications	2	1	1
- Financial infrastructure	1	1	**0**
- Transportation	1	1	**0**
Operational access	2	2	1
Sources of income	3	2	**1**
Favorable demographics:		2	2
- Presence of extremist groups	3	N/A	3
- Supporting social norms	1	N/A	1
- Preexisting state of violence	3	N/A	3
- informal social networks	1	N/A	3
- Criminal syndicates	3	N/A	3
Invisibility	2	2	**0**
Fortified Relationship	N/A	3	**3**

Table 7.   Assessment of Conduciveness

Source: Modified by author, data from Angela Rabasa, et al., "Ungoverned Territories, Understanding and reducing Terrorism Risks" (Research Paper, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 169, 269.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics which make the Sahelian-Saharan region, particularly northern Mali, an ungoverned region conducive to AQIM development. In doing so, the indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness analyzed in the previous chapter highlighted the characteristics in the Sahelian-Saharan region to ascertain any emerging trends which can substantiate or debunk the development of AQIM in the region. The comparison with the Colombia-Venezuela border and Somalia deduced the trends and supported the hypotheses in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

This chapter is organized in two parts. The first will give a summary of the findings described in chapter 4. It will emphasize in the meaning of the results, their implications, and the unexpected findings. The second part will consist of recommendations. These recommendations may help to reduce or at least mitigate the indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness. They will directly or indirectly respond to the secondary questions raised in chapter 1.

1. What characteristics make northern Mali a non-governed area attractive to the AQIM?

2. What strategic interest does AQIM have in northern Mali and the surrounding region?

3. For which reasons do some local tribes support AQIM?

4. Why is AQIM transitioning to governed spaces, much more in the south-east of its traditional area of operation?

5. What is the current AQIM strategy? Is it effective?

6. What changes could be made to that strategy to make it more effective?

It will also present the unanswered questions and the points that need further study in order to have a better understanding of AQIM in the Sahelian-Saharan region.

Interpretations of findings described in Chapter 4

The first finding concerns the establishment of a "special" region managed by a group assuming political and security responsibilities away from the central government. The *Despeje* in Colombia and the *Adghagh* in Mali received from their respective central governments a special status in their history. However, the Adghagh had a longer period of autonomous operation in its province by supporting the colonial administration. The French gave to the Ifoghas leadership the ability to govern that region in their behalf because it was distant and isolated, and the French did not have the means to control it alone. Later the peace agreement of Tamanrasset (1991) caused a significant demilitarization of the region. The immediate consequence was the divergence of the locals' loyalty from the central government to those who really control the use of force in the countryside. Obviously, these were the former rebels of the *Patriotic Movement of Azawad* (Mouvement Patriotique de l'Azawad-MPA). Progressively, the Malian governments' authority lost its respect due to its lack of a coercive capacity and institutional presence in the countryside.

The second finding is relative to the cultural and social resistance to state penetration. As in the Somali community, part of northern Mali is a stratified and clan-based society. The Adghagh and northern Niger have a common cultural and social resistance to state penetration in this relative important group of the population. This

group is generally composed of the unemployed youth, some persons who experienced at a very young age the severe droughts of the region and migrated in Libya, and all those who need to protect their influence and control over the region. The cultural concept of *Essuf*, sometimes expressed through theater, poetry, and songs depict the social malaise and political discontent of some unemployed young Tuaregs. These people are called *Ishumars* ("chômeurs" in French, which means unemployed) and express the sentiment of being abandoned by their government. The insurgents and the criminal groups exploit the Ishumar sentiment by supporting some messages in the Essuf songs and poems related to exile, exploitation of local resources, armed conflicts, and loss of identity. However, the Ishumar sentiment goes beyond unemployment. It is a malaise related to the difficulty to adapt to societal change which conflicts fundamentally with the life style of nomadic feudal herdsman. The difficulty to adapt, particularly in the Adghagh and north-western Niger, the traditional nomadic way of life to the societal change and the resistance of some traditional leaders to democratic principles disturb the youth. Moreover, the sparse population in a territory as big as Texas (Adghagh and north-western Niger), the lack of government presence and communication in the countryside, and the exploitation made by some criminal groups enhance the cultural and social resistance to state presence. AQIM and extremist preachers take advantage of that situation to gain adherents to their form of Islam.

The third finding is relative to the lack of the monopoly of force. Historically, there was not one single entity in charge of coercion and order in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The region was split in areas of responsibilities within a confederation or an empire. Therefore the group in charge of an area had the ability to mobilize a "coercive"

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force if needed or be supported by its allies or higher level political authority to the clan. There was an order in the use of violence in the region unless a group decided to defy that order. However, the colonizers methodically disrupted the cohesion within the Tuareg confederation and between sedentary and nomadic ethnic groups. That policy had a severe impact, in particular on the Tuareg community, by removing the concept of a supreme power managing the use of force. Almost each tribe managed its small militia to support its own interest, but always staying within the boundary of the colonizers' rules. Part of the unemployed youth trained during the successive insurgencies and the progressive development of criminal groups at the end of 20th century were the results of the state's loss of monopoly of force in the region. Moreover, the existence of a demilitarized zone in southern Morocco and northern Mali after 1994, coupled with the lack of local government capacity, allowed illegal armed groups to hold ground. The loss of the monopoly of force disrupted the state's authority and the development conditions in the region. It appears that different illegal armed groups in the Adghagh are progressively slipping into local Islamist insurgent groups as shown by the Patriotic Movement of Azawad's mutation to Harakat Ansar Al-Din then Jamaat Ansar Al-Din. It is also evident that the Da'wa religious movement has strong ties with AQIM and Jammat Ansar Al-Din at least, through their military leadership.

The fourth finding concerns the criminal networks which involve mostly weapons and drug trafficking in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The Sahelian-Saharan trade routes created the wealth of the ancient empires and kingdoms of the region, but lost importance due to the rise of the sea lines of communication. These ancient routes are regaining their importance because of the lack of state control on illegal movement of people and goods.

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The main corridor goes from northern Mauritania to southern Morocco, the Algeria-Mali Border region, and the Algeria-Niger region to northern Chad. Illegal armed groups are extremely active along this corridor. It appears that some businessmen involved in the trade between southern Algeria and northern Mali are linked to the Da'wa religious movement. Except for Judith Scheele's research on smuggling in the Algeria-Mali border region, which slightly refers to that point, other researchers do not cover the subject. However, at least one Da'wa mosque exists in the city of Gao in a trader neighborhood. The presence of the mosque indicates that the Da'wa movement was able to strengthen its urban social network in the city of Gao.

The fifth finding, related to a population with access to arms, is obvious with the development of illegal armed groups and banditry in the region. The last conflict in Libya caused a spread of military equipment never seen before in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The arrival of many former Libyan combatants in northern Mali will increase the access of the population to modern military arms. The immediate consequence is the ability of the illegal armed groups to sub-contract the stealing of vehicles and the kidnapping of western hostages.

The sixth finding, the lack of border control, is not new but is dramatically important in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The size of the territory to monitor, the lack of resources for some states, and the different peace agreements are factors which disrupted the states' ability to control their borders. As a consequence, borders are almost non-existent, allowing freedom of movement to the illegal armed groups. The seventh finding is inherent to the sixth. That is the external interference through AQIM itself.

The seven finding is related to the indicators of ungovernability. They are almost obvious but one dimension related to the Da'wa religious group was unexpected. The leaders of AQIM and Jamaat Al Ansar Al-Din are linked to the Da'wa. Apparently, some businessmen who trade between southern Algeria and northern Mali are also linked to the Da'wa. There is not enough academic research on the Da'wa in the Sahelian-Saharan region and their link with AQIM, Islamist insurgent groups such as Jamaat Al Ansar Al-Din, and illegal trading. However, the leader of the Jihadi-insurgent movement Jamaat Ansar Al Din, Yiad Ag Ghali, is member of the Da'wa movement and has built a Da'wa mosque in the city of Kidal.[1] His cousin, Abou Abdel Karim was the first non-Algerian to lead a Seryia of AQIM (Al Seryat Al Ansar). The second non-Algerian to lead a Serya is Sultan Ould Badi, a Mauritanian from the town of Boutilimit. He leads the Seryia Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa. That brings us to the supposition that the Da'wa, beyond its religious goals and its activities officially focused on proselytism, shapes the terrain for an illegal organization which combines religion, illegal trade, and political activities.

The eighth finding concerns the will of the illegal armed groups to weaken the governance in the Sahelian-Saharan region. They do not hesitate to sabotage new infrastructure currently built through the Special Program for Peace and Security in northern Mali. They also want to keep the international community out of the area by supporting general insecurity and the bandits who steal the NGOs vehicles. However, there is incoherence in their attitude toward AQIM which continues to kidnap Western citizens. Common sense leads one to the conclusion that kidnapping Europeans will cause a focus of the international counterterrorism agencies in the region. Considering

that there is a permanent consensus among the illegal armed groups sharing the same space, there may be an agreement and a common interest between AQIM and the other groups regarding hostage taking.

The ninth finding confirms the importance of illegal income-producing activities. It is evident that all of the armed groups in the region derive either directly or indirectly their resources from illegal activities. The three main activities are hostage taking, drug and weapon trafficking. The kidnapping of a Mauritanian gendarme, the probable execution of three European hostages (a German, French, and a British) by AQIM, and the duration of the negotiations may indicate that kidnappings are not AQIM's main source of income. It has other important sources of income and they may be important enough to maintain the neutrality or the alliance of the other armed groups.

The tenth finding concerns favorable demographics through the existence of armed groups and a preexisting state of violence. Historically, the Sahelian-Saharan region has been a space of recurrent hostilities among different groups. The word *razzia* is a symbol of the previous security condition of the region. The French used most their military to fight the phenomenon during their sixty years of presence in northern Mali. The different armed conflicts in the region are continuously reinforcing the armament arsenals of the illegal armed groups and ordinary individuals. The existence of illegal activity and youth unemployment will continue to feed favorable demographics in some areas.

Finally, invisibility is lower now than in the past due to the threat that AQIM causes to the international community. All the western counterterrorism agencies are focused on the region and there is a current multinational military operation to counter

the AQIM threat. The implication of a progressive loss of invisibility creates the

necessity for AQIM and the other armed groups to recruit as many as possible from the

different communities. That implies an expansion of AQIM in the Sahel.

In summary, the ten findings of this research are the following:

1. The establishment of a demilitarized region which favored AQIM development

2. The development and maintenance of the cultural and social resistance through the cultural concept of Essuf and Imushar rock

3. The absence of the state monopoly of force

4. The importance of criminal networks along drug escort and weapons trafficking routes

5. The easy access to arms by the civil population

6. The absence of border control

7. The links of the religious movement Da'wa with the radical islamist and the traffickers' groups

8. The will of all the illegal armed groups to disrupt the state's institutions

9. The economy based on informal and criminal activities

10. The absence of the effort of AQIM to mask its presence in northern Mali.

Hypotheses on AQIM and Affiliates "Strategy to Disrupt States" Authorities

In the light of the findings, an analysis of the operational concept of the threat in

the Sahelian-Saharan region will help to identify the place of AQIM in northern Mali.

The main hypothesis is that there is a supra-organization which organizes the drug

trafficking in the Sahelo-Saharan region. In order to achieve its goals, that organization needs to follow the conditions of table 8 in order to achieve its strategic end state.

Table 8.	AQIM and Affiliates' Ends, Ways, and Means		
Variable	**Ends**	**Ways**	**Means**
Strategic	Allow a continuous flow of drug and other illegal goods	Establishment of complex and organized criminal networks	Involvement of local criminal groups and key leaders
Operational	Disrupt states and international organizations' ability to interfere along the trafficking routes	Complex connections with the locals, supporting rebellions and armed groups	Social and illegal trade networks, financing, weapons, political legitimacy, and proselytism
Tactical	Weaken security forces and general intimidation	Attacks and sabotage against states and NGOs	Banditry, general insecurity, insurgency

Source: Created by author.

In the mid-term, there may be a competition between AQIM and the other former rebel groups of the region to be the representative of the main criminal organization in charge of the drug trafficking. That implies that AQIM will either control part of the social support of the former rebel groups, or expand their influence in the region to the maximum extent possible, or destabilize any competing group. Based on the table, the Tuareg armed groups are likely to control the criminal activities in the region if they provide enough confidence to the cartels and show that they are able to challenge the states. The crisis in Libya can give them the military capacity and the professional expertise. However, they need the legitimacy from the local populations.

Summary of AQIM's Center of Gravity Analysis

The results of the analysis of the indicators of ungovernability and conduciveness allow the author to provide a concise summary of AQIM's center of gravity (COG) in tables 9 and 10.

Table 9.   Analysis of AQIM'S Strategic Center of Gravity

CRITICAL CAPABILITIES	CENTER OF GRAVITY	CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS	CRITICAL VULNERABILITIES
- Destabilize Sahelian-Saharan governments - Delegitimize Sahelian-Saharan governments - Defeat conventional military forces through conventional war	- Local AQIM Seryia established in each country	- Expansion of support capabilies - Control of Algeria border for logistic reasons - Funding via narcotics and kidnappings - AQIM tactical units (Seryas) - Coalition with local rebellion groups - Neutrality of international community - Operational sustainment through national military reserves and Libya lost equipment and munitions	- Loyalty of rebel movements in the Sahelian-Saharan region - Fair distribution of Funding sources (drug, kidnappings) - Operational support from Libya and other countries (Ammunition)

Source: Created by author.

Table 10. Analysis of AQIM's Operational Center of Gravity			
CRITICAL CAPABILITIES	**CENTER OF GRAVITY**	**CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS**	**CRITICAL VULNERABILITIES**
- Destabilize Malian government - Delegitimize Malian government - Defeat Malian conventional military forces through conventional war	- Seryia Al Ansar renamed Jamaat Al Ansar Al Dine in northern Mali (the center of gravity may shift to other seryas depending on the country and the communities involved in the conflict)	- Expansion of support capabilities - Control of Algeria border for logistic reasons - Funding via narcotics and kidnappings - AQIM tactical units (Seryas) - Coalition with local rebellion groups - Neutrality of international community - Operational sustainment through national military reserves and Libya lost equipment and munitions	- Loyalty of rebel movements in northern Mali - Fair distribution of Funding sources (drug, kidnappings) - Operational support from Libya and other countries (Ammunition)

Source: Created by author.

AQIM's center of gravity in Mali relies on any of the Seryia. The Seryia are constituted on a tribal basis to operate in specific areas of the Sahelian-Saharan region. The Seryia *Al Ansar* is currently the COG in northern Mali. The Seryia *Al Ansar* is mainly composed of Tuaregs of the Adgagh region. Its chief, Abu Abdel Karim, is the cousin of Iyad Ag Ghali, current leader of the Ifoghas rebel group. The Movement Unity and Jihad in West Africa could become another center of gravity if AQIM has to continue further south in the Sahel. The Seryia *Al Vurkane*, leaded by Yahia Abu Hamam, would

probably be the center of gravity if AQIM has to conduct a major operation in

Mauritania. It is mainly composed of Mauritanian jihadists. The ability of AQIM to

sustain its presence and to progress in the region relies on the existence of local insurgent

groups requesting its support and the availability of former Libyan ammunition stocks.

The RAND's conduciveness variables constitute AQIM's critical capabilities and the

"Fortified Relationships' are its critical requirement.

<center>Recommendations</center>

The geographical characteristics and the effects of the climate favor the

conditions of ungovernability in the Sahelian-Saharan region. The social structure and

characteristics in some areas compound to the consequences of the armed conflicts. The

existence of the Sahelian-Saharan trade routes makes the region conducive to the

development of insurgent and criminal groups. The analysis of the region, through the

variables of ungovernability and conduciveness, facilitated putting the pieces of the

puzzle together to see the complexity of the problem in order to have a better

understanding.

It is obvious that there is a lack of governance which allows the different illegal

groups, in particular AQIM, to influence the youth. The solution is not the unique use of

force, but to a long-term operation combining security, law enforcement, governance,

development and communication. This implies the establishment of secured compounds,

the development of road networks and the conduct of a wide area security. That will

remediate the isolation of the areas under influence of AQIM and the other illegal armed

groups. The Special Program for Peace and Security of Northern Mali is part of the

response but it can be improved by integrating with the military operations process and

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an effective information operation campaign. The interdependence of security and development calls for the maximum integration of security, development, and governance for a better coordination and more efficient results.

The second point poses the necessity to conduct concerted and simultaneous actions by the regional states. There is already a multinational military operation through the CEMOC, but the process needs to be implemented through joint operations and the integration at all military levels of command of the counterterrorism operation of the representatives of the Sahelian-Saharan countries. However, military operations on their own will not be sufficient to defeat AQIM and the other criminal organizations. The size of the region, the agility of the threat, and its intelligence capacity could be overcome only by neutralizing its sustainment capacity. Furthermore, the new extension of AQIM activities in the Sahel is also a threat for ECOWAS and poses the necessity to make an operational coordination between that organization and the CEMOC. It is possible to isolate AQIM and the other illegal armed groups by disrupting the gasoline smuggling and the use of Toyota pickups. This dimension of the operation won't be possible without the integration of law enforcement and customs in the process. The power projection of law enforcement and the customs do not allow them to dissuade any illegal activity in the region without being integrated into a more robust military force. That implies a better coordination of the different services activities and unity of command to achieve a unity of effort and an economy of force.

Finally, at the communication level, or information operations, efforts should converge on local Muslim organizations and religious clans, and the Essuf culture. There is extensive proselytism conducted by foreign preachers and AQIM toward illiterate and

young populations. That target population does not have the ability to think critically about the Da'wa and AQIM preachers. Moreover, there is no state control of the message they transmit in the nomadic camps. Only the efforts of those who are respected by the locals as having the knowledge of the Koran and the Sunna (traditions) could disrupt the Jihadist messages. On the other hand, the secular unemployed youth could be influenced by a positive Essuf. The Essuf, through the Ishumar rock, continues to distill a sentiment of revolt and nostalgia of a "period of freedom" in the Sahara. The communication piece of any operation against insurgent or criminal groups cannot be effective without positively influencing the Essuf culture and the Ishumar rock.

<p align="center">Recommendations for Future Study</p>

This study focused on the Sahelian-Saharan regions, particularly northern Mali's, ungovernability indicators and the characteristics which make it conducive to the development of AQIM. The analysis came to the unexpected finding of the importance of kinship relationships which helped the Jihadist to easily integrate some local communities. Being part of these communities through marriages in northern Mali, the insurgent and the criminal groups set ties with AQIM for operational and financial supports. This condition was described by the author under the name of "Fortified Relationships". Further studies on this aspect of fortified relationships may provide a better understanding of the importance of this new variable in African insurgencies particularly those hosting tribal based communities.

Conclusion

AQIM is originally an Algerian insurgent group which found favorable ground in the Sahelian-Saharan region for it sustainment activities since the mid-1990s. Its activities increased considerably from cigarettes and small arms trafficking to drug escort and kidnapping. Northern Mali and the corridor including southern Morocco, northern Mauritania, and the Algeria-Mali border region constitutes a zone of interest for AQIM and all the criminal groups of the region. The inhospitable terrain and weather, the weakness of the institutions, and the isolation of the local nomadic populations facilitated AQIM's influence in the region. AQIM and other organizations know how to influence the variables of ungovernability and conduciveness to strengthen their relative freedom of action and movement in the region. The Sahelian-Saharan states can influence the same variables to defeat AQIM and any other criminal or insurgent organization in the region. That will need combined integrated efforts, resources, and time to reach positive results.

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[1]A forumist confirms the links of Iyad Ag Ghali (Commander of the Ifoghas insurgents) with the Islamists since the early 2000s, kidalinfowebsite, February 16, 2012, http://www.kidal.info/KI/forums.php?theme=debats&msg=9940

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