



From Need to Greed through Creed: The Transformation of Al Qaeda Terrorism in the Islamic Maghreb and the Sahel

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November 2015

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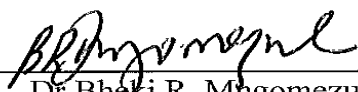


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Abstract

AQIM appeared on the Algerian landscape in 2007 after the merger between Al Qaeda and the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) with the objective of expanding its existing network in North Africa and the Sahel region. Within a relatively short period, AQIM adopted Al Qaeda tactics of suicide bombings targeting foreign institutions. It rapidly grew into one of the most dangerous terrorist groups operating in North Africa. Forging links with other militant Islamist groups such as Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and Ansar Dine, AQIM became an influential player within the terrorist network of that region. Pressure from security forces in Algeria propelled the group to seek refuge in Mali where the 2012 conflict provided a safe haven for the group. Operation *Serval* launched by the French military in 2013 dealt a severe setback to AQIM since many of its fighters were killed and others dispersed to other parts of the region. From that period onwards, there has been a reduction in terror attacks and bombings. Yet, an increase in kidnapping of foreigners for ransom coupled with drug and contraband trafficking signalled a transformation in the modus operandi of the group.

In trying to understand this trend, the study employed a qualitative method of data collection to examine the AQIM phenomenon. This involved applying the crime-terror paradigm in order to assess the evolution of AQIM from a terror group with political and religious intentions into a group engaged in criminal activities with economic motivations. Using desktop research and document analysis the study made concerted efforts to understand the causes and motivations of AQIM with the view to contribute towards formulating counter-terrorism measures that are more effective to address the threat of terrorism in the Sahel and North Africa. The findings of this study revealed *inter alia* that AQIM is a hybrid entity that displays both terrorist and criminal motivations which are determined by the context within which the group finds itself. One of the recommendations of this study is that concerted effort towards effectively countering the threat of terrorism is needed in order to ensure a holistic approach towards engaging this terrorist threat. In this regard, any strategy should include inter-regional information sharing among states and the creation of a joint commitment of forces in the Sahel with the aim of undertaking joint transnational operations along the borders. By so doing, terrorism could be contained even if it is not completely annihilated.

Keywords: Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Terrorism, Organized Crime, Sahel

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Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Abbreviations	xi
Chapter One	1
General Introduction and Background.....	1
1.1 Introduction: Setting the Scene	1
1.1.1 The origins of the Algerian civil war	3
1.2 Research Problem	4
1.3 Research Hypothesis	4
1.4 Research Objectives	5
1.5 Research Questions	5
1.6 Research Methodology	5
1.7 The significance and limitation to the study	7
1.8 Research Contribution	8
1.9 Structure of the study	9
Chapter Two.....	11
Preliminary Literature Review and Conceptual Framework.....	11
2.0 Introduction.....	11
2.1 Terrorism: A Conceptualisation.....	11
2.1.1 Terrorism: Towards a Definition	14
2.1.2 Types of Terrorism	16
<i>2.1.2.1 State Terrorism</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>2.1.2.2 Non-state Terrorism.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>2.1.2.3 Transnational Terrorism.....</i>	<i>17</i>
2.1.3 Religious Terrorism	17
2.2 Ideology.....	21
2.2.1 Ideological Origins and Development	21

2.2.2 Religion as an Ideology	23
2.3 Transnational Organized Crime (TOC)	24
2.3.1 Definition and Conceptualisation	24
2.4 Crime-Terror Argument: A continuum of Terror and Organized crime	27
2.4.1 The Nature of the Crime- Terror Continuum	28
2.4.1.1 Alliances	30
2.4.1.2 Appropriation of Tactics	31
2.4.2 The Context of the Crime-Terror Continuum	32
2.5 Chapter Summary	33
 Chapter Three	34
Theoretical Frameworks	34
3.0 Introduction	34
3.1 Explaining Conflict: An Examination of Some Theories	34
3.2 Theories that guided the Study	37
3.2.1 Greed and Grievance Theory	37
3.2.1.1 Greed Thesis	37
3.2.1.2 Grievance Thesis	39
3.2.1.3 Greed and Grievance Theory	41
3.2.2 The Convergence Thesis	43
3.3 Chapter Summary	45
 Chapter Four	47
The Religious Ideology of Terrorism	47
4.0 Introduction	47
4.1 Militant Islamism	48
4.1.1 The Precedence of Militant Islamism: Ibn Taymiyya	50
4.2 Wahhabism	51
4.3 Salafism	52
4.4 Contemporary Militant Islamism: The Influence of Qutb and Mawdudi	54
4.4.1 Sayyid Qutb	55
4.4.2 Mawlana Mawdudi	56
4.5 The First Inspiration in the Contemporary Era: The Iranian Revolution	58
4.6 The Second Inspiration: The Afghan <i>Jihad</i>	59
4.7 Al Qaeda: The Face of Militant Islamism in the 20 th Century	63

4.7.1 <i>Jihad</i> : A Misinterpreted Pretext.....	66
4.8 Chapter Summary	68
 Chapter Five.....	69
The Root Causes of Terrorism in Algeria.....	69
5.0 Introduction.....	69
5.1 Algeria: A Brief Pre-Colonial Historical Excursion	69
5.2 A Colonial Legacy	71
5.3 The War of Independence and the Birth of Modern Algeria.....	74
5.4 The Rise and Decline of the FLN.....	75
5.4.1 Ben Bella Era.....	75
5.4.2 The Boumedienne Era	77
5.4.3 Chadli Benjedid Era	79
5.5 The rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).....	80
5.6 The Military Coup and The Decline of the FIS.....	83
5.7 Opportunity Seized: Thus Enters the GIA.....	83
5.7.1 GIA: Formation and Tactics.....	84
5.7.2 GIA: Leadership and attacks.....	85
5.8 Out with the GIA and in with the GSPC	89
5.8.1 The leadership of the GSPC: Hassan Hattab	90
5.8.2 GSPC under Sahrawi	91
5.8.3 GSPC under Droukdel: The beginning of an Al Qaeda Alliance	91
5.9 Chapter Summary	93
 Chapter Six.....	94
From the Islamic State of Algeria to the Economic Caliphate of the Sahel.....	94
6.0 Introduction.....	94
6.1 North Africa: Al Qaeda's Treasured Playground.....	94
6.2 The Nascence of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.....	95
6.2.1 AQIM: Operational Structures	97
6.3 AQIM and Its Reign of Terror	98
6.3.1 AQIM under Pressure: From Algeria to Mali	101
6.4 AQIM's Economy of Terrorism	103
6.4.1 Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR).....	104
6.4.2 Drug Trafficking and contraband smuggling	106

6.5 AQIM: Criminal Terrorists or Terrorist Criminals?	109
6.6 Chapter Summary	111
 Chapter Seven	113
In Search of Solutions: Conclusion and Recommendations	113
7.0 Introduction	113
7.1 Evaluating resolutions and Counter Terrorism frameworks	113
7.1.1 The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Resolutions	114
7.1.2 The African Union Counter-Terrorism Framework	116
7.2 Assessing Counter-Terrorism Strategies in Africa	119
7.2.1 Assessing the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP)	120
7.2.2 An Assessment of Operation Serval	121
7.3.1 Greater Cooperation of States in the Maghreb Region	123
7.3.2 Towards a More Holistic Approach: A focus on Development	124
7.3.3 Countering Extremist Ideologies	126
7.3.4 Responding to the crime-terror nexus	128
7.4 Quo Vadis AQIM	129
7.5 Overall Summary	131
 Bibliography	133

List of Tables

Table 1: Types of Religious Terrorism	20
Table 2: Differences and Similarities between Organized Crime groups and Transnational Terrorist groups	27
Table 3: The Timeline of AQIM Kidnapping for Ransom Activities	105

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Crime-Terror Continuum	29
Figure 2: AQIM Terror Attacks from 2008 -2014	100
Figure 3: AQIM and Affiliate attacks in Mali for period 2014 -2015	103
Figure 4: AQIM Annual Income from Kidnapping for Ransom	104
Figure 5: Cocaine Transit areas in West Africa	107

Abbreviations

AFRIPOL	African Police Cooperation Mechanism
AIS	Islamic Army of Salvation
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FFS	Socialist Forces Front
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front
FLN	National Liberation Front
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
MIA	Armed Islamic Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Union
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
TOC	Transnational Organised Crime
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

Chapter One

General Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction: Setting the Scene

The emergence of Al Qaeda on the global scene is often associated with the events of September 11th 2001. This is partly due to the fact that it was the first time in history that a terrorist organisation had conducted an attack outside of its local territory. However, Al Qaeda terrorism can be traced back to the twin bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Mombasa in 1998. The group further established its tentacles within the African region when on 11 April 2002 Al Qaeda launched an attack against the Ghriba synagogue situated on the Tunisian island of Djerba. After a hiatus of exactly five years, Al Qaeda marked its return with three suicide bombings in the city of Algiers. This event not only represented the beginning of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) but it also ushered in the reign of terror that would engulf North Africa for the subsequent years. The danger of AQIM lies in its ever-evolving nature of its operations and its flexibility to adapt to current situations. AQIM has become one of the most dominant terrorist groups in Africa as its influence can be noted on militant groups such as the Boko Haram and Al Shabaab and its threats shows no sign of abating. Consequently, to comprehend the workings of AQIM and the dangers it poses, it is necessary to examine the historical context which incubated and precipitated its birth and growth and this can be traced back to a decade and a half prior to the renaming of the group.

In 1992, Algeria, on the verge of becoming the first Islamic nation to transit from authoritarianism to democratic pluralism, was about to enter into the annals of history as the first elected Islamic republic (Le Sueur, 2010). A military coup abruptly halted the process and paved the way for a near decade-long civil war between the state and militant Islamic groups. In this context, one of the militant groups, Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) or the Armed Islamic Group in English – the antecedent to the Salafist Group for the Combat and Preaching (GSPC) and later Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – capitalised on the grievance of the population to justify its attacks on the state. Eventually, after losing the support of the people due to its belligerent and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, the GIA splintered and the GSPC was formed. In addition to adopting the GIA's ideology of overthrowing the government and transforming Algeria into an Islamic state, the GSPC

further sought to extend its reach beyond Algeria by extending its caliphate into North Africa as a whole. The merger between Al Qaeda and GSPC in 2007 concretized this vision as the group adopted the name Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Chivvis & Liepman 2013:5). In a nutshell, this marks the genesis of terrorism in the Maghreb region which is the focus of the present study.

In a relatively short period, the reenergized AQIM began employing Al Qaeda tactics of suicide bombings and targeting of foreign institutions and, in a relatively short period of time, the group became one of the most feared terror groups in Algeria. As the indiscriminate attacks increased, so did the casualties who included non-combatants amongst whom were women and children. The group eventually abandoned this method of assault due to the decline in support from the populace which in turn dealt a massive blow to their recruiting capacity. Furthermore, pressure from security forces in Algeria propelled the group to seek refuge in Mali where the 2012 conflict provided a safe haven for the group until the French military launched operation *Serval* in 2013 (Le Monde, 2013). Afterwards, AQIM retreated in hiding, reassessing their plans of operation. This resulted in the decrease in the number of terror attacks executed by this terrorist group. Inversely, in recent times there has been an increase in the kidnapping of foreigners for ransom and trafficking of drugs and contraband by members of the group. This latter trend exemplifies an evolution of the group's modus operandi.

Despite the fact that the group has not been in the spotlight in recent times for terrorist attacks, the danger that it poses has not diminished. It is imperative, therefore, to establish the type of group that AQIM has metamorphosed into in order to proffer recommendations to curb any threat that the group may pose either presently or in the near future both in north Africa and the entire African continent as a whole. In this context, it is crucial to examine the background, emergence, ideology and evolution of AQIM. Although the latter's theatre of operations stretches throughout the Sahel region into northern Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Chad, the group still maintains a predominantly Algerian support base. Furthermore, despite having adopted the name Al Qaeda in its designation, the group still pertains to the ideology of its predecessor, namely, the GSPC. Against this backdrop, this thesis examines the history of the militant group AQIM not only from the time of its emergence in the post-coup era in Algeria but rather from the original event that inspired the birth of jihadi extremists in

Algeria, namely, the Algerian war of independence that transpired between 1956 -1962 (Volpi, 2003:32).

1.1.1 The origins of the Algerian civil war

Within two years of winning the war of independence, the Algerian populace faced another political turmoil in the form of a military coup after which ensued almost three decades of single party rule (Le Sueur 2010: 19). In the economic sphere, the strong reliance on industrialisation at the expense of agriculture initially had a positive effect but eventually led to a near collapse in the economy as unemployment soared with the youth finding themselves as the targeted victims. Furthermore, the people were prevented from expressing their grievances through protests as this would only exacerbate the amount of force that the military and security forces would use as means to repress the crowd. Although the government eventually allowed other political parties to participate in the 1990 elections, it had no intention of ceding power to the upcoming incumbent. Thus after losing the first round of elections and anticipating a second round loss, the military stepped in and cancelled the elections. This event became a historical moment for Algeria as it marked the beginning of one of the longest civil wars in the history of North Africa. It also precipitated the emergence of one of the longest operational jihadi groups in Africa.

In this milieu, it becomes clear that religious terrorism, in this instance jihadi terrorism, does not incubate inside a vacuum but rather there are underlying causes such as political grievance, poor governance and lack of economic opportunities that stimulate the perfect conditions for it to develop. Consequently, this has led scholars to ascribe the root causes of conflict into two broad paradigms, namely, the greed and grievance categories. Furthermore, a pivotal point to note is that once terror groups are formed, they do not remain as static entities. As the leadership of the group changes - in the event of the leader being replaced or killed - so does the group's ideology and modus operandi. Similarly to a business enterprise, a terrorist group needs funds to function and thus sources of funding become a crucial element for their survival. However, as Makarenko (2004) notes, it is often the case that in an attempt to scour for funding, the group's ideology changes and the desire for profit overshadows its original political/religious goal, albeit the group still makes recourse to the latter if only for recruiting new members. It is with this elucidation in mind that this study attempts to study the evolution of AQIM from the time of its inception to its present day

functioning in order to determine whether the group still remains a terror group focusing on economic gains as a source of funding or if it has turned into an organised crime group using terror tactics as a means of further its economic interests.

1.2 Research Problem

The recent decline in the terror activities of AQIM in the Sahel might be perceived by many as a sign of victory against the Islamic militant group. After operation *Serval*, conducted by the French military in Northern Mali in January 2013, AQIM went into hiding to the relief of the international community who believed that the group might have finally been defeated. Furthermore, AQIM has not conducted any major attacks since that epoch, albeit splinter groups associated to it continue to launch small-scale assaults against military and foreign interests in the Sahel region, for instance, the Mali restaurant bombing and the Tunisian museum attack *inter alia*. Moreover, as previously mentioned, although there has been a great reduction in terror attacks by AQIM, kidnapping of foreigners for ransom and trafficking of drugs and contraband signals have increased, signalling a transformation of the modus operandi of the group. As a result, scholars have turned their attention towards other active groups in the Sahel, such as the Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and the Islamic State (ISIL) contributing towards a decrease in literature on AQIM. However, a caveat is that failure in understanding the group's current functioning and operations due to the myopic misconception that it has been defeated, may result in serious social and security repercussions in the near future.

Given this dearth of information relating to the current state of AQIM, it becomes imperative to undertake a comprehensive study that will provide an analysis of the group in view of examining the threat and danger that it poses to the Sahel and beyond. Hence, this study aims to provide a thorough analysis of AQIM with the view of offering suggestions to academics and policy makers on how to curb the threat of AQIM and other similar militant groups who follow similar traits.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The thesis of this study asks whether AQIM has transformed from a terror group with political and religious intentions into a group engaged in criminal activities with solely economic motivations.

1.4 Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to contribute to the existing literature on AQIM in order to produce sufficient data that will provide the basis for understanding the group's current activities. To this end, the following objectives guided the study from its conceptualisation:

- a) To examine and analyse the links between weak states, greed and grievance, the crime-terror nexus and AQIM terrorism in the Sahel.
- b) To contribute to the literature that aims to provide an understanding of the evolution of AQIM in the Sahel region.
- c) To establish how AQIM has evolved over time.
- d) To suggest alternative measures and policies aimed at addressing the threat of terrorism in the Sahel region and the rest of Africa.

1.5 Research Questions

From these objectives flow the following research questions:

- a) What are the origins, modus operandi, motivations and objectives of AQIM in the Sahel?
- b) To what extent has AQIM evolved from a religious terror group into an organised criminal network?
- c) Is AQIM linked with any organised crime groups?
- d) Are the current counter-terrorism measures efficient in combating the threat of militants groups such as AQIM in Africa?
- e) What can be learned from the phenomenon of AQIM and how can this contribute towards formulating more effective responses to AQIM and its affiliates?

1.6 Research Methodology

A research design, as Selltitz et al. (cited in Mouton, 1988: 32) note, 'is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose'. Furthermore, the researcher should determine the nature of evidence required to answer the research questions, objectives and the research problem. As such, this study favoured a qualitative method of data collection since it allows the researcher to understand complex personal and social issues by delving deep into the phenomenon under study. In a qualitative research, data is interpreted to establish 'an enriched and significantly meaningful perspective' (Tavallaei & Abu Talib, 2010: 570). In contrast to quantitative methodology where the focus is on measuring parts of the issue, qualitative research tends to

create ‘a picture which covers the whole image in it’ (2010: 571). It was with this understanding in mind that the qualitative approach was adopted for this study.

To further produce a research design that is more specific, focused and practical, this study employed a case study approach. In addition to providing the researcher with the opportunity to identify substantial resource materials for the study, the findings of a case study research can lead to the specialization of the area under investigation. One of the primary advantages of case-study research is that it allows the researcher to connect abstract ideas to concrete examples of cases that are explored in detail. This in turn, according to Neumann (2011: 42), further enhances the examination of intricate details of societal processes, thus contributing towards developing a richer and a more comprehensive explanation that can analyse the complexity of social life. The case study for this research is the AQIM phenomenon in the Sahel region.

For the greater part, this study preferred secondary data analysis. As Vartanian (2011: 13) spotlights, secondary data analysis provides a broader interpretation of the area under discussion as it includes access to large amounts of information, coverage of a broad range of topics and take less time to organise. To this end, secondary data on AQIM was garnered from an array of scholarly sources that included reports and studies in journals, textbooks, newspapers, publications by both governmental and non-governmental organisations, magazines and news commentaries amongst others. Moreover, credible websites of international organisations and scholarly databases were accessed to amass data. To further enrich the validity of the findings of the study, global documents on AQIM such as those produced by the Centre for Security Studies, Amnesty International, Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, Human Rights Watch and United Nations were sourced and analysed. Finally, after collection, the different data sets were assayed qualitatively so as to distil from them the most desirable credible findings on the AQIM phenomenon. Given that the study did not opt for the quantitative approach, collected was analysed thematically as is the norm in qualitative research. The above methodology was chosen to achieve the aim of this study, which is to provide a thorough analysis of AQIM with the view of contributing to the literature on how to curb the threat of AQIM and other similar militant groups who follow similar traits.

1.7 The significance and limitation to the study

Among the plethora of studies on AQIM, some scholars have adopted a historical method by focusing on its inception as the GIA until its eventual merger with Al Qaeda Central (Filiu, 2009; Le Sueur, 2010; Harmon, 2010). Others have attempted to identify the reason behind the merger between GSPC and Al Qaeda (Martinez, 2004; Botha, 2007; Jebnoun, 2007; Black, 2008). More recently, scholars who have analysed the prospect of AQIM associating with criminal networks and resorting to criminal activities for economic revenue, maintain that AQIM remains mostly a terror group that participates in criminal activities (Harmon, 2010; Pham, 2011a; Liang, 2011; Echeverría, 2012). This study examines research that has been conducted on other groups such as the Taliban, the Abu Sayyaf, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, as well as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), since these groups are viewed as terrorist entities that are evolving into groups primarily engaged in criminal activities resulting in an obfuscation of the line between ideology and greed due to vast profits (Makarenko, 2004; Schmidt, 2010).

These studies served as a prism through which the transformation of AQIM was analysed to determine whether its trajectory or operation shares any similarities with the above mentioned terror-cum-criminal groups. Subsequently, it can also be observed that scholars differ on whether AQIM is a terror group involved in criminal activities or if it is an organized crime group using terror tactics to economic gain. This study filtered information from the aforementioned studies in order to better understand the phenomenon of AQIM and its evolution in the Sahel region while synthesising the differing views of these scholars with the prospect of achieving the study's general objective.

From the above-mentioned, it can be noted that previous research projects on AQIM have been conducted from perspectives that evaluate the social, political, religious and economic motivations of the group as separate entities. For instance, scholars who focus on a historical analysis of AQIM do not necessarily examine the social and economic motivations of the group (Filiu, 2009; Le Sueur, 2010). On the other hand, other scholars who focus on the economic motivation of the group give little attention to the group's religious component (Pham, 2011a; Liang, 2011). The advantage of such an approach is that it allows the researcher to focus exclusively on a specific aspect related to the functioning of the group

thereby creating space for an in-depth analysis with the potential to provide more concrete results.

In contrast, the shortcoming of such a method is that the researcher prioritizes certain aspects as more important than others, thus promoting the tendency to dismiss the other facets as unimportant. Consequently, this results in a major gap within the literature on AQIM. Taking a cue from this shortcoming, this study overcame this limitation by examining the religious, the political and the economic motivations of AQIM separately and then combined them as a whole in order to better comprehend the AQIM phenomenon. In turn, this aided the researcher in determining whether AQIM is a terror group involved in criminal activities for economic support - **criminal political enterprise** - or if it is a criminal group primarily motivated by financial gain yet focusing on grievance (political or religious) as an ideological apparatus to attract recruits - **traditional criminal enterprise** - (Makarenko, 2004).

This study is limited in that it did not review other terrorist groups such as the Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and ISIL in Africa, although some references are made to these groups in the dissertation. Another limitation is that in terms of contribution to the originality of the study, the researcher was unable to interview members of the group directly due to the surreptitious nature of terrorism itself coupled with the restriction of access to members of terrorist organizations as well as time and financial constraints which would have made traveling to the research area almost impossible. Yet the amount of literature available enabled the researcher to overcome this lacuna. Consequently, in this dissertation, reference will be made to the documents and writings of AQIM available through credible internet and newspaper websites as noted above.

1.8 Research Contribution

The many studies that have attempted to study the phenomenon of AQIM, have done so from a historical perspective focusing primarily on the political and social causes that led to the commencement of the group. Added to that, while some researchers have investigated the economic motives of AQIM, there has been little systematic attention paid to the type of criminal identity that the group has transformed into. With these forewarnings in mind, this

study aims to fill in these gaps in the literature in order to provide knowledge and support effective counter-terrorism policies in the Sahel region and in Africa in general.

1.9 Structure of the study

The research study is structured as follows:

Chapter One: General Introduction and Background

This chapter has provided the background to the study. It has rationalised how the topic was chosen and provided the aim, objectives, hypothesis and research questions addressed in the study. Furthermore, it has demonstrated the research methodology, the significance and limitations and the structure of the study.

Chapter Two: Preliminary Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Chapter two will review existing literature on the theme of the study. It will summarise and engage with the sources. The strengths and weaknesses of the existing literature will be identified. Importantly, the chapter will indicate what is missing from the literature as justification for the proposed study. As such, it will clarify significant concepts pertinent to the research and explains how these concepts relate to the research literature in the field of religious terrorism and organised crime transformation in the Sahel and Africa.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework on which the study is based will be the focus of this chapter. After presenting a general discussion on the role of theoretical framework in research, the chapter will introduce the chosen theory and justify its relevance to this study. This study will be examined through the prism of two theoretical framework of analysis, namely, the greed and grievance theory and the convergence thesis.

Chapter Four: The Religious Ideology of Terrorism

This chapter will peruse the religious ideology of AQIM from its inception as the GIA to the eventual merger with Al Qaeda central and until its present status.

Chapter Five: The Root Causes of Terrorism in Algeria

The rise of AQIM in terms of its political motivations and the factors that facilitated its birth will be analysed in this chapter. Additionally, the dynamics that propelled the rise of AQIM

and incubated its radicalisation within the Algerian context and beyond will also be examined.

Chapter Six: From the Islamic State of Algeria to the Economic Caliphate of the Sahel

This chapter will examine the sources of AQIM financing such as existing financial networks, drug trafficking, cigarette smuggling, kidnapping for ransom, so as to determine the economic motivation of the group.

Chapter Seven: In Search of Solutions: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will pull the study together by reiterating key discussion points. Importantly, drawing from the findings, the chapter will make recommendations for the future and identify other areas of further research on the theme of this study. As such, it will assess the current counter-terrorism policies formulated by the UN, the EU, the AU, and other regional blocks through their relevance and shortcomings in countering the threat of AQIM in Africa. In conclusion, multiple avenues in curbing terrorism and measures contributing towards formulating effective counter-terrorism policies will be proposed.

Chapter Two

Preliminary Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.0 Introduction

After having previously set the scene and introduced the dissertation, this chapter further continues in this endeavour by assessing and distilling from the range of existing literature relevant concepts that contribute towards a better understanding of the AQIM phenomenon. Blaxter et al. (2010:124) advance that the purpose of a literature review is to ‘to locate the research project, to form its context or background and to provide insights into previous work’. So conceived, the primary focus in this chapter is to review existing literature on the themes pertinent to the current study and these include the terrorism, ideology and organized crime. Particular focus is dedicated to the problem of religious terrorism, religious ideology and the connection between terrorism and organized crime since they assume a pivotal role in contributing towards a comprehension of the transformation of AQIM in the Sahel and the broader North African region. Additionally, this chapter also investigates the way in which different scholars have tackled or conceptualised these concepts. In short, this chapter on the literature review and conceptual framework attempts to contribute towards a correlated understanding of the phenomenon of AQIM.

2.1 Terrorism: A Conceptualisation

In a way, the terms “terrorism” is an abstraction. It is only given meaning by those who use it at any given time. Therefore, ‘It is virtually impossible to understand terrorism without examining the context of where and how it developed’ (White, 2002: 65). Taking a cue from this statement, the concept of terrorism merits a brief historical exploration as evidenced in the existing literature. The earliest account of organized terrorism can be traced back to first-century Judea and involves a group known as the Zealots. In his writings, the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius documents the little that is known about the group which he describes as a highly organised religious sect whose aim was to end the Roman rule in Palestine. The Zealots, also referred to as the *Sicarii* (a term describing their weapon of choice) utilised unorthodox tactics that included attacking their enemies in daylight and in public spaces (Laqueur 1987: 12).

For instance, the Zealots would choose a feast day or any day when there would be a large gathering in Jerusalem. Once they had identified their target, whether ‘a moderate Jewish

leader (someone who advocated collaboration with the Romans), a local Greek resident of Judea, or a member of the Roman occupying power', a Zealot would step out from the crowd and stab the victim to death using a short dagger or *sica* and then disappear into the crowds (Weinberg & Eubank, 2006: 22). According to Chaliand & Blin (2007: 57), the group had both a religious and political objective. Their political aim was to tussle power from the Roman occupiers through terror tactics and uprisings. As a religious group, they wanted to implement a high level of strictness in religious practices and they would go as far as attacking Jews who they felt were not complying with their rules. For the Zealots, both the religious and political aims, albeit different, were inseparable. Incidentally, the phenomenon of the Zealots also marked the beginning of the idea of purity both in the religious and political arena that would continue until our present day (Chaliand & Blin, 2007:57).

Another organisation or sect that demonstrated similar characteristics to the Zealots came to the fore during the eleventh century under the name of the Assassins. In contrast to the Zealots, there is better documented information about this sect (Chaliand & Blin, 2007: 59). Founded in Persia by Hassan Sibai, the group was a messianic sect within the community of Shi'ite Muslims. Its primary focus was that of purifying the Muslim community who had been corrupted by the largely Sunni leaders of medieval Islam.¹ Realising that its opponents outnumbered its members, the group enlisted the services of the *feyadeen* - individuals who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the group in view of reaching paradise (Weinberg & Eubank, 2006:24). Their tactics included operating in complete secrecy. High ranking Sunni leaders, prefects, caliphs and Christian crusaders were among the group's victims (Laqueur, 1987: 13). Akin to the Zealots, the Assassins preferred the dagger as their weapon of choice. However, the dagger was not chosen for its effectiveness but rather for the ritualistic symbol that it represented since for the Assassins, the act of killing was perceived as a sacramental duty (Weinberg & Eubank, 2006: 13). The brief analysis of the two sects, the Zealots and the Assassins, spotlights that the religious dimension in contemporary terrorism is not a recent phenomenon but can be traced back to prior centuries.

¹ The Sunni and the Shia's are two predominant traditions within Islam that disagree over the succession following Prophet Muhammad's death in 623 CE. Over time, this disagreement has extended to 'political authority and legitimacy, and the nature of leadership of the masses' (Alvi, 2014:41). Whereas the Sunni placed emphasis on social order which often meant greater tolerance of a tyrannical ruler, the Shias' focus was more on fighting oppression and despotism. For more on the Shia /Sunni divide, see Vali Nasr (2006), Martin (2011: 147).

A few centuries after the Assassins, the French Revolution signalled a turning point in the history of terrorism as it marked the emergence of the concept of 'state terrorism' (Chaliand & Blin, 2007: 95). Some scholars associate the French Revolution with the starting point of the history of terrorism. To support their claim, they advocate that it was the first time that terrorism found itself at the centre of a 'comprehensive political philosophy and strategy to gain and retain power' (Rubin & Rubin, 2008: 4). On the other hand, there are those who attribute the French Revolution to the beginning of modern terrorism (White, 2009; Cronin, 2010). Incidentally, it was during the period of 1793-94 that the term 'terrorism' was first employed to designate the *regime de la terreur* or the 'reign of terror' of Maximilien Robespierre, the leader of the radical group known as the Jacobins, who took control of the French government (Weinberg & Eubank, 2006: 26). Robespierre employed terrorism as a means to remain in power by eliminating his enemies or those who posed a threat to his leadership.

The system of terror during the French Revolution, according to Rubin & Rubin (2008: 4), reveals three elements that are relevant to contemporary scholars in their quest for understanding terrorism. Firstly, the Jacobins employed terror against others as a means to gain the support of its members. Unlike the Zealots or the Assassins who claimed religious inspiration, the Jacobins justified their actions in the name of the people (Weinberg & Eubank, 2006: 27). Secondly, Robespierre and his followers eliminated entire social groups that included the aristocrats, the Girondin moderates and rivals among the radicals. These groups were labelled criminals due to their social standing and the category they belonged to rather than for the acts that they have committed (2006:28). Finally, the Jacobins' aim was to instil fear among those in the French populace who might have doubts and disagreements with the ideology of those in power (2006: 28). In short, the French Revolution 'served both as the founding act of modern state terror and as the model defining and delineating the strategic use of violence by a state apparatus'(Chaliand & Blin, 2007: 101).

Having thus briefly examined the history and development of terrorism from the earliest written account to the birth of modern terrorism, it can be noted that both the concept and meaning of the term terrorism has changed and evolved according to the corresponding historical epoch. Hence, to understand the meaning of terrorism within our contemporary context, the quest to discover a working definition of terrorism assumes an unprecedented mode of urgency.

2.1.1 Terrorism: Towards a Definition

A brief etymological analysis of the term ‘terrorism’ reveals that it obtains its roots from the Latin verb *terrere* signifying ‘to bring someone to tremble through great fear’ (Schmid, 2011: 68). Since terrorism is a complex and multifaceted concept, a simple etymological analysis is far from sufficient to capture the full dimensionality of the problem. Subsequently, scholars realised this shortcoming, attempted to produce a working definition of the term terrorism. This endeavour, though promising, was besotted with multiple difficulties since any definition of terrorism would not do justice to its complexities and multi-variance. For some scholars, as Schmid (2011:42) notes, searching for the perfect definition of terrorism amounts to ‘no more than a futile polemical exercise, chasing a chimera’. The problem is further compounded by the lack of consensus amongst scholars, politicians, social scientists, lawmakers and policy makers of what the term actually consists of.

One of the difficulties associated with defining terrorism is the fact that terrorism contains an offensive connotation in that ‘when labelled a terrorist a person is politically and socially degraded’ (White, 2009: 4). The same usually occurs when an organisation is categorised as a terrorist group. Sometimes, governments suppress their opponents through lethal force and label them as terrorist groups in an attempt to obtain the legitimacy of the international community. The freedom fighter versus the terrorist debate is another quandary that arises out of the definitional issues of terrorism. Determining who can be labelled a freedom fighter or a terrorist spotlights the blurred line that exists between the two and the prevalent relativism that is inherent within such an undertaking. Two instances that exemplify this conundrum are the African National Congress (ANC) in apartheid South Africa and Hamas in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In both cases, the same group was/is perceived as ‘terrorists’ by some and as ‘freedom fighters’ by others. In order to overcome this impasse, Kushner (2003:143) posits that the freedom fighter differs from the terrorist in terms of target choices. While the former concentrates predominantly on military targets, the latter targets civilians and unarmed combatants in the aim of instilling fear into the government and populace. Nonetheless, the freedom fighter / terrorist debate remains a paradox that will continue to fuel debate about the legitimacy of group and individual actions (2003:144).

Hoffman (2006: 40) defines terrorism as ‘the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change’. Similarly for Chomsky, terrorism is ‘the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that

are political, religious, or ideological in nature...through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear' (Kushner, 2003: 69). In its attempt to find a working definition of terrorism, the U.S. Department of State (2004: xii) defined it as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents usually intended to influence an audience". Without claiming any absoluteness of this definition, it is fair to argue that it is the closest one could get to distinguishing it from warfare. However, in spite of its viability, the definition does have its limitations as there are certain aspects that are overlooked. The term 'non-combatant' is not clarified to ascertain whether it encompasses both civilians and military personnel. Additionally, since the definition constrains terrorism as acts performed by non-state actors only, it excludes a major aspect of terrorism, namely state terrorism (Schmid, 2011:49). Another weakness is that the definition does not refer to other motives behind terrorism besides the political (Hoffman 2006; Schmid 2011).

Retaining the Department of State definition, Sinai (2008:11) amends it to include terrorism as an act perpetrated against any citizen of a state - civilian and military. Moreover, he adds that 'unlike guerrilla forces, terrorist groups are less capable of overthrowing their adversaries' governments than on inflicting discriminate or indiscriminate destruction that they hope will coerce them to change policy'. The recent reign of terror perpetrated by ISIL in both Syria and Iraq, however, debunks the latter statement which would normally apply to most terror groups. It thus becomes clear that terrorism is a complex phenomenon and defining it becomes "the most ambiguous component in terrorist studies, with no universally accepted definition that differentiates attacks against civilian non-combatants or armed military or takes into account the latest trends in terrorist objectives of warfare" (Sinai, 2008:9). Subsequently, a working definition of terrorism should encapsulate some pivotal elements of terrorism such as the threat of violence, the meaning of non-combatants, the legitimization of violence and the intimidation of both government and citizens by terrorist groups. Additionally, the definition should also enable one to distinguish between acts of terrorism, insurgencies, guerrilla warfare and armed rebel attacks.

With the aforementioned caveats in mind, this study adopts the working definition of terrorism formulated by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1566 of 08 October 2004 that defines terrorism as:

Criminal and violent acts, including those against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious harm, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any acts, which constitute offenses within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism (United Nations Security Council, 2004: 2).

Although the distinction between state and non-state group is implicit in the above definition, it is important to further analyse these two modes of terrorism. Categorising terrorism into different typologies allow scholars to examine the range of terrorist activities, the specific type of terrorism to be analysed and further contribute to a holistic understanding of terrorism (White, 2009: 13). Consequently, three types of terrorism will be analysed, namely, state, non-state and transnational terrorism.

2.1.2 Types of Terrorism

2.1.2.1 State Terrorism

State terrorism is the form of violence that government perpetrates against its own citizens as a means to retain power and to instil fear in the name of the state. This includes state operatives such as the police or military using repression, detention, torture and genocide as tactics in order to defeat actors within its territory or outside its borders (Ali Khan, 2006:77). Another dimension of state terrorism occurs when states secretly or openly support terror acts committed by non-state actors against people and institutions who are enemies of the state and this is often referred to as state-sponsored terrorism (2006: 78). In this instance, the function of the state is to provide moral, financial and military support to these terror groups. Prime examples of state terrorism are Hitler's Gestapo, Stalinist's regime of the 1930s and the Algerian military against the Islamists in the 1990s. Similarly, the Syrian government's support of Hezbollah in Lebanon exemplifies state-sponsored terrorism.

2.1.2.2 Non-state Terrorism

Non-state terrorism is usually performed by non-state actors against government, ethno-national groups, religious groups and other perceived enemies (Martin, 2011:33). This type of terrorism can be further expounded into social-revolutionary terrorism and nationalist-separatist terrorism. Social-revolutionary terrorism includes 'acts perpetrated by groups seeking to overthrow the capitalist economic and social order' (Post, 2005:56). An example is

the Algerian National Liberation Front which is examined in this study's subsequent chapters. On the other hand, according to Post (2005:56-57), nationalist-separatist terrorism refers to 'groups fighting to establish a new political order or state based on ethnic dominance or homogeneity.' Prominent examples are the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) in Spain.

2.1.2.3 Transnational Terrorism

Transnational terrorism, a more recent phenomenon actualised through the 9/11 attacks by Al Qaeda, is defined as 'cross-border terrorism that is not state-controlled or state-sponsored but operating in more than one country' (Schmid, 2011:696). Transnational terrorist acts include attacks against foreign governments, institutions and representatives. The group often selects its targets based on the value as symbols of international interests as is exemplified in the choice of targets of Al Qaeda that include the World Trade Centre, The London Subway, and kidnapping of foreign hostages. Although Al Qaeda falls within the transnational category, the group can also be said to engage in religious terrorism as their methods appear to be informed by a religious ideology. This takes us to the next type of terrorism – religious terrorism.

2.1.3 Religious Terrorism

Religious terrorism, another important facet of non-state terrorism, is defined as an 'indiscriminate and unlawful use of violence against non-combatant civilians, justified by perpetrators in terms of a higher (divine) authority' (Schmid, 2011:681). For the religious terrorist, acts of terrorism assume a transcendental dimension as they perceived as a direct response to some theological command from the Divine transmitted through either sacred texts or by clerical authorities who are representatives of the divine on earth (Hoffman, 2006:272). People or groups that engage in religious terrorism range from lone wolves to large dissident groups to even governments. As Martin (2011:131) opines, even the motivations of groups engaged in religious terrorism vary as some are inspired by defensive motives while others are more interested in the hegemonic propagation of their faith whereas others consist of a combination of both aspects. From this, it becomes apparent that the definition provided by Schmid above fails to consider the varying motives of religious terrorists who are not focused solely on religious ideals but who also have a political agenda.

In attempting to procure a definition of religious terrorism, scholars face similar complexities in defining terrorism since there is little consensus on what religious terrorism actually consists of. Rapoport (cited in Gregg, 2014:39) posits that the difference between secular and religious terrorism lies in the use of sacred text and scripture by the religious terrorists in contrast to their secular counterparts. Sedgwick (2004:795) further adds that ‘while the ultimate aims [of religious terrorist groups] will be religiously formulated, the immediate objectives will often be found to be almost purely political’. Taking the aforementioned into consideration, this study adopts the following definition of religious terrorism as proposed by Gregg (2014:40) who defines it as, ‘the threat or use of force with the purpose of influencing or coercing governments and/or populations towards saliently religious goals’.

To further understand the underpinnings of religious terrorism, Hoffman (2006:88-89) highlights some important characteristics of this phenomenon. Firstly, acts of religious terrorism are identified as transcendental acts or a sacramental duty and as such the religious terrorist often disregards the political, moral or practical constraints that may otherwise apply to secular terrorists in the attainment of their goals. Secondly, unlike secular terrorists who would as far as possible disengage in indiscriminate killing as it would be incompatible with their political aims, religious terrorists often ‘seek the elimination of broadly defined categories of enemies’ (2006:89). Furthermore anyone who is not a member of the latter’s group or who does not abide or agree to their ideology is termed an ‘enemy’ and is a legitimate target (Cronin, 2010: 39). For the religious terrorist, this all-encompassing violence is perceived as both morally justified and a necessity for the achievement of their objectives.

Thirdly, secular and religious terrorists differ in terms of perceptions of themselves and their acts. For the former, violence is a means to correct a flaw in a moderately good system or incite the creation of a new system. The religious terrorists, on the other hand, identify themselves as outsiders striving for achieving fundamental changes in the existing orders and replace the system (Hoffman, 2006:89). To these, Cronin (2010:39) adds a fourth feature when she notes that the religious terrorists do not regard themselves as bound by secular laws and values and hence, the overthrow of this secular state becomes a dynamic motivation.

After analysing these characteristics, Gregg (2014:38-39) developed a threefold typology of religious terrorism, where he categorises religious terrorist groups into those that ‘1) foment the apocalypse; 2) aim to create a religious government; and 3) intend to religiously cleanse a

state'. Groups pertaining to an apocalyptic vision that focuses on maximising the destruction of people, property and the environment in the aim of 'fomenting the end of time and ushering in religious promises of a new world', tend to be the most common stereotype of religious terrorism (Gregg 2014:39).

These types of apocalyptic groups abide by an ideology that focuses on the arrival of a new world or the coming of the messiah which will correspond with the end of the world (Rapoport cited in Gregg 2014:39). The Japanese sect Aum Shinrikyo, that was responsible for the nerve gas attack in the Tokyo subway in 1995 that resulted in the death of 12 people and more than 5000 injured, is a prime example (Juergensmeyer, 2008:179). Gregg (2014:39) warns that groups abiding by the apocalyptic paradox of destroying the world in order to create a new one are the most dangerous as they do not appear to confine to any rational thought and they do not engage into negotiated settlements. Furthermore, these groups are the ones who are the most prone to obtain Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in order to achieve their objective.

The creation of a religious government is another objective that many religious terrorist groups adhere to. The most prevalent form of this objective can be currently ascertained by militant Islamic groups whose desire is to overthrow the secular government and install in its place a state that observes *Sharia*' law (Gregg, 2014:40). This is exemplified by the Lebanese group Hezbollah, who used terrorism against Israel and its own government with the aim of installing a religious government in Lebanon. With the emergence of transnational terrorism, religious terrorist groups, which hitherto were confined to their states, have developed transnational ties with other religious groups that hold similar ideologies. For instance, not only does Al Qaeda have different sub-groups in different continents but it also has affiliated groups that include Abbu Sayyaf in the Philippines, Al Shabaab in Somalia and Al-Nusra Front in Syria, amongst others. In addition to forming a religious government within their states, some religious terrorist groups have greater ambitions of forming religious regions or 'super-states' (Gregg, 2014:41) as is noted in the recent caliphate declared by ISIL in the region of Syria and northern Iraq.

Religious cleansing, a third type of religious terrorism, is often linked to the second feature or may even pertain to result from it. For religious terrorists, the objective of cleansing or eliminating 'unfaithfuls' or infidels within their religion or another religion is very often a

sine qua non for creating a religious state. As such, all the citizens within a state's border or region have to conform to the group's interpretation of the faith (Gregg, 2014:42). In the context of this study, this is examined within the GIA's indiscriminate killings of individuals, both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, in its quest to overthrowing the Algerian government. Eventually, for its lack of supporting the campaign of the GIA, the entire population was labelled as infidels and became the target of undiscerning attacks (Harmon, 2010: 14). Although the notion of cleansing also features in secular terrorism (as perceived in the notion of ethnic cleansing in a separatist group), there is an apparent distinction to be made.

In contrast to secular terrorism, religion instead of ethnicity is the striking feature of religious cleansing. As Gregg (2014:43) saliently notes, 'religious terrorist groups can be multi-ethnic, such as Al-Qaeda, which is made up of Muslims from all over the worldwide community, but not multi-religious; they are all Muslim'. Terrorism is a multi-complex phenomenon and religious terrorism is no less different. Depending on the context, the three types of religious terrorism highlighted above may at times be interlinked or separate. The case of Aum Shinrikyo whose focus was on the apocalypse illustrates that these types of terrorism can be separated while, on the other hand, the GIA demonstrated the inter-relatedness of these types as the group amalgamated the second and third type. The different types of terrorism and the way they correlate are illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Types of Religious Terrorism

Religious Terrorism Type	Defining Objective(s)	Example
Apocalyptic	Cataclysmic destruction to people, property and environment Hasten arrival of a "new world"	Aum Shinrikyo
Creation of a religious government	Abolish secular state Create a state governed by religious law and doctrine	Hezbollah GIA / GSPC
Creation of a religious state / region	Remove groups from other religions Remove groups within same religion with different interpretations of faith	AQIM ISIL

Source: Adapted from (Gregg, 2014:43).

After having examined the notion of religious terrorism, it is important to note that although terrorism is not a recent phenomenon – as demonstrated in the illustration of the Zealots and the Assassins - there has been a significant increase in terrorist attacks by religious groups during the nineties and the number is continuously on the rise (Hoffman, 2006:86). Since the 9/11 attacks, religious terrorism has become synonymous with Islamic terrorism and this is further exacerbated by the fact that over 70% of the groups added to the American Foreign Terrorist Organisations list after 2001 are Islamic (Beck & Miner 2013:854). Although this study examines an Islamic militant group, it is important to reiterate the fact that religious terrorism is not an exclusively Islamic phenomenon but has its occurrence in other religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism *inter alia*.

2.2 Ideology

The concept of ideology has become a central feature within the various narratives of terrorism and more particularly within the discourse of religious terrorism. However, there are difficulties that present themselves when attempting to define the term ideology despite its prevalence within terrorism literature. One of the problems encountered is the fluctuated meaning of the term in its application to differing contexts. Furthermore, the definition of the term has undergone several changes from the time of its inception in 1786 to its present day usage. Nonetheless, the importance of the relationship between ideology and conflict cannot be undermined as noted by Walid Phares (2007: xiv) who accentuates that

Modern conflicts, especially since the nineteenth century, are grounded in doctrinal roots. Nationalism is the earliest form of militant ideology in the contemporary West, followed by Marxism and fascism. In the Arab and Muslim world, religious fundamentalism took the lead in the nineteenth century, followed by extreme nationalism, which alternated with socialism and Islamism throughout the twentieth century.

2.2.1 Ideological Origins and Development

In an attempt to analyse the boundaries of thought, Destutt de Tracy, a French philosopher, coined the term 'ideology' and defined it as 'the study of the origin of our ideas about the world in sense experience' (Lafraie, 2009:6). This science of ideas was presumably based on reason and empirical evidence and its aim was to rectify the metaphysical and unscientific method utilised by De Tracy's predecessors in their quest for knowledge. The term 'ideology', however, only obtained its prominence in scholarly discussions and modern day usage through the writings of Karl Marx who referred to it as a false consciousness

determined by social conditions and constituted the 'ideas of the 'ruling class' that upheld the class system and perpetuated exploitation' (Heywood, 2002:42). Lafraie (2009:7) further clarifies this Marxist's notion of 'ideology' to include not only the theory of knowledge but also ethics, religion and any form of consciousness. Ideology, for Marx, had a negative connotation as it symbolised a distorted consciousness that obscured social contradictions while promoting the interests of the ruling class.

Later, the rise of fascism and totalitarian regimes prompted scholars to develop an alternative view of ideology. Some scholars, for instance, Arendt and Popper posited that ideology is a form of social control that demands compliance and subordination (Heywood, 2002:43). In this regard, ideology is perceived as a closed system of thought that demands a monopoly of truth while refusing to accommodate opposing beliefs. In the context of terrorism, this is exemplified through the phenomenon of state terrorism where those in power utilise terror tactics against those who are opposed to their methods. On the other hand, ideology can also be perceived as a system of meaning where it assumes a cultural dimension by 'rendering otherwise incomprehensible social situations meaningful, to so construe them as to make it possible to act purposefully within them' (Geertz, 1973:220). From this brief exploration, it can be argued that ideology can serve as an effect that is positive in as much as it is a science of ideas or a notion that renders perplexing events meaningful or negative in that it perpetuates a false consciousness that promotes oppression.

In turn, this demonstrates that the notion or the definition of ideology depends on the context in which the term is utilised. This study investigates the concept of ideology in conjunction with religion. Before exploring religion as ideology, there is a need to clarify that there are some elements that are common to all conceptions of ideology regardless of the context. These include: each ideology consists of a set of moral values that are considered as absolute; it has an outline of the 'good society' in which these values would be fulfilled; there is a methodical disparagement of the current social order; and there is a strategic plan of the way change can be achieved (Lafraie, 2009:11). Consequently, according to Selinger (cited in Heywood, 2002:44), ideologies should not be considered as rigid systems of thought but rather as mobile set of ideas that overlay with each other at numerous points.

2.2.2 Religion as an Ideology

When de Tracy formulated the science of ideas, his primary goal was to overcome the religious and metaphysical explanations of ideas that were predominating in his time. Juergensmeyer (2008:19) notes that in proposing the science of ideas as a replacement for religion, de Tracy unknowingly placed religion and ideology on the same level. Akin to the secular framework of thought, religious ideology not only provides a coherent picture of the world and imbues the persons with a sense of meaning but it also ‘provides the authority that gives the social and political order its reason for being’ (Juergensmeyer, 2008:20).

After analysing the different conceptions of religious ideology examined by scholars, John Plamenatz discovered the following five characteristics. Firstly, religion provides human beings with the false illusion that they have knowledge when in fact they are uninformed. Secondly, religion becomes a means through which people overcome their fear and allow them to express themselves in the face of their inability to control the force of nature. Thirdly, in giving a public and sacred character to certain actions and rituals, religious ideology serves to bind communities together. Fourthly, through its threat of punishment or promise of rewards from a higher being, religious ideology coerces individuals into observing social rules. Finally, through a religious ideology, individuals are satisfied with their condition as they are provided with a sense of direction and purpose for their future (Plamenatz, 1970:91-92).

Although the notion of peace is a central tenet in religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism, there is also the propensity for religion to be considered as the cause of numerous conflicts. The French philosopher and mathematician, Blaise Pascal was well aware of the susceptibility of religion when he wrote in his *Pensées*, ‘men (sic) never do evil so openly and contentedly as when they do it from religious conviction’ (Pascal, 1941:314). In accordance with Pascal, it should be qualified that religion is not the cause of conflict *per se* but rather there are individuals who justify violence while adducing religious doctrines. This theme is further explored in the next chapter where notions such as *Jihad* and *Takfir* are examined to show how militant terrorists have utilised these terms to formulate and propagate a religious ideology of violence.

2.3 Transnational Organized Crime (TOC)

Throughout most of its history, organised crime had been traditionally perceived as a law enforcement problem restricted to the domestic level (Williams, 1994:97). However, the change in global politics and economics due to globalisation had led to the transformation of organized crime into an international phenomenon. The end of the Cold War had enabled organised crime groups to emerge from the boundaries that had hitherto confined them to the domestic sphere onto the global scene (Shelley 2005:102; Newburn 2007:420). Globalisation, hence, has allowed both legitimate businesses and transnational organized crime groups to equally benefit from the following factors: improved interdependence between nations, the effectiveness of international travel and global communications, the permeability of national borders, and the globalisation of international financial systems (Williams, 1994:97). As a result, there has been an increase in transnational commerce as information, money, physical goods and other commodities passage freely across states (Lyman & Potter, 2011: 241).

In the post-Cold War era, transnational organized crime groups have emerged from countries that include the former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and many of the former states of the USSR. Their transactions consist of drug peddling, human trafficking, arms dealing, narcotics and contraband smuggling (Shelley, 2005:102). Also, the increase in consumer demand of leisure products coupled with the advent of post-industrial economies have resulted in a fundamental change in many traditional organized crime groups. Traditional culture-bound syndicates like the Japanese Yakuza, the Chinese Triads and the Sicilian Mafia, who originally operated within their confines of their local areas, diversified their markets onto the international arena (Roth, 2010:8). Newburn (2007:19) broadly categories TOC into three main set of activities, namely, 1. **Smuggling** includes commodities, drugs and protected species 2. **Contraband** encompasses stolen cars, tobacco products and alcohol, and 3. **Services** consist of immigrants, prostitution, indentured servitude, money laundering and fraud.

2.3.1 Definition and Conceptualisation

Organized crime, according to the FBI, can be defined as ‘any group having some manner of a formalized structure and whose primary objective is to obtain money through illegal activities’ (cited in Lyman & Potter, 2011: 4). Additionally, these groups consolidate their control of power over people in their locality, region or country through the use of actual or threatened violence, corrupting public officials and extortion (2011:4). In 1998, the European

Union (EU) defined organized crime as a criminal organisation consisting of a structured association of two or more persons, ‘acting in concert with a view to committing crimes or other offences that are an end in themselves or a means of obtaining material benefits and...improperly influencing the operation of public authorities’ (cited in Wright 2006:8). One of the problems faced by law enforcement and judiciary systems, though, is that there has been a lack of a consensus concerning the definition of the term ‘organized crime’. This has resulted in a failure to formulate laws that can effectively combat this problem on both a national and international level. This conundrum is further compounded by the differences that exist between judicial systems and police strategies both on a national and international level resulting in a scarcity of information sharing between organizations (Roth, 2010: 6). Organized crime groups, aware of such discrepancies, have exploited these to their advantage.

Realising this shortcoming and the dangers thereof, the United Nations attempted to formulate a working definition of organized crime at the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC). Due to the intricate and complex notion of organized crime, international representatives failed to achieve consensus on a working definition of the term (Lyman & Potter, 2011:8). To overcome this impasse, the UN representatives instead adopted a broad definition of organized criminal groups which they defined as:

a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit (TOC Convention, Article 2(a)).

To further elaborate on the above definition, the convention expounded the features that would determine what constituted as a transnational offense when committed by an organized criminal group. An offense was classified as transnational if: (i) the offense was committed in more than one state; or (ii) a substantial part of the transgression was prepared, planned, directed or controlled in one state but executed in another state; or (iii) the felony was perpetrated in one state by an organized group that engrossed in criminal activities in more than one state; or (iv) the offense was committed in one state but its repercussion extends to other states (TOC Convention, Article 3(2)). While there is no explicit iteration in the TOC Convention of what consists of criminal acts, the UN has nonetheless identified 18 categories of transnational offenses that display the characteristics denoted in Article 3 (2) above. These

include: money laundering, computer crime, terrorist activities, environmental crime, theft of art and cultural objects, trafficking in persons, theft of intellectual property, trade in human body parts, illicit arms trafficking, illegal drug trafficking, aircraft hijacking, fraudulent bankruptcy, sea piracy, infiltration of legal business, insurance fraud, corruption and bribery of public or party officials (Roth, 2010:7). Moreover, factors that facilitate and promote the flow of transnational organised crime offenses can be attributed to corruption, poor governance, failing states and porous borders (Shelley, 2014; Lacher, 2012; White 2009). The UN definition also highlights a crucial aspect of organized crime as compared to religious terrorist groups. Unlike the latter, the former is motivated by profits and ideology has no impact on directing or influencing the members of an organized criminal group.

While there is often the enticement to delineate TOC groups as ‘organized’ groups with a hierarchal structure; this is not always the case. The above definition of organized criminal groups clarifies this misconception as it attempts to not ‘limit the scope of application [of the definition] to hierarchal structured or mafia type organizations only’ (UNODC cited in Roth 2010:7). This clarification gains more significance within the scope of this study as it is applied to a terrorist group that either conjoined with or evolved into a TOC group, namely, AQIM. Additionally, having thus adopted a working definition of TOC, it is noteworthy to situate it within the context of the study.

The significance of the Sahel-Sahara region in the organized crime domain, according to Lacher (2012:4), is not that it is a pivotal area for TOC but rather that there exists few other engagements that allow groups to acquire similar profits in that region. Nonetheless, the Sahel region of Mauritania, Algeria, Niger, Mali and Libya remains a hub for TOC operations that consist of the smuggling of Morocco cannabis resin, drugs, narcotics and kidnapping for ransom amongst others. *Ab initio*, cigarette smuggling was the original operation of the organised crime network in the Sahel and it contributed immensely to the subsequent emergence of the practice and networks that have solidified the growth of drug trafficking into its present state (2012:5). The smuggling of narcotics still remains a primary form of revenue for some criminal groups as typified in Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a former commander AQIM, who was so successful in smuggling cigarettes that he was subsequently given the moniker ‘Mr Malboro’ (The Guardian, 2013). The increase in TOC has serious implications concerning the security in the Sahel region and this threat is further amplified

when terrorist groups evolve into TOC organisations. This phenomenon is often referred to as the crime-terror continuum and as such merits an explication.

2.4 Crime-Terror Argument: A continuum of Terror and Organized crime

From the preceding sections, it becomes evident that traditionally, organized crime and terrorism belonged to separate categories based not only on their definitions but on the motivations of the different groups. For instance, while the motivation of the terrorist often lies in changing the ‘system’ in order to achieve a greater ‘good’ for the community, the criminal has no interest in influencing or affecting the public opinion but is rather interested in material satiation and personal gain (Hoffman, 2006:42-43). Hence, profit becomes the primary motivation for organized crime groups whereas terrorist groups are guided by political or ideological objectives. Despite their differences, both organized crime and terrorist groups share striking similarities as illustrated in the Table below.

Table 2: Differences and Similarities between Organized Crime groups and Transnational Terrorist groups

	Organized Crime Groups	Transnational Terrorist Groups
Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are motivated by economic gain and greed • have a status quo orientation • shun media attention • do not legitimate their action • deny responsibility for their acts • develop working relations with state organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are motivated by political ideology and grievance • have a revolutionary orientation • seek media attention • claim legitimacy for their actions • accept responsibility for their acts • rarely develop working relations with state
Similarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are rational actors • use or threaten severe violence • use kidnapping, assassinations, extortions • act clandestinely • act illegally under national and international law • pose an asymmetrical threat to states • are highly adaptable and resilient organizations • often act in sympathetic environments • often provide social services for local communities • profit from globalization and new technologies • increasingly develop networks • are particularly strong if operating from safe heavens 	

Source: Daase (2010:56).

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the line that demarcated organized crime from terrorism has become blurred. A study conducted by Shelly et al. (quoted in Daase, 2010:56) concluded that the interaction between terrorist groups and organized crime networks are growing deeper and more complex, sharply contrasting the prevalent belief that the two entities differed in terms of motivations only. The impending rise of globalization after the end of the Cold War meant that terrorist groups could no longer rely on state sponsorship to fund their operations and were compelled to turn to criminal activities for financial support. The primary reason for terrorist groups to embrace organized crime as their main source of funding is because of the similar characteristics that both enterprises share. These similarities between the two enable them to easily espouse each other's organizational and operational characteristics (Dishman, 2001; Makarenko, 2004; Sanderson, 2004; Shelly, 2014).

This process of criminal syndicates and terrorists adopting each other's features and vice versa has compelled scholars to study this evolutionary feature of this crime-terror relationship. The culmination of these research activities/projects have proliferated a growing literature surrounding the crime-terror nexus resulting in two interrelated stream of debates, namely, (i) the nature of the crime-nexus and (ii) the contexts conducive to its birth and expansion (Carrapico, Irrera & Tupman, 2014: 214). On the opposing end, there are proponents who argue against the association between terrorist and criminal groups and hence posit that the two aspects have to be separated since terrorism and criminal activities are incompatible with each other (Laqueur 1999; Mathis 2004: 105). However, echoing Shelley (as cited in Roth, 2010:478), this study adopts the notion that transnational terrorism and organized crime are interrelated and analysing these two concepts separately becomes problematic.

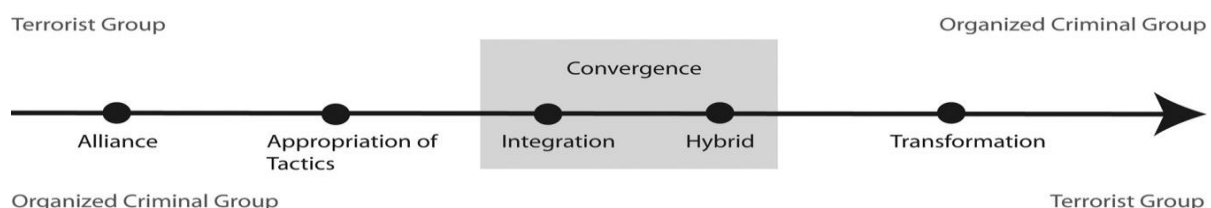
2.4.1 The Nature of the Crime- Terror Continuum

According to Roth (2010:480), the crime-terror continuum is a concept that obtains its origins in the 1970s and 1980s when scholars first started to uncover the connection between terrorism and organized crime. During that time, the relationship between the two entities was designated as *narco-terrorism*. The term was coined by Lewis Tambs, the then US Ambassador to Colombia, in an attempt to describe terrorist acts perpetrated by drug trafficking organizations (Williams, 2008:126). White (2009: 68) posits that the term *narco-*

terrorism refers to ‘terrorists who use either terrorist tactics to support drug operations or drug-trade profits to finance terrorism’. This is typified in the operation and tactics of the Medellin Cartel whose pursuit of power and profits led its members to resort to violence against governments and civilians that included public bombings and assassinations (Roth, 2010: 492). From this period onwards, the crime-terror relationship would not only surge but also grow in complexity.

Tamara Makarenko (2004) is credited as the first scholar to assess this complex relationship which is described as the crime-terror nexus (Carrapico, Irrera & Tupman, 2014: 214). In addition to the rise of globalisation, the subsequent transnational dimension of organized crime entities coupled with the evolving nature of terrorism contributed towards the steady decline in the demarcation line between organized crime and terrorism. This process of the gradual amalgamation of the two phenomena is referred to as a security continuum which consists of organized crime on the one end of the spectrum and terrorism on the other end. This spectrum comprises of four gradual phases: 1) organized crime and terrorist groups form alliances to promote their respective interests; 2) each entity appropriate each other’s tactics and method; 3) terrorist and criminal groups converge creating a functional alliance and 4) transformation of one group into the other (Makarenko, 2004: 130-131; Carrapico, Irrera & Tupman, 2014:214). These four phases can be classified under the broad headings of: alliances, appropriation, convergence and transformation (as noted in Fig. 1).

Figure 1: The Crime-Terror Continuum



Source: Makarenko (2010:185)

Juxtaposing the latter phases on the crime-terror nexus are the following three levels, that is, the operational, evolutionary and conceptual (Makarenko, 2010: 184). On the operational level, the nexus can adopt either one of two forms. Firstly, one group adopts the tactics of the other, for instance, a terror group employing criminal tactics and the other way round. The second form is the functional merging of the terror and criminal group which can be either an ad hoc alliance or the integration of one group into the other. The evolutionary plane refers to the ‘transformation of the tactics and motivations of one entity into the other’, that is, a

criminal network can evolve into a terrorist group or vice versa (2010: 184). Finally, the conceptual level occurs when both entities occupy the same space and time and as such, crime and terrorism are treated as clearly defined actions.

This conceptual level mirrors the ‘convergence’ (third phase) context that engenders hybrid entities that pursue their ‘ideological and economic motivations by perpetrating acts of politically motivated terrorism and engaging in organized criminal activity for profit maximization’ (Makarenko, 2010: 184). Likewise on the crime-terror continuum (Fig. 1), this convergence context is situated in the middle of the spectrum and it consists of a ‘grey area’ symbolising the fulcrum where organized crime and terrorism are inseparable from each other (Makarenko, 2004: 28). While chapter three will examine the convergence and transformation in greater depth, the other two phases (alliances and appropriation) on the continuum is briefly examined in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.4.1.1 Alliances

In addition to being the most common type of linkage, alliances formed by organized criminal groups and terrorists are both tactical and strategic. Tactical alliances can be described as a once-off deal or a short-term negotiation (Dishman, 2001:52) whereas strategic relationships are based on mutual interests and last for a longer period (Wang, 2010: 15). Dishman (2001:53) spotlights that the reasons behind both strategic and tactical alliance include: ‘the desire of a TCO [Transnational Criminal Organization] to enter a new market, the need for a specialized service, or more generally, as a means to reduce the risk of a TCO’s illegal operations’. To these, Makarenko (2004:131) adds: sharing ‘expert knowledge’ in terms of bomb-manufacturing, money laundering or counterfeiting; providing operational support, that is, providing access to smuggling routes; and also procuring financial support, for instance, colluding in bringing illicit products like narcotics onto the market.

The meeting of three IRA members with FARC members - in 2001 - in order to share expert knowledge of bomb-making typifies a tactical alliance (Sanderson, 2004). In other words, the encounter was temporary as it had a specific purpose with no endeavour of forging of a long term partnership. On the other hand, a strategic alliance can be exemplified in the relationship that was developed between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Albanian mafia during the Kosovo conflict involving heroin trafficking (Makarenko, 2004: 132). The profits

the Albanian mafia concurred in regard to the heroin transactions were funnelled towards the KLA's political wing in order to purchase weapons (2004:132). This type of alliance, according to Hutchinson & O'Malley (2007:1104), can be described as 'parasitic' since it comprised of terrorist benefiting from organised crime profits in a relationship that 'will only last as long as the terrorist group appears useful, and as long as the ideological differences between the two groups do not conflict'. Similarly, Wang (2010:16) assiduously observes that the strategic alliance between organized crime groups and terrorists can be perceived as a means of risk reduction that is mutually beneficial. As a way to guarantee their profits, organized criminals seek the protection of terrorist entities while the latter benefit by hiding themselves through their involvement in organized crime (Wang, 2010:16).

2.4.1.2 Appropriation of Tactics

The second phase on the continuum is an evolving step from the alliance phase. It refers to the operational tactics employed by both organized crime and terrorist groups and consists of a twofold feature: appropriation and integration. Appropriation occurs when terrorist groups learn to engage criminal activities to support or finance their activities or when organized crime groups that engage in terrorism tactics to further their own interests. In this regard, criminal organizations conduct 'selective and calibrated violence to destroy competitors or threaten counternarcotic authorities' (Dishman, 2001: 45) and the aim is often to coerce competitors or government into negotiation and compromise. This was exemplified by the Sicilian Mafia's bombing spree in 1993 as way to force government to abrogate the anti-mafia legislation (Jamieson, cited in Makarenko, 2004:134).

Meanwhile, terrorist groups employ criminal tactics in order to secure funds for their operations and this includes 'Basque Homeland and Freedom movement (ETA), the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)', and more recently the Taliban, Al Qaeda and its affiliates, more importantly AQIM, have all been linked to the drugs trade (Phillips & Kamen, 2014; Makarenko 2004: 132). Integration of tactics, on the other hand, is when an organised crime organization integrates within a terrorist group or vice versa, in order to acquire that group's tactics. In sum, most relationship in the crime-terror nexus evolve into appropriation or integration as this phase eliminates the inherent difficulties associated with alliances. These include: 'differences over priorities and strategies, distrust, danger of defections and betrayal, and the threat that alliances could create competitors' (European Union, 2012:30).

2.4.2 The Context of the Crime-Terror Continuum

After having examined the nature of the crime-terror nexus, it becomes imperative to examine the context which incubates and provides the suitable climate for such a relationship to spur. Shelley (2005:102) discovered that the nexus between terrorist and organized crime groups thrive on a state of chaos, protracted conflicts and regions containing shadow economies. Makarenko (2010:187) echoes this when she notes that ‘weak and failed states foster nefarious collaboration, which subsequently seeks to perpetuate a condition of civil (or regional) war to secure economic and political power’.

Therefore, in order to facilitate their operations, instability and the prolongation of conflict becomes a primary motive for both organized criminal and terrorist groups alike. Unstable environments often lead to ‘poor border security, weak law enforcement, corrupt public officials and established smuggling networks’ (EU, 2012:18). The infamous collaboration between organized crime and terrorism is given further impetus to thrive in spaces where government control is either fragmented and weak or non-existent. This is exemplified in countries like Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Thailand, Somalia and northern Mali. With particular importance to this study, northern Mali has recently emerged as an area that combines terrorism with criminal activities and it incidentally happens to be a training hub for AQIM members (EU, 2012: 19).

Corruption is another aspect that is exploited by organized crime and terrorist groups as a way to enhance the crime-terror nexus. Despite the crucial role that corruption plays within the interplay of organized crime and terrorism, there are other factors that are essential to the sustenance of the nexus and these are: ‘endemic corruption, weak governments and a weak economic system in conjunction with unsupervised borders’ (Kittner, cited in Shelley 2014: 84). Consequently, the conjunction of violence, corruption, organized crime, weapons smuggling, and other illicit activities creates a safe haven for both terrorist and criminal groups to operate with a state that has lost its legitimacy (EU, 2012:19). The aim of groups involved in the crime-terror nexus is to create a state within which corruption becomes widespread and endemic. In turn, this state would lose its authority and be viewed as a ‘predator instead of a protector’ (Picarelli, 2012: 192). Facing a loss of legitimacy among the people, government can do very little to prevent terrorist and organized crime groups from expanding the crime-terror continuum. With this in mind, Picarelli (2012: 190) rightly observes that it is no surprise that ‘organized crime and terrorist groups gravitate towards

regions of the globe with high levels of corruption'. Some examples are Central Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Philippines, among others (Shelley, 2014: 85).

In the context of the Sahel, AQIM rely on factors that are conducive to perpetrating a crime-terror nexus. The outbreak of the conflict in Mali in 2012 provided the perfect opportunity for AQIM to capitalise on expanding their activities. Erosion of state institutions, collusion with corrupted officials, involvement of security officials and business persons in contraband trafficking are among the factors that provided the perfect theatre of operations for AQIM. According to Lacher (2012:11), organized crime in Mali became a serious impediment in 2006 after the rebellion of the Tuareg individuals residing in the region bordering Algeria and Niger. This eventually led to a loss of state legitimacy and authority in the area and opened up the opportunity for the influx of organized groups using the area as smuggling routes. In an attempt to expand their area of operations in Mali, AQIM, capitalising on the weak state legitimacy in northern Mali, joined forces with radical Tuareg Islamist group Ansar Al Dine and MUJAO of Mauritania and staged a successful coup against the Malian government in 2012 and ended up controlling most of the northern Malian region (Chivvis & Liepman, 2013: 9). During this time, AQIM increased its kidnappings for ransom and its weapons smuggling trade. This, as Lacher (2012:17) interestingly points out, was also due to the reluctance of the Malian leadership to tackle AQIM because of the complicity of high ranking state officials in organized criminal activities.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The discussion in this chapter has delineated key themes that are significant to attaining a proper understanding of the AQIM phenomenon by examining concepts such as terrorism, organized crime and ideology. To further comprehend the transformation of AQIM in the Sahel, particular focus was given to religious terrorism and religious ideology. At the close of this chapter, the reader should have an understanding of the concept of religious terrorism, organized crime and the linkage of the two as examined in the crime-terror continuum. Next, this study attempts to develop a theoretical framework that seeks to examine the root causes of the conflict in Algeria that has given rise to the birth and subsequent élan to AQIM to transform into one of the most dominant terrorist group in Africa. To this end, two theoretical frameworks of analysis were chosen, that is, the greed and grievance theory and the convergence thesis. These two frameworks will be expounded in Chapter Three below.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Frameworks

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of a chapter discussing the theoretical framework of a study is to both inform and situate the reader within the context of the development of the study. A theoretical framework aims to locate the present study in the broader context and to provide the author with a certain perspective through which to examine a particular topic with the hope of bringing a new dimension to their study. Whilst the previous section discussed important concepts that can be considered as the thematic underpinnings of the study, this chapter examines the theories that in turn create a structure which guides the research. Approaching research from this angle enables the reader to develop a clearer understanding of the direction in which the study is progressing. With this in mind, this chapter sets out to accomplish this deed by discussing the theories that guided the study or the theories on which the presented study is premised or grounded.

The end of the Cold War witnessed a gradual change in conflict dynamics from interstate to intrastate. This paradigm shift prompted scholars to advance theoretical approaches to explain this change in the conflict domain. Some of these theories include: state-failure (Rotberg, 2003), frustration and aggression (Dollard et al, 1939), neo-patrimonialism (Chabal, 2005), clash of civilisations (Huntington, 1993; 1996), greed and grievance theory (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Steward, 2008), *inter alia*. To situate the reader within the context of the discussion, some of these theories are skimmed since it would be an ambitious undertaking to exhaust them all within this chapter. In continuation with the literature review from the preceding chapter, this chapter aims to provide a broad theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of AQIM by propounding on two theoretical frameworks of analysis. Primarily, the greed and grievance theory is used to examine the factors that have contributed to the growth of the militant extremist group. Secondly, the study examines the transformation of the group within the spectrum of the convergence thesis.

3.1 Explaining Conflict: An Examination of Some Theories

In an attempt to explain the dynamics of violent conflicts, scholars have proposed various explanations. One of these is the state failure thesis which posits that a state fails when it is unable to discharge its responsibilities of providing political goods and services to its citizens living within its borders (Rotberg, 2003:2). Failure to control its territory and a loss of

legitimacy weakens the state's security apparatus rendering it vulnerable to the disgruntled populace who form insurgent groups which rebel against the state with the hope of changing the status quo. Consequently, it turns into a security threat to its neighbours and to the greater region at large. This theory strikes resonance within the African continent as most states that are engaged in conflicts within their borders can be said to exhibit a failure of governance to a certain degree (Libya, DRC, Somalia etc.).

Despite its usefulness, the state failure thesis does run into some difficulties with regard to its dominant political narrative in its analysis of conflict. As Bates (2008:261) succinctly puts it, this theory remains unpersuasive as it only highlights the effects such as poor governance, lack of political institution and loss of legitimacy but does little to explain the actual cause of the conflict. But despite this criticism, the theory remains useful and relevant to this study because it explains (at least in part) why people resort to terrorist activities.

Neo-patrimonialism is another theoretical approach used to explain conflict, with specific focus on Africa. Neo-patrimonialism can be defined as a form of governance that is sustained through 'unequal forms of political reciprocity which link patrons with their clients along vertical social lines' (Chabal, 2005: 3). This is characterised by the fact that the legitimacy of the politicians lies not in a system of accountability but depends rather on their 'ability to provide for their own' (2005:4). Despite functioning well in certain regimes in post-independent African states, the inherent instability within neo-patrimonialism meant that it possessed the seeds of its own destruction. The eventual demise of this system leads to conditions where 'the line between the private and public spheres is so blurred that notions of the public good and of independent civil society are ultimately absent'(Englebert and Tull, 2008: 117).

Within this situation of confusion coupled with disorder and even violence, political actors, seizing the opportunity to maximise their own interests, undermine the state and loot its resources. In short, the political elite use 'disorder as a political instrument' to pursue their own interests and satisfy their greed (Chabal, 2005:7-8). The regimes of Sani Abacha of Nigeria and Mobuto Sese Seko of Zaire exemplify 'predatory states' where the political elite feasts on the state resources with 'any more regard to the welfare of the citizenry than a predator has for the welfare of its prey' (Evans, 1989:562).

This theory becomes problematic, however, due to its ardent focus on the gluttonous appetite of the elite. Similarly to the state failure theory, it fails to take into account other factors that led to the unfolding of the post-colonial system into conflict. These include ‘the collapse of the post-colonial mode of accumulation that was in part linked to the pressures from globalisation, and the anti-state market reform agenda promoted by the IMF, World Bank and other donors’ (Obi, 2009: 111). However, the theory remains useful in the sense that it explains how reciprocity results into dissatisfaction among sections of society and thus triggers violent activities which include terrorism.

Moving away from a political explication of conflict, Huntington (1993) developed the *clash of civilisations* theory that examines conflict from a cultural perspective. This theory advocates that in the aftermath of the Cold War, the causes of conflict are no longer ideological, political or economic in nature but cultural as it emanates from a clash between groups or nations of different civilisations. The core of this thesis rests on the premise that ‘these civilizations are based on irreconcilable values, rivalry and conflict among them is inevitable’ (Heywood, 2011:514). The primary irreconcilable value that Huntington attributes to the cause of ethnic conflict and identity wars is religious division or ‘fault lines’ among civilisations, especially between the West and Islam (Franks, 2006:79).

In the wake of the 2001 Trade Centre attacks and the current wave of violence of Islamist extremism, Huntington’s statement that Islam has ‘bloody borders’ and possess a high propensity to resort to violence in international crises (1996:258), has gained prominence amongst many scholars. As Abrahamian (2005: 529) articulates, ‘the mainstream media in the USA automatically, implicitly and unanimously adopted Huntington’s paradigm to explain September 11’.

Although Huntington deserves credit for his prescient theory, some elements within his argument are questionable. Firstly, it fails to take into account why some states fight each other while others do not (Jacoby, 2008:80). Secondly, the model of civilisations painted by Huntington is rigid and homogenous which is far from the objective reality since cultures are complex and open to external influence (Heywood, 2011:515). From this, it can be concluded that the argument oversimplifies religion as the sole instigator of conflict while disregarding other causes.

After having briefly examined these three frameworks mentioned above, it can be noted that although these theories are useful in analysing conflicts, they are limited in assessing the causal factors that lead to violence in the first place. This further reinforces the debate surrounding the insurmountable task of developing a theory that seeks to explain warfare at the abstract level (Jacoby, 2008: 182). This difficulty of such an undertaking is captured by Levy (1998:140) in the following words:

there is no consensus as to what the causes of war are, what methodologies are most useful for discovering and validating those causes, what general theories of world politics and human behaviour a theory of war might be subsumed within, what criteria are appropriate for evaluating competing theories, or even whether it is possible to generalise about anything as complex and contextually dependent as war.

While this sullen communiqué spotlights the setbacks that scholars face, it is far from an indication that the task is impossible. Keeping the foregoing warning in mind, the study favours the greed and grievance theory as it provides a more nuanced analysis of the causes of conflict. It is also a more viable paradigm with which to assess the phenomenon of AQIM and its context. So conceived, the theory is examined under separate headings (greed then grievance) before reconciling both in order to promote a broader and more encompassing analysis.

3.2 Theories that guided the Study

3.2.1 Greed and Grievance Theory

3.2.1.1 Greed Thesis

The greed thesis, developed through the research of Collier and Hoeffler (2004), ascribes an economic approach to the causes of conflict. It claims that the ‘feasibility of economic predation and the rational pursuit of economic interest’ are the primary causes of conflict (Cater, 2003:20). This system of thought can be traced back to the writings of Grossman (1999: 269) who modelled rebellion as an industry that incurred profits from looting in so much that ‘the insurgents are indistinguishable from bandits or pirates’. With its emphasis on the economic motivations of conflict actors, this view is quite popular among economists. For Collier (2000), the fundamental tenet of the greed theory is that all societies experience grievances but it is only when opportunities for rebellion present themselves that civil war breaks out. This is further reinforced when Collier (2000: 91) asserts that he

investigated statistically the global pattern of large-scale civil conflict since 1965, expecting to find a close relationship between measures of these hatreds

and grievances and the incident of conflict. Instead, [he] found that economic agendas appear to be central to understanding why civil wars get going.

Thus, he concluded that ‘conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance’ (2000:91). It can be deduced, then, that conflicts are caused by rational actors seeking their own advantage and benefits. In this respect, Hoeffler (2011:277) argues that since the rational choice argument plays a crucial role in much of economists’ understanding of economic behaviour, it becomes evident that the argument lies at the centre of the greed theory. This can be exemplified in the context where potential recruits only join a rebellion after making a rational decision based on cost-benefit analysis (2011:277). In their analysis of civil wars from 1960 to 1999, Collier & Hoeffler (2004) developed the Collier-Hoeffler (CH) model to study the motive and opportunity behind the 78 civil wars that occurred during that time frame. The CH model is econometric and it focuses particularly on opportunity as the determining factor of rebellion and civil wars (Collier et al, 2005:3).

The findings of the study demonstrated that ‘opportunity as an explanation of conflict risk is consistent with the economic interpretation of rebellion as greed motivated’ (Collier et al, 2005:18). Additionally, other significant risk factors that increase the probability of conflict or rebellion include: dependence on primary commodity exports, geographic dispersion of population, a previous history of conflict, low education opportunities, unequal ethnic and religious composition, high population growth, low average income and economic decline (Cater, 2003: 20; Collier, 2006: 5-7). On the other hand, grievance factors such as inequality, political rights, ethnic polarization, and religious fractionalization yielded little correlation in relation to conflict incidence (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004: 588).

The fact that ‘opportunity can account for the existence of either for-profit or not-for-profit rebel organizations’ (Collier et al, 2005:18), it highlights the importance of the notion of opportunity within the greed model. In that regard, Murshed & Tadjoeeddin (2009:89) provide a threefold classification of opportunities, namely, financing, recruitment and geography. The sources of finance for rebel groups often include: arrogation of natural resources, funding by sympathetic diasporas living abroad who are sympathetic to the ideology of the group, contributions from other states that are against the government, and multinational corporations interested in the region.

The concept of recruitment rests on the ability of the group to attract recruits to increase the fighting force. A context consisting of high percentages of unemployed male youths among the population, low levels of education and endemic poverty is a thriving atmosphere for such recruitment. In terms of geographical context, rebel groups and insurgents prefer mountainous topography or other safe havens to hide or plan their operations. Al Qaeda's use of the mountainous territory in Afghanistan to launch attacks against the US led coalition in 2003 is a prime example. In short, the greed thesis sums up that conflict 'occur in poverty stricken, failed states characterised by venal, corrupt and inept regimes, with the dynamics of war sustained by a motivation akin to banditry' (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009:89).

3.2.1.2 Grievance Thesis

The earliest account of grievance as a catalyst of conflict can be located in the writings of Aristotle who noted that grievances due to inequality of society coupled with the inefficiency of the government to respond to this problem resulted in social conflict (Jacoby, 2008: 103). Building on Aristotle's notion, Tedd Gurr (1970:24) developed the theory of 'relative deprivation' (RD) that he defined as the actors' perception 'of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capacities'. In other words, it is the disparity between what people think they deserve, and what they actually believe they can attain (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009: 96). This incongruence between aspirations and achievement becomes 'a frustrating experience that is sufficiently intense and focused to result in either rebellion or revolution' (Davies, 1962: 5). Gurr's core argument in his RD theory can be described as follows, 'the greater the deprivation an individual perceives relative to his expectation the greater his discontent; the more widespread and intense discontent is among the members of a society, the more likely and severe is civil strife' (1970: 24). For instance, the mass protest of the youth in Algeria in the 1980s leading up to the violent revolution resulted from the frustration of being unemployed despite having educational qualifications. As Murshed & Tadjoeeddin (2009: 97) pointedly note, 'educational achievements may raise the aspirations of young people, but they will become frustrated if unemployed...venting their feelings in mass political violence'.

Horizontal inequality (HI) is another notion of the grievance theory that overlaps with relative deprivation. HI is defined as the systematic 'inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups' (Stewart, 2008:3).

Stewart (2002: 2) distinguishes HI from the equality amongst homogenous groups or populations also known as vertical inequality (VI). The HI thesis is relevant as a conflict analysis tool in that it takes into account the effect of collective group grievance. A group identity is construed through either religion or ethnicity or class or religion.

As Cater (2003: 22) points out, there are four sources of economic and political differentiations between groups: 1) political participation, 2) economic assets, 3) employment and 4) social access and situation. Hence 'a collective perception of an intergroup disparity within one or more of these dimensions constitutes horizontal inequality' (2003:22). While Vertical Inequality (VI) focuses on inequality of personal income among individuals, HI encapsulates a broader range consisting of the political and economic causal factors of conflict. For example, HI denotes inequalities across groups that share common identities such as ethnic, religious or regional in terms of distribution of income, assets, educational opportunities, political opportunities, allocation of state subsidies (Stewart 2000). To further propound on her theory, Stewart introduces four sources of horizontal inequalities.

The first source arises as a result of discrimination in public spending and taxation lead to conflict. In societies where employment is the principal source of personal advancement, discrimination in allocation of job opportunities can lead to frustrations and resentment as in the case of Burundi in the 1990s (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009:98). Secondly, high asset inequality is another source of HI. Countries with high agrarian inequalities are often prone to conflict and these include El Salvador, Guatemala, Nepal and the Philippines (Russett, 1964). The third source of inequality consists of economic mismanagement and recession. Many countries in Africa, Latin America, and former Soviet Union that were engaged in conflict have also been plagued with economic mismanagement and collapse of the state.

Despite the IMF and the World Bank' adjusted programmes to assist with economic development, many of these countries (such as the DRC and Somalia) have failed to achieve economic recovery (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009: 98). Finally, grievance related to resource rents is another source of HI. If the local population perceive that they are not benefitting from the resources of their land, natural resource rents can become a source of frustration and eventual conflict as in the example of the Niger Delta of Nigeria (See Mngomezulu, 2013). In a nutshell, the grievance theory draws on the 'human motivation of participants engaged in violent conflict, particularly the role of political, cultural and economic factors in influencing

and constructing group identities and mobilizing such groups to compete for power' (Stewart, 2000: 246-247).

Since no theory can claim infallibility, both the greed and the grievance theories have their share of difficulties. The greed theory, according to Keen (2012:759), is limited in that it views 'human motivation in terms of economic motivation and individual rational choice'. Murshed & Tadjoeeddin (2009:96) also add that the theory fails to examine 'institutional mechanisms that cause the competition for resource rents to descend into outright warfare'. In so doing, it 'fails to point to the mechanisms that link economic conditions to political outcomes' (Bates, 2008: 261). For instance, the conflict in the DRC, despite its economic undertone, was triggered by institutional grievance (Zartman, 2011:300). Therefore, there is danger for studies that focus solely on the economic motivations of conflict actors to produce 'probabilistic statements of conflict rather than the factual descriptions of actual conflict dynamics' (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003: 5).

Adhering to the latter caveat, the grievance theory attempts to mend that problem by providing an understanding of the causal factors of inter-group conflict. However, while the grievance theory may be more adept at explaining the causes of the emergence of conflict than the greed thesis, it fails to show why these conflicts persist (Murshed & Tadjoeeddin, 2009: 108). Moreover, an overemphasis on grievance as a cause of conflict can lead to ignoring other factors like the economic variables and 'the difference in power resources between parties concerned' (Jacoby, 2008:123). As Hoeffler (2011: 275) rightly asserts, 'a well-defined theory of rebellion has to consider both aspects [greed and grievance] because they are interrelated'. It is this perceptive statement that informs the following subsection.

3.2.1.3 Greed and Grievance Theory

Although the greed versus grievance dichotomy may be a purposeful starting point to investigate the cause of a conflict, this separation leads to an impasse that fails to do justice to the analysis in the first place. Murshed & Tadjoeeddin (2009:102) remark that while 'greed and grievance are regarded as competing views, they may be complementary, as greed may lead to grievances and vice versa'. There is a possibility that grievances may be present without greedy motives but the opposite may not be so true. In agreement with this statement, Keen (2012:770) notes that even situations where greed is 'powerfully fuelling' the conflict,

the origins of that greed can be located within a set of grievances. Additionally, there are several instances where conflicts contain both proponents of the greed and grievance.

For example, the LTTE conflict in Sri Lanka can be observed as a conflict where the Tamil people who were facing discrimination (grievance) at the hand of a greedy government (greed). Another instance is that of the Liberian conflict of 1989-2007 resulting from ethnic resentment (grievance) towards government discrimination (greed) (Zartman 2011:302-303). Conflicts in our present age have assumed a complex and intricate combination of economic, political, cultural and security subtleties (Ballentine, 2003:280). Therefore, attempting to understand the underlying motivations that sustain such conflicts through the framework of a greed vis-à-vis the grievance theory is not only limited but also myopic. In order to overcome this deficit, it is imperative to perceive the greed and grievance theory not as two incongruent theories but rather as, in the words of Zartman (2011:303), 'two sides of the same coin'.

This study adopts the approach of combining both theories as a means to analyze the underlying motivations behind the creation and evolution of AQIM. The grievance theory serves to examine the roots and motivations behind the formation of AQIM and its propensity to use violence in promoting its cause. The events leading up to the Algerian civil war within which AQIM finds its origins consisted of a series of grievances arising from the emergence of new social cleavages and political demands (Cristiani, 2013:74). Furthermore, the subsequent annulment of the 1992 elections meant that in denying victory to democratically elected opposition party, the military had effectively stifled the voice of the people and further increased their anger and frustration. The GIA, capitalising on the people's grievances, amassed support and launched a series on the Algerian military and security forces under the banner of turning Algeria into an Islamic state (Harmon, 2010:14; Filiu, 2009). This notion of the grievance theory is examined in more details in chapter five.

Meanwhile, the greed theory assesses the motivation for the evolution of AQIM from a religious terrorist group with political motivations to a terror group involved in criminal activities that include kidnapping for ransom and drug trafficking amongst others. In line with the notion that conflict actors operate from a rational perspective, the greed theory conceives AQIM members as rational actors engaging in terrorism to further their end of amassing profits rather than rectifying injustices or grievances. Next, the discussion of the convergence thesis attempts to further examine the reason behind why terrorist groups evolve into organized criminal networks. In the light of this study, this framework sets out to evaluate the

link between AQIM as a transnational terrorist group and a transnational organised crime network.

3.2.2 The Convergence Thesis

The convergence thesis, according to Makarenko (2004:135), refers ‘explicitly to the idea that criminal and terrorist organizations could converge into a single entity that initially displays characteristics of both groups simultaneously’, producing a change in the aims and ultimate end towards which the organization strives for. The notion of a convergence purports that the two organizations – terrorist and organized crime – become a single hybrid entity that display similar characteristics and motivations in such a way that it becomes almost impossible to distinguish one from the other. This process extends beyond the mere cooperation or alliance between the two groups as discussed in the previous chapter since both entity assume each other’s identity to the extent of becoming inseparable. The convergence theory can be further divided into two components that are independent yet related. Firstly, it includes criminal groups that display political motivations. Secondly, of importance to this study, it refers to terrorist groups that are so attracted to criminal profits to the extent of ‘using their political rhetoric as a façade solely for perpetrating criminal activities on a wider scale’ (2004:135).

This second component is also labeled by some scholars as the transformation process and it serves to reinforce the convergence thesis (Picarelli, 2012:188). While the convergence theory primarily implies the fusion of two entities, transformation refers to the evolution of the aim and motivation of a single group *in lieu* of two to the extent that it results in a drastic change in nature of the group. During the transformation of a terrorist group into a crime-terror entity, there are certain organizational changes that take place. Of these changes, Rosenthal (quoted in Picarelli 2012: 189) lists three: ‘a degradation of the leadership cadre committed to the political cause; political transformations that undermine the political *raison d’être* of the group; and opportunities for significant criminal profits’. To these, the following can be added: change in the group’s motivation from perpetrating violence to maximising profits; there is a decrease in the intensity associated with political demands and a change in the recruitment strategy (EU, 2012:38). In other words, terrorist groups that undergo the transformation process ‘shift their *raison d’être* from political to economic goals’ (Picarelli, 2012:188) while still appearing to adhere to a political agenda.

Consequently, this tactic is used by such groups as it presents a twofold advantage. Firstly, government and law enforcement authorities are deceived into focusing on political issues and problems instead of investigating the criminal activities of the group. Secondly, the use of terror tactics becomes a method or tool to promote the group's hegemony within the criminal network and dissuade any form of competition from other organized crime groups (Makarenko, 2004:137). Also, the group continues to attract recruits to its rank with its focus on political grievances combined with financial rewards. Thornberry and Levy (2011:8) contextualizes this within the AQIM phenomenon when they assert that 'the extreme poverty experienced by people living in Mali, Niger and Mauritania ensures that AQIM will remain an attractive employer and provider in the region'.

Rosenthal (cited in Picarelli, 2012:189) denotes terrorism-for-profit as a criminal activity that includes 'kidnapping, banditry, looting, or smuggling—legitimized by an ideological veneer'. This is reflected in the funding operations of AQIM which include kidnappings for ransom, illegal cigarettes, human and drug trafficking in the Sahel and cocaine smuggling *inter alia* (Levy & Thornberry, 2011:8). As a result, 'such operational ambiguity has by now become a distinctive feature of AQMI's "Islamist terrorism" wherein hostage-hustling, car-smuggling, drug-trafficking, money-counterfeiting, arms-dealing, cigarette-reselling, and gasoline-bootlegging are more present than political or religious pronouncements' (Mohamedou, 2011:3).

Another important aspect pertinent to both the convergence and transformation process is the context that enables these hybrid groups to perpetuate their activities. In addition to contributing to state failure, issues such as violence, corruption and conflict create an environment that scholars refer to as a 'black hole' that aims to 'foster the convergence between transnational organised crime and terrorism, and ultimately create a safe haven for the continued operations of convergent groups' (Makarenko, 2004:138). Subsequently, a 'black hole state' emerges where poor governance and a lack of security enable hybrid groups to conduct their illegal activities in the open without fear of reprisal from government or security forces.

An example of a black hole state is the tri-border region of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay where terrorist and organised crime groups operate comfortably (Picarelli, 2012:190). In a

study conducted by Philips and Kamen (2014), the authors describe the emergence a black hole state within Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban movement. Furthermore, the authors highlight three factors that propel a transforming organization into a black hole state. These include: 1) the entity should operate within the geopolitical context of a weak or failing state; 2) the group must be continuously involved in both criminal and terrorist activities and 3) the organization's original founding principle should hold a strategic value to the group (Philips and Kamen, 2014:42-43).

In applying these three factors to AQIM, one can determine the extent to which AQIM has undergone a transformation and whether the group operates within a black hole state. In the preceding paragraphs, it was noted that AQIM is involved in both criminal and terrorist activities. At the same time, AQIM's theatre of operations in the conflict stricken region of Northern Mali resonates with the second factor in that the organization operates within the context of a weak or failing state. The third factor, however, appears to pose a problem since it is difficult to ascertain whether AQIM still adheres to its founding principles. However, it can be argued that AQIM, similarly to the Taliban, was founded on religious principles but eventually evolved into an entity involved in organised criminal activities. Nonetheless, as Philips and Kamen (2014:45) posit, Al Qaeda remains committed to its original religious principles of radical Islam and global jihad which still hold strategic value. Additionally, 'its message has been propagated worldwide through its networks of operatives and splinter groups' (2014:46).

With the foregoing logic in mind, it can be concluded that the third factor applies to a significant degree to AQIM since it is one of Al Qaeda's most allegiant affiliate. As a result, it can be concluded that the group has undergone a transformation and operates within a black hole environment. The subsequent chapters of this dissertation further expand and evaluate the notion of transformation that facilitated the transformation of AQIM within the Sahel context.

3.3 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to situate the present study within the two theoretical frameworks, namely, the greed and grievance theories and the convergence thesis. Before analyzing these theories, the chapter briefly examined other theories of conflict highlighting their positive and negative aspects. In addition, a rationale and justification for choosing these

theories were provided. While the grievance theory served to account for the rise of AQIM within the Algerian context, this will be expounded in greater detail in chapter five. On the other hand, the greed theory served to examine the economic motivations behind the continuous evolution of AQIM. Similarly, this aspect will be further examined in chapter six. In extension to the greed theory, the convergence thesis aimed to demonstrate the transformation of AQIM from a terrorist group with political motivations to an organized crime entity focused on criminal activities for the sole purpose of profits. As such, the greed and grievance theory in tandem with the convergence thesis with particular focus on the transformation process aimed at guiding the study to a closer understanding the phenomenon of AQIM.

Before engaging into the historical antecedents of AQIM within the Algerian context, it is fitting to revisit the pivotal role religion plays as an ideology within the founding principles of the group. Since militant Islamism not only predated extremist groups such as Al Qaeda and the GIA but also influenced their formation, it is imperative therefore to analyze the antecedents that have given rise to this school of thought. In this regard, the next chapter discusses the history and development of militant Islamism from the time of its emergence to the form that it presently has taken.

Chapter Four

The Religious Ideology of Terrorism

4.0 Introduction

According to De Azevedo (2010: 5), Thomas Aquinas once posited that he feared the person ‘of a single book’. In this regard, Aquinas was referring to the dangers of enclosing oneself in a single point of view and refuting any objectivity while at the same time embracing a form of solipsism. The ‘person(s) of the single book’, regardless of their religion whether it be Christianity, Judaism or Islam, share the common traits of purporting to a deviation of the original position of their religion to one that is ‘superficial, exclusivist and xenophobic’ (2010: 3). These ‘fundamentalists’ adhere to a literal following of the sacred texts such as the Gospel, Torah or the Quran and consolidate a rudimentary intolerance towards those who do not share in their ideology. Consequently, religion becomes an ideology that certain extremists utilise in order to perpetrate violence against innocent victims. The previous chapter considered the theoretical frameworks that informed this study towards formulating an adequate understanding of the phenomenon of AQIM by studying its birth, operations and transformation. In turn, this present chapter investigates the religious ideology behind AQIM, which falls under the broad banner of militant Islamism.

As such, the present chapter follows a linear trajectory in analysing militant Islamism. It begins with the examination of the thinker whose thoughts gave rise to the militant school of thought – Ibn Taymiyya. Then, Salafism and Wahhabism, the two schools of thought that originated from the writings of the Taymiyya are examined through the prism of the 20th century. The Iranian revolution and the Afghan jihad, two events that are often cited as having a profound influence and impact on the ideology of present day militant Islamists are investigated. The chapter concludes with the examination of the ideology behind the most notable contemporary militant Islamist group, namely, Al Qaeda. A brief historical background of the origins of the group and its ideology is provided in order to dispel some misconceptions that are commonly attached to its infamous leader Osama Bin Laden. Moreover, the dangers of the ‘person(s) of a single book’ is illustrated through the prism of Al Qaeda’s intolerance and solipsism in its interpretation of Quranic texts with its relativistic interpretation of concepts such as *jihad*, *takfir* and *kufr*.

4.1 Militant Islamism

According to the Global Terrorism Index (2014), the top four groups responsible for the majority of terrorism fatalities from the period extending from 2000 to 2014 include Al Qaeda, The Taliban, Boko Haram and ISIL. At a cursory glance, it is quite evident that these groups have numerous differences in their tactics, strategies, goals and their areas of operation. Yet, looking beyond these differences reveals that these groups share a common feature in terms of the ideology of militant Islamism². Kushner (2003:230) defines militant Islamism as ‘a fundamentalist, utopian ideology that often justifies violence for what is seen as a higher cause’ and notes that it is in many respects similar to past ideologies such as Fascism and Marxism. Militant Islamism rests on three common characteristics, namely, the implementation of a strict interpretation of the Quran and *shari’a* (Islamic law); a united Muslim state ruled by a caliph and the use of *jiḥād* in attaining these two latter objectives (Kushner, 2003:230). Moreover, Vertigans (2009:5) observes that militant ideologues who lack formal religious authority often refer to Islamic doctrine as a means to justify violence and killings. For Migaux (2007:258), ‘Islamic fundamentalism becomes Islamism only when its ideology is used to impose a strictly interpreted model of original Islam based on *shari’a*, or Islamic law, on society and on the state’.

Ironically, the birth of militant Islamism can be attributed to the decline of the great Islamic civilisation. Examined from this perspective, militant Islamism symbolises a desire to return to the past era where Islamic civilisation was the predominant culture in the world. From its nascence in the 7th century CE – when the Prophet Muhammad received divine revelations from the archangel Gabriel that would become the moral and political foundations of the religion – up until the early 19th century, Islam spread into ‘a vast empire that would become the cradle of the greatest known civilization’ (Migaux, 2007: 261). Within the first seventy years of its existence, Muslim armies conquered countries such as Palestine, Syria, Persia and Armenia, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, the Algerian coast, and Morocco. The period from 685 to 945, however, is etched into Islamic history as the period where the Muslim civilisation reached its zenith and is also generally referred to as the period of the High Caliphate. The advancements during that period included ‘improved river irrigation and long-distance trade...people of diverse languages, religions, cultures, and ideas...and the flourishing of artistic and intellectual creativity’ (Goldschmidt & Davidson, 2010:65). It was often the case

² The term ‘Islamism’ is used in this context to denote the political use of Islam as opposed to the theological doctrine.

that the hegemony of the Arab empire was challenged during the tenth to the thirteenth century by other nations such as the Turks, Persians and Christians amongst others. Yet, it was only from the fifteenth century onwards that the West became a serious competitor to the Muslim empire which extended from the Middle East to South Eastern Europe and North Africa.

Towards the eighteenth century, the West had both achieved and consolidated military, economic and political power over the Middle East (Goldschmidt & Davidson, 2010:147). This period marked the beginning of the decline of the supremacy of the Islamic civilisation as the West conquered many of the Arab states. In 1796, the Ottoman Turks suffered its first military defeat at the hands of the Russian army. Further losses ensued with European armies successfully invading at least seven Muslim countries with the most notable ones including Aden (Yemen), Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt between the period of 1798 and 1912 (Kushner, 2003: 230). By the end of World War I, the slow decline of the Islamic cultural and political supremacy found its culmination in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The latter began to lose its grip on the Middle East as ‘the British and French consequently divided up the former Muslim empire as spoils of war’ (Kushner, 2003:231). The most humiliating defeat, however, was incurred by the newly formed state of Israel against a combined Arab force of five armies. The event was a revolutionary one for the Muslims since it humiliated their armies and discredited their regimes and...established a colonial settler state in their midst’ (Goldschmidt & Davidson, 2010: 293).

The demise of the once powerful Islamic civilization led many Muslim scholars to critically reflect the reason of the growing strength and superiority of the West in contrast to the Arab world. As Hiro (2002:44) strikingly points out, the only plausible answer was that,

either Europeans had devised a system better than Islam or the Muslim community had failed to follow true Islam. Since none of them [the intellectuals] was prepared to concede the inferiority of Islam to any other social system, the inevitable conclusion was that Muslims had deviated from the true path. So, the state was set for Islamic reform.

It is against this backdrop that militant Islamism became an enticing feature among Muslims who wanted to return to the dominant era of the Islamic civilisation. While many Muslims adjusted to the ideas and concepts of the West, a few rejected the West and its innovations completely. Adhering to an ideology deeply entrenched in fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, these militant Islamists rejected the changes brought forth by the West and perceived

the latter as the enemy. According to Kushner (2003:230), militant Islamists comprise only of about 10 to 15 per cent of the whole Muslim population of the world. While militant Islamism was influenced by the historical context surrounding its incubation, there are many factors that underlie its characterisation. One salient concept contributing to militant Islamism is the school of thought within the Islamic tradition that is often referred to as Salafism and/or Wahhabism. Prior to examining the development and interrelationship of the school of thought upon militant Islamism, it is merited to firstly undertake a brief examination of the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyya who is considered the theologian who set the foundations for the Salafist and Wahhabist ideology and as such holds a ‘central significance for contemporary militant [Islamists]’ (Vertigans, 2009: 17).

4.1.1 The Precedence of Militant Islamism: Ibn Taymiyya

Ibn Taymiyya was a Syrian jurist and theologian who was born in 1263 and died in a Damascus prison in 1328. Similar to other great thinkers within history, his thoughts were greatly influenced by the difficult context in which he lived (Migaux, 2007: 270). It was time when the Islamic empire was splitting into smaller states due to the threats of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. At the same time, the advancing Muslim Mongols from the East had recently plundered Baghdad and ended the Caliphate (Ayubi, 1991: 126; Migaux, 2007: 270). Taymiyya, realising that Islam was jeopardised by these external pressures and was in desperate need of unification, condemned all original form of Islam as heretical and perceived ‘adoration of saints, pilgrimages to tombs, and Sufi practices all were viewed as idolatrous’ (Migaux, 2007: 270). For him and his followers, the only true sources of knowledge were the Quran and the Hadith.³ In terms of his political thoughts, Taymiyya followed the orthodox consensus on the necessity of government and leadership to all societies (Ayubi, 1991:126). In one of his books entitled *Al-Siyasa al-Shar’iyya* (Governance in Accordance with the Islamic law), he presents the *shari’a*-based rules for governing relations between the authority and the people. In line with his objective of achieving unity, his political thoughts drew inspiration from Islam practiced in its original and fundamental form. Although Taymiyya may have followed the conventional Islamic teachings of his time, he did introduce some new nuances to existing concepts.

³ The Hadith refers to the sayings that are attributed to the prophet Muhammad.

Turner (2010: 547) observes that Taymiyya ‘introduced the concept of the new *jahiliya*⁴, positioned the importance of *jihad* as equal to the five pillars of Islam’. In as much as he acknowledged that *Jihad* should be utilized against infidels, he also provided a twofold delineation of the latter. Firstly, infidels were perceived to be any persons who constrained or prevented total piety to God. Secondly, the term referred to any person who opted out of or deviated from the *shari’a* even if the person had uttered the ‘credo’ (Ayubi, 1991:126). Furthermore, he extended the concept of infidel to include Muslim leaders who gave allegiance to non-Muslims. In this context, he was referring to the local Muslim leaders who pledged allegiance to the invading Mongols (Ayubi, 1991:167). In promoting the notion of *jihad* as a duty to fight the forces of the infidels, Taymiyya propelled it as a concept that was at the centre of Islamic practice (Turner, 2010: 547). The fact that radical Islamists who assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981 quoted Taymiyya when they accused the former Egyptian president of being an infidel demonstrates the influence of the scholar within modern militant Islamists’ thinking (Mousalli, 2009: 9). In sum, the life and influence of Ibn Taymiyya is encapsulated by Migaux (2007:271) in the following words,

Ibn Taimiya, considered subversive by the authorities and challenged by the ulama, was nonetheless, thanks to his simplistic sermons advocating the use of violence, quite successful among the marginalized classes and those lacking an in-depth knowledge of the Muslim religion. It would seem that, six centuries later, the situation has not changed much.

From his time onwards, Taymiyya’s thoughts and concepts have held great influence over many militant Islamist ideologues such as Al Wahhab, Hasan al-Banna, Sayid Qutb, Osama Bin Laden and Al Zawahiri amongst others. After having examined the influence of the thought leader behind the ideology of militant Islamism, the next section turns towards the two schools of thought instigated by the thoughts and doctrine of Ibn Taymiyya.

4.2 Wahhabism

Wahhabism started as a theological reform movement founded by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703 – 1792) in the 18th century. Influenced by Ibn Taymiyya, al-Wahhab recommended a basic and literal return to the practice of Islam as it was in the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the pious ancestors of the first three Muslim generations. The belief was that this would help purge the Muslim community from its adherence to superstition, adultery and tribalism that contributed towards a deviation from the observance of Islamic

⁴ *Jahaliyya* refers to the total pagan ignorance that is meant to have characterised pre-Islamic Arabia. Contemporary political Islamists such as Qutb and Mawdudi use this term to typify all societies that are not thoroughly and genuinely Islamic (Ayubi, 1991: 254).

rites and practices (Hiro, 2002:38). In this regard, he advocated a return to a puritan form of Islam that was ‘purified of all its dross and restored to its original strictness’ (Migaux, 2007:272). With this renewed vigour, al-Wahhab and his followers perceived themselves as the true believers and set out to purify their community by destroying the sacred trees and tombs of the saints. Consequently, the community drove out al-Wahhab and his followers who found refuge in Diriya where they made an alliance with the ruler Muhammad ibn Saud (Hiro, 2002:38). The newly formed Wahhabites launched a *jihad* against those who they perceived as infidels or apostates. They subsequently spread throughout the region that would later become known as Saudi Arabia.

In terms of its teachings, Wahhabism adheres to a literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunna⁵ of the Prophet Muhammad (Alvi, 2014: 40; De Azavedo, 2010: 51). Muslims should thus act in accordance with the Quran and the Sunna combined with the rules and teachings prevalent during the time of the prophet (Rakic & Jurisic, 2012: 650). Strictly puritanical and conservative, Wahhabism regards any Muslim who fails to follow the principle of Islam in its original form as advocated by the Wahhabite as liable to face excommunication (*takfir*) and thus be considered a heathen or *kufir*. Wahhabism exuded a strong intolerance towards Shias, Dervishes and Sufism as their centres, places of pilgrimages and sanctuaries were destroyed by Wahhabites (De Azavedo, 2010: 52). In sum, al- Wahhab did not add anything new to the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya other than simply putting them into praxis while giving them an extremist aspect. Nonetheless, Wahhabism has spread from the time of its founder to currently becoming the official religion in present day Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In other areas, it has influenced other Islamist thinkers such as Sayid Qutb, the ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood. According to Rakic & Jurisic (2012: 651), ‘contemporary Wahhabism creates a climate suitable for the birth of extremism, creation of closed and fanatical groups and get into the phase of destruction and demolition’ as exemplified in groups such as Al Qaeda. Another school of thought which has been greatly influenced by both Taymiyya and Wahhabism is Salafism. It is to this school of thought that the discussion will now turn.

4.3 Salafism

Salafism, a concept featuring prominently in the works of Iranian political thinker Jamal al din al Afghani (1838–1897), emerged as a school of thought in the 19th century in reaction to the diffusion of European ideas (Kepel, 2002: 219; Turner, 2010: 543). Although the term

⁵ Sunna are the sayings, ways and traditions of the prophet Muhammad (Ayubi, 1991: 256).

salafi is almost impossible to translate, it is derived from the word *salaf* denoting devout ancestors or predecessors particularly the immediate predecessors of the prophet Muhammad (Ayubi, 1991:68). Salafist thinking is characterised by a literal and puritan approach to Islamic doctrines and scriptural texts combined with the sole emphasis on the Quran and the *hadith* as the only legitimate sources of conduct and reasoning. Inspired by Taymiyya and akin to their Wahhabite counterparts, Salafists comprehend the sanction of the sacred texts in their most literal and traditional sense (Kepel, 2002: 220). Hegghammer (2009: 249) pointedly observes that many militant Islamist ideologues readily use the nomenclature ‘Salafi’ to describe themselves and this exuberance is also observed in groups that adopt the term in the title, for example, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) of Algeria – a group examined in this study. The reason behind the enthusiasm in adopting this adjective is that it ‘connotes doctrinal purity and therefore affords a degree of religious and political legitimacy to whoever describes himself as such’ (Hegghammer, 2009: 249).

Despite the fact that the diversity of the Salafis community is spread among multiple factions around the world, they are invariably united by a common religious creed containing the central facets of religious interpretation and comprehension. Central to the Salafi article of faith is the tenet of the unity of God that is referred to as *tawhid* with a threefold character. These include: 1) only Allah is the creator and sovereign of the whole universe; 2) the uniqueness and supremacy of the one God; and 3) Only God has the right to be worshipped (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 208-209). Following the Quran denotation of God as the supreme legislator, Salafists advocate that Muslims follow the *shari’a* in their entirety while denouncing secularism which in their view symbolises the power of human laws over divine authority. Repudiating the separation between state and religion, Salafists believe that the only rules for governing state, institutions, human conduct and belief must be based on the Quran and the Sunna (2006: 209). While the Salafist community comprises of various groups, they can be broadly categorised under three major factions: the purists, the politicians and the jihadists. The purists, perceiving politics as a deviation from the true path of Islam, focus on propagation, purification and education through nonviolent means. Conversely, Politicos identify the importance of the Salafi creed within political affairs as it ‘dramatically impacts social justice and the right of God alone to legislate’ (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 208). Finally, the jihadists adopt a more militant approach as they believe that their current context requires a revolution that can only be achieved through violence.

It is imperative to note that the third category is the one that is of most relevance to this study since AQIM adheres to the Jihadi-Salafist approach. AQIM fits in the Jihadi-Salafist prototype due to its emphasis on the use of violence to establish Islamic states governed by *shari'a*. One of the differences between jihadists and Politicos Salafis is that while the latter debated concepts and ideas at universities, the former acquired their political knowledge on the battleground (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 225). As such, *Jihadi*-Salafism emerged in Afghanistan during the war against the Soviet army invasion in the late 1980's where the jihadists acquired their lessons in politics as war and it is within this context that Al Qaeda was formed. While the Afghan war provided the incubation and birth of *Jihadi*-Salafism, its members were influenced by the radical ideas of contemporary political thinkers such as Sayid Qutb and Mawlana Mawdudi.

4.4 Contemporary Militant Islamism: The Influence of Qutb and Mawdudi

The downfall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 shattered the illusion of Muslim unity producing a sense of cultural tragedy. In addition to having a profound influence on the ascent of Salafi-Jihadism, the situation of a lost identity also provided the space for Islamist movements to strive towards reclaiming their cultural identity and restore Islamic unity. A teacher named Hasan al-Banna established one such movement which began as a youth club 'with its main stress on moral and social reform through communication, information and propaganda' (Hiro, 2002:60). The movement would later turn out to be one of the most influential as well as controversial organization in Egypt's political history. The influence of the movement *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*, or more commonly referred to as the Muslim Brotherhood, would extend beyond the borders of Egypt into Algeria, Palestine, and Tunisia amongst others. The objective of restoring Islamic unity is clearly captured in the Muslim Brotherhood's motto 'God is our objective; the Qur'an is our constitution; the Prophet is our leader; Struggle is our way; and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations' (quoted in Turner, 2010:548). In this way, the society envisaged Islam as a total ideology that offered 'an all-powerful system to regulate every detail of the political, economic, social and cultural life of the believer' (Hiro, 2002:60).

The movement grew rapidly and soon its members consisted primarily of the urban lower-middle classes such as students, civil servants, artisans and traders who were inspired by its religious slogans (Kepel, 2002:28). The Muslim Brotherhood attracted a wide following through its charitable activities involving running schools, dispensaries, mosques and

workshops (Hiro, 2002:61). Through its popularity, the movement established itself within the political arena and supported the coup perpetrated by Nasser and his allies in 1952. However, when Nasser renegaded on the vision of a unified Egypt through the implementation of an Islamic order but instead followed a nationalist agenda, he met with opposition from the Brotherhood movement. This drift further exacerbated when a failed assassination attempt on Nasser's life in 1954 was blamed on the organization. In response, Nasser executed 6 members of the Brotherhood and sent another 4 000 to jail while others went into self-exile into other countries including Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Lebanon (Hiro, 2002:65). Among those jailed, was Sayyid Qutb who would become known as 'one of the original theorists of modern Islamism' (Kepel, 2002:23) and whose thoughts would make him albeit infamously 'the most essential contributor to what is the Al Qaeda ideology' (Turner, 2010:549).

4.4.1 Sayyid Qutb

It was during his time in prison undergoing persecution and hard labour that Qutb produced some of his major works amongst which *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones) would become the most influential among radical Islamist thought worldwide (Ayubi, 1991:139). In this book, Qutb expounds on the key concept of *jahiliyya*. For Qutb, the world is divided into two spheres, namely, the Order of Islam or the order of *jahiliyya* (total ignorance). According to Qutb, this ignorance not only referred to the pre-Islamic Arabia but it was part and parcel of the current age as he argued,

We are also surrounded by *jahiliyya* today, which is of the same nature as it was during the first period of Islam, perhaps a little deeper. Our whole environment, people's beliefs and ideas, habits and art, rules and laws is *jahiliyya*, even to the extent that what we consider to be Islamic culture, Islamic sources, Islamic philosophy and Islamic thought are also constructs of *jahiliyya* (Milestones, 2006:34).

As far as Qutb is concerned, *jahiliyya* is a result of the moral deterioration of the Islamic values due to Western culture and ideas seeping into the Egyptian society particularly, during Nasser's regime. It can be argued that his anti-Western stance and his disdain towards the Nasserist regime can be attributed to two experiences in his life. Firstly, the culture shock he received while he was in America furthering his studies and secondly, the long-term jail sentence and the tortures he underwent while he was in prison (Ushama, 2007: 172). To overcome this *jahiliyya*, Qutb suggest following the Salafis teachings underscoring the importance of *tawhid*, the prominence of following the Quran, Sunna, and the pious ancestors

(*salaf*), the continuous battle against *shirk* (worshipping any other than God) and fighting the enemies of Islam (Wiktorowicz, 2006: 222). Consequently, Qutb reasoned that a revolution is required to abolish *jahiliyya* and restore in its place an Islamic state governed by Allah through the *shari'a*.

Whether Qutb personally advocated for a violent revolution through the use of *jihad* remains a disputed issue amongst scholars. While Kepel (2000:26) and Ayubi (1991: 140) advance that Qutb advocated for the use of violent *jihad*, Ushama (2007:187) argues that Qutb had no intention of instigating violence. Hiro (2002:67) reconciles both views when he interestingly points out that although Qutb wanted to elude violence, he could not dissuade his radical followers from waging *jihad* against the social order which he had labelled *jahiliyya*. As Kepel (2000:31) observes, this created a situation where those who were living in *jahiliyya* were no longer viewed as Muslims (this would consist of the members of society) and were labelled *takfir* (infidels) and they thus became legitimate recipients of violence. The execution of Qutb by the Nasser regime, which many of his followers perceived as martyrdom, provided the impetus for the spread and acceptance of his ideas within the Arab world (Hiro, 2002:68).

4.4.2 Mawlana Mawdudi

Another important thinker whose writings greatly influenced contemporary militant Islamists is prolific Pakistani author and journalist Mawlana Mawdudi. He was born in southern India in 1903 during the period of the British occupation of the region. Mawdudi believed that Islam was facing multiple threats, specifically, from the foreign occupiers and the Hindu majority in India. As a result, he advocated for a revival of Islam that could only be achieved by returning to the fundamental aspects of the faith and allowing the restoration of Islam within all aspects of life including the political. This author and journalist rejected nationalism and democracy as he believed both would lead 'to the predominance of Indian and / or non-Islamic forces and influences' (Ayubi, 1991: 128). Instead, he urged Muslims to remove any Indian, Western and secularist inspiration. Rather, he advocated, they should focus on reviving their faith and aim towards establishing an Islamic state. Mawdudi argued that 'Islam is a revolutionary doctrine and system that overturns government. It seeks to overturn the whole universal social order . . . and establish its structure anew . . . Islam seeks the world' (cited in Milton-Edwards, 2006:26). To achieve this change or revolution toward

Islamic independence, Mawdudi followed in the footsteps of Hassan al-Banna and founded the *Jama'at al Islami* (Islamic Group). Yet, in contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood, the newly formed organisation was legal for most of its history (Kepel, 2002:35).

A major distinction within the vision of Mawdudi was the importance of *jihad* as a means to achieve Islamic governance and statehood. There is a view that '*Jihad* is at the same time offensive and defensive . . . The Islamic party does not hesitate to utilize the means of war to implement its goal' (quoted in Milton-Edwards, 2006:26). Echoing al-Banna and Qutb, he believed that the solution of the problems that Muslims were facing is found in the way of Islam. His major premise for establishing an Islamic state was that God was the sovereign ruler and there was nothing outside of His control and His laws (Habeck, 2006:38). As such, he advocated for a state where sovereignty in the name of Allah would be exercised and complimented by the implementation of *shari'a* (Kepel, 2002:34). Mawdudi's notion of the absolute sovereignty of God (*al-hakimiiya*) would influence other radical fundamentalist and militant groups as it implied that humans are only delegated to implement *shari'a* which is ultimately superior to any human-made political or economic system. Turner (2010: 549) identifies Mawdudi as 'the link for the transition between Hassan al-Banna's vague methodological approach to establishing an Islamic state and the sophisticated ideology of Sayid Qutb'.

In the later years, Salafi-Jihadi movements would find ideological justifications for their movements through the ideas discovered in the writings of al-Banna, Mawdudi and Qutb. Concept expounded by these thinkers particularly *tawhid*, *jahiliyya*, and *jihad* would become prominent within the statements of *Jihadi* groups utilizing them as justifications for violence against innocent civilians including Westerners, non-Muslims and Muslims (Habeck, 2006: 39). The pivotal role of Qutb and Mawdudi's thoughts and ideas cannot be denied as they hold a threefold importance for current militant Islamist groups. Firstly, their writings intellectually justify an anti-Western attitude on both a cultural and political level. Secondly, they justify the establishment of an Islamic state based on *shari'a*. Thirdly, in their writings, there is a justification for overthrowing secular governments. These also include Muslim leaders who fail to govern according to Islamic rule (Bahari & Ahmad, 2012: 23). Zimmerman (2004: 223) accentuates the impact of Sayyid Qutb's ideas as one aspect contributing towards the creation of Al Qaeda since its former leader Osama Bin Laden was

mentored by Mohammed Qutb, Sayyid's brother. The other two contributions towards the formation of Al Qaeda are: the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the Afghan *jihad* of the 1980's.

4.5 The First Inspiration in the Contemporary Era: The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian revolution of 1979 is considered as one of the most significant events in the history of Islam as it was the only contemporary event where the ideas of political Islam were put into practice. This occurrence helped the Arab world to regain some of the confidence that was lost over a decade earlier when Israel defeated the Arab armies in the Six Day War. The detrimental effect of the latter war reverberated within the Arab world to the extent that some scholars, such as White (2009: 203-205), advocate that it was one of the major propellants of the rise of violence in the Middle East including the rise of militant Islamism. The Iranian revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, however, brought a glimmer of hope as it represented the revolution that prior thinkers and thinkers had advocated.

Although Khomeini did not personally create the Iranian revolution nor was he the ideologue behind it, he became the undisputed leader over the revolution as his political theory was incorporated into the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Ayubi, 1991:147). In 1963, Khomeini attempted to overthrow the Shah Mohammed Reza from power resulting in the Ayotallah being sent into exile in 1964. Between then and 1979, Khomeini built up a network of revolutionaries while at the same time buttressing his influence and reputation among the people of Iran. Ali Shariati, who was among those revolutionaries, is considered as the ideologue behind the Iranian revolution. While Khomeini influenced the urban middle class, Shariati who was well versed in Islamic teachings and Marxist philosophies became a major source of intellectual influence for the young militants (Kepel, 2002: 37). After having mobilised the people, Khomeini and his followers led the revolution against the Shah in 1979. Unable to suppress the masses and insurgents, the military surrendered with the Shah escaping the country, allowing Khomeini to step in 'as the undisputed leader of the Islamic revolution and establishing his Islamic republic' (Hussain, 1984: 189). In short, Khomeini (with the help of his revolutionaries) had managed to put into practice what many other thinkers and scholars had thus far only advocated in writing.

Kepel (2000: 23) singles out an interesting point when he advances that although Khomeini differs with Qutb and Mawdudi in terms of sect affiliation (Qutb and Mawdudi belonging to the Sunni sect while Khomeini was a Shiite), all three 'shared a vision of Islam as a political

movement...and called for an Islamic state'. Following a similar line of thinking as Qutb and Mawdudi, Khomeini posits that the four functions of government is: 1) to enforce the *shari'a*, 2) to combat the oppression of the rights of ordinary individuals and eliminate corruption, 3) to fight heresies and errors in the legislations and 4) to prevent foreigners from intervening in Muslim affairs (Hussain, 1984: 186). One of the reasons associated with the success of the Iranian revolution in contrast to other failed revolutions in the Arab world, is that Khomeini was able to unite all levels of the Iranian population including the middle classes, the radical intellectuals, the clerics, and the disinherited (Kepel, 2002: 24).

The effect of the Iranian revolution on the Arab world was phenomenal since it provided a display of Islam overcoming Western hegemony in the form of the Shah. Furthermore, it demonstrated that an Islamic revolution was a definite possibility and not mere rhetoric. Although the euphoria subsided after a while due to the reign of terror in Iran that ensued including the hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran, the revolution has maintained itself as a milestone for numerous militant Islamists. Another event that would inspire militant Islamist and provide further impetus to their cause was the Afghan *jihad* that began the same year as the Iranian revolution.

4.6 The Second Inspiration: The Afghan Jihad

In 1978, after a coup d'état reminiscent of Marx's notion of revolution, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) under the leadership of Nur Mohammed Takari came into power with the sole objective of transforming Afghanistan into a socialist state. Principled on Marxist's ideology, the new leaders envisioned 'the establishment of a socialist nation in which class oppression would be wiped out and the productive energies of the poor mobilized' (Edwards, 2002: 25). In a move to quell the incertitude of the people, the new government astutely reassured them that all the reforms would be in accordance with the *Shari'a* (Hiro, 2002: 202). On the international front, the PDPA leadership and its Marxist counterparts the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation emphasising close military, political and economic ties between the two.⁶ To fulfil its promise to abolish class oppression according to Marxist principles, the government of the PDPA began its campaign of implementing policies to achieve its goal. These policies consisting of 'radical agrarian reform, compulsory literacy and the imposition of socialism through thousands of

⁶ For instance, Article 4 of the Treaty read that 'the signatories shall consult with each other and take, by agreement, appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence and territorial integrity of the two countries' (Hiro, 2002: 205).

arrests and summary execution' (Kepel, 2002: 138), alienated the majority of the population. A growing sense of estrangement coupled with public dissatisfaction resulted in an increase of people and religious leaders began voicing their discontents against the leadership.

In order to suppress a growing opposition, the government began to target religious leaders. This led to many fleeing and joining resistance groups in neighbouring Pakistan. The momentum of the wave of opposition against the Marxist regime intensified and in April 1979 reached its crescendo with a general uprising. In December 1979, the ruling party made the grim realisation that it had lost control of the majority of the country and subsequently appealed to the Soviet Union for help. As a result, the Soviet Union responded by sending in its troops on the 24th of December 1979 and three days later, the Red army captured the military installations and seized the presidential palace. Taking control of the Afghan government, the Soviet Union appointed Babrak Karmal as the new leader of Afghanistan in a move to restore peace and stability (Hiro, 2002: 208; Kepel, 2000: 138). In short, the revolution envisaged by the PDPA did not deliver the intended benefits as they had expected it to. The so-called 'socialist paradise' that the regime wanted to institute only managed to create a situation where 'tens of thousands...took up arms against the regime and millions chose exile in Pakistan and Iran' (Edwards, 2002: 25). Instead of contributing towards the promotion of the socio-economic welfare of the population, the revolution ushered in an epoch of violence and conflict with consequences that would have resounding effects for years to come.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan horrified the West as President Carter describing the act as the 'greatest threat to peace since the Second World War' (cited in Urban, 1988: 56) and pledged to help defend the Persian Gulf region. Meanwhile, the Afghan exiles who fled to Peshawar in Pakistan, began to organise their own resistance movement to launch an attack in order to remove the Soviets from their homeland. It is important to note that these fighters belonged to a heterogeneous group of organisations under the umbrella of Islam and the differences extended to the social, ethnic, political and military arena. In terms of ethnicity, the fighters or mujahedeen varied from members of Traditional Sufi groups, the Muslim Brotherhood to the enthusiasts of the Wahhabite doctrine (Kepel, 2002: 140).

Nonetheless, the mujahedeen set their differences aside, organised themselves and set out to defend the territory of Islam from the Soviet infidels through the launch of a struggle or defensive *jihad*.

In addition to the support of the international Muslim community, the fighters soon received ‘assistance from the United States, logistical support from Pakistan, and financial contributions from Saudi Arabia’ (Migaux, 2007: 292). At the beginning of the *jihad*, Islamic solidarity consisted mainly of monetary help but gradually it became more practical in that a number of foreign jihadists joined the movement in Peshawar then proceeded to the battleground of Afghanistan. Mignaux (2007: 293) describes the widespread influence of the Afghan *jihad* on these Arab volunteers from different parts of the Muslim world. As such,

more than 20,000 Muslims from the Middle East and the Maghreb were involved in *jihad*. The largest battalions came from the Middle East. Their numbers likely included approximately 6,000 Saudis, 4,000 Egyptians, and 1,000 Yemenis, as well as several hundred Syrians and the same number of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. A smaller number came from the Maghreb—maybe 2,000 Algerians and a few hundred Tunisians, Moroccans and Libyans. Some hailed from farther afield, including a few Westerners and a handful of Indonesians, Malaysians, Filipinos, and Sudanese.

Although these recruits possessed the will and determination to engage in *jihad*, they lacked the combat training required for such an undertaking. On the other end, the huge amount of monetary donations provided by Saudi Arabia and wealthy Muslim donors for the training and accommodation of the volunteers opened up opportunities for corruption and thus the services of a trustworthy person was required. A Jordanian professor of Palestine origin Abdullah Azzam who was a pivotal figure among the Afghan Arabs was chosen as the trustworthy person and he was responsible for housing and training the new recruits. To this end, he co-founded an organization known as *Maktab al-Khidmat ulMujahideen al-Arab* (MAK) in Peshawar and it ‘housed, trained and financed the anti-Soviet Afghan *jihad*’ (Gunaratna, 2002: 4). Azzam’s objective was to promote the cause of mujahedeen and illustrate that it was the duty of every Muslim to participate in the Afghan *jihad* through either physical participation or monetary assistance. This message was propagated through his magazine *Al Jihad* containing news from the war, doctrinal texts and editorials written by Azzam himself.

From an ideological standpoint, Azzam’s modelled on Salafist scholar Ibn Taymiyya as he advocated that the only way for Islam to restore its original glory was for the faithful to

engage in *jihad* (Hiro, 2002: 215). Although both Azzam and his predecessors called for *jihad*, their resulting effects were different in that Azzam attracted thousands of volunteers to fight while for his predecessors the result was purely rhetorical. In other words, while his predecessors only managed an idealistic result, Azzam had a more practical success. Kepel (2002: 147) links this practical accomplishment on the context and circumstance within which Azzam found himself. Unlike his antecedents, he had an organised group at his disposal to make the *jihad* a reality. Finally, a decade after they invaded Afghanistan, the Soviet troops withdrew in February 1989 with the casualty of about 14 500 soldiers. For the Afghan mujahedeen, this was a monumental victory demonstrating that the infidels had finally left the land of Islam. Subsequently, the Arab and Asian mujahedeen, inspired by the victory over the Soviets, returned to their country of origin with the aim of effecting radical political and social change in their societies (Gunaratna, 2002: 5).

Azzam, who eventually became the symbol of the mujahedeen movement, died together with his sons in a bomb blast in Peshawar in December 1989. Prior to his death, Azzam anticipating the victory of the Afghan mujahedeen, decided to put in place a new project that would continue the work of the Afghan *jihad* in the form of an international *jihadi* army after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. He would presciently note that

obligation will not end with victory in Afghanistan, and *jihad* will remain an individual obligation until we have reconquered all Muslim lands and reinstalled Islam: we still have ahead of us Palestine, Bukhara, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Burma, Yemen, Tashkent, and Andalusia (cited in Migaux, 2007: 294).

This ideological vision would be carried on even after his death by his former protégé and deputy of the MKA – Osama Bin Laden. In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal and the return of the mujahedeen to their respective region of origin, the MKA gradually became obsolete in terms of pursuing its original objectives. Nonetheless, Osama was resolved to continue the legacy of his mentor by creating an international network of jihadists who had participated in the Afghan *jihad* (Hiro, 2002: 227).⁷ Mahamedou (2007: 46) asserts that in late 1989, Bin Laden was joined by Ayman al Zawahiri, the leader of the Islamic Jihad group

⁷ In this regard, it is noteworthy to clarify certain aspects concerning the relationship between Osama and Azzam. Robin Gunaratna (2002:25-26) believes that the alliance between the two slowly deteriorated over the issue of reconfiguring MAK once they reached their objective of removing the Soviets. Osama wanted MAK to adopt terrorist tactics to achieve its aim to which Azzam was strongly opposed. Gunaratna further posits that some believed that Osama was behind the assassination of Azzam although he publicly revered his former mentor.

in Egypt and together they formed what became one of the world most infamous terrorist network, more commonly known as Al Qaeda.⁸

4.7 Al Qaeda: The Face of Militant Islamism in the 20th Century

Despite the fact that Al Qaeda would become almost synonymous with Osama Bin Laden, Azzam was the one responsible for its ideological blueprint. As mentioned above, about a year before his death, Azzam formulated the outlines of what would become the founding charter of Al Qaeda. His aim was to establish an organization consisting of mujahedeen who would fight for the cause of oppressed Muslims worldwide (Gunaratna, 2002: 24). The organization would also be a vanguard for the establishment of the Umma and it would be a symbol of Islamic resistance. Turner (2010: 550) describes Azzam as the ‘Godfather of *Jihad*’ whose legacy was to transfer a struggle that had hitherto been confined to the Middle East into a global political phenomenon with worldwide security concerns. Regardless of his gift as an original thinker and ideologue behind the would-be Al Qaeda, Azzam lacked the vision to operate the organization unlike his deputy Osama Bin Laden (Turner, 2010: 551).

Thus, after the death of Azzam, Bin Laden took over the reign of Al Qaeda and adopted new tactics while at the same retaining the original ideology put forth by his predecessor. The reason behind this, according to Gunaratna (2002: 23), is that Bin Laden was ‘not an original thinker but an opportunist, a businessman at heart, who surrounds himself with a good team, manages it well but borrows heavily from others’. Interestingly, although Bin Laden is perceived as the most notable contemporary of Jihadi-Salafism, he played a minor role in the intellectual development of militant ideology. Rather, this role is fulfilled by his deputy (current Al Qaeda leader) Dr Ayman al Zawahiri who became the ‘ideological brains’ behind the twin tower attacks on the 11th September 2001 (Riedel, 2008: 16).

The ingenuity of Zawahiri resided in his ability to transform Al Qaeda’s ideology from focusing on local *jihad*, as in the case of Afghanistan, to adopting an international perspective focusing on international *jihad*. In contrast to Azzam who only managed to gather and influence a fighting force, Zawahiri went a step further by providing the dispersed Afghan mujahedeen with a distinct ideology; hence enabling them to unify under the one banner of Al Qaeda. Zawahiri indicated his seriousness in cause for a global *jihad* when he willingly

⁸ The original name of the organization was *Al Qaeda al Askariya* which meant the military base. The author also notes that the name Al Qaeda has a twofold meaning. In Arabic, the term could mean ‘precept’, ‘rule’, ‘norm’, or ‘column’ where as in a modern context it can refer to ‘database’ (Mohamedou, 2007: 121).

conceded his leadership position at the Egyptian Islamic *Jihad* and joined Al Qaeda. Moreover, he adroitly developed an argument to convince the reluctant leadership of Al Qaeda and *Jamaat Ismailia* to amalgamate under one international organisation. This event not only marked the beginning of the transformation of *jihad* from a local to an international sphere but also ‘synthesised the Al Qaeda ideology’ (Turner, 2010: 553). Zawahiri exerted such a great deal of influence over Bin Laden that the latter appointed him as the head of Al Qaeda’s religious committee (a branch that issued *fatwas* or religious rulings) and the *Shura Majlis* also known as the consultative council (Gunaratna, 2002: 27).

In one of his publications entitled *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, Zawahiri presents the Al Qaeda manifesto including the organization’s strategies, objectives and ideology. In relation to the type of ideology that Al Qaeda embraces, it can be best defined as Salafi-Jihadism which, in the words of Kepel (2002: 220), has a ‘supercilious respect for the sacred texts in their most literal form...and an absolute commitment to *jihad*’ and whose target was the West. One of the contributions of Zawahiri to the Al Qaeda ideology is that he managed to provide an international dimension to the localised Islamist struggles and thus established a space where ‘local groups with local interests obtain links with Al Qaeda headquarters and act in its name’ (Turner, 2010: 554). In this way, through their links with Al Qaeda, these dispersed groups would operate under its ideology and propagate Al Qaeda’s message. In the context of this study, the GSPC prior to its merge with Al Qaeda Central exemplified one of these groups that acted in the name of Al Qaeda.

To further understand the workings of Al Qaeda, it is important to examine the strategies that flow from the group’s ideology that consists of both a political and a religious nature. Firstly, it seeks to overthrow the present world order and liberate Muslim territories from foreign occupation before unifying all Muslim countries into one Caliphate. To this end, the group advocates for the use of the holy war (*jihad*) in order to purge Muslim lands from the influence of non-Muslim culture. Thus, after the caliphate is established, it will have one caliph (ruler) who will govern according to the *shari’a* and ‘a puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam’ (Piazza, 2009: 66). These strategies are prominent within the discourses of Bin Laden, especially within the two *fatwas* he released: ‘Jihad on the Americans occupying the Country of the Two Sacred Places’ in 1996 and ‘Declaration of Jihad against Jews and Crusaders’ in 1998. These two fatwas reveal three issues that sustains the group’s momentum and these include: 1) the despoiling of Saudi Arabia (holy land) by the on-going ‘occupation’

of the American troops, 2) the devastation and infliction of suffering of the Iraqi population by the United States and its alliances⁹ and 3) the persistent occupation of Jerusalem and the murdering of innocent Muslims by Israel (Perry & Negrin, 2003: 44). In reaction to these accusations, Bin Laden perceives America as the far enemy who has proclaimed war against Allah, the prophet and all Muslims. Therefore, according to him, it becomes only logical for every Muslim to declare *jihad* against the enemy and he reiterates this in his 1998 *fatwa* when he instructed all Muslims

To kill the American and their allies—civilians and military—...in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the Holy Mosque [in Mecca] from their grip, so that their armies leave all the territory of Islam, defeated, broken, and unable to threaten any Muslim (Bin Laden, 2003:46).

He further supports his pronouncements with quotes from the Quran. Although Bin Laden is not a religious scholar per se, he does have a strong establishment within religious traditions. This plays a crucial role as his recurrent quotes from the Quran and other religious texts (including Ibn Taymiyya's writings) as an attempt to legitimize his *jihadi* objectives appear to resound with his audience in the Muslim world (Perry & Negrin, 2003: 43). For instance, within a few months of issuing his 1998 fatwa, his call for *jihad* was duly answered when two bomb blasts within minutes of each other annihilated the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salam respectively.

A few years later on 11 September 2001, the plane attacks of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon would symbolise the devastation that Al Qaeda and its ideology can cause to a nation regardless of whether the latter is a leading global superpower. The ferocity of the group would continue as it would claim the 2002 Bali bombings, the Madrid train bombings in 2004 and the London bombings in 2005. In Africa, it would manifest itself by forging ties with several groups such as Al Shabaab, Boko Haram and most importantly in the context of this study, the GSPC who would later become AQIM. It would also capitalise on the fertile ground for recruits in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of 2003 and even parent ISIS within the Iraqi war context. Ironically, ISIL would overtake Al Qaeda as the most dangerous terrorist group while utilising some of Al Qaeda's tactics.

⁹ For clarification purposes, it should be noted that the war referred to is the first Gulf war following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1991. As Perry & Negrin (2003: 44) note, the 'infections' that Bin Laden makes reference to is the subsequent sanctions imposed by the UN upon Iraq in the aftermath of the war.

More importantly, one aspect that all these groups share in common is the notion of *jihad*. To the extent that most groups use this concept to perpetrate mass killings, it becomes imperative to understand this concept. Thus, it merits a brief explanation so as to present the reader with a fuller understanding of what *jihad* is and in so doing preventing it from become a mere nomenclature devoid of any true meaning.

4.7.1 Jihad: A Misinterpreted Pretext

There is no other term within Islam that consists of a rich and complex nature yet at the same time full of contestations than that of *jihad* (Cooper, 2004: 110). For non-Muslims, the term evokes disturbing images of extremism and the indiscriminate belligerence of jihadists towards innocent victims. Noorani (2002: 45) parallels the term *jihad* with the word ‘crusade’ that has a positive connotation for Christians in that it describes ‘peaceful religious gatherings’ whereas for a Muslim the same terms denotes a message of religious violence and suffering reminiscent of the middle ages. Similarly, while *jihad* conveys a negative meaning for the non-Muslims, it has a positive undertone for the Muslim as it symbolises an important truth of their religion. In the Quran, the word *jihad* appears 41 times while 28 *ayas* (verses) make reference to it.¹⁰ The contestations surrounding the doctrine of *jihad* evolve around the fact that its meaning, definitions, justification and appropriate application is not based on a single authoritative interpretation (Turner, 2010: 544). It may thus be the reason why many jihadists abuse this interpretative liberty in advocating the doctrine of *jihad* as a means to legitimise their spate of violence against innocent victims. Thus, to comprehend the doctrine of *jihad*, a brief historical analysis of the term follows.

In its original Arabic syntax, the word *jihad* means *haal al Jihd* (a state of *jihd*) which can further be transliterated as ‘a state of permanent efforts’ (Phares, 2005: 21). In other words, the term alludes to something more than just a ‘holy war’ in that it advocates for a physical, moral, spiritual and intellectual effort. To further drive this point across, Noorani (2002: 49) saliently notes that if war was the primary way of engaging in this effort, then the Quran would have used other terms that represent armed combat, such as *harb* (war), *sira’s* (combat) or even *qatal* (killing), instead of the term *jihad*. Yet, while the doctrine of *jihad* advocates for a ‘personal endeavour to follow the will of Allah, resist temptation and strive to be a better Muslim’ (Turner, 2010: 544), it also purports a collective effort to defend or

¹⁰ The Quran consists of 114 *suras* (chapters) and 6, 234 *ayas* (verses).

expand one's community through means of war. Hence, the two descriptions of *jihad* are, the lesser *jihad* which symbolises fighting for the community in as a form of self-defence and the greater *jihad* which refers to the inner struggle of the person towards realising one's capacity. Simply put, 'the lesser *jihad* is the visible struggle against the enemy on the battlefield while the greater or supreme *jihad* is the ceaseless war humans are called to wage against their lower selves' (Khomeini, 1981: 429).

However, Salafi-Jihadists such as Al Qaeda and its affiliates tend to focus primarily on the lesser *jihad* as a means to promote their cause. This is redolent of the 8th century when Muslim rulers, who for the sole purpose of expansion inspired by greed, wealth and ambition, needed a reason to engage in unprovoked wars. In a similar way, as Turner (2010: 545) notices, 'Osama bin Laden and other militants seek to characterise terrorist acts as a response to a perceived injustice rather than an act of outright aggression'. The prophet Muhammad, whom these Islamist militants claim inspiration from for their violent *jihad*, lived in a dangerous context where his *umma* (community) and he had to flee or otherwise face the danger of extermination. In contrast to the depiction of the prophet as a warlord who forced reluctant people to convert to Islam through the wielding of the sword, he and the first community of Muslim were battling for their lives and violence was thus inevitable (Armstrong, 1995: 10-11). Consequently, due to the different context that Muslims find themselves presently, the relevance of the lesser *jihad* is not the same as in the times of the prophet. On the other hand, the importance of the greater *jihad* within the contemporary context is pivotal and necessary. According to Miller (cited in Noorani, 2002: 46), it should be directed towards two facets: individual virtue and the society's struggle for justice.

Meanwhile, for the Salafi-Jihadists, the only way to achieve justice for the community is to restore the lost glory of the Islamic civilisation through the establishment of an Islamic caliphate based on *shari'a* law. In turn, the only means of attaining this renewal is by using the greater *jihad*. For the Salafi-Jihadists, the notion of *jihad* can be summed up in the words of Abdullah Azzam (cited in Turner, 2010: 545) as '*jihad* and the rifle alone, no negotiations, no conferences, no dialogues'. The targets of the *jihad* include apostate Muslim rulers (Near enemy) and Western powers (Far enemy). By extension, any Muslim, whether a ruler, an individual, or a group, who does not adhere to the ideology of the Salafi-Jihadism is considered a *kufr* (infidel) and declared an enemy.

Arguably, it is only ‘the right ruler (the caliph or his appointee) or the legitimate scholars (clerics) [who] can designate someone or a group as *kufir* and put this label on the enemies of the state or the opponents to *jihad*’ (Phares, 2005: 54). Subsequently, once a group or an individual is designated as *kufir*, the conception of *takfir* (excommunication) can be extended to that group or person. In this instance, the group or person is excommunicated and the person is no longer under the protection of the Islamic law and as such they are vulnerable to the proclamation of the violent *jihad* against them (Vertigans, 2009: 105). In the context of this study, as will be noted in subsequent chapters, these notions such as *takfir*, *jihad* and *kufir* play a pivotal role within the ideology of the GIA and its rise to prominence on the Algerian scenery.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to examine the religious ideology behind militant Islamism in order to situate the reader within the broader context of the study. The groups examined in this study such as the GIA, GSPC and AQIM share this ideology and hence it is imperative to have an understanding of the constituents of militant Islamism. To this end, this chapter provided a brief historical background of militant Islamism by examining the background and thoughts of its original instigator, that is, Ibn Taymiyya. The two schools of thought (Salafism and Wahhabism) which his ideas set in motion were also viewed in tandem with modern thinkers who further continued his legacy either through their writings (Qutb) or by forming a movement (Mawdudi and later Azzam). The ideas of Taymiyya find their practical realisation in the infamous organization known as Al Qaeda within the context of the Afghan *jihad*. It is important to note that the aim of this chapter was to trace the ideological thread of militant Islamism from its historical origins until the present day. Hence, historical backgrounds of thinkers, events and movements were provided as a means to clarify and situate the reader within the broader perspective of the context.

After examining the religious ideology of militant Islamism, the next chapter proceeds specifically into the analysis of the antecedents that gave rise to the incubation and formation of AQIM. So conceived, the next chapter analyses the root causes of conflict in Algeria from its struggle against the French colonial power in the 1960s to its local battle against militant extremists in the 1990s to the current sporadic spate of violence perpetrated by AQIM, which is the focus of the present study.

Chapter Five

The Root Causes of Terrorism in Algeria

5.0 Introduction

When analysing the emergence of terrorism in North Africa, particularly in the Maghreb region, there is a tendency to view this crisis in the light of the post 9/11 context. While this approach is advantageous to a certain extent in that it provides an understanding of the present situation, it is also limited in other aspects as it fails to capture the historical development behind such a situation. Realising this deficiency, especially when applied to the Algerian context, scholars who study the emergence of terrorism in Algeria often begin their analysis from the epoch prior to the Algerian civil war of 1992. While this method undoubtedly captures the historical antecedents to the emergence of terrorist groups such as the GIA in the wake of the military coup that denied Islamists a legitimate democratic victory, it is reticent in providing an understanding of the dynamics that led to this unfolding of events. It is within this milieu that this chapter seeks to bridge the gap between the foundations of violence within the Algerian political domain and the emergence of jihadists groups in the post-coup era.

To this end, this chapter argues that terrorism in present day Algeria is a product of its experiences and as such situates it within the larger historical background. It is imperative for scholars to comprehend that the emergence of terrorism in Algeria cannot be studied apart from the country's colonial, socio-economic and political background. The chapter begins with the Algerian war of independence and its colonial influence on the political system inherited by the French in the aftermath of their departure. Subsequently, it examines the political development of post-independent Algeria under the three former head of states, Ben Bella, Boumedienne and Chadli. A brief analysis of the decline of the ruling party and the rise of the opposition party situates the reader within the context of the political situation prior to the civil war outbreak. The emergence of terrorism in Algeria in the aftermath of the military coup is examined through the lens of the greed and grievance thesis discussed in chapter three. The chapter concludes with a brief exploration of the two antecedents to AQIM, namely, the GIA and the GSPC.

5.1 Algeria: A Brief Pre-Colonial Historical Excursion

Algeria is situated in the north-west Mediterranean coast of Africa and is surrounded by Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Libya and Tunisia. It is argued that from a geographical

perspective, Algeria had always been a difficult region to rule because the Tell and Saharan Atlas mountain chains hinder communication between the North and South of the country and ‘the few good harbours provided only limited access to the hinterlands’ (McKenna, 2011: 63). The disintegration of the Almohad Empire in the thirteenth century saw the emergence of three distinct communities, namely, the Hafsids in Tunisia, the Abd al-Wadids in Algeria, and the Marinids in Morocco. These geographical boundaries were further redefined during the Ottoman rule as: ‘Tunisian Husaynid beylik, the Moroccan Sharifian Saadian, Alawi sultanates and the Algerian deylik (known as the Regency)’ (Naylor, 2000:6). The latter acted as a sovereign state. It later became known as the first Algerian state or the Algerian Ottoman Republic. Under the Ottoman rule, the Algerian regency was economically successful and Algiers became the capital city. It was at this place from where power was exercised from 1671 onwards by officers known as the *dey* who were the representatives of the Ottoman rulers. Due to the stability of the Algerian regency, there was an influx of people into the urban society of the coastal cities among whom was an ethnic mix of Turks, Arabs, Berbers, Moors (Muslim Spanish descendants) and Jews (Stone, 1997: 29). Meanwhile the interior ethnic composition of the populace consisting of local Berbers and Arabs remained unchanged.

By the second half of the 18th century, widespread revolts by the Darqawa brotherhood, the increasing independence of the deys and the decline in exports contributed towards the weakening of the Ottoman rule in the central Maghreb and specifically Algeria. A financial, political and social crisis ensued throughout most of the region where the populace gradually lost trust in their rulers. Resenting their Turkish rulers, local residents translated their anger into rebellions led by religious leaders throughout the 19th century. The rapid decline of the Ottoman rule in a way paved the way for another foreign occupier to seize the opportunity. Unbeknownst to the Algerian locals at that time, the next conquest would last for about 130 years and become ‘one of the most ignominious examples of systematic colonisation that the world has ever seen’ (Stone, 1997: 31).

On June 14, 1830, at the request of the French king Charles X, French troops landed in Algiers and invaded the city, expelling the Ottoman dey but not before committing brutal acts of savagery and religious vandalism. On the 5th of July 1830, the French seized control of the city in an event that would be referred to later as the *prise d’Algiers* (the taking of Algiers) where the Hussein dey was defeated by the French marshal Louis de Bourmont. The pretext

for the French conquest is often attributed to the '*coup d'éventail*' episode where Hussein dey is said to have hit Pierre Duval (the French king's consul at Algiers) three times on the arm with a fly swatter. The reason for this incident was that the French ambassador refused to answer the Ottoman ruler's question concerning the monetary debt that France owed Algeria (Stone, 1997: 30; McKenna, 2011: 64). The French conquest of Algiers signified an end to the Ottoman rule and marked the beginning of a new colonial era that would indelibly redefine Algeria and its people.

5.2 A Colonial Legacy

Modern Algeria 'can be understood only by examining the period—nearly a century and a half—that the country was under French colonial rule' (McKenna, 2011: 64). Although this statement may appear to contain some exaggerations, it nonetheless captures the important role that the French occupation played in the history of Algeria. The victory of the French troops over the Ottoman rulers in Algeria was difficult as the invasion encountered resistance from the locals who viewed them as a cultural and political threat. The inhabitants that the French discovered in Algeria had varied ethnic identities and differing interests but shared a common bond in that 99 per cent of those inhabitants practised Islam albeit under different forms (Lowi, 2009: 49). To their disappointment and surprise, the French troops encountered inflexible armed resistance from the Berber and the Arab population. One such resistant movement was led by the emir Abd el-Kader who was also the leader of a state consisting of local Berber tribes based on the Islamic principles (Stone, 1997: 31). His aim was to prevent Christian infidels from dominating the Muslim believers and thus perceived his resistance as a form of a *jihad*.

Abd el-Kader was so successful in his endeavour that even the French acknowledged his political authority when both factions signed the Treaty of Tafna in 1837. By this time, the land under the emir's control included much of the west and centre of Algeria while the French only occupied Algiers and the coast. However, two years later, the French under the leadership of Marshal Bugeaud defected on the treaty resulting in Abd el-Kader launching a *jihad* against the French. The ensuing war would last for the next eight years before the French, reverting to terrorist tactics and brutal repression, would defeat the emir who eventually surrendered and was sent into exile in 1847. Incidentally, this event would foreshadow another war between the French and the Algerians more than a century later where the independence of the locals would be at stake.

After their victory, the French occupiers started the process of systematic colonisation of Algeria through ‘disinheriting and disorienting the colonized’ (Naylor, 2000: 7). Overnight, the once prosperous Muslim population found themselves as second-class citizens thoroughly dispossessed of their land. An influx of European settlers resulted in more land being taken away from the local populace and being given to the newcomers. McKenna (2011: 66) points out that ‘there was a relative absence of well-established native mediators between the French rulers and the mass population. At the same time there was an ever-growing French settler population (the colons, also known as *pieds noirs*) which demanded the privileges of a ruling minority in the name of French democracy. In addition to the ever-growing number of French settlers in Algeria, European hegemony began to appear in all sectors of the Algerian society including the political, economic and even the religious spheres. The relegation of the Arab population as second- class citizens caused a major disruption in Algerian culture and society while at the same time their *mode de vie* slowly disintegrated. For instance, the local tribes who relied on land for their subsistence had only 10 per cent of the land by the end of the 19th century whereas the settlers occupied almost 1 million hectares of land. The French government possessed 6 million hectares by 1919 (Lowi, 2009: 51). In turn, Algerians who had lost their lands were left with no option but to work on the settlers’ farms as wage labourers.

Discrimination against the locals extended to other realms such as the political, legal, fiscal, juridical and civil. The colonisers effected an institutionalised system of class discrimination where the Jews were classified as the best among the locals while the Berbers were considered slightly superior than their Arab counterparts. Algerians were considered French subjects rather than citizens and whoever wanted to acquire French citizenship had to renounce their Muslim civil status and accept to live under the settler’s law instead of Islamic law. Unsurprisingly, for many Algerians this was equivocal to apostasy and many preferred to maintain their second-class political and societal status (Ruedy, 1992: 75-76). The objective of this discriminatory system was not only to assert the occupier’s superiority over the colonised but also to create division among the locals in order to intensify social conflicts. In this regard, this generated a divide and rule situation that allowed for a more effective way of governing the populace (Lowi, 2009: 52). McKenna (2011: 66) characterises the pattern of rule of the French from the time of conquest until independence as ‘a tradition of violence and mutual incomprehension between the rulers and the ruled’. The machinery of

colonisation had a detrimental effect on the Algerians, affecting them psychologically, physically and personally. In short, according to Franz Fanon (cited in Naylor, 2000: 7), the trauma inflicted by the French on the Algerians was a 'massive psychoexistential complex' resulting in a feeling of non-existence.

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French political thinker, acknowledged that the unwarranted system of colonisation perpetrated by the French in Algeria had a negative effect as it 'made Muslim society more barbaric than it was before the French arrived' (McKenna, 2011: 66). Furthermore, he presciently noted that should the French not change their method, it would result in a war between the colonisers and the colonised. Nonetheless, the occupiers, disregarding any advice concerning their method of rule, continued their process of assimilating Algerians into the French culture while discriminating against those who were obstinate towards embracing their culture. This system of systematic colonisation by the French displays the characteristics of an anti-dialogical theory of action which consisted of the divide and rule method, the manipulation of the colonisers over the colonised and of cultural invasion (Freire, 2000:138-167).

In continually maintaining discrimination and injustices combine with forced repression, the colonisers aimed to dehumanise the colonised and propel the latter into a state of disparagement. However, continued grievances and injustices eventually promote a sense of fatalism within the population resulting in a violent reaction on their part. Freire (2000: 49) justifies this violent response on the part of the colonised as follows,

In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception...must become the motivating force for liberating action...The oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves.

Eventually, the largely marginalised population of Algeria realised the reality of oppression and began to conscientize themselves to the perception of liberating themselves from the yoke of their oppressors. Slowly, nationalist aspirations began to spread among the Muslim Algerian population from both within the country and abroad. These included the assimilationists (those who were exposed to French education), the Muslim reformers (those who were inspired by the religious Salafi movement of Muhammad Abduh in Egypt) and the proletarians (those who belonged to a movement of Algerian workers in France) (McKenna,

2011: 69). This oppressive system of colonial abuse by the French that enforced the ideology of European superiority vis-à-vis native inferiority had its parallels in other oppressive colonial systems on the continent like Kenya, Rhodesia and South Africa at the time. Akin to these systems, there was little room for peaceful revolution and the only viable solution for the oppressed to seek their right of self-determination was through organized violence. It is against this backdrop that the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN – National Liberation Front) was formed in 1954. Its aim was to embody the Algerian's peoples struggle with the ultimate aim of fighting for the liberation of its people. Thus, more than a century after the French defeated the Ottoman rulers and subdued the locals, they faced another greater challenge – the war for Algeria's independence.

5.3 The War of Independence and the Birth of Modern Algeria

The war of independence commenced on the 31st October 1954 when the FLN, whose objective was to restore an autonomous Algerian state based on social democracy within an Islamic paradigm and equal citizenship for all Algerians, launched its first attacks in the Aures Mountains and Batna. To achieve their goal, the FLN had two main weapons in their arsenal, namely, guerrilla warfare within Algeria and diplomatic action abroad especially at the United Nations (McKenna, 2011: 71). Despite the initial repression by the French military on the members of the FLN after the first assault, the revolution soon gained impetus and spread throughout the whole region. In terms of tactics, the FLN resorted to direct attacks against the French military, assassinations, economic sabotage and intimidation of opponents within the Muslim and European communities (Stone, 1997: 37). Alarmed by the increase of violence and the intensity of the uprising, the French National Assembly declared a state of emergency soon after the war began, initially in certain regions that were most affected and later over the whole country.

Despite the revolution, France remained obstinate about defending its colonial conquest as encapsulated in the words of François Mitterrand, who was the Interior minister at the time, 'Algeria is France, because Algerian departments are departments of the French Republic' (cited in Naylor, 2000: 18). It was this prevailing perception that caused the French government to increase its effort to retain Algeria at all cost as it deployed a French army of about 500, 000 troops to its colony. Meanwhile, unable to maintain its hegemony in the other regions of northern Maghreb, the French government decided to grant both Tunisia and Morocco full independence in 1956 (McKenna, 2011: 72). This enabled the French to

concentrate solely on ‘French’ Algeria since ‘to abandon Algeria is to condemn France to decadence’ (Soustelle, 1957:69). The prominence of the situation in Algeria was such that it bore a direct influence on the course of politics and government in France. In addition to combatting the FLN and nationalists, the French government also had to deal with the *pieds noirs* (colons) who became increasingly concerned that an independent Algeria meant that they would lose their elitist position and protection from the French government. It is imperative to consider the Algerian war of independence not solely in terms of a coloniser (French) against the colonised (Algerians Muslim) since it encompassed a more conglomerate conflict

between the *pieds noirs* (Algerians of French descent) who wanted to remain in their native land under French protection, and the indigenous Muslims, who demanded initially an end to their second-class status...the war also involved feuds and disputes between rival Muslims and between the *pieds noirs* and the French authorities (Stone, 1997: 37).

Faced with an increasingly problematic situation regarding Algeria’s right to self-determination, president de Gaulle conducted secret negotiations with the FLN in view of establishing a referendum as a first step for Algeria to achieve sovereignty. On 18 March 1962, both the French government and the FLN leadership signed a final cease-fire at Evian. After eight years of war in which thousands lost their lives, the Evian Accords officially ended 130 years of colonial rule by the French in Algeria and the FLN was recognised as the only representative of the people of Algeria. The referendum occurred on the 1st July 1962. When 91 per cent of the 6.5 million electorate voted in favour of self-governance, Algeria finally became independent and the FLN party ascended to power.

5.4 The Rise and Decline of the FLN

5.4.1 Ben Bella Era

Ahmed Ben Bella became the first head of state of post-independent Algeria in September 1962. One of the consequences of the eight-year war of independence was the mass migration of at least 90 per cent of the French settlers back to their native country. They consisted of mostly the working class such as teachers, doctors, engineers and skilled workers. The primary task of Ben Bella and his newly appointed government was to reconstruct an Algeria that had become ‘overwhelmingly disoriented, bewildered, displaced and hopelessly ill-equipped for the task ahead’ (Stone, 1997: 42). This would require a threefold feature of 1) creating a peaceful country, 2) gaining the trust of the populace in order to consolidate power and 3) rebuilding the country’s economy (Lowi, 2009:76).

With regard to the reconstruction of the economy, the new government remained faithful to its political rhetoric before independence and proceeded to veer the Algerian economy towards socialism. While in theory the endeavour appeared feasible, in practice the task was more challenging. The major obstacle encountered by the leadership was that the previous administrative system was both complex and powerful. Not only was it modelled after the French public administration but it also comprised of strongly assimilated tribal alliances (Talahite, 2008: 53). Despite this impasse, Ben Bella and his leadership incorporated socialist features within the system (Werenfels, 2007:37). Yet, as Tlemcani (1986: 91) pertinently notes, 'the repressive colonial state apparatus inherited by [the government] was to be maintained and modernized but not smashed'. This would prove to be a costly mistake on the part of the government as for the next three years of Ben Bella's rule, the country was plunged in an economic crisis.

An upsurge in unemployment forced many Muslim Algerians to leave the country to seek for working opportunities in Europe and other places. With the decline of the Algerian economy, its leaders had to rely on foreign aid donations from France, the Soviet Union and some Arab countries. One of the contributing factors towards the failure of Ben Bella to address the economic decline stemmed from the political power struggle prevalent within the ruling party. In the immediate aftermath of independence, the once unified FLN, which had defeated the French colonisers, began to show fissures as members placed personal ambitions over the rebuilding of an Algerian state on the brink of failure. Furthermore, the combination of Ben Bella's inconsistent style of political leadership and poor administrative record resulted in further dissension within the party. He grew increasingly paranoid as he 'felt threatened not only by those whom he had alienated in his seizure of power, but also by those who had helped him take power' (Yefsah, 1990: 112). Ben Bella gradually removed the members of the top echelons of the FLN so that within a short period of time he was head of state, head of government, secretary-general of the ruling party and chief of the army at the same time (Lowi, 2009: 79).

In an effort to consolidate his power, Ben Bella had envisaged reducing the influence of the military in politics and replacing his closest ally, the minister of defence – Colonel Houari Boumedienne. This proved to be Ben Bella's final mistake as on the 19th of June 1965, he was usurped through a bloodless coup and was later sent to prison. After successfully

carrying out Algeria's first postcolonial coup d'état, Houari Boumedienne took control of the government and became the new head of state.

5.4.2 The Boumedienne Era

As head of government, Boumedienne almost immediately set out to undo the political institutions and systems that were put in place by his predecessor. Meanwhile, Boumedienne retained certain provisions put forth by Ben Bella in the 1963 Constitution of Algeria which stated that 'Algeria was a socialist state, Arabic the official language, Islam the official religion, and the FLN the sole legal party' (Lowi, 2009:80). In this regard, it can be argued that one of the legacies of former president Ben Bella is the adoption of authoritarianism within Algerian politics as it manifested itself in the form of the exclusive single party rule of the FLN. Furthermore, if the war of independence was the blueprint for the participation of the army in the political sector, then the events of the 1965 coup led to a more direct involvement of the military in politics (Werenfels, 2007:35). Boumedienne dissolved parliament, suspended the constitution and established a Council of the Revolution as the main political body regulating government. Notwithstanding the fact that Boumedienne assumed power through a coup, the former head of the military wing of the FLN still maintained the same legitimate authority he possessed during the war of independence in the eyes of the people. This legitimacy arose from the fact that the post-independent political regime installed by Ben Bella assumed its legitimacy through the national struggle for the liberation of Algeria (Adamson, 2004: 26).

In the economic sphere, Boumedienne introduced some new policies advocating a break from the vision of his predecessor. In order to allow the state to take control of its natural resources and reduce its dependence on foreign aid, the government introduced new economic policies with the threefold objectives of rapid large-scale industrialisation, nationalisation and land redistribution (Stone, 1997: 87). The government resolved to concretize their new plan and by 1972, most sectors of the economy, including the most important ones of hydrocarbon and oil, had been nationalized. The revenues gathered from oil, which had become the primary commodity export, enabled the government to establish new projects such as 'provision of extensive social insurance: free, universal education and health care, subsidized foodstuffs and public transportation...and free housing' (Lowi, 2009: 83). The vision of establishing a socialist economy gradually became a practical reality through the development of heavy

industry and human capital including the instituting of numerous public enterprises and state-owned farms (Meliani, Aghrout & Ammari, 2004: 93). Yet, focusing solely on establishing large-scale industries meant that the non-industrial sector such as the agricultural sector *inter alia* was neglected (Werenfels, 2007:39). According to Boumedienne, this was not an oversight but rather a *sequitur* from the argument that the revenues from oil contribute towards creating a strong economic infrastructure that solidifies heavy industries that in turn provide industrial support for agricultural productivity. In short, Boumedienne demonstrates his logic when he notes that ‘heavy industry will be the locomotive which will draw behind it, agriculture, light industry, and other carriages (on the railroad) of our economic life’ (cited in Tlemcani, 1986: 113).

As regards land redistribution, it did not accrue the same benefits for the people as the nationalisation and industrialisation processes. Instead, the authoritarian characteristic of Boumedienne and his government translated into the regime having monopoly over land redistribution. Following from its neglect of the agricultural sector, the government failed to distribute fecund land to the agricultural peasants in rural areas. Instead, land was reallocated along hierarchal lines with former militants, allies and the regime’s friends benefiting the most, thus reinforcing the bureaucratic and military elitist characteristic of the regime. This system, as Lowi (2009: 84) aptly observes, ‘reinforced clientelism, which in turn bolstered the already strong collegial networks and regional ties that had carried over from the colonial period’. Consequently, there was a mass exodus of people moving from rural to urban areas in search of employment opportunities in the industries. While this situation had a positive effect in economic terms as the Algerian GDP grew at a rate of over 6.8 per cent per year (World Bank, 1982; 1990), the increasing population growth in urban areas contributed towards ‘housing shortages, rising unemployment and social discontent’ (Lowi, 2009:84).

By the time of his death in 1978, Boumedienne had transformed Algeria into a socialist model with a healthier economy than during his predecessor’s time. One of his legacies would be the institution of the 1976 National Charter that would later become the basis of the new constitution adopted the same year. The 1976 constitution retained certain provisions of the previous one but reiterated the position of Islam as the official religion of the state, the mode of government as republican, the basic rights of freedom of expression and equal rights of women amongst others (Le Sueur, 2010: 29). In short, while Algeria enjoyed a period of relative economic growth during the Boumedienne era, the implementation of his reforms

had opened a social and economic lacuna between the bourgeoisies and the masses (Naylor, 2000:123).

5.4.3 Chadli Benjedid Era

In 1979, Colonel Chadli Benjedid succeeded Boumedienne after he was chosen by the military leadership over two other popular candidates. The first candidate was Mohammed Yahiaoui who was the coordinator of the FLN and the prime choice of the radical socialists. Abdelaziz Bouteflika who held the position of foreign minister in the previous government was the second candidate. Ironically, the latter went into exile after his defeat and returned twenty years later to rule the country at the request of the military. The senior military leadership perceived Chadli as a compromise candidate and chose him for two reasons. Firstly, in selecting a former military person, there was the surety of the dominance of the military within the country's politics. Secondly, the fact that Chadli was also a FLN member, the 'symbolic role of the party was acknowledged' (Lowi, 2009: 102). Hence, in the three regimes of post-independent Algeria, there was an increasing hegemonic influence of the military.

Algerians often referred to the period during Boumedienne's rule as one of the 'golden age' (Meliani et al., 2004: 92) due to the social and economic development whereas Chadli's era is referred to as the '*décennie noire*' (black decade). During the reign of Chadli, the challenges that were present in the Boumedienne years such as unemployment and lack of housing grew more challenging due to the political failure of the Chadli regime. A major catalyst propelling the crisis within the Algerian economy was the plummeting prices of oil in 1986 resulting in re-evaluation of the socialist paradigm advocated by the two previous heads of state. The dependence of Algeria's economy on hydrocarbon and oil revenues at the expense of other sectors spelt that the economy was slowly deteriorating. In addition to poor implementation of policies and a failure of the industrialisation process, other reasons for the failure of the Chadli regime included: a high level of corruption within government, an ever-growing level of unemployment, an increasing housing crisis, a rapid decline in the Algerian economy and a lack of political competition against the ruling party (Barka, 2011: 102).

People who had hitherto relied on the state for provisions and benefits were left without state welfare resulting in a growing opposition to the ruling party. Despite its continuous reaffirmation of change within its rhetoric, the FLN government failed to alleviate the

situation of the people. After three decades of rule, the FLN had only managed to embody an authoritarian-bureaucratic system that saw the suppression of other political opponents and the absence of free elections. Converting Algeria into a one-party state through the justification of being the only legitimate party due to its struggle accolades, the FLN struggled to achieve its objectives it promised after independence. Furthermore, the FLN began alienating itself from the middle class (who had been the hardest hit from the economic crisis) comprising mostly of the youth. The drift between the ruling party and the masses widened as the Algerians became more frustrated with the political and social grievances exerted upon them by the ruling party. Suddenly, the FLN, which few decades earlier had struggled so hard to defeat the French colonisers had eventually followed in their footsteps. This phenomenon is reminiscent of Paulo Freire's prescient warning:

Many of the oppressed who directly or indirectly participate in revolution intend—conditioned by the myths of the old order—to make it their private revolution. The shadow of their former oppressor is still cast over them...In their struggle the oppressed find in the oppressor their model of "manhood" (Freire, 2000:46).

The accumulated grievances of the people meant that it was only a matter of time before they themselves would openly express their discontents towards the ruling party. The stage was set for a confrontation between the government and the people and it arrived in the form of a public demonstration in October 1988. The protests began as a demonstration by people who felt marginalized by the current regime and within four days, it turned into a riot. Despite the massive suppression of the protesters by security forces, the government had little choice but to listen to the voice of the people. Within days, Chadli initiated a process of liberalisation when he introduced political pluralism which allowed the organisation of other political parties, thus officially ending the FLN monopoly of power (Naylor, 2000:164). After a new constitution was adopted in 1989 allowing for the public participation of opposition political parties, Chadli authorised multi-party elections throughout the country and scheduled the first democratic election in Algeria.

5.5 The rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

The 1988 October riots (also referred to as Black October) signalled a new dawn in the Algerian political scenery as Islamism emerged as an alternative to the ideology purported by the FLN. After the socialist approach endorsed by the FLN resulted in failure in the economic and social domain, the majority of the population were left disillusioned and placed the blame

solely on the FLN. The Islamists capitalised on the failures of the ruling party and seized the opportunity to enter into the political domain by attending to the grievances of the people. They established 'food markets and religious schools, invested in mosques and provide cheap services and food' to the Algerian population (Borka, 2012: 103). The youth who were the hardest hit by unemployment became the primary target of those Islamists. The party also attracted to its ranks the unemployed, Arabic teachers, merchants who were opposed to state socialism, engineers, jewellers, former discontented members of the FLN and a few intellectual (Zoubir, 1993: 94). Gradually the Islamists set out to build a rapport with the people by attending to their grievances in view to obtaining the support and legitimation of the people.

Although the FLN had claimed to be an Islamist party since its inception, Islam never influenced any decision made by the leaders as it remained confined either to the cultural domain or on the political periphery (Kepel, 2002: 163). Thus, when the Western economic method adopted by the FLN failed dismally, the Islamists had little problem in convincing the people that a radical change was required; a change where Algeria would return to its Islamic roots. The Islamists, interpreting the text of the Quran to fit their messages, proposed that the solution to the problem of the people was to establish an Islamic state of Algeria ruled by a religious government guided by *Sharia*. It is against this background that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS – Front Islamique du Salut) emerged on the Algerian scene as a political party under the guidance of Abassi Mandani and Ali Belhadj. The FIS soon became a legal political party and won a resounding victory at the 1990 municipal elections. Frederic Volpi (2009: 132) posits that the success of FIS as a political party can be attributed to

profitant pleinement de l'effet de nouveauté, du manque de compétition politique organisée dans la sphère religieuse, de la lenteur de la mobilisation des autres partis politiques, du réseau des mosques indépendantes, et jouant sur l'impression très répandue que les acteurs islamiques ont directement contraint le régime à faire des concessions démocratiques. [Fully benefiting from the novelty effect, the lack of political competition from other religious parties, the tardiness of other political parties to mobilise, the network of independent mosques and capitalising on the widespread impression that the Islamists were directly responsible for pressuring the regime into making democratic concessions]

The momentum the FIS obtained from their small victory continued into the general elections a year later. With their newly found stimulus, the FIS continued to rally the support of the people through its efficient social services and political rhetoric. The FLN realising the threat

posed by their main opposition party, started to repress the FIS supporters that were organising protests and demonstrations through the country in a bid to challenge the government. A few months prior to the general elections, the military leadership declared a state of emergency because of the fierce resistance by the FIS supporters and members. This resulted in the arrest of numerous FIS members, amongst whom were its leaders Mandani and Belhadj (Volpi, 2003:50). Opposition parties including the FIS and other secular parties began doubting the validity of the so-called democratic transition instituted by the FLN and began searching for alternative political options. Despite the fact that some executive members of the FIS encouraged for an end to the political participation with preference for other means of political struggle, Abdelkader Hachani who was the interim leader, arbitrated that the party continues in its campaign through the proper political and legal channels. He believed that 'the political legitimacy gained through the ballot box was the best insurance the FIS could get at the time' (Hachani cited in Volpi, 2003:51).

Regaining its confidence, the FIS re-launched its electoral campaign. Hachani's decision proved accurate, as the FIS emerged victorious in the first round of the general elections triggering surprise among many analysts and observers. President Chadli and his leadership anticipated a close contest between the FLN and the FIS but regretted their decision for political democratisation when the ballots were finally counted. Late in the evening of 26 December 1991, the results were made official: out of the 231 contested seats in the national assembly (430 in total), the FIS won 188, the FFS (Socialist Forces Front) which was the main democratic opposition party captured 25 and the FLN came third with 15 seats (Le Sueur, 2010: 51; Volpi, 2003:52). Not only did the FIS win by a huge margin but they won by majority which meant that they would have the power to change the constitution when they came into power.

Hence, the conversion of Algeria into an Islamic state was within reach of the FIS party. If the defeat in the municipal elections proved a waking call for the FLN, then the result of general elections was a humiliating calamity for the ruling party. To exacerbate matters, the fact that the new elections law stated that only the two parties with the most votes from the first round were eligible to contest in the next round, the FLN did not qualify to stand as a candidate in the next round of elections. After almost three decades in power, it appeared that the FLN's leading role in Algeria's politics ended with the people looking forward to change.

5.6 The Military Coup and The Decline of the FIS

Accepting defeat would be difficult, especially if the one ruling party has been in power for as long as the FLN had been in the epicentre of politics in Algeria. The military, which had removed itself from the political arena in the wake of Chadli's political pluralism process of 1989, had earlier issued a warning that it would not allow any party to use the democratic process as a means to put an end to democracy in Algeria (Zoubir, 1993: 97). Meanwhile, Chadli conceded defeat and was prepared to work with the leadership of the FIS. By contrast, the military realised that victory for the Islamist party in the second round was imminent which signalled an end of the republic and decided to deliver on their prior threat. On the 11th of January 1992, the military annulled the second round of legislative elections, forced President Chadli Bendjedid to resign, dissolved the FIS and suppressed its members. After the coup, the military established a High Committee of State (HCE – *Haut Comité D'État*) to rule the country with Mohammed Boudiaf – a veteran of the war of independence who had returned to the country after 28 years in exile – as its head. The military continued its mission to dissolve the FIS as it unleashed a wave of suppression against its members that included mass arrests, confinement in camps in the Sahara and ill-treatment of the prisoners (Joffé, 2012: 132).

Five months after he was chosen as leader of the country, Boudiaf was assassinated by one of his own guards. Some scholars such as Benjamin Stora (2001:17) delineate this incident as the starting point of the Algerian civil war. From that point onwards, the military would increase its efforts in suppressing the Islamists and their supporters, contributing towards the radicalisation of the affected Muslim population (Joffé, 2012: 132). This context compelled the FIS to establish an armed wing under the name of the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA – *Mouvement Islamique Armé*) which would later become the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS – *Armée Islamique du Salut*) (Naylor, 2000: 336). Furthermore, the situation also allowed violent Salafi-Jihadist groups to enter the playing field with the most infamous amongst them being the Armed Islamic Group (GIA – *Groupements Islamique Armé*).

5.7 Opportunity Seized: Thus Enters the GIA

Although the 1992 military coup and the subsequent suppression of Islamists by the army are perceived as catalysts for the emergence of jihadist groups such as the GIA on the Algerian scene, their antecedents can be traced back to an earlier time, that is, a decade earlier to be precise. In 1982, Mustafa Bouyali formed a militant Salafist inspired association known as

the Armed Algerian Islamic Movement (MAIA – *Mouvement Algérien Islamique Armé*) in order to launch *jihad* against the state and security forces in retaliation for the killing of his brother (Volpi, 2003: 146). Bouyali (who was incidentally a FLN veteran of the War of Independence) and his followers managed to mount spectacular attacks against the regime between 1982 and 1987 (Moussaoui, 1994: 1324–25). After the death of Bouyali at the hands of security forces in 1987, many of his followers were arrested but later released in 1989. Upon their release, some followers (such as Belhadj) became members or co-founders of Islamists movements while others pledged allegiance to the armed jihadist groups in the period after the military-backed coup (Joffé, 2012: 124; Kepel, 1995:122). Lowi (2005:226) spotlights the influence of Bouyali on the jihadist groups of the post-coup period when she notes that his movement was ‘the first guerrilla formation in the history of independent Algeria and the precursor to the armed Islamist groups of the 1990s’.

5.7.1 GIA: Formation and Tactics

In addition to the Bouyali influence, there were other factors contributing towards the formation of the GIA. Firstly, the returning jihadist fighters from the war in Afghanistan, often referred to as the ‘Algerian Afghans’, played a pivotal role within the GIA cadre. Faced with unemployment and lack of work opportunities upon their return, the Algerian Afghans soon became potential recruits of the armed Islamists movements. Secondly, after their release from prisons, numerous former members and supporters of the FIS who underwent radicalisation while in prison, further bolstered the ranks of the GIA. Thirdly, since the GIA operated primarily in the urban areas of Algeria, many recruits migrated from the countryside to join the armed group (Lowi, 2009: 131-132). It is important to note that in the beginning, the GIA consisted of splintering jihadist cells that operated distinctly of each other. It would only be later that they would be unified under the command of a single leader. Concerning the composition of the GIA, it comprised of young unemployed males mostly under 25 years of age whilst there were those who were older albeit with criminal experience. Financially, the group received funds from the Algerian diaspora living in Europe and North America who sympathized with their cause and at other times through criminal activities such as bank robberies (Stone, 1997:189).

In relation to its tactics, the objectives of the GIA was diametrically opposed to those of the MIA or the AIS who were prepared to negotiate with the government in their bid to ascend to

power. The GIA for its part rejected any means of dialogue or compromise with the Algerian government in its bid to transform Algeria into an Islamic state ruled by *sharia*. To attain these objectives, the GIA preferred ‘short-term spectacular terrorist attacks’ that extended to suicide bombing and transnational terrorism (Stone, 1997: 184). Another tenet that separated the GIA from other armed groups such as the MIA or the AIS is the group’s adoption of violence and ‘sweeping use of *takfir*’ (Rudolph, 2008: 126) where the latter included any person who did not participate in the fight against the government. While the GIA and the MIA shared the same goal of Islamising Algeria, their means to achieving that end differed radically.

The commonality between the GIA and AIS has ignited a form of debate amongst scholars concerning the relationship between the two. Some scholars in line with Stone (1997: 184, 188) view the GIA’s role as complementary to the MIA and the AIS. They argue that the relationship between the two groups oscillated between hostility and cooperation as at one stage the GIA and the AIS attempted to assimilate. By contrast, other scholars such as Kepel (2002: 265), posit that the AIS was established as a competitor to the GIA in order to recruit individuals who were dismayed with the moderate stance of the MIA but wanted to participate in the *jihad* against the government. Furthermore, the formation of the AIS was more of a political weapon for the FIS to gain leverage against the government on the negotiation table while this was not the case for the GIA. In adopting this latter line of argument, it can be argued that the tactics and objectives of the GIA and the AIS were too different for there to exist any chance of merger between the two.

5.7.2 GIA: Leadership and attacks

As noted in the previous subsection, in the aftermath of the military coup, the GIA consisted of loosely formed extremist cells without a common leader. These conglomerate groups of jihadist managed to carry out significant attacks against the military and security forces in different regions of Algeria. One of these attacks is often associated as the one that initiated the civil war. It occurred in 1992 in Algiers and resulted in the death of six police officers (Joffé, 2012: 132). The heterogeneous jihadist groups realised that these assaults were effective but limited. The existing power struggle among the different leaders of the cells proved difficult to foster any kind of unity among the jihadist fighters. Eventually, the

Algerian extremists evolved and amalgamated under one leader or emir (the Arabic term designating a prince) and became known as the GIA.

Abdelhaq Layada became the first emir of the newly unified GIA in 1992. Immediately, he drew up the statutes of the GIA and disseminated the rules of conduct for its members. He envisaged the unity of the GIA based on the Salafist principle of 'the way of orthodox Sunni Islam as the pious ancestors understood it' (Layada cited in Kepel, 2002: 261). He further perceived the role of GIA as the new emissary of Islamism in Algeria since the defeat of the FIS at the hands of the military. Hence, the GIA embarked on its cycle of violence with the aim of neutralising their opponents who comprised of the government, its officials and any person who had a link with the enemy. As a result, what followed was a succession of assassinations of not only government officials but also intellectuals who were also perceived as the enemy since they embodied the image of the French-speaking intellectuals. However, one of the characteristics shared among the GIA leaders was that their reign was usually short as they would either be arrested or killed by the security forces within months or a few years after they assumed power. Layada, the first emir of the GIA was arrested in May 1993 and thus ended his time at the helm of the armed group.

Mourar Si Ahmed (also known as Djafar al Afghani) succeeded Layada as new leader of the GIA. Under his leadership, there was an exacerbation of violence and the GIA expanded its support base to outside of Algeria. Abroad, a weekly paper *Al-Ansar* was published in London providing publicity and doctrinal justification for the actions of the GIA resulting in amassed support for the group among the worldwide Salafist communities (Kepel, 2002: 263). On the local front, the GIA's support base increased as the group gradually encompassed other factions which launched attacks in the name of the GIA. This is exemplified in the abduction and killing of two French surveyors in Sidi Bel Abbes by extremists affiliated with the GIA. This incident also marked the beginning of the GIA's campaign of attacks against foreign nationals. In October 1993, the group issued an ultimatum to foreign nationals by giving a letter to a hostage kidnapped from the French consulate shortly before her release with the following words, 'we are giving you one month [to leave the country]. Anyone who exceeds that period will be responsible for his own sudden death. There will be no kidnapping and it will be more violent than Egypt' (Stone, 1997: 195).

Exactly two months later, the GIA actualised their threats when twelve Croats were killed in the most brutal manner – some were beaten to death while others had their throats slit with their hands tied behind their backs. Even Algerians were not spared as exemplified in the killing of Mohammed Bouslimani who was a prominent figure of the Hamas party. His crime was that he refused to issue a *fatwa* supporting the tactics of the GIA. The ferocity of the violence was unrelenting since the GIA interpreted their *jihad* by ‘killing and dispersing all those who fight against Allah and his prophet’ (Si Ahmed cited in Willis, 1996: 285); whether those enemies were foreign nationals or local Algerians. After an encounter with the security forces near Algiers, Si Ahmed was killed in February 1994.

In the wake of the death Si Ahmed, Cherif Gousmi (whose *nom de guerre* was Abdullah Ahmed) was chosen as the emir of the GIA. Despite his short reign as GIA leader, lasting until September 1994, he achieved the feat of unifying more factions into the GIA which included some of the original members of the FIS such as its former provisional leader Mohammed Said (Stone, 1997: 188). He was also the most influential leader of the GIA as he had both militant experience (national and international) and religious credentials (he was an Imam and a former local representative of the FIS). In July 1994, the group killed seven Italian sailors and kidnapped the Yemeni and Oman ambassadors to Algeria whom they later released. As a means to terrorise the population and mount pressure on the government, the GIA adjusted its *modus operandi* by detonating bombs in and around the capital Algiers. Gousmi had a clear message for the government and the ‘infidels’: the GIA would not stop its relentless attacks on the *kufirs* until Algeria was an Islamic state run by an Islamic government through the *shari’a*. In short, this memorandum to the government was as simple as the slogan that accentuated its communiqué: ‘No Agreement, No Truce, No Dialogue’ (Kepel, 2002: 266). However, akin to his predecessor, Gousmi met his end at the hands of the security forces in September 1994.

If his forerunner was the most efficacious leader, the new emir – Djamel Zitouni – could be labelled as the most visionary head of the GIA. He became the first emir who launched *jihad* on foreign soil. Two months after he was elected leader, in December 1994 four members of the GIA hijacked a French plane, Air France flight 8969 with 171 passengers and crew members, in an attempt to blow up the plane over the streets of Paris. When the aircraft stopped for refuelling at the airport in Marseilles, French commandos stormed the plane, eliminated the four jihadists and foiled the plan of the GIA. In response, the GIA praised the

hijackers for their courage and affirmed in its bulletin that ‘this operation is the start of a new phase which is the Martyrdom phase in which the enemy will be completely overwhelmed by the attacks’ (quoted in Kohlmann, 2007: 7). This event became a case study from which future extremists would learn from the mistakes of their antecedents. About seven years later, nineteen hijackers would accomplish what the GIA had planned to do; yet, the target would be the United States and not France.

Despite its initial failure with the foiled hijacking, the GIA intensified its attacks on French soil contrary to those who expected the initial failure to serve as deterrence. The GIA’s first casualties on French soil included 4 dead and more than 80 injured when it detonated a bomb at the Saint Michel-Notre Dame Metro station in Paris on the 25th of July 1995 (Le Sueur, 2010: 131). Two weeks later, a nail bomb at the Arc de Triomphe injured 17 people amongst whom were 11 tourists. Gunaratna (2002: 122) depicts the carnage of the GIA in France between the period of July and December 1995 thus, ‘the GIA detonated a further eight bombs in France, three of which went off in Paris metro stations, killing ten and injuring over 200 people’. The GIA was as relentless on the local scene as it was abroad in its *jihad*. In March 1995, a bomb exploded outside the police station in Algiers resulting in 40 fatalities (Stone, 1997: 193). During his time as leader of the GIA Zitouni had achieved some unprecedented feats such as initiating the *jihad* in France but he also committed some grave tactical mistakes resulting in a loss of legitimacy among many of the GIA members. The contributing factor to Zitouni’s decline was his indiscriminate attacks against government, foreigners and innocent Algerians alike. Slowly, many members of the GIA (including former FIS adherents) withdrew, distanced and even denounced the group.

In retaliation for the ‘betrayal’ of his former comrades, Zitouni coldly ordered reprisals against these infidels and their families. Among those who were captured and executed were Abdulrazaq Redjem and Mohammed Said. However, Zitouni’s final act that would seal his demise resulted from an attack that shocked even the most extremist fundamentalist. In March 1996, GIA militants raided a Trappist monastery in the village of Tibhirine and kidnapped seven monks. When the French government did not succumb to Zitouni’s demands, he ordered the killings of the monks (Le Sueur, 2012: 132-133; Kohlmann, 2007: 8-9). Soon afterwards, support for the GIA rapidly declined as it lost its legitimacy in the eyes of its members, the public and its recruitment image was dealt a crippling blow from which it would not recover. Furthermore, the editors of *Al-Ansar* in London suspended the bulletin

and withdrew their support from Zitouni. The latter was eventually denounced by his members and in July 1996, he was ambushed and shot dead by dissident members of the GIA (Kohlmann, 2007: 9).

The unity that previous emirs had so diligently aimed to achieve fragmented due to the actions of Zitouni. His eventual killing led to further infighting among the GIA members and there was no suitable candidate to take over the group. With the shortage of aspirants to fill the leadership vacuum, one of the junior members of Zitouni's Shura council, Antar Zouabri advanced to take over the rule of the GIA. What he lacked in practical experience, he tried to commensurate with blind aggression. Consequently, he further alienated the group's 'own membership and fellow Islamists in North Africa' (Kohlmann, 2007: 10). Continuing in his predecessor's footsteps, Zouabri extended the concept of *takfir* to the whole Muslim population of Algeria without any religious justifications. Kohlmann (2007: 11) aptly captures the plight of the most brutal extremist group in Algeria when he remarks that,

cast out by other mujahedeen, abandoned by many of its supporters, and targeted by both its "apostate" enemies and its own former Islamist allies, the GIA was no longer an effective or cohesive military force. The GIA was never officially dissolved, though by 2001, it had become largely defunct.

The last emir of the GIA was killed in February 2002 while involved in a clash with security forces. Zitouni's time at the head of the GIA 'had brought the Algerian jihad to its knees and his successor, Zouabri, finished it off altogether' (Kepel, 2002: 271). Although Al Qaeda who was formerly an ardent supporter of the GIA had withdrawn its support from the GIA in the wake of the deviation of Zitouni, it was still interested in the Algerian *jihad*. In the late 1990s, a group emerged on the Algerian militant landscape that adhered to Al Qaeda's ideology and objectives. Despondent with the GIA tactics and killings of innocent Muslims, the faction broke away to form its own group under the name of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC –*Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat*).

5.8 Out with the GIA and in with the GSPC

The GIA's unrivalled brutality coupled with its deviation from its original *raison d'être* were the main contributors towards the fragmentation of the jihadist group. Under the direction of former paratrooper and GIA commander Hassan Hattab (also known as Abu Hamza), a new splinter group was formed which adopted the name *Al-Jamaah al-Salafiyyah li-al-Dawah wal Qital* or the GSPC. In terms of its ideology, the newly formed group followed Jihadi-Salafism

in the aim of overthrowing the apostate Algerian regime through *jihad* and install in its place an Algerian Islamic state ruled by *shari'a*. As can be noted, the ideology is not a novel concept but similar to the one adhered to by the GIA. In fact, the GSPC stated in its first communiqué that it is 'a continuation of the Armed Islamic Group, following its ideology, before it deviated and went astray. Thus, [the GSPC] represents the genuine path that jihad has followed since its inception in Algeria.' (cited in Kohmann, 2007:13). The semblance that the GSPC is a mere replica of the GIA can be easily assumed were it not for the tactics espoused by its leader.

From its inception, the GSPC had clarified its twofold aim of 1) continuing the war against the government and 2) to extend the GSPC's operation beyond the Algerian border. As such, the GSPC was contending to undertake *jihad* on both a local and international level – reminiscence of Al Qaeda's tactic. To further delineate itself from the GIA, the GSPC emphatically emphasised that the *jihad* would be undertaken against security forces only and not civilians (Filiu, 2009: 220). The GSPC attracted new dissidents from the GIA, the FIS and members of other jihadist groups who were not willing to accept the government's truce of laying down their arms. As a result, the GSPC rapidly expanded into one of the most active jihadist group operating within Algeria and in Northern Africa.

5.8.1 The leadership of the GSPC: Hassan Hattab

As the first leader of the GSPC, Hassan Hattab's primary role was to rebuild the image of the Salafi-Jihadist movement in Algeria as it had been stained by the previous exploits of the GIA. To this end, Hattab tried to foster ties with other militant movements in Algeria and eventually took control of these groups. He also followed a Salafist ideology focusing attacks on military personnel only, though at times this would include executing civilians who were either informants or spies. Unlike the GIA, the GPSC would refrain from attacking innocent civilians or kidnapping women in order to turn them into sex slaves. Hattab was serious in his vision of reviving the local *jihad* against the government and set out to persuade those with the same foresight as him to join in with the GSPC. One of those targets was Mokthar Belmokthar, a former Afghan and GIA veteran, who brought to the GSPC his expertise in smuggling weapons and cigarettes between Algeria and the Sahel. Belmokthar would later become the leader of the Al Mourabitoun group responsible for attacks in Mali presently.

On the international arena, Hattab restored contacts with former GIA sympathisers who had returned to the Salafist movement in Europe and favoured the tactics and vision of the GSPC (Migaux, 2007: 312). One of the most notable attacks that occurred during time of Hattab's leadership was the kidnapping of 32 European tourists in February and March of 2003. Some scholars would indicate that the GSPC's commander, Amari Saifi, as a way to challenge Hattab, conducted the kidnappings (Filiu, 2009: 220). By that time, there was growing discontent towards the leader of the GSPC as his members perceived him as too moderate and therefore ineffectual in continuing the mission of the GSPC. As Kohlmann (2007:13) points out, during Hattab's tenure as leader the 'GSPC made no major achievements of note...nor did it launch the dramatic, inspiring military operations of previous eras'. In September 2003, after a meeting by the GSPC leadership, Hassan Hattab was disposed as leader and replaced by the more radical Nabil Sahrawi (also known as Abu Ibrahim Mustafa).

5.8.2 GSPC under Sahrawi

The election of Sahrawi who had close links with former Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden as he had trained in the Afghan camps prior to joining the GIA was an indication that the leadership wanted the GSPC to adopt a more global outlook. The new leader was resolute in attacking the apostates comprising of the Algerian government at home and the US and allies abroad. Before Sahrawi could actualise his new vision, he was killed by security forces in June 2004. After his death, another former GIA member, Abdelmalek Droukdel (who chose the moniker Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud) was chosen as the new emir of the GSPC and carried on with Sahrawi's plan. Within the GSPC, there was a struggle between focusing on the local *jihad* that consisted of overthrowing the FLN government and the global *jihad* that meant defeating the Far Enemy (Harmon, 2010: 15).

5.8.3 GSPC under Droukdel: The beginning of an Al Qaeda Alliance

The success of president Bouteflika's amnesty program for former jihadist fighters dealt a major blow to the recruiting capacity of the GSPC and further intensified the debate within the GSPC of local versus international *jihad*. The Iraq war initiated by the US and allies in 2003 provided the answer to that struggle. The US-led invasion provided the impetus for young recruits to join the GSPC in order to be trained and sent into battle in Iraq. The war in Iraq and the ensuing insurgency popularised the notion of *jihad* and soon the GSPC was inundated with volunteers from around North Africa that included fighters from Libya,

Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia who were willing to help their brothers in Iraq. Similarly to the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets the war in Iraq 'became a magnet for thousands of activists in the Arab world and beyond' (Filiu, 2009:221).

Realising that this was the opportunity for the GSPC to establish itself on the global arena, Droukhal pursued closer relations with Al Qaeda by initiating conversation with Al Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda Iraq (Le Sueur, 2010: 155). Soon the contribution of Algerian jihadists of in Iraq became eminent as Saudi Arabia's intelligence would later indicate that 20 per cent of fighters in Al Qaeda Iraq were Algerians (Filiu, 2009: 222; Kohlmann, 2007: 17). The public endorsement of the kidnapping and execution of two Algerian diplomats in Bagdad by Al Qaeda Iraq in July 2005 had a positive impact on the rapprochement between the Al Qaeda affiliate and its North African counterpart. Despite its focus on international *jihad*, the GSPC had not lost sight of its local objective. In 2005, the group launched an attack on a military outpost in Mauritania killing 15 military personnel (Harmon, 2010: 16). Assuming Al Qaeda's tactics of attacking foreign targets, the GSPC bombed a bus carrying foreign employees of a US owned firm in 2006, killing the driver and injuring 6 employees (Filiu, 2009:223). Gradually, the GSPC adopted Al Qaeda's modus operandi in its denunciation of the amnesty offered by Bouteflika's government while targeting the Far Enemy such as France and the US and its ability to successfully execute manoeuvres outside the Algerian borders in Mauritania and Mali for instance.

A partnership between the GSPC and Al Qaeda grew increasing closer as both sides realised its importance and mutual benefit. GSPC saw this partnership as producing global exposure and legitimacy in the eyes of the worldwide Salafi-Jihadist movement. For Al Qaeda, it had a practical basis as it sought to access the widespread network of GSPC cells in Europe (Le Sueur, 2010:155). Hence, on the 11th of September 2006, Al Qaeda celebrated the fifth anniversary of its attacks on American soil with the announcement of the integration of GSPC into Al Qaeda. Four months after its official merger with Al Qaeda, the GSPC officially announced that it would from that time onwards be known as *Qaedat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Maghrib al-Islami* or Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This is a brief history of how AQIM came about in North Africa.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to situate the emergence of terrorism in Algeria from a historical perspective. Comprehending the emergence of this phenomenon requires an understanding of the factors that contributed towards the incubation of terrorism such as Algeria's colonial legacy and its socio-economic development from post-independence to pre-civil war period. To this end, the chapter analysed the Algerian war of independence and the political regimes that followed until the 1992 military coup. Then the chapter changed course as it focused on the emergence of religious terrorism within the Algerian environment. It achieved this goal by examining the formation, leadership and tactics of the two antecedents to AQIM, namely, the GIA and the GSPC. Albeit subtly, the chapter attempted to analyse the root causes of the Algerian conflict through the greed and grievance thesis as elaborated in chapter three and discovered that conflicts arise due to both economic and political grievance.

In the next chapter, the emergence of AQIM in Algeria and its expansion into North Africa will be examined. As such, the ideology, tactics and transformation of the group will be assessed through the crime-terror paradigm. The discussion initiated in previous chapters is distilled and is applied to the next chapter as it evaluates the central tenet of this study, which is about understanding the phenomenon of AQIM.

Chapter Six

From the Islamic State of Algeria to the Economic Caliphate of the Sahel

6.0 Introduction

Having established the historical antecedents of the situation that incubated the birth of terrorism in Algeria, this chapter investigates the transformation of the most infamous and sophisticated terror group that emerged in the aftermath of the civil war. The emergence of AQIM marked the beginning of transnational terrorism in both Algeria and the rest of Africa. This chapter, in an attempt to attain the objective of this study, seeks to ascertain an understanding of the phenomenon of AQIM. To this end, the chapter attempts to answer the question as to whether AQIM is a religious terrorist group that resorts to criminal activities for funding or if it has transformed into an organised crime group focused solely on economic gains and recourses to terror tactics to achieve this goal. As such, the origin and organisational structure of the group is examined. Furthermore, there is a brief assessment of the terrorist acts coupled with the profit-generated activities (such as kidnapping for ransom (KFR) and drug trafficking) conducted by the group. By the end of this chapter, it is hoped that the reader will have a more comprehensive understanding of the type of entity known as AQIM.

6.1 North Africa: Al Qaeda's Treasured Playground

Africa had long been the playground of Al Qaeda and its terrorist activities, even before its merger with the GSPC. In addition to the continent being the recipient of numerous attacks by the group, it had been the host of the group's former leader, Osama Bin Laden, for many years. Before his escape to Afghanistan in 1996 in the aftermath of discovering a plot to have him arrested, Bin Laden spent many years in Sudan training future jihadists and planning attacks on US interests. It would take another two years, however, before Al Qaeda carried out its first major attack on African soil. On the 8th of August 1998, two Al Qaeda operatives drove a truck loaded with explosives into the US embassy in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi. The ensuing blast 'demolished a multi-story secretarial college, severely damaged the U.S. embassy, and the co-operative bank building' resulting in 4500 people injured and 213 fatalities (Gunaratna, 2002: 160-161). Concomitantly in Dar es Salaam, an Al Qaeda member performed another suicide mission by also detonating a truck outside the US embassy killing 11 people.

Prior to the 9/11 events, these two attacks would symbolise the serious threat and devastation that Al Qaeda posed to the African continent and the rest of the world. Despite its contacts with various jihadist group in North Africa, it was not until 2002 that Al Qaeda would make its presence felt in the region. On the 11th of April 2002, precisely seven months after 9/11, Tunisian Al Qaeda member Nizar Naouar conducted a truck bomb attack against the Al Ghriba synagogue on the Tunisian island of Jerba. Al Qaeda's first attack on North African soil claimed the lives of 21 tourists amongst whom 14 were German nationals (Guardian, 2002). It can be argued that the Tunisian attack was the inception of Al Qaeda terrorism in Northern Africa which would find its culmination in the merger between itself and the GSPC.

6.2 The Nascence of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

In commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the 11th of September 2006, Ayman Al-Zawahiri announced the official merger of the GSPC and Al Qaeda. Three days later, in an acknowledgement of the message of Zawahiri, the GSPC released its own communiqué affirming its allegiance to Al Qaeda and specifically to Sheikh Bin Laden,

we are glad to inform our Islamic nation and our Muslim brothers around the world about the great news which the mujahedeen have been waiting for... the news of the merging of the Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat in Algeria with Al-Qaeda... We have decided to swear bayat to Shaykh Usama Bin Laden and to continue our jihad in Algeria as soldiers under his command, for him to use us in the cause of Allah when and where he sees fit...(quoted in Kohlmann, 2007: 21).

In the subsequent months after this official amalgamation of the GSPC into Al Qaeda, the Algerian jihadists group continued to use its previous name on all its official documents and bulletins. After four months of careful consideration and consultations with Bin Laden, the GSPC finally changed its name to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The hiatus between the pledge of allegiance to the actual name change had led scholars to examine the relationship between AQIM and Al Qaeda more closely.

In terms of ideology, both terrorist groups subscribe to Salafi-jihadism that possesses an anti-Western perspective with the aim of establishing an Islamic caliphate ruled by a caliph under *shari'a*. Additionally, both groups have little tolerance for other forms of Islam and view violence as a justification or a duty in their quest to attain their goals. In 2014, Abdelmalek Droukdel reiterated AQIM's objectives by renewing the group's loyalty to Zawahiri when he pledged, 'an allegiance to *jihad* to liberate Muslim lands and affirm Islamic *shari'a* law in it

and bring back the Caliphate that is based on prophetic principles' (TRAC, 2014:1). However, the fact that both groups espouse a similar ideology is not equivocal to them having the same identity or even a close cooperative relationship (Liepman & Chivvis, 2013: 4).

Ab initio, AQIM displayed Al Qaeda's *modus operandi* such as 'high-profile coordinated attacks against symbolic targets, active use of the media and internet and investment in lengthy preparations and timing' (Mohamedou, 2011:3). Yet, AQIM had difficulties mutating from its GPSC identity into the Al Qaeda one due to its social and political environment. One of those problems was the fact that both organisations had a different 'far enemy'. For Al Qaeda it was the US while for AQIM the primary enemy was France. Liepman and Chivvis (2013: 4) interestingly highlight that it was not coincidental that Droukhal sought closer relations to Al Qaeda during the period when the latter's propaganda was directed against France. Another issue that spotlights the failure of AQIM to totally adopt Al Qaeda's identity relates to the composition of AQIM. In an interview with the New York Times in 2008, Droukhal admitted that the majority of members of this organisation were Islamists of Algerian nationality (Mekhennet et al., 2008: A1). These issues have led scholars to conclude that the GPSC's name change was merely a marketing strategy that the group utilised to gain more exposure in order to enlarge their pools of recruits.

After analysing AQIM media and internet propaganda messages, Sorriano (2011: 294) concludes that the GPSC exploited its merger with Al Qaeda to improve its image and elevate its profile since 'its leaders did not intend the merger to mark a drastic change in the group's existing strategies or objectives'. Harmon (2010: 16) echoes this statement when he notes that for the GPSC, the merger had more to do with survival than advancing local or global *jihad*. He further argues that,

besides the differences in name and rhetoric and the introduction of new tactics, including suicide bombings, the major changes in the Group's posture included its expansion into the Sahara-Sahel region and its drift into contraband and trafficking (Harmon, 2010: 5).

Regardless of the reasons behind the change of name, it appeared that the renaming had reinvigorated AQIM to attain its objective with earnest. The adoption of a new name propelled the group from a mere insurgency to a more flexible network organisation capable of imposing significant damage (Cristiani, 2013: 79). To examine the impact of the evolution

of AQIM within its political and social context, this dissertation now turns to analyse its operational structure.

6.2.1 AQIM: Operational Structures

The argument of scholars who purport that the merger had little impact on the restructuring of the previous operating method of the GSPC is supported when one examines the structures within which AQIM operates. Simply stated, AQIM had retained the previous structures and operations that its predecessor had put in place albeit with minor adjustments. Prior to its union with Al Qaeda, the GSPC divided its arena of operations, which included Algeria and certain parts of the Sahel, into nine geographical zones with an emir as the leader. In the aftermath of its emergence, AQIM set out to restructure these nine zones into four main *ktibas*¹¹ or branches divided into north, south, east and west.

The north/central section, formerly zones 1, 2 and 3 of the GSPC covers the capital Algiers and its suburbs, Kabyle and the east coast of Algeria. According to the ECOWAS Peace and Security Report (2013:2), this *katiba* was the most active of the four (as at 2013) as it comprised of the largest number of fighters ranging between 500 -800 men who planned their operations from the Aures mountain region. Conversely, the least active is the west *katiba*, previously GSPC's zone 4 and 8, consisting of the western part of Algeria that extends to Morocco and the south-western part of Algeria. Zones 5, 6 and 7 on the Eastern part of Algeria have been restructured into the East section that extends from the south of Tunisia, eastern part of Algeria to the north of Niger. This *katiba* also known as *Katibat Tariq ibn Zayyad* was established by Amira Saifi in 2003 but later came under the leadership of Yahia Abou Ammar Abid Hammadu (alias Abdel Hamid Abou Zeid) (Ecowas PSR, 2013: 2). This branch of AQIM under the guidance of Abou Zeid has evolved into one of the most 'terrorist' branches. In addition to the killing of two foreign hostages in 2009 and 2010 respectively, the commander of the *Katibat Tariq ibn Zayyad* was also reported to assist and train Boko Haram militants in Niger (Tanchum, 2012: 2).

The southern branch also known as *Katibat al-mulaththamin* whose emir is Khaled Abdul Abbas more commonly known to as Mokthar Belmokhtar, comprises of former zone 9 that

¹¹ The term *katiba* originates from the tradition of Islamic military where the army was divided into *katibas* (representing a battalion of approximately 300 soldiers), *sariyya* (squadron of less than 100 soldiers); *fassila* (a platoon) and *jema'a* (a group). Notwithstanding the GSPC and later AQIM, this structure was also adopted by the National Liberation Army during its guerrilla war against the French (Ecowas PSR, 2013: 8).

encompasses south-western Algeria, northern Mali and Mauritania (Ecowas PSR, 2013: 2). Contrasting the *katiba* of Abou Zeid whose primary operation is terrorist activities, this branch focuses on criminal activities such as smuggling of weapons, contraband and stolen vehicles (Botha, 2008: 49). This is due to the fact that its leader Belmokhtar is more influenced by monetary gain rather than purely terrorist activities. However, it is important to recall that Belmokhtar and his militants had been involved in terrorist attacks both during his time in the GSPC and in AQIM (Echeverria, 2012: 169). In recent times, due to the military pressure on AQIM militants in the central region, the southern *katiba* had superseded it to become the most active of the AQIM branches. Belmokhtar gradually became a pivotal player within AQIM as he formed important networks with different Arab and Tuaregs tribes in the Sahara region, particularly in Northern Mali (Bencherif, 2013:109).

While the decentralisation model of AQIM (where the leader of each region had his own autonomy) contributed positively towards it becoming the most active and feared jihadist group in the Sahel region, it also had some disadvantages of instigating a clash between the emir of the group and its commanders. One of the instances occurred when AQIM's emir Droukdal feared that Belmokhtar was growing too influential and had him replaced with the former head of the information committee Yahia Djouadi (Botha, 2008: 77). Anticipating that his life might be at risk, Belmokhtar retreated into Mali where he continued his exploits and established alliances. He eventually formed his own jihadi group in 2012 called the Masked Brigade which would later change its name into *Al Mourabitoun*. The ongoing rivalries within AQIM combined with external threats from the Algerian and international security forces have left AQIM with reduced capacities and propelled the group to adapt to its social environment while at the same time remaining faithful to its objectives. The next section of this dissertation investigates AQIM in terms of the attacks it conducted from the time it emerged on the Algerian scene until the present time. The aim is to enable the reader to evaluate the transformation of the jihadist organisation.

6.3 AQIM and Its Reign of Terror

In the immediate aftermath of its merger, AQIM began its terror campaign in 2007 with more ardour than its predecessor with seven synchronised bombings aimed at various police stations in Algeria, killing 8 persons and injuring over 10. Yet, the first major attack of AQIM and the worst ever in over a decade in Algeria occurred on the 11th of April 2007 when AQIM correlated a carefully planned double suicide attacks in Algiers to commemorate

the fifth anniversary of the Ghriba Synagogue bombing that symbolised Al Qaeda's first attack on North African soil. The first blast targeted the office of the prime minister killing over 12 and wounding 118 while the other attack on the police station resulted in 11 fatalities and over 40 injuries (Le Sueur, 2010: 164). This was the first incident where AQIM introduced suicide bombing as a strategy to destabilise the enemies and thus departing from the traditional *modus operandi* of the GSPC or even the GIA. Suicide attacks featured as AQIM's signature from this point onwards and on September 6, there was an assassination attempt on the Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika when he was visiting the city of Batna. Although the president was unhurt, the explosion resulted in the death of 16 people. On 8 December, another suicide attack on the naval barracks in coastal city of Dellys killed 30 people (Botha, 2008: 58). Thus far, by targeting government offices and military officials within Algeria, AQIM had confined itself to a local *jihad*. However, the next assault would characterise the seriousness of AQIM as a source of both local and global terror.

Over a year after its formation, on the 11th of December 2007, AQIM launched a cautiously planned double suicide mission in the capital city Algiers targeting the United Nations building and the Algerian Constitutional Court Building. Following the tactics of Al Qaeda, the two suicide bombers drove two separate trucks laden with about 800kg of explosives into the buildings. The first suicide bomber identified as 64-year old Rabbah Bechla drove one truck into the United Nations while 32-year old Larbi Charef conducted the second suicide attack. The resulting explosion killed over 38 people (17 UN workers) and wounding over 170 others. AQIM instantly claimed responsibility for the attack on its website by stating that the assault was 'another successful conquest...carried out by the Knights of the Faith with their blood in defence of the wounded nation of Islam' (Botha, 2008: 58).

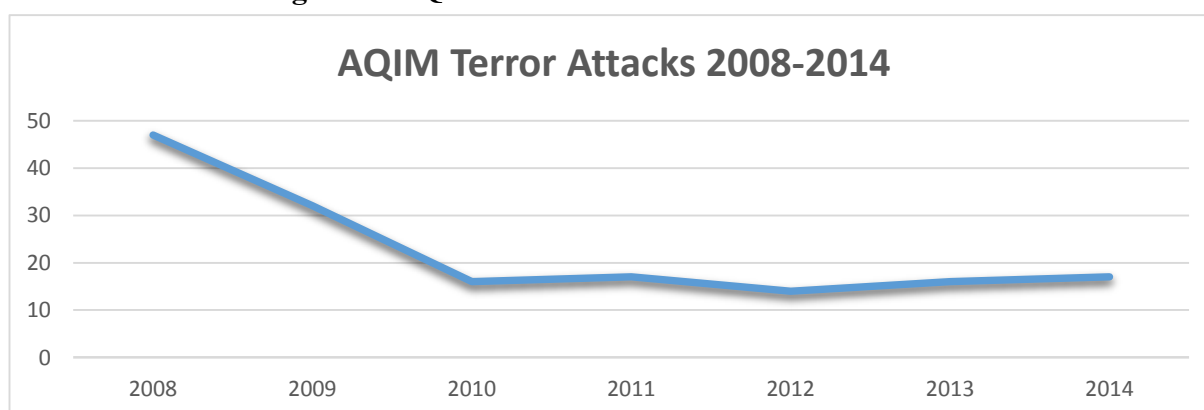
In the eyes of AQIM, the choice of these two targets had symbolic values as the constitutional court was overlooking elections for the apostate government of Algeria and the UN exemplified the international enemy of Islam. This assault was the second time a UN building was attacked by Al Qaeda affiliates. The first one was the bombing of the UN offices in the Cana Hotel in Baghdad in 2003 in which Al Qaeda Iraq (AQI) members characterised the UN as a tool that the West utilises to dominate Muslims and as such, the UN became an open target for jihadist groups (Le Seuer, 2010: 166). As Botha (2008: 63) posits 'the attack on 11 December 2007 signalled AQLIM's intentions not to limit their attacks to foreign workers and companies, but to target others, including humanitarian and

diplomatic representatives'. With this, AQIM reinstated the original approach of the GIA of targeting foreign nationalities.

Despite the escalation in suicide attacks the following year, the casualties were not equivalent to those of the previous year when AQIM was at its zenith within the Algerian context. In August 2008, there were over 125 people killed where the most vicious attack happened when a truck packed with explosives drove into a police academy resulting in 43 fatalities (Le Seuer, 2010: 167). Nevertheless, AQIM could not match its deadly spate of violence that it initiated the previous year, resulting in a drop in the number of fatalities. In 2009, the most notable assaults were the execution of British hostage Edwin Dyer and the bombing of a convoy of Chinese engineers protected by Algerian forces that killed 24 individuals. In June 2010, AQIM claimed responsibility for the death of 11 Algerian soldiers while also detonating a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device at another police checkpoint resulting in 10 fatalities (7 police officers and 3 civilians).

In March of the same year, the group launched its first suicide bombing attack in Niger and in August, Mauritania was the recipient of its first suicide attack by AQIM. Overall in 2010, fatalities caused by the attacks of AQIM amounted to over 80 people and the areas affected included Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger (Global Security, 2015). The following year witnessed a greater focus on kidnapping for ransom than on violent attacks. The most infamous attack was the detonation of an improvised explosive device (IED) by an AQIM trained member targeting the French embassy in Mali. Henceforth, violent assaults by AQIM declined while the group began focusing on kidnapping for ransom (Australia National Security, 2015).

Figure 2: AQIM Terror Attacks from 2008 -2014



Source: Global Terrorism Database (2015)

Filiu (2009: 6) attributes this downward spiral of violence to two factors. Primarily, the effective military strategies in dealing with AQIM militants have proven successful in dealing with the terror threat. Secondly, the fact that Al Qaeda in Iraq was fighting Sunni nationalist insurgencies provided a negative image for the Al Qaeda affiliates around the globe, especially AQIM. Additionally, the increase in suicide bombings as a method of *jihad* and its indiscriminate attacks against civilians also dealt a blow to the recruiting image of AQIM. Realising the latter mistake, AQIM, in its propaganda and media website, attempted to downplay the number of local casualties of its attacks and instead emphasised the number of foreigners killed. Some scholars have also associated the Arab springs, especially the Libyan uprising as contributing towards the decline in the ranks of AQIM as its members went to assist its allies in the overthrow of Qaddafi and his government in 2011.

6.3.1 AQIM under Pressure: From Algeria to Mali

From 2008 onwards, AQIM was under increasing pressure from successful military campaigns by Algerian security forces. This led to a decrease in both number and propensity of attacks by the group. It eventually sought refuge in neighbouring Northern Mali where it received much needed respite. Not only did Northern Mali shelter AQIM militants from the Algerian security forces, it also provided the group with a safe haven to conduct its various activities and plan new attacks. Furthermore, the region would become the epicentre of AQIM's theatre of operations for the next few years and according to some scholars (Harmon, 2010; Pham, 2011), this contributed towards its transformation from being less politically motivated to more economically driven. Contributing factors towards this change include a lack of governance and the formation of alliances with local population through marriage bonds and forging ties with networks of drug traffickers (Ecowas PSR, 2013: 2). In relation to its *modus operandi*, AQIM changed its focus from explosive attacks aimed at causing voluminous casualties to kidnapping for ransom and drug trafficking. It is important to note that although kidnapping for ransom had been part of AQIM's tactics for funding since its inception (and during its time as the GSPC), the ratio of kidnapping for ransom to terror attacks had almost doubled since 2008/9 period.

However, the 2012 Northern Malian insurgency provided the perfect opportunity for AQIM to restore its image as a terror group focused on political objectives of establishing an Islamic

state in its area of operation. State failure due to a lack of governance structures in Northern Mali compounded with the rebellion of the Tuaregs against the Malian government in the north of the country due to accumulated grievances, provided AQIM with a perfect opportunity to accomplish the objective for which it was created, that is, extend the Islamic caliphate beyond Algeria. Joining forces with the local battalions and Ansar Al Dine, AQIM and its followers began controlling sizeable areas while implementing *shari'a* and at the same time opening training camps. The establishment of a UN mission in Mali had the adverse effect of propelling more recruits to join the jihadi factions. Adapting to the new environment, AQIM began establishing its own economic system within the area it controlled through

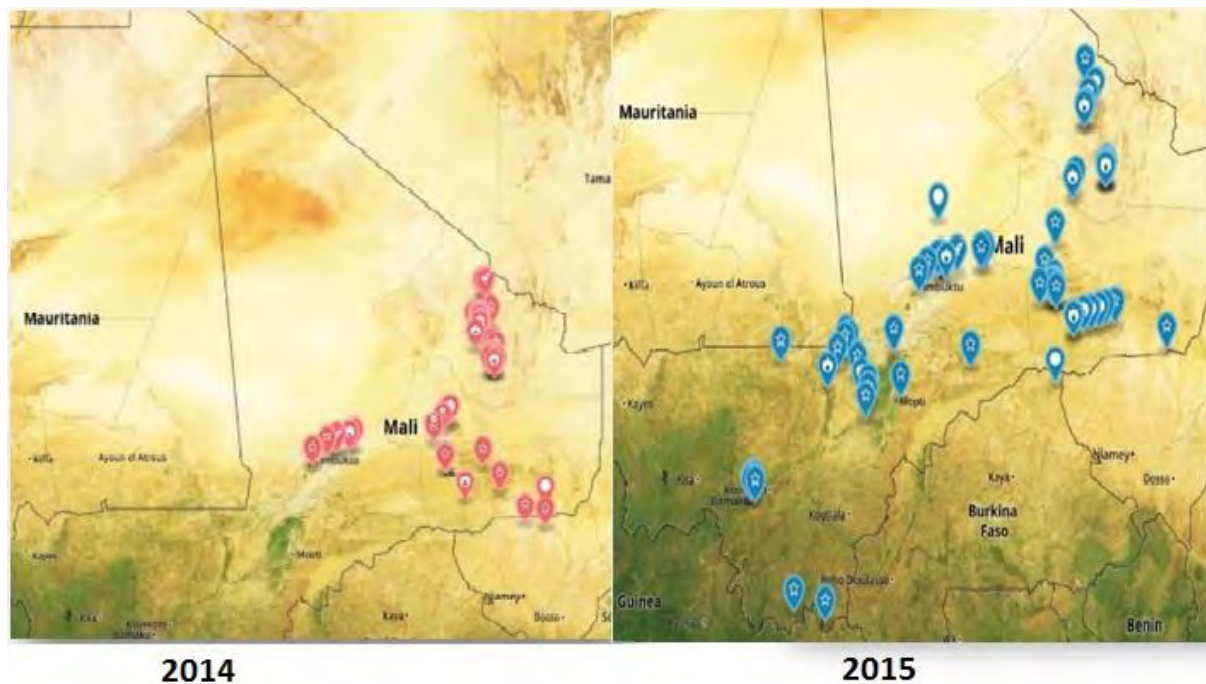
employment- and income-generating activities, including the recruitment of combatants and auxiliaries (guides, drivers, informers, paramedical staff); the supply of foodstuffs (cereals, sugar, tea, etc.), fuel, tyres, spare parts and weapons; and subcontracting hostage taking and hostage keeping (ECOWAS PSR, 2013: 3).

Gradually, AQIM and its allies started gaining the trust of the people with increasing popularity gained at the expense of the dwindling legitimacy of the government and local traditional leaders. Moving away from its exclusively Algerian composition, AQIM began recruiting members from all parts of Africa such as Morocco, Tunisia, Mali, Mauritania and Niger amongst others and some even arrived from countries as far as Pakistan and Afghanistan in order to wage *jihad*. Realising that its security forces were not equipped to face the insurgents who were advancing upon the capital city of Bamako, the Malian government made a desperate appeal to the international community for help as it perceived that defeat would have been eminent.

The French government responded to the plea by the government of their former colony by preparing for a military intervention in Mali. In January 2013, the French military launched operation *Serval* against the advancing jihadist groups. Supported by the US, the British and its allies, the French intervened with airstrikes and ground assaults occasioning the death of over 300 jihadists fighters (Chivvis & Liepman, 2013:9). A few weeks later, the foreign forces wrestled back the areas occupied by the jihadists such as Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal from AQIM and its fighters. In the process, the jihadists dispersed and sought refuge in neighbouring countries in the Sahel. While operation *Serval* could be deemed successful in terms of military prospects, it would be obviously ambitious to assume that the operation had totally defeated AQIM. Actually, it is more accurate to state that the French intervention

incapacitated the political and social functions of AQIM organisation and consequently led to AQIM gravitating more towards becoming an economically motivated entity. Nonetheless, 2014 and 2015 have witnessed an increase in attacks albeit from AQIM affiliates in Mali as attested in the figure below.

Figure 3: AQIM and Affiliate attacks in Mali for period 2014 -2015



Source: Adapted from militaryedge.org (2015)

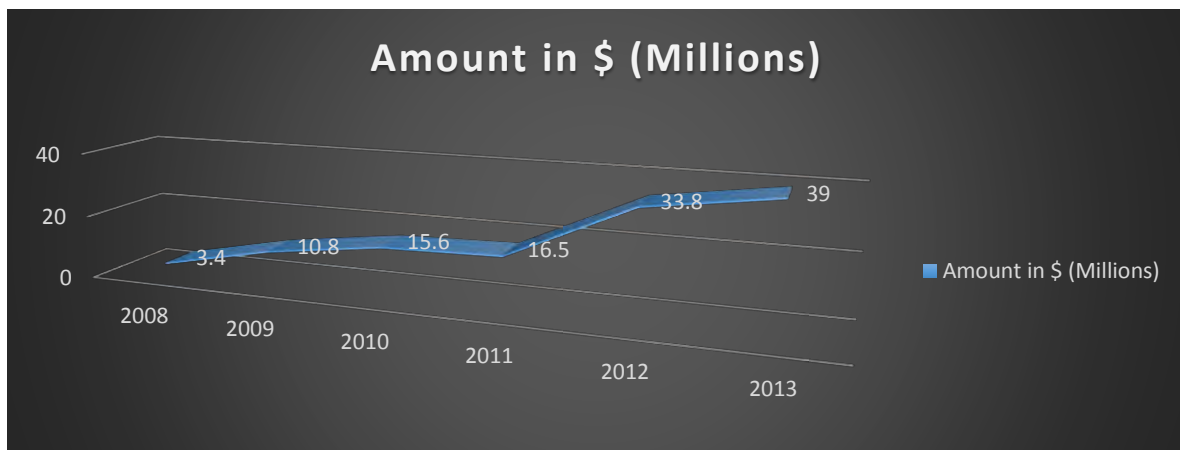
6.4 AQIM's Economy of Terrorism

As previously mentioned above, in the wake of operation *Serval*, AQIM reduced its terrorist attacks and turned its attention to engaging in criminal activities for financial gain. There is little doubt that terrorist groups require funds in order to run their operations. Since the international community considers terrorist groups illegitimate, the only avenue for these groups to raise funds for their survival is through involvement in illegal activities. It is no different for AQIM which derives its funds from illegal activities consisting of kidnapping for ransom (which is its highest source of income), drug trafficking and illegal smuggling of illegal contrabands (Shelley, 2014: 4). To understand the relationship between criminal activities and terrorism within AQIM with the view for counter-terrorism measures, it is imperative to examine separately the activities from which it derives its income.

6.4.1 Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR)

In recent times, kidnapping for ransom has become the primary source of income for AQIM. Unlike the GSPC, whose kidnapping of 32 tourists was more of a terrorist act, kidnapping for ransom by AQIM tilts more towards a criminal activity for profit nowadays. A study conducted by Lacher (2012: 9) concluded that the estimated amount of ransom fees between the period 2008 and 2012 were in the region of between \$40 and \$65 million with the price per hostage ranging between \$1.5 and \$4 million. The ECOWAS Peace and Security Report (2013:4), however, puts the annual AQIM earnings through KFR at approximately \$163 million. In terms of conducting negotiations in the wake of a kidnapping, AQIM follows a usual pattern that comprises of providing proof of detention followed by a ransom paid by those who seek the release of the hostages. The release is often ‘partly open’ in that hostages are released and ‘partly closed’ where ransom money is paid in secret by the actors (ECOWAS PSR, 2013: 3). Jihadist groups such as AQIM justify KFR as weapon of war against the infidels and the apostates and any hostage is treated as a prisoner of war (Echeverria, 2012: 176). It is for this reason that the jihadists have no qualms in executing their hostages should their demands not be met by government. Two such cases that received worldwide media attention was the killing of British hostage Edwin Dyer in 2009 and Frenchman Michel Germaneau in 2010. Nonetheless, the profit that AQIM obtained from the KFR from 2008 has continued to increase as noted in the figure below

Figure 4: AQIM Annual Income from Kidnapping for Ransom



Source: Adapted from Brisard (2013)

Since the KFR activities have proven to be a lucrative source of income for AQIM, it is not surprising to notice a continuous increase in hostage kidnapping by the group. To this extent, as Daniel Benjamin (2011) notices, ‘no group has made a bigger name for itself in the

kidnapping-for-ransom business than Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)'. The table below illustrates this increase and impact of KFR activities of AQIM.

Table 3: The Timeline of AQIM Kidnapping for Ransom Activities

Timeline of AQIM Kidnapping for Ransom			
2003	February 2003	First foreign hostages taken hostage by the GSPC comprise of 32 Europeans	31 released and 1 died of heatstroke
2008	22 February 2008	2 Austrian tourists are kidnapped in Tunisia then moved to Mali	Hostages were later released
	14 December 2008	Canadian Robert Fowler, UN envoy to Niger kidnapped alongside his driver	Released in Mali
2009	22 January 2009	Four European tourists (2 Swiss, 1 German and 1 British) were kidnapped	British hostage Edwin Dyer executed while other 3 were released
	9 November 2009	3 Spanish relief workers (Alicia Gamez, Roque Pascual and Albert Vilalta) were kidnapped	All 3 were later released
	26 November 2009	French National Pierre Camatte kidnapped in Ménaka in Mali	Later released
	18 December 2009	two Italians (Sergio Cicala and his wife Philomène Kaboré) were kidnapped in Mauritania then transferred to Mali	Both were eventually released
2010	19 April 2010	Michel Germaneau, a 78-year-old French national, and his driver were kidnapped in the north of Niger.	Hostage was executed

	16 September 2010	5 French nationals, 1Togolese and 1 Madagascan kidnapped in north of Niger	
2011	7 January 2011	2 French nationals were kidnapped by AQIM militants in Niger.	They were killed on 8 January during a rescue attempt.
	24 November 2011	2 French nationals were kidnapped from their hotel in Mali.	1 hostage was killed. The other, Serge Lazarevic (the last French hostage in Africa) was later released in 2014
	25 November 2011	AQIM militants kidnapped 1 Swedish national, 1 Dutch national and 1 dual British-South African national from Timbuktu, Mali.	1 German national was killed during the kidnapping. The Dutch national was released. The South African is still held hostage.
2012	26 January 2012	AQIM claimed responsibility for kidnapping a German national in Kano, Nigeria.	The hostage was later executed
	15 April 2012	a Swiss woman was kidnapped in Mali	She was eventually released
2015	As at 23 June 2015	AQIM purports to have last two hostages in Mali	

Source: ECOWAS PSR (2013: 3-4); ANS (2015); Weiss (2015).

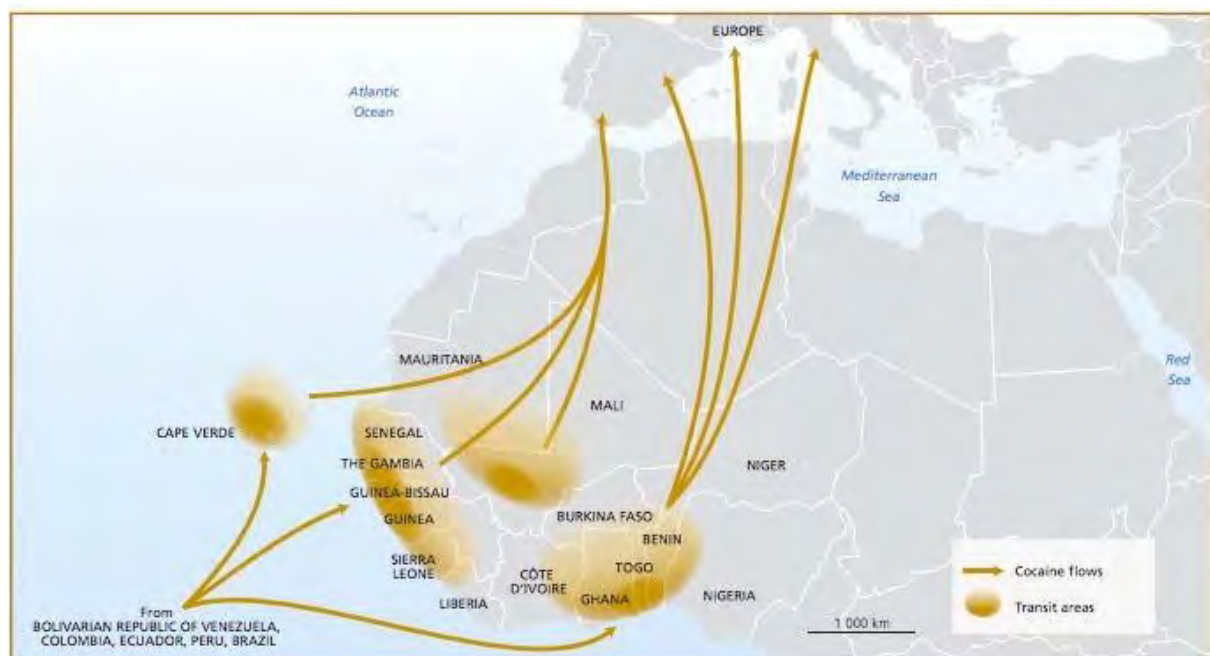
6.4.2 Drug Trafficking and contraband smuggling

Although AQIM's involvement in drug trafficking and contraband smuggling can be traced back to the era of the GSPC, the group has since grown more adept to this form of illegal activities as it featured as one of its specialities. This success of AQIM within the drugs and illegal smuggling arena can be attributed to its former commander of the southern region, Mokhtar Belmokhtar 'who epitomizes the intersection of crime, corruption, and terror in the

vast territory from North Africa to the Sahel’ (Shelley, 2014:235). The increasing involvement of AQIM in the drug trafficking field have led to the group forging alliances with local terrorist groups such as the Movement for the Unity of Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and international drug cartels resulting in an increased flow of drugs within the Sahel region.

As Lacher (2012: 6) points out, there has been a gradual expansion in the drug flow from South America to West Africa. From there, the drugs find their way to Europe through different smuggling routes of the Sahel. Upon their arrival on the Western shores of Africa in countries like Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Benin and Ghana, the drugs are transported through inland routes through Northern Mali to Algeria, Morocco and Libya where they are then transported either by plane or by boat to their ultimate destinations. One evidence purporting to drug trafficking in the Sahel is the case of the ‘Air Cocaine’, a Boeing 727 that was discovered in the town of Tarkint in Mali after it was shot down before take-off. During the investigation, it was discovered that the plane carried between 7-10 tons of cocaine from the airport in Venezuela and its final destination was Morocco (Lacher, 2012:7).

Figure 5: Cocaine Transit areas in West Africa



Source: UNODC (2013:9)

Morocco has emerged as one of the most vulnerable countries for drug smuggling and trafficking due to its geographical proximity to Europe. In October 2010, Moroccan

authorities disrupted a major drug trafficking syndicate consisting of links between drug cartels in Latin America and AQIM. A month later, Malian official arrested six prevalent drug traffickers who had links with AQIM (UNODC, 2011: 37). Due to the scarcity of research data in drug trafficking, it becomes difficult to assess the full extent to which AQIM benefits from the drug trade. Despite this impasse, through the distilling of the information that is available, it is possible to assess the impact of drug trafficking within the Sahel region. Pham (2011:21) spotlights this problem when he notes that it is difficult to ascertain the direct role that AQIM has within the drug trafficking flow. However, he argues that in addition to AQIM offering protection to drug smugglers, drug cartels and contraband dealers, there is little doubt that the group stands to benefit financially from these illicit trade networks in the Sahel. Consequently, as terrorist groups become more fixated on the financial benefits of the drug trade, they slowly renegade from their original *raison d'être* to share similarities with drug cartels. Derek Maltz (cited in Hernandez, 2013:39) underscores this when he affirms that

drugs and terrorism coexist across the globe in a marriage of mutual convenience. As state-sponsored terrorism has declined, these dangerous organizations have looked far and wide for resources and revenue to recruit, to corrupt, to train, and to strengthen their regime. Many drug-trafficking groups have stepped up to fill that revenue void.

Another form of illegal activities through which AQIM financially benefited is cigarette and arms smuggling. In addition to providing protection to drug and illicit contraband traffickers, the group also exacts a levy from the smugglers who operate within AQIM's region (ECOWAS PSR, 2013: 3). In the domain of cigarettes smuggling, Belmokhtar has proven to be the talisman as he earned the moniker 'Malboro Man' due to his financial successes in such operations in the Sahel (Guardian, 2013). Shelley (2014:235) extends Belmokhtar's involvement to 'arms and people smuggling in a web of criminal partnerships'. The money obtained through narcotics and other forms of smuggling contributes towards buying weapons for the group. One of the reasons that terrorist engage in counterfeit trade is because it has a low risk profile. Furthermore, terrorists engage in counterfeit operations in two ways, namely, directly or indirectly.

AQIM falls within the first category as it is directly involved in illicit activities rather than operating through third parties. Direct involvement means that the group is personally engaged in the production, distribution and sale of the illicit goods and the funds obtained are redirected towards financing the operation of the group. According to Ronald Noble (quoted

in Shelley, 2014: 268), ‘terrorist organizations with direct involvement include groups who resemble or behave more like organized criminal groups than traditional terrorist organizations’. From the above paragraphs, it appears that AQIM has gradually departed from its terror activities to focusing on illicit transaction and kidnapping for ransom. While it can be argued that AQIM engagement in these illegal trades is to obtain funds for its operations, at the same time, it is also evident that AQIM has, in recent years, predominantly focused on kidnapping for ransom and drug trade as its sole activities. This begs the question as to whether AQIM is merely a hybrid group that is involved in crime, trafficking, and insurgency or if it is still focused on the *jihad* or the illegal trafficking /kidnapping for ransom side (Harmon, 2010: 20).

6.5 AQIM: Criminal Terrorists or Terrorist Criminals?

Since its emergence as an Al Qaeda affiliate from the GSPC in 2008, AQIM has not only spread its reach in the Sahel but also obtained millions of dollars from its operations in that region. In this regard, AQIM can be perceived as a group that is focused more on generating profit rather than launching *jihad* and establishing an Islamic state as was its original objective. Meanwhile, this perception is challenged by the 2012 events in Mali which demonstrated that AQIM is not solely focused on criminal activities as means of profit but can also resort to military action when the opportunity presents itself. The fact that AQIM controlled the large territory of Northern Mali (assisted with other jihadists groups) shows that the political motivations of the group are still relevant to the group’s functioning. Attempts to assess the type of group AQIM has evolved into have separated scholars into two groupings.

The first category views AQIM as primarily a terror group involved in criminal activities to fund its campaigns. To this end, AQIM still purports to its primary motive of establishing an Islamic state through the use of *jihad* while the funds serve as a means to finance its operations and recruit new jihadists into its ranks. As such, the group still retains its original motivation that serves as a propellant to its functioning and evolution. The second category illustrates AQIM transforming into an organized crime group that uses terror tactics solely for economic gain. In this view, AQIM is a group that appears to act with ideological and religious ideals, but is actually only interested in obtaining ransom money and engaging in criminal activities for profit (Liang, 2011: 3). In this regard, the group adheres to its original ideology only in as far as it is a political façade to attract recruits. Although, these two

categories provide a basis for which to understand the phenomenon of AQIM, they are limited as they embody an either-or paradigm. As a means to rectify this shortcoming, it is merited to assess AQIM through the lens of the convergence thesis (previously examined in chapter three of this study) as it makes for an easier categorization of the group in its current state.

Within the crime-terror continuum, Makerenko (2014:135) introduces the convergence thesis where a terrorist group and an organized crime organisation converge into one entity where their tactics are indistinguishable from each other. Another aspect of the convergence thesis posits that some terror groups adopt criminal tactics as a means to finance their operations. In this aspect, the convergence occurs through the blending of the crime-terror nexus within the same space and time. Within this context, ‘a hybrid entity emerges and simultaneously displays ideological and economic motivations by perpetrating acts of politically motivated terrorism *and* engaging in OC for profit maximisation’ (EU, 2012:17). While this may resemble the second category, the difference is that the hybrid group can be defined either as terrorist or criminal and thus can be easily overlooked by both anti-crime and anti-terrorism agencies.

Pham (2011:29) assiduously posits that ‘AQIM has proven itself to be rather resilient, transforming itself to adapt to changing conditions in the Maghreb’. From its beginnings as the GIA with a Salafist-Jihadist ideology to its merger with Al Qaeda AQIM has transformed into one of the most notable terrorist groups operating in North Africa. While the group capitalised on the grievance of the population to enter the governance arena (the case of Northern Mali), it has also become an infamous player in the domain of kidnapping for ransom and drug trafficking. Because of its successful adaptation to its environment and context, the Sahel for instance, it has become difficult to distinctly separate the political and economic motivation of AQIM. Therefore from the information gathered and the data examined, it can be argued that since AQIM displays ideological (Salafist-Jihadists propaganda and statements) and economic (kidnapping for ransom, drug trafficking, arms dealing) motivations, it falls under the categorisation of being a hybrid entity.

As such, AQIM is ‘comfortably rooted in both ideology and profit, constantly shifting [its] strategies and tactics as [it] evolves’ (Ballina, 2011: 130). The evolution of AQIM into a hybrid entity can be attributed to its link with Al Qaeda and the steady expansion of its sphere

of attack due to its political economy of the terror and crime nexus (Liang, 2011: 5). The French military operations may have thwarted AQIM's sphere of attacks in that many of its fighters have been killed and as such cannot effectively launch devastating attacks against foreign targets. It is with this in mind that Pham (2011: 25) alludes to the fact that,

the AQIM of the future may come to consist of only a few hundred hardcore terrorists waging international jihad against the West and its allies, while being supported by an affiliated criminal organization of several hundred.

This statement proved prescient, as the period following operation *Serval* has witnessed an increase in terror attacks on UN peacekeepers, foreign targets and even civilians. Moreover, it is concerning to note that while these attacks were perpetrated not only by AQIM and but by groups affiliated to it. From this, it appears that AQIM is supported by splinter groups in conducting terror acts under the banner of ideology such as Ansar Al Dine and the newly renamed Al Qaeda in West Africa (formerly Al Mourabitoun). Therefore, it is fitting to conclude that Al Qaeda is a terrorist group influenced by both political motivations (establishing an Islamic state in the Sahel) and economic motivations (through drug trafficking and kidnapping for ransom).

AQIM's religious and political ideology is further extended in the newly formed Al Qaeda in West Africa (formerly Al Mourabitoun) which is a cause for concern. Rather than being defeated as many scholars purport, it appears that AQIM has once again reinvented itself, but this time it took the form of smaller splinter groups. From the available information, it appears that the political motivation of AQIM is carried forward by splinter groups that share the same ideology. Yet, this leads to another concerning eventuality: has AQIM's economic motivations also being carried forward through splinter groups /drug trafficking groups which remains unaware due to the lack of information available?

6.6 Chapter Summary

Through its plethora of criminal activities, AQIM has established itself as one of Al Qaeda's wealthiest affiliates. Despite its economic successes, AQIM has responded to its critics who claim that it has transformed into an organised crime organization that is profit motivated by launching various attacks on security personnel and civilians alike in the Sahel region. This chapter has attempted to clarify this argument about the type of organisation into which AQIM belongs by assessing, firstly, its political inspiration through the attacks it conducted

both inside and outside of Algeria; and secondly, its economic motivations by examining its criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom and drug trafficking.

It is important to note that although AQIM failed to achieve the goal of the global *jihad* for which it was formed, it remains one of the most dangerous groups in North Africa. The resilience of the group is characterised by its adaptation to the various situations and contexts that it encounters. When Algerian security forces managed to expel the group into the Sahel, it reinvigorated itself within the confines of Northern Mali which it eventually controlled. Meanwhile, it reduced its terror attacks while at the same time increasing its criminal activities and generating millions of dollars. After the French military defeated AQIM fighters in Northern Mali forcing them to find refuge in the Sahel, the group later resurfaced but as different splinter groups adhering to the same ideology. For instance, Al Mourabitoun, whose leader is none other than the former AQIM commander Belmokhtar, has been responsible for numerous attacks in Mali on both civilians and security forces. The difficulty in combatting the terrorism of AQIM is due to it being a hybrid group that exhibits both criminal and terrorist characteristics. To this end, the next and final chapter seeks to determine how groups such as AQIM and other similar groups can be defeated.

Chapter Seven

In Search of Solutions: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

Thus far, the preceding chapters have assessed the phenomenon of AQIM by examining its ideology, historical origins and transformation. In response to the hypothesis of this study, the previous chapter (Chapter 6) revealed that AQIM is a hybrid entity that displays both terrorist and criminal motivations which are determined by the context within which the group finds itself. Some of the conditions that allow the group to thrive include poor governance, lack of security on the border and grievances of the populace due to poverty, discrimination and unemployment. The aim of the present chapter is to conclude the study and proffer recommendations that aim towards countering the threat of terrorism in general and AQIM in particular and contribute towards its demise.

Yet, before undertaking the task stated above, the study examines the existing measures that are in place to combat the threat of terrorism in Africa. As such, resolutions passed by the UN and the AU are investigated and assessed with regards to their resourcefulness. Furthermore, this chapter also evaluates the two counter-terrorism initiatives that were effectuated in North Africa, namely, the US-led initiative known as the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the French military intervention in Mali (Operation Serval). Subsequently, the successes and failures of these initiatives are elucidated and recommendations on how to improve these failures are proposed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study and the prospects of AQIM on the African continent.

7.1 Evaluating resolutions and Counter Terrorism frameworks

When assessing the impact of AQIM terrorism in the Sahel region and North Africa, it is imperative to situate this undertaking within the broader spectrum of the terrorism phenomenon. Terrorist attacks in 2014 have claimed the lives of more than 43, 500 people and injured more than 40, 900 signalling a notable increase from previous years. Africa also claimed its share in these figures with groups such as Boko Haram and Al Shabaab recording an increase in fatalities of 311% and 141% respectively (Miller, 2015: 4). Although AQIM, Ansar Al Dine and newly formed Al Qaeda in West Africa do not feature as the top terrorists groups causing the most casualties, they nonetheless remain a pertinent threat to the Sahel region and beyond. As noted previously within the study, the events of 9/11 did not initiate the beginning of religious terrorism but alerted the world towards the dangers of that type of

terrorism. After Al Qaeda's greatest victory over the West, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with the consent of the world powers began a concerted effort to combat terrorism. The result appeared in the form of the formulation of resolutions and counter-terrorism frameworks that countries were encouraged to adopt at a global, continental and regional levels. As such, there came into effect numerous UNSC resolutions on terrorism, AU and EU counter-terrorism frameworks *inter alia*. It is in this milieu that the foregoing sections examine and evaluate these resolutions and paradigms with respect to Africa and most particularly the Sahel region.

7.1.1 The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Resolutions

In its role as the UN primary organ in dealing with international peace and security globally, the Security Council has played an active role in combatting terrorism. This is evident through the formulation and subsequent adoption of resolutions relating to terrorism. The focus of these resolutions have varied from concentrating on specific acts of terror such as resolution 1189 that deals with the Kenyan and Tanzanian bombings to more globalised incidents such as resolution 1373 that was passed in the wake of 9/11. It is important to note that these resolutions were formulated in line with Chapter VII of the UN Charter that deals with actions that are a threat to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression (UN, 1945: Article 39-51).

Adopted on the 28 of September 2001, in the aftermath of 9/11, Resolution 1373 was quite significant as it imposed certain legal obligations on member states. With respect to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the resolution emphatically called upon member states to

re-double efforts collectively as well as individually, to prevent and suppress terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including, by increased co-operation and full implementation of the relevant international conventions relating to terrorism to which they are parties and called on all Member States, *inter alia*, to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts by criminalizing the provision, acquisition and collection of funds for such acts (UNSC, 2001a)

The resolution also led to the establishment of the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) whose aim was to both assemble the UNSC members and to supervise the actual implementation of resolution 1373 by member states. To further support the work of the CTC, the UNSC later established the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) through resolution 1535 which included making recommendations to states based on

their responses to the council (Ford, 2011:26). With regards to implementing resolution 1373, it required the development of novel administrative structures, setting up of advanced technical equipment and substantial stages of training. Furthermore, the successful implementation of this resolution also necessitated enhanced security reform sector, intelligent units and a well-established financial regulatory mechanism. However, many states, particularly in Africa, lack the resources to successfully implement resolution 1373 (Cortright, 2005: 63). Recognising this shortcoming, the UNSC adopted resolution 1377 allowing the CTC to support these states through financial, technical, regulatory, legislative or other assistance programmes with view to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1373 (UNSC, 2001b).

As a result, on the 8 September 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 60/288 (The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy) paving the way for the first comprehensive global framework for combatting the threat of terrorism. Taking into consideration all the aspects of the previous resolutions, this framework contained a fourfold approach to combatting terrorism categorised under four pillars, namely, 1) addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, 2) preventing and combating terrorism, 3) building state capacity to counter terrorism and 4) defending human rights while combating terrorism (UN General Assembly, 2006: 4-9). These pillars meant to serve as concrete measures that states can implement individually or collectively while being assisted by the Counter-Terrorism Task Force (CTTF) that the Secretary General established in 2005.

On the 14th of June 2014, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 68/276 (the fourth review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy) highlighting new issues and challenges that have emerged more pertinently over the past few years. While terror groups conducting attacks still remain a prevalent threat, the document also revealed lone terrorist attacks and (with particular importance to this study) the connection between organized crime and terrorism as growing concerns. The review suggested that more emphasis needed to be placed on pillars 1 and 4 for a long-term success and as such it set the direction for which the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is to follow until the its next review in 2016 – which would be its 10th anniversary since its conception (UN General Assembly, 2014).

7.1.2 The African Union Counter-Terrorism Framework

The recent upsurge in bloodletting by terrorist groups in Africa has invoked questions surrounding the role of the African Union and its capabilities in dealing with the ever-growing threat of terrorism. The continuous inability of African states to combat or even contain the proliferation of terror groups in their region cast doubt over the intent and willingness of the AU to seriously deal with the issue of terrorism. This further overshadows the concerted effort of the AU in its formulation and implementation of legal counter-terrorism frameworks such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention of 1999 or the Algiers convention, the 2002 AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combatting Terrorism and the Protocol in 2004.

In July 1999 in Algiers, the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism or the Algiers Convention was adopted by the 35th Ordinary Session of the OAU Head of States but was only effectuated in December 2002 after 30 states had ratified it (Ford, 2011: 29). In addition to providing a definition of terrorism, the Algiers convention elucidated on the importance of promoting areas of cooperation among member states, the institution of state jurisdiction over acts of terror and as well as initiating a system for extradition, inter-state investigation and mutual legal assistance. The Algiers convention also required that member states adhere to a fourfold commitment towards countering terrorism.

Firstly, as Article 2 (c) of the Algiers convention noted, states must ‘implement the actions, including enactment of legislation and the establishment as criminal offences of certain acts as required in terms of the international instruments’ (OAU, 1999). As such, these states should ratify these international instruments and apply them within their domestic statutes. An example of an international instrument that states should implement is the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages of 1979. The second commitment emphasises the importance of establishing and supporting inter-agency cooperation at a national level (OAU, 1999: Article 4) prior to an inter-state level (Article 5). The third commitment follows from the second, as it requires that states improve cross-border policing and surveillance so as ‘develop and strengthen methods of controlling and monitoring land, sea and air borders and customs and immigration check points’ (Article 4 (2c)).

Additionally, this also includes sharing of information amongst member states as Article 5 (5) stresses that ‘States Parties shall co-operate among themselves in conducting and exchanging

studies and researches on how to combat terrorist acts and to exchange expertise relating to control of terrorist acts'. Lastly, the fourth commitment pertains to states not providing any type of support to terrorist groups such as 'providing safe sanctuaries both directly or indirectly, financing groups, committing or inciting to commit terrorist acts through provisions of weapons or issuing of travel documents and visas' (Article 4(1)). Although the Algiers convention predated the establishment of the African Union, it remained the foundation for subsequent counter-terrorism frameworks and as at 2013, only 41 out of 52 African states had ratified the convention.

After its inauguration in July 2002 from the amalgamation of the OAU and the African Economic Community (AEC), the African Union (AU) set out to align itself with the global fight against terror, with particular focus on Africa. The Algiers Convention coupled with the reality of international terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks propelled the aspect of counter-terrorism to become a major part within the formation of the AU's peace and security framework (Ford, 2015: 30). In continuing to concretize the commitments and strategies as stated in the Algiers Convention, the AU's Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism was adopted in September 2002. In addition to calling on member states to ratify and implement the Algiers Convention, this plan sought to adopt practical counter-terrorism measures to address challenges that included police and border control, legislative and judicial measures, financing of terrorism and exchange of information (Moki, 2007:115). To this end, the Plan of Action initiated the establishment of the AU's Peace and Security Council whose objective is to 'harmonize and coordinate continental efforts in the prevention and combating of terrorism' (African Union, 2002: Article 4).

Moreover, as part of a practical implementation of its Plan of Action of 2002, the AU established within the Peace and Security Council the African Centre for the Study and Research of Terrorism (ACSRT or CAERT in French). The objectives of this centre include researching all aspects of terrorism, developing counter-terrorism capacity building programs and provide advice to member states based on recommendations on a needs basis (African Union, 2004: Article 5 (2 a-f)). In its 7th Annual Focal Points Meeting in December 2013, the ACSRT presented its plan for the implementation of the Plan of Action for the following four years which consisted of four pillars. These included 1) 'enhance information sharing and dissemination through the ACSRT CT-Situation-Room and the CT Early Warning System (CTEWS)'; 2) augment the rate of publications while at the same time improving its quality;

3) implement national and regional capacity building programmes; and 4) improving the relationship and cooperation of the research centre with the regional and international partners (AU PSC, 2014: Paragraph 41).

In July 2004, the AU adopted the 2004 Protocol of the Algiers Convention which recognised the ‘linkages between terrorism and mercenarism, weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, corruption, transnational organized crimes, money laundering, and the illicit proliferation of small arms’ as increasing prevalent risks associated with terrorism (African Union, 2004: Preamble). The purpose of this protocol was to rectify a significant weakness of the OAU Convention in that the latter did not have an implementation mechanism *per se*. To this end, the protocol mandated the AU PSC to monitor and facilitate implementation in addition to harmonizing and coordinating efforts and also encouraged Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to play a more active role (Allison, 2015:5). Although the protocol was adopted in 2004, it only entered into force on the 26th of February 2014 after 15 countries ratified the Protocol on the Algiers convention of 2004. The reason behind the delay was that the African Union required 15 countries to ratify the protocol before it could be effectuated and it only attained that number a decade later (AU, 2004: Article 10). Thus far, states that are in the foreground in the war on terror such as Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Mauritania and Chad have not ratified the protocol yet (Allison, 2015: 5; AU, 2014).

In an effort to continue implementing counter-terrorism measures in Africa in accordance with the relevant regional and international mechanisms, the AU has developed the African Model Anti-Terrorism Law as a comprehensive legal instrument that member states can adopt to ‘strengthen their criminal justice system and effectively prevent and combat terrorism’ (AU PSC, 2014: Par. 46). However, according to the AU PSC report 2014, only three member states (Ghana, Mauritius and Burkina Faso) have approached the AU for assistance in implementing the new model into their national legislation. From these preceding paragraphs, it can be argued that there has been progress in terms of formulating continental counter-terrorism frameworks from the time of the OAU until its evolution into the AU despite the accusations levelled against the continental organisation for its futile effort in reducing the threat of terrorism.

7.2 Assessing Counter-Terrorism Strategies in Africa

In its quest to prevent and combat terrorism in Africa, the AU has adopted some of the UN priority areas such as counter-terrorism legislation, operational mechanism and capacity building. While this approach has a share of its advantages in terms of security related affairs, it is also quite limited in the area of development. This can be partly blamed on the emphasis on security-related mechanism by the UN at the expense of the development aspects, which are more relevant within the African context. As a result, the UN has experienced limited success in its implementation of counter-terrorism objectives in Africa. Scholars argue that this lack of success is due to the failure on the part of the UN to take into consideration the African perspective when implementing these mechanisms in addition to the dearth of political will on the part of African leaders. Hence, this has translated into slow progress to implement counter-terrorism measures by the AU.

The accusations levelled against the AU for the slow pace of its implementation of the Algiers convention and subsequent protocols and counter-terrorism mechanisms can be categorised according to two levels. Firstly, the AU continuously faces challenges from the international community in such a way that its efforts in the global fights against terror are eclipsed by the actions of the US, Britain, France and the UN. Moreover, the AU has received little support from these Western powers towards assistance in implementing anti-terrorism instruments on the African continent. Instead of collaborating with the AU, these Western powers prefer working directly with the member states as exemplified in the US establishment of the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) in 2002 to assist Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad (Moki, 2007: 121).

The second aspect concerns the continental level where the AU faces challenges from its own member states regarding the implementation of the 1999 OAU convention. The primary difficulty included persuading all the member states to ratify the Algiers convention. After much urging and continuous pleading by the AU, only 41 member states have ratified the convention until present. In a similar fashion, it took just over a decade for the 2004 Protocol to enter into effect and there has been only 15 ratifications. Additionally, according to Ford (2011:31), the AU 'lacks a system for monitoring implementation of measures by states even if they do ratify'. The lack of funds, resources and technical knowledge remain the greatest challenges that contribute to the failure of the AU to fully implement its counter-terrorism strategies (Moki, 2007: 133). This in turn leads to the AU relying on the assistance of the UN

and the Western countries which prefer to function or implement their strategies independently of the African continental organisation. Having said that, this section now turns to assessing two of these strategies that have been implemented in North Africa: the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and Operation Serval.

7.2.1 Assessing the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP)

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the US administration, concerned with the proliferation of religious terrorism in Africa particularly the Horn of Africa and North Africa, launched the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) in 2002 – a counter-terrorism partnership with the Sahelian countries of Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Chad (Le Seuer, 2010: 152). As a means to attain its primary goal of preventing terrorists from establishing safe havens in the Sahel, the program received \$7 million in funding (Davis, 2007: 151). Other objectives of the initiative included protecting porous borders from illegal activities such as drug trafficking and people smuggling, providing training in capacity building, training military and civilian officials in the four countries and encouraging information exchange among states. At that time, the GSPC, one of the terrorists groups that turned the Sahel into their operation hub with the kidnapping of 32 European tourists, was based in Algeria. Thus, although not included in the PSI, Algeria became a pivotal partner of the US in its war on terror in the region. The first success of the PSI was the capture of GSPC's Saifi – the mastermind behind the kidnapping of the European tourists. However, the PSI failed to capitalise on this initial success and effectively combat the GSPC. Inadequate funding, the unwillingness of states to share information and the US shouldering all the responsibilities of the initiative contributed towards the inability of the PSI to achieve its full potential (Moki, 2007:132).

Realising its mistakes from the PSI initiative, the US administration launched the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2005. Unlike the PSI, the TSCTP received much more adequate funding with \$100 million per year for five years (Davis, 2007: 155). The increase in funding resulted in a more ambitious counter-terrorism program that saw the partnership extending to nine states as compared to the previous four. The TSCTP included Chad, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria and Senegal. The core objectives of the TSCTP remained the same of the PSI but extended to include, 'strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities; enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces; promoting democratic governance;

discrediting terrorist ideology; and reinforcing bilateral military ties with the United States' (Reeve & Pelter, 2014:22). Operation Flintlock, the first military exercise where over 3000 soldiers from the partner states underwent training, signalled the beginning of the TSCTP initiative in North Africa and represented the model for future counter-terrorism initiatives (Le Seuer, 2010: 216). Operation Flintlock had a threefold objective of 'coordinating security along borders, strengthen patrols in ungoverned territories and prevent establishment of terrorist bases' (Harmon, 2010: 23).

Thus far, TSCTP has been in operation for about a decade during which time it has yielded both gains and losses for the US and its partners. The program has been successful in that it has improved the US-Africa relations in terms of counter-terrorism and military cooperation. This is witnessed in the various joint military exercises that the US conducts every year with countries such as Tunisia, Morocco and Mali amongst others. Yet, the TSCTP had not succeeded in achieving its original objective of totally eliminating terrorist activities in the Sahel. This lack of success is proven by the increase in both terrorist attacks in the Sahel and illegal activities across borders. Scholars have thus debated as to whether or not the US had exaggerated the situation or the threat warranted by AQIM in order to initiate the large deployment and massive funding towards US counter-terrorism measures which have resulted in embarrassing situations for the TSCTP (Harmon, 2010: 23). Four military armies that the US trained under the PSI have proceeded to overthrow their government. These include Chad in 2006, Mauritania in 2008, Niger in 2010 and the most recent being Mali in 2012. While the latter coup enabled AQIM to capitalise on the situation, the jihadists were prevented from overthrowing the government when the French launched operation Serval.

7.2.2 An Assessment of Operation Serval

On the 11th of January 2013, at the request of Malian transitional government, France launched Operation Serval to defend the Malian capital from falling into the control of AQIM and its jihadist allies. Having already positioned its equipment and military at different bases in the region such as Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, Abidjan in the Ivory Coast and N'Djamena in Chad, the French military intervened within hours of the request by the Malian transitional government. Within the next months, the operation possessed a sizeable troop of about 6 500 military personnel of which 4000 were French, 2000 were from Chad and the rest from other countries (Reeve & Pelter, 2014: 10). The operation also received support

from allies of France. The support by the US, UK, UAE, Netherlands, Sweden and Canada came in the form of strategic transport aircrafts for troops, helicopters and armour while Germany, Belgium, Denmark and Spain provided tactical transport aircraft and battlefield helicopters (French Ministry of Defence, 2013). The aims of the mission were directly clear: helping the Malian Armed Forces to fight the jihadists while protecting civilians and assisting Mali in recovering its sovereignty and legitimacy (French Ministry of Defence, 2013). As elaborated in the previous chapter, the operation was perceived as successful in that the jihadists were defeated and dispersed into the Sahel.

Enthused by the success of Operation Serval, the French administration initiated operation Barkhane in 2014. Contrasting Serval which had a specific time frame, Barkhane had an open-ended mandate that would see 3 000 French military combatants based indefinitely in five states of the Sahel (also referred to as the G5 Sahel) – Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso. According to the French Ministry of Defence (2014), Operation Barkhane had two objectives, namely, to support the Sahel-Saharan partners in their fight against terrorist groups and to prevent the establishment of sanctuaries for jihadists in the Sahel. It is interesting to note that the objectives of Barkhane have a similar nuance to those of the PSI.

In assessing Operation Serval for its eighteen months' duration reveals both successes and limitations. The operation claimed tactical success such as combating jihadist groups, eliminating and repelling their fighters. Yet, the operation has also encountered numerous strategic limitations. Despite the French and UN military presence in Mali, the country has not regained its full sovereignty as there are still insurgent groups fighting in the North of the country rendering it ungovernable. The French administration and its allies mistakenly perceived the problem in Mali as a terrorist rather than a political problem. In so doing, it focused on defeating AQIM and its affiliates at the expense of addressing the prior political conflict (between the Tuaregs groups and the government) that contributed to a conducive environment for the terrorist groups (Reeve & Pelter, 2014: 26).

After the intervention, porous borders have allowed jihadists to disperse into neighbouring countries, thus transferring jihadist terrorism there. Consequently, groups that have splintered from AQIM have strengthened and become more ambitious as demonstrated in the increase in attacks in Mali, Niger and Mauritania in the aftermath of operation Serval (Mielcarek, 2013). According to Reeve & Pelter (2014: 27), ransom payments paid to AQIM by

governments in order to secure the release of hostages have also undermined the counter-terrorism efforts by the French military.

7.3 Policy Recommendations: Towards a Viable Solution

After having examined the existing counter-terrorism framework models of the UN and the AU that are in place in Africa, the ensuing sections suggest some recommendations in order to curb the rising threat of AQIM and other terrorist groups that are in operation in the Sahel. To this extent, it becomes imperative to be reminded of the words of the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, who stated the following:

Our strategy against terrorism must be comprehensive and should be based on five pillars : it must aim at dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or supporting it; it must deny terrorists access to funds and materials; it must deter states from sponsoring terrorism; it must develop state capacity to defeat terrorism; and it must defend human rights (Annan, 2005:26).

A concerted effort towards effectively countering the threat of terrorism needs to contain these five pillars in order to provide a holistic approach towards engaging this threat. Over the years, the UN has passed counter-terrorism resolutions that have gradually incorporated these five pillars. The period after the 9/11 events has witnessed an increase in a counter-terrorism measures focusing predominantly on the security aspect. Yet, cases such as Afghanistan and Iraq have led scholars and policy makers to realise the importance of development within the paradigm of counter-terrorism measure. Subsequently, there was a shift from an emphasis on security towards a more balanced approach that include the nexus of security and development. It is with this in mind that the following recommendations are formulated.

7.3.1 Greater Cooperation of States in the Maghreb Region

From the above, it can be argued that Africa has been open to security assistance from the international community as witnessed in the establishment of the TSCTP and even the French partnership in the region. Yet, there has been a disparity between the rhetoric and the assistance provided as most times counter-terrorism frameworks initiated by the AU fail in many states due to a lack of funds. In this regard, it is important for the international community to assist and form partnership with the AU prior to attempting to provide funds to individual countries in their battle against terrorism. While the US security initiative through the TSCTP have proven beneficial to the states involved since its inception in 2005 (Filiu,

2009:10), the US has been less active in military actions than their French counterparts as signalled through Operation Serval followed by Barkhane. Meanwhile, the French may have been successful in expelling the jihadists from Northern Mali but its increased military presence have done little to alleviate the belief that the Western nations have a hidden agenda in their ‘interventions’ in Africa. In order to dispel this notion that the West is only concerned about their own interests, Filiu (2009:10) recommends that these nations keep a low profile lest they provide a palpable excuse for jihadi propaganda. Additionally, France and the US should assume the role of support to the AU instead of taking the lead role in their operations.

Since AQIM’s theatre of operation in the Sahel stretches over various states in North Africa, it is not viable to expect that either the French or the US in cooperation with a few states can actively counter the threat of terrorism. In order to effectively counter the threat of AQIM and its affiliates, it is imperative for North and West African states to cooperate so as to mount a concerted counter-terrorism effort. This should include inter-regional information sharing among states and the creation of a joint commitment of forces in the Sahel with the aim of undertaking joint transnational operations along the borders. The North African regional block – the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA) consisting of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia – should be made operational once again.

The fact that AQIM has evolved from a group exclusive within the Algerian context to a transnational terror group operating in the Sahel, implies that there need to be increased bilateral exchanges between regional blocks such as UMA, ECOWAS and ECCAS to make the trans-Saharan cooperation a success. In this regard, Ammour (2012:7) recommends that to promote efficient intelligence sharing, ‘stabilization efforts must be structured around integrated regional zones grappling with the same problems’. To prevent local resentment, these integrated forces should consist of locals as well, for instance, in the case of countering the threat in Mali the Tuaregs groups should be incorporated within the armed forces. However, it is also important not to create a situation where the locals are armed to the point that they can initiate their own armed rebellion.

7.3.2 Towards a More Holistic Approach: A focus on Development

Although security is important in countering terrorism, it is only a part of the solution. To effectively counter the threat of AQIM and its affiliates, there is need for a greater

coordinated effort among the states of the region not only in terms of security action but also in respect to development. To this end, these states should resolve ‘the current condition of political stasis, economic stagnation, social atrophy, and cultural discrimination’ (Pham, 2011b: 253). A greater political will on the part of all the African leaders is required to confront challenges such as ‘bad governance, poverty, local conflicts over resources, corruption, youth unemployment and alienated peripheries’ (Crisis Group, 2014:23). It is imperative to note that while these latter issues may not create terrorists as such, they nonetheless incubate a context of grievances that is conducive towards the recruitment of individuals by terrorist groups. As examined in this study, the context of poor governance, unemployment and corruption were proven to be primary catalysts that contributed towards the outbreak of the Algerian civil war.

One important aspect towards alleviating the threat of AQIM is to promote good governance in the region, especially in the context of Mali where intermittent cases of terrorist attacks have occurred in recent years. However, it is difficult to practice good governance in a situation where there is conflict and a lack of trust. Presently, the conflict in Northern Mali is still ongoing as various armed groups continue to violate the cessation of hostility agreement that was signed in Algiers on the 19th February (UNSC, 2015). To resolve this issue of poor governance, it is imperative for regional blocks to promote a commitment to democratic ideals such as advocating for good governance while rejecting military coups, respecting of human rights and listening to the voice of the people. Another pertinent challenge to good governance is corruption by government officials. Resolving this issue requires that the international aid packages are attached with strict anti-corruption strategies consisting of ‘formation of authoritative, well-resourced civil society oversight mechanisms and simple, measurable indicators’ (Crisis Group, 2015: 23). In addition to the international aid donors, it is imperative that regional governments should also support and implement anti-corruption strategies nationally.

Another way to counter terrorism is to foster environments that are not conducive for terrorist recruitment. This can be achieved (at least in part) by establishing opportunities of employment and education. A focus on sustainable development with the objective of responding to the social and economic structural problem of the society helps to ‘eliminate the conditions favourable to terrorists’ (Jebnoun, 2007:19). As Ammour (2012: 6-7) notes, expanding economic integration between Maghrebians, Sahelians, and Sub-Saharan partners

can result in establishing projects which in turn would increase the accessibility of disregarded regions. In responding to the grievances of the populace the government would not only garner legitimacy and trust but also receive support which in turn would deal a blow to the recruitment strategies of terrorist groups.

There is also a greater need to empower the youth through education, skills training and capacity building. To prevent a situation where the young people are unemployed after school – a situation in Algeria that led to the October riots of 1988 – the governments of the region need to adhere to a long-term commitment of creating economic opportunities for the growing youth population (Pham, 2011b: 253). For instance, this could come in the form of special policies that equip the youth with skills training in order to help them find employment or introduce programmes that are geared towards creating sustainable economic development initiatives aimed at the unemployed youth.

7.3.3 Countering Extremist Ideologies

Poverty and unemployment in themselves are not the efficient causes of terrorism but rather factors that facilitate the recruitment of individuals by terrorist groups. Bin Laden and Al Zawahiri, who are regarded as the most infamous of all jihadists, were wealthy individuals – Bin Laden was the son of a millionaire and Zawahiri was a surgeon. As noted in chapter four of this study, the leaders of Salafi-jihadist groups distort the original teachings in order to rationalise their causes. Poverty and social inequalities create a milieu that is susceptible for young people to be easily exposed to these radical and extremist ideologies. Echoing this argument, the AU Peace and Security council (2014) posit that ‘social grievances, unresolved conflicts, personal or community identity claims, religion, history, marginalization, exclusion and a host of other factors...produce an ideological narrative that creates an enabling environment for recruitment and radicalization’. Therefore, in order to counter extremist ideologies, two aspects need to be taken into account.

Firstly, there is a need to tackle the issues that foster the milieu that enables recruitment, namely, social and economic inequalities. Ways to tackle the latter issues were discussed in the previous subsection above. Secondly, a concerted effort by different actors within society is required to formulate programmes dealing with counter-radicalisation and counter-extremist ideologies. To this end, it is important for government to partner with members of

civil societies to formulate such measures as to effectively counter extremist ideologies. Programmes should be aimed at creating awareness of the extremist ideologies among the local communities. In this regard, religious leaders should denounce all forms of extremist teachings in particular the distortions of sacred texts used by jihadist groups such as AQIM. Islamic religious leaders should further collaborate and establish religious curriculum that aims at rectifying the distorted message advocated by the Salafi-Jihadist extremists. One example is the letter that Muslim scholars wrote to ISIL leader Al Baghdadi spotlighting his error and distortion of the text of the Quran (Ababakar et al., 2014).

Additionally, counter-radicalisation programmes should be introduced in schools where children can learn about inter-cultural understanding, tolerance, non-violence and respect for all religions. Another place that is vulnerable to violent radicalisation is prison where inmates are easily influenced by fellow jihadists. Special programmes should be implemented to prevent prison from becoming pool of recruits for jihadist groups such as rehabilitation programmes consisting of psychological counselling and religious education. Internet and social media is another avenue that jihadist groups exploit in order to disseminate their propaganda. This is dangerously evident in the surge of individuals, male and female, that flock to join ISIL in Iraq and Syria. Consequently, those who are not able to travel to fight with the group are inspired by their ideologies and conduct individual attacks in their own countries (often referred to as lone wolf attacks).

While it is important for government to curb this propaganda through censoring and monitoring these websites and social media arena, it should be careful not to go as far as undermining the democratic ideals of freedom of expression. To adequately counter extremist ideologies, it is imperative for the government of the region to work in tandem with their civil societies to formulate policies and legislation with the above in mind and implement them. In turn, the AU in conjunction with global partners should provide support to regional and local governments in their effort to counter extremist ideologies and preventing the exacerbation of terrorism. Chelin & Mngomezulu (2015:123) emphasise that countering violent radicalisation should be perceived as a collective responsibility and ‘should not be shouldered solely by spiritual leaders but citizens, governments and international actors’.

7.3.4 Responding to the crime-terror nexus

The AU Peace and Security Council Report (2014) acknowledges that the link between transnational terrorism and organised crime has become increasingly apparent especially in the Sahel. The report overtly acknowledges this when it defines the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO after its French acronym), an offshoot of AQIM, as a group ‘financed by narco-trafficking, comprising radical elements and fanatics with a mercantile profit maximization mind-set’ (2014: Par 19). This proliferating trend of the crime-terror nexus is a threat to peace and security in the continent and the world. In addition to possessing an inadequate legal framework to deal with the crime-terror threat, many states differ on their stance towards hybrid groups.

While in one state a hybrid group would be classified as a terrorist entity, another state would perceive the same group as a criminal organisation. Ammour (2012:2) captures this dilemma between the Algeria and the Sahelian states in this regard when he notes that ‘they [Algerians] see AQIM as a new type of terrorist organization driven by its extremist ideology. Sahelian states, in contrast, stress the criminal nature of the group, with its heavy engagement in drug and arms trafficking, as the most dangerous aspect of this regional threat’. Hence, the failure to formulate an adequate definition of the threat at hand results in a fragmented response to the danger.

Having realised the threat of the crime-terror nexus and the danger it poses, the UN passed resolution 2195 on the 14th December 2014. In the latter, the UN warns states of the increasing danger of terrorist groups dealing in cross-border criminal activities as a means to fund their activities. Although the resolution does not delve into the motivations and functioning of hybrid groups such as AQIM, it nonetheless emphasises that states be assisted in implementing legal frameworks that can deal with people involved in terrorist and organised criminal activities.

One way to combat the crime-terror threat is to establish a joint-task force at national and regional level that investigates the convergence of organized crime organisations and terrorist entities. Incidentally, this is what the new President of Nigeria (Muhammadu Buhari) is trying to do. The responsibility of the task force would be to monitor and evaluate the trends and movement of these hybrid groups and provide feedback to the member-states. The agreement to establish African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), which is

designed to address the threat of organized crime on the continent, is a beginning to achieving this joint-task force. The objective of AFRIPOL is to ‘promote police coordination at strategic, operational and tactical levels bearing in mind the common challenges facing the African countries in terms of terrorism and organized transnational crime’ (AU PSR, 2014: par 63).

While AFRIPOL is a positive start towards addressing the crime-terror threat, there is a need for the newly formed organisation to receive adequate support nationally, regionally and internationally. To successfully address the threat of AQIM and its affiliates, AFRIPOL needs to foster cooperation in transnational policing by ‘building liaison networks, exchanging police personnel, organising foreign training programs, joint operations, intelligence sharing operations and capacity building programs’ (Liang, 2011:4).

The private sector, particularly the financial industry, can become pivotal partners in combatting the crime-terror nexus as they can help identify and report cases of fraud, money laundering and other illegal financial activities. Furthermore, these industries can work with the government to identify lacunae in the financial system which criminal/terrorist groups exploit and help formulate laws and policies to address these challenges. There should be greater cooperation between law enforcement organisations that deal with organized crime and counter-terrorism institutions on a local, national, regional and international level. In short, as Pham (2011b: 254) cautions, AQIM currently ‘cannot be effectively combated by military means alone...an even broader approach will be required, one that does justice to the growing nexus between extremism, terrorism, and organized criminality’.

7.4 Quo Vadis AQIM

After assessing the present activities of AQIM, there are two possibilities that emerge concerning the possibilities of the future of the group. Firstly, AQIM could continue to break up into different splinter groups in the Sahel region. Secondly, through a coordinated effort from the international, regional and local communities, AQIM could be defeated. Apropos the first possibility, it appears that it is already in progress. Several splinter groups from AQIM have already joined forces and controlling major parts of the Sahel and West Africa. For instance, Al Mourabitoun – a merger of two former AQIM splinter groups Al Mulathamun Battalion (The Battalion of Those Who Sign in Blood) and MUJAO – has been responsible for the majority of attacks in Mali in the past two years. Its leader, Mokhtar

Belmokhtar, recently pledged allegiance to Al Zawahiri and changed the jihadist group name to Al Qaeda in West Africa (Joscelyn, 2015). While some scholars perceive the name change as a commitment of Belmokhtar to Al Qaeda Central, it may also signal a move away from the shadow of AQIM as he aims to establish his group as the predominant Al Qaeda organisation in the Sahel and West Africa. Under the leadership of Belmokhtar, the group has become one of the most infamous and dangerous group operating in the Sahel to the extent that it was labelled as the most dangerous threat to US interests in the Sahel (US Department of State, 2014).

The on-going jihadist feud between ISIL and Al Qaeda central have resulted in ideological differences between jihadist groups around the globe and particularly Africa. This is pertinently observant in the case of the name change of Boko Haram to the Islamic State in West Africa after its leader pledged allegiance to the ISIL's Al Baghdadi. The ISIL – Al Qaeda feud has also affected AQIM as there appears to be an ideological battle of allegiance amongst its members. On the 14th of July 2014, AQIM's judge for the central region Abu Abdullah Othman al-Asemi released a tape pledging support to the ISIL leader. Two weeks later, the emir of AQIM, Droukdel opening renewed the group's allegiance to Al Qaeda's leader Al Zawahiri (Maghreb News, 2014). This aperture within AQIM, resonating with the rift amongst jihadists group over the continent, may result in the group splitting in two where one division follows Al Zawahiri while the other pledges to Al Baghdadi. A further cause of concern is that jihadist groups in Africa may turn against each other due to differing ideologies as it the case in Syria between Al Qaeda's Al Nusra Front and ISIL.

Having said this, the second possibility appears as a distant and unattainable ideal. At present, the prospects of eliminating terrorism on the African continent is a monumental task that is made more difficult with the proliferation of jihadist groups and increase in lone wolf attacks as exemplified in the Tunisian museum attacks on the 18th of March 2015 and the beach resort on the 26th of June 2015. With the increase in terror attacks by both individuals and groups, it becomes evident that military force alone is not a viable approach to address the issue of terrorism, more so with respect to AQIM. Taking cue from the Global Terrorism Index 2014, Chelin & Mngomezulu (2015:123) spotlight that initiating a political process and policing have been two of the most successful strategies for defeating terrorist groups from the 1960s. The two strategies were responsible for defeating over 80 per cent of terrorist groups while military engagement accounted for only about 7 per cent.

The strategy of initiating a political process may not be a viable option in dealing with AQIM due to its ideology and objectives. Military engagement is also unfeasible in ending AQIM as exemplified in the French military operation Serval. However, policing is a more achievable method to defeating AQIM, especially regarding the current split occurring within the group. This would require that the above-mentioned recommendations be effectuated, with specific focus on countering extremist ideologies of the group and addressing the grievances that lead these individuals to join the group in the first place. This would also provide AFRIPOL with the opportunity to participate in its first mission and achieve a successful result. In short, this indicates that there is hope in defeating AQIM but only if the concerted effort on part of actors concerned in countering the threat reflects the urgency of the situation.

7.5 Overall Summary

This study began by providing an introductory background to the socio-political context that precipitated the emergence of AQIM on the Algerian and North African scene. Then, in order to situate the reader within the broader perspective of the study, key concepts were delineated from existing literature to achieve that aim. These themes included terrorism, organised crime, ideology, the crime-terror continuum and their inter-relatedness within the AQIM network. As a means to further comprehend the functioning of the group in relation to the ideology that drives its members, a brief historical excursion was undertaken in the Salafist-Jihadist school of thought. In tandem with religious ideology, the context that inspired the rise of Militant Islamism was also examined in events such as the Iranian revolution and the Afghan jihad against the Soviets.

Moving from a general to a more particular perspective, the study then proceeded to discover the origins of AQIM by analysing the root causes of the Algerian civil war. The assessment of the Algerian conflict revealed that the combination of the colonial legacy, poor economic decisions and increasing grievances of the populace contributed towards the outbreak of the civil war. This evaluation correlated with the greed and grievance theoretical framework advanced in chapter three of the study as a means to understand the origins of conflict. Subsequently the evolution of AQIM was examined through the lens of the convergence thesis, also elaborated in chapter three. To this end, the study assessed the number of terror attacks and the criminal activities conducted by the group from the time of its emergence until present times. Although AQIM has reduced its number of terror attacks in the past years, it has by no means transformed into an organised crime network. Hence, the findings

of the study reveal that AQIM has transformed into a hybrid organisation that displays both economic and ideological motivations. In other words, AQIM behaves both as a terrorist group and an organised crime entity.

Taking a cue from this observation, this study proffered some recommendations for states to combat the menace of AQIM on the continent. Prior to giving its recommendations, the study assessed current counter-terrorism measures that are in place and highlighted their deficiency in dealing with the new form of threat that AQIM poses. To effectively counter-AQIM, the recommendations that the study suggests include greater cooperation among local and regional governments in terms of military and intelligence sharing, focus on development and good governance, alleviation of poverty and countering extremist ideologies in schools and prisons *inter alia*. Finally, it is imperative to remember that AQIM cannot be defeated instantaneously but rather it would require patience and effort which would have to be translated into a long-term commitment.

Therefore, the recommendations given above should be viewed in this light. As such, their success requires greater cooperation not only between the international, regional and local governments but also between the government and its citizenry. It is only when the government can gain the trust and legitimacy of the populace through good governance, reducing poverty, eliminating discrimination, preventing situation of grievances and improving economic opportunities for all that groups such as AQIM can lose their *raison d'être* and thus function only within the confines of history books. Failure to do this would be tantamount to trying to extinguish a conflagration of fire using bare hands or trying to kill a wild lion using a pocketknife. Terrorism is a complex phenomenon. The only way it can be combated is through concerted effort by different stakeholders. It needs a comprehensive approach.

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