From Security Issues in the Sahel to the Dynamics of Armed Groups in Mali

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Introduction

• Instability and insecurity in the Sahel-Saharan region

• Transnational jihadist groups in the region (AQIM, MUJWA, Boko Haram, Al Mourabitoune...)

• International and regional security forces on the ground (France, United States, MINUSMA, G5 Sahel...)
Beyond terrorism and the Global jihad

• Terrorism is polysemic and complex

• Two dimensions of terrorism: Goals and means

• Rhetoric strategy

• Global VS local VS glocal jihad (Marret, 2008)

• Safe haven as a social space

• Does not capture the complexities of the conflict
The Situation in Brief: Mali

- Mali has been undergoing episodes of violence particularly Tuareg rebellions since its independence in 1960.

- The latest Tuareg rebellion started in January 2012; however, this time jihadist groups were among the actors of the conflict.

- Regional dichotomies between North and South (and the Center...).

- The Algiers peace agreement of 2015.
L’Azawad, territoire de la rebellion
No peace – no war in Mali

- Peace agreement but ongoing violence
- Elites for power and resources...
- However, conflict of representations and memories
- Communities do not share the same stories:
  - Between ethnic groups (Bambaras and Tuareg people)
  - Between Tuareg tribes
Source: Philippe Rekacewicz, Au “pays” des Touaregs, Le monde diplomatique, avril 1995
The Tuareg political order: two axes

First axis: Tribes

- Differences between the precolonial and the colonial times.

- During the postcolonial time: involvement of the Malian state in the tribal governance.

- Tribes are not an official administrative structure...

- But still used and present in the representations of the Tuareg elites...
The Tuareg political order: two axes

Second axis: Social status ("Castes")

- *Imushagh* (« nobles »)
- *Imghad* (« vassals »)
- *Inadan* (« craftsman»)
- *Iklan* (« freed slave », « Bella » is most often used)
Stories of violence and Tuareg narratives

- The colonial time and the rebellion of Firhoun
- The Tuareg revolt (1963-1964)
- The *Ishumar* and the rebellion of the 1990s
- The Tuareg rebellion of 2006
- The irredentism of Ibrahim Ag Bahanga
Stories of violence and Tuareg narratives

• The Tuareg rebellion in 2012:
  ➢ Ambivalence of Iyad Ag Ghali and Ansar Dine.
  ➢ CMA vs Platform --) HCUA vs GATIA ---) Ifoghas vs Imghad
  ➢ Fragmentation and tribalization
  ➢ The forgotten role of women
Selected Publications:

Adib Bencherif, *De la « question touarègue » aux mémoires du conflit : pour une réconciliation malienne*, *Rapport Centre FrancoPaix*, février 2018, 


Thank you!

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