ICTs, Social Media and Tendencies of Radicalization in the Sahel

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2012-2020: Sahel conflict and violence increases: case of the Fulani

**NEW TERRORISM HOT SPOT: AFRICA’S ‘ARC OF INSTABILITY’**

- Active al-Qaida affiliate, ally, and/or among Top 40 Failed-Fragile States
- Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQM) in Sahel - Agence France Presse & Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative

‘New’ War dynamics

• Amalgam of actors: Jihadists, militias, ethnic organisations, military, international community (MINUSMA, G5, EU, Embassies)
• Transnational networks; amplified by internet and accessing social media
• Violence as a weapon of marginalized groups

Increasing violence, ugly violence; ethnic violence

• Massacres of villages, 160-200 death
• Ethnic clashes
• Militias who arrest and kill people
• Military who kill ‘imagined’ jihadists
• Jihadists who attack army and elites
• Gender based violence
• Etc.

• 4000 deaths reported in 2019 (UN)
• IDPs and Refugees: 1.000.000 in the central Sahel
Casualties from 2015 to 2019
Number of deaths from armed violence in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger

Source: acleddata.com
GSM coverage 2001-2013
Changing possibilities to organize: strong ties: Ethnic Linking: Cameroonian mobile societies (Nyamnjoh 2014)
Nomads Unite: History of ‘emancipation’
Information flows on Social Media
Advancement of new Information and Communication Technologies: Example from rural Mali (Togola 2019)

- 87% of the population has a phone
- 59% are smartphones;
- 28% simple telephones with functions like bluetooth and simpel FB
One of the ethnic violences in Mali: Fulbe/Dogon: complementarity and opposition

• Fulbe in Mali accused of Jihadism; they did indeed join, but not all
• Fulbe spread over West-Central Africa; Dogon: Pays-Dogon in Mali
• Dogon are partly also in the Jihad, no numbers known

• Dogon-Fulbe: sedentary – nomads; farmers-herders
• Dogon-Fulbe: history of domination and slavery

• Today: Dogon/Dozo militia ‘protect’ population where the state is absent; Fulbe also have their militia and protect their own villages
• Military plays a double role
Fulbe empires: Jihad in the 19th Centuries
Identity references: History & Memory ‘work’

‘Diina wartan’:

The regime of Maacina will come back (population Inner Delta)
But at the same time:
Dogon (farmers/sedentary) and the memory of Fulbe Power in the region: slavery and domination

The dancing Fulani mask in Dogon Festival
Farmer herder relations reference to a symbiotic past in times of increasing violent conflict (picture 1991)
Propaganda:
Hamma Koufa, Leader of Katiba Maacina circulating messages: preaches with reference to Jihad, and reference to the marginalization of the Fulani pastoralists
Conclusion: Conflict and Communication Dynamics

ICT (connectivity): organisational dynamics

Political Agency: nomadic groups and radicalization

Information: Marginalisation discourse - othering

Conflict and violence
Of interest:

hope-less a film by V4T

biographies de la radicalisation
(French)

biographies of radicalization
(English)

Voice4Thought
CTD site of research
www.nomadesahel.org