

THE RISE OF SECESSION MOVEMENTS IN WEST AFRICA  
AND ITS SECURITY IMPACT ON THE REGION

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
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by

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## ABSTRACT

THE RISE OF SECESSION MOVEMENTS IN WEST AFRICA AND ITS SECURITY IMPACT ON THE REGION, by Mousbaou Atcha Boukari, 114 pages.

West African countries have experienced the rise of secession movements given their independence with significant impact upon their stability. Some scholars have targeted ethnic marginalization, bad governance and poverty as being key factors to be addressed if the desire of the people to secede is to be reduced. However, the recent escalation of the separatist movements in Mali and associated terrorist activities has destabilized the country, and the West African region, and calls for long term solutions. This paper analyzes factors that have been addressed by Niger and Senegal in order to avoid the Tuareg 2012 uprising in Mali and the escalation of the secession movements in the southern Casamance region in Senegal. Factors such as grievance mitigation, successful decentralized policy, sound insurgency mitigation strategy and good diplomacy need to be addressed in order to mitigate this rise in secessionist sentiments.

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## ACRONYMS

AOF	French West Africa ( <i>Afrique Occidentale Française</i> )
ATT	<i>Amadou Toumani Touré</i>
ATNMC	Niger-Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change
AQMI	Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb
ENI	National Hydrocarbons Authority ( <i>Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi</i> )
FLEC	The Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda
FLAA	<i>Front de Libération de l’Azawak et de l’Aïr</i>
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPE	International Political Economy
HCRAD	High Commission for Administrative Reform and Decentralization
HI	Horizontal Inequalities
MFDC	Movement of the Democratic Force of Casamance
MNJ	Niger Movement for Justice
MNLA	National Liberation Movement of Azawad
MSF	<i>Medecin Sans Frontière</i>
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SONATRACH	<i>Société Nationale de Transport et de Traitement des Hydrocarbures</i> (Algeria)
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program



WWI

World War 1

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Secession occurs frequently in Africa, even though official diplomatic doctrine is firmly against the movement (Young 1965, 82). Secession movements, though a world phenomenon, have been prominent in Africa since the separate countries proclaimed independence in the 1960s. From Nigeria to Ethiopia and from Sudan to South Africa, separatist movements have encountered diverse fates. Some succeeded, others failed; some turned into civil war, others did not; some went dormant, and other rejuvenated. What is a secession movement? Why do some people decide to separate from a central government? What makes it a failure or success? Oxford dictionary defines secession as the action of withdrawing formally from membership of a federation or body, especially a political state. This paper will focus on the mitigation of the rise of the secession movements in West Africa. The word secession will be used alternatively with the word separation throughout this paper.

The West African region is bordered on the south and west by the Atlantic Ocean. The north is limited by the Sahara Desert and the eastern bordering line is along Nigeria and Niger. It has 16 countries with a land mass of about 5,112,903 km<sup>2</sup> and approximately 365 million people. The sub-region is enriched with diverse cultures and ethnic groups. It is the bedrock of the three famous medieval empires known as the Ghana, Mali and Songhay Empires, and several other kingdoms among which are the Benin, Mossi and Ashanti (Kennedy 2016).

These tribal empires constituted the socio-political structures of the time preceding the European colonization period in the mid-to-late 1800s. This period of colonization imposed upon these indigenous empires artificial lines upon the continent of Africa demarcating the new European style of political organization which the Africans were forced to inherit at their independence in the 1960s. These artificial constructs are one of the lingering sources of the desire for some to secede from their current national governments.

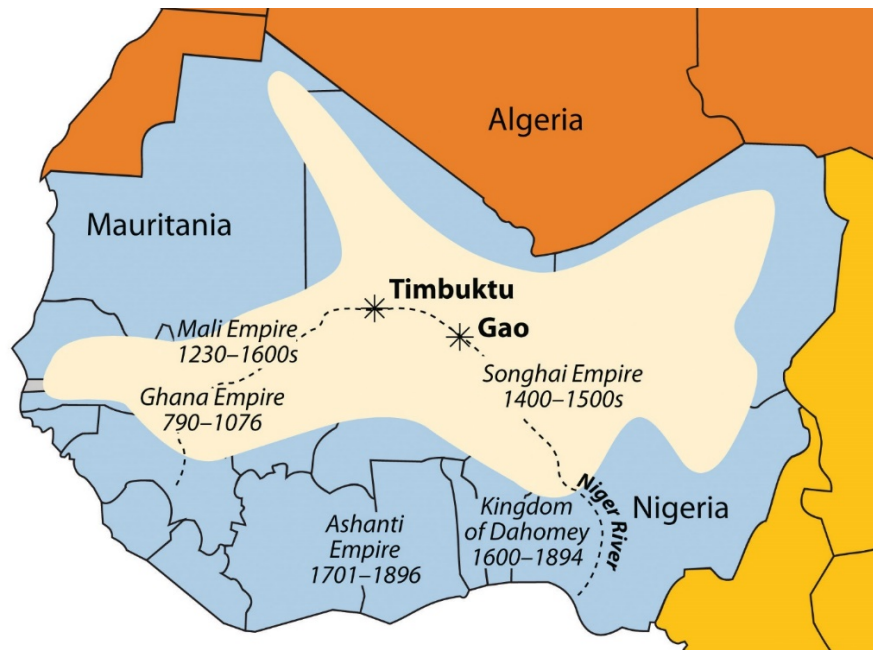


Figure 1. Map of Empires and Kingdoms in West Africa

*Source:* Royal Berglee, “World Regional Geography: People, Places, and Globalization, v. 1.0,” FlatWorld, accessed November 3, 2017, [https://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/2657?e=berglee\\_1.0-ch07\\_s01](https://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/2657?e=berglee_1.0-ch07_s01), figure 7.5.

The kingdom of Benin in the 15th century stretched from the eastern part of the modern Republic of Benin to the Niger River in the southeastern part of modern Nigeria. The coastal belt is fertile and covered with tropical forest, beyond which lies a narrow strip of grassland savannah which is proper for farming. The Benin Empire derived its name from the Bini people who dominated the area. The city and its people were more properly called the Edo and these people are found today mostly around Benin City in Nigeria. At its zenith, the empire is said to have stretched from Onitsha in the east of Nigeria to the present-day nation of Ghana, including the Yoruba land (modern Benin and Nigeria) and the Ewe land (modern Benin, Togo and Ghana). The Ga people of Ghana also trace their ancestry to the ancient Kingdom of Benin (Osadolor 2001).

West Africa was the land of great empires. From the early days of the Ghana Empire to the last days of the Songhay Empire, the dynamic interaction between people in these empires resulted in the sharing of beliefs and cultures. The Ghana Empire, which should not be confused with the modern Republic of Ghana, came into existence around 600 AD. The principal people of ancient Ghana were the Soninke and the empire stretched from the city of Niani in the modern Republic of Guinea to Awdaghost in Mauritania. As for the Mali Empire, the Mande people shared ancient customs with the Malinke and Bamana as well as the Malinka of Guinea, the Mandinka of Senegambia, the Guinea-Bissau Mandinka, and the Dyula of northern Côte d'Ivoire. One of the peripheral Mande groups are the Soninke, who were the founders and rulers of the Ghana Empire. The populations of Mali also included the desert Tuareg, who are the Berber people, who founded the Almoravid Empire in the 11th century. The empire also included the Songhay people of the Kingdom of Gao which eventually become the Songhay Empire.

The Songhay Empire covered a vast portion of Western Africa known as Songhay; the Sorko, and the Tuareg of the Songhay Empire were among the first people in the region of Gao (Conrad 2005, 15-64).

When studying the history of West African kingdoms and their medieval empires, it is apparent that people from different tribes and ethnic groups, to a large extent, were interrelated and shared similar cultures and traditions. For example, the Benin Kingdom extended from the current Ghana including the “Yorubaland” (Benin Republic and Nigeria) and the Ewe land (Republic of Benin, south Togo and western Ghana). The same relationship continued to exist through the time of the medieval empires. In the Ghana empire, the Wangara people, the descendants of the Soninke as well as the Sa(gha)nogo, the Kamaghaté, the Diaba(gha)té, the Timité, the Cissé-Haidara, the Fofana and the Bagayogo had ethnic linkage with the Malinke and Bambara, Sarkho and Tuareg of Mali and the Songhay Empire (Conrad 2005, 15-64). These groups of people were linked culturally, traditionally and religiously. Today, they are spread across the West African region due the arbitrary colonial partitioning of the continent; however, most of them still keep this cultural bond alive.

The European colonial powers divided the continent without respect to the social, cultural, or historical background of the people they separated (Englebert, Tarango and Carter 2002). Consequently, in the southeast part of West Africa, the Igbo, Hausa and a large portion of the people of Yorubaland were forced to live together without considering their cultural differences. In the south, Ewe ethnic groups were split between Benin, Togo and Ghana. To the west of that sub-region, the Madinka, the descendants of the Mali Empire, were scattered between Guinea Conakry, Cote d’Ivoire, Mali, Gambia,

Guinea Bissau, and Senegal. In the upper north, the Sorko and Tuareg of the Songhay Empire were divided and forced to live in countries such as Niger, Mali and Mauritania, away from their own ethnic groups (Conrad 2005, 15-64).

This situation led to socio-politico-economic crises across Africa and the present day proliferation of secession movements in West Africa. These movements are one of the direct consequences of the arbitrary partitioning of the African continent and are the source of the frictions and grievances created by a forced and difficult cohabitation. Factors such as bad governance and socioeconomic marginalization favored the nascent nature of the movement. The desire for ethnic and culture autonomy, which has led to secessionist desires, according to some scholars, has now become a world phenomenon.

There have been arguments and theories about the secession movements. Liberal theory recognizes the peoples' universal right of self-determination to secede if they feel persecuted (Lehning 1998). According to Lehning, separation should be considered to rectify grave injustice. Scholars of the Unity Theory warn that separation never solves secession movement crises (Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009). Whatever the theories may be, it is safe to assert that many countries around the world had or have been experiencing these movements.

The United States of America, Canada and most European countries have gone through this movement at some point in their history. The increase of independent states has been a defining feature of the post-World War II era. There have been 132 newly created states since 1945, a threefold increase in 70 years. Even a sitting United States President once promoted the right of people to self-determination if they could not keep the union. Then President Buchanan once stated: "The union rests upon public opinion,



and it can never be forced on people through war; if people cannot live together or love one another, it must one day perish. Congress possesses many means of preserving it by conciliation, but the sword was not placed in their hand to preserve it by force” (Buchanan 1860).

In Africa, many countries are vulnerable to the desire for secession because of factors such as high level of grievances due to lack of strong democratic institutions, corruption, and ethnic marginalization; unequal share of resources through a superficial decentralization policy; mismanagement of the secession related violence either by being too lax or too brutal. Externally, the influence of the so called powerful countries known as “Great Powers” is also a non-negligible factor (Coggins 2006). There are also other factors that scholars have often referred to that are associated with separatist movements. Countries such as Morocco, Angola, Cameroon, Sudan, and Ethiopia, as well as Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal in West Africa have been dealing with secession crises for decades. As time passes, these separatist desires have decreased, except in eastern Africa where Eritrea successfully seceded from Ethiopia in 1991. The decline in secessionist tensions can often be the result of decisive action in terms of the deployment of state security forces, as well as negotiation. The policy of the stick and carrot approach has often led to state authorities promising socio-economic and political reforms to avoid secessionist desires (Bamfo 2012).

This situation raises significant issues concerning reasons why many separatist movements end up in violence or civil war. It is important to emphasize the different *modus operandi* of most separatist groups. In certain situations, the groups seek legal means to address their grievances whereas in other cases they use violence and war to promote

their cause. The latter case is usually the evolution of a peaceful movement evolving into violence and large scale conflict. This violence often disrupts the security, economic development and harmony in the country. Many authors and journalists have discussed the motives and ideas behind the use of violence by most separatist groups. Brown and Keating argue that when a group of people in a nation resort to violence to claim their rights, it is a response to a long standing unresolved grievance (Brown 1996).

In recent years, the independence of European countries, such as Montenegro in 2006 and Kosovo in 2008, could have sparked and revived other separatist movements in the world. Scotland in Great Britain and Catalonia in Spain, have pushed forward their new intention to become independent nations due to the recent withdrawal of Great Britain from the Eurozone, known as “Brexit”. It could have given motivation and hope to the pro-separatists in these countries to accentuate the pressure on the central governments. The current events in Europe reminds us that independence and the demand for freedom remain potent forces in today’s world.

The rise in tension in Europe has impacted the countries in Africa where secession movements were dormant leading to South Sudan’s secession in 2011. This situation marked a significant breakthrough in the fight for secession on the continent. In Cameroon, for example, the government has taken drastic measures to overcome the revived separatist movements that unilaterally declare the independence of the English speaking region. In Angola, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), a separatist group in the oil-rich Angolan province, ambushed the Togolese national soccer team bus on 8 January 2010 to raise the international community’s awareness (Ojakorotu 2011).

Additionally, in West Africa, countries like Mali, Nigeria (Biafra), Senegal (Casamance); and Ghana (Togoland), the separatist's movement have gained in momentum. They increased the level of violence in guerilla and terrorist activities. In Ghana and Nigeria, the leaders of these movements have been arrested and sent to prison. Casamance, in southern Senegal has seen a long-running conflict between the government and the MFDC (Movement of the Democratic Force of Casamance) rebel group, which wants independence and has regained its violence (BBC 2003). In Mali, the Tuareg separatist groups in the northern part of the country founded a political movement called the National Liberation Movement of Azawad (MNLA) in 2010. Moreover, in 2012, the Tuareg mercenaries, after fighting for Muammar Gaddafi, returned back to Mali and Niger with heavy armaments. Their aim was to destabilized Mali and Niger central government and create a Tuaregs' independent state named Azawad. They succeeded in destabilizing Mali where the movement has turned out to be a large scale conflict leading to a United Nations intervention in 20 December 2012 (Ba 2014).

The conflict, however, failed in Niger even though both countries have shared the same socio political history for a long time. The failure in Niger has raised the curiosity of many scholars as what the government of Niger has done differently in terms of the level of the grievances, the decentralization policy, the insurgents' deterrence strategy and the international community's interest to stop the conflict from happening. This experience in Niger could serve as an example to the rest of the West African countries in how to mitigate the rise of secession movements in their respective countries (Westerfield 2012).

### Problem Statement

West Africa has been vulnerable to political instability since its independence from European colonial authorities in the 1960s. Unfortunately, it was left with artificial colonial borders that made no sense from an ethnicity perspective. This situation placed the region under long-simmering security challenges. These challenges range from trafficking of light weapons to terrorist activities in the region. In addition to these challenges, the region has been facing secession movement threats in Mali, Niger, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. These movements have increased following South Sudan's independence in 2011.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the ways the governments should handle separatist conflicts in West Africa to minimize their proliferation and mitigate the level of violence arising from them.

### Primary Research Question

What can West African governments do to minimize the desire of perceived marginalized groups from seeking independence from the central government?

### Secondary Research Questions

1. What are the theoretical elements that give rise to separatist movements?
2. Why do separatist movements resort to violence to attain political independence?
3. What is unique about the style of governance in West African nations?
4. How susceptible are West African countries to separatist movements?
5. What role do the socio-politico-economic factors play in secession

movements?

6. What are the external factors that influence the rise of secession movements?

### Assumptions

It is assumed that secession movements will continue to exist in West Africa. The sanctity of the national boundaries inherited from colonial regimes will remain a primary concern of African nations.

### Definitions

Boko Haram: A branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. It has been active in Nigeria since 2009. The name of the group means western education is a sin. The group is active in the north of Nigeria, and wants to impose Islamic law as the only law in Nigeria. It also wants to outlaw education that is not based on Islam. The group sees itself as similar to the Taliban, which are active in Afghanistan. Locally, the group is known as the Taliban. The official name of the group is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad." They also call themselves Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (Free Encyclopedia 2017).

Casamancais: People from Senegal's southern region called the Casamance who have been fighting for independence of the region they considered not part of the mainland Senegal.

Great Power: A nation or country that has considerable international influence and military strength. (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2017). For the purpose of this paper, it is a nation that has a veto power in security council.

Islam: A monotheistic religion based on the word of God as revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammed. It is characterized by the acceptance of the doctrine of submission to God (Allah) and to Muhammed as the chief and last prophet of God (The Free Dictionary 2017).

Jola: (also known as Diola in French) A heterogeneous ethnic group found in Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau. They comprise 10% of the population in The Gambia and 6% of the population in Senegal (The Free Dictionary 2017.)

Modus operandi: A particular way or method of doing something (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2017).

Maquisards: A member of n irregular armed forces that fight a stronger force by sabotage and harassment (Free Encyclopedia 2017).

Secession: The action of withdrawing formally from membership of a federation or body, especially a political state (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2017).

Separatism: The advocacy or practice of separation of a certain group of people from a larger body on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or gender (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2017).

Terrorist: A person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2017).

### Limitations

The study has to be completed during the ten (10) month-long Command and General Staff Officers Course. Due to the lack of time and travel funds, all research will be limited to internet sources and from resources obtainable from the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL).

### Scope and Delimitations

This research will be restricted to African secessionist movements with only a little discussion on secession movement in other parts of the world. The study will be confined strictly to the secession movement process and how to remedy the problem as it pertains to the West Africa sub-region.

### Significance of Study

This topic is significant to the military profession and other scholars for many reasons. It can help promote peace and security in the region by settling secession issues through dialog and negotiation. Africa has plummeted into terrorists' violence due to the Azawad secession rebel groups' activities in northern Mali and the Islamic group Boko Haram in the north of Nigeria. This research hopes to find a way to reduce the use of violence in addressing secession sentiments. Currently, most hot spots in the region are areas where secession activists are active. Therefore, this research may assist the authorities in West Africa to ease grievances and prevent terrorists from joining separatist movements like they did in Mali. It is also important to mention that the research will provide an insight to existing literature by exploring other means to deal with the secession movements in West Africa

### Chapter Conclusion

This initial chapter introduced the historical and ethnic background of West Africa that still plays an important role in the governance of the region and the fact that the region is home to several long-standing secessionist movements. Chapter 2 provides the literature review focusing on understanding the phenomena of secessionist

movements and what it is about West Africa that makes it a fertile ground for their existence.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This study examines the phenomena of secession movements and the factors that give rise to them in the West African sub-region. This study also examines literature that is relevant to the key research questions addressed in the thesis. These questions are about the elements that give rise to separatist movements; the reason why they often resort to violence; the uniqueness of African governments; and the external factors that influence secession movements. A number of articles have been written on the rise of secession movements. In all the articles, the quality varies, ranging from a general overview to more specific analysis of the topic. In order to gain insight into this subject, this study uses unclassified sources such as books, magazines and other professional journals by respected authors on the topic, and materials from the internet.

#### Theoretical Elements that Give Rise to Separatist Movements

This section focuses on the scholarly literature concerning the phenomenon of secession movements. It deals with several different theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon as to the cause of or perceived need to resort to secession activities.

The normative theory, the right to self-determination of those who want to keep the territory intact, is promoted by Percy B. Lehning, in his work, *Theory of Secession: An Introduction*. He claimed that the secession theory has two facets and provides two different liberal perspectives. The first one supports and the second one opposes the secession. The argument for secession centers on the right to self-determination. For him,

pertaining to situations in which ethnic conflict has made living together impossible, people must be allowed, under the right of self-determination, to secede. Lehning comments on the universal right of people's self-determination that secessionism aims to amputate, either forcibly or non-forcibly an independent state from part of a territory. He also argues that any group of people that is not satisfied with the way the central government runs the affairs of the republic has the right to secede (Lehning 1998, 2).

It is also a cardinal principle in modern international law that a people, based on respect for the principle of equal rights, and fair equality of opportunity, have the right to freely choose their sovereignty and international political status with no interference (Shaw 2003, 227). For Birch, individuals have the right of voice in a democratic state which falls in line with self-determination but added that once they are committed to a state, they should have a substantial grievance in order to justify their exit (Birch 1984).

The nationalism theory promoted by Kedourie is against the right to self-determination. He holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government (Kedourie 1960). Even liberalism theory does not recognize group rights as it relates to secession (Buchanan 1991b, 7), which is inconsistent with the notion of accepting freedom as the ultimate political value (Beran 1988). Lehning also proposes the "Communitarian Theory," which focuses on the concept of living together peacefully to that of partition. He argues that the international community's stance regarding secession should go beyond the rights of people to self-determination to consider the "living together principle" and values instilled within a

group of people. Different communities should make rules to mutually share governance of the country instead of seceding (Lehning 1998).

In the same vein, Napoleon Bamfo, in his article *The Menace of Secession in Africa and Why Governments Should Care: The Disparate Cases of Katanga, Biafra, South Sudan, and Azawad*, the arbitrary colonial partitioning of the African continent makes each country in Africa vulnerable. For him, the European scramble for Africa exposed the countries to the concept of similar people having their own sovereign nations. He argues that the construction of artificially imposed European boundaries did not take into consideration the culture and the ethnic diversity of the continent (Bamfo 2012).

Robert Schaeffer, in his book *Warpaths: The Politics of Partition*, observes that secession movements fail to end violence or prevent future wars from occurring. It causes a domino effect that leads other minorities in the same states to seek self-determination. It also engenders weak economic states and leads to bad governance and a possible encouragement to other observant ethnic groups (Schaeffer 1990). After Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia in 1993, the two countries fought a bloody territorial war from 1998 to 2000 and were again on the brink of war in 2005, even after a complete separation of their populations (Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009).

Another factor that scholars have identified is the ethnic and cultural differences factor. Oumar Ba, in his paper “*Tuareg Nationalism and Cyclical Pattern of Rebellions: How the Past and Present Explain Each Other*,” observes that ethnic diversity plays a big role in a separatism movement. He uses the illustration of the Mali ethnic sociological cleavage line which places the “white” Tuareg race on one side and the “blacks” on the

other side. For him, the Tuareg are not the only ethnic group in the northern part of Mali and if they chose to secede, it is because they consider themselves different from others. This difference is salient in the political arena where the black race is more represented in government. He continues arguing that it is what also makes the south, where blacks are in the majority, more developed than the north, where the Tuareg live (Ba 2007). This situation is conducive to ethno-political conflict and violence (Brubakar and Laitin 1998, 425).

However, a cultural group may fight for secession if they feel that their culture is truly threatened or marginalized to the limit of extinction. A culture's value is determined by its contribution to the lives of the people who live by it and by the people who indirectly come into contact with it (Buchanan 1991b, 52). Keller observes that if a minority group is feeling persecuted and threatened by another ethnic community, the solution might be a grant of autonomy or a significant amount of decentralization. He argues that ethnic security dilemma is to protect individuals from being targeted for violence in the event of a failure of the peace process (Keller 2010). Partitioning can help, according to Kaufmann, because it resolves the ethnic security dilemma by dividing territory and physically separating warring groups and reduces the threat that each ethnic group poses to the other (Kaufmann 2009). However, some scholars question the moral as well as the practical and theoretical grounds on which the argument rests (Bishai 1998, 92-110).

Another old school of thought maintains that conflicts are caused by economic and political marginalization. According to MacCulloch populations are more likely to rebel when discrimination in the nation is high, and that increasing the inequality in

income also increases the predilection to seek change through revolution. Economic factors drive groups of people to secede. He also states that certain states systematically draw resources from one group and deposit them with another on purpose (MacCulloch and Pezzini 2004). Polarization occurs when two groups exhibit great intergroup heterogeneity combined with intra-group homogeneity. Horizontal Inequality (HI) are inequalities among groups of people that share a common identity (Gurr 1970). Such inequalities have economic, social, political and cultural status dimensions, each of which contains a number of elements (Stewart 2011, 2)

In contrast, Buchanan suggests that a transfer of some means from the rich citizens to the poor citizens is not an injustice. However, many other means exist by which a government can increase the standard of living of poor areas without transferring resources from the rich to the poor (Buchanan 1992). Mats Berdal and David M. Malone in *Greed and Grievance: The Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, state that groups of people in a region endowed with natural resources often manage to grab the resource management and use the money to buy weapons and then use that power to wage secessionist wars (Berdal and Malone 2000).

In this literature, scholars discussed facts regarding self-determination, socio-cultural, and economic marginalization which are factors that drive people to secession movements. It fails however, to indicate that bad governance, especially, corruption and fraud, are also sources of grievances that drive people to secede from the central government.

### Cause of Violence in Most Separatist Movements

Violence in secession movements may range from effecting the politico-economic status to creating a social crisis. The grievance and greed theory of Collier and Hoeffler identifies variables and factors that encourage violence during the fight for independence. For them, these two are dominant variables in fueling and instigating separatism conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

The grievance variable theory explains that violence is a result of a long standing unresolved dormant grievance. The horizontal inequality (HI) theory, developed by Collier and Hoeffler, elaborates on the overlap between identity and economic opportunity, wherein one's group affiliation may limit their employment. And the group that is disfavored or marginalized accumulates the grievance because at that period they have no means or power to claim their right (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). This situation often leads to the violence-related secession conflicts whenever the minority group finds itself in a position of power either during an uprising or during a civil war (Ebiede 2016).

Violence in a separatist movement does not occur by chance. Ethnic conflicts arise when groups within the same community, but with a distinct sense of identity, perceive their governing structure to be incapable of addressing their basic needs thus giving rise to grievance (Bercovitch and Derouen 2005). Paul Tiyambe-Zeleza, in his paper, *The Causes & Costs of War in Africa, From Liberation Struggles to the 'War on Terror'*, observes that religious ideology might also have a huge impact on fueling conflict. It is driven and fused with passion, morality, emotion and radicalism which makes it conducive for violence. Often, religious extremist violence rises when a group of religious people claim to be marginalized by the central government (Tiyambe-Zeleza

2008). Ragnhild Nordas also observes in his paper, *Identity Polarization and Conflict*, that violence is an outcome of grievance in response to an imbalance in the distribution of wealth, revenue, or political power. It is also used to protest against threats resulting from the unequal distribution of resources (Nordas 2007).

The greed variable theory argues that secessionist actors using violence are motivated by the profit they will derive from the conflict. As mentioned earlier, a group demanding secession often claims to be marginalized or ill-treated by the dominant group or the government. Collier and Hoeffler argue that such a stance is motivated by economic interest. They argue that secession movements occur more often in regions where the countries' resources are abundant (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Berdal and Malone call this the resources grab. They contend that this usually leads to civil war or at least a unilateral declaration of independence (Berdal and Malone 2000). This is the case in Somaliland, in the Casamance in Senegal, and in Cabinda in Angola (Keller 2010).

Galtung's structural violence concept illustrates an early example of this orientation where unequal social structures produce unequal access to resources for different social groups. Structural violence, developed by Johan Galtung in the article "*Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*", observes that social structures or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs (Galtung 1996). Structural theories experienced a resurgence in the 1990s in the international political economy (IPE) and war economy literature. The IPE challenges neo-liberal economic theory, maintaining that global political and economic processes contribute to systemic conflict (Keen 1998). Snyder and Bhavnani note that "recent studies of contemporary civil war have found a strong and positive relationship between wealth and

conflict. Easy-to-procure resources such as oil, ‘breed’ civil war by supplying the means and motive for armed conflict (Snyder and Bhavnani 2005)

Secessionists are often ideologically motivated groups seeking to achieve their goals through violent action to fight the central government (Hechter 1992). There is often a “master cleavage” behind political violence, but that actual violence manifests as private vertical conflicts between individuals and groups within a given community (Kalyvas 2003). The findings focus on the greed and grievance factors, as well as the ideology factor, as reason for the use of violence in secession movements. However, the literature rarely mentions the government’s disproportionate use of force to repress any peaceful demonstration and uprising leading to a violent reaction from the other parties. Also, it does not state the fact that throughout history the peaceful way of claiming independence has rarely been successful.

#### The Unique Style of Governance in West Africa Nations

Northouse defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal” (Northouse 2007, 75). This process is normally executed by encouraging people to achieve objectives, and provides direction to an organization or community in a manner that makes it more cohesive and rational (Campbell 2011).

Understanding the unique style of governance in west African nations that causes the rise of secession is complex. Some scholars contend that African leaders often use the authoritative style of leadership, which is a classic and coercive use of power. In this approach, the leader exercises strong command and control over decision-making (Kouzes and Posner 1987). It is characterized by the abuse of authority. Therefore, most



scholars consider an authoritative regime may cause secession movements. Errol Henderson contends that conflicts in third world countries are the result of political, economic and cultural factors. He believes that the regimes use ethnic segregation to oppose a selected group of people, thus ensuring the government is not found responsible for their poor economic outcomes (Henderson and Singer 2002).

Conflict within states occurs because of the use of disproportional force, especially when certain groups are excluded from power. Secession is then more likely to occur when these groups have the ability to mobilize people and fight back (Cederman, Buhaug and Rod 2009). The use of violence by dissidents provokes the use of violence by the government because the threat to the government as well as the general population is higher (Hibbs 1973). There are multiple reasons that constitute a government's response to secession movements. Many scholars argue that repressive governments' responses are defined depending on the situation and on different attributes of the conflict as well as the structure of the political economy (Davenport and Armstrong 2004).

In separatist struggles, allowing a group of people to separate, puts the unity and the authority of the nation in jeopardy (Knight 1985). This view is supported by Davenport who found that conflict frequency, strategic variety, and deviance from cultural norms play a significant role in determining the governments' response (Davenport and Armstrong 2004). Siroky argues that regardless of type of demand, most countries do not respond to secessionists by giving up territory. Multiple factors determine a government's response to secession movements. Such realities change the ways a state can achieve peace and end war. In the 1990s, a number of civil conflicts ended in negotiated settlements (Siroky 2009)

The literature indicates in general that negotiation is a fruitless anti-violence policy. The argument against negotiating with secessionists is straightforward: conciliatory policies set a dangerous precedent that few governments care to follow. These policy options, from severe repression to systematic conciliation, arise not from a single theory of fighting against the extremists but as reactions to different situations and the influence from external organization (Sederberg, 1995).

The literature discusses the abuse of power, disproportionate use of force and negotiation as means that the government utilizes to respond to secession movement. But it fails to point out that the government's failure to efficiently implement peace agreement decisions is an important factor that contributes to re-initiation of most separatist movements.

#### Susceptibility of West African Countries Towards Separatist Movements

Napoleon Bamfo in his article, *The Menace of Secession in Africa and Why Governments Should Care: The Disparate Cases of Katanga, Biafra, South Sudan, and Azawad*, states that separatist's movements in Africa is the consequence of the arbitral partition of the continent. A division that tore apart ethnic groups. This situation has forced different ethnic groups that did not share the same cultural and traditional values to live together provoking frictions and misunderstanding that lead to today's mistrust among the ethnic groups (Bamfo 2012). Some literature has also put emphasis on the impact of colonization. Especially through the early institutions of colonization, the drawing of political boundaries at the end of the 20th century resulted in a large number

of divided ethnicities that have been neglected by economics research (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2005).

Gellner agrees that ethnicity has been an important factor in most secession movements. For him, undermining its impact would be detrimental to the African realities and exposing the continent to unavoidable secession sentiments. Ethnicity is seen as a pre-modern social community which provides the contemporary nation with its bases (Gellner 1964). A pre-modern ethnic substratum, or *ethnie*, must, according to Smith, be present if a nation is to have any chances of success, any emotional resonance. For Connor and Smith, if something is capable of generating such passions, it must not only be deeply rooted, but also tangible (Smith 2016). Connor and Smith argue that in any country there will always be misunderstanding with the central government but if the emotional strength of people towards the nation is high, the nation stays unshakable. However, if it is a nation consisting of different ethnic groups without any emotional strength, the nation is destined to experience secession movements. And for them this situation is exacerbated by the failure of the government, in most countries, to implement an inclusive and sound economic development program (Smith 2016).

Gellner thinks that secession groups worldwide, seem to be locked in an intense struggle regarding the future of their ethnicity. Their struggle is centered around issues about religion, culture and ideology. He asserts that the majority seems to prefer to remain in their new country and be moderate, and tolerant. However, a relatively small, but growing group would like to establish a stricter form of the religion, one that informs and controls all aspects of society. These are the ones who press for secession (Gellner 1964).

Other scholars, reflecting on the conception of the right to secession as being a means of last resort, pointed out that secession is justified if, and only if, the encompassing state fails to ensure basic human rights and the secured survival of a group. And human rights abuse is recurrent on the African continent according Human Rights Watch (Allain and O'Shea 2002). Buchanan also links legitimate secession to the experience of injustices. According to him, it creates incentives for governments to implement fair, participatory policies towards minorities as a means to protect the state's territorial integrity (Moore 2003).

Research on the origins of African countries' weak state capacity in the pre-colonial period show that the slave traders have crucially shaped African development mostly by encouraging ethnic conflict and by lowering trust. (Nunn and Wantchekon 2011). The mistrust inherently created a psychosis among Africans who may not want to live with ethnic groups they don't really trust. However, other scholars show that deeply-rooted pre-colonial ethnic institutions link significantly with modern development and their analyses present long-run implications of historical legacies focusing on the ethnic dimension (Gennaioli and Rainer 2006). Assessing the effect of deeply-rooted features on modern development seems important, as it shows that the impact of contemporary national institutions on regional African development is small, mostly because the state's development programs diminishes rapidly outside the capitals (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou 2014).

#### The Socio-Politico-Economic Factors in Secession Movements

In Africa, people are discriminated on account of their ethnicity, religion, and region. They are also victim of discrimination against the allocation of government

projects and grants; and differential access to key sectors of the economy, such as oil and gas and communications (Stewart and Langer 2007). These exclusionary politics sow the seeds of violence. People who are marginalized, even for known reasons, become irritated and seek to do the same in areas perceived to be dominated by them (Stewart and Langer 2007). A region with a high birth rate coupled with lack of employment opportunities, invariably would result in a large number of disgruntled unemployed youth who then become disillusioned with life. If a group is excluded from political power and marginalized economically, group consciousness arises and disparate subgroups will be brought together under a common identity to create a more effective resistance (Stewart and Langer 2006).

Buchanan complains that secession lowers the quality of political discourse in the remnant state. For him, showing one's strong disapproval by protesting may be more efficient than trying to exit from the union (Buchanan 1997, 48). Brancati, analyzing the impact of decentralization policies in some developing democracies, finds that it is a useful mechanism in reducing both ethnic conflict and secessionism. (Brancati 2006). However, other writers argue that decentralization helps to legitimize the national government, consolidate political power, and co-opt separatist movements. Tordoff argues that centralized states are inherently inefficient, and that decentralized governance with well-trained personnel increases public participation in governance and alleviates grievances (Westerfield 2012).

Ethnic disparity in a country provokes misunderstanding and friction among the population; however, this does not always lead to secession movements' conflict. It is the lack of the political will of particular regime to implement policies intended to lessen fears

and distrust among the marginalized groups that give rise to grievances (Keller 2010). As such Alesina and Easterly show, with cross-country regressions, that states with straight borders and where a significant part of the population resides in more than one country, under-perform economically compared to more organic countries (Alesina, Easterly, and Matuszeski 2011).

The findings that link a country's ethnic composition to civil war are the most relevant. The correlation between ethnic fragmentation and civil war is weak (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Scholars also emphasize the role and impacts of ethnicity in the spread of civil conflict across borders, not as a cause, but as a facilitator. Ethnic groups that span state borders, like the Tuareg, are likely to influence each other to mobilize and engage their respective governments in violent acts, making the risk of civil war contagion higher when the same ethnic group is found on both sides of the international boundary (Westerfield 2012).

The average cost of goods and the tax burden rise more in the seceding region than they do in the rest of the country. However, if the minority decides to secede, its discontent must be intense. The minority is dissatisfied because it has been marginalized many times. (Buchanan and Tullock 1962). To the extent to which the predecessor state has produced goods and services subject to economies of scale, secession raises average cost and the per capita tax burden in the remainder of that state. This, too, is a negative spillover. However, the seceding state is negatively affected, as well. Thus, both states have a strong incentive to continue joint production and use. Secession does not have to cover all functions of government. Cooperation among jurisdictions may be differentiated on functional lines (Frey and Eichenberger 1999).

Economic decline and the severe inequalities in wealth between different regions in a country are reasons why a sector will resort to violence in order to secede. They have lost confidence in the central government's ability to provide for their basic needs. A country where economic scarcity results in poverty, is worsened by the lack of access to basic services like water, food, accommodation and education (Langer, Mustapha, and Stewart 2007, 15). For them, economic deprivation can be explained by three concepts: relative deprivation, polarization and horizontal inequalities (HI). Economic HIs include inequalities in ownership of assets, be they financial, natural resource-based, human and social and of incomes and employment opportunities that depend on these assets and the general conditions of the economy (Langer Mustapha and Stewart 2007, 4).

However, Collier and Hoeffler admit that natural resources and the disruption of the political structure are not the only factors that might explain the emergence of secession movements, but these factors are strong (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). An older school of thought maintains that conflicts are caused by economic and political marginalization. Studies by MacCulloch indicate that populations are more likely to revolt when inequality in the nation is high, and that increasing the disparity in income also increases preference to seek change through revolution (MacCulloch and Pezzini 2004)

Buhaug suggests that marginalized groups on the periphery of large countries are expected to resort to insurgency, and that if the authorities fail to provide solutions, the aggrieved groups of society often resort to violence to redress the situation either by seeking to destabilize the central government or by attempting to secede" (Buhaug 2006). Other scholars contend that marginalized groups adopt violence when they perceive that

they are not receiving what they believe to be rightfully theirs, whether that is political, economic, or commercial (Westerfield 2012).

### External Factors That Influence the Rise of Secession Movements

Secession movements are not peculiar to West African countries. They have been a worldwide phenomenon since the treaty of Westphalia that ended the Thirty Years' War in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A review of the literature regarding statehood in international relations and international law throughout history, shows the international community's behavior and attitude toward this movement. Woodrow Wilson believed that no people must be forced under a sovereignty under which they do not want to live. This statement aligns with the normative theory which grants the right to self-determination. The consolidation of the norm of self-determination in the United Nations Charter has provided stateless nations with the vocabulary and legal apparatus to pursue greater control over their political fates. However, in practice this legal system has never been implemented (Solomon 2012).

The controversy became apparent when a United Nations member state submitted a written comment to the Special Committee that drafted the "Declaration on Friendly Relations" stating that the majority of United Nations members did not recognize secession as a legitimate form of self-determination. This statement corroborates a statement made by the former Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, in 1970. According to him there are no UN documents that expressly recognize secession based on the principle of self-determination (Kirgis 1994).

Moreover, the international community's ambiguous stance is not a new event since the League of Nations, created just after WWI, adopted the same position. The



International Commission of Jurists stated that Positive International Law did not recognize the right of national groups to separate themselves from a state from which they are a part. This bipolarization of the International Commission creates a juridical vacuum in international relations among nations (Kirgis 1994). In the minds of some scholars, the international community's stance has been ebbing since the decolonization era. Even though the international community opposed the secession of the Katanga region in DR Congo in the 1960s, and Biafra in Nigeria in the late 1960s, they supported Bangladesh seceding from Pakistan (Pantazopolou 1995)

The breakup of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia is also an interesting case study. According to the *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*, the international community's behavior toward secession movements has evolved with time, from total opposition to acceptance under certain conditions. However, Bridget L. Coggins, from The Ohio State University, criticizes the international community for ignoring the rules and doing the will of what she named the politics of "The Great Power". For her, the success of a secession depends on whether or not it has a Great Power Support (Coggins 2006). Ryan Griffiths in his article disagrees with this statement and elaborates that the secessionists often engage in a pre-diplomatic campaign using different connections and methods. This international campaign is often conducted by the diaspora and those who show interest to the region (Griffiths 2005). This dual position continues to give hope to other secession movements to continue fighting.

### Chapter Summary and Conclusion

Secession has been a worldwide phenomenon for a long period of time and there are a lot of theories regarding its occurrence. Some theories argue in favor of acts of

secession and suggest that it is a way that may be used to solve long standing ethnic conflicts, while others doubt it is able to create an everlasting peace. Secession is influenced by the principle of self-determination as described by the United Nations Charter on Human Rights. However, it has been generally characterized by the use of violence and civil war in a bid to force the government to the negotiation table.

The West Africa sub-region has been a theater for secession movement activities since independence in the 1960s. This situation has greatly impacted the security in a region already deeply involved in political, economic and social crises. It raises questions about governments' and the international community's roles in the recurring crises regarding secession movements. Scholars, such as Errol Henderson and Bridget L. Coggins, point out the responsibility of the government and the international community. Nevertheless, the investigation into the Chechen separatists' motivations for instigating the Moscow Theatre and Beslen School hostage crises shows that separatists are motivated by calculated socioeconomic objectives.

Some scholars have already written about the secession movements in West Africa but do not highlight factors such as political weaknesses and the environmental influence. There is also little research about why countries, like Mali, Niger and Senegal with almost similar political, economic and social backgrounds have manifested different levels of violence relating to secession movements. This situation indicates that the level of grievance, decentralization progress, the insurgency mitigation strategy, and the "Great Power Interest" are important factors to consider in analyzing secession related conflicts.

Having reviewed literature from various sources, the next chapter will outline the methodology that will be used in the analysis of the data to answer the questions posed in the thesis' main hypothesis.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the historical ethnic background of West Africa that still play an important aspect of governance in the region and the fact that the region is home to several long-standing secessionist movements. It is the present the primary research question and the sub- question supporting it.

Chapter 2 provided the literature review that focused on understanding the phenomena of secessionist movements and what is it about West Africa that makes it a fertile ground for their existence.

Chapter 3 analyses the variables for analyzing the phenomenon of the secession movements in the sub-region using Mali, Niger and Senegal as case studies. This chapter outlines the methodology used during the conduct of the research. The analyses from this will undergird the author's recommendations on how to better mitigate the secession movements in West Africa.

The author uses a qualitative methodology using case studies. "Qualitative methods are effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent (Mack et al., 2005)." As put forward in a study by Anne-Marie Ambert, qualitative methods trade comparative objective studies of a broad range of subjects for depth, to facilitate understanding on a more finite sampling. Qualitative methods focus on how and why people behave, think, and make meaning, rather than focusing on what people do or believe on a large scale. Ambert, added that

qualitative research enables the researcher to analyze data from the macro to the micro level without risking analytical integrity by comparing the proverbial apples to oranges (Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner 1995, 880).

### Selection Criteria and Explanation

The first step in the development of the hypothesis was to examine available background material on the rise of secession movements and what governments do to mitigate its growth in West Africa. The characteristics were identified from instances where different authors, citing different sources, came to similar conclusions about the influence of particular criteria, giving credibility to the characteristics. The variables that will be used for this analysis are: level of grievances mitigation, insurgent deterrence strategy, decentralization progress, and great power interests. This section provides a closer look at each factor and why they were selected as criteria for analysis.

### The Level of Grievances Mitigation

Grievance occurs when a minority group of people are said to be marginalized by the government or by the majority group or even where the natural environmental conditions are not conducive for a better life. A separatist movement does not occur by chance. Ethnic conflicts arise when groups within the same community, but with a distinct sense of identity, perceive their governing structure to be incapable of addressing their basic needs (Bercovitch and Derouen 2005). The definition of this variable focuses on the presence of the factors which contribute to increase the level of grievances leading to a desire to separate from the central government. Some scholars agree with Nancy Annan that political discrepancy, ethnic marginalization, and environmental factors are

elements leading to the rise of grievances in African countries. (Annan 2014). These three factors will significantly influence the ranking of the level of grievance mitigation. Each factor, assessed as decreasing the level of grievances will be rated 1, 2 or 3 based upon how many of the three sub-variables that work towards mitigating the level of grievance are present in each case study. Failure to address none of the factors is rated 0.

### Decentralization Progress

The decentralization process is the level of the pluralization of power. It is the apparent representation in established government structures where power is given to the people to manage themselves under the supervision of the central government. On the African continent, especially in West Africa, power and state wealth has tended to shift away from the people. Decentralization encourages the promotion of the development of multi-party systems, capitalism, federalism, and the political representation of people independent of their social status (Tiyambe-Zeleza 2008). Different types of decentralization should be distinguished because they have different characteristics, policy implications, and conditions for success. Successful decentralization focuses on political, economic and the administrative dimension of governance (UN 2000). These three factors, for a successful decentralization, will influence the ranking of the decentralization progress in the analysis of the variable in the next chapter. Each characteristic, when successfully met, will be rated 1. A country that meets the three conditions will score 3. Failure to address no characteristics or their absence is rated 0.

### Insurgent Mitigation Strategy

Insurgency mitigation is a plan to address insurgency which is a subversive element or participates in open violence and presents an undetermined potential threat to the national government. The success or failure of an insurgency depends on the central government's ability to address it when it still at an initial phase. Several counterinsurgency authors agreed with Jeffrey W. Knopf's multilevel scheme of how to create a successful insurgency deterrence strategy. These elements of insurgency deterrence strategies are: military deterrence through coercion, nonmilitary deterrence through coercion; and bargaining, using negotiation or dialogue means (Knopf 2010). These three elements are going to be used to evaluate the ranking of the insurgency deterrence strategy developed by each country in the analysis of the variable in the subsequent chapter. Each factor, if successfully addressed in a country to deter or mitigate the insurgency, will be rated 1. A country will score 3 if the three factors are successfully implemented to mitigate the insurgency. Failure to address a factor or its absence is rated 0.

### Great Power Support

This is the attitude of the international community regarding its support to secession movements. This support varies and depends on the interest of various superpowers. From total opposition to acceptance, under certain conditions, depending on whether their interest is threatened in the region or not, Great Power Support to a secession movement has never been clear. For Bridget L. Coggins, the success of a secession depends on whether or not it has a Great Power Support. For her the Great Power interest is measured in terms of a political, economic and strategic dimension. The

more a regime protects the Great Powers' interest the more supportive it is to the regime. (Coggins 2006).

Great Power Interest varies in terms of the political, economic and strategic dimensions. The number and caliber of the Great Power countries supporting a regime will be significant in the ranking of the variables in the next chapter. A Great Power, for the sake of the ranking will at least be a country that has veto power in the Security Council. The involvement of each Great Power support is rated 1. The minimum number of Great Power support is 3.

#### Selection of the Research Case Studies

The next step is to test the variables selected against the findings of the case studies of the secession movements. Niger, Mali and Senegal were selected in order to well understand the issue of secession movements in the West Africa sub-region. Both Niger and Mali are among the largest countries in the region with land mass respectively about  $1,270,000 \text{ km}^2$  and  $1,240,000 \text{ km}^2$ . As for the Senegal, its lands mass is only  $196,722 \text{ km}^2$ . The population is 20 million in Niger, 14.5 million in Mali, and Senegal has 15.41 million. Mali and Niger, contrarily to Senegal, have a relatively very low population density in West Africa. Niger, Mali and Senegal gained their sovereignty in the 1960s from France. They are ruled by an executive President elected for 5 years and share democratic values where freedom of speech is respected. They share the same religion of Islam as the predominant religion, and some similarities regarding their ethnicity as well. (Thurston and Lebovich 2013).

From the comparison of the three countries, it is evident that they have some commonalities. It is also clear that the three countries have experienced secession



movement conflicts. The Tuareg separatist conflicts, also known as the Berber separatism in North Africa, occurred several times since colonial independence in the early 1960s. The first occurred in Mali in 1962 to 1964. The second and the third occurred both in Mali and in Niger in 1990 to 1995 and in 2007 to 2009. The fourth occurred in Mali in 2012 until the present. Senegal has experienced a different secession movement in the southern part of the country in the Casamance region since the 1980s making this movement one of the longest secession conflicts in the history of Africa even though it has become an isolated frozen conflict in recent years. (Westerfield 2012).

As for Mali, the recent secession movements in the country in 2012, following the fall of Gaddafi in Libya in 2011, supposedly did not involve Niger even though it shares the same conflict history with Mali.

The variables in the following matrix are going to be evaluated and analyzed to find that these variables, when acted upon decisively, will help mitigate the secession movements (Westerfield 2012).

Table 1. Sample Table for Scoring Input Variables against Case Studies

<b>Serial</b>	<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>MALI</b>	<b>NIGER</b>	<b>SENEGAL</b>
1	Level of Grievances Mitigation	(0-3)	(0-3)	(0-3)
2	Decentralization Progress	(0-3)	(0-3)	(0-3)
3	Insurgency Mitigation Strategy	(0-3)	(0-3)	(0-3)
4	Great Power Support	(0-3)	(0-3)	(0-3)

*Source:* Created by author.

Table 2. Interpretation of Grading

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
3	Indication of variable high
2	Indication of variable moderate
1	Indication of variable low
0	Indication of variable absent

*Source:* Created by author.

### Summary

This chapter describes the method used to analyze these following variables of the level of grievance mitigation, the decentralization progress, the insurgency deterrence strategy and the level of Great Power support. It uses a qualitative methodology comparing case studies of the strategies that both Mali and Niger as well as the Senegalese governments have used to either succeed or fail at handling their secession movements. The research will make suggestions on how to improve West African governments' ability to quell secession movements in their effort to provide security and stability in the region. The next chapter will concentrate on the analysis of these variables.

CHAPTER 4  
ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the rise of secession movements in West Africa using Mali, Niger and Senegal as case studies. To do that, the variables identified in the previous chapter will be analyzed in relation to evidence presented in each of the countries with a view to evaluate how they were used successfully or unsuccessfully by the authorities of each country to mitigate the rise of their secession movements.

A Case Study of a Secession Movement in Mali



Figure 2. Mali

*Source:* Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook: Africa: Mali,” last updated 12 July 2018, accessed 21 January 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>.

### General Background

Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa with a land size of about 1,240,192 square kilometers. It shares borders with Algeria to the northeast, Niger to the east, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire to the south, Guinea to the south-west, and Senegal and Mauritania to the west (CIA 2017a).

It has a population of about 17,885,245 as of the July 2017. It is ethnically diverse and comprised of Bambara, Fulani (Peul), Sarakole, Senufo, Dogon, Malinke, Bobo, Songhai, Tuareg, and other Malian ethnic groups. Mali has 13 national languages in addition to its official French language. Muslims account for about 94.8%, Christian 2.4%, and Animist 2% (2009 est.). The country is divided into eight regions and one district, Gao, Kayes, Kidal, Koulikoro, Mopti, Segou, Sikasso, Tombouctou and the District of Bamako. The concentration of the Tuareg in the north is seen to be a catalyst for the recurring secession violence (CIA 2017a).

### Level of Grievances Mitigation

The Tuareg are traditionally a nomadic people of Berber heritage located primarily in the regions of the Sahara. They can be found in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Algeria, Burkina Faso and Libya. Tuaregs are generally Sunni Muslims of Sufist orientation, which speak Tamasheq. They are organized in clans and adhere to a highly hierarchical caste system. The largest concentration of Tuareg can be found in Mali and Niger and represent approximately 10 % of the population. They live a nomadic life in the desert, in an environment that is unfavorable to agricultural development due to desert weather conditions. This difficult condition impacted the growth of the Tuareg region

which still lingering behind other regions in Mali in terms of infrastructure development. (Keita 1998, 6,7).

Northern Mali is populated with both Tuareg nomadic and semi-nomadic populations among other sedentary ethnic groups. Their grievance lies in the past history as well as in the present one. In the nineteenth century their territory was occupied by the French and the Ottoman Empire. They resisted them and it continues with the resistance of Kaocen in 1916 which founded the beginnings of the modern social and political processes of rebel mobilizations among the Tuareg. It also confirms the failure of the political alternative to rebellion by pushing the Tuaregs into political exile within and outside Mali's borders. It will be seen later that these historical and economic processes, and politics are realized in the rebellion of the 1990s, which occupies a central role in the Tuareg rebel world (Deycard 2011). Apart from this past political grievance, Tuaregs found themselves, after the decolonization in countries, in the minority. This impacted their representation in political decisions. That was the reason why they decided to secede from their respective countries and create a country comprising of Tuareg people (Keita 1998, 12, 13).

Moreover, another aspect which manifested their grievance was the degree of economic marginalization they have experienced. Their regions are less developed and suffer from a lack of investment and fertile land for agricultural development. It is a desert landscape on which it is difficult to grow crops. Consequently, they rely on the cattle herding as their main economic revenue. Cattle raising is prominent in the region but the recurrent drought plunged the region, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, in a state of desolation where the nomads could rarely find food or water for their livestock. It is

also important to point out that there are also grievances based on inequalities regarding access to health and education in the north (Humphreys and Mohamed 2003).

As Humphreys and Mohamed write, the Tuareg separatists are also socio-politically marginalized. For much of the period after independence, the north was under military rule, brutalized and did not enjoy the fruits of the country to which they were attached. The appointed governors were of the Songhai group and did not care about the Tuareg community. Until 1990, there had been only two Tuaregs and two Arabs appointed as ministers, and only two Tuareg officers in the Malian army (Humphreys and Mohamed 2003).

In the area where the population is aggrieved, and the solution from the government to solve the problem is lacking, there is the likelihood of radical militant groups taking advantage of the situation to perpetuate violence. If the population feels that the militants are addressing their cause, it is likely to receive support from the locals who feel aggrieved. Al Qaida and other radical Islamic groups may continually seek minority groups, which are not adequately represented, or are the disadvantaged in society. The country is demarcated into a north-south divide where Tuareg are found in the deprived north. Most of this community rallies behind Islamic groups that promise to address their concerns (MacCulloch and Pezzini 2004).

Before the start of the conflict in 2012, Mali had undertaken a meaningful political decentralization process by forming the elected sub-national governments. The political and social determination to solve the political, social and economic discrepancy between the north and the south, had been the government's priority to solve the long pending crisis in the north. In Mali, democratization, coupled with administrative

decentralization, was meant to improve the living conditions of the people, especially in the north. A significant number of Tuareg rose to the ranks of ministers. The administrative decentralization and the creation of regional parliaments and governors ensured a measure of political freedom. The geostrategic and economic importance of the Sahara had increased significantly. Tourism generated new income, as did migrants on their passage to Europe. But unfortunately, fiscal decentralization did not follow the process, making the government's project to relieve grievances less successful (Klute and Lecocq 2013).

From the analyses, it appears that the authorities in Mali have invested themselves in the resolution of the political discrepancy which will pave the way to solutions to ethnic marginalization and to the hostile environmental conditions for socio-economic infrastructure development. However, only the political discrepancy seems to have been successfully implemented and both ethnic marginalization and environmental efforts failed due to the government's inability to raise funds to support the programs. Therefore, the level of grievance mitigation is rated 1.

#### Decentralization Progress

Regarding Mali, the Tamanrasset and the *Pacte National* Accords took place in Algeria in 1991 and 1992 following the 1990 Tuareg uprising, which initiated a decade long decentralization process. The ex-President, Alpha Omar Konaré, and civil society worked together to set the foundation and the guidelines leading to the creation of the region of Kidal, as well as more than 700 urban and rural communes nation-wide (Magassa and Meyer 2008). This produced a four-tier political system: communes at the lowest level, *cercles* above them, regions above the *cercles*, and the central state at the

top. The communes elect their own leadership, who send representatives to the next higher levels. However, decentralization really began only in 1999, when local elections finally took place and the central government completed the hand-over of the administration of land, transportation, education, and health care to elected local governments (Seely 2001, 499-524.).

In theory, the decentralization process was a success but in practice the government did not meet the objectives envisioned for lack of financial support. The authorities provided the development programs and the people to occupy them, however, they did not support them with adequate means to implement the details of the peace agreement. For example, the poor financial support to the local level governments prevented more than half of the created communes from executing their duties. Under the development tax law, communes received 80 percent of this revenue, *circles* got 15 percent, and regions got five percent. (Pringle 2006, 43-44). However, in practice the government was not able to raise enough taxes; and financial support from the donors was mismanaged. As illustration, reports from USAID pointed out that the authorities in Mali succeeded in establishing a foundation for the elected sub-national governments but the achievements were less clear due to the fact that the responsibilities were transferred without accompanying resources (Coulibaly, Dickovick, and Thomson 2010).

The decentralization process initiated to implement the details of the peace process did not achieve its objectives despite the political and social will behind the process. This was due to a lack of financial resources. Without financial support, it is difficult to set any lasting decentralization policy. The rebel leaders listed the slow implementation of decentralization in Mali as one of the reasons why they were ending



the peace treaties and returning to violence (Westerfield 2012). From this analysis, it appears that the Malian decentralization process was politically and administratively successful but did not meet its objective because it was financially handicapped, therefore only partially achieving the decentralization objectives set by the peace agreement. The two lines of effort successfully implemented are the political and administrative factors. The economic line of effort was a failure. Therefore, the decentralization process variable analyzed in the Mali case study is rated 2.

### The Insurgency Mitigation Strategy

Mali has experienced several Tuareg secessions before January 2012 but all of them were put down mercilessly. The first 1963 Tuareg rebellion, known as the Alfellaga rebellion, was harshly put to an end with the government poisoning wells in Tuareg region, decimating their livestock and executing many civilians (Boiley 1999). The second rebellion started in 1990, although more organized, well financed and led by Ishumar and a Lebanon veteran, Iyad ag Ghali, leader of the Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad (MPA), met with a harsh government response and failed (Lecocq 2010). However, this second rebellion weakened the government causing it and the rebels agree to hold a peace talks in Tamanrasset, Algeria.

The Malian government had chosen, with the Tamanrasset Accord in 1991 and The *Pacte National* of 1992, to negotiate with the rebels who had just attacked the Malian forces in the 1990 uprising. The outcome of these peace talks was detrimental to the government because it had agreed upon a removal of the majority of the Malian defense forces from the north (Peace Accords Matrix 1992). This action put the armed forces in a weak position in that region. It also gave the rebel group an opportunity to make more

demands on the government. This situation encouraged other Tuareg rebel groups to attack in other regions in order to be allowed to join the negotiation table for such demands (Klute 1995, 55-71).

The authorities in Bamako gave up on pressuring the rebels and established a decentralized security program whereby local law enforcement was delegated to the local government. Therefore, in reference to this accord, the Malian army started withdrawing from the region with fewer and fewer posts, only being present in the cities of Kidal, Gao, and Menaka. This situation resulted in the national security forces withdrawing from some security key points, giving the advantage of the terrain to the rebels. Normally, in line with this agreement, the Tuareg combatants were to be assimilated into the Malian Defense Forces in order to build a cohesive and homogeneous force. However, only a few Tuareg rebels joined the regular armed forces of Mali contrary to the principle of the accord (Klute 1995, 55-71).

It is important to mention that the government's posture of non-violence and lack of firmness encouraged other rebel groups to create factions and to make more demands. Instead of fighting these factions the government stated that it would continue to negotiate with any groups that seemed to be marginalized by the peace agreements (IRIN 2013). For example, the reaction of the authorities to these sporadic rebel groups forming was again to look for moderate Tuareg leaders to mediate with instead of vigorously combating the rebels and negotiate later, as in the first and second rebellions. For example, when the rebels attacked the military barracks in Kidal, Menaka, and Tessalit, President Amadou Toumani Touré, known as ATT, chose to respond to the attacks with

an economic development program for northern Mali instead of taking strict measures against the perpetrators (IRIN 2013).

This soft posture contributed in strengthening the rebels, to the detriment of the security environment, forcing the government to another peace talks at Algiers in Algeria. It was there that the government made more and more concession to the rebels' demands such as the repatriation of Tuareg communities forced into resettlement camps in the south of the country and opportunities for Malian Tuaregs to join the central government in Bamako. Another example that explains weak leadership was fact that in many occasions the president undermined the rebels increasing threats and refused to fight them firmly. He stated that he would rather satisfy the rebels' demands than to fight them, to show to the world the government was committed to the peace process. The government, while trying to ease the Tuareg grievances, chose a soft approach and this made impression to the rebels' leadership that the more they asked for the more concessions the authorities were going to make (Government of the Republic of Mali 2014).

As a consequence, a group known as ATNMC (Niger- Mali Tuareg Alliance for Change) led by Ibrahim ag Bahanga, head of a key breakaway group, forced the government to another peace talks under the moderation of African Union in Libya in 2009 (Lohman 2011). During these talks, the government, maintaining its non-violent posture, continued to make concessions. The authorities offered to the Tuareg insurgents more local empowerment, economic development, and further integration into the Malian Defense Forces. The government went further to form a counterterrorism unit made up of former Tuareg combatants. This action again contributed in strengthening the rebel groups during the 2012 crisis. When the conflict started, the majority of the Tuareg rebel

forces in the Kidal region were trained in counterterrorism by the government. The regular government's troops were confined to bases in Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal. This situation unintentionally created an environment that would be favorable to the future return of rebels (Foster-Bowser and Moseley 2012).

Despite many critics in the press, and within the populations against its soft approach, the government in Bamako continued to claim that it was the best approach. The Independent voiced widespread public discontent with the government strategy consisting of only negotiation with the rebels. The negotiation did not lead to rebellion across the country, but it did set conditions for the next revolt in 2012. Therefore, when the former rebels were then forced out of Libya in 2012 and returned to Mali with their weapons and arsenals, after the Libyan war, they found no resistance at the border. They were allowed to enter the country with their weapons. At the same time in the country, the *Mouvement National de Libération de L'Azawad* (MNLA, National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad), was created by Ibrahim ag Bahanga, a leader of both previous rebellions (Nossiter 2012).

The MNLA launched the attack on the government troops in January 2012 demanding for the independence of the Tuareg homeland known as the Azawad. The rebels who came from Libya supported the secessionists with heavily armed and modern weapons from Qaddafi's army. In the course of this fight they were joined by radical Islamic rebel groups (Ansar Dine, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb). In less than a month of fighting against the Malian armed forces, more than half of Malian territory was under the control of the separatists. This situation led to a coup back in Bamako plotted by the Captain Sanogoh Amadou. Within a week, the MNLA had taken control of more than a

half of the country. Eventually the indigenous Malian Tuareg rebels, were overtaken politically by the Jihadist fundamentalist Ansar Dine, Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). This situation drew the international community to intervene and defeat the terrorist groups that took advantage of the secession movements operations. They were defeated later by a coalition led by French armed forces (Albuquerque 2014).

From the analysis, it appears that the revolt of the 2012 was the result of the failed insurgency mitigation strategy. Only one factor (negotiation) of the three elements required for a successful insurgency mitigation strategy was successfully implemented. The insurgency mitigation strategy in Mali case study failed due to weak military deterrence and nonmilitary coercion. Therefore, the insurgency mitigation variable will be rated 1.

#### Level of Great Power Support

From total opposition to acceptance under certain conditions, depending on whether their interest is threatened in the region or not, Great Power Support to a secession movement has never been so ambiguous. For Bridget L. Coggins, the success of a secession depends on whether or not it has a Great Power Support (Coggins 2006). This statement explains most of the so called Great Power Support, or not, to secession movements in Africa and in the world. When the Malian crisis exploded in 2012, it took time for French and the international coalition to intervene to stop the terrorists who were already close to taking the capital city of Bamako (Bergamaschi 2013).

The north of Mali has always been a meeting point for foreign influences for economic and religious connections. There is a constant lack of interest on the part of the

Malian authorities for the region. This disinterested attitude towards the region, from the authorities of Bamako, gave free access to neighboring and other countries who found an opportunity to develop economical activities with the Tuaregs and also assist them in their post-colonial longing for a Tuareg state. This situation encouraged local populations to welcome and support some neighboring countries' interference. Northern Mali even became, over time, a central location in the competition for regional leadership, especially between Libya and Algeria. Both countries have sometimes been accused of supporting the rebels or using the area to contain insecurity outside their own borders. The simple geostrategic position that this area of the country offers, along with it being an "ungoverned space," it would be advantageous of some outside countries to help the Azawad region to secede (Bergamaschi 2013).

Then, toward the year 2000, there were talks that Mali might have potential oil reserves. The government allocated 700,000 square kilometers for drilling in 2005. No wells have been drilled yet (Augé 2011, 186-187). The companies that have invested are Italy's ENI, Algeria's SONATRACH, Canada's Selier Energy, and a few other minor players with high risk tolerance. This sudden rush for that part of the country coincided with a movement mostly made up of ethnic Tuareg, some of whom are believed to have fought in the Libyan army during the Libyan Civil War, though other Tuareg MNLA fighters were on the side of the National Transitional Council and returned to Mali after that war. The movement was founded in October 2011 and stated that it includes other Saharan peoples. Their objective is to create a country named Azawad in the northern part of Mali (Albuquerque 2014).

What is interesting to point out is French attitude towards the Libya uprising in 2011. French president Nicolas Sarkozy, whose country has interest in the neighboring countries of Libya, Niger, Algeria and Mali, knowing perfectly that attacking and removing by force Muammar Gaddafi would destabilize the region. The most astonishing thing is that when the MNLA, National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, and other rebel group attacked the Malian forces, claiming secession of the region from the central government, the French did not condemn the movement but asked the government to negotiate with them. At the beginning, it seems that French never wanted to intervene to stop the movement. They only did when they noticed that the movement was joined by some terrorist groups. Even when the Malian government associated the whole group to terrorists, the international community never consider MNLA to be terrorist groups (Matic 2014).

This situation brings most observers to think that the Great Powers have some interest in this crisis. The main target behind the French intervention in Mali is the protection of the financial, political and security interests. In this vein, various francophone countries in West Africa began orienting away from France towards the US, China, and India as regards to trade relations (Matic 2014). Furthermore, France, as the previous colonial power, was not willing to lose its previous spheres of influence in favor of other powers such as China and Iran. Therefore, France regarded it a ripe time for an intervention that would protect its interests. By doing so some other powerful countries could have secured their corporate access to the region. For example, with France adopting a new hardened opposition to military regimes in Africa towards the end of the 1980s, relations between France and the Traoré government worsened. France ran a

media campaign highlighting abuses by the Malian government with respect to Tuareg populations and, in supporting opposition groups in Bamako, contributing to the fall of the Traoré regime (Humphreys and Mohamed 2003).

The French interest in the region lies in the economic, politic and security levels. French companies work in Mali or in its neighboring countries (Algeria in the oil sector and French investments in Niger and Mauritania). Fighting instability in the region and searching for other natural resources could be advantageous, thus enhancing the French interests in Mali and in the whole region. The main interests of France, Europe and Africa are at stake, according to French Foreign Minister Roland Fabius. On top of such French interests is finding uranium in the African desert, as approximately 75% of France's electricity comes from nuclear energy. International energy estimations indicate that the north Mali desert and east of Niger is estimated as being third in having reserves of uranium. In Niger, the French company AREVA provides more than third of the nuclear energy stations for electricity in France. Thus, the French economic interest in Mali was one of the main targets behind the intervention (Matic 2014).

On the political ground, France has traditional and historical influence in the region, thus it is trying to re-draw its influence against the increasing US and Chinese presence. In this respect, the US has built military bases operating surveillance drones to monitor the whole region extending from Somalia to Mauritania. China's pragmatic policy towards Africa is one of the two key actors in the African policy during the last decade. France has significant economic interests in Mali and its neighboring countries that should be protected. At the same time, France wants to protect itself and its citizens abroad. Currently at Kidal, the capital city of the northern region, the government troops



are not welcome. The security and regional defense is in the hands of the UN and the MNLA. Some members of the international community are appealing for autonomy for the region (Matic 2014).

From this analyses several deductions can be made. The fact that the Great Powers contributed to the growing secession sentiment in the northern part of Mali. Then, the Libyan campaign contributed to reinforce the Azawad and the rebel fighters. Since the MNLA leaders warring action there was not any condemnation from the international community. France pressured the authorities in Bamako to negotiate with the rebels. When the conflict started and the Azawad fighters were not yet joined by the terrorists from the Lybia and Algeria, the Great Powers encouraged both parties to restrain from violence. The Azawad leaders were even allowed to communicate through the international media. When the coalition was bombing the terrorists, they deliberately spared secession movement combatants. Some scholars argue that if the terrorists had not overrun the secession movement, the French would not have intervened and the movement would have been a success (Nossiter 2012).

It is clear that the Great Powers interest in the region is high, however there is no evidence that they supported the secession movement, except that their behavior regarding the MNLA forces is subject to interpretation. The movement failed to capture land and create its own country but its forces are still patrolling alongside French and UN troops in Kidal (Wing 2011). From this analyses, it appears that the authorities in Bamako were less interested in the region's strategic, political and economic interests. As a result, they did not significantly improve their diplomatic ties with the Great Powers towards the development of that region leaving room for the secessionists to gain

sympathy from some Great Power before they were joined by terrorists. Therefore, the variable regarding the level of Great Power support to the government is rated 2, as France and United States were the only active powerful countries interested in the region before the conflict.

Table 3. Scoring of Input Variables for the Analysis of Mali

<b>Serial</b>	<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>MALI</b>
1	The Level of Grievance Mitigation	1
2	Decentralization Progress	2
3	Insurgency Mitigation Strategy	1
4	Level of Great Power Support	2

*Source:* Created by author.

## A Case Study of the Tuareg Secession Movement in Niger



Figure 3. Niger

*Source:* Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook: Africa: Niger,” last updated 12 July 2018, accessed 10 February 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ng.html>.

### General Background

Niger is a landlocked country in West Africa region with a land size of about 1,267,000 square kilometers. It shares borders with Algeria and Libya to the north, Chad to the east, Burkina Faso and Mali to the west, and Benin and Nigeria to the south. It has a population of about 19,245,344 as of the July 2017. It is ethnically diverse and comprised of the Hausa, Zarma or Songhai, Tuareg, Fulani (Peul), Kanuri, Gurma, Arab, Tubu, and other Nigerien (CIA 2017b).

In Niger, French is the official language but Hausa and Djerma are the most spoken languages. Muslims account for about 80%, Christian 20%. The country is divided into three regions: The northern, western and southern regions. The main cities are Niamey, Agadez, Ayorou, Maradi, and Zinder. The Tuareg are concentrated in the north and were the epicenter of the secession rebellion movements. (CIA 2017b).

### Level of Grievances Mitigation

The Tuaregs of Niger, like their counterparts in Mali, have lost their identity due to the fact that the Tuareg kingdom was divided into different countries by the colonialists. As a result, the Tuareg found themselves in a minority position in their new countries. Moreover, under the Ottoman empire, the Tuareg community was involved in commerce exchange internally since and externally they controlled the Saharan trade routes for the past 1,000 years. They were successful business partners with the rest of the world. Socially, the Tuareg are Berber and do not feel to be part of the black community in the south. They are the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa and have fair skin. Consequently, they feel to be socially and economically marginalized. For example, before 1990 the Tuareg representation in public affairs was limited. In addition, they live a nomadic life in the desert, in an environment that is unfavorable to human habitation and lacks any infrastructure. They live on the herding of cattle but due to the lack of the government involvement in the region, recurrence in cattle diseases and drought often impacts their economic sources (Asfura-Heim 2013).

Niger, as well as Mali, experienced Tuareg secession rebellions in the 1990s and mid-2000s, because of the similar political, social and economic marginalization factors. Like in Mali, political grievances were rising in Niger in the early 1990s due to the

government's failure to uphold its promises to invest more in their region in terms of road infrastructure, potable water and schools. Though a peace agreement was reached following the 2007 Nigerien rebellion, the government in Niger has implemented some of the provisions of the peace accord that ended fighting in the 1990s, which called for greater decentralization, ex-rebels being integrated into society, and Tuareg being granted income from uranium revenues (Prevost 2012).

From the analyses, it appears that the socioeconomic and political deprivation of the Tuareg region in Niger have been successfully addressed by the authorities in Niamey. They instituted a greater and more successful decentralization process, and the ex-rebels were integrated into the society. Incomes generated by the production of uranium and oil are used to develop the northern Tuareg region. It also provides gratuities to local and ex-rebel leaders. Factors, such as political discrepancy and ethnic marginalization, have been successfully addressed. Only the hostile environmental factors for socio-economic infrastructure development still needs significant investment. Therefore, the level of grievances mitigation variable will be rated 2.

#### Decentralization Progress

The government of Niger implemented a decentralization plan similar to that of Mali following the peace agreement to strengthen national and institutional decentralization structures and to improve local governance and civic participation in the partner communities. However, the decentralization process was delayed by successive political turmoil in the country. The international community suspended their aid and support for the implementation of the decentralization plan. It was either suspended by the donor countries or held up by disruptions in the central government. It was in 2004

that the real and true decentralization process started due to the government disturbance surrounding the violent removal of President Mainassara in 1999. However, the new President Tandja Mamadou promised to continue to implement the Ouagadougou Accords to give a new impetus to the decentralization process (BBC 2017.)

In line with this policy, some foreign partners helped the country in its effort to implement the decentralization of governance. The activities are being implemented by the GFA Consulting Group. Co-financing by the European Union supported and supplemented the project's measures. The project supported the complementary and mutually reinforced cooperation between the national and local stakeholders in the decentralization process. The government's High Commission for Administrative Reform and Decentralization (HCRAD), a body set up by the State to supervise the decentralization process, established various technical and administrative criteria for the layout of the municipalities (Klute and Lecocq 2013).

At the end of the decentralization process, new communes were created with a decentralized administrative authority. The country held its first democratic local elections in 2004 where more than 3,500 Mayors were elected. The new decentralization policy helped promote the creation of a local infrastructure development plan, livestock management and assistance, the collection of taxes and the receipt of revenue from them, and the coordination with international and national independent partners. Those partners and tax revenues provided financial relief to the process and the programs (Hilhorst and Guijt 2006).

However, the scarcity of financial resources slowed the process down during the course of the program implementation. This event prompted the leaders of the 2007–2009

rebellion to launch another rebellion. The only reason they did this was to sabotage the authorities' peace process and denounce the slow pace of decentralization. For them, the government failed to deliver on its earlier promises. The uprising did not stand long because their argument of the violence did not endear themselves to the public sentiment (Bonnal 2018). The rebellion failed also because the government in Niger, contrary to Mali, provided financial support to the municipalities. Though this financial support was insufficient it showed the Niger authorities' effort to make the decentralization policy become a reality (Mohamadou 2009).

This analysis shows that the Nigerien decentralization process was politically, administratively and economically a success. These three conditions are what is required for a successfully implementation of a decentralization program and have been well applied in Niger. Therefore, the decentralization process variable for this case study is rated 3.

#### Insurgency Mitigation Strategy

The government of Niger, at the beginning of the rebellion, tried to crush the 1990s rebellion. It began negotiations only after several years of military operations. Thus, the brutal counterinsurgency campaign of Nigerien military continued for years after Mali initiated negotiations with its rebels. From the first sign of unrest among the Tuareg population, Niger has demonstrated its intention of ruthlessly suppressing the revolt. The army conducted a major operation in which approximately 400 Tuaregs were assembled and executed in the town of Tchintabaraden. The information was picked up by the international media, and this forced the government to conduct a hasty

investigation and arrested several officers by the army and police, who were later released under pressure from the army (Ilahiane 2006).

In 1992, the Nigerien government completed the details of the National Pact, Niger declared “a safe precaution zone” in the Tuareg home base, taking as an argument the authority of the military forces in the region to expand their control over the area. After four years of exclusive military response, the government negotiated a peace agreement with different rebel groups. Financially exhausted and frequently unable to pay its military and civil servants, the government saw no choice but to negotiate (UNHCR 1992).

The Nigerien government again used force to fight the rebellion when the insurgency resumed in 2007. President Tandja Mamadou refused to negotiate with the rebels and justified his refusal to negotiate by saying that the government had fully implemented the 1995 Ouagadougou Agreement. He felt that it was not in anyone’s interest to take up arms. The president also took measures to ensure the safety of its citizens. The state of emergency for the entire region of Agadez, a curfew in the central region, and limited movement to areas affected to civilians were implemented. The government then proceeded to arrest dozens of suspects and expel the press from the region obscuring reports of escalating violence. President Mamadou also claimed that the MNJ was laying mines in Niamey which resulted in calling for the formation of People’s Brigades and denounce those suspected of taking action against the government (The Economist 2007).

He moved 80% of its population in the north to areas south Agadez to deny the rebels safe haven and support. This military strategy continued for two years, with heavy



losses on both sides. The government imposed some restrictions on the media as a part of its counterinsurgency strategy. This led to a strategy of crushing the rebels by all means. The strategy of the carrot and stick, however continued because the government was still calling the rebels to handover their weapons and be granted immunity. He also pledged 60 million dollars to support the military operation in the region. The freedom of the media was suppressed and several freedom fighters and international organizations continued to accuse the government of human rights abuse. This is in contrast to Mali, where the free press continued to flourish in spite of the rebellion (Freedom House 2008).

The government also interdicted all the international radio reporters from the battle zone because the broadcasting was often biased towards the MNJ cause. Several of the reporters who tried to bypass the interdiction were jailed or sent out of the country for publishing reports on the government's handling of the insurgency. It was only after the crackdown that the rebels agreed to come to the negotiation table. Most rebel fighters agreed to join the peace negotiations in recognition of this military deadlock. As in the previous decades, only after a military solution had failed did Niger undertake negotiations, ultimately offering concessions similar to the ones Mali had negotiated years earlier (Freedom House 2008).

Unlike Mali, the government of Niger imposed restrictions on the weapons and military equipment coming from Libya following the collapse of Muammar Qaddafi's government in 2011. It was a difficult task due to the fact that the borders in that region are porous and without border demarcation. However, with determination, the authorities of Niger sorted and collected all the weapons and military equipment from all the combatants coming back from Libya. Even though they were not denied entry into the

territory, they were forbidden to come in with their arsenals. This decision to collect weapons at the border was one of the strategic decisions that saved Niger from the 2012 uprising (Albuquerque 2014).

From the analysis of the insurgency mitigation strategy in Niger, the military deterrence, nonmilitary coercion and the negotiation strategy required for a successful counterinsurgency process were successfully implemented. Therefore, the variable will be rated 3.

### Level of Great Power Support

History has shown that rebellion movements or secession movements always need military capabilities and financial resources to succeed. Nevertheless, the financial and the human resources cannot on themselves spark the success of separatism movements. In order to reach its objectives, secession rebel groups require a backing of the so called Great Power support to the movements. Bridget L. Coggins, from the Ohio State University, criticizes the international community for ignoring the rules and doing the will of what she named the politics of The Great Power. For her, the success of a secession movement depends on whether or not it has a The Great Power support (Coggins 2006). France was already economically involved in Niger since the northern region constitutes an economic concern for France, Niger being the producer of uranium and the mining infrastructure is located in the northern part of the region (Klings 1995).

According to a recent journal publication, the company Areva is in charge of the extraction of the uranium, with global revenues of 12.56 billion dollars in 2013 (Flynn and De Clercq 2014). Even the Nigerien government was initially adamant about its unwillingness to grant even partial independence to the Tuareg, due to the fact that the

region is holding one of the biggest uranium mines in Africa, from which much of the country's wealth comes (Krings 1995). Unwilling to give up this natural resource rich territory, the government adopted an 'iron-hand' policy of counterinsurgency, which entailed indiscriminate targeting of civilians. In January 2008, Rhissa Ag Boula, the most prominent of the remaining leaders of the 1990s rebellion, reappeared in the press. In France, he was interviewed by *le Nouvel Observateur* as a spokesperson for the MNJ. For him a "Battle of Uranium" was soon to be launched by the rebels against the Arlit-based French mining company, Areva (Deycard 2011).

Ag Boula had been one of two prominent Rebel leaders brought into the Nigerien government after the end of the 1990s rebellion. In the 1990s, he had coordinated a dozen rebel factions in the FLAA (*Front de Libération de l'Azawak et de l'Aïr*) and then signed the peace deal with the Niamey authorities on their behalf. In April 2008, The government of Niger requested that Ag Boula be extradited by the French government; however, by this time, he was no longer in France. Apart from the pursuit of this leader, with the tacit help from France, several reporters were arrested and exported; the foreign press and aid groups were closed. The state of emergency in the Agadez Region, re-authorized every six months since November 2007, has barred foreign press or aid from the area. In mid-2008, the French charity, Doctors without Borders (MSF), was forced to close a childhood malnutrition treatment program in Maradi Region which had been operating since 2005. MSF was subsequently ejected from the country by the Nigerien government (Deycard 2011).

This situation was directly or indirectly supported by French authorities because they could not allow any security threats in the uranium production area which happens

to be the Tuaregs' contested area. In addition to France, other Great Powers' interest in the country is significant. For example, in 2006 and 2007, the government of Niger granted a series of concessions for mining and gas and petrol exploration, divided between almost all of the mining companies present on the international market (Chinese, Americans, Australians, Canadians, and Indians). Therefore, the international community's interest was very high in Niger so they encouraged the government, with its iron-hand approach, to quell the rebels and bring peace to the region. This support to the government of Niger by France had placed the secession movement in an unfavorable position (Albuquerque 2014).

From this analyses, it appears that the internal community support was crucial due to politico-economic and strategic interests that Niger represented not only for France but also for the US and China. The number of countries supporting Niger are three and all of them have veto power in the Security Council. Therefore, the variable regarding the level of Great Power Support to the government of Niger is rated 3.

Table 4. Scoring of Input Variables for the Analysis of Niger

Serial		VARIABLE	NIGER
1		Level of Grievance Mitigation	2
2		Decentralization Progress	3
3		Insurgency Mitigation Strategy	3
4		Level of Great Power Support	3

Source: Created by author.

A Case Study of the Secession Movement in Senegal (Casamance)



Figure 4. Senegal

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, “The World Factbook: Africa: Senegal,” last updated 12 July 2018, accessed 25 February 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sg.html>.

### General Background

Senegal is located in the West Africa region with a land size of about 196,722 square kilometers. It shares borders with Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, Guinea and Guinea- Bissau to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The Republic of Gambia is an enclave stretching into the southern part of the Senegalese territory, almost separating the Casamance from the rest of Senegal (CIA 2017c).

It has a population of about 14,668,522 as of July 2017. It is ethnically diverse and comprised of the following ethnic groups: Wolof 41.6%, Pular 28.1%, Serer 15.3%, Mandinka 5.4%, Jola 3.4%, Soninke 0.8%, other 5.4% (includes Europeans and persons of Lebanese descent) (2016 est.). Muslims account for about 96.1%, Christian 3.6%, animist 0.3% of the population (2016 est.). The country is divided into ten administrative regions: Dakar, Saint Louis, Louga, Diourbel, Thies, Ziguinchor, Fatick, Kolda, Tambacounda and Kaolack. (CIA 2017c).

The Casamance is the southern region of Senegal south of the Gambia River which bisects northern Senegal from the Casamance region in southern Senegal. It contrasts with the rest of Senegal due to its tropical humid zone. The rainy season, which is longer in Casamance region than in the rest of Senegal, extends from June until October. This region can receive up to three to four times more precipitation. This explains why the area is greener and more fertile than northern Senegal. The Casamance is divided into two regions: Ziguinchor and Kolda. It covers 52,000 sq km and has a population of 1.4 Million inhabitants. The upper Casamance is the country of the Peul (herders) whereas the Middle Casamance is mainly the land of the Mandingo farmers, but

it is also possible to find both ethnicities at either side (Federation of the Free States of Africa 2007).

### Level of Grievance Mitigation

The Jola ethnic group's discontent started with the colonization. The French imposed their administration, a system of indirect rule, through local intermediaries. With a lack of clear and cooptable local power structures, the French attempted to install chiefs, often Wolof or Mandingo, and was unsuccessful because the Jola communities refused to recognize the Wolof and the Mandingos' authority, not only because they abused their authority, but also the Jola do not see the Wolof or Mandingo as members of their societies and refused to obey them. The predominance of Islam in the north and Christianity in the south was also part of the reason why they were not respecting the appointed chiefs. In fact, Islam came relatively late, around the turn of the 19th to 20th century in Casamance. This explains the view of the *Casamançais* to see the religion as of Islam being imposed on by the north (Evans 1999).

The geographical aspects of the Casamance region, as being physically separated from most of the northern Senegal, gives the Jola evidence that it should be an independent country. However, after independence, the fertile and rich Casamance region was attached to Senegal by the French colonialists. The Jola were hostile to this post-colonial decision. They did not however, oppose when a northerner, ethnically related to the southern Jola and a fellow Christian in a predominantly Muslim country, was to become the first president of the newly independent Senegal (President Leopold S. Senghor 1960-1980). It was only when he stepped down, after two decades of ruling the country, that the separatist movements started. This situation brought some scholars to

support the greed theory regarding the Casamance secession movement. According to the MFDC's (Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) leader, Father Diamacoune Senghor, the Casamance was never part of Senegal during the colonial period since it was administered first by Portugal, then by France under a special status conferred on the region (Brown 1996).

Another factor that deepened the frustration of the Jolas' was the Senegalese government's new law that did not favor the Jola. The 1964 National Domains Act ordered that the State has the monopoly over all land. The law violated the culture of the people by not taking into account the traditions and values they believe in. For example, the new law on land has forbidden the Jola to distribute the land according to the traditional ways. The new law also allowed the Senegalese from other regions to acquire land in Casamance. This situation has put the Jola in a difficult position as their fertile lands were expropriated and they could no longer cultivate them. They became financially destitute and the level of unemployment increased in the region. The reallocation of city and village spaces has amplified the discontent between the people of Casamance and the migrants from the north of Senegal (Nicole 1997).

The Family Code Law, voted in 1972, has frustrated the Jola because they could no longer decide on the marriage celebrations, on the traditionally guided heritage concerning the distribution of assets and the traditional recognition of a marriage. Those decisions were being transferred to state control which was the only national instrument to provide certificates. There was also a sense of unfair treatment of the Jola because they did not have the same rights as the caliph of the Mourid Brotherhood in the northern part of the Senegal who could do or undo marriage celebration policy and go unpunished.



This situation exacerbated the Jolas' anger and as a consequence, they refused to abide by this family code. Thus, they were prosecuted and ill-treated (Nicole 1997).

The MFDC has capitalized upon these grievances of the local populations. They manipulated the ethnic consciousness and got near universal popular support. They initiated movements and demonstrations throughout the region. The objective of the movement was the independence of the Casamance or an autonomy that would allow the region to decide on what is best for the region. However, the uprising in the early 1990s was repressed aggressively by the state and many people, as well as the MFDC leaders, were arrested. This situation has provoked anger and disgust over all the region. That was what prompted the Casamance secession armed conflict in the early 1990s (Evans 2003a). The government of Senegal, by choosing to ignore the political nature of the conflict and to respond with unprecedented force, had set a tone for some violent secession movements in the region. (Humphreys and Mohamed 2003).

From the analysis, it appears that Casamance region was ethnically discriminated against by the authorities in Dakar. The environmental factors were not also applied because the region was rich in agricultural production. Therefore, the variable level of grievances mitigation will be rated 2.

#### Decentralization Progress

According to Brown, all developing countries have undergone political struggle due to the attempts by central administrations to extend their influence and the people attempting to defend their autonomy (Brown 1996). The political situation in the post-colonial era in Senegal did not favor a good decentralization program because the government was centralized. The country was subdivided into prefectures and sub-

prefectures. It was supposed to allow the people to get closer to the rulers in order to participate in the development programs. However, it failed due to the fact that the taxes collected were centralized at the central government and were not redistributed to foster development activities in the remote areas (Faye 2006).

A rapprochement was initiated by President Wade with the MFDC in the early 2000s with its founding leader, Father Diama Coune Senghor, and the government. Following the talk, the government decided to appease the political tension by releasing all of the MFDC prisoners, except those who committed violent crimes. Also, all the MFDC casualties' hospital bills were taken care of by the authorities. They promised to initiate the rebuilding of Casamance starting with the rehabilitation of neighborhoods and villages in the region abandoned during clashes between the army and the rebels. They also financed micro-projects, such as transport vehicles, carts, canoes, the installation of sanitary equipment and the distribution of medicines, periodically in certain localities of the region as well as the re-establishment of contact between the army and the combatants living in neighboring countries and the external wing of the MFDC (Smith, Sall, and Dansokho 2003).

Law 72-25 of April 1972 introduced decentralization in rural areas by the creation of rural communities throughout the country. Even though rural communities were supposed to have management autonomy, most of the time they have remained under the control of the central administration. The first attempt to implement a decentralization program was a failure. Subsequently, a new set of laws was promulgated in 1996, under a constitutional reform, and this new decentralization law has granted an efficient status of legal entity to a three types of territorial administration. The laws of 1996 specified that

these three entities should also enjoy financial autonomy, be freely managed by councils elected through universal suffrage, and shall be responsible for the design, programming and implementation of economic, social and cultural measures and actions. The following domains were put under their control: land affairs, population and social welfare, youth, sports and leisure, environment and natural resources management, health, culture, education, town planning and housing. The rural communities would derive their incomes from diverse taxes and contributions from the government (Gehrold and Neu 2007).

Regional councils were also elected and were to help promote economy, social, educational and cultural development of the region. In addition, they were to implement regional development and land use plans; support for economic interest groups for the populations of certain villages in Casamance; coordinate local development investments and actions; and also implement and manage regional facilities. A regional development agency was to assist the various authorities to coordinate and harmonize the plans and programs between the government, region and grassroots communities; to manage development plans and schemes; to formulate and follow up on agreements to provide administrative services to communities; and design and undertake studies relating to local schemes (Gehrold and Neu 2007).

The Senegalese state has therefore taken a number of measures to help the secessionist fighters and neighboring populations obtain small funds for micro-projects agricultural equipment and fishing. A management committee for these micro-projects, were to be set up and led by a representative of the gendarmerie. These projects were initiated in more than thirty villages in the Casamance. They consist of fighting the

poverty that is raging in the region and the temptation to cultivate and trade in marijuana (Gehrold and Neu 2007).

These preceding measures have contributed in providing, over the past decade, a situation of “no peace and no war” in the region. The security assessment is improving and the government seems to control the situation. The revolts and killings have significantly reduced in number even though some secessionists are still in the forest. From this analysis, it appears that the decentralization process initiated by the government has taken into consideration the three factors required for its success, the political, economic and administrative dimensions. Therefore, this variable will be rated 3.

#### Insurgency Mitigation Strategy

The 1970s saw protests in the Lower Casamance against injustices by the Senegalese administration, particularly in relation to land tenure disputes. These problems were followed in 1980 by a violent students’ strike at Ziguinchor against deteriorating conditions as a consequence of the government’s financial crisis. One student was killed by security forces. The government of Abdou Diouf, who had only acceded to the Senegalese presidency in January 1981, responded with violence and crack downs. Several students and the MFDC leaders were arrested and sent to prison. The Casamance was also divided into two new regions, as described above, in what is generally interpreted as an attempt by the government to isolate and control separatism in the Ziguinchor region alone (Evans 2004).

On the ground, repression continued with the arrest of several hundred people, often on purely political grounds, although the rebellion was also used as a cover to settle

local scores, for example through false denunciations of individuals as rebels or rebel sympathizers. A number of detainees were tortured or murdered in custody. The MFDC, in response, armed and trained its followers in the forest and across the border of Guinea-Bissau and opened the conflict in April 1990 by attacking a customs station at Séléti. The government responded with a large military force presence and counterattacks in the region. There was significant deterioration in security in the region. An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 people died, with at least 652 killed or wounded by landmines and unexploded ordnance. Many more have been displaced. A census in 1998 by the Catholic Charity Caritas, indicated a total of 62,638 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees (Humphreys and Mohamed 2003),

However, since his election in 2000, President Wade adopted a new approach to the Casamance peace process. He called the separatists to the negotiation table. He promised them armistice if they were willing to lay down their weapons. He tried to bypass intermediaries and negotiate directly with the secessionists, the armed wing of the MFDC. Therefore, he sidelined the movement's political wing and directly targeted the rebels themselves. He appointed General Abdoulaye Fall, in 2002, to be the link between the government and the separatists' armed movement. The General appointed Latif Aidara as an emissary because he is from the region. Fall sent audio and video cassettes to the main secessionist faction to appeal to them addressing some of the MFDC's demands. The military would stop seeking and harassing the secessionists and they would get amnesty if they gave up their weapons (Evans 2004).

The president also invited to the palace some key figures of the MFDC political leaders who have taken refuge in neighboring countries. They later returned to their

villages with the support of the authorities. Other appeasing actions and programs were implemented in order to ease the tension but as the armed secessionists were divided into different factions, it was difficult to get all of them around the same negotiation table. However, the General and the emissary had worked hard to get in contact with them. Despite this, the emissary and the General made outstanding progress in the peace process (Evans 2003b).

The previous administration was not so bad because it helped weaken the separatist movements. President Wade responded to the movement with a robust army presence. The army, in the course of its duties, committed some human rights abuses that revolted the population. He had also begun to include more Casamançais in his cabinet. Peace talks were also held in neighboring countries, like in Guinea-Bissau and Gambia in 1992. The MFDC was represented by rebel leader Sidy Badji and Father Diamacoune Senghor, the founder of the resistance movement. He was upset that the main goal of the movement, the independence of Casamance, was not the subject of negotiations. However, even though the separatists did not officially end their resistance, the movement was softened by these measures taken by the government. (Gehrold and Neu 2007).

The government ultimately gave the military solution priority over any kind of political or legal solution. Violent attacks by both sides further aggravated the crisis. The official line of the Senegalese authorities was to promote peace negotiations, but in fact it actually reinforced its military presence, sending more troops to the south of Casamance (Gehrold and Neu 2007). The government also succeeded indirectly in dividing the rebellion into different factions (Front Nord and Front Sud). The division disorganized

and hindered the rebels' will to fight as they lacked unity of command and effort and became suspicious of one another (Evans 2004).

Father Diamacoune listed several key conditions for peace to reign in Casamance. They were the conditions that had already been provided for in the Bissau Peace Talks in 1991. For him the silence of arms in the region was conditioned by the free movement of individuals, the release of the MFDC detainees and the withdrawal of military forces from the Casamance region while retaining only few forces in Ziguinchor, Bignona and Kolda. Indeed, Father Diamacoune explained that the 1991 agreements had not been respected because the army, instead of retreating, received larger numbers with more sophisticated weapons. Nevertheless, the rebels promised not to use their weapons again but refused to surrender them (Evans 2004).

According to the President of the Ziguinchor Regional Council, the Senegalese State's decentralized administration holds consultation meetings for local people and members of the MFDC, including rebel fighters and members of the outer wing. In addition, socio-economic projects by the gendarmerie authorities are set up with the financial support of the Minister of Youth, and targeted the poorest populations in the region. The overall peace environment that has reigned since the 1990's era of intense conflict era indicates that the government has succeeded in finding a solution to the problem. The *Casamançais* live today in a period of "no peace and no war" (Gehrold and Neu 2007).

From the analysis of the insurgency mitigation strategy in Senegal, the military deterrence strategy was overused by the authorities, aggravating the crises at the beginning. However, as they realized their mistakes, they have been successful in the use

of non-military coercion and the negotiation strategy using the carrot and stick approach. As a result, in the past decade there have not been any significant attacks in the region. The unsettled situation in the region may be related to the greedy tendency of some unpopular ex-rebel's leaders. Therefore, the variable will be rated 2.

### Level of Great Power Support

Great Power involvement is strategically important. When the Great Powers' interests align in favor of a state's emergence, the division of the state will be blocked when Great Powers' interests align against it (Coggins 2006). There has been a historical bond between France and Senegal, especially in the Casamance region. The French took the region from the Portuguese in 1888 and reattached it to Senegal. However, the *Casamancais*, the people of Casamance, resisted the idea of attaching themselves to Senegal. They fought the French during colonialization and some French soldiers did lose their lives. Today, three streets of Dakar immortalize some of the battles of the Casamance *maquisards* which fought the French during the colonial period (Faye 2006).

The government and rebel groups in Mali, unlike those in Senegal, came under considerable international pressure to find a resolution to the Tuareg problem. France's position, with respect to the Casamance conflict, has been less activist than its engagement with Mali. France has maintained strong relationships with Senegal and has not taken a prominent diplomatic position to help resolve (or interfere in the Casamance conflict. However, the most important success of the authorities in Senegal was diplomatic success.

In order to reassure the international community, in the early 1990s, the country welcomed the Pope and hosted the African Cup of Nations in 1992. They also hosted the



International Islamic Conference in Dakar. By these events, the authorities deliberately wanted to prove to the world that the country is safe and could be relied upon. Even some of those events were held in the Casamance to show that it is part of Senegal. They also participated in the Gulf War on the allied coalition side. This was a strategy for the government to gain support from the western countries against the insurgents, and indirectly, its troublesome relationship with its neighbors such as Guinea-Bissau and Gambia. They eventually succeeded in gaining the support of the international community in terms of diplomatic relationships and in the condemnation of the insurgency movement (Federation of the Free States of Africa 2007).

On the economic ground, the region is rich and fertile for agricultural production. For a long time, Senegal has enjoyed its location on the Atlantic Ocean, a remarkable geographical situation for its economy. This allowed the country to play a central role in the various exchanges between Europe, Africa and America. Moreover, until 1960, Dakar was the capital of French West Africa (AOF). To the north, the Senegal River, which has given its name to the country, has always been a privileged zone of contact with other African regions. Having never experienced a coup, Senegal remains one of the most stable countries on the African continent. Since 1960, the Senegalese model of stability and democracy has often been cited as an example (Amady 2011).

Government support to IDPs was mainly through the Economic and Social Empowerment Program in Casamance, launched in June 2001, with the support of donors and humanitarian agencies. It includes demining, demobilization of combatants, reconstruction and community development related to reintegration and long-term sustainable development activities. The World Food Program (WFP) and the United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as national and international NGOs, are active in the country. WFP helps relief and reconstruction operations in the Casamance's targeted areas of high concentration of IDPs. In 2008 and 2009, WFP implemented a food for work program to help make returning to the Casamance sustainable and to promote self-reliance for returnees. It has also provided school meals to encourage school attendance and help restore livelihoods (WFP 2009).

“Growth in Africa will be fueled by China.” This was the prediction made by Mamadou Diallo a Senegalese economist and former presidential candidate, in August 2010. As early as 2009, China replaced the major western countries as Africa's largest trading partner. Between 2010 and 2011, they jumped from one hundred and twenty-seven billion dollars to one hundred and sixty-six, as much as the amount of the China-Germany trade. In addition, China is questioning the models of cooperation proposed so far by the traditional partners of African states and creating rivalries between the powers present in Africa. Major French companies, such as Bolloré and Bouygues, are competing with Chinese companies, such as China Road and Bridge Corporation, to take over the construction of major infrastructure (Gehrold and Neu 2007).

U.S. interest in Senegal has focused on international strategic objectives. Also it designed humanitarian policies to address specific African crises including Senegal. In addition, multinational corporations have also played a major role in formulating U.S. policy (Delancy, Reed, Spyke, and Steen 1997). Presidents Clinton and Bush visited Senegal during their administrations. They thanked Abdou Diouf for his past support for international peacekeeping operations, and for his work on the African Crisis Response

Initiative, a U.S. program of training African military forces for peacekeeping operations (BBC Africa 2003).

From this analyses, it appears that the internal community support was crucial due to politico-economic and strategic interests that Senegal represents for not only France but also for the US and China. Therefore, the variable regarding the level of the Great Power support to the government in Senegal is rated 3.

Table 5. Scoring of Input Variables for the Analysis of Senegal

<b>Serial</b>	<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>SENEGAL</b>
1	Level of Grievance Mitigation	1
2	Decentralization Progress	3
3	Insurgency Mitigation Strategy	2
4	Level of Great Power Support	3

*Source:* Created by author.

Table 6. Scoring of Input Variables for the Analysis of Mali, Niger and Senegal

<b>Serial</b>	<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>MALI</b>	<b>NIGER</b>	<b>SENEGAL</b>
1	Level of Grievance Mitigation	1	2	1
2	Decentralization Progress	2	3	3
3	Insurgency Mitigation Strategy	1	3	2
4	Level of Great Power Support	2	3	3

*Source:* Created by author.

Table 7. Scoring of Output Variables for the Analysis of Mali, Niger and Senegal

<b>Serial</b>	<b>VARIABLES' COMPOSITE VALUES</b>	<b>MALI</b>	<b>NIGER</b>	<b>SENEGAL</b>
1	Ability to Mitigate the proliferation of Secession Movements	06	11	09

*Source:* Created by author.

### Summary of the Chapter

Secession movements are proliferating in the northern parts of Mali as a result of a very high level of grievances. The Tuareg population in the region is deprived and marginalized and is aggrieved because it lacks basic human needs. In addition, the unfavorable weather conditions do not encourage a successful agricultural production. In Mali, the decentralization program, initiated by the government to boost local community development, stalled for lack of financial resources. The funding provided by the international partners was misused. The government is weak and corrupt and unable to stand firm against the Tuareg secessionists allowing them to enter the country with weapons they took from Libya after the war. Malian authorities also failed in their diplomacy as they did not succeed in denying to the secession movements critical international support.

In Niger, social-political imbalance and economic deprivation are prevalent in the north but not like in Mali. The government has been using the income from the uranium production in the region to invest in basic needs for the people. Many key figures of the region have been incorporated in the cabinet and enjoy the country's wealth. The grievance is moderate in comparison to Mali. Niger has also invested in a

decentralization process; they use the funds generated by the oil and uranium production to accompany the decentralization program in order to provide financial support to the local governments. They also were firm and intolerable regarding the Tuareg secessionists. They used the carrot and stick method to dissuade the rebels who were coming in the country with the arsenal they got from Libya after the war. They were disarmed before entering in the country, unlike the Malian Tuareg fighters. The uranium and oil production has conferred to the Nigerien the international community's protection.

In Senegal, the political stability of the country is in contrast to the insurgency fighting in the southern part of the country in the Casamance region. The geographical aspect of the region encourages the *Casamançais* to claim that the region is not part of the Senegal. Most of the grievances were linked to the unpopular government Family Code and Land Acts imposed on the people of Casamance. The government, under Abdou Diouf, did not successfully manage the uprising and it developed into a significant security issue in the region. However, the government of Abdoulaye Wade has through negotiation, using the carrot and stick approach, decreased the violence in the region. They also have implemented a sound decentralization program to include the rebels' abandoned areas and vulnerable people. They have in the process of their international relations attained diplomatic deals to have the international community assist in their cause. There is no evidence, however, to support an assertion that the violence perpetuated lately in a forest foothold of the Casamance was perpetrated by the rebel group.

The challenge for the three countries is to invest in mitigating the population's grievances. However, the analysis has indicated that a country such as Niger successfully stopped the insurgency, and Senegal, despite the difficult terrain (deep forest and landmines) has weakened the rebellion and brought back security in the region. They have succeeded where Mali has failed. The UN mission is currently conducting in Mali a peace keeping operation as a result of the government's failure to mitigate the secession movements.

From the analysis, it is clear that certain factors motivate the rising of a secession movement and its related violence in the communities. These include capitalizing on the population's grievances by the politicians, a lack of a sound decentralization program, a failure in the strategy to mitigate the insurgency and failure in diplomatic efforts regarding the international community. It is clear that the Tuareg secession movement has caused the spread of insecurity in Mali by bringing along, knowingly or unknowingly, terrorists groups.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

This thesis examines the rise of secession movements and ways to mitigate the spread of separatism movement conflicts in West Africa with the view to identify some major factors that trigger separatism conflicts in the region. The study then proposes some ways as recommendations to mitigate the secession related conflicts.

The study identified numerous factors, such as the level of grievance mitigation, decentralization progress, the insurgency mitigation strategy and the support of the international community. However, these factors are not on their own the only characteristics that contributed to the rise of secession conflicts. There are several other elements which, combined with the factors identified, enabled the conflicts. Some of these factors are poverty and greed. However, many countries in West Africa could have plunged in the wave of the separatism movements but they did not.

The promotion of peace and development is the key to minimizing separatist conflicts. From the African perspective, peace is first and foremost about physical security, the satisfaction of basic needs and psychological harmony. The authorities cannot stop political, economic and social conflicts until they provide all citizens the basic needs, instead of favoring a small group of the population over others based on ethnicity or religion. The marginalization of the north versus the south or of the west versus the east is common in many African countries and this often parallels with the development of the region. And what ensues is the rise of the population's grievances towards the authorities. What keeps a population united is the hold and control of

economic opportunities, a perceived sense of justice, good governance, and easy access to education. For instance, in Niger, Burkina Faso and Ghana, people can develop their business and run their activities trusting the government to render them justice whenever they need it. In a country where everybody seems to be part of the nation and less excluded from the nation's business the grievance level is at a much lower level.

The failure in a decentralization policy in many countries is another factor promoting the rise of secession movements. Instituting a decentralization program often comes without serious regard to its implementation funding. Many similar programs have fallen in the same trap where the will of the authorities and the hope of the population have been hampered by the incapacity of funding or lack of funds to generate resources to keep the wheel turning. Given the lessons from Mali, Niger, and Senegal, the decentralization program, without any funding, must be avoided because it can only reinforce the divisions and suspicion within the country.

The insurgency deterrence strategy is also a factor in mitigating a succession movement. The strategy involves the carrot and stick approach that successful governments implement to put an end to a secession related insurgency.

Lastly, the Great Powers' support to the government contributes largely in mitigating a secession movement. They support the central government with diplomatic, informational, military and economical means in order to diminish the movement. Unfortunately, the support often goes to regimes in countries where the Great Powers' interests are being protected by the African government.

To grasp the West African secession movement's operational environment, other factors such as bad governance, greed, history, ethnicity, culture, religion, and poverty



are also other key variables to be considered. These factors play considerable roles in the rise of secession movements in West Africa.

### Recommendations

The analysis of the rise of secession movements in West Africa, in the three case studies, show that the rising trend can be mitigated by addressing the following factors: socio-politico-economic discrepancy, ethnic marginalization and environmental factors to reduce the level of grievance; good governance to reduce corruption in order to raise money to finance a sound decentralization policy; a tough, firm, and able leader to apply an insurgency deterrence strategy; and knowing how to sort between the Great Powers' interests and the national interest in order to have the international community assist in diminishing secession movements in West Africa.

### Level of Grievance Mitigation

Mali should set conditions for socio-politico-economic development by addressing ethnic and political marginalization. The authorities should encourage government programs, international organizations and non-governmental organizations' projects investment in the northern part of the country to mitigate the environmental factors unfavorable to economic development. Governance should be transparent, especially during local and national elections. The officials should also reinforce judicial and legal institutions, especially in the north, where the government's presence is lacking. This would lower the levels of corruption of government and public officials and thereby boost confidence of the population in the government's ability to administer its affairs. There should be investment in infrastructure such as transportation, water, and electrical

capability, especially in the north to improve social services and provide access to basic amenities to all people irrespective of their ethnic or religious background. Leaders in Mali should promote commerce between the northern states and other neighboring countries to increase trade and expand markets across the northern half of the country. It should also provide tax relief to companies directly involved in economic development in the northern parts of the country.

The authorities in Niger should also encourage international organizations and non-governmental organizations' projects to invest in the northern part of the country to mitigate the environmental factors unfavorable to economic activities' development. Niger should continue to advocate the use of conciliation methods, concessions, and tactical factors, to maintain and to consolidate its current peaceful environment. By adopting a negotiation concept, governments could avoid endless conflict as well as its impacts.

The government of Senegal should promote public access to information and continue to involve the local population in the Casamance in the decision-making process. The government should open up more judicial courts in the region and make bureaucracy less painful to enable the people to have quick access to compensation and access to the judicial process to address its grievances. This could facilitate the rule of law where no one group or class of people would be seen to be dominant in government and the citizenry would have confidence in the ability of government to dispense justice with fairness. Mainland Senegal and its southern Casamance region should consider that leaders in the Casamance be represented in high national positions. In so doing, people in Casamance would begin to feel that they are part of the country.

### Decentralization Progress

In Mali, officials should respect the promises of decentralization and vital political reforms to avoid regenerating the conflict. They should increase economic development activities to allow the people to have access to basic needs to reduce the high level of poverty that is holding the people hostage. They should actively work toward meeting the decentralization promises and strictly respect the peace accord. Mali's government actually had the financial resources needed to initiate a better functioning decentralization and reintegration programs, and encourage the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance.

Niger and Senegal, despite the progress made in their decentralization policies should continue striving to provide to all the people the political reforms that would bring the people from all the regions to be part of the decision making process.

### Insurgency Deterrent Strategy

Mali should adopt a more robust and firm attitude towards the secessionists in order to compel them to the negotiation table. The protagonists should work to overcome the distrust between them and engage with determination in a dialogue that would pave the way towards the establishment of a long term peace. They should implement the carrot and stick approach, same as what Niger and Senegal did to overcome the secessionists.

The government in Senegal should continue to encourage the politicians, civil society, religious authorities and the law enforcement agents to take concrete action to consolidate existing initiatives by setting up popular networks of citizens for peace in Casamance. They should include neighboring countries, especially Guinea-Bissau and

Gambia, to create the conditions for positive results in finding definitive solutions to the crisis. The opposition and other citizens should join hands and consolidate initiatives at the national level in order to work towards a fairer, just and inclusive Senegal.

### Great Power Support

Malian authorities should enhance good governance through democratic values to gain the international community's support. The officials in Bamako should capitalize on the ongoing United Nations peace keeping operations in the country to resolve their differences with the secessionists. They should develop partnerships with NGOs committed to accompany the peace process by defining and implementing projects and special programs for the development and social reintegration of the secessionists. By applying these measures alongside others, it would contribute to making advances in the resolution of the crisis and the establishment of a long-term peace.

Senegal should go further by capitalizing on its diplomatic success, to shift both the concept and program design to accommodate the actual needs of those who are still hiding in the forest by guaranteeing their safety and needs. The officials should understand the root causes of this conflict and involve all parties concerning with the problem. They should also request the expertise of some other nations that have gone through the same experience to provide them with adequate means to build peace and prosperity. Outsiders are not always the solution for those who must come up with their own answers. However, by showing good will, the international community would open a safe space for peacebuilding on all levels.

After this research, it is obvious that the selected variables use to analyze the case studies worked in two out of the three countries used as case studies in West Africa.

These variables are satisfactory in Niger and Senegal but are not in Mali. As a matter of fact, Mali has been unstable for almost six years. Therefore, for West Africa countries in general these variables need to be addressed in order to mitigate or to gradually diffuse possible rise of separatist movements in the future.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The research shows that certain areas for further study became obvious even though the primary and secondary questions covers several aspects of the thesis. Some authors are building a correlation between separatist movements and terrorists. There is the need to further study the possible nexus to establish the relationship existing, if any, between secession movements and terrorist organizations in West Africa.

Another area for further research is how secession can be a remedy to end ethnic division and conflicts in West African countries. Additionally, further study is needed on the impact of natural resources on secession movements as well as the correlation between government stability and poverty with secession movements.

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