

FORMS OF CONFLICT AND CRIMINALITY THAT MAY FUEL VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE AREAS OF NORTHERN COTE D'IVOIRE

| Dosso Binaté Namodé Alice *¹ | and | Konan Kouamé Hyacinthe ² |

1. Peleforo Gon Coulibaly University of Korhogo | BP 1328 KORHOGO | Côte d'Ivoire |

2. Peleforo Gon Coulibaly University of Korhogo | BP 1328 KORHOGO | Côte d'Ivoire |



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ABSTRACT

Background: Crime, like the heads of the hydra, constantly evolves and manifests in new forms. This study aligns with Cusson et al., arguing that border populations experience various illicit and non-standard activities, referred to as "opportunistic" crime, which impact their gender and lifestyles. These areas were previously regarded as small-scale fraudulent trafficking zones where the absence or weak presence of the state and porous borders facilitated such activities. However, the emergence of terrorism has transformed these regions into high-risk zones. **Objective:** This research aims to examine the specific forms of conflict and criminality observed in these border areas, particularly those connected to gold-mining sites. **Methods:** Qualitative surveys were conducted using the participatory research method (MARP), and interviews were conducted with local authorities in the surveyed areas. **Results:** The findings reveal that criminal organizations exert control over these areas and exploit these illicit activities and conflicts to recruit their workforce and finance terrorism. The social learning theory of crime, as advocated by Sutherland and others, serves as the foundational theory for this study. According to this theory, criminal behavior is learned through interpersonal exchanges, with individuals motivated by personal gain. Additionally, Sageman's theory complements this perspective by explaining how jihadist recruitment can be facilitated. He suggests that radicalization occurs within breeding grounds of resentment, where similar pairs, such as groups of friends, brothers, or cousins, foster the growth of radical ideologies.

Keywords: Conflict and crime, border populations, violent extremism or jihadism, criminal organisations, natural resources in Côte d'Ivoire.

1. INTRODUCTION

The UN Secretary General's Action Plan (2017) indeed observes that "violent extremism is a multifaceted phenomenon that eludes clear definition. (...) However, it is more a matter of political and security practices and their requirements..." This attempt at a definition, however, brings us to the heart of the security debate on African borders. Regardless of the ambiguity of the terms, cross-border risks and the accompanying violence are increasingly present, serving as evidence of the great fragility of these border areas. This fragility encompasses multiple dimensions: political, social, economic, security, and environmental. These borders have become hotspots for illicit trafficking and organized crime. While West Africa has long been under the United Nations' attention, it is only recently that the international community has recognized the magnitude of the organized crime problem in the region. Organized crime takes various forms that equally endanger the stability of the region. Consequently, West Africa is now one of the area's most vulnerable to jihadist infiltration, considering the situations in Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as the military-political crisis in Guinea. Since Côte d'Ivoire shares borders with each of these countries, it becomes a high-risk nation in terms of the jihadist threat. The terrorist activities of Boko Haram, which is not far away in Nigeria, also contribute to the prevailing sense of fear. International organizations such as the UN, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, and other partners are actively involved in the search for solutions to ensure security at the borders of countries. The OECD, in its work, examines the role of border regions in the evolution of violence since the late 1990s in North and West Africa. Utilizing its innovative Spatial Conflict Dynamics Indicator (SCDi), the report explores the growing correlation between political violence and border regions. It analyzes over 170,000 violent events between January 1997 and June 2021 at the regional level and employs case studies in the central and eastern Sahel. Additionally, it appears that disrupting the supply of logistics, food, and manpower to jihadist groups could facilitate the search for solutions. The fact remains that Côte d'Ivoire is becoming a supply zone for these militias. It is crucial to understand that these border areas provide the ideal setting: a no man's land with minimal state control, the existence of numerous clandestine routes that bypass official ones, remote areas teeming with able-bodied young people in search of livelihoods. The porous nature of our borders, coupled with certain socio-cultural and religious factors, makes West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, the ideal stronghold for jihadist activities. Other scholarly studies report on the jihadist threat on the borders of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the observed conflicts and criminal activities, but without directly linking them to the likely purposes of recruitment and financing of jihadism.

The GAFI report (October 2013) can easily be used to support the empirical findings from the sites investigated. The report outlines a number of methods involved in the financing of terrorism in West Africa. Firstly, the lack of security in the Sahel region, particularly in northern Nigeria, Niger, and Mali, allows for the rampant smuggling of money, weapons, and ammunition, as well as other resources needed by terrorist organizations. It appears that there is an increased use of legitimate businesses and commercial transactions to finance terrorism. The objective of this study is therefore to link the local dynamics that fuel criminality and conflicts in Ivorian localities located in the so-called "red zones," in the sense that they can serve as a means of recruiting the necessary labor and providing useful funding for the jihadist machinery.

Appropriately, Zeini (2014) also argues that transnational crime is closely related to cross-border crime, as it generally extends in space and time. Both concepts are central to organized crime, commonly defined as a set of crimes characterized by preparation, thoroughness, with multiple interventions, and generally having an international dimension. This transnational crime has slowly but surely formed due to the vulnerabilities of states, such as the vastness of territories, the length and porosity of borders, and chronic governance deficits. These deficits include the absence of a vision and strategy in terms of security, weak involvement and responsibility of local communities in the management of security issues, a low level of economic and social development, social injustice, poverty, misery, marginalization, and even the exclusion of certain segments of society, such as young people and women...".

This study, therefore, assumes that jihadists and their criminal organizations can rely on latent and recurrent conflicts and/or criminal activities surrounding resources and their consequences to recruit personnel and finance their projects.

The reference theory used in this study is that of social learning of crime, supported by Sutherland and other authors. According to this theory, it is necessary to take into account that criminal behavior is learned through interpersonal exchanges. It is important to understand that individuals, driven by the pursuit of personal gain, may eventually learn criminality and derive their livelihood from it. Similarly, according to Sageman (2008), jihadists can exploit the resentments and disarray of populations to radicalize and recruit them.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The study population

The data collected for this study pertains to border localities in the North-West, specifically Tiéfinzo-Sanzanou-Sokoro in the sub-prefecture of Kimbirila-North; Kanakono, Zanikaha, Kapégué, and Koulousson in the department of Tingrela; as well as Togonieré, Sokolo, and Petit Nassian in the department of Kong. In the North-East, the data includes Kalamon and Gôgô in the departments of Doropo and Téhini, respectively (see Figure 1 for reference).

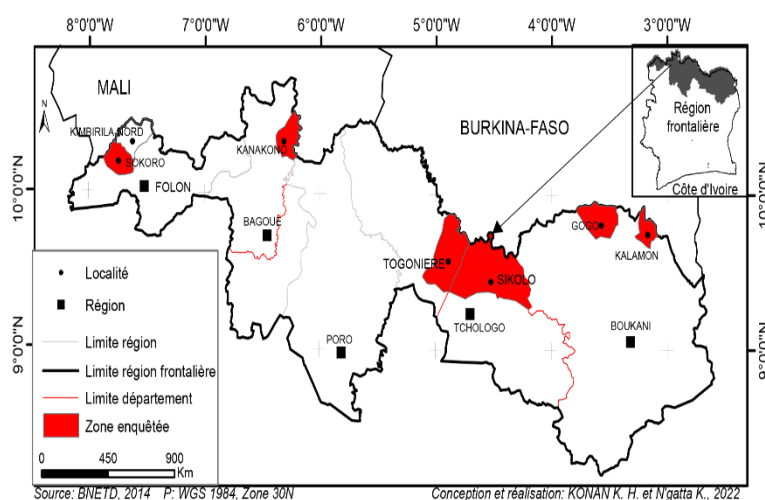


Figure 1: the figure presents the map location of the study areas.

2.2. Data collection methods

Data collection utilized various tools of the Participatory Research Methodology (PRM) (3), including the Venn diagram, resource maps of different terroirs, seasonal calendars, natural resource matrices, and focus groups.

The resource maps of terroirs, which involved youth and/or women, were instrumental in visually representing the current state of natural resources. Following the production of the maps, feedback sessions were organized, providing an opportunity for the participants to provide clarifications and additional information.

Natural resource matrices were conducted separately with women's and men's groups to explore the significance of different natural resources in terms of sustenance, income generation, and future prospects. These matrices also examined the impact of climate change on these resources and the levels of conflict associated with them.

Focus groups were conducted with participants from the survey locations, aiming to engage all relevant stakeholders. Each group, consisting of approximately 9 to 12 participants, focused on specific topics and dynamics related to lowlands, savannah areas, areas affected by cash crops, areas used for cattle breeding, mining sites, and forests. The discussions centered around the challenges associated with each of these areas and community responses. Additionally, the focus groups explored the appropriation of resources contributing to the highlighted conflicts and criminal activities, as well as individuals' attitudes towards economic insecurity.

2.3. Methods of data analysis

The combination of Sutherland's (1992) and Sageman's (2008) theories provides a comprehensive analysis of the research subject. Sutherland's theory emphasizes that individuals learn criminal behavior through

interactions with their peers, adopting negative definitions of legal rules. The accumulation of these negative definitions ultimately leads to criminal actions. According to Sutherland, individuals not only imitate what they observe but also interpret actions and the social and material context around them, particularly in terms of present opportunities, which contribute to the commission of criminal acts. Increased exposure to criminogenic decisions within one's peer group correlates with higher engagement in criminal activities.

Furthermore, Sutherland and others argue that crime can be learned given the right conditions and motivations. Individuals perceive opportunities for easy financial gains through certain activities valued by the community. The prevailing conditions of impunity and the allure of gain make engaging in these activities more tempting. They learn from already corrupt peers, associating with vices and embracing them as a way of life. Criminality is learned and accepted through daily activities and interpersonal exchanges.

Similarly, Sageman (2008), in his analysis of numerous terrorist itineraries, proposes an explanation for jihadist recruitment. He suggests that radicalization stems from personal experiences of injustice and witnessing inflicted injustices. This fertile ground of resentment becomes the breeding ground for radicalization within small groups of friends, brothers, and cousins. Populations living in border areas, characterized by poverty and inequality, hold resentment towards the state due to their marginalized situation, rendering them vulnerable to jihadist recruitment. For instance, the Peulh community, feeling marginalized, may become susceptible to radicalization as they share similar culture and ideology with jihadists. Additionally, young individuals, facing life's challenges, may succumb to the temptations offered by jihadists, such as motorbikes or other incentives, leading to their recruitment. Taking into account these various factors is crucial in combating terrorism.

1. RESULTS

3.1. Manifestations of the observed phenomena: Conflicts and criminalities in presence

3.1.1. Conflicts and criminal activity in the lowlands: in the background, the water issue: The main sources of conflict between farmers and herders in relation to the use of the lowlands are crop damage, the destruction of fences used to protect market gardening, and the use of water. These conflicts are recurrent and involve women who grow vegetables and cattle breeders. These conflicts intensify in the dry season when the rivers completely dry up. As a result, the lowlands become the only sources of water shared by the two socio-professional categories. The localities particularly affected by the water crisis are Kalamon, Petit Nassian, and Togoniéré. This already delicate situation in these geographical areas is aggravated by the massification of livestock in localities such as Kalamon, where a family can own 50 to 100 head of cattle. In the absence of banking structures in the department of Doropo, cattle have become a means of saving. In these localities, these conflicts are settled at the level of the notability. Generally, the outcome of the settlements is the compensation demanded from the herder. The largest herders admit to having spent around one million CFA francs per year to cover the damage caused by their herds. Criminal activities related to conflicts around the lowlands are characterized by the injury of animals, the destruction of market gardeners' enclosures by child herders seeking to gain access to water points for their herds. The other type of conflict is generated by the struggle for control of space in the lowlands, which have become the only cultivable areas due to the expansion of cashew nut cultivation. In Togoniéré, conflicts pit Fulani women against indigenous herders. Indeed, the oxen used by the indigenous Pallaka and Niarafolo for animal husbandry are allowed to roam, destroying the crops grown by the Fulani women. In addition to this type of conflict, which is little known, there is a thorny conflict between Fulani herders and farmers in this locality, as in other localities. In Sokolo, the conflicts between women and herders are linked to the destruction of crops in the lowlands by oxen. The extent of the damage can be gauged from the words of the president of the women's group, "Our annual harvest is what remains after the damage caused by the oxen."

In Koulousson, there are two levels of conflict in the lowlands. The first is between the indigenous or transhumant Fulani and the indigenous people. In both cases, clemency is granted to the guilty party, and then the chief fines the Fulani, especially the transhumant ones. The conflicts observed in Tiéfinzo are related to crop damage. While the damage caused by the livestock of local herders is minimized, the damage caused by transhumant herders is considered to be more significant because they graze their animals at night during their journey. Finally, the last type of conflict between the Malinke and the Lobi in Sokolo relates to the Lobi community's failure to respect Muslim practices in accessing the water point that remains the source of supply during the dry season. This conflict in access to water sources is due to the application by the Malinke of an Islamic principle which holds that a woman who does not perform ablution defiles the water she steps into.

Consequently, the use of water from this spring by a Muslim woman would not make her pure before Allah, hence the ban on Lobi (animist) women from this water point, which is the closest to the village during the dry season. They are forced to travel more than 10 km from Sokolo to get water.

3.1.2. Cashew nuts, a factor in community tensions: There are very few conflicts linked to the exploitation of savannah areas and the cultivation of cashew nuts. Most of the recorded conflicts involve rare cases of crop destruction by oxen and a few instances of crop theft. Conflicts in savannah areas are not significantly different from those in the lowlands and typically occur between herders and farmers. These conflicts arise from the destruction of cashew plants and crops, as well as the farmers' desire to occupy grazing areas designated by the sub-prefectural authority of Gôgô, leading to tensions.

In Sokolo, the Malinkés express frustration as they perceive that the Lobi non-natives, who have seen their population grow, are using their influence to evade paying agreed-upon royalties. Additionally, besides the damage caused by oxen, there are reports of crop theft by Fulani herdsmen. According to our respondents, the quantity of stolen crops is not negligible, especially considering that a single herd can consist of more than 100 animals. As highlighted by a young Lobi from Sokolo, "the herdsman has become a planter without owning a single cashew tree."

Conflicts over land between indigenous and Malian populations have also been reported, particularly regarding the demarcation of cultivable plots and even the border. Farmers in Koulousson often have plots on both sides of the border, which are frequently disputed by Malian parties in Tiongui. These parties consistently claim these plots as family property without providing substantial evidence.

The presence of the jihadist threat in the region has led to an increase in the number of Dozo checkpoints, which dominate the border roads that have been ignored or abandoned by law enforcement forces. The absence of clear demarcation with neighboring villages (gouinzon and tiemba) and neighboring countries (sangouroula in Mali; sogbèni and djoboko in Guinea) contributes to conflicts among the different populations.

3.1.3. Conflicts and criminal activity in cattle-breeding areas, with the Fulani at the heart of all suspicions:

The development of livestock farming, originally intended to provide a means of conversion and savings for a population geographically distant from banking structures, has now become a source of pressure on natural resources. In Kalamon, as well as in Gôgô, livestock rearing is practiced by all communities, yet the Peulhs are wrongly singled out as the exclusive owners of the herds that cause damage, despite the Lobi community having more livestock. In Togoniéré, Fulani herders feel unjustly treated by the local population, as they are charged for installing and accessing the dam used as a watering point. However, they cannot leave the cattle pen or reach the dam without damaging crops. Once the damage is noticed by the farmers, they summon the herders, who are then required to compensate them. A farmer in this area expresses their frustration, stating, "We often feel like these people have kept us here to exploit us. We can't leave the cattle park we paid to install for fear of destroying surrounding plantations, and we can't access the dam we paid for. It's unbelievable."

Confronted with this situation, the Peuhl communities are questioning the necessity of continuing to reside in the area, given the increasing scarcity of natural resources and growing conflicts. In Sokolo, tensions between herders and farmers are evident, particularly between the Lobi and Peulh communities. In Togoniéré, the Peulh community intends to migrate to Katiola to escape recurrent conflicts. The development of livestock farming poses a constraint on agricultural activities, with market gardening activities coming to a halt due to crop destruction caused by herds, as seen in Gôgô.

According to the village chief, "We have been compelled to establish a vigilance committee to monitor our fields. During harvest time, some transhumant animals visit the fields before us. Our crops, the fruits of our hard work, are in danger." In Tiéfinzo, livestock theft is also a concern. Several thefts have occurred in both native and Fulani herds. The first incident involved 28 oxen in one herd, and the second involved 30 oxen. These thefts are believed to be the work of transhumant herders who break the fences at night and take the cattle to Mali. To address this issue, the yards have been moved closer to the houses. Additionally, thefts of oxen and aggression against Fulani herders have been reported along the borders of Mali and Guinea. Due to the porous nature of the borders, stolen oxen are taken across the border, and the Fulani are forced to pay substantial amounts of money to recover their animals. Theft incidents are also frequent within the village, where the stolen animals are never found. Another concern is the presence of police officers and gendarmes on the roads and field tracks. Even when presented with administrative documents, they demand money from the Fulani herders. At each checkpoint, the police force the Fulani to pay sums ranging from 100,000f to 250,000f/CFA.

3.1.4. Mining areas: areas marked by frustration and corruption: The first visible conflict arises from the clash of interests among the mining company AMPELA, the state, and the indigenous Koulango communities in Kalamon and Lorhon in Tehini. These communities accuse the state of transferring all its mining wealth to AMPELA without their consent and express confusion regarding the permit allocation process.

The second conflict occurs between AMPELA and the illegal operators. Since its establishment for research purposes, AMPELA has employed the police to remove illegal operators from its exploration area. A daily cat-and-mouse game ensues between the illegal operators and the police forces hired by AMPELA. The local population criticizes the police

for allowing foreigners to exploit gold and extort money from them, which they wouldn't dare to do with the local population. A levy of 3,000 CFA francs is imposed on each tricycle transporting mined gold products to Burkina Faso. This amount is demanded for every bag of minerals intercepted at border checkpoints.

3.1.5. Other conflicts and crimes observed: Criminality in all its forms is one of the most pervasive sources of insecurity in West African border regions today. These criminal practices have fueled corruption, which is undermining political integrity and impeding development. The border areas are rife with illicit commercial activities, including smuggling of various goods, involving a wide range of actors. The pursuit of profit takes precedence over all social values. The visited border areas possess a distinct characteristic of hosting both clandestine and non-clandestine gold mining sites. The prevalent level of corruption and criminality, coupled with the limited presence of essential state structures, give these sites their unique features: they are essentially lawless territories with minimal control, enabling the proliferation of various illicit activities and misconduct. These sites serve as actual breeding grounds for criminal behavior, as the referenced theory suggests.

3.1.5.1. Drugs: Drugs are ubiquitous. Given the demanding nature of their work, gold miners frequently resort to drug use for personal reasons. They claim that obtaining drugs on-site is easy and that it provides them with strength and motivation for their labor. It is important to note that drug consumption intensifies tensions among workers and contributes to observed behavioral excesses. Consequently, drug trafficking and its usage are integral components of the activities orchestrated by transnational criminal organizations, who view it as a lucrative source of income. The profits generated from drug trade are subsequently laundered through various illicit activities, including livestock farming, as part of their overall operation.

"This job is difficult and requires you to be in another state to do it, in fact, you can die while working. The drugs help us to work to take away the fear and give us more energy" (Gold diggers, 3).

3.1.5.2-Arms trafficking:

Weapons are prevalent in various forms: homemade weapons, Kalashnikovs, and other Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Gold miners and their associated groups or security personnel possess these weapons as a means of self-protection against the prevalent banditry observed on the mining sites. Acts of violence committed using weapons are commonplace, and assassinations and murders have become routine occurrences in these designated "red zones."

The term "opportunistic crime," akin to health terminology, is aptly employed here to describe diseases that should not be exacerbated but can prove immensely detrimental to vulnerable individuals. Thus, within gold mining sites, even the slightest activity can swiftly devolve into a festering wound, becoming illicit and perpetuating a cycle of violence.

"Our work involves gold, which means that we can be attacked at any time, and when they come, they are armed and intend to shoot us. That's why we also arm ourselves to defend ourselves" (Gold diggers, 5).

3.1.5.3. Kidnappings: Kidnapping for ransom is becoming a very common practice. Thus, on a regular basis, people, particularly very wealthy economic operators and their collaborators, are kidnapped and ransoms are demanded. The outcome is often dramatic and traumatic for the relatives. Especially since the cases solved by the police are very small.

"Today, he sees kidnappings in the region like in American films. Several people have been kidnapped and ransoms have been paid to free them. These people come back really traumatised" (Administrator Doropo).

3.1.5.4.Smuggled goods: Sugar, timber, cannabis, pharmaceutical drugs, and other commodities are transported on motorcycles through clandestine routes from one area to another. These untaxed and inexpensive goods flood the border regions of Côte d'Ivoire, extending as far as the center (Bouaké). Scouts precede them and bribe the police along the way. Additionally, there is the export of cash crops to neighboring countries due to pricing policies (such as cashew nuts, cocoa, and coffee), as well as the illicit trafficking of Ivorian gold (which holds greater value elsewhere) that is transported to neighboring nations.

Regarding this matter, N.B. asserts, "One often encounters a procession of about a hundred vehicles on these clandestine routes. These motorcycles carry various contraband and untaxed goods. This should be reported so that the government can take action."

In summary, these findings reveal that conflicts and criminal activities revolve around the allocation, utilization, and appropriation of resources, as well as the pursuit of profit "at any cost." Resources play a crucial role in people's lives and daily routines. However, the proposed regulations contribute to discontent and frustration, creating fertile ground for the infiltration of jihadist influences, which facilitate recruitment and financing. It should be noted that despite the fines intended as compensation, farmers often feel that their annual harvests suffer significant losses due to the damage caused by Fulani livestock. They perceive the compensation as undervalued. On the other hand, Fulani communities claim that other populations treat them as mere sources of revenue and that they are always the ones who bear the costs. Neither party is genuinely satisfied with the proposed settlements, further fueling resentment among the affected populations. For some, it fosters a sense of exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination, which can be exploited and perverted, just as the relentless pursuit of success can.

3.2. The aims of conflicts and opportunistic crime

3.2.1. Recruitment

3.2.1.1. The issue of transhumance: Transhumance is a traditional form of animal husbandry practiced by the Fulani community. Their way of life is inherently connected to transhumance. However, the scarcity of natural grazing lands due to the preference for cash crops and the consequences of urbanization are among the factors that are disrupting their way of life. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Fulani community is often viewed with suspicion as they are sometimes involved in criminal activities related to illegal roadblocks, organized crime in the north, and gold mining sites. The Fulani people are in need of alternative livelihoods to sustain themselves beyond livestock rearing. Unfortunately, their vulnerable situation makes them susceptible to recruitment by jihadist groups.

3.2.1.2. The issue of resentment among the population: In the border areas, there exist numerous developmental inequalities. These regions have been neglected by the state, leading to a situation that can breed frustration and despair among the population living in poverty, making them vulnerable to the influence of jihadist groups. In Tehini and Tougbo, at the border regions, jihadists entice young individuals by offering money and motorcycles, as revealed by conducted surveys, and by promising improved conditions in exchange for their recruitment. Another evident factor is the desperation of the population, who see the promises of assistance and resources from the arriving foreigners (jihadists) as a means to escape poverty. The presence of conflicts and criminality creates a crisis-like atmosphere that can be exploited by these ideologists. The marginalized and discriminated Fulani community is involved in various activities associated with organized crime and jihadist operations.

B.L., Administrator: "All the time I worked in Bouna, the people responsible for the attacks on the roads, commonly called coupeurs de route, were always Peulhs, according to the survivors. However, a number of documents show that looting through attacks on means of transport (trucks, motorcycles, buses, etc.) is one of the preferred practices of jihadists to obtain supplies quickly when external financial support is slow or dwindling.

3.2.2. Financing of jihadist activities: The people exhibit a particular ease. Capital seems to circulate on the gold panning sites and within local activities. A diverse population, predominantly consisting of young individuals, swarms the area. Illicit activities and various forms of criminality serve as the manifestation of this pursuit of profit and the means through which jihadists acquire or increase their resources: manpower, materials, and funds.

During an interview with a young person, they stated, "Here, anything is possible; you can become rich overnight. There is work available everywhere and in every domain." However, people work and engage in activities without realizing that their efforts serve other purposes. Investigations have revealed that gold panning, attacks and robberies on roads, smuggling, and various other activities generate income for jihadists. Consequently, certain organized criminal networks in these regions take matters into their own hands, disregarding the authority of states, although establishing their direct connections with jihadism remains challenging. Nonetheless, a wide range of illicit activities are attributed to the jihadists by the populations in these red zones, and their reputation continues to rely on the fear they instill in the hearts of the people.

It should be noted that well-established terrorist groups are increasingly descending from Niger to provide support to the gangs operating in West Africa. According to reports from international organizations, it is concerning that their collaborations and alliances greatly undermine border security. They provide mutual financial and logistical support to each other.

4. DISCUSSION

Our results showed that the population faces endemic criminality and fierce competition for access to natural resources, with the state being considered absent or predatory, and its representatives failing. The localities studied are marked by the socio-economic marginalization (stigmatization) of certain communities, especially the Fulani community and the younger generations, fueled in particular by increased competition for access to land and natural resources. This struggle for control has become even more bitter because of new migrations of Fulani populations and other populations from the sub-region who have come for gold panning. This situation is confirmed by the studies of Mafou (2020), who mentions that if in the past migration to Côte d'Ivoire was directed towards the coastal and forest areas, it is now directed towards the north, which is home to activities that attract the interest of other types of migrants, such as gold panning. The latent or open conflicts are therefore, from the point of view of Konan and Guehi (2021), risk factors that must be taken into account (Risk Bulletin, 2021). The consequence of population densification in an area with pressure on resources in an environment already marked by inequalities and where the state has not provided basic services and security for more than a decade of military and political crisis. Our studies have shown that the relatively high level of crime in this part of the country is linked to the absence of the state, which allows criminal gangs to flourish. The absence of the state has also created a vacuum that has allowed non-state actors to take control of prerogatives that were once vested in the state. Recent socio-political and security events in Côte d'Ivoire, marked by attacks on military positions in the northeast of the country (Kafolo-Tougbo and Tehini attacks), expose the fragility of the socio-political and cultural environment, the reasons for which could be hidden in the struggle for control of resources between socio-professional categories with sometimes divergent interests. This is what happens, according to Hobsbawm (1994, p. 576), quoted by Sheptycki (2014, p. 6), when states, in cross-border areas, show their real incapacity to honor what, according to their own criteria, constitutes their main function: the maintenance of order.

5. CONCLUSION

Finally, it should be noted that the populations of the northern border areas are generally confronted with a development problem. The conflicts they face are increasingly interpreted as a struggle for control of natural resources that have already been weakened by climate variability, to which demographic pressure is now added. As for crime, it reflects the resilience of underserved populations, particularly those living in border areas, who can benefit from the flow of contraband, which pushes them further out of reach of the state. Although these livelihoods are not sustainable because they rely on international crime, they can be seen as preferable to poverty and can be fiercely defended when threatened. Moreover, this situation can have perverse effects on the security of the country and the region as a whole if development efforts are not made for these populations and if the presence of the state is not reinforced to reduce the resentment they develop. African states, and particularly Côte d'Ivoire, would benefit from implementing a set of measures that could reduce the gloomy long-term prospects that jihadist ideologists nurture and build. When we see that the various forms of terrorist attacks show a real adaptation of terrorist action to the efforts of states but also reveal their perfect organization, they always manage to take advantage of the chaos and fragility of the people. Let us take into account, here, the criminalities and conflicts observed on the investigated sites.

Côte d'Ivoire aims to maintain its role as the engine of the West African economy; however, it also provides the best conditions for ideologists to easily find the human, material, and financial resources they need to thrive. The research objective is confirmed, as is the starting postulate. The reference theories, very timely, have allowed us to demonstrate why the criminalities and conflicts, as well as the sentiments of the populations, deserve to be highlighted. The work on the modernization of borders and transhumance can only bring significant advantages in the fight against insecurity in West African border areas.

Footnotes and bibliography

- (1) **OECD**: has presented its latest Fragile States Report 2016-
- (2) **UNODC**: Transnational Organised Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment-2013
- (3) **PRM**: is a powerful methodology for rural development research. It is based on the work of an interdisciplinary team that combines various techniques for collecting and analysing information, using the following tools: direct observation, group interviews, diagrams, games and role plays, anecdotes, proverbs, workshop work, or visual tools whose nature varies according to the type of information sought.

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