Can Old Regimes Handle New Wars? A comparative study of regime survival strategies in Chad and Mali in the face of insurgencies

Research on new wars argues that since the 1980s states and regimes have become more vulnerable to violence from non-state actors. Two developments in the Sahel region support the new wars thesis: an increase in Islamist radicalization and new access to the global black market, both of which strengthen Islamist insurgents. Using a comparative case study of the regimes in Chad and Mali from 2003 to 2016 and applying a theoretical framework of regime survival in states with internal anarchy, this paper explains how regimes in the Sahel region defend themselves against insurgents. Surprisingly, the paper finds that regimes in the Sahel region are still able to cope with the rise in non-state threats. The paper first shortly compares the longevity of the present regimes in the Sahel region to all previous ones, second examines in-depth how Chad and Mali fight the insurgents. Findings are that since independence regimes have not relied on state institutions for survival, because the threat of coup dissuades them from relying on those institutions. The regimes are, thus, as strong or as weak as they ever were.

How do regimes survive insurgencies in a strategic environment of declining state power and empowered non-state actors[1]? At the heart of the so-called New Wars-literature is an agreement about a structural shift in power from states to non-state actors since the 1980s. Proponents often explain a shift from inter-state, conventional war to prolonged internal wars by pointing to three developments. First, globalization is the most basic structural change, thought to undermine the autonomy of the state due to increased economic competition and external demands, such as the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund (Duffield, 2007; Kaldor, 2012, 2013; Münkler, 2004). Moreover, 'shadow globalization' allows a sustainable war economy to develop, because non-state militant actors are able to sell local high value commodities such as drugs or minerals on the global market. In effect, non-state militant actors have been able to prolong conflicts, but are also thought to care less about political goals than about prolonging the conflict, as the war economy is profitable to them (Jung, 2003; Nordstrom, 2004; Reno, 2011).

The second change is the increased importance of 'identity politics', a term which refers to an increased ability among militant non-state actors to mobilize along identities such as tribal or religious affinity (Creveld, 1991; Heupel & Zangl, 2010; Holsti, 1996). Identity politics also weakens the state's ability to command loyalty, or even reduces the state to a resource for self-enrichment and patrimonialism (Reno, 1998, 2011). The third change is the proliferation of cheap, commercial technology, which undermines the state's monopoly on force (Creveld, 1991; Duffield, 2007; Hammes, 2005, 2006; Kaldor, 1999; Münkler, 2004; Smith, 2008). By utilizing available technology such as GPS, cell phones, and reliable off-road vehicles, non-state militant actors are able to achieve much of the mobility and coordination associated with armed forces. Moreover, the huge surplus of Russian-made weapons depressed the prices on reliable, light weapons.

In the light of the huge increase in the number of internal military conflicts after the end of the Cold War, the quick answer seems to be that regimes in regions with relatively weak state institutions are, in fact, not able to survive for long against strengthened insurgents. To reach this conclusion one has to assume a simple, causal relation between state institutions and the survival of regimes. Since the publication of Samuel Huntington's "Political Order in Changing Societies", many political scientists have, indeed, made such an assumption (Andersen, Møller, Rørbæk, & Skaaning, 2014; Huntington, 2006). However, this

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[1] This paper defines regime as the ruling elite comprised of the persons within the executive power, such as the head of state, persons within government, within the inner circle of the political system, such as leaders in the military or intelligence agencies or private persons, without whom strategic decisions cannot otherwise be made. The term regime is not used with normative connotations nor reserved to autocratic political systems.

paper sets out to examine the strategies of the regime against internal threats as an intermediate variable influencing the outcome of regime survival. Regime strategies might be able to draw on other means and ways than the military or economic power of the state institutions, or combine the means of rudimentary state institutions with the means of non-state actors in creative ways.

The Sahel region is a relevant testing ground for examining to what degree regimes' survival strategies are sufficient to secure their grip on power in the face of weakened state institutions and stronger non-state militants[2]. Globalization has increased the power of non-state actors, who benefit from the increased trade through the Sahara linked to illicit global networks. The smuggling of migrants from other African states and narcotics from South America has enriched local criminal groups as well as insurgents and terrorists (Bøås, 2015; Solomon, 2015). Weak since independence, the states in the Sahel have not been able to increase their authority, monopolize their use of force, or effectively deliver public goods. Since 2007, all states in the Sahel have seen a decline in public services, and three out of four have declining state legitimacy and security institutions according to the Fragile State Index, 2016. In Chad, public services and state institutions have marginally improved, but still Chad remains the seventh most fragile state in the world. Despite a general improvement in the state institutions of African states, the Sahel states remain weak and are in decline in accordance with the New Wars thesis. To survive, they are likely to have employed strategies not limited to the power of their state institutions.

Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the question: how do regimes in the Sahel region stay in power, despite a relative decline in state power and a high prevalence of violent, internal conflicts? An answer to that question would contribute to the New Wars literature by examining regime survival strategy as an intermediate variable that shapes the outcome of declining state power. More specifically, this paper points to the regime's reliance on internal and external alignment to survive insurgencies because of the constant threat of coup from within the state institutions. In fact, this paper goes as far as to argue that this specific regime survival strategy largely offsets changes in relative state power, because since independence regimes only have used state institutions in a very limited way.

In order to theorize regime as a separate level of analysis, this paper draws on theoretical work on regime survival. Classic theories on regimes in weak states find that their primary goal is mere survival, not state building or the restructuring of societies according to political ideologies (Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Clapham,

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[2] This paper defines the Sahel region as consisting of Chad, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania. Geographically, the region encompasses semi-arid areas south of the Sahara and, thus, more states. However, as will be argued in the subsequent section, the four states share demographic, political and historical characteristics that allow comparison.

1996; David, 1991; Jackson & Rosberg, 1982; Joel S. Migdal, 1988). Moreover, informal and personal politics are, in this perspective, thought to be more important than the formal and institutional politics associated with Western state-building efforts (de Waal, 2015). Consequently, new approaches, building on insights from classic regime survival theory, have sought to identify how informal and personal instruments of power are used in counterinsurgency strategies (Day & Reno, 2014; de Waal, 2015; Seymour, 2014b; Staniland, 2014). Most important is the use of co-option and the use of de facto or de jure shared authority, which allows insurgents and militias to become part of either the regime's patrimonial network or to co-exist with the regime, despite a declared political and military conflict. Theory on regime strategies towards non-state militant actors will be introduced in more detail in the analytical sections.

For now, the key theoretical addition is the recent work on coups in weak states. Arguably, coup does not receive enough attention in the new approach to regime survival. In the 1960s and 1970s, important work on coups demonstrated the detrimental effects of coup on military effectiveness, the development of legal-rational state institutions as well as inclusive politics (Finer, 1962; Jackman, 1978; Luttwak, 1979; Perlmutter, 1969). Coup remains a threat in many African or Middle Eastern states and unlike insurgencies, the threat of coup by definition stems from state institutions[3]. Facing a dual threat of coup and insurgency, the regime has to settle on a strategy utilizing state institution in a way that does not increase the risk of coup (Powell, 2014; Roessler, 2011). Therefore, this paper ties the risks of coup and insurgency together in a coherent theoretical framework, which argues that the use of co-option or shared authority is a rational choice, because the risk of coup makes a strategy based on military dominance or improvement of public services difficult. The lack of reliable institutions forces the regime to rely on internal or external actors to remain in power.

The argument is developed in four parts. Part one is a quantitative description of the expected lifetime of the regimes in the region. Changes in the expected lifetime of regimes would provide an indication of the extent to which globalization and state erosion have a direct effect on regime survival. Unfortunately, the limited number of cases does not allow for a rigorous, statistical examination of the correlation. Still, examining all regimes in the four states in the Sahel region since independence in 1960 makes it possible

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[3] A coup is defined in accordance with Huntington's definition of military coup: an illegal replacement of a state's governmental leadership through its military's use or threat of violence (Huntington, 2006, p. 218). An insurgency is defined as "a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by a quick seizure of power", a definition adopted from Stephen Metz (2004, p. 2). Insurgents are, thus, often outsiders of the regime and their objective might be less than the replacement of the governmental leadership, e.g. autonomy or even access to patronage networks.

to describe quantitatively the development in the longevity of the regimes in the Sahel region. Based on that, the paper selects the case of Chad, 2003 to 2010, and Mali, 2011 to 2015, in order to examine the regime survival strategies in-depth. The last three parts of the argument are guided by a structured, focused method in order to provide a coherent qualitative analysis of the two cases of regime survival strategies in face of insurgencies (George & Bennett, 2005). Part two analyses the impact of coup-proofing strategies on the military capabilities of the Chadian and Malian armies. Parts three and four examine the use of internal and external actors, respectively, in line with the perspective of regime survival theory.

The longevity of regimes in the Sahel region

French colonial rule in the Sahel region came to a sudden end in 1960. All the four former colonies under study were among the poorest in the world, with little infrastructure and state institutions, some of the very factors identified by James Fearon and David Laitin as key factors that explain the outbreak of civil war (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Moreover, all the states had formal sovereignty over large territories, where large parts of the arid Northern areas were sparsely populated and were subject to little government control. Jeffrey Herbst has demonstrated how African states with these geographical features are especially prone to insurgencies (Herbst, 2014). The political impact of the geographical features is in all cases amplified by black African tribes living primarily in the southern parts of the states, whereas tribes of Arab or Moor descendant live in the northern parts of the states. Taken together, the structural conditions for regime survival is comparable across the four states.

Center of Systemic Peace have provided the datasets *Coup d'Etats* and *Polity IV* that make it possible to trace regime survival over time. The 22 regimes wielding power in the examined period have been divided according to the decade in which the regime came to power. Since 2010, three new regimes have come to power – two of them by a coup and one through a peaceful transition of power, but the regimes are left out of this paper for their logical lack of years in power. Other factors than a decline in relative state power might explain changes in the expected longevity of the regimes. Especially democratization and the peaceful transfer of power are likely to have become more commonplace after the Cold War. Consequently, the relative risk of losing power due to coup, insurgency, and peaceful transition of power are indicated as percentage for each decade of regimes coming to power. Table 1 sums up the data.

Table 1: Regime survival over time

Decade of regime coming to power / Indicator	1960s (n=4)	1970s (n=5)	1980s (n=2)	1990s (n=5)	2000s (n=3)

Average years in power for a regime who came to power in the decade in question	15	9	7	11	7
Percentage of regimes that lost power due to peaceful transfer of power	0	20	50	20	0
Percentage of regimes that lost power due to coup	100	40	0	60	67
Percentage of regimes that lost power due insurgency	0	40	50	0	0

Source: Data from the datasets "Polity IVd Polity-Case Format, 1800-2015" and "Coups d'Etat, 1946-2015" from Center of Systematic Peace.

Despite a limited data material, the examination leads to three findings that give an indication of the recurrent challenges of the regimes in the Sahel. The regimes taking power in the 1960s all survived into the 1970s. In the case of Chad the Tombalbaye regime only survived due to French intervention that halted an insurgency offensive before the insurgents reached N'Djamena (Hollick, 1982, p. 298). In comparison, regimes taking power after 1970 have on average had a lower amount of year in powers. However, the average has been relatively stable and perhaps even slightly higher for regimes taking power in the 1990s and 2000s, if one excludes the short-lived Abdallahi regime in Mauritania from 1996 to 1997. The relatively stable periods in power across the last four decades do not reflect the large changes in the external conditions, such as the end of the Cold War or the process of democratization in the 1990s.

Coups have remained the single largest threat to regime survival. More than half of the 23 regimes in the four states lost power due to a military coup. Furthermore, the risk of coup has remained high since 1970, with six coups in the period from 1990 to 2012. The persistently high number of coups deviates from the general trend of a decline in the number of military coups since the 1960s (Powell & Thyne, 2011, p. 255). Since 1991, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger have held genuinely democratic elections, which should, in theory, allow a peaceful transition of power. However, only in three instances have the presidents in the states peacefully accepted to transfer power, and only in Mali 2002 did the president hand over power after an election. The many occurrences of coups in the Sahel states are likely to influence the applied regime survival strategies, because state institutions represent a threat as much as an instrument of power to the regime.

Finally, Chad, Mali, and Niger have combated insurgencies several times, and since 2002, Mauritania has faced a small-scale Islamic insurgency from AQIM. Despite of that, Chad remains the only state in which insurgents have successfully overthrown the regime. Idriss Déby, who was already a regime insider before falling out of grace with President Hissène Habré, led the last successful insurgency in 1991. A number of insurgencies have failed since 1990, which at least indicates that the regimes have been able to overcome a shift in power between state institutions and non-state militant actors. Still, in Chad in 2006 and 2008

and in Mali in 2013, insurgents almost managed to topple the incumbent regimes. Only a late intervention by France saved the regimes from military defeat. The near-failure of the regimes in Chad and Mali makes the two insurgencies interesting from the perspective of this paper. The cases of Chad, 2003 to 2010 and Mali from 2011 to 2015 are contemporary and should reflect the new conditions identified in the New Wars thesis. Moreover, the circumstances must have forced the regimes to expend all their possible means and ways in order to survive. In doing so, they are likely to have revealed to what extent state institutions or allies were keys to survival. The next section will examine how the regimes of Idriss Déby in Chad and Amadou Toumani Touré in Mali handled the risk of coup. Moreover, the section will examine how the strategies to reduce the threat of coup have influenced the choice of counterinsurgency strategy.

Coup proofing in the Sahel region

The primary task of a praetorian force is to protect the incumbent regime against the risk of coup from actors within the regime's powerbase. In a recent quantitative study, Jonathan Powell found that coup proofing mostly comes at the expense of proficiency in counterinsurgency (Powell, 2014). Frequent rotation of officers, lack of communication, or insufficient means are some of the factors identified by Powell that decrease the counterinsurgency competency of the army (Powell, 2014, p. 331). This section argues that the regimes in Chad and Mali had praetorian forces that received copious resources and training, at the cost of the regular forces. What is more, the regular units suffered from lack of materiel, training, and personnel, which military assistance from the United States could not rectify. This lack of competence allowed lightly armored, but mobile insurgency units to overcome the regular army units.

Columns of Toyota pick-up trucks packed with insurgents armed with light weapons and crew-served weapons, such as anti-tank rockets or heavy machine guns, were emblematic of the insurgencies in both Chad and Mali. Tactically, both insurgencies operated fundamentally differently from the Maoist concept of guerilla warfare in the earlier phases of an insurgency. Instead, insurgents relied on highly mobile units that caught government forces unprepared. Insurgents' access to vehicles and crew-served weapons was not just the result of new prosperity brought about by smuggling. In Chad, insurgent groups received most of the pick-up trucks and anti-tank missiles from Sudan (Tubiana 2008, p.41; Wezeman 2009, p.8). A breakdown in diplomatic relations between Chad and Sudan caused by the Darfur crisis resulted in the Sudanese support to Chadian insurgents (De Maio, 2010, p. 30). In Mali, years of smuggling across the Sahara provided insurgents group with vehicles suited for desert warfare. However, only after the death of Muammer Gaddafi in October 2011 could the Malian insurgents steal or buy crew-served weapons from Libyan weapon stores (Anders, 2015, pp. 174–177). In both cases, the sudden access to mobile,

crew-served weapons changed the balance of force between the regimes and the insurgents within a short period. Tactically, a highly mobile, but lightly armored enemy operating in easily identifiable vehicle columns presents great opportunities to armored, regular ground troops with even rudimentary air power. Still, in both cases, the armed forces found it difficult to withstand the insurgent offensives, most likely because the regimes had organized the armed forces in a way that was detrimental to effective mobile warfare.

For years, the regimes of Déby and Touré disadvantaged regular ground forces to protect their regimes from the threat of coup. First, patronage and personal loyalty were more important than professional qualifications at the senior level. In Chad, the small army totaling 10,000 to 15,000 men had 60 generals and 256 colonels. Of those, the vast majority came from the same Bideyat clan of the Zaghawa tribe as did President Déby (Marchal, 2006, p. 46). Having an outsized senior command was a way to reward personal loyalty, and a way for the regime to balance distrusted elements within the army. In addition, positions that could be used to stage a coup, such as the Chief of Staff were replaced almost annually. In Mali senior officers were co-opted into the ruling party and some of them into positions as civil servants in the ministries (Solomon, 2015, p. 71). Second, in Chad the regular army was less an army than an instrument to co-opt insurgents, criminals, or militiamen away from combating or harassing the state (Debos, 2011). In the years after the outbreak of violence, the nominal number of soldiers swelled from 15,000 to 60,000 most of whom were co-opted insurgents or militiamen. Third, the regimes balanced regular units with praetorian and paramilitary forces. Besides the favored presidential guards, other units were used for regime protection, such as the gendarmeries, and several intelligence services such as *la Sécurité Rapprochée* and *l'Agence Nationale de Sécurité* (Maoundonodji, 2009, p. 390). In short, the regimes clearly favored their praetorian elites rather than regular forces, which meant that the armed forces were better suited to protect the regime against threats from inside the regimes' power base than against insurgents.

The impact of the United States' military assistance

After 9/11 2001, Chad and Mali became part of the United States' initiatives such as the Pan Sahel Initiative and Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. Even though the program focused on the special forces of the Sahel states, the United States Special Forces and Marines offered training to regular units in both states (Harmon, 2015, pp. 230–233). In line with their preference for praetorian units, the regimes engaged in the military assistance programs in ways that benefited coup proofing at the cost of limited progress in the professional level of the regular units. In Chad, on May 16, 2004, Zaghawa members

of the presidential guard unsuccessfully staged a coup. In the wake, President Déby dissolved the presidential guard and established the Principle Security Service for State Institutions (DGSSIE), which recruited broadly among the ethnic groups in Chad ("Interview with Special Forces Officer, 3rd Group," 2016). The regime allowed the new unit to engage in periodic training with units of United States Special Forces. Just a month after the attempted coup in 2004, the regime agreed with the United States to found a new elite unit, the Special Anti-Terrorist Group (SATG), which received training and materiel from United States Special Forces and Marines (Ruszkiewicz, 2015, pp. 7–8). Both units took part in extensive combat during the insurgency. Only after the threat of insurgency dropped, President Déby used SATG in short-termed interventions in Mali, Nigeria, and Cameroun, which has generated international goodwill.

In Mali, the United States' forces chose two lines of effort: to train and equip a counter-terrorism unit within the 33rd Parachute Regiment, which President Touré had assigned to be presidential guard. The second line was to train and equip the mobile units named Echelons Tactiques Inter-Armes (ETIA) operating in Northern Mali. Even though the two units were both part of a train and equip program, their core tasks were very different. Stationed just outside Bamako, most of the activities of the regiment took place near the capital, even though the President had only tasked one company with the role of presidential guard (Powelson, 2013, p. 35). In 2010, the United States funded a dedicated counter-terrorism unit within the 33rd, but the regime retained the praetorian ability of the regiment by expanding the regiment. In contrast, ETIA units were ethnically, mixed units, stationed in Northern Mali. As an outcome of the peace agreement after the latest Tuareg insurgency, their task was to maintain order in the Northern region and combat renewed insurgencies.

With one unit tasked with coup proofing and the other units tasked with counterinsurgency, the Touré regime clearly prioritized coup proofing. ETIA units were constantly hampered by lack of equipment, constant rotation of personnel and were not allowed to receive training at unit level. According to officials at the United States Embassy in Bamako, the regime chose to give ETIA an unfavorable treatment out of fear of coup (Warner, 2014, p. 75). In contrast, the regime expanded the 33rd Regiment and allowed the new elite company to train as a unit with US instructors. Moreover, soldiers from the selected regiment received better pay and housing and served in the units for years. Not surprisingly, the 33rd Regiment was the only military unit that successfully fought the insurgents in 2012, but the lack of efficient regular units nullified the tactical success of the elite unit (Powelson, 2013, p. 54). In contrast, most ETIA units remained in base and dissolved after the insurgents had occupied the northern part of Mali in April 2012.

In the end, years of coup proofing did not protect President Touré against the military coup in Bamako in March 2012. With companies of the 33rd Parachute Regiment fighting in Northern Mali, disgruntled units from the regular army joined the spontaneous, but successful coup led by Captain Amadou Sanogo. However, one cannot conclude that coup proofing failed entirely in Mali. President Touré avoided coups in 21 years, a period with several coups in the neighboring states of Mauritania and Niger. Moreover, the 33rd Parachute Regiment managed to evacuate President Touré and even launched an unsuccessful counter-coop only days after the first coup (Mcgregor, 2013, p. 7). Finally, the coup only took place when the regime repositioned part of the 33rd Parachute Regiment to Northern Mali to stem the unrest in the autumn of 2011.

Prioritizing coup proofing above counterinsurgency was a logical choice for the regimes in the light of the risk of coup and actual coups in Chad and Mali since 1991. However, the cost was considerable. In 2006 and 2008, insurgents reached N'djamena and regime forces only expelled them at the last moment. In January 2013, French aircraft bombed and stopped the advance of insurgent columns heading towards Southern Mali. Contrary to the question asked in this paper, the offensives of the insurgents could reinforce the argument that regime survival is less likely faced with an insurgency. However, the next section argues that alignments are the key strategy to regime survival, and weak state institutions do not necessarily affect alignment.

Internal alliances

Fearing a coup from actors within the state institutions or the regime's power base, regimes have to look beyond the state to secure its survival, when faced with an insurgency. In a dire situation, such as the one in Chad in 2005, the circumstances force the regime to align with non-state actors to counter the threat from within the state institutions and the insurgencies outside. However, governing and surviving through non-state actors have been a routine part of many post-colonial states due to their weak state institutions (Clapham, 2002; de Waal, 2015; Hagmann & Péclard, 2010; Joel S. Migdal, 1988; Naseemullah & Staniland, 2016; Seymour, 2014a). As Christopher Day and William Reno point out, regimes often face factionalized and even violently divided domestic political networks that can be manipulated in order to assert authority (Day & Reno, 2014, p. 112). Factionalized domestic groups and weak state institutions might result in a higher risk of the outbreak of insurgencies, yet the regimes might be suited to strategize and ultimately survive in such a domestic environment.

Manipulation can take many forms, from co-option over collusion to balancing a common threat. Day and Reno find that co-option – including the non-state actor in a patronage network of economic and political benefits in return for loyalty – is one of the most common and successful strategies to assert authority in violent conflicts in Africa (ibid 2014, pp. 121–122). However, in areas with little governmental control, such as Northern Mali, other forms of governance are likely to exist. To conceptualize such governance forms, Adnan Naseemullah and Paul Staniland introduce the concepts of hybrid and de jure rule. The authors define hybrid rule as an explicit sharing of authority, whereas a de jure rule is defined as an implicit sharing of authority (Naseemullah & Staniland, 2016, p. 17). Conceptualizing existing forms of governance, the authors consider hybrid and de jure authority an outcome of colonial rule. However, this section argues that co-option and hybrid and de jure authority are instruments, which regimes use to secure internal alliances in the face of insurgencies. Delegation of authority and access to co-option are, in this view, reversible depending on the level of threat the regime faces. In the two cases, once the insurgencies erupted, both regimes co-opted local non-state militants into allies. Moreover, non-state actors, who the regimes previously kept out of power or even detested, were suddenly a key factor in the regimes' attempt to balance the new threat.

Chad: allies in both camps

Constituting only one percent of the total population in Chad, the Zaghawa tribe forms a very narrow power base of the Déby regime (Grawert, 2008, p. 604). Zaghawas constituted the majority of the soldiers behind the coup against President Déby in 2004 and of the insurgents after 2005. To avoid losing his entire ethnic power base, President Déby tried to reconcile some of his disgruntled tribesmen. One of the key disagreements was the regime's policy toward Darfur. The Zaghawa-dominated insurgency group *Justice and Equality Movement* (JEM) fought the Arab Janjaweed militia in Darfur, and represented many of the Zaghawas in Darfur, who constituted almost 10 percent of the population (ibid 2008). Despite a shared ethnic background, President Déby tried to combat JEM in 2003 and 2005 and arrest their leader, Khalil Ibrahim (Berg, 2008, pp. 77–78). President Déby's support of JEM made it possible to reduce defections among the Zaghawa power base of the regime. JEM accepted the regime's sudden policy change, perhaps because of their desperate security situation in Darfur. The Déby regime supplied JEM with weapons and gave the group de facto autonomy in Eastern Chad, which had the added benefit of making JEM responsible for combating the insurgents in the region, where most insurgent violence took place (International Crisis Group, 2008, p. 27).

However, by turning JEM from a pariah into an ally, the Déby regime ran the risk of aggravating relations with Sudan, which indeed became the outcome. Moreover, Chadian support of the one side of the Darfur war risked alienating the sizeable Chadian Arab population. Therefore, the most surprising internal alignment the regime made was with key Arab elites in the Eastern Wadai region, an alignment that held most Chadian Arab tribes away from the insurgency. Until 1982, Chadian Arabs enjoyed a privileged position in Eastern Chad. However, after the rise to power of the Habré regime, Arab tribes were marginalized and many were forced to migrate to Darfur (Burr & Collins, 2008, p. 159). The displaced Chadian Arabs have been at the heart of the struggle for land and privileges in Darfur since 2002, and have been largely represented in the Janjaweed militias (Flint & De Waal, 2008, pp. 23–24). Furthermore, the Déby regime marginalized the Arab tribes in Chad and mostly favored fellow Zaghawas. No wonder Albadour Acyl Ahmat Aghbach, a key Arab leader chose to join the anti-Déby insurgency in 2005 (Hansen, 2011, p. 3). Yet, in 2005 and 2006, President Déby was able to co-opt large parts of the Arab tribes to make them allies of the regime or at least make them stay out of the insurgency. First, in 2005, President Déby married into one of the most important Arab families, and appointed male members to lucrative positions in state-owned companies (Sandouk, 2010). Second, the President appointed an Arab to succeed his son as the commander of the Chadian army in Eastern Chad (Ayangafac, 2009, p. 6). Arab involvement in the insurgency remained remarkably low, which is most likely a testament to the success of the regime's efforts to balance the insurgency by allying with formerly marginalized tribes.

What is more, the pragmatism of the regime and non-state actors is striking. Identity differences or historical conflicts are not reflected in the outcome of alliances and co-option, which suggests that the actors' goal of political survival structured the behavior of both regime and non-state actors. As such, the New Wars thesis of identity politics might be valid at the societal level, but less so at the regime level.

Mali: returning to old allies in the north

In Mali, the regime also reached out to non-state actors to stem the tide of the insurgents, although not to the same degree and success as in Chad. Largely, hybrid and de jure arrangements of authority in Northern Mali came into being during the previous Tuareg insurgencies 1990-1996 and 2006-2009. In the period from the outbreak of the insurgency to the coup in March 2012, the Touré regime tried to utilize the non-state actors, with whom it shared authority in Northern Mali, to manipulate the balance of power in that region. As smuggling of drugs became highly profitable in the mid-2000s, low-caste clans, such as the Lemhar Arabs and Imghad Tuaregs, moved into the business, which resulted in confrontations between privileged groups and the regime-supported low caste groups (Raineri & Strazzari, 2015, p. 260).

What is more, the regime colluded with smugglers and most likely Al Qaeda in Maghreb to get a share of the spoils from smuggling and the profitable kidnapping of Westerners (Boeke & Tisseron, 2014, p. 37). Through 2010, the strategy of sharing authority and colluding with criminal groups and terrorists allowed the regime to avoid a confrontation in Northern Mali, despite an increase in the capacity of the non-state militant actors.

Colonel El haj Gamou embodies the alignment between the Touré regime and the Imghad Tuaregs. Owing to his fighting independently against other Tuaregs between 2006 and 2009, Gamou with his militia was admitted into the ETIA program, discussed previously (Lecocq et al., 2013, p. 346). Against the intention of integrating different tribes in the ETIA program, the regime allowed Gamou to maintain an all Imghad Tuareg unit. During the insurgency, the Tuareg and Arab allies made little difference against the insurgents. Gamou took his unit to Niger to avoid an imminent defeat to the insurgents, only to return in January 2012 to fight along intervening French forces (Lacher & Tull, 2013, p. 3). In practice, the regime was willing to share authority with Gamou in Northern Mali in return for loyalty and some kind of stability.

In the spring of 2012, the military junta revived an even older alliance with Fulani and Songhai militias. in 1994, Songhai officers from the 33rd Parachute Regiment founded the Ganda Koy militia as a self-defense militia against the Tuareg insurgents (Cristiani & Fabiani, 2013, pp. 88–89). Ganda Koy was largely dormant after the peace agreement between Tuaregs and the regime in 1996, but Songhais chose to reactivate the militia after the military advances of the insurgents in 2012. Fulanis founded a similar militia in 2008 named Ganda Iso in order to secure the interests of the Fulanis during the small Tuareg insurgency. Captain Sanogo and the military junta promoted and utilized the militias to launch a low-cost balancing strategy. Promoted by a coalition of primarily Songhai politicians in Bamako, the Malian army provided training facilities and weapons, as well as supported the formation of an umbrella organization of non-Tuareg militias (Lecocq et al., 2013, p. 353). In the end, Ganda Koy and Ganda Iso had little to show militarily, as advancing insurgents chased them away from the city of Douentza in July 2012 and conquered Fulani and Songhai dominated regions in August 2012 (Boisvert, 2015, p. 280). In the aftermath of the French intervention, Songhai and Fulani militias have contributed to the complex and anarchic situation in Northern Mali in which non-state actors are dominant. Transferring de facto authority in return for short-term support might have increased the likelihood of regime survival, but in the long run has contributed to the undermining of the UN-led state building initiative.

In the face of advancing insurgents, both regimes immediately turned to non-state actors to balance the threat. Some of the alignments failed to make a difference, but the willingness of the regimes to rely on

other actors to counter an insurgency threat, arguably demonstrates that internal alliances are a routine part of the regime's survival strategies. A few thousand insurgent forces quickly exposed the ineptitude of the regular forces of the Chadian and Malian armies. To compensate, the regimes had to co-opt non-state actors as well as accept the de facto authority of non-state actors in parts of the territory. In Mali, these non-state actors afterwards showed little interest in relinquishing their newfound power. In Chad, the regime had to look beyond historical and ethnic animosities and mistrust in order to secure new allies. By potentially upping the ante in Darfur, the Déby regime ran a considerable risk by co-opting Darfur key actors in the internal conflicts in Chad. Taken together, the ineptitude of the regular forces and the cost and risk associated with alignment show how crucial alignment is to regime survival in states with weak state institutions. The effect of strengthened non-state militant actors, so important in the New Wars thesis, is negated by the regime, because militias aligned with the regime, such as the one commanded by Colonel Gamou, benefited just as much from the structural changes as the insurgents.

Last resort – the use of external powers to remain in power

Since 2001 Western military assistance and intervention in insurgency wars have surged, as the United States became engaged in e.g. Central Asia or Africa to counter Al Qaeda. External assistance, however, reflects the global agenda of Western powers, not the local concern of the regime. In a study of nine states receiving United States military assistance for counterterrorism and –insurgency, Daniel Byman argues that problems connected with patron-client relations and moral hazard issues permeate the relationships. Information asymmetry allows local regimes to inflate the international threat of local insurgencies to receive assistance, and the firm commitment of the United States creates an unintended incentive for regimes to avoid reforms or to carry on with self-defeating strategies, because the risk of defeat is minimal (Byman, 2006, p. 109ff; see also Ladwig, 2016). This section argues that the regimes in Chad and Mali were able to profit from Western fear of instability and terror, because they were willing to accept French intervention to halt the advance of insurgents.

Ever since the independence of the French colonies in the Sahel, French forces have been permanently stationed in the region, even though the number of French forces in Africa has declined from 30,000 in 1960 to 6,600 in 2014 (Germain, 2016). In 2006 and 2008 France used its permanent bases and 1,200 soldiers in Chad to support the Déby regime discreetly in the war. A handful of French Mirage aircraft tracked the movements of the insurgents, and the French Defense attaché was deeply involved in the

defense of N'Djamena in both 2006 and 2008 (Tubiana, 2011, p. 18). Moreover, a peculiar arrangement between President Déby, France, and Libya resulted in French cargo planes lifting ammunition from Libya to N'Djamena in the critical days in February 2008, when regime forces halted the insurgents a few hundred meters from the presidential palace (L'Express, 2008). French military support might have been discreet, but it was crucial for the survival of the Déby regime. France wanted to avoid the uncertainty of a regime change and consequently put forward very few demands for political reforms, which explains the regime's willingness to accept external intervention as a last resort (de Waal, 2006, pp. 62–63). Contrary to the idea of moral hazard, the Chadian regime did not attempt to secure a permanent French involvement. After stabilizing the internal security situation, the Déby regime expelled the French dominated EUFOR/MINURCAT operation to protect refugees from Darfur in Chad, and threatened to close French military bases near N'djamena (Thedrel, 2010). In fact, the relationship between President Déby and France changed its character after 2010, when France became dependent on Chadian support to handle regional conflicts in Mali and later the conflict with Boko Haram in Cameroun and Nigeria. France became more interested in the strength of the elite units of the Chadian army than worried about the weakness of the Déby regime.

The reason for the changes in President Déby's policy toward France was the realignment with Sudan. Sudan had supported the insurgents with arms and bases, partly because of the Chadian support of Zaghawa-dominated insurgents in Darfur (Meerpohl, 2013, p. 3). After nearly losing power in 2008, President Déby reversed his strategy towards the Darfurian insurgent groups. The regime expelled the groups – mainly JEM – from Chad in 2010, despite their support for the regime in the previous years. A formal rapprochement between Chad and Sudan in February 2011 effectively ended the insurgency that was not viable without Sudanese assistance (Seck, 2010). The Chadian case indicates that regimes in the Sahel use external power as an integrated part of their survival strategy. Moreover, when survival is at stake, the regimes are willing to go without permanent Western support to accommodate the demands of other powers as well as break ties with JEM, despite a shared ethnic affiliation.

Moral hazard in Mali?

In many ways, the external involvement in Mali differs from that in Chad in the sense that the regime was reluctant to accept French involvement, but once external forces were present, the regime acted in a way that suggests a moral hazard problem. The apparent inconsistency in the strategy towards external actors most likely comes down to the difference between factions within the regime. Coup leader Sanogo preferred a Nigerian-led ECOWAS operation to stop the insurgents' advances, whereas the Interim

President Traoré lobbied for a French intervention (Chivvis, 2016, pp. 77–78). Sanogo only accepted the French intervention when an ECOWAS operation proved practically impossible. Different prospects after the intervention probably explain the disagreement within the regime. The French intervention was part of a larger UN-effort to restore democracy and stability in Mali, which clearly excluded Sanogo and the military junta from power, once the elections were held.

Since 2013, the multidimensional stabilization mission MINUSMA has tried to strengthen the legal-rational control of the state institutions as well as improve their capacity. However, the current President Ibrahim Keïta shows little will to change the institutional setup of the Malian state, or the informal working of Malian politics (Murray, 2016). Moreover, the French forces from the anti-terror operation Barkhane remain active in northern Mali, which provides the regime and the UN-mission with intelligence as well as an offensive capacity towards insurgents and Al Qaeda terrorists. The Malian security forces remain unable to wield authority, and patrimonial practices are still abundant. However, the external forces are clearly committed to Mali, and President Keïta is able to satisfy the demands of his power base, without having to fear an insurgency offensive. External intervention is, thus, an integrated part of the survival strategies of the Malian regime, in the face of strengthened non-state actors.

New Wars literature points to the effects of globalization and shadow economy on the strength of non-state actors. In particular, smuggling, migration, and terror stemming from the Sahel region cause great concern among Western states. Yet, the increase in the capacity of the likes of Al Qaeda in Maghreb also enhances the chances of Western military assistance and ultimately intervention if the threat manifests itself. From a Western perspective, this creates patron-client control problems as well as problems of moral hazard. However, from a regime perspective, Western concern about transnational threats equals a near automatic assurance of regime survival. When willing to accept a de facto transfer of authority to Western powers or International organizations, the regimes can keep Western assistance as the last part of their survival strategy.

Conclusion

Regimes in the Sahel region today are likely to spend roughly the same number of years in power as regimes in the previous decades since 1960. In addition, the threats they are facing resemble the threats that have plagued the regimes since independence, namely coups and insurgencies. This is no coincidence. The regimes' design their survival strategies to compensate for the lack of strong state institutions and for that reason, they have to accept a permanent threat of coups and insurgencies. The two main elements of the survival strategies in Chad and Mali are coup proofing and reliance on allies

rewarded with de facto or de jure authority. Regimes guard against coups by building small, elite forces loyal to the presidents and their immediate associates. Regular forces, conversely, are starved out of resources, training, and personnel, because they might constitute a power base for potential coup leaders, as was eventually the case in Mali. The second element, building alliances, is a routine part of the regimes interaction with non-state militant actors. Instead of attempting to monopolize violence, the regimes delegate authority as a reward for support against insurgents, which makes it possible for especially the Chadian regime to wedge and balance the insurgents. External intervention is a last resort, but nonetheless, an integral part of the regimes' survival strategies. In the light of the regimes' willingness to give up de facto authority, this might be less surprising.

The findings in the cases from the Sahel region have important implications for the New Wars debate. This paper has not entered the debates about the real effects of globalization, shadow economy, or the newfound importance of ethnic or religious identity. Instead, this paper has shown that regime survival strategy serves as an intermediate variable that negates the potential impact of strengthened non-state militant actors, because the regime does not rely on strong state institutions to survive. One cannot analyze the effects of New Wars on regime survival without examining the ways regimes use to secure allies among the increasingly important non-state militant actors. What is more, Western interventions in weak states are often perceived in the light of state failure, but should more precisely be considered an intrinsical part of regime survival strategies in weak states. Regimes with weak state institutions might have been dealt a bad hand, but their strategic acumen often makes up for this lack.

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