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# Global Illicit Flows and Local Conflict Dynamics

## The Case for Pre-Emptive Analysis and Experimental Policy Options

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to address three interconnected policy questions:

- **First** how do global illicit flows impact on local conflict dynamics? Are there specific conceptual features that can be identified that may assist us to analyse this phenomenon across cases?
- By understanding these, **second**, what can be done to limit the negative impact of organised crime on violent conflict? Are new ideas required or is it only a question of recalibrating existing policy alternatives?
- **Third**, what are the implications for international involvement in conflict affected states? Given the potential complexities of engaging in conflict spaces on what are often hidden or little understood criminal resource flows, are these even viable objectives for policy intervention, for either development or security actors?

The paper draws at the outset on two contrasting case studies – that of conflict in Libya and Nigeria in the recent past – both of which have shaped our work and thinking on the topic. Libya and Nigeria have some interesting parallels and some important differences. In both cases the oil economy is an important resource and driver of some aspects of the conflict. However, in Libya's case transnational or cross-border flows and their control have played a more important role than in Nigeria. In the case of the latter, the Boko Haram insurgency shows little evidence of resourcing from wider criminal flows; the movement has largely survived on extortion or protection money of local trade to raise funds. In Libya, payments from proxies and the state (in the form of legal transfers) have sustained the conflict. In Libya the central state has little reach. In Nigeria, the central state is comparatively stronger, but suffers from a debilitating level of corruption, providing opportunities for collusion between state and non-state actors which sustain conflict. Thus, with respect to the conflict in the Niger Delta, there is strong complicity between state, business and criminal actors.

While the paper's focus is largely on Africa, given that much of the discussion on the political economy of conflict has had a link to conflicts on the continent, it also seeks to build on our wider experience of working in and researching conflict zones elsewhere and engaging with the range of stakeholders involved.

The discussion begins with a short overview of the history of the debate on the linkages between organised crime and conflict with an African focus. This schematic serves as an introduction to a series of analytical issues that we have drawn from both the Libyan and Nigerian case studies as

well as our own analytical work conducted on organised crime and illicit networks in several other conflict zones. While we do not claim these to be a definitive list, we hope that they serve to promote debate about the state of the evolving discussion and the linkages between global flows and local conflicts.

Referring to the connection between criminal flows and conflicts is not necessarily new. However, the scale of the challenge has changed as has the analytical discourse that is increasingly being adopted. The current debate in our views reflects a merging between an older literature on "greed or grievance" as a cause of conflict, and a newer (and less developed) one that has sought to identify organised crime as one 'driver' of conflict. Driver in this context has four overlapping dimensions:

1. Conflict over the control of illicit markets;
2. Illicit markets providing resources for continuing conflicts;
3. Illicit revenue streams associated with conflict (and the disruption that it brings) postponing peace by ensuring that incentives from the criminal economy are seen as more advantageous than from peace; and,
4. External resourcing of conflict actors and/or wide spread corruption associated with illicit markets which is a "bleeding sore" that erodes the state, preventing a decisive end to conflict (and through collusion in illicit markets provides incentives for state actors to gain from its continuance).

As these points suggest, and as we will argue as the paper unfolds, there are important overlaps between the older work on "greed and grievance" and the emerging focus. What is lacking is a better way of conceptually framing the connections to allow a more sophisticated policy discussion. We conclude that policy in this area is better informed by identifying a set of principles around which to frame responses rather than a set of 'actions' that are unlikely to be replicable across conflicts.

## THE EVOLVING DEBATE

Addressing conflict has been on the agenda of development and peace-making efforts for several decades. The debate has evolved considerably over time. At the risk of simplifying a complex set of discussions, at the outset the focus was largely on bringing opposing parties together to address political interests; this developed into a stronger focus on addressing the political economy – or what has often been termed "resource conflicts" – underlying several civil wars and insurgencies.<sup>1</sup> More recently, the emphasis of these discussions has centered on the concept of "fragility", which, while explicitly wider than conflict (it examines also

how fragility undermines peoples' life chances), has been closely linked in the evolving debate to how conditions of fragility and violence are interconnected. The focus here is more on criminal than politically motivated violence, although in many conflict zones it may be difficult to distinguish the difference.<sup>2</sup>

The resource conflict discussion did cover the issue of organised crime (although this terminology was itself not used in relation to conflicts in Africa). Illegal diamond mining, particularly in the context of civil war in Sierra Leone and Liberia in the 1990s, was an important component of a debate that was often labelled in shorthand as "greed or grievance".<sup>3</sup> It recognised that illicit access to resources, and the desire to retain control over them, served to both ignite and protract conflict, and blurred what might have been legitimate insurgent conflicts. As noted, this paradigm seldom, if ever, mentioned organised crime, nor did it provide analytical perspective on the political economy of illicit flows that were seen to drive conflicts. That was partly a question of terminology, but it was also a reality that detailed academic work on criminal networks in the African context had simply not been done.

Work on specific conflicts had occasionally thrown a focus on individual criminal actors – take Guus Kouwenhoven in Liberia or Victor Bout in Africa more generally – as being facilitators of conflict.<sup>4</sup> These were middlemen who often supplied weapons in exchange for access to resources like diamonds. Critical to their operation was an ability to supply logistics to conflict protagonists (in Bout's case, for example, an extensive network of flight freight connections). None of the contemporary literature, however, ever accused Kouwenhoven or Bout of being "mafia bosses". They were generally seen as businessmen, albeit operating in the grey economy, who profited from supplying war. Moreover, rarely was any ideological motive ascribed to their acts – they were assumed to be almost entirely mercenary.

Thus, while literature on war economies and the later discussion of "fragility" did recognise illicit activities to some extent, it seldom used terminology such as "organised crime" or "illicit flows". Perhaps this was because the nature of the illicit flows in question, at least in the African context, was dominated by the diversion of natural resources, rather than from those commodities typically associated as "criminal" – i.e. drugs, or even the illegal wildlife trade. The natural resources discussion has focussed on a range of policy issues – most notably around reforms of the mining sector and associated initiatives such as the Kimberly process in relation to diamonds. If "traditional crime" was considered at all, it was seen as a law enforcement/rule of law area, not an economic issue. Few, if indeed any such analyses in this rubric sought to link wider illicit global flows and conflict, at least not using the terminology of illicit networks that has emerged in some of the current debates.

The conflict resources discussion also never drew from the literature on organised crime.

Nevertheless, in many ways the connection between organised crime and conflict itself evolved from the political economy discussions and their later focus on "fragility". It also reflected to some extent a merging between a discussion on "organised crime" (drawing on an older and established literature on this topic) and the resource conflict debate. Later efforts to resolve the Afghan conflict, where there was an explicit link to the criminal via the heroin trade, was the first contemporary major conflict to require a direct consideration of the role of criminal networks in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, though the response framework largely continued to compartmentalise organised crime into the domain of law enforcement and the justice sector, without tying these interventions into the holistic political economy of the conflict.<sup>5</sup>

In Iraq, organised criminal networks and their linkage to conflict actors were pointed to both in US military, UN and academic assessments, as helping to fund the insurgency, but gained little overall traction in the debate.<sup>6</sup> In Burma illicit drugs provided a possibility for peace-making through the creation of an exit strategy for Kuhn Sa, so arguably providing little interest for outsiders to pressure decisive action against the illicit market. In the African case, the rise of cocaine trafficking in West Africa, and particularly its connection with instability and conflict in the small state of Guinea-Bissau and challenges of governance elsewhere pushed forward a connected set of discussions on illicit trafficking and instability, with a far more explicit link to the implications for democratic governance.

The result has been that more recently a series of debates about the wider impact of illicit flows and organised crime and peacekeeping have reinforced the political economy debate, albeit from the perspective of illicit flows with explicit mention of the term "organised crime".<sup>7</sup> The term itself had not widely been used in Africa previously, but discussions on conflict in West Africa became the crucible for the evolution of the debate.<sup>8</sup> While in an African context at least initially there had been some resistance to make use of what was seen effectively as a Western term, this caution had all but vanished by the late 2000s.<sup>9</sup> Following the collapse of the state in Mali in 2012-13, and the role that cocaine flows were understood to have played first in hollowing out state institutions and later undermining peacebuilding, the role of illicit trafficking and criminal economies in conflict became a much more commonly accepted paradigm. This was marked by a significant uptick in the number of mentions of organised crime and criminal flows within Security Council Resolutions: going from four resolutions in 2004, to fifteen a decade later – the majority with a focus on Africa.<sup>10</sup> These took place outside of, but to some extent informed by, the older "war economies" discussion, but with a greater cognisance of the connection

between global illicit flows and local control. West African/Sahelian instability also finally triggered an acceptance that a wider set of economic, political and developmental resources would need to be brought to the table if these conflicts were to be effectively resolved.<sup>11</sup>

The overall discussion on organised crime now stands at an important juncture. The debate itself, similarly to the previous one on resource conflicts, is being driven forward by a series of institutions and individuals, bridging the policy and academic sphere. Nevertheless, the overall conceptual framework and the approaches for this task remain under-developed, and responses still tend to be silo-ed between political, justice and development actors. This is changing fast however, partly as a reflection of several donors being prepared to fund more granular analyses of criminal networks in conflict and development contexts, and an increasing number of key donors piloting ‘whole of government’ approaches.

A major gap in the foundation of evidence remains, however. Where a focussed study of organised crime, criminal groups and their evolution has taken place in the developed world and Latin America, there has been less of a focus on teasing out the attributes and trajectories of criminal networks in other contexts, most notably Africa.<sup>12</sup> As the global reach of organised crime has expanded in the last decade however, the urgency of obtaining a fuller understanding of illicit flows and their connections to conflict, ethnicity, local power and politics more generally, is increasingly apparent. Africa, including North Africa, is now a critical frontier in the discussion on organised crime – but by implication also its connections to conflict.

What follows is an attempt to provide greater guidance to analysts and practitioners involved in the discussion, with a specific focus on understanding the linkage between external flows and local conflicts. Seven key themes emerge from both the two case studies and the wider discussion of the linkages between conflict and organised crime. We have structured them as a series of overlapping exhortations to those working on the theme:

1. Shift the focus from flows to transactions that influence conflict actors;
2. Move from illicit ‘snapshots’ to historical trajectories and future trends;
3. Understand how illicit flows combine with legitimate ones;
4. Do not forget geography (the locality of production, transit and the consequences for state peripheries);
5. Identify the infrastructure of trafficking and who controls it;

6. Analyse how local control intersects with external flows; and,
7. Isolate the role of the state in a typology of protection.

Each is addressed in turn.

## 1. SHIFT THE FOCUS FROM FLOWS TO TRANSACTIONS THAT INFLUENCE CONFLICT ACTORS

Much of the work on illicit flows is strongly shaped by the data available. In many ways, this sounds like a surprising and even an incorrect proposition given that it is often argued that not enough data is available to analyse the extent of organised crime. Nevertheless, to a surprising extent, discussions of illicit flows are often strongly dominated by numbers. This is generally to answer two inter-related questions that are often posed: how much illicit stuff is moving? (and, by definition, how much is it worth?); and is the movement increasing or decreasing? While these are significant questions from an analytical perspective, they have disproportionately shaped discussions around organised crime and conflict.

In almost all cases, the actual volume of illicit flows is extremely difficult to determine (the case studies of both Libya and Nigeria faced these challenges), and the evidence available can often be highly misleading. The measurement of illicit flows is almost always derived from seizure data, which, while widely used, has also been widely discredited as a reliable measure of the flows. In many zones of fragility, where state capacity is weak and levels of transactional corruption and higher-level impunity can be considerable, seizures provide little, if any, real indication of the extent of the phenomenon.

Discrepancies between volumes of illicit products seized and reported, and the subsequent estimates of the scale of the flow actually transiting across a territory, may be enormous. Take, for example, the divergence in reporting of cocaine flows from Colombia, itself not a perfect example given higher levels of state capacity and external engagement. Three recent estimates have been produced: one by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which shows a 40 per cent increase in cultivation to 96,000 hectares in 2015<sup>13</sup>; one by the US State Department’s Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) which shows that the cocaine crop doubled in size between 2013 and 2015, reaching nearly 400,000 acres<sup>14</sup> (around 161,874 hectares); and, an unpublished one by the CIA based on a calculation of the total volume of cocaine flows intercepted or known about, which is said to indicate an even greater (said to be up to a 100 per cent) estimate of production.<sup>15</sup>

The spread of the discrepancy between the three estimates is vast. To be perhaps cynical, to some degree these reflect a series of political pressures: the UNODC one by its association with the government, which would like to

show lower cocaine production; and, the two US estimates partly based on a desire to raise the awareness of the challenge. Nevertheless, this single case is an illustration of the challenges of measuring even one of the most closely monitored illicit markets on the planet. On their own none of the estimates say much about the impact of these flows on conflict and the propensity for conflict or instability.

The second measure often used is that of the value of the illicit market. Again, much of the discussion here is based on conjecture. In the West African case, for example, while numerous figures for the value of the cocaine transiting through the region were made there was little analysis of how much money in fact stayed there. The available evidence in Guinea-Bissau for example suggested only a comparatively small amount, which was not banked and was distributed in cash.<sup>16</sup> That is not to say that these funds did not have significant political impacts, only that the primary discussion had not sought to link resource flows to local events, with the main focus of much of the analysis on identifying the total value transiting West Africa. Equally, in the case of the conflict in Nigeria, and the activities of Boko Haram, low value items such as funds earned from taxing the fishing trade on Lake Chad or the strong association between the movement and cattle theft and the “taxing” of herders,<sup>17</sup> may be of great importance. Yet these are excluded from the analysis, which seeks to make the link to larger value items – often drugs.<sup>18</sup>

This presents two concerns. First, the preoccupation with quantifying the scale of the flow, and the scramble of researchers to find ephemeral numbers and “evidence” of trafficking, has often obscured analysis of the contextual political economy; secondly, the estimated “size” or monetary value of the flow is used to determine political prioritisation, without a more systemic understanding of the impact and consequences of such flows.

## 2. MOVE FROM ILLICIT ‘SNAPSHOTS’ TO HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES

The reliance on numbers represents another general challenge with assessing organised crime: that is, it is often done so outside of its historical context, producing a ‘snapshot’ of criminal groups and illicit flows at a particular point in time. Such a snapshot however ignores important historical trajectory that is extremely valuable, not only for understanding how illicit flows came to serve as a driver for conflict, but also in determining how criminal markets may evolve in the future and finding possible means of resolution.

The case studies for this report, as well as numerous other cases, show clearly how illicit markets and their interactions with local players in conflict zones are derived from a specific set of historical trajectories. These shaping

trajectories are as important as the volume and worth of the flows, if not more so, because they determine how local players engage with them.

To take two examples: In Libya, ordinary people were extremely eager to benefit from the fruits of illicit smuggling markets. That was not because Libyans are inherently criminal, but because the Gaddafi regime had allowed only favoured groups to engaged in illicit trafficking: it was a form of state sanctioned illicit trade. Thus, as the case study highlights, to participate in such illegal markets was often a personal objective because it denoted freedom from oppressive state control. By contrast, in Guinea-Bissau, senior levels of the state and military began to “tax” the movement of cocaine through their territory precisely because external resource flows from which they had derived rents from in the past had dried up. Cocaine was dealt with in a remarkably similar way that aid flows had been in the past, and the impact of such flows resulted in political violence *within the elite* rather than wider conflict.<sup>19</sup>

Nigeria presents something of a different case study in this regard. In research completed for the wider DfID study of which this paper is a part, Sasha Jespersen has shown that organised crime in Nigeria has had a much longer period of historical development, including a diversification across a number of sectors. For example, while there are reports of drugs moving to Boko Haram controlled areas, these are for local use and the militant group is not involved in the trafficking and are facilitated by wider criminal networks. Nevertheless, if such established criminal networks are not directly connected to the conflict in the country’s north-east, their long-term presence has had a significant impact on overall levels of state capacity, promoting corruption and state erosion, including within the military and security establishment.<sup>20</sup>

The reasons why these factors are of critical importance is that they often point to the social or developmental solutions to the challenge in a way that a simple description of amounts will not (and cannot). In short, understanding how illicit flows drive conflicts cannot be a uni-dimensional current picture, but a longer-term understanding of the historical trajectory of the actors and their motivations. These are almost always a cross-over between social, economic and political factors, and thus it is critically important for researchers exploring the nexus between organised crime and conflict to understand the evolution of criminal markets and the groups that associate with them.

## 3. UNDERSTAND HOW ILLICIT FLOWS COMBINE WITH LEGITIMATE ONES

A concentration on illicit flows as a conflict driver often takes a relatively narrow focus on the connections between a specific illicit flows and the nature of the violence that

it may generate. Yet in no conflict zone is the connection between conflict and resource flows as simple as this. This is a key point that early efforts to categorise conflicts within the binary “greed or grievance” framework managed to entirely obscure: that it was often grievance around the exclusion of resource distribution by the state that prompted the conflict, and thus securing access to those resources became a primary driver of the conflict itself.

In fact, the real question needs to be how, within the overall economy and its distribution, do illicit flows merge, counter or reinforce licit ones? There is a tendency, particularly by the international community to allow a single flow or criminal activity to dominate the debate and the policy conclusions: as previously noted (cocaine did this in West Africa) human smuggling is now doing so in Libya, for a while maritime piracy did so in the Horn of Africa.<sup>21</sup> And it worth noting that in all of these three cases, these flows became pertinent due to their impact in Western markets, not in the countries in which they themselves were propagated. When a single illicit flow becomes the primary motivator of all international assistance and engagement, this may be to the neglect of other flows with a higher local perception of importance. West Africans were always critical of the Occidental focus on cocaine flows rather than on hashish, for example, which is more widely used; in the case of Libya, the fact that migrant boats are stopped but those smuggling fuel are generally not; and in the Horn the accusation that maritime piracy was a priority when illegal fishing was not.<sup>22</sup>

This mono-focus often overlooks flows of greater damage, or the wider reason why it may be possible to extricate communities from one flow rather than another, and certainly fails to take account of the importance and legitimacy that local actors may have within a context as the provider or protector of one or more illicit flow. In the Libya case, it was possible for one group, the Amizagh, to entirely recuse themselves from the increasingly violent human smuggling trade due to their relative strong control over coastal illicit fuel export and cross-border smuggling on the western borders which provided viable alternatives. That the Toubou along the southern borders would fight violently to retain their control in the same industry speaks to the paucity of other alternatives.<sup>23</sup>

A second important point is that illegal flows are often closely intertwined in multiple ways with legal ones and analysis must seek to disentangle these in order to explain the nature of the nexus between crime and conflict.

The case study of Libya provides an extremely good example of this phenomenon. In Libya three different resource flows intertwined to create the specific political economy of the conflict. The first was external payments made by proxies (in this case mainly but not exclusively, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) to various militias or armed groups. The second was payments from government to members of militia groups with the objective of ensuring loyalty. The third was

the profits from trafficking or taxing illicit flows. Each of these three resource flows served to reinforce the other, weakening the central government and empowering individual militias. Ironically, this was also the result of the government payment that in many ways was about buying off troublesome militias.<sup>24</sup>

Early analyses of illicit flows (including by us) ignored the impact and inter-relationships of one set of criminal economies with access to other resources, largely because the brief for the commissioning of the paper had been a focus in Libya on the illicit. At the same time, several analyses examined the issue of licit flows and their impact on the conflict without any reference to illicit ones. In neither case was an adequate understanding of the resource drivers of the conflict possible, and the consequences of this blinkered perspective is that the identification of possible solutions is obscured. The risk is that responses focussed on just one flow come undone as criminal networks and control groups displace to or are sustained by other sources of income. For example, the case study on Colombia, and the strategies to disengage the FARC from drug trafficking have highlighted the gold trade, and criminal control over artisanal mining as an important alternative. Strategies will also have to be devised to disengage armed groups from this activity.

In summary, illicit flows need to be analysed holistically rather than singularly, taking into account the entire criminal economy, and the licit one as well. Furthermore, specific attention needs to be paid to how they intertwine.

#### **4. DO NOT FORGET GEOGRAPHY (THE LOCALITY OF PRODUCTION, TRANSIT AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR STATE PERIPHERIES)**

The interconnection between illicit flows and conflict zones is often a feature of geography. The point seems an obvious one, but it is often underestimated. One of the most obvious features of this is that zones of instability where there is a nexus between illicit trafficking and conflict have three features:

- Small states with weak governance or large states with limited state reach to their peripheries; or a combination of both
- Countries on the path of a significant trafficking flow, often between producer and destination countries; and countries that are the source of particular illegal commodities (transshipment vs source countries).
- Contexts characterized by fragile governance with deep political divisions and corruption and often excluded or marginalised groups on the periphery.

Regions that are vulnerable or have experienced conflict, such as Central America, the Balkans and West Africa all

display these features to some degree or the other. External flows moving through such geographic spaces are almost certain to become the target for control, because they provide an easy source of rents.

Within this framework however, a combination of geographic and institutional factors are critical in shaping conflict and its connections to illicit flows. Take the case of pre-war Mali: all three of the conditions outlined above existed. Illicit trafficking had two countervailing impacts: it further weakened the central state through corruption – the Presidency itself negotiated directly with cocaine traffickers for a “protection fee” – while empowering groups on the periphery who taxed the illicit trade.<sup>25</sup>

In southern Libya, the Toubou have dominated the illicit migrant smuggling market because of their dominance of the state’s periphery and their exclusion from its politics at the centre. This control of the market – which started with the protection of remote oil fields, and later reinforced by the flows of Syrian refugees through the region in 2013 – greatly enhanced their ability to profit from the flow.<sup>26</sup> That has strengthened their overall negotiating position, not least in relation to external EU states such as Italy seeking to curb the flow of illegal migrants.

In the absence of a state control and presence, local groups with some capacity for violence garner financial and political capital through the levying of “protection fees” in areas that produce illicit products, or through which those flows transit. Both the form of protection tax, the structure of the group levying such a tax and the amount of legitimacy that a group can gain with the local population will depend on whether the most lucrative flow is locally produced, how labour intensive it is in local markets, and whether there is a demand for that good locally.<sup>27</sup>

Nigeria is an interesting case study in this respect. Boko Haram is widely reported to “tax” multiple commodities that move through or within the geographic zone which they control. Nigerian customs officers for example point to the highly regularised system of payments that fund the group, with anything that moves long distances or which is traded, likely to incur a fee of some sort.<sup>28</sup> As Jespersen concludes: “This is classic mafia behaviour, but it is not linked to global illicit flows.”<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the fact that transporting drugs or migrants through Boko Haram controlled areas provides little comparative advantage in the wider regional illicit economy there is no significant global or regional illicit flow which the group could tax. If there was, it is very likely that the resourcing and nature of the conflict in Nigeria’s north-east would be very different.

Illicit resources that are produced locally, with a high degree of geographic focus and labour intensively, for example opium or coca cultivation, or artisanal mining, will have implications for the nature of conflicts. Along state peripheries

and in borderlands, these sites become a magnet for local control groups seeking to capture criminal rents. At the same time their local roots require those groups to engage far more intensively in the local political-economy, and expand to the provision of local governance and service delivery to ensure hegemony of control. This type of geographic control often takes on mafia-like characteristics, with a strong interweaving of protection taxation that allows the local group to expand by taxing or extorting any activity – legitimate or illicit - that falls within their geographic area.<sup>30</sup>

Once hegemonic control can be achieved in its entirety, levels of violence may actually decline, as violent competition between groups falls away, and the threat of violence (rather than the actual perpetration of violence itself) becomes enough to ensure the coercion of local communities and the economy. Similarly, once this level of control has been achieved, it becomes harder for governments to use violent strategies to compete with their local governance, increasing the likelihood that the result is a *pax Mafioso*, rather than violent challenges from the state.

By contrast, groups taxing transit trades will often take a different trajectory. Here, the lack of resources present within their domain will require a strategy that attempts to achieve route control, as the Toubou did over smuggling markets. A strategic effort is made to expand influence over that route across a broader geographic area, and to seek accommodation with other local control groups for a monopolistic control over the trade in one illicit good. Dealing across multiple jurisdictions will require constant negotiation, competition, and higher levels of corruption and violence to protect the goods in transit. In this way, transport infrastructure (roads, ports and airports) and natural transport conduits (rivers) for transporting goods, and border posts that become nodes around which the negotiation of transit are made, all become key determinants of trafficking economies and flashpoints for control.

The geography of different conflicts often entails features of centre or peripheral conflicts (or urban rural divides) and the different forms of institutional state presence in these areas. Illicit flows may be key to strengthening opposition or peripheral groups in such cases; thus, the nature of flows through areas where such groups are present and the state has little or no control is key.

## 5. IDENTIFY THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF TRAFFICKING AND WHO CONTROLS IT

Closely related to the point on geography is that on the infrastructure of trafficking. Being in the position to control places or routes where licit or illicit goods are produced is an enormously important criteria for determining which groups in conflict situations benefit.

Libya again provides an important example of this. On-going conflict around airports and sea-ports between different militia groups has been an important element of the civil war. These installations have proved important not only to bring in goods and weapons, but also to tax trade, including illicit trade. There is good evidence for example that illicit prescription pharmaceuticals (in wide demand in the country) brought through Libyan ports have been an important source of funding for some Libyan groups. In Nigeria Boko Haram moved to control the choke-point for trade in order to tax the movement of goods more effectively.

Analysis of the role of natural resources in conflict has identified a typology around the relative ease or difficulty around which the value of the illicit resource can be accessed – i.e. its “lootability”. The conclusion drawn was, in general, the more lootable a resource is, the higher the likelihood it will increase the severity and duration of a conflict. Lootable, or diffuse, resources are easily accessible and extractable to those who can control the area in which they are located. Lootable resources may also be geographically spread and renewable, such as agricultural produce, livestock and timber, or unrenovable but easily accessed, such as secondary or alluvial diamonds (and other gems) dispersed over the earth’s surface.<sup>31</sup>

Conversely, resources that are lootable with much greater difficulty are those that require high levels of technology or skills to extract; these tend to be geographically concentrated, such as oil, primary diamonds and other deep-shaft minerals and gemstones. Their extraction involves costly mining expertise and inputs and is less reliant on just human labour. This type of resource may make rebel access problematic, and is more likely to be in the hands of governments, or government-affiliated corporations. Such resources have also been strongly associated with corruption, patron-client networks, and personalistic rule. These resources under state control provide means of financing for governments, who then may not need to develop a tax base or economic diversification. This can result in poor economic growth amid elite self-enrichment, and, with it, an aggrieved population. Subsequently, challenging the state for control over those resources becomes a primary strategy for insurgency groups seeking to assert legitimacy. Government looting or monopoly control is an important source of conflict or tension.

Nevertheless, hard and fast rules are difficult to apply. In the Niger Delta militant groups have been active in stealing oil from local refineries. This however often requires collusion with state officials, including the payment of “fees”. For the most part then, Jespersen’s case study concludes that in the case of oil theft there is a complex inter-relationship between criminals, militants and politicians. In past election cycles, it is likely that some elites used proceeds from stolen oil to order targeted killings, buy votes or pay thugs to disrupt voting. Conspicuous use of stolen oil profits to corrupt the democratic process deepened these problems. The trade weakens public institutions and aggravates

known conflict drivers. It deepens corruption, funds political violence and damages the environment. Oil theft networks rely on violence – or at least the threat of it – to hold onto their turf and secrecy. In some communities, fights over rights to (steal) oil weakened local power structures and social resilience, especially when battle lines were drawn between ethnic groups or generations. Theft networks have also set up shop in some of the Niger Delta’s most violent corners. Over time, the trade became part of a larger Niger Delta conflict economy that is lucrative and entrenched.

Thus, the lootability and required infrastructure to access a resource, including an illicit one, becomes closely tied to the nature and degree to which it may be exploited to finance conflict. Resources that are accessible only with great difficulty tend to lead to secessionist conflict as grievance is sparked over the unfair distribution of wealth, the presence of more easily exploitable resources is more likely to lead to non-secessionist wars. Such generalisations are no doubt challengeable. Nevertheless, our point here is to suggest that there may be important degrees of what could be termed a *lootability spectrum* which shape the activities of different actors. (That may also reflect in the level to which criminalised groups endanger their own members in the process in which resources are exploited; illegal mining operations by either criminal or militia-style groups in different parts of Africa, including in disused deep level mines in South Africa, is a profitable but highly dangerous activity.)

## 6. ANALYSE HOW LOCAL CONTROL INTERSECTS WITH EXTERNAL FLOWS

The penultimate theme to consider is how external flows interact with local actors within conflict zones. Given the relatively recent introduction of organised crime concepts into the study of conflict, there remains a tendency to use relatively generic terminology, casting entire groups under the rubric “traffickers” or “smugglers”, or even more pejorative and unhelpful, “narco-terrorists” in relation to some insurgencies where drug production or trafficking is also a feature. These kind of labels are used both by political parties to the conflict, as well as the international community, with considerable implications for the legitimacy or historical trajectory of the conflict and the association with illicit flows, a point that we made above.

The point to emphasise here, therefore, is that a greater deal of granularity is needed. Criminal networks have different sets of actors based on the functions they perform. Drawing on, and adapting from, the wider literature on organised crime, three sets of actors (and associated functions) can be identified:

- *Criminal entrepreneurs* are what in most conflict zones would be termed “businessmen”, often involved in “import-export”. These are the essential individuals who



move goods in conflict zones. While such goods may be illicit they may also be combined with licit goods. A key set of Arab traders in the Sahel, often said to be involved in drug trafficking, are a good example. An important defining point for criminal entrepreneurs is that they have wider (and often global or regional) networks with which to facilitate illicit trade.

- *Criminal protectors/violent entrepreneurs* sell violence itself, to provide protection or political reinforcement. It is worth remembering that the original definition of mafia groups are those that sold their services to enforce contracts in the underworld and that the quintessential crime of the mafia is extortion – the levelling of payments for protection. Importantly in the case of extortion, the group promising to provide protection is also the same one who will be responsible for violence if payment is not made. Such linkages are often present in conflict zones and may be critical to shaping the conflict. Those who sell their violence at the local level almost never (at least initially) have global contacts on which to build trade relations. Their comparative advantage is to sell their capacity for violence generating local protection economies. For such groups, taxing illicit or licit trade is much more cost effective than seeking to try to control it from a business perspective.
- *Violent and criminal entrepreneurs* have appeared in a limited number of contexts, where those who manage the movement of goods and who provide protection merge. This may often be the result of greed on the side of the protectors and depending on who is involved, may be unsuccessful. When the military in Guinea-Bissau (essentially the protectors) attempted to engage in entrepreneurial activity they became vulnerable to intervention from the DEA, with catastrophic results for their overall involvement in the protection economy. The evidence suggests in fact that the most successful cases of violent and criminal entrepreneurs are those where the criminal entrepreneur establishes (or buys) a permanent capacity for violence, rather than the providers of violence turning to business. The decline of the FARC in post-peace process Colombia, and the current evolution of the Toubou in the human smuggling markets of Libya both illustrate this convergence.

While these distinctions are important in analysing patterns of trafficking and their participants, they may depending on the circumstance also shade into each other. Nevertheless, understanding the functions that different actors perform at different points is critical. Responses to organised crime organisations and networks in a conflict zone must recognise that each of these three actors – and the functions – may be vulnerable to external interventions in different ways. The criminal entrepreneur's business model is strongly based on his/her ability to connect. The violent entrepreneur relies on the transactions around payment.

The model where the functions of violence and criminal entrepreneurialism are combined is perhaps the most complex to understand. In such cases, the combination of functions may represent the evolution of long standing criminal markets. Where violent entrepreneurs take over the business or trade function such groups may be particularly vulnerable (as illustrated in the case of Guinea-Bissau) due to their lack of business experience and connections. Where criminal entrepreneurs buy-in violent protection partners they too – as is common in many underworld transactions at a more micro level – may be threatened by the very people they pay.<sup>32</sup> Such arrangements and their vulnerabilities would benefit from greater research.

One final point worth exploring, albeit one that is often misconstrued, concerns how violent entrepreneurs might use criminal resources to expand. To emphasise: this is not simply a feature of accumulating the resources. Key to long-term strength is how groups absorb and invest the resources that they acquire from the protection economies they manage. Investment and absorption appears to be closely aligned to questions of group size and structure, leadership, ideology and the connected issue of political positioning. It might also include how any emerging group aligns with the state.

Earning resources from protection economies does not therefore necessarily lead to long-term strength in the wider political economy. Indeed, the acquisition of resources may lead to vicious internal conflicts as to how they can be absorbed and the implications that those resources have for the identity and long term trajectory of the group. In Libya for example, some militia groups that were extremely well positioned and becoming rich by providing protection services in the immediate aftermath of Gaddafi's fall (a good example is the Zintanis in the West), assumed almost no role later, as internal conflict weakened their position in relation to others. This is remarkably similar to other African criminal groups we have studied closely that become a victim of their own success: the Johannesburg bouncer mafia (a classic set of violent entrepreneurs protecting the city's drug trade and club industry) shattered as acquired resources were not re-invested in the group and the partners fell out in a vicious internal struggle.<sup>33</sup> In Libya, the Amizagh, for example, distanced themselves from human smuggling as a conscious choice, when it was felt that association with such a mortality intensive trade was undermining their overall political ambitions.

The ideological dimension, and the crime-terror nexus adds another layer of complexity to contemporary iterations of this debate, particularly in Africa, where competing terrorist "brands", as well as resource flows, seem to trigger a constant splintering and mergers of groups in infinite permutations.

## 7. ISOLATE THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN A TYPOLOGY OF PROTECTION

Finally, several of the previous points, directly or by implication, have highlighted that the state in conflict zones might itself have an important role to play in the definition of a local criminal economy, and (paradoxically) will often be intrinsic to the development of protection economies. To summarise the conclusions thus far: in places where resources flows (legitimate and/or illicit) transit areas of poor or weak governance, or where corruption is already endemic, structured protection economies develop around the desire for rent extraction. Given some of our earlier points about the merging of two debates, what is important about the concept of 'protection economies' is that it emerges directly from the literature on studying organised crime, most notably the mafia in Italy. Applying it to conflict zones requires adapting the concept, although the basic principles remain similar.

Protection can take multiple forms and constitute complex networks over large swathes of territory, but in almost all cases, will involve state actors in some shape or form, performing a range of functions dependent on the degree of capacity they have. The protection economy is thus best seen as a spectrum, from state-sponsored protection through to criminal controlled. Understanding the spectrum is critical for two reasons: first, the nature of state control will shape the nature of violence; and second, it will have implications for interventions designed to undercut protection economies and end illicit flows.

The spectrum of protection can be divided into five basic types, each of which is defined by the degree of state capacity, which is in turn defined as a feature of the state's ability to control the criminal economy rather than necessarily to deliver services across the territory (though the latter is also important). The spectrum is as follows:

1. *Full state control* over the protection economy, where senior levels of the state or security forces provide complete protection for illicit flows. This would be the case of Guinea-Bissau, for example. And, as the example shows does not preclude conflict (and may well promote it) within the political or security elite over control of the illicit flow.
2. *State as gatekeeper*, where senior levels of the state control and distribute who is allowed to garner criminal rents even in remote areas where they may have no actual territorial presence, and where this access may be used as a form of state favour. This was the case in Gaddafi's Libya, and was the case in Northern Mali before the coup.
3. *Mixed control* is the middle of the spectrum example, where state actors have some presence locally, but need to negotiate control with powerful actors who may also

have a degree of local control. Such an agreement may result in quite structured customary agreements around levels of bribes to state actors, and quantities and frequencies of illicit flows that can transit. Here, the migrant smuggling economy in Northern Niger serves as an example; state actors in the isolated north of the country have historically reached local agreements for 'payment' to facilitate the flows of people over the border and the central state is not involved in the 'transaction', with no tribute flowing upward.

4. *Criminal control* is defined by significant levels of state weakness, where they may be indirect links but these do not define the local criminal economy or who controls it. Most often, this tends to result in a fully-fledged criminal industry that pays final 'tithes' to senior or local government to ensure on-going permissiveness. In such cases, there may be full collusion between state actors and criminal ones, although state actors are generally too weak to shape the arrangement to their advantage.
5. *State absence*, is the final model in the typology, where there is essentially no central state presence, local militias or warlords provide protection in its entirety. This model plays out in Southern Libya, as well as in large parts of Afghanistan.

The implications of the structure and level of state involvement in the protection economy has important implications for levels of violence and the nature of conflict. As previously suggested, total control over a territory or illicit economy can reduce violence considerably. The use of violence by criminal groups is nearly always a strategic consideration – violence and the threat of violence is an important tool for exerting criminal control, but at the same time, violence attracts often undesired attention from state actors. If a market becomes too violent, and when that violence is increasingly seen to extend outside of criminal actors into 'normal' society, then interventions from the state or external actors challenging the business are more likely. This runs contrary to the goal of a protection network, whose function is to smooth the way. It is interesting, therefore, to analyse how violence manifests within a criminal market or network of protection.

In the earlier parts of the spectrum, where there is high-level of state control, violence is most likely to occur within the elite, rather than being a feature of a wider conflict in society. In Guinea-Bissau, the violence manifested in extreme political instability – political coups and assassinations - with little or no societal violence, as controlling key functions of the state was enough to capture the rents from the criminal economy. In cases where the state acts as a gatekeeper, the potential for violence is higher, because control is less clear, and, as noted, access to illicit markets is often given as a form of state favour or used to placate local interests, which suggests a level of

localised competition. As with Gaddafi's Libya, providing access to illicit trafficking revenue was a longstanding strategy he used to stave off the erosion of his regime. The consequence of this once the regime collapsed, however, was a far higher level of violence between the groups once state arbitrage was removed.

The mixed control typology has some similarities to the gatekeeper model, where local control is divided into "turf", with severe implications both for governance and for violence. Where different groups compete for control of the illicit economy, violence is likely to ensue, and conflict between state and non-state forces for control might again have violent ramifications, particularly where security forces are involved. An alternative scenario is that over time there is increasing convergence between the criminal networks and the state, which then begins to more closely resemble full criminal control. In this case, violence is used purely for criminal signalling.

Thus, in cases to the right of the spectrum, where criminal control is predominant and the authority of the central state highly limited or non-existent, there is greatest propensity for violence until hegemonic control can be achieved. Multiple illicit flows controlled by competing, or alternating groups, can sustain prolonged violent clashes indefinitely with no individual groups able to gain the upper hand, as is the case in Libya now. The state or its representatives, as the above typologies suggest, is almost always a player in shaping the nature of such criminal economies. State weakness in this sense is only one part of the problem which occurs along a spectrum of crime-state collaboration.

Analysis of this intersection between criminal groups and state is critical when considering external interventions. There has been a tendency to assume a de facto distinction between organised crime and the state or a zero-sum conflict between state and criminal actors, and thus the international community typically seeks to exorcise the criminal through reinforcing state capacity, without recognising the role that state plays in protecting illicit flows. Where central state control is entrenched in protection, such investments merely strengthen their ability to further protect and control the illicit flows, possibly moving the typology to a different model on the spectrum and enhancing state involvement. In Georgia, for example, Alexander Kupatadze recounts how a police campaign to remove organised crime extortion of businesses (a classic protection economy) was successful in doing so, only to provide the opportunity for the police themselves to take over the business of protection payments.<sup>34</sup> As the analysis has further seen, the implications of shifts along the protection typology spectrum will have variable impacts on the level of violence and the trajectory of the conflict.

One final point is worth emphasising here. Long-term state weakness, as Jespersen has pointed out in the case of Nigeria, which is strongly linked to illicit activities and corruption, erode the state. While poor state services and the enriching of prominent politicians and officials associated with the state are a cause around which groups can mobilise – as is both the case in the north-east with Boko Haram and in the Niger Delta – the result of such state weakness is an inability to respond effectively, either politically or militarily to conflicts, effectively sustaining them.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

Identifying these seven issues raises the important question of what are the implications for policy? At the outset it is important to emphasise that the analytical complexity that we have outlined above suggests that there are no easy policy fixes. The idea that there is a silver bullet (or a series of them) that can loosen the nexus between illicit flows/organised crime and conflict is misplaced. At the same time, much of what we have pointed to shows the embedded nature of organised crime in conflict situations – that embeddedness and the linkages to multiple other factors suggests in fact that governments already have at least some of the tools to respond.

In our way of thinking, rather than offer a specific set of policy alternatives, we suggest instead a set of principles – *recognition, linkage, timing, engagement and experimentation* – that should define any intervention across different geographic contexts and illegal markets. Taken together they are likely to result in a more tailored and appropriate responses than suggestions around "one size fits all policies". They are as follows:

- *Recognition*: A previous publication on this subject had been titled "The Elephant in the Room"<sup>35</sup> partly because illicit markets were often talked about in the coffee breaks at meetings on different conflicts, but had been too difficult to put on the main agenda. Our experience suggests that identifying and analysing illicit flows as conflict contributors (drawing on some of the pointers we have suggested above) constitutes a critical first step. In most cases, the challenge has simply been to put the "illicit economy" firmly on the peacemaking and peacekeeping table, and to avoid it being silo-ed as "a law enforcement issue". The challenge remains to, properly integrate it into political and economic calculations and negotiations. Unless that is done, solutions and policy options will simply ignore the issue, or at best fall back to classic responses around capacity building of state security structures.<sup>36</sup> Taking into account criminal flows and actors may in contrast promote easier or more sustainable resolution of conflict.

- *Linkage*: Given that organised crime and illicit flows and their linkages to conflict crosscut so many areas of government policy – political or foreign policy, development, law enforcement, trade policy, health, the environment – any response by definition needs to include multiple players. How that response is structured may differ from government to government and context to context. Three basic principles should apply: (1) responses should definitely include but not be lead or coordinated by law enforcement bodies, whose focus is generally too narrow and tactical; (2) alternatives should be based on a “whole of government” analysis of the linkages between illicit markets and conflict participants; (3) responses will require access to discretionary funds that overcome restrictions of individual (development or security) funding pools and allow a blended, integrated response.
- *Timing*: The general approach to illicit flows within a peacekeeping, peacebuilding scenario is that it is an issue that can be left “till later”, once the state is stabilised and the political issues resolved. However, case studies almost always suggest that the relationship between illicit markets and conflict deepens over time, and serves as a centrifugal force to state consolidation. Most pertinently, as protection markets set the norm for doing business, those who benefit from the illicit economy become increasingly entrenched in their positions. (Libya is perhaps the most recent and most sobering case here.) Given that illicit markets wherever they exist are likely to solidify over time and therefore become much harder to resolve, early intervention appears to be absolutely critical. That, in itself, requires pre-emptive analysis in conflict zones and a general recognition that illicit markets have important impacts on the evolution of conflict.
- *Engagement*: Effective engagement must rely on building partnerships globally, regionally and locally. That means putting the issue of organised crime and its linkage to conflict on the agenda of the multilateral system. It also implies supporting innovative civil society responses at the local level and recognising that how the media reports on conflict dynamics can also have a critical role in influencing outcomes. That will require not only engaging within the context of individual conflicts but a wider-coordinated global engagement.
- *Experimentation*: As in any new area of intervention, experimentation is a crucial requirement. We simply do not have enough examples of success to determine what may work and what may not. Each of the four points above, by their nature, are likely to promote experimentation by ensuring that policy is informed by new analysis, inputs structured along different lines of operation, and careful consideration given to the timing of interventions.

## ENDNOTES

1. For a summary of the general debate see John de Boer and Louise Bosetti, "The Crime–Conflict Nexus: Identifying Gaps and Opportunities for Policy Research," August 11, 2015 (access here: <http://cpr.unu.edu/the-crime-conflict-nexus-identifying-gaps-and-opportunities-for-policy-research.html>). Also see Louise Bosetti, James Cockayne and John de Boer, "Crime-Proofing Conflict Prevention, Management and Peacebuilding: A review of emerging good practice," United Nations University, Centre for Policy Research, 10 August 2016 (access here: <http://cpr.unu.edu/crime-proofing-conflict-prevention-management-and-peacebuilding-a-review-of-emerging-good-practice.html>)
2. See for example John de Boer, Robert Muggah, and Ronak Patel, "Conceptualizing City Fragility and Resilience," United Nations University, Centre for Policy Research 19 October 2016 (access here: United Nations University, Centre for Policy Research, 27 April 2017 (access here: <http://cpr.unu.edu/conceptualizing-city-fragility-and-resilience.html>) OECD, *States of Fragility 2016: Understand Violence*, Paris: OECD, 2016.
3. See Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and grievance in civil war', *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56, pp. 563-595, 2004
4. See for example Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The destruction of Liberia and the religious dimensions of an African civil war*, New York: New York University Press, 1999. Kouwenhoven was only recently convicted in a Dutch court.
5. Vanda Felbab-Brown, 'Counterinsurgents in the poppy fields: drugs wars and crime in Afghanistan', in James Cockayne and Adam Lupel (eds), *Peace Operations and Organized Crime: Enemies or Allies?* London: Routledge, 2011.
6. See Phil Williams, *Criminals, Militias and Insurgents: Organized Crime in Iraq*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army, June 2009. One of us (Shaw) participated in a comprehensive UNODC mission on organized criminal networks in Iraq. Its findings, while widely referred to, gained little traction in the UN.
7. A marker in the debate is James Cockayne and Adam Lupel (eds), *Peace Operations and Organized Crime*, London: Routledge, 2011
8. This was both the result of an examination of individual cases, but also a series of regional responses driven both by the UN but also by the independent and high profile West African Commission on Drugs.
9. See Stephen Ellis and Mark Shaw, 'Does organized crime exist in Africa?', *African Affairs*, 114, 457, pp. 505-523, 2015.
10. Global Initiative, 'Development Responses to Organised Crime', discussion paper for the development dialogue meeting hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime, The Hague, 8-9 April 2014.
11. Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, 'Fixing a Fractured State: Breaking the cycles of crime, corruption and conflict in the Sahel', Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Geneva, April 2015.
12. Mark Shaw and Tuesday Reitano, 'The evolution of organized crime in Africa: Towards a new response', Institute for Security Studies, Paper 244, April 2013, Pretoria.
13. UNODC, *Colombia: Monitoreo de territorios afectados por cultivos ilícitos* 2015, Vienna, July 2016.
14. United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, Drug and Chemical Control (Volume 1), March 2017, pp. 132-134.
15. Personal communication with DEA official, Colombia, March 2017.
16. Mark Shaw, 'Illicit Narcotics transiting West Africa', case study prepared for OECD/AfDB, *Illicit Financial Flows: Criminal Economies in West Africa*, Paris: OECD Publishing (authored by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime), 2017.
17. Virginia Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency*, London: Hurst & Co, 2015.
18. A similar point could be made historical on the degree to which the charcoal trade funded Al Shabaab In Somalia. There was for example widely covered reports on links to the ivory trade and terrorism in the Horn of Africa (which is minimal to non-existent) then on the more mundane issue of charcoal.
19. Mark Shaw, "Drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, 1998-2014: the evolution of an elite protection network", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 53: 3, September 2015, pp 339-364.
20. Sasha Jespersen, Conflict Obscuring Criminality: The Crime–Conflict Nexus in Nigeria, paper completed for the UNU study, 2017 (available at: <https://cpr.unu.edu/conflict-obscurity-criminality-in-nigeria.html>)
21. While maritime piracy is arguably different from other criminal markets described here, there are some important conceptual similarities; ransoms for ships and crews being similar to other forms of protection payments. See Anja Shortland and Frederico Varese, 'The Protectors Choice: An Application of Protection Theory to Somali Piracy', *British Journal of Criminology*, 54, 2014, pp. 741-764..
22. Environmental crime markets occupy a somewhat uncomfortable position in this respect. While middle class and international sentiment may focus on the illegal trade, these issues seldom have local political resonance. No South African political party for example campaigns on the issue of ending environmental trafficking. There are many more pressing issues for most voters. Within the environmental sector too, the illicit trade of iconic species (rhino horn, elephant ivory or lion bones), crowds out the illegal trade in often smaller and less attractive species (pangolin or abalone for example).

23. This was addressed in brief in the Libya case study, but further detail on the Amizagh and Toubou cases is available in Mark Micallef, 'The Human Conveyor Belt: human smuggling and trafficking in post-revolution Libya', Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Geneva, 2017.
24. In the fledgling government's defence this was itself a strategy ingrained in the Libyan political economy, Gaddafi having used it extensively.
25. Peter Tinti, 'Illicit Trafficking and Instability in Mali: Past, Present and Future', Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Geneva, January 2014, and Reitano and Shaw, 'Fixing a Fractured State', *op.cit.*
26. Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, 'Atlantic currents and their illicit undertow: fragile states and their transnational security implications', in Tim Ridout (ed) *Atlantic Currents 2015: An annual report on Wider Atlantic Perspective and Patterns*, George Marshall Fund, Washington DC, October 2015.
27. This was a clear conclusion from OECD/AfDB, *Illicit Financial Flows: Criminal Economies in West Africa*, Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017: where a study of 14 illicit markets showed that where there is a local investment in or demand for an illicit good resulted in a far higher level of legitimacy for the groups which controlled that flow.
28. Discussions with Nigerian Customs officials by Shaw, Abuja, November 2016.
29. Jespersen, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
30. Mark Shaw, 'We Pay, You Pay: Protection Economies, Financial Flows and Violence', in Hilary Matfess and Michael Micklaucic (eds) *Beyond Convergence: A World Without Order*, Washington DC: National Defense University, October 2016. The original and classic study of mafia protection is Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
31. There is considerable analysis on this dating back to the second Congo wars and Central African conflicts. See, for example, Tony Addison, Philippe Le Billon and S. Mansoob Murshed, 'Conflict in Africa: The Cost of Peaceful Behaviour', *Journal of African Economies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 365-386; 2003; Päivi Lujala, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Elisabeth Gilmore, 'A Diamond Curse? Civil War and a Lootable Resource', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 538-562, 2005; or Michael Ross, 'Oil, Drugs, and Diamonds: How Do Natural Resources Vary in their Impact on Civil War?', produced for the International Peace Academy project on Economic Agendas in Civil Wars, June 2002.
32. For an illustration of the fragility of such transactions in this regard, see Mark Shaw, *Hitmen for Hire: South Africa's Underworld Exposed*, Cape Town, Jonathan Ball, 2017.
33. Mark Shaw and Simone Haysom, (2016) "Organised Crime in Late Apartheid and the Transition to a New Criminal Order: the Rise and Fall of the Johannesburg 'Bouncer Mafia'", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 42:4.
34. Alexander Kupatadze, *Organized Crime, Political Transitions and State Formation in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
35. Walter Kemp, Mark Shaw and Arthur Boutellis, "The Elephant in the Room: How Can Peace Operations Deal with Organized Crime?", *International Peace Institute*, June 2013.
36. It was notable, for example, that while the international community recognised the political implications of illicit trafficking in the Northern Mali conflict, nonetheless the vast majority of responses focussed on capacity building of security institutions. See the mapping annex of Tuesday Reitano, Mark Shaw and Martin Ewi, 'Mid-Term Evaluation of the CT-Sahel programme', European Union, 2014.