THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GHANA AND GUINEA-BISSAU

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LEGON JUNE 2019
DECLARATION

With the exception of quoted sources and acknowledged references, I, David Yankey, hereby declare that this dissertation is the product of an original research conducted by me under the supervision of Amb. Dr. Kodzo Kpoku Alabo and that no part of this study has been submitted anywhere else for any other purpose.

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DATE

DATE
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my sweet family and all those who are contributing positively in the creation of a drug-free country.
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My first and foremost gratitude goes to the Almighty, Most High God for His sufficient goodness and mercies, guidance, wisdom and inspiration, which have sustained me throughout my academic pursuits. If I have come this far then it is the unmerited favour of God who has blessed me with life, health and knowledge.

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NYAMENLE EYILA AWIE BIALA.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSS - African Centre for Strategic Studies

AU - African Union

CTED - Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate

DEA - Drug Enforcement Administration (US)

DPA - Department of Political Affairs

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

EMCDDA - European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

EU - European Union

HIV/AIDS - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

NACOB - Narcotics Drug Control Board

TOCs - Transnational Organized Crimes

UK - United Kingdom

PRI – Institutional Revolution Party

PAN – National Action Party

FARC – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

GIABA - The Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the political economy of drug trafficking in West Africa and how drug trafficking influences the economy. The study utilizes the transnational security threats as the main theory for its analysis. The study is purely qualitative and relies primarily on literature review and interviews as sources of data. The study finds that the common drugs trafficked through both countries are cannabis, cocaine, heroin and hashish. The antecedent conditions of harsh economic circumstances, advantageous geographical position and a vulnerable state apparatus are also evident in the environment leading up to the rise of the drug trafficking economy of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. The study finds that whereas these conditions arose in Ghana mainly due to economic mismanagement and years of political instability, the Guinea-Bissau case came about due to a historically weak and unstructured economic system coupled with armed conflict during their brief but devastating civil war. Most of these drugs are brought into the sub-region using large commercial fishing or freight ships. After the drugs arrive in Ghana and are re-packaged, drug mules carry them aboard commercial flights to their destinations in Europe and America. The situation differs, however, in Guinea-Bissau. Due to Bissau’s poorly developed aviation system, the re-packaged drugs must be transported through ground routes to Gambia, Senegal or Mali before drug mules carry them to their final destinations using the relatively more developed aviation system in those nations. The main actors in the drug trafficking trade in both Nations are principally three. The most pivotal actors are the Latin American drug trafficking syndicate. The second actors are local collaborators who were primarily made up of entrepreneurs who may have had previous dealings with these drug trafficking groups in Europe or Latin America. The third group is the Politico-Military elite. The main actors in Ghana’s drug trade is similar to that of Guinea-Bissau, although the third group of actors in Ghana differ slightly from the third group of actors in Guinea-Bissau. In place of the Politico-Military elite, who functions as the third actors in Guinea-Bissau, are the complacent security officials in Ghana. The success of the drug trade in these countries can be narrowed down to the close collaboration between these three key actors to take advantage of the permitting environment presented by the countries. The approach of the two government in addressing the drug trade is similar. Measures formulated to address these issues revolve around the key tenants of demand reduction, supply reduction, development programmes related to the prevention or reduction of illicit crops, production or trafficking of drugs, control measures and money laundering. The large profits derived from the drug trade have a marked effect on the relatively fragile economies of both countries. There exist a large body of stories and anecdotes which strongly suggest a nexus between politics and the drug trade. Measures have been put in place by both countries which are hinged on collaboration with foreign agencies to combat the drug trade, but it is evident that a lot remains to be done.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

The trafficking of drug is the sale and distribution of illicit drugs. This illegal drug trade has been defined, in today’s international system, as a transnational security threat. Even though this threat may not seem to pose immediate danger to the international community, its cumulative effect may far overshadow that of the traditional threats like terrorism, money laundering, maritime piracy, arms trafficking, among others. The danger these traditional threats pose is universal in nature. However, developing states appear to be the most vulnerable to transnational security threats. In the last decade and half, states including Ghana and Guinea-Bissau have become the hotspots for the trafficking of illicit narcotics with its associated consequences.¹

West Africa has risen in prominence as a central player in the international drug enterprise. The sub-region initially served as a conduit for narcotics heading to Europe and North America but has now evolved into the consumer base as well. According to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the illicit trade of narcotics as well as its associated international organised crime pose a destabilization effect on state security and economies.²

The West African shores have become known as a key pivot in the transatlantic drug trade. The quantity of cocaine seized in 2007 alone on the West African seashore was estimated at more than one hundred and sixty (160) kilograms in countries such as Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Senegal.³ In the initial seven months of 2007, the quantity of cocaine seized had increased by more than 250% from figures recorded for the same period in 2005.⁴
Drug traffickers use West Africa not only as a conduit for the drugs to their destination countries but also as a stockpile. This assertion is corroborated by the large quantities of cocaine on their way to and from West Africa to the European market seized by law enforcement agencies in Europe. Available reports indicate that the Spanish and UK navies reportedly impounded approximately ten thousand (10,000) kilograms of cocaine in international waters on fishing vessels which had left African ports in 2006. This figure represented a dramatic increase from three thousand seven hundred (3,700) kilograms reported in the previous year.\(^5\) The mode of transport of these drugs is not restricted only to shipping vessels. According to several reports, private airplanes are used regularly to ferry large quantities of narcotics from the western part of Africa to Europe and South America.\(^6\) Private airplanes containing large volumes of narcotics have been reported to land in Guinea-Bissau from Latin America.\(^7\)

Since 2016, the quantity of cocaine (20 - 40 tons) transited through the sub-region to Europe (with 20 tons of cocaine alone estimated at $1.5 billion), by far exceeds the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of some West African countries.\(^8\) The consequences of the illegal trade in such high-value drugs are seen in an increase in corruption, money laundering and a hampered health delivery service.\(^9\) The effects of drug trafficking on economies cannot also be underestimated. An inflow of revenue from this trade has the capability to cause inflation in currencies and result in devaluing genuine exports in a phenomenon term “Dutch Disease”.\(^10\) Drug traffickers often launder their money through the real estate business in their host countries. This has the effect of artificially escalating the cost of business throughout all the sectors of the economy.\(^11\)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) first drew attention to the drug menace in West Africa in 2008. It cautioned that a booming drug business in the sub-region was changing economies and corrupting people across societies.\(^12\) Consequently, this illicit
trade appears to have affected the political landscape of some African countries with an emerging indication of a linkage between politics and the narcotic business in West Africa.\textsuperscript{13} Some events in West Africa underscore the relationship between the two. For instance, in Guinea-Bissau, the security details of Guinea-Bissau’s President, Nino Vieira, were not only allegedly made to protect drug consignments but drug deals were also carried out in “the first lady’s private residence and in the President’s VIP salon cars.”\textsuperscript{14} Ousmane Conte, the son of Guinea’s late President Lansana Conte, admitted to being a member of a drug smuggling network on television in February 2009.\textsuperscript{15} The Washington Post in its 15\textsuperscript{th} March, 2009 edition stated that cocaine was sometimes smuggled abroad via the diplomatic bag by Guinea-Bissau state officials.\textsuperscript{16} In Ghana, in May 2009 and September 2011, the then President, J.E.A Mills subjected himself to security checks at the Kotoka International Airport before embarking on trips to London and the United States (U.S), respectively.\textsuperscript{17} This was because the President was said to have begun to suspect the involvement of members of his own government in the drug commerce. This suspicion is given credence in a WikiLeaks cable cited here:

“… in June 2009, he [Mills] told the U.S. ambassador to Ghana, Donald Teitelbaum, "elements of his government are already compromised and that officials at the airport tipped off drug traffickers about operations there."

Drug trafficking is a global multibillion-dollar industry which has enticed political authorities around the globe, who seek to derive the perceived benefits of the market.\textsuperscript{19} Considering all these, there is an imperative to properly examine the relationship between the drug trade and the economy in both Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.
1.1 Problem statement

The strategic and ideal location of West Africa between South America and Europe, and its predisposition to vices such as bribery and money laundering and poverty have made the region a prime location as a drug hub. Evidence obtained from *Le Monde Diplomatique* has established the influence of drugs and drug-related activities including funds into politics and the economy.\(^{20}\) Narcotics are brought into Ghana and Guinea-Bissau for onward shipment to other parts of the world. The business readiness in Ghana has made it a conducive environment for those who engage in illicit drug trade.\(^{21}\) Some politicians and civil servants in Ghana have also been on the radar of some international security agencies in recent years, after one of the well-known politicians was arrested at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York for trafficking drugs during his official visit to the United States.\(^{22}\)

In terms of media coverage, Guinea-Bissau is on record to be one of the leading narco-states in the world with output from narcotics trade far exceeding output from its national economy. South American cocaine cartels had always seen Guinea-Bissau as a perfect drug trafficking transit hub. And while this illegal industry seems to be decreasing thanks to the United States (U.S.) and counter-narcotic policies of the United Nations, the country is still dealing with other drug-related issues and continues to be traile by the same hardship and institutional shortcomings that endorsed the drug business from the start.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), drugs that were being transported through West Africa alone amounted to billions of US dollars. UNODC further argued that other bigger drug consignments seized both at sea and on land in the sub-region between 2005 and 2007 were more than twenty (20). Hundreds of commercial airlines were also identified to have been implicated in moving cocaine from West Africa to Europe. The UNODC noted that the same period saw overthrows, attempted coups d’état and even the assassination of President Joao Bernardo Vieira in Bissau.
After the U.S Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials arrested in 2013, the former navy chief of Guinea-Bissau, José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto, for trafficking cocaine into the U.S., smuggling briefly slowed.

In both Ghana and Guinea-Bissau, there have been discussions about the level of influence of drug trafficking on the economy. For instance, a Dakar-based journalist, Anne Frintz, notes that the ideal geographical position of West Africa between Europe and South America, and its poverty, disorganisation and widespread corruption have made it the new drug transit point. Additionally, benefits accrued from the illegal drug business are channelled to fund politics. Other observers have also examined the implications of the narcotics trade on the economy of the two countries. Although not popularly studied, there are indications of the influence of narcotics on the economy and politics of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.

The work thus seeks to examine the connection between politics and the drug business in West Africa by comparing Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.

1.2 Research questions

The study therefore intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the conditions and dynamics of drug trafficking in West Africa?

2. Who are the main actors and what is the form of collaboration among drug traffickers in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau?

3. What is the state of the drug-politics nexus in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau and its effects?

4. What are the measures put in place by ECOWAS, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau to combat the menace, successes and challenges of drug trafficking?
1.3 Objectives of the study

The research generally looks at the political economy of drug trafficking in West Africa with Ghana and Guinea-Bissau as a case study. It specifically seeks to:

- Examine the conditions and dynamics of drug trafficking in West Africa.
- Identify the actors and form of collaboration among drug traffickers in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.
- Describe the state of the drug-politics nexus in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau and its effects on the economy in West Africa.
- Investigate the measures put in place to combat the phenomenon and offer suggestions and recommendations following findings.

1.4 Rationale of the study

West Africa is faced with many development and security challenges, especially contemporary transnational threats. Drug trafficking heralds a much greater danger to the viability and security of the sub-region. This study will help inform politicians, statesmen and citizens on how best to contain the menace.

1.5 Scope of the study

The research work is largely an examination of the political economy of drug trafficking in West Africa using Ghana and Guinea-Bissau as case studies. The work will cover the period from 2010 to date. This period is being used because West Africa has become a major storage, re-packaging, transit and distribution point for cocaine trafficking since then.
1.6 Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study is transnational security threats. Transnational security threats are termed as non-military threats that cross boundaries and impede the political and social landscape of a country. Schultz, Gordon and Quester in their 1997 book, *Security Studies for the 21st Century*, describe transnational security as a mechanism for appreciating the means through which both States and Non-state actors operate inside and outside state boundaries, interact and influence the defence of a state and its people.\(^{22}\) Cusimano argues that as a direct result of globalization, open societies and open markets, security matters have moved beyond mere sovereignty.\(^{23}\)

At the very core of the transnational security paradigm is the inclusion of non-state actors within the boundaries of other states which influence the defence of those states and its inhabitants. Although non-state actors operating within state boundary and influencing policy are not necessarily new, historically the transnational extent of their activities were considerably curtailed by the underdeveloped communication channels and technological matters as seen since the advent of the technological age.\(^{24}\)

Certain writers are of the view that the transnational security paradigm doesn’t necessarily contest the traditional state-centric paradigm with its inclusion of non-state actors but seeks to widen the security agenda. Buzan argues that the state has taken more of a secondary role in the new security agenda. He, however, maintains that the state still has a fundamental role to play although not necessarily being the unique reference entity which defines the threat.\(^{25}\) This essential alteration is more clearly understood in the context of notions such as human security which considers security as a multi-tier phenomenon which translates from the global down to the individual level.\(^{26}\)

In other words, transnational security threats are security threats that are not exclusive to one country but cut across the delimitation of states. Moreover, unlike traditional security
challenges, transnational threats emerge slowly and often do not elicit a focused or timely policy response. The significant transnational threats include drug trafficking, terrorism, endemic corruption, maritime piracy, arms trafficking, illegal migration, infectious disease and environmental degradation among others.

Notable critics of transnational security threats such as Matthew and Shambaugh (1998) posit that the current significant transnational security issues, a translation of the collapse of what they call a “bi-polar world”, remains an outcome of the technological advancement, ease of mobility and expedited communication channels seen in the twentieth century. 27 Other authors are of the view that the elevation of transnational security issues have arisen due to the attempt to identify emerging external threats in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. 28 Other critics such as Haftendorn (1991) is critical of the idea of global security as assuming a universe with a shared definition of security and common values, rules and principles. She argues that such a world simply does not exist. 29

Despite all these criticisms, the perpetration of such threats in one state has severe repercussions which would be felt throughout the world. Thus, the choice of the concept of transnational security threats fits into the topic under investigation which is “the political economy of drug trafficking in West Africa: A comparative study of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.”

1.7 Literature Review

Several scholars have written extensively about drug trafficking issues worldwide, particularly in Latin America. This work reviewed some of these studies similar to the subject matter as well as the set objectives of this project. This is presented below

George W. Grayson examines the deadly effects of the Mexican drug cartels on the United States in “Mexico: Narco-violence and Failed State?” 30 Grayson also delves into the
relationship between the drug business and government actors and attempts to propose means of managing this situation.

Grayson paints a grim picture of the interplay between drugs, corruption and politics during the prolonged hegemony of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) until it was replaced by the centre-right National Action Party (PAN) in 2000. Grayson outlines the succession of the prominent drug cartels as well as their offshoots and demonstrates a clear and obvious link between this world and the Mexican political establishment. He exposes in graphic details, how the powerful drug lords have corrupted the Mexican society with their power, permeating throughout the political and law enforcement establishments of the country at all levels. He further examines President Felipe Calderon’s reign and his attempt at halting this menace.

The author continues to assess Mexico’s aggressive efforts at stopping the sale and distribution of narcotics and also considers the effects of this corruption on the Mexican state. Grayson therefore considers if Mexico could stand a danger of becoming a failed state.

The author identifies two dimensions of state power in a so-called failed state. These are its scope and strength. He explains scope as the separate functions and targets set by governments. The author describes strength as the capability of the government to outline and execute policies. The author asserts that the Mexican State demonstrates an extensive scope with its monopoly over the petroleum sector, its role as the foremost energy supplier, its funding of public education, its various retirement and health-care schemes, its control of public universities, and control of the Mexican Military and other security forces. Grayson however casts doubts on the strength of the Mexican State by pointing to their lack of control over the drug cartels. In the end, the author portrays an image of a disintegrating State struggling to deal with the powerful drug cartels due to complacency, corruption and incompetence.
Francisco E. Thoumi (2003) in “Illegal Drugs, Economy and Society in the Andes” examines the political and social behaviours of Andes nations in context to how susceptible they have been to the drug trade. The author traces the emergence of the narcotics trade as a contentious policy issue in the Andes to the signing of certain key international conventions on the drug trade such as the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs by the UN in 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Drugs (1971) and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988).

Thoumi (2003) carefully deconstructs the pitfalls of drug policy creation and explores a theory of competitive advantage in the narcotics trade. He proceeds to generate policy implications from the theory he describes. Thoumi assesses the prominent features of countries involved in the narcotics trade and attempts to propose reasons to that effect. Thoumi argues that drug policy formulation fails to incorporate a discussion into why crime grows and festers in society. Due to this challenge, policy makers often erroneously adopt measures which in their estimation will aid to protect society from criminals. In his book, Thoumi compares the varying definitions assigned to “the drug problem” in America and the Andes. It is revealed that America primarily sees the drug problem as a supply issue and therefore backs policies which aim at eliminating the problem from the source or origins. The Andes nations on the other hand, define the drug menace as principally an issue of demand.

Thoumi points out that the role morals and ethics play in drug policy creation poses some unique challenges. There is a clear and distinct lack of consensus on the role mind-altering drugs play in daily human life. Thoumi points out that two schools of thought exist on this issue; the position that mind-altering drugs must only be used for medicinal and research purposes and the position which allows for recreational use of the drugs. These positions by themselves differ according to cultural differences. Certain cultures recognise mind-altering drugs as part of the human experience whiles others do not.
Thoumi concludes by calling for a revisit of the debate about mind-altering drugs from a social and scientific based angle. He discourages heavy-handedness in drug policy formulation. He proposes policy reforms aimed at improving social reactions to drug trafficking and drug use across the globe.

“The Political Economy of the Drug Industry”, edited by Menno Vellinga, is a collation of the musings of several experts from Latin America, Europe and the United States on the intricacies of the drug trade on a national, regional and worldwide level. The book touches on the legal, economic, political and social sides of the narcotics trade.

The book discusses previous and current policies employed to stop the drug trade. It concludes that attempts aimed at eliminating the distribution of the drug have largely failed and must be revisited by scholars. The book alludes to similar tactics employed by the illegal drug industry that comes with globalization. The book further notes that the farming and trading of marijuana, heroin and cocaine seamlessly fits with the local economies of the rural communities involved in the trade. This therefore provides them with an apparently desirable alternative to overcome poverty. Reference is made to Plan Dignidad (The Dignity Plan) which was an initiative of the Bolivian President Hugo Banzer to stop the drug trade targeting the production and distribution channels used. Plan Dignidad also focused on money laundering linked to the drug trade and initiated social programmes aimed at combating drug addiction. Menno Vellinga argues that the plan gave rise to resistance from the farmers and resulted in their rise as a potent political movement.

In terms of the interplay between the narcotics trade and politics, the book tows the same line as authors like Francisco Thoumi, who posit that drug trafficking in Latin America forms part of a wider process of what he terms “delegitimization of the state”. The book closely examines the nuances of the relationship between the higher classes and the rural folks in relation to the war on drugs and eradication policies. The book further reveals the effect of
the illegal trade of drugs on the state as well as the militarization the war on drugs inevitably creates.

Finally, the book assesses the various proposed economic and political designs for managing drug addiction and crime linked to the narcotics trade. The book appears to favour the Dutch model of decriminalization. The book concludes by putting forward a new interdisciplinary model for managing the drug issue which takes a decidedly non-military stance.

“Drugs and Democracy in Rio de Janeiro: Trafficking, Social Network, and Public Security” by Enrique Desmond Arias looks at the effects of drugs on the democratic institutions of Rio de Janeiro as well as the associated crimes it comes with and their effects on the poor and marginalised in the city. The author describes the drug trafficker as a new political actor on the Rio political scene who takes active part in the growth and safety of the local community. The author portrays the relationship which exists between local leaders and these drug traffickers to be nuanced and volatile. The author points out that the drug traffickers have become a vital alternative to the communities due to the inability of government to provide jobs and basic amenities. He argues that low wages for security officials have played a role in fostering corruption among the police. Arias succeeds in portraying the drug trafficker as a vital political actor who interacts with the forces of government in Rio de Janeiro.

Anabel Hernández in “Narcoland” talks about the connection between drug traffickers and their political protectors in Mexico. Hernandez asserts that the war on drugs has virtually been rendered unwinnable due to the connection between drug traffickers, the upper class and the highest level of the political elite. Hernandez is very critical of President Felipe Calderon’s war on the drug barons which has resulted in thousands of deaths.

The book uses Joaquín “Chapo” Guzmán as an example of complicity from the highest level of power. Hernandez accuses Calderon’s government of using its war with the cartels to help Joaquín “Chapo” Guzmán establish a monopoly on drug trafficking in the country. The
author supports her argument by pointing to Guzmán’s aided escape from prison. The book disputes the government’s account of the escape and proposes an explanation which involves the Echeverría, Salinas de Gortari, Fox, and Calderón administrations in the protection of the drug traffickers. The author further points to the damming testimony given by Edgar “La Barbie” Valdez Villarreal about his drug organization’s association with the Calderón administration. She argues that many of these accusations were never investigated. The author points a finger of blame at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who it accuses of teaming up with some of the drug tsars despite efforts of the DEA to limit the power of the drug cartels.

Oliver Villar and Drew Cottle in “Cocaine Death Squads and the War on Terror” delve into the link between drug traffickers, governmental forces and terrorism using Colombia as an example. The book alleges that the war on drugs in Colombia is a smokescreen for the actual situation, which is a strife for control of the drug trafficking business in a perverse imperialistic system of domination through state-sanctioned terrorism.

Similar to some of the already reviewed books, Oliver Villar and Drew Cottle’s work attempts to establish a link between the drug business and the political world. The authors do this through a theoretical analysis of the overlap of interest between the network of business interest in the drug industry in South America and the United States. The book argues that there has been friction between the business network which runs the drug cartels and the FARC rebel group over control of the multimillion-dollar enterprise. The American and Colombian authorities have sought to capitalise on this to use cocaine production to corrupt the guerrillas, this has resulted in the militarisation of the Colombian countryside in a struggle to retain control of those areas.

The authors assert that 90% of proceeds from the drug trade ends up in the United States, while a good portion of the remaining 10% which stays in Colombia is used to finance
guerrilla warfare against American interest in Colombia. The book therefore concludes that the war on drugs has only served the interest of the drug traffickers and the Americans to the detriment of the Colombian working class.

A review by Asempa Abankwa Okyere examined the factors driving drug trafficking as well as its effects in Ghana. The author opines that political leaders around the globe have become entangled in the drug trade due to its assumed benefits. The author points out the devastating effects of the narcotics trade on public health, the economy as well as human safety across the West African sub-region. Asempa Abankwa Okyere concludes the review by describing the various mechanisms provided to help stop the drug trade in Africa.
1.8 Sources of Data and Research Methodology

1.8.1 Methodology

1.8.2 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research approach. Descriptive research design entails describing the characteristics of a set population on the basis of available data. The data derived from respondents and interviewees on the political economy of drug trafficking in both countries will be described based on the target population from which the data will be acquired. Due to the set research questions and objectives of this project, a descriptive approach provides the most viable process of deriving detailed information on the subject matter. The uniqueness of this research approach lies on its ability to clearly capture the social world and provide answers to pivotal questions Hancock describes as “why things are the way they are” and the differences that lie among different social characteristics. This approach helps to obtain detailed information from respondents which provide a critical explanation from the view of respondents on the subject matter. Deductions and analysis are made from the information gathered to answer the research questions without recourse to statistical tools and inferences. This study adopts the case study approach, using the examples of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. The rationale behind this is to gain an in-depth knowledge into the links between politics and drug money in these two West African Nations. A multiplicity of reports exist which seek to link the political elite to the drug trade in both countries, making a cross comparison between the two nations the best approach to get to the core of the subject matter.

1.8.3 Population, Sampling and Sample Size

The population describes the entirety of the subject of which the researcher is concerned with. Due to the inability of the researcher to collect data from all individuals and agencies concerned with the subject matter from both countries, a target population will be focussed on. The study will target agencies/institutions such as the Narcotics Control Board (NACOB),
Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), the Food and Drugs Authority, Guinea Embassy in Accra, Ghana Embassy in Conakry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFA&RI), Dr. Vladimir Antwi – Danso, the Dean of the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFSC) and Mr. Alfred Northey Dua, Clinical psychologist. The above-mentioned officials from these institutions will be sampled due to their in-depth knowledge in the issue understudy. This study will employ the multistage sampling technique comprised of purposive and convenience sampling to identify relevant respondents for the study. The purposive sampling will be utilised to identify officials who are within the subject area for not less than 8 years. This will enable the researcher gain detailed information from seasoned respondents on the subject matter. Employing the convenience sampling technique, seven (7) respondents who are experts from the selected agencies/institutions would be used. Creswell argues that the least sample size for any qualitative analysis should be seven (7), thereby making the selected sample size suitable for the study.

1.8.4 Instrument and Procedure for Data Collection

The study will make use of both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was obtained through unstructured interviews. An interview guide will be used in order to obtain suitable and pertinent data from the selected sampling population. An interview guide also has the added effect of providing the researcher with transcribed feelings, sentiments and ideas regarding the topic under study. By the use of face to face interview coupled with one on one interviews, the researcher will be able to seek clarifications via follow-up questions and glean the required information from the respondents. Additionally, secondary data will be sourced from both online and offline sources such as books, journals, reports, seminar papers and other records from the Balme, LECIAD libraries.
1.9 Ethical Consideration

Certain ethical considerations will be made in the execution of this thesis. Some of these key ethical considerations include confidentiality, anonymity where required as well as the collection of informed consent before the interviews are conducted. The researcher will provide respondents with a written consent grounded on the specified objectives of the study.

1.10 Organization of Chapters

This research will be organised in four main chapters.

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Overview of the political economy of drug trafficking in West Africa

Chapter Three: Examination of the Linkage between Drugs, Politics and the Economy of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

Chapter four: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations
ENDNOTES

5 Ibid
10 A "Dutch disease" is an economic term referring to the negative consequences that may arise from spikes in the value of a nation’s currency. While Dutch disease is primarily associated with a natural resource discovery, it can likewise result from any large influx of foreign currency into a country, including foreign direct investment, foreign aid, or substantial increases in natural resource prices. The term "Dutch disease" was coined by The Economist magazine in 1977, when the publication analyzed a crisis that occurred in the Netherlands, following discoveries of vast natural gas deposits in the North Sea in 1959; Keh, D. (1996). Drug Money in a Changing World: Economic Reform and Criminal Finance, UNODC, 1996.
13 Understanding the intersection of Drugs, Politics and Crime in West Africa: An Interpretive Analysis, op. cit.
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26 Ibid
CHAPTER TWO
OVERVIEW OF DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ITS ECONOMICS IN WEST AFRICA

2.1 Introduction
This chapter assesses the background of drug trafficking in West Africa, presenting its mechanism and the factors driving it. The chapter also considers the dynamics of the illegal trade of drugs and discusses its economics.

2.2 An Overview of Narcotic Drugs and Its Usage
The word narcotic is derived from the Greek word “narcosis”. Mr. Galen, a physician, is said to have first used the word in reference to chemical agents which cause paralysis or numbness. Initially, natural herbs from mandrake roots, poppy juice from opium and altercus seeds were considered prime examples of narcotics. Narcotics were primarily used as analgesics, numbing agents or sleep-inducing agents.

The contemporary definition of narcotics differs based on perspective. Often, it is defined as substances which bind to opioid receptors (proteins triggered by substances such as morphine). Generally, narcotics are thought of as any illicit substance. In the United States (U.S.), narcotics are legally considered as opium and its various derivatives as well as their semi-synthetic alternatives. This legal definition precludes cocaine, marijuana and amphetamines; although due to their dulling properties they are often imprecisely classified as narcotics. This legal definition of narcotics holds negative connotations and differs from the generally accepted medical definition of narcotics which is tightly linked to its pharmacological usage. Medically narcotics are used in a variety of ways, chief among them as pain management medication. Three broad kinds of narcotics are known based on their psychoactive properties. These are morphine, codeine and thebaine. These substances are all derived or synthesised from opium chiefly for medicinal use. Drugs created from these
substances with the aim of managing pain include oxycodone, tramadol, hydrocodone, methadone, and hydromorphone.\(^5\)

The divergent views on narcotic use are not only restricted to the legal and pharmacological use of the substance. As has already been discussed, these views are deeply steeped in cultural, ethical and moral arguments.\(^6\) There is a lack of consensus on the role of mind-altering drugs in daily human life. Some people argue that mind-altering drugs can only serve as medicinal and research purposes while others argue that a controlled amount of these drugs can be used for recreational purposes. Culturally, mind-altering drugs are perceived differently. Certain cultures recognise mind-altering drugs as part of the human experience whiles others do not.\(^7\) The prevailing narrative drifts more towards the almost exclusive use of narcotics for medicinal and research purposes. The United Nations (UN) currently only permits the use of narcotics in research and medicine only. These are sectioned as “Schedule 1” and include coca and cocaine, opium and heroin, marijuana and amphetamines. Any use of narcotics outside these domains is normally classed as abuse.

Due to these views on narcotics use, statutory cataloguing any drug as narcotics carries a higher sentence for offenders. In America, although both cocaine and amphetamines are classed as “Schedule II” drugs, any cocaine related charge carries a higher penalty more than amphetamine related charges due to cocaine’s classification as a narcotic.\(^8\)

### 2.3 A Brief Overview of Drug Trafficking

There is an extensive market for the trade in narcotics and other drugs which are subject to drug prohibition laws. Most jurisdictions prohibit the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale and subsequent use of these illegal drugs. Some countries, however, permit the restricted trade and usage of certain illegal drugs.

The global market for the trade of these illegal drugs is estimated to be in excess of US$321.6 billion annually. In 2003, the sale of illegal drugs alone was estimated at 1% of total global
trade which stood at US$36 trillion. The large worldwide market for these illegal drugs makes stopping it a herculean task for local law enforcement agencies across the world.

The use of mind-altering drugs in human society goes back to the Neolithic age, but the illegal trade of these drugs is a relatively recent development. One of the first reports of the illegal drugs trade was in the 19th century in China when the emergence of an illegal opium market resulted in a sharp increase of opium-addicts to over twelve million people. The resultant ban of opium by the Qing-dynasty resulted in the first opium war between China and the United Kingdom (UK). The UK defeated the Chinese forces, permitting them to continue the sale of opium grown in India to the Chinese. A second war was fought over the sale of opium between UK and French forces on one hand, against the Chinese on the other hand resulting in another defeat for the Chinese. Trade in opium increased rapidly after these two wars. However, in 1868, the UK was forced to regulate the use of opium in Britain due to an increasing number of opium-addicts by passing the 1868 Pharmacy Act.

In the United States, the control of opium sale was in the domain of the individual states before the 1914 passing of the Harrison Act. The Harrison Act was a direct consequence of the passing of the International Opium Convention two years prior. Drug use in Europe and North America spiked in the 21st century, with many people using cocaine and marijuana. This growing market was seized upon by the emerging drug cartels who increased cooperation among themselves to be able to simplify trans-Atlantic drug trafficking.

Drug trafficking is universally considered as a menace to the public health and safety of a lot of people and is prohibited in almost all jurisdictions worldwide. Trading in illegal drugs carries huge fines, prison sentences and even the death penalty in certain countries.

Methods of controlling the illegal trafficking of drugs vary across different jurisdictions. While others concentrate on deterrence by issuing strict punishments for users and dealers,
other target production and supply by attacking the criminal organizations between the trade.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{2.4 Drug Trafficking Routes}

Most of the illegal drugs trafficked worldwide originate from the Latin America and one of the prime routes through which these drugs end up in the United States and Europe is through Venezuela. Much of the drugs trafficked through Venezuela originate from Colombia and goes through Central America, Mexico and some Caribbean countries on a circuitous route to the West.\textsuperscript{16}

The trafficking of cocaine through Venezuela has been on the increase since 2002. The United States has been trying to combat this trend through the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), but this has faced some challenges since Venezuela severed ties with the DEA accusing them of spying.\textsuperscript{17} Primarily due to the expulsion of the DEA from Venezuela, drugs trafficked through Venezuela has risen. Cocaine seizures in Venezuela have risen due to this. The country ranked among the top six for cocaine seizures between 2008 and 2012.\textsuperscript{18} There are rumoured links between politicians and the drug kingpins in Venezuela. In November 2016, two relatives of Venezuelan President Maduro were found culpable of attempting to traffic narcotics into the United States with the aim of helping the President stay in power with the proceeds of the shipment.\textsuperscript{19}

The West African coast has grown as a preferred transit point for illegal drugs en route to Europe and North America. West African Nations such as Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Nigeria and Togo have become key routes through which narcotic drugs are trafficked.\textsuperscript{20} This growth is allegedly due to some characteristics that make them vulnerable to drug trafficking. These include rampant corruption, porous coastline and limited border controls as well as weak law enforcement and judicial systems. Other specific characteristics that draw traffickers to some countries in the sub-region and not others include their
geography, notably their strategic location on a trade route and along the coast; infrastructure, particularly the existence of air and sea ports; the existence of smuggling networks and routes that can be tapped to move drugs; and connections with African facilitators. Security personnel are also poorly paid in our side of the world, making them susceptible to bribes from the drug traffickers.21

International market conditions also explain the increased drug trafficking in Africa. In the cocaine market, decreased demand in the U.S., increased demand and profitability in Europe, and increased interdiction on direct shipping routes from South America to Europe prompted cocaine traffickers to diversify itineraries and ship cocaine to Europe via Africa. In the heroin market, pressure on traditional trafficking routes prompted traffickers to reopen the African route to Europe that had been very active in the 1980s and early 1990s.

![Transit Points for Illegal Drugs in West Africa](https://example.com/transit_points.png)


**Figure 2.1:** Some Transit Point for Illegal Drugs in West Africa

The traffickers have been known to also use small aircrafts to carry the drugs. Often when land routes are used, the traffickers have to liaise with known terrorist organizations like Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, who control these routes.22
A preferred route for the smuggling of heroin from Afghanistan to the West is through eastern and southern African nations through the so-called “southern route” or “smack track”. This has contributed to the growing usage of heroin among countries within this route.  

The traditional route for narcotics trafficked from Asia, move through southern China and Southeast Asia. Routes within former opium producing nations like Thailand and Iran are still used. Other diverse routes through central Asia and Russia exist as well. The varied routes thrive and support new emerging markets in Asia and globally. Demand for heroin in particular keeps driving the market. The large amounts of drugs trafficked through Asia to Europe and America originate from Afghanistan and the so-called Golden Crescent countries of Iran and Pakistan. Iran has emerged as a preferred route for smugglers from its history of being a primary trading route. Other Golden Triangle nations including Laos and Thailand produce drugs for the Australian, U.S. and Asian markets through the southern routes. The Dark web on the internet has also grown as an alternate trading point for drugs in recent times, particularly among the youth.

Figure 2.2: Major Trafficking Routes
Source CIA

2.5 History of Drug trafficking in West Africa

The smuggling of drugs in West Africa intensified in the early 20th century, with the sub-region being used as a re-packaging and transit location for drugs trafficked from Latin America and South Asia en route to the European and North American market.
trafficking of goods in West Africa is however not a new phenomenon. Moorish, Touareg and Dioula merchants had long been journeying around the sub-region, ferrying drugs to satisfy demands for centuries. The infamous slave trade resulted in the trafficking of human slaves for centuries which affected every part of the West African coast.  

Although the sub-region is not renowned as an illegal drug producing hub, there exist a history of cannabis cultivation in the 1990s. Reports show that the colonial administration in Nigeria piloted the growing of coca plants in botanical gardens around locations in Nigeria during the latter part of their rule. From colonial police reports in Nigeria, cannabis was brought in from Europe, America and South Africa and sold to Nigerians.

One of the earliest instances of drug smuggling through West Africa occurred in 1952 when a Lebanese gang recruited people to transport drugs from Lebanon to America through Ghana and Nigeria. The growing need for drugs in Europe and America precipitated the rise of West Africa as an important drug trafficking hub. A crack down on drugs transported from Latin America and Asia to satisfy this growing market forced the drug traffickers to diverge their routes through the western coast of Africa to avoid detection.

The traffickers have continued to evolve in their means of evading detections despite the stringent polices of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Large quantities of illegal drugs are transported through West Africa to the Western market yearly. This resulted in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) singling West Africa out as a key axis for the trafficking of cocaine. According to UNODC, some 13 percent of the cocaine seized in Europe in 2009 transited through West Africa. Many assessments arrive at a much higher proportion and a likely and more common calculation is that up to one third of the shipments arriving in Europe have been transiting through West Africa in recent years. Moreover, the UNODC further estimates that 40 to 45 tons of heroin flowed into Africa in 2009 out of
global flows of 460 to 480 tons,\textsuperscript{36} giving Africa a nine percent share in global heroin trafficking.

2.6 The Re-emergence of West Africa as a Pivot in Drug Trafficking

The West African sub-region is home to some of the world’s most deprived, underdeveloped and unstable nations. A majority of the countries in the sub-region are unable to provide basic amenities to their populace, lack strong state institutions, lack proper control over their borders, have high levels of corruption, have the needed infrastructure, network and route connections, have the African facilitators and are bedevilled with conflicts and strife. All these factors create a conducive atmosphere for drug trafficking to fester.

The UNODC indicated that the illicit goods were, in the early stages, trafficked only in small quantities, but as time advanced and the demand for drugs kept increasing, countries in West Africa precisely Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau were assigned with cocaine consignments as large as 135 to 145 tonnes. West Africa since then became an important part of the drug trading world,\textsuperscript{37} with both the increase in variety and number of drugs trafficked through West Africa and the expansion of the drug trade from West Africa to other parts of the continent.\textsuperscript{38} This growing trend has been blamed on the sub-region’s weak history of rule of law.

Another characteristic is the endemic poverty situation in most countries within West Africa.\textsuperscript{39} The harsh economic situation in most countries in West Africa has forced governments to tighten the economic purses of these countries. These parsimonious measures employed to restructure economies in the sub-region has been in part instigated by the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) who have a huge hold on most African nations. Poor households have borne the brunt of these measures, experiencing harsh economic conditions for decades. This situation has coincided with the strong response of the West to drug trafficking, forcing the traffickers to switch tact and seek
new routes, and thereby creating a fertile ground for the infiltration of drug traffickers into these vulnerable societies.\textsuperscript{40}

This change of route has also aided in the opening up of new markets in countries through which these drugs are trafficked. According to reports, drug consumption has doubled in these countries since 1990. Currently estimated users are around 5.7 million people.\textsuperscript{41}

The geography of the sub-region coupled with its weak borders and pliable law enforcement agents has resulted in its growth as a transit point for trafficked drugs especially from the Andean countries. It is believed that the drug cartels from the Andes have formed associations with criminal gangs in some West African nations such as Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria which has further solidified their hold in West Africa. The reported high rate of corruption among governments and politicians in West Africa nations has created power conspirators in the sub-region who act essentially as gatekeepers of the transatlantic drugs trade.\textsuperscript{42}

Most of the countries within West Africa suffer from endemic poverty, malfunctioning state institutions, lack of development, wars and poor governance. This weakens them and creates the fertile ground for exploitation by these drug traffickers. These deep-seated systemic challenges culminate in drug traffickers having free run at conducting their businesses.\textsuperscript{43}

Another key factor behind West Africa’s re-emergence as a pivotal point in the transatlantic narcotic trade is its peculiar geography. The original route for drugs destined for the Western markets is through Venezuela and Brazil. The most appropriate distance between Venezuela and Brazil on the other hand and the West African coast is approximately 10 degrees north of latitude. Unsurprisingly this area, also known as “highway 10”, remains the area with the highest drug seizures by European and American agencies of narcotics which have journeyed through Africa.\textsuperscript{44}
Although most of the drug related activities linked to West Africa has to do with trafficking, the sub-region is developing a reputation as a production spot for drugs such as methamphetamine. These drugs are subsequently re-packaged and trafficked to Europe or America with South Africa as a preferred route. Recent large-scale seizures of materials for manufacture and processing of methamphetamine, cocaine and ecstasy in West Africa show the growing trend of production in the sub-region.

2.7 The New Dynamics of West Africa’s Drug Trade

The illicit drug trade in the West African sub-region appears to have transitioned in a relatively short span of time from a small entrepreneurial group of networks to a large-scale transnational network of drug shipment. This was in part precipitated by the emergence of bigger and more profitable markets aside the traditional market of North America. The market for narcotics, principally cocaine, in Europe has grown rapidly over the last few years with nearly four (4) million users. North America remains by far the largest market for drugs, recording over seven million users of cocaine alone. The UNODC reports that the demand of cocaine in Europe yearly stands at 135 to 145 metric tonnes of cocaine. Cocaine has a higher street value in Europe than in America, costing almost double the required amount to buy a kilogram of the drug in Europe than it does in America.

The growth of the European market has coincided with a slight waning of the market in North America. The diversification of the routes of transport by the Mexican cartels through West Africa to the European and the American markets has placed them above the Colombian and Caribbean cartels. Efforts by the West in the Caribbean have almost deprived the South America cartels of their direct routes to the United States. The combined efforts at tackling the narcotics trade directed towards the North American market has had the effect of forcing the traffickers to devise news routes through West Africa and expand the existing routes with a growing focus on the European markets.
In spite of the increasing quantity of drugs being ferried through the West African corridors, West African narcotics groups continue to operate using the old methods employed since the 1980s. The number of drug mules entering American and European airports between 2004 - 2008 rose dramatically to over 1300 mules caught. Within the same period, two metric tonnes of drugs were impounded from mules traveling to European airports. The UNODC reports that the number of drug traffickers using the commercial airline routes into nearly a dozen European airports doubled.\(^{51}\)

The growth of the drug trafficking networks across West African has come with an increase in actors involved in the trade. The movement of illegal drugs through West Africa is complicated, employing a large cast from Latin American actors, established West African co-conspirators and a new crop of investors who perform varied functions in the machination of the trade.\(^{52}\)

Despite its primitive methods of conveyance of the drugs to the Western market, the sub-region’s drug trafficking industry has remained vibrant and entrepreneurial. The illicit trade industry serves as a conduit component for an ever-increasing quantity of drugs on the European and American markets. What has facilitated the continual thriving of the industry in West Africa has been the distinct lack of the widespread violence which characterises the Latin American trade. This relative absence of violence has ensured that the networks have continued to grow without attracting any attention.\(^{53}\)

Although West Africa is still far from other transit points in North America in terms of the quantity of drugs moved through it, the high valued drugs still possess a great destabilizing factor to the characteristically weak West African economies and states.

\section*{2.8 Challenges Posed by Drug Trafficking}

The main challenges posed by drug trafficking in West Africa are that of corruption, money laundering and other drug related crimes. Drug-related violence on the scale as seen in Latin
America is yet to be seen in West Africa.\textsuperscript{54} The country where these vices have been witnessed more is Guinea-Bissau.

Drug money is often seen in West Africa in the form of bribes. The street value of the drugs is such that the component paid as bribes is large enough to trickle down through the society. It creates a false lifestyle of wealth in communities and serves as an unwholesome source of motivation for the youth. This perpetuates the cycle and, in a way, contributes to drug addiction, crime and violence in order to succeed as others in the drug business have.\textsuperscript{55}

West Africa’s burgeoning capabilities as a drug producing hub poses a unique threat on its own. Currently, West African countries are mainly used as transit and re-packaging points, this comes with minimal crime. However, since the production capabilities keep rising, certain stakeholders are of the view that drug-related violence on the scale seen in Latin America may begin to manifest in the sub-region. The corrosive nature of this sort of violence corrupts government institutions, security forces as well as individual households.

A clear example of drug-related violence is the recent conflict in Northern Mali.\textsuperscript{56} The violence is believed to have been partly instigated by rival drug trafficking gangs jostling for control. This violence festered and developed into the complicated issue which prompted the UN-backed French military intervention in 2013.\textsuperscript{57}

The double assassination of the President of Guinea-Bissau, Joao Bernardo Nino Vieira and the Chief of Defense Staff, General Batista Tagame Na Wai in 2009 was heavily influenced by the narcotics trade. The 2011 botched coup attempt by former navy chief, Bubo Na Tchuto, who is believed to be a drug kingpin, was also influenced by the drug trade.\textsuperscript{58}

Much of the drug related activities in West Africa go on under the radar. Most of the drug-related arrests happen when people attempt carrying drugs across the border or aboard airplanes. Although some politicians have been apprehended in conjunction with the
narcotics trade, an explicit link between politics and the drug trade is difficult to prove. It is believed that what is missing in the illegal drug trade in West Africa is the overt violence associated with the trade, akin to happenings in the illicit drug trade circles in Latin America, where drug barons have caused political instabilities and violence. This absence of violence has therefore led some writers to see it as a reason for the failure to establish a clear link between drug trade and politics in West Africa.59

Aside the clear and obvious threat to security the narcotics trade pose, there are other insidious threats associated with the trade which affect nations caught up in it. These include public health threats of the consumption of such drugs. As has been mentioned, West Africa is a transit and re-packaging hub for the drugs trade. However, the sub-region has started generating a large number of drug users. Despite the prohibitive cost of these drugs, usage is on the rise in certain West African countries. Reasons advanced for this include the wealthier class spending on the drugs and the traffickers paying for services with some of the drugs.60

Aside the obvious health impacts of narcotics use, other issues such as crime to support the drug-using lifestyle, depression and suicide have been reported in people addicted to narcotics.61 There are an estimated 2 million drug users in West Africa. Despite this fact, drug treatment health facilities are largely non-existent on the continent. Only Nigeria and Senegal have basic health facilities designed to tackle drug-related health issues.62 The sub-region is therefore ill-prepared to deal with even the most obvious aspects of the drug menace.

The narcotics trade also poses challenges to the economy of countries. As has been mentioned, an inflow of revenue from this trade has the capability to cause inflation in currencies and result in devaluing genuine exports in a phenomenon term “Dutch Disease”.63 Drug traffickers often launder their money through the real estate business in their host countries, the inflationary effects of this can have deep reaching consequences for the stability of the economy of countries.64
It is apparent that the issues related to drug trafficking pose a huge challenge to governance on the continent. The corrupting effects of the drug money is threatening to undermine the political, security, health and economic structure of the sub-region.\textsuperscript{65}

2.9 Mode of Drug Trafficking in West Africa

The West African drug trafficking syndicates appear to have moved some of their operations outside the continent to major cities across the world, due to intensified measures put in place by the West to curtail drug trafficking as well as the increase in demand for narcotics globally.\textsuperscript{66} These established networks still utilise their routes through West Africa. It is known that about 25\% of the cocaine originating from Latin America still journeys through West Africa and ends up in Europe.\textsuperscript{67}

The rise in demand for narcotics globally incentivised some drug cartels in the Americas to team up with West African drug dealers aiming at meeting these high demands by taking advantage of the air and sea routes available on the West African Coast.\textsuperscript{68}

The initial mode of transport of illicit drugs through the West African coast was through container vessels and private cruisers. The drug dealer has however changed its modus operandi due to the intensified coastal security checks by West African countries and their Western partners. The traffickers resorted to using air routes to supply their drugs. The traffickers are able to acquire used airplanes relatively inexpensively as well as willing pilots to ferry their shipments through porous routes in West African countries. The poor national radar systems in West Africa allows these airplanes to fly undetected through their pre-planned routes.\textsuperscript{69} The illegal drugs are then re-packaged and transported to the European markets through “drug mules” or “human vessels” who swallow pellets of cocaine usually folded into condoms and go aboard commercial airplanes and ships headed to Europe.\textsuperscript{70} An increasing number of airplanes carrying narcotics through West African routes have been captured between 2007 and 2008.\textsuperscript{71} Shipment of drugs via the ocean route from South
America across the Atlantic towards the West African transit points has increased. The drugs are normally amassed until such a time that they are re-packaged as described for movement toward the European and American markets via the traditional methods.  

America’s crackdown on drug trafficking through intensified border campaigns under the aegis of war on drugs has severally hampered the Mexican cartel’s ability to reach the American markets with their illicit drugs. The crackdown subsequently forced the drug barons to branch out to use the West African coast as a transit point. This situation has however brought Mexican dealers in conflict with the Colombian drug cartels who are gradually been pushed out of the American and European markets with the resurgence of the Mexican cartels. This coupled with the arrest of the Colombian’s main controller of the trafficking routes has resulted in large losses to the cartels.

The preferred embarkation points for drug lords are in Brazil and Venezuela before onward shipment through the West Africa Coast to the West. The already discussed termination of work by the DEA in Venezuela coincided with a rise in shipment of drugs from Venezuela and Brazil en route to West Africa.

2.10 Economics of the Drug Trade in West Africa

The proceeds of the drug trade permeate every facet of the economy in the affected countries. The vulnerable nature of the economies of the majority in West Africa makes African states prone to influence from the huge profits from the illegal drugs trade. Most researchers are of the view that the value of drug money which is channelled to the sub-region exceeds the national income of some West African States. For a country as poor as Guinea-Bissau, the trade in cocaine is about US$ 2 billion a year, which is almost twice the Guinea-Bissau GDP. Compared globally, the value of the drugs transiting through the region is small. In European cities, for instance, the value could be as high as US$ 20 billion. Because this type
of international trade deals with billions of dollars, criminal activities increase and tend to be more violent.\textsuperscript{76}

This has however been increasing since 2004.\textsuperscript{77} The street value of the drug seized for just the initial nine months of 2007 was a record US$ 480 million, representing a 50\% rise from the previous year. In 2009, drug seizures in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau alone accounted for 90\% of the entire drug seizure for the whole of Africa for the same period.\textsuperscript{78} This however may paint the picture that drug barons do not use the shores of other West African nations as transit points. Meanwhile, this increase could be due to poor or complacent law enforcement agencies. Recorded figures for the quantity of cocaine seized between 2001 – 2007 rapidly rose from 273 kilogrammes to 47,000 kilogrammes. A small percentage of the value of these drugs finds its way into the economies of these African countries. The drug gangs who conduct the trafficking generate a large amount of income from their activities. It is believed that West African drug barons made revenues of between $1.8 and $2.8 billion in cocaine sales only in 2009.\textsuperscript{79}

The region’s growing drug production business is also estimated to generate a large amount of income. Estimates from the year 2010, indicate that over 3,000 drug mules carrying methamphetamine produced on the continent made the journey from West Africa to Asia. The value of the drugs was an estimated US$360 million. Most of the income from the drugs produced on the continent finds its way back to the sub-region. Some of the drugs also go to satisfy African markets of which South Africa is the biggest consumer.\textsuperscript{80}

One of the major financial threats of drug trafficking is money laundering. The increasing volumes of drugs trafficked through the region comes with increasing sums of money which need to be “cleaned”. The drug traffickers launder their monies in West African countries such Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. These countries are chosen by the drug traffickers mainly
due to the size of their economy, which allows the traffickers to assess secondary services such as legal or accounting advice.

The drug revenues are often raised from several avenues such as local manufacturing of drugs, the sale of trafficked drugs produced elsewhere, remittance of the proceeds of drugs sold outside the region, revenue from drug mules. Additional revenue is often derived from ancillary activities linked to the core business of drug trafficking such as fake identity providers, recruiters and drug re-packaging. In a bid to circumvent detection, drug traffickers employ several complicated means. These include using lawyers, shell companies, cash carriers and foreign exchange bureaux. They also launder the money through more conventional means such as casinos, buying real estate as well as hotels. West Africa’s economy is also set up as a mostly cash-based economy, creating an avenue for the drug traffickers to launder their money. Cash injection through smaller economies occurs as well. For instance, cash injection from drug trafficking into the relatively small economy of Guinea-Bissau pushed their foreign exchange reserves up from US$33 million to $174 million between 2003 and 2008. Although that period witnessed a drop in foreign direct investment and donor assistance. An unexpected rise in the value of the Gambia’s currency in 2007 which was not backed by data on capital inflows was attributed to cash from the narcotics trade by The Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA).

The revenue from drug money has been known to cover all the negative effects of stagnant economies. Drug money has been associated with an upsurge in development, construction works and job creation in many developing countries. Some of the drug traffickers also buy high-cost items such as houses, cars… and thereby inject much needed cash directly into the economy. Some researcher however cast doubts on the benefit of these monies to the
economies. It is argued that much of this same money leaves the economy once it has been pumped into it.\textsuperscript{83}

There are anecdotes of people backed by “drug money” capturing and cornering markets and thereby forcing out small genuine business owners in some West African countries.\textsuperscript{84} Entire banking sectors have been placed in a precarious position where they have been tempted to accept drug money. This exposes them to prosecution and puts them in danger of going out of business should these monies be withdrawn suddenly. Other financial institutions such the insurance agencies, credit unions among others also face these issues.

2.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, perspectives of the use of narcotic drugs differ based on culture, religion and ethics. Although narcotics’ definition precludes cocaine, marijuana and amphetamines, it is legally expanded to include these categories of drugs. West Africa plays a key role in drug trafficking principally as a transit and repackaging hub. The region however has a burgeoning drug production sector. The West African coast has become prominent as a drug trafficking hub due to the advantageous geographical position of the countries, porous borders, corrupt officials and harsh socioeconomic conditions prevalent in most of these countries. The crackdown by the west on the old trafficking routes forced the drug cartels to seek out new routes and settled on using and expanding the old trafficking routes through the area as well as developing new channels. The change transformed drug trafficking in West Africa, which initially was a small-scale entrepreneurial trade to its current transnational major scale level. This upturn has resulted in an exponential growth in the profits from the drugs. These monies are in turn laundered in West African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. This artificial injection of cash into the economy is often to the detriment of small and genuine business owners and affects the nations negatively.
The next chapter will examine the linkage between drug trafficking, politics and the economy in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.
ENDNOTES


7. Ibid


13. Did


23. Africa is heroin's new highway to the West”. The Economist. 31 January 2019.


25. Ibid


30. Ibid


41 Ibid.


49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.


53 Ibid.


56 Ibid

57 Ibid.


61 Ibid.


69 UNODC 2007b, 11–12


Ibid


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.
CHAPTER THREE

EXAMINATION OF THE LINKAGE BETWEEN DRUGS, POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY OF GHANA AND GUINEA-BISSAU

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the linkage between Drugs, Politics and the Economy of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau as well as explore the measures put in place by the Governments of the respective countries.

3.1 Types of Drugs Trafficked in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

The major drugs trafficked through Ghana are cannabis, hashish oil, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, speedball and ephedrine.¹

Figure 3.1: Types of Drugs in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau
Source: Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)
Most of these drugs originate from outside the West African sub-region, although production of certain drugs has been recorded as already discussed. Ghana possesses a high production capacity for cannabis. The country has been ranked the second highest producer of cannabis in West Africa only behind Nigeria. The cannabis produced in Ghana is predominantly of high quality in the level of high delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol. The produced drugs feed a large domestic and foreign market. Cannabis was reportedly introduced by returning soldiers from Asia in the early 20th century. Earliest cultivation of the drug was in parts of the Eastern region for recreational use among the lower-class groups in the major cities.2

The production of cannabis in Ghana saw a major expansion between the 1960s and 1980s. Cultivation spread to other areas of the country including some towns in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions as well as the Afram plains. The Office of Generic Drugs (ODG) also reports that cultivation of narcotics started at the same period along the southern border of Ghana with Togo and in some areas of the north where drug policing is sub-optimal.3 There was also a more diverse demographic demand at the same time, spreading from the lower
class, to use among young members of the upper class, particularly those who had recently returned from studies abroad. Towards the latter stages of the 1970s, demand spread among the middle class. According to the Ghana Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), the cannabis market peaked after the 1980s with regular and infrequent use by over 15% percent of the population and an estimated export demand for half of the produced drugs in the country.

Heroin and cocaine are other drugs that Ghanaians are believed to be involved in.

![Figure 3.3 Types of Drugs in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau (Cocaine/Erythroxylon coca)](source)

As has already been mentioned, Ghanaians were initially involved in the heroin and cocaine trade as intermediaries for Nigerian drug syndicates. This role eventually evolved into Ghanaians serving as couriers thus, making Ghana a major transit and re-packaging hub. Ordinary Ghanaians are recruited as couriers for about $2,000 which represents a significant sum of money in the country. These couriers include both men and women with other West African nationals such as Nigerians and Guineans (See appendix 1). The use of some Ghanaian diaspora members as couriers is also a common tactic employed by the drug dealers.
These individuals are recruited as couriers and travel extensively between North America and certain parts of Europe.⁴

The main drugs trafficked in Guinea-Bissau according to the country’s main body in charge of drug enforcement (Les Services Spéciaux de la Lutte Anti Drogue) are cocaine, heroin, Valium, cannabis and hashish.⁵ One of the earliest reports of Guinea-Bissau being used as a transit point for narcotic drugs was in 2005 when a number of foreigners, including some Latin Americans, were arrested on an island within the Bijagos archipelago of the country. Since then, the volume of narcotic drugs transiting through the country has increased exponentially although some writers believe that widely estimated figures may have been exaggerated.⁶ The pervasive nature of the drug trafficking business through the Guinea-Bissau society led to the United Nations and the United States openly accusing some Guinean military officials of involvement with the drug trade.⁷

Guinea-Bissau’s rise as a pivotal player in the West African narcotics trade coincides with the year which proved the most statistically prolific year (2005) in terms of drug trafficking in the West African region. In the West African context, the peak of the shipment of cocaine estimated yearly alone reaches about 50 tonnes, having a wholesale value in Europe of roughly US$2 billion.⁸

Logistically, Guinea-Bissau is a key entry point for the bulk of cocaine which comes from South America. Most of these drugs are brought into the sub-region through the use of large commercial fishing, freight ships or private jets. These ships rendezvous with African vessels on the sea usually with a Latin American “overseer”. These African vessels then proceed towards the north. Some of the African collaborators are paid with a small quantity of drugs which also find their way to Europe through local drug syndicates. The local syndicates often employ the use of drug mules who board commercial flights to Europe.⁹
3.2 Drug Consumption in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

The most consumed imported drugs in Ghana are cocaine and heroin although synthetic drug use is also known to happen. The main synthetic drugs used in the country include mandrax and amphetamines. Although impossible to quantify, drug use in the urban areas of Ghana is reportedly on the rise. The access to these imported drugs is mainly blamed on a spill over of the trafficked drugs as they transit through the country. The use of these drugs is dated back to the mid-19th century and has kept on increasing with the quantity of drugs which transit through the country.\textsuperscript{10}

Production of crack cocaine has been reportedly made locally in Ghana since the 1990s. The origins of this have been traced back to a local drug baron who was imprisoned in April 1993. During this time, there were occasional raids of so-called “cocaine kitchens” where the drugs were processed in Kumasi.

Cocaine and heroin usage in Ghana are normally as an additive to marijuana or tobacco which is then smoked. This is locally termed as goju or “African karate”. Injection of the drugs is the least favoured method of usage.

The relative prohibitive cost of heroin restricts its usage to the upper and well-to-do class of the Ghanaian society. Marijuana is more widely preferred due to its relative cost. Usage of heroin among the wealthy in Ghana is normally ascribed to an acquired habit with those who have travelled to Europe and America. According to Bernstein, heroin usage in Ghana is more common among returnees and the drug traffickers who are often addicts themselves. The gender skewness often linked to marijuana users is less visible among users of heroin and cocaine in Ghana.

Cocaine and heroin have also sometimes been marketed to fishermen as a more potent alternative to their usual “performance enhancing” drug of choice which is mainly marijuana.
Anecdotes of similar instances suggest that certain people may have been convinced to buy and use cocaine and heroin without being fully aware of what exactly they were purchasing or using.

3.3 Main Actors within the Drug Trafficking Networks

Drug traffickers employ the services of a quasi-professional network for protection to ensure their operations go on unhindered. Normally these protection networks evolve to take up prime roles in the drug trafficking business as they grow tired of merely providing safe passage for a fee.

The trafficking of narcotic drugs in Guinea-Bissau is believed to be hinged on a network developed between the political elite and collaborators in the military. Due to the aforementioned strategic positioning of the country vis-à-vis the transatlantic drug trade, a potent network of competing interest offering protection grew around the increasing flow of illicit narcotics primarily from Latin America. It has been postulated based on this, that the quest to source easily attainable finances outside the harsh Guinea-Bissau economy gave rise to a corroding effect which gradually corrupted and criminalised other state institutions and people within the political establishment. The development of the association between the political and military elite can be traced back to the aftermath of the 1998-1999 civil war. The tension between these two groups after the civil war forced the construction of a symbiotic relationship between certain members who sought allies from the competing camps. These flirtations of politics and the military, although in violation of the 1993 Guinea-Bissau constitution, coalesced around the illicit trafficking of narcotics. A prime example of this is the so-called “elite group”. This group draws its members from the political and military elite and are reportedly heavily involved in the narcotics business. Recently however, the group
has been rocked by internal strife due to varying interest from members competing for control of the organization.

This somewhat unique development of the drug trafficking network presents a distinctive set of three actors to the trade. The most pivotal actors are the Latin American drug trafficking syndicate. In spite of the decisive role of the drug traffickers in the development of the Guinea-Bissau trafficking economy, the syndicate was clearly unable to build up a network on its own. The syndicate rather founded a fertile environment where their local collaborators set themselves up quite efficiently to take advantage of the trade. The Latin American drug organizations relied heavily on these local collaborators who were primarily made up of entrepreneurs who may have had previous dealings with these drug trafficking groups in Europe or Latin America. These entrepreneurs were those who had effective ties with the political establishment in the country. The third group is the previously discussed pivotal politico-Military elite. The quest to find external sources of cash drove this group into the drug trafficking business. A key figure in this was former president of the country, João Bernardo ‘Nino’ Vieira who ruled for a total of nineteen (19) years spanning three presidential terms.¹³

The success of the illicit trade of drugs in the Guinea-Bissau boils down to a close relationship between these three key actors. Despite the extensive impact of drug trafficking in the country, it is obvious the trade is controlled by a few connected people who basically run the country. The potential enormous profits of the trade have been a key driving force which has strained already delicate relationships between groups and caused organizational divisions in the country.¹⁴

Prior to the rise of the drug trafficking economy of the country, the 1998 - 1999 civil war laid the roots for the success of the trade. The civil war has been partly blamed on a clash between
competing interests within the political and military establishment who wanted to create other sources of income and saw the trafficking of weapons for money to pro-autonomy fighters in the region of Casamance over the border with Senegal as a great opportunity to pursue this end.\textsuperscript{15} The short but brutal civil war provided the Guinea-Bissau elite with a great opportunity to generate badly needed funds to support political campaigns and lavish life-styles.

Several parallels can be drawn between the system of actors within the drug trafficking economy of both Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. The antecedent conditions of harsh economic circumstances, advantageous geographical position and a vulnerable state apparatus are also evident in the environment leading up to the rise of the drug trafficking economy of Ghana. The Politico-Military nexus facilitating the drug trafficking economy of Guinea-Bissau is more amorphous in Ghana although there are anecdotes of a higher involvement among the entire security apparatus of Ghana as opposed to the Military centric issue occurring in Guinea-Bissau.

According Dr. Vladimir Antwi-Danso, the Dean of the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFCSC), the primary driving factor behind the drug trafficking economy in Ghana is the high level of corruption. A second factor is what he calls the monetisation of politics and the culture of worshipping richness, “bigmanness”. In his assessment, the monetisation of politics and its subsequent corruption of the society have led to the situation where these so called “big men” are adored. This therefore allows them to pave their ways through everything because the society is corrupt. The weak institutions in Ghana allow them to operate without being caught. They know that the weakness comes from corruption and the monetisation of politics.\textsuperscript{16}

An interview with Douglas Akaligaung, a Foreign Service Officer, revealed that Naa Ayele, a convicted drug trafficker, could have possibly been under possible surveillance in order to
unravel her entire drug trafficking syndicate. There were reports which indicated that there had been other incidents in which she was allowed to go but it was in this particular incident that she was apprehended. What this case seems to suggest is that these drug traffickers are able to compromise security officers to have their ways around the law which prohibits people from carrying these illicit drugs.\textsuperscript{17}

The primary actors in the drug trafficking economy of Ghana also reveal three key players similar to the case of Guinea-Bissau. First are the Latin America drug organizations. These drug organizations are aided by their local collaborators made up of “drug barons” and the complacent individuals within the security services and political circles. Whereas there exist a clear link between the Latin American drug traffickers and the Politico-Military elite in the case of Guinea-Bissau, a similar link between the Latin American syndicate and the politico-military establishment is more difficult to prove in Ghana. Security officers are seen to be facilitators, therefore are key actors in the drug economy of Ghana. The drug traffickers themselves constitute another key actor with their network of couriers. It’s a value chain, with a network of other people who may be involved in this situation but are not yet known.\textsuperscript{18}

Drug traffickers collaborate effectively in Ghana. There have several instances in which cocaine has either vanished or been substituted for other substances with collaboration of police personnel. The Kofi Boakye cocaine tape scandal is a perfect example. In a secretly recorded conversation at his house, the then Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), and now Commissioner of Police Kofi Boakye bragged that he raided the MV Benjamin, a ship, entering Ghanaian waters with cocaine in 2006 with his men and stole the cocaine. Information on the tape further affirmed that ACP Boakye was asked to monitor “sort out” the owners of the consignments, should they look difficult.
According to the Georgina Wood Committee Report of 21st April, 2006, the appropriate security and law enforcement authorities had also gathered that the said vessel was entering Ghanaian waters with a shipment of cocaine. However, the officials failed to seize the cocaine. Seventy six parcels of a total of 77 cocaine parcels seized subsequently disappeared and the vessel was set ablaze. The Chief Justice Georgina Wood Commission of Inquiry which was later set up by the government carried out an investigation and implicated groups of individuals including three (3) of the vessel’s crewmembers as having assisted the importers and owners of the consignment and also discovered from the tape other acts of corruption, abuse of office, professional misconduct and unsatisfactory service on the part of ACP Boakye. The Commission then recommended that ACP Boakye and his accomplices be arrested and prosecuted. In response to the Commission’s recommendation, the Government arrested and prosecuted some of the suspects. The most notable exception was ACP Boakye. He was instead given a leave. Kofi Boakye’s tape is an example of the fact that cocaine dealers know themselves and collaborate.¹⁹

3.4 The Transit of Drugs through Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

Although the West African coastline has been used for decades as a transit point for drugs, its role in the contemporary drugs trade became very apparent in 2004 when several reports outlined the key level of assistance provided by certain players to the drug traffickers in the sub-region.²⁰ The exact volume and subsequent value of drugs making its way annually through the sub-region varies widely depending on the reporting organization. Current figures estimate that annual cocaine shipment through the sub-region varies from 50 tonnes to a high of 250 tonnes. These figures provide wholesale revenue of between 3-14 billion dollars annually.²¹
It is widely thought that about half of cocaine heading to other destinations aside the United States passes through the West African region. This accounts for thirteen percent (13%) of worldwide cocaine flow. Much of this, accounting for 80% of all shipments, enters the sub-region via the sea often in several dozen ships. The remaining 20% are brought in by air via illicit aircrafts.

Cocaine headed for Europe and America transit through Ghana from South America. The difficulty in trafficking drugs coupled with advanced detection methods compel the drug dealers to conceal their exact routes which keep on evolving. It is brought into the country and repackaged for couriers to transport onwards, concealed in various ways. This includes swallowing or concealing them in local products and sent out to their final destinations.

According to the Narcotics Control Board of Ghana (NACOB), the heroin transiting through Ghana comes from the Far East. There are two (2) main sources, the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent. The Golden Triangle is made up of Burma, Laos, and Thailand. The Golden Crescent is Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. These are the main centres of opium, poppy, and the raw materials that produce heroin.
These drugs are produced in large quantities in those countries and find their ways to the West. Cocaine comes from the west to the east and poppy comes from the east to the west. Africa is often seen in this trafficking as a common ground of exchange as these drugs transit to their final destination.

According to data by NACOB, heroin is most often seized on flights from South Africa and Ethiopia. These airlines appear to be the airlines of choice of the traffickers. This can be attributed to the common routes used by the airlines. A number of arrests have also been made on flights from Morocco (Air Maroc).

Another detected air route is through Central Africa (from Nairobi, Kigali to Accra). Although these areas are not known for the production of narcotics, the drug traffickers use them to move their drugs from the Far East to South Africa. The Drugs are channelled not only through Ethiopia or South African Airways, but also through Kenyan and Rwandan airlines. Ghana is therefore used as a transit point to send their goods from one side to the other.
Other alternative routes exist in transporting drugs. Apart from the triangular traffic (South America-west Africa- Europe), there is the North-South routes between Ghana and Mali; there is a lot of trafficking Ghana-Mali-Niger all the way to Libya and Algeria, which is the northern route.

As already mentioned, when these drugs get to Ghana for re-packaging and onward shipment, some of the local collaborators are paid for their services with a quantity of the drugs.

Figure 3.5: Heroin in a Briefcase
Source: Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)
Couriers and mules then move these drugs to their final destinations. The couriers preferred mode of concealment of the drugs is via swallowing or putting it in a briefcase. When they swallow and successfully land without being arrested, they start taking in liquid which pushes the pellets down. They then go to the washrooms to take them out. Due to that, it is observed that they normally don’t take anything on board.
Figure 3.7: Cocaine Pellets from the Stomach of a dead drug trafficker
Source: Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)

Figure 3.8: Drug pellets with solution tape removed from the stomach of the dead trafficker
Source: Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)
Aside the local syndicates awarding these illegal drugs to mules for transhipment to Europe, some spill over into the country. This therefore causes what is known as the spill over effect. Once the drugs have been brought from South America to Ghana, re-packaged and shipped to the final destination, some are left in the country and people begin to consume. According to NACOB as they consume, they do develop ‘dependency’ and become addicted to drugs.
The routes used by the drug syndicates to Ghana are similar routes employed by the syndicates to reach Guinea-Bissau. Cocaine from the Andes and heroin from the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent use the Northern hub of West Africa, consisting of Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, The Gambia, and Senegal as a source of ingress.

The airline industry in Guinea-Bissau appears not to be developed as compared to that of Ghana. Therefore, drug traffickers in Bissau resort to other means than the use of airlines. The commercial air links to the preferred destination markets of the drugs are thus unavailable in Guinea-Bissau. As has been discussed already, the drugs that enter Guinea-Bissau via the air routes utilise small air crafts which land in illegal airstrips. Therefore, after the drugs have entered the country mainly through the Coast with a small fraction by the air, they are re-packaged and dispatched via couriers and mules. These couriers make the relatively easy journey from Guinea-Bissau to Dakar (Senegal) or Conakry (Guinea) and are dispatched by commercial airlines towards their final destinations. Bamako (Mali) has also emerged as a preferred departure hub for re-packaged drugs heading for Europe and North America from Guinea-Bissau.
A recently observed trend shows a shift from cocaine to methamphetamine (Meth) because it came to light that 1kg of methamphetamine in the Far East is about $120,000, which is more expensive than cocaine. And the amount used to produce 1kg of cocaine is more than the amount used to produce 1kg of methamphetamine. This shift has caused the drug traffickers to go into methamphetamine to gain more profit.26

Figure 3.11: Disfigured face after Methamphetamine ingestion
Source: Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)

Figure 3.12: Destruction of the teeth and gum due to methamphetamine ingestion
Source: Narcotics Control Board (NACOB)
Governmental official figures for drugs transiting through Ghana and Guinea-Bissau vary extensively from figures reported by other organizations. These differences can be attributed to the fact that the governmental figures are computed based on drug seizures made whiles the other figures are broad estimations made.

NACOB reports that a total volume of 8,241.44 kg of cannabis was trafficked through Ghana between 2016 - 2018. The highest quantity was recorded in 2017 when 4,672.84 kg was trafficked through the country. The total volume of cocaine moved through Ghana for the same period was 42.21 kg with the highest of 29.47 kg recorded in 2018. A total of 1.45 kg of heroin was trafficked through Ghana in 2016. There are no recorded values for heroin in the other years. A total of 49.955 kg, 24.27 kg and 25 kg were recorded respectively for methamphetamine, speedball and ephedrine between 2016 - 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weight (Kg) Of Narcotic Drugs Trafficked Through Ghana</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>Hashish Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,011.25</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4,672.84</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,557.35</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,241.44</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Narcotic Control Board of Ghana

Official figures derived for Guinea-Bissau from the country’s main body in charge of drug enforcement (Les Services Spéciaux de la Lutte Anti Drogue) indicate that the main drug moved through the country is cocaine (Table Guinea). The figures show that between 2016 - 2018, the highest figure for trafficked cocaine through Guinea-Bissau was recorded in 2018 (3,729.8 kg). The values recorded for 2016 and 2017 were 2,227.1 kg and 2,360 kg respectively. The figures also show that a total quantity of 8,316.9 kg of cannabis was trafficked through Guinea-Bissau between 2016 - 2018. The highest quantity was recorded in 2018 when 3,729.8 kg was trafficked through the country.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weight (Kg) Of Narcotic Drugs Trafficked Through Guinea-Bissau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cannabis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>3729.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2227.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8316.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Value of trafficked Drugs through Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

According to figures provided by NACOB, the street value for cannabis is $19 - $56 per kilogram depending on the grade or quality while the price in Accra ranges between $93 - $185 per kilogram. In terms of cocaine, the street value ranges between $15,000-$25,000 per kilogram depending on availability. The street value of heroin is between $ 20,000- $40,000 per kilogram also depending on availability.27

3.6 The Nexus between Drugs and Politics

The drug dealers are aided in their bid by what appears to be highly influential people with the economic muscle to have their way through, being able to infiltrate the various security agencies in order to compromise the institutions and bend the rules. Buttressing this point is the case of convicted drug trafficker, Naa Ayele, who was able to find her way through from the Kotoka International Airport despite the presence of scanners and security checks only to be apprehended in England.28

Another real threat posed by the drug trade is the corrupting influence on state institutions. These institutions are often the ones charged with curbing the menace. The large proceeds of the trade enable the drug dealers to pay bribes, fund political campaigns and make campaign contributions. There are other instances where suspected drug dealers have run successfully for political office using the profits of their illegal activities. Notable figures in Ghana such as renowned academic, Dr. Kwesi Aning, and the former Director of the Ghanaian Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), Yaw Akrasi, have been publicly critical of the drug trade proceeds.
used to finance political campaigns. Several writers such as Moisés Naím are of the opinion that in places where drug profits abound, it is practically a given that corruption and official complicity will be rampant, often involving people holding very high office. The astronomical profits often made from the drug trade juxtaposed with the relatively meagre salaries governments in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau pay and the other legitimate sources of income available for people from these countries suggest a greater potential for illicit influence.

In African countries such as Ghana and Guinea-Bissau, it is a widely held opinion that the drug traffickers often have influences on politicians in order to continue with their activities. The question is always about the severity of the influence and how far up it may go. The drug traffickers often seek to corrupt different levels of government officials. This may include governmental officials lower down the authority ladder such as clerks right through to security services personnel, ministers and judicial officials and may go as far as members of parliament and the presidency in some instances. An instance of this systematic form of corruption in Ghana is the case of a dozen agents of the Ghana Narcotics Control Board who were arrested and charged with aiding drug traffickers in moving their drugs through Ghana. The arrested individuals admitted that they took $1,500 per kg of cocaine to enable passage through Ghana’s main airport, the Kotoka International Airport. The case against these individuals was however thrown out by an Accra circuit court.

There exist a substantial body of reports and anecdotes on the links between politics and drug traffickers in Ghana. Dr. Vladimir Antwi – Danso asserts that the main actors are “serious barons”. According to him, the incarceration of the former Member of Parliament and traditional chief for the Nkoranzah South District, Eric Amoateng, in November 2005 by the U.S. security officers for indulging in drug trafficking could be a best example. He further noted that, Amoateng and his accomplice, Nii Okai Adjei, were both arrested in New York.
for possessing 136.4 pounds of heroin with a street value of more than USD 6 million. He proceeded further that, the drugs were apparently hidden in “…a cargo shipment consisting of seven crates that arrived at Newark International Airport in Newark, New Jersey, from Great Britain…” Both Amoateng and Okai Adjei were charged with conspiracy to distribute heroin in the U.S. and arraigned before Court in Brooklyn, New York. Amoateng was sentenced to a minimal prison term of “120 months, with five years’ supervised release…” in a US district court in Brooklyn, New York after a plea bargain in March 2007. Subsequent public inquiries into this case revealed deep penetration of Ghana’s political elite by drug trafficking networks.

Another example, according to Dr. Antwi-Danso, is the previously mentioned cocaine case of Naa Ayele. In her defence in London during her trial, she gave evidence to the effect that “big men” and politicians backed her in Ghana. These mid-tier drug barons often recruit couriers, who are often the ones arrested. For instance, thirteen (13) students from three (3) universities in Ghana, including the University of Ghana were arrested in London. A mid-tier drug baron such as Naa Ayele was a dealer and a courier. She was carrying twelve (12) kg of cocaine when she got arrested. The couriers, however, only carry small quantities (3/4 kg).

There is also the speculation that even diplomats are involved, only that there is a lack of clear evidence linking any diplomat to the act. When a diplomat is a suspected drug dealer, it is often difficult to hold them to accountability because they have diplomatic immunity. All what states can do is to ask for the immunity to be waved for the diplomat in question to be tried in the host state. A typical example of this is the case of Frank Benneh. He was a Minister Counsellor at Ghana’s Embassy in Switzerland when he was arrested for alleged trafficking in cocaine. He was sent back to Ghana to be tried, convicted and sentenced to twenty (20) years in prison in 1999.
The suspicious ability of certain political players to raise huge amounts of money for political activities often raises questions as to the sources of these funds. This raises the question of who may be providing these politicians with the financial assistance, it is likely to be the drug barons, who may want to compromise these politicians or use the system to their parochial interest.\(^{35}\) However, as has been stated, the nexus between the political elite and the drug traffickers remains difficult to establish in Ghana. In spite of these, certain cases seem to point to an obvious drug-politics nexus. The suggestion is that drug money helps to fuel politics in Ghana and evidence from the mentioned instances appear to corroborate this. There is an intrinsic nexus, a belief between drug and politics in Ghana. Secondly, the reported instances where impounded drugs were able to disappear from police strongholds indicates a high level of complicity by politicians as well as the structures of politics (institutions).\(^{36}\)

The form of corruption employed at higher levels involves interfering with the enforcement of laws and laid down measures from outside an office or may involve the alteration of laws and regulations themselves.\(^{37}\) High level politicians complacent in drug trade are often called into action when large shipment of drugs is being moved. These shipments often require a high level of complicity and call for a greater level of protection. This high profit of such shipment makes it easier to pay for the protection required in these instances.\(^{38}\)

Normally, the form of corruption involves principal-agent transactions where drug dealers act as the principals with corrupt government officials playing the role of agents who facilitate the dealings of the drug dealers in exchange for payment. However, the level of corruption and the state of complicity of the officials may be so far reaching that such cases are considered as infiltration. In the particular case of Guinea-Bissau, the reported level of infiltration is so high that certain organizations such as the Drug Enforcement Administration consider these government agents to be drug traffickers themselves.
Infiltration characterises the more malicious form of the drug trade as interests of these unlawful organizations exert a high level of control over broad aspects of governance in these countries. Studies completed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) found evidence of people in high office who are complacent in the drug trade, particularly in Parliament and the Ministry of Transport in Ghana.\(^{39}\)

Another emerging trend is the involvement of relatives of family of politicians in the drug trade. News reports in Ghana indicated that a brother-in-law of the current President of Ghana called Raymond Amankwah, was apprehended in Brazil in 2008 for drug trafficking.\(^{40}\)

The gradual intrusion of drug money into the political organization of these countries poses a threat to the relatively fragile and emerging democracy of the nations. Drug proceeds coupled with violence and intimidation result in a systematic drifting away from rules and laws. The intrusion also breaks down public institutions and results in stagnated growth. The corrupt networks which develop to aid the processes of drug trafficking cause a state of uncertainty as to how far these networks go and those who may be involved. This may sometimes result in a breakdown of service delivery and cause public disaffection and cynicism.

### 3.7 The Effects of Drug Trafficking on Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

The multifaceted threats posed by drug trafficking to the security, stability and economy of the two countries are far reaching and interlinked. The stability and security of countries may be threatened when rival drug factions jostle for control. The proceeds from the drug trafficking have also often been linked to money used to finance extremist groups and other violent actors. The corrupting effect of drug trafficking weakens security institutions in West Africa and contributes to the gradual erosion of the democratic principles of a nation.

The threat posed by these nefarious activities is clearly illustrated by the situation in Guinea-Bissau. The political class of Guinea-Bissau has been reported to have fought over control of
the drug market. The trafficking trade has also been linked to the 2009 double assassination of President Joao Bernardo Nino Vieira and Chief of Defence Staff, General Batista Tagame Na Wai.\textsuperscript{41} The attempted coup in 2011 by the well-known drug kingpin and former Navy boss, Bubo Na Tchuto was also linked strongly to the drug trade.\textsuperscript{42} The instability in Guinea-Bissau is different from what is known in other countries because it is not borne out of strife between the government and a non-state actor but rather a struggle between senior government figures for control of the lucrative drug trade.

Another threat posed by drug trafficking is its link to ancillary illegalities such as human trafficking, arms trafficking, vehicle theft and black-market minerals trade. The logistics employed for the drug trade can easily be employed towards facilitating these other crimes.\textsuperscript{43} The duty of gathering and coordinating logistics for the drug trade is mainly left to Africa collaborators who function as “fixers”. These people are often charged with arranging personnel and transport logistics to facilitate the movement and storing of these drugs.

Para-Military and insurgent groups functioning in the drug producing countries such the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are known to use the drug trafficking routes in West African countries such as Ghana and Guinea-Bissau to traffic drugs in a bid to finance their activities. A similar case occurred in 2011 when five (5) people were apprehended in Liberia with the help of the American Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Upon interrogation, these individuals disclose that they were tasked by people believed to represent FARC, to store large quantities of heroin from Afghanistan in Benin and then move them to Ghana where they would have been trafficked via commercial airlines to the US. Some of them also agreed to sell large quantities of cocaine and weapons to undercover agents.\textsuperscript{44}
The level of violence linked to the drug trade in Latin America has not yet been seen in West Africa. The West African drug trafficking organizations seldom use violence as they face relatively little opposition to their activities. However, there have been reported incidence of attacks on people opposed to the drug trade in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. In reaction to a recent spate of assassinations that had plagued the country in 2007, the then presidential candidate of Ghana Prof. Atta-Mills alluded to an association between the murders and the drug trade by claiming that the large finances from the trade permitted these barons to buy anything and anyone including “contract killers”.

A key challenge to addressing the drug trafficking menace is the gifts and philanthropic works often provided by the drug traffickers to the local populations in Africa. Drug traffickers employ this mechanism to protect consumer markets or to ease their movement. These gifts and philanthropic works endeared the drug traffickers to the general populace. This increases the acceptance of the drug trade by the locals thereby undermining efforts to stem the tide of the trade. Such cases have been reported in Ghana, where some politicians linked to the drug trade pump money into their communities by providing public services and paying for people’s health fees and school fees. This enables them gain and retain the support of their communities. A clear example of this is a former Ghanaian Member of Parliament, Eric Amoateng, who was convicted of drug trafficking and sentenced to prison in the United States. Due to his high level of philanthropic works, it was widely believed that he would win elections had he stood from jail. This is a common occurrence in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau, where suspected drug dealing politicians provide gifts and money to people particularly in the runup to elections. This undermines measures to stop the drug trade in the communities.
3.8 Effects of Drug Trafficking on the Economies of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau

The profits made from the drug trade have huge repercussions for the economies of these relatively small West African nations. A study undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports that drug proceeds often represent close to 0.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of some African countries. The study also suggests that West African drug organizations can sometimes earn between $1.8 billion and $2.8 billion annually. The effect of drug trafficking on the economy is huge. According certain scholars, drug trafficking is the largest and arguably only export business in Guinea-Bissau. Foreign Direct Investment in the country ballooned from two million dollars to fourteen million dollars from 2004-2009. This figure was the equivalent of a fifth of all international aid to the country in 2005 and fourteen percent (14%) of Guinea-Bissau’s export. The values also exceeded all net incomes Guinea-Bissau earned from foreign investment by 280%. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that the quantity of drugs trafficked through Guinea-Bissau is valued at $2 billion annually, which is over four times bigger than the country’s GDP.

Although drug trafficking may appear to provide a lot of money to the economies of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau, it has severe medium to long term effects on the economy. A study conducted by the UNODC revealed that more than a quarter of the profits from cocaine sales is laundered abroad. The report suggested that although the proceeds of drug trafficking can initially boost investment and local businesses and the GDP of nations in the short term, it turns to have devastating long-term effects on the economies. Drug revenues may in the long term have an inflationary effect on commodities and properties rates. It may also distort export figures and result in uneven competition. Another long-term effect of the drug trade is that it promotes skewed income and the uneven distribution of wealth which may result in
higher corruption. This forces out lawful and legitimate business which may be unable to access the funds to compete with these organizations.

Some studies have linked the injection of laundered drug money into economies to reduce the overall annual economic growth rates in small and developing nations like Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. A study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shows that an increase of a billion US dollars in money-laundering could reduce overall economic growth by up to 0.03 and 0.06 percentage points.

Another effect of the drug trade has on the economies of the countries is lost taxes. Information sourced from an interview with Mr. Solomon Stanley Eyo of NACOB and Mr. Alfred Northey Dua, Clinical psychologist, indicate that the nation loses taxes during the activities of the drug dealers.

According to Dr. Vladimir Antwi-Danso of GAFCSC, although it may appear that the Ghanaian economy has been seriously monetised due to drug trafficking, the direct effects of the drug trade is an area which has not yet seen much research and would therefore require research to be conducted to adequately establish this link.52

3.9 States Intervention to Stop Drug Trafficking

The approach of the two governments in addressing the drug trade is similar. Measures formulated to address these issues revolve around the key tenants of demand reduction, supply reduction, development programmes related to the prevention or reduction of illicit crops, production or trafficking of drugs, control measures and money laundering.

Ghana has sought to strengthen the existing institutions who are charged with combating the drug trade. The main body in charge of tackling the drug trade in Ghana is NACOB. NACOB coordinates responses with key bodies such as (CEPS), Police Criminal Investigations Department, Immigrations and the Navy. The Guinea-Bissau equivalent of NACOB is Les
Services Spéciaux de la Lutte Anti Drogue who likewise coordinates responses to the Guinea-Bissau drug trade with other security agencies.

Both nations have also received immense support from foreign agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) of the United States, the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) of the United Kingdom, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Customs Organization (WCO). These international bodies provide logistics, technical support and finances needed to combat the drug trafficking.

Plans by the Government of Ghana to pass a bill that would seek to change the status of NACOB from a board to a commission is also intended to strengthen the State agencies in their fight against the narcotics trade. In 2017, the Minister of the Interior, Mr Ambrose Dery, announced that the ministry was in discussions with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to establish a sub-regional office in Ghana. This, he hoped, will provide the needed support to the local law enforcement agencies in their fight against the illicit drug trade. In April 2018, the AIRCOP, Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force (JAITF) was set up at Guinea-Bissau’s airport which has resulted in a number of arrests and cocaine seizures.

As part of ECOWAS protocols or arrangements, they work in collaboration with other national agencies in combating drug trafficking and ensuring a reduction of the incidences where drugs are brought into the sub-region. Ghana and Guinea-Bissau are both signatories to number of these protocols.

3.10 Challenges to Intervention to Stop Drug Trafficking

Due to the level of corruption within the two nations, it would be challenging to effectively combat drug trafficking without dedicated personnel. A major challenge is therefore getting officers who are committed to eliminating or reducing drug trafficking. Due to the lure of the
huge sums of money that these traffickers give to these individuals, it is imperative to continuously motivate them to guard against any compromises. Again, there is the need to engage in more monitoring and training for these officers at the frontline.

There is also the need for more external collaborations with other security agencies. A successful example of this was the Operation West Bridge where the United Kingdom and Ghana Anti-Drug Law enforcement agencies worked together to ensure close monitoring of the drug situation in the country. This is particularly necessary for a country like Guinea-Bissau, that some writers are of the opinion that they lack the institutional capacity or willingness to truly seek an end to drug trafficking.53

There is also the issue of countries who have signed unto the ECOWAS protocols but are failing to adhere to them due to one reason or the other. ECOWAS being a sub-regional body, may lack the authority to enforce these protocols. Funding for such anti-drug trafficking programmes is also another challenge for ECOWAS.

3.11 Conclusion

The main drugs trafficked through Ghana are cannabis, hashish oil, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, speedball and ephedrine. Similarly, the main drugs trafficked in Guinea-Bissau are cocaine, heroin, Valium, cannabis and hashish. The antecedent conditions of harsh economic circumstances, advantageous geographical position and a vulnerable state apparatus are also evident in the environment leading up to the rise of the drug trafficking economy of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. Most of these drugs originate from outside the West African sub-region. The main actors within the drug trade in both nations are in three groups made up of the Latin American drug organizations, local facilitators or fixers and complacent political/security officials. The large profits derived from the drug trade have a marked effect on the relatively fragile economies of both countries as elaborated above. There exist a large
body of stories and anecdotes which strongly suggest a nexus between politics and the drug trade. Measures have been put in place by both countries which are hinged on collaboration with foreign agencies to combat the drug trade but it is evident that a lot remains to be done.
ENDNOTE

1 Interview conducted with Mr Solomon S. Eyo of the Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) in Accra in April 2019.
4 Ibid
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28 Interview conducted with Mr Douglas Akaligaung of the Foreign Service in Accra in April 2019.
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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary of findings

The drug economies of both Ghana and Guinea-Bissau are quite similar. The common drugs trafficked through both countries are cannabis, cocaine, heroin and hashish. There is a large volume of cannabis trafficked through both countries primarily because a great chunk of it originates from the West African nations of Nigeria and Ghana. The antecedent conditions of harsh economic circumstances, advantageous geographical position and a vulnerable state apparatus are also evident in the environment leading up to the rise of the drug trafficking economy of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. The challenges both nations faced leading to their shared conditions of vulnerable state apparatus and harsh economic conditions however vary slightly. Whereas these conditions arose in Ghana mainly due to economic mismanagement and years of political instability, the Guinea-Bissau case came about due to a historically weak and unstructured economic system coupled with armed conflict during their brief but devastating civil war. Most of these drugs are brought into the sub-region through the use of large commercial fishing or freight ships. These ships rendezvous with African vessels on the sea usually with a Latin American “overseer”. These African vessels then proceed towards the north. The ship is mostly still owned by the Latin American drug organizations until the drugs are delivered in Europe. Some of the African collaborators are paid with a small quantity of drugs which also find their way to Europe through local drug syndicates. The local syndicates often employ the use of drug mules who board commercial flights to Europe. The mode of trafficking of the drugs after they’ve landed in West Africa largely remains similar for both countries, but the routes differ. After the drugs arrive in Ghana and are
repacked, drug mules carry them aboard commercial flights to their destinations in Europe and America. The situation differs however in Guinea-Bissau. Due to Bissau’s poorly developed aviation system, the re-packed drugs must be transported through ground routes to Gambia, Senegal or Mali before drug mules carry them to their final destinations using the relatively more developed aviation system in those nations. The main actors in the drug trafficking trade in Guinea-Bissau are principally three. The most pivotal actors are the Latin American drug trafficking syndicate. The second actors are local collaborators who were primarily made up of entrepreneurs who may have had previous dealings with these drug trafficking groups in Europe or Latin America. The third group is the politico-Military elite. The main actors in Ghana’s drug trade are similar to that of Guinea-Bissau. First are the Latin American drug organizations. The second actors are the local collaborators or the “drug barons”. The third group of actors in Ghana differ slightly from the third group of actors in Guinea-Bissau. In place of the Politico-Military elite who function as the third actors in Guinea-Bissau are the complacent security officials in Ghana.

Although there is a significant overlap of the role of politicians in the drug economies of both countries, the dominant role the politicians play in the drug trade for both countries vary slightly. In Guinea-Bissau, there is documented evidence of politicians providing the so-called protected channels and free passage for the movement of drugs and thereby functioning more prominently as the third actors. In Ghana, however, reports of a similar role for politicians remain anecdotal. What has been documented as the role of politicians in Ghana in the drug trade has been as the second actors or local collaborators. These people are the “drug barons” who may have entered politics as a means of facilitating their drug businesses.
The success of the drug trade in these countries can be narrowed down to the close collaboration between these three key actors to take advantage of the permitting environment presented by the countries.

NACOB reports that a total volume of 8,241.44 kg of cannabis was trafficked through Ghana between 2016 - 2018. The highest quantity was recorded in 2017 when 4,672.84 kg was trafficked through the country. The total volume of cocaine moved through Ghana for the same period was 42.21 kg with the highest of 29.47 kg recorded in 2018. A total of 1.45 kg of heroin was trafficked through Ghana in 2016. There are no recorded values for heroin in the other years. A total of 49.955 kg, 24.27 kg and 25 kg were recorded respectively for methamphetamine, speedball and ephedrine between 2016 - 2018.

Official figures derived for Guinea-Bissau from the country’s main body in charge of drug enforcement (Les Services Spéciaux de la Lutte Anti Drogue) indicate that the main drug moved through the country is cocaine (Table Guinea). The figures show that between 2016 – 2018, the highest figure for trafficked cocaine through Guinea-Bissau was recorded in 2018 (3,729.8 kg). Values recorded for 2016 and 2017 were 2,227.1 kg and 2,360 kg respectively. The figures also show that a total quantity of 8,316.9 kg of cannabis was trafficked through Guinea-Bissau between 2016 - 2018. The highest quantity was recorded in 2018 when 3,729.8 kg was trafficked through the country.

The drug dealers are aided in their bid by what appears to be highly influential people with the economic muscle to have their way through, being able to infiltrate the various security agencies in order to compromise the institutions and bend the rules. There is a strong body of reports and anecdotes which suggest a nexus between the drug traffickers and politicians in both countries. Normally, the form of corruption involves principal-agent transactions where drug dealers act as the principals with corrupt government officials playing the role of agents
who facilitate the dealings of the drug dealers in exchange for payment. Although there are instances particularly in Guinea-Bissau where the corrupt government officials have been classified as drug traffickers themselves.

The level of corruption and the state of complicity of the officials may be so far reaching that such cases are considered as infiltration. Infiltration characterises the more malicious form of the drug trade as interests of these unlawful organizations exert a high level of control over broad aspects of governance in these countries.

The multifaceted threats posed by drug trafficking to the security, stability and economy of the two countries are far reaching and interlinked.

A key challenge to addressing the drug trafficking menace is the gifts and philanthropic works often provided by the drug traffickers to the local populations in Africa.

Although drug trafficking may appear to provide a lot of money to the economies of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau, it has severe medium to long term effects on the economy. Research indicates that the drug revenues may in the long term have an inflationary effect on commodities and properties rates. It may also distort export figures and result in uneven competition. Another long-term effect of the drug trade is that it promotes skewed income and the uneven distribution of wealth which may result in higher corruption. This forces out lawful and legitimate business which may be unable to access the funds to compete with these organizations.

Some models also indicate a linkage between the injection of laundered drug money into economies to reduced overall annual economic growth rates in small and developing nations like Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. A study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shows that an increase in billions of U.S. dollars in money-laundering could reduce overall economic growth by up to 0.03 and 0.06 percentage
points. Although this study establishes that the drug trade impacts on the economies of both countries, it does not directly quantify these effects. A subsequent study may have to be conducted to ascertain this.

The approach of the two governments in addressing the drug trade is similar. Measures formulated to address these issues revolve around the key tenants of demand reduction, supply reduction, development programs related to the prevention or reduction of illicit crops, production or trafficking of drugs, control measures and money laundering.

Measures have been put in place by both countries which are hinged on collaboration with foreign agencies to combat the drug trade but it is evident that a lot remains to be done.

4.2 Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the conditions and dynamics of drug trafficking in West Africa. The study also sought to find out the main actors, know the form of collaboration among drug traffickers in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau and to determine the state of the drug-politics nexus in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau and its effects.

Through the interviews and document review, the antecedent conditions of harsh economic circumstances, advantageous geographical position and a vulnerable state apparatus were also seen as some evidence in the environment leading up to the rise of the drug trafficking economy of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. Most of these drugs originate from outside the West African sub-region.

It was also established that the main actors within the drug trade in both nations are in three groups made up of the Latin American drug organizations, local facilitators or fixers and complacent political/security officials. The large profits derived from the drug trade have a marked effect on the relatively fragile economies of both countries as elaborated above.
There exist a large body of stories and anecdotes which strongly suggest a nexus between politics and the drug trade. Measures have been put in place by both countries which are hinged on collaboration with foreign agencies to combat the drug trade, but it is evident that a lot remains to be done.

4.3 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations emanating from the research:

- It is recommended that governments of the two nations place emphasis on cross collaboration with other West African nations, particularly the ECOWAS group in order to effectively combat the drug trafficking menace.

- It is also recommended that both governments seek to strengthen the existing laws on drug trafficking by focussing on preventive measures. A regular assessment of the capacity of law enforcement agencies to respond effectively to the ever-evolving tactics of drug traffickers may also be conducted.

- The Education Department and the Demand Reduction Department of NACOB must be offered as much training and courses as well as logistics to enable it undertake effective Preventive Education Programmes.

- Staff of NACOB and officers of the relevant agencies must be well remunerated to prevent from falling prey to drug barons and drug traffickers.

- Finally, it is recommended that further research be conducted into the direct effects of the drug trade on the economy of Ghana to adequately establish this link and fully quantify this effect.
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Interview conducted with Mr. Douglas Akaligaung of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in Accra in April 2019.

Lecture notes and Interview conducted in Accra with Mr. Alfred Northey Dua, a Clinical psychologist, in April 2019.
Appendix

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GHANA AND GUINEA-BISSAU.

*The purpose of these questions is to obtain your opinion and views The Political Economy of Drug Trafficking in West Africa: A Comparative Study of Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. This is solely for an academic research as a further requirement for a post-graduate MA degree certification. Responses to the following questions will be treated with high confidentiality and solely for the purpose of the research.*

PART I

1. What is the state of narcotics trafficking in Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

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2. What are the main narcotic drugs trafficked through Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

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3. What is the volume of the various drugs trafficked through these countries per year?

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4. What is the street value of the drugs trafficked through these countries per year?

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5. What is the effect of the drug trafficking on the economy of Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

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6. What is the financial effect of drug trafficking on people in Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

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7. How are the violence, corruption and drug abuses affecting the productivity of the Ghana/Guinea-Bissau economy?

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8. How much is the country losing by being perceived internationally as the home of drug dealers and corrupted politicians?

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9. Through which routes are the drugs trafficked through Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

10. What are the factors behind the success of the traffickers through Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

11. Who are the main actors within the drug trafficking business in Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

12. What are the individual functions of the main actors within the drug trafficking business in Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?

13. What is the form of collaboration among drug traffickers in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau?
14. What is the state of the drug-politics nexus in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau and its effects?

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Part II

15. What is the status of the National anti-drug plan/strategy in Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?
   a. In force    □
   b. Drafted but pending approval □
   c. Being drafted □
   d. Expired □
   e. Does not exist □

16. Please indicate which of the following areas are covered by the National Plan/Strategy:

   Y       N
   □       □ Demand Reduction
   □       □ Supply Reduction
   □       □ Development programs related to the prevention or reduction of illicit crops, production or trafficking of drugs
   □       □ Control Measures
   □       □ Money laundering
   □       □ Program Evaluation
   □       □ Others (specify).................................................................
17. Which national entities are involved in executing the National Anti-Drug Plan/Strategy?

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PART III

18. Is your organization a central actor in state activities against drug trafficking?
   Yes    ☐
   No     ☐

19. If Yes, what interventions have you engaged in to curb drug trafficking in Ghana?
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20. Please indicate which of the following areas are covered by your organization’s anti-drug trafficking Plan/Strategy:

   Y       N
   ☐       ☐ Demand Reduction
   ☐       ☐ Supply Reduction
   ☐       ☐ Development programs related to the prevention or reduction of illicit crops, production or trafficking of drugs
   ☐       ☐ Control Measures
   ☐       ☐ Money laundering
   ☐       ☐ Program Evaluation
   ☐       ☐ Others (specify)........................................................................................................
21. Which national authorities are involved in the approval of your agency’s Anti-Drug Plan/Strategy?


22. Does your agency’s Anti-Drug Plan/Strategy conform to the national Anti-Drug Plan?


23. What is the process for approving your Anti-Drug Plan/Strategy?


24. What are the challenges to your role in curbing Drug trafficking in Ghana/Guinea-Bissau?


25. What are the prospects for success?


26. What are the measures put in place by ECOWAS to combat drug trafficking?

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27. What are successes of the measures put in place by ECOWAS to combat drug trafficking?

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28. What are challenges of the measures put in place by ECOWAS to combat drug trafficking?

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