

## Building a narco-state. The case of Guinea-Bissau

Micael Ramos Pereira

Master in International Studies

Supervisor:  
Doctor Pedro Nuno Alves Vidal de Seabra,  
Invited Assistant Professor,  
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

November, 2022

Department of History

Building a narco-state.  
The case of Guinea-Bissau

Micael Ramos Pereira

Master in International Studies

Supervisor:  
Doctor Pedro Nuno Alves Vidal de Seabra,  
Invited Assistant Professor,  
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

November, 2022

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to all Bissau-Guineans who dreamed, with Amílcar Cabral, of an independent and developed country that would meet the aspirations of all the people and not just a few.

It is also dedicated to Catarina, for her support and patience with me throughout my master's degree in International Studies.

I thank everyone who led me, directly and indirectly, to do this research. A word of thanks to Sophie, who invited me to Guinea-Bissau for the first time to participate in a workshop back in 2019, which was the founding moment for a working idea. A word of thanks to Carlos Isaac, my filming partner who accompanied me on my trips to the field and with whom I ended up producing a documentary in parallel.

Finally, I leave a special thanks to my supervisor, Pedro Seabra. He was with me in this project from the beginning and helped me to think about it. Pedro accompanied me in all the phases of its realization; without his care, this would not have been possible.

The field trips to Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, and Mexico, including Sinaloa, were only possible thanks to the grants I received from the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Pulitzer Center. To them, all my gratitude.

## RESUMO

Em 2007, a Guiné-Bissau foi rotulada de narco-estado, na sequência do envolvimento de militares na passagem de cocaína pelo país. Durante um certo período, de 2014 a 2018, com o afastamento do então chefe de Estado Maior António Indjai e a contenção dos militares nos quartéis, sem tomarem parte em golpes de Estado, o comércio ilegal de droga parecia ter sofrido um revés. No entanto, apreensões significativas de cocaína em 2019 e a crise política que se seguiu em 2020 devolveram alguma atenção ao tema. Com base em trabalho de campo, relatórios, acórdãos judiciais e entrevistas, esta dissertação analisa o que aconteceu depois de 2014 na relação entre o estado e o narcotráfico. Mostramos como o envolvimento, dentro do estado, com organizações criminosas internacionais se estendeu a actores civis inseridos no sistema político e no sistema de justiça. Tendo em conta estas conclusões, comparamos o uso do termo narco-estado em diferentes geografias. Mostramos que este pode ser aplicado à Guiné-Bissau se for considerada uma definição menos restrita desse rótulo. Embora o tráfico de droga não tenha tomado conta do Estado, nem influencie a maior parte das suas estruturas, a sua relação com altos membros do governo molda a forma como competem pelo poder e a forma como governam, contribuindo para retardar o desenvolvimento do país.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Guiné-Bissau; narco-estado; tráfico de droga; África Ocidental; fragilidade do estado

## ABSTRACT

In 2007 Guinea-Bissau was labeled as a narco-state, following the military involvement in the passage of cocaine through the country. For a certain period, from 2014 to 2018, with the ouster of then army chief António Indjai and the containment of the military in the barracks, without taking part in coups d'état, the illegal drug trade seemed to have a setback. However, the most significant seizures in 2019 and the ensuing political crisis in 2020 brought some attention to the topic again. Based on fieldwork, reports, court rulings, and interviews, this dissertation analysis what happened after 2014 in the relationship between the state and the illegal drug trade. We show how the engagement within the state with international criminal organizations extended to civilians embedded in politics and the justice system in those years. Considering these findings, we compare the use of the narco-state term in different geographies. We show that it can be applied to Guinea-Bissau if a less narrow definition of the label is deemed. Although drug trafficking has not taken over the state, nor does it influence most of its structures, its relationship with top government officials shapes how they compete to hold power, and the way they govern, stalling the country's development.

## KEYWORDS

Guinea-Bissau; narco-state; drug trafficking; West Africa; state fragility

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	5
<i>An overview of Guinea-Bissau's connection to drug trafficking</i>	
1.1 The narco-state label.....	5
1.2 Drug trade and seizure of power .....	8
1.3 Political infiltration and a cross-border quest.....	11
CHAPTER 2	14
<i>State fragility, state collapse, and illegal trade</i>	
2.1 Legacy and transition .....	14
2.3 The extreme case of Guinea-Bissau .....	18
2.4 The incorporation of illegal trade .....	20
CHAPTER 3	22
<i>Drug trafficking and its relation to the state between 2014 and 2020</i>	
3.1 The political context as of 2014 .....	22
3.2 Seizures, criminal investigations, and trials .....	26
3.3 The cocaine route that crosses Guinea-Bissau .....	30
3.4 Critical points in the judicial system and the security sector .....	34
3.5 The political crisis of 2020 .....	38
CHAPTER 4	41
<i>A comparative analysis of the use of the term narco-state</i>	
4.1 Mexico and other examples in Latin America of narco territories.....	41
4.2 The cases of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan .....	44
4.3 Mali, the Sahel, and the absence of the state.....	46
4.4 Capture of the state apparatus versus capture of key officials .....	47
CONCLUSION	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY	54
SOURCES	67

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
APU-PDGB	Assembly of the People United–Democratic Party of Guinea-Bissau
BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
CIFP	Carleton University’s Country Indicators for Foreign Policy
CPIA	World Bank’s Country Policy and Institutional Assessment for Africa
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Language Countries
DEA	US Drug Enforcement Administration
ECOMIB	ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
HDI	Human Development Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCG	Organised Crime Group
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PRS	Party for Social Renewal
MADEM-G15	Movement for a Democratic Alternative - Group of 15
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNIOGBIS	UN Office for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

## INTRODUCTION

There was a time when one of the world's poorest countries, Guinea-Bissau, was suddenly portrayed with a worrying label: that of the first narco-state in all of Africa. International cocaine trafficking cartels had infiltrated the state apparatus, particularly in the powerful spheres of the military. Latin American criminal networks had acquired protection for the passage of drugs to West Africa, destined for Europe. Also, they had associated themselves with terrorist groups in the Sahel. These alliances called into question the state's functioning, the country's future, and the region's security.

Beginning in 2007, the cocaine crisis in Guinea-Bissau attracted the interest of the media, researchers, and international institutions such as the United Nations. This interest was mainly lost from 2014 onwards when there was an apparent political stabilization, followed by an absence of significant drug seizures. The debate on the term's application to the country stopped shortly afterwards, in 2016. What happened after? Has the drug trade affected the state in recent years?

This dissertation explores how and why the relationship between the state and narco-trafficking in Guinea-Bissau evolved between 2014 and 2020. The update is justified by the fact that, after an extended period, 2019 saw the two most significant seizures ever in the country, bringing back some international attention. A political crisis followed in 2020 when the current president Umaro Sissoco Embaló forced a seizure of power backed by António Indjai, a former head of the armed forces. Indjai was the man behind what became known as the "cocaine coup" in 2012 and on whom the United States is offering a \$5 million reward for his capture.

Given this new reality, the underlined research question of this dissertation concerns whether or not it makes sense to apply the narco-state label to Guinea-Bissau. We analyze the extent of state capture achieved by drug trafficking organizations and how this differs or not from other countries that tend to fall under that same label. We demonstrate that critical elements come into play in how the illegal drug industry can influence the control of a state without interfering with many of its functions.

There are four parts to this dissertation. The first two chapters provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau and the role and performance of the state with a historical framework. The last two add new insights on the relation



between the state and international criminal networks in the period under review, while putting it in perspective against other countries also often characterized as narco-states.

The first chapter reviews academic work, official reports, and media coverage of drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau from 2007 to 2020. In the second chapter, we historically frame state functioning and robustness before and after independence. Drawing from datasets and reports, we revisit the country's position in several global indices that measure state fragility. We also identify the state's most vulnerable components and how they deal with drug trafficking.

The third chapter presents findings from fieldwork conducted in 2021 in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Mexico. From interviews and collected official documents, including criminal cases and confidential reports, we establish what happened from 2014 to 2020 and the critical points of the relationship of cocaine trafficking with the state during this period.

We show that political, military, and judicial actors have violated the rule of law to benefit cocaine traffickers based on new primary sources, including field interviews. We argue that top politicians, army officers, prosecutors, and judges have protected the international criminal networks that use the country as a transit point. Drug kingpins are not arrested or are quickly pardoned. In contrast, government officials and law enforcement agents involved in combating trafficking were removed from office and persecuted.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, we explore the use of the term narco-state in the literature devoted to other case studies, comparing them with Guinea-Bissau. In Latin America, we examine Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia and the existence of "dark spaces" and narco-territories. In Central Asia, we look at Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan and how, in some of these countries, unlike the Latin American examples, drug trafficking plays a more decisive role in the central power of the state.

The different approaches that define the term narco-state in other geographies were left for last to allow for a reexamination of the Guinean-Bissau case in a new light. The goal was not to be conditioned beforehand by bias on the scope of this label. Preconceived notions on this concept are grounded on the assumption that if the state were a fruit tree, then all of its fruits would be rotten, much like the use of the term "narco-state."

In fact, there is no consensus in the literature on what is precisely a narco-state. The meaning and extent of this term have not been framed consistently yet. There are attempts to

establish an orthodoxy about the label grounded on the literal sense of the compound word. From that standpoint, a narco-state must be, as the name implies, a state whose key engine of the economy is the production and trafficking of drugs with the sponsorship of the state itself. According to this line of thought (Chouvy, 2016), drug production and trade need to be institutionalized in a narco-state. That is, by state determination, through official channels. Such a framework leaves out weak states that do not control parts of the territory or where corrupt officials in crucial positions guarantee the passage of drugs.

However, the aim to settle an orthodox concept circumscribed to a proactive role of the state apparatus reveals a double standard in assessing the label. It disregards that the prefix narco is not a word used in its literal sense. Narco is a short name for narcotic, which formally means a type of drug that includes heroin but not cocaine. By applying the same standard, narco-states would be states with an economy officially based on producing opiates. But if there is no debate on the non-literal sense of the prefix narco, why does the term state associated with the label require such a strict interpretation?

This dissertation argues for a more flexible concept of a narco-state, closer to the one presented by Jordan (1999). We face a narco-state when drug traffickers have the complicity of government departments, the military, and courts, plus when they have the president's consent. We demonstrate that narco-corruption is deep-rooted in Guinea-Bissau's political, military, and judicial elite, by determining who is or remains in power, thereby conditioning the management of the state as a whole and jeopardizing a viable future for the country.

From a methodological point of view, although we resorted to some quantitative data in the second chapter, based on indices related to state fragility, the rest of the research relies on qualitative data. Much of it was obtained from primary sources. Because secondary sources covering the period from 2014 to 2020 are scarce, we chose to invest in interviews with people with direct knowledge of the events in the third chapter. We also obtained court documents and confidential reports.

To fund the necessary fieldwork, we articulated between academic work and journalism. I obtained an investigative journalism grant from Gulbenkian Foundation for research in Guinea-Bissau and a grant from the Pulitzer Center that financed trips to Mali and Mexico. These trips helped to understand the regional reach and scope of the cocaine route associated with the 2019 seizures.

On these field trips and sometimes at a distance, in videoconferences or calls, six semi-structured interviews were recorded for academic purposes. Additionally, we draw on knowledge added by media articles authored by me as a journalist about drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. Nevertheless, these data are treated and cited as other articles in the references list.

Overall, this dissertation expands the existing literature and assesses how Guinea-Bissau has evolved in its relationship with drug trafficking. It contains findings that allow to better understand how state capture by international criminal groups works in this country compared with other nations labeled as narco-states. Finally, within the field of International Relations, it contributes to the study of security dynamics in West Africa.

## CHAPTER 1

### *An overview of Guinea-Bissau's connection to drug trafficking*

Despite being a small and relatively forgotten country on the west coast of Africa, Guinea-Bissau began to attract the attention of the international community in recent years after an initial curiosity before and right after independence due to Amílcar Cabral's charismatic profile. This sudden contemporary interest undoubtedly had to do with granting an unparalleled status on that continent: the status of a narco-state.

This chapter reviews the literature on what has been published on the topic. We follow a chronological order to facilitate an understanding of how the presence of the illegal cocaine trade in the country evolved. Along with academic work, we also look at media coverage and reports produced by international organizations to provide a complete picture.

#### *1.1 The narco-state label*

In 2007, Guinea-Bissau began to be viewed as a narco-state. The Telegraph published a news article in June 2007 saying, "Western drug enforcement officials fear it could soon become Africa's first narco-state" (Freeman, 2007). It was the first one we found in international mainstream media to use the label. It pointed out severe and long-term poverty, steep corruption, and no control of borders as part of the reasons. The following month, BBC reported on the matter (Winter, 2007), alluding again to the fact that some feared the country was on its way to becoming a narco-state. For both reports, the then head of the UNODC for West and Central Africa, António Mazzitelli, was interviewed, supporting the use of this label.

Mazzitelli was the author of the first scientific article on the subject, some months later (Mazzitelli, 2007). It was published by Chatham House (the current name of the Royal Institute of International Affairs), describing how the former Portuguese colony had become a paradise for criminals:

The case of Guinea-Bissau is probably the clearest example of how attractive West Africa can be to transnational criminal networks. Awash with small arms and light weapons as a consequence of the continued coups d'état that have characterized the past 30 years of its history, Guinea-Bissau is in a socio-economic situation of 'structural emergency'. The illiteracy rate is around 80 per cent, unemployment around 60 per cent. The government

budget - 80 per cent of which comes from external aid - is entirely devoted to paying the salaries of the public and military administrations. The state is virtually incapable of providing any services to its citizens, including security and justice. Border and territorial control are non-existent, because of a total lack of any kind of equipment and trained personnel. In Guinea-Bissau there are no proper prisons, so judicial sentences cannot be implemented. Often judges prefer not to sentence dangerous criminals through fear of reprisals by convicted individuals who remain at large. (Mazzitelli, 2007: 1087)

According to this paper, the first time a Latin American trafficking network was spotted in the country dates back to April 2005. The police detained several foreigners with 19 kilos of cocaine on one of the islands of the Bijagós archipelago, where they had set up a facade fish factory and had their airstrip. In addition to the fact that two major cocaine seizures occurred in a short period (670 kilos in September 2006 and 635 kilos in April 2007), the weight of this illegal activity compared to the country's economy was already significant. April's seizure alone amounted to 14% of the country's total exports (*ibid.*).

Interestingly, Mazzitelli did not use the term "narco-state" in his academic formulation of the problem. Instead, he referenced an article entitled "Fears of an emerging narco-state" (IRIN News, 2007). That article was published in February 2007, by IRIN News, a former project of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and now called The New Humanitarian.

IRIN News described a dramatic evolution in the country, with more than 50 seizures of cocaine in the previous two years. "The situation is so serious that government stability is threatened as drug traffickers extend roots into ministries, the army, and the police" (IRIN, 2007). The article stated that drug traffickers were paying many soldiers to provide security for the transport of cocaine. To support these claims, other than anonymous sources "familiar with the drug trade," one of the few people interviewed and named by its authors was Mazzitelli. "That is just the tip of the iceberg," he said. It also cited the then Justice Minister, Namuano Gomes, who declared that "people at all levels of society are profiting by facilitating the drug trade."

In December 2007, the UNODC published a report (UNODC, 2007b) on cocaine trafficking in West Africa — one of the authors was, not by coincidence, Mazzitelli — dedicated mainly to Guinea-Bissau, saying there were "repeated allegations that high ranking officials in government and the military" were "complicit in drug trafficking," which added up to "a number of questionable judicial and executive decisions that appear to be corruption-

related” (UNODC, 2007a: 29), with the country being placed last in the overall governance ratings in Africa.

Some months later, the UNODC’s 2008 annual report (UNODC, 2008b) underlined that the total seizures of the previous two years were worth more than the state budget. The growing demand for cocaine in Europe and the need for Latin American drug cartels to use new intercontinental routes turned the country into a perfect solution since it offered the shortest distance between South America and Africa and, at the same time, an unguarded coast.

Following this official endorsement by a UN agency, a high-profile report published by The Guardian reinforced attention from the news industry (Vulliamy, 2008). The article singled out Guinea-Bissau as the first narco-state in Africa and the entire world. The media prominence associated with using that label had to do, in part, with a misperception of its unique nature. Contrary to what the news article suggested, the country was not an unprecedented case.

By then, academic work had already been produced on case studies identified as narco-states earlier than Guinea-Bissau. Paoli, Rabkov, Greenfield, and Reuter concluded in 2007 that Tajikistan had become a narco-state during the 1990s. This former Soviet province turned into a transit point for heroin produced in Afghanistan, “in which leaders of the most powerful trafficking groups occupy high-ranking government positions and misuse state structures for their own illicit businesses” (Paoli et al., 2007: 952). In the fourth chapter, we will address the use of the label in other contexts and geographies in further detail.

On the academic side, the problem of drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau would show up for the second time in a paper by Stephen Ellis (2009). The study aimed to cover the entire West Africa region, focusing on Nigeria by listing several events in this country since 1934, when some attempts to cultivate coca plants were made. Later the territory became a transit point to North America and Western Europe, controlled by Lebanese smugglers (Ellis, 2009: 173-174). Despite the relevance given to Nigeria, Ellis admitted that “by most accounts, the West African country that has become almost completely immersed in the drug trade” was Guinea-Bissau. “A Nigerian drug law enforcement official has stated that the Bissau-Guinean army cooperates with drug traffickers to the extent of using military premises to stockpile cocaine while awaiting shipment to Europe” (ibid: 191).

By that time, more than a quarter of the cocaine consumed in Europe was estimated to pass through West African countries, according to UNODC (2007).

### *1.2 Drug trade and seizure of power*

The increasing role of Guinea-Bissau in the international drug trade had to do with the “close cooperation with parts of the army and high ranking politicians” (Kohnert, 2010: 10). Initially, papers described the complicity of state officials in broad terms. However, the partnership between criminals and the military would soon become evident. In July 2008, traffickers unloaded the cargo of a private plane from Venezuela at Bissau airport. They took it away without being inspected. Top military officers imposed that the Judiciary Police would not investigate the incident. The following month, the navy chief Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto, was suspended from his duties on suspicion of being involved in the affair and attempting to execute a coup d'état, eventually fleeing the country (Kohnert, 2010: 10-11).

The violent double assassination, within 24 hours, of President Nino Vieira and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Tagme Na Waie in March 2009 was reported in the press (Pinto and Pereira, 2009; Quade and Peres, 2009; Quade, 2009) as a settling of scores between these two figures. A possible connection between both incidents and drug trafficking was raised by the media and also by scholars. Bybee (2009) considered that the two murders represented a “critical new manifestation” of a “resource curse” in Guinea-Bissau. That was so because the cocaine trade became pivotal for the country’s economy. Countries with economies dependent on the export of a single resource, usually oil or gas, face adverse effects, including the spread of corruption and a general lack of accountability, because of how the government dissociates itself from the need to live off the taxes of citizens and companies. Bybee based his thesis on the theory brought by Richard Auty in 1993 in his book “Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: The Resource Curse Theory” and on the concept of “Dutch Disease.”

The inflow of money into Guinea-Bissau saw a sudden and sharp increase. It multiplied from 2003 to 2005, and Bybee (2009: 11-12) could not find any other explanation except the drug trade. “Given the absence of alternative revenue-generating sectors or commodities in the country, one can assume that this FDI [Foreign Direct Investment] is derived from drug traffickers who have constructed buildings and roads under the guise of legitimate businesses

to accommodate their activities.” Bybee stated that there were visible effects on the country’s governance. Government officials involved in the drug trafficking business ensured that the rule of law was not enforced to protect this illegal trade (Bybee, 2009: 13-15).

In 2011, Green and Thompson wrote that the UN and the US, among other international players, “have suggested that facets of the political establishment at every level” were “complicit in narcotics trafficking.” To label Guinea-Bissau as a narco-state was “therefore merely a reflection of this reality” (Green and Thompson, 2011). According to them, the state did not work at all, but that became acceptable. “The drugs industry has provided an outlet for a political class which increasingly sees little point in trying to engage with an international system that does not seem to want to engage with them.”

This analysis was premonitory of what happened the following year, in 2012. Army officers connected to drug trafficking led a coup d’état known as the “cocaine coup.”

From the perspective of the American Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the UN, this only worsened Guinea-Bissau’s already weak position in Africa by putting drug trade interests at the center of governance (Cordeiro, 2012; O’Regan, 2012; Público, 2012). “In other African countries, government officials are part of the problem. In Guinea-Bissau, it is the government itself that is the problem”, summarized a DEA senior official (Nossiter, 2012).

That same year, two months after the coup, Embaló (2012) wrote how the “political control of the military became extremely difficult.” Embaló argued that post-independent Guinea-Bissau had shown that alliances and divisions between groups had become volatile over time. They changed according to circumstances (Embaló 2012: 255-256), with the military always being protagonists in political life, many joining the ranks of the historical party PAIGC.

Overlapping levels of relations were possible, including between civilians and the military inside and outside the state. This adaptability had to do with the hierarchy concept brought by Chabal et al. (2004), in which, more than the state itself, what was at stake was a fight for power in a hybrid environment.

Nino Vieira, a military commander who became the nation’s political leader for more than 20 years, was the most remarkable example of protagonism by the military. The fluidity of power relations derived from the fact that there has been no actual institutionalization of the



armed forces in the country. Because of that, senior officials who lived through the liberation war felt entitled to compensate themselves for their efforts, including appropriating available resources, even if they were illegal.

This type of hierarchy harkens back to the conclusions of Chabal et al. (2004: 36) on how “some chiefdoms may become self-contained isolationist units of social interaction.” Moreover, on how they viewed “the world around them as hostile.” A behavior also found in criminal and terrorist organizations seeking to gain power.

The switch-off between a power struggle and the need to follow the rule of law allowed the cocaine trade to expand. The business dynamics increased and, with it, the consequences. Signs began to emerge of alliances of drug traffickers with not only military and politicians but also with terrorist networks. While very few facts were known about these partnerships, they became an essential aspect of cocaine transit through West Africa (Bybee, 2012; Ellis, 2012; Kemp et al., 2013).

At that time, references to a connection of this illegal trade to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, accumulated (Christensen and al., 2012, Hoffman and Lane 2013, Shaw and Reitano 2013, Kwesi and Pokoo 2013, Global Initiative 2014, World Bank 2015). Concern grew on how this could pose a threat to the international community, particularly from the perspective of the US, which saw Guinea-Bissau as an entry point of an illicit funding source to an increasingly unstable region.

Drawn by the lucrative revenues, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other militant groups in West Africa have also been linked to Guinea-Bissau trafficking. Now commonly referred to as Africa’s first narco-state, Guinea-Bissau has become a regional crossroads of instability. (O’Regan and Thomson, 2013: 1)

The risk related to terrorism undoubtedly played a role in motivating U.S. authorities to act. This perception was compounded by the DEA’s March 2013 arrest in Algeria of two alleged members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and three al-Qaeda operatives, who were ultimately accused of trading cocaine for money and weapons following the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime in Libya (U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control 2013: 3). During a Senate hearing, then-director of National Intelligence James Clapper characterized Guinea-Bissau as the most critical cocaine transit point in West Africa, not hesitating to call the country a narco-state (ibid.: 18).

This statement was preceded in 2012 by former DEA Chief of Operations Michael A. Braun's assessment before the House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security. Braun warned U.S. congressmen: "The Colombian and Mexican cartels have teamed with indigenous organized crime groups" in Guinea-Bissau, and "with groups like the infamous Tuareg nomads further to the north" (Braun, 2012: 24).

### *1.3 Political infiltration and a cross-border quest*

The most comprehensive work on Guinea-Bissau's relation to drug trafficking was published by Mark Shaw (2015) and Hassoum Ceesay (2016). Shaw, whose background is in criminology, had previously written on the topic (Shaw, 2012; Shaw and Reitano, 2013, 2013b). In his 2015 paper, however, he did an unprecedented chronological reconstruction of how drug trafficking networks were introduced and became strong in Guinea-Bissau. His article described how the 1998 civil war was related to arms trafficking for the separatist rebels in Casamance, Senegal, in which President Nino Vieira was involved. It revealed how, after being forced into exile in 1999, Nino returned to the country in 2005, allegedly funded by Colombian drug traffickers. The connection was established through contacts in Guinea-Conakry, where he was a friend of President Lansana Conté. Fueled by cocaine money, Vieira won the elections that year and secured an alliance of convenience with then deputy chief of staff Tagme Na Waie.

In short: "Vieira's rise to President is closely aligned with trafficking of cocaine through the country" (Shaw, 2015: 346-348). Most likely, the double murder of Vieira and Na Waie in 2009 and the coup d'état in April 2012 by the then chief of staff António Indjai were stages in the fight for control of the drug business. From that moment on, top military officers would become dominant (ibid.: 355-356).

Ceesay (2016) added a more transnational vision to the phenomenon, pointing out that there was more to know beyond the country's porous borders. "It is likely that Casamance may offer a transshipment route for the onward trade of cocaine to Europe, but the onward routes from this point remain largely unclear" (Ceesay, 2016: 221). Fundamentally, one needs to be aware that "while it was Guinea-Bissau that was given the sobriquet of a 'narco-state,' the drugs trade has affected every country in the region in one way or another" (ibid.: 223).

Although the cross-border dynamic promised to be a good field of research to invest in, from 2016 onwards, no more academic work was explicitly published on the topic. There was a sudden general perception that the worst of the drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau was over. At the same time, the academic discussion on how the country could be considered a real narco-state did not make much sense anymore.

This perception grew because cocaine seizures dropped significantly in the following years. The assumption was that the arrest in April 2013 of the then navy chief Na Tchuto (Indictment against José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto and others, 2015; Nossiter, 2013) in an ambush mounted at sea by DEA agents had cooled down the impetus of drug cartels in Bissau. The subsequent resignation in 2014 of his superior, António Indjai, who was also targeted by the US covert operation but avoided getting caught, only strengthened that argument.

Arguably, a single event, the DEA sting operation against Na Tchuto and Indjai, has the potential to recalibrate this analysis significantly. There is evidence that the traffickers have responded to this partially successful law enforcement intervention by moving or expanding their operations elsewhere along the West African coast, in particular penetrating the political and military elite in neighbouring Guinea-Conakry. (Massey, 2016: 203)

This state of affairs was only challenged when, in 2019, the Judiciary Police made the two largest cocaine seizures ever. Later, following the December 2019 election of a new President, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, and his decision to immediately dismiss the government (without legitimate constitutional power to do so) and appoint a new prime minister of his confidence, the scenario became even more apparent. As soon as Sissoco Embaló took office, the military occupied the government buildings and even the supreme court of justice, with many considering that a coup d'état was on its way (Green, 2020).

In the meantime, the drug problem seemed worse than ever before. Just three months after the takeover of power by Sissoco Embaló, Mark Shaw published a Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime report on the latest developments. The article described the context of the new head of state's arrival at the presidential palace:

The group of military men who lined up on either side of the new president and prime minister in February contained a notable addition: António Indjai, the DEA's main target in its April 2013 operation targeting the Bissau elite. The parallels between the 'cocaine coup' of 2012 and the seizure of power in early 2020, one that also had clear military backing, have been pointed to by several local observers. (Shaw, 2020: 9)

According to Alex Vines, in an article published by World Politics Review (Vines, 2020) entitled “Guinea-Bissau political crisis could make it a narco-state again,” the signs were very worrying. “Sources in Bissau tell me that unidentified aircraft have been arriving in the city on a weekly basis, suggesting that this illicit trade continues to flourish.”

As of the writing of this dissertation, it is possible to establish there was a consistent academic interest from 2007 to 2016 on drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. It was mainly focused on reviewing the cocaine trade connection with state weakness and the power structure in Guinea-Bissau, specifically with the political and military leadership of the country and in the period from 1998 to 2014. Afterwards, the absence of significant cocaine captures coincided with academia’s lack of interest in exploring the phenomenon’s evolution and the state itself as an entity dependent on or subjugated to drug trafficking.

Before establishing the state of affairs from 2014 to 2020, we will look in the next chapter at the structural causes of this reality. For that, we have to go back much further, to Guinea-Bissau’s transition to independence and how the state structures evolved over time.

## CHAPTER 2

### *State fragility, state collapse, and illegal trade*

In order to evaluate the influence of international criminal networks on Guinea-Bissau's power structures, we need to know what kind of state was and is currently in place. Not only that, but how it evolved before and after the emergence of drug trafficking. The goal is to learn where the country has been positioned concerning the various concepts and indices of state fragility. Moreover, to what extent there was a state collapse in the historical period under review.

#### *2.1 Legacy and transition*

Developing countries that were colonies of European powers are typically associated with weak states. From the start, the weakness of those states is related to the fact that they were inherited from the former colonizing powers. Many have been unable to provide the necessary means to ensure the well-being of the people and the regular functioning of its institutions in fundamental areas such as health, education, and security. Public organizations and government departments were built during colonial times with parameters and purposes that had nothing to do with the culture and conditions of indigenous people living in those territories (Ogaba Agbese & Klay Kieh Jr., 2007: 280).

The absence of a state able to cover the population's needs was self-evident under colonial rule. The Portuguese administration maintained a minimal footprint with no real control over the territory and granted its management primarily to Cape Verdean officials. At the same time, it denied the Bissau-Guineans any conditions for education and professional development. Those policies were part of the Portuguese racist approach to its colonies and, as pointed out by Green (in Chabal & Green, 2016: 30), led to mistrust and tension in the 1960s over the fact that the PAIGC leadership in Guinea-Bissau was dominated by Bissau-Guineans of Cape Verdean origin, with clear consequences in the following decades, the first of them with the death of the movement's leader, Amílcar Cabral.

During the Portuguese occupation, the Bissau-Guinean economy was based on poorly diversified and rudimentary agricultural production. After independence, it did not change much. The ambitious plans designed by Cabral to invest in rural areas (Cabral, 1969) were

not pursued. Cashew nuts replaced almost entirely an initial predominance of peanuts and rice (Temudo and Abrantes, 2013). In a few decades, they became more than 90% of exports, jeopardizing the country's food security (Barry et al., 2007).

The lack of interest of successive governments in expanding the state outside the capital and investing in a policy of inland improvement and agricultural industrialization had to do, in part, with the absence of representatives of the rural population in leadership and management positions. The urban creole elite that had already performed these functions in colonial times took the bureaucratic apparatus and the few public resources available. That was a pattern otherwise typical to Lusophone Africa, where mestizos prevailed over black Africans in the transition of power (Bayart, 1993).

The situation only got worse from the moment that the role and size of the state began to be compromised as a result of a coup d'état in 1980 led by Nino Viera against the Cape Verdean elite in defense of the "true Guinean identity" (Stoleroff, 2013: 160), and, later on, following a wave of structural adjustment programs that were broadly applied in Africa, including in Guinea-Bissau.

Soon afterwards, Guinea-Bissau became trapped. The transition from a nearly non-existent colonial presence, marked by the almost total absence of basic infrastructure, especially outside the capital, made the country one of the poorest in the world. A new nation was inheriting fragile economic resources and with no intellectuals and technical cadres in an international context of discouragement to expand state functions. Without the means to provide essential education and health services to most of the population, there were no conditions to develop and modernize.

By the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union's breakup led to the dropout of its socialist solidarity with the new African nations. The Soviet withdrawal pushed them towards the aid solutions provided by the West during the neoliberal era of Reagan and Thatcher, with the first structural adjustment program (SAP) being applied in Guinea-Bissau in 1987 (Chabal, 2002: 101), which implied, in return, the reduction of budget deficits at an early stage of state building.

The SAP reforms imposed by the IMF and the World Bank benefited a very small number of traders, namely the ones who had easy access to the state and good credit. Less well-connected traders and the vast majority of rural producers were left out (Forrest, 2002: 244).

These constraints coincided with a series of strategic errors in public investment. A project for a large factory in Cuméré for rice hulling and groundnut oil production, for example, was done without guaranteed personnel training and a much-needed raw materials supply chain. Its failure practically put an end to the dreams of industrialization of the country (Forrest, 2002: 254-259).

The fragility of the state evolved deep. Nino Vieira, the long-standing president who ruled the country from 1980 to 1998, could not turn the situation around, with its regime increasingly dependent on foreign aid. As a reaction to the chronic weakening of the state, community structures got more robust, especially in rural areas beyond the reach of the government departments, with health units and schools self-managed and financially supported by the population (Barros, 2012: 75).

## *2.2 Quantifying fragility*

The path Guinea-Bissau took has been translated into quantifiable objective terms by surveys and analysis grids. By using a selected list of indices singled out by Ferreira (2017: 1296-1297) as a starting point, it is possible to provide a depiction of the perceptions about the level of vulnerability of the Bissau-Guinean state when compared to other countries.

The first of those indices, Carleton University's Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) Fragility Index, is based on 70 indicators that measure state performance. Those indicators attest to the extent to which states can be considered fragile or failed. They cover the three classic dimensions defined by Weber (authority, legitimacy, and capacity). Guinea-Bissau had the seventh worst ranking in the world in 2012, the last year for which data is available (Country Indicators for Foreign Policy, 2012).

In an index with more recent data, the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment for Africa (CPIA, 2021), Guinea-Bissau ranked as the fifth worst out of 39 sub-Saharan countries in overall scores for 2020, surpassed only by Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and South Sudan. It was last in the West and Central Africa region, with a score of 2.5 out of 6. The other former Portuguese colony in the region, Cape Verde, with which it ironically came to form a single nation for a short period, is at the very top. This performance has remained constant since 2013, with minor fluctuations in the indicators. It places the country in the

subgroup of the most fragile states in Africa (all countries with 3.2 or less are classified as fragile).

The CPIA indicators are divided into four clusters: Economic Management; Structural Policies; Policies for Social Inclusion and Equity; Public Sector Management and Institutions. The lowest scores recorded by Guinea-Bissau are concentrated in these last two clusters. Looking inside the clusters, we see that the most critical indicator is Transparency, Accountability, and Corruption in the Public Sector, at 1.5 (World Bank, 2021: 79), while the average for West and Central Africa is 3.2.

In the Fragile States Index, an initiative of the Fund for Peace and the Foreign Policy journal, the position Guinea-Bissau held in 2012 was 15th (in 178 countries), with the most worrying indicators being Security Apparatus (9.4), Factionalized Elites (9.2), and State Legitimacy (9.3), and with an overall score of 99.2 (Fragile States Index, 2022), within the worst of four fragility levels (“Alert,” ranging from 90 to 120 points). Higher scores mean poorer performance. The country reached its worst score the following year, 2013, at 101.1, and has improved since, although it remains on the top 30 most fragile states in the world — it was 27th in 2021. Over these years, the only indicator that never went below the 9-point barrier was C2: Factionalized Elites. This indicator measures “power struggles, political competition, political transitions, and where elections occur will factor into the credibility of electoral processes (or in their absence, the perceived legitimacy of the ruling class)” (Fragile States Index, 2022). Guinea-Bissau scored 9.60 out of 10 every year since 2014, after a peak of 9.70 in 2013).

In the index created by the Brookings Institution on state weakness in the developing world, the most recent data are from 2008. There are 20 indicators distributed over four dimensions of the state: economic, political, security, and welfare. Guinea-Bissau appeared in the 18th lower position in a ranking of 141 countries. The most flawed dimension for this small African country was security — 5.96 out of 10, where 0 is the worst and 10 is the best (Rice & Patrick, 2008: 38).

In the Global Report 2017 prepared by the Center for Systemic Peace (Marshall & Elzinga-Marshall, 2017), Guinea-Bissau state was identified with little or no evolution over the years in its performance. Again, the criteria were designed to measure fragility. The



country scored 17 out of 25, among the worst ranked that year, only behind the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Among the existing quantitative options, one of the most complete and up-to-date is brought by Grävingholt et al. (2014: 1290). Produced every two years and based on the weighting of a group of experts, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) has a set of indicators that score from 0 to 10. It comes with a report of a few dozen pages. The latest available report, BTI 2022, covers a period of analysis between February 1, 2019, and January 31, 2021. It highlights that “Guinea-Bissau remains one of the least developed countries in the world, ranked very low on the Human Development Index at 178 out of 189 countries”. Above all, “the low quality of government services – particularly education, health care, and security – have contributed to the country’s low HDI ranking” (BTI, 2022: 4).

Much discussion has taken place around the concept of fragility applied to states (Grimm et al., 2014). The sample quantitative analyses that we just looked at show how there is little doubt Guinea-Bissau falls into the definition of a fragile state, whichever grid we use.

### *2.3 The extreme case of Guinea-Bissau*

Being a fragile state, has Guinea-Bissau ever been a failed state? According to the Global Report 2017, yes. That happened between 1998 and 1999 during the civil war. However, there are currently no indexes with rankings on failed states, even though the expression started to be used in the international political arena in the 1990s. Initially, the Fragile States Index (FSI) was called Failed States Index (Lambach & Johais, 2015: 1300), but was later dropped.

The “failed state” term gained special prominence with the September 11 of 2001 attacks in the US (Rotberg, 2002; Rotberg, 2003; Ghani & Lockhart, 2009; Newman, 2009; Grimm, 2014). It was a way for the White House to characterize Afghanistan and the context in which it became home to Al-Qaeda, the organization responsible for those terrorist attacks (Piazza, 2008: 469-470).

Call (2008: 1492) wrote that when the term “failed states” appeared, it referred to states that were not able to function as independent entities, citing an article by Helman and Ratner (1992) and the examples of Haiti, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union or Sudan, and that there was

another complementary term, “collapsed states,” framed by Zartman in 1995 as countries in which “the basic functions of the state are no longer performed.”

While neither the phenomenon nor the concept was new, it was 9/11 that changed the perception of its importance and impact on a global scale. Just a year after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the US National Security Guidelines assumed failed states were a more significant threat than nations with ambitions of territorial expansion (Grimm, 2014: 198). As a result of the growth of trade, migration, internet use, and fiduciary services provided by the offshore industry, weaker states were no longer isolated. They represented no longer a threat to the countries around them but to everyone (Rotberg, 2002: 127). That was one of the side effects of globalization.

After this turning point in Afghanistan, Western nations, led by a new foreign policy of the US, began to look with new eyes at state failures. It did not matter how seemingly remote those territories were. If they originated the displacement of millions of refugees, they also could be platforms for exporting violence, terrorism, and criminality.

State failures that the rich countries used to be able to ignore can thus no longer be overlooked. Intrastate and interstate conflict, drug rings, and the smuggling of arms, timber, antiquities, and precious stones— combined with money laundering and the large-scale, speedy financial transactions made possible by globalization—are resulting in an agile and flexible complex of networks that mostly thwart any attempt to create order. (Ghani & Lockhart, 2009: 23)

Despite the great diversity in the characteristics of failed states, there is a set of common symptoms that are felt as failure takes hold. On the one hand, the living conditions of the population rapidly worsen, with less and less access to health services, education, and less purchasing power; on the other hand, corruption thrives, with a small elite concentrating the distribution of resources by the state and safeguarding themselves by hiding part of their assets abroad. At the same time, political leaders become more authoritarian and aggressive, strangling the courts’ autonomy and civil society’s ability to act. In this process, the state loses all its legitimacy (Rotberg, 2002: 128-130).

To better conceptualize extreme cases of non-functioning states, Lambach & Johais opted for the term “state collapse” as an alternative — under the broader “fragile states” umbrella — to the status of “failed state”. They quote Schlichte to argue “that ‘state failure’ is no more than a discursive product without a corresponding empirical phenomenon.” The term helps to justify international interventions in the non-Western world by characterizing certain nations

as “pathological”. In contrast, it is possible to frame “state collapse” by quantifying apparent gaps in the state’s institutional capacity, following the Weberian tradition but leaving out aspects related to legitimacy, and thus restricting the definition of state to an entity holding “monopolies on rule-making, violence and taxation within a defined territory and among the population living therein” (Lambach & Johais, 2015: 1300-1305).

With this tighter grid of criteria, in which several indicators covering the dimensions of violence, taxation, and rule-making are measured, such as the closure of the supreme court or the dissolution of the security forces, they ended up identifying 17 cases of state collapses in a total of 15 countries in the post-colonial period, between 1960 and 2007. Guinea-Bissau in 1998, when the civil war broke, was one such case.

#### *2.4 The incorporation of illegal trade*

Clingendael, the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, analyzed the governance of Guinea-Bissau’s security sector in the aftermath of the civil war (Herbert, 2003). The study concluded that the functions of the state were “grossly underfunded, lacking in facilities, resources, and technical capacity.” Although there were laws in place, neither the government nor the military nor police forces believed they should follow them. “When orders are given to security forces it appears that at no time do participants discuss or even consider the constitutionality or illegality of their actions” (Herbert, 2003: 55).

Herbert’s analysis matches the description made two decades on by the 2022 BTI report on Guinea-Bissau, which is quite graphic. The judiciary is characterized as non-independent. The rule of law is one of the worst-performing indicators, scoring 4 out of 10 points. Political office holders who break the law are usually not investigated and prosecuted. On the contrary, they manage to stay in office.

Public officeholders who benefit illegally from their positions are rarely held accountable by legal prosecution when they break the law and engage in corrupt practices. This concerns all the top government officials, including the president. (BTI, 2022: 12)

The study done by Herbert in 2003 did not mention drug trafficking. Only later did the drug connection to the Bissau-Guinean military and top political figures surface as rooted in the civil war and illegal arms trade with Casamance rebels (Vigh, 2009; Stolerof, 2013; Shaw,

2015). Herbert, however, singled out the context of what was to become the foundation for the emergence of drug trafficking by delving into one of the aspects of state fragility. On the one hand, there was an ethical crisis in the military elite and, on the other, a degradation of the country's state capacity as an effect of the neo-liberal structural adjustment imposed by Western governments in the 1980s and 1990s. Conditions were created so that illegal trade could settle organically.

Like a substrate of fertile soil, this meltdown resounded the doom recipe described generically by Kaldor (2012: 86) for developing countries suffering the negative consequences of neo-liberal policies and globalization, exposed to “decaying institutional apparatuses,” vulnerable to “networks of corruption, black marketeers, arms and drug traffickers.”

After 2009, it became clear that there was a robust correlation between illegal trafficking, an anemic national economy, and fragile institutional structures (Kohnert, 2010) that could not enforce the rule of law and much less implement an accountability policy. In Guinea-Bissau, this cocktail of impunity made the politico-military elite ideally suited to establish partnerships with international criminal networks and control the income distribution in this context (Embaló, 2012).

According to Bybee (2012: 78), based on his research on Guinea-Bissau, “in failed states where drug traffickers have made major inroads, certain organs of the state may be captured through narco-corruption (most of the military and criminal justice sectors), while the functioning of the state itself not fundamentally altered due to its extremely limited capacity.”

Whatever conclusions we may draw about the drug business size and scope, literature on Guinea-Bissau gathered enough evidence that the money generated by this trade boosted political competition (Chabal & Green, 2016; Ellis, 2012). The aim was to occupy critical positions in the state hierarchy crucial to access these illegal rents, in what Shaw & Reitano (2013) classified as “cocaine politics.” We can therefore conclude that Guinea-Bissau has a very fragile state, regardless of the various indices available, and that this situation is lasting and profound. Also, the collapse of the state in the late 1990s was linked to political and military power elites becoming involved in illegal trade. First of arms and then of cocaine. Next, we will find how that evolved and what it meant in recent years.

## CHAPTER 3

### *Drug trafficking and its relation to the state between 2014 and 2020*

For a while, in the past decade, Guinea-Bissau seemed to distance itself from the narco-state label it had earned by having modest cocaine seizures and managing to avoid military coups. However, in 2019, the two largest cocaine seizures brought the problem back into the spotlight.

Based on official reports, court rulings, confidential documents, interviews, and media articles, this chapter analyzes how, between 2014 and 2020, the state handled drug trafficking and who were the players who most benefited from that approach.

After framing the country's political evolution in the period under review, we look in detail at the data on the presence of drugs in the country and its regional context. Next, we focus on the justice and security sectors before ending this chapter with the relationship between trafficking and the political crisis that Guinea-Bissau experienced in 2020.

#### *3.1 The political context as of 2014*

2014 represented the ending of a cycle of extreme instability in Guinea-Bissau. The year saw the conclusion of a transition phase, conditioned by pressure from the international community to restore democratic normalcy after the coup d'état of April 12, 2012. This coup was the climax of a turbulent sequence of events related to military interference in the country's political life, beginning with the assassination of Nino Vieira and the armed forces chief of staff in 2009, followed by a failed attempt to seize power in 2010.

In reaction to the military takeover, on April 29, 2012, ECOWAS activated diplomatic, economic, and financial sanctions on Guinea-Bissau (ECOWAS, 2012) and several officers behind the coup, starting with its leader, army chief António Indjai (BBC, 2012). The UN Security Council imposed a travel ban in May of that year (UNSC, 2012a) against five members of the coup's military command (António Indjai, Ibraima Camará, Estêvão Na Mena, Daba Nualna and Mamadu Ture), joined by six more in July.

These actions were reinforced by Guinea-Bissau's withdrawal from the activities of several prominent organizations, including the CPLP and the African Union, and the suspension of programs then underway by the World Bank and the African Development

Bank (UNSC, 2015b). The European Union followed the UN sanctions (Official Journal of the European Union, 2012), adding to the measures taken the freezing of any assets that those involved in the coup might have in Europe.

The international community's rapid and aligned blockade of Guinea-Bissau created enough pressure for the military command to come to an agreement with ECOWAS and consent to host a 600-man peacekeeping force (the ECOMIB), promising to return power to civilians, with a commitment to organize new elections within 12 months (Dabo, 2012).

The legislative and presidential elections ended up happening only in 2014. They took place in a free, fair, and transparent manner and with a very high participation rate (close to 80% in the case of the second round of presidential elections). They were therefore seen as an essential milestone in reestablishing constitutional order and a sign of the population's will to live in a democracy (UNSC, 2014). In May, José Mário Vaz won the presidential elections as the candidate for PAIGC. This party had won the parliamentary elections a month earlier, winning 55 out of 102 seats (Lusa, 2014).

In June, a new government took office, with Domingos Simões Pereira, former secretary-general of the CPLP, as prime minister. In his inauguration speech, he promised to bring "order, discipline, and work" to the country. The government formed at that time had an inclusive composition, with 19 members from PAIGC, six from the second most-voted party, PRS, and elements from three other small parties (UNSC, 2014: 2-4).

Moreover, the period between 2014 and 2020 was marked by some notable facts. Two of them were referenced in reports by the UN secretary-general to the Security Council as positive, contributing to a period of relative stability in Guinea-Bissau, despite the turmoil observed among political opponents. First, a president completed an entire term in office, an unprecedented achievement since there were elections since the country's independence (UNSC, 2019c). Second, the military remained in the barracks without interfering in political disputes. There was also a reduced volume of drug seizures until almost the end of José Mário Vaz's presidency (UNSC, 2014 to 2018), hinting at a possible slowdown in the country's use as a transit point by international criminal networks.

The conditions of political peace between the presidency and the government during José Mário Vaz's first year in office allowed for some promising progress. The return of confidence from the international community has prompted donors to put money back into

the country, ensuring the timely payment of civil servants. In September 2014, ECOWAS presented a proposal for a military and police pension system for more than 2,200 officers to be retired over five years, while initiatives to strengthen the capacity of national authorities to track drug trafficking and money laundering intensified (UNSC, 2015a).

In February 2015, the Bissau-Guinean government presented in Brussels a strategic plan for 2015-2020, named Terra Ranka (“new beginning” in Creole). Representatives from more than 70 countries and organizations were present. In all, donors pledged 1,3 billion euros of financial support (EEAS, 2015). The World Bank alone committed €250 million to be invested by 2020 in strengthening the public sector, providing essential services, and stimulating programs for private investors and productive sectors (Hanusch, 2015). But in a few months, political instability returned, with the president sacking the prime minister in August 2015 (Al Jazeera, 2015).

From that moment on, the disagreement between José Mário Vaz and Domingos Simões Pereira worsened, with the president appointing three prime ministers without the PAIGC’s agreement: Baciro Djá in 2015 and again in 2016, after a nine-month break in which a name proposed by the party, Carlos Correia, governed the country; Umaro Sissoco Embaló between 2016 and 2018; and Artur Silva in 2018 (UNSC, 2015 to 2018).

In late 2015, a faction of 15 PAIGC lawmakers, led by Braima Camará, a politician close to President José Mário Vaz (Rocha, 2015), rebelled and withdrew the absolute majority that the party had in parliament, making the situation even more difficult. The impasse paralyzed the reform program underway in defense, security and justice, and led to a deterioration of public education and health services (UNSC, 2016c: 1-4). PAIGC defectors eventually created their party in 2018, the MADEM-G15 (RFI, 2018).

To restore the regular functioning of parliament and the government’s legitimacy, ECOWAS promoted an agreement in Conakry in October 2016, signed by the parties represented in parliament (ECOWAS, 2016). All parties committed to supporting the formation of an inclusive government, with a consensual prime minister accepted by the president, and to resume the PAIGC government program and the underway reforms. The Conakry agreement was, however, slow to be respected and only came about in April 2018, with the appointment of Aristides Gomes as prime minister (Reuters, 2018).

The president's acceptance of the name presented by PAIGC to head the government was due to the pressure exerted by ECOWAS. The heads of state and government of this group of West African countries imposed an ultimatum on January 27, 2018, to their neighbor: if within four days Guinea-Bissau did not implement the Conakry agreement, ECOWAS would apply sanctions immediately against 19 individuals, including a travel ban and the freezing of financial assets for them and their family members (ECOWAS, 2018). The list included several of PAIGC's 15 dissidents. At the top of the list were the dissidents' leader Braima Camará, the attorney general and his predecessor, and one of the president sons, Herson Vaz (E-global, 2018).

The new government led by Aristides Gomes resumed the 2014 program of Domingos Simões Pereira's Terra Ranka. In an assessment, the UN secretary-general underlined how frustration was growing among international partners because of the "protracted institutional paralysis that lasted from 2015 to early 2018" (UNSC, 2018c: 4). He suggested a constitutional revision dividing the responsibilities of the president and the prime minister as a future solution to these political crises. He described a disagreement on how the country should be ruled as a cause of the breakup of José Mário Vaz and Domingos Simões Pereira. He also pointed out another reason for their conflict: certain politicians and businessmen close to the president were excluded from the government and thus could not access public funds. This information matches the views of the local elite. The conflict was triggered when Simões Pereira did not support Vaz in the internal dispute within the PAIGC to decide on its 2014 presidential candidate (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as B, 2021).

By 2018, drug trafficking was mentioned by the UN as part of the instability's root, but only in vague terms.

At its core, the key drivers of instability in Guinea-Bissau have remained largely unchanged since the previous strategic review mission to the country, deployed in 2016. Those drivers boil down to the following structural factors: a profoundly divided political class, driven by narrowly defined and antagonistic group interests; the growing political influence of a parallel economy based on narcotics trafficking; the absence of the state, especially in rural areas, and the fact that, where present, it is largely ineffective; the generalized lack of respect for the rule of law; violations of human rights and widespread impunity therefor; a general atmosphere of resignation with regard to poverty; and lack of access to basic services. (UNSC, 2018c: 4)



The “growing political influence” of drug trafficking, as referred to in this UN assessment, was not based on official data on this illegal trade because the available numbers on seizures from 2014 to 2018 are too modest to prove that. In the following sections, we will try to understand why.

### *3.2 Seizures, criminal investigations, and trials*

One of the main difficulties in understanding the scale of cocaine trafficking in Guinea-Bissau is the absence of statistical data and the fact that there are very few seizures and indictments. These modest figures do not mean that the illegal cocaine trade is down.

Allegedly, the low number of criminal inquiries is due to the lack of capacity of law enforcement agencies to act consistently and systematically and, at the same time, the involvement of elements of the armed forces, and the political elite with drug trafficking organizations, especially since the 2012 coup d'état. “This has led to the unabated spread of cocaine trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. International intelligence suggests that cocaine trafficking is taking place on a weekly or biweekly basis, without any interference from Government officials” (UNSC, 2012b: 8).

Most of the drug trafficking that passed through Guinea-Bissau was not subject to any police action or even reported to the authorities. These transports were, moreover, protected by the military. For example, in Andalai, a small locality near Mansoa, 60 kilometers east of Bissau, following the 2012 coup, the resident population saw a plane land on the road at night and the cargo being loaded onto a military truck from the Mansoa battalion. “That is what a lady who lived there and witnessed it told me the next morning when I got there. They cleared the berms and used a three-kilometer straight road. For fear, these facts were not reported anywhere” (interview with a local journalist, 2021).

These landings also happened from 2010 onwards in Cufar, south of the country, where a road turned into an airplane strip. In Bijagós islands, boats transshipped cocaine to the mainland (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as C, 2021; interview with a Guinea-Bissau civil society leader, 2021; interview with an international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021).

The removal of General António Indjai — who had escaped a DEA sting operation and was identified as a drug kingpin — from the post of army chief in September 2014 by newly-

elected President José Mário Vaz was seen as an essential measure. It helped to change the perception of the country's state of affairs (Faria, 2014; UNSC, 2015a: 11). That happened when there was a broad political consensus. "Indjai's resignation happened due to the pressure exerted by international partners on the president and with the need to give an important signal" (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as B, 2021).

For a period, trafficking activities appeared to be reduced significantly (Shaw, 2015: 359). In May 2015, Indjai assured that he wanted to retire from military life, admitting to devoting himself to agriculture and denying that he was involved in the illegal cocaine trade (Farge & Pereira, 2015). A European ambassador in Bissau said that after the arrest of Admiral Na Tchuto in 2013, fear set in, and people started thinking that "US drones were flying above the country" (ibid.).

In the second half of 2014, four seizures were made, with the police confiscating a total of only 3 kilograms of cocaine and 57 kilograms of marijuana (UNSC, 2015a: 6). In 2015, the UN secretary-general's reports made no mention of any seizures (UNSC, 2015b; UNSC, 2016a). In 2016, in the first five months of the year, 36.7 kilograms of cocaine had been seized from passengers on flights bound for Bissau as a result of a cooperation and training program provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), specifically for airport security officers (UNSC, 2016b: 12).

Funded by the European Union and the United States, this drug control program at Bissau airport continued to produce results in the following years, but with a relatively modest scope. In the first half of 2017, for example, 2.9 kilograms of cocaine were confiscated (UNSC, 2017b), and in 2018 the total amount seized was around 30 kilograms (UNSC, 2019a; UNSC, 2020a).

The Guinean-Bissau people were expected to believe that everything was fixed all of a sudden by magic. It seems the message one tried to project is that everything was fine; therefore, if drugs were not seized and traffickers were not chased, it was because there were none. But if we were not talking about seizures, it was because the business circuits must be very well set up. (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as A, 2021)

Between 2014 and 2015, under the government of Domingos Simões Pereira, there was a boost in measures to fight drug trafficking. In November 2014, an agreement was signed between the government and UNODC to create an airport anti-trafficking cell with "real-time

operational communication between international airports in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean” (UNODC, 2014a). This cell, however, would only be installed in April 2018, coinciding with the inauguration of the Aristides Gomes government (UNODC, 2019b).

The UN secretary-general praised some “signs of progress” at that time in the Guinean-Bissau administration’s commitment to combat organized crime and drug trafficking and the fact that there was an admission that the problem was deep and cross-cutting. Some government officials admitted the role of military and police leaders in the cocaine trade and suggested that top politicians were also implicated in it (UNSC, 2018c: 5).

When cartels of that nature come into a country, they take root, and dislodging them costs a lot. From the moment there is some collaboration, even through more or less informal channels that link organized crime circuits to instances of power, it takes a long time and much investment to eradicate this circuit. I have had the experience of being confronted with that reality. I was hoping Guinea-Bissau could give much stronger signals in fighting and resolving this situation. That would involve joining the regional initiatives to combat crime and taking concrete steps to control our territory’s sovereignty. (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as A, 2021)

In 2019, in contrast to previous years, the two largest-ever drug seizures in the country took place. On March 9, 789 kilograms of cocaine were captured, and four individuals were arrested by the local Judiciary Police (Operation Carapau, 2019). One of the detainees was identified as an adviser to the speaker of Niger’s parliament (Reuters, 2019b). This seizure took place on the eve of the parliamentary elections. It was reported in the news as involving “an element associated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM),” who was said to own a truck in which the cocaine was to have made its way by road through Mali, hidden in a false bottom under a load of fish boxes (Lusa, 2019a).

In Operation Carapau, the Judiciary Police did not inform the Public Prosecutor’s Office during the investigation. Despite that being mandatory, police detectives suspected the complicity of some prosecutors with drug trafficking networks, including the attorney general (information provided by a local senior law-enforcement officer identified here as A, 2021; information provided by a international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021). A prosecutor eventually showed up at the scene of the suspects’ arrest, accompanied by a defense lawyer, without any notice or invitation. A few days later, this prosecutor was appointed by the attorney general as the head of the criminal inquiry (interview with a former member of the

Guinea-Bissau government identified here as B, 2021; information provided by a international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021).

In November 2019, two Nigerian and one Senegalese detained in Operation Carapau were sentenced by a Bissau court to 14 and 15 years in prison (Operation Carapau, 2019: 16-17).

On September 2, 1,869 kilograms of cocaine were seized, and ten suspects were arrested in Operation Navarra (UNSC, 2020a). The group of traffickers involved in the case was headed by a Colombian-Mexican and a Bissau-Guinean with political connections, Braima Seidi Bá (Shaw & Gomes, 2020: 12), who managed to escape (Operation Navarra, 2020: 9). The police had already referenced Seidi Bá since 2007. He owned a car that supplied fuel for Colombian traffickers' planes in Cufar (information provided by a local senior law-enforcement officer identified here as B, 2021).

In March 2020, Colombian-Mexican Ricardo Ariza Monje and his Bissau-Guinean deputy Seidi Bá were convicted *in absentia* to 16 years in jail. In addition, three Colombian, six Bissau-Guinean, and one Malian were sentenced to four to 14 years in prison. The data collected during the criminal inquiry made it possible to determine financial flows to and from third countries: Senegal, Portugal, Spain, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, and the United States (Operation Navarra, 2020: 10-20).

In October 2020, the Bissau Court of Appeal substantially reduced the original ruling. The sentences were downsized from 16 to six years in prison for Seidi Bá and Ariza Monje, while they were reduced to two to five years for the remaining ten defendants. The court canceled the crimes for criminal association and money laundering and returned to the defendants all assets and funds seized from them, amounting to more than 2.5 million euros. The judges considered there was no proof that the defendants created a group and that “its main purpose was to introduce large quantities of drugs into the country on a continuous basis” (Global Initiative, 2021: 8-9).

Finally, in June 2022, the Supreme Court of Justice dropped the drug trafficking convictions against Ariza Monje and Seidi Bá. It stressed that there was no evidence that these two ringleaders were involved in cocaine transport and conceded that all the money they had accumulated in banks could come from legitimate business activities (Operation Navarra, 2022: 7-9). The Civil Society Organizations Concertation Space, an NGO

consortium, said in a statement that the Supreme Court of Justice was “hostage to organized crime in Guinea-Bissau” (Lusa, 2022a).

Apart from the judgments concerning the two largest-ever cocaine seizures that occurred in 2019, during the field research we could only collect court documents on three more trials for the period under review. Accessing judicial files is difficult due to the lack of conditions of the courts (information provided by a local senior law-enforcement officer identified here as B, 2021; information provided by a international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021).

Those three trials concern cases of “drug mules.” In all three of them, passengers carried cocaine on flights to Bissau from Brazil with transit through Lisbon. In the first case, in September 2013, Fernando Agosto Té was arrested with 379 grams of cocaine in capsules in his stomach. He was sentenced to one year in prison (Bissau Court, 2013). In the second case, in July 2018, Ernesto Cá was intercepted with 98 capsules totaling 1,089 grams of cocaine. The defendant was sentenced to two years and three months in prison (Bissau Court, 2018). In the third case, in August 2018, Saido Biai was caught carrying 4.9 kilograms of cocaine inside a sink. He was sentenced to eight years in jail (Bissau Court, 2019).

These examples represent the judicial system’s approach to drug trafficking over the period under review. Most seizures were made at the airport, where quantities are usually much less significant than by sea or land (information provided by a local senior law-enforcement officer identified here as A, 2021; information provided by a international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021).

### *3.3 The cocaine route that crosses Guinea-Bissau*

Before Operation Carapau in March 2019, the last major cocaine seizure in Guinea-Bissau occurred in 2007 (UNODC, 2007a). In the time between these two seizures, and especially in the period under review in this dissertation, 2014-2020, there was a perception that Guinea-Bissau was no longer a drug entry point into the continent. Indeed, “in interviews conducted by the Global Initiative in Bissau in 2017, the consensus among international law-enforcement bodies seemed to have been that cocaine was still being transited through West Africa — but through neighboring Guinea or other regional ports” (Bish, 2019).

Operation Carapau was thus an opportunity to understand better the evolution of the cocaine route through the country and its context within the West African region. Not only

because of the facts formally contained in the criminal case, with the conviction of an individual identified as an advisor to the president of Niger's National Assembly, Ousseini Tinni (Bish, 2019) but also because of facts that were uncovered, yet not brought to trial.

Behind the transport of 789 kilograms of cocaine was an individual who was not arrested by the Guinea-Bissau authorities. This individual, Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri, better known as Rouggy, is originally from Tabankort in northern Mali. The Judiciary Police identified him during the surveillance and investigation of Operation Carapau (information provided by a international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021; information provided by a local senior law-enforcement officer identified here as A, 2021; interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as B, 2021). Guinea-Bissau issued arrest warrants for him and his assistant, Oumar Ould Mohamed, from Gao, also in northern Mali, in connection with the case but canceled them later (information provided by a Mali senior law enforcement officer, 2021).

Rouggy was added in July 2019 to the United Nations sanctions list (UNODC, 2019c), depicted as using profits from drug trafficking to finance armed terrorist groups, notably Al-Mourabitoun. There is a reference to his involvement in 2018 in trafficking 10 tons of hashish from Marrocos to Mauretania, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The Al-Mourabitoun movement is in the sanctions list since 2014 for “participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of,” “recruiting for” Al-Qaeda (UNODC, 2014b).

Rouggy is the uncle of Sherif Ould Tahar, known as “El Chapo du Sahel” and considered the most significant trafficker in West Africa (Pereira, 2022a: 26; UNSC, 2020d: 26). A report by a UN panel of experts regarding the security situation in Mali related Rouggy to Operation Carapau (UNSC, 2020d: 27).

The illicit cocaine trade has evolved in northern Mali within a broader security context, in which the drug has served to finance armed violence. Cocaine has only replaced other products, such as cigarettes, in a long-established smuggling route in the Sahel on the border with Algeria. This phenomenon came to be referenced when a Boeing with almost ten tons of cocaine on board crashed in the desert in the Gao region in 2009 (International Crisis Group, 2018: 3-6).

To date, the information obtained on Operation Carapau is the most solid on the eventual destination of cocaine leaving Guinea-Bissau by land. In Operation Navarra, which took place in September 2019, the international connections were more challenging to establish, as the Colombians arrested had no prior criminal record (Operation Navarra, 2020; information provided by an international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021).

There is no available data on which criminal organizations produce the cocaine that passes through Guinea-Bissau. However, field trips to Mali and Mexico allowed us to establish a correlation between the set of organizations known as the Sinaloa cartel and the route that crosses Guinea-Bissau towards Mali (Pereira, 2022a: 27). This goes back to earlier indications, including the arrest of a Venezuelan pilot in Bissau in 2008 who used to work for Sinaloa but eventually fled (Pereira, 2022a: 28-29).

In recent years, substantial quantities of cocaine crossing the Atlantic Ocean in ships bound for Guinea-Bissau were seized outside the country. In August 2019, the authorities of Cape Verde intercepted a Brazilian fishing vessel with two tons heading to Bissau (Santos, 2020). These shipments fall within a diversified movement at several West African ports, including Dakar, Abidjan, and Lagos, during a significant increase in cocaine production in Colombia (Roger, 2019; The Economist, 2019).

West Africa's contribution to cocaine distribution has been under the radar of American and European authorities, and also the United Nations, since 2004, when the volume of seizures in the region took a significant jump, from 95 kilograms in 2002 to 1,788 kilograms in 2004 and 6,458 kilograms in 2007 (UNODC, 2007b: 8). Interest has redoubled with the growth of political and security instability in the region, particularly since the coup in Mali in 2012, and the way cocaine has fueled this instability, to the point where terms such as narco-terrorism or narco-jihadism have been applied (West Africa Commission on Drugs, 2014).

Several countries in the region reported the involvement of AQIM and other terrorist movements in drug trafficking. In 2009, Ghana extradited individuals connected to al-Qaeda to the US because of a cocaine shipment from Mali to Spain. In 2010, members of that organization were identified by Mauritanian authorities in a cocaine and marijuana shipment. In 2013, the DEA arrested two Colombians and three AQIM elements in Algeria suspected of exchanging cocaine for weapons purchased in Libya (U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, 2013: 3).

In November 2018, the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in cooperation with Croatian law enforcement authorities disrupted an OCG proposing to trade cocaine for surface-to-air missiles and other advanced military-grade weapons. The Colombian broker was heavily involved in the trafficking of cocaine to the EU via West Africa and allegedly intended to pass on the weapons to the terrorist group Ansar al-Dine. This group is linked to al-Qaeda and promised the broker the use of smuggling routes passing through territory controlled by the group in the Sahara Desert for his drug-smuggling business. (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol, 2019)

These examples are, however, contradicted by some observers, who note that much of the analysis produced in the last decade on this reality was based on speculation, due to the reduced number of investigated cases: “Without strong international mechanisms and support, and international cooperation at the regional level, there are no conditions to say that relations exist and to have an effective fight against drug trafficking” (interview with a UN political expert in Guinea-Bissau, 2021).

Regardless of the absence of more quantitative data, in the regional context, Mali emerges as a central point at the intersection of drug trafficking, violence, and political instability. Moreover, in the relationship that this violence and instability generated from northern Mali have with other West African countries, Guinea-Bissau has positioned itself as a consistent transit point for cocaine since the period before 2014. The arrest of Admiral Bubo Na Tchuto in 2013 reportedly put the arrival of cocaine to Malian traffickers on hold for a few months (International Crisis Group, 2018: 6).

Between 2019 and 2021, Bissau has been identified, along with Banjul in Gambia and Conakry in Guinea, as one of three primary hubs for illicit activity on the west coast of Africa by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. This characterization as a hub requires the existence of infrastructures (airports or airstrips, ports, roads), an informal economy, weak sovereignty including porous borders, and a deep-rooted culture of corruption where the rule of law is weak (Bird, 2021: 5 and 11). Apart from Cape Verde, the largest cocaine seizures in the region during this period were in Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal, with the immediate destinations of the seized drugs being Mauritania and especially Mali.

The record-high seizures in Guinea-Bissau are in line with what has also ensued in Senegal and Gambia. This apparent increase in trafficking infiltrating the West African coast is related to the pressure brought by a considerable increase in cocaine production in the three



major coca-growing countries (Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia), which more than doubled from 2014 to 2020, from less than 900 tons to around 2,000 tons (UNODC, 2022a: 54).

A decline in seizures from 2008 and a near drought in seizures between 2013 and 2019 were seen as evidence the region was playing a diminishing role as a trans-shipment point in global cocaine trafficking routes. Huge seizures in 2019 put paid to this theory, and point to significant volumes of cocaine trafficked through the region; indeed, their scale suggests that some flows had continued to transit the region during the decline years, as one-off consignments of such scale are highly unlikely (Bird, 2021: 5)

However, there is still a significant lack of knowledge about cocaine destinations, especially on what happens after the drug reaches Mali, and the relationship between transit countries like Guinea-Bissau and Latin American trafficking networks. This gap is partly due to the scarcity of primary sources and an apparent absence of cooperation between national law-enforcement agencies in West Africa and Latin America (Pereira, 2022a: 27 and 30).

### *3.4 Critical points in the judicial system and the security sector*

Since the civil war of 1998-1999, the relationship between civil and military power has been pointed out as one of the main challenges to solve Guinea-Bissau's chronic instability and to unblock the atrophic conditions from which the state suffers (Herbert, 2003; Gibert, 2009; Gorjão & Seabra, 2010; Carvalho, 2011; Embaló, 2012; UNSC, 2012 to 2020).

In the case of the armed forces, structural constraints explain why there has been such a high frequency of military coups over the years and the involvement of many army officers in drug trafficking networks. There is a disposition for the Bissau-Guinean military to think and act according to their particular interests, which may not match the interests of civilian power (Embaló, 2012: 255-256).

The way veterans who fought in the war of liberation were integrated into the armed forces and felt left behind in the distribution of political posts and perks led them to feel legitimized to seek enrichment by any means, as General Induta lamented in 2001 (Stoleroff, 2013: 224). Some of these veterans began striving for better individual positions by joining political relationships that gave them access to resources or by allying themselves with international criminal networks (Vigh, 2009: 161).

However, as of 2014, the military leadership's prominence in drug trafficking lost steam, and some civilian actors began to play an increasing role in that trade (confidential report, 2019). This development coincided with an absence of coups d'état.

In part, the absence of military coups had to do with the pressure wielded by the international community. In four reports "on the progress made with regard to the stabilization of and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau," published between 2015 and 2019, the UN secretary-general stressed the existence of a "broad consensus that sanctions have acted as a deterrent to the direct involvement of the security and defense forces in the deteriorating political situation the country has faced since" the resignation of Domingos Simões Pereira by the president (UNSC, 2015c: 2). This perception only changed in 2020 and is explored in further detail in the following subchapter.

The apparent preponderance of civil actors from 2014 onwards in the relationship with international criminal networks has seen a string of efforts to control the judicial system and political power for the benefit of the illegal cocaine trade. A group of experts who prepared an information gathering and analysis report on drug trafficking for UNODC concluded, based on a broad set of interviews made in Bissau (confidential report, 2019), that a businessman, a politician, and a prosecutor gained major roles during that era. The businessman is Braima Seidi Bá, one of the convicted traffickers in Operation Navarra, who had been running legitimate businesses as a front for several years, including importing goods. The politician is Braima Camará, leader of the MADEM-G15 party, who manages his interests through a close relative. And the prosecutor is Bacari Biai.

The information about Braima Camará's growing significance overlaps with the facts gathered during a criminal investigation opened in Portugal in 2017 and closed in 2021 for lack of evidence regarding almost two million euros of hard cash that the businessman and politician deposited in Portuguese banks between 2014 and 2017 (Pereira, 2022b). Camará had been investigated before in Portugal for drug trafficking, although he was never convicted.

As for Bacari Biai, former Justice Minister Ruth Monteiro, who held the post between 2019 and 2020, publicly accused him and a close associate of his, Juscelino De Gaulle, of being involved in drug trafficking (Pereira, 2020b).

[Bacari Biai and Juscelino De Gaulle] can hardly convince me and a large part of the population that they were not involved with the drug traffickers. I say this with all responsibility. We only need to realize that during the time they were in charge of the Judiciary Police, there were practically no seizures. There were drug dealers who escaped from the Judiciary Police premises with the product without any inquiry being opened on the security officers that guarded those premises. (Ruth Monteiro in Pereira, 2020b)

Biai has halted many drug-related investigations (confidential report, 2019: 34). In January 2018, already as attorney general, he started hiring officers for critical posts, including at the airport and port of Bissau, without proper training for this kind of work, calling into question the effectiveness of the anti-drug services. This recruitment was challenged by the Judiciary Police (ibid.). In parallel, Biai and De Gaulle harassed Judiciary Police inspectors involved in the fight against drug trafficking (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as C, 2021).

In December 2017, Biai had the criminal investigation into Nino Vieira's murder closed (Semedo, 2017) without the prosecutor's office being able to officially confirm the former president's connection to cocaine trafficking (confidential report, 2019: 15, 18-23 and 27).

The absence of criminal cases allowed the then Umaro Sissoco Embaló government, in 2017, to claim that there was no drug trade on the Bijagós islands, a previously identified critical transit point (Carlos, 2017).

Regardless of the specific actors noted here, the justice system already had significant vulnerabilities in its relationship with international criminal networks before Biai was appointed attorney general. According to a 2016 report by the UN on the independence of judges and lawyers, drug trafficking was one of the topics in the justice system, along with forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and others, where impunity was most evident. "Positive efforts to carry out investigations into these crimes are often frustrated when the prosecution service does not promptly follow through, and the suspects have time to leave the country" (UNHRC, 2016: 14). In addition to portraying a total lack of court and prison conditions, this report called into question the impartiality of judges. It noted that "corruption is also widespread, including among actors in the justice system, although difficult to assess" (UNHRC, 2016: 8 and 17).

There is a historical distrust that the people of Guinea-Bissau legitimately express about the judicial system due to its oppressive role during colonialism when it was at the service of the strategy and orders of the political power (UNIOGBIS, 2020: 25). The subordination of

the judiciary to political power remained a reality after independence and is noticeable in the composition of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, where only one of its members is elected by his peers (UNHRC, 2016: 8). The president and the parliament appoint all others. This subservience of the judiciary is even more explicit in how the president can choose and fire the attorney general (UNHRC, 2016: 10). “The attorney general is a kind of aide-de-camp to the president. And the attorney general can call any case to himself and assign it to a magistrate he can manipulate” (interview with a Guinea-Bissau civil society leader, 2021).

Apart from the Judiciary Police, a corporation with an international reputation of “capacity and independence” (Global Initiative, 2021: 12), security forces that depend on the Ministry of the Interior have a fragile relationship with the rule of law. Most police officers recruited since 2012 have no formal ties to the state.

Many police officers are recruited by certain commanders or by the minister himself and have no salaries. They end up working on their own and are often part of organized crime, i.e., they collaborate with those who commit crimes to get some benefits. I say this from my own experience because I was an advisor to the Ministry of the Interior. The number of these recruits is already more than 4,000, while the number of police officers in Guinea-Bissau is slightly more than 3,000. (Guinea-Bissau civil society leader, 2021)

This state of affairs in the justice system and the security sector has had an apparent impact on the behavior of the armed forces, the courts, and the police in high-profile cases.

Despite the restoration of constitutional order in 2014, with the holding of free, fair, and transparent elections, the authors of the 2012 coup d'état, including General António Indjai, have not been subject to judicial investigations for either the usurpation of power or the drug trafficking plot in which they were involved. That was, in fact, one of José Mário Vaz's election promises: “From April 14, everyone will be pardoned, even those who committed crimes on the 13th; only then will we have true national reconciliation, peace, and stability,” he said during the electoral campaign (Darame, 2014).

The two-year transition that followed the 2012 coup provided fertile ground for the military junta and affiliated politicians in power to scale up unlawful activities. The population has little trust in the justice system, which is perceived as being ineffective, biased and aimed at serving and covering up the interests of the powerful. (UNCS, 2015a: 13)

The amnesty granted to General Indjai and the other military personnel involved in the so-called cocaine coup was endorsed in May 2014 in a joint communiqué from the PAIGC and

PRS, the two parties with the most votes in the legislative elections the previous month (UNSC, 2014: 2).

President José Mário Vaz himself was freed from a criminal inquiry of corruption that was ongoing when he was elected president. It had to do with the alleged embezzlement of \$12 million in financial support given by Angola to Guinea-Bissau when he was Finance Minister between 2009 and 2012 (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as B, 2021). He was even detained for a few days in February 2013. In March 2014, then-attorney general Abdu Mané tried to prevent Vaz from running for office because of that inquiry, but his request was rejected before the Supreme Court of Justice, which led the attorney general to resign (UNSC, 2014: 4).

In a nutshell, the stalling of justice and security sector reforms in the period under review coincided with impunity for military officers involved in the 2012 coup, with an almost absence of cocaine seizures between 2014 and 2018, and with the prevalence of some civilians in the state's relationship with the drug trade.

### *3.5 The political crisis of 2020*

The result of the 2019 legislative elections is reminiscent of what happened in 2014 and 2015. PAIGC won with the same political program, Terra Ranka, and the same candidate, Domingos Simões Pereira, achieving 47 of the 102 seats in parliament (Cassamá, 2019). Braima Camará's MADEM-G15 managed to come in second with 27 seats.

An agreement between PAIGC and APU-PDGB allowed Simões Pereira to secure the parliamentary majority (Lusa, 2019b) with 54 seats, but president José Mário Vaz rejected his name for prime minister. "This proposed name is not objectively and publicly in a position to ensure a healthy and ethical institutional relationship, and without irremediable institutional ruptures with the president," justified the head of state (Lusa, 2019c).

Given this deadlock, Aristides Gomes continued as prime minister, and Domingos Simões Pereira stood as a candidate in the December 2019 presidential elections, in which José Mário Vaz sought reelection. It turned out that Umaro Sissoco Embaló, the candidate of MADEM-G15, won with 53.55% of the vote in a run-off contested by Simões Pereira (Al Jazeera, 2020a).

Simões Pereira challenged the results in the Supreme Court of Justice. However, before the dispute was settled, Sissoco Embaló was sworn in on February 27 with the support of outgoing president José Mário Vaz in a ceremony protected by the presidential guard. That day the armed forces occupied all key state institutions, including the Supreme Court. In the following days, Sissoco Embaló dismissed prime minister Aristides Gomes and replaced him with Nuno Nabiam, leader of the APU-PDGB, with the support of MADEM-G15 and PRS. Less than two weeks later, the ECOMIB troops ensuring the maintenance of constitutional order were withdrawn from their posts at the new president's request (UNSC, 2020b: 2-3).

In the aftermath of this power grab, several events have occurred that are connected in some way to drug trafficking. New president Sissoco Embaló and new prime minister Nabiam had their picture taken on the steps of the presidential palace alongside General António Indjai and two other officers involved in the 2012 cocaine coup, deputy chief of the general staff Mamadu N'Krumah and chief of the airforce Ibraim Papa Camará (Shawn and Gomes, 2020: 7).

Justice Minister Ruth Monteiro, who provided political cover for the largest cocaine seizures in 2019, was fired and accused by the attorney general's office of taking a UNDP car. She had to go into hiding for two months because she feared for her safety, eventually leaving the country (Pereira, 2020a; UNSC, 2020b: 10-11).

A criminal case was also opened against Aristides Gomes. In the meantime, he lost his security guards from ECOMIB and was forced to take refuge in the United Nations mission, where he stayed for a year until he was able to leave Guinea-Bissau in February 2021 (Marques, 2021). Later, Aristides Gomes revealed that President José Mário Vaz called him to try to stop the seizure of cocaine in Operation Caparau and that soon after Operation Navarra, MADEM-G15 joined the president to try to replace him as prime minister (Pereira, 2022b).

In the area of justice, the Judiciary Police director, Filomena Mendes Lopes, was forced to resign (Pereira, 2022a). Earlier, in February 2017, she had been fired by Sissoco Embaló when he was prime minister, and was replaced at the time by Bacari Biaí. After becoming president, Sissoco reappointed Biaí in November 2021 as attorney general (Democrata, 2021).

In the security sector, Botche Candé took office as minister of the Interior in March 2020 and allowed one of the Operation Navarra fugitives, Braima Seidi Bá, to move freely in Bissau when he was sentenced in the court of the first instance to 16 years in prison. Seidi Bá was reported to be working under the protection of General Indjai (Shawn & Gomes, 2020: 13).

Later in 2021, Candé was identified during a police operation, Operation RED, as allegedly being behind the theft of 900 kilograms of cocaine from traffickers working under General Indjai in an apparent rivalry between groups (interview with an international senior law-enforcement officer, 2021). This theft occurred two months before Candé emerged as the leader of a new party he created, the Guinean Workers' Party (RFI, 2021). Before that, he was one of the leaders of MADEM-G15, the party of Braima Camará and Sissoco Embaló (Darame, 2022).

This sequence of events is consistent with the promise reportedly made by MADEM-G15 to drug traffickers in 2019 that the party would keep an “open door” to trafficking in exchange for election campaign money (Shawn & Gomes, 2020: 5).

The weakness of our institutions allowed people who have no commitment to morality to reach the top of the hierarchy of our state. (interview with a former member of the Guinea-Bissau government identified here as A, 2021)

Despite these worrying signs, the international community, including the European Union and Portugal, eventually recognized the president's legitimacy. This recognition followed the approval of ECOWAS (Al Jazeera, 2020b; Rodrigues, 2020). A political transition was completed with Sissoco Embaló's election as ECOWAS chairman in July 2022 (Lusa, 2022b).

At this point, we can conclude that Guinea-Bissau has displayed symptoms of infiltration of drug trafficking organizations into the security and justice sectors and the political elite over the past decade. Officials in top positions of political power have promoted instability to secure control of certain essential functions that facilitated cocaine trafficking while hindering the state reform long-planned and demanded by international donors. However, are these elements enough to say that Guinea-Bissau is a narco-state?

## CHAPTER 4

### *A comparative analysis of the use of the term narco-state*

Having established in detail how, in recent years, Guinea Bissau had its political institutions fall prey to drug trafficking, we will review other case studies approached by academia in different countries to ascertain the extent of the narco-state label.

The label seems loaded with prejudice and has functioned as an anathema. Once it began to be called a narco-state, Guinea-Bissau was seen from the outside “as a genuine threat to the international community, harboring drug rings and other avenues for illicit global trade and the fostering of international terrorism” (Chabal & Green, 2016: 230).

Not to be conditioned by this prejudice, we decided to first build insights and analysis on the state and narcotrafficking in the previous chapters, leaving for the end the discussion on the framing of this label and how our case study compares with others. We start by presenting countries in Latin America before focusing on Asia and Africa, so we can properly frame the use of the term better and then return to the case of Guinea-Bissau.

#### *4.1 Mexico and other examples in Latin America of narco territories*

In Latin America, the drug economy and its relationship with the state have historical roots, although manifesting differently in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico, countries where this phenomenon has a greater weight. This relationship evolved from how territories integrated coca, marijuana, and opium poppy cultivation before widespread policies prohibited their production and fought their trafficking (Pansters, 2018; Gillies, 2018; Gutierrez, 2020; van Dun, 2019; Thoumi in Wilson & Lindsey, 2009).

Mexico contradicts the notion that the drug industry’s association with the state can only flourish in fragile countries. Despite being a consolidated state with solid institutions, a robust economy, and a credible electoral system, the country includes some “dark spaces” within its borders where central authorities cannot control the means of violence. Not only the rule of law does not exist in these territories, but drug production and trafficking have long been part of the local economy and its governance culture. It links to the hierarchy of local power and the exercise of that power in the state structure, in what Pansters (2018: 317-319) calls an “informal order.”



This hybrid system revolves around *caciques*, that is, strongmen who concentrate power on themselves and may even hold public offices. This informal order has thrived at the regional level in Mexico. It is fed by practices of clientelism, corruption, and political protection, promoting, or at least allowing, the development of illegal activities and bridging the gap between governance and organized crime, where there is a symbiosis made of exchanges of favor.

Finding refuge under state autonomy, a new Realpolitik federalism granted regional elites and regionally based drug trafficking organisations greater independence and more options to protect their interests. Sociologist Rivelois even speaks of mafia regions or narco-states, where regional elites, often priista cacicazgos, established alliances with the bosses of illegal economies and appropriated the spoils themselves. In combination with increased criminal resources, the changing configurations of (sub)national power gave rise to a new generation of regional networks of corruption, complicity and impunity. (Pansters, 2018: 323)

While there has been a dramatic evolution of the drug industry since the 1980s, with Mexico taking a leading role in moving cocaine produced elsewhere in Latin America to the United States, such local alliances between the political elite and the drug bosses are an old reality. Pansters gives several examples of military commanders and regional politicians who personified this crossroads during the 20th century, such as the case of General Macías Valenzuela, who in the 1940s was governor of Sinaloa and a trader of locally produced opium (Pansters, 2018: 322).

In Bolivia, where the production and consumption of the coca plant are traditional practices, the drug economy began to develop during a period of military dictatorship that lasted from 1964 to 1982. At the time, “state-narco networks” were established based on the relationship between elements of the state and drug bosses. According to Gillies (2018: 733), cocaine production and trafficking syndicates had guaranteed that they were not criminally prosecuted or even enjoyed the protection of people at the top of the military hierarchy and in other relevant positions in the state.

These state-narco partnerships survived Bolivia’s transition to democracy, despite increased institutional scrutiny and the pressure brought by a strengthened US policy to fight international drug trafficking. More fragmented formats emerged, with criminal organizations maintaining strong links to military power figures from the previous authoritarian regime (Gillies, 2018: 736-737).

In Peru, the case study of the Fosforo district in the Upper Huallaga region shows how consistent the idea is that it is possible to have territories within a country capable of deep interdependent relations with drugs. In this enclave, the *patrones*, or drug bosses, are the ones who dictate the rules of life in society.

The *patrones* became important local powerholders who not only dominated socio-economic resources but also legitimated their narco-territoriality, defined as their strategies to exert authority over social life in these drug-processing communities, through interactions and arrangements with a variety of “shadow powers”. (van Dun, 2019: 1028)

To a large extent, the exercise of power by the *patrones* was regarded as legitimate by the local population. People saw it as an alternative to the order of the central state, even more so when the production of coca and coca paste was an essential part of the economic livelihood of many families. In addition, the *firmas*, as the criminal organizations are known there, were materially supporting the communities to bolster their popularity (van Dun, 2019: 1032-1033).

In Colombia, which by 2018 represented 68.5% of the world’s 213,000 hectares of coca plantations, this industry is based in territories where the central state is not as present (Gutierrez, 2020: 1014-1015). One of the most notorious examples is in Putumayo, a region with no infrastructure and dependent on agriculture, which was dominated for almost four decades by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). Gutierrez argues that the local coca growers created their own political and social order. It was “precisely the illegal coca economy which enabled an excluded territory and people to be inserted back into the market” (ibid.: 1016).

In these territories with strong state-narco connotations in Latin America, there was a moral dimension in how the industry had a popular legitimacy, which helps explain how the business expanded, including its articulation with the state (Pansters, 2018: 325). This legitimacy has to do with the integration of drugs into the local culture (Gutierrez, 2020).

Although the outlawing of coca production and a series of police crackdown campaigns helped bring violence to these territories, the high profits of the drug industry allowed some communities in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia to counterbalance the economic and social hardships imposed by structural adjustment programs at the turn of the 1980s to 1990s. It compensated for an anemic public investment in these regions (Thoumi in Wilson and Lindsey, 2009: 208; Gutierrez, 2020: 1016).

#### *4.2 The cases of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan*

In Asia, China and Taiwan were historically the major producers and exporters of opium. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the primacy of production was taken over by Afghanistan. From the late 1990s onwards, much of the opium and heroin coming from there used a route through the former Soviet provinces of Central Asia via the old Silk Road. Tajikistan's weight in the export to Russia and Europe of opium and its derivatives produced in Afghanistan was estimated to be between 25% (Lewis, 2010: 39) and 50 to 65% (Paoli et al., 2007: 961).

The decline in the number of criminal cases and convictions for drug trafficking in Central Asia has not meant a reduction in this illegal trade. On the contrary. In Tajikistan, cases dropped by less than half in the five-year interval from 2001 to 2006. "The more drugs are trafficked through Central Asia, the lower the level of drug-related crime" (Lewis, 2010: 40). This extrapolation is inferred from the fact that opium and heroin production has grown substantially in Afghanistan, which is relatively easy to measure by the size of poppy plantations.

Tajikistan emerged from a civil war in 1992 that plunged the country into state failure and created the conditions for drug trafficking to blossom throughout that decade, encouraged by its proximity to Afghanistan, which shares a 1200-kilometer border, and a deep economic crisis. The drug-fueled culture of corruption was almost institutionalized. In 2000, a chief position in one of the Interior Ministry posts on the border with Afghanistan could cost \$50,000 (Paoli et al., 2007: 952-957).

In a decade, criminal groups have gained so much weight and influence that some of their leaders have moved into government positions. These leaders were military commanders who decided to make a career in the state or run for elections. They joined the two major political parties, including the one that got President Emomali Rakhmonov elected in the 1990s (Paoli et al., 2007: 967-969).

Paoli, Rabkov, Greenfield, and Reuter consider that the data they have collected is sufficient to conclude that they are facing "a veritable 'narco-state.'" They do not discuss the concept at length and prefer to focus on only one ingredient: the drug trade is "headed or protected by high-ranking government officials" (ibid.: 971).

In Kyrgyzstan, where there is no border with Afghanistan, unlike neighboring Tajikistan, heroin has also had a growing presence. While it is not entirely clear who dominates the market, there were elements in solid positions of power who had even determined the closure of the anti-drug agency. According to Kupatadze (2014: 1-2), the period when the country came closest to justifying a narco-state status was during the presidency of Kurmanbek Bakiev, between 2005 and 2010, when his brother Janish was involved in drug trafficking while heading the State Guard Service, and one could speak at that time of a “criminalization of the state” (ibid.: 3-4).

In Turkmenistan, the involvement of the highest state figure in the drug trade was likewise an issue. Several former officials who eventually defected to the West, including a former governor of the central bank, reported how during the authoritarian regime of Saparmurad Niyazov in the 1990s, the dictator himself stored large quantities of heroin in a personal safe. Moreover, it was the military who guaranteed the protection of the traffickers along the route, justifying for Lewis (2010: 42-43) the application of the term narco-state.

Unlike the experiences in Latin America, where the ties of criminal groups with the state are more at the regional or local level, in these Central Asian examples the business is done with the connivance or even under orders from senior officials with high positions in the central state apparatus. This state umbrella explains the absence of violence generally associated with repressive police campaigns, fierce competition between rival groups or the insurgency of rebel movements supported by drug money. Instead of promoting instability, what this money does is help consolidate power by buying people’s loyalty in critical places in the chain of command.

Rather than resulting in conflict, it is arguable that the trade in narcotics has instead strengthened regimes, providing them with a way to manage political challenges by centralizing power and buying off disaffected groups. (Lewis, 2010: 46).

As for Afghanistan itself, because it is so relevant as an opium producer, while there is some literature speculating on the extent to which it might be a narco-state, there is no consistent academic output on it, but primarily diplomatic and military considerations. Although drug production increased even during the war from 2001 to 2021, the problem was limited to Helmand province in the country’s south. It is far beyond the central state control

exercised by Kabul, and this aspect is an essential part of the discussions held in the past decades related to military strategies (Schweiz, 2008).

#### *4.3 Mali, the Sahel, and the absence of the state*

Studies on the drug industry and its relationship to society and the state are relatively recent in Africa. The most lucrative drugs in the market, heroin and cocaine, were out of the continent for a long time. There has been more attention on cocaine in the region after Guinea-Bissau was labeled as Africa's first narco-state and with the emergence on the scene of the Sahel (Carrier & Klantschig, 2016: 174-175).

In the Sahel, specifically in Mali, and unlike Guinea-Bissau, the academic literature has not even raised the hypothesis that it might make sense to discuss the possible application of the narco-state term. The reason seems obvious: in the territory in question, northern Mali, and the context of growing insurgency since 2006, the state has become increasingly absent; thus, traffickers no longer needed protection agreements with the central power in Bamako (Briscoe, 2014: 7-8).

While the cocaine trade is relatively new to the region, at least in significant quantities, the routes used to transport it across the Sahel had long been employed to smuggle other products, including cigarettes and cannabis (Tinti, 2020: 3; International Crisis Group, 2018: 3-4).

Cocaine trafficking, evident in the region from the crash of a Boeing in 2009 with almost 10 tons on board, coincided with a fast development of the rebellion against Amadou Toumani Touré's government. Tuareg groups spearheaded a series of attacks beginning in 2006 and created in 2011 the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Ansar Dine (Briscoe, 2014: 13).

As the conflict intensified in the early 2010s, the Malian government opted to entrust security in that region to local militias and commanders of former rebel groups. This withdrawal of the armed forces displeased the military leadership and eventually precipitated a coup d'état in 2012. However, despite the support of a UN peacekeeping mission and French special forces with Operation Barkhane, it was no longer possible to recover the state's presence in northern Mali. On the contrary, violence spread southward (Tinti, 2020: 4).

This absence of the state does not mean that there are not — or were not — high government officials implicated in the drug trade in Mali. That was, in fact, the case at least until the 2012 coup d'état, when there seemed to be a settlement between the armed forces and some groups considered pro-government, in a kind of outsourcing of state security that included tolerance towards the illegal cocaine trade.

The merger of protection economies with state security structures created a new dynamic in which, broadly speaking, government-supported Bérabiche Arab, Lamhar Arab and Imghad Tuareg military units – led by Lieutenant-Colonel Lamana Ould Bou, Colonel-Major Ould Meydou and Colonel Ag Gamou respectively – were called upon to counter the influence of Ifoghas and Idnan Tuareg rebels, who were allied with the Kounta Arabs. The intertwining of drug-trafficking networks with armed actors not only led to the increased militarisation of trafficking, it also upended traditional hierarchies and created disputes within and between communities. (Tinti, 2020: 10)

The patronage connection with the state continued to exist afterward, with cases of corruption of elements of the security apparatus in Bamako (UNSC, 2020d: 2). Some drug traffickers made political careers, having access to immunity, diplomatic passports, public contracts, and also investments in the legal economy (International Crisis Group, 2018: 8-11). Nevertheless, drug traffickers do not seem to depend as much on these government officials as in other countries, but rather on the communities where they are embedded and of which they are prominent members, and whose autonomy and sense of independence are significant (Tinti, 2020: 14).

#### *4.4 Capture of the state apparatus versus capture of key officials*

In all of these countries just examined, where drug trafficking arguably has a significant impact on society, the use of the term narco-state or related expressions such as narco-territory seems loose. In none of the literature analysed in which the term was applied is there a concern to frame it clearly and precisely, even though Paoli sketches a very brief definition: a state “in which leaders of the most powerful trafficking groups occupy high-ranking government positions and misuse state structures for their own illicit businesses” (Paoli et al., 2007: 952).

There are, however, those who have devoted time and energy to this normative discussion. Chouvy (2016) criticizes the indiscriminate application of the term over the years and believes that, in reality, there is not a single narco-state in the world. According to him,

many authors who resort to this classification merely justify it with situations where drug production and trafficking involves a very high level of government corruption, “despite the fact that corruption is usually described according to its nature, or to its scale and/or to the sector it affects, not according to the economic resource at stake” (Chouvy, 2016: 27).

However, this specialization of corruption, named according to the resource in question, is not unique to the drug industry. It also happens with the oil industry, for example. The term petro-state has been applied to designate countries that are not only highly dependent on oil but where this resource is associated with a phenomenon of “spiraling corruption” (Karl, 1999).

Bybee, who studied the case of Guinea-Bissau for his doctoral thesis, sought to frame the concept of a narco-state taking into account the impact “that the drug trade can have on all components of the state, not merely political factors” (Bybee, 2011: 97). That is, not limited to the political protection achieved through corruption, but also referring to the social, economic and security dimensions, thus extending to phenomena such as drug addiction, to insurgency hotbeds fueled by drug money, and to the weight that this trade has on the country's economy, including as an employer and in exports.

According to this holistic view, the capture of government officials exists in Guinea-Bissau, allowing drug trade organizations to operate with impunity, but this corresponds only to the political dimension of a narco-state. That is, only one of four dimensions. Bybee concludes that, given this broader framework, Guinea-Bissau is not — or was not in 2011 — a narco-state. All the more so because these dimensions are more difficult to compromise if there is no state to be affected: “Failed states are actually less vulnerable to the deleterious effects of the drug trade because they have very little at stake in terms of state capacity” (Bybee, 2011: 285).

This finding is in line with Shaw, who considers, for Guinea-Bissau, that “using the term narco-state where much of the state has little or no capacity is inappropriate” (Shaw, 2015: 339). For him, the definition of narco-state includes “the subversion of state institutions by drug barons at multiple levels.” And what is happening with drugs in that country concerns a “relatively small elite network that aims to control an illicit resource from which they have benefited” (ibid.: 341).

There is in this holistic framework the assumption that only an organized and structured state — and in that sense, corresponding to a classical European and Weberian view — can be considered a narco-state. All territory not efficiently covered by such a state should not be subject to such a label.

In search of the true literal meaning of the term, Chouvy prefers to leave no room for doubt and goes even further:

A state cannot qualify as a narco-state unless illegal drug production and/or trafficking are/is the result of top-down economics where the state developed, if not initiated, an illegal drug industry. For a state to be rightly categorized as a narco-state, the illegal drug industry must be state sponsored and must contribute to the majority of a country's overall economy. (Chouvy, 2016: 35)

But what if, in a very fragile state, in which parts of the territory and the essential functions that citizens expect to see fulfilled are not covered by the state apparatus, there are top officials in central power involved in drug trafficking, to the point of holding critical positions in the government, courts, armed forces, so impunity is guaranteed to criminals and they can prosper from the cocaine business? This reality has to be considered for Guinea-Bissau in recent years, especially from the known facts starting in 2019.

Unlike Mexico or Colombia, where the drug industry only has to deal with local or regional authorities and where it makes more sense to talk about narco-territories, in a country as small as Guinea-Bissau, there is no way to avoid central power. “The smaller the country, the more they have to make alliances with high-ranking national political figures” (Thoumi in Wilson and Lindsey, 2009: 207).

David C. Jordan designed a process that he calls narcostatization, which includes an index that attempts to translate a graduation scale in the relationship between drug traffickers and elites in both democratic and authoritarian states (Jordan, 1999: 6). The last of these stages of narcostatization, the narco-state, is achieved when “the criminalization of the political system has reached the point that the highest officials of the government protect and depend on narcotics trafficking organizations” (ibid.: 234), with the “possible complicity of the presidency itself” (ibid.: 121). This level can be attained in a democratic regime where the “ruling class maintains itself in power despite the apparent existence of contested elections and full public participation” (ibid.: 9).



If this is the grid, then Guinea-Bissau is close to being a narco-state. There would be no need for a capture of the state apparatus. The capture of very high government officials — and more than that, their active involvement in trafficking, as seems to be the case — would thus be a necessary and sufficient condition.

In any case, the consequences of this power trap are profound. Capturing the people with some of the most prominent state positions produces a political contest motivated by the wrong reasons and fueled by illegal financial resources that destroy fair and healthy competition in elections. In the long run, even if drug trafficking does not directly contaminate most state functions, it negatively affects its performance (see, in this regard, all the reports made by the UN Secretary General to the Security Council between 2014 and 2020). This trap offers the ideal conditions for the situation to last, removing the chances of Guinea-Bissau having governments focused on pursuing cross-cutting policies capable of building a state that serves the well-being of the people and sustainable development for their country.

## CONCLUSION

Besides being a very lucrative economic activity, drug trafficking can be a potent political disruptor. It has played a meaningful role in Guinea-Bissau's history over the past two decades. It emerged as a resource for the elite in a failed state with an anemic economy resulting from a civil war that worsened development prospects. The illegal cocaine trade has been mentioned as one of the drivers of instability in the country.

In 2005, cocaine allegedly financed Nino Vieira's comeback as president, and from then on, international criminal networks never ceased to have alliances with local political and military power. The fact that 2019 saw the most significant cocaine seizures ever and that these are linked to a sequence of political events is a sign that this illegal trade made its way into infiltrating, in the long run, the Bissau-Guinean elite, including top officials at the judicial system and the government.

This dissertation sheds light on the interconnectedness between drug trafficking and the state of Guinea-Bissau from 2014 to 2020. We show that following the stabilization achieved in 2014, with the military refraining from engaging in coups d'état, there was a preponderance of civilian actors in the drug business, including politicians, businessmen, and prosecutors.

We show that the interests of this illegal trade conditioned the governance solutions advanced between 2015 and 2018. The political instability caused by then-president José Mário Vaz's refusal to work with an elected prime minister allowed the planned reforms to the security sector and the judicial system to be stalled, benefiting the drug traffickers.

The political crisis of 2020 occurred due to the largest cocaine seizures. The military's intervention to force Umaro Sissoco Embaló into office as president, and the formation of a government integrating his MADEM-G15 party, promoted impunity for kingpins identified and accused of trafficking activities, as well as the rise to critical positions of state power of civilians allegedly involved in this illegal trade.

Overall, this dissertation finds that in the last decade, the relationship between drug trafficking and the state has consolidated, expanding its ramifications in the Bissau-Guinean elite beyond the military hierarchy. Cocaine has established itself as a highly profitable resource. It has become a reason for a struggle by politicians involved in the business to

shape governance in their favor, strangling the rule of law and sacrificing cross-cutting policy planning and execution that might enhance state capacity and legitimacy.

Given the conceptualization and the use of the label narco-state to date in different countries, Guinea-Bissau fits into the framework of this term if it corresponds to a less strict definition than that advocated by Shaw or Chouvy.

Discussing the application of the narco-state label makes sense because of its impact on the external perception of a country. Until the large-scale dissemination of the label in 2007 as a way to describe Guinea-Bissau, the Bissau-Guinean population did not censure drug trafficking because it was an unknown business without a moral charge associated with it. However, from the moment people started to be associated with that image, and there was tighter control of citizens in airports abroad, the connotation of the country with a narco-state led to a generalized rejection of the population concerning the drug trade (interview with a Guinea-Bissau civil society leader, 2021).

In addition to being a driver of local political instability, although drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau is not linked to violence, it does influence the spread of violence in the region. This dissertation helps clarify the route that runs through Guinea-Bissau with shipments of cocaine to northern Mali, where it helps finance rebel groups classified as terrorists by the UN.

Unfortunately, it is challenging to have quantitative data on drug trafficking or narco-corruption and the level of criminal association it involves in a country like Guinea-Bissau, where the rule of law is feeble, and impunity is high. To a large extent, our analysis depended on testimonials, opinions, and extrapolations obtained both directly and indirectly.

There is also a notable lack of work on the transnational relations of drug trafficking between Latin America and Africa, including its more political dimension. Nothing is known about the criminal organizations in Colombia, Mexico, and possibly other countries that export drugs to Guinea-Bissau, nor how they relate to their local partners. We have to wait for further developments from the law-enforcement agencies in these countries to investigate exports to Guinea-Bissau before academia can expand its knowledge of this illegal business and its relationship with the state.

In short, the relationship between drug trafficking and the state in Guinea-Bissau has not lost importance in recent years. On the contrary, this trade has expanded within the state and

is no longer the domain of only top officers in the armed forces. This protracted infiltration, which has lasted for almost two decades, has implications for the difficulty of having governance focused on solving the country's development problems. It also worsens the security situation in the region, particularly in the Sahel, by helping to finance groups linked to violence. The scope of these consequences justifies further discussion on applying the term narco-state to this small country.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al Jazeera (2015). Guinea-Bissau president dismisses government. 13 August 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/8/13/guinea-bissau-president-dismisses-government>, accessed 16 June 2022.
- Al Jazeera (2020a). Umaro Cissoko Embalo wins Guinea-Bissau presidential election. 1 January 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/1/1/umaro-cissoko-embalo-wins-guinea-bissau-presidential-election>, accessed 7 September 2022.
- Al Jazeera. (2020b). ECOWAS recognises Umaro Sissoco Embalo as Guinea-Bissau president. 23 April 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/23/ecowas-recognises-umaro-sissoco-embalo-as-guinea-bissau-president>, accessed 16 September 2020.
- Andreas, P. (2004). Illicit international political economy: the clandestine side of globalization. *Review of International Political Economy*, 11(3), 641-652.
- Aksar, M. (2017). Qui protège Chérifould Tahar, célèbre narcotraficant du Sahel? *Monde Afrique*, 7 February 2017, <https://mondafrique.com/tege-cherif-ould-tahar-celebre-narcotraficant-sahel/>, accessed 9 September 2021.
- Aubyn, F. K. (2013). Managing complex political dilemmas in West Africa: ECOWAS and the 2012 crisis in Guinea-Bissau. *Conflict Trends*, 2013(4), 26-32.
- Barros, M. de (2012). A Sociedade Civil face ao processo de democratização e o desenvolvimento na Guiné-Bissau (1991-2011). *Africana Studia*, (18).
- Barry, B. S., Creppy, E., & Wodon, Q. (2007). Cashew production, taxation, and poverty in Guinea-Bissau, in Barry, B. S. et al (Ed.). *Conflict, livelihoods, and poverty in Guinea-Bissau* (Vol. 88). World Bank Publications.
- BBC. (2012). Ecowas imposes sanctions on Guinea-Bissau junta leaders. BBC, 30 April 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17893676>, accessed 7 April 2021.
- Blagden, D. (2016). Induction and Deduction in International Relations: Squaring the Circle Between Theory and Evidence. *International Studies Review*, 18(2), 195–213.
- Bird, L. (2021). West Africa's Cocaine Corridor: Building a subregional response. *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 28 April 2021, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/west-africas-cocaine-corridor/>, accessed 5 May 2021.
- Bird, L. & Gomes, A. (2022). 'A very strange coup attempt'. *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 4 February 2022, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/coup-attempt-guinea-bissau/>, accessed 5 February 2022.
- Bish, A. (2019). The second coming of West Africa's cocaine trade? *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 18 March 2019, <https://globalinitiative.net/the-second-coming-of-west-africas-cocaine-trade/>, accessed 7 May 2020.
- Bos, J-M. (2021). La Guinée-Bissau et le Mali au cœur du trafic. Deutsche Welle, 18 June 2021, <https://www.dw.com/fr/trafic-drogues-afrique-guin%C3%A9e-bissau-mali/a-57818593>, accessed 23 June 2021.
- Braun, M.A. (2012). (2012). Compilation of Hearings on Islamist Radicalization by the U.S. Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives — Volume III, 20 June 2012, 18-29.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. (2014). State fragility and failure as wicked problems: beyond naming and taming. *Third World Quarterly*, 35(2), 333-344.
- Briscoe, I. (2014). *Crime after Jihad: armed groups, the state and illicit business in post-conflict Mali*. Clingendael - Netherlands Institute of International Relations.
- Bybee, A. L. (2009). The Narco Curse in West Africa. *New Voices in Public Policy*, 3(2).
- Bybee, A. N. (2011). *Narco state or failed state? narcotics and politics in Guinea-Bissau* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Bybee, A. N. (2012). The twenty-first century expansion of the transnational drug trade in Africa. *Journal of International Affairs*, 69-84.

- Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2022). International Narcotics Control Strategy Report — Volume I: Drug and Chemical Control. *United States Department of State*, 1 March 2022, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/22-00767-INCSR-2022-Vol-1.pdf>, accessed 5 April 2022.
- Cabral, A. (1969). *Revolution in Guinea: An African People's Struggle; Selected Texts*. Stage 1.
- Call, C. T. (2008). The fallacy of the 'Failed State'. *Third World Quarterly*, 29(8), 1491-150.
- Cardoso, C. (2002). *A formação da elite política na Guiné-Bissau (Vol. 5)*. Centro de Estudos Internacionais do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL).
- Carlos, J. (2017). Ministro do Turismo da Guiné-Bissau nega narcotráfico nos Bijagós. *Deutsche Welle*, 24 March 2017, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/ministro-do-turismo-da-guin%C3%A9-bissau-nega-narcotr%C3%A1fico-nos-bijag%C3%B3s/a-38107433>, accessed 5 July 2022.
- Carrier, N., & Klantschnig, G. (2016). Illicit livelihoods: drug crops and development in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 43(148), 174-189.
- Carvalho, A.L. (2011). Intervenções externas no sector da segurança na Guiné-Bissau. *Lusíada. Política Internacional e Segurança*, 4, 47-68.
- Cassamá, L. (2019). PAIGC ganha eleições legislativas na Guiné-Bissau. *VOA*, 13 March 2019, <https://www.voaportugues.com/a/paigc-ganha-eleic%C3%A7%C3%B5es-legislativas-na-guin%C3%A9-bissau/4827096.html>, accessed 3 September 2022.
- Ceesay, H. (2016). The 'narco-state' and the impact on institutions in Guinea-Bissau and countries in the sub-region, in Chabal, P., & Green, T. (Eds.). (2016). *Guinea-Bissau: Micro-state to 'narco-state'*. Hurst, 205-228.
- Chabal, P. & Daloz, J.P. (1999). *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument*. James Currey Limited.
- Chabal, P., Birmingham, D., Forrest, J., & Newitt, M. (2002). *A history of postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. Indiana University Press.
- Chabal, P., Feinman, G., & Skalnik, P. (2004). Beyond states and empires: chiefdoms and informal politics. *Social Evolution & History*, 3(1), 22-40.
- Chabal, P., & Green, T. (Eds.). (2016). *Guinea-Bissau: Micro-state to 'narco-state'*. Hurst.
- Chaliand, G. (1969). *Armed struggle in Africa: with the guerrillas in Portuguese Guinea*. Monthly Review Press.
- Chatam House (2013). 'Guinea-Bissau: Rescue from Collapse', Summary of a meeting addressed by José Ramos Horta, Chatham House, London, 29 October 2013. Available at: [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/home/chatham/public\\_html/sites/default/files/291013Horta.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/home/chatham/public_html/sites/default/files/291013Horta.pdf), accessed 27 April 2022.
- Chouvy, P. A. (2016). The myth of the narco-state. *Space and Polity*, 20(1), 26-38.
- Combs, C. C. (2017). *Terrorism in the twenty-first century*. Routledge.
- Cordeiro, A.D. (2012). Ban Ki-Moon avisa: Centenas de quilos de cocaína entram na Guiné-Bissau todas as semanas. *Público*, 6 December 2012, <https://www.publico.pt/2012/12/06/mundo/noticia/ban-kimoon-avisa-centenas-de-quilos-de-cocaina-entram-na-guinebissau-todas-as-semanas-1576372>, accessed 17 May 2021.
- Cornell, S. E. (2006). The narcotics threat in greater Central Asia: from crime-terror nexus to state infiltration?. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4(1), 37-67.
- Costa, P. A. (2019). *Instabilidade Política na Guiné-Bissau: Dimensões, Causas e Efeitos* (Master dissertation, ISCTE).
- Country Indicators for Foreign Policy, 2012. Country Ranking Table 2012, *Carleton University*, <https://carleton.ca/cifp/failed-fragile-states/country-ranking-table/>, accessed 3 July 2022.
- CPIA (2021). Assessing Africa's Policies and Institutions. *World Bank*, November 2021, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36885/CPIA-Africa-Assessing-Africa-s-Policies-and-Institutions.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y>, accessed 4 July 2022.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Christensen, M. M., Vlassenroot, K., Anders, G., Themnér, A., Vigh, H., Persson, M., & Bøås, M. (2012). *African conflicts and informal power: Big men and networks*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Crick, E. (2012). Drugs as an existential threat: An analysis of the international securitization of drugs. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 23(5), 407–414.
- Dabo, A. (2012). Bissau junta says hands power back to civilians. *Reuters*, 22 May 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/bissau-junta-idAFL5E8GMDLF20120522>, accessed 8 April 2021.
- Dalby, C. (2019). Record Cocaine Hauls Confirm Guinea-Bissau’s ‘Narco-State’ Reputation. *Insight Crime*, 25 September 2019, <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/guinea-bissau-colombia-cocaine-hauls/>, accessed 9 June 2020.
- Darame, B. (2014). Candidato guineense José Mário Vaz promete perdão aos criminosos. *Deutsche Welle*, 24 March 2017, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/candidato-guineense-jos%C3%A9-m%C3%A1rio-vaz-promete-perd%C3%A3o-aos-criminosos/a-17534861>, accessed 5 September 2022.
- Darame, B. (2022). Botche Candé: O “eterno super-ministro” da Guiné-Bissau. *Deutsche Welle*, 22 June 2022, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/botche-cand%C3%A9-o-eterno-super-ministro-da-guin%C3%A9-bissau/a-62225349>, accessed 5 September 2022.
- De Danieli, F. (2014). Beyond the drug-terror nexus: Drug trafficking and state-crime relations in Central Asia. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 25(6), 1235–1240.
- Democrata, O (2021). Sissoco exonera Fernando Gomes e nomeia Bacari Biaí novo procurador-geral da República. 20 November 2021, <https://www.odemocratagb.com/?p=34303>, 8 September 2022.
- Denis, D., & Ted, L. (2007). *Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (with special reference to Guinea Bissau)*. UNODC.
- ECOWAS (2012). ECOWAS sanctions Guinea Bissau after failed talks. *ReliefWeb*, 30 April 2012, <https://reliefweb.int/report/guinea-bissau/ecowas-sanctions-guinea-bissau-after-failed-talks>, accessed 6 April 2021.
- ECOWAS (2016). Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the ECOWAS Roadmap for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea Bissau. 14 October 2016, [https://www.odemocratagb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CONAKRY-AGREEMENT-ON-GUINEA-BISSAU\\_versao-inglesa.pdf](https://www.odemocratagb.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CONAKRY-AGREEMENT-ON-GUINEA-BISSAU_versao-inglesa.pdf), accessed 21 June 2022.
- ECOWAS (2018). ECOWAS imposes individual sanctions for non-implementation of the Conakry agreement in Guinea Bissau. 7 February 2018, <https://ecowas.int/ecowas-imposes-individual-sanctions-for-non-implementation-of-the-conakry-agreement-in-guinea-bissau/>, accessed 21 June 2022.
- EEAS (2015). Terra Ranka: A Fresh Start for Guinea-Bissau. *European Union External Action*, 30 March 2015, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/2105\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/2105_en), accessed 16 September 2022.
- E-global (2018). Guiné-Bissau: CEDEAO surpreende e sanciona Herson Vaz, filho do Presidente da República. 7 February 2018, <https://e-global.pt/noticias/lusofonia/guine-bissau/guine-bissau-cedeao-surpreende-e-sanciona-herson-vaz-filho-do-presidente-da-republica/>, accessed 21 June 2022.
- Ellis, S. (2009). West Africa’s International Drug Trade. *African Affairs*, 108(431), 171–196.
- Ellis, S. (2012). Africa and the War on Drugs – a review by Stephen Ellis. *African Argument*, 22 October 2012, <https://africanarguments.org/2012/10/africa-and-the-war-on-drugs-a-review-by-stephen-ellis/>, accessed 5 February 2022.
- Ellis, S., & Shaw, M. (2015). Does organized crime exist in Africa? *African Affairs*, 114(457), 505-528.
- Embaló, B. (2012). Civil-military relations and political order in Guinea-Bissau. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 50(2), 253-281.
- European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol. (2019). EU Drug Markets Report 2019. *Publications Office of the European Union*, [https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/drug\\_markets\\_report\\_2019\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/drug_markets_report_2019_pdf.pdf), accessed 6 January 2021.
- Evans, M. (2003). Ni paix ni guerre: The political economy of low-level conflict in the Casamance. *Background paper for HPG Report*, 13.

- Farge, E. & Pereira, F. (2015). Guinea Bissau sidelines top brass in bid to end coups. *Reuters*, 19 May 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bissau-military-insight-idUSKBN0O41XS20150519>, accessed 19 June 2020.
- Faria, L. M. (2014). Presidente da Guiné-Bissau demite o principal chefe militar. *Expresso*, 19 September 2014, <https://expresso.pt/internacional/presidente-da-guine-bissau-demite-o-principal-chefe-militar=f890166>, accessed 19 June 2020.
- Faso, B., & Verde, C. (2011). Cocaine from the Andes via West Africa to Europe. UNODC.
- Felbab-Brown, V., & Forest, J. J. (2012). Political violence and the illicit economies of West Africa. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24(5), 787-806.
- Ferreira, I. A. (2017). Measuring state fragility: a review of the theoretical groundings of existing approaches. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(6), 1291-1309.
- Forrest, J. (2002). 'Guinea-Bissau', in Chabal, P., Birmingham, D., Forrest, J. & Newitt, M. (Eds.). *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. Indiana University Press, 236-263.
- Fosu, A. K. (1992). Political instability and economic growth: evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. *Economic Development and cultural change*, 40(4), 829-841.
- Fragile States Index (2022). *The Fund for Peace (FFP)*, 2006-2022, <https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data/>, accessed 4 of July 2022.
- Franco, H. (2018). Preso traficante de um cartel que escondeu coca em navio de ajuda humanitária. E é português. *Expresso*, 15 September 2018, <https://expresso.pt/sociedade/2018-09-15-Preso-traficante-de-um-cartel-que-escondeu-coca-em-navio-de-ajuda-humanitaria.-E-e-portugues>, accessed 21 May 2020.
- Freeman, C. (2020). The African gateway for UK cocaine. *The Telegraph*, 10 June 2007, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1554135/The-African-gateway-for-UK-cocaine.html>, accessed 9 June 2020.
- Galli, R. E., & Jones, J. (1987). *Guinea-Bissau: politics, economics and society*. Frances Pinter.
- Ghani, A., & Lockhart, C. (2009). *Fixing failed states: A framework for rebuilding a fractured world*. Oxford University Press.
- Gibert, M. V. (2009). The securitisation of the EU's development agenda in Africa: insights from Guinea-Bissau. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 10(4), 621-637.
- Gillies, A. (2018). Theorising state–narco relations in Bolivia's nascent democracy (1982–1993): governance, order and political transition. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(4), 727-746.
- Gisselquist, R. M. (2017). Varieties of fragility: implications for aid. *Fragility, Aid, and State-Building: Understanding Diverse Trajectories*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1-24.
- Global Initiative (2014). Illicit Trafficking and Instability in Mali: Past, Present and Future. *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 27 January 2014, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/illicit-trafficking-and-instability-in-mali-past-present-and-future/>, accessed 8 June 2021.
- Global Initiative (2021). The Seidi Bá cocaine trial: A smokescreen for impunity? *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 20 January 2021, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/seidi-ba-cocaine-trial-bissau/>, accessed 3 February 2021.
- Gorjão, P., & Seabra, P. (2010). Guiné-Bissau: a incontornável sensação de " déjà vu". *Lusitana - Política internacional e Segurança*, 3.
- Grayson, G. W. (2011). *Mexico: Narco-violence and a failed state?*. Transaction Publishers.
- Grävinholt, J., Ziaja, S., & Kreibaum, M. (2015). Disaggregating state fragility: a method to establish a multidimensional empirical typology. *Third World Quarterly* 36(7), 1281-1298.
- Green, T. & Thompson, P.R. (2011). Guinea-Bissau: A Narco-Developmental State? — A response to Marie Givert's article, <https://africanarguments.org/2011/07/a-response-to-marie-giberts-article-guinea-bissau-a-narco-developmental-state/>, accessed 28 April 2022.
- Grimm, S., Lemay-Hébert, N., & Nay, O. (2014). 'Fragile States': introducing a political concept. *Third World Quarterly* 35(2), 197-209.
- Gutierrez, E. D. (2020). The paradox of illicit economies: survival, resilience, and the limits of development and drug policy orthodoxy. *Globalizations*, 17(6), 1008-1026.



- Heine, J., & Thakur, R. (2011). *The dark side of globalization*. United Nations University Press.
- Helman, G. B., & Ratner, S. R. (1992). Saving failed states. *Foreign Policy*, (89), 3-20.
- Herbert, R. (2003). Security Sector Governance: An Analysis of Guinea-Bissau. *Working Paper Series of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'*.
- Hirsch, A. (2013). Cocaine flows through Sahara as al-Qaida cashes in on lawlessness. *The Guardian*, 2 May 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/02/cocaine-flows-through-sahara-al-qaida>, accessed 14 June 2021.
- Hoffman, E. (2014). Elections Not Enough to Bring Stability to Troubled Guinea-Bissau. *Global Observatory*, 25 March 2014, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/03/elections-not-enough-to-bring-stability-to-troubled-guinea-bissau/>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Hoffman, F. G. (2007). Conflict in the 21st century: The rise of hybrid wars (p. 51). *Arlington: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*.
- Hoffman, F. G. (2009). Hybrid warfare and challenges. *National Defense University, Washington DC, Institute for National Strategic Studies*.
- Hoffman, M. & Lane, C. (2013). Guinea-Bissau and the South Atlantic Cocaine Trade. *Center for American Progress Journal*, 22 August 2013, 1-7.
- Hanusch, M. (2015). Terra Ranca! A fresh start for Guinea-Bissau. *World Bank*, 25 March 2015, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/terra-ranca-a-fresh-start-for-guinea-bissau>, accessed 9 September 2022.
- Ibekwe, N. & Bauwens, D. (2020). Drug Frontier: How cocaine trafficking is impacting West Africa. *Premium Times*, 1 January 2020, <https://www.premiumpost.com/news/headlines/370647-special-report-drug-frontier-how-cocaine-trafficking-is-impacting-west-africa.html>, accessed 23 May 2020.
- Indictment against José Americo Bubo Na Tchuto and others (2015). *US Justice Department*, 25 March 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-sdny/legacy/2015/03/25/U.S.%20v.%20Na%20Tchuto%20et%20al%20Indictment.pdf>, accessed on March 10 of 2020.
- International Crisis Group (2018). Drug Trafficking, Violence and Politics in Northern Mali. *International Crisis Group*, 13 December 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/267-narcotrafic-violence-et-politique-au-nord-du-mali>, accessed 8 June 2021.
- IRIN News (2007). Fears of an emerging narco-state. *The New Humanitarian*, 2 February 2007, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2007/02/02/fears-emerging-narcostate>, accessed 7 June 2021.
- Johansen, R. (2008). Guinea-Bissau: A new hub for cocaine trafficking. *UNODC Perspectives*, 5 May 2008, 4-7, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/about-unodc/Magazines/perspectives\\_5\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/about-unodc/Magazines/perspectives_5_WEB.pdf), accessed 5 September 2020.
- Jordan, D. C. (1999). *Drug Politics: dirty money and democracies (Vol. 1)*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Kaldor, M. (2003). The idea of global civil society. *International Affairs*, 79(3), 583-593+iv+vii.
- Kaldor, M. (2012). *New and old wars: Organised violence in a global era*. Polity Press.
- Kaldor, M. (2013). In defence of new wars. *Stability*, 2(1), 1-16.
- Karl, T. L. (1999). The perils of the petro-state: reflections on the paradox of plenty. *Journal of international affairs*, 31-48.
- Kemp, W., Shaw, M., & Boutellis, A. (2013). The elephant in the room: how can peace operations deal with organized crime? (pp. 32-45). *New York: International Peace Institute*.
- Kohnert, D. (2010). Democratization via elections in an African 'narco-state'? The case of Guinea-Bissau, working paper 123. Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Area Studies.
- Kopytoff, I. (1989). The Internal African Frontier: the Making of African Political Culture, in *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kwesi Aning, E. & Pokoo, J. (2013). Drug Trafficking and Threats to National and Regional Security in West Africa. *West Africa Commission on Drugs*. Available at <http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Drug-Trafficking-and-Threats-to-National-and-Regional-Security-in-West-Africa-2013-04-03.pdf>, accessed 10 February 2022.

- Kupatadze, A. (2014). Kyrgyzstan – A virtual narco-state? *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 25(6), 1178–1185.
- Lambach, D., Johais, E., & Bayer, M. (2015). Conceptualising state collapse: an institutionalist approach. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(7), 1299-1315.
- Lebovich, A. (2013). Mali's Bad Trip. *Foreign Policy*, 15 March 2013, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/15/malis-bad-trip/>, accessed 3 August 2021.
- Lewis, D. (2010). High Times on the Silk Road. *World Policy Journal*, 27(1), 39–49.
- Lewis, D. & Valdmanis, R. (2013). Special Report: How U.S. drug sting targeted West African military chiefs. *Reuters*, 24 July 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-guinea-bissau-sting-special-report-idUSBRE96N0AR20130724>, accessed 5 May 2020.
- Loewenstein, A. (2016). Guinea-Bissau struggles to end its role in global drugs trade. *The Guardian*, 7 January 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jan/07/guinea-bissau-global-drugs-trade>, accessed 5 May 2020.
- Loewenstein, A. (2019). How the Drug Trade Transformed a Peaceful Tropical Country into a Narco State. *Vice*.
- Lusa (2014). PAIGC vence legislativas guineenses e presidenciais terão segunda volta. 17 April 2014, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/paigc-vence-legislativas-guineenses-e-presidenciais-ter%C3%A3o-segunda-volta/a-17574309>, accessed 18 May 2021.
- Lusa (2019a). Guiné-Bissau: Maior apreensão de droga da história do país em véspera de eleições. 10 March 2019, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guine-bissau-maior-apreensao-de-droga-da-historia-do-pais-em-vespera-de-eleicoes/a-47840628>, accessed 9 June 2020.
- Lusa (2019b). PAIGC ganha com maioria relativa eleições na Guiné-Bissau. *Público*, 13 March 2019, <https://www.publico.pt/2019/03/13/mundo/noticia/paigc-ganha-maioria-relativa-eleicoes-guinebissau-1865292>, accessed 7 September 2022.
- Lusa (2019c). PAIGC volta a propor Domingos Simões Pereira para primeiro-ministro. *Público*, 21 June 2019, <https://www.publico.pt/2019/06/21/mundo/noticia/paigc-mantem-proposta-domingos-simoes-pereira-chefia-governo-1877183>, accessed 7 September 2022.
- Lusa (2019d). PR da Guiné-Bissau aceita demissão de procurador-geral da República. *Diário de Notícias*, 2 July 2019, <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/pr-da-guine-bissau-aceita-demissao-de-procurador-geral-da-republica-11069660.html>, accessed 4 July 2022.
- Lusa (2019e). Guiné-Bissau: José Mário Vaz demite Governo liderado por Aristides Gomes. *Deutsche Welle*, 29 October 2019, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guin%C3%A9-bissau-jos%C3%A9-m%C3%A1rio-vaz-demite-governo-liderado-por-aristides-gomes/a-51029980>, 5 September 2022.
- Lusa (2021). PJ da Guiné-Bissau detém três oficiais da polícia por suspeita de tráfico de droga. 9 July 2021, [https://www.sapo.pt/noticias/atualidade/pj-da-guine-bissau-detem-tres-oficiais-da\\_60e8bfce6e6517259c0c54e](https://www.sapo.pt/noticias/atualidade/pj-da-guine-bissau-detem-tres-oficiais-da_60e8bfce6e6517259c0c54e), accessed 10 July 2021.
- Lusa (2022a). Guiné-Bissau: Sociedade civil “estupefacta” com absolvição de alegados narcotraficantes. 2 July 2022, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guin%C3%A9-bissau-sociedade-civil-estupefacta-com-absolvi%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-alegados-narcotraficantes/a-62337924>, accessed 3 July 2022.
- Lusa (2022b). Guiné-Bissau assume, pela primeira vez, presidência da CEDEAO. *Deutsche Welle*, 3 July 2022, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guin%C3%A9-bissau-assume-pela-primeira-vez-presid%C3%Aancia-da-cedeo/a-62343301>, accessed 4 July 2022.
- Marques, C. (2021). Ex-primeiro-ministro Aristides Gomes saiu da Guiné-Bissau. *Deutsche Welle*, 12 February 2021, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/ex-primeiro-ministro-aristides-gomes-saiu-da-guin%C3%A9-bissau/a-56551850>, accessed 13 February 2021.
- Marshall, M. G., & Elzinga-Marshall, G. (2017). Global report 2017: Conflict, governance and state fragility. *Center for Systemic Peace*, 27 August 2017, <https://www.systemicpeace.org/vlibrary/GlobalReport2017.pdf>, accessed 5 July 2022.
- Massey, S. (2016). Global geopolitics and the failure of securitization in Guinea-Bissau, in Chabal, P., & Green, T. (Eds.). (2016). *Guinea-Bissau: Micro-state to 'narco-state'*. Hurst, 185-203.
- Mazzitelli, A. L. (2007). Transnational organized crime in West Africa: the additional challenge. *International Affairs*, 83(6), 1071-1090.

- Muggah, R., & Sullivan, J. P. (2018). The coming crime wars. *Foreign Policy*, 21.
- Naim, M. (2003). The five wars of globalization. *Foreign Policy*, 134(1), 28-37.
- Newman, E. (2009). Failed states and international order: constructing a post-Westphalian world. *Contemporary security policy*, 30(3), 421-443.
- Norris, P., Kern, M., & Just, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Framing terrorism: The news media, the government and the public*. Routledge.
- Nossiter, A. (2012). Leader Ousted, Nation Is Now a Drug Haven. *The New York Times*, 1 November 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/02/world/africa/guinea-bissau-after-coup-is-drug-trafficking-haven.html>, accessed 4 June 2021.
- Ntephe, P. (2012). *Does Africa Need Another Kind of Law?: Alterity and the Rule of Law in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, SOAS, University of London).
- Observatory of illicit economies in West Africa (2021). A 'libertação' de traficantes condenados pela coordenação das maiores remessas de cocaína de sempre para a Guiné-Bissau. *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 2 September 2021, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/weaobs-risk-bulletin-1/>, accessed 7 September 2021.
- OECD (2018). Illicit Financial Flows: the economy of illicit trade in West Africa. *OECD Publishing*, 20 February 2018, <https://www.oecd.org/dac/illicit-financial-flows-9789264268418-en.htm>, accessed 8 January 2021.
- Official Journal of the European Union (2012). Council Regulation (EU) No 377/2012 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies threatening the peace, security or stability of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. *EUR-Lex*, 3 May 2012, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:119:0001:0008:EN:PDF>, accessed 8 April 2021.
- O'Regan, D. (2012). Narco-States: Africa's Next Menace. *The New York Times*, 28 July 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/13/opinion/narco-states-africas-next-menace.html>, accessed 4 June 2021.
- O'Regan, D., & Thompson, P. (2013). Advancing Stability and Reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau: Lessons from Africa's First Narco-State. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SpecialReport-Guinea-Bissau-JUN2013-EN.pdf>, accessed 3 June 2020.
- O'Regan, D. (2014). The Evolving Drug Trade in Guinea-Bissau and West Africa. *International Relations and Security Network (ISN)*, 28 July 2014, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/187952/ISN\\_182200\\_en.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/187952/ISN_182200_en.pdf), accessed 4 June 2021.
- Ogaba Agbese, P. & Lay Kieh Jr., G. (Eds.). (2007). *Reconstituting the state in Africa*. Springer.
- Ostheimer, A. E. (2001). The structural crisis in Guinea-Bissau's political system. *African Security Review*, 10(4), 45-58.
- Pansters, W. G. (2018). Drug trafficking, the informal order, and caciques. Reflections on the crime-governance nexus in Mexico. *Global Crime*, 19(3-4), 315-338.
- Parkinson, C. (2013). LatAm drug traffickers set up in Guinea-Bissau, expand in Africa. *Insight Crime*, 29 August 2013, <https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/latam-drug-traffickers-set-up-in-guinea-bissau-expand-in-africa/>, accessed 4 June 2021.
- Paoli, L., Rabkov, I., Greenfield, V. A., & Reuter, P. (2007). Tajikistan: The Rise of a Narco-State. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 37(4), 951-979.
- Paris, R. (2004). *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pereira, M. (2020a). Ruth Monteiro: "Quando cheguei a Portugal soube o quão difícil foi tirar-me de Bissau". *Expresso*, 8 May 2020, <https://expresso.pt/internacional/2020-05-08-Ruth-Monteiro-Quando-cheguei-a-Portugal-soube-o-quo-dificil-foi-tirar-me-de-Bissau>, accessed, 8 May 2020.
- Pereira, M. (2020b). Ruth Monteiro: "Os traficantes de droga têm muito mais proteção do Estado do que eu". *Expresso*, 9 May 2020, <https://leitor.expresso.pt/semanario/semanario2480/html/primeiro-caderno/internacional/-os-trafficantes-de-droga-tem-muito-mais-protecao-do-estado-do-que-eu>, accessed 9 May 2020.
- Pereira, M. (2022a). O corredor de Bissau. *Expresso*, 8 April 2022, <https://leitor.expresso.pt/semanario/semanario2580/html/revista-e/-e/o-corredor-de-bissau>, accessed 8 April 2022.

- Pereira, M. (2022b). Aristides Gomes: “Portugal fez aquilo que nós todos vimos”. *Expresso*, 14 April 2022, <https://leitor.expresso.pt/semanario/semanario2581/html/primeiro-caderno/internacional/portugal-fez-aquilo-que-nos-todos-vimos>, accessed 14 April 2022.
- Pereira, M. (2022c). As malas de dinheiro do senhor Camará. *Expresso*, 19 August 2022, <https://leitor.expresso.pt/semanario/semanario2599/html/primeiro-caderno/internacional/as-malas-de-dinheiro-do-senhor-camara>, accessed 19 August 2022.
- Piazza, J. A. (2008). Incubators of terror: Do failed and failing states promote transnational terrorism?. *International Studies Quarterly*, 52(3), 469-488.
- Pinto, C., & Pereira, F. J. (2009). O sinistro precedente da morte ritual. *Expresso*, 7 March 2009.
- Público. (2012). Tráfico de droga aumentou na Guiné-Bissau após o golpe de Estado. 2 August 2012, <https://www.publico.pt/2012/08/02/jornal/trafico-de-droga-aumentou-na-guinebissau-apos-o-golpe-de-estado-25003297>, accessed 17 May 2021.
- Quade, P., & Peres, C. (2009). As rivalidades que mataram Tagmé e Nino não serão de origem étnica. *Expresso*, 7 March 2009.
- Quade, P. (2009). A vingança sossegou o povo. *Expresso*, 14 March 2009.
- Reuters (2018). Decree: Guinea-Bissau's Vaz Names Aristides Gomes as New PM. 16 April 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/guinea-bissau-president-jose-mario-vaz-aristides-gomes-new-prime-minister/4350727.html>, accessed 21 June 2020.
- Reuters (2019a). Cape Verde seizes record cocaine haul from Russian ship. 1 February 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/capeverde-drugs/cape-verde-seizes-record-cocaine-haul-from-russian-ship-idUSL5N1ZW4BD>, accessed 20 June 2020.
- Reuters (2019b). Adviser to Niger official arrested in Guinea Bissau cocaine bust. 11 March 2019, <https://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL8N20Y5U1>, accessed 20 June 2020.
- Reuters (2019c). Senegal seizes 798 kg of cocaine hidden in cars on a ship. 30 June 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-senegal-drugs/senegal-seizes-798-kg-of-cocaine-hidden-in-cars-on-a-ship-idUSKCN1TV0VC>, accessed 20 June 2020.
- Reuters (2020). Cape Verde court finds Russians guilty in record cocaine bust. 28 February 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-capeverde-drugs/cape-verde-court-finds-russians-guilty-in-record-cocaine-bust-idUSKCN20M36T>, accessed 20 June 2020.
- RFI (2011). Mali: révélations de WikiLeaks sur l'avion de la drogue. 5 January 2011, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20110105-mali-revelations-wikileaks-avion-drogue>, accessed 14 June 2021.
- RFI (2018). Bissau: Constituição do MADEM- G15. 1 July 2018, <https://www.rfi.fr/pt/guine-bissau/20180701-bissau-constituicao-madem-g15>, accessed 16 June 2022.
- RFI (2021). Ministro Botche Candé eleito Presidente do Partido dos Trabalhadores Guineenses. 18 December 2021, <https://www.rfi.fr/pt/guin%C3%A9-bissau/20211218-ministro-botche-cand%C3%A9-eleito-presidente-do-partido-dos-trabalhadores-guineenses>, accessed 2 March 2022.
- Rice, S. E., & Patrick, S. (2008). Index of State Weakness in the Developing World. *Brookings Institution*, 2008, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02\\_weak\\_states\\_index.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/02_weak_states_index.pdf), accessed 4 July 2022.
- Rocha, J. M. (2015). Impasse político e incerteza arrastam-se na Guiné-Bissau. *Público*, 29 August 2015, <https://www.publico.pt/2015/08/29/mundo/noticia/impasse-politico-e-incerteza-arrastam-se-na-guinebissau-1706371>, accessed 16 June 2022.
- Rodrigues, A. (2020). Portugal “toma boa nota” do reconhecimento de Embaló como Presidente da Guiné-Bissau. *Público*, 23 April 2020, <https://www.publico.pt/2020/04/23/mundo/noticia/portugal-toma-boa-nota-reconhecimento-embalo-presidente-guinebissau-1913643>, accessed 16 September 2020.
- Roger, B. (2019). Dakar cocaine seizure shows West African ports are easy transit hubs. *The Africa Report*, 17 October 2019, <https://www.theafricareport.com/18839/dakar-cocaine-seizure-shows-west-african-ports-are-easy-transit-hubs/>, accessed 20 June 2020.
- Rosen, L. W. (2015). International drug control policy: background and US responses. *U.S. Congressional Research Service*, 16 March 2015, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RL34543.pdf>, accessed 8 October 2021.

- Rotberg, R. I. (2002). Failed states in a world of terror. *Foreign affairs*, 127-140.
- Rotberg, R. I. (2003). Failed states, collapsed states, weak states: Causes and indicators. *State failure and state weakness in a time of terror*, 1, 25.
- Rudebeck, L. (1974). *Guinea-Bissau: a study of political mobilization*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Rudebeck, L. (2010). They Have Left Us in a Hole: Democratisation and Political Power in a West African Village. *Bulletin de l'APAD*, 31, 32.
- Sandor, A. (2016). *Assemblages of Intervention: Politics, Security, and Drug Trafficking in West Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa).
- Santos, O. (2020). Barco chegado a Cabo Verde do Brasil apanhado com droga para Guiné Bissau. RFI, 10 March 2020, <http://www.rfi.fr/pt/geral/20200310-barco-chegado-a-cabo-verde-do-brasil-apanhado-com-droga-para-guin%C3%A9-bissau>, accessed 19 May 2020.
- Schweich, T. (2008). Is Afghanistan a narco-state? *The New York Times*, 27 July 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/27/magazine/27AFGHAN-t.html>, accessed 16 May 2020.
- Seabra, P. (2011a). A stabilization mission in Guinea-Bissau: the illusive panacea? *Portuguese Institute for International Relations and Security (IPRIS) Lusophone Countries Bulletin*, 15, 5-9.
- Seabra, P. (2011b). Guinea-Bissau: bringing Angola into the fold. *Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security (IPRIS) Viewpoints*.
- Semedo, A. (2017). “Interesses políticos” ditaram arquivamento do caso “Nino” Vieira? *Deutsche Welle*, 29 December 2017, <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/interesses-pol%C3%ADticos-ditaram-arquivamento-do-caso-nino-vieira/a-41974931>, accessed 5 July 2022.
- Shaw, M. (2012). Leadership required: Drug trafficking and the crisis of statehood in West Africa. *Policy Brief 37, Institute for Security Studies*.
- Shaw, M., & Reitano, T. (2013a). Cocaine Politics in Guinea-Bissau: The link between drug trafficking and political fragility and its wider implications. *Columbia University, SIPA*.
- Shaw, M., & Reitano, T. (2013b). Arrest of Guinea-Bissau's drug lords just the first step in the battle against trafficking. *Institute for Security Studies*, 12 August 2013, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/arrest-of-guinea-bissaus-drug-lords-just-the-first-step-in-the-battle-against-trafficking>, accessed 7 September 2020.
- Shaw, M. (2015). Drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, 1998-2014: The evolution of an elite protection network. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53(3), 339-364.
- Shaw, M., & Gomes, A. (2020). Breaking the Vicious Cycle, cocaine politics in Guinea-Bissau. *Global Initiative Against Organized Crime*, 11 May 2020, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/cocaine-politics-guinea-bissau/>, accessed 21 May 2020.
- Shryock, R. (2020a). Guinea-Bissau: Political chaos could boost cocaine trade. *BBC*, 12 March 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51833073>, accessed 6 June 2020.
- Shryock, R. (2020b). Cocaine and Guinea-Bissau: How Africa's 'narco-state' is trying to kick its habit. *BBC*, 28 May 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/world-africa-52569130>, accessed 6 June 2020.
- Silva dos Santos, E. & Cajucam, C. (2019). Guiné-Bissau quer apertar o cerco no tráfico de drogas no país. *Rádio Sol Mansi*, 9 December 2019, <https://www.radiosolmansi.net/index.php/Nacional/guine-bissau-quer-apertar-o-cerco-no-trafico-de-drogas-no-pais.html>, accessed 8 June 2020.
- Solís González, J. L. (2013). Neoliberalismo y crimen organizado en México: El surgimiento del Estado narco. *Frontera norte*, 25(50), 7-34.
- Stoleroff, M. M. P. (2013). *Social boundaries, political elite bargains and (dis) order in Guinea-Bissau, 1974-1998* (Doctoral dissertation, SOAS, University of London).
- Sullivan, J. P. (2018). *The Rise of the Narcostate*. Xlibris Corporation.
- Temudo, M. P., & Schiefer, U. (2003). Disintegration and resilience of agrarian societies in Africa-the importance of social and genetic resources: A case study on the reception of urban war refugees in the south of Guinea-Bissau. *Current Sociology*, 51(3-4), 393-416.
- Temudo, M. P. (2008). From “People’s Struggle” to “This War of Today”: Entanglements of Peace and Conflict in Guinea-Bissau. *Africa*, 78(02), 245–263.

- Temudo, M. P. (2009). From the margins of the state to the presidential palace: The Balanta case in Guinea-Bissau. *African Studies Review*, 52(2), 47-67.
- Temudo, M. P., & Abrantes, M. B. (2013). Changing policies, shifting livelihoods: The fate of agriculture in Guinea-Bissau. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(4), 571-589.
- The Economist. (2019). *The global drugs trade shifts to west Africa*. 21 November 2019, <https://www.economist.com/international/2019/11/21/the-global-drugs-trade-shifts-to-west-africa>, accessed 10 June 2020.
- Themnér, L., & Wallensteen, P. (2014). Armed conflicts, 1946–2013. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(4), 541-554.
- Tilly, C. (2017). *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1990*. Basil Blackwell.
- Tinti, P. (2020). Drug Trafficking in Northern Mali: A Tenuous Criminal Equilibrium. *ENACT Research Paper*, (14).
- UNHRC (2016). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers. United Nations Human Rights Council, 15 June 2016, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/a\\_hrc\\_32\\_34\\_add1.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/a_hrc_32_34_add1.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2012a). Resolution 2048. *United Nations Security Council*, 18 May 2012, <https://reliefweb.int/report/guinea-bissau/resolution-2048-2012-sres2048-2012>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2012b). Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 27 November 2012, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2012\\_887.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2012_887.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2013a). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau, including efforts towards the restoration of constitutional order, and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country. *United Nations Security Council*, 6 May 2013, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2013\\_262\\_0.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2013_262_0.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2013b). Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 6 May 2013, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2013\\_680\\_0.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2013_680_0.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2013b). Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 6 May 2013, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2013\\_680\\_0.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2013_680_0.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2014). Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of and respect for constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 18 August 2015, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2014\\_603\\_0.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2014_603_0.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2015a). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 19 January 2015, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2015\\_37.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2015_37.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2015b). Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization of and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 12 August 2015, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2015\\_619\\_0.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2015_619_0.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2015c). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 13 August 2015, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2015\\_626\\_0.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2015_626_0.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2016a). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 12 February 2016, [https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s\\_2016\\_141.pdf](https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_2016_141.pdf), accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2016b). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security*

- Council*, 12 August 2016, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/837285?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2016c). Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization of and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 16 August 2016, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/838647?ln=en> accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2017a). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 7 February 2017, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/858734?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2017b). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 10 August 2017, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1299306?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2017c). Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 23 August 2017, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1301410?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2018a). Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 9 February 2018, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1472041?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2018b). Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. *United Nations Security Council*, 28 August 2018, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1639830?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2018c). Strategic assessment of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau : special report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 6 December 2018, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1654627?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2019a). Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau : report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 7 February 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1664358?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2019b). Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau : report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 19 August 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3825226?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2019c). Progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau : report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 29 August 2019, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3825890?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2020a). Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau : report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 6 February 2020, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3850091?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2020b). Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau : report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 29 July 2020, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3874494?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2020c). Progress made with regard to the stabilization and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau : report of the Secretary-General. *United Nations Security Council*, 20 August 2020, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3878075?ln=en>, accessed 7 February 2022.
- UNSC (2020d). Final Report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2374 (2017) on Mali and renewed pursuant to resolution 2484 (2019). *United Nations Security Council*, 13 August 2020, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3876820>, accessed 17 June 2021.

- UNODC (2007a). UNODC chief welcomes major cocaine seizure in Guinea-Bissau, urges full backing for police. 4 April 2007, [https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2007-04-04\\_2.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2007-04-04_2.html), accessed 3 July 2022.
- UNODC (2007b). Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa. The threat to stability and development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau), 10 December 2007, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/West%20Africa%20cocaine%20report\\_10%2012%2007.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/West%20Africa%20cocaine%20report_10%2012%2007.pdf), accessed 9 August 2020.
- UNODC (2008a). Drug trafficking as a security threat in West Africa. *UNODC*, 28 October 2008, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/drug-trafficking-as-a-security-threat-in-west-africa.html>, accessed 5 September 2020.
- UNODC (2008b). Annual Report 2008. *UNODC*, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/about-unodc/AR08\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/about-unodc/AR08_WEB.pdf), accessed 5 September 2020.
- UNODC (2011a). Transatlantic Cocaine Market. *UNODC*, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Transatlantic\\_cocaine\\_market.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Transatlantic_cocaine_market.pdf), accessed 6 September 2020.
- UNODC (2011b). Estimating illicit financial flows resulting from drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes. *UNODC*, 31 August 2008, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illicit\\_financial\\_flows\\_2011\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illicit_financial_flows_2011_web.pdf), accessed 6 September 2020.
- UNODC (2011c). Cocaine from the Andes via West Africa to Europe. *UNODC*, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/Reports/TOCTAWestAfrica/West\\_Africa\\_TOC\\_COCAINE.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/Reports/TOCTAWestAfrica/West_Africa_TOC_COCAINE.pdf), accessed 10 September 2020.
- UNODC (2014a). Acordo entre o governo da República da Guiné-Bissau e o Escritório da Nações Unidas contra a Droga e o Crime (UNODC). *UNODC*, 28 November 2014.
- UNODC (2014b). Al Mourabitoun (sanctions list). 2 June 2014, [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aa\\_sanctions\\_list/summaries/entity/al-mourabitoun](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aa_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/al-mourabitoun), accessed 5 August 2021.
- UNODC (2019a). Massive drug operation by Cabo Verdean authorities successfully seizes 9.5 tons of cocaine in Praia. *UNODC*, 5 February 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/2019-02-05-massive-cocaine-seizure-in-cabo-verde.html>, accessed 26 May 2020.
- UNODC (2019b). Guinea-Bissau. UNODC Technical Assistance. 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/guinea-bissau.html>, accessed 2 July 2022.
- UNODC (2019c). Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri (sanctions list). 10 July 2019, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/mohamed-ben-ahmed-mahri>, accessed 5 August 2021.
- UNODC (2022a). Global overview - drug demand, drug supply. *UNODC*, 2022, [https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wdr-2022\\_booklet-2.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/wdr-2022_booklet-2.html), accessed 4 September 2022.
- UNODC (2022b). Potential manufacture of 100 per cent pure cocaine, 2009-2020 (tons).
- U.S. Attorney's Office Southern District of New York (2013a). Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces Arrests Of Drug Kingpin Jose Americo Bubo Na Tchuto, The Former Head Of The Guinea-Bissau Navy, And Six Others For Narcotics Trafficking Offenses. *U.S. Department of Justice*, 5 April 2013, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-us-attorney-announces-arrests-drug-kingpin-jose-americo-bubo-na-tchuto-former>, accessed 13 May 2020.
- U.S. Attorney's Office Southern District of New York (2013b). Manhattan U.S. Attorney Announces \$102 Million Settlement Of Civil Forfeiture And Money Laundering Claims Against Lebanese Canadian Bank. *U.S. Department of Justice*, 25 June 2013, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-us-attorney-announces-102-million-settlement-civil-forfeiture-and-money>, accessed 13 May 2020.
- U.S. DEA (2013). Antonio Indjai, Chief Of The Guinea-Bissau Armed Forces, Charged With Conspiring To Sell Surface-to-Air Missiles To A Foreign Terrorist Organization And Narco-Terrorism Conspiracy. National Media Affairs Office of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 18 April 2013, <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2013/04/18/antonio-indjai-chief-guinea-bissau-armed-forces-charged-conspiring-sell>, accessed 13 May 2020.
- U.S. District Court Southern District of New York (2012). U.S. v. Na Tchuto et al Indictment. *U.S. Justice Department*, 25 March 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-sdny/legacy/2015/03/25/U.S.%20v.%20Na%20Tchuto%20et%20al%20Indictment.pdf>, accessed 13 May 2020.



- U.S. District Court Southern District of New York (2013). United States of America versus Antonio Indjai. *U.S. Justice Department*, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/nys/pressreleases/April13/IndjaiAntoniIndictmentPR/U.S.%20v.%20Antonio%20Indjai%20S6%20Indictment.pdf>, accessed 13 May 2020.
- U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. (2013). Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa. *U.S. Senate*, December 2013, <https://www.drugcaucus.senate.gov/reports/eight-steps-to-counter-the-drug-trade-in-west-africa/>, accessed 9 June 2020.
- Van Dun, M. (2019). Narco-territoriality and shadow powers in a Peruvian cocaine frontier. *Terrorism and political violence*, 31(5), 1026-1048.
- Van Riper, S. K. (2014). Tackling Africa's First Narco-state: Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. *Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, US Army War College*.
- Vigh, H. (2009). Conflictual Motion and Political Inertia: On Rebellions and Revolutions in Bissau and Beyond. *African Studies Review*, 52(02), 143–164.
- Vines, A. (2020). Guinea-Bissau's Political Crisis Could Make It a Narco-State Again. *World Politics Review*, 11 May 2020, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/28750/amid-political-chaos-in-guinea-bissau-drug-trafficking-reemerges-as-a-threat>, accessed 13 May 2020.
- Vulliamy, E. (2008). How a tiny West African country became the world's first narco state. *The Guardian*, 9 March 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/09/drugstrade>, accessed 14 May 2020.
- West Africa Commission on Drugs (2014). Not just in transit: Drugs, the state and society in West Africa. *The Kofi Annan Foundation*, 18 June 2014, <https://www.wacommissionondrugs.org/report>, accessed 16 June 2020.
- Wilson, E. & Lindsey, T (Eds.) (2009). *Government of the shadows: Parapolitics and criminal sovereignty*. Pluto Press.
- Winter, J. (2007). Africa - new front in drugs war. *BBC*, 9 July 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6274590.stm>, accessed 8 May 2020.

## SOURCES

- Bissau Court (2013). Ruling on the judgment of Guinea-Bissau versus Fernando Agosto Té. *Tribunal Regional de Bissau*, 19 November 2013.
- Bissau Court (2018). Ruling on the judgment of Guinea-Bissau versus Ernesto Cá. *Tribunal Regional de Bissau*, 2018.
- Bissau Court (2019). Ruling on the judgment of Guinea-Bissau versus Saído Biai. *Tribunal Regional de Bissau*, 15 February 2019.
- Confidential report (2019) (unpublished). Drug trafficking and organized crime in Guinea-Bissau. Criminal accumulation and elite protection, 2000-2019. A group of experts, not disclosed here, are the authors of this 83 pages confidential report done at the UNODC's request, which was not released to the public.
- Operation Carapau (2019). Ruling. *Tribunal Regional de Bissau*, 15 Novembro de 2019.
- Operation Navarra (2020). Ruling. *Tribunal Regional de Cacheu*, 31 March 2020.
- Operation Navarra (2022). Supreme court ruling. *Supremo Tribunal de Justiça*, 23 June 2022.
- UNIOGBIS (2020) (Unpublished). Análise de conflito - vertentes da instabilidade e oportunidades para a transformação na Guiné-Bissau. UNIOGBIS.