Just as national security progressively deteriorated in the course of the Liberia’s arms civil war, human security was systematically eroded. While it may be easy to look back and statistically quantify the human tragedy in the toll of the more than 750 thousand people that were killed and 1.3 million more that were similarly displaced, (UNDP, 2006) accounting for other forms of atrocities suffered by the people is less easy. Figures lack the capacity to convey the extent of emotional and psychological trauma the people went through in the course of this war. Accounting for loss in human right and human dignity is equally as difficult as accounting for the long term damage inflicted on children by their exploitation during the war. Four years after the war, Liberia was still rated by the Human Security Center as the least secure nation in the world with the highest rate of fatality from political violence. (HSC, 2006)
The abuse of human right that characterized the brutal civil war continued up till the audit of the report in 2005. The spate of violence and lawlessness that was associated with the war was promoted by an atmosphere of impunity in which all groups in the conflict operated. Throughout the war successive humanitarian reports filed by NGOs operating in the country were consistent with their report of widespread acts of violence, intimidation and exploitation against defenseless civilians.

Particularly worth mentioning is the degree to which women and children were exploited and abused. Their plight provoked this remark by the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Anan. “Children continue to be the main victims of conflict. Their sufferings take many forms. Children are killed, made orphans, maimed, abducted, deprived of education and healthcare, and left with emotional scars and trauma. Forced to flee from their homes, refugees and internally displaced children are especially vulnerable to violence, recruitment, sexual exploitation, diseases, malnutrition and death; children are being recruited and used as child soldiers on a massive scale. Girls face additional risk particularly sexual violence, these egregious violence of children’s rights take place in pervasive climate of impunity.” (UNSG, 2003)

Kofi Anan summed up the condition of not only children in Liberia but of all those that were affected by the conflict. About 21,000 children were estimated to have been forcibly recruited as child soldiers in Liberia. Having been used to perpetrated acts of violence sometimes even against their family and denied access to education, these children came out of the war not only confronted by a bleak future but also a hostile society who stigmatize them for their past. Violence against women assumed an endemic proportion during the war, girls and women were abducted and forced to join fighting forces as fighters and sex slaves. (A.I. 2004) The mentality of violence that has been entrenched in these young Liberian men and women continues to pose a serious danger to the nation’s security even after the cessation of the conflict.

Case Study Two

Analysis of Political History of Ghana

Ghana as a nation came into international limelight when it gained its independence in 1957 becoming the first of the European colonized nations in Sub Saharan Africa to be so privileged. Its inspirational independence leader Kwame Nkrumah immediately set the country on a path towards rapid industrialization, an effort that resulted in significant economic growth for Ghana. (IDA, 2004) Nkrumah also gained international prominence for being at the forefront of the struggle to liberate Africa from all forms of colonialism and his strong support for the political unification of post colonial Africa. Earning a reputation as a revered continental statesman, Nkrumah was a leading figure in the formation of the Organization of African Unity despite failing to sway member States into adopting his dream concept of a unified political and defense structure for the continent.

Nkrumah’s administration and his vision for Ghana were however short lived. In 1966 he was toppled in a military coup that ushered in 25 years of military rule in Ghana, albeit punctuated with bouts of experimentation at civilian democracy. (Sentinel, 2006) With that maiden coup d’etat in1966 Ghana’s military joined the frenzy of military incursion in to politics that was sweeping across the continent and consequently took on every pretext to justify an intervention through the barrel of the gun. Like most other countries in the region, bad governance and inept policies emanating from such military adventures in politics led to economic decline and widespread poverty providing successive coup leaders with ample justification for yet another violent rise to power.

In 1982 Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings assumed the reigns of power for a second time after his second coup d’état in a row. (ibid) His administration steadily transformed from an authoritarian posture to an inclusive one, a process that culminated in a democratic election in 1992. Although the results of this election only sought to endorse Rawlings as the democratically elected President, subsequent elections were widely seen to have been free and fair. With such endorsement from the international community, Rawlings progressively moved towards opening up the polity to multi party democracy. The regime also pursued a vigorous transformation that sought to restructure its ailing economy. This transformation similarly saw the military being actively re-professionalized, a process that has turned Ghana’s armed forces into one of the most professional in the region with a growing reputation for efficiency in International and regional peacekeeping operation. By such move, the armed forces’ focus was diverted from politics giving democracy the much needed opportunity to consolidate in Ghana.

Today Ghana has conducted a series of very successful elections including those that remarkably transferred
power from the ruling party to an opposition. Today Ghana convincingly stands tall in its achievement in governance and democracy. Political successes have engendered constructive economic policies leading to impressive economic gains and stability.

With respect to political stability, Ghana enjoys a unique history in the region: one untainted with any violent conflict. Surrounded by nations enmeshed in series of political turbulence and violent conflicts, Ghana has been often described as a peaceful island in an ocean of crisis. Its own experience with the menace of SALW is largely limited to the series of military coup it experienced earlier in its political history. Curiously, armed violence in the Ghana’s neighborhood has devastated much of these countries spilling from one to the other and forth Ivory Coast being the most recent. Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are yet to fully recover from their immediate past experiences. In the midst of these hostilities Ghana has played a significant role not only in mediation but also provided refuge for the persons displaced by war. Despite its proximity and interaction with its violence ridden neighbors, Ghana has remained inexplicably insulated from the vortex of violence whirling around it. Observers have attributed such an amazing degree of immunity to violence in the country, to the relative low volume of SALW circulating in the country.

It will be however be naive to assert that Ghana is completely void of illicit arms. Like the rest of her neighbors, SALW availability continues to pose a serious challenge to security but at a degree significantly less than any other. The era of military rule in the country was characterized by lax enforcement of weapons control regulations by the military which condoned proliferation within the military ruling class and amongst their civilian cohorts. (UN-DD, 2005) The country’s local small arms production capacity which is believed to be quite advanced attracts similar attention. There is presently no credible estimate of the volume of illicit SALW in Ghana but it is generally known to be substantially low and significantly less than others in the sub-region.

The country has in recognition of the destructive potential of SALW evolved aggressive mechanisms to check proliferation. Such measures are targeted against local production and possible cross border infiltration from other countries in the region.

Developmental Trend of Ghana

Ghana has since its return to democratic governance enjoyed a climate of stability which is unique in the West African region. This achievement is made more manifest by the specter of violence that continues to pervade its neighbors in the region. In the midst of such turmoil the country has undauntedly gone ahead to consolidate on democratic governance and economic gains. In stark contrast to Liberia and other SALW infested nations in the region, Ghana’s economy and standard of living has continued to show evidence of improvement. Infrastructural development has also spiritedly attempted to keep pace with the economic advances thereby creating an enabling environment for foreign direct investment.

Ghana possesses the best indices in human development levels in the region as derived by the office of the United Nations Development Program. It achieved a reduction in poverty level from 52 percent in 1992 to 35 percent in 2005 and remains the only West African nation that attained the Millennium Development Goals target of halving poverty by year 2015. The percentage of Ghanaian that have access to primary education as at 2005 was an amazing 92 percent, way higher than any other in the region. (IMF/WB 2005) It is also the only country to have in spite of the HIV/AIDS scourge raised life expectancy to 57 years as at 2005 while also holding HIV prevalence rate to only 3 percent. Ghana was as at 2006 ranked 136 amongst the 178 countries profiled by the UNDP in its human development report in the order of development. Its ranking is the highest in the region with Liberia and Sierra Leone at the very bottom of the list. (USAID 2005) The World Bank in its rating system, the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) ranks Ghana amongst the highest in Africa and the highest in West Africa. Transparency International also rates Ghana as the least corrupt nation in West Africa. (T.I.-CPI 2005)

Ghana’s economic attainment like its developmental strides stands out in West Africa. “Economic growth has averaged 4.8 percent from 1983 through 2000 but accelerated to 5.8 percent in 2004 and 6 percent in 2005.” (IDA, 2005- p2) Domestic debt ratio has been on the decline dropping from 23.7 percent in 2002 to 10.8 percent by 2005. (ibid) Agriculture which like in the rest of the region is the largest employer of labor contributing about 48 percent of the nations GDP experienced an impressive growth rate of 7.5 percent, in 2004 production in agriculture had been boosted by government agricultural policies aimed at pest and disease control. (OECD, 2007)
The growth in manufacturing sector had also been positive but less rapid than agriculture, its growth in 2005 stood at 5.1 percent accounting for 21.5 percent of GDP. Investment in the manufacturing sector has been largely due to increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the agricultural produce processing industry. In terms infrastructure, Ghana boasts of a road network of about 50,000 kilometers and road conditions have improved from 23 percent good, 27 percent fair and 50 percent poor in 2001 to 40 percent good, 30 percent fair and 30 percent poor in 2005. (OECD, 2007) Its seaport and airports are also the hub of commercial transport in West Africa. Presently Ghana’s international airport is one of only a handful in sub Sahara Africa where flights can originate and terminate in the US, a gesture informed by safety and security standards. The Seaport in Tema has an enormous loading capacity of over 14 million metric tons, second in the sub-region only to that of Nigeria. (Searchwine.com)

Tourism, perhaps the best indicator of a nation’s level of security has experienced a tremendous growth in Ghana. According to the world tourism organization, Ghana is the fastest growing tourist destination in West Africa with a growth rate of 24.4 percent this rate almost doubles that of the rest of the region put together. (ibid)

Similarly Ghanaians enjoy the highest rate of access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa with the exception of South Africa. Its electricity consumption per capita in kilo watt hours as at 2003 was 285 according to UNDP Human development report. Other West African nations, Niger, Sierra Leone and Mali trail the rest of the world in this report. Liberia even failed to be considered by the report. In the field of education, Ghana continues to set the pace, as mention earlier, access to primary education in the country is at 92 percent, standards in its institutions of higher learning has improved tremendously. Universities enrollment as a result has been on the rise serving but local and regional needs.

On the diplomatic scene, Ghana’s international profile has risen dramatically in recent times. The Country has come to play crucial roles in West African mediatory efforts for the resolution of many of the raging political conflicts in the region. Former president John Kufour was in the forefront of the region’s mediatory effort for the resolution of the Liberian and Ivory Coast internal conflicts. Within the continent and beyond, Ghana has won considerable admiration for voluntarily submitting itself to international scrutiny under the African Union peer review mechanism. An instrument conceived by African heads of government under the auspices of the African Union, providing a platform for checking excesses in governance by mutually evaluating levels of transparency and accountability of member nations. Outside Africa, the world powers have been also warming up to Ghana’s rising profile in the region. This status has attracted notable world leaders to the country. The country has in recent times been privileged to host amongst other, heads of government from China, Britain, Germany and the USA. British Tony Blair’s visit in 2002 was the first by a British Prime Minister since Harold Macmillian’s in 1960 and former Chancellor Schroeder’s visit was the first by a German Leader since independence. (Cocking, 2005) Since then we’ve had President Obama visit Ghana in 2009. Table 2 below captures the development status of Ghana and 13 other countries in the sub-region as at 2002 comparatively reflecting performance in 5 human development indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>HDI Ranking</th>
<th>Life Expectancy at birth(years)</th>
<th>Adult Literacy (percent)</th>
<th>GDP per capita(PPP)US</th>
<th>Human Development Index (HDI Value)</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>54.2 35.6 675 0.412 8.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>47.9 22.3 1167.5 0.335 13.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote D’Ivoire</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>45.95 49.7 1536.5 0.401 18.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>56.2 36.6 1996.5 0.405 1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>56.2 58.1 2235.5 0.528 20.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>44.8 38.5 725 0.349 1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Conakry</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>53.9 30.35 2170 0.434 9.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>48.1 19.3 998.5 0.329 13.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>44.7 29.0 774.5 0.292 14.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>43.4 1148.5 0.443 131.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>56.0 40.2 1721.5 0.451 11.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>41.0 35.6 564 0.317 5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>54.5 53.6 1513 0.476 6.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chapter analyzed the implication of the proliferation of SALW on security in West Africa using case studies of Liberia and Ghana. The chapter reviewed both countries' security indicators under a SALW endemic setting for Liberia and examined Ghana's security indicators under a condition of low arms availability. After an in-depth analysis, Liberia presented evidence of significant decline in all security parameters examined. Ghana on the other hand revealed a continuous improvement in these security parameters leading to a conclusion that SALW availability negatively affects security.

From relative positions of parity in the 1960s Liberia and Ghana now manifest different status in the sub-region. Liberia today stands as a symbol of how a country can retrogress in the development ladder and offers other nations in the region a lesson on the consequence of SALW. Its experience of nationhood of over 150 years fizzled in the mist of the 14-year armed violence and unmitigated access to SALW. Today Liberia is a nation attempting to rebuild itself almost from the scratch. Shamefully it has on two occasions relied on the very countries it helped liberate from colonial bound to rescue it from its depth of despondency. Democracy is once again is in its infancy in the country and its security continues to be haunted by the atrocities of the past. Government institutions under the current President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf are acknowledged to be picking up but the issues of infrastructure and the people’s corrupted psyche will take a while to be reoriented. More so, the future of the nation will continue to be uncertain unless the question of SALW is comprehensively addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

While the end of the Cold War heralded an era of improved international cooperation and increased global economic productivity, in West Africa however this era was characterized by a surge in tragic armed conflicts and internecine destruction. The devastation such violence inflicted on the sub-region is evident in its present state of economic and social stagnation which today places the sub-region in the group of the poorest and most volatile regions in the world. The plight of the sub-region has led many observers and policy makers into seeking measures for not only resolving ongoing conflicts but also preventing future ones as a panacea to the region’s manifold problems. SALW as the primary weapon of conflict in the region attracts significant attention in the discourse on armed violence in West Africa as in much of the developing world.

In answering the primary question of this research being: to determine if there is a relationship between SALW and the pervasive state of insecurity in West Africa, this study analyzed the conflicts in the sub-region by examining two countries with relatively similar political antecedents but different levels of SALW availability and dramatically different security experiences.

This analysis revealed that the degree of availability of SALW in a country is directly related to the degree of insecurity in the country. In other words, the more the volume of SALW in a country, the higher the probability of the country experiencing a deterioration in its state of security.

Comprehensively, the study also identified causes of conflicts in West Africa to span many other factors and found the nature of the region’s conflict to be also intrinsically shaped by the sub-regions political history and social dynamics. Principally, colonialism by its nature of oppressive subjugation bequeathed a legacy of authoritarianism to post-colonial African political leadership. The African political class that inherited power from the colonialist essentially did not represent the most credible leaders in African society. Some of such leaders were practically foisted on the people of the emergent African nations for colonial imperialistic interest and expediency. Seeking justification to cling unto power and perpetuate themselves in office, these leaders found it convenient to resort to the same high handed tactics their colonial mentors had employed in keeping their subjects in check.

More so the complex entities that were amalgamated into post-colonial state structures by the colonial powers were by their very heterogeneous nature prone to conflicts. No consideration was given to unit compatibility or the desires of the ethnic units that were merged together as nation states. In some cases tribes that found themselves together had shared a history of deep seated animosity while some homogenous ethnic units were severed by international boundaries. The ensuing struggle for supremacy and cross border affiliation amongst rival and severed groups has remained a source of instability in the region.
Five decades after earning political independence, Africans cannot justifiably continue to blame colonialism for much of its woes having had the opportunity to rid itself of its debilitating vestiges. Unfortunately, succeeding African administrations have failed to initiate policies that are capable of turning around the fortunes of these nations. Most African political leaders have fallen prey to politics of exclusion that effectively alienate their citizens. Resentment arising from such marginalization has often been the cause of much of the conflicts plaguing the sub-region. The complexity in the causes of conflict in West Africa is reflected in the complementary nature of each of the earlier listed factors and that of SALW in instigating and sustaining conflict. The role of all these factors in West African armed violence is often intertwined. While some observers have asserted that the fundamental cause of conflict in West Africa is leadership failure and inept social and economic policies, others have held that discontent with the status quo and political resentment are in themselves incapable of igniting violence in the scale experienced in West Africa unless empowered by arms. The experience in West Africa does not absolutely invalidate any of the positions. In Liberia for instance, Samuel Doe’s misrule was the trigger to popular disaffection and widespread antigovernment sentiments. It is, however, important to note that while the resentment against Doe and his administration was at this time palpable, the situation never degenerated into armed violence until Charles Taylor was able to introduced arms into the equation with the aid and support of his external mentors. It could also on the other hand be logical to reason that if Doe had not alienated the people through his unpopular policies, even with firearms, Charles Taylor would not have been able to mobilize support for his insurrection. Therefore, the theory of SALW as a fundamental cause of insecurity though critical, is insufficient in explaining West African security dilemma without the dimension of other political and social triggers to insecurity in the region. What remains uncontestable however is the exacerbating capacity of SALW to existing conflict and its debilitating effect on security. Introduction of SALW to any conflict most definitely increases the intensity and lethality of such conflicts and makes conflict resolution complex and difficult. Armed violence perpetrates itself by boosting supply and entrenching SALW proliferation channels. The resulting steady and increased supply in turn escalates and complicates the conflict with disastrous consequence to all facets of security, like human development, human security and state developmental capacity. Often as security deteriorate in affected nations, they lose their capacity to render basic state functions, economy collapses and the people are plunged into depths of poverty and deprivation. Conditions as these, creates the environment necessary to sustain armed violence by extending the range of deprived and disenchanted and uneducated youths available for recruitment by dissident factions and further impair the capacity of state security agencies to function. SALW and violence become therefore mutually reinforcing fostering a vicious circle of violence, arms proliferation and social and economic deprivation that becomes difficult to break without external intervention. Other less charitable role of external actors in the region’s SALW proliferation is perhaps most aptly reflected in the sources and channels of SALW to the sub-region. Besides the limited production capacity of local black smiths in the region, all forms of SALW are imported from outside the sub-region. The channels for these supplies range from official government to government pacts like the US cold War supplies to the Liberian government, to the activities of intermediary countries as Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso Guinea and Libya in subverting international arms embargo into Liberia. Liberia also presented case of arms brokerage by resources-seeking merchant like the timber and iron ore cartel of Charles Taylor. A major concern to the entire sub-region is the propensity of SALW to extend their destructive traits across international boundaries. Liberia, Sierra Leone Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali and Nigeria have in succession fallen prey this menace. Recommendation

The volatility of armed conflict and the portability of SALW have shown how easy it is to internationalize violence as demonstrated in the West African conflagration. The regional impact of SALW menace in West Africa therefore calls for a concerted effort to stemming the proliferation of SALW. Any effort in this direction must however be initiated from the grassroots soliciting the support of the very people that stand to bear the most vicious brunt of SALW. This study though acknowledges the role of political and social factors in raising the demand for SALW will direct its recommendations only on means of curbing the supply of SALW. Emphasis in curbing this supply must primarily be placed on educating the masses on the detriment of SALW. Such public awareness campaign should form the bedrock for further control measures. The logic behind this is that if the culture that tolerates and accepts gun ownership is not broken no amount of economic
appeasement would curb proliferation. Civil society groups and NGOS by their affiliation with the masses provide the best machinery for spreading this campaign at the national level. Although the ECOWAS protocol on the prohibition of SALW represents a significant step towards a collective effort at curbing SALW proliferation in West Africa, the series of violation of the terms of this protocol reflects its ineffectiveness. Countries like Ivory Coast had capitalized on this short coming to supply arms to Liberia in violation of international arms embargo on the country. Efforts must therefore be made by the ECOWAS to make the protocol legally binding on all member states. ECOWAS should also enlist the UN as a guarantor to this law so that any punitive action be taken against violators would be endorsed by the UN thereby making such actions more effective and in the case of sanctions extending its application to all UN member nations. ECOWAS should also impress on member nations to empower their national SALW commissions through adequate funding and staffing. Such commissions should undertake harmonization training for all security agencies in West Africa in order to integrate their SALW information sharing effort and foster information sharing amongst them. Since SALW are mainly imported into the sub-region from outside, there is also a need for a global action against illicit sale of SALW. The United Nations as a global political body should be prevailed upon by the ECOWAS to criminalize arms supply to non state actors in the sub-region. A policy could be evolved in the line of the Ottawa Convention prohibiting the use of landmine.

Recommendation for Further Studies
Despite the pervasive state of insecurity in the sub-region, Ghana appears to have defied all theories and logic to the West African security dilemma. Although this study identified the countries low volume of SALW as a dominant factor in its rising security profile this factor cannot be viewed in isolation. The scope of this study did not cover the precise nature of refugee movement into Ghana, rudimentary capability and operational modes of Ghana’s security agencies and the countries internal wealth distribution pattern as against its national economic profile. Additional studies could be carried out in this areas to investigate other probable factors responsible for its enduring stability in midst of violence.

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