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Balancing needs and insecurity: the challenges of the State

What 800 Sahelians have to say

Chad National Report

***Perception study on the drivers of insecurity and violent extremism
in the border regions of the Sahel***

This research project has been carried out by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

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AN 'EPIC, UNUSUAL AND STRATEGIC STUDY'

This research project on perceptions of insecurity and violent extremism drivers in the cross-border regions of the Sahel has offered a unique opportunity to embark on a major and innovative study at the regional level regarding global issues such as armed violence, radicalization, jihadism and security. The project was undertaken without preconceptions and its multinational scope, through the study of frontier regions of countries in the Sahel, together with the decision to listen to the views and ideas of the region's own people and take account of their perceptions and representations, has contributed to the broad, generous and ambitious orientation of an exercise. In general, very little is known about how the populations most affected by armed violence, extremism and insecurity perceive and react to it. In fact, a dominant paradigm exists regarding these questions, which are generally seen from 'top-down' perspective by national and international institutions. These institutions opt for political, security, police and military responses to violent radicalism based on religion.

While perceptions and representations do not necessarily precisely reflect reality, they contribute towards conveying an idea of its depth, intensity, and texture: its sound, its tonality and its contrasts. Most often what is 'perceived' is a distortion, an exaggerated vision of what is, in fact, 'lived'. However, the characteristic distance between what is lived and what is perceived may also take an inverted form, with the latter offering an attenuated and filtered reconstruction of reality. The respondents express themselves, for the most part, in a sober manner in describing the misfortunes and the mortal dangers they have suffered. The responses of the 800 Sahelians who have been interviewed during this study reveal a practical rationality in the face of the challenges of radicalization, violence and insecurity, which is evinced by vulnerable individual actors whose circumstances are precarious and painful.

In addition to the difficulty and danger involved, readers of this report should be aware of the experimental nature of this enquiry, which was undertaken simultaneously in eight Sahelian countries. This wide area of research, studied in depth over a short period of time, has opened up ideas for action and reflection which have hitherto been disregarded or insufficiently considered. Thus, it has given access to fruitful lines of research and identified latent solidarity networks. It is agreed that this exploratory work should be furthered.

Over a period of between five and eight days, 59 researchers made round trips totalling some 24,000 kilometres, covering the frontier zones linking Senegal to Mauritania and Mali, the zones linking Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, and those of the countries bordering on Lake Chad, namely Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon. A questionnaire was used to collect responses from 698 individuals in all, spread throughout these eight countries of the Sahel including, in descending order, 147 respondents in Mali (21 per cent of the regional sample); 120 in Nigeria (17 per cent); 100 in Niger (14 per cent); 88 in Mauritania (12 per cent); 74 in Senegal (10 per cent); 71 in Chad (10 per cent); 60 in Burkina Faso (8 per cent); and 38 in Cameroon (5 per cent). Supplementary in-depth interviews were carried out with more than 50 people during additional consultations.

Through these two stages of the inquiry process, the teams identified a pool of 80 key contacts who were subsequently invited to come to Abuja, Bamako, Dakar, N'Djamena, Niamey, Nouakchott, Ouagadougou and Yaoundé to compare and exchange their perceptions of the reasons for insecurity and violent extremism in their respective frontier zones. Interviews were also set up, to the extent this was possible, with those who sympathised with armed groups or with reformed group members. Lastly, national and international consultants were approached to produce case studies and conceptual analyses which were complementary.

The organisation of the research itself represented a substantial challenge. Problems arose from the recruitment of teams to administer the questionnaire (these were composed of teams of researchers and university personnel made up entirely of nationals from the countries concerned) as well as from the simultaneous initiation of research on the ground in all eight countries. Other issues were associated with the necessity to follow a protocol in relation to security; communication covering the entire group of researchers dispersed throughout the cross-border conflict zones; and the organisation of the transfer of the contact group of key respondents to the various capitals. Plans needed to be constantly revised to react to circumstances and various constraints. These included administrative considerations (permits and co-ordination with the authorities); political concerns (the post-election situation in Nigeria and the transition in Burkina Faso); security scares (Boko Haram attacks in the region of Lake Chad); financial difficulties (failed transfers, budget overruns); technical problems (electricity and internet failures); and even climatic and cultural obstructions (the rainy season and the onset of the month of Ramadan).

The decision to work with university researchers and interviewers of local nationality rather than with external consultants was a risk, but one which has paid off. The goal was to construct a team which had the most appropriate profile for a method of enquiry which was adapted to local realities; was able to suggest the best places to go; was able to select the most able interviewers; and, finally, was able to bring insight to the analysis of the results. The common methodology across the survey was the outcome of interactions with the eight national teams and thus emerged from a collective effort. The quality of the data and the analysis which has come out of the responses of the 800 Sahelian respondents is opening up a range of options for mitigating their vulnerability to violent extremism and enhancing the resilience of the populations concerned. The study has deliberately ignored the conventional taxonomy of the armed groups and the interpretation of religious motivation which is typical of political science approaches in order to concentrate on a conceptual framework which stays closer to the perceptions of the inhabitants of the cross-border regions themselves.

In the majority of the areas covered, however, the populations received the researchers favourably and opened up to them without any major problems throughout the entire critical phase: the research on the ground. In Mali, the locals were particularly appreciative of the courage of the researchers who had come to see them where they lived and had posed direct questions, going straight to the essential issues. In Nigeria, the teams were all the more favourably received because their respondents were conscious that no-one representing the authorities had ever seen fit to concern themselves with what the population had been suffering for years, since the beginning of the Boko Haram insurrection. It should be noted that, in certain sensitive cross-border areas, unusually, none of the teams were escorted by security forces or police during their work on the ground, despite the fact that the study had laid down no procedure on this issue. However, the teams were, themselves, supposed to announce their arrival and make contact with the public authorities and with the military command in the districts they proposed to visit. Both of these elements formed an important part of the approach since, in the view of those involved in the study it had an impact on the way the neutrality of the study was perceived by local inhabitants. Thankfully, no researcher was worried, even though they were at times in close proximity of security threats.

Amidst the observations, the results and the suggested avenues for further reflection, there are facts which might seem, at first sight, to be embarrassing, since it is evident that the perceptions of the individuals interviewed prioritise some striking truths which demand to be considered. However, within what the responders have to say and their ideas for change there is, above all, a demand for the reinforcement of the state, and a desire for normality and security indissociable from a

citizenship which is in the course of formation. The stories of the respondents, though sometimes tragic, also have the merit of not permitting the future to be previewed in a too deeply apocalyptic a manner. Those involved in this study have refused to analyse the situation using fear as an explanatory principle (the heuristic of fear), although by the end of this research it had become clear that radicalization is a durable phenomenon to which people will have to adapt and respond. At the very moment when the international community finds itself entrenched in a second “war against terror” in the Middle East, the questions dealt with here are not merely of local concern.

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To conduct this study, the team decided to work with the following persons:

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SUMMARY

Study areas

This study has been conducted in four regions of Chad: in the Lake and Kanem regions – located directly on the border – as well as in the Bahr el Gazel region and the capital city N'Djamena. These regions are characterized by great ethnic and linguistic diversity. They are also marked by precariousness, underemployment, food insecurity, drought and rural exodus. Currently, the major challenge facing the region is linked to the presence of Boko Haram around Lake Chad. Insecurity and signs of violent extremism have become a 'daily reality' for people in the area. This study touches upon several issues including identity, cross-border dynamics, radicalization and the role of women and young people.

The **Kanem region** (pop. 333,000) is considered Islam's door into Chad and the entire population is Muslim. The area is a quasi-desert area and primarily a livestock farming area. Trade, agriculture and the artisanal harvest of natron are also practiced. The **Lake Chad region** (pop. 430,000) is bordered to the southwest by Cameroon and to the west by Nigeria and Niger, two countries also located on the shores of Lake Chad which offer great potential for agriculture, fishing and livestock farming. The region is mostly populated by Muslim populations. Finally, the **Bahr el Gazel region** (pop. 250,000) is a pivotal area between, on the one hand, the interior and Lake Chad and, on the other, the interior and the Saharan zone. Principal activities are raising livestock, farming and trade.

Besides, **N'Djamena** (pop. app. 950,000) is located directly across the border from Kousseri, Cameroon. It is both the capital of Chad and a region, and a centre where people from diverse backgrounds mix. Data collection was also conducted in the N'Djamena region.

State and citizenship, religion and identity

Chad is a mosaic with a great number of ethno-linguistic groups and its population is mainly divided between Muslims and Christians. Identity, especially religious identity, has always been at the heart of the antagonism and turmoil in the country and remains a potential factor of instability. Increasingly frequent and intense tensions have been expressed between the Tijani and Wahhabi inside the Chadian Muslim community. The secular state of Chad is struggling to play a constructive role in inter-religious (especially inter-Muslim) discussions, as some of the denominations feel unjustly ostracized and marginalized. The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Chad has a difficult and controversial role in managing inter-Muslim tensions. Its authority is not accepted by a large number of Wahhabis.

Inter-communal and cross-border dynamics

In spite of the administrative boundaries, communities in border areas live in close contact with each other, and the result is a consistent cross-border social, cultural, economic and religious identity. Borders are porous: in relation to smuggling and illegal trafficking, but also in relation to insecurity and the ideas and actors of violent extremism. Often the state is barely present and there is a lack of public infrastructure. People in border areas find themselves in the crossfire of growing insecurity and the danger from Boko Haram. On the one hand, they suffer the atrocities of Boko Haram; on the other, collateral damage from the armed struggle against this movement. These conclusions lead to suggest that border areas should be managed regionally, as opposed to being exclusively managed at national level.

Radicalization: clues and process

Radicalization was treated distantly, and even with a certain degree of denial, by most of the sources interviewed for the study. They all insisted that the phenomenon is foreign to Chad, brought in by travellers, students, traders, etc. However, daily life and the events which have shaken the country show that radicalization, as a reality or process, has been making its way in Chadian society for decades. Recent incidents have highlighted the role of Chadian extremists in the operations of Boko Haram. Extremist movements are not only based on religion to attract young people but they actually use the entire social and cultural register, the context, and co-opt hopes and dreams to spin and sell an idyllic model of society where every desire will be fulfilled. The atrocities committed by extremist groups like Boko Haram result in a highly negative perception of these groups among the majority of the border peoples, who denounce their selected use of religion.

The role of women and young people

Women and young people represent a large percentage of the population but have the least access to debate, decision-making and, especially, the means of production. Women, as a result of their status and responsibilities, are most vulnerable to social turmoil. Young people are the main target for recruiters of extremist movements. However, it seems clear that the role of women and young people can be significant in preventing violent extremism in terms of education, raising awareness and community-based dissuasion, if a better place in society can be made for them.

Avenues for reflection

Based on the perceptions collected during the study and observation in the field, as well as the analyses of, and discussions with, various relevant stakeholders, the following avenues for further reflection emerge:

- Develop a multi-sectoral national strategy/policy for counter-terrorism;
- Adopt an expanded collaborative approach;
- Avoid treating communities or religious groups collectively;
- Reclaim border areas in a sustainable manner and through a sub-regional approach;
- Meet the specific needs of young people;
- Develop a strategy of communication, raising awareness and training to counter radicalization;
- Adopt a more neutral position for the state in the management of religious affairs.

INTRODUCTION

Nine researchers travelled for six days from N'Djamena – a 2,000 km round trip – conducting 71 interviews in the villages around eight towns on Lake Chad, the country's natural border with Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. Ten of the sources identified during this survey were then invited to N'Djamena to meet and exchange their perceptions of insecurity and violent extremism in their respective border areas. The analysis of the results presented in this report has been substantiated by information gathered in N'Djamena – as the capital is also located on the border – and from contributions by national experts on the subject.

The choice of survey area was dictated by the major challenge which Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP¹ – formerly, Boko Haram) now represents to the Lake Chad region. The local population is suffering pressure, violence and abuse from ISWAP and even Chad's capital, N'Djamena, has had repeated attacks. In addition, the survey area is characterized by significant ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity, but also by precariousness, underemployment, food insecurity, drought and the rural exodus towards the city.

Kanem Region

The Kanem region² (pop. 333,000) is bordered to the west by Niger, to the south by Lake Chad and the Lake Chad region, and to the east by the Bahr el Gazel region. The main ethno-linguistic groups are the Kanembu, the Daza/Toubou/Kreda, the Bulala, the Kouka, the Arabs, the Fulani, the Tunjur and the Haddad, among others. The most widely spoken languages in the area are Kanembu, Dazaga and Arabic. Historically, the Kanem region is considered Islam's door into Chad and the entire population is Muslim. It is where the Sahel meets the Sahara, so it is more or less a desert except for the area around Lake Chad.

Constantly under the threat of famine, the region is primarily a farming area (mostly, cattle, camels and goats) with Nigeria as its main market. Agriculture (corn, wheat) is practiced, mainly in the wadis, because rainfall is meagre in other areas. Natron, harvested artisanally, also has significant economic importance for the area. The Kanem Region is also known as a zone of trading and immigration, both towards N'Djamena and the other towns in Chad as well as to neighbouring countries and the greater Arab world.

Lake Chad

The Lake region, as the name suggests, is on the edge of Lake Chad. To the north and east, the lake is bounded by the Kanem region; to the south, by the Hadjer-Lamis region; to the southwest, by Cameroon; and to the west, by Nigeria and Niger. Its population of 400,000 is essentially Muslim. The Lake region is mostly populated by Kanembu, Buduma, Kouri, Kotoko, Arabs, Babalia, Kanuri, Haddad and Mober, and many other ethnic groups from other parts of Chad and elsewhere who are attracted by trade, fishing or agriculture. The shores of Lake Chad offer great potential for agriculture and fishing. These areas are also grazing areas with almost perennial pasture and water resources. Due to the shrinkage of Lake Chad, much of the population lives on the many islands: some "800 islands are currently inhabited" (Golvang Bayo, 2006).

¹This group was first known under the name 'Boko Haram', although it called itself *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad* (Group of the People of Sunna for Preaching and Jihad). In May 2015, the group swore allegiance to Islamic State becoming Islamic State's West Africa Province, in Arabic *Wilāyat al-Sūdān al-Gharbī*. This report uses both names interchangeably, as did the sources involved in the study.

² Cf. Allahou Taher 2006.

Bahr el Gazel Region

The region of Bahr el Gazel is not directly on the border but is a pivotal area between, on the one hand, the interior and Lake Chad and, on the other, the interior and the Saharan zone (beyond Libya). The Kreda are the main ethnic group in this area and their principal activities are raising livestock and farming. The Bahr el Gazel region is also an area of flourishing trade and considerable emigration (mainly to Saudi Arabia).

N'Djamena

N'Djamena is both the capital of Chad and a region. With a population of 900,000 (8.7% of Chad's total population), N'Djamena is the most populous place in the country. N'Djamena is located directly across the border from Kousseri, Cameroon. Like any capital city, N'Djamena is a centre where people from diverse backgrounds – both Chadian and foreign (from Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, the Central African Republic and Sudan) – mix and where most basic social services are concentrated. However, due to socio-economic inequality and the high cost of living, there are conspicuous differences between the different categories of citizens.

The analysis of this unprecedented collection of perceptions from the population in the frontier zones of the Sahel who are most vulnerable to, and most concerned with, security is structured around four considerations which are indicative of the complexity of the subject of the study. In this report, the perceptions are first placed in the context of the state and citizenship, religion and identity (Section I), before being examined in relation to inter-communal relations and cross-border issues (Section II). These two initial stages contribute to the understanding of the process of radicalisation and its measurement (Section III), before the report puts into perspective the part played by women and young people (Section IV). The report concludes with avenues for further reflection. While this report is based on the results and observations in the eight national reports within the international study, it is not to be regarded as a substitute for them.

STATE AND CITIZENSHIP, RELIGION AND IDENTITY

Points to remember:

- Chad is a mosaic with a great number of ethno-linguistic groups and its population is mainly divided between Muslims (around 58%) and Christians (around 35%).
- Identity, especially religious identity, has always been at the heart of the antagonism and turmoil in the country and remains a potential factor of instability.
- Increasingly frequent and intense tensions have been expressed between the Tijani and Wahhabi inside the Chadian Muslim community.
- The secular state of Chad is struggling to play a constructive role in inter-religious (especially inter-Muslim) discussions, as some of the denominations feel unjustly ostracized and marginalized.
- The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Chad has a difficult and controversial role in managing inter-Muslim tensions. Its authority is not accepted by a large number of Wahhabis.

1. Diversity and contrast

Chad gained independence in 1960 and, for half a century, its history has been marked by violence, conflict and chronic instability. The country had known relative calm since 2008 until the recent bloody events attributed to Islamic State's West Africa Province.

The country is an ethno-linguistic mosaic with many ethnic and ethno-linguistic groups: Chapelle (1996) counted 110; Lewis (2009), 133. In the area where the study was conducted, most of the population are Buduma, Kanuri, Kanembu, Gorane, Teda, Kouri and Haddad, among others. The official languages of work and education are French – inherited from colonialism – and literary Arabic (written and spoken Standard Arabic). Several religions coexist (Islam, Christianity, and other traditional religions) as highlighted by the latest census (2009):

Religion	Male	Female	Average
Muslim	59.3	57.5	58.4
Catholic	17.7	19.3	18.5
Protestant	15.7	16.5	16.1
Animist	4.1	3.9	4.0
Other religion	0.5	0.6	0.5
No religion	2.7	2.2	2.4
Total	100	100	

Source: (RGPH II 2009, as quoted in INSEED 2012)

Islam is, clearly, the most prevalent religion, accounting for over half of Chadians (58.4%), followed by Christianity with 34.6%. In Chad, then, unlike in most other Sahel countries, there is a relative balance between religions. This balance effectively justifies the state's secular orientation.

Islam³ was introduced in Chad at the beginning of the 11th century with the Islamization of the empire of Kanem under Mai Dunama I⁴ (Magnant 1992, Coudray 1992). Under his successor, Mai Dunama Dibalemi, Islam was spread by force among the people of the empire. By the late 16th century, Islam had spread to Baguirmi and, by the early 17th century, to Ouaddaï. From a religion of the court, Islam passed, over the centuries, into popular observance, spreading to Bahr el Gazel, Borku, Tibesti and regions of central and southern Chad.

Christianity came to Chad in 1920 with American Baptist and evangelical missions and, from 1929, with Catholic missions. Today, there is a proliferation of new churches in the country, particularly Pentecostals. These churches, which are very active in evangelization, are unpopular in conservative Protestant and Catholic circles. However, up to now, no direct conflict has been detected between the Christian denominations and even less with Muslim groups.

Some Chadians also practice traditional African religions. Generally, these religions offer an explanation for the world and provide answers to existential questions by establishing strong ties with nature. Propitiatory rituals use nature to establish strong ties between the ancestors and the divine. In most cases, initiation rites have a key place in these religions. It is not possible to mention all of these rites in this report, but the best known are the *marga*⁵ of the central region and initiation rituals among the most southern peoples⁶. However, remnants of these African religions also remain strong among most of Chad's Muslims and Christians.

The Constitution of Chad from 1996 – which was revised in 2006 – emphasises, in its preamble, the willingness of Chadians “to live together with respect for ethnic, religious, regional and cultural diversities; to build a State of law and one united Nation founded on public freedoms and the fundamental rights of Man, the dignity of the human person and political pluralism, on the African values of solidarity and fraternity”. This preamble firmly rejects the political framework of confessionalism and “any propaganda of ethnic, tribal, regional or religious character tending to infringe the national unity or the secularity of the State...” (Article 5). Clearly, the secularism of the Chadian state and its commitment to fundamental principles of coexistence, in spite of its diversity and ethnic and religious differences, are indisputable. In practice, the management of coexistence has not always been easy. It was evident in the study that manipulation of symbols of identity is a given and, in the ways the communities interact, distrust persists, due to the tumultuous events experienced by the country.

2. The never-ending work of building unity and secularity

“The extremists are there in every corner, be it Islam or Christianity, among the Jews or Buddhists. These are the ones who deviate from the path and are violent towards those who are against them. In Chad, there are many sects”. (Comment by a researcher and lecturer, N'Djamena, 6 July 2015)

This great national diversity has not often been used to its full value. Rather, it has been manipulated for various purposes. In 1962, the new leaders of independent Chad set up a single party regime which severely repressed popular uprisings. This situation soon created opposition, especially among people in the centre and north of the country. The National Liberation Front of Chad (FROLINAT) was created on the 22nd June 1966 in Nyala, Sudan under the leadership of Ibrahim Abatcha. This movement would play a key role in the cycle of violence the country subsequently experienced. As

³ For more detail about Islam in Chad, cf. Ladiba 2011, Magnant 1992, Coudray 1992, among others.

⁴ Some minority sources consider his predecessor, Mai Oummé, as the first Muslim prince of Kanem.

⁵ Founded on the mountain ritual. Cf. Fuchs 1997 and Vincent 1962.

⁶ Cf. Jaulin 1967, Fortier 1982, Magnant 1997, Adler 1982.

Ladiba (2013) notes, “markers of group identity were mobilized very early (Ahmed Kotoko 1989, as quoted in Ladiba 2013) and the rebellions drew much from them.” Markers of group identity (ethnicity, religion, geographical origin, etc.) have been central to the mobilization strategies of the parties in Chad. After 1979, one could hardly talk of Chad without mentioning antagonism between the north-south/Muslim-Christian etc. Group membership – manipulated and/or reinvented – is a feature of Chadian politics which is constantly stirred up, and the issue of religion returns again and again.

The process which led to the adoption of the Constitution and the fundamental principles referred to above included heated debate on the issue of state secularism. Indeed, during the National Conference of 1993, some groups (in particular, Muslims) suggested secularism should be abandoned in favour of Islamic Sharia law. Later, the adoption of other texts governing the life of citizens was subject to the same debates, with religious objectives in sight. A draft code on the family and individual rights has been proposed for nearly a decade, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This code has, to date, not been adopted, for some Muslim circles think it does not take into account the principles of their religion. The same goes for the law on the prohibition of early marriage, which proposes to fix the minimum age of marriage for girls at 18 years. The law was adopted at the end of another heated debate, with Muslim circles judging the proposal to set the minimum age for marriage for girls at 18 as against nature. These examples highlight the significance of religion in public debate and coexistence. The legitimacy of the positions of each side is not so much questioned in these debates as the state’s ability to remain faithful to its vocation and secular nature (ATP 1978, Allatchi 2003) given the interference of the debate on Sharia (Garondé, 2012).

Chad’s contemporary history has also been peppered with events which deeply question the nation’s goal of coexistence. These events are particularly rooted in the exacerbation of religious differences and the emergence of radical denominations (Nekim 1994, Beyem 1997, Abderamane and Brahim 1997, Tchad et Culture 2005). The most egregious of such events was the call for “jihad⁷” launched by Sheikh Ahmet Ismael Bichara in the town of Kouno (in Baguirmi) on the 29th June 2008, which left more than 70 people dead. After the publication of the caricatures of Prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper, demonstrations were held in N’Djamena, resulting in the vandalization of churches and Christian schools. The international and sub-regional context – with a focus on radicalization and violent extremism – as well as recent events in the country, have raised fears in many Chadians of a greater polarization of religious differences, as shown in this comment by a person interviewed for the study and asked about the religious question:

“We are trying to raise awareness by asking believers to stay away from extremist Islam and to follow the Islam of the just... We have been talking with the authorities of this country for years. But there are some people in authority who do not take this problem seriously. They take anything regarding religion lightly. We have told them that, one day, this will eventually destabilize the country”. (Comment by a leader in the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, N’Djamena, 27 June 2015)

Identity is a dynamic which changes over time and according to the context. That is why this report suggests the essentially dichotomous reading of Chad (the north-south, Muslim-Christian antagonism) should be dismissed and more attention needs to be paid to the multiple dynamics within Chadian society. In Chad, there are now a number of markers of group identity which are frequently used for society mobilization, especially in the political sphere. There have been constant efforts to revive inter-religious dialogue to temper the dichotomous reading of the socio-political dynamics at work in the country (Zaid 1997, Djonwé 2012). The state has found it difficult to manage

⁷ Jihad, in the warlike sense of the term.

these antagonisms. Indeed, FROLINAT⁸, in its time, criticized the first leaders of the country for their bias in favour of the south at the expense of other parts of the country. The regimes which followed have all tried in their own way to ‘rebalance’ power⁹, something which southerners view as relegating them to second place. Currently the management of the country, which is marked by the pre-eminence of people close to the President, is denounced by the NGO community, the press, the opposition parties and many of those who make up public opinion. It seems, therefore, that attenuating structural antagonism is not the main concern of the country’s leaders.

3. The state in turmoil: “Tijani vs. Wahhabi¹⁰”

“When we touch on questions of faith, it is not force that is the solution, but reason. We must bring the other person to understand that he is in the wrong and to give up the wrong he wanted to do. If you go against him with force, with repression, he will feel under attack and seek to defend himself. In defending himself, he will put all his intelligence into acquiring whatever he needs, not only in self-defence but also to achieve his primary objective for wanting to follow the path, the path of destruction that is his”. (Comment by a researcher and lecturer, N'Djamena, 6 July 2015)

Researchers who have worked on Islam in Chad are keen to claim that “Tijani, belonging to the Maliki school, has become the rule of Islam in Chad”. However, “this Islam has also confronted interference from neighbouring countries (Libya and Sudan), the Maghreb and the Middle East (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, etc.)” (Ladiba, 2013). These are the followers of the Tarbiya and later the Wahhabiya.

A department in charge of religious affairs and worship was established in the 1970s within the Ministry of Interior. This department’s role is to control the different religions (Christian and Muslim) by granting authorisation for opening churches and mosques, although many mosques are created without authorisation. This department, which also monitors the content of sermons, watches over the prevention of extremism and religious conflicts, whether inter-denominational or intra-denominational. In a complementary way, the Chadian government also makes use of Muslim leaders to manage problems within the community. Thus, in 1974, the Islamic Committee of Fatwa was established. In 1976, the conference of Imams also recognised this organisation, making it the *de facto* representative body for Muslims in Chad. Later, it became the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (Ladiba, 2011).

The relationship between the different Islamic denominations (Tijaniya¹¹, Tarbiya and Wahhabiya) has not always been easy. Fearful of being overwhelmed by conflicts between them, the Chadian government, then headed by a non-Muslim, entrusted the Islamic Supreme Council with the management of Islam in the country. The leaders of the Islamic Supreme Council are essentially

⁸ At its creation, this movement was called Liberation Front of the North, before being renamed the Liberation Front of Chad.

⁹ That is, within the state apparatus, especially the key mechanisms for decision-making and public security.

¹⁰ It is important to emphasise that, in Chad, a certain perjorative sense is attached to Wahhabism, assimilating it to radical Islam. Thus, the followers of this denomination prefer to call themselves Ansar al-Sunna (companions of the Sunna). The Superior Council of Islamic Affairs disputes this name, arguing that the Sunna represents the entirety of Muslims. For the Council, the followers of Wahhabism must assume the “Wahhabi” name.

¹¹ Tijaniya is a branch of the Islamic Sunni brotherhood called Sufism. It was founded by Ahmed al-Tijani (1737-1815) between 1781-1782, hence the name Tijaniya. The particularity of Tijaniya is the direct contact of its founder with the Prophet and thus “a new path, a sure path, a rapid path, cleared of the long ascetic exercises of other paths (...)” (Triaud, 2010), and it has an exclusive membership made up of the faithful. Tijaniya has hundreds of millions of followers in the world, especially in Africa. Cf. Triaud (2010), Sakho (2014) and the official website of the Brotherhood, <http://www.tidjaniya.com/ahmed-tijani.php>.

Tijani. With the rise of Tarbiya, the Islamic Supreme Council feared being overwhelmed and forbade it by decree of the Ministry of the Interior. It was not until 1976 that Chad held a conference of Imams to reconcile the two branches of Tijaniya: today, followers of Tarbiya and Tijaniya recognise that, in spite of some partly divergent practices, they are all Tijani.

Wahhabism appeared in the 1980s. The major sponsors of this denomination are Dr. Haggat Mahamat Ahmat¹², Oumar Adam and Oustaz Mahamat Djibrine. Wahhabism calls for a more orthodox Islam, faithful to that of the Prophet and his Companions. The showcase for this denomination is Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadya Association (a national association recognised by the Ministry of the Interior under the folio: 214), which hosted the 2006 International Congress of Wahhabis in N'Djamena. The association is fairly strong, with substantial resources for carrying out charitable and educational activities, building mosques, etc. The tension between this denomination and proponents of the Tijani branch among the leaders of the Islamic Committee is very strong and results in violent debates. Coudray (1992) has already reported the words of a Wahhabi against the Tijanis: *"I hate Tijaniya (...) They ignore the Quran and know only their rosary (...). They are idolaters who worship their sheikhs. (...) Their practices are built on fables (hurâfât)."* The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, through the voice of Imam Hussein Hassan Abakar, argues: *"In Chad, our mazhab (law school) is Maliki; our aghida (faith) ashari, matroudia and tariga (path) are Tijani (Sufi). Whosoever shall seek to touch this fundamental will be hit with an iron hand"* (Mahamat, 2015). The Wahhabi denomination is regularly called *salafist*, *takfiriya*, and, thus, publicly equated with Al-Qaeda, DAESH, etc.

On 3 March 2015, Order No. 014 of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Public Security dissolved the Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadya Association "for reasons of risk of disturbance of public order". Behind this action, the association sees the hand of its old enemy, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and especially its President, Hassan Hissein Abakar. Opinion is quite divided on this dissolution, even challenging the legitimacy of the Council itself. Indeed, many wonder why the Ministry of the Interior must intervene in inter-Muslim discussions. Why should an association created in accordance with freedom of association which has been promoted by the government since 1990 be dissolved in this way? How does the association disturb public order? Who is afraid of this association?

These questions bring this discussion back to the way Chad's secular state handles the issue of religion and intra-denominational relations, especially between Muslims. For one experienced actor encountered during this study, the state plays a role that not only disturbs relations, but is entirely negative:

"The State, in its secular nature, must know how to manage religious issues, but it should do so by observing neutrality so that it does not become a means of pressure to obscure any given faith."

Furthermore, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs is increasingly seen by Muslims as "an attempt by the state to keep a stranglehold on Islam in Chad" (Ladiba, 2011); all the more so because the "Wahhabi" do not feel represented by the Council.

¹² Also, owner of the FM radio station, Al-Bayane. This station, which initially broadcast only Quranic programmes, was forced to diversify its editorial content by the High Commission of Communication (HCC).

INTER-COMMUNAL AND CROSS-BORDER DYNAMICS

Points to remember:

- In spite of the administrative boundaries, communities in border areas live in close contact with each other, and the result is a consistent cross-border social, cultural, economic and religious identity. It is common for this border identity to be stronger than the sense of belonging to the state.
- Often the state is barely present and the lack of public infrastructure forces local people to develop their own strategies for finding resources and services.
- Borders are porous: in relation to smuggling and illegal trafficking, but also in relation to insecurity and the ideas and actors of violent extremism. People living on the border perceive the area as increasingly exposed to danger.
- People in border areas find themselves in the crossfire of growing insecurity and the danger from Boko Haram. On the one hand, they suffer the atrocities of Boko Haram; on the other, collateral damage from the armed struggle against this movement.
- Traditional authorities are particularly affected by the rise of extremist groups, which target them in their attacks. Nevertheless, traditional authorities remain respected by the local people.

1. Border regions: national or regional zones?

1.1 Rethinking the cross-border area as an open space

'Brothers' beyond borders and across Lake Chad

"The benefits of living here are the easy access to moving goods and the constant contact with our brothers on the other side. It facilitates the mix". (Comment by a respondent, Liwa, 12 June 2015)

The Lake region is emblematic of the open border areas of the four neighbouring countries directly bordering Lake Chad, with most ethnic groups living on both sides. These people include the Buduma, Kanuri, Hausa and Bornouan. The Kanembu are divided between Chad, Nigeria and Niger. Thus, the border limits of the four countries were imposed on communities which, nevertheless, maintain cultural, linguistic and commercial ties. Lake Chad, used by all for economic activities (fishing, agriculture, transport), continues to consolidate relationships which have never weakened. Local people consider these ongoing relationships, facilitated by linguistic versatility (most people speak, on average, three languages from among French, local Arabic, Kanembu, Goran, Kotoko, Hausa, Kanuri and, for a few, English), as the benefits of life in the border area. They can stay in touch with their 'brothers in neighbouring countries', for *"a Buduma stays a Buduma"* whether he is in Chad, Nigeria or Cameroon.

The consequence of this socio-anthropological reality is that ethnic identity is stronger than administrative boundaries; links between individuals and communities are stronger than attachment to respective states. In reality, the states must pool their efforts and direct them towards development which is appropriate to the specific nature of the border areas. Regional integration is a reality at all levels in this area, but its agenda has yet to be precised. The ability of people to work together across borders will certainly offer examples of this integration.

Integration should be especially easier in the case of Chad because, unlike other Sahelian capitals, N'Djamena is itself located on a border (separated from Cameroon by two rivers, the Logone and the Chari, which see daily movements of people from one country to another). For example, the Kotoko group lives on both sides of the Chari and Logone. Opposite N'Djamena, the Cameroon town of Kousséri is a true gateway for people and goods from Nigeria and Cameroon, despite police harassment at the border post of Nguéli.

An economy dependent on openness to Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon

“The Lake region borders three countries. So, in economic terms, I think it offers great advantages in terms of export and import of products, especially with Nigeria”. (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with men, Bol, 11 June 2015)

Chad is a completely landlocked country whose economy depends mainly on trade with Cameroon and Nigeria, fed through their respective seaports, Douala and Harcourt. Chad's industrial fabric is very poor, so manufactured consumer goods come essentially from these two neighbours. It is also through these pathways that Chad exports its raw materials (which, since 2003, have been cotton, gum arabic, livestock and oil). In areas as remote as the Lake region and Kanem region, transport by water on Lake Chad or by land routes make economic relations even more intense. For the people, this activity is one of the major advantages of living near the borders.

Trade between Chad (the Lake region and Kanem region) and the other countries on the Lake, includes livestock¹³, agricultural products, fish (fresh, dried and smoked), and natron¹⁴. In return, a wide variety of manufactured products (two-wheeled vehicles, construction materials, sugar, tea) are brought from Nigeria and Cameroon to Chad. These transactions are not always carried out through official channels, with customs duties paid. Smuggling is widely practiced and brings consistent profit to those who have mastered the circuits. It covers a diverse range of products: clothing, fuel, building materials, food, drinks, various vehicles (motorcycles and cars), etc. The populations of these border areas, therefore, look not only towards N'Djamena, but, in particular, to Maiduguri, Nigeria, which is the true regional commercial and economic hub. This polarization is so great that in most of the islands of Lake Chad, even on the Chadian side, the Nigerian Naira is used more than the CFA. On the border with Niger, together with the Naira and the Central Africa CFA franc, the West African CFA franc also circulates. This shows that, in terms of economic and monetary flows, these areas do not obey formal border limitations. Nigeria attracts all people in these areas, due to the opportunities and prospects it offers for import-export.

1.2 Poor infrastructure, isolation and extroversion

“Theoretically, government should be closer to the citizen, but this is rarely the case. The people of the border feel abandoned to poverty, lack of education and health facilities”. (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with men, Bol, 11 June 2015)

The border areas are very unevenly provided with infrastructure compared to more central areas of the country. On some islands in Lake Chad and in certain remote areas of Kanem and Bahr el Gazel, there are no schools, clinics or piped drinking water. Electricity in Chad is supplied only in large urban centres. The road infrastructure in these areas is mainly composed of dirt roads and tracks, which are

¹³ Chad has a large herd for which Nigeria is the main market (90%, according to Laleix 2015).

¹⁴ Natron or natrum: a naturally occurring hydrated sodium carbonate used in food, especially for livestock, and in the manufacturing of cleansers.

poorly maintained and which become almost impassable with the rains. Various charitable organisations (IOM, WFP, Alima, etc.) provide support to public services in the areas of health, education and the supply of drinking water. However, for the people, much remains to be done. For example, there are schools in cities like Bol, Mao, Bagassola and Moussoro, but, once students have obtained the baccalauréat, they must go to the capital, to other parts of the country or abroad for higher studies. Even when infrastructure exists, it is often insufficient, inadequate, under-equipped or not staffed with qualified personnel. Therefore, people believe that their region is prone to poverty, insecurity, hunger, ignorance and illiteracy: *“We are an abandoned people”*.

This lack of infrastructure and basic social services (hospitals and health centres, schools, training centres, drinking water supplies, roads, etc.) also worsens emigration to Nigeria or Cameroon, especially for higher education (university and professional) or to learn English in schools in Maiduguri and Zaria (Nigeria), or sometimes Ngaoundere and Maroua (Cameroon). Given Chad’s lack of healthcare, Nigeria also remains a destination for medical treatment. Some observers fear that the constant movement and the general mixing of people, as well as prostitution, risk spreading sexually transmitted infections (STDs/HIV-AIDS).

The people living in these areas have learned to develop strategies to deal with the shortage of infrastructure and basic social services: if the nearest school is on the Nigerian side, they send their children there; if the nearest health centre is on the Nigerian side, that is where they go for treatment... In addition to the search for comparative advantage, on whichever side of the border, they have recourse to a network of family members and other acquaintances speaking the same language, practicing the same religion, etc. Forced to get by as best they can, these people see the border not as a limit but as a resource and use it to meet the needs of daily life by seeking out the best service wherever it may be.

2. The complex characteristics of insecurity

2.1 Smuggling and illicit trafficking: between necessity and insecurity

“(...) Yes, here, when we look at the facts aggravating the Boko Haram phenomenon, it is also the drug phenomenon, specifically tramol [a medically prescribed pain-killer]! Frankly, in this locality, I wonder if the tramol problem will ever go away, because those who are supposed to fight tramol are the real providers!” (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 14 June 2015)

Another characteristic of the border areas is the trafficking of consumer goods as contraband to avoid paying customs duties. Most traders in the border areas, and those who pass through these areas, have long mastered the circuits and roads which allow them to circumvent the customs barriers and, therefore, their duties. Mobile customs brigades have been set up to limit the smuggling, without significant results. Smugglers of prohibited goods and products use the same circuits as those bringing in permitted consumer goods. According to the data collected during the study, illegal products include the drug called *bongo* (a form of hashish), tramol and small arms. Both narcotics seem to be a scourge which adults in the surveyed areas regularly mention when talking about young people. Tramol is derived from Tramadol, a highly addictive painkiller containing extracts of opium whose overdose induces hallucinogenic effects. Its use is widespread among young people, especially in the border areas.

The mobile customs and drug law enforcement brigades seem unable to limit either the smuggling or the illicit trafficking. Some blame corruption, as well as the collusion of officials and public servants

with the smugglers and traffickers. These activities continue to evolve unchecked. Respondents are categorical on the responsibility of public officials:

“Trafficking creates insecurity and should be carefully monitored by the border guards. Some trafficking, like weapons, drugs and contraband, should be banned by the state. If today you stop the person, he must be punished, the fraudulent products burned. This trafficking is reprehensible and, in principle, the state must counteract these actions because they will lead to insecurity in these countries.”

Instead, they observe that:

“Drug trafficking here (...) is highly developed and the authorities do not seem on top of the situation. Perhaps some customs officials are even accomplices...”

Sometimes it is precisely the red tape and procedures of the customs officials involved in the various shady deals that ‘force’ traders to resort to smuggling.

2.2 Insecurity, Boko Haram and the response to terrorism

“Insecurity is great in this region, especially on the islands, the area closest to the border. You know, people on the other side, closer to the border, are living a real psychosis! People are wary! They are afraid of their neighbours: you are together but you are afraid of each other, you know? Not only from the insecurity coming from Boko Haram, but even from our own defence and security forces. Sometimes, they (the security forces) do not even check whether certain people, or even certain groups of people, belong to a terrorist group or not – local people!” (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 14 June 2015)

The insecurity of daily life

To the same degree that the border areas are zones of flourishing trade, they are also vulnerable to insecurity and violence. The laxity of the borders makes them zones of ‘free movement’ for offenders and lawbreakers of all kinds. Traffickers of goods, as well as cattle thieves, highway robbers and burglars easily slip past the security forces in one country and seek refuge on the other side of the border if pursued. Organised crime and insecurity¹⁵ in one country, therefore, easily spreads to the others. The events of February 2008¹⁶ are a good example of this situation, showing how insecurity and organized crime have also spread between N'Djamena and Cameroon in particular. In addition to these events, there is Boko Haram and the fight against it. ‘Being hassled by the police’ – whether they are police based in their home areas or mobile brigades – is also a major obstacle in terms of the daily activities and free movement of people in the border areas. Identity checks, body searches, abusive fees for environmental check, intelligence agents – all are feared by the people of these areas. This is why so many people, on both sides of the border, try to get around these checks, searches, etc. or maintain different identity papers.

Boko Haram’s impact on the population

The rise in violence due to Boko Haram – and its spread in the area between Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad – were regularly mentioned as disadvantages of living on the border. Indeed,

¹⁵ Regarding the insecurity in the Chad Basin, cf. Saibou 2004, Musila 2012.

¹⁶ In February 2008, a coalition of rebel groups, departing from the Chad-Sudan border, attacked N'Djamena. Intense fighting took place before the army could break it up and finally push back the rebel forces.

the events which have taken place in the area for the past five years have reinforced the perception of the border as an area which is overexposed to various dangers and threats. In addition to physical violence and abuse, the sources living in the border areas interviewed for the study listed the following daily consequences of the situation:

- Economic activities and the movement of people slowed down or blocked by the insecurity and uncertainty generated by Boko Haram.
- Intensified harassment and surveillance by security forces on both sides of the border.
- Limitation of the freedom of movement, even extending to the interior of Chad.
- An atmosphere of fear and panic.
- Price inflation, including for goods for daily consumption, due to the blocking of traditional supply circuits.
- An exponential increase in the number of returnees and refugees from Nigeria and the islands of Lake Chad, resulting in greater pressure on food supplies.
- The difficulty of getting back to farming although it is the height of the growing season...

At the same time, the state, out of a duty to protect the people and territory, has engaged in an armed response against Boko Haram, which is not without repercussions on the people in the areas where the group is the most visible.

The effects of the armed struggle against Boko Haram on local people

Repeated attacks on the islands of Lake Chad and those in N'Djamena as well as the threats which still hang over the people have given new importance to the state's anti-terrorist activities. Indeed, the deployment of security forces has been intensified in the border areas, such as the Lake region, and drastic security measures have been put in place. In this quasi-state of emergency situation, people are under constant pressure from armed men.

"Despite the possession of an identity card which, in principle, allows freedom of movement, checkpoints are multiplying to extort money from citizens by the National Security Agency, the Territorial Surveillance, the National Police, the Gendarmerie, Customs, etc." (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with men, Bol, 11 June 2015)

Some communities, including the Buduma group (some of whom are known to be involved), are under particular pressure from the state. But this pressure is considered a stigma by the community. Radicalization or engaging in violent extremism cannot be the act of a community, but rather the act of individuals or groups of individuals, approached by the violent groups, who share with these groups a similar agenda or hope to accomplish their own goals by integrating into these groups. It cannot be said that all the Buduma have deserted their villages to join Boko Haram. It is, therefore, not appropriate to stigmatize an entire community.

Traditional authorities: caught in the middle

In these remote regions where most people live in rural areas, tradition remains important and, consequently, so do the traditional leaders. In this report, 'traditional leaders' means the heads of districts, villages and neighbourhoods, the earth-priests, etc. These leaders hold a certain aura among the people in their own areas. However, the study showed that they seem to suffer the same pressure and the same stigma as their fellow citizens. This puts them in a particularly ambiguous position – on the one hand, threatened on a daily basis by Boko Haram, and, on the other hand, harassed by the police – and they find themselves caught between the two. Indeed, community institutions – including the traditional leaders – are particularly targeted by elements of Boko Haram

because they are considered “*collaborators*¹⁷” of the government. These leaders receive almost daily threats from elements of this group. During the attack on Ngouboua, the district chief was among the victims murdered by Boko Haram.

However, these traditional authorities play an important role. As reflected in the survey, they remain well regarded for their work in raising awareness of violent extremism, especially with young people. This role should be recognised in actions to prevent radicalization.

3. Citizens without borders?

“(...) Everybody is so frustrated; sometimes, frankly, it gives you the feeling of being ... not even Chadian!” (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with men, Bol, 11 June 2015)

In this report, citizenship refers to a relationship between individuals and a state from which they expect basic services, safety and welfare and to whom they pay membership dues, tax, etc. One of the tangible elements of citizenship may be the national identity card or any other administrative document issued by the competent authorities (birth certificates, driver’s license, business licenses, etc.) which mentions nationality. The evidence from the study indicates that most of the people surveyed have an administrative document. However, this is not the only symbol of citizenship. Indeed, some have two administrative documents supporting dual citizenship: Chadian and Nigerian, Chadian and Cameroonian, Chadian and Nigerien... Kinship networks and social ties are the first resources which are mobilized to secure identification documents in one country or the other. In addition to these resources is the corruption in departments responsible for issuing these IDs (that is, officials who can be paid to provide them). Communities in the border areas do not allow themselves to be confined, neither within the borders nor to a specific administrative document. Rather, they are living in a dynamic of spatial continuity, economic continuity and social continuity.

In the case of the islands of Lake Chad, the patchy presence of the government means that people turn in whichever direction their interests may be served. The relationship of these people to the authorities varies in intensity, depending on whether they are in more isolated areas or major centres like Bol or Mao. Where state officials are in place and properly represent the state, people maintain more intense relations with them; where the authorities are not in place, the people manage as they can. The perception of the local population is that the state is not going to come to them, however much they would like this.

¹⁷ Term used by a respondent.

RADICALIZATION: CLUES AND PROCESS

Points to remember:

- Radicalization was treated distantly, and even with a certain degree of denial, by most of the sources interviewed for the study. They all insisted that the phenomenon is foreign to Chad, brought in by travellers, students, traders, etc.
- However, daily life and the events which have shaken the country show that radicalization, as a reality or process, has been making its way in Chadian society for decades. For many people, latent intolerance had not previously manifested itself in actual violence. There has been a major change in the last decade.
- Extremist movements are not only based on religion to attract young people but they actually use the entire social and cultural register, the context (in particular, the problems), and co-opt hopes and dreams to spin and sell an idyllic model of society where every desire will be fulfilled.
- The atrocities committed by extremist groups like Boko Haram result in a highly negative perception of these groups among the majority of the border peoples, who denounce their selected use of religion and consider them as “fanatics”.

1. Radicalization: imported or endogenous?

“We find the two factors at the same time because intolerance has always existed everywhere with us but did not create so many problems. I think violent extremism, as we know it today, came from somewhere else, because those going to Quranic school and who study in the Middle East, once they come home, find that the Islam we practice here is archaic. And there are the religious people from Pakistan and Afghanistan who preach the word of God and use the opportunity to raise awareness in favour of violent extremism”. (Comment by a respondent, Liwa, 12 June 2015)

Radicalization can be seen as a dynamic process which gradually leads an individual or group to refuse any debate with positions other than their own on religious, political and social matters. This process can lead to symbolic or physical violence. There was a consensus among the sources involved in the study that radicalization as a phenomenon is primarily imported from outside Chad (87.3%, i.e. 62 of the 71 people surveyed).

Imported phenomenon

The current reality, produced over nearly a decade, is that most stakeholders consider northern Nigeria as one of the main sources of radicalization. For a long time, the northern region of Nigeria has been a centre of Quranic education with great masters known throughout the Chadian basin. In Chad, particularly in the Lake and Kanem regions, thousands of young people have regularly gone to Nigeria to attend Islamic schools¹⁸. The intensification of Boko Haram’s violence has highlighted the commitment of many young people who are on this path. The young people trained in these Nigerian

¹⁸ In 2009, some 100 Chadian children were taken from the Quranic schools in northern Nigeria and brought home to their families in Chad following the dismantling of certain Quranic schools controlled by Boko Haram. On 25 February 2012, an evaluation committee – composed of IOM and the Government of Chad – went to Ngouboua, a town 30km from the Nigerian border. Over 800 migrants from Nigeria live in this town and this group includes a large number of unaccompanied children, aged between 6-14.

khalwa (traditional Quranic schools where students live with their masters, usually far from home) are considered to be the ones who, in turn, spread radicalization in Chad.

“It is the people who left for Quranic schools in Nigeria, those people who left to study outside the country, who return and infect others here, who are the cause of violent extremism. They copy the others”. (Comment by a respondent, Moussoro, 11 June 2015)

Others see more distant sources as the cause of radicalization in the country: Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Libya, Pakistan, etc. Saudi Arabia, including the University of Medina, is a destination of choice for Arabic-speaking Chadian students who graduate from high school or King Faisal University in N'Djamena. Apart from the students, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Sudan are also favoured destinations for Chadians seeking to work or trade. These students, travellers and adventurers are thought to bring radical ideas based on religion back to Chad. There are also books and pamphlets from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Egypt which circulate throughout Chad. The media also play a part in radicalization, especially video sites with clips of extremist speeches or apologies for those speeches which are downloaded and distributed widely by SD card on mobile phones. Thus, radicalization is a phenomenon coming from outside Chad which has eventually managed to establish itself in the country:

“This was not in Chad before, but now there are problems at all levels, even among Muslims themselves”. (Comment a respondent, N'Djamena, 4 June 2015)

Other types of travellers are considered to be carriers of these ideas into Chad, particularly the preachers from the Gulf and elsewhere who move from mosque to mosque, preaching and organising spiritual retreats¹⁹ (*kuruj*) for young people. These preachers, mostly members of the *Tabligh jama'at*²⁰ (Society for Spreading the Faith) organisation, are considered sources of radicalization:

“People come from outside (Nigeria, Pakistan, etc.) to proselytize here. They even get paid for this”. (Comment by a respondent, N'Djamena, 4 June 2015)

An endogenous process

Many people in Chad fend off any question about radicalization with a code of silence, denying the radicalization process even exists in the country. Others, although less numerous, think radicalization has local roots, that it has developed within the country. Indeed, some believe that religious divisions within the Muslim communities in Chad have always been present. However, the sources interviewed in this study see a difference between this local form, which they describe as intolerant or fundamentalist, and the current situation with its unusual physical violence. In the words of this respondent:

“Intolerance has always existed everywhere here, but it did not create so many problems”. (Comment by a respondent, Mao, 12 June 2015)

Religion in Chad has always been part of political debate and is one of the major signs of group identity used to convene or manipulate these groups during communal clashes in the country. A

¹⁹ These retreats have since been banned by the Minister of the Interior, who considers them a source of radicalization.

²⁰ An international movement created by the Pakistani Muhammad Ilyas Al-Kandhlawi (1303-1364). This organisation specializes in the *dawa*. Its goal is to propagate the values of Islam to all who can be reached, by positioning itself far from politics. The members of this organisation travel from town to town preaching the values of Islam, in particular those found in the *kuruj fi sabil-Allah*.

trend towards intolerance based on religion has long existed in Chad. However, violence in the name of religion has been relatively limited, to verbal jousting or to symbolically violent and sometimes harsh writing:

“Many of our relatives here are extremists, but they do not find the opportunity to show it”. (Comment by a respondent, Mao, 12 June 2015)

Intolerance is also felt within religious communities – among Christians (especially between Protestants and Catholics) but also between the different denominations of Islam in Chad. As explained earlier, the two main ones, *Tijaniya* and *Wahhabiya*, carry out a fierce war of words.

The fact that Islam in Chad is predominantly Sufi (*Tijani*) is regularly evoked to justify the resistance of Chadian Muslims to radicalization. However, this argument does not take into account, on the one hand, the radical positions taken even by the *Tijani* and, on the other, the rise of other denominations considered to be more radical than the Sufi path, in particular, the *Wahhabiya*. Thus, the role of national players in the process should not be dismissed. In fact, within the country, this radicalization appears in public debate and even in the positions taken in the political sphere. Furthermore, individuals and organisations of *Wahhabi* persuasion are marked as hubs of radicalization which harden the tone of society in favour of a more rigorous practice of Islam. In general, there is consensus on limiting the radicalization of symbolic and verbal violence, even if fanatics like Sheikh Ahmet Ismael Bichara of Kouno²¹ have already advocated warlike jihad against “infidels” and also Muslim society which is not pious enough in his eyes.

The rise in violence, by the Islamic State’s West African Province, highlights a new aspect of radicalization, with Chadians directly involved in the atrocities of the group. Here, the process of radicalization results in open violence, directed against the symbols of the state, traditional structures (heads of districts, in particular) and all Muslims who do not share the vision of these groups, as well as non-Muslim “infidels”.

2. Strategy of approach and recruitment: fulfilling needs

“(...) People are poor, they have nothing to do! They [members of Boko Haram] come with flattering speeches and obtain the support of these young people. People believe that the young are convinced by the ideology of Boko Haram - no, no, this is not true! It is because people have nothing to do, they have a family to feed, their dignity to defend, but they do not even have the opportunity to work and, above all, to earn a crust! And so, the men of Boko Haram come and offer them money, a lot!” (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with students, Bol, 11 June 2015)

The path to the cruelty...

It is difficult to explain how young people arrive at such cruelty.

“Boko Haram kills, even more, their own brothers, fathers and mothers, so we are all caught”. (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 10 June 2015)

The example of the district chief of Tchoukoutelia, who was allegedly executed by his own younger brother, is the one which seems to have made the greatest impression. The process of radicalization

²¹ In addition, a Sufi.

in this sense involves a person denying and annihilating everything which represents society (primarily, their own parents) and their previous practice of Islam. To make it easier to get these young people to act, these acts are crowned with religious symbolism or even result in a place in the movement's hierarchy. A district chief confides that he has received anonymous calls with threats clearly stating that *"to shed blood will be lawful (halal)"*.

Thus, killing people who belong to a society which does not share the principles of the movement becomes a lawful work with religious value:

"They are told to kill their parents because they say we're kaffir. And those who kill their parents, it seems they even become emirs of Boko Haram". (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 10 June 2015)

Religious feeling is not the only thing at stake in this situation. Indeed, to become an emir means holding a position of power and control of the loot collected in the devastated and ransacked villages:

"And when they come to conquer, especially some villages, they will sweep up whatever they find, because – don't forget – when they enter a village, the people flee, leaving behind everything they have and that is what they pick up, you know? And economically, frankly, this [theft] allows them to have something, see? With all the consequences that you know!" (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 10 June 2015)

The use of certain psychotropic substances (here, tramol) by extremist groups is also mentioned as an explanation for the atrocities committed by young people.

Finally, the violent atrocities can also be understood as revenge on a society which has always left them on the margins – because they came from socially ostracized castes,²² or in response to abuse and humiliation known, in particular, in the *mouwadjir*²³ situation. In some cases, this situation, intended to shape the child's character and perfect his Quranic education, is particularly terrible for children, who are sometimes very young. Some grow up, alone, far from their parents, under the orders of one master. It is, therefore, not easy for them to reintegrate into their family network and society, as their attachment has been easily broken under the dictates of their masters.

... is facilitated by a well-rehearsed recruitment strategy

First, there is the charisma and leadership of the Quranic teachers (*oustaz* and marabouts) trained in Quranic schools and *khalwa* close to Boko Haram. Once home again in their area of origin, these teachers have a reputation that attracts a great number of young disciples. Indeed, they leave Chad (the Lake, Kanem and N'Djamena regions) for Maiduguri and other remote areas of northern Nigeria each year with hundreds of students (*mouwadjirin*), entirely handed over by their parents. Most of

²² In Chad, there are hierarchical systems which marginalize certain social groups. Socially ostracized, these groups are called 'unclean' and banned from intermarriage. In the areas where the study was conducted, it is mainly the people called Haddad who are stigmatized (further south, it is the Noy among the Sar, according to Magnan (1986) and Fortier (1982). "Haddad" (from *haddid*, meaning "iron" in Arabic) means "blacksmith" as well as "potter" (Pommerol, 1999). Apart from their socio-professional specialization (blacksmiths, potters, tanners, weavers etc.) and the endogamy imposed on them, these populations are distinguishable "(...) neither by some remarkable physical type, nor unusual language, nor by their ways and customs (...)" (Golvang Bayo, 2006). Even the famous professional specialization is not exclusive, since these crafts are also practiced by other groups and blacksmiths are not ostracized everywhere.

²³ The documentary, *"Tchad, l'enfance enchainée"* (Tchad – A Childhood in Chains), shown in France 2's *Envoyé Spécial* programme in 2005, gives an overview of this situation.

these students remain faithful to their teachers, spiritually and in everyday life. Thus, these *oustaz* easily lead many young people into the ranks of Boko Haram.

Second, family relationships are used to recruit, from one person to the next:

“Young people who are with these groups have been manipulated by their friends and relatives. Some eventually follow, unfortunately”. (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview in N'Djamena, 2-3 July 2015)

Most border communities live on both sides of the border. This strategy is based on the trust between relatives. Therefore, many people simply find themselves trapped by their relatives, joining without cause, hoping for something else. This is especially the case for women:

“If they go, it is mainly to accompany their husbands. Sometimes they do not even know they are going to Boko Haram”. (Comment by a female respondent, Bagassola, 13 June 2015)

For these reasons, communities are accused of co-operating with Boko Haram. In Chad, the Buduma, who live in the Lake region and the islands in the middle of the Lake, are often accused of co-operation. Following the repeated abuses by Boko Haram, culminating with the repeated attacks in N'Djamena²⁴ and several deadly attacks in the Lake region²⁵, even official speeches lean in this direction. Conversely, while they are also located in a border area, the Kanembu were identified by the respondents in the study (including by non-Kanembu respondents) as a community resistant to religious extremists, as are, to a lesser degree, the Fulani and Arabs. According to the respondents, these communities – because they are “pious and respectful of religion” – are suspicious of extremist speeches.

Third, the manipulation of the people's living conditions facilitates recruitment, especially among young people. Extremists are familiar with the context in which people live and their aspirations, so their messages promise to improve these conditions. Thus, financial and material motivations (the motorbike that so attracts the young) are important:

“(...) Boko Haram pays 340,000 Naira for young people, that is, around 1 million CFA francs²⁶”. (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with men, Bol, 11 June 2015)

The announcement of a casteless, egalitarian society is one of the mirages sold to people, especially the young. Social frustration (one's position in the castes) and social injustice (elitism, nepotism, and corruption) also push some young people to leave for these groups which offer hope for a better future.

Fourth, a total deconstruction of religious practices is at work in the communities. Other marabouts and Muslims are declared ungodly and accused of not following the tenets of religion. These groups, therefore, propose a new vision of Islam that is purer and better than others, strictly following the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. According to the perceptions collected during the study, the *Wahhabis* are more likely to become radicalized or follow radical movements. Here, the question of ignorance, illiteracy and poor Quranic training comes in. People with a solid intellectual training,

²⁴ Double attacks on 15 June and 11 July 2015 killed more than 50 people.

²⁵ Attacks in Ngouboua and Tchoukoutelia.

²⁶ These are the motivations given for joining, but also for staying indefinitely faithful to, the movement.

either Quranic or from the formal Arabic-speaking or French-speaking schools, are considered less susceptible to radicalization, unless they are themselves already vectors.

3. Perceptions of extremist groups and their actions

"These people are bandits, adventurers, smugglers and killers to be fought. They bring violence into the region; they kill people for nothing, even children. They are people who have hijacked Islam for their own interests. I think religion forbids everything they're doing". (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 14 June 2015)

Among the groups considered extremist or terrorist by the respondents in the study, the groups most mentioned are Boko Haram (due to their proximity and the news), Al Qaeda, AQIM, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant²⁷. As shown in the table below, the majority see them as bandits or wild fanatics.

"(...) bandits, highway robbers. What they do is bad because they kill, they rob innocent people. They are harmful to society. They are not for the development of religion nor for the fulfillment of the people". (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 14 June 2015)

Perceptions of extremist groups	Number	%
Saviours	0	0.0
Resisters	1	1.4
Fanatics	33	46.5
Bandits	34	47.9
Desperate	2	2.8
Other, to be determined	1	1.4
Total	71	100

Insecurity in the border areas largely results from highway robbers²⁸, armed and organised criminal gangs who ambush travellers to strip them of their property, causing a loss of material possessions and even a great number of human lives. Local people put extremist groups in the same category. These groups are also clearly associated with trafficking including drugs, especially tramol whose consumption is widespread. Therefore, their rhetoric of jihad is not convincing. As one respondent observed:

"When we say 'jihadist' in Islam, we mean Muslims who protect their religion but do not kill innocent people."

Thus, the extremist groups' approach to religion is frowned upon. These groups, especially those whose actions are visible to local people, are considered to be criminals spreading violence and destruction in the name of religion. Many consider their actions are against the very precepts of Islam, in particular, the respect for life. Their actions tarnish religion and distort its image.

What's more, 64.8% of the respondents (46 of 71) perceive the extremist groups' use of religion as evil. However, it must be said that 25 people do consider it to be good. These respondents nuance

²⁷ Also known as DAESH and, in Arabic, *ad-dawla al-islāmiyya fi-l-'irāq wa-š-šām*.

²⁸ Cf. Saibou, 2004 to explore this issue further.

their position by differentiating between radical violence in the name of religion which targets non-Muslims (*kaffirs*, Westerners) and radical violence in the name of religion that also attacks other Muslims.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Points to remember:

- Women and young people represent a large percentage of the population but have the least access to debate, decision-making and, especially, the means of production.
- Women, as a result of their status and responsibilities, are most vulnerable to social turmoil.
- Young people dream of a better life and, unable to find it at home, go elsewhere in pursuit of it. They are the main target for recruiters of extremist movements becoming, in turn, the armed force of these movements and recruiters of those close to them. Material motivations appear to be the principal motivation for youth engagement.
- However, it seems clear that the role of women and young people can be significant in preventing violent extremism in terms of education, raising awareness and community-based dissuasion, if a better place in society can be made for them.

1. Women: a silent and vulnerable majority?

“The word of women is not heard by people here. We are the primary victims of these phenomena because we do not have the strength to defend ourselves and must take care of the children, too.” (Comment by a female respondent, leader of a women's group, Bol, 11 June 2015)

Women represent the largest stratum of the population, 51% according to the second General Census of Population and Housing of 2009 RGPH II (as quoted in INSEED 2012).

A patriarchal society

The communities in which the study was conducted (Buduma, Kanembu, Gorane, Teda, Kanuri) are patriarchal societies, where the role and status of women, and their relation to men and the community, are socially constructed around dependence. This structure is clear in the interviews conducted as part of this study. It follows that women largely depend on men, whether their fathers, husbands or brothers. Men command the essential resources and structures of production. Women have some limited access to waged employment, but are most active in farming and small businesses. Thus, the traditional view of women in these societies still puts them in the role of almost perpetual child. The vulnerability of women is exacerbated by the prevailing types of relationships in the social order, the status of wife or daughter being dependent on the relation they maintain with the husband or father. Furthermore, women are not always informed of security threats and have no say.

“Here, women are under-informed, uneducated, made to stay home and, thus, become the ideal victims”. (Comment by a female respondent, leader of a women's group, Bol, 11 June 2015)

In general, women's access to schooling, training and information in Chad is far behind that of men. Significant advances have been made, but the situation remains difficult. This is not without its consequences in remote areas where there are few or no schools, nor other training and outreach programmes.

Enhanced vulnerability

Women are clearly perceived by the community as more vulnerable to insecurity and violent extremism. Women, as well as men, perceive women as “innocent”, “fragile” and less capable than men because they are “inadequately prepared to deal with violence”. The correct attitude towards violence or insecurity is perceived as the ability to escape danger as much as it is the physical ability to deal with it. The social contributions of women are mostly understood to be the duty to take care of the household, especially the children. Thus, in areas like Bagassola, Liwa, etc.:

“They are the first victims of these phenomena²⁹ because they do not have the strength to defend themselves and must take care of the children as well.” (Comment by a female respondent, leader of a women’s group, Bol, 11 June 2015)

Other responsibilities (working in little shops, selling foodstuffs, farm products, spices, etc.; moving around or out of their villages and towns) make women even more vulnerable in insecure times, as it was expressed by this respondent:

“They are very sensitive, very fragile, yet they are the ones who leave to work in the fields, go to the markets...”

Actress or manipulated victim of violent extremism?

She is a woman of about 40 years old, born of a Toupouri mother and a Hausa father. Married to a Barma, she became Islamized and lived with her husband in the Boutal Bagar neighbourhood. After the first attacks on N’Djamena on 15 June 2015, some elements of Boko Haram who were captured gave up the names and contacts of their accomplices in the town. The police arrested the woman as she was leaving for Fianga (Mayo Kebbi).

As a collaborator with elements of Boko Haram in N’Djamena for two years, the woman, who spoke Hausa, would have been contacted as soon as the fighters arrived in town. She would first have hosted them and then helped them find rooms to rent and meals. She also would have served as their guide to understanding the city and feeling more at ease to move around the area. After the attacks, she was alerted by some elements of Boko Haram to flee N’Djamena, to avoid being arrested and, certainly, giving up sensitive information.

A dozen phone cards were found on her (phone chips for her parents and husband, others for communication with Boko Haram). Her husband, who was also arrested, was eventually acquitted because no proof of his involvement was found. The woman, in jail, allegedly confessed to acting without the knowledge of her husband.

How did this woman become an accomplice in such an undertaking? Certainly, she would have been baited by money, but, over time, she must have realised what was happening. Did she consent to work with them anyway? This case highlights the collaboration of a woman, not under the leadership of a male relative, with an extremist group.

²⁹ Insecurity and violent extremism.

A possible road to extremism

The vulnerability of women outlined earlier also prevails when women are more or less obliged to follow their husbands or fathers on their travels. This is where their path crosses extremism, when the journey leads men to *khalwa* in northern Nigeria or directly to Boko Haram camps. Their commitment is usually due to a decision by the head of the household: *“Sometimes, they are obliged to follow their husbands to Nigeria”* (Comment by the leader of a women's group, Bol, 11 June 2015). However, this ‘passive’ course must not eclipse the active roles played by women in some extremist group activities. The bloody events in Chad and elsewhere sometimes highlight the role of women. At a minimum, it seems that, whatever the trajectory and the influences behind this radicalization, women have become agents of violent extremism.

2. How the isolation of young people helps extremist groups

Young people: a force on the edges

“They cannot play their role properly! The problem they all have is the weight of tradition, especially of religion. It weighs heavily on them! For example, a woman has no right to disagree with her husband, nor the young, with their parents! For example, if your father belongs to a political party, he forces you to follow! Yet politics is a choice! He forces you to follow him; he forces you to make the same choice as he does! So, this will not allow us to assume our responsibility, to play our part properly!” (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with students, Bol, 11 June 2015)

The poverty which prevails in these regions hits young people, in particular: they bear the brunt of the regions’ destitution and endemic unemployment, where there are no opportunities beyond fishing and agriculture. Most of them are also dependent on their parents for the means of production, education, labour, business, marriage, etc. This dependence makes them – as it does for women, but to a lesser extent – a segment of the population without a voice. Most of the young people encountered during this study see themselves as a marginalized class, outside decision-making and community life.

In the areas covered by the study, young people hold a rather ambivalent place. On the one hand, they are seen as the ones who will, one day, take up adult burdens – ensuring security, contributing to development, ensuring farm work and fishing:

“Their place is important because, without young people, society has no strength. Youth are the backbone of a country, the core of development”. (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with students, Bol, 11 June 2015)

On the other hand, a propensity to crime, debauchery and consumption of prohibited substances (such as, *bongo* and tramol) is intrinsically linked to young people and strongly condemned by the rest of society. Such activities worsen the perception of the young, as evidenced by the position taken here by a respondent:

“Young people and their elders disagree because young people have strange behaviour and respect nothing. Some young people take tramol and the older people do not like it”.

The traditional model of social reproduction in Chadian society is in crisis. Indeed, young people dream of things their parents cannot provide and seem ready to do anything to get them (at least, some do). This raises a problem with the model: parents and the community are less and less representative of the model desired and replicated by young people.

Dreams of grandeur and elsewhere

“We dream of having a motorcycle, of trading, of getting married. Some want to go to Nigeria ... In our region, there are people who dream of rejoining Boko Haram just to have a motorcycle, money, etc.” (Comment by a respondent, recorded during a group interview with students Bol, 11 June 2015)

Young people in the areas surveyed in this study aspire to many things. The greatest dream of ‘success’ is paid employment or self-employment which allows them to live decently (i.e. making an income through trade). Although this study has been conducted in very rural areas, apart from N’Djamena region which is more urban, fishing and agriculture are seldom mentioned as career prospects, far behind paid labour (*“to become a senior official of tomorrow”, “to become an important person in the country”* – working in public service, or for an NGO, a humanitarian organisation or a private company) and trading (*“he dreams of becoming a great trader”*). The path to this success is through quality training, school or the funds to start a business. Having a socio-economic position and respectability in these societies also involves setting up a household, that is to say, by marriage. But the monetization of marriage transactions makes marriage so expensive that young people without gainful occupation usually cannot attain it. In the Lake region, the average marriage costs about 600,000 CFA (over 1,000 USD); about 2.1 million CFA in Kanem, and 2,000,000 CFA in Bahr el Gazel (about 3,500 USD). As for the material goods of which the young dream, the motorcycle is arguably the most desired, before a house.

Unable to fulfill their dreams at home, many young people leave. In areas like the Lake region and Kanem region, Nigeria remains the ideal destination to seek employment, trade or study the Quran. Some go to other big cities in Chad, especially N’Djamena, while others, especially from Bahr el Gazel, go further, in particular, to Saudi Arabia. The way to Libya is closed, due to the turmoil in that country since the revolution and the death of Gaddafi in October 2011.

Besides the general category of people living on the margins of society, it is mainly young people (18-30 years), in particular those who speak Arabic, who appear to be the main targets of the extremists. Among Chadians who have left the country to join the ranks of Boko Haram, most of them are young people. Witnesses emphasise the context in which young people live, identifying five sub-categories who radicalize or join extremist groups (in this case, Boko Haram):

- Young people looking for money and material goods, such as motorcycles.
- Young victims of injustice, unemployment and social ostracism.
- Young people who are convinced of the cause of these extremist groups.
- Young people who come from outside Chad, especially from Libya and Saudi Arabia.
- Young adventurers seduced by the power of Boko Haram.

The table below illustrates the respondents’ insistence that material incentives are the main reason for youth engagement.

Motivation for the young to join extremist groups	Number	%
Social status	13	18.3
Material reasons	37	52.1

Religious values	18	25.4
Drugs	0	0.0
Other	3	4.2
Total	71	100

The geographical location of these young people is also relevant. Young people in the most remote and isolated areas, including the islands in Lake Chad like Ngouboua and Tchoukoutelia, are the most targeted. This is easily explained by the fact that these regions are close to the areas where Boko Haram is most active, but it is also due to the ease of movement among local people.

Increasingly, young people leave for the *khalwa* in Northern Nigeria, not only for Quranic courses but also for the training camps of Boko Haram. This new situation increases the marginal position of young people who are, increasingly, seen as a threat to society: *“They slaughter people, even their own parents”* (Comment by a respondent, Bagassola, 14 June 2015). These young people are at the heart of this movement, militarily but also as recruiters of other young people in their home community. It is also they who demonstrate the financial and material benefits to be had by joining the movement. This has been highlighted by recent events in the Lake region and in N’Djamena.

3. What role do women and young people play in resistance?

“I do not really see how women can help prevent the departure of young people to Boko Haram, except by educating children and raising their own awareness among each other. The older women can raise awareness with their sons so that they do not join the extremists”. (Comment by a female respondent, leader of a women’s group, Bol, 11 June 2015)

The role of women as educators is highlighted in the study as a key element, first in the education of small children and prevention of extremism and, second, in the supervision of adolescents, especially girls, and protection against the influence of their partners who are members or supporters of extremist groups. During the interviewing process in the study it was clear that it was easier to get women in these communities to talk when they were among themselves. Therefore, women – especially women opinion leaders, teachers etc. – could make a very valuable contribution to preventing radicalization through this feminine framework which is more conducive to free speech.

As for the young who do not join Boko Haram, they have gained importance in the most exposed villages by becoming part of their communities’ self-defence groups. In this role, young people are succeeding in making themselves a new place within the community, but also in making themselves heard. As a result of the use of violence, extremist groups like Boko Haram overvalue young people as their main target for recruitment, and similarly communities – often disoriented by the atrocities of this extremist group – overvalue the role of young people in defending them and see them as a way of creating a ‘defence force’.

Traditional leaders have involved some young people who have returned from Boko Haram camps (those not put in jail) in raising awareness of the risks of indoctrination and extremism. Others do not dare take part in such public activities because they fear reprisals. As this man says, *“They play a very big role. If they are well educated, Boko Haram will not grow”*. Their experience serves as an example, to convince others not to leave, or to deconstruct the promises of the recruiters. In the same way that young people have been exploited to recruit others, these returning young people serve as a reverse example, raising awareness from one person to the next.

AVENUES FOR REFLECTION

This study comes at a time when the issue of violent extremism is more prominent than ever in Chad³⁰. The government has usually responded in a security-oriented manner, favouring an eradication strategy, meeting violence with violence. The right of states to defend themselves and to secure their people is imperative. However, the process of radicalization and violent extremism can also be prevented through an understanding of the underlying societal dynamics. This is why a study taking a socio-anthropological approach to understanding the fundamental causes can be so valuable.

Based on the perceptions collected during the study and observation in the field, as well as the analyses of, and discussions with, various relevant stakeholders, the following avenues for further reflection emerge:

Avenue for reflection 1: Develop a multi-sectoral national strategy/policy for counter-terrorism

One thing is to fight a terrorist group and quite another to prevent citizens (especially, young people) from joining extremist groups or accepting their ideology. It is, therefore, important to separate the armed struggle against extremist groups from preventive action against indoctrination and recruitment into violent extremism. Preventive action takes place in the areas of civil society, development and education. As radicalization is, in the first instance, a societal problem, society could be the first place to look for appropriate solutions – that is, action at the social, cultural, religious, civic or economic level. Nothing can succeed if it does not meet the aspirations of communities and individuals. So, the right to greater peace demanded by the people and the need to end abuse by various law enforcement representatives should not be forgotten.

Avenue for reflection 2: Adopt an expanded collaborative approach

A multi-sectoral approach should also make it a point of honour to work with communities, particularly through traditional leaders. This would allow people to regain confidence in the state and to more effectively collaborate in its efforts to prevent violent extremism or anti-terrorism. Community mobilization, with specific roles assigned to each category of the community according to their abilities, could be part of this approach. While conducting this research in the field, it was clear that traditional leaders are undertaking actions to raise awareness which, in their opinion, are showing signs of success bearing fruit. It was also clear that women and young people could play important roles in local actions to prevent extremism. Thus, in the same way that individuals are exploited to recruit those around them to extremism, they could also be instrumental in raising awareness of it.

It would also be useful to develop co-operation between state institutions, as well as between these institutions, civil society and community-based organisations. Society's entire capabilities could be mobilized, to have a critical mass of expertise and resources available to implement effective action. In N'Djamena – as in border cities such as Bol, Liwa, Bagassola, Mao and Moussoro – there are organisations able to contribute meaningfully to such an approach. Actions taken by institutions, civil

³⁰ There were attacks by Boko Haram in Chad at Tchoukoutelia on the 13 February, and at Ngouboua on the 3 March, 2015 (5 deaths, including the district head). On 15 June 2015, the first suicide attack occurred in N'Djamena with 36 deaths. On 29 June, 11 people – including 5 policemen – were killed in a suicide bombing during a police operation in N'Djamena. Then, on 11 July, another suicide attack took place in N'Djamena's central market, causing 15 deaths and wounding 80 people.

society or community-based organisations could not only help meet the security requirements, but, more importantly, the aspirations of the people.

In the discussions leading to the adoption of the anti-terrorism law, the National Assembly took a step in this direction by proposing the establishment of the Chadian Commission Against Terrorism (CTLT). To be more effective, the structure of the CTLT should include all types of stakeholders in a way reflecting the evident variety of Chadian society.

Avenue for reflection 3: Avoid treating communities or religious groups collectively

It is now clear that extremists were able to penetrate some communities easily and recruit followers and fighters within them. These communities, as a result of their lakeside location, were in close proximity to the epicentre of Boko Haram activities and the first ones to face the armed groups. Current events have resulted in these communities (mainly Buduma and Kanuri) facing accusations of collusion with Boko Haram. These communities are, thus, ostracized and subjected to constant pressure in the context of the general mobilization of communities against extremism and anti-terrorist actions in progress. In addition, traditional authorities (chiefs of villages and districts), with considerable influence in these communities, are under even greater pressure. But an approach focusing on the pursuit of scapegoats will not prevent further recruitment.

In such circumstances, even Boko Haram supporters who would like to ‘repent’ would think twice before leaving the extremist camps. There is, therefore, good reason to stop the indiscriminate criminalization of these communities, to stop demonizing them and their leaders.

Finally, the claims by some extremist groups of obedience, or belonging, to Islam have created confusion about those who truly are faithful to this religion. A policy to prevent violent extremism should also make a point of avoiding ostracizing the followers of Islam or any particular branch of the religion, especially the followers of Ansar al-Sunna. This would avoid the frustrations which make radicalization easy and help ensure broad participation in prevention.

Avenue for reflection 4: Reclaim border areas in a sustainable manner and through a sub-regional approach

The border areas have been presented as abandoned areas, benefiting from very little attention from central government and a lack of administration. Therefore, the practical realities observed during the study and the wishes of the people converge in the desire to see the presence of the state on a more permanent basis, providing better quality public services, both as a sovereign authority and as an agent of development.

The recovery of the border areas should also be evident in the extension of national sectoral policies in education, vocational training, health, etc., to these areas. In order to address the problem of their remoteness from the centre (N’Djamena), infrastructure to support transport and communications could be strengthened to improve ties with the rest of the country. To secure the borders over the long term, the security forces would need a more permanent presence, not the sporadic presence which often leads to abuse, racketeering and extortion of local people.

This approach could be sub-regional, not to break the social and economic dynamics at work but, instead, to offer them a more formal development framework. An institution like the Commission for the Lake Chad Basin [*Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad*], whose mandate is, precisely, the development of this area, could be a place for developing such initiatives. The goal would be to allow states to adapt to the existing dynamic by adopting a sub-regional approach.

Avenue for reflection 5: Meet the specific needs of young people

Boko Haram's recruitment process has incorporated and manipulated the needs and aspirations of the different strata of the population living in border areas. It would be useful, therefore, to adopt a specific strategy to fulfil the needs of the groups targeted by extremists, especially young people. Access to opportunities for professional integration would allow young people to regain confidence in society and continue to believe in a better model than that sold by the recruiters. Access would also undermine the seductive rhetoric of the recruiters.

In practice, it would be a question of providing more meaningful opportunities for basic and vocational training; of ensuring jobs for these peripheral areas in both the public and private sectors; of supporting the development of the informal sector to enable the development of self-employment. Finally, the revalorization of fishing and agriculture, which are now losing ground, would also help to increase employment.

Avenue for reflection 6: Develop a strategy of communication, raising awareness and training to counter radicalization

Ignorance and the lack of information make it easy for extremist groups to get their message across. Forceful action against their propaganda could be important in areas where these groups are at work, as well as for the whole country. A communication strategy could be developed for this purpose. This strategy could be based on the local media, especially community radio stations which are very close to the people and popular with them, because they broadcast in local languages: in particular, Radio Kadaye FM broadcasting from Bol, in the Lake region; in Kanem, Bissam FM operating out of Mondo and Albichari FM operating out of Ngouri; and in Bahr el Gazel, the radio station operating out of Moussoro. Each of these radio stations has a 50-100km radius, thus, they cover large areas where no other media are present or they are inaccessible because of language barriers. In the past, awareness campaigns related to vaccination, peaceful coexistence, disease prevention etc., have regularly used these radio stations successfully.

In addition to radio, training structures such as the French or bilingual schools and the *médressa* – as well as the *khalwa* and *mabrouka* which have spread throughout the country over the past decade – could also relay communications to, and provide education against radicalization for, the youngest people.

However, this approach would imply determining the content and developing a good quality communication strategy, in connection with the actors likely to be affected.

Avenue for reflection 7: Adopt a more neutral position for the state in the management of religious affairs

Although secular, the Chadian government has always shown a willingness to regulate and organise religious issues. From the 1960s-70s, some denominations of Islam (*Tarbiya*, *Wahhabiya*...) have received special attention from the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior's Department of Religious Affairs and Worship. At times – in the name of preserving public order – bans, prohibitions, even dissolutions, have been imposed against certain denominations or their associations, although they are legally recognised and, therefore, republican. The followers of these denominations see in these bans, not only the work of the state but, above all, the work of the Supreme Council and its *Tijani* leaders. On the other hand, the *Tijani* see a growing permissiveness

on the part of the government and a lack of resolution against the advance of the “dangerous” *Wahhabi*.

In the middle of these conflicting positions and the dilemma of intervening despite freedom of association and religion, the state puts its credibility and authority at stake each time it takes a position on these issues. In its capacity as guarantor of social peace, it should, however, be careful not to feed inter-religious or intra-religious antagonisms. It could act, as an authority which respects the fundamental laws of the country, in an equal manner towards all denominations without collusion with any one in particular.

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