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What 800 Sahelians have to say

Senegal 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.

Burkina Faso - 6 interviewers
1'500 km – 5 days

60 interviews
Villages around 6 towns
Languages: Fulfulde

Cameroon - 6 interviewers
1'500 km – 8 days

38 interviews
Villages around 6 towns
Languages: Mandara, Fulfulde, Chad Arabic, Kotoko, Kanuri, Gamargu, Podoko, Matal, Mafa &Kapsiki

Mali - 8 interviewers
8'000 km – 12 days

147 interviews
Villages around 15 towns
Languages: Fulfulde, Tamasheq, Hassaniya Arabic

Mauritania - 6 interviewers
2'500 km – 7 days

88 interviews
Villages around 16 towns
Languages: Pulaar, Hassaniya Arabic, Wolof

Niger - 9 interviewers
4'000 km – 6 days
100 interviews

Villages around 12 towns
Languages: Hausa, Tamasheq, Fulfulde

Nigeria - 9 interviewers
1'600 km – 7 days

120 interviews
Villages around 8 towns
Languages: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo

Senegal – 6 interviewers
2'800 km – 6 days

74 interviews
20 villages
Languages: Wolof, French

Chad - 9 interviewers
2'000 km – 6 days

71 interviews
Villages around towns
Languages: Chad Arabic, Kanembu, Buduma

8 capital cities
8 focus groups

80 community leaders

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National report

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

Interviewers

We would like to specially thank our interviewers for completing their challenging task despite the high level of insecurity and vulnerability of the study areas.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

SUMMARY

Study areas

Senegal is relatively small compared with neighbours Mali and Mauritania, and the length of its borders is reduced accordingly. This investigation focused on two areas: the north (Podor and Rosso) and the east (Kidira). Their immediate proximity to Mauritania and Mali provided a source of analysis relevant to the subject of study. From Saint-Louis, 260km north of Dakar, six interviewers travelled through the area of Podor, Rosso and Kidira to conduct 74 semi-structured interviews with border area residents from diverse socio-professional backgrounds. In six days of investigation, the team travelled 2800km and carried out 103 hours of interviews.

State and citizenship, religion and identity

Senegal owes its reputation as a stable country to an old model of complementary temporal and spiritual powers (state and marabouts), the so-called "Senegalese social contract". It is also a country where democracy is increasingly affirmed, without, however, being immune from deadly violence. Predominantly Muslim, religious identity in Senegal is divided between various Islamic brotherhoods and a host of non-sectarian movements. This configuration leads to a jostling for position often marked by quarrels, destruction of property and even physical violence. Although the state comes in for strong criticism, its political relevance is not questioned. Indeed, in both the urban and border context, the criticism seems more like a demand for government and public services, rather than their rejection.

Inter-communal and cross-border relations

The residents of the border areas which were surveyed perceive themselves, in turn, as neglected – due to their distance from large urban centres (Dakar, Saint-Louis, Tambacounda, Bakel) – and as privileged – due to opportunities for trade with neighbouring countries (Mauritania/Mali). Livestock theft and seasonal migration for agriculture and mining are seen as major factors in the deterioration of inter-communal relations. Border communities do not see themselves as victims of violent extremism. Educational, religious and cultural institutions are perceived as the major drivers of resilience in the north and east of the country.

Radicalization: clues and process

The weight of social and family tradition seems predominant in the process of attachment or detachment in relation to the different theological currents people claim or reject. People perceive divisions in the religious field as potential sources of extremism: the management of diversity in this field is at risk. Violent extremism is perceived as foreign to the local context. The armed groups, in general, are rejected en masse even when they claim to act for Islam. The violent jihadist phenomenon in the region is often interpreted as the result of political and economic manipulation by the West. The term "jihad" as it is currently used, especially in the West and by the media, is universally rejected by the border communities. According to them, "jihad" is an important and positive tenet of Islam, with which they wish to identify.

The role of women and young people

Although generally perceived as minor players, women and young people are proving to be indispensable links in the mobilization to curb violent extremism, through their associative and socio-economic commitment to the service of the community and to their own groups. While they are spontaneously presented as concerned mainly with plans of migration and exile, the young have a greater desire than it would seem for social and professional integration within the community. The gender approach of the results indicates that women are not aligned with the male perspective, but,

rather, are simply less likely to speak out on questions asked. Economic insecurity and poor supervision during, and after, military service are felt to be the main factors for the vulnerability of young people to jihadist recruitment.

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:

Response to needs identified in the survey areas

- Enhance the economic potential of the border zones;
- Fight livestock theft to reduce security risks;
- Develop bi-national policies in favour of cross-border zones;
- Support the capacity for resilience already present within communities;
- Enhance border identity to reduce disconnection with the national space.

Response to the regional need for analysis

- Provide the means for greater understanding, prevention and action in a concerted manner.

INTRODUCTION

From Saint-Louis, 260km north of Dakar, six interviewers travelled through the area of Podor, Rosso and Kidira to conduct 74 semi-structured interviews with border area residents from diverse socio-professional backgrounds. In six days of investigation, the team travelled 2800km and carried out 103 hours of interviews. Ten of these sources were then invited to Dakar to compare and exchange perceptions on insecurity and violent extremism in their respective border areas. The analysis of the results presented in this report is, in addition, supported by a detailed literature review and by information gathered by, and from, national experts on the subject.

Senegal is the most western part of the African continent, jutting into the Atlantic Ocean – at the junction of Europe, Africa and the Americas, and a crossroads of major sea and air routes. The country enjoys a privileged geographical and even strategic site. Yet, it is relatively small compared with neighbours Mali and Mauritania, and the length of its borders is reduced accordingly. This investigation focused on two areas of Senegal: the north (Podor and Rosso) and the east (Kidira). Their immediate proximity to Mauritania and Mali provided a source of analysis relevant to the subject of study.

North Zone: Rosso and Podor

The twin cities – Rosso, Senegal and Rosso, Mauritania – are separated by the Senegal River. On the border with Mauritania, Rosso, Senegal is one of four cities in the Senegal River delta (the others being Saint-Louis, Richard Toll and Dagana). It only became a fully operating commune of Dagana department (in the region of Saint-Louis) in 2002. Between 2002 and 2013, the population of Rosso, Senegal increased from 9,388 to 15,870 inhabitants, that is, a rapid growth rate of 69% according to the census[1]. Rosso, Senegal is a multi-ethnic city inhabited mainly by the Wolof (73%), present throughout the delta region, and by the Haalpular, Moor and Soninke ethnic groups (21%, 0.4% and 0.3%, respectively, of the population). Economically, the city of Rosso depends on the primary agriculture sector (especially, the cultivation of rice and vegetables) and on services, as a result of its dynamic trading sector.

Podor is one of the three provincial capitals of the Saint-Louis region (the other two being Saint-Louis and Dagana). It is also the largest and most populous: 37,0751 inhabitants, according to the latest census in 2013. Podor is the most northern city in Senegal, bordered to the east and north by the Senegal River. Economically, the department of Podor has little to offer and records a high rate of youth emigration. The primary agriculture sector (including livestock – the largest livestock population in the region) is most important, compared to a non-existent manufacturing industry and poor services.

East Zone: Kidira

Kidira, located over 600km from Dakar, is a landlocked city in the department of Bakel, Tambacounda region, on the border with Mali. Kidira lies on the Falémé, one of the tributaries of the Senegal River. In 2008, the town had 5,239 inhabitants; the 2013 census registered 10,065. Kidira's largest ethnic groups are the Fulani and Soninke. The health and education infrastructures are largely non-existent, which shows the living standards of the population in one of the poorest regions of Senegal (Kidira's poverty index is 62.5, according to the results of the ESPS[2]). Kidira is also a crossroads, a point of

[1] General Census of the Population, Habitat, Agriculture and Grazing, 2013 (Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat, de l'Agriculture et de l'Elevage de 2013).
[2] Investigation into poverty in Senegal (Enquête de Suivi de la Pauvreté au Sénégal).

exchange and cross-border trade between Senegal, Mali and part of the sub-region. As such, Kidira's economy is based extensively on trade: its customs office represents one of the largest cash inflows into the Senegalese economy – some 90% of the revenue obtained from merchandise liquidation by customs inspections in the entire southeast region. The city's economic activity also includes agriculture and livestock.

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:

- Senegal owes its reputation as a stable country to an old model of complementary temporal and spiritual powers (state and marabouts), the so-called "Senegalese social contract". It is also a country where democracy is increasingly affirmed, without, however, being immune from deadly violence.
- Predominantly Muslim, religious identity in Senegal is divided between various Islamic brotherhoods and a host of non-sectarian movements. This configuration leads to a jostling for position often marked by quarrels, destruction of property and even physical violence.
- Although the state comes in for strong criticism, its political relevance is not questioned. Indeed, in both the urban and border context, the criticism seems more like a demand for government and public services, rather than their rejection.

1. Islamic brotherhood vs non-sectarian Islam, terms and issues involved in the divide

1.1 Senegal's Sufi path of Islamization

Depending on the source, the Islamization of Senegal dates to between the 9th and 11th century, but the late 19th century was a particular period of mass Islamization. This was Sufi Islam, structured into brotherhoods.

Senegal has four main brotherhoods: the Qâdires, the Tidianes, the Mourides and the Layenes. Most Muslims in Senegal identify themselves as Sufis. Sufism is an Islamic doctrine whose followers claim a deep (and not only literal) understanding of the word of God, as well as closeness (and even a merger) with its mystery. It is built on training and spiritual guidance. The frame can also be social. In the Senegalese context, it is traditionally accepted that the marabout is both spiritual guide and social guardian.

RESPONDENTS' COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP:
(more than one answer could be given)

Religious commitment	**Brotherhood (*tariqa*)**	**55.4%**
	Religious association	8.1%
Other commitment	Political party	16.2%
	Strictly cultural association	9.5%
	Local socio-economic group	8.1%
	Trade union	6.8%
	NGO-type structure	1.4%
	Other	4.1%

Result: 55.4% of the respondents are members of a brotherhood.

The community survey illustrates the anchoring of Sufism through religious socialization which the *daaras* (Quranic schools) provide to the population: 56.4% of respondents said they had received religious instruction as part of the Quranic schools.

Sufi Islam – the Islam of the brotherhoods – has, for a long time and up to the present day, had a reputation as a tolerant form of Islam, even a relaxed and unpolitical one. Its popular appeal promotes this image, although this is contradicted by the complexity of the groups and sub-groups of the brotherhoods. Within each major brotherhood, in fact, are a variety of leanings with more or less pronounced peculiarities. Thus, we find circles, movements, associations and communities taking an

obvious political stand in societal debate or being unfailingly rigorous in terms of religious observance. These trends have often been described as "pockets of extremists" within the brotherhood phenomenon. The field of Sufi Islam continues to expand with the sheikhs as these become increasingly autonomous vis-à-vis the large brotherhood groups and 'open' new sects by recruiting in diverse circles.

1.2 Reformist Islam

Another Islamic tradition exists in Senegal. Long known as "reformist Islam", this movement developed within Senegal around the young students who returned from the Maghreb in the turbulent atmosphere of the 1950s. These young Senegalese were considered to be under the influence of pan-Arab and independence ideologies. They engaged in politics against the colonial regime and advocated a reform of Quranic teaching. Their leaders were more or less marginalized by the new independent state which chose, instead, to strengthen its alliance with the main leaders of the brotherhoods. It was only with the Iranian revolution in the late 1970s that the movement enjoyed a revival with the birth of *Jama'atou Ibadou Rahman* (the gathering of the servants of the Merciful). The Ibadou Rahmanes would intensify the Islam brotherhood/no brotherhood debate and seduce a part of the urban and educated youth. At the same time, Senegalese society found itself facing important societal debates between secular and reformist intellectuals (not always Ibadou Rahmanes) who were considered to be the bearers of political Islam, unlike the brotherhood leaders. In the 1980s, the unfinished mosque in Dakar, near the airport, became the Mecca of this reformist Islam that sought to promote an Islamic society which would substitute for failed secular development. The imams of this mosque were often arrested by the Criminal Investigation Division (DIC) after some of their sermons.

DOES VIOLENT EXTREMISM COME FROM OUTSIDE?

The majority of the Senegalese surveyed think that violent extremism comes from outside the Sahel region (68.9%). This view is stronger in the north of the country (82.9%) than in the east, where they are proportionally almost four times more inclined to think that violent extremism comes from inside the Sahel countries (78.2%). People who have received religious instruction in the *daaras*, as well as those belonging to a brotherhood or religious association, are more likely than those who have neither received instruction nor belonged to a brotherhood or association to share this opinion (72.3% and 71.4% respectively).

Beginning in the 1990s, there was a profound change with the new arrival of a variety of groups and tendencies (Tabligh, Wahhabiya, Salafiyah, etc.). However, the name of *Ibadou Rahman* persisted and was used to denote all of these segments. The enrollment of young people in these groups became a prominent feature of the religious landscape. Girls took the veil and boys started wearing short trousers and long beards. But the movement remained fragmented, as each group proved jealous of its uniqueness. From the 2000s, the movement seemed to become less feverish. Reformist Islam disapproves of intercession by the saints and this position earned them rejection by the majority of people who see them as "Muslims under 'Arab' influence", as well as "sectarians", "radicals", "extremists" and "people who understand little about Islam".

> "*The Ibadou were treated as jihadist because their message is identical. The perception is that these are the same groups*". (comment by a respondent)

Between the two camps, brotherhood and reformist, controversy certainly exists, but it does not prevent reciprocal borrowing and dynamic compromise. Thus, issues related to the secular State, moral depravity (particularly the issue of homosexuality), or Freemasonry, led to multiple denunciation campaigns carried out jointly by Islamic actors transcending brotherhood and non-brotherhood membership.

Beside the reformist movement, a black Shia Islam movement was also growing, mainly in cities and especially in the east of the country. It claimed intellectual independence vis-à-vis the old paths of Senegalese political Islam; nourished a critical message against the brotherhoods; advocated temporary marriage; and promoted significant steps towards development, especially in agriculture. This movement is involved in more or less regular public controversies which guarantee it the audience it requires for its recruitment campaigns.

1.3 Brotherhood and non-brotherhood religious movements: between emulation, compromise and complementarity

Each of these different camps, based on its doctrinal reading of Islamic traditions, tries to promote and develop its own brand of spiritual guidance to the Senegalese. In such a situation, confrontation (both verbal and physical) is not lacking; it is systematically presented as a reaction to insults suffered. Indeed, with today's ever-present media, any remark about religion, whether confidential or public, can become the subject of a 'buzz' phenomenon leading to a fight or to community condemnation. However, there is a growing emergence of religious discussion between the religious forces and Senegalese public sphere, with calls on the state to guarantee the expression of all religious tendencies. A civic voice – demanding the state as protector, equidistant from partisan forces – is emerging at the heart of religious plurality.

Cutting across these dynamics, the public space is saturated with manifestations of unity and religious unanimity. Each camp, through its traditional communicators, strives to excel in the development of kinship that unites it with everyone throughout the country. Each camp makes it almost an obligation to maintain social relations with all other groups and reminds people, at every opportunity, of its roots in universal propositions: *"We are all Muslims"*, *"All paths lead to God"*, *"Our spiritual leaders are all parents"* (comments by respondents).

From one dynamic to another, a form of religious pluralism has arisen in Senegal that is simultaneously the source of emulation, competition and complementarity, with complex methods of regulation constantly combining distrust and fair exchange.

2. Senegal: the roots of a model nation state

Senegal, in its current form, comes from a relatively recent, and short, colonial history (between the late 19th and early 20th century). Colonization led to transformation in a context where two other types of power prevailed: traditional and Islamic. The meeting points between these different matrices have generated a process of interpenetration which gives rise to the interesting phenomena of accommodation, influence and mutual instrumentalization. Gradually, a political model of command and management of the territory under the control of elites linked by relations of mutual interest developed. On the one hand, the colonial power implemented its trade economy; on the other, the religious elite consolidated its new position as a privileged intermediary in the colonial system, on the ruins of the pagan aristocracy which had been defeated militarily. Finally, these same pagan elites found themselves recycled, often as chiefdoms of provinces, in the new territorial chain of command[3]. Thus was born, in Senegal, a model of complementary power with different forms of social and political legitimacy, which set itself up as the hallmark of political life in the country.

[3] These processes have received much study by different researchers such as Boubacar Barry, Donald Cruise O'Brien, Momar-Coumba Diop, Mamadou Diouf.

2.1 The Senegalese "Social Contract": between social inheritance and the democratic project

ARE PEOPLE SATISFIED WITH THE STATE?

The majority of respondents (60.8%) say they receive basic social services, but this claim is strongly nuanced by complaints expressed in the qualitative data. This said, these results clearly reveal disparities between the eastern and northern regions: 74.3% of people surveyed in the north believe they have basic social services while the majority (51.3%) in the east says the opposite. State services in the eastern region are much less present than in the north, which has benefited from agricultural development. Women (73.1%) and young people (69.6%), as well as those without gainful employment (68.4%) and those with less than secondary-level education (66.7%), say they have better access to basic social services than their opposites. The most vulnerable people, then, seem to be the least demanding, and more likely to spontaneously accept the situation. This relative paradox is explained by a euphemistic perception of reality, which is shown by similar results (a difference of 0.8%) between those who have, and those who do not have, children, the former having a greater dependence on basic social services (school, health).

Upon independence, the national government extended this principle of complementarity of power – also called the "Senegalese Social Contract" (Donald Cruise O'Brien) – while actively promoting new forms of social mobility through education as well as governmental, civil service and military careers. These new matrices of 'modern' social legitimacy became juxtaposed (and telescoped) with those considered traditional (e.g., the social hierarchy of castes) and religious (e.g., the social superiority of marabouts over disciples).

Senegalese identity, as well as Senegal's politics, remains marked by this plurality of vision, speech, legitimacy and legacy which is related to the different twists and turns which have shaped the country's history. Thus, the Senegalese citizen moves in an archipelago of identities and allegiances which maintain various relationships, according to the individuals and communities involved. Yet, it was long believed that cultural, social and political changes – through urbanization, the breakdown of the basic family unit, or openness to the world – would lead to a weakening, or even a decline, in primary and secondary allegiances (family, territorial origins, clan, religion, etc.)[4]. This consensus view is well illustrated in remarks collected by this study:

> *"Senegal is big, if you will, but one could say that it is really composed of only a few families. For every issue, it is enough for just a few brotherhoods to come together, uniting their voices, and, then, no cloud can continue to persist".* (comment by a respondent)

Shared by a large part of the population, this strong consensus view has become part of the resources of resilience. Indeed, it represents a community ideal which should not be broken. It is a product of, but, in turn, also produces, the requirement for peace and stability. Thus, 36.5% of people questioned in the community survey believe that the state and religion forbid the same offenses and crimes. In this context, the promotion of democracy in Senegal only seems to happen, paradoxically or paradigmatically, when the leaders in whom the religious and traditional heritage is vested – the marabouts, traditional chiefs, Islam – are also promoted.

The Casamance conflict, which has been ongoing since 1982 in southern Senegal, is not perceived by the respondents in the border areas of the north and east as a threat to national unity and security at all.

[4] On this prognosis and the maintenance of socio-religious forces, see the authors' study: *La question musulmane au Sénégal. Essai d'anthropologie d'une nouvelle modernité*, (Paris: Karthala, 2010). Another source which could be considered is : *État, islam et sociétés au Sénégal. Un air de nouveau temps?*, recently published under the direction of Abdourahmane Seck, Mayke Kaag, Cheikh Gueye and Abdou Salam Fall, (Paris: Karthala, 2015).

2.2 The role of religion in acts of public violence

DO PEOPLE TRUST THE STATE TO ENSURE SECURITY?

When asked spontaneously, respondents say they mostly feel safe in their region (68.9%), which does not mean that serious concerns do not exist. Indeed, most of them say the presence of the military is "reassuring" (85.2%), and even "very reassuring" (59.5%). However, the favourable opinion of this presence varies according to the institutional identity of the forces, ranging from 48.6% of respondents being favourable to "the presence of (only) African forces" to 45.9% in favour of international (i.e. UN) forces. However, the majority (50%) is "unfavourable to the presence of Western forces", of whom 73% are "very unfavourable". The Senegalese state retains the confidence of the respondents with 87.8% of them considering that it is able to ensure security.

The consensual nature of the organisation of political life does not always guarantee immunity against violence. Indeed, at the very moment when Senegal consolidated its image as the 'democratic showcase of Africa' following the second democratic handover in 2012, an organisation of families of the victims of pre-election violence appealed to the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to judge 32 cases, including 8 deaths and 24 cases of torture.

This violence is part of a long series of incidents from 1960 to today. Very often, little attention has been given to the symbolic significance that those involved (whether as perpetrators or victims) have given the violence. In the three cases presented here, the religious dimension of the violence deserves to be highlighted.

The attempted assassination of President Senghor at the Grand Mosque of Dakar

In August 1967, on the occasion of the great prayer of Tabaski at which the President of the Republic (Leopold Sedar Senghor) traditionally assisted, a man stood up, pistol in hand, and shot twice at the President before being overpowered. The bullet did not hit home. The man with the pistol, Moustapha Lô, was subsequently identified as a disciple of the Tidiane brotherhood and cousin of Marabout Cheikh Tidiane Sy, then in prison. He was also suspected of being a militant Diaiste, that is, a group named after the former partner and opponent of President Senghor (also in prison at the time of the attack). Arrested and sentenced to death, Moustapha Lô has remained in popular consciousness as a result of the final words attributed to him at his execution. According to legend, Moustapha Lô, in front of his firing squad, made a prayer of two *rakkat* (a series of postures) and addressed the judge: "As for you, I do not know what awaits you, but I die with a clear conscience, as a martyr".

The Moustarchidin Wal Moustarchidates in the turmoil of the murder of six policemen

On 13th May 1993, at the end of an uncertain election, constitutional judge Babacar Seye was murdered in his car by a hit squad of three men. In the wake of multiple arrests, Moustapha Sy, leader of the major movement Moustarchidin Wal Moustarchidates[5], was arrested following public statements indicating that he had evidence of the circumstances, location and identity of the sponsors and killers of the judge. He also declared that he would be able to assassinate the President, but had no interest in doing so. On 16th February 1994, the country was in shock. Masked men wearing vests with inscriptions in Arabic had killed five policemen (a sixth dying from his wounds). Moustapha Sy's movement was accused, dissolved and then prohibited across the entire

[5] In fact, originally it was mainly a *daahira* (circle), but as a result of its evolution it can now be seen as a socio-religious movement. Moreover, in 2000 the movement eventually acquired a political party called the Party of Unity and Assembly (PUR). The terms *moustarchidine* and *moustarchidates* are Arabic and refer to young men (boys) and young women (girls) who are dedicated and committed to religion and God's way.

national territory. Over 100 of his supporters were arrested. His movement was accused of murdering – with knives, machetes and guns – the six government officials during an unauthorized march to reach the Palace of the Republic following a political rally organised by several opposition parties. His movement has never claimed the acts.

The Mamadou Diop case

The death of Mamadou Diop was undoubtedly the most publicized incident during the violence which accompanied the pre-election period of 2012. Many portraits of him, microphone in hand, circulated in major newspapers and on social networks. On Friday 27th January 2012, during a rally organised by the political opposition, Mamadou Diop officiated as muezzin in the various prayers. In an interview he gave the authors that day (part of another study), Diop said that the former President's desire to seek a third term was not acceptable, that this desire was not only an insult to Senegalese democracy, but also an affront to his vision of the "Senegal of Amadou Bamba, El-Hadji Malick Sy, Seydina Limamou Laye" [6]. Diop confided to the authors that he was determined and ready to die a martyr if must be. A few hours after this interview, Mamadou Diop was killed in the first clashes between the police and demonstrators, fatally struck by a police bus. He became an icon of popular resistance against Wade's third Presidential term.

[6] The founding fathers of Senegalese brotherhoods: Ahmadou Bamba (1853-1927), founder of Mouridism; El-Hadji Malick (1855-1922) is considered the propagator of the *Tidjaniya* in Senegal; Seydina Limamou Laye (1843-1909), a leading figure in Islam in Senegal, is seen, rather, as the Mahdi (one speaks of his community as a brotherhood, but his supporters reject the term and consider themselves the Islamic Ummah).

INTER-COMMUNAL AND CROSS-BORDER DYNAMICS

Points to remember :

- The residents of the border areas which were surveyed perceive themselves, in turn, as neglected – due to their distance from large urban centres (Dakar, Saint-Louis, Tambacounda, Bakel) – and as privileged – due to opportunities for trade with neighbouring countries (Mauritania/Mali).
- Livestock theft and seasonal migration for agriculture and mining are seen as major factors in the deterioration of inter-communal relations.
- Border communities do not see themselves as victims of violent extremism.
- Educational, religious and cultural institutions are perceived as the major drivers of resilience in the north and east of the country.

1. Self-perception of the community

> *"Being able to sell goods that come from Mali and are less expensive is one of the advantages. The other important fact is that we have relatives there and their villages are, for us, like our own villages".* (comment by a respondent from Kidira)

The data from the study indicates that a position on the border can be considered a starting point to grow a collective sense of identity marked by a number of characteristics.

1.1 The issues of economic survival

The difference in prices at various places on the northern and eastern borders are converted into an advantage by the people living near these borders – both for their own consumption as well as for business opportunities. This mainly concerns access to consumer goods and equipment – mainly oil, sugar, milk, meat and appliances. The perceptions expressed in the following extracts make this point explicitly:

> *"Life here is cheaper, you just take the boat to go shopping". "The traffic is dense, we trade with Mauritania, where sugar is 450 francs compared to 700 francs in Dakar or even 600 francs here". "We buy all our goods over there. It is less expensive".*

The illegal nature of some of these transactions is mentioned by the respondents, both in terms of regret at their repercussions on the national economy and justification of the transactions because of the poverty of the border areas, as in this comment:

> *"Border trade seriously affects the Senegalese economy, [but] it suits the local population who have low purchasing power".*

In general, the business opportunity seems to be experienced as a necessary evil. The illegal aspect is made relative, and some speak of the "tolerance" of the custom agents, especially during holidays.

1.2 The positive dimension of the border at the social and cultural level

The border appears to constitute a constant opportunity for discovery and encounters, even dual community membership. It is in this respect that the symbolic becomes as crucial as the material, with multiple benefits such as:

> *"Living between two cultures of different countries, we are able to benefit from both at the same time"; "Linguistically, we are rich because we speak at least two languages"; "The benefits are reflected in our relationship with the Malians so we regard Mali as our second country"; "(...) We are also more open to other cultures, with the Mauritanians".* (comments by respondents)

Two facts seem important, especially in the eastern region. The first is that the respondents themselves make several references to sub-regional political identities, thus appropriating them: *"This is the dynamic of exchanges and encounters with people of the sub-region"; "We are next to a neighbouring country with which we share the UEMOA space[7]".* The second is that there already seems to exist, notably through the organisation of sporting activities, popular frameworks for cultural exchanges which help improve the internal regulations of the countries.

> *"We are always in touch with the Malians, so we learn a lot culturally because the Malians invite us to their celebrations and we invite them to ours. Furthermore, in our football clubs, there are many Malians who come from Diboli and participate in the navétanes[8], as Regulation allows."*

By comparison, we do not notice similar examples in the north zone, neither in relation to the claim of a sub-regional identity, nor in relation to actual shared frameworks of sports and cultural competition. However, respondents refer forcefully to the idea of *family* and *kinship* on both sides of the river: *"I have family on both sides of the border"; "(...) people know each other and there is complementarity between the cultures, way of dancing, cooking and all that. It is very enriching"*. The term "river people", often used in the different exchanges, suggests that the river itself is a symbol of a distinct community and sharing.

1.3 The feeling of being outside the national space

The concept of cross-border identity also stirs up images of, and comments related to, disadvantage. These are initially observed at the political level through the frequent expression of a feeling of separation from the national space. Respondents feel they are living in a vague and marginal space in which the national dimension is not perceived, in terms of symbols. In this respect, some respondents noted that the most common symbols of the Republic (including the national flag) are not identifiable by part of the population. Others believe there is real confusion in the marking of boundaries. One of the partners in the study – a respondent from the north zone – recalls the persistence of a political fantasy of a historic border that overlaps with the official, political border[9] in a conflictual manner:

[7] West African Monetary and Economic Union (Union monétaire et économique ouest-africaine).

[8] The term has two meanings. The first refers to the seasonal movement of agricultural workers looking for daily employment on the more or less sizeable farms. The second refers to the vast popular movement which takes place every winter wherein, in every neighbourhood of every town in the country, young people organise various championships within the sport and cultural organisations. It is in this second meaning that the term should be understood here.

[9] History is written not only by the central and state power. It is also made of popular memories which oppose, and offer alternative versions of, the official history. This quote denounces the artificial nature of the official border of the north. It offers, in opposition, the memory of a border which is more historical and part of local culture.

> *"(...) and this border is the work of Senghor and Ould Daddah, without which Mauritania would still be part of Senegal. Hassan II said that the border of Morocco is Senegal".*

Similarly, others believe that, before independence, the border between Senegal and Mauritania was 45km from the river. In the east, respondents report the cases of Senegalese villages subject to Malian taxes. During the group interview, actors from the east zone expressed a strong desire for a state policy of rehabilitation and reintegration into the national territory of the people living on the border, some of whom are not even sure which side (Senegalese or Malian) they live on. According to their testimony, even the operations to mark the border which have currently been initiated are causing conflict. This is because of the uncertainty which has long prevailed concerning the administrative and political management of these populations.

> *"On the border, around Kenyéba, near Diniogobou, people wonder if they are Senegalese or not..."* (comment by a respondent from the east zone).

> *"In the north, we consider the Senegal River to separate the two countries, but in Démet near Waladé you do not say that you are in Senegal, people have Ouguiya[10] coins in their pocket ... yet they are Senegalese"* (comment by a respondent from the north zone).

2. Perceptions of risk and threats

Of the 74 respondents, only 22 (29.7%) feel they are not safe. Two main sources inform the perceptions noted in one direction or another. Personal experience of aggression determines the general perception (favourable or unfavourable) of the context. "(...) *I feel completely safe here, we live in harmony. There is no violence problem. Yes, some bickering, fighting or otherwise, but nothing unusual".* In other comments, however, having been a victim, or witness, of aggression reinforces the feeling of insecurity. "*We constantly live with insecurity. There are nights during which thieves come, we have chased them repeatedly. They steal livestock, and rape girls in their homes!*"

2.1 Understanding the geographical and socio-political challenges

Living in a zone of transit and seasonal/work migration appears to crystallize the feeling of insecurity.

> *"Everyone in Rosso is very worried. (...) This is a border town, there are people who come from Nigeria, from Mali, who cross without money and, so to pass, they steal. This is very common. We have asked for patrols and a hotline phone number. I personally proposed this to the police".*

Other fears are ecological: *"What I fear most is the dam on the river. The water rises, and the dam is in poor condition".* Similarly, some respondents start developing the feeling that the agricultural and mining potential of their land is also a source of vulnerability. In the east, for example, there is a sense that the area's strategic nature is intensifying. This view is supported by a discourse whose scope deserves attention:

> *"Following the problems in Ivory Coast, Kidira became a transit point to other countries of Africa. The city has experienced expansion with the development of trade and internal immigration, including the Baol-Baol".*

[10] Mauritanian currency.

The impact of the security situation linked to violent religious extremism is also evident:

> *"But we're safe only temporarily, because we feel that having borders with Mali and Mauritania is not safe! We believe that violence may come from Mauritania with the Tuareg and Boko Haram. It's easy to enter Senegal".*

The analysis of regional dynamics is based on a political imagery rooted in recent history. The events of 1960 (between Senegal and today's Mali), and those of 1989 (between Senegal and Mauritania), are two benchmarks which feed the idea that the border is a political space at risk[11]. This feeling is reinforced, in the eastern part, by a respondent who adds an additional concern for public health: *"It's risky to live near the border, because we are exposed in case of conflict, especially since I work in a town adjoining the border, without mentioning the risk of diseases that spread fast".*

In the north zone, the perception of risks and threats is revealed by a sense of 'dependence on the border', and by a sense of being a potential target of terrorist activities. This dependence is expressed in the context of complaints from neighbouring populations on the border, especially those engaged in commercial activities. Controls considered excessive and, especially, the practice of 'deportation without luggage' are well-documented, as well as the 'unexpected' and unilateral closures of the border by the Mauritanian authorities. There is a feeling that the border is too 'porous':

> *"Trafficking results in people being more exposed. There are large arrests, terrorist activities that plague Mauritania and pass by the river. This exposes people".*

2.2 Feelings about the reality and quality of security measures

> *"Myself, I feel safe because of the police and gendarmerie. They would soon intervene in case of a problem".*

However, given the region's free movement of goods and people, respondents see the size of daily passenger flows (trucks and cars), the arrests and expulsions of "*the bearded ones*", the low numbers of security staff and control points, all as indicators of insecurity. The context of the ECOWAS community also means it is particularly easy to disappear into the legal system with fake State-Civil documents.

Without question, the most important of the perceived risk factors is livestock theft. This item is mentioned most by respondents as an important factor in conflict and the deterioration in inter-communal relations.

> *"The Mauritanians came here and stole our livestock. The people rebelled and this caused a civil war, and all this because the state refused to intervene and help us stop such theft".* (comment by a respondent from the north zone)

Malians are also mentioned by name in dozens of phrases similar to this one:

[11] In 1960, conflict broke out between the leaders of the former Federal State of Mali – which included Senegal and the French Sudan (today's Mali). The crisis ended painfully with the armed expulsion of Sudanese back to Mali by trains set up for this purpose. They were accused of trying to invade Senegal. Between 1989 and 1991, violent and deadly fighting occurred between Senegal and Mauritania. Thousands of people living north of the river were pushed back into Senegal.

"Here, our major problem is livestock theft, and most of the thieves are Malians. They come here, take our animals and cross the border".

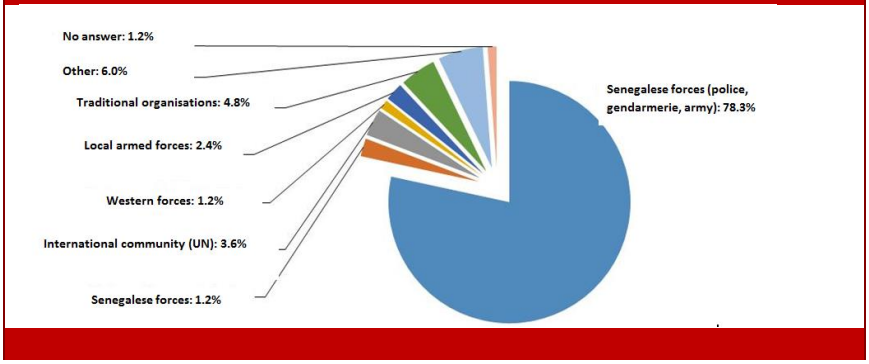
The perceptions of respondents about living in areas where heavy commercial and human flows occur also appear to express community withdrawal[12]. Migrants, adventurers, seasonal workers, and itinerant preachers are described as people who do not receive enough state surveillance. Their presence leads to a defensive tightening of community ties and the creation of self-defense groups (with the approval of the competent authorities on the matter), especially upon the approach of some major holidays, such as Tabaski or Korité[13].

"Measures taken in our community against foreigners are mainly monitoring activities, and they are conducted in coordination with the police. Two months from Tabaski, over 300 young volunteers have organised as part of a rotating 15-day guard. If the suspect is threatening, they call us and we call the police... Near Fanay, attackers came in mid-morning to attack the BICIS[14]. People must do what they can... The state does not always have the means to be everywhere... the country is big and the people must take noble initiatives. We must take our own responsibility. We must organize to rouse everyone and do what is necessary before the intervention of the police...." (comment by a respondent from the north zone)

However, the statistics reveal people have low confidence in self-defense, compared with government action in this area (78.3%). Confidence in the effectiveness of the security and defense forces remains important.

"The Senegalese police is one of the best police forces in the world. People coming in and out are known by the police... Even if you do not feel like you are under surveillance, you are... Sometimes they take people from the airport..." (comment by a respondent)

WHO DO YOU THINK CAN BEST ENSURE YOUR SECURITY?



[12] The idea of a 'melting pot' which appeared prominently in the preceding paragraphs seems to be contradicted here. This is a result of the investigation which is neither paradoxical nor contradictory. Community withdrawal is expressed mainly in relation to particular social groups who are not indigenous to either side of the border. These groups of seasonal workers are perceived as people *who do not live here* and do not figure in the description of positive community relations. This positive description, indeed, is not exclusive, for it is also accompanied by mutual accusations of livestock theft.

[13] Also referred to as the Feast of Mutton (Tabaski) and the celebration at the end of Ramadan (Korité). They are the two biggest holidays in the Muslim calendar.

[14] International Bank for Trade and Industry of Senegal

3. Resources of resilience

Even if the majority thinks the jihadist phenomenon is not present in their localities (60.8%), the people surveyed, nevertheless, hold and promote ideas and arguments relating to how to prevent extremism. Educational, religious and cultural institutions are identified as being at the forefront of this effort. Indeed, the respondents emphasize education; the strengthening of the family unit; promoting dialogue between the state and the leadership of the religious brotherhoods; strengthening traditional mechanisms such as 'joking relationships' [a social characteristic called '*cousinage à plaisanterie*' in French] between ethnic groups and between families; and the dissemination of a culture allowing different interpretations[15].

To decrease people's vulnerability to extremism due to poverty, several forms of empowerment, drivers and measures are perceived by respondents as important. Agriculture, through its various sub-sectors, is perceived as the main driver for improving the living conditions of the population. The lack of water was also noted in the east, with a strong demand for the construction of mini-dams to guarantee regular access to this resource.

The northern area sees a strong demand for increased cooperation between the two sides of the river, especially in the frequent requests for bridges and ferries to make passage more fluid. Official political collaboration between Senegal and Mauritania will need to be deepened, especially by pursuing common objectives to improve infrastucture.

> *"Soon, work on the bridge will begin. A scanner will be built to detect weapons at the intersection. This will solve the problems... There is also the Trans-Africa project (Tangier, Nouakchott, Dakar) for trucks to come directly from Morocco".* (comment by a respondent)

The activities of community service organisations, especially those related to the issue of local development, received a degree of attention. Yet, a critical view seems to lead some respondents to doubt their efficiency, particularly in the east. Furthermore, women are more trusting than men about the role of culture in community resilience to violent extremism (38.5% compared to 33.5%).

The people surveyed are, nevertheless, very divided on the possible existence of communities who are resistant to violent extremism: 23% said they were not able to answer, while the other 77% are split into approximately equal parts, with 36.5% answering affirmatively and 35.1%, negatively.

Ultimately, from the 68 comments received, there arose a moral portrait of the Senegalese as "prudent", with a "sense of sharing", ignoring the "culture of violence" and having a "brotherhood affiliation". Taken together, these traits – considered as positive – predispose one to believe that Senegal has a resilient community. But these aspects are offset by other traits which were also widely discussed, especially the issue of the persistence of caste divisions and religious currents.

[15] This notion of a culture allowing different interpretations was held and defended by a representative of non-brotherhood Islam in the group interview. The respondent did not explain their use of the term: whether religious, as a "right to divergence" (*haq al ikhti-laf*), or civic, as a "duty of tolerance".

RADICALIZATION: CLUES AND PROCESS

Points to remember:

- The weight of social and family tradition seems predominant in the process of attachment or detachment in relation to the different theological currents people claim or reject.
- People perceive divisions in the religious field as potential factors of extremism: the management of diversity in this field is at risk.
- Violent extremism is perceived as foreign to the local context. The armed groups, in general, are rejected en masse even when they claim to act for Islam.
- The violent jihadist phenomenon in the region is often interpreted as the result of political and economic manipulation by the West.
- The term "jihad" as it is currently used, especially in the West and by the media, is universally rejected by the border communities. According to them, "jihad" is an important and positive tenet of Islam, with which they wish to identify.

1. Perceptions of respondents

1.1 The Islamic brotherhood/non-brotherhood split: a rising danger?

The community survey shows that the split in Senegalese Islamic religion appears to be, for the majority of our respondents, little informed by detailed knowledge of the schools of law[16]. The theological and judicial references of the different denominations claimed or denied by the respondents come, mainly, from minimal, even non-existent, knowledge. This suggests that the weight of religious attachment has more to do with family and socio-cultural tradition than doctrine. To the potentially religious conflict, then, is added a certain affective dimension – mobilizing ethnic, cultural, social and even economic affinities.

What divisions in the religious field are perceived as a source of radicalization and conflict? Promotion of the Sufi brotherhood model as a bulwark against extremism – particularly since the events of September 11, 2001 – has been accompanied by a public indictment of *Ibadou Rahman* groups as factors in extremism. These groups are very heterogeneous and, rightly or wrongly, have become the confused object of various types of charges. Here are some illustrations collected in the field:

> *"At Rosso, the Ibadou insult the marabouts"; "The Ibadou are assimilated with the jihadists because they use the same speech"; "Even when they come, they isolate themselves, they have their big mosque for themselves, their small mosques for themselves"*[17]. (comments by several respondents)

[16] According to Islamic tradition, doctrinal currents are merged with schools of law. These schools reflect the diversity of possible interpretations of Muslim law. There are four main schools: the Hanifite school of law, the Maliki school of law (which is the most widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa), the Shafiite school of law, and the Hanbali school of law.

[17] The concept of "large" and "small" mosques is an ironic way to point to what would be, for this person, the sectarianism of the Ibadou Rahmanes. In every city in the country, there is generally a Great Mosque where an Imam Ratib officiates. It is in these mosques that government officials pray during such major holidays as Tabaski or Korité. Alongside these Great Mosques, there are many others which are consequently considered 'small' mosques.

DOMINANT PERCEPTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The majority of respondents perceive the factors in violent extremism (VE) through its economic dimension. Whether in identifying development factors (54.1%), the motivations of groups or individuals (40.5%), or the qualification of jihadists (41.9%), the economic dimension surpasses all others (social, political, religious, educational and psychological). Men are proportionally more likely to perceive VE through the socio-economic dimension (60.4% compared to 42.3% of women). And, as for women, the young relativize the size of the phenomenon more than their elders do, with 38.8% of them (compared to 43.1% of those that are older than 25) attributing the motivations of VE actors to the economic and financial interests they can derive.

The tendency to identify jihadists as *"*bandits*"* decreases with increasing educational level (55.6% of those whose education level is less than secondary level; 20% of those with more education), while the belief that violent extremists are driven by economic and financial interests increases with the level of education (37% of those whose education level is less than secondary level; up to 46.7% of those whose education level is above). Moreover, 83.3% of the managers and professionals tie the development of VE to economic factors, and 84.6% of craftsmen, traders and business leaders – no doubt more exposed to criminal activities – call the jihadists *"*bandits*"*. Finally, none of the respondents referred to the jihadists of today as *"*saviours*"* or *"*liberators*"*.

These charges raise the fear of possible confrontation:

"In the future, it could create problems. At the moment, some tolerate it ... but when the Ibadou preach, some leave saying 'We will not listen!'"; *"When it is the Ibadous' turn to preach, some do not even come to the mosque... This is a time bomb"*[18]*.* (comments by several respondents).

The war in Mali has exacerbated tension along the split. However, the study confirms that the non-brotherhood trend seems to call mainly for the rule of law protecting all religious tendencies in the country. It is possible, in this respect, to talk about what is at stake in the diversity of Islamic paths in Senegal. Moreover, the presumed war of the different forms of Islam is not without its opposite discourse. While in the field, researchers involved in the study found there were strong statements about the possibility of overcoming potential conflict.

> *"I am less pessimistic ... Ibadou has become a label. (...). We must educate people (...) Differences are present everywhere, even within the same school. What we must learn is to understand disagreements as differences of interpretation and distinguish between the political objectives of the groups who, in the name of Islam, take political positions (in relation to the West or socio-economic issues)".* (comment by a respondent)

Furthermore, the brotherhood/non-brotherhood split masks other divisions which are plausible sources of radicalization of speech and attitudes. The Mouride community is also the subject of perceptions which liken it to a potential source of crisis. As one of the interviewees stressed, *"We have the same problem with the Mouride, for they also raise revolts. People avoid them to avoid tensions".* This is due to the Mouride vocabulary and imagery which currently fuels the revival of the brotherhood as a nationalist myth. The Mouride propensity to be at the forefront of the national stage (political, economic, cultural, artistic etc.) creates a feeling of anxiety in other Sufi groups. These groups view the Mouride surges as a hegemonic project that, in a more or less distant future, could turn them into religious minorities.

1.2 Violent extremism in the popular imagination and speech

The causes of violent extremism are perceived mainly as coming from the outside, especially as a result of the political and economic interests of Westerners who seek to destabilize the territories in order to more effectively settle there and exploit their resources.

[18] In some mosques, the worshipers belong to a range of denominations. To avoid a hierarchy, with a single denomination leading prayers, everything is done by turn. But, in some cases, this 'democratic' solution does not satisfy everyone. Thus, some of the faithful may leave the mosque when an Imam of a different denomination officiates.

"It comes from the outside, from the great powers like the United States which seek to destabilize the country to have the monopoly and then send help. They preach the false to have the true. As in Nigeria, for example, you know that there is oil there, that's why".

The attempts of theological and doctrinal regimentation are also denounced:

"These are people who have been in schools in Arab countries and come to impose another Islam".

The causes of violent extremism are more definitely defined as external when the idea has developed of local tradition resisting the extremist. *"Oh yes, African countries do not have this problem. We meet to resolve disputes. Extremism and terrorism, really, are from outside. It's among the Arabs and the Americans. Here, in Africa, we do not know that!"* This statement seems to claim a form of Islam which is free from violent manifestations which taint certain contexts, including in Africa. This explains why respondents (78.4%) did not have a strong feeling that their religion is turned away from basic precepts in their own localities.

SECONDARY PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM: THE POLITICO-RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

Of all those questioned, a quarter believe that political and religious factors favour the development of violent extremism (VE). However, this view is tempered by the fact that few (less than 10%) believe the motives of the extremists are tied to political ambition or religious conviction, and that the jihadists can be resisters, defenders or fanatics.

Residents on the border with Mauritania are more likely to politicize the phenomenon, while in the east of the country religious factors are preferred (31.4% of people in the north think political factors favour the development of VE and 20% favour religious factors, compared to 20.5% and 30.8%, respectively, in the east). Men (67%) see politics rather than religion as development factors for VE (whereas 71.7% of women see religion as the explanation) and they prefer to call the jihadists "resisters" or "defenders" (76.7%) while women speak of "fanatics" (64.6%).

Young people are also more sensitive than their elders to the politico-religious dimension of VE: the majority of them feel that political or religious factors favour the development of VE (56.4% and 61.7% respectively). It should also be noted that the tendency to qualify jihadists as fanatics increases with the level of formal education. People with education above secondary school are more likely to consider religion rather than politics as development factors for VE (40% compared to 6.7%). Finally, religion appears as the second development factor for VE among people who received religious instruction outside the *daaras* or *madrassas* (32.1%) just as identification of jihadists as fanatics is the second choice among people who do not belong to a brotherhood or religious association (26.5%).

Although some practices are mentioned as a problem – such as influence peddling or the exploitation of child beggars[19] – this analysis could affect the overall coherence of the religious field, as well as its capacity to resist nonconformist alternatives to its dominant discourse. Religious leaders are seen to play a decisive role against violent extremism by 56 respondents compared to 9 who feel they are powerless to stop the phenomenon. Religious people, then, have an image as bearers of the message of discernment, and the call for peace and responsibility:

> *"They denounce suicide, killing one's neighbour, and also jihad; they explain that jihad no longer exists, that there is only the jihad nafs [the internal struggle for control of the ego], because we are near the end of the world".* (comment by a respondent)

[19] Influence peddling refers to the manipulation by some religious leaders of the customary respect due to their positions and titles, in order to obtain undue social and economic privilege. The mention of child begging refers to an important social debate. Traditionally, the practice, especially in Quranic schools, was considered to be part of training, to harden the child and drive out vanity. Today, the practice is contested by those who believe that begging is exclusively at the service of those Quranic teachers who, out of greed, put increasing numbers of children out to beg in the streets, instead of educating them.

There remain two relevant points which it is important to emphasize. Firstly, extremism's power of attraction is seen as having an easier path among the "poor", the "ignorant" and "those who want power". The "*Ibadou Rahmanes"* and "youth" are also cited. Secondly, the armed groups are perceived very negatively and are strongly rejected. *"They are warlike. So they are not good. Where they are, there is no more security*" (Comment by a respondent). Some accounts advocate their destruction: *"They must be destroyed because force must remain with the state. We must always promote justice and security; we should not create vigilante justice when the state is there".* However, this rejection coexists with an admittedly low margin of acceptance. This acceptance justifies itself with considerations that *"Armed groups are generally the result of popular uprisings or they are organized by a marginalized minority"* or *"They're fighting against the United States. They are rebels, I think".* They are also seen as people exploited by Western powers in the sense that they install disorder which will benefit the latter.

1.3 Justification of violence in terms of religion and community (non)acceptance

According to our sample, radical violence in the jihadist cause is rejected. The prevailing view seems to be that Islam does not need violence to spread and, therefore, those using violence on its behalf are perceived as deviant or impostors. The few times (8 cases out of 74) where the jihadists are described as resisters or defenders is to emphasize the fight against the West: *"They defend the country and religion against Westerners who speak ill of the Prophet".* Except for these very marginal perceptions, feelings were split between those who see the jihadists simply as "bandits" (32/74), those who see them as "fanatics" (9/74) and still others who call them "desperate" (14/74). Their explanations for rejection mention political, cultural, psychological, but, especially, religious interpretations. At this level, the jihadists' poor understanding of Islam is much denounced:

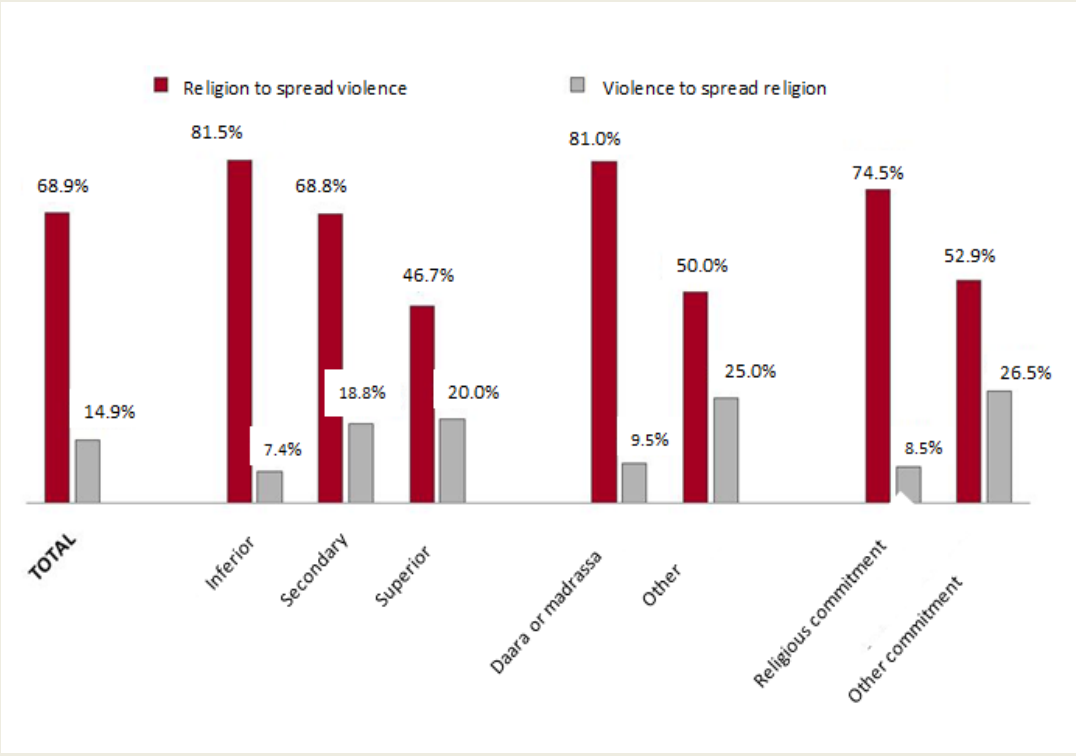
> *"For they do not know what religion says, they are lost!"* (comment by a respondent)

It should be noted, however, that the principle of rejection by religious injunction is neither exclusive nor systematic, as can be seen in this remark by someone who does not wish to blame the jihadists:

> *"These are people who have taken a path. There are people who tarnish the image of religion and attack them. I do not agree with the jihadists, but I am not against them, either. I do not know if they have respected the path, but the Prophet made the jihad!"* (comment by a respondent)

However, this comment should not hide the fact that, ultimately, in terms of perception, the idea that violent extremism can have a religious origin is strongly undermined both by the individual comments and by the results of the questionnaire. Indeed, religious belief is only designated as the root of religious extremism by 6.8% and religious indoctrination by 8.1%.

IN YOUR OPINION, THE JIHADIST CAUSE USES:



A large majority of respondents (68.9%) believe that the jihadist cause uses religion to spread violence rather than the reverse (14.9%). But this opinion is strongest in the east of the country. The study also noted that the level of education decreases with the tendency to believe that the jihadist cause exploits religion for violent purposes (46.7% compared to 81.5%). Moreover, it is most interesting to note that the great majority of those who have received religious instruction, as well as those who belong to a brotherhood or religious association (respectively, 81.5% and 74.5%), feel that the jihadist cause exploits religion. Thus, people whose Islamic identity would seem to be strongest are most vigilant about the exploitation of religion, which can be explained as a self-critical attitude which allows them both to distance themselves from a 'corrupt Islam from outside' (in their eyes, embodied by jihadism) and to remain faithful to 'the local, genuine Islam'. This vigilance can also be the effect of the messages of the religious and political leaders of the country (see, in particular, the Presidential speech during the last Korité, at the end of Ramadan).

1.4 The media and the community judgement of jihadism

Jihadists: between the media image and common sense

Overall, respondents consider that the media have hijacked an important Islamic term with which they want to be able to identify: "*jihad for a noble life*". In the context of a highly oral society, it's not possible not to be struck by the recurrence with which the sources spontaneously refuse to surrender the terms "jihad" and "jihadists" to those they call "bandits of Islam" or "terrorists". For them, the jihadist is the ordinary hero, radically alive, who controls his passions with dignity and assumes his various social and family responsibilities in spite of internal and external tribulations. He is the father who fights to earn a daily living. *"The jihadist is us, not them",* say these respondents. They also say that, in keeping with Islamic tradition and the teaching of their masters, the "lesser jihad" (i.e. holy war) is a thing of the past. The call for peace and understanding, the promotion of kinship and joking relationships[20], the choice of religious education for their children, are all, in their

[20] The 'joking relationship' (in French, *'cousinage à plaisanterie'*), extensively studied in various cultures by anthropology, is a controlled acting out whereby potential antagonism is stabilized and de-dramatized. This mechanism consists of exchanges and reciprocal obligation between two subjects (families, clans, ethnic groups, etc.) with comments and gestures

view, current social and cultural resources in Senegalese society which guard against radical jihadist propaganda and the murderous form of jihadism.

The media and how the community sees jihadism

Social media, listed in some cases as vectors of radicalization, are perceived with mixed feelings in the study sample. Some consider them more as a form of extroversion and a factor in perversion, while others consider them a binding factor which strengthens family and social ties. Very few women in the study sample have ever used social media (3.8% compared to 14.6% of men).

Respondents, then, do not emphasize, either for social media or classic media, any particular relationship between 'links to media' and the 'radicalization process'. In spite of the widespread media coverage of the phenomenon of religious extremism, the sample in the survey has very limited knowledge of the jihadist movements in the region. Nor does media coverage of the jihadist phenomenon appear to have a real impact on whether respondents feel directly confronted with the threat of religious extremism. Indeed, only a small minority (6 individuals) say they believe in the presence of Al Qaeda in their regions, compared to 45 who say the contrary. These different results appear to reflect a lack of regular monitoring of these groups. It is also possible to explain this lack of information by a pronounced disinterest or general rejection: *"They are all killers"* (as one respondent commented).

PERCEPTION OF JIHADIST AND RELATED ORGANISATIONS:

Do you see any difference between the armed groups: Al Qaeda, AQIM, Boko Haram, ISIL (Islamic State), Ansar Dine, MUJAO?	In your opinion, what is the nature of these organisations?				
	Political institution	Religious body	Terrorist group	Resistance movement/ Guerrilla movement	Other
Yes, they are different	17.6%	29.4%	35.3%	5.9%	5.9%
No, they are the same	8.8%	11.8%	50.0%	8.8%	14.7%

The use of local media deserves a few remarks. Firstly, only 5.4% of respondents say they learn about the activities of armed groups from local radio, which is very active in the survey areas. In the same vein, only 10.8% say the internet and social networks are the best media for learning about the phenomenon of radical violence. When the question does not concern the specific issue of radicalism and extremist violence, trust in the media alters. Public media is cited as the preferred and trusted source of information by 36.5% of respondents, compared to 21.6% for Western channels and 4.1% for pan-Arab channels – although no respondent mentions the public media as reliable sources of information about violent extremism.

2. Security at the national level

2.1 The legislative and judicial framework and political will against the threat

On 29th May 2015, the Minister of the Interior and Public Security brought together the territorial prefects and governors. The aim was, among other things, to exchange best practice for facing the

which would normally be unacceptable (insults, teasing, etc.) without any of the protagonists becoming offended. The custom is still very much alive, and its vitality explains why it is mentioned as a resource for enhancing regulation and avoiding conflict.

security threats in order to do everything possible to keep terrorists from crossing the Senegalese border. This type of administrative meetings appear to be complementary to the mechanisms of the African Union's Peace and Security Council[21] and the UEMOA in the fight against transnational financial crime (money laundering and the financing of terrorism[22]). ECOWAS has also adopted regulations on the circulation of small arms and light weapons which contribute to insecurity in the sub-region, particularly on the land borders between states.

The involvement of communities in prevention seems to be a strong option. Indeed, the management of the security situation by the state requires, among other things, the organisation of warning systems, consciousness-raising and information – both about national security policy as well as about the status of risk at the regional level. This report also notes a series of strong statements from the top of the Senegalese government (especially since the war in northern Mali) seeking to alert the public to the importance of these risks to the regional situation. As an illustration, Prime Minister Mahammad Boun Abdullah Dionne noted in his general policy statement, "Our country is evolving in a sub-regional context marked by instability linked to the emergence of organized networks threatening the integrity of the country". Recently, on the occasion of the Great Prayer at the end of Ramadan (Korité), the President of the Republic, in his greetings to the Senegalese, made a highly publicized call to the nation for more vigilance concerning security.

2.2 Indicators of risk and exposure to threat[23]

Surveys of military and legal experts suggest a series of facts which, over the last 15 years, have increased the risk of exposure to extremist violence:

- The presence of Senegalese as combatants in several military theatres: Libya and Syria;
- The logic of target growth and the expansion of perimeters of terrorist attacks given Senegal's proximity to areas already exposed to extremist violence;
- The continued (and emotionally charged) argument about the fundamental guidelines of the nation, such as in the debate on secularism of the state and its institutions;
- Political and strategic choices by the Senegalese government (from after the attacks of September 11 until the recent dispatch of troops to Yemen) which are susceptible to retaliation;
- The presence of many groups, embassies and structures belonging to countries considered 'enemies of Islam'[24];
- Habits, behaviour and cultural factors specific to Senegal (popular customs of incivility and indiscipline).

The government of Senegal has initiated a policy to strengthen its intelligence services, increasing staff as well as the quality of its human resources. The defense and security forces have increased efforts for exchange and dialogue about the so-called new threats and risks to the Sahel region, structured around various non-military skills. There has also been the promotion of other meetings specifically for military people – those on active duty as well as those who have retired – like the

[21] Article 3, paragraph c of its Constitutive Act gives the African Union the objective, among others, to "promote peace, security and stability on the continent". The organisation has also adopted a number of principles including "respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities". To implement these principles, the African Union established the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa.

[22] The Uniform Law on the fight against money laundering, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the West African Economic and Monetary Union on 20th March 2003 in Ouagadougou; the Uniform Law 2009-16 relating to the fight against financing terrorism.

[23] Extracts from the reports *Expertise militaire* written by the national consultants involved in this study.

[24] This idea covers a relatively vague spectrum in the data collected during this study. Usually, the respondents used general terms like "Western countries" or, in a more limited way, "the United States".

Forum of Generals. This forum helps develop a synergy of resources and information between different services and bodies of the defense and security forces[25].

2.3 Study of three recent cases of threats[26]

Senegal has specific national legislation punishing any act of external aggression committed by individuals or organised gangs, whatever the motives of the attackers. Three current cases relating to acts classified as terrorist and endangering state security should be analysed in relation to the Senegalese penal code and its provisions for enforcement with respect to external attacks.

The Sheikh Alassane Sene case

The day after the so-called Republican Demonstration in Paris on 10th January 2015 – in which President Macky Sall took part following the deadly attack on *Charlie Hebdo* – Sheikh Alassane Sene and Hamdel Ba allegedly "sent a terrorist text message" to the Interior Minister and the Director General of the National Police. The content of this message was: "Greetings to the enemies of Islam. We are already 19 members of Al Qaeda in Dakar. We follow you closely inside and outside the country. The threat applies to you as well as your children, you and your president". Immediately, the resources of the state were set in motion to find the author through his SIM card. It was the SIM of Hamdel Ba who, once arrested, named Sheikh Alassane Sene[27], a religious leader and founder of the movement called "taré yallah", as the author of the message. On 14th February 2015, he was indicted by the senior investigating judge for terrorism through intimidation and for undermining the security of the state. Both men have been in custody ever since and the case is ongoing.

The Saër Kebe case

This 18-year old student in his final school year at the Lycée de Mbour 80km from Dakar was known as a confirmed militant of the Palestinian cause. He posted a short threat message on the Facebook page of the US Embassy in Dakar denouncing the support of "Yankees" to Israel and announcing future reprisals against the world's primary military power. An investigation was quickly conducted and the boy was located and arrested on 10th May 2015. He was charged and has been in custody since then for "terrorist activities, advocating terrorism and conspiracy to commit terrorist acts".

The Ibrahima Ly case

Two months earlier in March 2015, also in Mbour, Ibrahima Ly was arrested for the same offence by the Polyvalent Intervention Brigade (BIP) supported by the Criminal Investigations Division (CID). This Franco-Senegalese man – born in France of Senegalese parents and who worked in France as a security guard – is well-known in jihadist circles. He was the subject of a dragnet for several days by the Counter-Espionage Division who had obtained his description from the French and American intelligence services. Ibrahima Ly is suspected of involvement in terrorist attacks and for fighting in Syria with jihadist militias. After his arrest in Senegal, he was placed in custody within the scope of an international arrest warrant in France for terrorism and advocating terrorism. The case is ongoing.

[25] A video clip of a meeting of the Forum of Generals (Forum des Généraux): http://www.dakaractu.com/2eme-forum-des-Generaux-une-reponse-a-l-insecurite_a91503.html

[26] Extracts of a report by the legal expert involved in this study.

[27] The Facebook page of the founder of this group: https://fr-fr.facebook.com/pages/Sheikh-Alassane-Sene-TAREE-YALLAH/243435399015459?sk=info&tab=page_info

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Points to remember :

- Although generally perceived as minor players, women and young people are proving to be indispensable links in the mobilization to curb violent extremism, through their associative and socio-economic commitment to the service of the community and to their own groups.
- While they are spontaneously presented as concerned mainly with plans of migration and exile, the young have a greater desire than it would seem for social and professional integration within the community.
- The gender approach of the results indicates that women are not aligned with the male perspective, but, rather, are simply less likely to speak out on questions asked.
- Economic insecurity and poor supervision during, and after, military service are felt to be the main factors for the vulnerability of young people to jihadist recruitment.

1. The gender approach to perceptions in the study results

1.1 Gender and the perception of security

For 85.7% of women and 74.5% of male respondents, the state is the best guarantee of security. “Western powers”, “the international community”, “village organisations” or even the “Community of African States”, totalled together, received no more than 7.2% of women’s trust, compared to 18.6% of the men’s.

Women see the presence of the armed forces as “very reassuring” (65.4%). However, once foreign troops are present, this rate changes, with over half of the women surveyed (53.9%) rejecting the presence of troops. When troops are (exclusively) African, the overall acceptance rate is positive (61.6%), but this positive acceptance rate appears to be moderated when it's broken down into detail: only 15.4% “very favourable” compared to 46.2% “somewhat favourable”. When the international and UN identity of the troops is highlighted, women show a high rate of indecision (23.1%), but this does not prevent the majority (of both men and women) being in favour of the possible presence of peacekeepers (45.7%) compared to a large minority against (32.4%).

1.2 Gender and perceptions of religious extremism

On several determinants of religious extremism, large differences exist in perception in terms of gender. Indeed, of the seven factors proposed in the survey as favouring the development of violent extremism, the economic factor is most credited with favouring it by respondents. For men, the figure is 35.8%, whereas, for women, only 25%. The economic factor is closely followed by the religious factor: with 25% of women considering it as decisive, compared to only 9.9% of men. However, no women or men in the study consider the international factor as likely to promote violent extremism. This result of the survey contrasts with other data from the community survey and group interview, where the international factor was seen to play a role and where Westerners were believed to spread disorder in order to more effectively reap the benefits of rebuilding peace and the economy.

This tendency to ‘outsource’ the causes of extremist disorder is expressed more specifically in the figures which show that 68.9% of respondents, against only 20.3%, consider that the causes of

violent extremism are exogenous to the social and religious culture of the localities of the study. The Islam practiced in these areas is considered to be 'calm'. This explains why the vast majority of people surveyed (78.4%) in the north and east feel that religious practices and public speech remain well-supervised and not subject to misuse. The socio-religious leadership gains by this confidence, with 75.7% of respondents considering it as essential in the fight against violent religious extremism. This trend is well represented among women who adhere by 73.1% to the idea. However, these women show a certain lack of clarity about the actions of the community leaders: 15.4% of the female respondents say they are unable to describe any concrete action taken by this leadership against violent extremism.

2. Women and young people: perceptions of roles

2.1 Vulnerability, insecurity and a new role in the community

Perceptions are, first and foremost, part of an overall cultural context in which so-called vulnerable groups (women, young people, the elderly, and the disabled) should not be subject to attack. Boko Haram and the kidnapping of schoolgirls are denounced as examples in this sense. Among young people, vulnerability is particularly seen in terms of a risk of indoctrination, for which they are believed to be the object. In addition, the study noted a change in male/female and young/elder relationships in relation to the way women and young people are now recognised as more autonomous.

> *"This has evolved. There are far fewer taboos. At the time of our mothers, there was no complicity* [in male/female and young/elder relationships]. *Now, relations are better".*

Two factors appear to interfere with the dynamic of change. On the one hand, school qualifications function as an argument for participation in the improvement of social life. On the other hand, economic and political transformations also help propel the dynamics of participation: *"(...) with the 21st century, with equality, women are everywhere, in fields, offices, factories".* Community organisations in which women play important roles also give them visibility and a public audience, even beyond the community. Several NGOs and development organisations have women as primary interlocutors.

> *"They are listened to because their leadership is asserted. They no longer suffer the dictates of society as happens elsewhere".* (comment by a respondent)

One of the most prominent women on the national political scene – and a native of Podor – is thus described as being *"(...) the pride of all Podor female residents".* As for young people, several comments, including this one, emphasize their involvement:

> *"If there is a project in the village, we call on the youth to seek their opinion: if they agree with the older people, the project is carried out. Otherwise, it is abandoned".*

The question of the integration of women and young people in the community decision-making process, however, remains hampered by the persistence of old ideas: *"Women should be at home. They manage the whole house."* (comment by a respondent)

2.2 The changing roles of women

Women appear to perform multiple roles in the current context, according to the comments collected during the study. Seen as the most vulnerable, their possible contribution to peace is seen as most important *"(...) because it is in their interests.*" (comment by a respondent)

> *"As wives and mothers of the main actors of these conflicts, women must be counsellors because they are aware that it is better to be poor until death rather than lose a son or a husband".* (Comment by a respondent)

Women are still perceived as the pillars of the education of children and, thus, best placed to inculcate societal values (peace, among others). However, the way that most respondents seem to keep reminding women of this role may suggest a way to limit women's accountability for other issues. In the study sample, several statements argue, in fact, for the non-appropriateness of women's involvement, especially in issues related to conflict:

> *"They play a very large role in everything, but perhaps not in lowering violence".* (comment by a respondent)

This reservation is often justified from the point of view that this is what the religious want:

> *"In that environment, women have no role. On the religious level, the woman is always behind the man. She doesn't have much say".* (comment by a respondent)

This reserve is also justified by the criticism, undoubtedly severe, of their public initiatives for awareness and advocacy:

> *"For the Casamance, there was a platform of women for peace, is it truly useful? I do not believe so".* (comment by a respondent)

From an analytical point of view, the report can conclude that these frictions and contradictions in perceptions are essential testimony to a societal debate showing that the image and the social role of women is changing. She is no longer confined in an exclusive and intimate domestic space.

2.3 The more ambiguous evolution of the role of young people

Unlike women, young people seem to be the focus of perceptions of resistance collected in the field. In the north zone, they are described as disinclined to work and, in particular, to invest themselves in the primary agricultural sector. In the east, several of those interviewed stressed their willingness to stake everything on emigration.

LIFE PROJECTS IN PERSPECTIVE

Of the majority of those who were asked about their "dreams" or hopes, only 25% mentioned emigration, of whom almost half cited the West or France as the destination, the others being more allusive ("abroad"). Three quarters of the responses are divided between marriage and family, successful education or getting a job in Senegal. One of the respondents believes, however, that *"nearly 90% of 20 year olds dream of going to France to succeed in life".*

Data from fieldwork

Furthermore, the perception that they are vulnerable to jihadist recruitment is acute in most of the respondents for whom economic insecurity is an important vector for radicalization. Their frequent enrollment in the regular army, followed just as commonly by their demobilization, is also considered a favourable condition for potentially easy indoctrination into gangs.

> *"(...) The ex-soldiers are a potential risk. They are trained and then let loose... I have spoken with the ex-soldiers, but they have almost suicidal ideas... they say they are ready to be rebels if there was a Casamance nearby..."* (comment by a respondent)

For others, the situation is more nuanced because *"the army recruitment policy has changed... Now, they go home with a trade, and continue to be trained for two years."* (comment by a respondent)

The social condition of young people – which is considered precarious – seems to be, ultimately, an obstacle to their accountability on issues of peace and conflict. Society seems to consider them as not yet up to the job. However, as this respondent notes:

> *"Since they are the main actors of this violence, it is their responsibility to consult and raise awareness among themselves to stop this".*

But for many respondents, young people must first *"educate themselves among themselves, be models"* and then "*go to work, for that is the only thing that can engage youth*".

These different opinions do not include the voices of young people themselves about how they see their own role in the security situation which challenges them. This is evident throughout the study, along with a desire for engagement:

> *"(...) Young people must be involved with sports and cultural associations. And when sensitizing youth, it works better when it's among themselves. The marabout said that it is for youth to educate youth".* (comment by a respondent)

AVENUES FOR REFLECTION

Based on the perceptions collected from the study and observations in the field, as well as analysis and discussions with various relevant stakeholders, the following avenues for further reflection emerge:

Response to needs identified in the survey areas

Avenue for reflection 1: Enhance the economic potential of the border zones

Economic uncertainty was named as the most determinant cause of violent extremism. Neutralization of this factor could be possible with community support aiming to enhance the economic potential of the north and east zones in consultation with local communities (particularly young people and women).

In the different areas surveyed, people perceived the primary sector – especially agriculture and livestock – as the main driver for improving living conditions. Interventions in favour of this sector could ensure the increase of cultivated areas and the raising of income levels. In the east, it would also be important to meet the demand for mini-dams, as highlighted during the investigation.

In the east, the establishment of transparent charters between the government, the mining industry and local communities could reduce the popular sentiment that the economic potential of the region is not exploited to the benefit of local people. An inclusive policy to curb the strong sense of dispossession expressed by respondents seems useful.

Avenue for reflection 2: Fight livestock theft to reduce security risks

The *security risk* factor which was most mentioned by respondents relates to the issue of livestock theft. The survey also shows that the cross-border nature of this crime is perceived as a cause of regional instability. Aid to reduce livestock theft would help reduce security risks.

The registering and tracking of herds with new digital technologies may be an option. Note that Senegal has many young companies working in applications and software development. Young people from herders' communities are already initiating experiments to observe the impact of the use of applications and softwares on livestock sale and shepherding activities. Similarly, alongside the establishment of inter-professional spaces for dialogue, the development of cattle-tracking technology could also help solve conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. The farmers complain of (deliberate) looting of their fields by the herds of their neighbours.

Avenue for reflection 3: Develop bi-national policies in favour of cross-border zones

The *political* factor of security issues is far from negligible. A high level of demands are expressed for bi-national policies in cross-border zones, initially at the level of inter-state relations. In the north, there is a request for increased cooperation between the two sides. Thus, it would seem necessary to deepen the official policy of co-operation between Senegal and Mauritania, including the pursuit of common objectives in relation to infrastructure (e.g., bridges and ferries to make it easier to cross the Senegal River) and joint management of the border. On this issue, the creation of a bi-national, community-based joint body could be envisioned: people on both sides could be consulted, help monitor the situation, and express their needs to policymakers.

Avenue for reflection 4: Support the capacity for resilience already present within communities

The factors of resilience in relation to violent extremism, beyond their economic and political aspects, also combine with social factors. In this sense, it has become clear that educational, religious (especially, those led by religious brotherhoods) and cultural institutions are perceived as privileged spaces for communicating a strong, preventive message as well as being major drivers of resilience in the north and east. Alas, until now, they remain the poor relatives of militarized solutions to the threat of violent extremism.

This implies that their capability for action must be promoted and improved. However, this must be done without forgetting to question the conservative approach these social institutions and social forces can have (particularly towards women and young people) as well as their influence on some forms of social inequality related to the social stratification of caste, particularly in the north zone.

Having identified the leaders and structures of educational, religious and cultural organisations, authorities could accompany them in acting both against the risks of violent extremism, but also against the societal imbalances which make different members of their communities more vulnerable. These vulnerable groups could also be supported in addressing violent extremism and in changing the social and legal framework which perpetuates their vulnerability.

From this support for social transformation, spaces for enlightened citizenship could develop would enable emancipated people to defend themselves against extremist manipulation. For vulnerable groups (women, young people, and particular castes), these measures would enhance a local and national sense of citizenship which is stronger and expressed in a dedicated formal and institutional space: public politics.

Avenue for reflection 5: Enhance border identity to reduce disconnection with the national space

Cross-border and inter-communal relations are factors in insecurity which could also be acted on through a number of vital measures. Firstly, the strong feeling of isolation in border communities generates a gap between the border region and the national space. This represents a significant risk in terms of security and territorial integrity. People single out the territorial continuity of public services – including access to electricity, water and telephone services – as a particular issue in the east zone. Access to national TV and radio also remains difficult. In the north and the east, a newspaper can take two days to arrive. In the wake of requests by respondents, an increased focus on the presence and symbolic visibility of the government in border areas would be beneficial.

These measures could be linked to the design of cultural programmes promoting peace between the different border communities. Festivals could easily be created to celebrate the social and cultural dimensions of the border. This factor was positively highlighted by respondents. These festivals could be placed under the auspices of the celebration of shared heritage (crop varieties, farming techniques, food, music, religion, dances, political and intellectual history, etc.). They would constitute ties between the border populations and, therefore, frameworks for the development of resilient communities, but also recurring opportunities for repositioning within the national space through moments of sharing and joy which would facilitate, for example, tourism.

Response to the regional need for analysis

Avenue for reflection 6: Provide the means for greater understanding, prevention and action in a concerted manner

This academic research at the regional level shows the importance of promoting a tool for research, diagnosis, prevention and foresight in partnership with public research institutions as well as regional and continental institutions (ECOWAS, UEMOA and the AU). This tool would generate messages of warning while specifying the effective levers for action to be developed in response to the risks of insecurity and violent extremism. It would, by its civil, even civic, character effectively mobilize resources across a number of sectors. In addition, the promotion of political and social dialogue on the values of the Sahel – based on certified protocols for tracking tensions and conflicts, and then on developing inclusive devices for sharing the outcomes with the public and policymakers – would constitute a strong resource for resilience.

In this spirit, two major projects exist and are being carried out by *the Observatoire africain du religieux* (African Observatory of the Religious) at Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis:

- A barometer of socio-political and religious values in the Sahel;
- A publication for researchers (but also for observers and policymakers): *L'Année religieuse de l'Afrique* (The Religious Year of Africa).

Support for a comprehensive device (involving research/social dialogue), including from the institutions of peace and development from the Second World War, would have two major impacts in the short and medium term:

- It would send a strong signal about the need to rebuild a new and more inclusive international order. This inclusiveness would act on jihadist propaganda and reduce its political attractiveness which has been fostered by a feeling of unfairness in international relations.
- It would contribute to the valorisation, over time, of the human and scientific resources mobilized as part of this study.


From
the People of Japan


Sahel
Construire le futur.


U N
D P
Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.