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CAMPUSES AND CONFLICT IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

Violent Extremism and the Politics
of Religion in Higher Education



Alexander Thurston

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was written and researched by Alexander Thurston. Several members of the RESOLVE Network Secretariat contributed to this report's development, including former RESOLVE Network Director, Candace Rondeaux; current Interim Executive Director, Leanne Erdberg; Research Associate and Project Manager, Kateira Aryaeinejad; and Associate Coordinators, Bethany McGann and Megan Loney. RESOLVE would also like to thank the reviewers of this report, including Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob, RESOLVE Network Research Advisor. Finally, RESOLVE would like to thank the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for its generous support for this report and RESOLVE's research initiative in the Lake Chad Basin.

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Campuses and Conflict in the Lake Chad Basin is the first in a series of RESOLVE Network research studies investigating violent extremism and the politics of religion on university campuses in the Lake Chad Basin — particularly in Cameroon, Chad, and Nigeria. As a component of the RESOLVE Lake Chad Basin Research Initiative, this report aims to advance RESOLVE's mission to address gaps in locally-informed, empirically-driven research on violent extremism by mapping out current knowledge, research gaps, and emerging trends related to religion within the higher education sector and its relation to violent extremism.

The report addresses several topics: the significance of higher education to violent extremist groups, in particular the group popularly known as Boko Haram;¹ the impact of colonial legacies on the university system; and areas warranting further study related to violent extremism, religiosity, and student life. The report provides a guide for those seeking to broaden their understanding of Boko Haram and emerging trends in the Lake Chad Basin. The report also tests prevailing assumptions about the relationship between education, religion, and violent extremism. Finally, the report suggests means by which to address violent extremism in the Lake Chad region and beyond.

For more information about RESOLVE, its network of experts, and its research in the Lake Chad Basin and across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, please visit our website at www.resolvenet.org and follow the discussion on Twitter via @resolvenet.

1 The group's formal name is Ahl al-Sunna li-l-Da'wa wa-l-Jihad. This can be translated as "People of the Prophetic Model, Calling People to Islam and Engaging in Jihad." Boko Haram operates in several factions, one of which has the official imprimatur of the Islamic State.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rise and spread of the violent extremist organization Boko Haram has affected millions living in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. Boko Haram’s current incarnation was built on the ashes of a religious movement that took impetus from multifaceted political and socioeconomic cleavages.² Despite concerted efforts, the group has proven particularly difficult for Nigerian authorities, regional militaries, and civilian vigilantes to stamp out by military means alone. To further complicate the situation, little is known about the broad swath of individual recruits who have joined Boko Haram, their backgrounds, their levels of support for Boko Haram’s ideology, and their motivations for joining. These gaps make efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in the region even more difficult.

This report takes up one aspect of these questions by focusing on higher education, primarily in northeastern Nigeria (Boko Haram’s zone of origin) but also in Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. Given the youthful base of Boko Haram and many other violent extremist movements, policymakers have periodically asked whether universities and colleges are sites that might either incubate or counter extremism. The relationship between higher education and violent extremism, however, is a tenuous one, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin. Existing literature on higher education in the region chronicles the development of individual universities and national education systems, but the understanding of current trends on campuses is patchy, as is the understanding of broader societal attitudes toward Western-style education. In the case of Boko Haram, understanding these dynamics is even more important, given the group’s ideological opposition to Western-style education and its recruitment and radicalization of youth.

Rejecting the “Education-Extremism Nexus”

Existing research suggests that different types of educational environments — including Qur’an schools and private religious universities — do not inherently encourage extremism. Certainly, the Lake Chad region is home to heated intra- and inter-religious debates, as well as profound uncertainty about the meaning and purpose of education. Case studies and anthropological research have shown how the legacies of colonial and postcolonial resistance to Western-style education continue to shape parents’ and children’s choices about schooling. Yet existing studies provide little insight into how the dynamics at the intersection of religion, politics, and higher education may affect or be affected by the rise and spread of violent extremist groups and ideologies. Moreover, there is need for further study of individuals’ decisions

2 A wide literature has discussed Boko Haram. Notable studies include Abdul Raufu Mustapha, ed., *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria* (London: James Currey, 2014); Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria* (Ibadan: IFRA, 2014); Adam Higazi, “Mobilisation into and against Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria,” in *Collective Mobilisations in Africa*, edited by Kadya Tall, Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle, and Michel Cahen, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 305-358; and Hilary Matfess, *Women and the War on Boko Haram: Wives, Weapons, Witnesses* (London: Zed Books, 2017). The present author has also written a book-length treatment: Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

regarding educational institutions. Similarly, there is need for further study of disillusionment among university students as a result of the lack of educational infrastructure, educational resources, and job opportunities following graduation.

Religiosity in Curricula and on Campuses

Since the 1970s, religious groups, religiously-oriented curricula, and religious activism have expanded on campuses in the Lake Chad Basin. Increasing attention to religion in the higher education sector is not restricted to one religious doctrine. Rather, there is growing religious diversity on campuses in the region, with representation from Muslims and Christians, Salafis and Pentecostals, and Islamists and quietists. Despite this, only a few profiles of individual student movements exist, limiting understanding of how religion and politics intersect on campus at the hyper-local level, and how, if at all, different groups may be either promoting or combating violent extremism. Scholars' attention to Salafism and Pentecostalism has overshadowed potential research questions concerning how other movements on campuses — such as Islamists, Sufis, and mainline Christians — are reacting to the Boko Haram crisis. Meanwhile, some evidence suggests that increasing the focus on religious studies and engagement on campuses may serve as a bulwark against violent extremism.

Global Ties and Trends

External influences, especially from the Middle East, are reshaping what it means to be an intellectual and a religious authority in the Lake Chad region. Middle Eastern donors fund study abroad programs for university students and establish educational institutions in the region. These external influences, however, do not necessarily increase extremism. For example, many Middle Eastern-trained scholars are prominent opponents and critics of Boko Haram. Nevertheless, foreign-funded institutions and returnees from the Middle East are often looked upon warily by local populations. Returning students, in particular, have been regarded as disrespectful of social norms and existing religious hierarchies, resulting in friction between returnees and local communities. The broader impact of these external influences, their interests in the region, and their role in promoting or countering violent extremism warrants further examination.

Academic Efforts to Understand and Counter Boko Haram

Scholars in the region pay increasing attention to violent extremism as a topic of research and reflection. Some scholars have made influential efforts to oppose Boko Haram. Despite university-based efforts to speak out against and to understand the drivers and sources of resilience to violent extremism, little documentation exists regarding their influence and longevity. Moreover, it remains unclear what purchase, if any, Boko Haram's ideas — or those of other violent extremist movements — have on the region's campuses and the extent to which individual scholars have been able to counter them.

Conclusion

The threat posed by Boko Haram cannot be sufficiently addressed by military means alone. As efforts to undermine violent extremist organizations in the Lake Chad Basin continue, more attention to the factors driving radicalization, support, and recruitment, especially among youth, is needed. To that end, the following areas, as related to ongoing dynamics in the higher education system, deserve greater attention:

- What factors are influencing attitudes toward violent extremism among youth in the higher education system?
- To what extent do the politics of religious-secular divides or divides between different student groups on campuses affect youth attitudes toward violent extremist sentiments and groups, such as Boko Haram?
- How have international influences in the higher education system served to mitigate or promote violent extremism among youth?
- What role can and do higher education institutions play in addressing violent extremism, and what role can they play in facilitating post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction?

INTRODUCTION

Boko Haram, which arose in Nigeria at the turn of the twenty-first century, has spread across the region's porous borders into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. To date, the violent conflict in the Lake Chad Basin region has devastated local economies, displaced thousands, and worsened an already large-scale humanitarian crisis affecting millions across West Africa.

Addressing the challenge of Boko Haram requires greater understanding of its rise. Much research in this regard focuses on the complex combination of environmental degradation, interreligious and ethnic tensions, and poor governance as drivers of extremism. These are all critical factors. Yet there is need for more research examining the impact of education, particularly the politics of religion in higher education curricula and on university campuses. Such dynamics are important, given that part of Boko Haram's ideology involves its critique of Western education; the group continues to attack schools and higher education institutions.

Previous literature has both asserted and rejected links between education and violent extremism, often relying on anecdotal accounts and conjecture. To address this gap in knowledge, this report delves deeper into what is and is not currently known about the politics of religion in the Lake Chad Basin's higher education system, including any link to violent extremism. This report explores the evolution of higher education in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria; the role of religion on university campuses and intersections with violent extremism; and trends warranting further attention.

BOKO HARAM AND EDUCATION: A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP

Boko Haram emerged in the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri at some point between the mid-1990s and 2002. The group's founder, Muhammad Yusuf, was a young Salafi preacher who denounced Western-style education and secular government. He gained a wide following, including hardline deputies who favored armed rebellion and supported global jihadism. Yusuf oscillated between a desire for mainstream acceptance and a penchant for controversial statements until 2009, when his escalating conflicts with authorities led him to launch a large but doomed uprising. In the wake of the uprising — which led to the deaths of Yusuf and over 1,000 other people — Boko Haram became an underground jihadist insurgency.

Its strength grew until 2014-2015, when its bid to carve out a territorial enclave in northeastern Nigeria provoked a regional campaign to crush the group. In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. In summer 2016, Boko Haram split into two factions, one led by long-time commander Abubakar Shekau and another headed by a newly designated Islamic State representative, Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi. Throughout its existence as a full-blown insurgency, Boko Haram has conducted waves of terrorism, including suicide bombings, raids on military outposts, ambushes, and kidnappings. Despite repeated declarations that Boko Haram is on its last legs, the group's factions trouble much of far northeastern Nigeria, as well as southeastern Niger, far northern Cameroon, and the islands of Lake Chad.

Opposition to and Roots in Western Education

Boko Haram first made a name for itself by harshly condemning Western-style education. Muhammad Yusuf and his then-deputy Shekau condemned what they saw as pervasive immorality in Nigerian schools. Yusuf complained that Western-style schools taught students ideas such as Darwinism and the water cycle, which he said contradicted core Qur'anic verses about God's role in creation. Yusuf and Shekau attacked Western-style schools as sites where students were allegedly brainwashed into worshipping the Nigerian state instead of God. Yusuf alleged that Muslim schoolchildren learned depravity through the mixing of genders and religions in schools.

Yet Boko Haram's relationship with Western-style education is more complex than the group acknowledges. Although many of its top leaders had only rudimentary education, whether in classical Islamic settings or Western-style ones, many of Boko Haram's followers are secondary school graduates, dropouts, and university students. Viewing Boko Haram in comparative perspective, it is possible that some recruits have science and engineering backgrounds, as is the case with many militants in the Middle East. Osama bin Laden, after all, had an engineering background, while Ayman al-Zawahiri was trained as a medical doctor.³ To some students and graduates embittered because education did not fulfill the economic promise

3 For a discussion of the prominence of engineers, mathematicians, and scientists in jihadist movements, see Diego Gambetta and Steffen Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad: The Curious Connection Between Violent Extremism and Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

they anticipated, Boko Haram’s message regarding the intrinsic immorality of such education may find some resonance.

What is more, some of Boko Haram’s leaders may have had sustained encounters with Western-style education. Future Boko Haram leaders Abubakar Shekau and Mamman Nur reportedly attended the Borno College of Legal and Islamic Studies (BOCOLIS) in the 1990s.⁴ BOCOLIS was founded in the 1980s as a bridge between the classical Islamic studies system, which is widely popular in Borno, and the formal government education system. It remains difficult, however, to assess what impact BOCOLIS would have had on their thinking. For example, at the college, they would certainly have heard messages in favor of the implementation of Sharia in criminal and civil matters in Nigeria. Circa 1999/2000, BOCOLIS’ principal, Umar Gajiram, joined in agitating for the implementation of Sharia in Borno State, amid the wider movement in northern states for Sharia at that time.⁵ Yet such pro-Sharia messages reflected attitudes that were mainstream and widely shared among Muslims in the north. Figures such as Gajiram did not call for jihad or for an Islamic state. All told, the available evidence is insufficient for drawing any conclusions about how studying at BOCOLIS might have influenced the outlook of Shekau, Nur, and other future Boko Haram members.

Amid the insurgency, Boko Haram’s relationship with Western-style education has been even more complicated. In the group’s home turf of Borno, some families connected with the movement consented to have their children and orphans enrolled in a special school called Future Prowess. The school’s founder later played a central role in negotiating the release of 82 of the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls.⁶ Alongside Boko Haram’s diatribes, parts of the sect have sometimes reached accommodations with Western-style education.

Attacks on Campuses

Importantly, Boko Haram has not simply preached against Western-style education; it has also attacked schools, colleges, and universities. Once Boko Haram acquired significant military capabilities, the group made a point of attacking schools, colleges, and universities, especially in 2013-2014. In 2013, Boko Haram attacked an agricultural college in Gujba, Yobe State; the following year, it stormed the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, Yobe, where it killed an estimated 59 boys. Most famously, in 2014, Boko Haram attacked the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, where the sect abducted

4 See International Crisis Group, “Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency,” April 3, 2014, 19, https://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1396951718_216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf.

5 See “Report of the Committee on Application of Sharia in Borno State,” April 2000, reproduced in *Sharia Implementation in Northern Nigeria 1999-2006: A Sourcebook*, compiled and edited by Philip Ostien (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2007), 18, http://www.sharia-in-africa.net/media/publications/sharia-implementation-in-northern-nigeria/vol_2_10_chapter_2_supp_borno_pre.pdf.

6 Joe Parkinson and Drew Hinshaw, “Freedom for the World’s Most Famous Hostages Came at a Heavy Price,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 24, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/two-bags-of-cash-for-boko-haram-the-untold-story-of-how-nigeria-freed-its-kidnapped-girls-1513957354>.

276 schoolgirls. Boko Haram's violence has profoundly undermined school security and lowered school attendance in northern Nigeria and northern Cameroon.

Universities, too, have been affected. One of the most affected has been the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID). In July 2011, Boko Haram's violence and threats prompted the temporary closure of the university. UNIMAID remained closed for half of 2012. Boko Haram threatened the university again in December 2013. In the first half of 2017, Boko Haram repeatedly targeted UNIMAID with suicide bombings. In July 2017, a Boko Haram faction ambushed a team of researchers, drawn from UNIMAID staff and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, who were exploring for oil in northeastern Nigeria. In that incident, Boko Haram fighters killed as many as 50 people and kidnapped several university staff members, who remain in captivity at the time of writing. The attacks on UNIMAID staff and facilities have elicited a vigorous debate at the university about how to improve security; they have also prompted academic organizations to criticize the government and the military for their perceived inattention to the issue.⁷

Other affected universities include institutions in Adamawa and Kano, two other northern Nigerian states. In 2014, when the city of Mubi fell into Boko Haram's hands, the Adamawa State University and Federal Polytechnic were "stripped bare — cars, laboratory equipment, workshop tools, vehicles, and even doors and windows were removed from buildings and carted away by Boko Haram."⁸ In Yola, the Modibbo Adama University of Technology was threatened as residents fled the city, but it remained opened throughout this period. In 2015, as the Federal Polytechnic in Mubi was attempting to rebuild, a senior administrator lamented, "We recorded both human and material loses of unquantifiable degree in this institution. It will surprise you that the insurgents occupied our quarters, and the psychological trauma is still there in some people."⁹ Meanwhile, although Kano is far from Lake Chad, the city was heavily affected by the Boko Haram crisis, especially after Boko Haram's massive attack on Kano in January 2012. That attack was followed by one on Bayero University Kano in April 2012, targeting a campus Christian service, highlighting the breadth and extensive reach of the group.

Given Boko Haram's ability to adapt to changing circumstances while continuing to attract followers, greater understanding is needed about both the group and the environment of higher education in the Lake Chad region. Going forward, researchers and policymakers will need to more fully understand the role of education in promoting or mitigating violent extremism before policymakers can develop effective interventions to prevent and address extremism on campuses and beyond.

7 Fidelis Mac-Leva, Hamza Idris, Uthman Abubakar, and Ibrahim Sawab, "Boko Haram: Why UNIMAID is under Siege," *Daily Trust*, July 2, 2017, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/boko-haram-why-unimaid-is-under-siege/203901.html>. See also "Mu ne muka kai harin da ya kashe farfesa a Maiduguri — Shekau," BBC Hausa, January 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/hausa/38648858>.

8 Personal communication, Kyari Mohammed, October 2017.

9 "Boko Haram Attacks: Rector Seeks Special Intervention For Mubi Polytechnic," *The Dream Daily*, November 24, 2015, <http://www.thedreamdaily.com/boko-haram-attacksrector-seeks-special-intervention-for-mubi-polytechnic/>.

QUESTIONING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

In the literature on countering violent extremism (CVE), a twin assumption often appears concerning education:

- The idea that certain educational institutions (especially “madrasas” and Islamic universities) promote extremism
- The idea that education is the most promising vehicle for preventing extremism or de-radicalizing extremists.

In the Lake Chad region, where a relatively low number of youth attends secondary school, much less university, such assumptions do not necessarily hold true.

UNICEF data for 2008-2012 show that at a national level, some 54 percent of Nigerian children (male and female) attend secondary school.¹⁰ In Cameroon, the figures are similar: nearly 53 percent for boys and 49 percent for girls.¹¹ In Chad, secondary school attendance is 22 percent for boys and 11.6 percent for girls.¹² In Niger, the relevant figures are 13.4 percent for boys and 8.4 percent for girls.¹³ As of 2015, UNESCO data show that whereas some 17.5 percent of Cameroonians enroll in university, the figures are less than 11 percent in Nigeria, less than 4 percent in Chad, and less than 2 percent in Niger.¹⁴ Even these figures conceal regional disparities. Boko Haram’s main geographical reach — in northeastern Nigeria, southeastern Niger, and northern Cameroon — includes some of the poorest and least-served regions of those countries.

Current evidence regarding the link between higher education and violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin is limited. Recent quantitative studies have found no significant correlation between educational background and extremist recruitment. While research on the subject varies, Qur’an school students (in Hausa, *almajirai*, singular *almajiri*) do not seem to be especially prone to extremism.¹⁵ One survey

10 UNICEF, “At a Glance: Nigeria,” https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria_statistics.html#117.

11 UNICEF, “At a Glance: Cameroon,” https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/cameroon_statistics.html#117.

12 UNICEF, “At a Glance: Chad,” https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/chad_statistics.html#117.

13 UNICEF, “At a Glance: Niger,” https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/niger_statistics.html#117.

14 UNESCO, “Gross Enrollment by Level of Education,” <http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=142>.

15 Researchers, such as Hannah Hoechner, acknowledge that while some Qu’ran students may join Boko Haram, it does not necessarily follow that Qu’ran students as a whole are more vulnerable to recruitment. Others, including William W. Hansen, note that the poor socioeconomic conditions characterizing a significant number of Qu’ran students make those students, as a whole, more vulnerable to recruitment. See Hannah Hoechner, “Traditional Quranic Students (Almajirai) in Nigeria: Fair Game for Unfair Accusations?” in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, edited by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2013), 63-84. See, also, William W. Hansen, “Poverty and

concluded that “there is no demographic profile of a Boko Haram member.”¹⁶ Another study found that “in environments where overall levels of literacy and education are low, individuals who later join violent extremist groups are found... to be particularly deprived in educational terms.” That study added that “higher than average years of religious schooling appears to have been a source of resilience.”¹⁷ These quantitative studies, moreover, are based on interviews with defectors, which limits their applicability in understanding active members, deceased fighters, and individuals who refused to participate in the studies. In other words, preliminary quantitative findings cast doubt on the idea that certain types of education lead to extremism, but much remains unknown about Boko Haram’s social base.

Research from other conflict zones suggests that education can frustrate students even as it nurtures aspirations and develops skills.¹⁸ In the Lake Chad Basin, as elsewhere, many of the most coveted jobs in government, politics, and business go to university graduates, making a degree a prized and sometimes indispensable credential. At the same time, many students look ahead to a difficult future. Protests by unemployed graduates, for example in Chad,¹⁹ indicate that a degree does not guarantee a job. Boko Haram and other extremists in the region and beyond have attempted to activate such anxieties. While their position on the topic is marginal, the rhetoric they employ is effective to some extent because it reflects genuine social problems.

The confluence of factors contributing to such trends is supplemented by a long and evolving history of resistance to Western education systems implemented in Lake Chad Basin countries during the colonial era. Today, those legacies have significantly influenced the makeup of higher education structures and fueled extremist rhetoric.

“Economic Deprivation Theory”: Street Children, Qur’anic Schools/almajirai and the Dispossessed as a Source of Recruitment for Boko Haram and other Religious, Political and Criminal Groups in Northern Nigeria,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, 10:5 (2016).

16 “‘Motivations and Empty Promises’: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth,” Mercy Corps, April 2016, 2. https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Motivations%20and%20Empty%20Promises_Mercy%20Corps_Full%20Report.pdf.

17 “Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment,” United Nations Development Programme, 2017, 5, <http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf>.

18 For relevant findings from a study of education and attitudes toward violence in Somalia, see Mercy Corps, “Critical Choices: Assessing the Effects of Education and Civic Engagement on Somali Youth’s Propensity Towards Violence,” November 2016. https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/CRITICAL_CHOICES_REPORT_FINAL_DIGITAL.pdf. Mercy Corps found that exposure to secondary education sometimes increased youths’ support for political violence.

19 “Tchad: manifestation de jeunes diplômés au chômage à Ndjamena,” RFI, 5 February 2016, www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20160205-tchad-manifestation-jeunes-diplomes-chomage-ndjamena.

SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Colonial Legacies of Resistance to Western-Style Education

In West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin, there are long legacies of resistance to Western-style education. Although the resistance rarely takes the form of violence, its echoes have affected Boko Haram's career, and will continue to affect efforts to address violent extremism in the education sector. Divisions between Francophone and non-Francophone systems established during the colonial period in Lake Chad Basin countries have faded to some extent as ideas, practices, and people have begun to move more fluidly across the region. This paper, however, discusses education systems using the Francophone and non-Francophone (French and British) frame given its importance in explaining how the higher education system has evolved in distinct areas of the region.

During the colonial period, the French and British administrations made minimal efforts to promote Western-style education, including higher education, in areas with large Muslim communities. To reach compromises with local Muslim elites, colonial officials often agreed to limit the presence of missionaries and Western-style education. Colonial schools initially focused on educating "sons of chiefs" for important roles in the colonial administration.²⁰ In terms of teaching and shaping Islam, the British founded an elite school for training Muslim judges, the Northern Provinces Law School/School for Arabic Studies, in 1934. The school aimed to produce graduates who would be "modern" and flexible in outlook, particularly in terms of applying Islamic law.²¹ The French devoted even less attention to such issues. When the French occasionally founded Islamic schools or "medersas," they often did so in a reactive manner, to compete with indigenous efforts at reinventing the classical Islamic system.²²

Ironically and cruelly, colonial administrators were ambivalent about the Africans they trained, whether in secular schools or Islamic ones. On the one hand, colonialists looked to "civilize" such graduates and to imbue them with a spirit of progress. On the other hand, colonialists feared that such graduates could never be assimilated either into Western societies or back into their original cultures.²³ Meanwhile, Muslim parents feared that colonial schools would make their children into Christians, atheists, or deviants. Mir-

20 James P. Hubbard, *Education Under Colonial Rule: A History of Katsina College, 1921-1942* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000).

21 Alex Thurston, "Managing Ruptures, Telling Histories: Northern Nigerian Muslim Intellectuals and Arab Universities, 1900-2012," Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 2013.

22 Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power, and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001). For background on one incident in colonial Chad, see Issa Hassan Khayar, *Le Refus de l'école: contribution à l'étude des problèmes de l'éducation chez les Musulmans du Ouaddaï* (Tchad) (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1976), 77-78.

23 Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, second edition (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1923), 431-436.

roring the colonialists' own attitudes, Muslim communities sometimes considered graduates to be oddities who fell through the cracks between two cultures. All of these factors made local populations reluctant to send their children to colonial, Western-style schools.²⁴ Today, one major gap in existing knowledge and research about the Lake Chad region concerns the extent to which such reluctance endures.

Muslim graduates of colonial schools, in turn, sometimes provoked tensions by criticizing traditional authorities and calling for sweeping reforms. Nigeria's Abubakar Gumi (1924-1992), who went on to become a pivotal player in the Salafi movement after independence, was one such critic. Shortly after graduating from the School for Arabic Studies in the 1940s, Gumi caused a major controversy by challenging a provincial imam's knowledge of how to wash for prayer.²⁵ As his stature grew, he began challenging the region's Sufi orders and helped to found the mass-based anti-Sufi movement Izala in 1978. Indeed, Salafi and reformist movements in West Africa have often drawn major support from Western-educated elites.²⁶ Ironically, however, some of these figures later became prominent critics of Western-style education: in the 1970s, Gumi wrote derisively that colonial schools had transformed Muslim children into "either hunting dogs in the foreign hunters' hands, or the prey of the hunt."²⁷ Boko Haram's founder Muhammad Yusuf later quoted this passage in his manifesto.²⁸

Decades after colonialism ended, Boko Haram took advantage of the colonial legacy in the education sector. Although Boko Haram's theological ideas were and are marginal, the movement tapped into wider sentiments when it sought to awaken an anti-colonial, skeptical attitude toward Western-style education. The colonial legacy helped Boko Haram to cast Western-style education as an immoral force brought from the outside, a force that weakens and corrupts Muslim societies.

Hybrid Education and Echoes of Resistance to Western-Style Education

Even as postcolonial governments treated education as a platform for development and national unity, skepticism about the value of Western-style education lingered. In many areas around Lake Chad, the refusal to attend Western-style schools and/or government schools continued after independence. In 1984, in northeastern Nigeria, a Borno State Panel on Education Review reported that "some parents do not enroll their children to schools [sic] because of insufficient time allocated to the learning of the Holy

24 On these trends, see Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge*, chapter two; Muhammad Sani Umar, *Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), chapter one; Khayar, *Le Refus de l'école*; and, for an anecdote about these dynamics in Maiduguri, Jonathan Owens, *Neighborhood and Ancestry: Variation in the Spoken Arabic of Maiduguri, Nigeria* (Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1998), 124.

25 Abubakar Gumi with Ismaila Tsiga, *Where I Stand* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1992).

26 Ousman Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity in Twentieth-Century West African Islamic Reforms* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

27 Abubakar Gumi, *Al-'Aqida al-Sahihah bi-Muwafaqat al-Shari'a* (Beirut: Dar al-'Arabiyya, 1972), 78-79.

28 Muhammad Yusuf, *Hadhihi 'Aqidatuna wa-Manhaj Da 'watina* (Maiduguri: Maktabat al-Ghuraba' li-l-Tawzi' wa-l-Nashr, 2009), 83-84. For a broader discussion of how Nigerian Salafis relate to Western-style education, see Thurston, *Boko Haram*, chapter one.

Quran.”²⁹ Meanwhile, anger from Arabophone populations over the marginalization of Arabic-speaking children in state schools contributed to resentments and even rebellions in Chad.³⁰

Many Muslims remain deeply invested in the classical Islamic educational system. In that system, students begin by memorizing the Qur’an and then proceed to study Islamic law and related subjects.³¹ The system has continued up to the present time, amid various efforts to create hybrid systems that pair classical Islamic education with Western-style education, or to create a bridge between the two systems. Some parents hedge their bets and send their children to different types of schools simultaneously (for example, government school during the day and Qur’an school in the late afternoon), or they send different children to different types of schools.³²

Since the colonial period, educators have integrated elements of the classical model into experimental “Islamiyya” and “Franco-Arabe” (French-Arabic) schools. Northern Nigeria, for example, has seen a proliferation of privately-run, tuition-based Islamiyya schools, especially at the secondary level. They are regulated through the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies or NATAIS, housed at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria and recognized by the National Council of Education since 2011.³³ The proliferation of Islamiyya schools resulted from several factors, including the collapse of public schooling amid economic recession in the 1980s,³⁴ as well as efforts by Islamic movements — including the Sufi orders and especially Izala — to found schools to expand their influence.³⁵ Not all students, however, can afford Islamiyya

29 Borno State of Nigeria, *Government White Paper on the Report of Panel on Education Review in Borno State* (Maiduguri: Government Printer, 1984), 52.

30 Bana Barka, “De l’intégration socioprofessionnelle des diplômés arabophones dans le bassin du Lac Tchad,” in *Les musulmans, l’école et l’état*, 147-179, especially 159-160.

31 For two important treatments of classical Islamic education in northern Nigeria, see Alhaji M. Abdurrahman and Peter Canham, *The Ink of the Scholar: The Islamic Tradition of Education in Nigeria* (Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria, 1978); and ‘Ali Abu Bakr’s *Al-Thaqafa al-‘Arabiyya fi Najjiriya min 1750 ila 1960 ‘Am al-Istiqlal* (Beirut, 1972). For a recent treatment of higher Islamic education in Cameroon, see Ahmed Khalid Ayong, “Traditional Scholarly Culture in Northern Cameroon, 1900-Present,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bayreuth, 2017. For a discussion of what students read in this system, see Bruce Hall and Charles Stewart, “The Historic ‘Core Curriculum,’ and the Book Market in Islamic West Africa,” in *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Arabic Literacy, Manuscript Culture, and Intellectual History in Islamic Africa*, edited by Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 109-174.

32 Noah Butler, “Collapsed Pluralities: Islamic Education, Learning, and Creativity in Niger,” in *Islamic Education in Africa: Writing Boards and Blackboards*, edited by Robert Launay (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2016), 285-306.

33 National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, “About Us,” undated, <http://nbais.com.ng/about.php>.

34 In 1976, Nigeria’s military government launched a Universal Primary Education scheme which initially boosted enrollment by over 400 percent in many areas, but which floundered when oil revenues dropped. See Marg Csapo, “Universal Primary Education in Nigeria: Its Problems and Implications,” *African Studies Review* 26:1 (March 1983): 91-106; and Mark Bray, *Universal Primary Education in Nigeria: A Study of Kano State* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

35 Izala operates schools for children as well as for adults, and Izala has emphasized providing adult education to married women. On Izala’s schools and their impact, see Muhammad Sani Umar, “Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970s-1990s,” *Africa Today* 48:2 (Summer 2001): 127-150; and Elisha Renne, “Educating Muslim Women and the Izala Movement in Zaria City, Nigeria,” *Islamic Africa* 3:1 (Spring 2012): 55-86.

schools' fees. Many children remain entirely outside of the Western-style educational system. Much like its messaging around colonial legacies and Western-style education, Boko Haram has tapped into the disappointments endured both by those who attend secular schools and those who attend Islamiyya and other hybrid schools in an attempt to garner further support.

Higher Education after Independence: From Centralization to Decentralization

At independence, the Lake Chad countries held up their education systems as vehicles for national development and identity. Yet education also symbolized internal divisions — political, regional, and religious — opening up space for ideological competition.

During the decades after independence, national governments exercised centralized control over higher education.³⁶ Through the 1990s, the region's Francophone countries prioritized one central university in their capitals: the University of Yaoundé in Cameroon, the University of Chad, and Abdou Moumouni University in Niger. Nigeria, with its federal system, was somewhat more decentralized, although in the 1960s Nigeria was served by only a few prominent universities at Ibadan, Ife, Nsukka, and Zaria. As part of numerous programs designed to promote national unity after the war, military and civilian authorities created at least 22 new universities between 1975 and 1983. The first seven, established in 1975-1977, included four major institutions in northern Nigeria: Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, the University of Jos, the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), and Bayero University Kano.³⁷ Starting in the 1970s, Nigeria's educational landscape became exponentially more diverse. At present, the country has 41 federal universities, 47 state universities, and 74 recognized private universities.³⁸

In the Francophone countries, education became a key battleground in efforts to decentralize society and politics. Beginning in the 1990s, Francophone governments established regional universities to meet subnational demand for greater representation. For example, new universities in Cameroon reflect the

36 The higher education sector in the Lake Chad Basin, and particularly higher education in northern Nigeria, has been the subject of numerous studies. Major secondary works include collections of essays that address universities and their development in Nigeria, such as Joseph Kenny, ed., *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience* (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007); and in Cameroon, such as Michel Kamdem and Eike Schamp, *L'université africaine et sa contribution au développement: L'exemple du Cameroun* (Paris: Karthala, 2014). Several universities have published books detailing their own histories, such as BUK – see Isa Alkali Abba, Ismaila Abubakar Tsiga, and Abdalla Uba Adamu, eds., *Building the Citadel: Thirty Years of University Education in Kano, 1964-1994* (Kano: Bayero University, 1994). Published conference proceedings from universities in the region also give insight into intellectual trends since independence. See, for example, "Papers Presented to the Conference on the Impact of the Ulama in the Central Bilad al-Sudan," Centre for Trans-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri, May 1991.

37 Several of these universities represented upgrades to existing institutions: BUK replaced Abdullahi Bayero Kano, and UNIMAID replaced the North-East College of Arts and Sciences.

38 See <http://nuc.edu.ng/>.

politics and conflicts over language (French versus English) in the country, where conflicts are growing over the political status of the country's Anglophone regions.³⁹ Most Cameroonian universities are designated as bilingual, but some are instructed to operate exclusively in one language. Central governments also used university creation exercises to reduce the political threat posed by mass student bodies in the capital. For example, Cameroon's initial decentralization exercise in the university sector in 1993 came in response to major student protests at the University of Yaoundé, where the student population had reached 41,000.⁴⁰ The decentralization of universities has helped to equalize the playing field for students from different parts of their respective countries, but decentralization also highlights the extent and persistence of regional disparities within these countries.

As noted, the promise of education has sometimes fallen flat, from the primary to the tertiary levels. Nigeria experienced a severe educational crisis starting in the 1980s. The previous decade had brought an ambitious effort to boost enrollment, the Universal Primary Education program, financed by rising oil revenues.⁴¹ Economic recession in the 1980s and the overextension of the Universal Primary Education program meant that widespread disappointment ensued: universal enrollment proved impossible, schools grew overcrowded, and corruption worsened in the social and education sectors. These trends not only affected primary and secondary schools; they ultimately lowered the value of a university education. The education crisis also provoked society-wide anxiety about the trends at all levels of the education system. Political authorities grew fearful that they were losing authority over youth and that unemployed graduates were becoming a menace to social order.⁴²

The effects of this long-term educational crisis linger today. Being a university student can be a fraught, uncertain existence. Overcrowding, poor living conditions, and inadequate stipends can make life very difficult for students. Compounding these problems is the issue of strikes and disruptions on campuses. Within Nigeria's universities, many faculty belong to the Academic Staff Union of Universities, which regularly strikes over pay, pensions, and underfunding. Similar bodies exist in Francophone countries, such as Chad's Syndicat National des Enseignants et Chercheurs du Supérieur (National Syndicate of Higher Instructors and Researchers) and Niger's Syndicat National des Enseignants et Chercheurs du Supérieur (National Syndicate of Instructors and Researchers). Such strikes disrupt and slow many students' progress.

39 "Cameroon's Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures," <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/130-cameroon-worsening-anglophone-crisis-calls-strong-measures>.

40 Margaret Mbeseha, "Organization and Governance of African Universities: The Case of Cameroon" in *Governance and Transformations of Universities in Africa: A Global Perspective*, edited by Fredrick Nafukho, Helen Muya, and Beverly Irby, 73-90 (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2014), 76-77.

41 See Marg Csapo, "Universal Primary Education in Nigeria: Its Problems and Implications," *African Studies Review* 26:1 (March 1983): 91-106; and Mark Bray, *Universal Primary Education in Nigeria: A Study of Kano State* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

42 Borno State Transition Committee, *Main Report (Executive Summary) Submitted to His Excellency Senator (Dr.) Ali Modu Sheriff, Executive Governor, Borno State*, July 2003, 80, 88.

In short, university students have more choices than their predecessors did several decades ago, but the atmosphere in which they study has changed. Universities have gone from being the pastures of a privileged few to being contentious environments with complicated internal politics and complicated roles in national and local politics. That universities have acquired such roles does not automatically breed extremism, however, and the question of how the politicization of universities affects extremism merits further study.

CURRENT INFLUENCES AND TRENDS

Lake Chad region's higher education system has evolved to serve multiple agendas, creating a confluence of different curricula and actors with ties to university campuses and movements. The implications of these ongoing changes with regard to their relationship to violent extremism are not yet fully understood. Certain trends, however, stand out:

- Rising religiosity in higher education research
- Growth of religiously-oriented student and non-student groups
- External influences including study abroad returnees and foreign investments in higher education
- University efforts to oppose violent extremist groups.

Rising Religiosity in Higher Education Research

In the first several decades of their existence, the major universities in Lake Chad countries were bastions of secular nationalism and Marxism.⁴³ Starting in the 1970s, amid a broader growth in public religiosity, these universities began paying more attention to Islamic studies, especially in northern Nigeria. Such attention did not fuel violent extremism, but it did accelerate debates about the place of Islam in Lake Chad societies and politics. As these debates intensified, the range of viewpoints under consideration broadened. Movements such as Boko Haram found some purchase at the edges of the spectrum of views that people were considering.

In northern Nigeria, universities attracted formidable scholars of Islam as faculty members starting in the 1960s,⁴⁴ but in the Francophone countries of Lake Chad de-emphasized Islamic studies. Those countries inherited the French-style tradition of *laïcité*, which stresses a far-reaching secularization of state and society. Additionally, Francophone elites were skeptical about the value of Arabic. These factors delayed the emergence of Arabic and Islamic studies departments in many Francophone Lake Chad universities until the 1990s. For example, in Cameroon, a department of Arabic only opened in 1998 at the University of Ngaoundéré.⁴⁵ Prior to that time, research on Islam was concentrated in such departments as history, anthropology, and philosophy. Many Francophone universities continue to lack Islamic studies departments. In northern Nigerian universities, however, Islamic studies moved from being the preserve of Islamic studies departments to being a wider, campus-wide concern: calls have grown for the “Islamization

43 See Adam Mayer, *Naija Marxisms: Revolutionary Thought in Nigeria* (London: Pluto Press, 2016) for a history of Marxist intellectuals in Nigeria.

44 “History of the Department of Islamic Studies,” Bayero University Kano, undated, <http://ais.buk.edu.ng/node/10>.

45 Barka, “De l’intégration socioprofessionnelle,” 164.

of knowledge,” meaning an effort to ground all disciplines and sciences in purported Islamic values and frameworks.⁴⁶

In northern Nigeria, student interest in Islamic studies is increasing. That interest revolves around topics such as the implementation of Sharia, Islamic conceptions of social justice, and issues of sectarianism and gender. At the University of Maiduguri, for example, students moved from writing theses about “traditional core research in religious issues” in the 1970s and 1980s to writing about “contemporary issues affecting the Muslim umma [community],” such as Islamic banking, Islamic approaches to poverty reduction, faith-based organizations, politics, “and the influence of Western Education and culture on the Muslim Youth.”⁴⁷ Student research now often aims to generate Islamic approaches to confronting social problems, although understanding of what is “Islamic” varies considerably. Importantly, in Nigeria, Islamic studies on campus is not a major source of extremism: no prominent university professors or lecturers, including Salafis, have endorsed or defended Boko Haram or other extremist groups.⁴⁸

Beyond the traditional structure of faculties and departments, Nigerian universities are increasingly establishing centers dedicated to aspects of Islamic studies. One of the most influential such centers is ABU’s Centre for Islamic Legal Studies, whose members helped draft Sharia penal codes in the early 2000s. One more recent example is BUK’s Centre for Qur’anic Studies, which “aims to serve as a Think Tank to articulate the desired policy directions of Tsangaya [i.e., Qur’an] school system, integrate its programmes with the National Education Policy and realign the schools to be more relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the Muslim community and the larger Nigerian society.”⁴⁹ Meanwhile, across the north there are specialized colleges for Islamic studies, such as Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies in Kano (founded 1976)⁵⁰ and the Borno State College of Legal and Islamic Studies in Maiduguri (founded in 1980-1981 and later renamed the Mohammed Goni College of Legal and Islamic Studies).⁵¹

46 Aliyu Dauda, *Islamization of Knowledge Programme in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*, Nigeria, 2002).

47 “Annotated Bibliography and Trend Analysis of Existing Knowledge in Universities in Northern Nigeria on Islam and Development, Islamic Knowledge, and the Islamization of Knowledge,” Nigeria Research Network, March 2013, 12, <http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.odid.ox.ac.uk/files/nrn-wp14.pdf>.

48 There has been one controversial case involving an Islamic Studies instructor. In October 2013, Nigerian authorities arrested Dr. Nazeef Yunus, an Izala member and assistant lecturer in the Department of Islamic Studies at Kogi State University, on charges of recruiting for Boko Haram. Yunus vigorously denied the charges, and Izala called for his release. “Nigeria’s Boko Haram Crisis: Anger at Lecturer Nazeef’s Arrest,” BBC, November 22, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25051886>; and Lami Sadiq, “How Detained Lecturer Described Boko Haram in His PhD Thesis,” *Daily Trust*, November 30, 2013, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/how-detained-lecturer-described-boko-haram-in-his-phd-thesis/15658.html>. For some background on Yunus, see Higazi, “Mobilisation into and against Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria,” 320, footnote 32.

49 Bayero University Kano Centre for Qur’anic Studies, “About the Centre,” undated, <http://cqs.buk.edu.ng/?q=node/9>.

50 Alex Thurston, “The Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies: A Site for the Renegotiation of Islamic Law and Authority in Kano, Nigeria,” in *Muslim Institutions of Higher Education*, 247-264. 2016.

51 MOGCOLIS, “About,” undated, <http://www.mogcolis.com.ng/about.php>. Another account holds that BOCOLIS originated as the Higher Islamic College of Maiduguri in 1974; see Alkali, Monguno, and Mustafa, “Overview of Islamic Actors in North-eastern Nigeria,” 28.

A trend toward the increasing attention to Islamic and Arabic Studies in the higher education system in Lake Chad Basin countries should not be misunderstood as a driver of radicalization. In fact, much literature suggests that extremists are more likely to come out of fields such as engineering, which can inculcate the black-and-white, “there is only one answer” mentality that complements extremist thought.⁵² The most famous northern Nigerian student radical, Ibrahim al-Zakzaky, followed this trend; al-Zakzaky studied economics at ABU Zaria.⁵³ Increased focus on the relationship between attitudes toward violent extremism and interest and/or participation in Islamic and Arabic studies programs on university campuses in Lake Chad Basin can provide much-needed insight on these dynamics.

Student and Non-Student Groups

Campuses in the Lake Chad Basin feature religious activists from various backgrounds. Existing research gives the impression that the influence of most of these groups is rising. Campuses are crowded religious marketplaces characterized by competition and interaction among many different proselytizing tendencies. Although none of the major tendencies directly encourages violent extremism, more research is needed to understand how and if these religious trends interact with violent extremism.

In the 1970s and 1980s, new religious movements emerged and/or gained greater momentum in the higher education sector and beyond. In the Muslim community, three trends were particularly influential: Salafism, Islamism, and Shi‘ism. In the Christian community, Pentecostal movements gained considerable ground. In terms of Islamic activism, the overall effect of the rise in public Muslim religiosities since the 1970s was not a rise in extremism, but rather a rise in inter- and intra-religious competition. That atmosphere of competition helped Muhammad Yusuf — a relatively junior and undertrained preacher who possessed neither a university degree nor a strong classical pedigree — to attract his initial following.

If it is true, as some sources have reported, that Boko Haram’s initial base was a student circle at the University of Maiduguri in the mid-1990s, then this following should be understood not as a symptom of broader radicalization on campuses, but as the product of an increasingly energized search for new authorities and new identities. That process takes Muslim students in diverse directions, only a few of which lead to extremism. Going forward, key challenges for researchers and policymakers include understanding more about what is driving this religious competition on campuses, the curricula being taught, the demographics of Islamic studies faculty and students, and the career paths of Islamic studies graduates. In addition, more research is needed to more fully understand the activities, nature, and influence of historically or increasingly influential religious groups on campus — including Salafi, Islamist, Shia, and Pentecostal groups — to more fully grasp their relationship, if any, to violent extremism region-wide.

52 Gambetta and Hertog, *Engineers of Jihad*.

53 For further information on al-Zakzaky and his activities, see the section on Shi‘ism on page 26 of this report.

Salafism

Salafis promote a literalist theology and generally reject Sufism, Shi'ism, and much of the traditional practice of Islam in the Lake Chad region. Boko Haram is, by its own account, theologically Salafi, and it emerged out of the larger Salafi community in northern Nigeria. Even so, Salafi preachers have been prominent critics of Boko Haram since the mid-2000s and have dedicated substantial effort to refuting Boko Haram's ideology. In the Lake Chad Basin, Salafism is represented through movements such as Izala in Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon,⁵⁴ and Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyah (Supports of the Muhammadan Model) in Chad.⁵⁵ A network of quasi-independent Salafi preachers who call themselves Ahl al-Sunna (People of the Prophetic Model) has emerged out of Izala. Many of them graduated from the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. The most prominent figure in this network was Ja'far Mahmud Adam (d. 2007), the one-time mentor and later bitter opponent of Boko Haram's founder Muhammad Yusuf.⁵⁶ In the Francophone countries, where postcolonial states sought to tightly regulate Muslim affairs, the rise of Salafism posed a challenge to state authority, specifically to the state-backed, Sufi-dominated Muslim umbrella organizations such as the Association Culturelle Islamique du Cameroun (Islamic Cultural Association of Cameroon, created 1963), the Conseil Supérieur des Affaires Islamiques du Tchad (Higher Council for Islamic Affairs in Chad, a successor organization to bodies dating to 1970), and the Conseil Islamique du Niger (Islamic Council of Niger, a successor organization to bodies dating to the country's independence).

Despite a growing number of studies of prominent Salafist preachers and movements, less is known about Salafism on campuses. Salafism has deeply influenced some student movements in the region, such as the Association des Etudiants Musulmans du Niger (Muslim Students' Association of Niger),⁵⁷ and the Salafi-influenced movement Jeunesse Islamique du Cameroun (Islamic Youth of Cameroon, French acronym JIC). Created in 1983 as a dissident alternative to the state-backed Islamic Cultural Association of Cameroon, the JIC received state recognition in 1988.⁵⁸ JIC leadership came from Arabic-speaking,

54 There have been several major studies of Izala: Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform*, chapters four and five; Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Ramzi Ben Amara, "The Development of the Izala Movement in Nigeria: Its Split, Relationship to Sufis and Perception of Sharia Implementation," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bayreuth, 2011.

55 Ansar al-Sunna has been mostly studied in its Egyptian and Sudanese contexts; the author is not aware of an academic study of the movement in Chad. For one analysis of Sufi-Salafi conflicts in Chad, see Rüdiger Seesemann, "The Quotidian Dimension of Islamic Reform in Wadai (Chad)," in *L'islam politique au sud du Sahara: Identités, discours et enjeux*, edited by Muriel Gomez-Perez (Paris: Karthala, 2005), 327-346.

56 See Andrea Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Da'wa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam (Daura, ca. 1961/1962-Kano 2007)," *Islamic Africa* 3:1 (Spring 2012): 1-23; and Alex Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam, Preaching and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

57 See Abdoulaye Sounaye, "Salafi Youth on Campus in Niamey, Niger: Moral Motives, Political Ends," in *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*, edited by Elina Oinas, Henri Onodera, and Leena Suurpää, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 209-229.

58 Hamadou Adama, "La mosquée au Cameroun: Espace public ou espace privé?," in *Islam et sociétés en Afrique subsaharienne à l'épreuve de l'histoire: un parcours en compagnie de Jean-Louis Triaud*, edited by Odile Goerg and Anna Pondopoulo, 293-314 (Paris: Karthala, 2012), 310.

Salafi-leaning graduates of Middle Eastern and Nigerian universities who had returned to Cameroon and were dissatisfied with the religious landscape there.⁵⁹ The movement also attracted Western-educated Cameroonian elites. The JIC benefited from financial support from the Libyan government, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), and other Middle Eastern donors.⁶⁰ In late 2003, anti-Christian tracts whose authorship was attributed to the JIC caused an uproar in Cameroon.⁶¹ More recently, JIC leaders have stressed their commitment to interreligious dialogue.⁶² JIC leaders present their organization as a bulwark against extremism; for example, at a 2015 training for Muslim scholars, JIC President Moustapha Ramadan Nlend stressed the theme of women’s education and dignity.⁶³

Although Salafi movements have gained influence in Lake Chad Basin faculties and campuses, their expansion faces significant barriers. First, Sufi scholars continue to lead many Islamic studies departments across northern Nigeria. For example, until his premature death in 2015, the head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at UNIMAID was Professor Tijani el-Miskin, who was not only a scholar of Sufism but also from a major Sufi family.⁶⁴ Second, Salafis are regarded by many hereditary Muslim rulers and politicians as overly divisive and polemical, an attitude that can lead authorities to prefer Sufis, or at least non-Salafis, for leadership posts. Third, the attention such departments devote to northern Nigeria’s Islamic past ensures that Sufism remains an intellectual theme at northern universities.

Islamist Influences

One major Islamist organization — an organization that promotes Islamization of state and society on a largely non-sectarian basis — in northern Nigeria is the Muslim Students Society (MSS). An organization for Muslim high school and university students, the MSS was founded in southwestern Nigeria in 1954. The MSS attracted a national following, including northern Nigerian elites,⁶⁵ spreading throughout Nigeria’s secondary schools and universities. In the 1970s, MSS branches at Ahmadu Bello University

59 See the section on international influences on page 29 of this report for further discussion on external influences in the Lake Chad region.

60 Hamadou Adama, “Islamic Communication and Mass Media in Cameroon” in *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa*, edited by Rosalind Hackett and Benjamin Soares, 137-156 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015), 145.

61 Valentin Zinga, “Cameroun: Le spectre de l’intolérance,” RFI, July 24, 2004, http://www1.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/055/article_29460.asp.

62 “Cameroun — Abdourahman Hayatou: ‘La jeunesse islamique a fait du dialogue interreligieux l’une de ses priorités’,” Camerpost, February 4, 2016, <http://www.camerpost.com/cameroun-abdourahman-hayatou-la-jeunesse-islamique-a-fait-du-dialogue-interreligieux-lune-de-ses-priorites/>.

63 “Yaoundé: comment relever les défis sécuritaires,” CamerounWeb, August 18, 2015, <https://www.cameroonweb.com/CameroonHomePage/economy/artikel.php?ID=329752>.

64 Aisha Yusuf, “Prof El-Miskin: The Other Half of Our Loss,” *Daily Trust*, October 2, 2015, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/opinion/prof-el-miskin-the-other-half-of-our-loss/113496.html>. On his father Abubakar al-Miskin (1918-2014), see John Hunwick, Compiler, *Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 2: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 397-398; http://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=worldcat_org_all&q=el-miskin%2C+tijani.

65 See Muslim Students’ Society of Nigeria Facebook group, “About,” undated, https://www.facebook.com/pg/Muslim-Students-Society-of-Nigeria-158864880794920/about/?ref=page_internal.

Zaria (ABU) and Bayero University Kano (BUK) gained a reputation for outspoken Islamism; at ABU, the MSS attacked a club where alcohol was served in 1978 and demonstrated on campus in 1979.⁶⁶ One radical MSS leader, Ibrahim al-Zakzaky (b. 1953), went on to lead the “Muslim Brothers”/Islamic Movement in Nigeria, a Shia-leaning movement.⁶⁷

Other MSS figures went on to become prominent Islamist intellectuals in northern Nigerian universities in the 1980s; these intellectuals attempted to articulate a detailed program for Islamizing the Nigerian state. Their program was very different from Boko Haram’s. Rather than envisioning the dismantling of the state and the dissolution of Nigeria and its replacement with a Salafi-jihadist enclave, the MSS Islamists envisioned a progressive Islamization of the existing Nigerian state within its present borders and in ways compatible with the international order.⁶⁸ Some of those Islamist intellectuals became influential figures in the drive to implement Sharia in northern Nigerian states starting in 1999; in particular, the Center for Islamic Legal Studies at ABU Zaria became a hub for codifying and discussing Sharia. Still other MSS leaders became prominent politicians. The MSS is, at present, a mainstream movement: speakers at its 60th anniversary conference in 2014 included the Sultan of Sokoto Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar, then-Vice President Namadi Sambo, then-Speaker of the House of Representatives Aminu Tambuwal, and former Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau.⁶⁹ However, in contrast to the wave of scholarly attention to Salafism in the region, much less attention has been devoted to the MSS. It is unclear whether and why the movement is still growing on northern Nigerian campuses or simply maintaining its position.

Shi’ism

The Islamic Movement in Nigeria, founded circa 1979-1980 by al-Zakzaky, took political inspiration from the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Over time, the IMN adopted elements of Shia Islam, taking inspiration from the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The IMN advocates replacing the Nigerian state with an Islamic state. Al-Zakzaky was repeatedly detained in the 1980s and 1990s on charges of fomenting disorder, and his followers conducted violent demonstrations, for example, in Katsina in 1991.⁷⁰ The IMN has strength in Zaria, its headquarters, as well as in northern cities such as Kano and Sokoto. The IMN

66 Loimeier, *Islamic Reform*, 299.

67 More on Ibrahim al-Zakzaky is provided in the section on Shi’ism on page 26 of this report.

68 Representative works by Islamist intellectuals from this period include Ibrahim Sulaiman’s *A Revolution in History: The Jihad of Usman dan Fodio* (1986) and his *The Islamic State and the Challenge of History: Ideals, Policies and Operations of the Sokoto Caliphate* (1987), both published by Mansell of London. These works invoked the nineteenth-century Sokoto Caliphate as a model for Nigeria in the 1980s.

69 Abbas Jimoh, “MSSN Holds 60th Anniversary in Abuja,” *Daily Trust*, May 23, 2014, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/mssn-holds-60th-anniversary-in-abuja/47013.html>.

70 For background on the IMN, see Muhammad Dahiru Sulaiman, “Shiaism and the Islamic Movement in Nigeria 1979-1991,” in *Islam et islamismes au sud du Sahara*, edited by Ousmane Kane and Jean-Louis Triaud, (Paris: Karthala, 1998), 183-195; and Mukhtar Umar Bunza, “The Iranian Model of Political Islamic Movement in Nigeria (1979-2002),” in *L’islam politique au sud du Sahara: Identities, discourse et enjeux*, edited by Muriel Gomez-Perez, (Paris: Karthala, 2005), 227-242.

also has a presence in northeastern Nigerian cities such as Potiskum and conducts conferences and events in Maiduguri,⁷¹ but it does not have a significant presence outside of Nigeria. In December 2015, a clash between the IMN and the Nigerian army resulted in the ongoing detention of al-Zakzaky, as well as bans on IMN activities in Kaduna, Kano, and Plateau States.⁷²

The IMN's Academic Forum, led by Shuaib Ahmad, includes students and staff at universities and colleges. According to its own description, "the main objective of the Academic Forum is to regain the intellectual, cultural and civilizational identity of the Umma [global Muslim community] through the intellectual revolution in the academic environment."⁷³ Among the Academic Forum's activities is an annual conference, the Seminar on Islamic Thought.⁷⁴ Existing research, however, does not reveal much about the IMN's influence on different campuses, and very little is known about the position of Shia minorities in Cameroon, Chad, or Niger.

Pentecostalism

The Lake Chad countries have substantial Christian populations, constituting a majority in Cameroon and large minorities in Chad and Nigeria. Within the vicinity of Lake Chad itself are large Christian populations, for example, in southern Borno State. As in Muslim communities, Christian communities have seen diversification and fragmentation, particularly since the 1970s. Alongside the older, mainline churches, such as the Catholic and Anglican churches, has been a rise in new movements, especially Pentecostal churches. Southwestern Nigeria is a major hub for Pentecostalism, but the influence of those churches — the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Deeper Life, Winners Chapel/Living Faith Church, and others — extends throughout the region.⁷⁵ In comparison with the mainline churches, Pentecostals and other new churches sometimes take a more confrontational attitude toward Muslims and a more activist stance toward evangelization, which can contribute to Muslim-Christian conflict in northern Nigeria and beyond.

71 See, for example, Islamic Movement in Nigeria, "Za'afa faru Mu'utamar na yan uwa mata a Maiduguri," January 15, 2009, <http://harkarmusulunci.org/data.asp?id=100705&lang=1>.

72 For background on this incident and its aftermath, see Kaduna State Government, "Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Zaria Clashes" August 2016, <http://kdsg.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Report-of-the-Judicial-Commission-of-Inquiry-into-the-Zaria-Clashes1.pdf>.

73 Islamic Movement in Nigeria, "Academic Forum," undated, https://www.islamicmovement.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=98&Itemid=132.

74 See the IMN's write-up of its 2016 Seminar at https://www.islamicmovement.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2831:seminar-on-islamic-thought&catid=41:frontpage.

75 On Pentecostalism in the region, see Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Tomas Drønen, *Pentecostalism, Globalisation, and Islam in Northern Cameroon: Megachurches in the Making?* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); and Barbara Cooper, *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).

The rising influence of Pentecostals has shaped the trajectory of powerful Christian umbrella bodies in the region. In Nigeria, the most powerful such group is the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN, itself a coalition of five Christian “blocs”).⁷⁶ Although CAN’s current president is a Baptist, its president for 2010-2016, Ayo Oritsejafor, was a prominent Pentecostal leader. As CAN president, Oritsejafor took a hard line on Boko Haram, treating the insurgency as a specifically anti-Christian phenomenon, discouraging efforts at amnesty and dialogue, supporting a tough military response, and calling for Christians to arm themselves for “self-defense” against the group.

Pentecostals and Evangelicals have had an ongoing presence on university campuses around Lake Chad. For example, the Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES) is a national body that aims “to be a movement of Christ-like students in Nigeria’s tertiary institutions transforming the campus, and society upon graduation.”⁷⁷ NIFES has a few branches in the northeast, including one established in 1992 at the University of Maiduguri.⁷⁸

Notably, universities can be major recruiting grounds for Pentecostals, especially from other Christian denominations. Many students from mainline Christian churches, once away from their families and home churches, are exposed to new perspectives and questions on campuses. Pentecostal groups, with their emphasis on personal transformation and intense communal life, as well as their theological critiques of Catholicism and other mainline churches, offer Christian students a powerful form of religiosity and belonging.⁷⁹

Salafism and Pentecostalism both emphasize personal moral purity, a reformist attitude toward co-religionists, and a narrative that describes a spiritual vanguard struggling against a broken moral order. Such ideas can be particularly attractive to youth. It should be emphasized that holding morally conservative positions does not make one an extremist — and that in the context of Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, making a public demonstration of one’s faith, endorsing conservatism about sexuality, and questioning the secular foundations of state and society are not necessarily extreme positions. The most important question is whether any of these communities has a systemic propensity to commit violence. Overall, the answer appears to be no. If Boko Haram emerged in a context where strong religious commitments were widespread, Boko Haram nevertheless appears fairly exceptional — even when compared to groups such as the IMN — in its antipathy toward the state and its exclusivism vis-à-vis Christians and other Muslims. Greater research into the activities, influence, and membership of Pentecostal groups on campuses could shed some important light on their activities and role in fomenting or countering violent extremist sentiment.

76 Christian Association of Nigeria, “Blocs of CAN,” undated, <http://canng.org/about-can/blocs>.

77 Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students, “Vision,” undated, <http://www.nifes.org.ng/about-nifes/vision/>.

78 See their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Nifesunimaid>.

79 Linus Unah, “Young Nigerians Are Connecting with Pentecostal Churches. Will They Return to Catholicism?” *America: The Jesuit Review*, November 16, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/11/16/young-nigerians-are-connecting-pentecostal-churches-will-they-return-catholicism>.

International Influences

The higher education system in the Lake Chad Basin is part of a globalized world, especially along two axes: locals who study abroad and foreign actors who invest in local education.

Students Returning from Studies Abroad

In terms of study abroad, many of the region's elites are Western-educated.⁸⁰ Many Muslim religious leaders, as noted throughout this report, have studied in the Middle East, including at Egypt's Al-Azhar University, which attracts many Sufis; Saudi Arabia's Islamic University of Medina, which attracts many Salafis; and the International University of Africa in Khartoum, Sudan, which attracts an eclectic clientele. Southeast Asia, particularly the International Islamic University Malaysia, is becoming another important destination for students seeking a non-Western, Islamic university education.

Despite the prominence of some graduates, many returnees from Middle Eastern universities are unable to find employment commensurate with their level of education. Their unemployment and underemployment, combined with the suspicion some returnees face from local Muslim leaders, can lead to resentment.⁸¹ At the same time, however, returnees are often pioneers in founding private Islamic schools, which can allow them to disseminate their knowledge and perspectives while earning incomes.⁸²

Starting in the 1960s but especially after the 1990s, the graduates of Middle Eastern universities furnished an alternative model of Muslim intellectual authority — an alternative to both locally trained classical scholars and to professors at Western-style universities. The rivalry was most pronounced with the classical scholars: graduates of Middle Eastern universities often attacked classical scholars as backward and heterodox, while presenting their own knowledge of Islam as both purer and more substantial. Often adept at using electronic media and confident in engaging in polemics, some Middle Eastern graduates attracted wide followings, particularly among youth. These followings gave the most prominent graduates a secure livelihood as they established schools and traveled lecture circuits. Many other Middle Eastern graduates, however, found themselves excluded from various career paths, including those in the government and justice sector. Meanwhile, the relationships between Middle Eastern graduates and university professors were sometimes closer, especially because many returning graduates hoped to teach at local Islamic Studies departments. Yet for established professors, the Middle Eastern returnees could often seem like rude upstarts, young men who wanted to make preaching careers on the basis on the strength of a bachelor's degree, Arabic fluency, and provocative theological positions. Those Middle Eastern graduates who

80 A few examples include the Nigeria's Minister of the Interior, the current Vice Chancellors of Bayero University Kano, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, and Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, and the current prime ministers of Niger and Cameroon.

81 "Cameroun: Désillusion des anciens boursiers des pays arabes," Jade Cameroun, April 17, 2007. <http://www.jade-cameroun.com/?q=node/45>.

82 Abdourhaman, "Dynamique et perspectives," 121-122.

have joined major university faculties tend to be the better trained and less polemical among their group.⁸³ Some scholars in the Lake Chad Basin, both returnees from the Middle East and locally trained scholars, now aspire to be “al-shaykh al-duktur (Doctor Shaykh)” — that is, someone who combines classical and university education.⁸⁴ Expectations are rising concerning what credentials Muslim religious leaders will have, which places new pressures on classical scholars, university professors, and Middle Eastern returnees alike.

Foreign Influence in Lake Chad Universities

In terms of foreign investments in local education, the Lake Chad region’s university systems emerged at a time when Middle Eastern governments and universities were exerting stronger influence in sub-Saharan Africa. During the postcolonial period, Middle Eastern governments and organizations created and funded new universities within this region, such as the Islamic University of Say, Niger, established by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 1986;⁸⁵ King Faisal University in Chad, sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government in 1991; and the University of Abéché, founded 1997 with support from Abu Dhabi.⁸⁶

Some of the region’s private, religiously-based institutions are not necessarily funded by Middle Eastern partners but do derive inspiration from Middle Eastern-backed universities. For example, major private religious universities in Nigeria include Al-Qalam University in Katsina, which is modeled on the Islamic University of Say,⁸⁷ as well as Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin, which was created by the Abdur-Raheem Oladimeji Islamic Foundation in 2005 (Oladimeji is a Lagos-based businessman).⁸⁸ Private Islamic universities and colleges also exist in southwestern Nigeria. The most prominent are in Osun State: Fountain University in Osogbo, created in 2007 by a major Yoruba Muslim youth movement, the Nasrul-Lahi-Il-Fatih Society or NASFAT;⁸⁹ and the Sheikh Bin Baaz Shariah College of Nigeria in Iwo, founded in 1988

83 On these dynamics, see Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria*; and Lisbet Holtedahl and Djingui Mahmoudou, “The Power of Knowledge: The Life of Alhaji Ibrahim Goni, Islamic Judge in Ngaoundéré, Northern Cameroon,” in *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters Between Sufis and Islamists*, edited by Eva Rosander and David Westerlund, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997), 254-285.

84 This dynamic is increasingly salient throughout the Muslim world. See Nabil Moulina, *The Clerics of Islam: Religious Authority and Political Power in Saudi Arabia*, translated by Ethan Rundell (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 192.

85 Al-Jami‘a al-Islamiyya bi-l-Nijar, “‘An al-Jami‘a,” undated, <http://universite-say.com/bienvenu/presentation-et-historique-de-l-uin.html>.

86 Karine Bennafla, “De la guerre à la coopération: les dangereuses liaisons tchado-libyennes,” in *La nouvelle Libye – Sociétés, espaces et géopolitique au lendemain de l’embargo*, edited by Olivier Pliez (Paris: Karthala, 2004), 111-138, 124. On King Faisal University, see Adam Youssouf Moussa, “King Faisal University in Chad: Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Prospects,” in *Muslim Institutions of Higher Education in Postcolonial Africa*, edited by Mbaye Lo and Muhammed Haron, (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 157-177.

87 Al-Qalam University Katsina, “Brief History,” undated, <http://www.auk.edu.ng/brief-history>.

88 “Historical Background,” Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, undated, <http://www.alhikmah.edu.ng/historical-background/>.

89 “History,” Fountain University, undated, <http://fuo.edu.ng/history/>.

by a graduate of the Islamic University of Medina named Abdur Rasheed Hadiyyatullah.⁹⁰ Private Christian institutions are even more numerous, but these are primarily concentrated in the south and the Middle Belt.

The trend toward the creation of private universities is more limited in the Francophone Lake Chad countries, but some private colleges are emerging with Middle Eastern support. For example, the Saudi Arabian embassy in Cameroon and a Saudi Arabian businessman, Abou Daoud, financed and supervised the creation of Abou Daoud College in Maroua in 1992. More recently, the Turkish-backed Cameroonian Association for Aid and Solidarity opened a private secondary school (Collège de Fraternité Kayseri-Maroua). The spread of private Islamic institutions in Cameroon has spurred public universities to compete: the University of Maroua, for example, has expanded its offerings in Arabic, granting its first doctorates in that subject in 2015.⁹¹

The implications of these external influences are deeply contested by many actors in the region, including many Sufis, hereditary Muslim rulers, and Christians. Such actors often see Middle Eastern returnees, especially Salafis, as directly or indirectly responsible for the rise of Boko Haram. Their argument is that the graduates of Middle Eastern universities spread ideological extremism that paved the way for Boko Haram's extremism. Yet the returnees themselves might protest that they have been at the forefront of denouncing and refuting Boko Haram's ideology and actions and that Salafis have featured prominently as targets of Boko Haram's assassinations. It is clear that Middle Eastern returnees have often been divisive and confrontational vis-à-vis social norms and existing religious hierarchies, but blaming the returnees for the rise of violence may be too simplistic. More research is needed to assess the full impact of these returnees on individual departments and universities, and to assess the impact of the private educational institutions that Middle Eastern returnees create.

University Responses to Violent Extremism

Universities in the Lake Chad Basin, despite being targets of violence, have responded to the Boko Haram crisis by contributing their intellectual labor and organizational acumen. Regional universities have held numerous conferences and workshops, such as the University of Diffa's "International Symposium on Youth Radicalization and the Reintegration of Reformed Fighters" in May 2017.⁹² The University of Diffa, including its Peace and Development Unit, has worked with Nigerien authorities to help conceive the de-radicalization efforts underway in Diffa.⁹³ Universities have also participated in the Peer-to-Peer Challenging Extremism project and partnered with USAID to carry out P/CVE projects.⁹⁴

90 See <http://www.shariahcollege.com/>.

91 Abdourhaman, "Dynamique et perspectives," 135-140.

92 See <http://www.univ-diffa.ne/symposium-international-sur-la-d%C3%A9radicalisation-des-jeunes-et-la-r%C3%A9insertion-des-repentis-de-boko>.

93 Obi Anyadike, "How Jobs Can Help Niger Win the War Against Boko Haram," IRIN, 17 July 2017, <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/07/17/how-jobs-can-help-niger-win-war-against-boko-haram>.

94 Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob, "The War Has Just Begun: Boko Haram and the Coming Diffusion of Terror in Nigeria," *Small Wars Journal*, 11 March 2017, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-war-has-just-begun-boko-haram-and-the-coming-diffusion-of-terror-in-nigeria>.

Academics throughout the Lake Chad region have also participated in analyzing and rebutting Boko Haram.^{95,96} Notable individuals based at universities in the broader region, although not in the core conflict zone, have joined the effort.^{97,98}

The extent to which these efforts will spread or have impacted the views of students on campus, the broader community, or violent extremist movements themselves is not clear. Further research into these efforts, the individuals behind them, and their impact on the broader community and trends in violent conflict could help efforts to bolster opposition to and aid in mitigating the spread of violent extremist movements in Lake Chad. As the example of Diffa shows, however, universities remain key sites for generating ideas and programs that can assist in CVE efforts.

95 Kyari Mohammed, current Vice Chancellor of Modibbo Adama University of Technology in Yola, Nigeria. After joining MAUTECH as a graduate assistant in 1985, he rose through the academic ranks to become Director of the Centre for Peace and Security Studies. In June 2014, he was appointed Vice Chancellor. Mohammed's contributions to public debate over Boko Haram began immediately after the sect's 2009 uprising. See: Kyari Mohammed, "Matters Arising from the Boko Haram Crisis," Gamji, undated, <http://www.gamji.com/article8000/NEWS8744.htm> and Kyari Mohammed, "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram" in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, edited by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, 9-32 (Ibadan, Nigeria: French Institute for Research in Africa, 2014).

96 Saibou Issa, currently Director of the École Normale Supérieure of Maroua and formerly head of the Department of History at the University of Ngaoundéré. A specialist in the history of banditry, rebellion, and insecurity in the Lake Chad region, Issa has applied his expertise to the issue of Boko Haram. His recent research projects include editing a collection of studies entitled *Les musulmans, l'école et l'état dans le bassin du Lac Tchad* (Muslims, the School, and the State in the Lake Chad Basin, published 2016 by Harmattan in Paris). The collection focuses not on Boko Haram but on a broader set of educational questions that the movement's violence has raised with renewed intensity: how to integrate different forms of education, how to provide futures for products of different educational systems, etc. See the description here: <http://www.editions-harmattan.fr/index.asp?navig=catalogue&obj=livre&no=51778>.

97 Souley Mane, a historian at the University of Yaoundé-I, Cameroon, where he is also Director of the Center for Study and Research on Islam and Muslim Societies in Central Africa. His recent works include:

Les musulmans du Cameroun disent non à Boko Haram et au terrorisme (The Muslims of Cameroon Say No to Boko Haram and to Terrorism, published 2016 by Hikmah Press in Cameroon) and *Les associations islamiques au Cameroun: Entre prosélytisme et développement 1963-2016* (Islamic Associations in Cameroon: Between Proselytization and Development, 1963-2016, published 2017 by L'Harmattan in Paris). This book does not address Boko Haram, but as the foreword comments, it is useful for understanding the context in which Boko Haram operates in Cameroon.

98 Ahmad Murtada of the Islamic Studies Department at BUK, who wrote an early and well-informed article on Boko Haram in 2012. Murtada is a Salafi who opposes Boko Haram. See Ahmad Murtada, "Jama'at 'Boko Haram': Nash'atuha wa-Mabadi'uha wa-A'maluha fi Nayjiriya," *Qira'at Ifriqiyya*, 13 November 2012, <http://bit.ly/2BXI9ly>. Translated into English as "Boko Haram in Nigeria: Its Beginnings, Principles, and Activities in Nigeria," 2013, http://download.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_BokoHaram.pdf.

CONCLUSION

What's Missing from the Map?

The Boko Haram conflict and its aftereffects will disrupt life in the Lake Chad Basin for years to come. As a tenacious insurgency that has precipitated a humanitarian emergency, ending the conflict will require efforts in multiple areas, not only the security sector. Higher education could be one of those areas, particularly given the importance of addressing recruitment and grievances provoking support for violent extremism among youth. However, it is important to keep certain factors in mind in the pursuit of further research and interventions focused on higher education in the Lake Chad region. Many untested assumptions remain, given the relative paucity of in-depth research on higher education in general in the region, as well as any linkages between higher education, or education in general, and violent extremism. While this report has outlined major trends in the higher education sector as revealed by current literature, substantial room remains for further research concerning the dynamics underlying, the impact, and the influence of each of those trends.

Evolution of Higher Education

Researchers have a growing command of the broad outlines of developments inside higher education in Lake Chad countries, but key developments remain unexplored. What is missing, often, is analysis at the meso and micro levels, that is, dynamics at the local, community, and individual levels. For example, studies of Salafism or Pentecostalism at the national level, or even at the level of a city, give only limited insight into variations between localities and campuses, let alone individual departments. Generalizations about trends — such as the transition from a climate of Marxism and secular nationalism on campuses in the 1970s to one of greater religiosity by the 2000s — need to be tested through in-depth examination of particular cases. Moreover, many of the detailed studies of Lake Chad universities that exist are more or less official histories, which often gloss over internal debates and conflicts on campuses. Significant, in-depth research is needed to more fully explore how higher education in Lake Chad Basin has evolved, the extent to which its history has shaped current structures, and what, if any, impact these dynamics have had on violent extremism in the region.

Rising Religiosity on Campus

Although available information seems to point to a trend of rising religiosity in higher education curricula and research in Lake Chad Basin, the nature of that trend, the driving forces behind it, and its impact remain largely unexplored. Moving forward, analysts might explore who sets research agendas on campuses and in departments, what factors are driving increased interest in Islamic studies among students, how university research is disseminated and what research reaches the widest audiences, and how on-campus debates, conferences, and research are affected by local and national politics, religion, and conflict. Additionally, there is need for greater attention to gender dynamics in understanding how conver-

sations about Islam play out on campuses. For example, how do women feature in these debates, both as participants and as objects of discussion and symbolic action?

Student Groups and Affiliations

Relatively broad information on the different religious organizations active on or with ties to Lake Chad campuses, as well as their activities on campuses, exists. Greater insight into these organizations and their relationship, if any, to violent extremist movements can be gleaned through the development of in-depth profiles of groups at the branch or chapter level. However, researchers and practitioners could also examine what new groups may be arising in this already complex and contested environment, whether as a result of independent factors or as a reaction to other groups. For example, how are Sufis responding to the rise of Salafism and Shi‘ism? How are mainline Christians reacting to the growth of Pentecostalism? Do students who belong to different tendencies isolate themselves from one another, or are there consequential interactions and overlaps among constituencies? To what extent have different religious or secular groups on campuses served to connect people to or counter violent extremist organizations, including Boko Haram, and how successful have their efforts been? Are interactions between different student groups being regulated on campuses, and, if so, how?

International Influences

International linkages between Middle Eastern entities and students in the higher education system in Lake Chad are well documented, but little research has been done to understand the implications of these linkages or the influence of other global actors. Future research might address international influences from beyond the Middle East. What influence, for example, do American Evangelicals and Pentecostals have over their Lake Chad co-religionists — or vice versa? What impacts are the African graduates of Islamic universities in Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia having on their societies once they return home? These questions have policy implications in the sense that exaggerating the impact of foreign connections can lead to misplaced efforts, particularly in the CVE realm.

Universities and their Impact

Key to understanding the positioning of the higher education sector in Lake Chad, and its relationship to violent extremism, is understanding how those on campus and in local communities view and assess their own relationship, as well as the relationship of one another and of government policies, to violent extremism. Research has not kept pace with rapidly moving events in terms of Lake Chad universities and their response to violent extremism and Boko Haram. Consequently, much remains unknown. Little is understood about the types of debates and discussions that are taking place, informally and formally, on university campuses regarding Boko Haram, the behavior of security services, elected politicians, hereditary rulers, and other key actors. There is also little insight into the nature and breadth of the impact that efforts in the higher education sector to counter or prevent violent extremism have had or could potentially have.

Moving forward, P/CVE interventions aimed at the higher education sector will have a better likelihood of success if they are informed by more rigorous analysis of these gaps in research and of current assumptions about the links among religion, education, and violent extremism, some of which may very well prove to be unfounded.

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