



A Burkina Faso Armed Forces soldier patrols the area during the opening days of Flintlock 20 near Thies, Senegal, on 16 February 2020. Flintlock is U.S. Africa Command's premier and largest annual Special Operations Forces exercise, designed to strengthen the ability of key partner nations in the region to counter violent extremist organizations, protect their borders, and provide security for their people. Photo by U.S. Army Specialist Miguel Pena.

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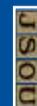


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Evidence for Burkina Faso

Ariotti/Fridy



JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIVERSITY



## ***Informal Governance as a Force Multiplier in Counterterrorism: Evidence for Burkina Faso***

Margaret H. Ariotti and Kevin S. Fridy

JSOU Report 20-3

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**On the cover.** A vehicle crosses a river in Burkina's north between Dori and Gorom-Gorom. In the dry season this river is not there. It is cheaper to pave the riverbed than build a bridge. In the few months when there is water, kids wait on both sides. The automobile owner removes the carburetor, rubber-bands a plastic bag around the exhaust, and gives the kids a small gift of money to push the vehicle across the water. Photo by Christian Knecht/used with permission.

**Back cover.** A Burkina Faso Armed Forces soldier patrols the area during the opening days of Flintlock 20 near Thies, Senegal, on 16 February 2020. Flintlock is U.S. Africa Command's premier and largest annual Special Operations Forces exercise, designed to strengthen the ability of key partner nations in the region to counter violent extremist organizations, protect their borders, and provide security for their people. Photo by U.S. Army Specialist Miguel Pena.

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# Foreword

As U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) grapple with the 2018 National Defense Strategy's transition to great power competition, the inevitable question is: How can the already stressed enterprise address the enduring counterterrorism (CT) fight while contributing to the new orientation? On the surface they appear to be separate and distinct applications of SOF capability. In some respects this is true. But once large scale, conventional deterrence effectively takes hold, great power competition will play out more regularly in the battle for influence, access, and resources in developing countries. Competing in this realm will be about politics and perception, not kinetic capabilities.

At the time of this writing, the Department of Defense is considering reducing the number of SOF and enablers in West Africa to meet more pressing great power competition challenges elsewhere. From a kinetic or law enforcement approach to CT, this appears like a zero-sum loss of capability to combat violent extremist organizations (VEOs). In this monograph, Dr. Kevin Fridy and Dr. Molly Ariotti assert that a CT effect in Burkina Faso can be more fruitfully generated by incorporating the range of Burkinabè informal governance providers into joint, interagency, and partner operational concepts. Although joint doctrine correctly notes the host nation (HN) government must invite U.S. SOF into the country, it errs in assuming that only the HN provides the population with governance. By differentiating between the concepts of government and governance, Fridy and Ariotti demonstrate how local political legitimacy can be enhanced—and the allure of VEOs diminished—by enhancing indigenous, informal governance structures. Although written from the perspective of CT, readers are encouraged to imagine how SOF could apply the insights in the context of great power competition as well.

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We would also like to thank Dr. David Ellis of the Joint Special Operations University for encouraging us to pursue this project and helping us frame the findings in such a way that they can more clearly speak to this monograph's primary audience, and Dr. Abdoul Karim Saidou of Université Ouaga II for helping lay the groundwork for data collection in Burkina. Without their interventions this project would not have come to fruition. Kevin Fridy would like to thank his wife, Sarah, and daughter, Ruth, for tolerating his absence and keeping the home afloat. Molly Ariotti would like to thank her friends and family for their encouragement and support.



## Introduction

Eliminating or reducing the control, influence, and appeal of terrorist groups is an inherently political undertaking, not a technical problem of destroying, degrading, or disrupting a network faster than it can reconstitute. *Joint Publication 3-26 Counterterrorism* (JP 3-26) plainly states, “Terrorism is the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually *political* [emphasis added].”<sup>1</sup> While the research and analysis that follows directly challenges the concept of “ungoverned spaces” that JP 3-26 assumes to be an underlying problem,<sup>2</sup> it does reinforce the idea that counterterrorism (CT) operations cannot achieve sustainable strategic effect without addressing the underlying conditions that make violence seem reasonable or rational to particular population groups. JP 3-26 states “CT activities and operations are taken to neutralize terrorists, their organizations, and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals.”<sup>3</sup> From the perspective of politics, CT activities at best can only provide the space for political solutions to take hold over time; they cannot in and of themselves heal sociopolitical tensions.

The emphasis on kinetic operations in CT among U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) has—since at least 2006—been both policy-based and cultural. Nevertheless, there have been calls for rebalancing SOF to give greater weight to non-kinetic, influence-oriented activities in the human domain. For instance, while commanders of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and United States Army Special Operations Command, General Joseph Votel and Lieutenant General Charles Cleveland, respectively, called for greater emphasis on the special warfare aspect of the SOF competencies.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, USSOCOM issued a white paper entitled *SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear* under then-Commander Admiral William McRaven that clearly noted today’s conflicts occur in the human domain, which is “about developing understanding of, and nurturing influence among, critical populaces.”<sup>5</sup>

To do so requires SOF to gain greater knowledge of the sociocultural, political, and economic aspects of local populations, but this also means

that ideas about politics, government, and governance have to move beyond the level of the state. The Joint Staff recognized this need when it issued the Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations (JC-HAMO) as part of the series supporting the Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning. Although CT is largely practiced as a technical challenge in the Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze, Disseminate cycle, it is more properly interpreted as a manifestation of political discontent. Sustainable strategic effect in CT is largely a function of rebalancing societal stressors as they evolve. Indeed, JC-HAMO notes that “the purpose of military operations is often to enable a political strategy that will create a desired state” and that “local political leaders must play a central role in mediating an end to a conflict and, in instances of internal strife, *developing a new or revised governance framework* (emphasis added).”<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, there is a critical defect in joint doctrine that could effectively undermine CT activities and contribute to political discontent among some indigenous populations. By conflating the concepts of government and governance, joint doctrine assumes that weak governments lead to “ungoverned space”—a decidedly Westphalian and somewhat inaccurate depiction of how social systems operate in many developing countries where violent extremist organizations (VEOs) operate.

Using Burkina Faso as an example, the goal of this monograph is to provide insights into the ways in which SOF can determine how indigenous governance structures can be engaged to halt or reverse the growth of VEOs and contribute to a more productive rebalancing of political tensions. Operating in the human domain or engaging the HAMO requires deep appreciation of local worldviews, modes and patterns of life, and organic institutional arrangements that make them viable.

## **The Fallacy of “Ungoverned Spaces”**

At the heart of the U.S. military’s joint doctrine on CT, counterinsurgency (COIN), and stability, lies the concept of the host nation (HN).<sup>7</sup> HN is a catchall phrase that combines the government’s civilian leadership, bureaucracy, social service institutions, security services, and military in the form of a unitary actor. The HN is the U.S. government’s partner in restoring or creating order according to JP 3-07 *Stability*, 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, and 3-26 *Counterterrorism*. The key threat is political instability and the stress on the sovereign state, or the HN. JP 3-26, for instance, asserts “Politically

unstable states and ungoverned spaces generate local and regional conflict and humanitarian crises. These areas are vulnerable to exploitation by other states and transnational groups.”<sup>8</sup> From the inter-

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national relations and sovereignty perspectives, the concept of working by, with, and through the HN makes intrinsic legal and diplomatic sense. But from the perspective of some indigenous populations, the HN concept is problematic and can in some cases exacerbate the fight against VEOs because HN governments are sometimes considered to be more threatening than the VEOs.

The U.S. military’s joint doctrine conflates the concept of government with governance when in fact they have two separate connotations. Jensen captures the difference well:

Where ‘government’ signifies the structure and function of public institutions, their authority to make binding decisions, and their authoritative implementation of those decisions and allocation of values through politics, policy, and administration, ‘governance’ embraces all actors, organizations, and institutions, public and non-public, involved in structuring politics and their relationships, whether within sovereign nation-states or without.<sup>9</sup>

Government can be a source of governance and social order, but this does not mean that it can or should be the only source of governance and social order. In the U.S., the government operates at the local, state, and federal levels and is easily recognized by important symbols, such as the U.S. Congress, U.S. Postal Service, local police and fire departments, state departments of education, and, alas, federal and state taxation agencies. The government is granted the final authority over the use of force by the people through a series of constitutional guarantees. Governance in the U.S., however, exists in myriad forms alongside it. For example, residents increasingly live in planned communities with homeowners associations,<sup>10</sup> operate and participate in professional associations with bylaws, and attend religious institutions with norms and standards of conduct. Governance and social order are achieved through a variety of practices, self-limiting behaviors, and institutions—not just through the power and authority of government.

But, what if governance as practiced in foreign societies looks different than in the United States? What if a local population is physically separated from its government by poor infrastructure or weak institutions? What if government as imagined in Western industrialized countries does not exist at all? Is there no governance to be found in the absence of government? Are the people and territory truly “ungoverned?” Somalia, for example, is often described as “a failed state,” “lawless,” or “ungoverned space.”<sup>11</sup> Despite this government-centric perspective, Stremlau identifies numerous mechanisms for creating social order among Somalis, including customary *xeer* law, *Shari’a* law, and community security pacts among others.<sup>12</sup> To this list, one might also add the international *hawala* money transfer system used by the diaspora to send remittances to family still in Somalia.

In short, there is great capacity for conflict and tension to be resolved harmoniously among citizens even without the direct participation of government, and making use of a variety of non-governmental options might actually increase the legitimacy and stability of the socio-political system in fragile environments.<sup>13</sup> The growing literature on Hybrid Political Orders, for example, explores “the multiple ways traditional, personal, kin-based or clientelistic logics interact with modern, imported or rational actor logics in the shifting historical conditions of particular national and local contexts.”<sup>14</sup> Whereas most people in the U.S. view the government to be the center of power, in hybrid political orders “the real holders of political power and providers of public goods, including security, may have little allegiance to the state or may not even subscribe to the ‘idea of the state’ itself (Abrams 1988; Hansen and Stepputat 2001).”<sup>15</sup> Rather than presume the government should hold a monopoly on the use of force, the hybrid political orders literature empirically investigates the extent to which a country’s population groups and (often preexisting) governance providers negotiate power relationships over time with the government.<sup>16</sup>

By making the HN the central CT, COIN, and stability partner, U.S. joint doctrine, obscures the legitimate and necessary subnational sources of governance and socio-political order in many non-Western states. If the intent is to stabilize a sociopolitical system—that is, create the experience of stability, legitimacy, and opportunity within a geographic space—is the HN government the only means to do so? According to joint doctrine, it seems to be so. But problematically, in trying to bolster the HN, the U.S.

could inadvertently distort the balance of influence within a sociopolitical system and create the very conditions of insurgency and terrorism it seeks to diminish.

Some might argue that SOF, special forces (SF) and civil affairs (CA) in particular, are skilled in analyzing and engaging in local politics, especially through key leader engagements. Such skills are definitely necessary for operations on the ground, but there is a political danger inherent to engaging key leaders, especially when the operating environment is not yet kinetic. Just as with the HN, SOF can inadvertently disrupt local balances of power and contribute to a conflict spiral if established governance practices are disturbed. Prior to engagement and where possible, rigorous investigation about indigenous governance preferences should be undertaken in order to align strategy and operations with locally legitimate and capable governance practices. Otherwise, interventions based on limited appreciations of local contexts might result in dysfunctional local politics and undermine the desired strategic political effect despite operationally successful employment of the force.<sup>17</sup>

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## Why Burkina Faso?

The rise of VEOs in Burkina Faso presents a challenge to the recently elected democratic government. Violent attacks in Burkina Faso have become increasingly frequent and deadly since the installation of President Kaboré and his government in early January 2016.<sup>18</sup> In the ensuing three and a half years, more than 500 militant attacks have killed 933 people in Burkina Faso.<sup>19</sup>

More recently, the inability to respond to these security threats has created challenges for the government and its ability to deliver on campaign promises. Former Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thièba and his cabinet submitted their resignation to President Kaboré on 18 January 2019.<sup>20</sup> While no official reason for the resignation was provided, it is surmised that a new government, including a new prime minister, would deliver new life to

the government's activities, particularly with respect to the security challenges.<sup>21</sup> Immediately before receiving the confidence of the parliament in February 2019, Christophe Dabiré, the new prime minister, spoke on his priorities: security, social cohesion, and economic stimulation.<sup>22</sup> These priorities respond to many of the conditions that have been seen as creating environments favorable to radicalization, particularly in relevant contexts such as Nigeria.<sup>23</sup>

Since the popular insurrection of 2014 led to the removal of former president Blaise Compaoré, the transitional regime led by Michel Kafando and the democratically-elected government led by President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, have been subjected to increasing threats to formal governance. The authors examine the history of governance structures in Burkina Faso, and the role that governance and the provision of public services play in reinforcing the relationship between citizens and the formal government. Given that much existing scholarship suggests that perceptions of corruption and inefficacy on the part of government may lead citizens to seek alternative power structures, this is of direct importance to understanding the path forward for countering the potential growth of VEOs in Burkina Faso.<sup>24</sup>

The empirical research seeks to adapt the ideas underlying CT, COIN, and stability doctrine to the governance preferences of the different population groups across Burkina Faso. The main finding of this research project is that due to different cultural predispositions, modes of living, and experiences with the state, a one-size-fits-all

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HN strategy radiating out from the capitol cannot satisfy the governance preferences of the Burkinabè. In addition to examining the interactions between various types of governance options available to the population, the authors also discuss the growing body of scholarship that focuses the origins and growth of violent extremist groups. In the case of Burkina Faso, ethnic and religious differences have rarely been a politically salient means of

dividing the population. The examination reveals how this resistance can help SOF understand the potential sources of resiliency in Burkina Faso, and how these different elements may be used to reverse the spread of violence.

The conclusion provides some considerations in the formulation of future strategy and operations.

## **Outline of the Monograph**

The monograph is organized into chapters that address broad questions of governance and violent extremism, focusing particularly on the threats and resiliencies that are specific to Burkina Faso. Chapter 1 explores the history of governance in Burkina Faso. This historical overview focuses principally in the post-independence time period, although it discusses pre-colonial and colonial institutions as they pertain to contemporary governance. This chapter also examines the extent to which traditional, formal, and informal government institutions and practices act in complementary and competing ways. Understanding how citizens view the different structures that could potentially be petitioned for help is critical to furthering the appreciation of how interventions can reinforce or complement existing governance structures in an effort to protect against the spread of extremist ideals.

Chapter 2 provides a general overview of VEOs, concentrating on socio-cultural trends that could contribute to the growth of VEOs in Burkina Faso. It examines the evolution of ethnic relations and religion in Burkina Faso, finding that ethnicity has never been a particularly salient dimension of politics, and that kinship relationships may be one reason that such tensions (as they exist elsewhere) have historically been avoided. It also finds that the nature of Islam's spread through Burkina Faso has resisted all efforts to categorize and label the different varieties, and that although existing categorizations may be common in other contexts, they are not the most useful way to think about susceptibility to VEOs and radicalization in the case of Burkina Faso. The chapter also discusses the challenges that Burkina Faso faces concerning VEO recruitment strategies employed in regionally comparable contexts such as Nigeria, as well as the strengths and resiliencies that Burkinabè may be able to leverage to counter these influences moving forward.

Chapter 3 uses results from a survey conducted in Burkina Faso in June 2019 to explore the interaction of various types of governance structures in the minds of citizens. In this chapter, as with the following chapter, the focus is on distinguishing between respondents in the north (the region of Burkina Faso (Sahel)), and comparing and contrasting the respondents with those

from the south (Centre-Nord, Centre-Sud, Centre, and Plateau-Central). The analysis captures important differences in these populations' perspectives, preferences, and their exposure to the security crisis. In the Sahel region, the insecurity from Mali and Niger is felt within Burkina Faso. While there are instances of violence in other surveyed regions, they are much more isolated and unusual than in the North. Despite many similarities in the actors—whom citizens see as most useful for solving various problems—there are some important differences between respondents in the North and those in the South. This is notable with respect to different perceptions of the importance regarding local development councils and religious leaders. These differences are discussed at great length.

Chapter 4 relies on the same survey data to examine citizen perceptions of various security actors. Citizens were asked how they understand VEO recruitment by investigating whether citizens strongly perceive particular ethnic or religious groups to be more supportive of terrorism. The survey then focused on how citizens perceive agents of the state, such as the armed forces, the police, and the gendarmerie. As discussed in chapter 3, the traditionally strong respect for the Burkinabè armed forces represents a potential source of resilience, and the chapter investigates whether there are signs that recent reports of excess use of force against civilians are beginning to weaken this support. Important differences in responses regarding support for the armed forces and state violence against civilians suggest that this is an important area to monitor in the future. This chapter also investigates citizen perceptions of non-state actors, such as the autodefense militias known as the *koglwéogo*. The analysis uncovers important differences in how respondents in the North and South view the *koglwéogo*, although it is important to note that citizens may fear retribution for criticism of these militias, so any interaction with *koglwéogo* should be pursued with a great deal of care. Finally, the chapter concludes by examining respondents' perceptions of partners in the security sector, such as the United States and France. Support for these actors is discussed in light of the fact that it helps elucidate the underlying attitudes of citizens who may be most directly affected by their intervention.

The monograph wraps up with a discussion on the conclusions derived from the empirical research and the implications of the findings, as well as recommendations given the implications. The authors discuss how interventions may draw on the information presented to more effectively reinforce local capacities, and create a sustainable security infrastructure moving

forward. The authors discuss the role that a better appreciation of the governance environment has for improving future engagements, particularly with respect to the appropriate actors to be contacted and included in outreach activities. Particular focus is given to how these different groups and actors can be leveraged to reduce the likelihood that communities across Burkina Faso become fertile grounds for VEO activity.



## Chapter 1. Governance Providers in Burkina Faso<sup>25</sup>

Frederickson and Smith explain that governance “accounts for lateral relations, inter-institutional relations, the decline of sovereignty, the diminishing importance of jurisdictional borders, and a general institutional fragmentation.”<sup>26</sup> It does so by taking into account “the array and character of horizontal formal and informal associations between actors representing units in a networked public (including the nonprofit sector) and the administrative behavior of those actors.”<sup>27</sup> This notion of governance as a multilevel landscape where goods and services, formerly understood as the realm of the state, are distributed came into vogue recently as way for scholars of comparative politics to better understand the European Union.<sup>28</sup> As twenty-eight sovereign states move contentiously towards, and occasionally away from, a system of greater economic and political coordination and union, Europeans and interested observers alike wonder how formal and informal, as well as local, national, and transnational governance structures will manage to reinterpret the relationship between citizens and their government(s). The problem, as Hooghe and Marks note, is that no one seemed to be able to agree on how this arrangement would work. “The reallocation of authority upwards, downward, and sideways from central states has drawn attention from a growing number of scholars in political science,” they observe, “[y]et beyond agreement that governance has become (and should be) multi-level, there is no consensus about how it should be organized.”<sup>29</sup>

Like many of its neighbors on the African continent, Burkina Faso might be a good case for these scholars—whose government-centric perspectives struggled with the idea of multilevel governance—to turn for comparison. Thus far, the pinnacle of a formal Burkinabè effort to bring governance to the people via decentralization was the municipal council’s vision in a 1991 constitutional referendum and actualized in 2004 via the Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales.<sup>30</sup> From the outset, the responsibilities of these fledgling Burkinabè local governments were ill-defined, both in law and practice. Politicians in the capital share resources reluctantly, and often times insufficiently and unpredictably, with the hinterlands. For those resources that do make it into the regions, politicians are frequently accused of

micromanaging the resources for political benefit. For their part, these local governments have very little authority or capacity to collect taxes, making it difficult for them to independently set governance agendas.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps a challenge to governance equal to the functioning of formal constitutionally mandated local governments, however, the political universe in which they exist is already quite full. As Lentz points out, in most African countries, there are many “different registers of power (economic, ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ political)” which creates a diverse array of businessmen, politicians, pastors, ex-patriots, and elders who can play the role of “big man” and get things done for a concerned citizen.<sup>32</sup>

With so many potential paths to goods and services perceived by the population as the “public” responsibility, Burkinabè are faced with not only multiple choices but an informal and fluid roadmap detailing which choices to make and in which contexts. Does one go to the chief or the police if he suspects a neighbor of stealing his goat? Should one go to his legislator in the national parliament or the mayor if he does not have enough funds to send his promising child to a decent senior secondary school? When the lights in one’s neighborhood go out for an extended period, is his first trip to the nearest electric company office or his co-worker, whose brother happens to be an old schoolmate of the Minister for Education with a reputation for getting things done? There might be one answer to each of these questions that sheds light on the public goods provision network map most Burkinabè store implicitly in their cognitive understandings of multilevel governance. Just as likely, however, is that the various layers of governance in Burkina are organized differently from location to location, and perhaps even person to person. This is in large part the result of the creation of Burkina Faso as a state from a socioculturally diverse population.

## **The Making of Burkina Faso: Pre-Colonial, Colonial, and Independence Eras**

Historians suspect proto-Mossi individuals migrating from the Lake Chad area in the east settled in the Dallol Bosso area of western Niger near Burkina Faso’s eastern border around 700 CE. About three hundred years later, ancestors of the Bobo-Fing moved into the area around the Black Volta River’s big bend in what would become western Burkina Faso.<sup>33</sup> On their centuries- long migration from Futa-Toro, along the Senegal/Mauritania border to areas

eastward, Fulani speakers likely entered the area now known as Burkina Faso. As pastoralists several centuries before, they settled in the region. It was not until the early nineteenth century that Usman dan Fodio's Fulani jihad in Sokoto sparked the flame that would result in more permanent Fulani outposts in the area.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike the more lucrative coastal areas of West Africa, the land that would become Burkina Faso was of relatively low value to colonial powers. It was not until after the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) that Europeans saw the worth of entering the region with the primary purpose of preventing its acquisition by European competitors. When the French took notice of the area as they attempted to capture an East/West corridor along the Sahel, they found a powerful and proudly independent Mossi Empire in the center, surrounded by mostly acephalous communities and weak political entities. In 1890, when a French naval physician went to present gifts to the Mossi Mogho Naba in Ouagadougou, he was ordered to leave the kingdom immediately and take his gifts with him. But the French persisted making several cooperation arrangements with Bobo and Fulani communities to the west and north in 1888 and an agreement with the Mossi-related Gurmache to the east in 1895. Infighting among Mossi leadership made the empire vulnerable, and the French had few compunctions about using their superior artillery to defeat local forces. After a series of battles the Mossi were brought under a French protectorate in 1897.<sup>35</sup> Though there was a significant anti-colonial flare up in the north around Bani in 1915-17, for the most part, the territory endured a relatively uncontested colonial era.<sup>36</sup>

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As a territorial unit, the existence of an entity now known as Burkina Faso was not a foregone conclusion during colonialism. In the late nineteenth century, the land had value to the French colonizers almost exclusively as a means to keep British and German ambitions at bay. Ruled as a backwater in their larger colonial project, it was not until 1919 that the French recognized Upper Volta as a political unit to quell a series of riots in the west over conscription, forced labor, and taxation. Unlike the Mossi kingdom to the east, Upper Voltarians in the west had acephalous—or politically

separate—communities in the pre-colonial era and found it extremely difficult to acculturate themselves to the French centralized approach to authority.<sup>37</sup> Barely a decade later, on 5 September 1932, the French reversed course, hoping to cut costs at the peak of the great depression. Upper Volta had relatively unproductive farmland and few natural resources the French coveted, but it was a source of cheap labor which was needed in neighboring parts of the French colonial empire where investment returns were higher.<sup>38</sup> Most of the former colony was reassigned to Côte d’Ivoire, with portions of the north going to what would become Mali and a few tracts of the Far East going to what would become Niger.<sup>39</sup>

Reunification of France’s Upper Volta colony came on 4 September 1947 as the result of a struggle pitting Mossi traditional leaders looking for greater autonomy from Côte d’Ivoire against Western leaders hoping to join the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) fight against colonialism and for socialist and regionalist ideals. Due in no small part to French interference in the elections, the *Union Voltaïque*, a nationalist party supported by Mossi chiefs, took control of the colony following the reconstruction of Upper Volta.<sup>40</sup> Though remnants of the RDA movement and their backers in Upper Volta’s west would regroup to form the *Parti Démocratique Voltaïque* and eventually unseat a Mossi-coalition of parties in 1957, by this time the spoils of self-rule were too rich to forfeit. Though there were significant voices within Upper Volta in favor of joining Senegal and French Sudan in the *Fédération du Mali*, Houphouët-Boigny had relaxed the Ivoirien RDA’s appeals for regional unity and Maurice Yaméogo, the man who would become the Upper Volta’s first president, followed Houphouët’s lead.<sup>41</sup> Politics in Upper Volta turned inward.

Yaméogo exhibited none of the charisma of Africa’s independence era champions. In fact just a year before independence was granted to Upper Volta, he had rejected the idea.<sup>42</sup> Less than six years after independence the Yaméogo government was overthrown by military coup. This ushered in nearly a decade and a half of what Jackson and Rosberg label “military oligarchical rule” under the management of Lieutenant Colonel Sangoulé Lamizana.<sup>43</sup> Saye Zerbo led a successful coup against Lamizana in 1980 and troops under the command of Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo overthrew Zerbo in 1982. Though Upper Volta maintained relative peace during its first 23 years of independence and garnered some international cultural prestige as host of the largest Pan-African film festival from 1969 onwards, none of the

aforementioned heads of state lit a fire of nationalism in the country like Thomas Sankara did upon assuming power in 1983. “Since notable independence-era ‘national heroes’ were scarce, it is likely that the emergence of even a moderately progressive or nationalist leader would have left a prominent mark in the history books,” Harsch explains, “[y]et Sankara was anything but moderate.”<sup>44</sup> Though short-lived, lasting barely four years and mired in internal disputes for much of the latter portion, Sankara’s government did much to transform a country populated by people joined together by a French colonial creation into a nation. They discarded the colonial moniker, Upper Volta, for a new label: Burkina Faso, meaning land of the upright people. The name itself is an amalgamation of the Mooré (Mossi) and Dyula (Bobo) languages, and the -bè suffix on Burkinabè comes from Fulfuldé (Fulani, or Fulbé). Moreover, the language of local media was indigenized by breaking up the French monopoly on television and radio and pushing out more content in local languages. Red, white, and black, the colors of the Upper Volta tricolor, were replaced with a flag bearing pan-African colors and the addition of the star of Burkina Faso front and center.<sup>45</sup>

### **Formal Structures of Governance in Burkina Faso**

Prior to independence, the French decided that Upper Volta’s larger cities were easier to administer if given a modicum of autonomy. In 1955 this autonomy was granted to Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Three years later the municipalities of Ouahigouya, Banfora, and Koudougou were also granted limited control over local affairs and Kaya was added to the list of semi-autonomous cities in 1960. That same year rural communes were envisioned by the national government as smaller and economically less productive mini-municipalities.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps due to a lack of interest on the part of the newly independent national government in Ouagadougou, and perhaps due to a spate of coups that regularly reset priorities, the idea of decentralization never made it very far until the reimagining of Upper Volta as Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara.

In 1983, Sankara took the nearly blank slate of local governance he inherited through a *coup d’état* and painted it with neighborhood committees styled along the lines of those implemented in the wake of the Cuban Revolution. Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) began informally as localized support clubs of Sankara’s revolution, but eventually

were formalized with legislative assemblies and executive committees. Their mandate was broad in that it entailed a wide range of responsibilities including “ensuring the provision of basic social services and day-to-day security to helping out with the national census and publicizing government directives.”<sup>47</sup> When Sankara was murdered by his colleagues in 1987, the Compaoré government distanced itself from CDRs, which were deemed too loyal to their fallen leader.<sup>48</sup>

After Compaoré’s coup the idea of local governance in Burkina Faso remained a mostly fallow concept until 2006, when, in accordance with the 2004 Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales, Burkina Faso divided its population and territory into 351 communes of three types: rural (302 total), ordinary-status urban (47 total), and special-status urban (2 total) (see fig. 1). This move was a rather late entry into the mass wave of decentralization sweeping the continent.<sup>49</sup> Rural communes contain enough neighboring villages to surpass a population of 5,000 and theoretically have revenue generating capacities in excess of 5,000,000 West African CFA Franc (XOF) (approximately 9,000 USD) per year. Ordinary-status urban communes have more than 25,000 residents but fewer than 200,000, and have revenue generating capacities of at least 25,000,000 XOF (approximately 45,000 USD) per year. Special-status urban communes are Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Each has a population in excess of 200,000 and can generate at least 500,000,000 XOF (approximately 900,000 USD) in annual revenues.<sup>50</sup>

Communes, regardless of their type, directly elect municipal councils charged with discussing and deciding on vaguely defined communal matters. The municipal council then selects from its ranks a mayor, who acts as the executive in charge of enforcing council decisions. In principle, these councils take responsibility for most government functions at the local level. In practice, however, they have nowhere near the power and authority needed to fulfill these obligations. The Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso complained at its 7th annual meeting that “local governments point out that the concrete implementation on the ground is hampered by the refusal of application of the texts by the State Services, the often late provision of the financial resources to the local governments (the pre-allocated amounts allocated by the State do not allow the communes to determine for themselves the usage of the funds received) and the reluctance on the part of the technical services in regard to decentralization.”<sup>51</sup> In rural areas of Burkina Faso, a formal advisory group under the supervision of the municipal council

called the Conseil Villageois de Développement (CVD) exists. This group of residents is selected to represent all sectors of society (including those like the youth, women, and peasants likely to be overlooked for positions on the municipal council) and is designed to

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*In rural areas of Burkina Faso, a formal advisory group under the supervision of the municipal council called the Conseil Villageois de Développement (CVD) exists.*

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help the municipal council better understand the population's diverse perspectives on issues of local development.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to these formal local governments, Burkina has a national assembly with 127 members elected from its 45 provinces via proportional representation (see fig. 1). Every province has at least two seats in the assembly, and Kadiogo Province has the most seats with nine. Sixteen seats are designated for the national list.<sup>53</sup> Burkina's current assembly was elected in 2015 following the overthrow of the Compaoré regime and the sacking of the old national assembly building by protesters.<sup>54</sup>

Though this fledgling legislature might one day represent a compelling counterweight to municipal councils in terms of governance services for constituents, during Compaoré's tenure it was a largely feckless ballast to his ambitions.<sup>55</sup> President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré's strong hand in Burkinabè military efforts and reluctance to share important decisions with his legislature suggest not much has changed under new leadership.<sup>56</sup> With a strong executive and weak legislature, Burkina Faso is far from unique on the African continent.<sup>57</sup> Being weak in terms of shaping policy, however, does not diminish parliamentarians' ability to provide governance in the form of constituency services.<sup>58</sup> In other words, parliamentarians could have little sway when it comes to legislation but still masterfully funnel state resources to pork barrel projects and favored political clients back home.

Whereas departments are the formal units of local governance in Burkina Faso and provinces are the electoral unit for legislators, the region—Burkina's largest subnational unit—has as its primary role the coordination of central authority in the hinterlands. There are currently 13 regions in Burkina Faso (see fig. 1) and a governor is appointed by the president to lead each one. Within the regions, the governor is responsible for maintaining small satellite campuses of government ministries, which allows some interactions with the central government to take place in regional capitals. There are also regional councils, comprised of members who are appointed by the

departments, which could theoretically pass requests through the governor to the central government. Most of the communication goes the other direction, however, with regions receiving grants of cash and directives from Ouagadougou to pass along to departments. Regions function primarily, and are largely viewed, as tentacles of the national government.<sup>59</sup>

## **Informal Structures of Governance in Burkina Faso**

Burkina Faso's network of potential informal governance providers is so vast it is beyond the scope of this monograph to address all the possibilities in detail. Instead of focusing broadly, the following options focus narrowly on potential providers that arise in the literature as the most likely challengers—or if one takes a less zero-sum view, complements—to the state. These include ethnicity and patronage networks.

### **Ethnicity**

Traditional leaders are perhaps the most thoroughly studied of the alternatives to formal government. Slightly more than half of Burkina Faso's population identify as Mossi ethnically, and no other ethnic identity exceeds even 10 percent (see fig. 2). In addition, most of the ethnic groups to the north and west are not as centralized and hierarchical as the Mossi. As a political entity, the origins of the Mossi pre-colonial kingdoms go back at least half a millennium and perhaps a few hundred years more. Though the oral record is hazy, at some point between the 11th and 14th centuries a "red hunter" known as Tohazie came from the east near Zamfara in present day Nigeria to raid towns and villages along the Niger River valley. Eventually Tohazie arrived in the ancient Malian empire to help the king in war. As a token of his gratitude, Tohazie was given one of the king's daughters to marry. This couple's grandson, who went by the name of Na Gbewa, was chased out of the area by a growing Songhai empire and settled in Pusiga, in what is today the far northeastern corner of Ghana. One of Na Gbewa's daughters was Yennenga who ran away from her father when he would not allow her to marry. Near Tenkodogo she found a husband and would eventually birth Ouedraogo, father of the Mossi kingdoms. Yennenga's brothers would go on to found the Mamprussi and Dagomba kingdoms in northern Ghana.<sup>60</sup>

Wherever the children of Na Gbewa went they went on horseback. The great Red Hunter was a well-known cavalryman and they were his progeny. Wherever they settled they found inhabited land. While on conquest there

was undoubtedly bloodshed, the position of *Tenga* suggests that the Mossi, Mamprussi, and Dagomba were at least as likely to cohabit with the acephalous communities they found. The people they encountered could keep their family gods and their leader would remain chief of the land or *Tenga*. The children of Na Gbewa would take up positions as chief of the people, or *Naam*.<sup>61</sup> With this dual chieftaincy arrangement, the Mossi understood, from their inception as a society, the concept of multilevel governance in a very tangible way. Over the years there has been so much intermarriage that both those in the line of the *Naam* and those in the line of the *Tenga* today speak the same language and share similar customs, but issues of insulted local gods still go to the *Tenga* and issues of conflict between people still go to the *Naam*. As Ouedraogo's sons and grandsons spread throughout central Burkina Faso, they adopted similar hierarchical chieftaincy structures for ruling the people while allowing for local variance.

Of the various Mossi kingdoms, Ouagadougou is easily the most influential though Tenkodogo, Fada N'gourma, Yatenga, and Boussouma, as well as more than a dozen smaller kingdoms, exercise a great deal of autonomy over local political practices.<sup>62</sup> Given this model of expansion, some have suggested that the Mossi kingdoms are not an empire at all but instead a "number of more or less autonomous states loosely connected to each other through genealogical ties."<sup>63</sup> Despite the looseness of the ties that bind Mossi communities to each other, Burkinabè politicians have often treated the Mossi as a bloc and variously used Mossi chiefs as boogie men to draw support of non-Mossi Burkinabè for centralization projects or as potential clients with a massive cache of votes to trade for favors.<sup>64</sup> While Mogho Naba Saaga II's ambitions to turn Upper Volta into a Mossi monarchy were never realized, chiefs in Burkina Faso do maintain an important informal local governance role in many parts of the country. Though the state has at times actively sought to diminish the role of traditional authority in local politics, it often relies on chiefs to fill gaps in local administration.<sup>65</sup>

The second largest ethnic group in Burkina Faso is the Fulani. Though they make up just under 10 percent of the Burkinabè population and are only the modal ethnicity in the Sahel region, Fulani-speakers play an outsized role in Burkinabè politics writ-large and in state responses to terrorism in particular. Unlike their Mossi neighbors who reside almost exclusively within the boundaries of contemporary Burkina Faso, Fulani-speakers stretch across the Sahel region from the coast of Senegal all the way to the Red Sea. Also

unlike the Mossi, Fulani-speakers are historically not tied to agricultural land preferring rather to herd cattle across vast expanses which can lead to conflicts between the two groups.<sup>66</sup> This transient lifestyle presented a challenge to centralized leadership and resulted in acephalous communities that share a common language and many common customs but not a reliable hierarchical leadership structure.

It is impossible to know when the first Fulani herdsman stepped across the future Burkinabè frontier in search of pastureland. What is known is that the Fulani jihads of the nineteenth century had a profound impact on present-day northern Burkina Faso in terms of Fulani settlement in the area.<sup>67</sup> In 1803, Uthman dan Fodio, inspired by successful Fulani jihads in regions in present day Senegal and Guinea, led an army of Muslim soldiers in a rebellion in Sokoto, Nigeria, over their Hausa rulers who he characterized as greedy pagans.<sup>68</sup>

One of these soldiers, Sekou Amadu, returned to an area between Segou and Mopti in present day Mali. Complaining that the area was under tribute to Bambara-speakers who practiced an impure form of Islam, Amadu launched his own jihad and established the Massina Empire sometime between 1810 and 1815.<sup>69</sup> This Fulani Empire stretched down into the area that presently comprises Burkina Faso's Sahel Region. It was during the Massina Empire that Fulani settlements like Djibo grew in power and solidified the displacement of Kurumba-speaking populations who pre-dated Fulani-speakers in the area.<sup>70</sup> To the east of Massina, a Fulani emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate known as Liptako challenged and eventually displaced the ruling Gurma in the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century. They would establish a capital in Dori and rule from there through the colonial era.<sup>71</sup>

Within the Fulani diaspora in Burkina Faso there is substantial variance in terms of how sedentary they have become over the years in response to political and economic pressures. As a general rule, lower class *Riima-aiBe* tend to be more amenable to adapting to agriculture than high status *FulBe* and the ethnic subgroup *Liptaako* tend to be more sedentary with the *DjelgoBe* being more pastoralist and the *GaoBe* being somewhere in between.<sup>72</sup> The acephalous nature of the Fulani diaspora in principle makes it more of a challenge to describe the nature of customary governance with a broad brush than the more centralized and hierarchical Mossi model. In practice, however, the nature of Fulani governance, especially in sedentary communities, shares many similarities. Lund's work on the politics of Dori

is illustrative of this point.<sup>73</sup> During his study Lund found three “big men” in local politics: Dicko Nassourou, Dicko Sando, and Birabia. The first is the traditional Fulani leader of Dori, the second is also of Fulani royal lineage and served as both de facto traditional authority during the Sankara period when Nassourou fled to Canada and Member of Parliament for Dori during the Compaoré years, and the third is a very wealthy businessman. Via a hodgepodge of intermediaries who earn much of their living intervening on behalf of clients in political and legal disputes, residents of Dori must navigate this complicated trinity that overlaps traditional, democratic, and capitalistic powers.

### Patronage Networks

If formal institutions like communal governments represent modern politics, and Mossi and Fulani rulers whose authority harkens back to pre-colonial institutions represent traditional politics, it is a variety of “big men” that represent economic politics. Sandbrook explains the appeal of Burkina Faso’s “big men:” “Where a society’s impersonal, legal guarantees of physical security, status, and wealth are relatively weak or nonexistent, individuals often seek personal substitutes by attaching themselves to ‘big men’ capable of providing protection and even advancement.”<sup>74</sup> The idea here is that members of society look up to patrons of greater means in hopes of currying favor. They look down to clients of lesser means to build a base of support that can be deployed when one needs numbers to influence political decisions about who gets what, when, and how. While peasants and the urban poor are likely only clients and the president is almost always a patron, citizens in between experience times of being a patron with connections below and times of being a client with connections above.

In terms of gross domestic product per capita, Burkina Faso is poor. Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank rank Burkina Faso as one of the twenty poorest countries on earth. Given the prevalence of extreme poverty and poor conditions for a largescale economic growth, (the country is landlocked, has poor soil and unpredictable rain, a population with low levels of education, and relatively expensive labor and transport due to the strength of the West African Franc [CFA]),

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*Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank rank Burkina Faso as one of the twenty poorest countries on earth.*

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Burkina is reliant on international development assistance today and has been since the mid-1970s.<sup>75</sup> Though the number ebbs and flows from year to year, Overseas Development Assistance has comprised approximately 10 percent of Burkina Faso's total gross national product since the 1970s.<sup>76</sup>

Foreign countries are not the only ones filling in governance gaps and acting as patrons. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) of nearly every ilk are prevalent in the region. It is difficult to speak generally about such a diverse array of organizations, but it is safe to say that international NGOs have infiltrated nearly every sphere of public goods provision and development in Burkina Faso. Though lip service is certainly paid to "partnership" and "local" provision of these goods and services, the anecdotal record suggests a great deal of influence by the international donors and organizations they support.<sup>77</sup>

Religious networks can be viewed as an alternative informal mode for meeting governance needs in the developing world in general, and Burkina in particular, with religious leaders playing the role of patron.<sup>78</sup> Religion is an important part of many Burkinabè's daily lives.<sup>79</sup> According to the 2006 Burkinabè census, Muslims comprise 61 percent of the population, Catholics 19 percent, Animists 15 percent, and Protestants 4 percent, with less than 1 percent identifying as either nonreligious or having a different religion.<sup>80</sup> As with other populations in the region, there has been a marked migration away from self-identifying as a follower of one's traditional religion and toward the more cosmopolitan Abrahamic religions in the last several decades. The Burkinabè census in 1986, for comparison, identified slightly more than half of all Burkinabè as animist.<sup>81</sup>

Of the Christian Burkinabè, Catholics outnumber Protestants by more than four to one. Because of the church's heavy involvement in education, Catholics tend to be well placed in politics and economics in Burkina Faso in relation to members of other religious communities.<sup>82</sup> Muslims in Burkina Faso predominantly practice the Tijaniyya variant of Sufism though there are local variants of Sunnism- and Shiism-sponsored via development projects from the Gulf States and Iran respectively.<sup>83</sup> In this regard they are very much like the Muslim communities in neighboring countries. Where Islam in Burkina Faso tends to differ is in both its meteoric rise and historical avoidance of politicization. Whereas most Burkinabè today identify as Muslim, in the 1960s this number was 28 percent, and in the early 1900s estimates suggest it had not reached 5 percent.<sup>84</sup> None of the major Sahelian jihads

had converted a great number of members of the Mossi Empire, meaning Islamization occurred during French rule and the independence era.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps this fact explains how Islam adapted to the Burkinabè environment rather apolitically. Burkina Faso's current president is Catholic, a trait he shares with four of Burkina's previous six heads of state in a Muslim majority country. And unlike in other Sahelian countries, cemeteries in Burkina Faso are municipal and not segregated by religion.<sup>86</sup>

Other local "big men" who have amassed power through their political and/or economic acumen and have positioned themselves well in what Schatzberg identifies as the "moral matrix of legitimate governance," coexist alongside politicians, chiefs, NGOs, and religious authorities.<sup>87</sup> These businessmen, party functionaries, and occasional footballers or artisans who became wealthy abroad provide yet another source of patronage for citizens to draw upon outside constitutional provisions in hopes of having needs met when the government is unable to meet its responsibility. Oumarou Kanazoé (OK), to give a stark example, was one of the richest men in Burkina Faso until his death in 2011. He was born into a modest family in the northern region and attended Koranic school until his father died and, at the ripe old age of 12, he set off to earn his living as a petty trader. What started out as small bundles of locally produced cotton cloth grew into a multi-million dollar construction enterprise. In industry, OK became president of Burkina Faso's Chamber of Commerce. Though he never ran for political office, OK was seen as a reliable supporter, and coincidentally beneficiary of public procurement contracts, of whomever was in charge of national politics at the moment.<sup>88</sup> Though not an imam, OK was viewed as a devout Muslim who spread his largess onto several mosque projects and converted many an acquaintance to Islam.<sup>89</sup> In all of these spheres of public life—and likely many more not mentioned here—OK was a prominent figure in Burkina Faso who helped influence who earned a decent living and who struggled more than perhaps they should.

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*Burkina Faso's current president is Catholic, a trait he shares with four of Burkina's previous six heads of state in a Muslim majority country.*

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## Conclusions

When a mission requires engaging with local authorities, it is necessary to first identify who this authority is. As this chapter explains, in complex multi-

Figure 1. Burkina Faso's Political Boundaries

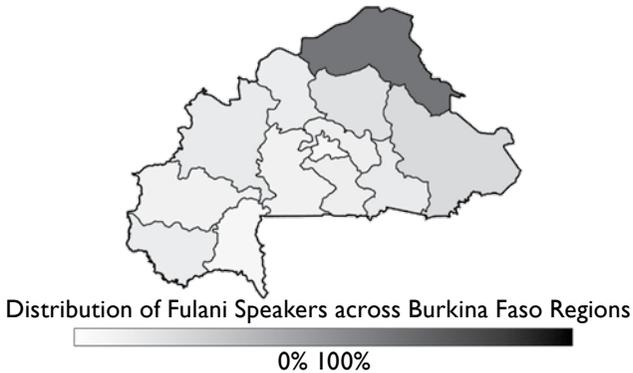
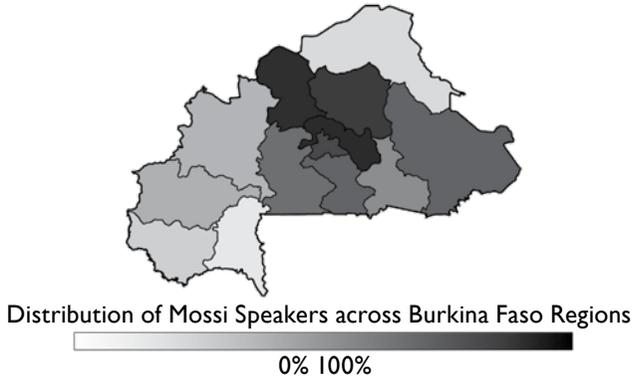
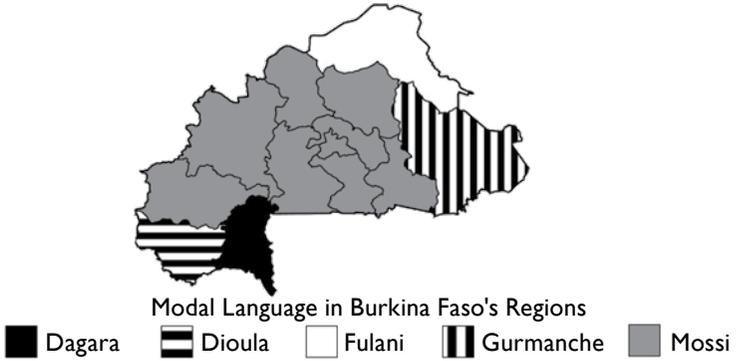


Source: Author-produced maps based on the units described by Burkina Faso's *Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale de la Décentralisation et de la Sécurité*.

level governance environments this task can be extremely difficult. The authority can change from location to location, issue area to issue area, and even individual to individual. In the best cases, approaching the wrong individual will lead to inefficiencies. In the worst cases, it can trigger hostility as the individuals who can offer assistance perceive unfamiliarity of facts on the ground as a slight.

While this chapter points out the complicated governance landscape in Burkina Faso and identifies most of the prominent players, subsequent chapters explore the relationship with these varying manifestations of multi-level governance and sympathy for terrorism. Readers will see which of these providers of governance are activated where, for what issues, and for whom. They will also better understand how some of these arrangements are more prone than others to foster communities sympathetic to VEOs.

Figure 2. Burkina Faso's Cultural Boundaries



Source: Author-produced maps based on statistics provided by the Observatoire Démographique et Statistique de l'Espece Francophone drawn from the 2006 Burkinabè National Census.



## Chapter 2. Islamic VEOs in Burkina Faso

*This chapter outlines factors contributing to the rise of VEOs in Burkina Faso. Evidence suggests that religion is, at best, a secondary contributing factor when it comes to explaining the growth of violent extremism in the region. The existing focus on differentiating and simplifying expressions of Islam by imposing labels (reformism, fundamentalism, brotherhoods, Sufism, Salafism) and attempting to identify the “problematic” elements of Islam are counterproductive, and lead to poor policy outcomes. This is particularly the case in Burkina Faso, where Muslim identity is complex and well-known for its syncretism. This chapter outlines the history of Islam and its interactions with the formal state in Burkina Faso over time, and then emphasizes the role that governance shortcomings have played in escalating violent extremism. It concludes by detailing some potential sources of resiliency that could provide means to counter violence and a further degradation of the security situation.*

Much of the discourse surrounding violent groups center on the Islamic nature of such groups, leaving aside any consideration of the underlying reasons that specific populations might be susceptible to their appeals.<sup>90</sup> It is important to highlight the fallacy of considering much of the alleged “Islamist” movements as highly religious or driven by some deep-rooted identity, rather than as the rallying cry of politically motivated individuals who wield religious appeals strategically. There is increasing evidence that “several recent, ostensibly religious, conflicts have their origins in localized disputes and grievances that have little to do with religion per se.”<sup>91</sup> Indeed, in order to understand which populations in Burkina might be most sensitive to politicization and co-optation by violent extremists, it is important to better understand what existing scholarship can tell us about the backgrounds and motivations of those who participate in VEOs.

The history of Islam in Burkina Faso is complex, and though marked by contention, the authors should not interpret this discord as a rejection of the formal state. Muslim Burkinabè should not be presumed to represent a greater threat because of their religion, but rather because colonial and

post-colonial history has, in many cases, led to specific elements of political and economic exclusion. This exclusion can be partially attributed to reservations about the public education system, and Muslims' desire to negotiate beneficial terms for their participation in the formal state.<sup>92</sup> Islam has frequently gained support, particularly in rural communities, as the result of government shortcomings and religious leaders' ability to provide public

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*Islam has frequently gained support, particularly in rural communities, as the result of government shortcomings and religious leaders' ability to provide public services.*

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services. In their roles as social planners, religious leaders have often proved adaptive, providing public goods and assuming tasks that the weak formal government institutions have failed to undertake.<sup>93</sup> In fact, Vitale sees the redefinition and expansion of religious authorities' activities as not only representing a leader's quest for visibility and notoriety, but also as the consequence of "the weakness of state authority, often unable to respond to the demands of an ever-changing and heterogeneous society."<sup>94</sup>

In this context of weak state performance, populations become susceptible to violent extremists because they are caught in the crosshairs. As a March 2019 report from Human Rights Watch describes:

Villagers consistently decried being caught between armed Islamists' threats to execute those who collaborated with the government, and the security forces, who expected them to provide intelligence about the presence of armed groups and meted out collective punishment when they did not. Community leaders representing different ethnic groups expressed concern that the security force abuses were serving to drive villagers into the hands of the armed Islamists.<sup>95</sup>

If the state fails to provide security and public services to these areas, it becomes increasingly likely that the population will decide that working with the violent Islamists represents the safest route forward for them as communities. It is likely that frustration with the national government, particularly resulting from economic marginalization and the removal from representative government, felt by more rural populations plays a major role in Burkina Faso's susceptibility to violent extremism.<sup>96</sup> This is likely compounded by those populations in society, such as the traditionally nomadic Fulbe (also known as Fulani or Peul), who are perhaps most distant from

the national government because of their traditional ways of life that do not fit neatly into centralized formal governance norms. The perception that violent extremists are often members of the Fulbe ethnic group has led to an increasing number of violent reprisals, on the part of both ordinary citizens and Burkinabè state forces.<sup>97</sup> This development is a major cause for concern, particularly in a country that has long prided itself on unity and a lack of ethnic conflict.

This chapter opens with a discussion of religion in Burkina Faso, and the historical factors influencing the way in which Islam interacts with the political sphere specifically. It is particularly necessary to note that Islam is less important substantively for its role as a religion, and more relevant in terms of the ways in which its marginalization in the political sphere has led to the creation of parallel structures that separate many Muslims from elements of formal governance. After tracing the evolution of Islam in the context of Burkina Faso, the chapter focuses on governance issues that drive participation in violent organizations, and resiliencies that Burkina Faso could leverage to counter these developments.

## **Evolution of Islam and Christianity in Burkina Faso**

Both Christianity and Islam are imported religions in Burkina Faso, which was historically dominated by Animist traditions. Christianity has been present across West Africa, including Burkina Faso, as the result of the expansion of missionary activities, principally in the 18th and 19th centuries. The dominant ethnic group of contemporary Burkina Faso, the Mossi, are notable in their storied resistance to all violent efforts to bring Islam to the then-established Mossi Empire. Despite their resistance to the imposition of Islam by force, they did exercise tolerance in the religious plurality of their empire, including with respect to practitioners of Islam who obeyed the established power hierarchies. It was only around the beginning of the 18th century that some chiefs of the Mossi Empire began to convert to Islam, arguably in part for strategic considerations in their desire to promote social cohesion among the groups over which they ruled.<sup>98</sup>

The politics of the colonial period played an important role in managing the status of Islam in Burkina Faso through the training of the elite classes, which occurred largely in schools run by Catholic missionaries. French colonial administration was acutely aware of the preexisting tensions

between traditional Mossi ruling classes and Islam, and Mossi elites' economic interest in maintaining a labor pool which could be sent to work on the plantations of Côte d'Ivoire contributed to their strategies in ruling over the area that largely became Burkina Faso. Further compounding the marginalization of Muslims in Burkina Faso was the variety of intragroup cleavages, each with different goals and priorities—notably that of the Mossi vs. non-Mossi. This cleavage played a persistent role in Islamic representation into contemporary history, with a mistrust between Muslims of the Ouest region—including those of Dioula, Bobo-Dioula, and Fulbe origins—and Muslims of the Centre region, principally Mossi. The continued mistrust reflects a longstanding division in orientation that exists in part as an artifact of Mossi hegemony, compounded by the imposition of the colonial state that reinforced the regrouping of Ouest—which has historically been oriented towards Mali and the north of Côte d'Ivoire—and the Mossi Empire, which has its roots in the Centre region.<sup>99</sup>

In more recent decades, Burkinabè Islam has experienced a resurgence, which Vitale attributes to the interaction of several factors, but places an emphasis on the concurrence of other religions as competitors.<sup>100</sup> Vitale argues that Islamic leaders in Burkina have had to think creatively about new strategies for proselytizing, learning to employ all available forms of communication in new ways and creating new public spaces. These leaders have also been successful at adapting their message to the culturally heterogeneous Burkinabè population, embedding their role into many elements of society's social fabric, both public and private.<sup>101</sup> Burkinabè Islam has always been impressively syncretic, and this flexibility is arguably a source of resiliency for the populations that should be respected and encouraged.

Scholars note that Islam in Burkina Faso is affected both by local and transnational dynamics, most notably in the form of Saudi ties. The relationships formed between Arabian Gulf states and the Burkinabè religious community are an important dimension of understanding the last few decades of Islam's growth in Burkina Faso. Money from the Gulf States has allowed religious leaders to realize their development projects and to expand their influence and popularity among the broader population.<sup>102</sup> Numerous exchanges for students, as well as money for other residency programs, has created strong religious ties between the Gulf states and the Muslim religious community in the last several years—a phenomenon with important political resonances, given the influx of foreign aid and other development

assistance that emanates from this region.<sup>103</sup> These ties have promoted a growing recognition by political actors of Islam's usefulness as a means of leveraging foreign aid, and attaining favorable financing for other development plans. These international ties suggest that religious elites may now have some leverage for demanding greater accommodation in the central government, if they choose to employ it.

## Differentiating Islam in Burkina Faso

It is important to note that Islam's role in Burkina Faso is different from elsewhere in the world, as well as elsewhere in the Sahel—religion has historically played a very limited role in Burkinabè politics, which is in contrast to many of its neighbors.<sup>104</sup> Scholars note that the organizing principle most important to Islam's development in Burkina Faso has been the concept of *l'umma* (community), and that this idea has led the vast majority of Islamic expressions to work hard to represent the totality of the Muslim community in the political sphere. In contrast to other parts of West Africa, Islamic actors in Burkina Faso have largely refused traditional classifications of reformism/traditionalism, and even various *turuq* (brotherhoods) have generally lacked the visibility that is readily observed elsewhere in the region.<sup>105</sup> Efforts to categorize and neatly label expressions of Islam in the context of Burkina Faso are a fool's errand, and largely distracts from understanding the important factors that drive the ongoing rise of violent extremism in Burkina Faso.

Scholars have emphasized that the salience of religion, like any other social identity, can be mobilized strategically.<sup>106</sup> This is counter to many existing presumptions about the role that religious attachment places in a person's life, and suggests that the political salience of religious identity is something that can be encouraged, or deemphasized. For example, the use of religion may be a strategy for violent extremist groups who wish to redefine the politically salient dimensions of Burkinabè national identity in order to mobilize support for their movement from abroad. The erroneous belief that religion is somehow more deeply rooted than other social identities is often combined with the assumption that Islamic doctrine is homogenous, and that the behavior of individuals worldwide can be directly ascribed to a unitary set of Islamic directives.<sup>107</sup> As scholars have emphasized in northern Nigeria, the Islamic religious establishment is highly fragmented.<sup>108</sup> Despite this scholarly consensus, many analysts are quick to equate Salafism with

efforts to return to “original Islam” and its principles, whereas this language is used much more broadly by a variety of Muslims with divergent practices.<sup>109</sup>

In Burkina Faso, the use of religious identity as a means for political mobilization may emerge from the transnational nature of religious ties.<sup>110</sup> The rise of homegrown violent extremist groups such as Ansaroul Islam is closely associated with ties abroad—notably in Mali. The leader of Ansaroul Islam, Ibrahim Dicko, was imprisoned for two years in Mali before returning to Burkina Faso’s north, where he became well-known for his calls to violence both in his mosque and on a radio station in Djibo.<sup>111</sup> Ansaroul Islam has its origins in social discontent, particularly the lack of equality between social classes, and the marginalization—both religiously, politically, and economically—of many young people and particular sectors of the population. As the International Crisis Group report states, “Ansaroul Islam is at least as much a social uprising as it is a religious movement.”<sup>112</sup>

The idea that a group such as Ansaroul Islam could be thought of as a social uprising raises an important question regarding violent extremism: Who joins violent extremist groups? In order to better understand which groups in Burkina might be most sensitive to the politicization of religion and co-optation by violent extremists, it is important to better understand what existing scholarship tells us about the backgrounds and motivations of those who participate in VEOs.

## Participation in Violent Organizations

Scholars have long focused on understanding the motivations that underpin participation in violent organizations. Some focus on the broader designation of violent political organizations<sup>113</sup> while others instead are interested in those that specifically employ terrorist tactics and/or extremist ideologies. Existing scholarship has examined a variety of “grievances” that might lead citizens to participate in violent organizations, such as political and economic exclusion, and vengeance.<sup>114</sup> Other scholars have focused on the factors that make populations susceptible to violent appeals,<sup>115</sup> and still others have thought critically about how variation in an organization’s willingness to include certain groups—such as women—affects the structure of VEOs.<sup>116</sup> In Burkina Faso, it is useful to draw on Nigeria’s experiences with Boko Haram to help understand the important factors at play. As this section

discusses at greater length, religion may play a role for some who join violent groups, but largely citizens join groups because of political and economic marginalization, or the hope that joining such a group might provide an opportunity for personal gain. Counter to a more popular understanding of violent extremism, it is frequently the case that ideological and/or theological motivations for joining violent organizations are second to concerns about state violence, insecurity, and economic incentives.<sup>117</sup>

It is important to note that there is no unified profile of members of VEOs. Many scholars and practitioners have highlighted the diverse social and economic backgrounds of those belonging to VEOs.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, it is also likely that many at-risk populations in rural Burkina Faso are likely to be those who face political and economic marginalization. Drawing on research from Nigeria—a context with many similarities to Burkina Faso—there is evidence to suggest that poverty plays an important role in extremists’ ability to recruit young people.<sup>119</sup> It is more complex, however, than the usual assumption that people who are poor and have nothing better to do will join. Research on Boko Haram in Nigeria has suggested that many who joined Boko Haram saw it as a potential opportunity to start or grow their small businesses, at least initially.<sup>120</sup> Economic and political marginalization of rural populations, particularly those with higher concentrations of nomadic groups, is likely to be a major factor in recruitment strategies in Burkina Faso.

Scholars have also considered the possibility that citizens join violent organizations in order to gain some kind of political representation.<sup>121</sup> Again, it is useful to draw a parallel between violent extremism in Burkina Faso and Nigeria—a country which has received much greater attention. Evidence from interviews with past members of Boko Haram suggest that many youth who joined were frustrated with perceived inefficacy and/or corruption of the government,<sup>122</sup> and some also expressed criticism for the excesses of the armed forces.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, many prominent scholars of Nigeria and Boko Haram argue that “[c]orruption enabled Boko Haram’s initial rise, by hollowing out popular confidence in the state.”<sup>124</sup> This disillusionment with formal

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governance suggests that citizens might be more willing to take a chance on an alternative that promises a sort of revolution in how the government operates.

To the extent that citizens in regions of Burkina Faso feel that the government is failing to secure their villages and support them during the ongoing security crisis, this could become a point of concern for the government's relationship with citizens at-risk for radicalization. In fact, this is likely to be one of the most important dimensions for reestablishing security in the region. Given that some of Ansaroul Islam's success in recruitment has been attributed to the social and economic dimensions of its initial appeals, disillusionment with governance—including formal, traditional, and religious governance—is likely the most important area for intervention. One of the most critical actions to reestablish security in Burkina Faso will be to address citizen perceptions of governance and government efficacy, and to promote a positive relationship between citizens and representatives of the state.<sup>125</sup>

Finally, religious reasons might play a role for some who join violent organizations, although religious reasons are frequently less important than frustration with the government or economic considerations in groups including Boko Haram.<sup>126</sup> Some scholars have argued that a lack of direct interaction with religious texts may make populations, particularly younger people, more reliant on a religious leader's interpretation of a holy text.<sup>127</sup> This makes them susceptible to extreme interpretations, particularly given the less rigidly hierarchical structure of Islam, which empowers individual religious leaders.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps more important in Burkina Faso is the proliferation of Arabic schools, which expanded greatly during the 1980s. The existence of a parallel education system for Muslim students may help diminish the likelihood that students lack opportunities to engage in the study of their religion, but creates a different problem: the diplomas issued by such institutions are rarely recognized by the state.<sup>129</sup> This means that many students, respected by their communities for their command of Arabic and holy texts, are "devoted to social marginalization"<sup>130</sup> because they are unable to access government/administration jobs, and they are limited in their access to "modern economy" sector jobs.<sup>131</sup>

In sum, participation in VEOs is likely driven by political and economic considerations for the vast majority of citizens. The lack of economic growth, combined with regime transitions in the last few years, has likely reinforced the political marginalization that many communities have long experienced.

The historical separation of Islam from the civil service and government administration has also contributed to this disconnect, both by preventing students of Arabic schools from accessing these jobs, and by creating a distance between local bureaucrats and the populations with whom they interact. Increasing violence in the region has created a situation in which citizens are forced to rely on the central government to ensure their security, which has so far proven largely ineffective—or tacitly accept the presence of violent extremists under threat of death or grave harm. While religious motivations are undoubtedly important for some participants, much of what we know about Burkina Faso and other cases with similar characteristics, such as Nigeria, suggests that participation in these movements is less about pushing for religious ends, although some participants almost certainly feel a religious connection.

### Threats and Resiliencies in Burkina Faso

Since Blaise Compaoré’s ouster in 2014, the security situation in Burkina Faso has rapidly intensified. While some of this is due to longstanding banditry arising from border insecurity, there is increasing evidence of what some have termed the “jihadization of banditry,” defined as the “solidifying nexus between militancy and banditry.”<sup>132</sup> This is best understood as a marriage of convenience, whereby both militants and criminals engage in a partnership that is mutually beneficial—bandits may supply manpower and logistic support, while militants may bring heavy weapons and hard currency.<sup>133</sup> This allows the rapid expansion of militant groups along previously established lines, with local operators who may be better tied to local communities. To help further the restoration of the security situation in Burkina Faso it will be necessary to devise strategies for dismantling these criminal networks. A component of this process will likely hinge on economic policies designed to create legal opportunities for groups who have resorted to operating outside of the state, thereby integrating them into the formal economy. Destroying smuggling routes will also be critical, though challenging, given Burkina Faso’s central location in West Africa and notably porous borders.

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The departure of Blaise Compaoré is rumored to have ended various deals, wherein Compaoré is said to have helped ferry arms and other goods in support of conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. There are credible allegations that Compaoré allowed Tuareg groups to come through Burkina Faso, in exchange for no attacks. When the transitional government and the new democratically elected government of 2016 took office, they made the decision to sever these ties, which has led some Burkinabè politicians to suggest that the uptick in attacks is at least partially driven by violent groups wishing to send a message to the new government.<sup>134</sup> There are also allegations that attacks are in some way being orchestrated by former elements of Compaoré's presidential guard, which has been disbanded. In a recent letter from Compaoré to the current president, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, Compaoré denies these allegations, and asserts that he recognizes the legitimacy of his successor.<sup>135</sup> Encouraging efforts to integrate former members of the presidential guard and other political and economic associates of the Compaoré regime is key to mitigating the potential threat that their newfound exclusion from power could pose to the security of the national government.

The rise in the number of attacks has contributed to escalated tensions between different religious and ethnic communities. There is a pervasive argument that conflicts, particularly those rooted in religion or ethnicity, are the result of intractable "ancient hatreds."<sup>136</sup> This variety of argument, based on ethnic and/or religious differences, can also be extended into the narratives surrounding violent extremism. Many scholars have criticized these arguments, pointing to the fact that many conflicts seen as "ethnic" in nature have been the product of political manipulation of communal differences.<sup>137</sup> Indeed, there is some evidence that such an effort to politicize inter-group conflict could be underway in the recent attacks in Yirgou (Centre-Nord), Burkina Faso. According to a government spokesperson in a Burkinabè news source:

During the night of 31 December 2018 to 1 January 2019 ... terrorists killed seven people, including the village chief, before fleeing. The pursuit of these terrorists by the population led to acts of violence and the loss of human life among the Fulbe communities in different localities within this region.<sup>138</sup>

At a press conference attended by members of the presidential majority in January 2019, political elites discussed these events as a "terrorist trap"

designed to undermine the social cohesion that is a source of pride for Burkinabé, and frequently cited in conversation.<sup>139</sup> Moving forward, it will be of the utmost importance to manage responses to attacks so as to reduce the likelihood of retribution directed at particular groups.

Although the Yirgou attacks represent one possible threat to Burkina Faso's security, its widespread condemnation by the public and political elites also underscores one of the resiliencies that many Burkinabè see as quintessential to their national identity and to their country's past success at avoiding civil conflict. The relationships known as "*parenté à plaisanterie*," frequently translated as "joking cousins," or "cousinage" are widely seen as critical to Burkinabè national unity.<sup>140</sup> These relationships exist across much of the Sahel, principally associated with Senegal, Guinea, The Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.<sup>141</sup> They serve as links between different ethnic groups, socio-occupational classes, villages, and families, binding them in teasing relationships that serve to diffuse situations and build connectivity.<sup>142</sup> In interviews, Burkinabè have frequently cited the all-encompassing nature of these relationships as the key difference between their country—with its historical lack of intercommunity violence—and other neighboring countries.<sup>143</sup> Because all (or nearly all) groups are integrated into this web, there are mechanisms that permit for tensions to be deescalated through a longstanding traditional institution.<sup>144</sup>

A major threat, and perhaps the one most proximate to U.S. military interests, is the role of Burkina Faso's armed forces in promoting security. Until recently, a potential resiliency for Burkina Faso could be found in high levels of popular support for the Burkinabè armed forces. According to a research dispatch on Burkina Faso published by Afrobarometer, approximately seven in ten Burkinabè are satisfied with the efficacy of the national armed forces. Despite concern about attacks conducted by violent extremists (religious and/or political extremists), the majority of Burkinabè felt safe in their homes and neighborhoods.<sup>145</sup> The relationship between the armed forces and citizens may be reinforced by the role the armed forces played in the failed coup attempt of the presidential guard in September 2015. When members of the *Régiment de sécurité présidentielle* (presidential guard) (RSP), led by General Gilbert Diendéré, attempted to stage a coup by taking members of Michel Kafando's transitional government hostage during a cabinet meeting, the armed forces refused to support the RSP.<sup>146</sup> The trust that citizens have in the armed forces is a major potential resiliency for the

security sector in Burkina Faso, and it is important that the potential abuses of power be tightly controlled moving forward. As previously discussed, one reason cited for some youths who joined Boko Haram was frustration with

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abuses and corruption in the military—it is vital that the Burkinabè armed forces avoid accusations of corruption and malfeasance to minimize the potential use of this recruitment tactic. There is evidence to suggest that the intensification and persistence of extremist attacks is beginning to degenerate popular support for the armed forces, perhaps particularly with respect to the areas most affected by violent attacks. This is likely due to alleged instances in which armed forces,

likely the gendarmerie, have engaged in retaliation against citizens, who may be perceived as reticent to assist the armed forces in gathering intelligence.<sup>147</sup>

Related to the role of the armed forces is the matter of the so-called “auto-defense” groups, known as the koglwéogo or the *dozos*, which depends on the ethnicity of the people forming the membership. The koglwéogos and the dozos have received a great deal of publicity in Burkina Faso, due to their uncertain role in society. Traditionally, the dozos acted as the armed defense of their village and its inhabitants, and their role in “performing tradition” while “doing politics” has become increasingly salient as the security situation in Burkina Faso has degraded.<sup>148</sup> The koglwéogos allegedly began to form in 2000, but they have grown exponentially since 2016 due to the ongoing security crisis. While these groups sometimes act as unofficial extensions of the legal police by apprehending criminals or the accused while awaiting formal reinforcements, there are many allegations of abuses including excessive fines, beatings, and even deaths at the hands of such groups. The resurgence of activity among the dozos and koglwéogos is also linked to the inability of official state actors to protect citizens from banditry, which led these traditional militias to organize nightly patrols to secure the local community. Relations between the formal state—with its need for a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force—and these citizen-organized groups with traditional discourses has been fluid and inconsistent over the past several decades.<sup>149</sup> Relatedly, there are rumors that efforts are underway to organize regional terrorist groups, with the *Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin*

taking the lead and local groups such as Ansaroul Islam and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara taking on more localized operations.<sup>150</sup> Establishing a role for the autodefense groups before they can potentially be co-opted or escalate ethnic tensions to the conflicts in the north, is a matter that must be addressed quickly.

While the Burkinabè government has mostly avoided taking a formal stance on autodefense groups, a serious discussion of these militias and their role within the formal apparatus of security is of the utmost importance moving forward. Some of the attacks, such as those in the vicinity of Yirgou and Arbinda, are becoming polarized around ethnicity, given retribution attacks and alleged involvement of groups like the koglwéogo who are more closely associated with the Mossi chieftaincies.<sup>151</sup> Delineating the precise role of traditional groups such as the dozos, and more recent and ethnically-rooted groups such as the koglwéogo is key to the coordination between the formal state, local actors, and the broader population.

## Conclusions

This chapter highlights several matters regarding the rise of violent extremist groups, both regionally and specifically within the context of Burkina Faso. While Burkina Faso has areas of resiliency, such as interethnic “cousinage” relationships and comparatively strong support for the actions of the Burkinabè security forces, there are also some causes for concern. Political and economic marginalization has led to frustration with formal government, particularly among younger citizens. There is also concern regarding local militias, such as the koglwéogos and the dozos, and increasing reports of abuses by formal security forces in areas threatened by attacks. These factors, more so than any religious dimensions, are associated with the potential for violent extremists to mobilize popular support. Minimizing the potential for extremists to leverage these arguments will be critical to Burkina Faso’s ability to counter radicalization moving forward.

As has been widely discussed in existing scholarship on Boko Haram in Nigeria, Burkina Faso’s problems with extremism are more directly tied to the government’s failure to provide basic public services, including security and protection, especially to its more remote populations. Rather than focusing on religion as a motivating principle, it is more useful to consider the reach of Islam as an organizational structure with many ties to society, and

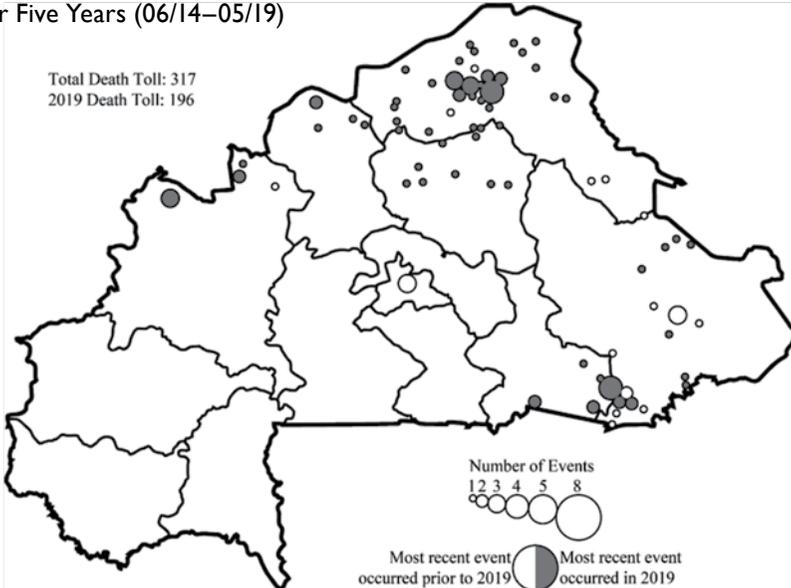
it is this organizational structure that is of use to violent extremists. Much like formal party organizations have established hierarchies, with regional and grassroots presences that mobilize voters, Islam provides a functional organization that can be leveraged to entice citizens to consider abandoning

*Threats of violence by extremists present citizens with a choice: cooperate with the extremists, or hope that the central government manages to provide security.*

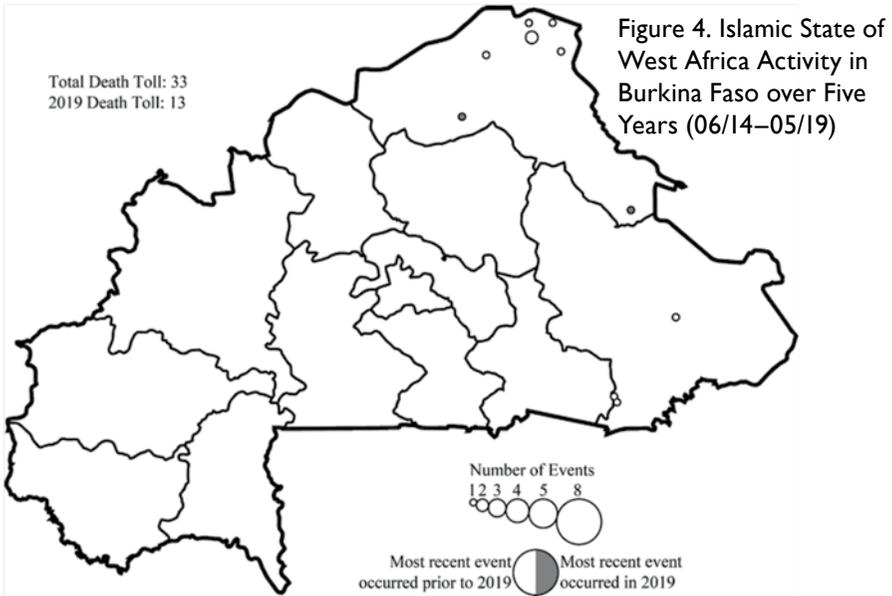
the formal state government which they do not feel serves them. Because these populations feel as though the state has largely neglected them, extremists may be able to appeal with promises of providing public goods, while reinforcing their control by threatening anyone who cooperates with the formal state. Threats of violence by extremists present citizens with a choice: cooperate with the extremists, or hope that the central government manages to provide security. Given

the failures of the central government in providing security to date, these threats of violence may prove effective in the short term.

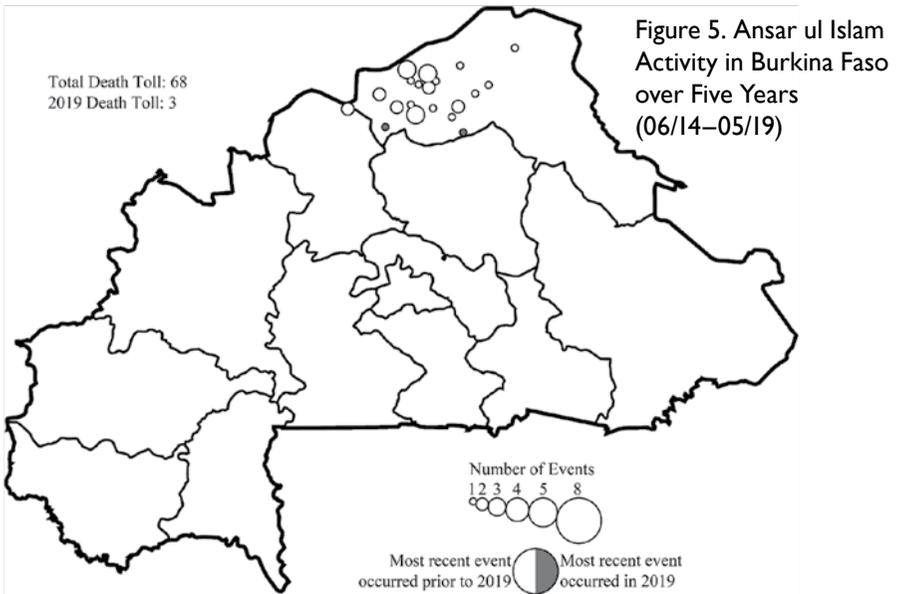
Figure 3. Jam'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) Activity in Burkina Faso over Five Years (06/14–05/19)



Source: Author-produced maps based on Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) data.<sup>152</sup> Only events that listed the organization as the first actor and resulted in at least one fatality are depicted. Al Mourabitoune (2) and Katiba Macina (1), organizations folded into JNIM in 2017, are included.



Source: Author-produced maps based on ACLED data.<sup>153</sup> Only events that listed the organization as the first actor and resulted in at least one fatality are depicted.



Source: Author-produced maps based on ACLED data.<sup>154</sup> Only events that listed the organization as the first actor and resulted in at least one fatality are depicted.

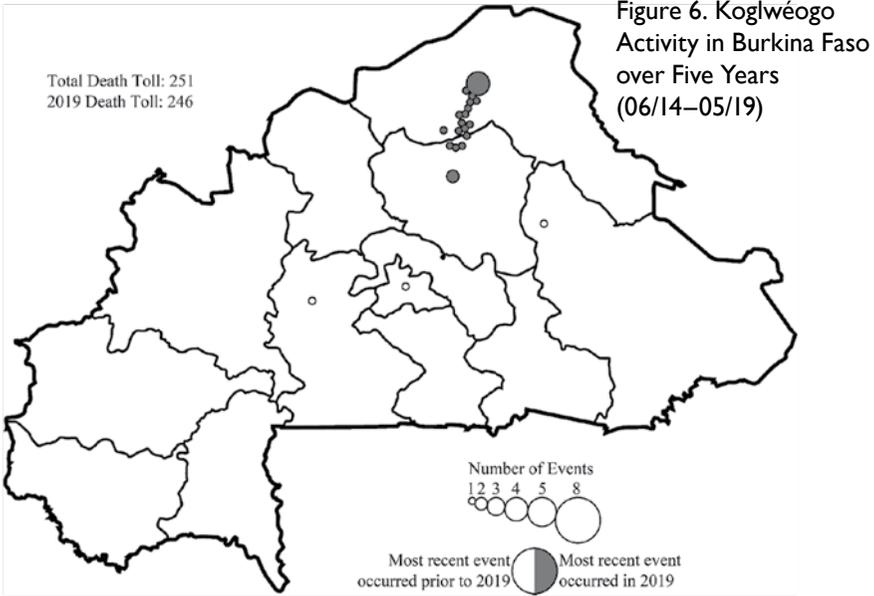


Figure 6. Koglweogo Activity in Burkina Faso over Five Years (06/14–05/19)

Source: Author-produced maps based on ACLED data.<sup>155</sup> Only events that listed the organization as the first actor and resulted in at least one fatality are depicted.

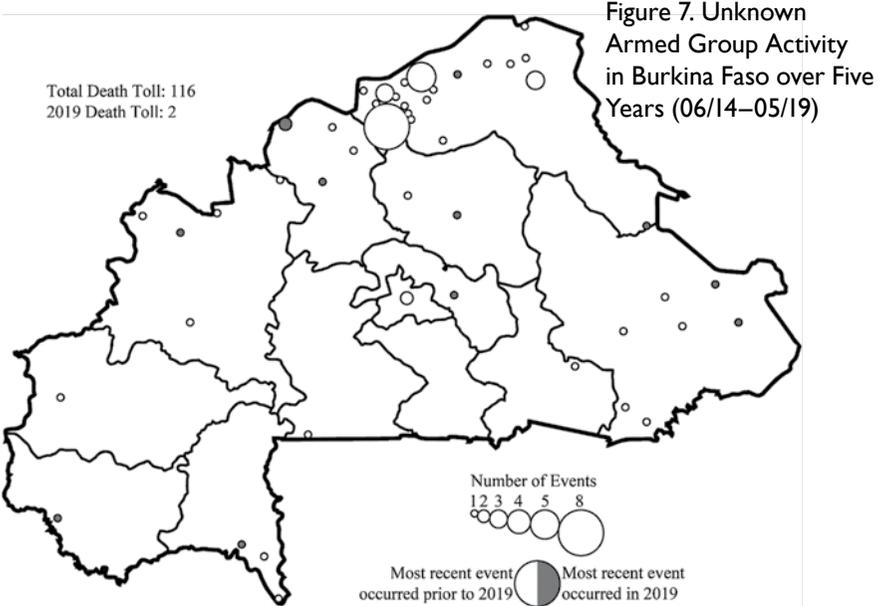


Figure 7. Unknown Armed Group Activity in Burkina Faso over Five Years (06/14–05/19)

Source: Author-produced maps based on ACLED data.<sup>156</sup> Only events that listed the organization as the first actor and resulted in at least one fatality are depicted.

## Chapter 3. Burkinabè Understandings of their Governance Environment

*Burkina Faso is not a monolith. A simple ride through the country reveals different climactic zones, land usages, architectural styles, and population densities. If one gets out of the vehicle and explores further one hears different languages, sees people practicing different religions, and smells different cuisines. These different lived experiences and the histories they manifest can impact the likelihood of success of various SOF interventions. In this chapter we look at how Burkina's North and South differ in how they view governance and where they turn to in search of solutions to communal problems. Burkina Faso is a country where public services are generally suboptimal, meaning that the data reveals many similarities across regions surveyed. Despite the similarities, there are also important differences, especially in areas of law and order. Given the importance of law and order for SOF operations, knowing the importance of village development councils in the North and local ethnic militias in the South can make attempts to interact with communities more likely to be successful.*

As chapter 2 explains, Burkinabè have a crowded environment of potential governance providers to turn to when they have a problem. This does not mean all potential providers are equal in the mind of a typical citizen, nor does it mean that any will be helpful in solving specific problems. Knowing the sites where one can theoretically have needs addressed is important. But so too is knowing how people understand these sites and their value on a day-to-day basis. Using a data set collected for this monograph, this chapter begins the empirical assessment of how to align indigenous governance preferences with CT strategy and operations.

As chapter 3 explains, the impact of VEOs is not experienced uniformly across Burkina Faso. The country's North has withstood the worst of terrorism, as it flows across the Malian and Nigerien frontiers. Though the South has experienced violence, it is the exception rather than the rule. Life goes on largely unaffected by the threat of terrorism in the south. In the north,

the story is different. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that in March 2019 there were more than 130,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Burkina Faso. The vast majority of these IDPs are from the northernmost Sahel Region's rural communities, seeking shelter first in the relative safety of less isolated and better secured urban areas within the region, but increasingly further south in camps set up for them in the Centre-Nord Region.<sup>157</sup>

In addition to being disproportionately impacted as victims of VEOs, security experts point to the Sahel Region as a fertile recruiting ground for VEOs.<sup>158</sup> The region is culturally different from its southern neighbors. In the Sahel, Fulani-speakers make up approximately half of the population, Tamasheq-speakers comprise the second largest group, and in the remaining, Mossi-speakers predominate. It is economically different as well, with health and education indicators in the Sahel Region lagging behind its southern provinces.<sup>159</sup> These two forms of marginalization, cultural and economic, are often identified by scholars as key ingredients in the recipe for VEO recruitment in the Sahel region and are viewed as sources of popular appeal for JNIM leaders, such as Amadou Koufa (a Fulani from a small village in Mali's Mopti Region) and Iyad Ag Ghali (a Tuareg hailing from a small village in Mali's Kidal Region).<sup>160</sup>

To compare governance in the North and the South, the authors conducted 992 surveys on the issue of governance in Burkina Faso over two weeks in June 2019.<sup>161</sup> Just over two-fifths of the surveys collected are from Burkina Faso's Sahel Region, which is referred to as the north for the remainder of this chapter. Just under three-fifths of the surveys collected are from the four regions one enters traveling most efficiently from the Sahel Region to Burkina's southern frontier with Ghana. These regions (from north to south: Centre-Nord, Plateau Central, Centre, and Centre-Sud) are subsequently called the South.

## **Mapping Governance in Burkina Faso**

Theoretically, there are nearly endless potential governance providers in Burkina Faso. Practically, citizens of Burkina Faso turn to roughly fifteen categories of providers for governance concerns (see table 2). Given 12 hypothetical problems, respondents were asked to whom they would go to seek help with each problem. Respondents were given two chances to answer

each question, offering both their first choice and second choice. This survey design gives respondents two dozen open-ended opportunities to provide—without influence from the researcher—people and institutions in their environment who can help them solve a problem related to governance. The fifteen categories of responses receiving at least one mention from at least 5 percent of respondents can be placed into five large categories: self-help (no one, friends/acquaintances, and parents/family), formal local government (mayor/municipal council, deputy in the national assembly, and village development council), informal local government (traditional leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, and *koglwéogo*), bureaucrats (police/gendarme, civil servant, and courts), and proxies for “don’t know” (generic “government” which includes answers like government, the president, or the state).

All responses in the “self-help” category were given by more than nine in ten respondents. These responses are well distributed throughout the regions surveyed. There are, however, some subtle but statistically significant differences between the North and South in Burkina Faso. Respondents from the South are more likely to identify “no one” as the correct person to whom to take a problem. It is difficult to say whether this response is more libertarian or defeatist. In either case, those from the South identifying themselves as the political problem solver is not unexpected. Having higher levels of education and higher standards of living, southerners are more likely to view themselves as the most appropriate solution to a problem. Northerners, in contrast, are more likely to identify family and friends as good places to go in search of communal solutions.

When it comes to formal institutions of local governance, in the minds of Burkinabè, the mayor and municipal council are front and center. This statement is true for the North and the South equally. The problems presented to the survey respondents were local in nature, so the fact that people identified the constitutionally mandated seat of local authority as the source of a solution is a function of good civic education. Where North and South differed is in how they identified other, constitutionally-recognized formal providers of local governance. The North respondents were slightly more likely to turn to deputies of the National Assembly than respondents in the South. A bigger difference between the North and South is seen in mentions of the CVD.

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*Northerners, in contrast, are more likely to identify family and friends as good places to go in search of communal solutions.*

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These local consultative bodies are designed for rural areas as a mechanism to bridge the distance between peasants and their Municipal Councils. A third of northerners mentioned CVDs as a good place to get problems solved. In the South, only 1 percent of people mentioned the CVDs.

Traditional leaders, also known as chiefs, are important in both the North and South. However, chiefs are on the minds of more than twice as many southerners as northerners. Koglwéogo, a Mossi ethnic militia group, was also, not surprisingly, more likely to be consulted in Southern Mossi-speaking areas than in northern areas where Mossi-speakers are sparse. Perhaps because the South is a safer area at present, southerners were also slightly more likely than northerners to identify NGOs as a place to turn in search of governance. Religious leaders seem to be filling in for traditional leaders and ethnic militias in Burkina Faso's North. There is no dearth of religious people in Burkina Faso in the sample. When asked how often they attend religious services, the median category in the sample is once a week and the modal category is more than once a week. On a six-point scale from Never (1) to More than Once a Week (6) people from the South averaged a 4.5 while people from the North averaged a 4.0. This difference is statistically significant. Despite the fact that Southerners identify themselves as more regular attendees of religious services than northerners, it is in the North that religious leaders are a more prominent feature in local informal governance.

Concerning bureaucrats and proxies for “don't know” there are some statistical differences between the North and South, but not much by way of substantive differences. Both areas have about a third of respondents identifying civil servants and the courts as good places to go to get a problem solved. The vast majority of northerners and southerners identified the police/gendarmerie at least once. For southerners, the identification of police/gendarme was nearly universal, but for northerners it was better than four out of five respondents. Southerners are also more likely than northerners to go outside of the typical answers in search of solutions to governance problems. They more often identify actors who are most likely theoretical (including the president, government, or the “state”) or rarely mentioned by others (such as parent-teacher organizations, provincial governors, and the regional high commissioner).

Because the questions ask about specific issue domains, it is possible to examine not only how frequently different governance providers are mentioned, but also how regional differences are expressed through those

mentions. The problems posed to respondents were divided into three broad categories: public works (potable water, a lack of teachers, inadequate roads, and flooding); personal assistance (school fees, no job, no tools for work, and no money for medicine); and law and order (land dispute, petty theft, flirting with a significant other, and armed robbers). Public works constitute the large infrastructural projects communities need, while personal assistance requests are most often less expensive than public works and denotatively less divisible with benefits being directed at a person or family. Law and order problems are matters pertaining to community trust, wherein the activities deemed unacceptable will be punished to discourage future offenses. Table 3 shows how the North and South differ in these areas.

When it comes to issues of public works, North and South are in agreement. The entity to which problems should be taken is the mayor/municipal council. For every single issue presented to respondents, this answer was given the most often, and by a huge percentage over the second most popular response. More than half of the respondents in both North and South gave this as the answer to all four issues presented. In terms of Burkinabè's cognitive shortcuts for local governance, this response speaks highly of civic education. Were a stranger to read the Burkinabè constitution, it is the mayor and municipal council that seem to be the appropriate place to take such issues. Were they funded as mandated, they would have the resources for these relatively expensive community projects. These public works projects also fall within the issue areas formal local governments are charged with tackling the world over.

Looking at personal assistance, the story the data tells of the North and the South is similar as well. Governments on the African continent have a storied history of promising a strong social safety net but failing to deliver due to poor finances.<sup>162</sup> Burkinabè from each region are similar in feeling the proper place to take care of this type of political desire is through oneself, family, and friends. They are perhaps libertarians, or have given up after having their hopes dashed by inadequate governance in this area. As one looks across school fees, a job, tools for work, and medicine, a pattern emerges. No one, parents/family and friends/acquaintances appear both across the issues and across the surveyed regions as frequently selected choices. These problems, in other words, are for respondents and/or their closest circle of contacts to solve. They are not viewed by Burkinabè as problems to pursue through local government or traditional leaders.

Law and order issues find the most variance across issues. A Burkinabè with a land dispute, is most likely going to the mayor/municipal council. Stolen money and armed robbers are both by-and-large considered police/gendarme issues. A flirting spouse is something to be settled by oneself or one's close friends and family. These truisms cut across North and South. There is some variance below the modal response to each question. It is here that CVDs and religious leaders come into play for northerners, and southerners start to turn to koglwéogo as an alternative to the police/gendarme.

### **Impact of Governance in Burkina Faso**

Tables 2 and 3 report data from questions that asked Burkinabè to put themselves in hypothetical situations. These questions typically ask “If your community is in need of X, who do you turn to for assistance?”, and respondents answer these questions by thinking about the person or organization that is most likely to deal with problems of this nature. Responses do not ipso facto mean they have experience solving a problem this way, or even an opinion on the quality of the solution offered. Table 4 presents data that speaks to this point by reporting how many respondents have actually, personally, contacted a given governance provider. The survey also asked respondents who had contacted these providers about their perceptions of the effectiveness of said provider. Whereas with the questions presented in tables 2 and 3 Burkinabè were read open-ended questions and could provide whatever answer they found most appropriate, the questions presented in table 4 had to anticipate possible governance providers. While the list satisfactorily includes all the most cited sources of governance provision, it is not exhaustive of all the answers Burkinabè provided.

Examining table 4, the most striking result is that very few Burkinabè personally make contact with governance providers outside of their close inner circle of family and friends. Most of our respondents in both the North and South identified family and friends as people they regularly contact in search of help. This relationship is most pronounced in the North where about 20 percent more of the respondents consulted with both family and friends than in the South. After family and friends, religious leaders are contacted by more than a quarter of northern respondents. Just over 1 in 10 southerners make the same contact in search of assistance. Northerners are also about twice as likely as their southern counterparts to contact civil

servants and municipal councils for help. Beyond these contacts, the likelihood of contact drops to the single digits. Burkinabè, by-and-large, are not making use of other potential governance providers.

On a five-point scale ranging from poor (1) to excellent (5) all the potential governance providers visited by more than 1 in 10 southerners and northerners received a good (4) median evaluation. But so do most potential governance providers who very few people bother consulting. To see if the decent evaluations despite little

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*Burkinabè, by-and-large, are not making use of other potential governance providers.*

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interaction is the result of efficient and effective service or a lack of expectations, the survey asks respondents about the quality of public services in their area (see table 5) by asking them the length of time it would take to obtain specific services. For example, if southerners need police assistance, they assume it will take between half an hour and an hour to arrive. Northerners estimate the time to be more than three hours. To get to a clinic or hospital by the fastest means available, southerners expect a trip of between 10 and 30 minutes. Northerners expect a long trip of between half an hour and an hour. When it comes to less immediate concerns, this pattern of southerners expecting quicker results than northerners repeats itself. If they need electricity, or help cleaning up storm debris, or help solving a situation with an abusive teacher, a typical southerner expects a solution to take a long time. They expect it to take between 3 months and a year in the case of electricity, and more than a year in the case of storm debris and abusive teachers. For northern respondents, the expectation is that these things will not happen at all, because they do not know if the service even exists. This finding suggests that low expectations are largely driving the decent evaluations northerners give their local governance providers. Years of poor service have diminished anticipations that their life situations can improve via external interventions.

## Conclusions

For SOF, it is important to understand the kind of reactions that requests for key leader engagements can illicit. The idea of engaging with local leadership in a complicated governance environment like Burkina Faso's is likely to bring up multiple questions in the minds of the Burkinabè hearing the request. How SOF answer these questions alongside their partners, even if

they are not cognizant that their actions constitute tacit responses, could be the difference between a successful mission and mission failure.

The first element to consider in the response is: Leadership of what? When it comes to solving real problems, the source of the solution may be the mayor, but sometimes could be a head of household or good friend with resources. The survey results suggest that the type of problem dramatically influences which answer is given. If the leader in question is the one who can bring large infrastructural projects, it is most likely the mayor or municipal council. If, however, it is a law and order situation, people may instead choose to see the police/gendarme, local citizen advisory commission, or ethnic militia. One should not assume all of these potential leaders are on the same page or cooperating. If there are terrorists on the doorstep, going to the person who can build a road might hurt your cause with the person to whom people turn to protect the community from external VEOs.

The second element to consider in the response is: Where am I? Given the prevalence of devices that can read longitude and latitude coordinates in the far-flung corners of the world, this question might seem overly simplistic. But we conducted a survey in a country of not quite 20 million people and found important differences on a line stretching from the south of the country to the north. A generic “Burkina” folder containing information on how Burkinabè behave and understand their political, economic, and/or security environment is likely too blunt a tool. There is going to be variance from region to region, and even village to village. While some of this variance is just noise in the data that does not amount to statistical or substantive significance, some of it is vitally important. SOF need to know how a community decides who gets what, when, and how, and this information influences the decisions that ultimately impact mission success.

Table I. Characteristics of Burkina Faso samples (North and South) compared to census figures.

	North Sample	Census	South Sample	Census
Sample Size	409	45473	583	215402
Age	Mean (41) Median (39)	Mean (51) Median (33)	Mean (39) Median (37)	Mean (48) Median (33)
Education	72% no school 15% some primary	92% no school	48% no school 13% some primary 11% some secondary	76% no school
Employment	38% farming 28% homemaker 14% petty trader		30% farming 17% homemaker 13% petty trader	
Religion	96% Muslim	96% Muslim	44% Muslim 39% Catholic 13% Protestant	55% Muslim 26% Catholic
Ethnicity	67% Fulbe 11% Tuareg/Bella 10% Mossi	57% Fulbe 13% Tuareg/Bella 12% Mossi	79% Mossi	80% Mossi
Partisan ID	27% MPP 21% UPC 15% none 12% CDP 10% PDS		36% none 29% MPP 16% CDP	

Note: Only categories receiving at least 10 percent of responses reported. For the purposes of this table, North denotes the Sahel Region and South denotes the Centre-Sud, Centre, Plateau-Central, and Centre-Nord Regions. For the census data, we only look at respondents 18 years of age or older since this is the minimum age requirement for the survey. Source: Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie - Burkina Faso, Recensement General de La Population et de l'habitation de 2006 (Minneapolis, MN: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, 2018).

Table 2. Numbers of respondents who identified governance providers when given hypothetical situations to solve.

	North	South	N
Mayor/Municipal Council	95%	96%	947
Friends/Acquaintances	97%	89%	914
No one	85%	96%	910
Parents/Family	97%	86%	894
Police/Gendarme	82%	96%	893
Traditional Leader	30%	70%	530
Civil Servant	35%	36%	352
Courts	31%	35%	328
Deputy National Assembly	33%	22%	262
NGO	19%	26%	230
Religious Leader	34%	13%	215
Koglwéogo	5%	32%	210
Village Development Council	33%	1%	136
Generic "Government"	5%	20%	136
Other	9%	15%	125

Note: Only categories receiving at least 10 percent of responses are reported. The results represent the percentage of people in a region who identified the given governance provider at least once in a battery of 24 questions asking respondents who they take various concerns to. Responses to these questions were open-ended and coded into categories after the response. When a row is color-coded black, it signifies that we are 99 percent confident residents in the North identify the provider more than residents in the South. When a row is color-coded gray, it signifies that we are 99 percent confident residents in the South identify the provider more than residents in the North.

	North	South	
<b>Public Works</b>	Potable Water	Mayor/Municipal Council (71%) Village Development Council (8%) No one (7%) Civil Servant (7%)	Mayor/Municipal Council (62%) "Government" (10%) Traditional Authority (9%) No one (7%)
	Teachers	Mayor/Municipal Council (63%) No one (19%) Village Development Council (7%) Civil Servant (5%)	Mayor/Municipal Council (44%) No one (14%) "Government" (11%) Other (11%) Civil Servant (11%) Traditional Authority (5%)
	Road	Mayor/Municipal Council (63%) No one (15%) Village Development Council (7%) Deputy in National Assembly (7%)	Mayor/Municipal Council (64%) "Government" (9%) No one (9%) Deputy in National Assembly (5%)
	Flood Control	Mayor/Municipal Council (58%) No one (17%) Village Development Council (6%)	Mayor/Municipal Council (62%) No one (12%) "Government" (8%) Traditional Authority (6%)
<b>Personal Assistance</b>	School Fees	Parents/Family (60%) Friends/Acquaintances (21%) No one (15%)	Parents/Family (44%) No one (31%) Friends/Acquaintances (19%)
	Job	No one (46%) Friends/Acquaintances (21%) Parents/Family (20%)	No one (36%) Friends/Acquaintances (24%) Parents/Family (21%) Civil Servant (10%)
	Tools for Work	Parents/Family (43%) Friends/Acquaintances (36%) No one (16%)	No one (31%) Friends/Acquaintances (25%) Parents/Family (21%) Mayor/Municipal Council (13%)
	Medicine	Parents/Family (55%) Friends/Acquaintances (32%) No one (8%)	Parents/Family (43%) Friends/Acquaintances (32%) No one (20%)
<b>Law and Order</b>	Land Dispute	Mayor/Municipal Council (47%) Traditional Leader (20%) Police/Gendarme (9%) Village Development Council (9%)	Mayor/Municipal Council (30%) Courts (24%) No one (14%) Traditional Leader (12%) Police/Gendarme (10%)
	Stolen Money	Police/Gendarme (47%) Village Development Council (14%) Parents/Family (10%) Mayor/Municipal Council (10%) Friends/Acquaintances (6%)	Police/Gendarme (55%) No one (17%) Koglwéogo (11%) Courts (7%)
	Flirting Spouse	No one (40%) Friends/Acquaintances (18%) Religious Leader (15%) Parents/Family (14%) Police/Gendarme (5%)	No one (52%) Parents/Family (17%) Traditional Leader (10%) Police/Gendarme (8%) Friends/Acquaintances (7%)
	Armed Robbers	Police/Gendarme (53%) Mayor/Municipal Council (18%) Village Development Council (11%) No one (8%) Parents/Family (7%)	Police/Gendarme (65%) No one (17%) Koglwéogo (12%)

Table 3. Best person to solve a given problem.

Note: Only categories receiving at least 5 percent of responses are reported. The results represent the percentage of people in a community who identified the given governance provider when asked to whom they would turn to have a particular need met or grievance addressed. Responses to these questions were open ended and categorized after the fact.

Table 4. Percent of respondents who report having personally contacted various governance providers and their evaluation of these providers.

	North Contact	Evaluation	South Contact	Evaluation
Parent/Family	78%	Good	57%	Good
Friend/Acquaintance	60%	Good	39%	Good
Religious Leader	26%	Good	12%	Good
Civil Servant	16%	Good	9%	Good
Municipal Council	14%	Average	8%	Good
Traditional Leader	7%	Good	7%	Good
Koglwéogo	3%	Fair	8%	Good
NGO	7%	Good	4%	Good
Mayor	5%	Average	6%	Average
Police	2%	Good	4%	Good
Gendarme	1%	Good	4%	Good
Deputy in National Assembly	2%	Fair	2%	Average
Court	2%	Fair	1%	Average

Note: The contact questions reads “Have you ever spoken with your \_\_\_\_\_ about a problem?” The percentage reported here is the percentage of respondents answering in the affirmative. All other respondents either answered in the negative or did not answer. The evaluation five-point scale ranges from “excellent” to “poor.” This question reads “In your community, how well do you think \_\_\_\_\_ are doing their jobs?” All respondents, regardless of whether they have personally contacted the governance provider, are asked this question and the median response is provided in the above table.

Table 5. Median response of northerners and southerners when asked about how long it takes to receive various services.

	North Response			South Response		
Police <sup>163</sup>	Less than 10 minutes	Between 10 and 30 minutes	More than 30 minutes and up to 1 hour	More than 1 hour and up to 3 hours	More than 3 hours	Don't know of service
Clinic <sup>164</sup>	Less than 10 minutes	Between 10 and 30 minutes	More than 30 minutes and up to 1 hour	More than 1 hour and up to 3 hours	More than 3 hours	Don't know of service
Electricity <sup>165</sup>	Less than a week	Between 1 week and a month	Between 1 month and 3 months	Between 3 months and a year	More than a year	Don't know of service
Storm Debris <sup>166</sup>	Less than a week	Between 1 week and a month	Between 1 month and 3 months	Between 3 months and a year	More than a year	Don't know of service
Teacher <sup>167</sup>	Less than a week	Between 1 week and a month	Between 1 month and 3 months	Between 3 months and a year	More than a year	Don't know of service



## Chapter 4. Violence and Security in Burkina Faso

*This chapter uses survey results to examine how citizens view the security environment. The survey examines how citizens differ across the regions surveyed, comparing respondents in the Sahel (North) to respondents in other regions (South), which have been less directly affected by the spread of violence. The results find that Sahel respondents tend to differ from the other respondents in systematic ways that are statistically and substantively significant. The results indicate that there is consistently high support for the Burkinabè armed forces, although it is higher among respondents outside of the Sahel, which is potentially worrisome. They also find that attitudes towards the koglwéogo militias, as well as state actors like the gendarmerie and the police have regional variation as well. The chapter concludes with a brief investigation of citizen perceptions of international security sector partners, as well as some recommendations for areas to address moving forward.*

This chapter returns to the perceptions about violent organizations and the security environment discussed at length in chapter 3, incorporating survey responses from citizens across five regions of Burkina Faso. These perspectives are tremendously important to the appreciation of the security environment, as citizen preferences help to reveal how average citizens understand the security crisis. These responses are also important because they offer insight on how people in more remote areas understand the security problems, moving beyond relying on exclusively elite perceptions in larger cities.

The survey data collected in Burkina Faso in June 2019 is also used to conduct the analysis and discussion in this chapter. The format of the questions was frequently a five-point scale, where respondents were asked whether their perceptions of a particular group or set of actors were: very negative, negative, neutral, positive, or very positive. Some questions asked to what extent an issue was seen as problematic, using instead a four-point scale (not a problem, minor problem, moderate problem, or serious problem). Other

questions provided a menu of choices (such as questions regarding ethnicity or religion), and included a category for other. All questions included options for those who elected not to respond, or who wanted to respond with some category that was not presented (i.e., other or don't know). For all questions, points were attributed to each response, which allows for the calculation of the mean response values for t-tests and the difference in proportions tests.

Consistent with the previous chapter, this analysis distinguishes between respondents in the Sahel region (the North)—and those in other regions surveyed as the South (Centre-Nord, Centre, Centre-Sud, and Plateau-Central). As illustrated by the maps in chapter 3, the Sahel region (Far North) has experienced the most consistent violence over the course of the past five years. Because the Sahel region shares a border with Mali and has experienced the most protracted violence, there is particular interest in how these respondents compare to respondents in other regions, where concerns about the security environment have rapidly intensified.

Ongoing violence has strongly affected people's beliefs about their safety across Burkina Faso, but predictably, fears about the safety of the community are more common among respondents in the North. Respondents were asked to consider the current level of violence, and compare it to the level of violence two years ago.<sup>168</sup> Just under 45 percent of all respondents agree (agree or strongly agree) that levels of violence now are higher than two years ago.

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*Just under 45 percent of all respondents agree (agree or strongly agree) that levels of violence now are higher than two years ago.*

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However, there is important regional variation masked by that aggregate number. The results show that the mean response is higher for northern respondents, signifying greater levels of agreement with the statement as compared with southern respondents. This is not

surprising given that violence has been highly concentrated in the northern regions of Burkina Faso.<sup>169</sup>

## Perceptions of Violent Extremist Groups

The overwhelming majority of citizens surveyed see terrorism as a major problem in Burkina Faso. When asked “How big of a problem do you think Burkina Faso has with terrorism?” 94 percent of all survey respondents said that Burkina Faso has a serious problem with terrorism. Citizens were then

asked questions about their perceptions regarding groups who provide support for terrorism. The focus was on evaluating the perceptions surrounding ethnic and religious support for VEOs. These questions are important to understanding the mentality and beliefs about such groups, as the nature of attacks and counterattacks in Mali and in the area of Burkina Faso around Arbinda have increasingly been described as ethnically-based.<sup>170</sup> Given Burkina Faso's relative lack of ethnic or religious-based strife in the past, the emergence of these dimensions in response to ongoing violence is a cause for broader concern.<sup>171</sup>

The results for the question regarding ethnic support are shown in table 1. The survey allowed respondents to choose as many different ethnic groups as they wished in response to this question, meaning that some respondents selected more than one group. It is important to note that for both respondents in the North and those in the South, the most common response was that no group was more likely than the others (nearly 56 percent of North respondents and nearly 57 percent of South respondents). For those respondents who selected at least one ethnic group, the most common response was the Fulbe (also known as Peul/Fulani). Eleven percent of North respondents (44 out of the full 409 people surveyed) and 20 percent of South respondents (114 of the full 583 surveyed) selected the Fulbe as being more supportive of terrorism than other groups. A difference in proportions test shows that respondents in the South regions were more likely to answer Fulbe than northern respondents, and the difference is statistically significant.<sup>172</sup> This is consistent with conventional wisdom about which groups are being recruited into violent groups, which often attribute terrorist actions to members of the Fulbe group.

Relatedly, the survey asked respondents whether they believed certain religious groups were more supportive of terrorism than others. External actors often associate violent extremism with particular sects of Islam, worrying that religious beliefs and practices may make some populations more susceptible to recruitment. The results are shown in table 2. Importantly, the majority of respondents in both the North and the South do not believe that any particular religious group in Burkina Faso is more supportive of terrorism. Of those surveyed, nearly 59 percent in the North and almost 60 percent in Southern regions do not believe that any religious group is more supportive of terrorism than another. For those respondents who selected one or more religions, Muslim groups were most frequently selected. This

was true for respondents in all regions surveyed, and there was no statistically significant difference between the northern respondents and respondents in other surveyed regions.<sup>173</sup>

While many external actors often attempt to focus on particular ethnic and religious communities that they perceive to be most at-risk, these survey responses suggest that the majority of Burkinabè do not see ethnicity or religion as the most important features of those engaged in violence. With this in mind, it is perhaps most important to focus on the various interactions of armed actors who are attempting to repel the extremists. These actors include state agents like the armed forces, the police, and the gendarmerie, as well as non-state actors such as the self-defense militias (e.g., *koglwéogo*).

### **Citizen Perceptions of Militia Groups**

As the maps in chapter 3 illustrate, most of the reported fighting between VEOs and the *koglwéogo* has occurred in the Sahel region. Given that the *koglwéogo* activity from June 2014 to May 2019 is highly localized, it is interesting to note the differences in survey respondents' opinions regarding the role of militia groups in Burkina Faso's political and security environment, shown in table 3. When respondents in the North are asked whether militia groups such as the *koglwéogo* are problematic, nearly 33 percent of respondents answered that the *koglwéogo* pose a serious problem, and nearly 48 percent saw the *koglwéogo* as a moderate to serious problem. This figure is in marked contrast to respondents from all regions surveyed excluding the Sahel, where nearly 48 percent of respondents do not consider the *koglwéogo* to be a problem at all. A t-test comparison of means confirms this pattern, showing that on average, northern respondents view the *koglwéogo* as a more serious problem than the Southern respondents.<sup>174</sup>

Despite efforts to regulate community policing initiatives, the government's unwillingness to take a firm stance on the *koglwéogo* seems to mirror a conflicted popular opinion of the efficacy and desirability of militia groups in the face of a rapidly growing security crisis.<sup>175</sup> It is important to note, however, that in their post-project interviews several enumerators stressed that in areas outside of the Sahel several respondents appeared reluctant or unwilling to criticize the *koglwéogo*. This is because the *koglwéogo* are active in many of the regions surveyed, although in the ACLED data they are primarily recorded as being engaged in violent actions with respect to

VEOs in more northern regions.<sup>176</sup> Because members of the *koglwéogo* are armed actors who often hold positions of power and influence in their communities, some respondents may be hesitant to express criticism for fear that they will be sanctioned or otherwise punished.

While there are strong regional variations in perceptions regarding newer militias such as the *koglwéogo*, the traditional militias found mostly in the West (known as *dozos*) do not appear to be affected by these issues. Most respondents in the North (55 percent) did not provide a response when asked whether Burkina Faso has a problem with *dozos*. Among those who did respond, the vast majority (nearly 31 percent) answered that the *dozos* pose no problem. This is similar to those respondents in Southern regions. Among other regions surveyed, 29 percent had no response regarding the *dozos*, while an additional 53 percent saw no problem with the *dozos*.

### **Citizen Perceptions of Burkinabè Security Forces**

The survey asked respondents questions about their perceptions about a variety of political and security actors in Burkina Faso. As discussed in chapter 3, one potential source of resiliency is the support citizens have historically expressed for the armed forces in Burkina Faso.<sup>177</sup> It asked citizens about their perceptions of the Burkinabè armed forces, and those results are reported in table 4. In both the North and the South, the vast majority of citizens express positive perceptions of the Burkinabè military.

However, some outside groups have expressed concern that this support for Burkinabè armed forces has eroded, as areas afflicted by violence have reportedly been subjected to violence on the part of state actors.<sup>178</sup> Using a t-test, the results indicate that perceptions are different between the northern and southern regions. While both are generally positive, southern respondents have, on average, more positive perceptions of the armed forces.<sup>179</sup> The survey also asked citizens whether they perceive state violence against civilians to be a problem, and to what degree. If recent reports are correct, the expectation is that respondents in areas with extremist violence would see state violence as more of a problem. This suggests that there should be a difference between perceptions of state violence in the North (high levels of violence), versus perceptions of state violence in the South (lower levels of violence). Table 5 illustrates the percentage of responses regarding state violence against citizens by region. A t-test was again used to examine

whether there are statistically significant differences across respondents in the northern and southern survey regions. The results suggest that in addition to being more wary of the military, respondents in the North rate state violence as more of a problem than those respondents in the South.<sup>180</sup>

The survey results suggest that support for the Burkinabè armed forces is at least slightly lower in the North, which has experienced more sustained violence than other regions surveyed. Nonetheless, consistent with Afrobarometer's work in 2015, the results find there are generally high levels of support for the Burkinabè armed forces.<sup>181</sup> It is important to note that the data represents a single point in time—a snapshot. This means that this particular survey cannot make claims about whether support for the armed forces has changed over time.

While support for the armed forces remains fairly strong, the fact that residents of the North see the use of violence against civilians by state actors as a bigger problem than citizens in other regions is consistent with recent reports of abuses in areas experiencing violence.<sup>182</sup> If these alleged abuses by state actors continue or intensify, they could exacerbate insecurity in areas that have suffered the most at the hands of violent extremists. These abuses by security forces are particularly worrisome, given that they are cited as one of the factors that allowed Boko Haram to recruit among disaffected populations in Nigeria.<sup>183</sup>

The survey also asked citizens about their support for other state actors involved in security operations—the police and the gendarmerie. The growth of contemporary militias, namely the *koglwéogo*, is often attributed to the absence of other actors capable of maintaining security in more remote villages.<sup>184</sup> The police and the gendarmerie in countries with a French colonial heritage play a complex and complementary role, wherein the police are typically responsible for more urban zones, while the gendarmerie is generally the primary actor in more rural areas.<sup>185</sup>

The results for the Burkinabè police are shown in table 11. While the group means for the Sahel and non-Sahel regions surveyed are both between a neutral and positive response (3.51 and 3.91 respectively), a t-test again shows that the perceptions among Sahel survey respondents are slightly less positive than their counterparts in other regions.<sup>186</sup> This is mirrored in another question, where the survey asks respondents about police performance relative to safety in their community.<sup>187</sup> A t-test again reveals that survey respondents in the Sahel are slightly less likely to agree with the

statement that the police are doing a good job than respondents in other regions, and this difference is statistically significant.<sup>188</sup>

The results for the gendarmerie are interesting not only in their own right, but also in comparison with the results for the police and armed forces. Table 12 shows the frequencies by response to a question about the gendarmerie's performance in communities across the two survey groups. Both the North and the South survey respondents have a mean response between negative and neutral (2.92 and 2.35 respectively), but the northern respondents are less negative in their assessments of the gendarmerie than the southern respondents. This difference is statistically significant.<sup>189</sup> This is particularly interesting in light of the responses regarding the armed forces. Because the gendarmerie is a military force, under the authority of the Minister of Defense and Retired Combatants (*Ministère de la Défense Nationale et des Anciens Combattants*) it is perhaps surprising that it nonetheless enjoys a better reputation among northern respondents. The gendarmerie is also suspected of engaging in excess use of force against civilians in villages around Arbinda.<sup>190</sup> This finding is consistent with existing reports, which note that civilians often hold gendarmes in higher regard than the national police.<sup>191</sup>

These results suggest that it is even more important that potential excess use of force on the part of the Burkinabè security forces be limited or better yet, eliminated, lest these actors develop even more negative associations among civilians in areas plagued by violent attacks. Operations in the past few years have also led to the confiscation of military uniforms in the hands of suspected terrorists, which implies that violent actors may attempt to impersonate agents of the armed forces in order to further undermine the relationships between citizens and the state. This may already be taking place, and the possibility should be addressed in the course of any outreach programs.

## Perceptions of International Security Actors

The final questions the authors examine in this chapter are the citizen's perceptions of international actors who are active in the political, economic, and security sectors. This is particularly the case with regards to security, given joint training operations conducted between American and French military forces (notably through the French Operation Barkhane throughout the Sahel).<sup>192</sup> It is useful to collect rough assessments of how these international

actors are broadly perceived by the citizens who ostensibly benefit from the efforts. The survey poses two questions asking respondents the extent to which they have a positive or negative opinion of the United States and

*It is useful to collect rough assessments of how these international actors are broadly perceived by the citizens who ostensibly benefit from the efforts.*

France. The results for the United States are shown in table 13, and the results for France are shown in table 14.

A t-test is used to assess whether there is a statistically significant difference in the response rates across regions surveyed. The results of this t-test show that northern respondents are slightly less positively inclined to the United States, although the mean response in both the Sahel and the other regions surveyed is between neutral and positive.<sup>193</sup> These responses suggest that the U.S. is generally viewed positively in areas experiencing violence, as well as across other areas of Burkina Faso that are less directly affected.

Opinions of France tend to be lower than opinions of the United States, both in the North and the South. Interestingly, there is no statistically significant difference in the opinions of France by region. Substantively, respondents in the North as well as those in other regions share roughly the same opinion of France, which hovers around neutral. This is perhaps related to the fact that the survey asked respondents about their general opinion of France, and French involvement in Burkina Faso includes a far more diverse set of issues (neocolonialism, economic controversies surrounding the CFA Franc, etc.).<sup>194</sup>

## Conclusions

The results presented in this chapter suggest that there may be problems with the actions taken by armed state actors in the Sahel region, which has been the most heavily affected by ongoing violent extremist activity. Given that respondents in the North tended, on average, to see state violence as a bigger problem than residents of other regions, one priority moving forward should be on curbing excess violence against civilians. An emphasis on professionalism and additional training for members of the armed forces on best practices for engaging with local endangered populations may provide one avenue for the amelioration of these relations in the immediate future.

Public support for state actors, military or civil, is essential to the furtherance of security operations throughout Burkina Faso.

In addition to working with armed forces to develop better practices for engaging with endangered populations, it may also be valuable to incorporate local organizations to help create ties between villagers, village leaders, and armed state actors. Better engagement with local village organizations could help to facilitate communication between various groups, thereby reducing the perceptions of reticence to provide assistance that may be fueling state violence.<sup>195</sup> In discussions, citizens frequently suggested a toll-free telephone number they can call to report suspicious activity, signifying that some work is underway to reinforce these channels, but there are likely more ways to promote such ties.

Another dimension upon which relations between villagers and armed actors could be improved is with regards to the *koglwéogo* militias. Despite some efforts at community policing to bring the *koglwéogo* into a broader framework, the *koglwéogo* represent a major problem for the Burkinabè security environment. This is particularly noteworthy in the stark regional variation demonstrated by respondents when asked to what extent the *koglwéogo* represent a problem. Northern respondents often saw the *koglwéogo* as problematic, while respondents of other regions considered the *koglwéogo* not to be a problem at all. It is imperative that the Burkinabè government take a firm stance on these militias. While they are sometimes helpful to local law enforcement (either police or *gendarmerie*), ultimately they represent a threat to the legitimacy of the state security apparatus. The *koglwéogo* largely lack the professionalism and training that formal state agents receive, and have frequently been involved in disputes where they are accused of excess uses of force against other civilians. Resolving the matter of the *koglwéogo* is also challenging due to the fact that many respondents fear these local armed groups, leading them to censor their opposition for fear of retribution. The survey enumerators reported that many respondents were reluctant to criticize the *koglwéogo*, out of concern that this information could be overheard or reported to the *koglwéogo*.

Table 6. Do you think some ethnic groups are more supportive of terrorism than others?

	North (number)	South (number)
No group more likely	229	331
Mossi	15	24
Fulbe	44	114
Gurma	6	14
Bobo	5	2
Gurunsi	3	2
Senufo	1	2
Bissa	3	3
Lobi	1	3
Dagara	2	2
Tuareg/Bella	11	26
Dioula	3	2
Other	2	0

Note: Respondents were able to choose as many responses as they wished. Groups who were not selected by any respondents are not included.

Table 7. Do you think some religious groups in Burkina Faso are more supportive of terrorism than others?

	North (number)	South (number)
No group more likely	241	347
Muslim	47	86
Catholic	2	17
Protestant	0	6
Traditionalist	1	5

Note: Respondents were able to choose as many responses as they wished.

Table 8. How big of a problem do you think Burkina Faso has with militia groups (like the koglwéogo)?

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Not a problem	29%	117	48%	277
Minor problem	9%	36	19%	108
Moderate problem	14%	57	10%	57
Serious problem	33%	134	15%	88
No response	16%	65	9%	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>

Table 9. I am going to name several actors in Burkinabè politics. I want you to tell me for each whether you have a positive or negative opinion of each – Burkina Faso Military

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Very negative	1%	5	1%	3
Negative	15%	63	3%	16
Neutral	9%	35	7%	42
Positive	59%	243	59%	341
Very positive	13%	51	30%	172
No response	3%	12	2%	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>

Table 10. How big of a problem do you think Burkina Faso has with state violence (military or police) against civilians?

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Not a problem	29%	117	48%	277
Minor problem	9%	36	19%	108
Moderate problem	14%	57	10%	57
Serious problem	33%	134	15%	88
No response	16%	65	9%	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>

Table 11. I am going to name several actors in Burkinabè politics. I want you to tell me for each whether you have a positive or negative opinion of each – Burkina Faso Police

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Very negative	2%	8	1%	4
Negative	18%	75	6%	37
Neutral	11%	43	8%	47
Positive	64%	260	70%	407
Very positive	5%	19	14%	80
No response	1%	4	1%	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>

Table 12. In your community, how well do you think the following people are doing their jobs? – Gendarmes

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Very negative	1%	5	18%	107
Negative	47%	190	47%	274
Neutral	13%	53	14%	80
Positive	8%	33	9%	50
Very positive	17%	71	7%	40
No response	14%	57	6%	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>

Table 13. I am going to name several actors in Burkinabe politics. I want you to tell me for each whether you have a positive or negative opinion of each. – United States

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Very negative	1%	5	2%	9
Negative	15%	62	5%	31
Neutral	16%	66	20%	116
Positive	39%	159	54%	312
Very positive	3%	11	5%	30
No response	26%	106	15%	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>

Table 14. I am going to name several actors in Burkinabe politics. I want you to tell me for each whether you have a positive or negative opinion of each. – France

	<b>North (percentage)</b>	<b>North (number)</b>	<b>South (percentage)</b>	<b>South (number)</b>
Very negative	8%	31	9%	53
Negative	18%	73	26%	152
Neutral	15%	63	14%	82
Positive	33%	134	37%	213
Very positive	1%	4	2%	12
No response	25%	104	12%	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>583</b>



## Conclusion

The story arising from the survey results is not a simple one. No easy recipes for successful SOF operations are presented in parts of Burkina Faso let alone the whole. However, in this complicated governance and security environment, there are some general lessons that can be taken into the field. Lesson one is that the governance landscape in Burkina Faso resembles a hybrid political order with differences in regional governance preferences. Developing strategy and operations based on capitol-centric doctrine to empower the HN with CT forces and economic development assistance is unlikely to achieve an enduring political effect in Burkina Faso. Lesson two is that, to avoid suboptimal results, strategy and operations should conceptualize a bottom-up consultative governance system to address critical gaps in security and governance while building or reinforcing trust among local populations. This is all the more pressing since violence in the North is increasingly taking on the character of an ethno-religious conflict, which could tear apart the core tolerant Burkinabè identity given one of the main combatants, the koglwéogo, is associated with the ethnic majority that predominates in HN institutions.

The requirement in the North appears more akin to Village Stability Operations (VSO) as practiced in Afghanistan from 2010-2012 with a mixture of SF and CA forces working with the United States Agency for International Development–Office of Transition Initiatives, U.S. Department of Agriculture extension agents, and a well-trained counter network force.<sup>196</sup> As the survey results demonstrate, although the armed forces and gendarmerie retain decent levels of respect in the North, the limited capacity of the HN to serve the needs of the population threaten to securitize or militarize the main interactions between civilians and the state. The time-sensitive nature of CT and stability activities might require a parallel sensing mechanism similar to the one underlying VSO. Navigating local governance preferences requires deep appreciations of local patterns of governance and frequent consultations with hybrid governance providers. If practicing CT with an emphasis on government-centric counter network operations runs counter to the lessons derived from the data, what practically can be done with these two important lessons?

Consider a hypothetical situation and see how the lesson one hybrid political order approach plays out into lesson two with a consultative governance structure. Suppose there is an act of violence in a fictitious Burkinabè village named Wuro. SOF are interested in addressing the culprit of the violence in Wuro to reduce future threats in the area. Who does SOF work through and who does it believe in the search for an answer to the question: “Who did it?” Information provided by the mayor of Wuro might identify a different target than information from the chief Imam. Answers from the traditional chief and koglwéogo add to the complexity. The Armed Forces of Burkina Faso, often viewed fairly or unfairly as perpetrators of violence against civilians themselves, should be regarded with caution as the final arbitrators of the truth. Like every potential partner they have biases, both self-serving and myopic.<sup>197</sup> When there are time and resources, it is best to triangulate information and the important players in law and order in the area should, if practicable, be included in these triangulations. This means considering the opinions of the Wuro village development council, police and gendarme, and municipal council and mayor. If the attack on Wuro has local participants these are the actors likely in the know.

If the aim is broader than tracking down a target—say developing shared information networks or a local strategy to reduce the appeal of VEOs—the list of pertinent players in Wuro expands even further. Development programs require local understanding and perception built into them. National-level programs designed and implemented through the HN government need local input to flow with their patterns of life and expectations. Just as with security, development assistance can alter the balance of influence and power among subnational political players and distort the equilibrium in hybrid political orders. To avoid this, a wide range of perspectives must be consulted—not just key leaders—in order to prevent projects resulting in clear winners and losers.

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) recognizes that the world is increasingly messy and requires a more nimble and adaptable response to most of today’s conflicts.<sup>198</sup> In order to facilitate the strategies and goals laid out in the NDS, the Department of Defense (DOD) has explored the ideas of Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning and JC-Hamo.<sup>199</sup> As Flynn et al. summarize, “the lesson of the last decade is that failing to understand the human dimension of conflict is too costly in lives, resources, and political will for the Nation to bear [and o]nce a conflict commences, it is already too late to

begin the process of learning about the population and its politics.”<sup>200</sup> The DOD recognizes that human will and its drivers matter for mission success and some foreign policy goals are better achieved without DOD intervention. But, what shapes human will in Wuro? How does that shape a campaign’s design? And, when should DOD take a primary or secondary status or sit a campaign out all together? One cannot hope to answer these questions without consulting a representative population of the people in Wuro because official state agents just do not have the kind of respect, trust, or efficacy to deal with many of Wuro’s citizens’ day-to-day problems.

For those living in villages like Wuro in Burkina Faso’s North, the front-line of VEO activities is on their doorstep if not inside the home. Their economic productivity is reduced, their children are displaced from schools, and the threat of violence is ever-present.<sup>201</sup> The vast majority of residents are not perpetrators of violence themselves, but are bystanders in a conflict between transnational terrorist networks, local ethnic militias, Burkinabè armed forces, and foreign militaries. They are fearful—rightfully so given the huge upswing in violence in 2019. Burkina Faso’s military is a necessary partner of the U.S. military in operations in the region. Without the consent of the Burkinabè military via the Burkinabè government, any operation becomes more challenging and fraught with political turmoil. But, the Burkinabè state is viewed by many northerners as part-and-parcel of their daily suffering. While

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*The vast majority of residents are not perpetrators of violence themselves, but are bystanders in a conflict between transnational terrorist networks, local ethnic militias, Burkinabè armed forces, and foreign militaries.*

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pushing the military to the side is neither a practical nor desirable solution, this knowledge suggests that including as many other participants in the local governance environment in the conversations about interventions and operations should be considered a best practice. It is via this feedback that the figurative landmines reveal themselves, as well as points of relative consensus where veto players are less likely to rear their heads and spoil progress.

The lessons from this research clearly reinforce the importance of viewing CT through the lens of politics and, as JC-HAMO states “developing a new or revised governance framework.” Rather than seeing ungoverned space where weak government institutions prevail, a more fruitful perspective asks: “What informal governance systems are in place that contribute

to legitimate social order, conflict resolution, and justice?” The answers are knowable and can be worked into operational concepts and interagency programming so long as kinetic and law enforcement solutions are seen as one element of a multifaceted approach to restoring legitimate and effective governance in hybrid political orders. The more such concepts are generated across the Sahel, the more likely SOF will increasingly gain the initiative against VEOs because they address the political grievances that VEOs successfully exploit. Burkina Faso presents an excellent test case for the idea of informal governance as a force multiplier in CT, but urgency is needed lest portions of its population fall prey to the allure of VEO solutions to inherently political tensions.

## Appendix. Survey Methodology

This study is not designed to collect a representative national sample of Burkina Faso, but rather to collect data around an important transect that crosses cultural, socioeconomic, and climatic zones, as well as ensuring reasonable variance in terms of the impact of terrorism and strength of state. The study's transect line runs along the longitude line  $-1.1^\circ$ . This line crosses five of Burkina's thirteen regions (Centre-Sud, Centre, Plateau-Central, Centre-Nord, and Sahel) and was chosen purposively to include both residents of Burkina Faso's relatively impoverished and conflict-ridden Sahel and relatively well-off and conflict-free Sudanian Savanna. It also picks up residents of the vibrant capital of Ouagadougou, regional cities, and rural villages. Figure 8 shows the longitude line  $1.1^\circ$  West and the five regions through which it passes.

Of the five regions selected for closer inspection, one is what Burkinabè would generally consider the North (Sahel) and four are in the South (Centre-Sud, Centre, Plateau-Central, and Centre-Nord). The design samples six sites of the southern region and twelve in the northern region. The regional team in the North consisted of six enumerators and in the South three enumerators. The one exception to this rule was Centre, the capital Ouagadougou, where only two enumerators were used, and the team used two sites to train the northern and southern teams respectfully. Each southern site was surveyed for three days with eight interviews per day. The northern sites were randomly assigned for four or five days. The decision to oversample the northern regions is due to the fact that occurrences of terrorist events predominate there and it was deemed necessary to improve the odds of sensing variance in the two regions of the North.<sup>202</sup>

To select (1) sites, (2) households, and (3) individuals, the design employed a multistage cluster sampling technique. Sites are typically villages and towns, though in Ouagadougou, given its immense size, they are neighborhoods. A sampling frame of sites is derived from a document published by the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization, and Security in preparation for local elections.<sup>203</sup> This document lists every village and town in Burkina Faso in addition to its population and the region, province, and department to which it belongs. Each of the prospective sites for a region was

assigned a sequence of numbers based on its list position and population. For example, the first site listed in the Boucle Du Mouhoun Region is the village of Assio. With a population of 2003, Assio would be assigned the sequence 1-2003. The second site listed is Badié with a population of 1796. Badié would, therefore, be assigned the sequence 2004-3799 and so on. Once all potential sites for a region were assigned a sequence of numbers, a random number generator was used to select survey sites.<sup>204</sup>

Sampling in this way makes it possible to select sites that are quite large (like neighborhoods in Ouagadougou with several hundred thousand residents) and quite small (like outposts in the Sahel with only a population of a few hundred). Because of the population weighting, however, sites that are larger have proportionately higher likelihood of being selected. In essence, this approach does not just throw the name of every city and village in a hat, but rather throws every citizen of a region into a hat. However, when selected, the design does not know each citizen's name or age or any other personally identifying information other than the site where he or she resides. The largest selected site by population has just shy of 50,000 residents. The smallest has less than 300 residents. For the entire sampling of sites, the median population is just over 1,600.<sup>205</sup>

Using GeoNames, all of the sample sites were geo-located. In Google Earth, a marker was placed near the center of the selected sites. Google Earth was then used to draw a circle around these markers with a diameter of five kilometers. Such a large diameter is necessary to avoid sampling bias because, in many parts of rural Africa, villages are spread out and those in outlying areas may be significantly different in ways important to the research from those in more centrally located households.<sup>206</sup> These circles create a catchment area of nearly 20 square kilometers to consider—an unmanageable amount of territory without further cluster sampling.

Because the ambition is to collect 8 surveys a day for 3 days from each southern site and for 4 or 5 days for each northern site, the design randomly selects a household, defined using Afrobarometer protocols as a group that generally eats out of the same pot, for each day from each site's catchment area.<sup>207</sup> In order to select these households, a modified Wampler et al. approach is employed.<sup>208</sup> A grid is placed over each site circle dividing it into sixteen sections. Each individual grid box is scanned visually using high definition satellite imagery and an approximate number of households per box is recorded. Then, using a random number generator one household for

each day is selected by first identifying in which grid the household is situated and then counting from the grid box's northwest corner across from left to right, then down a row, then across from right to left, and the process is repeated until reaching the random number selected. Once a household is selected, its GPS coordinates are recorded.

In June, when survey enumerators reached a selected household, they attempted to interview one of its adult residents. The selection of respondents, selection of the seven subsequent households, and call back and substitution procedures followed Afrobarometer protocols.<sup>209</sup> This means the interviewees were randomly selected using sampling frames stratified by gender to achieve a sample that is half male and half female. It also means that the second through the seventh interviews of the day were conducted at households using a predetermined walk pattern to ensure representativeness of the sample. If the randomly selected interviewee was unavailable to be interviewed at the time the survey enumerator reached his/her household, two call-back attempts were made over the course of the three site days before a household substitution commenced.

Optimally, this approach yields 1,011 surveys: 3 surveys from each of the 17 enumerators on the first training day in Ouagadougou, 8 surveys over 6 days by each of the 11 southern enumerators, and 8 surveys over 9 days for each of the 6 northern enumerators. In actuality, the team obtained 992 usable surveys after excising problematic surveys. These 992 surveys represent 511 men and 481 women spread out across every province in the 5 sampled regions as indicated in figure 8.

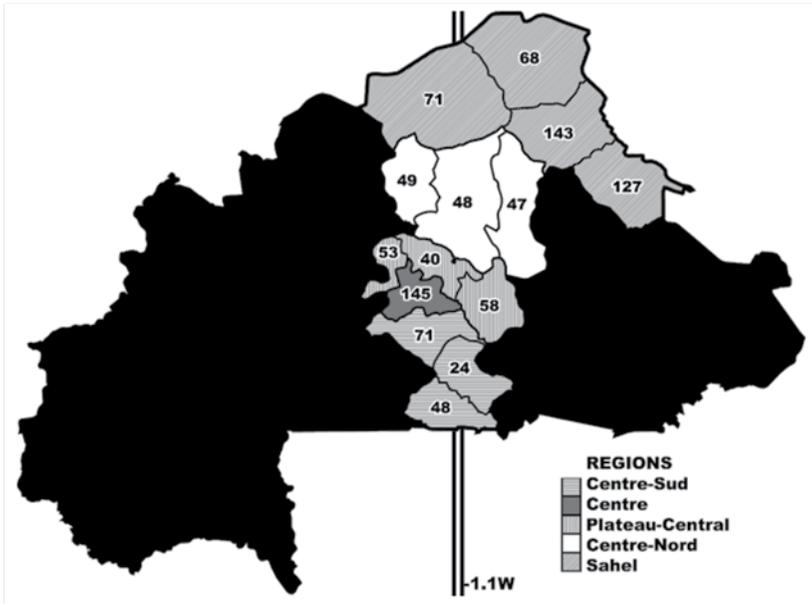


Figure 8. Distribution of Survey Responses Across Providences.  
Source: Author-produced map.

## Acronyms

<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
<b>CA</b>	civil affairs
<b>COIN</b>	counterinsurgency
<b>CT</b>	counterterrorism
<b>CVD</b>	<i>Conseil Villageois de Développement/Village</i> Development Councils
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>HN</b>	host nation
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>JC-Hamo</b>	Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations
<b>JNIM</b>	Jam'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen
<b>JP</b>	Joint Publication
<b>NDS</b>	National Defense Strategy
<b>NGO</b>	nongovernmental organization
<b>RDA</b>	<i>Rassemblement Démocratique Africain/African</i> Democratic Rally
<b>RSP</b>	<i>Régiment de Sécurité Présidentielle/Presidential</i> Security Regiment
<b>SF</b>	special forces
<b>SOF</b>	Special Operations Forces
<b>USD</b>	U.S. dollar
<b>USSOCOM</b>	United States Special Operations Command
<b>VEO</b>	violent extremist organization
<b>VSO</b>	Village Stability Operations
<b>XOF</b>	West African CFA franc



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  158. Serigne Bamba Gaye, *Conflicts between Farmers and Herders against a Backdrop of Asymmetric Threats in Mali and Burkina Faso* (Dakar-Fann, Senegal: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Peace and Security Centre of Competence Sub-Saharan Africa, 2018).
  159. African Development Bank Group, "Burkina Faso Data Portal," 2019, <http://burkinafaso.opendataforafrica.org/>.
  160. Djallil Lounnas, "Le Djihadisme Au Sahel Après La Chute de Daech," *Politique Étrangère* 2, no. Été (2019): 105–14; Mirjam de Bruijn and Jonna Both, "Youth Between State and Rebel (Dis)Orders: Contesting Legitimacy from Below in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 28, no. 4–5 (2017): 779–98; Mathieu Pellerin, *Les Trajectoires de Radicalisation Religieuse Au Sahel* (Paris, France: Institut français des relations internationales, 2017); Stig Jarle Hansen, *Horn, Sahel and Rift: Fault-Lines of the African Jihad* (New York, NY: Hurst, 2019).

161. Details on how this survey was conducted are available in the Appendix. Table 1 shows how the survey sample compares to the population as described by Burkina Faso's 2006 Census.
162. Lauren Morris MacLean, "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa: An Institutional Analysis of Colonial Rule and State Social Policies in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37, no. 3 (2002): 64–90; John E. Dixon, ed., *Social Welfare in Africa* (New York, NY: Croom Helm, 1987); Armando Barrientos and David Hulme, eds., *Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest: Risk, Needs and Rights* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
163. Suppose someone enters your home to burglarize it and you call the police. How long do you think it would take for the police to arrive at your house on a typical day around noon?
164. Suppose you are in your house and you experience a very serious injury and need immediate medical attention. How long do you think it would take you, by the fastest means, to get to the nearest medical center or hospital (public or private)?
165. Suppose you, or someone you know, requests to have electricity extended to their household. How long would this typically take?
166. Suppose your community is hit by a storm and requests to have a large pile of storm-related debris collected. How long would this typically take?
167. Suppose your community requests to have an abusive teacher removed and replaced at the primary school. How long would this typically take?
168. The exact wording was: "I would like to read you some statements about safety in your community. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each – The level of violence has increased a lot compared to two years ago."
169. The mean response for respondents in the North was 2.30 [95% CI: 2.17, 2.42], which is between "Agree" and "Neither agree nor disagree." The mean response for respondents in the South was 3.29 [95% CI: 3.19, 3.39]. This is between "Neither agree nor disagree" and "disagree." The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
170. Philip Kleinfeld, "Burkina Faso, part 1: Spreading violence triggers an 'unprecedented' crisis," *The New Humanitarian*, April 17, 2019, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2019/04/17/spreading-violence-triggers-unprecedented-crisis-burkina-faso>; Philip Kleinfeld, "Burkina Faso, part 2: Communities buckle as conflict ripples through the Sahel," *The New Humanitarian*, 18 April 2019, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/special-report/2019/04/18/burkina-faso-part-2-communities-buckle-conflict-ripples-through-sahel>.
171. Englebort, *Unsteady Statehood*, 125–6.
172. The difference in proportions is 0.09 [95% CI: 0.04, 0.13]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
173. The difference in proportions is 0.03 [95% CI: -0.01, 0.07]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.

174. The difference in means is -0.69 [-0.85, -0.52]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
175. Amnesty International, *Burkina Faso: Difficult Journey Towards Human Rights Respect* (London, UK: Amnesty International, 2018).
176. Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, “Acled Data.”
177. Loada, “Les Burkinqchè Dqns Un Sentiment de Sécurité Mais Inquiets de La Montée de l’extrémisme Violent.”
178. International Crisis Group, “Jihadist Violence”; Dufka, *Atrocities*.
179. The difference in means is 0.47 [95% CI: 0.37, 0.57]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets. The mean value for Southern respondents is 4.16, which is between a “positive” and “very positive” response. The mean value for Northern respondents is 3.67, which is between a “neutral” and “positive” response.
180. The difference in means is -0.43 [95% CI: -0.56, -0.30]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
181. Loada, “Les Burkinqchè Dqns Un Sentiment de Sécurité Mais Inquiets de La Montée de l’extrémisme Violent.”
182. International Crisis Group, “Jihadist Violence”; Dufka, *Atrocities*.
183. Onuoha, Youth; Higazi et al., “A Response.”
184. Larisa Epatko, “In This Burkina Faso Town, Fighting Crime Depends on Dialogue,” *PBS Newshour*, 9 November 2017, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/in-this-burkina-faso-town-fighting-crime-depends-on-dialogue>.
185. Jean-Pierre Bayala, “Le Rôle de La Police Municipale Dans La Sécurité Intérieure : Le Cas Du Burkina Faso,” in *La Réforme Des Systèmes de Sécurité et de Justice En Afrique Francophone* (Paris, France: Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, 2010), 79–94.
186. The difference in means is 0.40 [95% CI: 0.29, 0.50]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
187. The question was phrased as: “I would like to read you some statements about safety in your community. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. - The police are doing a good job.”
188. The difference in means is -0.29 [95% CI: -0.40, -0.19]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
189. A t-test shows that the difference in means is -0.58 [95% CI: -0.73, -0.42]. The 95% confidence intervals are reported in brackets.
190. Dufka, *Atrocities*.
191. Bayala, “La Police Municipale.”
192. James Sheehan, “U.S. Gives Lift to French Forces,” U.S. Army, 2019, [https://www.army.mil/article/217360/us\\_gives\\_lift\\_to\\_french\\_forces](https://www.army.mil/article/217360/us_gives_lift_to_french_forces).

193. The mean response for the Southern respondents is 3.65 [3.58, 3.72] and for the North it is 3.36 [3.26, 3.60]. The difference in means is statistically significant, at 0.29 [0.17, 0.41].
194. Englebert, *Unsteady Statehood*, 149–66.
195. International Crisis Group, “Jihadist Violence;” Dufka, *Atrocities*.
196. See, for example, Scott Mann, *Game Changers: Going Local to Defeat Violent Extremists* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).
197. International Crisis Group, “Jihadist Violence;” Dufka, *Atrocities*; Penney, “Blowback.”
198. Jim Mattis, “Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America” (Washington, D.C., 2018), <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.
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201. Paul Collier, “On the Economic Consequences of Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 51, no. 1 (1999): 168–83; Anna Freud and Dorothy T. Burlingham, *War and Children* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Resul Cesur and Erdal Tekin, “The Psychological Costs of War: Military Combat and Mental Health,” *Journal of Health Economics* 32, no. 1 (2013): 51–65.
202. Nsaibia and Weiss, “Ansaroul Islam.”
203. Ministère de l’administration territoriale de la décentralisation et de la sécurité, *Memorandum Sur La Dètemination Du Nombre de Sièges Des Conseillers Municipaux Par Villages et Par Secteurs Dans Le Cadre Des Élections Locales Du 02 Décembre 2012*.
204. If a site was deemed too dangerous by the research team, had been depopulated by terrorist threats as rural communities gravitated to urban centers, or the name provided by the Ministère de l’administration territoriale de la décentralisation et de la sécurité did not match any known location upon visit to the commune and a conversation with locals and government officials we did make substitutions. Thirteen of our thirty-six sites are substitution sites with seven of these substitutions coming from Sahel Region. When a substitution was made, we chose the closest community to the identified site that was deemed both secure and of approximate equivalency in terms of ethnic makeup, population size, and proximity to major roads.

205. At the 95% confidence level of the differences, there is no statistical difference between the sample mean population and the population mean population for the regions Centre-Sud, Plateau Central, Centre-Nord, or Sahel. Centre, which is home to the capital Ouagadougou, is extremely positively skewed. Five of our six randomly selected sites are in Ouagadougou and the sixth is a close suburb. The sampled sites have a significantly higher population, between 7,000 and 50,000 per site, than the non-sampled sites.
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207. Afrobarometer Network, “Round 7 Survey Manual,” 2017, 36, [http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/survey\\_manuals/ab\\_r7\\_survey\\_manual\\_en1.pdf](http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/survey_manuals/ab_r7_survey_manual_en1.pdf).
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