

*LESSONS FROM CHAD: ETHNIC CONFLICT AND  
ECONOMIC REORGANIZATION IN POST COLONIAL  
CULTURAL LANDSCAPES*

*HONORS THESIS*

*Presented to the Honors Committee of*

*Texas State University-San Marcos*

*In Partial Fulfillment of*

*The Requirements*

*For Graduation in the Mitte Honors Program*

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*May 2007*

*“Many African states are beset by major ethnic/regional cleavages and acute socio-economic disparities, but possibly nowhere is this more visible than in Chad, Africa’s fifth largest political entity, and one of the poorest on the continent. The artificiality of Chad’s colonial boundaries, the territory’s immense size, its unfavorable geographical location and its economic non-viability, neglect during the colonial era and mismanagement since, have all constituted major impediments to state-construction and nation-building. So sharp indeed are Chad’s internal cleavages and inconsistencies that the major question about the post-independence era may well be why the territory did not disintegrate more rapidly—rather than why it only ultimately did so in the mid 1970s.”*

Samuel Decalo <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Decalo, Samuel, “Chad: The Roots of Centre-Periphery Strife,” *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 317, Oct. 1980, p 491.

## **FOREWARD**

In the summer of 2005, I traveled to N'Djamena, Chad as an intern in the Political and Economic Section of the United States Embassy. During my three-month stay, I became aware of the current fragmentation of Chadian society and how societal divisions based upon differences in ethnicity and place affect the Chadian national political landscape.

During my three months stay in N'Djamena, I was exposed to and fascinated by complex subtleties of Chadian political paradigms and how they truly encompass more than simplistic North/South, East /West, Muslim/Christian dynamics. Paradigms to understand the current political situation should take into account the complex and fundamental events that took place under the Tombalbaye Administration during the formative, nascent period between 1960 and 1975. This period is the beginning of the Republic of Chad and the beginning of Chad's unified national political history. François Ngarta Tombalbaye, as the first president of Chad, due to the fate of history, had to steer the country through the beginnings of independence to construct a single state out of many co-existing political traditions and modes of governance.

When I arrived at the Hassan International Airport in N'Djamena, Chad in May 2005, I felt as though when stepping off the plane, I was entering quite literally one of the worst places on Earth. Chad ranks low on many developed countries' list of international strategic locations, and as one of the lowest ranking countries on the United Nations Development Index, Chad clearly has few resources with which to enter the global marketplace.

As one of the least developed of developing countries and due to centuries of international indifference in Central African affairs, many Westerners know nothing or very little of Chadian history, culture, or politics—nor are many interested in discovering anything about Chad.

When faced with a dire human situation, such as that of Chad, we oftentimes become apathetic. Sometimes we wish we could help, sometimes we become angry at the local populations or chide them for their corruption or lack of standard business ethics, and sometimes we simply look away and turn our attention towards a different story on the six o'clock news. But in the end, we miss the true human aspects of their story. We forget the human drama that takes place and focus solely on the misery and disgust of abject poverty. Every Chadian has a story, and in some ways each Chadian's story is influenced by the story of his or her state—Chad.

Even through the majority of Africa became independent from European colonial powers in the 1960s, many of us consciously or unconsciously perceive the world through the lens of colonization and the European colonial experience. Through that lens we dehumanize the African and form him into the proverbial other who despite our sometimes charitable notions, represents a world in which few of us (Westerners) would prefer to exist as well as a system in which few of us would like to participate. This other becomes the embodiment of all that is wrong with the world; he becomes the manifestation of the world's collective failures compounded by what we perceive to be his own ineptitude, thus

alienating the Westerner. This self-perceived alienation serves to perpetuate and encourages the apathy so prevalent in today's society.

The story of François Ngarta Tombalbaye and post –independence Chad is not simply the story of one more African country's struggle with independence, neo-colonialism, and bitter ethnic rivalries; but, rather, a story of a power struggle in one of the harshest places on Earth

Tombalbaye capitalized on several political tactics not unfamiliar to today's political struggles. Tombalbaye used fear tactics to cower his political opponents and allowed very little dissent, even outlawing political opposition. In addition to threatening and intimidating his political opponents, François Ngarta Tombalbaye manipulated the Chadian people's societal fears and placed a new emphasis on the revival of local traditions, sometimes attempting to exploit them for national political gain. Tombalbaye engaged and eventually alienated his political allies all the while trying to create a new republic. Tombalbaye dreamed of a new kind of Chad, a Chad that embraced its African roots and purged itself of French imperial influences—a national program not dissimilar to the better known program of 'Zairianization' of Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo (Kinshasa). Yet, Tombalbaye was torn between the tradition into which he was born, the Chadian tradition, and that which formed him, the French tradition.

Chad has recently come into the international spotlight due to the large numbers of refugees that have poured over its Eastern and Southern borders. The genocide, as Colin Powell passionately described it before the United Nations Security Council, that is taking place in the Sudanese region of Darfur

has forced more than 200,000 refugees into environmentally and politically instable regions of Eastern Chad. Continuing violence in the Central African Republic, Chad's neighbor to the South, has also forced thousands of refugees to flee.

This regional instability has thrust Chad into the position as a regional stabilizer, a role it has never before played, and is putting much strain on domestic resources in an already desperately poor country. The more than 200,000 extra people living in Chad and instability in neighboring countries have shaken the already desperately weak Chadian political infrastructure. Currently, Idriss Deby, the president of Chad, is struggling to remain in power and real and perceived threats of valid coup d'etat attempts have become more and more commonplace.

The United States government has of late begun to place more importance on the Sahelian region. The Sahel is the dry, mostly Muslim regions that lay between the Sahara and the Savannah. This region stretches from Eastern Chad, West to Senegal and the Atlantic. Due to worries of unchecked infiltration and implantation of fundamentalist Islamic sects from the Middle East and North East Africa potentially dangerous to American and Western strategic interests, the U.S. Government's Pan-Sahel Initiative places the Sahel region under increased levels of surveillance, increased levels of military interaction, and places a stronger emphasis on the stabilization and development of various Sahelian nations' armed forces. While this program is new and fairly limited in scope, it moves the entire region, Chad included, higher in terms of international

involvement and priorities. With the West's increased anti-terror efforts, it is likely that other nations will coordinate similar military and intelligence programs which will further serve to increase the global significance of the region.

I acknowledge this paper contains a somewhat simplistic depiction of the complex relationships between the various groups examined in this paper. This analysis of François Ngarta Tombalbaye's fifteen years as the Chief of State of the Republic of Chad is by no means an exhaustive work on the period and without a doubt is lacking in certain areas. This work is meant to be a thoughtful introduction to the tumultuous period under examination. François Ngarta Tombalbaye's political exploitation of the already fragile existing post-colonial Chadian ethnic identity and traditions in an ethnically plural society resulted in political and societal fragmentation and factionalization as well as impeded industrialization and meaningful economic development. Tombalbaye's presidency left Chad with several lessons—the compelling need for a national identity, governmental creation of a space for economic production, responsible economic development, an articulation of ethnicity, and an embracing of diversity.

François Ngarta Tombalbaye, although responsible for many wrongs against the Chadian people, almost seems somewhat of a tragic figure. Although the African continent was experiencing a great renaissance of native cultural traditions, a blossoming of philosophical explorations of black and African identity, the establishment of new centers of learning and culture, and a new emphasis on regional solidarity, this environment of hope and great promise still

lacked a viable economic infrastructure. Therefore, it was difficult for any leader in this time of great promise and blossoming of hope to reconcile social desires with economic realities. At independence, Tombalbaye had a tough task ahead of him; a task that literally meant forming a nation.

For better or worse, Tombalbaye was responsible for the first fifteen years of the Republic of Chad—its successes and its shortfalls. With his death in 1975, died an era, and since, the country has been reeling under one abusive president-dictator after another and military coups have become the norm rather than the rarity. Hopefully through studying the Tombalbaye era, one can gain more insight to the modern Chadian political situation and through that increased understanding, a more constructive dialogue can be established—a dialogue that talks about the real issues of war and peace, famine and drought, justice and injustice. The Chadian people deserve this dialogue—in both domestic and international forums.

My contribution to this dialogue is an attempt to understand the incipient process of independence and how Tombalbaye's presidency provided several important lessons on the need for a national identity, the creation of an equitable space for economic production, a national articulation of ethnicity, and the relevance of celebrating diversity. Also, I would like to present the reader with an often overlooked example of state deterioration, ethnic conflict, political complications due to overlays of tradition, and crises of identity.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### ***Cultural, Geological, and Ecological Diversity***

Chad is a country of extremes. Geographically, Chadian borders encompass vastly diverse types of terrain: the rocky desert regions of Ennedi in the North, the sandy Saharan dunes North of Lake Chad in Kanem, the flat fertile savannah plains of Mayo-Kébbi, and the almost tropical, oil-rich region of Logone-Occidental in the far South.

As can demonstrated in **Fig. 1**, **Fig. 2**, and **Fig. 3**, the peoples of Chad reflect these extremes as well. The North and center regions of the country are home to a Muslim population of ethnic groups such as the Arabs, Toubou, Hedjerai, Fulbé, Kanembou, Baguirmi, Boulala, Zaghawa, and Maba while the South is home to politically and economically powerful Christian and animist groups such as the Sara, Ngambaye, Gor, Mbaye, Goulaye, Moundang, and Massa. There are over 100 different languages spoken, each by different ethnic groups with both individual and collective histories<sup>2</sup>.

The ethnicities grouped together within Chadian borders are not necessarily similar nor have their histories been necessarily friendly or mutually beneficial. The various societal, cultural, and geographic histories and traditions that co-exist here allow and account for divisive national and societal friction. Very different political traditions, which serve to factionalize Chadian political structures, have developed over the years.

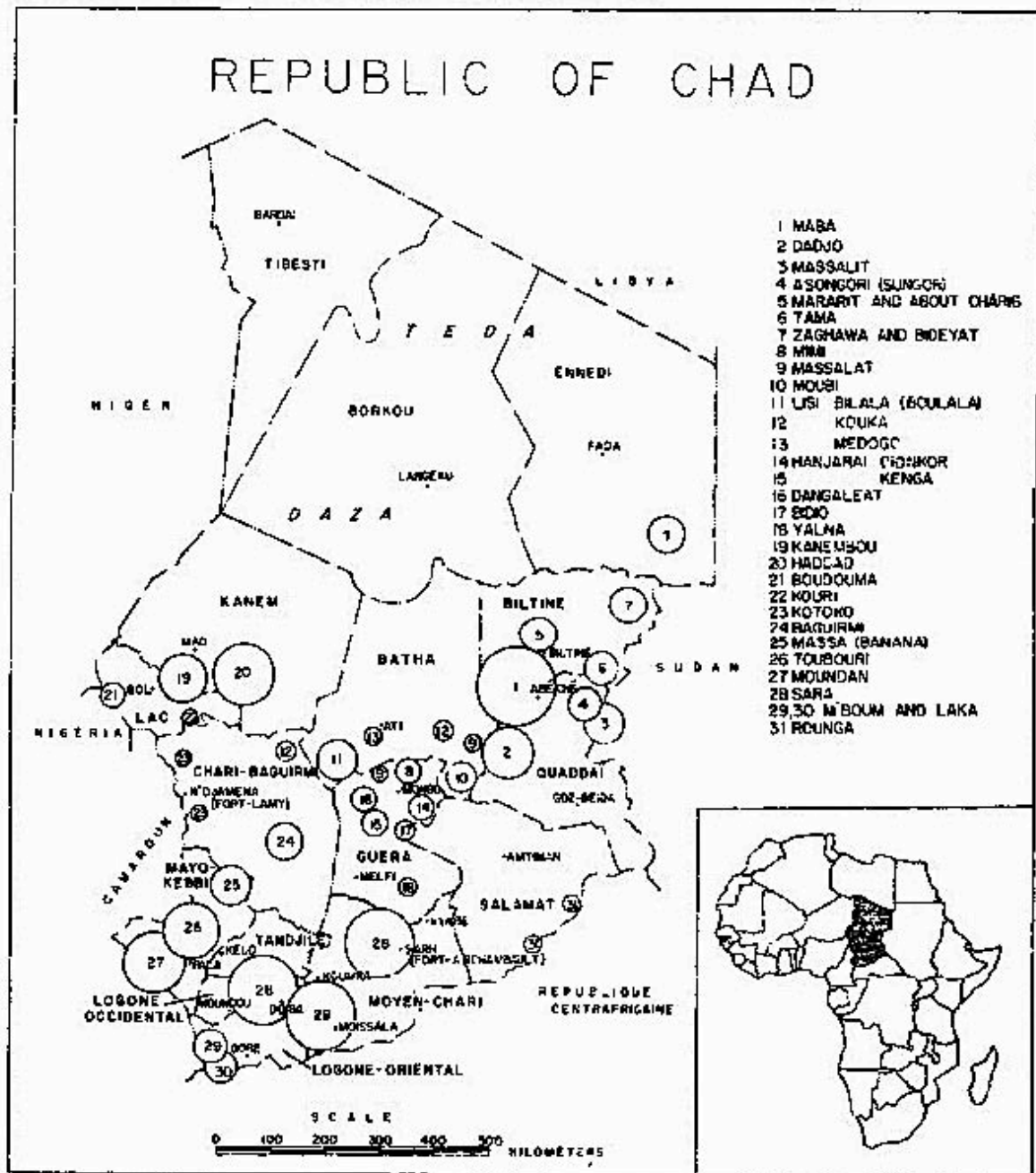
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<sup>2</sup> The Center for Reproductive Rights. "Laws and Policies Affecting Their Reproductive Lives, 5. Chad." 2003, [www.crlp.org/pdf/chad.pdf](http://www.crlp.org/pdf/chad.pdf), 01 December 2005.



Fig. 1, Chadian Administrative Divisions<sup>3</sup>

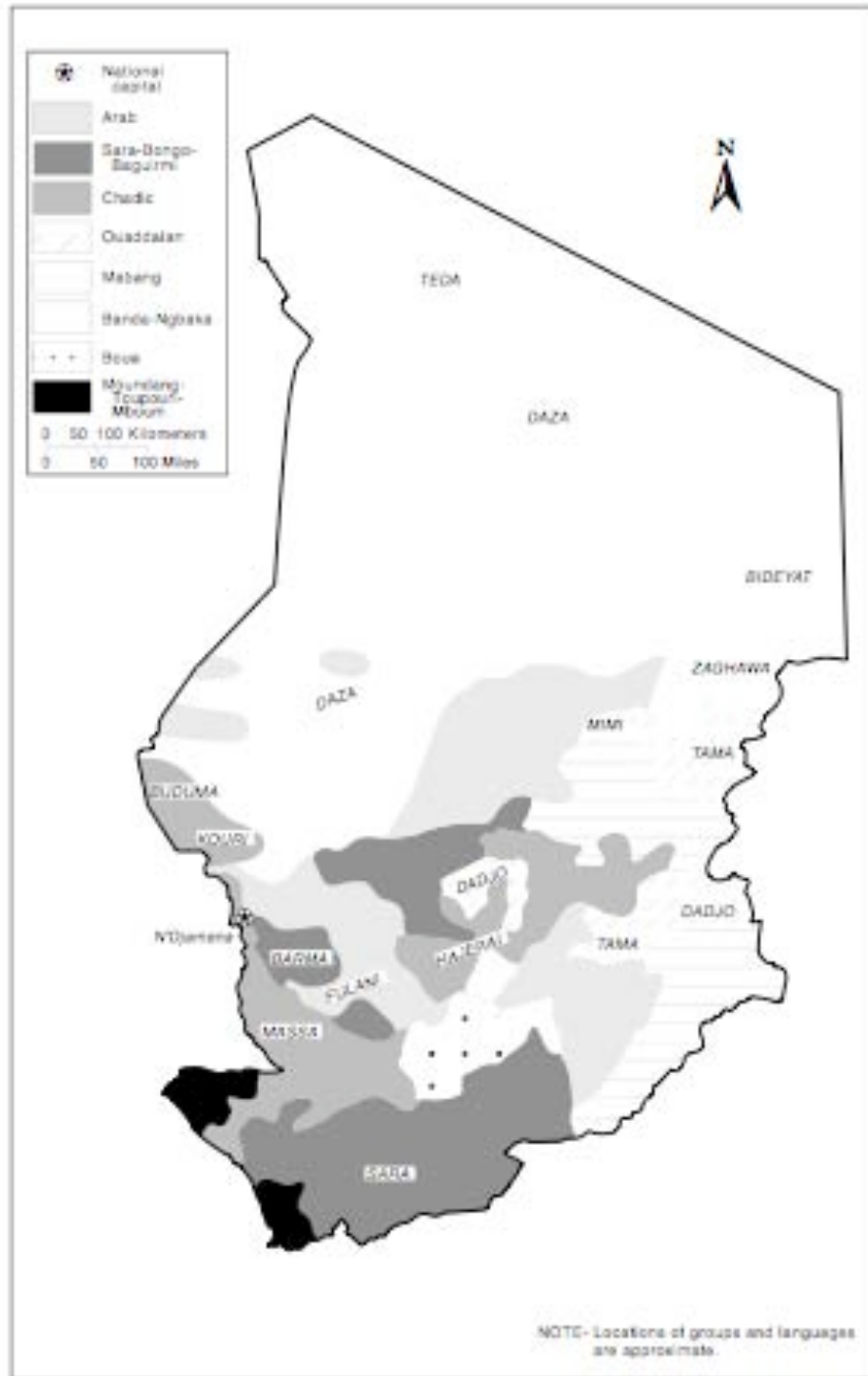
<sup>3</sup> University of Pennsylvania African Studies Center. "African Maps." ([http://www.africa.upenn.edu/CIA\\_Maps/Chad\\_19866.gif](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/CIA_Maps/Chad_19866.gif)). 15 April 2007.



Source: Mario Azevedo, "Epidemic Diseases Among the Sara of Chad," in Gerald Hartwig and David Paterson, *Disease in African History* (Durham: Duke University, 1978).

Fig. 2, A geographic representation of the spatial and population distribution of various Chadian ethnic groups in 1978.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Azevedo, Mario. "Power and Slavery in Central Africa: Chad (1890-1925)." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 67, No. 3, Autumn 1982, p 200



**Fig. 3, Ethno-Linguistic Divisions of Chad<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>5</sup> "Chad: Datos Del Pais." Ikuska Libros, S.L. 2 Jan. 2006.  
<http://www.ikuska.com/Africa/Paises/Chad.htm> 16 April 2007.

### ***Geographic Consequences for the Viability of a Chadian Nation-State***

This theme of geo-cultural political divisiveness is echoed in Robert Kaplan's article, "The Coming Anarchy,"<sup>6</sup> when he stated, "There is no other place on the planet where political maps are so deceptive—where, in fact, they tell such lies—as in West Africa."<sup>7</sup>

Historically and geographically, Chad exists at a great continental crossroads. Its position in the very heart of Africa has served to impede regional unification and solidarity. As the place where the Nilo-Sudanic East Africa meets the historically highly colonized rich West Africa, and as well as where the Maghreb meets Christian and Animist Black Africa, national unity has been difficult to establish—and cultural unity simply does not exist. Domestically, the location of N'Djamena, the capital city, on the Western border with Cameroon competes with more prominent regional and continental centers. Eastern Chad is focused regionally on the city of Abeche—the ancient imperial capital of the former Ouadai Empire and then pulled even more by the political powers of Khartoum.<sup>8</sup> Southern Chad is also pulled by various regional influences. The Southern population focuses regionally on the industrial centers of Sarh and Moundou and places a continental focus on Yaounde in Cameroon and Kinshasa in Congo.

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<sup>6</sup> Kaplan, Robert D. "The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet." *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, [http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~anthro/articles/Coming\\_Anarchy.htm](http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~anthro/articles/Coming_Anarchy.htm), 07 November 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Decalo, Samuel. "Regionalism, Political Decay, and Civil Strife in Chad." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1. Mar., 1980, p. 26.

Although these regional differences in orientation take place, Chad is commonly lumped into the West African political sphere due to the Western location of its capital, N'Djamena, and its status as belonging to the former French empire.

Kaplan uses the example of Sierra Leone as a country operating on the antiquated Westphalian notions of a nation-state system of international relations, yet has no single nation that composes a true state. A system formulated in seventeenth century Europe is hard to apply to the working dynamics of West African societies because of the ethnic pluralism and lack of historic presence of nation-state systems that exists in many West African countries. When a country exists with literally hundreds of languages, ethnic groups, and separate identities, it is hard to create a homogenous identity and therefore a national identity. Yet, maybe it should be questioned as to whether or not the nation-state system is any longer valid as a viable working paradigm for many African nations.

As alluded to in Kaplan's use of the example of Sierra Leone's situation, the Westphalian nation-state system is quite possibly not the best answer for many African societies. Perhaps a more socialist system based on local traditions of governance would be more successful than the system inherited from the European colonial legacy. There are certainly other state systems theories that could possibly work on the African continent. A possible paradigm shift could improve the African situation and could quite possibly serve as one of many needed solutions to the 'African problem' of weak national authority,

rampant poverty, and long traditions of social injustice and human rights violations. Is the nation-state's viability dwindling in the twenty-first century? Could a look elsewhere serve as a needed solution to abject poverty? In the next section I will examine the colonial roots of the nation-state paradigm in Chad and see how the implementation of this fundamentally European, now global structure affected the Tombalbaye era of modern Chadian political history as well as how this paradigm is affected Tombalbaye's use of ethnic identity in an ethnically plural society.

### ***Creating a National Identity***

Perhaps the sense of national identity in Africa is subsumed by a stronger sense of ethnic identity, however malleable that ethnicity or ethnic label may be. In West Africa, this poignant lack of a notion of national identity, and is even more confused due to its bittersweet history as a stage for European imperialism. This has proven to be crippling in both domestic and international affairs.

As demonstrated many times in the past by the examples of numerous European, Asian, and American countries, a country uses its national identity as a rallying point around which the country as a whole operates. Having a sense of national identity, national belonging, and some kind of a conception of civic structure is important because it is a common understanding of the rights and responsibilities that citizens enjoy in that nation. Although important, national identity is merely one paradigm through which a national situation can be analyzed. It is by no means a framework through which every problem can be competently examined.

In Chad, the handicapping consequences this lack of national identity and ethnic confusion and rivalry were made evident during the years just following independence from France. This colonial legacy created a very politically unstable state and was thus reliant upon French aid for assistance in keeping order and 'legitimizing' the post-colonial power structure to the local French formed class of Chadian elite. Chadian politicians relied heavily upon French military power to discourage attempts to remove the elite from power.

***Battling "Mutually Competitive Microcosms:" Creating an Economy***

As Samuel Decalo wrote in his article, "Chad: The Roots of Centre Periphery Strife," "...the country [Chad] has always been more a complex patchwork of mutually competitive microcosms rather than a political entity, no matter how fragile."<sup>9</sup> Yet, as Decalo also wrote, this problem was not new to Chad, "The roots of the disintegration of Chad, its deep centre-periphery cleavages, are anchored in the very nature of the society that became a French colony in 1900."<sup>10</sup>

These "mutually competitive microcosms," having been kept under some form of order by the French, burst onto the national political scene in full force with Chadian independence in 1960 and through the rule of Chad's first president, François (Ngarta) Tombalbaye. Previously competing populations were suddenly thrust into participation in the same national economy. Through the colonial experience, a new political economy was created that did not previously exist, a political economy that Tombalbaye, a southern Sara, ruled the

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<sup>9</sup> Decalo, Samuel, *Chad: The Roots of Centre-Periphery Strife*, African Affairs, Oxford University Press, Vol. 79, No. 317, Oct. 1980, p 492.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p 491



country manipulatively and shrewdly for fifteen years until he was murdered in a 1975 coup. During his rule, Tombalbaye implemented a form of spoils system which he used to control the country administratively. Tombalbaye rewarded his fellow southerners, especially those of his native ethnic Sara group, by granting them coveted government civil service and leadership positions, even when they were under-qualified and under-educated for the job.

Although Tombalbaye was undoubtedly influential during the time period covered in this work, he was not the only actor present in the Chadian political arena. There was an elite social class that had been developed in the colonial era. This class of elite social and commercial leaders controlled many political situations and had high levels of influence. In this class of social elite many were Sara, and if not Sara, were from the South of Chad. Tombalbaye was by no means the sole cause of societal breakdown. Environmental factors such as drought, external French, Sudanese, and Libyan influence, and existing internal traditions, rivalries, and cleavages all served to fragment Chadian society and politics until eventual complete breakdown in 1975.

## **TIMELINE—historical highlights 1960-1975**

### **1960**

Chadian Independence Declared Beginnings of *Africanization*

### **1962**

Tombalbaye bans all political parties except the *Parti Progressif Tchadien* (PPT),  
Territorial administration entirely purged of French administrators

### **1963**

Rise of Sara into Chadian Bureaucracy; Rioting in N'Djamena, more than 300 deaths

### **1964**

Tombalbaye granted complete control over PPT appointments  
“National Loan” tax increase; Request for French Military Aid

### **1965**

Chadian replacement of French military forces in the Borkou, Ennedi, and Tibesti regions  
(BET); Mangalme Riots

### **1966**

Formation of Chadian National Liberation Front (FROLINAT) by Ibrahim Abatcha

### **1967**

Murder of the Prefect and Deputy Prefect of the Ouaddi Region

### **1968**

Beginnings of Unrest in the North (Aouzou Strip); Death of Ibrahim Abatcha, Unrest within  
FROLINAT; FROLINAT Activity in BET; Tombalbaye requests French military aid to  
combat FROLINAT

### **1969**

Arrival of the French Administrative Reform Mission

### **1970**

Relative Calm

### **1971**

End of the French Administrative Reform Mission; (April) Tombalbaye's admission to the  
PPT of errors; Fragmentation within FROLINAT and rise of Goukouni Oueddei to National  
Prominence  
(August) Foiled Coup Attempt allegedly sponsored by Libya's Moammar Kadafi

### **1972**

Arrests of Libyan arms smugglers  
Drought  
Chad cuts Diplomatic Ties with Israel to Enhance Relations with Muslim nations  
“Black Sheep Plot”

### **1973**

Libyan Purchase of Aouzou Strip; Arrests of Prominent Southern Leaders, including Felix;  
Malloum, for involvement in the “Black Sheep Plot”; Implementation of the Yondo  
Continued Drought

### **1974**

Continued Yondo Initiations; “Volunteer” Labor Camps Constructed in the South  
Continued Drought

### **1975**

April 13, 1975—Tombalbaye killed  
Continued Drought

## II. COLONIAL IMPACT: PRE-INDEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

In the late 1950s, the French Empire was crumbling. The French had been stumbling through one unstable government after another since the end of the Second World War, and Chad, traditionally given a low priority, was clearly not a point of strategic importance. As Sam G. Amoo wrote, "As a colony, Chad was one of the most neglected of France's charges. Much of Chad's instability and violence can be attributed to its belated emergence as an organized territory."<sup>11</sup> In 1958, Charles de Gaulle was elected as president of the French Republic and due to growing international pressure began a policy of granting independence to French colonies despite his own capricious dreams and aspirations of a new and revived French empire.

The late 1950s also saw a change in the international political scene. The forceful and charismatic French leaders, Charles de Gaulle, was concerned that France was losing global influence and to regain that lost or diminishing influence, nuclear power was necessary. Charles de Gaulle felt it necessary to rebuild the *metropole* at the expense of its African colonies.<sup>12</sup> Chad did not have great material wealth or highly valuable natural resources to offer France as did some of her other African colonies; in Chad there is no uranium as there is in Niger, nor are there large reserves of natural gas as there is in Algeria. Oil was not exported from Chad until 2002. Compared to its neighbors and other former

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<sup>11</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005

<sup>12</sup> Milburn, Sarah S. "Toujours la Chasse Gardée?: French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Central Africa (c. 1970-1995)," Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rhe02/rhe02f.pdf>, 24 August 2005.

Equatorial French African colonies, Chad was always a “backwater” colony that was constantly understaffed, mismanaged, and lost in the shuffle by colonial authorities, Christian missionaries, and other African political entities.

The French government classified Chad as part of *Afrique Equatoriale Française* or French Equatorial Africa, which was also comprised of what is now Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), and the Central African Republic. French Equatorial Africa did not have much to offer in terms of wealth; except for Gabon due to the fact Libreville became an important seaport and oil exporter. Congo (Brazzaville) became important to the French as well due to its geographic location on the Atlantic Ocean and proximity to the Belgian Congo, or Congo (Kinshasa). The two landlocked colonies of French Equatorial Africa, Chad and the Central African Republic had fewer natural advantages from which to draw wealth or attract investment. The Central African Republic was in a somewhat more favorable position and more likely to attract colonial investment than was Chad, due to its climate much more suitable to agriculture and cultivation of a higher quality and quantity of lucrative cash crops.

According to local N'Djamena legend, French colonial officers considered it a demotion to receive a post as a colonial officer in Chad. French colonial officers would jokingly refer to each other as the ‘bottom of the barrel’ of the French imperial bureaucracy. Chad was not considered a valuable colony and this neglect certainly had an influence on the physical and human infrastructure created and formed during the colonial era.

Regardless of its lack of economic value, Chad was a French colony and therefore was subject to de Gaulle's reforms, as were many of its neighbors. One of these reforms was the increase in the amount of local autonomy and a decrease in the amount of official influence of French colonial officials. After the Second World War, many French colonies gained some form of autonomy, or at least gained some political rights, a factor which allowed colonial populations around the world the opportunity to explore self rule. Territorial Assemblies were created, and local or native politicians were elected to serve alongside French colonial officials. These locally elected officials of native [African] descent, although Chadian, were by no means an example of a stereotypical Chadian—they were what the French termed *évolués*, or 'evolved' meaning civilized and Westernized.

***La petite bourgeoisie africaine: Creating a local elite***

Across West Africa, it was common for French colonial officials, expatriates, or missionaries to search out what they considered to be the best and the brightest of African youth. French colonists groomed these youth, many of them children of traditional tribal leaders or other civic leaders, into what they considered to be appropriate leaders. Félix Eboué, the famous Chadian leader who formed the first colonial force to support Free France during World War II, made it fashionable to call these new 'leaders' in Chadian or West African society in general, 'évolués.'<sup>13</sup> Many of these 'évolués' were educated in universities in

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<sup>13</sup> M'Bokolo, Elikia, "Forces Sociales et Ideologies Dans la Decolonisation de l'A.E.F.," *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1981, p 397.

Paris, taught to speak, read, and write impeccable French, and became versant in even the most dogmatic aspects of Western protocol.

Education is a powerful tool for assimilation, and this new class of leaders essentially became French. They were encouraged by French colonial officials to shun local traditions, to use their local influence to orient the population more towards the West, i.e. France, and to develop various industries and necessary infrastructure. The so-called 'évolués' still yield a significant amount of influence in almost every aspect of Chadian life. For example, the influence of the 'évolués' is especially felt amongst Christian religious leaders in Chad.

The elite class that was created was an artificial creation due to the fact that the elite did not own the means of productions. The power conditionally acquired by this class of elite was granted to them not through some kind of cultural tradition, but through their position as the interface between traditional systems and the industrialized economic powers of the West. During this time, foreign contact meant access to wealth. Wealth, or at least comparative wealth, is power. The 'évolués' gained their status through economic means, by being more closely associated with the means of production than their compatriots. During the colonial era, foreign investors depended upon the elite to manage their affairs on the ground as well, a position that was perhaps economically favorable yet also served to socially alienate the elite from the bulk of the Chadian population. The elite's position gave them an influence on the colonial owners of the means of production and thus put them in a position of relative

power and created a new type of social stratification that varied from the traditional stratification.

In turn, it was the elite's position that could have allowed them to create and enhance economic relations in the external marketplace, but once independence was granted by the French in 1960 this class suddenly found themselves stripped of whatever power they once had. This readjustment in the political power structure shifted the elite to a position in society, one that removed the external marketplace from the national scene.

In colonial Chad, most formal schooling took place due to the efforts of European missionaries. Roman Catholic priests and nuns formed associations for children and took charge of planning and building schools, supplying teachers, mostly Western priests and nuns, as well creating plans for implementing the French policy of colonial assimilation. Christian missionaries were oftentimes the first contact many children had with the Occident.

Some Protestant missions existed as well; especially important denominations were the United Methodists and Presbyterians. Religious leaders of both Catholic and Protestant congregations, often come from an 'évolué' type background; the Archbishop of N'Djamena is a very influential leader, and he comes from such a background, as do the leaders of the United Methodist and Presbyterian denominations. The influence of 'évolués' was felt to a lesser extent in the Muslim population due to the lack of strong French social influence the in majority-Islamic areas.

Elikia M'Bokolo wrote, "The major event of social political history in French Equatorial Africa between 1940 and 1960 is effectively the emergence and the formation of a *petite bourgeoisie africaine*."<sup>14</sup> This invention of a *petite bourgeoisie africaine* in Chad had dual effects and served as both a point of unity and tension. Included in this elite group of young Chadian leaders were many more people from the South than from the North and Central areas of the country. This is due to the fact that in Chad much of the wealth is concentrated in agricultural exploits in Southern Chad. Thus, the French always had much more influence in the South than in the North. Many of the Southern peoples had adopted Christianity (mainly Roman Catholicism), as well as created a much more welcoming environment for the colonists. The next section will discuss the Islamic qualities of parts of Central and Eastern Chad that were largely neglected and had low levels of French colonial penetration.

### ***Regional Economic Disparity***

Since only economically profitable regions were highly colonized, French influence was higher in the South than in the North (See **Fig. 4**), there were also, as discussed above, many more schools in the South. Therefore, the majority of the educated Chadian population was southern thus creating a national imbalance in trained and educated populations. This fact served as another point of contention.

Before the late 1960s very few northerners received any formal schooling, and the few schools that did exist did not have a secular curriculum, but a

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<sup>14</sup> M'Bokolo, Elikia, "Forces Sociales et Ideologies Dans la Decolonisation de l'A.E.F.," *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1981, p 397.



religious one. Schools in the North were, and are, in many cases *madrassas* where the Qur'an is used to teach children to read and write classical Arabic under the tutelage of the local imam or marabou. Oftentimes, the imam, who in addition to leading the community in daily prayer and maintaining the local place of worship, is charged with the moral and scholastic formation of children. Therefore, the children receive an education inherently different than that of their peers attending French-run schools in the South.

This region of Chad is more closely associated with the Western Sudanese region of Darfur. Many of the same ethnic groups live on both sides of the Chado-Sudanese border and culturally, ecologically, and geographically these groups are very similar. Thus, there is a stronger cultural orientation towards Khartoum and the Sudan. The marginal land found in this region cannot support large populations and farming is limited to very small, irrigated plots.

As **Fig. 4** shows, the French divided basically into north/south divisions and classified the Northern half as 'Useless Chad' and the Southern half as 'Useful Chad.' This colonial classification demonstrates the neglect of Northern populations during the colonial era and the political tone concerning Northern populations. This map allows the reader to visualize the depth of French colonial penetration, approximate levels of education, and area of arable land.

This imbalance had disastrous effects on the Chadian population, and as Sam G. Amoo wrote, "Since independence, the benighted country has reaped from these roots a whirlwind of conflict precipitated by intractable interethnic

animosities and the incompatibility of existing subnationalism.”<sup>15</sup> This creation of an academically disenfranchised population served as a colonial legacy that continues to have important consequences despite many attempts at improving the education situation in the North.

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<sup>15</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005

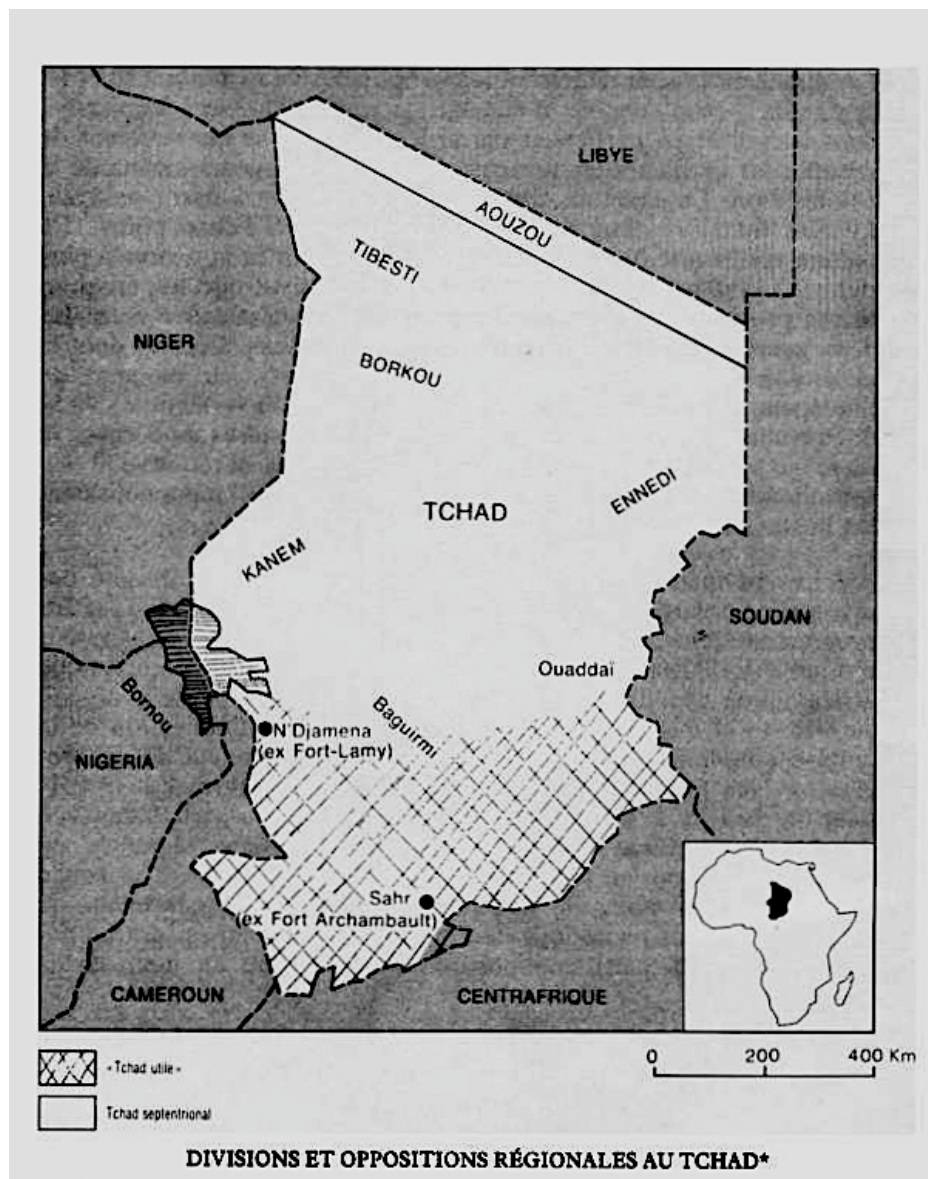


Fig. 4, The AEF era French eco-cultural division of Chad into *Tchad Utile* or Useful Chad and *Tchad septentrional* or Septentrional or Northern Chad.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Decalo, Samuel. "Chad: The Roots of Centre-Periphery Strife." *African Affairs*, Oxford University Press, Vol. 79, No. 317, Oct. 1980, 490-509.

### ***Political expression of a fragmented politico-economic landscape***

In 1959, François Tombalbaye, a Chadian politician of southern descent, an ethnic Sara, succeeded the famous Chadian politician Gabriel Lisette as head of the *Parti Progressive Tchadien* (PPT) or the Chadian Progressive Party.<sup>17</sup> The Chadian Progressive Party, composed principally of southerners, dominated Chadian politics during the late 1950s, which coincided with the ending of the Fourth French Republic creation of the Fifth. "The March 1957 elections gave the *Parti Progressive Tchadien* (PPT) alliance forty-seven seats out of sixty-five in the newly created Territorial Assembly: by the time the country became independent in 1960, Sara elements had acquired a dominant position in the government, bureaucracy, and the army."<sup>18</sup> With the creation of the Fifth Republic and the passing of a new constitution, new colonial territorial administration policies with a spirit of decolonization were written and thus changed the Chadian political situation into a more democratic and representative one.

The other major political party, the *Parti Progressive Tchadien's* rival party, the *Union Démocratique Tchadienne* (Chadian Democratic Union or UDT) was principally composed of Northern Muslims and held slightly different political views. Interestingly enough, the French had reason to suspect the PPT and the Sara of having some kinds of communist ties, perhaps due to feared or real Congolese influence in Southern Chad. At the time, across the African continent,

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<sup>17</sup> "François Ngarta Tombalbaye," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye), 05 December 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 32.

there were many political parties suspected to have some kind of communist sympathies, if not direct ties. Newly independent and developing Africa was a Cold War battlefield between Western and Soviet ideologies. Due to the PPT's penchant for militant nationalism and suspected communist proclivities, the French sympathized and actively supported the UDT.<sup>19</sup>

The existence of the 'évolué' political class angered many in Chadian society, and eventually led to political and social difficulties, even within the same ethnic groups. Many viewed the 'évolué' class as having disowned or cheated themselves and abandoned their true identities as Africans and Chadians, or in many cases as a member of a specific ethnic group. Many Chadians felt as though their best and brightest had been corrupted by the colonial power structure and were denying their heritage and traditions. This political and social elite's crisis of identity formed a wide political split in French Equatorial African "politics between the 'évolués' who became known by the masses as *mboundjou voko*, literally translated as 'white niggers,' and the mobilization of laborers, farmers, and urban workers."<sup>20</sup> This disdain for the 'Westernized' political class by the masses of the population, especially the urban workers, created a rift in Chadian society that was very difficult to bridge. Many Chadians saw this Westernization of the political elite as the decay and abandonment of tradition.

On August 11, 1960, France formally granted the Republic of Chad its independence, and François Tombalbaye was inaugurated as the Republic's first

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<sup>19</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 32.

<sup>20</sup> M'Bokolo, Elikia, "Forces Sociales et Ideologies Dans la Decolonisation de l'A.E.F.," *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1981, p 404.

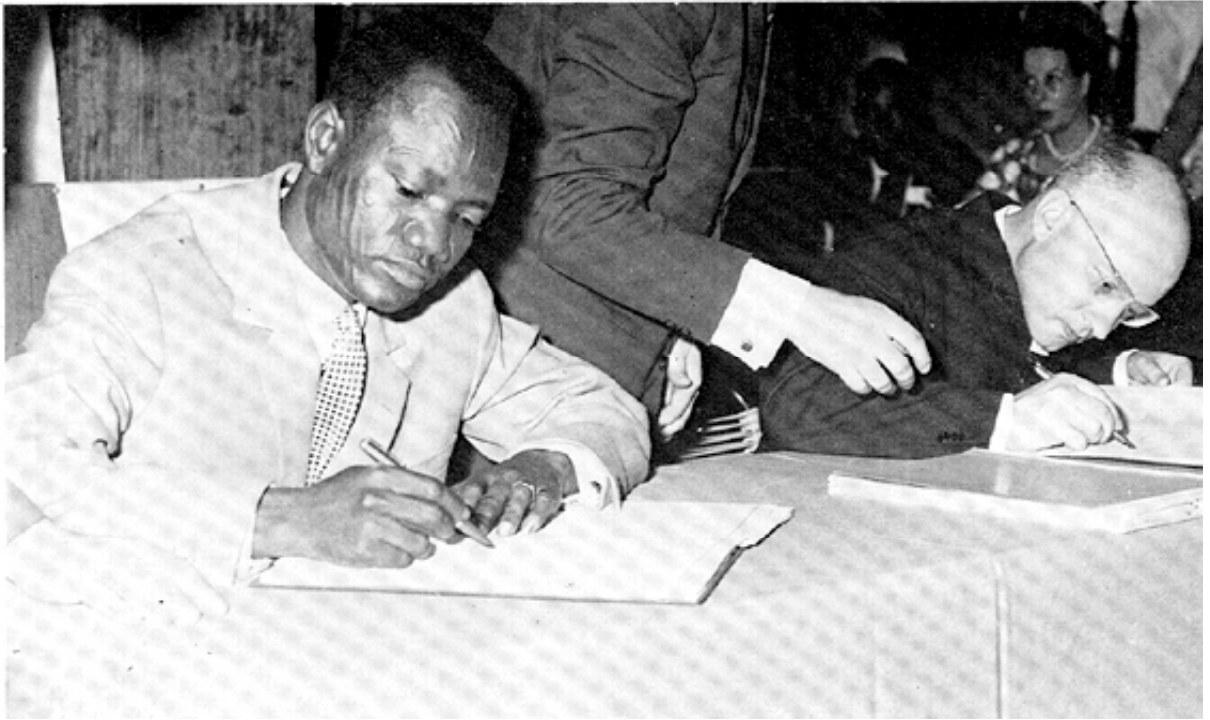
president (See **Fig. 5** and **Fig. 6**). As seen in **Fig. 5** and **Fig. 6**, Tombalbaye was respected and at independence had good relations with French colonial authorities. Tombalbaye was highly respected, and as the leader of the PPT and

“As a colonial legislator, Tombalbaye had managed to create a coalition of progressive forces from both the north and south of the country, isolating the more conservative Muslim factions in the center. It was hoped that he would continue to do this after independence, while creating the economic and political infrastructure in the vast, underdeveloped country of vastly disparate ethnic and religious groups.”<sup>21</sup>

In 1960, the year France granted independence to most of her African colonies, there were feelings across the African continent that a new day had dawned in sorts. Independence was Chad’s opportunity to embrace new and democratic ideals that it had never before known, much less been able to practice on its own. 1960 held much promise for Chad, and the Chadian people, when choosing Tombalbaye, believed they had chosen a man willing and capable to embrace new ideas of representative democracy as described to them by colonial authorities, and was ready to help pull Chad out of its miserable state of poverty.

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<sup>21</sup> “François Nguesso Tombalbaye,” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.



**Fig. 5, François Ngarta Tombalbaye and Jean Foyer at Chadian**

**Independence**

**August 11, 1960<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>22</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, Philippe. "Le Rituel et le Matériel."  
(<http://www.anthropologieenligne.com/pages/pageacA.html>). 15 April 2007.



**Fig. 6, François Tombalbaye, André Malraux, and Jean Foyer at the  
Proclamation of the Independence of the Republic of Chad, August 11,  
1960<sup>23</sup>**

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<sup>23</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, Philippe. "Le Rituel et le Matériel."  
(<http://www.anthropologieenligne.com/pages/pageacA.html>). 15 April 2007.



### III. FRANCOIS NGARTA TOMBALBAYE: THE EARLY YEARS

During the first months of the existence of the Republic of Chad, no drastic changes took place. Many French colonial officers remained in Chad working in the same capacities as they did before August 11, 1960. Chadian politicians assumed certain responsibilities, but in many cases were coached or directed by French officials as how to successfully operate a government. M'Bokolo described the first few moments of independence across the continent as "...superficial in the great majority of cases. The radicalism found in French Equatorial Africa was so ambiguous especially because all the political leaders and classes wanted to be as French as possible, yearning to be treated as wholly and entirely French and completely identified with the French colonial imperialism's ideology of assimilation."<sup>24</sup>

Independence found many countries in West Africa, Chad included, unsure of how to proceed. Many Chadian politicians had never before managed any kind of civil administration and were not familiar with many of the governmental and bureaucratic processes that allow Western countries to operate on a daily basis. Chadian leaders had received little if any training on necessary skills or concepts in public administration. For example, many national budgeting and finance tasks remained in French hands due to the lack of experience and expertise of local officials. When local officials did control the situation, they oftentimes were very undereducated for their positions and therefore incompetent to perform the duties required of them.

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<sup>24</sup> M'Bokolo, Elikia, "Forces Sociales et Ideologies Dans la Decolonisation de l'A.E.F.," *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1981, p 405.

Some of the most evident and powerful examples of continued French influence after independence across Francophone Africa were France's non-military power sources. The French, after 1960, continued financial support through its control of the *Zone Franc*, maintaining ties and ensuring friendly business environments for lucrative industries, especially oil in places like Gabon. But in Chad, cotton was the industry of choice, and CotonTchad, the government owned cotton exporter, became an incredibly prestigious and influential business in Chad. Also, just after independence, and in some cases still today, France maintained a very present role in the daily operations and functioning of many of its former colonies' governments due to historic ties, individual governments' requests for aid, especially of aid of a technical nature, and the French desire to retain some level of influence in the governing of its former colonies.<sup>25</sup>

Sarah Milburn, in her essay titled, "*Toujours la Chasse Gardée?* (Still the Exclusive Hunt?): French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Africa," wrote that, this is a cultural-economic phenomenon. The African franc zone, established well before the political independence of these countries was possibly the most consistent and penetrative legacy of transitional colonialism. It continued to provide the structure and financial security that allowed French companies, and companies from other nations to invest in Francophone Africa."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Milburn, Sarah S. "*Toujours la Chasse Gardée?*: French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Central Africa (c. 1970-1995)," Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rhe02/rhe02f.pdf>, 24 August 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

The French, in creating the *Zone Franc* created a currency directly linked to the French Franc, thus perpetuating dependency upon the former colonial power. This currency, the franc CFA, or franc *Colonies Françaises d'Afrique*, at its creation in 1945 was valued at one French franc (FF) per 1 Franc CFA.<sup>27</sup> The Franc CFA was devalued in 1948, as was the French franc, in accordance with the Bretton Woods Agreements signed in 1945 that linked the French franc to the American dollar, yet remained relatively equal to the French franc. In 1960, the franc CFA was devalued again, as was the French franc. It is interesting to note that the lack of real change of policies is epitomized in the acronyms used by the French and Francophone Africans alike, CFA.<sup>28</sup> Before independence, CFA was the acronym which stood for *Colonies Françaises d'Afrique*, or French colonies of Africa, but in 1960 the acronym CFA came to stand for *Communauté Financière d'Afrique*, or financial community of Africa. Currently, exchange rate of the franc CFA is linked to the Euro.

The creation of and French influence in the *Zone Franc* should not be considered a completely negative event. Although the *Zone Franc*, “perpetuates African dependence on France, [it] does so in a way that offers a real incentive to remain dependent, given the poverty and unreliable economies of many of the Zone’s less fortunate neighbors.”<sup>29</sup> The *Zone Franc* provided the former French colonies with a reliable currency based on a strong, rooted Western economy that was rapidly rebuilding after the disastrous effects of the Second World War

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<sup>27</sup> “CFA Franc, » [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franc\\_Zone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franc_Zone), 05 December 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Milburn, Sarah S. “*Toujours la Chasse Gardée?*: French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Central Africa (c. 1970-1995),” Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rhe02/rhe02f.pdf>, 24 August 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

(as did most of the developed world, the French saw unprecedented economic growth during the 1950s). The French economy stabilized rates of African inflation and in many cases kept the Franc CFA from collapsing. However, French investment in unsustainable and externally investing agriculture has continued to cripple efforts at rejuvenating national economies. While financial dependence is not ideal, it could be considered necessary for economies inexperienced in the international marketplace.

The first real obstacle to French influence in Chad under Tombalbaye's rule came in 1961 and 1962, when he decided to ban all opposition parties. Any political party that was not in alliance with the *Parti Progressif Tchadien* was simply not given the right to exist legally. Other political parties could not present candidates, hold official meetings, or publicly recruit members without fear of government brutality or retaliation. This move by Tombalbaye was a risky one that with various consequences that manifested themselves throughout his term as president of the Republic of Chad. In 1980, Sam Decalo wrote that "the origins of political decay go back two decades, to the abolition of competitive politics in 1961, and the wide scale purges of the mid 1960s."<sup>30</sup> This first abuse of power so early in Tombalbaye's presidency alarmed the country as well as international observers because by banning all political opposition, Tombalbaye set the tone of independent Chadian government.

It is interesting to explore what can be learned through examining Tombalbaye's leadership style and to try to ascertain which influences affected

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<sup>30</sup> Decalo, Samuel, "Chad: The Roots of Centre-Periphery Strife," *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 317, Oct. 1980, p 491.

him. Sarah Milburn offers an interesting perspective in stating that “all of these presidents [of Central African Francophone countries] benefited from the single biggest constraint which Gaullism placed on the rest of the French political system: the centralized, independent, autonomous strength of the French presidency.”<sup>31</sup>

Tombalbaye made an incredible display of power within his first year, which in turn polarized the country, dividing many different interests. Many African presidents of the independence era, and even still today do indeed have Charles de Gaulle to thank as their model for a president. It was de Gaulle, the president of France at the time of independence, who was looked to as an example of what a president of a country should be and how a president should act.

Biographically, many of these new African presidents fit Charles de Gaulle’s description: a former military leader who led the country and its people through great national crises who later became a politician. Charles de Gaulle was one of the most respected national leaders in the whole of French history, yet many times his use of power, especially to advance what he considered to be the most important of national interests pushed the limits of the traditional diplomatic status quo. De Gaulle was a strong president whose actions not only affected France and the French people, but the rest of the Francophone world as well. Perhaps Milburn’s conclusions must be re-examined and questioned. Was

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<sup>31</sup> Milburn, Sarah S. “*Toujours la Chasse Gardée?*: French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Central Africa (c. 1970-1995),” Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rhe02/rhe02f.pdf>, 24 August 2005.

de Gaulle's example beneficial to the Chadian experience given Tombalbaye's emulation of that example produced so much strife?

Tombalbaye's institution of a one party state has been termed very African by many political scientists and international political observers due to his use of force and strategic violence to accomplish political goals.<sup>32</sup> Across the continent, presidents of newly formed countries were exploring various techniques and methods of ruling, and once it was shown that the individual presidents could oftentimes direct their countries as they pleased, many responded by stripping away their people's political and human rights. Tombalbaye used his presidential powers to intimidate and eliminate his political and social opposition by the means of assassination and incarceration.<sup>33</sup>

#### **IV. ETHNIC CONFLICT IN THE MIDST OF AFRICANIZATION AND ATTEMPTS TO FORGE A NATIONAL IDENTITY**

In 1963, the Chadian political and security scene became very active due to Tombalbaye's goals or wishes to distance himself from the former colonial influence of 'Mother France.' Tombalbaye created a form of spoils system that institutionalized the preferential treatment of those of southern ethnic descent, i.e. Sara, Ngambaye, Moundang, etc., especially Sara. Tombalbaye put a system of national change in place that he termed an *Africanization* of policy, or *Chadditude*.

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<sup>32</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

As mentioned earlier, the early 1960s saw a blossoming of African philosophical explorations of negritude and black/African identity. These philosophical explorations inspired a new political philosophy called *Africanization*. When faced with the opportunities of political independence, leaders across the African continent, leaders sought to purge new national systems of European colonial influence. Ideas of more authentic or organic state systems began to emerge and at least gained nominal political support in Chad.

Using this plan of *Chadditude*, “[Tombalbaye] began nationalizing the civil service, replacing French administrators with locals.”<sup>34</sup> These new governmental officials held posts throughout the country, and many northerners did not appreciate the fact that southerners had come and taken away prized and coveted jobs in the government bureaucracy. Northerners were again ruled by people who were not of their own ethnicity or religion, and in many cases did not even speak the same language and they did. “A series of incidents convinced this population [northerners] that their situation under Tombalbaye would be no better than it was under France: colonial rule had simply shifted to the South.”<sup>35</sup>

Tombalbaye’s new policy of *Chadditude* included the nationalization of the government posts, were the armed forces. Tombalbaye named many Sara elite as officers in the newly formed independent Chadian military. “Recalling the injuries and humiliations that their ancestors had suffered at the hands of the northern Muslims who until the early twentieth century had raided and sold them into slavery, the Black administrators of independent Chad savored their new

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<sup>34</sup> ‘François Ngarta Tombalbaye,’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

power and ruled with brutal vengeance.”<sup>36</sup> This policy succeeded in rupturing some times with the French, yet also firmly kept in place the export oriented economy created under colonial regimes.

The army was redistributed around the country which meant that many Chadian soldiers of southern descent suddenly found themselves in military bases in the far north regions of Borkou, Ennedi, and Tibesti, more specifically in the towns of Fada, Faya-Largeau, and Bardaï. These soldiers reportedly conducted themselves poorly and harassed local populations and nomadic peoples. Sam Amoo wrote that “The venality and oppression of the Sara administrators and behavior of a poorly paid and poorly led army in the North were other major factors that sparked the conflict.”<sup>37</sup>

The real source of contention however may not have necessarily been Tombalbaye’s was institution of this policy of the “Sara-ization” of bureaucratic posts, but the fact that he levied substantial taxes to pay for this new system. To fund his nationalization initiatives, Tombalbaye presented a tax increase that he dubbed the “National Loan,” which he believed would appeal to and cultivate Chadians’ new sense of national pride and motivate the country to appreciate these new programs, especially in the South. This was not the case. Many Chadians simply saw the “National Loan” as a sharp tax increase by an incompetent N’Djamena government.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> ‘François Ngarta Tombalbaye,’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.



Violent riots first broke in cities in the center of Chad and quickly spread throughout the country. Tombalbaye could no longer keep control of the situation, so he requested that French forces intervene to reinstate order.<sup>39</sup> Chad was quickly disintegrating and lapsing into violent regional uprisings due to the perceived lack of an effective and responsible power structure, as well as the lack of any kind of real national security force. Many Chadians did not see the government possessing the authority or the means necessary to establish complete and effective national rule. Due to both a lack of resources and a lack of training, the national army was oftentimes incapable of providing a real source of security.

This lack of resources was only compounded by the ideological confusion that existed in Chad between the forces of traditional Chadian political structures and political paradigms and the imperially imposed nation-state paradigm. This conflict of paradigms and lack of clear national vision critically inhibited national success. During this time period, and arguably at present, this confusion of political and national systems and sources of political power makes the entirety of Chadian political life murky.

Also, ethnic hatred began to flame the fires of destruction more than ever, especially amongst the traditionally opposing North/South, Muslim/Christian groups. Economic difficulties presented populations with stress and that stress was manifested through increased ethnic tension. To the French, these riots were signs of a needed continued military presence in Chad—continued military

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<sup>39</sup> Milburn, Sarah S. "*Toujours la Chasse Gardée?*: French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Central Africa (c. 1970-1995)," Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rhe02/rhe02f.pdf>, 24 August 2005.

force that also served to lend a morally legitimizing force with which to confront critics of French colonial policies. "France's speed of response and flexibility remained high so long as the decision making capacity for African intervention remained closely tied to the French president and the Elysée's Office for African and Malagasy Affairs."<sup>40</sup>

In a larger scope, the 1960s saw massive global and social change. Imperialism was ending, Europe's hegemony was clearly over, and the United States and the Soviet Union were deeply engaged in a cold war for global dominance. The world's economy was still reeling from the exponential growth experienced in the 1950s and was quickly becoming increasingly interconnected and globalized, reaching out to new markets such as Chad. These global economic opportunities were hard for Tombalbaye to resist and while he desperately wanted to avoid contact with the global marketplace and Chad's former colonizer, the pull of capitalism was hard to resist. Traditional lifeways were politically useful but economic promise was more powerful and attractive.

Leaders harnessed the power of returning to tradition, the sentimentality of former traditions that appeal to basic instinct, but at the end of the day leaders must find some source of income and Tombalbaye understood that for Chad, that source of income was unfortunately or fortunately found by participating in the international system. This is important because it demonstrates the ideological divide between two political paradigms that Tombalbaye faced. Perhaps ideological campaigns that stress the importance of tradition and a return to

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<sup>40</sup> Milburn, Sarah S. "*Toujours la Chasse Gardée?*: French Power and Influence in Late Twentieth Century Francophone Central Africa (c. 1970-1995)," Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/rhe02/rhe02f.pdf>, 24 August 2005.

largely abandoned cultural practices do not advance national agendas but serve to fragment already fragile societies.

This was only the first major incident in which the French would intercede at Tombalbaye's request to reinstate order and calm. Even with French intervention, Tombalbaye insisted upon a return to tradition and even forced a return to traditional dress. As shown in **Fig. 7**, many Chadians were forced to dress as was common at the turn of the twentieth century.



**Fig. 7, A Postcard from the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century of a Stereotypical Sara from Northern Cameroon, near the Chadian Border<sup>41</sup>**

<sup>41</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, Philippe. "Le Rituel et le Matériel." <http://www.anthropologieenligne.com/pages/pageacA.html>. 15 April 2007.

## V. NATIONAL RESPONSES TO CONTINUED POLICIES OF AFRICANIZATION

Tombalbaye's policies of *Africanization* created unrest within the Chadian population many of whom, although not enthusiastic about external control or governance, preferred French governance rather than the newly independent Chadian one. This situation must be taken in context. Decolonization was a response to a changing world order that was forced to conform to the outcome of the Second World War. Therefore, Tombalbaye and other African leaders' *Africanization* processes were more than simple efforts to return to the comforts of some kind of pre-colonial tradition, they were a refusal to become a subservient nation in a post-war, post-colonial power structure. This refusal to fully participate in the Western-created world order and to explore its own notions of civics was a strong stand and cry for dignity and respect—as a country with its own traditions and values different from those of the colonial power. Along with other African leaders during the great blossoming of African philosophy and culture of the early 1960s, Tombalbaye decided to take what he believed to be a stand for his nation and not give into the economic agenda of Western imperial powers.

What is interesting about Tombalbaye's refusal to participate in the world system is that although he tried desperately to purge the Chadian system of French influence, he was forced to ask for financial and military aid. This reliance upon the French in times of need perpetuated the colonial paradigm and kept Chad and the Chadian people from being able to fully become independent.

With French intervention, policies of *Africanization* and *Chadditude* were held back. Also, perhaps most importantly, French intervention is morally disillusioning for the newly independent Chadian state. The fact that there is a need for foreign troops to intervene in Chadian domestic politics makes the Chadian feel as though independence has not really changed much. The desire to return to pre-capitalist lifeways cannot face the challenges posed by the colonially imposed export-oriented economy and hopes of wealth attainment by participating in the Western system.

Many things were happening in the newly independent Chad. While ideologically the African continent was experiencing a renaissance of sorts, Chad was beginning the slip into increased levels of ethnic strife and societal fragmentation. In 1963, in response to rioting across the country, Tombalbaye dissolved the National Assembly and assumed complete and total control of the country; an act which led to further discontentment across the country as well as within the Sara elite. In 1964, further intra-Sara fragmentation and increased riots weakened Tombalbaye's rule over the country, as well as his influence in the South, upon which he relied heavily in the past.

In Tombalbaye's efforts at Africanization, he used his own ethnic identity as a major source of his motivation and power. François Tombalbaye was a Sara. The Sara people are the largest single ethnic group in Chad and constitute approximately thirty percent of the total population, or approximately three million people<sup>42</sup>. The Sara are found in the southern part of Chad and the northern parts

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<sup>42</sup> Azevedo, Mario. "Power and Slavery in Central Africa: Chad (1890-1925)." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 67, No. 3, Autumn 1982, p 198.

of the Central African Republic and Cameroon (See Fig. 7), especially in the prefectures of Moyen-Chari, Logone Orientale, Logone Occidentale, and parts of Tandjilé.<sup>43</sup> They are a dominating force in Chadian national politics, culture, and economics, and the southern city of Sarh, formerly known as Fort Archambault, was a major administrative center under the French colonial government. It served as the headquarters of many Western non-governmental organizations working in Chad.

In October 1965, riots broke out in the central Chadian area of Mangalme. These riots began as a chieftaincy dispute amongst the Moubi people of the Guéra prefecture in central Chad and grew steadily, first becoming a larger dispute amongst the Moubi peoples of different villages, and then, due to government and therefore perceived Sara intervention, a Moubi-Sara confrontation<sup>44</sup>. The Sara became involved when Tombalbaye decided to use the existing chief, a pawn of Tombalbaye's government, to extract additional taxes and governmental contributions from Moubi villagers.

As mentioned earlier, one must question the effectiveness of the nation-state paradigm in Chad. The overlay of multiple systems of governance is potentially very confusing. It is difficult to find the various sources of governmental authority and even more difficult to distinguish to which authority is

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<sup>43</sup> Azevedo, Mario. "Power and Slavery in Central Africa: Chad (1890-1925)." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 67, No. 3, Autumn 1982, p 198.

<sup>44</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 35.

owed more allegiance. Traditional systems of government at times worked with the new 'national' government, oftentimes in some kind of venal situation.<sup>45</sup>

In Chad, even today, traditional chiefs and sultans yield an incredible amount of power at the local and regional levels. Depending on the traditions of the specific ethnic group and its culture, the local hierarchy is formed differently, but across the country, especially in the North and center, where neither the French nor the independent Chadian governments have ever truly penetrated, traditional leaders are very important. Oftentimes traditional leaders serve as contacts for the regional and national governments, especially concerning taxation, agricultural development, and census enumeration. Local leaders are even sometimes given a percentage of the taxes paid in their districts. This overlay of systems managed to deteriorate local morale and confuse many in Chadian society.

At times this relationship between the traditional leader and the national government serves as a point of conflict between local populations and their traditional power structure because a third party (the national government) manipulates certain aspects of local life that is foreign to the system. The traditional leader introduces something new that strays from traditional practices and serves to benefit the national government. The traditional leader is influenced by the nation-state situation in ways that he formerly was not, and

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<sup>45</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005



traditional modes of governance are not always equipped with ways to cope with this new variety.

In the 1960s with the start of the “National Loan”, the fact that some traditional leaders were given a percentage of the taxes paid in certain districts motivated local and traditional leaders to engage in corrupt practices such as bribery and extortion. These corrupt practices in the 1960s and today serve as a major source of inter and intra ethnic conflict. Internal resistance to national homogenization into a single, cohesive, national unit serves to also pose significant problems for national leaders—problems that cannot be resolved through force.

In 1965, the chieftaincy dispute amongst the Moubi in the Guéra prefecture served as inspiration for more widespread disorder, especially after Tombalbaye sent in government soldiers, mostly ethnic Saras, to quell the rebellion. The soldiers brutally repressed the riots. Over five hundred deaths occurred as a result.<sup>46</sup> The “bloody repression of the Mangalme riots resulted in the spread of dissidence in neighboring communities”<sup>47</sup> and set the mood across the country, especially the North and center for a wide scale rebellion. “Rebellion gained momentum slowly in the wake of numerous local eruptions involving specific abuses and humiliations by agents of the state against rural communities.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> ‘ François Ngarta Tombalbaye,’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>47</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 35.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

1965 also saw the extension of Tombalbaye's nationalization of the civil services. In the far North, French colonial administrators and civil servants who had been in the region since the colonial period administered the regions of Borku, Ennedi, and Tibesti. The far north has traditionally been a very hard place for any government officials to administer. There are numerous nomadic groups who are fiercely independent and insist on continuing their autonomous lifestyle. Also, the ethnic groups in the North had traditionally been rather violent peoples, competing for scarce resources in the face of harsh environmental conditions. Tombalbaye hesitated for two years before replacing the French officials because he must have known that the northerners would resist, and probably resist violently.

In the far north town of Bardaï, in the northeast region of Borkou, near the Libyan and Algerian borders, violence erupted in September of 1965. Bardaï is home to a large military base and therefore there were many Sara officials and soldiers, and then, when the French officials were replaced with southerners, the people protested. The local people, the Toubous, were left to the mercy of the Sara. Sam Amoo described the situation as, "Maladministration, caused mostly by the corruption, insensitivity, and brutality of Sara military and civilian officials made the B.E.T. (the regions Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti) erupt in rebellion."<sup>49</sup>

Many people of the Derde ethnicity, who also lived in the far North, did not react the same violent way some Toubou did. "The brutality and humiliation of Sara rule prompted the flight of the Derde and the Toubou to Libya while sons of

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<sup>49</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005.

the Sara led the insurrection in the North.”<sup>50</sup> The Derde simply left Chad, crossed the Libyan border, and began to organize political movements in southern Libya to combat Tombalbaye’s forces. Eventually, due to increased intra-Sara strife, many Sara, in both the government bureaucracy and the military, became increasingly dissatisfied with Tombalbaye and began to sympathize with rebel groups. Among the most discontent were the Sara soldiers stationed in the North or Center where much of the violence was taking place. These intra-Sara feuds began to simmer, but not before more organized rebel groups formed in the North, as well as in southern Libya.

The Toubou people are a very important ethnic group in Chad, not necessarily due to size, but due to geographic location and history. Samuel Decalo described the Toubou as following: “In the extremely sparsely populated desert northern half of Chad reside the semi-nomadic and fiercely independent Toubou, since 1966 the back bone of the rebellion against N’Djamena.”<sup>51</sup>

The Toubou people are basically divided into two different branches: the Teda of Tibesti, and the Daze of Ennedi and Borkou.<sup>52</sup> These two branches can be further subdivided into many different clans and factions, but in total, the Toubou numbered approximately 160,000 in the mid 1960s. Historically, the Toubou have been very independent and resisted any form of real or perceived foreign control or subservience. The Toubou put forth one of the most violent

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<sup>50</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Decalo, Samuel, “Chad: The Roots of Centre-Periphery Strife,” *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 317, Oct. 1980, p 493.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

and fierce resistances against French colonialism, and have in the past been very wary of outside influence and have always been important and influential in forming rebel movements against outside forces (i.e. French colonial forces, Chadian national forces, former African imperial forces).

Due to the geographic location of the Toubou, they have been able to control North/South trade in a very effective way. Much trade took and takes place between the peoples of Libya and Chad, especially between the Ouaddaï peoples and the traditional Saharan trade center and oasis city of Kufra in southern Libya. Being in control of this important trade route, and being in control of water resources in the harsh Saharan environment has forced traders to rely on the blessings of Toubou leaders while crossing Toubou territory, which is basically the Aouzou Strip in northern Chad.

For centuries, the Toubou have controlled relations between the peoples of the South and the peoples of Libya. Their geographic location and skills in the desert have allowed them to manage trade and contact between cultures and therefore their political influence in Chadian-Libyan relations is very strong.

## **VI. NEIGHBORING NATIONS, LIBYAN INTERVENTION, AND THE FORMATION OF FROLINAT (National Liberation Front)**

Wide spread violence and civil unrest attracted the attention both militarily and diplomatically of many of Chad's neighbors which affected the very top of Chadian government. "Intense pressure from the Central African Republic, Sudan, Algeria, Libya, and Nigeria contributed in no small way to the proliferation

of factional splits at the top [of the Chadian government].”<sup>53</sup> Chad’s neighbors had much reason to be concerned.

The Central African Republic, as well as its own unstable government, had a long shared history with Chad. A large number of Sara inhabit the Northern regions of the Central African Republic. Increased intra-Sara conflict and factionalism in Chad affected Sara peoples in the Central African Republic, and the government in Bangui was highly concerned with the security risks this increased tension posed.

The Sudanese government also had very legitimate security concerns. Chad and the Sudan share a very long and porous border and with overlapping populations of various ethnic groups. The increased insecurity, especially in the sensitive and historically influential Ouaddaï region worried officials in Khartoum that the violence could spread across the border, or the rebel groups would retreat to the Darfur region of Sudan to organize. Algeria was also concerned about violence in Chad spilling over its borders and into the desert Saharan regions of southeastern Algeria along its borders with Libya.

Nigeria, and its Lagos based government, is arguably the most influential government and economic power in West Africa, if not continent-wide. Nigeria was somewhat concerned about the violence and disorder in Chad for the sake of regional stability, but was more concerned about the security and authority of the Chadian government due to the need to maintain productive relations to

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<sup>53</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 35.

enforce policy concerning Lake Chad and its water resources. Northern Nigeria depends upon water from Lake Chad for the needs of many of its citizens.

Out of all the foreign countries mentioned, Libya was probably the most involved in the situation. Many Toubou and Derde had fled to southern Libya to organize rebel movements, and in the late 1960s, the Libyan leader, Moammar Kadafi, saw this Chadian instability as an opportunity to advance Libyan interests and eventually as a time to annex the Aouzou Strip in northern Chad due to the belief, later proven to be false, that uranium deposits existed there.

“The most prominent movement of this period was the *Front de Liberation Nationale du Tchad* (FROLINAT) or National Liberation Front of Chad, based in the Sudan.”<sup>54</sup> FROLINAT was a very factional Chadian rebel movement formed in northern Chad in 1966 and was led by Ibrahim Abatcha, whose death in 1968 only served to further divide FROLINAT partisans and created a variety of warlords, movements, and animosities.<sup>55</sup>

FROLINAT had extensive ties to the Libyan dictator Moammar Kadafi for two reasons:

First, the Libyans, to trade with their extensive networks in the Ouaddaï and Batha regions of central and eastern Chad, had to pass through the Toubou on their way from Kufra, and thus depended on the blessing and good graces of the Toubou to allow them passage on the narrow Saharan highways of northern

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<sup>54</sup> “François Ngarta Tombalbaye,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye), 05 December 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 35.

Chad<sup>56</sup>. Second, during the mid 1960s, a new leader emerged, Oueddei Goukouni, a Toubou, whose prominence gained through work with the FROLINAT catapulted him to national fame in the late 1970s and early 1980s<sup>57</sup>. Goukouni actually ruled Chad for a short time during 1982-1983.

Due to wide spread disturbances and disorder in the North and center of Chad, Tombalbaye felt forced to request French intervention, "citing treaties the two countries had signed at independence."<sup>58</sup> His own military forces were unequipped, poorly trained, and lacked the sheer manpower to effectively quell the mass rebellion taking place in the North. The French however, refused to intervene completely on Tombalbaye's terms, and agreed to intervention only if Tombalbaye agreed to the implementation of a French designed civil and military reform mission formulated to relieve ethnic tensions.<sup>59</sup>

The French reform mission of the late 1960s had four main goals: to alleviate inter-ethnic conflict, to retrain the army, to purge and reform Tombalbaye's administration, and to review unpopular laws and taxes.<sup>60</sup> There were many unpopular laws that Tombalbaye had arbitrarily made national policy. For example, Tombalbaye, for a certain period of time, outlawed the use of Western, i.e. French, given names. For example, a Chadian named Fabrice, a French given name, could no longer be known by that name and instead had to

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<sup>56</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 38. Ibid, 38.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> 'François Ngarta Tombalbaye,' ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

adopt a new, traditionally African, name. The French played a primarily defensive role, a military holding operation to keep the peace while Tombalbaye was to go back and change previously written unpopular laws and rewrite national policy.

The major change, and one of the changes that pleased Chadians most with the French reform mission was the re-evaluation of the taxation process and a review of the taxes imposed. "The taxes and laws imposed arbitrarily by Tombalbaye were to be rescinded, and the country's traditional sultans had their role as tax collectors, for which they received ten percent of the income, restored."<sup>61</sup> Traditional leaders were pleased with the new policy, or rather a return to former practices, and therefore were more obligated to restore some sort or form of order in their own regions to the best of their ability. Again, the beneficial nature of this change is controversial due to the overlay of multiple paradigms of governance. Traditional modes of governance were manipulated by the new nation-state mode of governance.

In 1969, these reforms continued. Elections were held to try to purge some of the administration and National Assembly. This new launching of a gradual process of societal and economic liberalization held many promises, but despite the release of over five hundred political prisoners, few things changed.<sup>62</sup> François Tombalbaye, who now insisted upon being called his traditional Sara name, Ngarta, because of his disdain for French colonialism and its remains, was the only candidate on the presidential ballot. Although the French reforms

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<sup>61</sup> ' François Ngarta Tombalbaye,' ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



attempted to solve some of the national problems, there were some policies that Tombalbaye refused to change.

In the military, efforts were made to include ethnicities that had been earlier ignored or marginalized, especially the Muslim Goranes, from the Guéra region. In early 1971 Tombalbaye even admitted to the *Parti Progressif Tchadien* (PPT) majority congress that he had made mistakes in the past and wanted to take steps to correct those mistakes.<sup>63</sup> “Order seemed to have been restored, and France withdrew its troops from the country.”<sup>64</sup> Increased governmental and economic liberalization aided the establishment of some kind of peace.

This new era of relative peace and liberalization lasted until late 1971 when it came to a sudden stop due to the uncovering of a coup with alleged ties to Moammar Kadafi, as well as other Libyan forces.<sup>65</sup> In response, Tombalbaye immediately severed relations with Libya and entered a new era of paranoia and personal insecurity which translated into larger problems for the Chadian people.<sup>66</sup> “In return, Kadafi granted formal recognition and aid to what remained of the FROLINAT opposition to Tombalbaye.”<sup>67</sup> Tombalbaye then began rightfully suspecting the higher echelons of Sara in the military of defection and

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<sup>63</sup> François Ngarta Tombalbaye,” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005.

<sup>67</sup> “François Ngarta Tombalbaye,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye), 05 December 2005.

participating in FROLINAT conspiracies and schemes.<sup>68</sup> To curb what he thought to be disloyalty among the Sara, he introduced the policy of the *yondo* initiation ceremony (See **Fig. 8**). It was made obligatory for all civil servants between the ages of sixteen and fifty and “from mid 1973 to April 1974, an estimated 3,000 southern civil servants, including two ministers and one colonel went through the ordeal.”<sup>69</sup> This shift to pre-capitalist life-ways demonstrates disapproval with the imposed system and a desire to return to pre-colonial traditions.

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<sup>68</sup> François Ngarta Tombalbaye,” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>69</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 33.



**Fig. 8, A Sara from Southern Chad displaying the scarring done during the  
*Yondo*<sup>70</sup>**

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<sup>70</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, Philippe. "Le Rituel et le Matériel."  
(<http://www.anthropologieenligne.com/pages/pageacA.html>). 15 April 2007.

## VII. Tombalbaye's Increased Fear and Return à *Nouveau* to the Policy of Africanization

As Tombalbaye's regime became more fearful of coup attempts and external manipulative forces, he increased governmental emphasis on his internal policies, i.e. *Chadditude*. To increase national support for domestic policies, Tombalbaye harkened back to traditional Sara rituals to appeal to the politically powerful Sara base and to help purge Chadian politics of foreign influence. Thus, *Yondo* was introduced.

"*Yondo* was essentially borrowed from a particular ethnic [Sara] subgroup,"<sup>71</sup> and was held every seven years.<sup>72</sup> All non Muslim civil servants were forced to retreat to southern villages every seven years to conduct various induction ceremonies that were essentially supposed to build community, mark the transition into manhood, and enhance the individual's perception of tradition and community. For men, many *yondo* ceremonies included hunting, the ritual scarification of the forehead, cheeks, and chin, as well as detailed instruction on traditional religious practices. For many women, the *yondo* rites included circumcision.<sup>73</sup> Understandably, "resistance to initiation also brought the crystallization of intra-Sara antagonisms along clanic and regional lines."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 33.

<sup>72</sup> Azevedo, Mario. "Power and Slavery in Central Africa: Chad (1890-1925)." *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 67, No. 3, Autumn 1982, p 202.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 33.

On a larger scale, the *yondo* rites had massive implications in national politics that Tombalbaye probably could not have predicted. Lemarchand even dared to say, “What brought intra-Sara tensions to a head was Tombalbaye’s decision, in the name of authenticity, to impose the *yondo* initiation ceremony on all Sara males between the ages of sixteen and fifty and make the rite of passage compulsory for anyone seeking admission to the civil service (teachers included), the government, and the higher echelons of the armed forces.”<sup>75</sup> “From mid 1973 to April 1974, an estimated 3,000 southern civil servants, including two ministers and one colonel went through the ordeal.”<sup>76</sup>

In the South, Tombalbaye had increased problems despite popular support. In response to violent student riots, Tombalbaye replaced his very popular Chief of Staff, Jacques Doumro, with the Colonel Félix Malloum.<sup>77</sup> Tombalbaye discouraged any practices of Christianity and attempted to purge the country of Christian influences by banning all missionaries.<sup>78</sup> Tombalbaye saw his power structure crumbling around him as well as the Chadian people. In the early 1970s, Chad, like many of its neighbors in the Sahel region, suffered from a drought that brought the country to its knees. Chadians were starving, angry, and desperate, and felt that the government in N’Djamena was not doing enough to promote economic and social development.

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<sup>75</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 33.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> ‘François Ngarta Tombalbaye,’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

Tombalbaye, in a fit of paranoia, rescinded the amnesty previously granted to political prisoners, and “by the end of 1972, over 1,000 political prisoners had been arrested.”<sup>79</sup> Also, in 1972, Tombalbaye fired his new Chief of Staff, Felix Malloum, along with other influential and prominent *Parti Progressif Tchadien* officials for involvement in the alleged “Black Sheep Plot.” In the “Black Sheep Plot,” Tombalbaye accused Sara government leaders of using traditional forms of magic and witchcraft to curse him. The conspiracy was termed the “Black Sheep Plot,” because black sheep were allegedly sacrificed during the traditional rituals.<sup>80</sup>

This response struck to the core of many Chadians because Tombalbaye was removing himself from the privileged role of an ‘évolué’ or member of the social elite who were supposed to suppress all traditional forms of superstitious behavior. Tombalbaye’s return to traditional behavior served to alienate the Chadian social elite who felt that the president should not be concerned with what they considered to be witchcraft, whereas many Chadians of a more average socio-economic status believed Tombabaye’s return to tradition was insincere and too late.

In response to the obvious unsettling and fragmentation, Tombalbaye disbanded the *Parti Progressif Tchadien* and formed a new party, the National Movement for Social and Cultural Revolution, or the MNRCS. Under this banner, Tombalbaye further increased his policies of *Africanization*, even bringing back some of the laws that had been done away with during the French reforms of

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<sup>79</sup> François Ngarta Tombalbaye,” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

1968-69. Even the name of the capital, known previously as Fort-Lamy, was changed to N'Djamena to reflect the return to an increased influence of traditional southern ways and the abolition of past colonial influences.<sup>81</sup>

1973 brought more problems for Tombalbaye, as well as the Chadian nation. In 1973, Libyan leader Moammar Kadafi annexed the Aouzou Strip of northern Chad through a secret deal with Tombalbaye. Kadafi believed there to be uranium in the desert sands of far northern Chad, and Tombalbaye simply wanted to rid himself, as well as his government, of the Libyan issue and end Libyan support of the remaining factions of the FROLINAT.<sup>82</sup>

Once the nation learned the news that Tombalbaye had traded the Aouzou Strip to Libya in return for an end to the harassment and active support of the downfall of Tombalbaye's own regime, many were ready for action. This move spurred conflicts between influential FROLINAT leaders such as Hissein Habré and Oueddei Goukouni added to the internal government conflict, and increased intra-Sara conflict.<sup>83</sup> Many historians regard this move as very important; "whether viewed from a diplomatic, political, or military standpoint, the Libyan annexation of Aouzou must be regarded as Kadafi's greatest coup, and as one of the most consequential events in the history of Libyan penetration in Northern Chad."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> François Ngarta Tombalbaye," ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.

<sup>82</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 38.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

After the events the Aouzou annexation and the consequential internal political fall-out, Tombalbaye knew that he was basically holding onto power with all his might and probably did not have much time left. Chad was in a dire economic condition due to more droughts. In 1974, a new program of forcing people, especially in the South, to 'volunteer' in an effort to increase cotton production served to further fragment southern society and Sara support. By the end of 1974, Tombalbaye had essentially lost total support and was ruling only through sheer force and personal will.

In April 1975, a coup was attempted and several important military and political officials were arrested for conspiring to overthrow the government. In response to the arrests, a group of soldiers killed François Ngarta Tombalbaye on April 13, 1975 and installed the famous Félix Malloum, another Sara whose political motives were precipitated by the *yondo* crisis, as president.<sup>85</sup> Malloum rose to power by capitalizing on the unpopularity of the mandatory *yondo* and sought to establish a new and different government that focused on a more national rather than Southern agenda.

## **VIII. Conclusion: Inter and Intra Ethnic Conflict and the Demise of a Government**

What happened in Chad after its independence in 1960 is an interesting example of how both inter and intra ethnic conflict can serve as both the source of power as well as the Achilles tendon of a president and his government. Also,

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<sup>85</sup> 'François Ngarta Tombalbaye,' ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois\\_Tombalbaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Tombalbaye)). 05 December 2005.



it is an example of how one ethnic group's culture can aid in a ruler's own downfall as Sam Amoo stated, it was the "Sara tendency for fragmentation" that led to a rise in intra-Sara conflict that eventually led to later coups"<sup>86</sup> and Tombalbaye's eventual fall.

René Lemarchand wrote that in Chad, "basically a two-fold process of interaction suggests itself: while ethno-factional rivalries within the state have undoubtedly contributed to its demise, the resulting vacuum has further accelerated the trend toward societal fragmentation; moreover, while this situation encouraged intervention from the outside, the penetration of the Chadian arena by external forces has created the issues and external linkages around which further splits have emerged."<sup>87</sup>

This history of societal fragmentation continues to this day to have disastrous effects on the Chadian government, political system, judicial system, and the Chadian people in general. Tombalbaye, with the help of political strategists, set some form of precedence and the entire national tone of divisive policies, and the use of manipulative, nepotistic systems of advancement favoring specific ethnic groups.

When a country is very politically sensitive and vulnerable period of transition, just as the Republic of Chad was in the 1960s, a leader can seize political, economic, and social power and wield that power in ways that either can build unity, a sense of national identity, thus averting total societal fragmentation.

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<sup>86</sup> Amoo, Sam G. *Foundations of Regional Peacekeeping: The OAU in Chad, 1977-1982*, The Carter Center, 1995, Columbia International Affairs Online, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/ams02/ams02.pdf>, 02 December 2005.

<sup>87</sup> Lemarchand, Rene, *Chad: The Misadventures of the North-South Dialectic*, African Studies Review, the African Studies Association, Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1986, p 33.

Or, conversely, a leader of a country during its most vulnerable periods of transition can capitalize on the power available to substantiate and legitimize his or her divisive rule. In Katerina Limenopoulou's examination of the exploitation of ethnic identity by political leaders in the post-Communist era Balkans, she asserts that a weak state structure and political transition can lead to "a lack of elite legitimacy" which can in turn make the elite feel vulnerable.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, to eliminate that real or perceived vulnerability, a leader can embrace an ethnic identity, thus legitimizing his or her rule.<sup>89</sup> This political move by the leader of a country is compounded when external forces (neighboring countries, drought, famine, etc.) intervene as was the case in Chad.

Had Tombalbaye not had the external factors to deal with, perhaps he would have had a much better chance at success. But, as is evident in this research, one must not ignore external or internal forces. One must examine the collective forces at work in a country.

Major lessons can be extrapolated from the Chadian experience under the leadership of François Ngarta Tombalbaye. These lessons, while seemingly painfully elementary or fundamental are useful to consider when examining current international situations such as the one in Iraq or in parts of India. In order to avoid violence, bloodshed, large economic burdens and even slower entrances into true participation into the international system and economy, we

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<sup>88</sup>Limenopoulou, Katerina. *The Politics of Ethnic Identity in the Balkans in a Post-Communist Power Vacuum*. September 2004, pp 1-27.  
(<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN019075.pdf>) 15 March 2005.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

must consider what we can do to alleviate tension and evade societal fragmentation.

The first major lesson that can be gleaned from the Chadian experience is that a nation must accept that a government or nation state, in order to be legitimized, must acknowledge and respect the peoples' cultural traditions. Theoretically it is necessary for a nation to establish some kind of national authority that the people see as both rational and legitimate. With the establishment of governmental, temporal, authority, the formation of a bureaucracy to execute the government's will must be formed as well. A major problem in Chad was the competition between traditional and national modes of governance. Tombalbaye's new national forces had to compete with the older, more legitimate tribal and traditional authority figures such as chiefs and sultans. This competition for legitimacy strained the already fragile new national governmental infrastructure and forced government leaders to attempt methods that in the end became a complicated overlay of systems that were not necessarily mutually destructive but were certainly not mutually beneficial as they existed. A new national government must work with culture and tradition in mind, not destroying and attempting to invalidate strong cultural traditions.

Perhaps when examining similar situations in current international relations, theorists can form a new mode of governance that is somewhat of a simplified version of what happened in Chad. Perhaps in Iraq, authorities can construct a new national paradigm through which these competing modes can

become not competing but mutually beneficial and eventually reinforce each other's authority and legitimacy.

Another major problem in Chad was the lack in understanding competing notions of ethnicity as well as changing notions of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Currently, ethnically plural nations attempt to forge a national identity that supercedes at least as far as the state is concerned, older forms of ethnic identity. This new national identity as discussed earlier in the paper, has historically been challenging to build across the African continent due to not only ethnic plurality but also to the deceptive political borders created by European colonial powers.<sup>90</sup>

Looking back, it can be said that one of Tombalbaye's fatal political errors was the not including the large and influential central Muslim population. Instead of creating a national identity that would appeal to all or most Chadians. Tombalbaye attempted to create a national identity out of his existing ethnic identity, thus alienating large and influential segments of Chadian society. The 1965 Mangalme Riots illustrate how many in the central region of Chad felt disenfranchised by Tombalbaye's political system. Therefore, what started as a dispute between a group and the government morphed into a dispute between ethnic groups, in this case the Sara and the Moubi. Had a viable national identity existed, one that was stronger at least civically than existing ethnic identities, this disaster could have been avoided.

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<sup>90</sup> Kaplan, Robert D. "The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet." *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, [http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~anthro/articles/Coming\\_Anarchy.htm](http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~anthro/articles/Coming_Anarchy.htm), 07 November 2005.

National definitions and increased clarity concerning what it means to be a Chadian and creating a space where ethnic and national identities can co-exist is vital to Chadian national success. The careful examination of attempts to forge national identity is relevant to today's debates in international relations and globalization. The immigration debate has gained new steam in the United States as well as in many European nations. Member states of the European Union are debating what it means to be a European and just how far the European Union should reach into the average European's daily life. Also of particular relevance is the issue of competing identities in Iraq. As learned by Tombalbaye's example in 1960s Chad, a national identity needs to be forged organically, with representation of all groups and through a deepening of mutual respect for diversity. This is a lesson that Iraq could learn in the process of transforming itself into a nation that can create a dialogue between Shia, Kurd, and Sunni identities. As Katerina Limenopoulou stresses in her work on the Balkans, a national identity must be forged in an ethnically plural society.<sup>91</sup> This national identity must coincide with the political borders of each ethnic nation to successfully integrate all members into a society. A Chadian must at least civically and legally identify more with the Republic of Chad than he or she does with his or her ethnic group (i.e. Sara, Gorane, Toubou, etc.) in order to function well within an ethnically plural society. To make this happen, Chadians must acknowledge that historic changes have taken place and after that recognition,

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<sup>91</sup> Limenopoulou, Katerina. *The Politics of Ethnic Identity in the Balkans in a Post-Communist Power Vacuum*. September 2004, pp 1-27. (<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN019075.pdf>) 15 March 2005.

they must work to accept those changes and adapt to a new sense of national identity. For example, the European Union is currently waging a huge advertising campaign in Europe encouraging Europeans to identify with the European Union in ways they may never have before. The case of Chad could be similar.

Also, for national success to take place, a space for economic production in which large segments of the national population are not disenfranchised must be created.<sup>92</sup> Tombalbaye methods of governing included nepotism, exclusion, and avoidance, all of which impeded national economic development, which in turn slowed the pace of infrastructure development and served to continually fragment Chadian society. Until a stable economy in which the majority of Chadians participate is created or achieved, Chadian society will continue to be unstable and conflict will be perpetuated.

Ideally, the creation of a new economy that sheds its former export-oriented imperialist past and proceeds down a new path pursuing new markets, incorporating progressive labor techniques and standards, and encourages equal participation in the national marketplace would be best. But, creating a new economy is difficult. When looking at Tombalbaye, one can examine his errors in fiscal policy and see that his tax increases, which he dubbed a 'National Loan' only served to fuel discontent and disinterest in the new Chadian government. Of course, political backlash from a tax increase is nothing new or particularly noteworthy. But, in this case, Tombalbaye's failed fiscal policy served to

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<sup>92</sup> Nuhuman, M.A. "Ethnic Identity, Religious Fundamentalism and Muslim Women in Sri Lanka." <http://www.lines-magazine.org/articles/nuhuman.htm>, 16 April 2007.

complicate existing problems and increase domestic tensions. Therefore, Chad's new economy must be created with ethnic responsibility, diversity, and complete economic enfranchisement and participation in mind.

To truly understand the current political situation in Chad, it is essential to understand the recent past, especially political trends since independence as well as to take into account the lessons that can be gathered in examining Chadian history. Currently, Chad faces a similar situation as it did in the 1960s and early 1970s except in this case the president, Idriss Deby, is a northerner. Deby has done much the same as Tombalbaye did in representing Northern interests and ethnic groups and giving them a status above that of the Southern peoples. If one thing can be proven through the examination of this period, it is that Francois Ngarta Tombalbaye's political exploitation of the already fragile existing post-colonial Chadian ethnic identity and traditions in a ethnically plural society resulted in political and societal fragmentation and factionalization and impeded industrialization and meaningful economic development.

Tania Murray Li's studies of competing ethnic groups in Indonesia raise interesting questions that are applicable to the situation of Chad<sup>93</sup>. Tania Murray Li's studies examine two different ethnic groups, the Lindu and the Lauje. The Lindu are comparatively very literate, economically prosperous, and assert some of political influence. The second group, the

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<sup>93</sup> Murray, Tania Li. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Jan., 2000, 149.

Lauje, is the opposite. Li's second group, although swidden farmers inhabiting similar geographic regions in Central Sulawesi, "very few people can read or speak the national language, swidden cultivation is the norm, housing and nutrition are poor, and livelihoods and health precarious."

Li makes a proposition that:

"a group's self-identification as tribal or indigenous is not natural or inevitable, but neither is it simply invented, adopted, or imposed. It is rather a positioning which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle."

This paradigm is useful in analyzing divisions in Chadian society that have about and is particularly relevant when looking at creation of the *petite bourgeoisie africaine* class in colonial Chad, ethnic power struggles, and how groups react once politically and economically empowered.

But, the question applicable to Chad is what did the first group do to attain high levels of education, improved healthcare, and increased livelihoods in modern Indonesian society? According to Li, it is a matter of articulation as presented by Stuart Hall and of social positioning within a larger society.<sup>94</sup> What happened in the first ethnic group, the Lindu, was that they organized themselves, consciously or unconsciously formulated a sense of identity and capitalized on that sense of a shared future to create

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<sup>94</sup> Murray, Tania Li. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Jan., 2000, 152.



new opportunities for themselves and their community. Yet, the second group, the Lauje, continued to lag behind other social and ethnic groups pace of economic and therefore political growth.

The Chadian government has many options when exploring opportunities for improvement, but the perhaps an emulation of the Lindu's experience could prove useful. The Chadian government should use the lessons outlined above and structure policy addressing those issues using a framework that articulates the shared and collective interests of all Chadians and all ethnicities. As Li stresses, "Articulation...is a process of simplification and boundary-making, as well as connection."<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps a national plan that does not attempt to blur or ignore the existence of a diverse and historical competitive society but is sensitive to various ethnic differences while celebrating diversity would help to create a shared vision and a sense of a shared future. This construction of a collective interest would create a sense of community. National simplification, not done in naiveté but in a spirit of constructing a new national paradigm through stripping the current society of historically volatile baggage to its very basic structures and using those structures in new ways to create enhanced opportunities could potentially create a stronger social fabric.

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<sup>95</sup>Murray, Tania Li. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Jan., 2000, 174.

Socially responsible development is shared development that does not serve to further fragment Chadian society but to increase opportunities for investment and participation in the emerging Chadian marketplace while overcoming its export-oriented past and securing some kind of equitable participative position in the global market. If Chad can find a broad vision that unites social forces around the goals of creating a new socially and economically viable Chad, the Chadian people will be able to overcome their tumultuous past, will have learned from François Ngarta Tombalbaye's mistakes, and will create a future that will be both brighter and sustainable.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

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