

# **Resilience to Violent Extremism: The Rural Livelihood Coping Strategies in the Lake Chad Basin<sup>1</sup>**

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HiCN Working Paper 237

October 2016

*Abstract:*

This paper is an analysis of the effects of violent extremism and the rural livelihoods strategies for coping with threats from Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. Since 2009, the Lake Chad Basin has witnessed increasing insurgency activities from the Boko Haram militants, leading to the destruction of lives, livelihoods, and displacements. However, studies have shown that while violent conflict has destructive impacts on lives and livelihoods--more people survive than perish. People threatened by violence from the extremist group cannot afford to wait for help; they adopt strategies to survive and protect their livelihoods. This study explores these mechanisms through review and analysis of the literature and current research in the Lake Chad Basin. The paper argues, the violence from Boko Haram has both direct and indirect effects on households whose primary sources of livelihoods are dependent on the resources from the basin. In response, the affected households adopt both positive and adverse strategies to mitigate immediate and long-term threats from the militant groups. The study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of rural resilience to violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Violent extremism, Coping, Livelihood, Lake Chad Basin

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<sup>1</sup> Paper submitted at the FAO and Household in Conflict (HiCN) 12th Annual HiCN Workshop “Violent Conflict, Resilience and Agriculture: From Emergency to Development,” October 25 -25, 2016, Rome.

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## 1. Introduction

The Lake Chad Basin (LCB) has witnessed increased insurgent attacks from the Boko Haram militants since 2009. As at mid-2016, the violence has caused approximately 20'000 deaths, with about 2.6 million internally displaced persons and 170'000 Nigerian refugees. The situation is more pronounced in some rural communities in Northeast Nigeria, Far North Region of Cameroon, Southeast Niger, and the Lake Chad region of Chad. The protracted nature of the violence has varying impacts on households whose primary sources of livelihoods are dependent on agriculture and the resources from the Chad Basin. However, as the humanitarian situation deteriorates, the affected households sought alternatives to cope with threats from the extremist group. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), “while conflict has an enormously destructive impact on lives and livelihoods, more people survive than perish” (USAID 2005). USAID further asserts that people under threat cannot afford to wait for help, they actively seek ways to survive in the face of evolving risks. Also, Justino (2012) notes that people usually leave places of more severe fighting to refugee and displacement camps, or move to safe areas or travel abroad. However, Justino also contends that numerous people stay behind in conflict zones and survive, carrying on their daily livelihood tasks in the midst of conflict and violence. USAID (2005) conclude, notes, an understanding of these resilient factors is necessary for future programming intervention. This study explores the mechanisms employed by households to survive immediate and long-term threats to their lives and livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin. The key question addressed is: What are the effects of violent extremism, and what are the rural livelihoods strategies for coping with threats from Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin? The study draws from previous studies and current research in the LCB and employs qualitative micro-level analysis using the livelihoods approach. The paper is structured to include background on the Lake Chad Basin, violent extremism and rural livelihoods, effects of violent extremism, coping with Boko Haram in the Chad Basin, and the conclusion.

## 2. Background Information

The Lake Chad is a shallow lake lying at the center of semi-arid basin shared by four countries in West and Central Africa: Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon. It's one of the largest endorheic lakes in the world, lakes that have no outlets to the river; but lose water only by evaporation or infiltration (Freeman 2014). It's also the 4th largest lake in Africa, and the 3rd largest in the world. According to the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the surface area of the



conventional basin is 967,000 sq km, with a population of 50 million inhabitants. This area includes but not limited to three regions in Cameroon, two in Niger, six states in Nigeria, and the entire Chad Republic (See Figure 1, Lake Chad Basin).

Figure 1: Map of the Lake Chad Basin

Source: Google Map

The Lake Chad's water, banks and islands serve as major sources of livelihoods for fishing, farming, and livestock rearing. However, the size of the Lake Chad has always varied due to environmental variability and climatic fluctuations, affecting agriculture and other business that are dependent on the lake resources. According to Lawrence Freeman and DeToy, the shrinking of Lake Chad surface is not only happening because of the decrease in rainfall but also due to increased in population which increased the demand for the water for irrigation purposes (Freeman and DeToy 2014). Statistics show that the surface area of 25000 Km<sup>2</sup> in 1973 had become 2500 Km<sup>2</sup> in 2015, while the watershed population of 8 million in 1973 had grown to 30 million in 2015 (Ibid). Also, most of the countries in the basin's conventional areas had experienced political instability and violent conflict that have impacted negatively on the socio-economic activities in the basin areas. The World Food Program (2016) notes that the ability of the Lake Chad and its productive resources to satisfy regional food security needs has been increasingly compromised by unmanaged environmental challenges, which compounded over time to cumulate social unrest and violence in the region.

However, to enhance the development of the basin, the government of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad established the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) on May 22nd, 1964 to foster the agriculture and the socio-economic development of the basin. "The mandate of the Commission is to sustainably and equitably manage the Lake Chad and other shared water resources of the Lake Chad Basin, to preserve the ecosystems of the Lake Chad Conventional Basin, to promote regional integration, and peace and security across the Basin (LCBC 2016)." Since inception, the LCBC has pursued several initiatives to sustain the development of the Lake Chad and the basin area, but the LCB is in the Sahelian region, regarded as difficult environment to live and work. Also, the frequent outbreaks of violence and the political instability in the region has made the area unattractive for tourist. Nigeria, Chad, and Niger has had political and social related violence since their independence in 1960; Cameroon is more politically stable (LCBC 2016). Over the years, many research projects were abandoned or incomplete due to recurring crises in the region. According to the FAO, the national statistics for this region is unreliable or incomplete because several research teams have abandoned the area due to violence (FAO 1995, cited in LCBC 2016).

Beginning in 2009, the problem in the Chad Basin took a different dimension with the onset of the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. The outbreak of the Boko Haram's violence in mid-2009 affects the Lake Chad region, causing deaths, destruction of livelihoods and displacements. This led to households and individuals to flee or abandon their primary livelihood activities; primarily farming, fishing, and rearing of animals and sought alternatives. The humanitarian situation in the Chad basin was a major topic at the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016, scholars and practitioners described the responses to the humanitarian crises in the basin. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) delegates at the Summit described the humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad region as "... the world's most neglected humanitarian crisis, where poverty and desertification have been compounded by violence caused by Boko Haram."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Statement by Stephen O' Brien, Head of OCHA at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, May 2016.

The OCHA further described the responses to the crisis as the most under-reported, underfunded and the least addressed humanitarian issues facing the world today. The International Committee of the Red Cross compared its operations in countries such as Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan with their activities in the Lake Chad Basin, concludes that the gap between the suffering and the responses in the Lake Chad Basin may be bigger. In the words of Yves Daccord, the director general of the International Committee of the Red Cross, “Normally I don't like to compare suffering, but if I look at all our operations ... what we see - in terms of levels of violence, of suffering and most importantly, the gap between the humanitarian response ... and what it should be - is possibly the biggest gap we have right now.”<sup>4</sup> These highlights the precarious situation of the humanitarian crisis in the Chad Basin.

As the humanitarian and development agencies struggle to meet the food and other essential needs of the affected population, the number of people that requires assistance outstretched the available supplies. But the question left unanswered is how the affected households have been surviving since the outbreak of violence in mid-2009. Also, the prolonged violence has blurred the line between humanitarian and development phases. A dichotomy that a panel at the International Humanitarian Studies Association Conference in Addis Ababa in March 2016 attempted to address “When does conflict end – revisiting relief and development in conflict.”<sup>5</sup> The panel drew on research in eight countries to argue that humanitarian action may take place in a long lasting conflict where both relief and development co-exist for decades. However, they raised a question about when the conflict ends and what the right balance is between development and humanitarian approaches.

De Waal (1997), emphasized that “violent conflicts are distinguished from other shocks by their deliberately destructive nature, including the intentional destruction of common coping strategies adopted by households in economically insecure environments.” The World Food Program affirmed that the Lake Chad Basin is an agrarian community, but farming has stopped due to insecurity.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it becomes imperative not only to assess the effects of extremist violence but also the strategies used by households to cope with the events. In the case of Chad Basin, individual, and households employed different strategies to survive immediate threats. But as the violence became prolonged, they also sought alternative strategies to sustain their livelihoods. Let's turn to the concept of violent extremism and livelihoods.

### **3. Violent Extremism and Livelihoods**

Violent extremism is “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives” (USAID 2011: 2). The Australian National Counter-terrorism Committee Framework also defined violent extremism as “a willingness to use or support the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social or ideological nature” (cited by Nasser-Eddine et al 2011:9).

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<sup>4</sup> Statement by Yves Daccord, Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, May 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Panel title at the International Humanitarian Studies Association (IHSA) Conference, Addis Ababa, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Statement by The head of World Food Program, Ertharin Cousin at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, May 2016.

These definitions of violent extremism emphasize the use of violence to further religious ideologies, political or social goals such as the Boko Haram's violence in Northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. The term radicalization is often used interchangeably with violent extremism but does not mean the same thing. Borum (2011) referred to radicalization as the exposure and acceptance of ideological messages, and the change in individuals from mainstream beliefs to extremist viewpoints. Newman (2011) and Borum (2011) rightly captured the difference between violent extremism and radicalization; radicalization is a process, whereas violent extremism is an action taken. The violent actions of extremist religious groups such as Boko Haram include suicide bombing, use of improvised explosive devices and bombs. These acts have severe impacts on lives and livelihoods when used to achieve ideological or political goals.

According to Broadbent (2010), the effect of political violence on economic activity can be analyzed in two ways--macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. Bruck and Schindler (2008) add, an emerging field of economic research examines conflict at the micro level using qualitative techniques. "Besides the economic micro level literature on conflict, there is another body of empirical studies that focuses on livelihoods in conflict-affected countries...." (Ibid). To Young and Osman (2006) "livelihoods approach combines a local level analysis and the understanding of the impact of the crisis on livelihoods with a more macro analysis of the conflict itself and the wider national, transnational and international factors that are affecting livelihoods." Young and Osman argue, conflict and people's livelihoods are inextricably linked (Ibid). "Livelihoods are integral to the causes of conflict and the impact it has had, and therefore will be central to any lasting solutions to the conflict" (Ibid).

According to Chambers and Conway: "Livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims, and access) and activities required for a means of living..." (Chambers and Conway 1992: 7). The Department for International Development (DfID) defines livelihood "as the means by which households obtain and maintain access to the resources necessary to ensure their immediate and long-term survival" (DfID, 1999). In relation to conflict, Young et al. (2002) said, livelihood consists of the ways people access and mobilizes resources for their survival and longer-term well-being, and hence reduces the vulnerability created by the conflict. The definition by Young et al., applies to this paper; it focuses on the vulnerability and shocks created and exacerbated by violent conflict, including violence from extremist groups such as Boko Haram. According to the Associated Press (AP), Boko Haram said, the Nigeria government would not know peace until it adopts sharia law, therefore, suggests that ideology plays a role in the group's motivation.

The livelihoods concept was initially applied in development studies in the 1980s to understand the components of people's livelihood assets and the survival strategies of the rural poor (Chambers and Conway 1992). According to Robert Chambers, the livelihood approach examines issues such as "where people are, what they have and what their needs and interests are" (Chambers 1988a:1). Young et. al., notes, the livelihood conceptual framework combines a local level (micro) analysis and the understanding of the impact of the crisis on livelihoods with a more macro analysis of the conflict itself and the wider national, transnational and international factors that are affecting livelihoods" (Young et al 2006). Also, the non-income focus of the livelihood approach makes it adaptable to the rural condition as stipulated by

(Chambers 1998a; Sen 1999; Schafer 2002), and it can be applied to understand the effects of insurgency and the coping strategies use by households to cope with the events.

According to Schafer (2002), the livelihoods strategies are the results of the analysis of assets (Social Capital, Physical Capital, Human Capital, Natural Capital and Financial Capital) and how it is affected or influenced by the vulnerability (shocks from violence) and by policy and institutions. The unit of livelihoods analysis is individuals and households (micro), and it also involves macro analysis (Young et al 2006). This analysis is fundamental to understanding the impact or consequences of violence on livelihoods and the coping strategies of the poor rural people (Chambers and Conway 1992). The DfID summarized the core principles of the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) to include: People-centered, people actors, local-level activity as the foundation for the development of policy, encourage partnership with government, private sectors, and NGOs, and maintain balance with the three elements of sustainability-- economic, social and environmental (DfID 1999:7).

Nonetheless, the livelihood approach is not without limitations. The main criticism of the livelihood framework was that it did not capture the effect of power and politics in livelihood (Baumann 2000). Livelihood approach was also regarded as a development concept that has been mainly applied to development studies on different topics such as Problems livelihoods (Chambers & Conway 1992; Carney 1998) and livelihoods diversification (Ellis 2000). In line with this, Francis (2000) “Making a Living: Changing Livelihoods in Rural Africa” explores responses to changing livelihoods of rural people such as disappearing job prospects, falling agricultural output, collapsing infrastructure and withdrawal of public services. She asked what are the different strategies employed by the rural poor in different parts of Africa. These studies according to Nigel include a component of the strategies and practices pursued by people in their day-to-day struggle for making a living (Nigel 2009:24). Livelihoods analyses were originally applied to development studies. The applications of the framework to the violent conflict were originally considered impossible because developments are long-term interventions.

However, Collinson (2003), and Korf (2002) have adapted the livelihood framework to complex emergencies including protracted conflicts. Schafer (2002:1) adds as conflicts continue over a long term, and the fact that people do survive in many situations of conflict and political instability, suggests that livelihood analysis is appropriate in conflict situations and can be utilized to identify opportunities for improved assistance. Scoones (1991) distinguishes between ‘copings’, which involves temporary adjustments to livelihoods in the face of change, and ‘adaptation’, which means a longer term shift in livelihood strategies. Although the livelihoods approach was initially considered a development concept, recent studies have shown that it can be applied to violent conflict, including extreme violent situations. There are projects that were sponsored by the DfID, European Union and others that use the livelihoods approach.

The situations of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI) project by the DfID and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) examines issues of protection and supporting livelihoods in situations of conflict in Nepal, Afghanistan, Somalia, Columbia, and Kosovo (Montani and Majid, 2002). In the case of Somalia, the project highlights the ways in which programming decisions can be moved from “free seeds and tools distribution to sustainable agricultural support project” (Montani and Majid 2002). The SCCPI project principally linked the relief to

development continuum, thereby providing practical ways that relief assistance can be channeled for long-term development purposes.

In addition to SCCPI, livelihoods project by the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) sponsored by the DfID, the European Union in Srilanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Uganda. According to SLRC (2014), the projects examine how people are making a living, educate their children, and access other essential services in conflict-affected situations (CAS). It can be inferred that the lessons and approaches from these projects can help to inform and redress some of the current challenges in the implementation of humanitarian assistance and development projects in the Lake Chad Basin. Longley and Maxwell (2003) argue that principled livelihoods support in situations of conflict is not only desirable, but it is essential to save lives. Young & Osman (2006) also add, "Livelihoods cannot be considered only in term of household access to resources and capital and related livelihood strategies." Thus, the livelihood approach can be applied to understand the consequences of insurgency and how rural communities in the Lake Chad Basin are coping with the events.

According to USAID (2005), Livelihood analysis is essential to understand the makeup resilience, its limits, and its opportunities. USAID adds, failure to consider basic livelihood dynamics can lead to poor and even damaging programming. Some development programs can be a threat to resilience that people had developed in response to the conflict. According to Schafer (2002), livelihood analysis highlights the sources of resilience to identify opportunities for improved assistance. Korf (2000:129) adds, "A significant strength of the livelihoods frame compared to earlier approaches is that it emphasizes on people potential in a holistic way rather than stressing their problems, constraints, and needs." Korf (2003a) also maintains that the so-called victims are more resilient than is suggested. De Waal (1994:140) adds, local coping strategies are the most important component of people's survival in many crisis situations.

As regards to the effects of conflict on households, the impacts of violent conflict can be divided into direct and indirect effects (Stewart and FitzGerald 2001). Justino (2012:2) said conflict and violence impact on the lives and livelihoods of individuals, households, and communities directly and indirectly. Nigel (2002) adds, "Conflicts destroy livelihoods, either directly through causing death and destroying property, or indirectly by limiting freedom of choice and adaptive behavior, thereby hampering the pursuit of successful survival strategies." Justino (2012:2) further note that direct effects of conflict include changes in household composition and economic status, and displacements; whereas indirect channels include changes in local and national markets and social relations. However, irrespective of the nature of the impact of conflict, Justino (2012:3) asserts that violent conflict kills and disables people, destroys productive assets, and block individuals and households access to their sources of livelihood and economic survival. Thus, it can be deduced that violent conflict has direct or indirect consequences on livelihoods, as well as short and long-term effects.

The studies on the impact of conflict on livelihoods in countries like Liberia, Rwanda, Nepal and Srilanka provides relevant insights on the consequences of conflict on rural populations. Longley et al. (2003) described the impact of war on rural livelihoods in Kambia District, Liberia, notes that there were massive displacements, but at the same time some communities were resilient in negotiating peace and reconciliations. In the case of Burundi and Rwanda, there

were increases in the prices of staple foods as a result of the destructions of agricultural lands and subsequent scarcity of farm produce (Bundervoet 2006; Verpoorten 2009). Seddon and Hussein (2002) on the impact of Maoists insurgency in Nepal said that the major local effects of the conflict are: rural exodus on the part of the local elite, and the local government officials, and the destruction of economic activities and local infrastructures. These three cases points to the direct effects (displacements in Liberia) and indirect effects (rise in prices in Burundi and Rwanda) and associated responses (mass exodus in Nepal) by the affected populations, among others.

On coping strategies, according to Jaspers & Shoham (2002), households respond by changing strategies to ensure their survival in conflict situations. Households respond to sudden or protracted disruptions to their livelihoods to ensure their survival (Ibid). De Waal (2005) add that households usually show remarkable resilience even in an extremely situation, uses mixed strategy to balance short-term needs and long-term survival concerns. Justino (2009) maintained that households living in conflict-prone areas often develop a complex set of risk reduction and risk-coping strategies. People usually leave places of more severe fighting but at the same time some stay behind carrying on their daily livelihood tasks in the midst of conflict and violence (Justino, 2012). The rural communities in Northeast Nigeria and it borders communities with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger is not entirely deserted. Although a large number of people fled the areas, some individuals and households still live in the areas, even while under Boko Haram's control. De Waal, (1994, p.140) concludes that local coping strategies are the most important component in people's survival in many crisis situations. These coping strategies have very relevant to the Lake Chad Basin

However, Korf et al. (2001) conducted a study of the livelihood strategies of war-affected communities in Sri Lanka. He argued that livelihood strategies and outcomes of the different communities differed considerably depending on local political conditions and geographies. He asserts that war can be both a threat and an opportunity; hence, civilians in conflict situations are not all victims. Schafer (2002) supports this argument, notes, "Certain livelihood strategies are part of the dynamics that can contribute to, and sustain conflict and instability." These literature support the assertion that household access to resources early can prevent or avoid further conflict (USAID 2005), but at the same time livelihoods strategies can also contribute or fuel conflict. According to Justino (2009), the relationship between households and armed groups, which results from the conflict process itself, plays a vital role in the sustainability of armed conflicts by making the organization of the conflict a function of the symbiotic relationship established between armed groups and households living in the areas they control. In the LCB, increased in radicalization and violence suggests that some individuals may have explored extremist activities as a source of livelihood. Although different livelihood coping strategies, have been used by households in the LCB before the onset of the Boko Haram insurgency.

The livelihood frame enhances understanding of the sources of resilience by rural communities that can be further built upon through development programming and other conflict resolution interventions. The livelihoods approach also enables an understanding of the different strategies that people employ to cope with violent situations. In practice, the impact of conflict on livelihoods can be analyzed using Household Economic Analysis (HEA). The Household Economy Analysis (HEA) is a four-step process (USAID, 2005) that involves: Identification of



the essential components that make up the livelihood of a particular group during a "normal" (i.e. non-conflict) time; Estimation of the impact of the conflict on livelihoods (e.g. disruption in agricultural production due to displacement, loss of employment, and destruction of assets) in terms of income, food consumption etc; Determination of ways in which households modify their livelihood strategies to minimize the impact of the conflict shocks; and identify appropriate forms of support aimed at minimizing the impact of the shocks (USAID, 2005).

#### **4. Rural Livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin**

The riverine system of the Lake Chad basin plays an important role in the livelihoods of the people living in the basin. According to the LCBC, farming, fisheries and herding are the most dominant activities, and it employs over 80% of the basin's population. The crops grown include cotton, groundnuts, cassava, millet, sorghum, rice, onions. The availability of agricultural raw materials led to the establishments of agro-allied industries such cotton ginning, breweries, leather industry, machinery, milling, and food industry. Nevertheless, households have highly differentiated access to resources and opportunities linked to ethnicity, gender, and ownership of assets, as well as knowledge, networks and experience acquired over time (Bene et al. 2003). Though Bene maintained that irrespective of wealth level, households rely to a large extent on the subsistence-based economy of fishing, farming, and herding.

The fisheries sector alone according to Sagua (1991) engages over 200,000 persons in the basin. According to FAO, "The people engaged in these activities, and their families continued, with few exceptions, to live at the margin of subsistence and human dignity" (FAO 1974, cited in Bene et al. 2003). The adage used to describe the link of fishing to the rural poor are: "fishermen are the poorest of the poor" (Bailey 1988:142) and "fishery is the activity of last resort" (Townsend 1998:142). Fishing activities are recognized to constitute a key element in the economy of floodplains or wetlands such as the Lake Chad Basin. The local populations living in the basin alternatively or simultaneously engage in fishing, herding or farming crops each depending on the period in the flood cycle. Sarch (1997) and Neiland et al. (2000) confirmed that fishing fits within a flexible and strongly seasonal matrix of various and diversified activities. Bene et al. (2003) maintained that the poorest households in the basin depend heavily upon a given combination of crops and natural resources for their food security and income generation, whereas the better-off, due to different socioeconomic and institutional constraints and opportunities, often develop different activity portfolios.

The population of Lake Chad region is diverse, with an estimate of 70 ethnic groups. The official languages of the basin countries are either English or French, a reflection of the respective colonies of the countries: British (Nigeria) and French (Chad, Niger, and Cameroon). However, most people in the Lake Chad Basin are uneducated, hence speaks several local dialects instead of the official languages. The languages spoken in the region are Kanuri (Niger and Nigeria); Fulfude (Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon), and Chadian Arabic (Chad). Most people speak Hausa, a popular language in Northern Nigeria. Mixing of races and blurring of tribal roles and the interactions between different tribes and their cultures, religions have increased social interactions among the different ethnic groups in the basin areas. The pluralistic makeup and linguistic adaptations of the basins populations are considered as an important survival strategy for people living in the basin (WFP 2016).

The Lake Chad Basin has a long history of human settlement because it's important crossroads for trans-Saharan trade, and the availability of water for farming makes it attractive to immigrants, explorers, and tourist(LCBC 2016). Migration across borders is a pre-colonial seasonal practice in the basin, and it has continued over the years in coping and adapting to seasonal environmental variability in the Lake Chad Basin. The treaty of the Economic Community of the West African States (EOWAS) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission statute recognize and facilitate interstate migration of citizens within the subregion including the Lake Chad Basin areas. Households over the years have cope with environmental variability in the basin through moving and responding to changing climate and natural resources. People move across nations bothers in the basin, employing various strategies to earn a living (WFP 2016).

Although economic development varies between nations that make up the Lake Chad Basin conventional areas: Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. The basin is considered the poorest; most marginalized and neglected part of each respective country in respect to the provisions of basic infrastructures and social services. Lemoalle and Magrin (2014) and Magrin et al. (2015) note that human development indicators in the Lake Chad areas are below national averages, which themselves are also low compared to the international standards (see the table of education enrolments in the Lake Chad Basin).

**Table 1: Rate of Education Enrolment in the Lake Chad Basin**

<b>Region/State</b>	<b>Local Rate of Gross Primary School Enrolment</b>	<b>National Average</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Borno State, Nigeria	21	82	61
Diffa region, Niger	57	63	6
Far North Region, Cameroon	52	82	30
LCB region, Chad	60	91	31

*Source: Atlas of Lake Chad (Cited in Mekonnen 2016)*

Table 1 shows the rate of primary education enrollment in the Lake Chad Basin is lower than each country average. The difference between the national enrollment rate and Borno State, Northeastern Nigeria is alarming. Borno State is the birth place of Boko Haram extremist group. Far North region of Cameroon and the LCB region of Niger enrolment rates are equal compared to their national averages. Diffa region of Niger has the lowest education enrolment compared to national average. These figures suggest that the Lake Chad Basin is probably the less developed areas of each country that make up the basin's conventional areas. Also, Chad and Niger have one of the lowest health standards in the world. According to Odada (2006) child mortality rates within the basin, countries are primarily due to malaria, diarrhea, measles, tetanus, respiratory infections, and diphtheria, but these diseases can be prevented through vaccinations. In 2010, during the onset of the Boko Haram's violence, 58,000 regional cases of cholera linked to poor sanitation and lack of potable water led to the death of 2,300 people (IRIN 2010). The deplorable living condition in the Lake Chad Basin has been worse since the outbreak of Boko Haram, and the effects of the violence have continued to generate interest among researchers and practitioners.

## **5. Effects of Violent Extremism in the Lake Chad Basin**

In an inquiry by Andrew Glazzard and Martine Zeuthen (2016) “What are the impact of terrorism and violent extremism, and where the impact is felt?” The Institute for Economic and Peace, Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2015 report “Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism” uses data from academic terrorism database for the year 2014 to estimate the economic and human impact of terrorism and violent extremism. According to GTI, in 2014, 78% of terrorism occurred in five countries (Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq). Nine out of the top 20 most fatal terrorist attacks in 2014 occurred in Nigeria alone, and Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria and neighboring countries in the Lake Chad Basin committed the greatest terrorist impact in 2014. In comparison, Boko Haram killed 6,664 Nigerians in 2014, if one adds the numbers from the other Lake Chad Basin countries such as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, the figure will be more. This number exceeds the number of people killed by ISIS in the Middle East in the same year. GTI (2015) conclude, notes, Boko Haram was the deadliest terrorist group in the world in 2014.

Before now, the Department for International Development DfID also commissioned an inquiry on “The impact of radicalization/violent extremism on poverty and development outcomes on the lives of poor people.” In response, Emma Broadbent (2010) said, identifying the impact of violence arising from radicalization processes and violent extremism on poverty and development outcomes is difficult due to lack of literature which deals specifically with the subject matter. However, Broadbent maintained that the discussion concerning radicalization and extremist violence focuses on Islamic extremism and religious fundamentalism; specific terrorist incidents; and the role of poverty as a driving force in radical and extremist violence. Broadbent also asserts that the general literature on the impact of conflict offers relevant insights and the importance of not viewing the effect of extremist violence in isolation of the consequence of violence as a whole.

In the Lake Chad Basin, there is an interface of conflict and environmental disaster from drought and desertification (WFP 2016). Nevertheless, the Human Rights Watch notes that the effects of violence from Boko Haram are more pronounced in some local communities in the Lake Chad region. The UN Security Council (2014) also acknowledges the increasing insurgent attacks targeting civilians and livelihoods in the northeastern states of Nigeria, seizing towns and compelling large numbers of people to flee to neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. At the peak of the Boko Haram’s insurgency in 2014, the UNHCR estimates that 4.6 million people have been displaced in Northeast Nigeria living in horrible conditions. The Human Right Watch report (2014) adds, the Boko Haram attacks have been on the increase since the beginning of 2014, with almost daily killings, bombings, kidnappings, thefts, and the destruction of livelihoods, Churches, Mosques, schools, homes, bridges, and businesses. According to the World Bank (2016):

The estimate of the destructions in northeast Nigeria is \$5.9 billion. The estimates of damages in Borno State alone, with 27 Local Government Areas include: 956,453 (nearly 30 percent) out of 3,232,308 private houses; 5,335 classrooms and school buildings in 512 primary, 38 secondary and two tertiary institutions; 1,205 municipal, local government or ministry buildings; 76 police stations; 35 electricity offices; 14 prison buildings; 201 health centers; 1,630 water sources; 726 power sub-stations and

distribution lines, 470,000 livestock were killed or stolen as a result of the insurgencies.

These figures represent mainly damages to the government infrastructures, the comprehensive empirical assessments of the damages to the rural infrastructures and livelihood activities has not been carried out effectively due to security concerns.

The indirect effects include an increase in transportation cost, changes in prices of commodities, and market closures. A survey of traders in markets in Diffa region, Niger by the World Food Program and other partners shows that Niger depends on the import of grains from Nigeria. However, according to the WFP, the majority of the transporters interviewed said that they suspended their activities due to insecurity; others stated that they use different routes or use alternative strategies to cope with supply problems. The changes in supply routes and closure of border points for all trucks to minimize the risk of Boko Haram's attacks have increased transportation cost and the cost of commodities. The new route for grain flow from Nigeria to Diffa is through Gashua-Geidam-Maine-Soroa is longer. An explosion attack on a military convoy in the Keblewa route and border point led to the closure of the road. In Cameroon, the closure of Kousseri boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria, paved the way for an alternative route through Fianga. According to many commuters, the closing of Niger-Nigeria and Nigeria-Chad borders due to security concerns is a primary concern to marketers and transporters in the Chad Basin. Also, there are complaints about harassments and demands for bribes from formal and informal checkpoint guards.

As regards to the prices of commodities, about four currencies are used by traders in the basin. In Nigeria, the devaluation of the naira following the drop in oil price affected operators by reducing their purchasing power. Also, in May 2013, the announcement of the state of emergencies in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa restricting movements of people and goods led to increases in food items in the area. The import ban on rice importation into Nigeria and the restriction of foreign transactions also put pressures on commodities. In Cameroon, the closure of the borders with Nigeria led to the reduction in the number of traders coming from Nigeria to buy food products and livestock from Far North region of Cameroon. This resulted in surplus commodities in the local market, poor sales, and a decrease in prices of cereals and animals. Some of the other observations in Cameroon border areas include an increase in retailers as many wholesalers' converts to retails due to reduced wholesale buyers (rice from Mayo dany, peanut from Tokombere and cowpea and maize from Chad). Food aid from humanitarian organization also contributed to the price decline due to the flooding of camps with relief supplies.

Likewise, the temporary closure of markets due to security concerns affected trading and businesses according to surveys in the LCB. In Yobe State, two popular markets (Damaturu and Potiskum markets) known for livestock trading recorded lower activities due to security concerns. Activities in Maiduguri market is also reduced by 40% because many traders avoid the city-regarded as the epicenter of the Boko Haram's violence. The closure of Damask market to minimize the risk of Boko Haram's attacks led to increased in the cost of commodities in Niger's border town Diffa (Grains sold in Diffa usually comes from Damsak, Borno state). In Cameroon, all border markets such as Kerewa, Kouyape, Amchide, Dabanga Ziguage and Logone-et-chart have been permanently closed due to insecurity. The closure these markets as a result of insecurity make it difficult for farmers to sell their produce, and some essential commodities

were difficult to access.

## **6. The Livelihood Coping Strategies in the Lake Chad Basin**

In the Lake Chad Basin, households employ different strategies to cope with environmental variability, drought, and desertification before the advent of the Boko Haram's insurgency. According to the World Food Program, before the current insecurity from civil conflict and related migrations, the LCB has long been a plural region of mixed identities, population movements, and cross-border trade (WFP 2016). LCB is characterized by a plurality of the cosmopolitan population, which reflects a diversity of local languages, dialects, ethnicities, tribes, and indigenous groups. They practice sophisticated techniques for adapting to environmental variability by engaging in synergetic, cooperative relationships of different livelihood strategies from fishing, herding, and farming crops. In spite of the international borders, people of the basin have maintained cultural ties of kinship, language, trade, and religious interaction. Meeren notes that relationships govern the people of the LCB rather than rights or obligations that typically determine social control in rural communities (van der Meeren 1980, cited in WFP 2016).

Linguistic adaptation is another key coping strategy of households in the LCB. The pluralistic makeup of the LCB; has made linguistic adaptation an important survival strategy amongst the pluralism of the basin. Hausa, a popular language in Northern Nigeria is widely spoken in the basin against the official languages of the basin countries (English or French). Also, several local dialects are used instead of the official languages such as Kanuri (Niger and Nigeria); Fulfude (Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon), and Chadian Arabic (Chad). The fact that most people living in the basin are not educated makes it easier to communicate with the local languages. The mixing of races and the blurring of tribal roles and interactions between the various tribes, cultures, and religions has increased social interactions among the people.

In addition, mobility is an essential coping strategy among many groups within the LCB. The Lake Chad Basin Commission statute and Treaty of the Economic Community of the West African States (EOWAS) recognize and facilitate inter-state migration citizens. Migration across borders is a pre-colonial seasonal practice in the basin, and it has continued over the years in coping with displacements and adapting to seasonal environmental variability. Hence, a relatively high capacity for resettlement seems to have developed among Basin populations. In the 1980s, temporary fishing camps were unifying groups of mobile fishermen of different ethnicities and levels of experience who stick to small fishing groups of up to eight or ten cooperating friends (van der Meeren 1980, cited in WFP 2016). There have been instances of civil society sharing local knowledge of fishing as a source of resilience building and cohesion. Households in the LCB have coped with environmental variability and conflict in the basin through moving and responding to changing climate and natural resources. WFP conclude that economic migration is a common characteristic of individuals and households within the basin's population; especially among poor people deprived of basic health and education services.

Households throughout the Lake Chad Basin rely mainly on subsistence activities from fishing, herding, and farming. However, increasing environmental challenges and violent conflict has led to multi-activity, individuals engage in several livelihood activities from fishing, livestock rearing, agricultural, trading, and handicraft making to secure revenues (Mekonnen 2016). Livelihood strategies have expanded and interchanged between groups. Herders have become

farmer-herders and farmer-fishermen. Farmers have diversified their diets and, in turn, expanded their activities to become traders. Also, water tenure systems have played a key role in livelihood strategy distinctions leading to adaptations based on wealth ranking. In the Yaéré floodplain in Northern Cameroon, the poorest population relies mainly on fishing, whereas the better-off in Yaéré tend to engage in farming activities. Adages such as “the fishermen are the poorest of the poor” or “the fishery is the activity of last resort” probably reflect a strategy of the rural poor to engage in inferior and unattractive activities.

An adverse coping strategy by some poor, uneducated mothers unable to feed their dependents send them to Koranic schools, entrusting their child into the protective care of the religious education system, it is the mother’s hope to offer a chance of survival at the cost of family separation. This coping strategy has adverse effects on the child development. Many young adults may have been radicalized through this process. See Table 2, distribution of Koranic schools in Northeast Nigeria.

**Table 2: Distribution of Koranic Schools in Northeast Nigeria**

S/N	States in North Nigeria	No. of Qur’anic Schools	No. of Teachers	No. of Enrolment	Percentage (Enrollments)
1.	Adamawa	2,139	--	141,951	4.59
2.	Borno	55,000	125,000	2,244,000	72.49
3.	Bauchi	4,703	10,736	301,980	9.75
4.	Gombe	2,124	4,670	123,923	4.00
5.	Taraba	--	--	63,168	2.04
6.	Yobe	2,191	8,694	220,745	7.13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>66,157</b>	<b>24,100</b>	<b>3,095,767</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Adapted from Center for Regional Integration and Development (2013)*

Table 2 shows a high rate of enrolments in Koranic schools in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, about 72 percent of the total enrolments in the region. Most of the students are left in the care of their Koranic teachers because the parent of the children cannot afford to take care of them. However, these students in the absence of parental supervision often fall victims of ideological beliefs and teaching impacted by their teachers. Most of the students may have been radicalized to join Boko Haram in the process. Most members of the Boko Haram members are students of the Koranic schools in Northeast Nigeria.

The livelihood strategies for coping with current displacement and livelihood challenges due to Boko Haram threats vary. According to USAID (2015), the presence of additional families is straining available local resources, exacerbating food, relief commodity, shelter, livelihood, and protection needs in the communities hosting IDPs, refugees, and returnees. However, living in host communities against staying in conventional IDPs camps is considered a coping strategy. UNHCR and OCHA reported a low incidence of conflicts between refugees/internally displaced persons and their host communities. Thus, reflect resilience from a relatively strong regional culture of adaptation to the environmental crisis. Hence social cohesion, which has developed under previous shocks, has been fomented amidst the threat of violence. Table 3 depicts the

distribution of IDPs in camps and host communities in the three Boko Haram’s most affected states in Nigeria.

**Table 3: Number of IDPs in Selected States in Northeast Nigeria in 2015**

S/N	Location	Borno		Yobe		Adamawa		Total IDPs	
	In Camps	118,874	7%	13,853	10%	6,874	6%	139,601	7%
	In Host Communities	1,487,532	93%	130,449	90%	115,876	94%	1,733,857	93%
Total IDPs		1606,406	100	144,302	100	122,750	100	1,873,458	100

*Source: International Office of Migration (2015)*

Table 3 shows that majority of the IDPs in Northeast Nigeria lives with host families. Living with host families and communities provides the IDPs with flexibility to engage in livelihoods activities instead of living in conventional camps--depending on emergency assistance from aid groups. Though at the beginning of the emergencies, most of the IDPs lived in temporary camps and relied primarily on relief from aid agencies to survive. However, as the violence became protracted, some displaced persons moved to live with host communities instead of staying in the camps. Living with host families provides the IDPs flexibility and opportunities to engage in livelihood activities instead of depending entirely on handouts. Some IDPs engaged in activities such as farming arable crops such as maize, millets, and sorghum; some engaged in petty trading and hawking fruits and vegetables, and some negotiated lands with village heads to build shelters and also cultivate agricultural products.

Just like the IDPs, OCHA maintained that most displaced people do not live in refugee camps, which have surpassed capacity, but instead reside with host families, relying on the generosity of already vulnerable host- country communities. Thus, the plight of displaced people, therefore, represents a collective challenge as scarcity, uncertainty; homelessness, pain, and fear permeate throughout the basin (OCHA 2015). Most Nigerian refugees in the LCB have adapted to their host communities by becoming merchant traders. See Table 4, Nigerian refugees in the Lake Chad Basin.

**Table 4: Number of Nigerian Refugees in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon**

S/N	Country	Refugees Location	Number of Refugees	Percentage (%)
1.	Niger	Diffa, Bosso, Maine and Kablewa	15,000	26
2.	Chad	Ngouboua, Lake Chad region	2,377	4
3.	Cameroon	Minawayo, Mora, Fotokol,	40,366	70

		Limani, Amchide, Douala, Kentzou and Garoua-Bouali.		
Total			57,743	100

Source: NEMA (2015)

Table 4 shows that majority of the Nigerian refugees live in camps in Far North Region of Cameroon. These figures have been fluctuating over time due to new displacement and returnees. Most of the refugees and IDPs in the Lake Chad basin according to UNHCR (2015) are mainly women and girls. In Southeast Niger, the arrival of the internally displaced and refugees has led to the creation of markets such as the Yebi market. The Yebi market is presently considered to be larger than the Bosso market due to IDPs and refugees' merchants. An estimate of 70% of retailers in Bosso markets are refugees. This suggests that some IDPs and refugees have adapted to their environment.

### 7. Supporting Livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin

Gelsdorf et al. (2012) categorized livelihood interventions into Government-led, peoples-led, agency-led and private sector-led interventions and participations. Different initiatives have been pursued by agencies to address the humanitarian and development crises in the LCB. In Nigeria, the government initiated several programs such as Victim Support Fund, Northeast Development Commission, and the Presidential Committee on Northeast Intervention. However, these initiatives mainly support humanitarian and stabilization activities in the affected Northeast region of the country, but far from addressing the long-term development needs of the area. Agencies have pursued other livelihoods supports to enhance both short and long term development in the LCB.

The WFP identified the School-Feeding Program (SFP), Spirulina, and Shea-nut production and marketing as support to livelihoods and long-term developments in the Lake Chad region (WFP, 2016). According to WFP, SFP will enhance access to education, given the hundreds of thousands of Nigerian refugee children forced to drop out of school out by insurgent groups, and those who have never received any formal education to start with in Nigeria (UNHCR 2015). The program has been piloted by in some states in Northeast Nigeria. In Southeast Niger, spirulina production reflects the potential of natural resources and traditional subsistence livelihoods in the basin, which can be harnessed and managed, using proper technical support and small credits (WFP 2016). There is potential for Kanembu women in Niger to form co-operatives and develop regional markets on spirulina. Also, Shea nut production presents a similar economic development opportunity in southeast Niger (Ibid). Shea nut is traded by women, and can serve as an integral source of women's economic empowerment in Southeast Niger. The improvement of security in the LCB is a necessary pre-condition for the successful implementation of these of these initiatives.

### 8. Conclusion

This study is an analysis of the effects of violent extremism and the livelihood strategies for coping with threats from Boko Haram in the Chad Basin. The study is based on previous studies and researches in Northeast Nigeria and the Chad Basin. The study agrees that the violence from



Boko Haram has direct and indirect effects, households use different coping strategies to survive both short and long-term threats. At the onset of emergency in the Chad Basin, the displaced persons relied primarily on emergency relief from humanitarian and development agencies. But as violence became protracted, some of the IDPs moved to live with host communities, providing them opportunities to engage in livelihoods activities such as farming arable crops and hawking agricultural products. However, an adverse coping strategy by some poor, uneducated mothers unable to feed their dependents send them to Koranic schools, entrusting their child into the protective care of the religious education system. This strategy has been counterproductive, it offers a chance of survival at the cost of family separation, and some Koranic schools serves as breeding ground and radicalization for violent Boko Haram members. Initiatives like the School-Feeding Program offers an opportunity for children that have dropped out of school to receive a formal education.

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