
EDUCATION AT THE BEDSIDE OF A "CONSENSUAL DEMOCRACY" IN CHADIAN STYLE

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ABSTRACT: *Just after its accession to international sovereignty, Chad experienced decades of socio-political crises. This has had negative repercussions on its development at all levels and particularly on its education system. However, a democratic process in a country can only achieve the expected objectives if it takes place in a State with a high rate of school-going population. This contribution attempts to show how the success of a country's democratic process depends to a large extent on the educational culture of its citizens. With a view to achieving the desired objectives, documents relating to the political history of Chad and those concerning the evolution of the Chadian educational process were consulted. In addition to the documentary approach, we proceeded by direct observation in the field. This allowed us to briefly present the vicissitudes that have characterized Chad and to establish their impact on the country's education and democratic culture.*

KEYWORDS: Chad, education, democracy, history, Chadian politics.

INTRODUCTION

Chad, like other African countries, has been experimenting with the form of governance that is democracy since the 1990s, when at the La Baule conference the continent's leaders were asked to experiment with it. However, it must be noted that the democratic process advocated by the country's high authorities has a lead under the wing because of the level of critical education of the population. Most of the studies carried out on the democratic process in Chad have focused on the democratic process itself, including the denunciation of electoral fraud, for example, without taking into account the critical level of education of the Chadian population at the origin of the phenomenon; that is what this study will focus on. This contribution therefore seeks to show how the success of a country's democratic process depends to a large extent on the educational culture of its citizens. This contribution will begin with an analysis of the concept of education in relation to the vicissitudes that have marked the history of Chad before proceeding to a brief assessment of its repercussions on the educational situation in the country.

METHODOLOGY

In order to successfully complete this study, we first rely on documentary sources. General works on the political history of Chad were read, which gave us an idea of the vicissitudes that have characterized the history of this country. Specific documents referring to education and the democratic process were also consulted. Recourse was also made to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sources. In this wake, important resources put on line on the Internet were very useful to us. Finally, we made use of oral sources made up of people who

had witnessed or participated in the democratic process in Chad and in the education process. Without hiding the direct observation that we made on the ground, since we were eyewitnesses to the democratic opening up in Chad; which, moreover, aroused our interest in this study. The data collected were analyzed according to the experimental method. This enabled us to arrive at the results that are presented below.

RESULTS

The concept of education

Education is, according to René Hubert:

the totality of actions and influences exercised voluntarily by one human being on another human being, in principle by an adult on a young person, and directed towards a goal which consists in the formation in the young person of dispositions of all kinds corresponding to the ends for which, having reached maturity, he is destined¹.

Originally the term education is linked to a vital need (it is said to begin with the gesture of a father who draws in front of his child the buffalo enabling them to feed themselves from childhood). In this sense, education becomes a vital necessity for any human society. For Comenius, who assumes the Christian heritage in a neo-Platonic perspective, "man needs to be formed to become man"; he is an "educable animal". Thus through education, notions of human rights and freedoms are inculcated. As such, education is now identified with the process of humanization and concerns all fields of human activity. It will henceforth accompany the effort to establish modern States. These modern States will take several forms. In Africa; in the 1990s the heads of state of that continent were encouraged by their metropolises to adopt democracy as a form of governance. It is in this context that Chad got rid of its dictator in December 1990 and began its first experiment in democracy. However, its history marked by successive political crises did not encourage experimentation with this form of governance.

Brief overview of political and educational history in Chad

Just after its accession to international sovereignty, Chad went through decades of political crises. Indeed, just after August 11, 1960, the date of Chad's accession to international sovereignty, movements of protest were created. The Chadian school inherited from colonization was a reality in Chad under the reign of the first Chadian president, NGARTA TOMBALBAYE. However, the enrolment rate remained very low due to parents' refusal to send their children to school. FROLINAT (Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad) was already created on 22 April 1960 in Nyala, Darfur (Waidou, 2014). Subsequently, political instability set in and even became widespread throughout Chad. In April 1975, NGARTA TOMBALBAYE was killed in a military coup that brought the perpetrators to power. The Superior Military Council (CSM) led by Gal Felix MALLOUM was unable to solve the problem of low literacy. It was in this context that the worst was reached in 1979, when there was talk of widespread civil wars in Chad with several tendencies (Buijtenhuijs, 1991) that had developed almost everywhere. This led to the withdrawal of some Chadians to the south, leaving the capital in chaos. During this time of withdrawal, the Chadian school functioned as best it could. Each people withdrew from the capital while trying to preserve their educational achievements. For example, the Evangelical College of Ndjamena was relocated to Bebalem in the south of the country². Vicissitudes will continue to mark the history of Chad until 1982, when HISSEIN HABRE took power. During the eight (8) years of HABRE's reign marked by

¹ Encyclopedic Dictionary of Education and Training, 3rd Edition, RETZ

² Interview with Ngaoudande Daniel, April 2020

a dictatorial management of the country, the educational process was making its way but marked by a disorder that affected the country's school map. It should be noted that since then, semi-literate people have joined the Chadian administration following various negotiation agreements for "sharing cakes". Our objective here is not to talk in detail about these malfunctions; rather, by raising this aspect of the problem, we want to show how these disorders affect the normal functioning of institutions and hence the democratic process. Let us say in passing that the democratic process can only achieve its intended objective when it is deployed in a country with a high school enrolment rate. In 1990, HABRE was overthrown by Idriss DEBY. At the beginning of his mandate, he announced the launch of the democratic process in Chad in these terms: *"I bring you neither gold nor silver but freedom..."*. In spite of these encouraging statements, the democratic process has continued to have a lead on the wing. It was even threatened during the first decade: strikes and other disturbances were observed. Scenarios went from "scenario to scenario" in order to save the school and academic years.

Impact on the Chadian education system

The socio-political crises that have marked Chad's political history have, as we have just said, had negative repercussions on education in Chad. Indeed, even if we note that the first school in Chad was created by French colonizers in Kanem in 1917 in the midst of the colonial period, it should nevertheless be noted that the political crises that occurred just after independence really did not favour the development of education in Chad. Indeed, recent diagnoses of the Chadian education system still show below-normal enrolment rates as follows.

Early childhood education is very poorly developed in Chad. Only 1.73% of children participate in this level of education for children aged 3 to 5 years (it should be noted that 37% of these schools are in the capital N'Djamena). Of the 267 schools that received 21,209 pre-school children in 2009/2010, 61% are private schools, 26% are community schools and only 13% are public³.

As for basic education, it is marked by insufficient and inequitable quantitative coverage: the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is 94% but the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) is 65.6%, indicating that 34.4% of children aged 6 to 11 are out of school; more than 800,000 children aged 9 to 14 are out of school⁴.

A high illiteracy rate is recorded in Chad, where the overall rate is 78%, with wide disparities. It is 45% and 57% in N'Djamena and West Mayo-Kebbi and 97% and 96% respectively in Barh El Gazel and Lac. It is 69% for men and 86% for women. Very low efficiency of the literacy system: very few learners reach level 2. Out of 60% of the learners enrolled in level 1, 29% are in level 2 and only 11% are in the post-literacy level⁵.

We can see from these data, which are moreover recent, that the enrolment rate has remained too low despite the enormous efforts made by the Chadian authorities in the field of education.

There is no doubt that these enrolment rates are the direct result of Chad's tumultuous past, which has meant that the various successive governments have not had the time needed to establish a good education policy; the priority being the survival of the regime by all means. The priority is the survival of the regime by all means. However, as we have already stressed,

³ "La situation de l'éducation au Tchad" in https://www.wathi.org/laboratoire/initiatives/election_tchad/situation-de-leducation-tchad/. Accessed 12 February 2020.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ ibid

the success of the democratic process can only be achieved if the citizens of this country are sufficiently educated. What we observe almost everywhere in Chad is that the majority of the population hardly understands the value of, for example, a vote. Even if one had just understood this electoral issue, it is just for a selfish interest: to bring someone close to power, for example, to access what is commonly known as "sharing the cake". Voting for the "right man for the right place" to solve the country's problem is not at all understood. And that is what allows the ruling majority that understands this principle to manipulate others who are "ignorant" for its own interests.

The consequences of these conflicts, which have characterized Chadian political life, have also led to a worsening of the ethnic fabric. This has had a strong impact on Chadian political life. It is well known today that in Chad we have quasi-regional political groupings. Clearly, no party - with the exception of the party in power⁶ - has succeeded in bringing together activists from all the provinces of the country. In Chad, we have ethnic parties that are predominantly or even regionally based, and as such do not have the possibility of mobilising the majority of Chadians for their causes. This situation makes democratic alternation through the ballot box almost impossible.

Education and the democratic process in Chad

Before returning to the relationship between education (by which I mean a people's level of education) and democratic practice, it is important to take stock of the democratic process that has been under way in Chad since December 1990.

Thus, the arrival in power of Idriss Déby in December 1990 inaugurated a cycle of hope for the Chadian people and especially for Chadian political life. Thus, the new political order established there is a multiparty system, which means that the winner by force of arms can lose the elections. It also implies that political contestation should be conducted exclusively within the civilian framework and that all political actors must respect these new rules. What about the democratic process in Chad?

Initially, progress can be noted in relation to this process, particularly in terms of the political statements made by the Head of State. First of all, let us say that if we were to assess the actions of the new regime solely on its verb, we would be tempted to say that Idriss Déby, undoubtedly deserves "the Nobel Peace Prize". Unlike his predecessor Habré, who devoted two thirds of his official speeches to the war effort against Libya and the remaining third to the need to establish a strong centralized state, Idriss Déby tirelessly hammered home the themes of democratization, forgiveness of former adversaries and peace (Buijtenhuijs, 1991). Immediately after his installation in power, he set the tone in his Message to the Nation of December 4, 1990, in the following terms: "It is a great pleasure for all the combatants of the patriotic forces to have contributed to the blossoming of the most cherished gift that you hoped for. This gift is neither gold nor silver: it is freedom! "This same theme was taken up again exactly three months later, on March 4, 1991, during his investiture as President of the Republic:

At the time of the victory of the patriotic forces (...), the MPS, through my voice, assured you of its commitment to work for the advent of a real, pluralist democracy, guaranteeing all individual and collective freedoms. Today we can reaffirm this commitment (...). The MPS, far from wanting to behave like a conqueror, wishes to facilitate the creation of the best conditions for the exercise of a real democracy in Chad (Buijtenhuijs, 1991).

⁶ The MPS is established all over the country for the simple reason that it is the ruling party. And as such has the means to carry out its policies.

The Chadian Head of State continued to reaffirm his firm will, hoping "that the MPS will not behave like the movement that is above all else, but like the last armed movement to take power in Chad, which should ensure the establishment of the rule of law". (ibid.) These words are ambitious, but the difficulty lies in translating them into reality. What about putting these promises into practice? In fact, Chad's new strongman as soon as he came to power in 1990 very quickly announced the need to break with a history marked and monopolized by single parties and "warlords". He thus took steps towards the liberalization of political life.

Thus, concrete achievements can be observed. It can be seen that a number of promises have been kept. For the first time in more than 30 years, Chad enjoys almost total freedom of the press. The local newspapers, namely N'Djamena Hebdo, Le Temps, L'Observateur, etc. do not hesitate to use and even abuse this freedom. They attack the President of the Republic and denounce scandal after scandal⁷. The notorious Documentation and Security Directorate (DDS), the political police created by its predecessor Hissein Habré, which committed most of the abuses attributed to the latter, is dissolved. Following the abuses imputable to the latter, a commission of inquiry into Habré's crimes was created. In March 1991, a National Charter was promulgated, giving exorbitant powers to the President of the Republic. However, the President announced the start of work on a new constitution. Thus, the multi-party system was formally adopted in October 1991.

Like many other francophone countries, and under French pressure (Buijtenhuijs, 1998), the Chadian President agreed to hold a Sovereign National Conference (CNS) from 15 January to 13 April. This conference enabled Chadians from all walks of life to meet and dialogue for the first time, to define institutions that would have new legitimacy, and to rebalance power between the President and his government. However, it must be noted that there are some failures in the process, for example, the National Charter, which replaces the Constitution promulgated on 28 February 1991, is open to criticism because it grants all powers to the President of the Republic, who is appointed by the governing bodies of the MPS and not by an independent body. This bears a strong resemblance to the Fundamental Act promulgated by Hissein Habré in 1982, even if this arrangement is temporary and is to disappear with the drafting of a new constitution by the Sovereign National Conference (Ibid.).

The other thing that is jeopardizing the process is the issuance of an ordinance on the creation of political parties. This ordinance stipulates that any new political party must have 30 founding members from 10 of the 14 prefectures in the country, three from each prefecture. It is true that the fear of the authorities is that regional or tribal parties will not reappear. But this does not make it easier for political leaders who aspire to create parties. Moreover, the new parties should not have external financing but should mobilize their own funds and those from within the country. Moreover, the transition period set for a period not exceeding 12 months has not been respected. As a result, Chad has experienced the longest transition in French-speaking Africa, lasting three years and a few days. As a result, it was the last country in the franc zone to hold multiparty general elections. Chad is also the only country where the Prime Minister of the transition, solemnly elected by the NSC, was abruptly dismissed before the end of his term of office, which was supposed to last until the end of the transition (Buijtenhuijs, 1998). Thus, the weight of the ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) was felt, as was the technique of instrumentalizing the fake political parties created to divide the few organizations with a popular base. The government implements all the strategies, thus emptying of their substance

⁷ One of N'Djaména Hebdo's numbers that caught our attention is the one in which the President of the Republic is caricatured carrying a bag full of bundles of bank notes to Cameroon for the purpose of diverting them.

the main decisions of the said conference; decisions which in fact limit the prerogatives of the President of the Republic. Trampling on these decisions, the president thus ensures exclusive control over the civil service and is the sole master in defining government policy.

A new Constitution was passed in March 1996. The elections of June-July 1996 demonstrated the ability of the government in power to manipulate the electoral rules by succeeding in keeping under its control the Independent National Electoral Commission (IECI), whose opportunism was confirmed during the successive electoral consultations⁸. Elected following the disputed elections, the Chadian Head of State succeeded without major difficulties in dividing an opposition which, moreover, does not have the means to be truly free and autonomous and which, in fact, lacks political maturity. The MPS, the ruling party, ran in the legislative elections in January 1997 under the best possible conditions and won an absolute majority of the seats in the National Assembly.

In 2001 and 2002, presidential and legislative elections were held, which were even more contested than those of 1996 and 1997. The MPS thus obtained 110 out of 155 seats in the assembly in January 2002. Its allies obtained 12. The opposition, which previously had the opportunity to "speak"⁹, was thus almost wiped out, since the absolute majority was held by the ruling party. We are thus witnessing an increasing retreat from democracy, all the more so as the single-party logic, peculiar to authoritarian regimes, is gradually taking precedence over that of democracy. The protests, both internally and internationally, are such that President Idriss Déby promises, when he is inaugurated, to respect the constitution, that is to say, not to seek a third term of office. He also pledged to engage in a dialogue with the nation's active forces with a view to improving governance. Against all expectations, the MPS congress of November 2003 decided to amend the Constitution to allow its president to run for another term.

The Congress believes that a "Constitution is not a Bible, much less a Koran" and is therefore subject to change. The constitutional reform was adopted after the referendum of June 2005. This popular consultation was widely boycotted by the Chadian population. A Western foreign embassy reported a turnout of less than 30 per cent¹⁰.

Finally, on 3 May 2006, presidential elections were held and the results came as no surprise; they reflected the political stalemate in Chad. In the first round, the outgoing Head of State won no less than 77.53% of the votes¹¹. The turnout is reported to be 66.49% of the 5.7 million registered voters. This ballot, like the previous one, is boycotted by the entire opposition, which denounces an "electoral masquerade". The only opponents of Idriss Déby are four "rivals" who are also members of the government coalition and are for the most part not very popular. This non-exhaustive history allows us to understand that the democratic process is not yet a success

⁸ International Crisis Group Africa Report N°111, of June 2006.

⁹ A few Chadian elites thus make fun of certain members who speak simply knowing that these words will not be taken into consideration at all, since the assembly is part of the Parliament, which resembles Chad to a place where one can speak in a folkloric manner of course.

¹⁰ We ourselves observed in the east of the country in Abéché where the population massively abstained in the successive elections of 2001, 2002 and especially the presidential elections of 2006.

¹¹ During the presidential elections of 2002, President Idriss Déby was re-elected in the first round, even though a few hours before the announcement of the results, the chairman of the INEC declared that "two candidates stood out from the pack, namely Idriss Deby, the MPS candidate, closely followed by Yorongar Ngarlejy, the federalist candidate. The 2001 ballot will be certified only by the CENI, which is in charge of validating the election results, and the French observers, who are very close to the government.

in Chad, since it is riddled with obstacles that stifle it. For example, there have been political assassinations, and the pretext for these atrocities is that the victims support this or that insurrectional movement. We can point to a few examples of such assassinations:

Gaston Mbainabey is the canton chief of Goré, in the western Logone region of southern Chad. At the beginning of March 1998, he received a summons from the sub-prefect of Benoye for Wednesday the 11th. The summons specifies that he must be accompanied by 15 village chiefs from his canton. Gaston Mbainabey warns them. On the day in question, they are all around him, waiting for the sub-prefect. Three military vehicles appear. The soldiers immediately took the chiefs to the banks of the Logone River, tied them together with a rope and shot them. Gaston Mbainabey, who was spared, had to witness the execution of his friends. When their crime was over, the soldiers took the canton chief home, installed him in his traditional seat and put him to death by firing squad (Verschave, 2001:151).

One thus realizes, as the memorandum of a coalition of opponents so well emphasized, that: "President Deby's deliberate policy is the systematic and open use of physical liquidation as a means of resolving political contradictions" (Ibid.). The most telling case is that of Maître Joseph Behidi, an activist and secretary general of the Chadian League for Human Rights in Chad, whose assassination seriously affected the political and democratic life of the country. Thus the situation will continue to deteriorate further and political actors will realize that the democracy under which they live is only a tree that hides the forest. Subsequently, it will be realized that accession to power through the ballot box remains a pipe dream for the time being, since the authorities have amended the Constitution to allow the President of the Republic to seek another term of office. This failure of the democratic process inevitably leads to vicissitudes which in turn lead to armed protests.

The democratic process and education in Chad

As pointed out above, the vicissitudes that have marked Chad's political history have not favored the development of the democratic process in Chad. Rather, they have delayed the development of the country and its level of education; the priority for the leaders is the survival of their political regimes. As a result, once democracy has been opened up in Africa, Chad finds it difficult to get the process off the ground. This difficulty can be explained by the low school enrolment rate of the Chadian population. Experience has shown that, at the beginning of the process, the basic notions of respect for human rights, freedom of opinion and, above all, civic-mindedness are not understood by most of the Chadian population. An illiterate population will only be able to commit acts contrary to the basic principles of any democracy. Thus, as shown above, the need to vote, as a civic duty, is not well perceived by Chadian citizens. It is not often understood how abstaining from voting could have a negative impact on the outcome of the ballot. Even if one had just taken part in a vote, it is just for the satisfaction of a selfish need; to bring a relative or the highest bidder to power. The population does not yet understand that, through the vote, which is an expression of the popular will, one could manage to choose quality leaders in order to straighten society for the good of all. Moreover, there is a problem of the responsibility of each citizen. We had noted, to our regret, that voter cards, for example, in our village with regard to the family, are held by the head of the household who, on the eve of the elections, redistributes them to each member of the family with precise voting instructions in favor of this or that candidate. The same applies to the decision to be registered on an electoral roll. This phenomenon can be observed everywhere else in Chad, where chiefs and/or leaders decide in the place of others. This implies that women and young men in a family do not have freedom of choice; not being aware of what is at stake, they find that this is normal and must be done so.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

At the end of this study we can say that Chad is one of the countries where the democratic process has not been able to make spectacular progress. This contribution has endeavored to show that the success of a country's democratic process depends largely on the educational culture of its citizens. The democratic process in Chad is under strain because of the very high illiteracy rate. This study is necessary for more than one reason because it could enable decision-makers to focus on the education sector in order to meet this requirement.

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