

Surveillance in Niger: Gendarmes and the Problem of “Seeing Things”

Mirco Göpfert

Abstract: Today, high-tech surveillance seems omnipresent in Niger, particularly because of the conflicts in neighboring Mali, Libya, and Nigeria and efforts by the U.S. and France to boost local security agencies. However, Niger is not a very efficient “registering machine,” and the gendarmes have very limited knowledge of the communities in which they work. The key to overcoming this problem of knowledge—to “see things,” as the gendarmes put it—is the nurturing of good relationships with potential informants. But as the gendarmes depend on the knowledge of locals, the power relationship between the surveillers and those observed proves far more ambiguous than generally assumed.

Résumé: Aujourd’hui, au Niger, une surveillance de haute technologie semble omniprésente, en particulier à cause des conflits au Mali, en Libye et au Niger et des efforts soutenus des États-Unis et de la France pour renforcer les agences de sécurité locales. Cependant, le Niger n’est pas une “machine d’enregistrement,” très efficace et les gendarmes ont une connaissance très limitée des communautés dans lesquelles ils travaillent. La clé pour surmonter ce problème réside dans “la manière de voir les choses,” comme les gendarmes le disent, c’est-à-dire d’entretenir de bonnes relations avec les informateurs potentiels. Mais comme les gendarmes dépendent de la connaissance de la population locale, le rapport de force entre les surveillés et les surveillants prouve être beaucoup plus ambigu que généralement présumé.

Keywords: Surveillance; policing; gendarmerie; knowledge; Niger

African Studies Review, Volume 59, Number 2 (September 2016), pp. 39–57

Mirco Göpfert is a lecturer in social and cultural anthropology at the University of Konstanz, Germany. He has published numerous articles on security, police work, and bureaucracy in Niger and is co-editor of *Police in Africa: The Street Level View* (Hurst, forthcoming). E-mail: mirco.goepfert@uni-konstanz.de

Introduction

Surveillance is on the rise in Niger, particularly high-tech surveillance. Since the onset of violent conflicts in neighboring Mali, Libya, and Nigeria, U.S. drones and French surveillance aircrafts have become visible in the skies over Niger and large portions of the Sahel. In close collaboration with their Nigerien counterparts, U.S. and French security agencies intercept telephone calls by alleged members of criminal networks—be it al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram, or “mundane” smugglers and traffickers. Nigerien officers are also receiving more and more U.S.-led training on how to gather, process, and catalog pieces of intelligence.

Despite all efforts to install and propagate sophisticated methods of surveillance, the street-level work by police and gendarmes, even of those primarily concerned with intelligence work, looks vastly different. Between 2009 and 2014, when I conducted ethnographic research, both police and gendarmerie had centralized intel-data repositories, or central registers (*fichier central*) where they were supposed to store all case files and information about offenders and suspects, their fingerprints, and sometimes even photographs. But they were highly inefficient. During my fieldwork in different units of the Nigerien gendarmerie (a rural police force) throughout the country, I found at least three reasons for this inefficiency. First, only a small percentage of the cases were transformed into written records and then sent for storage and cataloging (see Göpfert 2013). Second, these documents were hard copies and extremely difficult to comb through for any kind of information matching. And thus third, when a gendarmerie station requested help from a register to identify a given suspect, the central register replied weeks later, if at all. Niger, like most African countries, is a badly working “registering machine” (Szreter & Breckenridge 2012:1) and thus not a very efficient “knowledge apparatus” in Foucault’s sense (2004:112). The knowledge of the population collected in filing cabinets—to enable the identification of individuals, to support the functions of everyday bureaucratic governance, and in general, to make society legible (the fundamental function of governmental power, according to Foucault [2004]; see also Goody 1986; Scott 1998)—was rather restricted and hardly accessible to the gendarmes. *Herrschaft kraft Wissen*, or domination through knowledge, as Max Weber (1980 [1921]:129) put it, has yet to be achieved.

So while surveillance is visibly on the rise in Niger, institutional knowledge is not. And the gendarmes I encountered had only limited knowledge of the villages and communities in which they worked because they were transferred to a different region or town every three years. Thus they need to maneuver through a landscape that they do not know and for which they have no map. And for this function—in order to “see things,” as they said—they desperately need help. What, therefore, is the meaning of state surveillance in a context in which both the state and the surveillers seem to know very little about those they want to monitor?

The main focus of this article is the way in which the surveillers maneuver through unknown territory. This approach diverges from previous and predominant perspectives on surveillance in two ways: This article is neither about the objects and “audiences” of surveillance (see Lyon 2006:8), nor about the totalizing, subjectifying, and objectifying effects of surveillance as a mode of governing and exercising control over (at least specific segments of) the population.¹ States and their surveillance apparatus are often described by means of the panopticon metaphor made popular by Michel Foucault (1975)—a figurative prison in which the inmates can be the focus of the surveiller’s all-seeing but unseen gaze at any time; in which the inmates, as a consequence, become aware of their constant visibility and turn into their own surveillers; and in which power relations permeate and are reproduced in their subjects’ bodies. Yet in a context such as Niger, in which the panopticon seems to have more cracks than walls—more places to hide than to be seen—such an approach would be misleading. Rather, I want to present an account of surveillance that takes the surveillers’ perspective as a point of departure here: the Nigerien gendarmes’ practices and often improvised “ways of operating” in an unknown terrain (see de Certeau 1984:xiv,xix), particularly how they establish and manage relationships with potential informants. Taking up Michel de Certeau’s metaphor (1984:129), I suggest that where a “map of knowledge” is missing, even the supposed cartographers’ walks turn into improvised and ambivalent moves. The gendarmes rely on guides in an unknown terrain (intelligence agents), on other cartographers who might show them their own detailed maps (chiefs), and on the eyes and ears of others on the ground (friends). Thus the power relations between surveiller and person surveilled turn out to be much more fluid and indefinite than generally assumed.²

Surveillance in Niger in Historical Perspective

Systematic surveillance by state agencies started in Niger during the French colonization, particularly with the arrival of the colonial police. Today, a wealth of research exists on what the police did in French colonies (see, e.g., Bat & Courtin 2012; Glasman 2010). They were first introduced in French West Africa in 1930 and located exclusively in urban centers. Their tasks were not so much the detection and prevention of social deviance or criminal offenses; rather they served the colonial administration as a political police. Their main responsibilities were to maintain hygiene in the colonial capitals, control movements into the urban centers, prevent any anticolonial manifestations and propaganda, and eliminate political opponents of the colonial regime. In most independent African states this political function was transferred to what are now national police forces, such as the Police Nationale in Niger (see Blanchard & Glasman 2012; Brunet-la Ruche 2012; Fourchard 2003a, 2003b; Pratten 2008).

Policing outside the urban centers was very different. The *gardes de cercle* (often called *gardes-cercles*) were the main colonial rural police force.

Instituted in Niger in 1905, they were recruited from former *tirailleurs*, African recruits of the French colonial army, most of whom were from the French Sudan and the Upper Volta (Dramé 2007; *JO AOF* 1920, 1950). As a “local gendarmerie” these police officers served as intermediaries between French colonial administrators and the local population (Tidjani Alou 2001).

In Niger, the first gendarmerie unit, the Brigade de Niger, was put in place in the late 1940s (see *JO Togo* 1945); although precise numbers of gendarmes are unknown, they were probably fewer than a dozen, given the usual composition of future brigades. Significantly more came in the 1950s. In 1954 there were twenty gendarmerie brigades in Niger and all the units were under the command of French gendarmerie cadres. A brigade like the one in Zinder usually comprised two French gendarmes and four African auxiliary gendarmes; smaller posts such as Magaria or Birni-N’Konni consisted of one French gendarme and two auxiliaries (Cabry 2009; *Temps du Niger* 1961). All in all, at that time there must have been about thirty French gendarmes and some sixty African auxiliaries. But still, as the historiographer of the French colonial gendarmerie, Gérard Cabry, notes, Niger was “a forgotten, under-administered, under-equipped, and under-policed territory” (2009:129).³

Given the large distances that needed to be patrolled and the lack of an adequate communication infrastructure, most Nigerien guards were neither closely controlled nor well equipped by French colonial administrators. Consequently, more often than not they overused their right to collect taxes, be it in the form of millet, cattle, or forced labor (Dramé 2007; Fuglestad 1983) and sometimes radically in violation of local codes of mutuality, as described by Miles (1993). However, they could not overstretch their prerogatives arbitrarily. As they were often not from the particular locality, did not speak the local tongue, and were not familiar with the areas and people they were supposed to control, they needed the cooperation of local chiefs, guides, or other intermediaries (Fuglestad 1983). Even after Niger’s independence in 1960, the collaboration between public administrators and chiefs, with their knowledge of the local populations and state-backed power to control them, was the foundation of effective police work.

The institution of chieftaincy, however, had a hard time under Hamani Diori’s one-party rule between 1960 and 1974. As Miles notes, Diori, a typical French-African *évolué*, “looked askance at the chieftaincy as an anachronistic institution, at best old-fashioned and quaint, at worst a potential drawback to modernisation and change” (1987:251). As a consequence, chiefs were replaced by party committees as intermediaries between the government and the people and excluded from any formal role in the actual governing of the country. The army and gendarmerie were also under pressure and increasingly put to work on nonmilitary tasks such as in agricultural projects, and Diori turned parts of his party’s countrywide youth organization into a party militia that was ultimately supposed to supplant the national army (Higgot & Fuglestad 1975; Mignon 1989). Surveillance,

particularly of potential civilian and of political or military adversaries, was an essential part of his militia's duties.

This situation changed after Lieutenant Colonel Seyni Kountché's military coup in 1974. A dramatic increase in state surveillance occurred during the Kountché regime (1974–87), especially on the part of his powerful secret police, La Coordination (Amuwo 1986). Every taxi driver, street vendor, and hawker roaming public buildings, restaurants, and bars was suspected (sometimes correctly) of snooping on private conversations and reporting to the Coordination (Issa 2008). The result was "an extremely policed state" (Idrissa 2008:199) in which hundreds of people were arrested, interrogated, imprisoned, or killed for their political views. Kountché's regime was very efficient in meting out instant and draconian punishments for rumors and hearsay, and it was extremely effective at spreading uncertainty and instilling fear in the civilian population (see Bozzini 2011). But while its policies had the intended effect of squelching pluralist expression and creating a frightened citizenry, this kind of "low-tech surveillance" (Bozzini 2011:94) was limited in its capacity to collect, store, and evaluate intelligence.

In the late 1980s, after Kountché's death, things began to change gradually when the military-controlled, one-party system ended, and then during the period of democratization in the 1990s. Pluralist expression was allowed, the Coordination was suppressed, and both police and gendarmerie were largely discredited and kept a low profile (Lund 2001:859–860).⁴ Systematic surveillance and oppression came to a halt, and the hawker-informants returned to their old trade. The next shift, which took place in the early 2000s, persists until today. After 9/11, Niger, Chad, Mali, and Mauritania were counted among the West African "frontline states" in the global war on terrorism (Davis 2007:1). Since the abduction of thirty-two Europeans in March 2003 by the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), renamed al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb in 2007, the U.S. military presence in the Sahara has been augmented significantly (Ellis 2004; Keenan 2009b).⁵ From 2002 onward, Nigerien military and paramilitary forces have been assisted by foreign initiatives such as the U.S.-led Pan-Sahel Initiative (renamed the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership in 2005), which has mounted multinational military operations financed by the U.S., trained by U.S. Special Forces, and operating under U.S. command (Ellis 2004).⁶ These operations have resulted in increased militarization in Niger, with a remarkable rise in army and gendarmerie personnel.⁷ In addition, since 2009 France and the U.S. have provided Nigerien security forces with more and more high-technology surveillance assistance and training (Keenan 2008, 2009a).

The intelligence and surveillance apparatus has increased rapidly since the crisis in Mali triggered by the proclamation of the independent state by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in 2012, and particularly since the Islamist group Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) seized power. The French led

a military intervention in northern Mali and have increased their intelligence operations throughout the Sahel; France and the U.S. have strengthened their surveillance apparatus in the region, have started training and equipping police and paramilitary units to gather and process intelligence more efficiently, and have intensified operational cooperation with local intelligence services. France is operating surveillance aircrafts in the Sahel and the U.S. is operating unarmed Predator drones from a base outside the capital, Niamey (Whitlok 2013). In 2009 and 2010 I talked to diplomats in Niger who expressed fear that the Sahel region could turn into a “second Afghanistan.” Today, it even has its own name, given by Laurent (2013): “Sahelistan.”

Niger itself has also been making considerable investments to strengthen its surveillance capacities. As in most African countries today, since 2012 mobile phone users are required to register and provide personal identification details when purchasing a SIM card (Donovan & Martin 2014). This makes it much easier for Nigerien police and intelligence agencies, in close collaboration with the U.S., to monitor mobile phone communications. In October 2014 Niger purchased a reconnaissance plane to be operated by its own intelligence service (Reuters 2014).

Thus high-tech surveillance is on the rise in Niger. But at the same time, low-tech surveillance by street-level, generalist police and gendarmes through personal contacts, although barely targeted by international initiatives, is still the most important means for collecting information. Even pieces of intelligence produced by wiretaps or airborne surveillance need to be verified on the ground. In addition, all these high-tech measures are not only of limited value in this vast, predominantly rural country, but also are beyond the reach of most street-level policing agents. The latter need to work with informants, and particularly with ones they can trust.

Informants as Knowledge Brokers

The gendarmes whom I interviewed were strangers in the places where they worked, but communicating with locals was not a big problem. Most of the time, both sides spoke (or at least knew a little) Hausa or Zarma. Only on rare occasions—when the gendarmes were confronted with somebody who only understood a language (i.e., Arabic, Fulfulde, Tamasheq, or Tebu) that none of them understood—would they have to call for an interpreter, mostly a chief or his representative. But even if communicating was quite easy, knowing the identities of the people they talked to and gathering intelligence was far more difficult. Here they needed informants—to locate or identify a person, to understand the context of a particular complaint and the disputants’ relationship, to know their families’ previous history, and so on. I suggest that these informants can be thought of as “knowledge brokers”; I borrow the term “broker” from Giorgio Blundo’s (2001, 2006) studies of intermediaries in public bureaucracies, although I use it in a slightly different manner. Whereas Blundo focuses on the role of these intermediaries

in the citizens' access to bureaucracies, I focus on the bureaucrats' access to citizens, or more precisely, to knowledge of them.⁸ Brokers are those who can draw back the curtain between the local state and its citizens, not only by acting as administrative brokers who provide access to public services (Blundo 2001), but also by acting as knowledge brokers and providing the bureaucrats with information about the citizens they interact with. Administrative brokers help citizens deal with an administration that they don't understand; knowledge brokers allow bureaucrats to deal with a population that they don't understand.

The gendarmes' relationship with their informants was always a balancing act between suspicion and trust. As Sally Engle Merry argues, community intermediaries are "often distrusted, because their ultimate loyalties are ambiguous and they may be double agents. They are powerful in that they have mastered both of the discourses of the interchange, but they are vulnerable to charges of disloyalty or double-dealing" (2006:40). This resonates well with the three golden rules of intelligence work, which a gendarme who had learned it from CIA instructors recited to me:

Rule number one: Never trust an informant.

Rule number two: Never trust an informant.

Rule number three: Never trust an informant.

But, given these rules, what could a gendarme do with a piece of information from somebody he or she fundamentally distrusted? The gendarme could, of course, try to verify this information through independent sources—but in the tight social networks in the rural communities where the gendarmes work, the existence of independent sources is highly unlikely. In addition, every potential informant has good reasons to lie or say nothing at all, since being visibly friendly with the gendarmes, or appearing to be a "double-dealer," could cause stigma and social exclusion and lead to threats and violent attacks on oneself and one's family. This is why potential informants need to trust the gendarmes not to make the assistance publicly known and to provide protection in case of trouble. In short, whether the gendarmes are able to bridge the knowledge gap that separates them from the local population depends on their ability to establish networks of trustworthy relationships that involve particular forms of reciprocity (see Beek 2012). In the following sections, I describe the relationships the gendarmes establish with three types of potential informants: "intelligence agents," chiefs, and ordinary acquaintances.

Intelligence Agents

One morning, the commander of a brigade where I was conducting my research received a letter from headquarters. It contained a photo, the mobile phone number, and a description of a suspected terrorist's supposed domicile.

The brigade commander, Adjudant-Chef Souley, immediately called Issa, one of his intelligence agents (*agents de renseignement*).

Souley had about ten intelligence agents dispersed throughout the department, he told me. About half of them were former prison inmates, some of whom Souley had personally jailed and kept in touch with since their release. The others were small-time offenders whom Souley had decided not to send to trial after reaching a settlement at the gendarmerie station. Some of these intelligence agents had already supplied him with information—for example, about drug trade networks, which had led to arrests. Sometimes they were even operationally involved in Souley's work. The former drug dealer had actively helped him squash a group of drug traffickers; Souley and a handful of gendarmes had stood on the outskirts of town waiting for his intelligence agent to call him and describe the target group's vehicle as soon it left the bus station. In another case Souley had sent one of his intelligence agents to a town some 300 kilometers away to gather information about alleged Boko Haram terrorists spilling over from nearby Nigeria.

Men whom the gendarmes call “les enfants de la gendarmerie,” the gendarmerie's children, are unofficial employees who work at the brigade as cobblers, errand-boys, moto-taxi (*kabou-kabou*) drivers, or general handymen. They are often town natives and thus possess much deeper knowledge of the place and people than most gendarmes. Issa had been working at the gendarmerie for about twenty years when I met him in 2010. He had started out working as a “boy” for a former brigade commander, running errands, shopping for groceries, cleaning his house, doing the laundry, and ironing the uniforms. Bit by bit he became acquainted with the other gendarmes, and once his former boss left he began spending most of his time at the brigade. He told me that his daily job now consisted of sweeping the station's courtyard early in the morning and washing the gendarmes' cars and motorbikes for tips, but occasionally he would also go into town and gather information about people selling drugs or stolen goods. Now Adjudant-Chef Souley was giving Issa a specific task. He sent him out to search for the domicile of the alleged terrorist, to casually talk to neighbors and shopkeepers in the same street, and to listen in on conversations at the neighborhood mosque.

A few days later I asked Issa if he liked his job. “Ina so, bani so,” he said (in Hausa): “I like it, and I don't like it.” Many people from town think of him as a “secret agent,” as a “karen jendarmomi” (the “gendarmes' dog” in Hausa), as somebody who spies on people's private lives.⁹ The distrust with which people look at him complicates his life and limits his social contacts to his family, close friends, and the gendarmes. When he married his second wife, all the gendarmes donated a little money and visited him in his humble home. This only did more to nurture people's suspicions. Issa asserted that he did not spy on others, but I often heard him talking to gendarmes about this or that neighbor or merchant, indicating who lived where, traveled where, and was acquainted with whom. Apart from

the rare intelligence missions, his work was mostly to provide this kind of general information that was not available to the gendarmes who were constantly in transit, “de passage,” as Issa put it. These pieces of simple information therefore contributed to the gendarmes’ general knowledge of the civilian population.

From the gendarmes’ perspective, the relationship between the gendarmes and their intelligence agents is pragmatic. The gendarmes often give them mobile phones that allow them to keep in touch, as well as money or clothes. They will also, if necessary, help them file their own complaints against another citizen, and they turn a blind eye to whatever dubious activities the agents themselves may have been involved in. It is thus a give-and-take relationship, sometimes with explicit and at other times more implicit terms of trade. And yet trust plays an essential role therein because the consequences of such a relationship could be terrible. Adjudant-Chef Souley told me about one of his former intelligence agents, a pharmacist, who had been arrested for forging documents and almost went to jail. Souley had negotiated an out-of-court settlement for the man and had then entered into a privileged relationship with him. The pharmacy was located on the premises of the town’s little bus station, and like any bus station, it was a “hotbed of vice,” as both gendarmes and civilians said. Several times the pharmacist had informed Adjudant-Chef Souley about criminal activities at the bus station, and some of these tips had led to an arrest. One day, however, the pharmacist was found dead in front of his shop, with a bullet in his head. This weighed heavily on Souley’s conscience, he told me. According to Souley, in a town as small as the one he was working in, such crimes are rare. Souley knew that somehow information about the pharmacist’s working as an intelligence agent had gotten into the wrong hands.

Chiefs

Right after Adjudant-Chef Souley sent Issa to town to search for information about the suspected terrorist, he took out his mobile phone and called Gado—a *baruma* (i.e., representative of a village chief) who was in charge of the neighborhood where the terrorist was supposed to live. Gado was a well-known guest at the gendarmerie brigade. He came there almost every other day. He greeted all the gendarmes with a handshake, knew everybody by name, and would sit down on the gendarmes’ benches, where no other civilians were allowed to sit.

The hierarchy of chiefs in Niger parallels the overlapping territorial units of counties (*départements*), villages/towns, and neighborhoods. The corresponding chiefs are the *chefs de canton*, *chefs de village*, and *chefs de quartier*. In the case of pastoralist nomads (e.g., Tuareg), the smallest unit of reference is not the village but the group (i.e., a cluster of families), and the chief is the *chef de groupement* (even though the large majority of pastoralist families have become sedentary).

The chiefs and baruma are administrative brokers in that they help civilians gain access to state institutions, help them make complaints at the gendarmerie station, or, if they are accused of an offense, negotiate in their favor. And they are knowledge brokers in that they know the people and the area under their influence more deeply than anyone else; their knowledge of local citizens proved invaluable to colonial administrators a century ago, and it is still invaluable to gendarmes today. The latter, for example, cannot rely on or access public registers, and most people in rural areas do not have identity cards. So the gendarmes rely on the chiefs' cooperation when they need precise information about specific individuals in order to identify and locate a suspect: two necessary and crucial steps in any criminal investigation (see Brodeur & Ouellet 2005), whether it concerns a terrorist or a thief. In criminal investigations, a chief was like a joker in a game of cards: if you had him in your hand, you would probably win.

Chiefs were aware of the importance of their role, and so were the gendarmes, although not all gendarmes were entirely satisfied with this arrangement. One day in 2010, during Souley's leave of absence, I accompanied Chef Tahirou, a noncommissioned officer second in rank under Adjudant-Chef Souley, the interim brigade commander, and two gendarmes on a mission to a remote village to arrest a man for financial fraud. It was market day, and Chef Tahirou had the driver pull up right on the market square. Instantly a group of agitated people gathered around the vehicle. Chef Tahirou got out and shouted that he was looking for a man named Ali Hassan. At first nobody replied, but then a man came forward and told us that we should come to his house and wait for him to call the man we were looking for. After waiting two hours, Chef Tahirou decided to leave and forced the host to pay for the gendarmes' "travel expenses," including the gas consumed on the drive to the village. While Tahirou was collecting the money, I talked to one of the gendarmes, Amadou, who was sitting under a thatched roof in the shade, shaking his head in disbelief. "With Souley we never returned home empty-handed," he told me.¹⁰ As Chef Hamza, a noncommissioned officer in the same brigade, later explained to me,

There is no authority that can work without the traditional chiefs. For example, we know that this person is somewhere in this area, but we don't know in which camp, or in which section. But we know that he is a Fulani from that area, so we know his baruma. We give him the summons and he will make some research. On Saturday, he will go to the market and ask around, and then he will tell us his position. So they make our work much easier, much much easier. And even when you are on the ground, looking for somebody, you go and see the traditional chief, he is very efficient, he is very important, he is essential! When you arrive in a village, he will receive you; it is he that will show you everything; if you need somebody, he will say, "We want to see this or that person." Do you, the gendarme know him? Of course you don't. But the chief does know him! And his people will bring him to you or he will give you a guide that will take you to that person.¹¹

The chiefs and their knowledge are crucial to the gendarmes' work. But winning over the chiefs demanded experience and tact, and Tahirou lacked both these qualities. Amadou explained that on his arriving at the village and before going anywhere else, Tahirou should have gone to the chief's domicile. The chief would have felt respected, important, and proud to have the shiny blue gendarmerie truck parked outside his house and honored with the brigade commander's visit before any other business was conducted. After a couple of minutes of casual conversation, Tahirou could have casually asked whether this or that person was around, and the chief would immediately have sent his people to deliver this man to the gendarmes. "But bursting in on the market, just like that? Never!", Amadou added.¹²

In fact, neglecting the chiefs could prove risky, even dangerous—because it jeopardized the whole investigation, and because the villagers' noncooperation could easily turn into openly hostile opposition. Some chiefs refused to provide any kind of cooperation with the gendarmes and banned their subjects from talking to state officials altogether—under the threat of divine punishment. In such a situation, the gendarmes not only have no way of finding suspects, but often do not even hear of crimes. In areas where the chief has absolute control over the flow of information, the gendarmes are little more than the chief's cavalry: active only when he wishes and then generously recompensed for their services. The gendarmes were aware of the situation, but there was nothing they could do about it, they said—nothing but try to be on good terms with the chiefs.

Friends and Acquaintances

After having called Gado, the baruma, Adjudant-Chef Souley learned that neither Gado nor his chief had any idea of the identity of the suspected terrorist, but that he had already moved to an unknown location. He had only lived there for a couple of months and was a nice person who distributed sacks of rice among his neighbors, but he was a bit strange, too, because he did not pray with everybody else in the public mosque around the corner. That was all they knew. (And this was also the information Issa later brought back.) This information could have been helpful for Souley if he had learned it earlier. He told me that he needed to receive information about such occurrences in real time and from individuals providing it proactively, rather than just upon inquiry and, as in this case, after the suspicious man had moved away. "As a gendarme, you need to see things," he said. You need to know what is happening around you. This is why the contact, the mingling with the population, is strongly recommended. You need to know everything. You need to know everybody. This is how a gendarme can do his work well."¹³

"Mingling" with the civilian population gives the gendarmes what Brodeur and Ouellet call "connaissance" (2005:60), a kind of general knowledge about the people they face in their everyday work and whom they rely on in

order to contextualize the fragmentary and inconclusive information received during criminal investigations. Mingling also creates useful friends and acquaintances (see Bittner 1967). When Souley was tired of sitting at his desk, he would often take an afternoon drive around town in the brigade's Toyota. Often he would call me, "Come, let's make a little trip," and we would drive around the different neighborhoods for about an hour, just slightly faster than walking speed; often he would slow down and greet passers-by or people sitting on the street; sometimes he would turn off the engine and chat with them for a couple of minutes about their families, their businesses, and casually about news or recent events in their neighborhood, sometimes giving them a small bill for another round of tea. On one level, strolling through the village was proactive police work, the prevention of crime by making the presence of gendarmerie known, demonstrating the presence of the gendarmerie's blue Toyota, and managing the gendarmerie's visibility (see Paperman 2003).¹⁴ But on another level, as Souley told me, his objective was to cultivate and maintain friendly relationships with civilians. One might say that this was part of what is called "community policing" in the Anglophone world (Purdeková 2011:488; Ruteere & Pommerolle 2003).

Adjutant-Chef Souley and all the other gendarmes I talked to agreed that in order to develop relationships with such acquaintances—and potential informants—they needed simply to be modest, open, and accessible—to be good people. Chef Hamza even went a step further in his effort to find informants.

I give you an example: In the evening, I leave my uniform at home and take a walk through town. You know these *fada* [a group of men sitting and conversing on the street], don't you?¹⁵ Anyways, I come to a group and if they are about to prepare tea, I take a couple of francs and pay for it. And if perhaps there's a vendor of grilled meat passing by, I call him, "Hey, bring us meat for 1,000 franc." We eat together and chat a bit about everything and nothing, we laugh, and all that. Then we part and tomorrow this very *fada* will come together again. You come once, twice, three times, and the fourth time you don't come, someone will ask, "Hey, where is this monsieur who has been coming here?" "Ah, this monsieur, you know, he's a gendarme, he's not around, he has probably traveled," voilà, voilà. And when you come back, they will applaud to see you! Yes! Because now you have become familiar to them. Now starting from this, one day one of them might come to you, perhaps because something has happened in his neighborhood, or he has heard something. And that's it: being in a *fada* is a way to gain mutual trust. You got it? So this very relationship, it is our job to search for it.¹⁶

And indeed, on several occasions, when I was with Hamza in his own *fada* or favorite bar, people told him about this merchant who had just bought ten plots of land with God knows what kind of money, about this soldier who received a big and suspiciously wrapped packet from a bus arriving from Libya, and about that suspicious looking bearded man who had just

moved into the neighborhood and did not pray in the little mosque just around the corner. Not in the above-mentioned case, but in many others, these tidbits of information led to investigations, and sometimes to arrests.

Some gendarmes argued that people readily and openly talk to gendarmes because they live in a “culture of denunciation” (*culture de dénonciation*). But I did not find that this community cooperation had anything to do with a particular Nigerien “culture” of telling on people. Even though rural Niger is characterized by very strong social control, and most actions are public and thus the object of other people’s commentary and judgment, many people are highly skeptical of state authorities and would not to approach them. But the willingness of some people to do so, I would argue, is the result of the gendarmes’ clever way of bonding with them, of opening up to them, of building relationships of trust and reciprocity—not necessarily with many people, but with enough people who can help them to “see things.”

Conclusion

When Adjudant-Chef Souley told me that “as a gendarme, you need to see things,” he was not talking about visually perceiving persons, objects, or practices. Drones and other high-tech surveillance techniques may be able to “see things” in this sense, but they cannot by themselves overcome the problem of knowledge caused by the weakness of Niger’s registering machine. Drones may see, but they do not know. My aim in this article is to shed some light on what the daily exercise of state surveillance can mean in a context in which the state seems to know very little about its citizens. In other words: What does it mean for Nigerien gendarmes to “see things”?

State surveillance in Niger has always depended on work with informants. Admittedly, high-tech surveillance is on the rise, the governmental knowledge apparatus is being built up, and the gendarmes’ hopes for quicker and better knowledge gathering, processing, and utilization are high. But in a situation in which this knowledge apparatus still functions badly, it is vital for the surveillers to have personal contacts to verify and contextualize specific pieces of intelligence. In this article, I have tried to describe how the gendarmes maneuver through a landscape that they do not know and for which they have no map: how they establish and manage the web of relationships with particular knowledge brokers, namely intelligence agents, chiefs, and friends and acquaintances. The gendarmes’ relationships with all these individuals have elements of reciprocity; they always involve giving and taking, although neither the gendarmes nor their counterparts always have a clear idea of what they could glean from these relationships. Sometimes they do not even expect anything specific.

Informants seem to fulfill several functions with regard to the gendarmes’ knowledge gap. Since the gendarmes often mobilize several informants at the same time, they can triangulate specific snippets of information. In other words, their knowledge brokers are like GPS-satellites allowing the gendarmes to locate themselves and others in an unknown terrain. But each

of the three kinds of informants also have their specific value. Intelligence agents know the local terrain and the gendarmes use them as guides, sometimes as one-man expeditions to check on particular events or persons. The chiefs are valuable to the gendarmes because they have their own detailed maps and a powerful position that allows them to maneuver through a terrain that they understand as their own. If clever enough in their dealing with the chiefs, the gendarmes can get a glance at this map and eventually be steered in the right direction. Friends and acquaintances potentially multiply the gendarmes' eyes and ears on the ground. All these "knowledge brokers" help them to "see things."

In this context, and following de Certeau's (1984) line of thought, surveillance does not so much appear as a calculated action conceived of by a powerful surveillance dispositive—a strategy—but rather as a tactical way of operating: the improvised, localized, often spontaneous and makeshift practices of "make do." The strategist conceives the map, controls the map; the tactician has to move through the foreign terrain. And without the map, the supposed strategist, now incapable of "panoptic practice," is transformed into a tactician who needs to capitalize on forces and knowledge that are not his own.

The drones in the skies over Niger may be the symbols of an all-seeing, all-knowing strategist—which may trigger the highest hopes for some and the worst fears for others. But surveillance on the ground looks different—and even amateurish and naive as seen in the shadow of the drone. However, I am tempted to argue that Niger's relative stability and peace, even as it is surrounded by conflicts, and particularly the threat of Boko Haram, can at least in part be attributed to the gendarmes' "seeing things": to the efficiency of their often improvised and makeshift ways of dealing with the problem of knowledge.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to the gendarmes in Niger who accepted me in their units, as well as to Jan Beek, Jan Budniok, Pauline Bugler, Julia Dieckmann, Carola Lentz, and the anonymous referees of *ASR*. The research for this article was made possible by the German National Academic Foundation, the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, as well as by the generous support of the Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherches Sociologiques sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local (LASDEL), Niamey, and the Institute for Advanced Study Konstanz, where I was a fellow while writing this article.

References

- Amuwo, 'Kunle. 1986. "Military-Inspired Anti-Bureaucratic Corruption Campaigns: An Appraisal of Niger's Experience." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24 (2): 285–301.

- Baker, Bruce. 2007. "Conflict and African Police Culture: The Cases of Uganda, Rwanda and Sierra Leone." In *Police Occupational Culture: New Debates and Directions*, edited by Megan O'Neill, Monique Marks, and Anne-Marie Singh, 321–47. Amsterdam: Elsevier JAI.
- Bako-Arifari, Nassirou. 2006. "'We Don't Eat the Papers': Corruption in Transport, Customs and the Civil Forces." In *Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa*, edited by Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, 177–224. Cape Town: Philip.
- . 2001. "La Corruption au Port de Cotonou: Douaniers et Intermédiaires." *Politique Africaine* 83: 38–58.
- Bat, Jean-Pierre, and Nicolas Courtin, eds. 2012. *Maintenir l'Ordre Colonial: Afrique et Madagascar, XIXe–XXe Siècles*. Rennes: PU Rennes.
- Beek, Jan. 2012. "'There Should Be No Open Doors in the Police': Criminal Investigations in Northern Ghana as Boundary Work." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 50 (4): 551–72.
- Bittner, Egon. 1967. "The Police on Skid-Row: A Study of Peace Keeping." *American Sociological Review* 32 (5): 699–715.
- Blanchard, Emmanuel, and Joël Glasman. 2012. "Introduction Générale: Le Maintien de l'Ordre dans l'Empire Français: Une Historiographie Emergente." In *Maintenir l'Ordre Colonial: Afrique et Madagascar, XIXe–XXe Siècles*, edited by Jean-Pierre Bat and Nicolas Courtin, 11–41. Rennes: PU Rennes.
- Blundo, Giorgio. 2006. "Dealing with the Local State: The Informal Privatization of Street-Level Bureaucrats in Senegal." *Development and Change* 37 (4): 799–819.
- . 2001. "Négocier l'État au Quotidien: Agents d'Affaires, Courtiers et Rabatteurs dans les Interstices de l'Administration Sénégalaise." *Autrepart* 20: 75–90.
- Bozzini, David M. 2011. "Low-Tech Surveillance and the Despotic State in Eritrea." *Surveillance & Society* 9 (1–2): 93–113.
- Brodeur, Jean-Paul, and Geneviève Ouellet. 2005. "L'Enquête Cirminelle." *Criminologie* 38 (2): 39–64.
- Brunet-la Ruche, Bénédicte. 2012. "Discipliner les Villes Coloniales: La Police et l'Ordre Urbain au Dahomey Pendant l'Entre-deux-guerres." *Criminocorpus, revue hypermédia*. www.criminocorpus.revues.org.
- Cabry, Gérard. 2009. *La Gendarmerie Outre-Mer*. Paris: Éd. SPE-Barthélémy.
- Certeau, Michel de. 1984 (1980). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Davis, John. 2007. "Introduction: Africa's Road to the War on Terror." In *Africa and the War on Terrorism*, edited by John Davis, 1–14. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate.
- Donovan, Kevin P., and Aaron K. Martin. 2014. "The Rise of African SIM Registration: The Emerging Dynamics of Regulatory Change." *First Monday* 19 (2). www.firstmonday.dk.
- Dramé, Patrick-Papa. 2007. *L'Impérialisme Colonial Français en Afrique: Enjeux et Impacts de la Défense de l'AOF, 1918–1940*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Ellis, Stephen. 2004. "Briefing: The Pan-Sahel Initiative." *African Affairs* 103 (412): 459–64.
- Ericson, Richard V. 1994. "The Division of Expert Knowledge in Policing and Security." *The British Journal of Sociology* 45 (2): 149–75.
- Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- . 2004. *Sécurité, Territoire, Population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977–1978*. Paris: Seuil.

- Fourchard, Laurent. 2003a. "Le Contrôle de la Rue en Afrique Occidentale Française et au Nigeria, Fin 19ème Siècle–1960." In *Sécurité, Crime et Ségrégation dans les Villes d'Afrique de l'Ouest du XIXe Siècle à Nos Jours*, edited by Laurent Fourchard and Isaac O. Albert, 101–17. Paris: Éditions Karthala.
- . 2003b. "Sécurité, Crime et Ségrégation: Une Perspective Historique." In *Sécurité, Crime et Ségrégation dans les Villes d'Afrique de l'Ouest du XIXe Siècle à Nos Jours*, edited by Laurent Fourchard and Isaac O. Albert, 1–23. Paris: Éditions Karthala.
- Fuglestad, Finn. 1983. *A History of Niger 1850–1960*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Glasman, Joël. 2010. "Penser les Intermédiaires Coloniaux: Note sur les Dossiers de Carrière de la Police du Togo." *History in Africa* 37: 51–81.
- Goody, Jack. 1986. *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Göpfert, Mirco. 2012. "Security in Niamey: An Anthropological Perspective on Policing and an Act of Terrorism in Niger." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 50 (1): 53–74.
- . 2013. "Bureaucratic Aesthetics: Report Writing in the Nigérien Gendarmerie." *American Ethnologist* 40 (2): 324–34.
- Higgot, Richard, and Finn Fuglestad. 1975. "The 1974 Coup d'État in Niger: Towards an Explanation." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 13 (3): 383–98.
- Idrissa, Kimba. 2008. "Les Régimes Militaires entre 1974 et 1999 au Niger." In *Armée et politique au Niger*, edited by Kimba Idrissa, 165–206. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Issa, Mahaman M. 2008. "Le Régime Militaire de Seyni Kountché (1974–1987)." In *Armée et politique au Niger*, edited by Kimba Idrissa, 125–61. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Journal Officiel de l'Afrique Occidentale Française (JO AOF)*. 1920. "Arrêté général relatif aux pensions de retraite et gratifications de réforme des gardes de cercle." *JO AOF* no. 822, August 28.
- . 1950. "Arrêté 6366." *JO AOF* no. 2508, November 23.
- Journal Officiel du Togo (JO Togo)*. 1945. "Décret N° 45–1343." September 16.
- Keenan, Jeremy. 2006. "Security and Insecurity in North Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 33 (108): 269–96.
- . 2008. "US Militarization in Africa: What Anthropologists Should Know about AFRICOM." *Anthropology Today* 24 (5): 16–20.
- . 2009a. "Al-Qaeda Terrorism in the Sahara? Edwin Dyer's Murder and the Role of Intelligence Agencies." *Anthropology Today* 25 (4): 14–18.
- . 2009b. *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa*. London: Pluto Press.
- Laurent, Samuel. 2013. *Sahelistan: De la Libye au Mali au Cœur du Nouveau Jihad*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lund, Christian. 2001. "Precarious Democratization and Local Dynamics in Niger: Micro-politics in Zinder." *Development and Change* 32: 845–69.
- Lyon, David. 2006. "The Search for Surveillance Theories." In *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, edited by David Lyon, 3–20. London: Routledge.
- Manning, Peter K. 2001. "Technology's Ways: Information Technology, Crime Analysis and the Rationalizing of Policing." *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 1 (1): 83–103.
- McGregor, JoAnn. 2013. "Surveillance and the City: Patronage, Power-Sharing and the Politics of Urban Control in Zimbabwe." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39 (4): 783–805.
- Merry, Sally E. 2006. "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle." *American Anthropologist* 108 (1): 38–51.

- Mignon, Jean-Marie. 1989. "Les mouvements de jeunesse dans l'Afrique de l'Ouest francophone, de 1958 aux années 1970–1975." In *Le mouvement associatif des jeunes en Afrique noire francophone au XXe siècle*, edited by Hélène Almeida-Topor and Odile Georg, 107–28. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Miles, William F. S. 1987. "Partitioned Royalty: The Evolution of Hausa Chiefs in Nigeria and Niger." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25 (2): 233–58.
- . 1993. "Colonial Hausa Idioms: Toward a West African Ethno-Ethnohistory." *African Studies Review* 36 (2): 11–30.
- Olivier de Sardan, Jean-Pierre. 2001. "La Sage-femme et le Douanier: Cultures Professionnelles Locales et Culture Bureaucratique Privatisée en Afrique de l'Ouest." *Autrepart* 20: 61–73.
- Paperman, Patricia. 2003. "Surveillance Underground: The Uniform as Interaction Device." *Ethnography* 4 (3): 397–419.
- Pratten, David. 2008. "Introduction—The Politics of Protection: Perspectives on Vigilantism in Nigeria." *Africa* 78 (1): 1–15.
- Purdeková, Andrea. 2011. "'Even If I Am Not Here, There Are So Many Eyes': Surveillance and State Reach in Rwanda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 49 (3): 475–97.
- Reuters. 2014. "Niger Buys 'Spy Plane' to Combat Sahel Militants." www.reuters.com.
- Ruteere, Mutuma, and Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle. 2003. "Democratizing Security or Decentralizing Repression? The Ambiguities of Community Policing in Kenya." *African Affairs* 102: 587–604.
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Szreter, Simon, and Keith Breckenridge. 2012. "Editors' Introduction—Recognition and Registration: The Infrastructure of Personhood in World History." In *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History*, edited by Keith Breckenridge and Simon Szreter, 1–36. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Temps du Niger*. 1961. "Cérémonies du transfert des forces armées nigériennes à Birni-N'Konni." *Temps du Niger* no. 368, August 14.
- Tidjani Alou, Mahamane. 2001. "La dynamique de l'état post colonial au Niger." In *Le Niger: État et Démocratie*, edited by Kimba Idrissa, 85–126. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Weber, Max. 1980 (1921). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- Whitlok, Craig. 2013. "Drone Base in Niger Gives U.S. a Strategic Foothold in West Africa." www.washingtonpost.com.
- Zangaou, Moussa. 2008. "Femmes en uniforme dans les secteurs militaire et paramilitaire au Niger." In *Armée et politique au Niger*, edited by Kimba Idrissa, 255–88. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Notes

1. In the last couple of years a number of researchers, often inspired by Foucault's (1975) reflections on surveillance, have presented highly insightful accounts of the effects of surveillance as a mode of governing in Africa. See Bozzini (2011); Donovan and Martin (2014); McGregor (2013); Purdeková (2011). To my knowledge, no ethnographic account exists of the practices of surveillance as perceived by those who use them.
2. The observations presented in this article are based on two years of ethnographic research on security, policing, and the work of gendarmes in Niger. In order to

protect the gendarmes' anonymity, all their names are pseudonyms and I have withheld the time and place of the events and comments.

3. All translations are the author's.
4. Some gendarmes I talked to felt so demeaned during that time that they would not dare to wear their uniforms when going to work. They would hide them in a bag and put them on only after arriving at the office.
5. Between 2008 and 2011 the frequency of kidnappings in Niger increased rapidly. In December 2008 two Canadian diplomats were kidnapped near Niamey and released. In January 2009 four European tourists were kidnapped near the Mali–Niger border; three were released and one was executed. In September 2010 seven foreigners were kidnapped in Arlit, in Niger's uranium mining zone; in January 2011 two French men were kidnapped in Niamey and killed during a hostage rescue attempt.
6. Members of the PSI were Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal; TSCTP added Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.
7. The number of army soldiers rose from 4,000 to 10,000 until 2006. With biennial recruitments of initially 500, then 1,000, the number of gendarmes doubled from some 2,000 in the early 2000s to around 4,000 in 2008 and about 6,000 in 2013 (Keenan 2006; Zangaou 2008). Their numbers have thus almost doubled in only five years, and tripled in ten.
8. Ericson also uses the term "knowledge broker" in a different way: for the police officer who "produces and distributes knowledge for the risk management activities of security operatives in other institutions" (1994:151). My understanding of knowledge brokers is closer to and includes what Jan Beek describes as "friends of the police" (2012:561–62).
9. *Karen jendarmomi* is a pejorative term in Hausa, adapted from the more common *karen dwan* ("the custom's dog") for intermediaries between customs officials and their clients who serve as informants for the customs officials and are often involved in the unofficial taxation or nontaxation of transported goods (see Bako-Arifari 2001; Olivier de Sardan 2001).
10. "Avec l'Adjudant-Chef [Souley] on est jamais rentré sans celui qu'on a cherché."
11. "Il y a pas une autorité aujourd'hui qui peut travailler sans le chef traditionnel. Par exemple, on sait que telle personne et quelque part dans telle région, mais on ne sait pas quel campement, ou bien quelle section. Mais on sait que c'est un peulh de telle région, donc on connaît son baruma. On lui remet la convocation et lui il va faire des recherches. Samedi prochain il va sur le marché demander les gens, et demain il vient pour nous dire telle est sa position. Donc eux ils nous facilitent beaucoup des tâches, beaucoup! Et même si vous êtes sur le terrain en train de chercher quelqu'un, vous allez voir que le chef traditionnel, il est très efficace, il est très important. Il est indispensable! Vous venez dans un village, c'est lui qui va vous accueillir. C'est lui qui va vous montrer tout; si vous avez besoin de quelqu'un, il va dire 'on veut voir un tel.' Est-ce que vous, gendarme, vous connaissez? Vous ne connaissez pas! Mais c'est le chef qui connaît! Et ses gens vont l'amener ou bien il vous donne un guide pour vous amener chez telle personne."
12. "Mais faire irruption sur le marché, comme ça-là?! Jamais!"
13. "En tant que gendarme, il faut que tu vois les choses. Il faut que tu saches ce qui se passe autour de toi. C'est pour cela que le contact, le brassage avec la population, pour les gendarmes c'est recommandé! Il faut connaître tout. Il faut connaître tout le monde. C'est comme cela que le gendarme peut bien faire son travail."

14. According to Bruce Baker (2007), this kind of activity is very rare in an African police force, and Baker's claim seems true, to some extent, of the Nigerien gendarmerie. According to my observations, gendarmes went on extended patrols in remote areas only a couple of times a year, in collaboration with the National Guard, the military, forestry officials, or customs officers. Other than that, patrols only took place on the brigade commander's initiative, such as Souley's. According to Manning (2001), police organizations of the global North are also more concerned with the here and now than with the prevention of criminal acts.
15. *Fada* is a Hausa word originally designating "a chief's council chamber." Today the term is applied to any gathering of young men on the street, who are usually preparing tea or rice with beans, listening to music, and chatting until late at night. For their role in urban security, see Göpfert (2012).
16. "Je te donne un exemple: le soir je laisse ma tenue à la maison et je me promène un peu en ville. Tu connais les fada, n'est-ce pas? To, je viens dans un groupe, si c'est pour faire du thé, je prends quelque sous pour poser du thé. S'il y a peut-être un boucher de passage pour la viande, tu as mille francs, 'eh, il faut nous couper la viande pour mille francs.' On mange ensemble et on a un peu causé du tout et de rien, on riait, tout tout. Et maintenant on s'est quitté et demain la même fada-là va se réunir. Tu es venu une fois, deux fois, trois fois. . . . La quatrième fois si tu n'es pas venu quelqu'un va te demander 'Kai, où est le monsieur-là qui vient ici?' 'Ah, le monsieur-là, vous savez c'est un gendarme, il n'est même pas là, il doit avoir voyagé,' voilà, voilà. Et quand tu vas revenir, ils vont applaudir ton arrivée! Oui! Parce que maintenant tu es devenu un familier à eux. Partant de ça, un jour un d'entre eux peut venir te voir. Il t'a abordé, peut-être parce qu'il y a eu quelque chose dans son quartier, ou bien il a appris quelque chose. Et c'est ça: être à la fada, c'est pour gagner la confiance mutuelle! Tu as vu? Donc, cette relation-là, c'est à nous de la chercher."