

Chapter 2.

Development and governance: A fragile space

KEY POINTS

Central government often appears to have neglected the regions in the study zone, which are all outlying areas with the exception of the city of N'Djaména. In an area already suffering from massive poverty, drought in the 1970s and then economic crisis in the 1980s dealt a fatal blow to the post-independence period development projects and left the informal sector dominant. Efforts to kick-start public policies encouraged by the upbeat macroeconomic climate of the 2000–2014 period have not been enough to really change the populations' access to public goods: the region's rentier states are weak and have little control over development. Governments have had to compromise with the local powers of traditional leaders and religious authorities in order to govern a space with largely porous borders. Despite some differences, due largely to colonial heritage, the history of these regions is beset by troubled politics, countless land conflicts, endemic banditry and corruption, and recurring tensions between and within states. The population's vulnerabilities are hence multifaceted. Considering the complexity of their long-term history, they cannot be reduced to purely ethnic or religious problems, since divides and inequalities in the region's societies are also driven by all-important age brackets, social status, and gender relations.

1. Development in the region before Boko Haram: National outlying areas and their (too) slow integration?

The first step to be able to understand the development situation in the study region before the Boko Haram crisis is to identify different chains of events more or less conducive to development since independence. The study region's spaces can then be considered in terms of where they stand within their respective countries with respect to development projects and access to services.

1.1. Relations with national centres and how they have evolved

1.1.1. Influence of the general economic contexts

Four phases since independence in 1960 can be identified in terms of the promotion of development, whose timing varies by country.

The first phase is situated in a macroeconomic climate on the whole conducive to the implementation of public development projects, despite political unrest far from the study region (Nigerian Civil War from 1967 to 1970 and rebellions by National Liberation Front of Chad starting in October 1965). This phase lasted through to the early 1980s in Nigeria (oil slump in 1984) and Cameroon, but ended in the 1970s in Niger and Chad when they were hit by drought.

The second phase corresponds to a development crisis period: droughts in the Sahel and conflict in Chad came on top of the African economic crisis, marked by a drop in commodity prices and consequently in state rents, the debt crisis, and the introduction of the structural adjustment plans (1980s–1990s). These plans brought downsizing to the civil service and to semi-public corporations running farming operations (e.g. the cotton companies) and placed governments under the virtual economic authority of the Bretton Woods institutions.

The third phase, beginning in the early 2000s, was brighter with the effects of the debt cancellations, an upturn in commodity prices (especially oil, long produced by Nigeria and Cameroon and joined by Chad in 2003 and Niger in 2011),⁴³ and also growth in globalised investments enabling the resumption of public development policies. Geopolitical rivalry between traditional partners and emerging countries brought a certain amount of competition to the field of aid. Mounting violence in Borno State, starting in 2009, weighed heavily on the development agenda.

A fourth phase took shape with the commodity price drop in autumn 2014. This coincided with the escalation of the violence and its spread from north-eastern Nigeria to the border areas of neighbouring countries. Development has since been crowded out by the humanitarian emergency in the hardest-hit areas. Elsewhere, the public development effort is flagging under the weight of the economic crisis.

1.1.2. National backwaters?

Two main factors explain how the study zone's areas are placed compared with their national territory: their geographic situation and their demographic weight (Map 7). In Chad, these areas account for 29% of the population and form the politico-economic centre of gravity. In the other three countries, they are national backwaters (Igué, 2006), representing respectively 30% of the population of Cameroon, 9% of Nigeria, and just 3% of Niger.

The national backwaters—overlooked by the first post-independence development policies focused on consolidating the nation states from the central regions—are subject to tension between a certain marginality and economic vitality driven by the transnational trade dynamics (Grégoire & Labazée, 1993).

⁴³ Niger's historical rent is provided by Aïr-mined uranium, whose price rose when oil prices shot up in 2008 before plummeting following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in March 2011.

Cameroon

The North and Far North regions of Cameroon are extremely remote from the country's politico-economic centres of gravity that form the Yaoundé, Douala, and Western Highlands triangle: 1,000 km separate Yaoundé from the Cameroonian window of Lake Chad, and the Adamaoua cliff has long stood as a serious barrier to communications between northern Cameroon and the rest of the country. The name given to the country's northernmost region, Far North, a far cry from today's politically correct forms of territorial marketing, speaks volumes about the area's image as seen from Yaoundé.

Yet the North Region was a project space in the 1960s and 1970s. The father of independence, Ahmadou Ahidjo, was from the environs of Garoua, and the North occupied a prominent position on the national development agenda, with investment in transport (the railway arrived in Ngaoundéré in 1974) and the road system, urban infrastructures (especially in Garoua), the Lagdo dam for electricity, a hydro-agricultural project (stopped by the crisis in the 1980s), and tourism to a lesser extent. Rural development was largely assigned to the cotton development company, Sodecoton, set up in 1974, while the Semry rice irrigation schemes on the Logone River were intended to contribute to national food self-sufficiency (Seignobos & Iyébi-Mandjek, 2000) before being pared back to the more modest objectives of regional food security.

The 1980s marked a turning point with the advent of the economic crisis, a change of regime in Yaoundé, and Paul Biya's arrival in office in 1982. The North Region, at first politically suspect, slid down the agenda of national priorities. Huge contrasts appeared in northern Cameroon between certain more advantaged spaces with better access to services—generally the towns and cities (especially major cities such as Garoua and Maroua)—and marginal spaces such as the Lake Chad area, which was under-administered until Nigeria's occupation of the Darak area from 1987 to 2004.

In the 2000s, the national balance of power—a tacit alliance between President Biya's party and the traditional chiefs and major merchants of the north in the face of rebel forces in the west—maintained a certain economic status quo in the north (Muñoz, 2008). Since the Nigerian withdrawal from the Cameroonian side of Lake Chad, the government's presence has been felt a little more in the region. The cotton sector is seriously struggling on account of fluctuating cotton prices and production sometimes being diverted to Nigeria, as it was in 2011 (Seignobos, 2014).

There is therefore a strong general sense in the North and Far North regions of Cameroon⁴⁴ of injustice compared with the southern part of the country: underemployment and an imbalance in access to the civil service, services, and infrastructures (roads, clean water, education, health, and electricity). This is a frequent explanation given locally for the enrolment of young people into Boko Haram.

⁴⁴ Expressed, for example, in the 2002 Memorandum from the Greater North (see Boxes 4 & 5).

Map 7. The study region and the states bordering Lake Chad



Sources: *Atlas du Cameroun* (2006) ; *Atlas du Nigeria* (2003) ; *Atlas du Tchad* (2006), éditions du Jaguar, *Atlas Jeune Afrique*.

Niger

The Diffa Region in far-eastern Niger is also a remote backwater, 1,200 km or two days' journey at best from Niamey, with a small demographic weight that makes it even more marginal.

Aside from a tarmac road built to link Zinder, Diffa, and N'Guigmi, reached in 1975, and a livestock well campaign conducted around the same time, the region has received little public investment outside of regular food aid flows

to Manga and Kadzell with their structural deficit in cereals. Ecological crises (droughts) and political crises (repeated coups d'état in the 1990s–2000s followed by a freeze on international aid) have done nothing to help investment in this outlying area.

The Diffa Region found itself included in the national development scene (Box 3) in the 2000–2014 period, when it was a stronghold for President Mamadou Tandja (1999–2010). At the same time, it saw the development of an oil project (2009–2011) and the establishment of a protected area, the national nature reserve of Termit Tin-Touma (Magrin & van Vliet, 2014).

Box 3

Development progress in the Diffa Region (2000–2014)

“The CNPC’s oil project (2009–2011) consisted of building oilfields in the commune of Ngourti and an east-north-east/west-south-west pipeline to connect them to a refinery near Zinder, whose production is for the national market (Dittgen, 2012). The project, the infrastructures it built (airfield and roadworks and maintenance), and the social dynamics it triggered—an outcry from the commune authorities joined by environmental NGOs over the activity’s impacts and what they saw as inadequate impact studies—helped integrate Niger’s eastern fringe more into the national political scene, even though this did not prevent tensions such as the Diffa riots of 27–28 April 2013. In May 2013, as if in response to these protests, the revision of the 2007 Oil Code extended the 15% of oil revenues earmarked for the local authorities in the oil-producing areas to the department and regional authorities, providing N’guigmi and Diffa, in addition to Ngourti, with additional revenues.

“However, the Diffa Region benefited from far more public investment in the 2000s than in the previous decades. Dams were built on the Yobe River basin to develop river oxbows. A large well-based irrigation scheme was established in Ngagam, between N’guigmi and Bosso. The urban centres also benefited from investments. In 2008–2009, Diffa received various urban infrastructures and fixtures (roads, lighting, etc.). A polytechnic teaching oil and electronics techniques was opened in 2012, as was a college of education—Diffa had been the only regional capital without one. Work started in 2013 on surfacing the Diffa–N’guigmi road, which had not been done since it was built in 1975, rendering the road impracticable. In the same period, Dosso, elevated to department status, received a prefect, a doctor for its health centre and law courts, the water supply was extended to the surrounding villages, and the electricity grid was extended to the Nigerian border town of Malam Fatori.”

Source: Ngaressesem & Magrin, 2014: 229

Nigeria

North-eastern Nigeria is just as much of a backwater in that it is extremely remote from the national economic centres—the megacity of Lagos, the Niger oil-producing Delta, the federal capital of Abuja and, in the north, the metropolitan region of Kano. Although the four north-eastern states are demographic heavyweights in the Lake Chad region, they carry little demographic, and especially economic, weight at federal level.

As the most populous territory in the sub-region, the area gained a good transport system earlier than its francophone neighbours. The railway and road connections are behind the thriving trade in smoked fish from Lake Chad. In the 1970s, in the midst of the oil boom, the Nigerian shores of Lake Chad were the scene of a major hydro-agricultural operation, now cited as one of the most famous white elephants in the history of development: the Baga Polder Project and the South Chad Irrigation Project (SCIP) were supposed to turn the oil rent into cereals (Ngaressem & Magrin, 2014). The drought-driven transition to Small Lake Chad and the Nigerian government crisis, exacerbated by the oil slump, brought about the project's downfall (Bertoncin *et al.*, 2015).

Although locals and local officials still have hopes of re-launching the project (Bertoncin & Pase, 2012), it is barely mentioned by the Nigerian government. The government may well support the efforts made by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to take forward the inter-basin transfer project (NESTS, 2014), but it has not produced any detailed arguments as to its possible implications for the development of Lake Chad and north-eastern Nigeria. Hopes for north-eastern development are pinned more on oil exploration, ramped up in the 2000s (at the same time as Niger, Cameroon, and Chad). However, the security agenda has stolen a march on development since 2009.

Chad

The Chadian regions in the study area have a different status due to their proximity with the capital. Lake Chad gave its name to the country and is only a hundred or so kilometres from N'Djaména, the only national capital in the study zone. The fairly densely populated Chari-Logone interfluvium forms a bridge between the capital and the country's populated south rich in resources (a historical cotton-growing area turned oil producer since 2000). South-west Chad is both part of the study region, due to its strong migratory and trade relations with Cameroon (and Nigeria beyond), and in southern Chad. It is a cradle of cotton growing and among the areas that used to bring in the best cotton harvests. It is also one of the spaces where cotton growing best endures, despite the sharp decline affecting Cotontchad since the early 2000s.

These Chadian regions are also highly diversified, extending from the Saharan zone (north of Kanem) through the Lake Chad wetlands zone and the capital N'Djaména to the Sudanian zone (Mayo-Kebbi Ouest).

Of note, therefore, from the point of view of development are the following:

- Kanem, a beneficiary of pastoral water management projects, wadi development projects and regular food aid;
- Lake Chad itself, whose southern pool's northern shores around Bol formed a major project space in the 1950s and 1970s based on developing polders. Following a period of stagnation against a backdrop of Chadian civil conflicts, the projects backed by different donors, primarily the African Development Bank (AfDB), took off again in the 2000s (polder rehabilitation with full water control and extension of semi-polders with partial water control) (Ngaressesem & Magrin, 2014). The southern Chadian shores, meanwhile, provide an original example of endogenous development (Lemoalle & Magrin, 2014; Rangé, 2016).
- The capital N'Djaména. After being struck by conflict (extensive damage from 1979 to 1982 and sporadic fighting in 2006 and 2008), substantial public investments were made in the capital post-2008 in a climate of high oil revenues. These investments were highly concentrated in the capital's urban road system (Magrin, 2013) and in public buildings (supreme administrative court, museum, maternity and paediatric hospital, secondary schools, etc.). Some of these buildings were financed by new partners, including China (new National Assembly, inaugurated in 2013).
- The Mayo Kebbi Ouest Region has long depended on the cotton economy, while Mayo Kebbi Est depended on agricultural schemes on the Logone River plain and development of the Cameroon Chad–southern Chad–N'Djaména crossroads position, consolidated by the construction of the N'Djaména–Bongor–Moundou surfaced road in 2000. This region also has a dense population of NGOs, due in part to the climate of religious competition between Protestant and Catholic churches.

1.2. A marginal development region

1.2.1. Poor countries

The study region covers four of the world's poorest countries. These countries generally post low development and service access indicators. Two different Human Development Indicator (HDI) situations can be identified: Chad (183rd) and Niger (185th) have long been at the bottom of the world ranking, which covered 186 countries in 2014. Cameroon (150th) and Nigeria (151st) are in the middle of the group of Sub-Saharan African countries, on the whole trailing behind in the world ranking.

In Chad, ten years of oil production—whose revenues are factored into the indicator under per capita gross domestic product (GDP)—have done nothing to improve the situation. This speaks volumes about the weakness of the socio-health indicators and the difficulties in using oil rents for development.⁴⁵ In Nigeria, massive long-established oil rents have failed to drive development owing to the sheer size of the population and, more importantly, a multitude of problems with the handling of domestic socio-political tensions and the building of a state that can provide public goods (corruption and various dysfunctions). Per capita income in 2015 ranged from \$360 (Niger) to \$2,640 (Nigeria), with Chad (\$775) and Cameroon (\$1,250) in the middle. Life expectancy at birth ranges from 50 to 55 years, and infant mortality stands at between 50 and 100 per thousand live births.

1.2.2. Poor regions

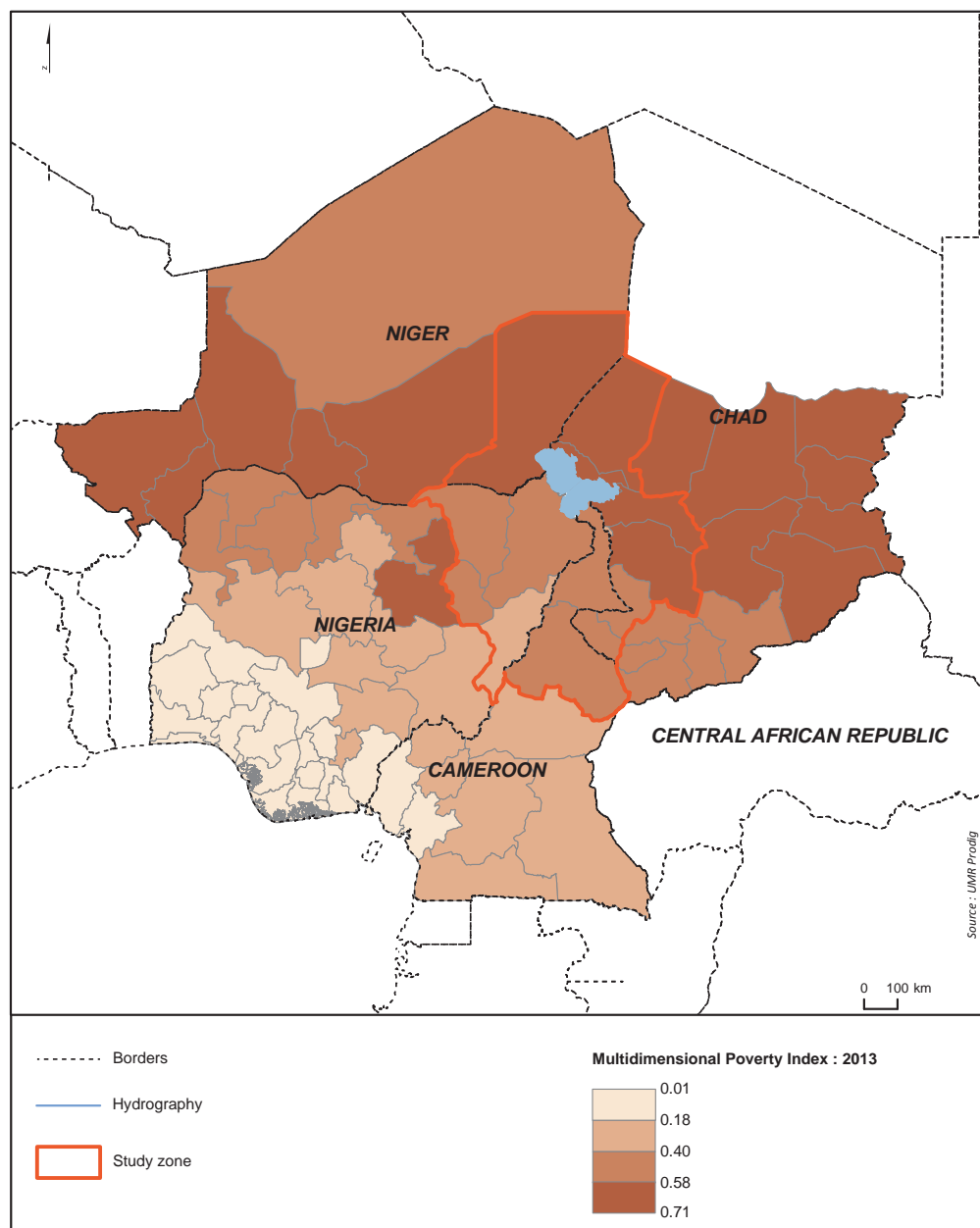
When the study regions are placed in the West Africa/Central Africa bloc (Map 8), the intensity of poverty measured by the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)⁴⁶ by and large falls into step with the agro-climatic areas: the Sahelian strip is the poorest (Kanem and Diffa), and poverty decreases towards the Gulf of Guinea. Borno and Adamawa in Nigeria post among the study zone's lowest poverty rates—an angle rarely considered when seeking to explain the Boko Haram phenomenon.

The study region's spaces post generally lower service access indicators than their national averages, and are often in or around the bottom of regional rankings. N'Djaména in Chad is the only exception in terms of regional rankings. However, progress has sometimes been observed due to investment efforts by governments and development partners, especially in the period from the early 2000s to the escalation and spread of the Boko Haram crisis.

⁴⁵ The HDI is a composite indicator including both the standard of living and education, and health outcomes.

⁴⁶ The MPI includes a number of indicators on health (infant mortality and nutrition), education (number of years of schooling and child school attendance), access to basic services (clean drinking water, electricity, and sanitation), housing quality, cooking fuel, assets, etc.

Map 8. Regional poverty measured by the Multidimensional Poverty Index



Source: www.opbl.org.uk, University of Oxford, 2013.

1.2.3. Generally low levels of access to services

Access to services remains difficult, in particular for the poorest populations and those living far from the cities and market towns where supply is concentrated. Everywhere, difficulties finding skilled staff for the infrastructures (education and health, in particular) reflect the study area's physical and symbolic distance from the central regions of the countries concerned (with the exception of N'Djaména and Mayo-Kebbi in Chad): civil servants often refuse to post to lands depicted as frightening and remote, especially when there is no incentive system to compensate being so far away; and the local backward education systems go some way to explaining the low number of civil servants originating from these regions. At a detailed level, some places turn out to be particularly unattractive to civil servants, as in the case of the health hazard represented by Lake Chad and the isolation of the Mandara Mountains (Cameroon and Nigeria).

Education

Primary school enrolment ratios and literacy rates are low on the whole.

In Niger, the gross primary enrolment ratio is 57% in the Diffa Region, placing it around the national average. In Cameroon, the rate of literacy for 15–24 year olds in the Far North was 47% in 2007, the lowest rate in the country (posting over 90% in ten of the 14 regions) (Republic of Cameroon, 2010).

In Chad, a long-identified socio-cultural divide can still be observed between Muslim populations—with their more difficult relationship to schooling—and Animist and Christian populations long open to Western schooling (Khayar, 1976). The gross school enrolment ratio around the lake (Hadjer el Hamis, Lac Region) is half the national average (45% as against 91%). Gross primary school access rates⁴⁷ are much higher in Mayo-Kebbi (approximately 110%) than in neighbouring Chari-Baguirmi (around 65%). The primary completion rate is 76% in Mayo-Kebbi Ouest compared with just 15% in Chari-Baguirmi.

This north/south divide is found again in Nigeria where, in Muslim areas, the British colonial power banned Christian missionary schools and left the region's children to continue to attend Koranic schools that hardly prepared them for the challenges of modern life at independence.⁴⁸ The north, with 54% of Nigeria's population according to the results of the 1963 census, hence accounted for just 3% of the number of pupils in secondary education. The 1970s oil boom failed to

⁴⁷ This rate expresses total enrolment in a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population for that level. It is over 100% when children older than the normal age are enrolled.

⁴⁸ In 1937, for example, the 36,838 Koranic schools in Sokoto Province taught 210,285 students as opposed to 2,000 in the government schools (Tibenderana, 1988: 226).

close this gap. In Nigeria's North East,⁴⁹ the gross primary enrolment ratio stood at 47.7% in 2013, half that of the southern states and in last place nationally (NESTS, 2014: 158).

Gross secondary enrolment rates are also low in all the regions around Lake Chad, at less than 10% in Chad and Niger, much like the equally low national grades (Ngaressesem & Magrin 2014: 238). The secondary completion rate is 6.8% in Chari-Baguirmi (and just 2.8% for girls), as opposed to 33% in Mayo-Kebbi Ouest (10.8% for girls). The secondary enrolment ratio in Nigeria's North East is 30%, ranking bottom of the six national statistical zones.

There are marked differences among girls' education situations. In Niger, for example, the Diffa Region's schools count 48% girls, and 43% in secondary education. In Cameroon, the Far North posts the country's lowest primary education gender parity index (0.2 versus 1 in Douala and Yaoundé, and 0.7 nationally [Republic of Cameroon, 2010: 17]). In Nigeria's North East zone in 2009, girls accounted for 35% of pupils in school in the local government areas (LGAs) around Lake Chad (Ngaressesem & Magrin, 2014: 237). The rate of female literacy is reportedly 37%, second to last in the national ranking ahead of the North West (NESTS, 2014: 157). In Chad, the primary completion rate in Chari-Baguirmi is 21% for boys, but a mere 9% for girls. More girls are enrolled in school in Christian-majority regions, such as Mayo-Kebbi, but the gap with Muslim regions narrows over the school years as the female school dropout rate is also very high.

This situation and large observed gaps with the different countries' central regions are a source of great frustration, expressed in particular in Cameroon in a memorandum written by key figures from the northern regions (Box 4).

This somewhat bleak picture needs to be put in perspective as regards the significant progress observed since the 1960s, and especially since the beginning of the 2000s. In Chad, the Lac and Hadjer Lamis regions had just 20 schools in the 1970s. In 2010–2011, they had 571. In 1976, there were just three lower secondary schools around the lake in Bol (Chad), N'Guigmi (Niger), and Makari (Cameroon). By 2011, the Chadian lake regions (Lac and Hadjer Lamis) alone counted 29 lower secondary schools and 14 upper secondary schools; 13 in the Nigerian LGAs of Borno State; and 14 in the Diffa Region in Niger. The pupil–teacher ratio stood at 27 and class size at 29. The schools are relatively well endowed with teachers and classrooms (Ngaressesem & Magrin, 2014), even though access to them is sometimes difficult for scattered and mobile populations (herders and fishers).

⁴⁹ Nigerian statistics often do not distinguish between individual states but consider six major regional zones. The North East covers the four states considered in this study (Borno, Yobe, Bombe, and Adamawa) along with the states of Bauchi and Taraba.

Box 4

Excerpts from the Memorandum from the Greater North (2002)

“Whereas North Province has one secondary school for 94,000 inhabitants, South Province has one secondary school for 17,000 inhabitants. These figures are much aggravated by the fact that there is a very low level of private education in the North due to the populations’ extremely low income levels. For example, in 2000–2001, private education numbers stood at 231,771 pupils in Centre Province, 288,455 pupils in Littoral Province and just 47,133 in Far North Province, 27,624 in North Province and 21,866 pupils in Adamaoua.

“[...] It is also of note, regrettably, that these public establishments have a chronic deficiency of teachers: the central government does not hire enough teachers from the North and those from the South refuse to work in the North. Despite this alarming situation well known to the public authorities, the government has not only made no significant effort to reduce this gap using public monies, but refuses to direct to the North foreign aid intended to build school establishments.

“[...] In higher education, the North is entirely absent from the administration of the country’s six universities. Not one rector and, of the 23 faculty deans, just one from the North. All of these factors, combined with the impoverishment of the parents, are dangerously jeopardising our children’s university education: less than 2% of university students are from the North.”

Another important change is the densification of the higher education supply in the region. This is decisive to broaden the horizons of these regions’ young people and train the managers they need. Nigeria has long had a dense network of universities, including the leading universities of Maiduguri and Yola in the North East. The largest universities are funded by the federal budget and are therefore dependent on public monies, themselves tied to oil rent fluctuations. In Cameroon, the creation of a university in Maroua in 2008—starting with the Higher Teachers’ Training College and the Higher Institute of the Sahel, and then the faculties a few years later—was seen as an important step taken by the government of Yaoundé towards acknowledging the Greater North’s problems.

In Chad, the creation of a graduate school for exact and applied sciences in Bongor in 2003, and then a university in Pala in 2014 as part of a widespread move to establish universities throughout the country, reflects this political will to decentralise higher education, as does the creation of a university in Diffa in Niger in 2014. Nevertheless, the irregularity of public funding and the low level of national human resources are hampering the running of these institutions.

Health

It is highly significant that infant mortality rates have hardly fallen since the period of independence: they stood at between 160 and 222 deaths per thousand live births before the Boko Haram insurgency in 2009, compared with 240 in the late 1950s (Cohen, 1967; National Population Commission, 2008). Yobe, for example, counted just 61 doctors, 40 midwives, and 460 health centres for 2.6 million inhabitants in the 2006 census. For want of hospitals and maternity facilities, women had to give birth at home, which largely contributed to infant deaths due to health complications.⁵⁰

Access to services also remains at very low levels, despite apparent healthcare progress. In Cameroon in 2004, under-five mortality stood at 205 per thousand live births in the North Region (the highest level in the country, with the average standing at 144). This was immediately followed by the Far North. Douala posted a rate of 75 per thousand live births. Nigerian Yobe, for example, had one doctor per 37,704 inhabitants (WHO standard: 10,000) and one midwife per 57,500 women of childbearing age (WHO standard: 5,000). The situation in Chad is sometimes worse: the health district of Baga Sola, on the lake, has one doctor per 60,000 inhabitants and one midwife per 19,000 women, while Mayo-Kebbi Est and Chari-Baguirmi have just one doctor per 102,330 inhabitants (Ngaressesem & Magrin, 2014). Comparatively, the national average was one doctor per 32,000 inhabitants in 2009 and one midwife per 10,500 women of childbearing age.⁵¹

The few improvements observed since the 2000s have not managed to make any significant change to the health situation. In Chad, for example, the health district of Bol had 13 health centres and one hospital with 19 beds in 2005. In 2013, the health district divided into two, had 23 health centres, and two hospitals with a total of 49 beds (Yemadji, 2015: 90).

Lastly, interesting regional healthcare initiatives have been conducted to take up the challenges associated with cross-border mobility: since 2001, the LCBI⁵² (AfDB/LCBC) has been working to bring AIDS under control, targeting especially those populations made vulnerable by their mobility, especially fishers, herders, traders, migrants, and prostitutes (Yemadji, 2015).

50 As in the North West, nearly half of the births counted in the North East were at home. The 2010 National Living Standards Survey found that only a minority of women (less than 39% and 25% for births of girls and boys, respectively) received skilled birth attendance (NESTS, 2014: 135).

51 <http://www.afd.fr/webdav/shared/PUBLICATIONS/THEMATIQUES/savoirscommuns/15-Savoirs-Communs.pdf>

52 Project in Support of the Lake Chad Basin Initiative.

Water supply

Niger and Nigeria appear to have better access to improved water sources (modern wells, boreholes, public fountains, and indoor taps) than Chad and especially Cameroon.

In 2004, the Diffa Region in Niger reported 106 mini-water supply systems and 983 modern water supply points providing safe drinking water to 78.5% of the regional population (Ngaressem & Magrin, 2014). In Nigeria, deep groundwater boreholes have long been used, not without problems at times (Ngaressem & Magrin, 2014), and an estimated 60% of households have access to safe drinking water in the North East, ranking it in fourth place of the six national zones (NESTS, 2014: 224).

In Chad, access to clean water varies by region. It stands at just 30% in the Lac and Hadjer Lamis regions, 39% and 45% in Mayo-Kebbi (Ouest and Est), and 62% in Chari-Baguirmi. In Cameroon in 2010, only 23% of the population in the North Region and 29% in the Far North had access to safe drinking water (ranking 13th and 10th of the 14 regions for a national average of 43.9%) (Republic of Cameroon, 2010).

1.2.4. The underemployment threat

Underemployment is an important aspect of poverty in the Lake Chad region, even though its expressions are fairly generic across Africa. The situation can be understood by comparing demand from the demographic structure with the supply of employment. The demographic upsurge has driven a massive influx of young people onto the labour market. In the study region, new-entrant cohorts (young people reaching the age of 15) totalled an estimated 80,000 in Chad, 142,200 in Cameroon, 10,380 in Niger, and 315,000 in Nigeria in 2015!⁵³ An equal number of jobs would need to be created every year for these young people to find their place in society—assuming there are enough jobs for the labour force already on the market, which is far from the case.

A very limited amount of formal employment is available, whether urban or rural. The formal work situation still bears the scars of the 1980s–1990s economic crisis, which rolled back public and private employment everywhere. A freeze on all hiring in the civil service prevailed through to the debt cancellations of the 2000s (INS Niger, 2006). In Cameroon, land tensions have been exacerbated by a “back to the village” phenomenon found among young people who had gone to work in the southern cities and a shift in investment from urban to rural

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⁵³ These estimates are based on the new-entrant cohort figures given by the *World Population Prospects 2012* report (United Nations, 2013), taking, for each country, the percentage corresponding to the weight of the population situated in the study area as a percentage of the total population.

areas. Mobility, health, and family instability problems have complicated the youth employment issue even further (Le Bissonnais, 2010).

In Nigeria, the north's unemployment rate is an estimated 31.9%, which represents the highest level in a country with an average of 23.9% unemployment (NEST, 2014: 27). In Cameroon, the youth underemployment rate is highest in the North and the Far North regions, at 82–84% as opposed to 46–48% in Douala Yaoundé and 60–70% in the other regions (Republic of Cameroon, 2010: 12).

A major socio-economic integration window for young people appears to have opened in the informal economic activities situated at the urban/rural interface, in cross-border trade (trade, transport, handling, catering, butchery, etc.) and in small communication services (mobile telephony). However, these activities are highly volatile and sometimes bordering on the illegal. Casual jobs based around the railway stations and Chinese motorcycle taxis called “clandos” consequently form a sourcing ground for organised gangs of roadblockers and Boko Haram (Seignobos, 2014). The potential of these activities in terms of employment, room for progress, and the positive socio-economic doors they may open remains sketchy to date.

Youth underemployment and retarded socio-economic empowerment (seen from the increasing age of marriage) have become important concerns for donors and policymakers in the south and the north (Filmer & Fox, 2014; World Bank, 2008). They have driven the creation of a multitude of funds, offices, and plans to support youth employment in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger in the last decade. In Cameroon in 2011, a plan to recruit 25,000 young people into the civil service was highly publicised in a mark of the end of structural adjustment and the dawning of a new era.⁵⁴ It targeted 17–40 year olds, estimated at 7,258,000 people (INS Cameroun, 2011). The young people were hired but without the operating budgets to enable them to work. In Niger, the Diffa oilfield has created jobs in the region but has also sparked strong social protests (Box 4).

However, as with service access, the employment situation has been changed only superficially by the relatively upbeat economic environment prevailing since 2000. Not only has it reportedly created few jobs—the World Bank acknowledges that growth driven by foreign direct investment in the extractive sector and agriculture has proved insufficiently inclusive—but it has most importantly benefited mainly the southern metropolitan regions and has barely touched the Lake Chad region.

⁵⁴ The first large-scale civil service hirings since the 1980s–1990s also took place in Niger and Chad—albeit equally in Senegal and the sub-region—in the same period, taking advantage of the bright post-adjustment macroeconomic situation. In Cameroon, the announcement of these job creations also coincided with the presidential campaign.

Box 5

**Indigenous youth employment
and the Diffa Region oilfields**

“In November 2008, 265 young unskilled labourers had already been hired by the oil companies, 57 of whom were from the commune of Ngourti. Their working and wage conditions are controversial: attractive for some, especially the poorest rural young people, but unacceptable if not degrading for other, better-off young herders or young urban jobseekers unaccustomed to heavy work. To give an idea, an unskilled labourer currently earns 60,000 CFAF per month, including food and board, for equipment installation, rising to 100,000 CFAF when operations actually start. Allegations concern wages, food (quantity and quality), work pace, housing and so on. Some authorities condemn ‘spoilt brats’ who leave the job before they have even really started working, raising the risk that ‘the Chinese’ will be discouraged and call in foreign manpower. A total of 1,500 job creations, including 500 skilled jobs, are ultimately expected over the next three years. The production phase is expected to employ 400 steady jobs and 800 temporary jobs.

“So is this a real opportunity to be seized or illusion? It is too soon to say, but a huge imbalance can already be observed in access to key information: real benefits, skills required, and how to apply and track progress with applications. The people of Melek still have far from a clear concept of the formalities they have to conduct to secure the oilfield jobs. Here in Melek, there are no motorcycles, no mobile phones (no coverage), no bush taxi line, no community radio station, and no nearby market. The only, very expensive, means of communication to get news from the family is by satellite telephone (‘Thuraya’). This isolation does nothing to help adjust to the changes underway and serves as a wake-up call to a growing divide between the Ouled Sliman and other herding communities such as the Mohamid Arabs.”

Source: Anderson & Monimart, 2009

2. Weak states with hybrid forms of governance

Anglophone Nigeria and francophone Niger, Chad, and Cameroon are all weak, rentier states with little control over the region’s development. Governments have had to compromise with local powers, especially traditional leaders and religious authorities, to govern a space with highly porous borders. The differences found among the four countries are due to their colonial legacy and the post-independence development of political regimes that have remained authoritarian in Chad and Cameroon, but are more open to multi-partyism in Niger and especially in Nigeria, in a decentralised federal framework. Yet the waning authority of the traditional leaders, local dysfunctions, and the absence of

programmatic vision from political parties competing for power have ultimately resulted in the hybrid forms of governance that are to be found everywhere in the region.

2.1. Differences between countries

Despite differences in political culture between anglophone and francophone countries, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon have certain characteristics in common. Together with the Boko Haram insurgency, the governance of their male gerontocracies partly explains the roots and protraction of the crisis because of social injustices, endemic corruption, authoritarianism, security force abuses, anaemic administrations, ballot rigging, etc. Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon hence look like *anocracies*, featuring nepotistic institutions, clientelism at the expense of performance, a very weak central government presence in rural areas, the recurrent influence of traditional chiefdoms and religious authorities, persistent ethno-regionalist tensions and, sometimes, insurgencies to protest against governments seen as illegitimate in a context of concentration or absence of separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers (Pérouse de Montclos, 2009).

Yet there are also sharp differences among the four countries. Unlike Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, Nigeria has never had a one-party rule or president for life. This largely explains the vitality of its party system, which is much more developed than in the neighbouring countries. Despite accusations of electoral fraud, Nigeria and Niger are also more democratic. Their presidents were elected in 2015 and 2011, respectively, and there was a real alteration of power in Abuja, the first through elections since independence. Conversely, the longevity of the presidential regimes in Chad and Cameroon, in place since 1990 and 1982, respectively, reflects a political ossification that does not guarantee stability. N'Djaména, for example, was threatened by armed rebellions in 2006–2008, not to mention its support to guerrilla movements in CAR and Darfur. In Chad, the government remained in power by the force of arms (Debos, 2013). Cameroon, for its part, is neither a democracy nor a dictatorship, but something in between.

Structural factors—mainly geographic, demographic, and historical—also explain the differences in each country. With the exception of N'Djaména, the regions around Lake Chad are extremely remote from the capitals. In Nigeria in colonial times, for example, the Kanuri people of Borno were governed from Kaduna, the capital of the Northern Region, 800 km away. The British relied mainly on the Hausa–Fulani of the Sokoto Caliphate to rule. Colonial officers consequently learnt to speak Hausa, but not Kanuri, a language they often found too complicated. In Maiduguri, they had to communicate through interpreters. While they became acquainted with the Fulani and Hausa emirs, they kept their distance from the Sultan of Borno, especially Umar Ibn Muhammad El-Kanemi, who never learnt English in 30 years in power from 1937 to 1967. Colonial officers hence separated

out the two entities, referring to them as “the Northern provinces of Nigeria and the Independent Kingdom of Bornu” (Sharwood Smith, 1969: 248).

In 1914, the merger with the South distanced the region further from the capital, now in Lagos—1,200 km from Maiduguri and several days’ travel—before the two cities were finally connected by railway in 1964. Politically speaking, the leaders of the South and the North did not have the opportunity to meet until a Legislative Council was established in Lagos in 1946. This meant in practice that the Muslims of the northern regions continued to go about their business without getting embroiled in the southern nationalist unrest. At independence in 1960, their leader Ahmadu Bello hence preferred to remain prime minister of the Northern Region rather than become head of government in Lagos. Moreover, it was not until the creation of the North-East State in 1968 that the leaders of Borno and Adamawa were able to circumvent Kaduna and communicate directly with the central government in Lagos and then Abuja, the new capital created *ex nihilo* by the military junta in 1975.

Illiteracy also played a hand in isolating the Lake Chad region, by preventing its inhabitants from being able to compete for national civil service positions. The problem affected the Muslim populations of the north of Cameroon and Chad. In Nigeria, the British had prohibited Christian missions in Islamic areas because they feared their schools would foster nationalistic ideas and destabilise the conservative aristocracy of the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno Sultanate, which had become London’s best allies. To save money, they also refrained from investing too much in the education sector: along with Nyasaland (now Malawi), Nigeria was the African colony that cost the British proportionally the least to administer prior to the Second World War (Ellis, 2016: 14).

The curriculum that the British developed in the Northern Region was explicitly focused on preventing a rural exodus of the masses (*talakawa* in Hausa) in search of urban wage jobs, as management positions in the indigenous civil service were reserved by birthright for the aristocracy (*sarauta*). While children in the South learnt English starting in primary school, those in the North were taught in Hausa and Kanuri. For want of English-speaking teachers, it was not until 1956 that the government of Northern Nigeria introduced English at primary school level, limiting teaching in vernacular languages to Hausa and Yoruba. As a result, the region’s civil service found it difficult to hire qualified locals: at independence in 1960, for example, 911 of the 3,318 senior posts remained vacant, 71% were held by British staff or Nigerians from the South, and just 2% were assigned to staff from the North (Tibenderana, 2003: 105).

This differential in access to education and the civil service was instrumental in fuelling the regionalist tensions that followed. The “northerners” feared domination by the “southerners” and launched pogroms against them that led to the Nigerian Civil War in 1967. After the first coup d’État in 1966, the Muslims of Northern Nigeria seized power by force, as in Chad following the fall of

President François Tombalbaye, a Christian southerner, in 1975. Aside from a parliamentary interlude in 1979–1983, the military juntas in Lagos and Abuja until 1999 were largely dominated by northerners, since fewer qualifications were required for a military career than for the civil service. In this respect, Nigeria took a very different path from Cameroon, where President Paul Biya, a southerner, sought rather to reduce the influence of the northern Fulani *lamibé* (see Section 3.3).

2.2. Decentralisation dressed as democratisation

Nigeria today is without question the most decentralised of the four countries of the study area. Francophone Niger, Chad, and Cameroon did not follow the British indirect rule model and were organised as united, indivisible republics. Unlike the Nigerian federation, their administrative constituencies have no legal personality and no control whatsoever on the redistribution of resources from the central government. Despite official decentralisation and devolution policies, their local and regional authorities are rarely elected. Deprived of financial autonomy, they rely heavily on subsidies and orders from central government.⁵⁵ Niger is divided into regions, departments, and communes organised by laws dating back to 2001 and 2008. Cameroon has been organised since 2004 into regions (formerly provinces), departments, and arrondissements (formerly called districts), respectively under the authority of governors, prefects, and sub-prefects. Chad is organised into administrative regions, which replaced the prefectures in 2002, and these are divided into departments, sub-prefectures, and cantons—the first two levels are headed by governors and prefects.

Much more populous Nigeria, however, is ruled by a “three-tier” government with a presidency in Abuja, 36 states, and 774 LGAs. For reasons of political convenience, this structure is crowned by six large “geopolitical zones” that do not legally exist under the 1999 Constitution. These include the North East with the Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe, Tarab, and Bauchi states. Unlike Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, the regional countervailing powers are extremely strong administratively and legislatively.⁵⁶ The federated states have elected assemblies, elect their governors, and pass their own laws. In the north since the end of the military dictatorship in 1999, some states with a Muslim majority have thus

⁵⁵ In Niger, mayors were elected for the first time in 2005, but the 2010 coup d’État prevented them from finishing their five-year term. Following local elections in 2012, their terms of office, due to end in 2017, were extended by six-month terms as resources were lacking to hold new elections. The electoral time frame for regional councillors was supposed to be the same as for the mayors, but they did not take up office in Diffa until 2011. In Chad, the first communal elections were held in July 2012 in selected towns and cities, such as in Bol where local councillors were elected for six years with an executive made up of a mayor and two deputies, renewed every three years.

⁵⁶ The all-party forum of the 36 governors of the federation, headed by a chairman whose term of office is never set in advance, forms an extremely powerful informal lobby.

reinstated Sharia law, in effect during the British era, albeit still not operational for penal enforcement in Borno. States moreover recoup half of the revenues redistributed by central government because their governors effectively keep hold of the funds theoretically earmarked for LGAs.⁵⁷ Furthermore, they often rig elections to put in place regional assemblies that serve as rump parliaments, since all their expenditure has to be approved by state governors. In practice, the latter are virtually irremovable until the end of their term, as impeachment actions rarely come to anything, not to mention federal investigations for corruption.⁵⁸

Compared with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, the strength of regional checks and balances in Nigeria obviously complicates the implementation of consistent national development policies. At the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, the necessity to deter separatist tensions resulted in an extraordinary proliferation of administrative entities, with a federal system that grew from three to 36 states from 1963 to 1996, and from 301 to 774 LGAs from 1976 to 1999. In 1967, for example, the former Northern Region was divided into six states, including the North-East which, centred on Maiduguri, was itself divided again into three—Borno, Bauchi, and Gongola—in 1976. In 1991, Gongola was in turn subdivided into Adamawa and Taraba, while Yobe was amputated from Borno, taking the name of the Yobe River that flows through it. Latterly, in 1996, Bauchi separated from Gombe.

The easy money of the 1970s oil boom hence gave the military juntas the funds to scale up the number of local governments, overturning British measures to merge districts in order to reduce their administrative overheads during the 1930s Depression. Paradoxically, this “centralising federalisation” process watered down the countervailing power of states that were increasingly numerous, small in size and financially dependent on the resources redistributed by central government. The trend is particularly marked in the North East, which generates a mere 5% of its revenues despite weighing in at 30% of the country’s surface area and 14% of its population (NESTS, 2014: 3). In practice, Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and Gombe are highly dependent on subsidies from Abuja. This is also the

57 Constitutionally, 26.72% of the revenues collected by the federal government must be disbursed to the 36 states, and 20.6% to Nigeria’s 774 LGAs. Yet the money due to local governments is not handed over directly by Abuja. Officially tasked with overseeing municipal budgets, state governors capture the majority of these funds despite a 2005 Monitoring of Revenue Allocation to Local Government Act that prohibits such practices. Similarly, governors often keep 10% of locally generated revenues that they are supposed to pay to LGAs.

58 There have been exceptions in Plateau State in 2004 and 2006, Bayelsa in 2005, Ekiti, Oyo, and Anambra in 2006, and Adamawa in 2014. However, the Governor of Plateau, Joshua Dariye, for example, managed to win his case against eight of the 24 members of the State House of Assembly who voted for his impeachment in 2006. He therefore returned to office despite pressure from Abuja and the anticorruption agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), which was prosecuting him for money laundering. In practice, state governors are more vulnerable to shifting alliances and court prosecution by their local opponents to annul election results.

case with their LGAs.⁵⁹ With a surface area of 2,600 km² for 205,000 inhabitants on average, these LGAs do not have any decision-making powers or financial resources. They are also highly criticised by southern politicians, who fault them for not generating revenues and for being concentrated in the northern regions.⁶⁰

LGA councils across Nigeria are in fact rarely elected, despite constitutional provisions that compel state governors to organise their election and set their tenure on a case-by-case basis. In 1976, 1988, 1990, and 1999, local elections played an important role nationally, serving as a democratic test ahead of the general and presidential elections that were to mark the end of military dictatorships and the return to civilian rule. In general, however, local elections record low turnouts. Most of the time, LGA chairmen are chosen and appointed by state governors in breach of the 1991 Amendment Decree No. 3, which is designed precisely to guarantee local council independence. It is alleged that 27 of the 36 states have not held a single local election since the end of the military dictatorship in 1999.⁶¹ Many have preferred to put in place *caretaker committees*, often chaired by the highest-ranking civil servant in the local administration, with a statutory six-month term of office, which also makes it easier for governors to appropriate their budget.

Local authorities are therefore highly unstable. From 1999 to 2015, for example, the chairmen of Borno State's 27 LGAs held office for total lengths of time averaging less than five years, half that estimated during the colonial period by anthropologist Ronald Cohen, based on a sample of 38 district heads.⁶² Since the end of the military dictatorship, Borno has held only two local elections, in 2003 and 2008. Each time, the governor's party—that is, the All People's Party (APP) and then the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP)—has won the chairmanship of all LGAs with the exception in 1999 of Kwaya Kusar, Chibok, Hawul, Jere, and Biu, which voted for the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The governor has since announced his intention to hold local elections, in 2014 and 2017, but they have never taken place due, among other things, to the insecurity. In practice, the governor has merely appointed caretaker committees, which have had to be regularly dissolved for statutory reasons, as happened in March and September 2016, and yet again in March 2017.

.....
⁵⁹ Yobe's 17 LGAs, for example, have more civil servants than the State government, with 30,000 and 28,000 employees respectively. Yet their annual budget stands at just thirty billion naira, nearly three times less than the Yobe State budget in 2016. Interviews with Yobe officials in Abuja on 14 May 2016.

⁶⁰ At a national conference in Abuja in 2014, some even called for them to be suppressed. Many northern LGA leaders would in fact prefer to be directly subsidised by central government rather than through the states. In late 2017, a constitutional reform seemed to approve the cancellation of the joint accounts binding LGAs to the states.

⁶¹ Interview in Abuja on 14 May 2016.

⁶² The calculation was made by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos from registers available from the LGA commission in Maiduguri in 2016. See also Cohen (1964), "Conflict and Change in a Northern Nigerian Emirate", in Zollschan, George & Walter Hirsch (ed.), *Explorations in Social Change*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p. 503.

Yobe State, Borno's neighbour, is equally significant. From 1999 to 2008, its 17 LGAs were governed by caretaker committees renewed every six months. Following local elections held in 2009 and 2012, the governor considered that elections were too expensive and that the local councillors' terms should be extended from three to four years, as in Lagos.⁶³ In December 2015, the 17 caretaker committees were again dissolved and their members, all men, reappointed to their offices the very next month. The elections finally held in February 2017 were called "a farce". The incumbent All Progressives Congress (APC) won control of all the LGAs, while the opposition (PDP) failed to present candidates and the voter turnout was minimal. As for Gombe and Adamawa states, they have held local elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015. But voters, who were called to the ballot box after the national and regional elections, merely endorsed the results of the winning party's primaries. The chairmanship of the LGAs in Gombe and Adamawa has always been won by the incumbent governor's party, the PDP or the different variants of the current APC.⁶⁴

In this context, Nigeria's democracy is not as dynamic as one might think compared with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Political parties in Nigeria do not have any more programmes or ideologies than the incumbent Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS-Tarayya), Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), or Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) in Chad. More often than not, they are coalitions of regional interests cobbled together to share the oil rent. The difference is that, in Chad, the opposition is made up of small formations that have no influence nationally, while it is concentrated in certain regions in the other countries of the study area, currently Zarmaland in Niger, the anglophone South-West in Cameroon, and Nigeria's South East zone.

These political configurations, combined with corruption at all levels of the administration, have obviously compromised the authorities' credibility and legitimacy. In the four countries of the study zone, the democratic deficit and government failures have driven the population to turn to other forms of politics. In the absence of trade unions and opposition parties, traditional chiefdoms and religious organisations have settled local disputes and voiced social demands, sometimes in a sectarian and violent form. In regions around Lake Chad, where Muslims are a majority, the representatives of official Islam were too divided and compromised to be able to replace the government and assume the democratic role played by the mosques during Egypt's Arab Spring and by the churches to end communism in Poland.

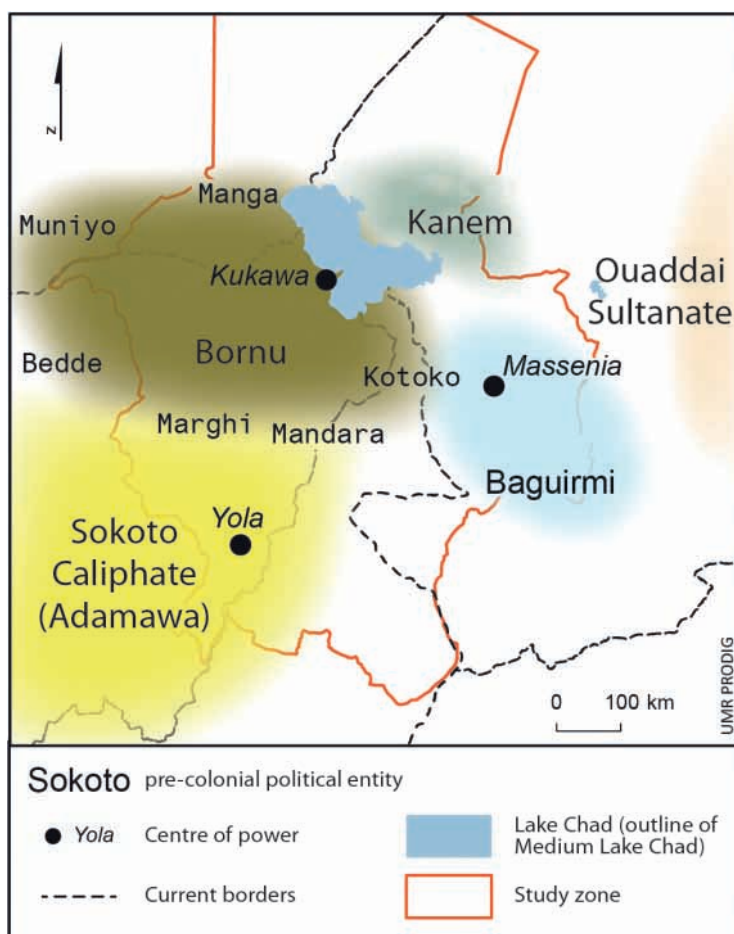
⁶³ Interview with Governor Ibrahim Geidam by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos in Abuja on 10 May 2016.

⁶⁴ In Gombe in 2015, votes were cast in the police stations, facilitating electoral fraud. In Adamawa, the state's electoral commission waited until the last minute to select the candidates presented by the two PDP factions, which prevented them from campaigning.

2.3. Importance of the traditional chiefdoms: The Kanem-Borno Empire, Adamawa Emirate, and Sokoto Caliphate

In addition to the Kingdom of Baghirmi in Chad, two politico-religious entities played an important role before colonisation and left their mark on the current situation: the Kanem-Borno Empire, whose reach extended throughout the study zone, including Borno and Yobe, and the Sokoto Caliphate, established by Usman dan Fodio's jihadists in the 19th century, which extended across the Nigerian states of Adamawa and Gombe and branched out into northern Cameroon through to the Diamare plain and the current Region of Adamaoua (Map 9).

Map 9. Ancient kingdoms in the study area circa 1875



Source: Sellier, 2011.

The Kanem-Borno Empire, founded in the 8th century and Islamised from the 11th century, first developed under the Sefuwa—or Sayfawa—dynasty, one of the longest Africa has ever known. Before taking the title of sultan (*Shebu*) under the Kanemi who supplanted the Sefuwa in the 19th century, its king (*Mai*) was already playing a political, spiritual, military, and judicial role. He waged war, levied taxes, blessed the religious ceremonies, settled affairs of divorce, and administered his subjects through governors called *Fuguma* in the capital, *Zarma* in the south, *Yerima* or *Arjinoma* in the northern regions, *Galadima* or *Kaghustemma* in the west, and *Kaigama*, *Mustrema*, or *Kasalma* in the east (Hogben & Kirk-Greene, 1966: 310; Tijani, 2010: 204). The itinerant royal palace was managed by servants (*sugurum* in Kanuri), usually domestic slaves or eunuchs who were highly prized because they could not have any offspring who might try to claim the throne. Under the supervision of the representative (*chima gana*) of a lord (*chima kura*) assigned to the court of the *Mai*, the rural and farming fiefs were governed by chiefs, *bulama* (or *blama*), who were called *mbarma* when new villages were created. Lastly, the encampments of Fulani and Shuwa Arab herders and nomads were placed under the authority of a *chima jilibe* (in Fulfulde).

Following the loss of Kanem in the 14th century, a region in today's Chad, the Borno Sultanate relocated to south of the lake and further centralised, as the Sefuwa dynasty no longer needed to share power with clans from the north. The kingdom reached its height in the 15th and 16th centuries when it stretched towards Zinder in Niger, conquered Hausa emirates as far as Kano, took control of the caravan routes to Libya, and broke the resistance of pagan groups such as the So along the Yobe River. During this period, famous *Mai* such as Ali Gaji Dunomami Zainammi and then Idris Alauma also consolidated their power by assigning command of their army to slaves (*kachalla*), who were easier to control than the noblemen (*kaigamawa*) with their inherited titles and privileges (Tijani, 2010: 158). However, Borno eventually declined due to internal rivalries, incessant attacks by the Tuareg to the north, the steady advance of Fulani from the west, and pressure from European abolitionists, who dried up the slave trade markets. In 1808, the *Mai* lost his legitimacy and reputation for invincibility when his capital Birnin Ngazargamu was sacked by Usman dan Fodio's Fulani jihadists.

The Sefuwa dynasty was then supplanted by a religious figure, Muhammed al-Amin al-Kanemi, who established his new capital in Kukawa and reorganised the kingdom on a military basis, grounding his rule in his Islamic ideology. Under the leadership of the sultan (*Shebu*), the court was thus reduced to a small number of councillors generally in the form of nine Muslim clerics who met in conclave (*majlis*) to nominate the dauphins and handle the highest affairs of the state. Muhammed al-Amin al-Kanemi also set about breaking up the Kanuri nobility's privileges by allowing his descendants to appoint and

dismiss leaders (*chima*) themselves, even going so far as to confiscate their goods in the event of disobedience. The hereditary succession rules were dropped, and the former fiefs were handed over alternatively to princes (*abba*), captains of servile descent (*kachalla*), and courtiers (*koguna*). Some nobles (*maina*) no longer held administrative posts and could not collect taxes in their own fiefs, while others were compensated with honorary titles such as “Lord of the North-West” (*Galadima*) and “Commander of the Janissaries” (*Kaigama*) (Cohen, 1967: 28).

In the south of the Borno Sultanate, the Adamawa Emirate (or *lamidat*) appeared later, in the 19th century. As an extension of the Fulani jihad from Sokoto to Adamaoua in today’s Cameroon, it was founded by one of Usman dan Fodio’s commanders, Modibbo Adama, who gave it his name when he conquered Fombina (the “southern lands” in Fulfulde) and who established its capital in Yola on the Benue River, a tributary of the Niger River, in 1841 (Abubakar, 1977). Like the Borno Sultanate, the Adamawa Emirate drew its legitimacy from Islam and developed as a military aristocracy with a predatory economy based on slavery. Yet it referred to a revolutionary jihad and remained the vassal of the Sokoto Caliphate. While the Borno Empire’s revenues were recognised as the personal property of the sultan, those of Adamawa were supposed to be paid into a public treasury (*bait al-mal*). Whereas it was forbidden for the *Shebu* to be seen in public, and he spoke to his people only through a curtain, the *Lamido* was more accessible and accountable to his Muslim subjects, in keeping with the example of Usman dan Fodio who considered the isolation of leaders as a form of oppression (Hodgkin, 1975: 249; Nigerian Administration Research Project, 2008: 65–80). Another important difference was that the Borno Empire collapsed before the arrival of colonial rule, submitting to the control of Rabih, a warlord from Mahdist Sudan, in 1893 (Mohammed, 2006).

2.4. The particularities of British indirect rule

Paradoxically, it was the system of British indirect rule that modernised, secularised, and consolidated the region’s emirates, using their traditional authorities to raise taxes and keep order at little cost. In Borno, where they arrived later on from Bauchi, the British even went so far as to restore the office of *Shebu* in 1902, by literally kidnapping a great grandson of Muhammed al-Amin al-Kanemi, Bukar Garbai; the latter had been placed under house arrest to pay an exorbitant war indemnity to the French who had defeated Rabih from their military base in Chad, Fort-Lamy (Dugate, 1985: 152)! For strategic reasons, the British also supported the irredentist claims of the Sultan of Borno and the Emir of Adamawa to lay their hands on the German territories in the north of Cameroon in 1916 and to annex the regions of Dikwa and Mubi, which were administrated by Nigeria under a League of Nations and then UN mandate from 1922 to 1961 (Hiribarren, 2016: 135, 178).

Despite a more direct rule in their colonies, the French in Niger, Chad, and (after the Germans) Cameroon also sought the support of traditional Muslim chiefs. Yet it was in northern Nigeria that indirect rule reached its height with the establishment of Native Authorities tasked with justice, land management, and policing responsibilities. To save money, the British purpose was to have emirs and district heads collect taxes for them. The traditional authorities hence became like farmers-general, paid in the form of a percentage of the tax proceeds and then a fixed wage when tax revenues increased and the colonial power wanted to save even more money (Tukur, 2016: 150, 284). At the end of the day, the British decided to pay the emirs 5% of the revenues of their native authorities, a rate that happens to be the same today as the proportion allocated to traditional leaders in their local governments.

In Borno, the territory's reorganisation also consisted of establishing and urbanising the sultan's power in a new capital built in 1907, Maiduguri. The old fiefs were merged into 21 districts and placed under the responsibility of subalterns (*ajia*), who were appointed by the *Shehu* and had to live in the city to remain under the control of the British (Cohen, 1971). In the countryside, the canton chiefs (*bulama*) and village chiefs (*lawan*) remained and are still there today, called *lawane* on the Cameroonian side. In Maiduguri, the *Shehu*'s council became a cabinet made up of administrative departments headed by a vizier, the *waziri*. The sultan, however, lost his political autonomy (Cohen, 1970: 196). His tax administration was scrapped in 1914 and his courtiers were replaced by district heads collecting taxation, especially the cattle tax (*jangali*), which provided some two-thirds of the native authority's revenues. Seasonal tributes due to the *Shehu* and the winter harvest tax were merged into a single, annual poll tax (*baraji*) to avoid a tax on land, which might have encouraged farmers to reduce the size of the land they farmed (Lugard, 1922: 246, 250).

The Adamawa Emirate experienced a similar fate. The British whittled down the Fulani *Lamido*'s prerogatives while the majority of Fombina came under the control of the French in Cameroon, with the exception of Yola. Meanwhile, the colonial power sought to take advantage of the advanced political development of the emirate's Islamic institutions to administer "pagan" populations who were less structured and where it was more difficult to identify reliable intermediaries. As in the Borno Sultanate, traditional chiefs were mobilised to collect taxes and facilitate the recruitment of "native" police officers, an occupation that raised particularly little enthusiasm (Rotimi, 2005: 77–161). In the name of Sharia law, which was codified and even developed by the colonial power, the emirs retained substantial justice and land management powers.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Before colonisation, these powers reached as far as renting or selling land (*waqf*), which was theoretically the Sokoto Caliphate's domain (Chafe, 1999: 79).

Pursuant to the 1910 Land and Native Rights Proclamation, amended in 1916, the granting of land-use rights was placed under the British governors' control. Under indirect rule, the purpose of this was to protect the indigenous peoples by prohibiting land purchases by foreigners, especially European companies that had done so much harm in plantation economies such as that of the Belgian Congo. In practice, this measure discouraged large land investments by food industry multinationals, and it goes a long way to explaining why the region's traditional stockbreeding did not develop into cooperatives, unlike the ranches in East Africa's settlement colonies. In northern Nigeria, the traditional chiefs therefore continued to manage the redistribution of vacant land in exchange for a tribute. In Borno, the *bulama* retained their control over the allocation of farmed and fallow land to household heads, their heirs, and newcomers (Cohen, 1967: 80).

2.5. Decline of the traditional authorities in the face of independence

Nigeria at independence was probably the country in the region that had left the most powers to traditional chiefs compared with the French style of direct colonial rule in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. However, the military and Jacobin coups d'état that ensued, concerned with safeguarding national unity and containing separatism urges, overcame the regionalist conservatism of the colonial period. At the height of the Nigerian Civil War in 1968, the junta abolished the system of Native Authorities, nationalised the "native police force", took control of the prison services, and assigned the management of the traditional justice courts to the states. In the north, in particular, the emirs lost their right of veto. The oil boom finished off the process. In 1976, a major reform, which created the LGAs, stripped the traditional chiefs of their last justice and tax collection prerogatives, while the 1978 Land Use Decree deprived them of a good part of their land rights by nationalising arable lands and assigning their management to state governors and LGAs. Whereas the Constitution of 1979 still referred to the consultative power of the traditional authorities, the 1999 Constitution no longer even mentioned their existence.

As a result, Nigeria narrowed its differences with Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Following independence in Niger, traditional chiefs had actually continued to collect taxation and dispense justice in rural areas that did not have courts. Recognised as an institution of the Republic by a 1993 ordinance and the 1999 Constitution, they still play an official role in the management of sultanates, provinces, cantons, groupings, villages, tribes, and quarters whose boundaries are superimposed on administrative constituencies. In the early 2000s, however, their customary rights were cut back by a decentralisation process that transferred some of their prerogatives to local councils.

In Chad, some traditional chiefs were suspended or dismissed following the proclamation of a republic in 1958. Reinstated in 1969, they subsequently became

representatives of the administration recognised by the 1996 Constitution and a 2008 Act. The assignments of the sultans and heads of cantons, tribes, groupings, villages (*bille*), and nomadic encampments (*ferik*) now include maintaining order, supervising the keeping of civil registration data, taking part in population censuses, facilitating tax collection, promoting education in public schools, arresting criminals on the run, proposing mediation, settling minor disputes, and monitoring the activities of the NGOs working in their area.

Lastly, in Cameroon, the post-independence authorities initially confirmed the traditional chiefs' prerogatives. In 1969, for example, a decree gave their records a legal value that could only be disputed before the sub-prefect or modern courts. This gave the traditional chiefs the authority to celebrate weddings, ensure that civil registration data were kept, and rule in civil and land cases, including successions. In 1977, however, another decree was to transfer some of their powers to the mayors and restrict their influence to departments for the sultans (*lamibé*); groupings, cantons, and arrondissements for what were known as the second-level chiefdoms (the *lawane* or *blama* in the north); and villages or quarters for the third-level chiefs (the *djaworo*). The administration also interfered in the choice of chiefs and imposed its own men on the pretext of overseeing the moral standing of candidates and democratising successions by introducing a principle of deliberation. This process of bureaucratisation and integration into the state-party was completed by the 1999 constitutional Act, guaranteeing that traditional authorities were represented on the hitherto inoperative regional councils, and by a 2013 order providing for third-level chiefs to be included in the salary scale of their colleagues and be paid like civil servants, but on a case-by-case basis.

As in Nigeria, this process made Cameroon's traditional chiefs part of the bureaucracy. Some took advantage of their new status to consolidate their position as intermediaries. Yet there were also many who lost credibility and influence as they became associated with political manipulation and were no longer authorised to collect a tribute.⁶⁶ Also, their subjects moved to cities and no longer needed them to register available urban land. Cameroon's traditional chiefs faced the same challenges as the paramount rulers of Nigeria's North East, now on the local government's payroll to the tune of 5% of the appropriations paid to the LGAs, and who had to obtain approval from the state governors to appoint and install vassals at district level. In both cases, the politicisation of the chieftaincy weakened customary institutions, with the proliferation of honorary titles and a large turnover rate due to interference from local governments, in particular in Nigeria following each election.

⁶⁶ For example, the *lamibé* of Ngaoundéré and Banyo compromised their position by supporting the presidential party, which went on to lose the local elections in the region in 1992 and 1997 (Adama, 2014: 188–189).

3. Societies, conflicts and insecurities

Aside from differences in governance practices and structures, the societies around Lake Chad all feature a very high level of political—and not just economic or food—insecurity. Their vulnerabilities are multifaceted and rooted in history. A purely ethnic or religious interpretation of the region's problems would be over-simplistic (Box 6). In contexts of male domination and endemic corruption, social inequalities also bring to light the importance of age class and gender status. Moreover, there are tensions at a number of international, national, and local levels. Last but not least, agro-pastoral resources fuel many land conflicts and endemic banditry.

Box 6

Ethnic group, a fluid notion

The notion of ethnic group can be misleading when trying to understand conflicts and relationships of domination in the study zone. Anthropologists themselves do not always agree on the definitions. In addition, what are known as ethnic identities are far too fluid and shifting to be able to be pinned to a territory and properly mapped. In Borno, for example, Kanuriland is supposed to include Maiduguri. Yet the extremely cosmopolitan urban centre is a melting pot of all sorts of populations, and Kanuri appears to have become a minority language in the city. Far from being monolithic, ethnic conglomerations are moreover shaped from within by social status, age, and/or gender divides. Lastly, community identities are often manipulated for political ends that prevent any rigid, essentialist interpretation of ethnicity. In the study zone, the Mandara Mountains region, bordering Cameroon and Nigeria, stands out as probably the most linguistically diverse.

3.1. Beyond ethnic group: A turbulent history

Historically, the region's populations lived with the constant threat of raids, conquests in the name of Islam, and food crises that obviously cut across current international borders, as they do today.⁶⁷ Slavery, in particular, had a huge impact on both the great kingdoms that lived off its trade—such as Borno, Fombina, and Baghirimi—and the small pre-colonial entities that had to reform their polities to escape the raids, as in Biu and the Mandara Mountains (MacEachern, 2001). Dominant groups hence appeared such as the Kanuri, in the majority in the

⁶⁷ The population of Northern Nigeria probably even shrank in the 19th century due to the combined effects of food crisis, slavery and Sokoto Caliphate wars. In 1914, for example, famine claimed nearly 85,000 lives in Borno and drove 25,000 Nigerians to seek food and shelter in neighbouring countries, while 50,000 people perished in Kano Province alone, including 30,000 from French Niger (Tukur, 2016; Mansell Prothero, 1956).

current states of Borno and (probably) Yobe, and the Fulani who remained in the minority in Adamawa and Gombe. There were nonetheless considerable differences between them. Whereas the Kanuri claimed to be descended from a Yemeni migrant from the east said to have founded the Sefuwa dynasty in the 8th century, the Fulani of Fombina arrived later in north-east Nigeria, in the 19th century. Unlike Usman dan Fodio, who first fought the Muslim Hausas of Guber on the Niger border, Modibo Adama set out to conquer “pagan” populations whom he barely attempted to convert so as to keep them in slavery (Azarya, 1978: 25, 35). Whereas the Fulani melted into the Hausa masses in Sokoto and Kano, they remained a visible minority in Adamawa and Gombe, where they continued to speak their language, retained their monopoly over knowledge of the Koran, and claimed the privileges of a chosen people with an exclusive access to God.

From this point of view, it is important to note that the region’s societies are certainly not as homogeneous as we are sometimes inclined to believe. Historically, for example, the Fulani of Adamawa (known as Fulbe in Cameroon) both captured slaves in attacks on the Mandara Mountains in the east and took in populations from the west who were fleeing raids by the Sokoto jihadists in Gombe and Bauchi. The Kanuri—called Kanowri or Yerwa in Nigeria, Sirata in the canton of Kolofata in Cameroon, Kanembu in Chad, and Beri-Beri, Mober, or Manga in Niger—expanded by absorbing “pagan” communities such as the Gamergu of Dikwa. The ethnonym “Gamergu” incidentally suggests a people possibly descended from the So aborigines, customarily called Malgwe or Malguwa, who are thought to be the ancestors of the Kotoko and the Mandara, or Wandala, an extremely mixed group found essentially in Cameroon (Cyffer *et al.*, 1996: 49–66; Seignobos & Iyébi-Mandjek, 2000). The so-called dominant groups were themselves shaped by strong divisions from within. Among the Kanuri, the Sefuwa dynasty’s *Mai* came from the Magumi clan, and the nobility (*maina*) exploited the peasants (*tala*). Among the Fulani, divisions grew between rural cattle herders, the *Bororoji*, and the urban aristocracy, the *Fulani Gida*.

Some populations also continued to resist. On the islands of Lake Chad, for example, the Buduma managed to escape the authority of the Borno and Kanem sultans and refused to gather in villages, essentially to avoid colonial taxation. Resistance was also strong in the Mandara Mountains, Cameroonian Adamaoua, and Gombe, which have much more of an ethnic mix than the northern parts of the current Nigerian states of Borno and Yobe. Social differentiation therein took a religious turn as the descendants of slaves often converted to Christianity to escape the religion of the oppressor. For example, populations from pagan groups considered as “infidels” (*kirdi*) exhibited no class solidarity with the Kanuri peasantry of free men (*tala*) to oppose the Borno nobility (*kantuoma*) (Cohen, 1964). Likewise, politically, the minorities in the British territories of the Northern Cameroons feared Kanuri and Fulani domination so much that

they voted 60% against the prospect of annexation by an independent Nigeria in November 1959. To reassure them, London had to grant them the creation of five Native Authorities theoretically free of oversight by the Sultan of Borno and the Emir of Adamawa. It was only on these conditions that they agreed to vote in favour of Nigeria in a second referendum held in February 1961, which endorsed their separation from Cameroon (Hare, 2013).

Yet ethnic, linguistic, and religious divides cannot alone explain the conflict dynamics of the area. There is also antagonism between socio-economic groups, themselves far from homogeneous. Herders, especially, are involved in many land issues because their cattle devastate crop fields during the southbound transhumance seasons from October to February, and then the northbound return from May to June. Pastoral people such as the Fulani are themselves affected by internal conflicts. The complexity of the region therefore points to the need to temper representations based on ethnic identities which are often seen in a religious light. In practice, divisions shape ethno-linguistic communities from within and reveal other types of vulnerability based more on age, gender, and income. Economic growth in the study area is not inclusive in a context of male domination and endemic corruption, where embezzlement deprives the poor of access to basic public services. The observation applies as much to Nigerian-style federalism as to Nigerien, Chadian, and Cameroonian centralism.

3.2. Tensions between countries

Political upheavals have also fed the insecurity of the Lake Chad region. Nigeria has generally maintained good diplomatic relations with Niger, but the story with Chad and Cameroon is entirely different. In 1978, Nigeria interfered in the civil war in Chad, supposedly to enforce peace, even going so far as to attempt to support one armed faction against another. In 1983, it also stepped in to contest the sovereignty of a number of lake islands in Chad and send its army to take control of them under the command of the current head of state, Muhammadu Buhari, who commanded the 3rd Armoured Division of Jos at the time. In 1994–1996, Nigeria was involved in armed clashes with Cameroon over a border dispute about the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula in the south. It was not until an International Court of Justice ruling and the signature of the Greentree peace agreement in June 2006 that the two countries resolved their dispute, which also concerned changes to the border near Gwoza and the repatriation of Nigerian soldiers who had occupied some islands on the Cameroonian side of Lake Chad since 1987.

As is usually the case in Africa, these inter-state conflicts have claimed relatively few lives compared with the civil wars that have torn apart the region, not to mention the lives lost as a consequence of the Boko Haram insurgency. Yet they have hampered the possibilities for cooperation between four countries on the dividing line between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), with Nigeria and Niger on one side and Chad and Cameroon on the other. The only project capable of uniting the region's nations, proposed by the President of CAR in 1994, was itself unworkable due to its environmental impact, its astronomical cost, and the lack of trade flows in the area. Policymakers have as yet been unable to finance the construction of a 300-km canal to transfer water from the Ubangi River to the Chari River and Lake Chad (Magrin & Lemoalle, 2015; Magrin, 2016). The LCBC has therefore remained an empty shell to all intents and purposes and has roused only to extend its mandate to fighting terrorism and Boko Haram under a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) created in 2015.⁶⁸

3.3. At national level: Feeling of marginalisation in the outlying areas

At national level, the populations around the lake have also suffered from political upheavals. Various rebellions took advantage of the outlying position of regions far from the control of government forces. As early as 1964, guerrillas from the Sawaba liberation movement briefly seized Bosso in Niger (Pérouse de Montclos, 2015). In 1978, the lake also served as a refuge for the "Third Liberation Army" of the National Liberation Front of Chad (FROLINAT). A few years later, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Chad (MPLT) set up rear bases on the Nigerian side of the area and recruited fighters around the lake and in Kanem. In 1990, with the fall of the Hissène Habré dictatorship, the former president's supporters also regrouped in the area under the Movement for the Defence of Democracy (MDD). The lake has since served as a safe haven for Tubu rebels, Chadian army deserters, and smugglers of all kinds.⁶⁹

The remoteness of the regions bordering Lake Chad has also fuelled a feeling of marginalisation and isolation. Their lack of attractiveness was undeniably a major factor behind the neglect of the colonial and then post-independence states. Economic potential was found more in the south towards the sea, while the local population survived on subsistence farming highly dependent on

⁶⁸ The LCBC, established in 1964 with its headquarters in N'Djaména, was supposed to coordinate the management of the four countries' water resources. Yet it had to cease operations from 1979 to 1987 because of the civil war in Chad. Moreover, it failed to overcome funding difficulties. Its resources depend on the economic health and good will of the four governments. Funding (53% from Nigeria, 27% from Cameroon, 12% from Chad, and 8% from Niger) is irregular and does not correspond to the share of each country, as over one-half of the surface area of the lake belongs to Chad, over one-quarter to Nigeria, one-sixth to Niger, and one-twelfth to Cameroon.

⁶⁹ In comparison with Boko Haram, the Movement for Justice and Rehabilitation of Niger (MJRN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Sahara (FARS) have kept a low profile in the north of Diffa Region. Yet in September 2016, Adam Tcheke Koudigan reportedly took over the leadership of the FARS, presenting himself as heir to the leader of the first Tubu rebellion in the 1990s, Barka Wardougou, who had died two months previously.

climate change.⁷⁰ With Yola founded in 1841, Fort-Lamy (N'Djaména) in 1900, and Yerwa (Maiduguri) in 1907,⁷¹ the region's cities were relatively recent and hardly able to compete with the huge metropolises on the coast. Following Borno's loss of control over trans-Saharan trade, which shifted to Kano in the 18th century, the introduction of a colonial market economy highlighted the role of seaports as the essential channel for export crops such as groundnuts.

Unlike in Niger and Chad, which are landlocked, majority-Muslim countries, the divide is quite obvious in Nigeria and Cameroon because their economic and political resources are concentrated in dominantly Christian regions on the Atlantic coast. In the south, stereotypes abounded on backward and uneducated Sahelian Muslims who were said to be incapable of facing up to development challenges and modernity in a global world. Cameroon had to allow northerners with lower secondary rather than upper secondary qualifications to receive positions in the civil service, as required everywhere else, and this is still seen as unfair by southerners. Likewise in Nigeria, southerners accused Sahelian Muslims of being "social parasites" who monopolised military power and siphoned off the country's oil resources on the coast. Exacerbated by the Nigerian Civil War, resentment ran so high that in 1990, the instigators of an attempted coup d'État led by Major Gideon Gwarzo Orkar and funded by Christian fundamentalists from the Niger Delta asked for the states of Borno, Bauchi, Katsina, Kano, and Sokoto to be excised from the Nigerian federation.

In the case of both Nigeria and Cameroon, however, there was no deliberate discrimination against the populations around Lake Chad. Northern Cameroon clearly suffered from the conflicts of the early 1990s. The civil wars in Chad spread many illegal weapons, and their consequences are still felt today.⁷² Following rumours of a "northern" conspiracy in 1983, President Paul Biya decided to break up Fulani fiefdoms and split the North into three provinces, while he promoted a Kirdi prime minister, Luc Ayang, to head the country. Yet the 1984 attempted coup d'État, which was also suspected of being organised by "Northerners", led the government to change its strategy and depend on the power of the *lamibé* and the Shuwa Arabs. In 1992, the introduction of a multi-party system hence reshuffled the cards. At independence, President Ahmadou Ahidjo had relied on the Kotoko and left the Shuwa Arabs in the opposition—like the French did because of their support for Rabih's revolt in Borno in 1900. Nevertheless, his successor, Paul Biya, supported the Shuwa Arabs, who

70 At independence, food still represented an average 60% of the budget of rural Borno households, whose income came from crafts rather than from the sale of agricultural produce (Cohen, 1967: 77–82).

71 Little trace remained of the former capitals of the sultanates of Borno in Kukawa or Kanem in Njimi.

72 In 2015, for example, the Kotoko and the Masa of Kousseri fought over a piece of land that the Cameroonian government had granted the UNHCR for Chadian refugees in 1979.

massively backed the ruling party (the RDPC), while the Kotoko subscribed to a small opposition formation, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (Gwoda & Zélao, 2012; Issa, 2012).

Constitutional safeguards were also introduced to uphold the country's major political balances. In 1982, quotas were put in place to reserve positions in the administration for the most educationally challenged northern provinces. In 1992, a post of President of the National Assembly was then assigned to Northerners. As for Nigeria, the federal system redistributes the central government's resources according to a complicated formula that weights each state's fiscal contribution by its population, surface area, development needs, and various other criteria. The country's turbulent history does not exhibit a systematic exclusion of "Bornoans", but rather fluctuating political relations with the government from generally good from 1960 to 1979, through a tenuous period during the Second Republic up to 1983, to renewed calm until the end of the military dictatorship in 1999.

At independence, north-east Nigeria was well represented in the corridors of power in Lagos. Adamawa had its federal minister with Muhammadu Ribadu (1909–1965), who held the Land, Mines and Power portfolio from 1954 to 1959, followed by Defence from 1960 to 1965. Bauchi, which included Gombe at the time, even provided the head of government, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1912–1966), who became prime minister in 1957. Borno, for its part, had several Kanuri ministers in Lagos, such as Zanna Bukar Dipcharima (1917–1969) for Works, 1957–1958, Commerce and Industry, 1959–1963, and then Transport, 1964–1966; and Waziri Ibrahim (1926–1992) for Health, 1959–1963, and then Economic Development, 1964–1966. Neither was the Sultanate hierarchy absent: its wali, Muhammad Isa Ngileruma (1908–1968), was the Minister of Natural Resources; and its vizier, Sir Kashim Ibrahim (1910–1990), was the first "native" to become governor of Northern Nigeria in 1962.⁷³

Following the first coup d'État in 1966, the successive military regimes were also careful not to leave out the north-east. The juntas of Yakubu Gowon (1966–1975), Olusegun Obasanjo (1976–1979), Muhammadu Buhari (1984–1985), Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993), and Sani Abacha (1993–1998) were all headed by or associated with Muslims from the Sahelian zones. Briefly detained in 1966, Sir Kashim Ibrahim became, for example, personal aide to General Hassan Katsina, his successor at the head of the Northern Region. It was elections and the return to a parliamentary regime that laid bare certain tensions with Lagos and then Abuja during the second, third, and fourth republics, respectively in 1979–1983, 1992–1993, and since 1999. In 1979, for example, the Great Nigeria People's

73 Among the founders of the ruling Northern People's Congress (NPC), he was elected to the assembly in 1952 and was one of four northerners chosen to take up ministerial offices in Lagos, first at the head of Social Services and then Education, before returning to Kaduna as Minister of Land and Development for the Northern Region in 1955.

Party (GNPP), led by Waziri Ibrahim, a presidential candidate, won the states of Borno and Gongola against the country's then ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN). In 1993, things appeared to look up for the north-east, as the only two parties authorised to stand in the presidential election were represented by Kanuri Muslims: the candidate of the National Republican Convention (NRC), Bashir Tofa, was from Kano, and the leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Babagana Kingibe, was from Borno. Yet the regional vote was divided, with an SDP victory in Borno and the NRC winning in Bauchi. In any case, Ibrahim Babangida's junta annulled the election result, and General Sani Abacha, himself a Kanuri from Kano, seized power in a coup d'État in late 1993.

By the end of the military dictatorship in 1999, north-eastern states were once again divided between the opposition (APP) and the ruling party (PDP). Unlike Adamawa, Borno and Yobe seemed to resist democratic change after the return to power of a Christian elect-president from the south, Olusegun Obasanjo. They were strongholds of the APP, a party dubbed the "Abacha People's Party" in reference to the dictator Sani Abacha. In presidential elections, Borno and Yobe voted massively for the opposition, especially for Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim from the north-west and a former military dictator in office in 1984–1985, before running on an ANPP ticket in 2003 and 2007 and then under the banner of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) in 2011.

3.4. Local political conflicts

The lakeside populations have also seen many local political conflicts. Notwithstanding the civil wars in Chad and the Tuareg and Tubu rebellions in Niger, which would logically have affected the lakeside regions, Cameroon was the scene of serious clashes between Shuwa Arabs and Kotoko in the department of Logone-et-Chari, when the first multi-party general election was held in 1992. The clashes also exposed land-use tensions, sparing the Fulani, who had no encroachment problems with the Shuwa Arabs, but not the Kotoko. The disputes on this occasion also affected the traditional chiefs from the point of view of the role they continued to play in the allocation of land-use rights.⁷⁴ In fact, the hybrid forms of governance in place under Nigerian federalism and Nigerien, Chadian, and Cameroonian centralism have rapidly shown their limitations when it comes to settling local political conflicts.

In Nigeria, for example, the system known as "consociationalism" is supposed to protect minorities by means of quotas and ensure a fair distribution of positions and resources, using a regional rotation principle known as "zoning". Yet in practice, it does more to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples at the expense of migrants from other national regions and immigrants from Niger,

⁷⁴ In January 2007, in the district of Zina, for example, clashes between Musgum and Kotoko over a disputed succession in the Lahaye chiefdom claimed more than a dozen lives.

Chad, and Cameroon. In each of the federation's states, locals hence benefit from privileged access to education, health, civil service positions, and land use, pursuant to the 1978 Land Use Act. Around Lake Chad, for example, Hausa migrants came up against a host of obstacles when they set out to settle and farm the spaces made available by the receding waters.⁷⁵ In practice, the traditional chiefs continued to oversee customary land-use rights in the area, and the LGAs in a way relinquished their own land prerogatives. In a country without a land registry, rural land management was therefore based on oral memory, which sometimes left the door open for strong-arming.

In general, the fragmentation of Nigeria's administrative structure, from three to 36 federated entities since independence, has failed to put an end to the domination of certain groups. When North-East State was created in May 1967, the Kanuri of Borno negotiated that the administrative capital would be Maiduguri, rather than Bauchi, in order to keep control over a new set-up in which they were the minority. When the State of Yobe was established in August 1991, the choice of its capital fell to Damaturu in Kanuri country, rather than to Potiskum, a more populous and ethnically multi-ethnic city. The authorities argued that Damaturu was better placed, like Dutse, which had become the capital of the State of Jigawa around the same time, at the expense of a larger city such as Hadejia.⁷⁶ In reality, neither Damaturu nor Dutse were more central than Potiskum or Hadejia. The choice of Damaturu was designed primarily to compensate the Kanuri for the loss of Yobe, which had been amputated from Borno for the benefit of the Fulani, the Hausa, and the Ngizim, Bole, and Karekare minorities.

In predominantly Muslim regions, Nigerian-style federalism has failed to protect the indigenous Christian converts, who have sometimes been victims of riots or pogroms, as have the Sayawas of the Tafawa Balewa LGA in the southern part of Bauchi State (Caron, 2015: 27–44). In many northern states, the zoning principle consists of assigning the post of deputy governor to Christians, a rule not written into the constitution, but one that is intended to reassure the religious minorities. This has been the case, for example, in Gombe since the end of the military dictatorship in 1999. Conversely, states with larger numbers of Christians, towards the south and the Middle Belt, often have Christian governors and Muslim deputy governors, as in Taraba and, to a lesser extent, Adamawa where the Christian deputy governor, Boni Haruna (1999–2007, APP), replaced his Muslim colleague, Abubakar Atiku, when he was appointed vice president to Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja.

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⁷⁵ They had to argue that, in addition to being Nigerian nationals, they were pioneers and that the indigenous inhabitants could not claim a right of priority over land that had never been farmed because it was underwater. As Muslims, the Hausa also maintained that the Kanuri's ethnic privileges contravened the teachings of God, before Whom all the faithful stood on equal terms (Krings, 2004).

⁷⁶ Interview by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos with the Governor of Yobe, Abuja, May 2016.

Borno and Yobe, however, are among the states where all elected governors and deputy governors have been Muslim, as in the case of Bauchi since the election of Abubakar Tatari Ali in 1979. Disinclination to level the playing field is just as patent from an ethnic point of view. Since 1979, all governors elected in Borno have come from the north, with one Mober (Mohammed Goni, GNPP) and one Shuwa Arab (Asheikh Jarma, NPP) during the Second Republic and then three Kanuri during the Fourth Republic: two from Maiduguri (Mala Kachalla for the APP and Kashim Shettima for the APC) and one from Ngala (Ali Modu Sheriff, ANPP). To save face, deputy governors are often chosen from among the Babur and Bura Muslims from the Biu Emirate in the southern part of Borno. In Yobe, Kanuri have also provided all the governors of the Fourth Republic, with Bukar Abba Ibrahim and Ibrahim Geidam, who represented respectively the senatorial districts of the east and west of the state. The only exception has been Mamman Bello Ali, a Karekare from Potiskum, who was elected by default in 2007 and died from leukaemia in 2009 before the end of his term of office.

Borno and Yobe differ from Gombe and Adamawa, both of which clearly have a more balanced political representation due also to a more ethnically and religiously mixed population. Since 1999, for example, the south of Gombe, less Muslim than the north, has managed to send two Christian senators to Abuja. By comparison, southern Borno, where Christians are supposed to be in the majority in certain LGAs, has only ever elected Muslim senators. Political tensions with indigenous Christian converts were already more marked in this area, even before the start of the Boko Haram crisis (Box 7).

Box 7

Borno State: A clear case of political tensions centred on ethnic and religious issues

According to the rules of “consociationalism”, Christian natives of southern Borno theoretically have rights that Christian migrants from other regions of Nigeria cannot claim. Yet they have long complained of restrictions in such areas as building churches, upkeep of cemeteries, appointing their traditional leaders, and a voice in the local media. For instance, their Christian missions schools, which were nationalised after the Nigerian Civil War and then privatised in some cases, are taxed more than Koranic schools, which benefit from total exemption out of respect for the region’s traditional practices.⁷⁷ Restrictions also concern regional civil service recruitment and promotion.

.../...

77 Historically, the Sultan of Borno granted certificates (*mabram*) which relieved the “marabouts” (*mallamai*) from paying taxes, a provision theoretically extended to the poor in the event of a famine or epidemic.

.../...

Historically, the Christian minorities and natives of southern Borno had access to the missionary schools that the British had prohibited in the Muslim areas and tolerated among the “pagans”. Given that the colonial power had invested very little in public education, 60% of primary schools in the Northern Region were run by Christian missions at independence in 1960. Similarly, 60% of primary pupils and 66% of secondary pupils were Christian.⁷⁸ The 1970s oil boom, which financed the expansion of public education, was not enough to fill the gap. Still today, there is a large gap between southern and northern Borno in terms of numbers of pupils, teachers, and primary and secondary schools.

Indigenous Christians thus argue that their higher level of qualifications should open the door to higher-ranking positions in the regional administration. In principle, “consociationalist” quotas guarantee each LGA a certain number of commissioners, permanent secretaries, and ministerial secretaries in the civil service from each of the federation’s states. However, these rules do not apply to regional administration secretaries, who are supposed to be recruited on merit and generally number a half a dozen per ministry. In practice, Borno’s indigenous Christian minorities consequently complain of seeing their career advancement blocked at middle management level by Muslim and Kanuri executives with better connections to the local political class.

The debate has taken both a religious and political turn. Some Kanuri from the north of Borno argue that they now have higher qualifications because they go on to university, whereas the Christians minorities from the south are in more of a hurry to find a job and do not take their studies any further than the level of polytechnics or colleges of education. It is difficult to know precisely what the facts are without information on the geographic origin of the students at the (federal) University of Maiduguri or in the country’s other public and private establishments. Feeling excluded as they do from the corridors of power, the southern Borno Christian minorities have good reason to want to go on to study at university to find a better job. Under the British system of indirect rule, the Kanuri aristocracy of the north long enjoyed privileged access to local administration executive positions, which gave them less of an incentive to pursue their education.⁷⁹

78 In 1965, a mere 8% of children attended school in the Sahelian areas compared with 40% in more southern and Christianised provinces such as Ilorin, Benue, and Plateau (Tibenderana, 2003: 145, 191, 219).

79 In 1982, it was estimated that the Kanuri of the north held 14% of the local civil service positions, whereas just 6% of their children had attended a government school or university. The private education sector was negligible (Gubio, 1983: 125).

3.5. Agro-pastoral resources as motives for crime and land conflicts

In addition to political differences taking an ethnic and religious turn, the populations around Lake Chad also face insecurity from highway robbery, cattle rustling, and land disputes over the control and management of agro-pastoral resources. In the absence of judicial and police data, it is difficult to speculate about growth in crime rates in the region's four countries. The Boko Haram crisis aside, local populations often voice the impression that there has been an increase in cattle rustling and conflicts between farmers and herders. The Sahelian drought of the 1970s drove herds towards the southern farmlands. However, the gradual settling of the pastoral populations and development of transhumance corridors have sometimes helped reduce antagonism, as in certain areas of Cameroon. The NigeriaWatch database records fewer agro-pastoral conflicts in the north-eastern Nigerian states than in the more southern regions, possibly because the former have the country's lowest population densities, with an average of 90 inhabitants per km² (Pérouse de Montclos, 2016, Chapter 3).

3.5.1. Roadblockers: Resurgence in the 2000s

Rural and cross-border banditry is nothing new in the Lake Chad region. It is part of the region's long history of raids (Seignobos, 2013). Yet the phenomenon saw a resurgence in the 2000s (Issa, 2010).

Banditry has developed in different ways in the Lake Chad region. Basically, the shores of Lake Chad, south-east Niger, and north-east Nigeria have been relatively spared these "roadblockers", unlike the North and Far North regions of Cameroon and the south of Chad. In the first zone, roads to markets have regularly been the scene of ambushes by *konta konta* (roadblockers in Hausa), as seen in Karamga, Gadira, Koita Mota, and Kouklea in the Nigerien part of the lake. Cattle rustling is a constant in Niger, for example, along a meridian line crossing the valley of Dilia, but has actually grown on the Nigerian side in the far south of Gombe, beyond the study area (Taraba, Nassarawa, Plateau, and Benue) (Olayoku, 2014). Yet the scale of armed attacks around the lake in Nigeria and Niger has remained negligible compared with the phenomenon of *zaraguina* (roadblockers in Fulfulde) in the north of Cameroon and south of Chad, an area that has become, with CAR, a major socio-political stake (Chauvin & Seignobos, 2013). In this second zone, gangs of highwaymen proliferated between the south of Chad and north-west CAR from the start of the 1980s, before extending their range of action, principally to North and Far North Cameroon, after 1995 (Seignobos, 2011). In the 2000s, the rural cross-border crime rate soared. The *zaraguina* have become a nightmare for travellers, who are regularly held up, and they feed the fears of herders, who fall victim to cattle rustling and kidnappings where hostages are ransomed for livestock.

It is impossible to put a figure on these attacks, but scattered veterinary department reports provide a rough estimate of the scale of the phenomenon. In the North Region of Cameroon from 2006 to mid-2007 alone, hundreds of people were killed or held hostage, herders along with hundreds of thousands of cattle were forced to flee the region, and the ransoms paid ran into billions of CFA francs (Djalla, 2007). From a technical point of view, the bandits are skilled in terms of weapons, communications (mobile and satellite telephones and Internet), and transport (motorcycles). Their gangs are made up of professionals in arms (rebels, soldiers, etc.) and herders forming the bulk of the rank and file, who collaborate with traders and local politicians, canton heads, or camp leaders to sell on stolen cattle on the markets.

Although the roadblockers have waned in the 2010s, without disappearing altogether, the *zaraguina* have made their mark. They have been met with armed responses, such as the herders' anti-*zaraguina* militia—while other responses continue, such as the Rapid Intervention Unit (BIR), an elite Cameroonian army unit formed against the *zaraguina*, which also serves to consolidate the authority of the central government. They have thrived on the contradictions of herding societies, especially of the Mbororo Fulani, who are marked by sharp social and intergenerational inequalities—and young people have seen taking up arms with roadblocker gangs as a way to revolt, gain their freedom, and make quick money.

3.5.2. Land conflicts: Poor regulation and politicisation

The Lake Chad region is also the scene of many conflicts over land and natural resources which, without necessarily leading to violence, can be a source of land insecurity and can block development when the regulatory system does not work. The use of violence places a question mark over the legitimacy and effectiveness of the different conflict resolution institutions. It is often a way of forcing the administration to play its role as referee in the land conflicts, as in the Cameroonian cotton zone (Seignobos & Teyssier, 1998). For the Fulani herders on the Benue plains plagued by land insecurity and large-scale banditry, the use of armed violence to defend their access to protected areas needs to be viewed in terms of the absence of an arena in which to debate the space's usage priorities, and in terms of how extremely remote central government is for certain groups that have fled insecurity in neighbouring countries.

Land conflicts over territorial control issues can drive a localised outbreak of violence, sometimes ending in the loss of human life. In Cameroon's Far North, chiefdom successions or creations and local election campaigns tend to trigger this type of violent conflict (Mbarkoutou, 2016). All around Lake Chad, uncertainty over water movements fuels land-use and territorial conflicts, whose stakes are raised by decentralisation (in Niger and Cameroon) and redrawn politico-administrative boundaries (in Chad) (Rangé & Amadou, 2015). The

Buduma communities are often among the protagonists in these violent conflicts, whether fighting among themselves or with Assalé Arabs and Kanembu in Chad or Mober (Kanuri) in Niger. For these islanders, marginalised in the local and/or national power structures, land and natural resources agendas combine with citizenship agendas.

When land conflicts overlap with other social divides (e.g. political, religious) and find a politicisation arena, they can become a key ingredient for socio-political crises. They were a decisive element in the spread of Kousseri clashes between Arabs and Kotoko to the Logone-et-Chari countryside and their protraction from 1992 to 1995–1996 (Issa, 2012). Nigeria has seen repeated fatal conflicts between farmers and herders in Adamawa and the Middle Belt over the last ten years, driven by a complex causal chain in which urban inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts play an important role (Higazi & Yusuf, 2017).

In another example in the Diffa Region of Niger, water conflicts between Mohamid Arabs and Fulani-Tubu were subsequently politicised as native claims. In the 1990s, following the massive influx of Mohamid Arab herders fleeing the persecution of the Hissène Habré regime in Chad, armed clashes broke out over the control of wells. Serious conflicts erupted again in 2006 (e.g. forced displacements, dispossession of real estate) out of jealousy over the rapid economic and political rise of city-dwelling Mohamid Arabs. Traditional leaders and Fulani and Tubu political figures then seized on the well conflicts to challenge the citizenship of the Mohamid Arabs. The Nigerien government decided to deport them, before backtracking following lobbying by the Arab diaspora through associations and in the press (Anderson & Monimart, 2009).

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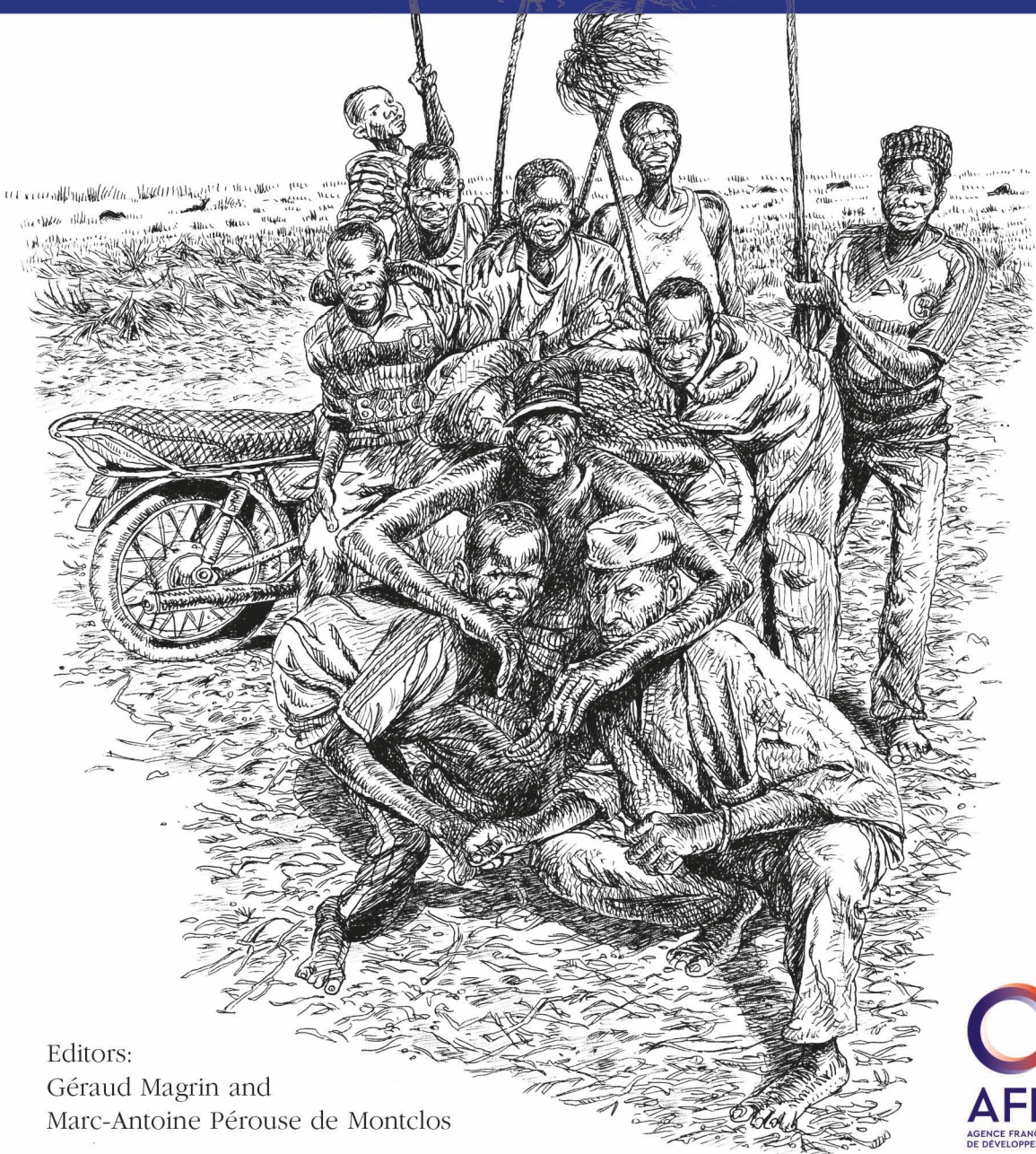
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Crisis and Development

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With contributions from: Sylvain Aoudou Doua, Emmanuel Chauvin,
Zakinet Dangbet, Goudoum Pierre Don-Donné, Ahmat Hessana,
Adam Higazi, Hadiza Kiari Fougou, Jacques Lemoalle, Géraud Magrin,
Abdourahmani Mahamadou, Kyari Mohamed,
Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Christine Raimond, Charline Rangé,
Ahmadu Abubakar Tafida, Abdullahi Liman Tukur, and Félix Watang Zieba

Maps: Pauline Gluski

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Foreword

This report covers the benchmarking study on the Lake Chad region drawn up by the Research Institute for Development (IRD) under the terms of reference provided by the French Agency for Development (AFD). The main findings were obtained from workshops and field missions conducted from March to June 2017.

The introduction was written by Géraud Magrin and Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos.

Chapter 1 was written by Emmanuel Chauvin, Charline Rangé, Jacques Lemoalle, Géraud Magrin, Christine Raimond, Sylvain Aoudou Doua, Hadiza Kiari Fougou, Abdourahmani Mahamadou, Ahmadu Abubakar Tafida, and Abdullahi Liman Tukur.

Chapter 2 was written by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Géraud Magrin, Emmanuel Chauvin, and Charline Rangé.

Chapter 3 was written by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos.

Chapter 4 was written by Charline Rangé, Emmanuel Chauvin, Christine Raimond, Sylvain Aoudou Doua, Zakinet Dangbet, Adam Higazi, Hadiza Kiari Fougou, Abdourahmani Mahamadou, Kyari Mohamed, Ahmadu Abubakar Tafida, Abdullahi Liman Tukur, and Félix Watang Zieba.

Chapter 5 was written by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Géraud Magrin, Charline Rangé, Ahmat Hessana, and Goudoum Pierre Don-Donné.

Chapter 6 was written by Géraud Magrin, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Emmanuel Chauvin, Charline Rangé, and Christine Raimond.

Chapter 7 was written by Géraud Magrin, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, and Jacques Lemoalle.

Appendix 1 was written by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos.

Appendix 2 was written by the entire team.

The study was reviewed by two IRD researchers, Christian Seignobos and Florence Sylvestre, to whom we are most grateful.