

Chapter 6.

Key variables

KEY POINTS

Development operators cannot control all the variables that will determine how the situation unfurls in the Lake Chad region. Climate change and world commodity price fluctuations are out of their hands. This is also largely true of demographic growth, which is subject to intense structural inertia. There is, however, the possibility of influencing security responses to the crisis and improving the forms of governance, a crucial point at local level. In economic policy, aid operators could also assist with public policy choices in agriculture, the extractive industries, and cross-border and domestic trade. One of the challenges will be to promote investment and diversify productive activities in rentier state environments. Repatriation and resettlement of displaced populations will also be essential to make the transition from emergency relief to development, as will youth employment and local capacity building.

We discuss here some of the main variables influencing the future of the space considered, differentiating between those beyond public policy control—only their repercussions can be addressed—and those that can be influenced by the choices made by the different types of players (governments and development partners).

1. Variables beyond public policy control

1.1. Climate

Following the fifth IPCC report, AR5 (2014), and pending sounder projections for the study zone, our climate hypothesis is as follows:

- An increase in temperature, compared with the situation observed in 2000, that could reach 2°C in 2050 (*Representative Concentration Pathway* – RCP 8.5) and 4°C by the end of the century (RCP 8.5). The change for the African continent could be less than 2°C for the middle and end of the century in the, improbable, event of RCP 2.6.

- Annual rainfall commensurably similar to that observed from 2000 to 2015 with, nonetheless, a possible lengthening of the rainy season and an increase in the occurrence of extreme weather events (Taylor *et al.*, 2017), such as the 150 mm of rain over Niamey on 12 June 2017.

Box 15

The IPCC's global climate scenarios (RCP)

The IPCC's climate projections are based on different greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions concentration scenarios.

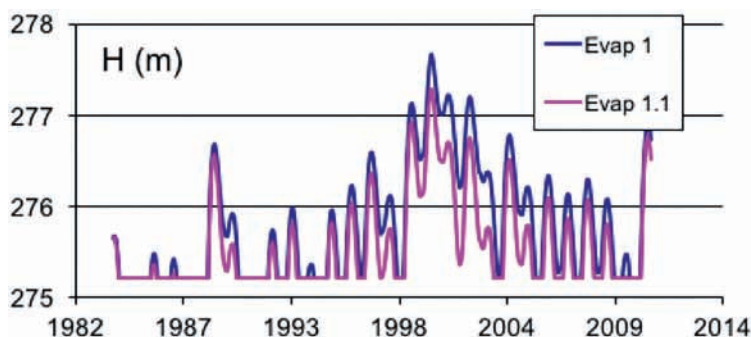
These concentrations were initially worked out from global socio-economic growth scenarios organised into four families (A1, A2, B1, and B2) by population growth and the shared or discrete implementation of clean energy technologies. In the IPCC AR5 report (2014), the IPCC introduced representative GHG concentration pathways (RCPs) to harmonise the approaches and speed up the assessments.

There are four RCP values, depending on the GHG emissions pathways to the year 2250. The most optimistic RCP 2.6 corresponds to a decrease in GHG emissions in the atmosphere by 2025. The most pessimistic RCP 8.5 (slightly higher than scenario A2) is based on a very sharp increase to 2200. The intermediate RCP 4.5 and 6 (very similar to scenarios A1B and B1) mark a stabilisation in GHG emissions to 2050 or 2200.

The potential century-end temperature rise for central Africa is 1°C to 2°C for the improbable RCP 2.6 and 4°C to 6°C for RCP 8.5 (IPCC AR5, 2014).

Assuming that precipitation over the basin does not show any significant change, direct temperature-induced evaporation from the lake will increase in a way that is still difficult to estimate, but could reach around 6% in 2050 and 11% in 2100 (GIZ, 2015). The impact of a 10% increase in evaporation on the level of the lake's northern pool was simulated using the hydrological model of the lake made available to the LCBC (Bader *et al.*, 2011; Lemoalle *et al.*, 2011). This is represented in Chart 5. Added to this is the decrease in the Chari River's runoff coefficient (share of rainfall received by the basin which is transported by the river), which occurred since the late 1970s and is potentially irreversible. These two factors combined, evaporation and runoff coefficient, raise the probability of low water levels for the lake's northern pool and Dry Small Lake Chad episodes, with their disastrous repercussions on the populations who use the northern pool's resources.

Chart 5. Simulation of the impact of a 10% increase in evaporation (Evap 1.1) over the current level (Evap 1) on the water altitude in Lake Chad's northern pool



Source: Authors' calculations based on the hydrological model of Lake Chad (Bader *et al.*, 2011).

Completely dry periods are longer and more frequent. Current studies indicate that a 2°C temperature rise could reduce rainfed sorghum and millet yields by 10% to 20%, irrespective of the precipitation trend (Sultan *et al.*, 2013). Given the foreseeable upturn in demand due to demographic growth and changes in dietary habits, this warming, like the increase in extreme weather event frequency, raises the need to limit the sources of vulnerability over which governments have more control (access to credit and inputs, market regulation, insecurity, and land-use inequalities). This is also required to enable the farmers (broadly speaking) to adapt their production systems and practices. Moreover, a small change in rainfall indicates a shift in isohyets with a zonal impact on the possibilities for some crops and livestock practices. The farmers and herders' adaptability to inter-annual variability by means of mobility and diversification therefore needs to be preserved and, where possible, improved. Particular attention should also be paid to offensive seed policies, which risk homogenising crop diversity too quickly by imposing a few alien varieties supposed to be more resilient to climate change.

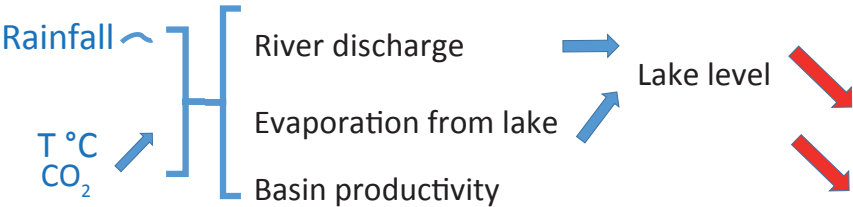
It should also be taken into account that a 10% variation in precipitation over the basin results in an approximately 30% variation in the Chari River's discharge and more or less the same change in Lake Chad's flooded surface area. The hydrological system hence remains highly sensitive.

It is therefore important to prepare for a future of greater difficulty for agricultural production due to the projected increase in temperature and extreme weather events, in an uncertain rainfall context, similar to the situation in 2000–2016. Extreme weather events can be both localised (storms, floods, and out-of-season rain) and relatively widespread (droughts), and are capable of significantly increasing the irregularity of agricultural production.

To date, little has been done to develop the water resources in the Lake Chad region. Aside from the classic agronomic techniques to capture water where it falls, we need to systematically consider the possibilities for storing water and using it more efficiently at different levels—from land plot through village land to the sub-basin—to tailor solutions to the array of local constraints. Larger-scale options, such as the inter-basin transfer between the Ubangi and Chari rivers, should be scientifically updated to better identify their advantages, disadvantages, and feasibility.

The combination of these constraints is summed up in Figure 3. When there is no marked change in rainfall over the basin, the rate of river flow is lower than during the wetter period (pre-1979). The rise in temperature combines with this first effect to decrease the level of the lake (for equal precipitation). Few studies appear to be available on the impact of climate change on the Sahel-Saharan zone.

Figure 3. Influence of the two variables indicative of climate change on Lake Chad's surface area and the agricultural yields of its basin



Source: Authors.

The drop in yields will result from the rise in temperature and the increase in the occurrence of extreme weather events. The arrows indicate the direction of the variation.

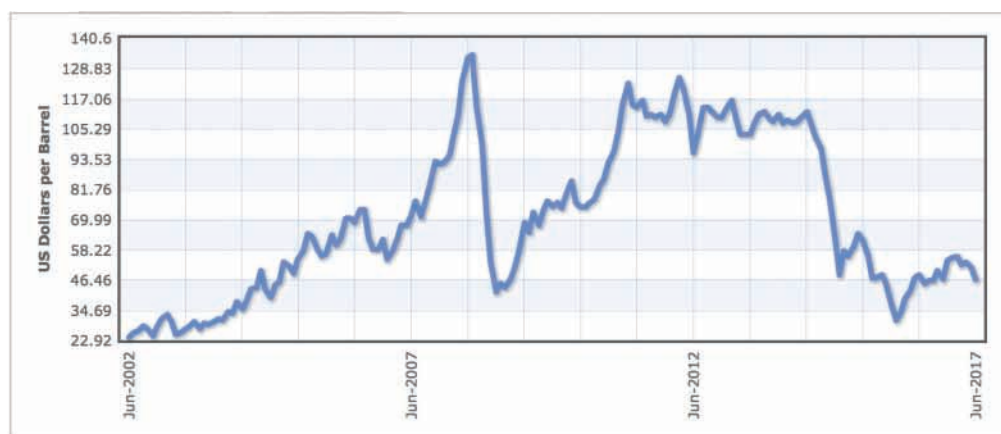
1.2. The international economic environment

Another very important variable, but one over which the governments of the Lake Chad region have hardly any control, is the international economic environment. This can be addressed by two variables with different effects on the countries studied.

1.2.1. Commodity prices and rent economy trends

Commodity prices form an economic fundamental in that the governments concerned depend on them to a great extent. In the recent period, the commodity price index has remained largely in line with oil prices¹⁴⁵ (see Chart 6). Oil prices are particularly important, since the four countries concerned are oil producers. Nigeria and Cameroon have been producing oil for decades, Chad became an oil producer in 2003, and Niger followed in 2011. Oil rent has become central to Nigeria and Chad's economies (nearly 30% of GDP, 60% of the national budget, and 90% of exports before the price slump in 2014), to the extent that other exported product prices (cotton in Chad) ultimately count for relatively little at national economy level. Oil carries somewhat less weight in Cameroon (6% of GDP, 10% of the national budget, and 44% of exports in 2015), where the economy is more diversified (manufacturing industry and primary exports of wood, coffee, rubber and, very recently, gold). In Niger, the main rent is provided by uranium—whose prices are only partially linked to oil prices owing to the geopolitical factor and the environmental issues associated with this mineral (sharp price drop following Fukushima (2011) despite oil prices remaining high). This rent is topped up by an as yet modest level of industrial gold mining (one mine in 2017). Oil production from the Agadem field has so far taken the form of oil products refined by the Zinder refinery for the national market. Export, planned for phase 2, has been put on hold in an environment of geopolitical uncertainty and, more particularly, low world prices.

Chart 6. Brent crude oil prices in US dollars per barrel (2002–2017)



Description: Crude Oil (petroleum), Dated Brent, light blend 38 API, fob U.K., US Dollars per Barrel

Source: IndexMundi (from the IMF).

¹⁴⁵ This was not the case in the previous supercycle, the economic boom period, when high agricultural and mineral commodity prices ran alongside low oil prices.

Following a period of high commodity prices (2000–2014), levels plunged with the price per barrel falling to around 40 to 50 US dollars, as opposed to double this figure in the previous phase. This slump reflects the slowdown in Chinese economic growth, combined with other factors. It is difficult to predict how long it will last, even though the hypothesis of a shortening of global economic cycles is often advanced. It is also difficult to predict the impact of the reduction in world reserves (price rise) on oil prices and, inversely, the impact of the energy transition to a low-carbon economy (drop in demand, which has a knock-on effect on prices).

In the medium term (ten years), three commodity price trends can be predicted:

- There could be an upturn in prices over a cycle of several years, associated with global economic recovery for example—with India's booming economy taking over from China as the main demand centre and economic recovery consolidated in the Western countries. An improvement in the macroeconomic situation of the Lake Chad region countries would then bring the possibility of redistributing the rents through public employment, local government, and resumption of national public investment policies. In the short term, this could help ease socio-political tensions, although alone it is not sufficient (the Boko Haram crisis broke out in an upbeat macroeconomic context). This kind of economic climate opens up the range of possibilities, but what ultimately happens depends on the choices actually made (Magrin, 2015): they may favour economies that do not create jobs, thereby using the rent in luxury urban real estate; or, conversely, they may foster investment in human resources and productive infrastructures.
- The stabilisation of commodity prices at a low level similar to the current level would place the regional system under even more stress in the Lake Chad region. Difficulties paying civil servants, suspension of public projects, further debt, and increased dependence on aid would create macroeconomic conditions adverse to recovery. In the long run, if the French decision to gradually phase out nuclear energy were to become effective and be followed by other countries, it could weigh negatively on uranium prices and hence on the Nigerien government's already meagre resources. A sustained plunge in oil prices would jeopardise the fragile balances on which Nigeria rests.
- A period of commodity price instability cannot be ruled out either, with very short cycles of high and low prices. This instability would increase macroeconomic management problems for the oil-producing countries, which would in turn be detrimental to the development of long-term investment policies.

The use of the extractive rents to drive economic diversification in high-price periods is a key consideration. Its implementation remains a challenge.

1.2.2. Foreign flows

The international environment can also come into play with an increase or decrease in foreign aid and investment flows.

In poor countries with low resources and huge infrastructure and human capital investment needs, an increase in these foreign financial flows should normally be conducive, and even essential, to setting them on a more positive economic and political path. However, their impact depends on how they are assimilated into public policies.

International aid

In the short and medium term, we can envisage the following:

- A significant increase in official development assistance to further transition to a post-conflict situation and the long-term stabilisation of one of the world's most vulnerable regions, which would produce long-term positive effects if it succeeded in building government capacities (for example, at federal, state, and LGA levels in Nigeria) and if its players managed to improve their sector and geographic coordination. Recent commitments by the European Union and Germany's cooperation agency appear to be along these lines.
- The stabilisation of aid at its current level: aid that is both substantial—taking different forms depending on the area (emergency humanitarian relief in the zones most affected by the Boko Haram crisis; classic development aid in the study zone's peripheral areas)—and insufficient considering the scale of needs and the countries' developmental capacity crisis.
- A large reduction in aid due to a palpable improvement in the security situation and donor fatigue, increased fiscal constraints, or political priority change.

Foreign direct investment

In the short and medium term, we can envisage the following:

- An increase in foreign direct investment due to the return of security, an upbeat international economic environment, and an improvement in the business climate, if not government incentive measures. These investments could concern the extractive economy (mines and oil), but also agriculture and industry—making the most of the abundant manpower available and the emerging markets associated with demographic and urban growth. Attractive regional planning policies would doubtless be required to encourage industrial investments in regions penalised owing to their distance from the main national centres (north-east Nigeria's remoteness from Kano

and the south of Nigeria; and the north of Cameroon's remoteness from the south).

- Investments and agro-mineral export production holding at their current level, constrained by low commodity prices and, in the areas concerned, the Boko Haram crisis.
- No new investment and an end to existing production where profit conditions are no longer guaranteed (Chadian and Nigerien oil due to the costs of operating isolated fields, Cameroonian oil due to the exhaustion of reserves, and uranium due to the price drop).

In addition to the key issue of social and environmental regulation of the impacts of the extractive activities, investment in the agricultural sector can produce positive effects only if there is government oversight to ensure that employment needs are met without exacerbating social exclusion from land grabs and the marginalisation of herding.

1.3. Demographics

Two demographic variables will influence population growth in the study region: the rate of natural increase (balance of births and deaths) and migration.

The inertia of the population age structure limits uncertainties over natural population growth in the medium term. Any drop in the fertility rate (which has barely started in some of the areas studied; see Chapter 1, Section 2.1) or sharpening of the drop in the fertility rate in coming years would only marginally affect the Lake Chad region's population growth owing to the large youth bulge in the current demographic structure. A sharp drop in the fertility rate would, however, expand the time window available to develop the "demographic dividend".

The study region does not have a strong tradition of international migration on the whole: no pool of European emigration comparable to the Senegal River valley and no regional migratory field similar to that from the Mossi Plateau to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. To date, most of the migratory flows have remained within the regional system or have taken the form of domestic migration to the central regions of the countries considered. Long-distance migration has often been for religious reasons (Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia) or for work (Libya and the Gulf countries) and has had no effect on considerable numbers in the Lake Chad region. Conversely, Lake Chad has attracted populations in the past from regions outside of the study zone (notably Zinder for Niger).

An increase in emigration is possible in the event of a significant worsening of living conditions should, for example, political and food insecurity become widespread. Emigration would then probably be regional: to neighbouring countries in the event of a political crisis in one of the four countries studied,

or to southern regions with more resources. One should bear in mind that these southern regions will also be under very strong demographic pressure (especially the south of Nigeria) and will consequently not be unrestrictedly open host areas.

There are hence three possible growth rate speeds for the Lake Chad region's population, estimated at 21 million inhabitants in 2006 and at 29.3 million inhabitants in 2017:

- Fast, corresponding to the current rate of natural increase (+3% per year) and relatively untouched by the reduction in the fertility rate or by interregional migration: the population would total 78 million inhabitants in 2050.
- Medium (+2.5% per year), corresponding to a gradual downturn in the fertility rate driven by development (e.g. progress in education and formal employment, especially for women; improvement in mother and child health; urbanisation) and moderate emigration to Gulf of Guinea cities or other destinations: the regional population would total 66 million inhabitants in 2050.
- Slow (+1.5% per year), reflecting, for example, a sharp rise in the death rate (conflicts, famine, and epidemics) and a high rate of emigration: the regional population would total 48 million inhabitants in 2050.

In Section 2.3, we address how migration could affect the population distribution in the Lake Chad region in the future, since its distribution will depend essentially on the choices made.

2. Variables within public policy control

2.1. *Security and governance*

Reconstruction and development possibilities will depend primarily on how the conflict evolves. Security and governance questions therefore need to be considered against how events unfurl with respect to both Boko Haram and government troops. The insurgency's dynamics are so local that there is no serious possibility of any real internationalisation of the conflict with engagement by Western troops or jihadists from Syria, Iraq, or Libya. However, the situation could deteriorate in the zone without affecting the area's four countries at national level. Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad can very well continue to live with a persistent crisis in their peripheral areas. Yet the lakeside regions are hardly likely to cope and develop if governance and conflict management do not improve nationwide in the zone's four countries.

2.1.1. How the conflict evolves

Conflict internationalisation or stagnation

Regarding the insurgents, the eventuality of internationalisation with involvement from jihadist groups in Mali or Libya seems highly improbable, since the sect remains embedded in highly local recruitment and predatory dynamics, even as it takes advantage of the porosity of the region's borders. Conflict stagnation is actually the most likely scenario: Boko Haram has already proved its resilience and ability to slip through the cracks in the lakeside countries, like the Lord's Resistance Army in eastern CAR.

Peace

Of modest probability, the prospect of peace—negotiated or otherwise—cannot be ruled out. Unlike the rebels in the Niger Delta's oilfields, the sect has lost the tacit support it initially enjoyed following the brutality of the military crackdown. As time wears on, it could therefore lose momentum as it fails to renew its fighters, irrespective of any advances made elsewhere by an anti-terrorist coalition, whose territorial gains owe so much to civilian assistance and virtually nothing to the improvement of its troops' technical performances. In May 2017, the release of 82 schoolgirls from Chibok, negotiated with Boko Haram, also opened a channel for dialogue that could stand a good chance of giving rise to a more lasting agreement.

The problem is that public opinion, both internationally and in the lakeside countries, is not in favour of negotiating with the jihadists. Without amnesty, we might see a few prisoner exchanges and the release of Boko Haram fighters who were recruited by force. However, demobilisation of the militia will remain a nagging problem. It is estimated that the CJTF counts 22,000 men in Nigeria alone, double Boko Haram's ranks. For the time being in 2017, just 300 have been enlisted into the army and it will be very difficult to recycle the remainder in the military and the police because of the drop in oil revenues and the lack of funding.¹⁴⁶

More importantly, there is a strong possibility that anti-terrorist coalition war crimes will go unpunished, which will do nothing to facilitate reconciliation, justice, and healing, not to mention compensation for the victims. Given the personal political career of the presidents of Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad, it is difficult to imagine them holding their armies accountable. As a former dictator, Muhammadu Buhari himself escaped the investigations of the Oputa Panel¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Interviews by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos with CJTF leaders in Maiduguri in 2015 and 2016. See also Pérouse de Montclos (2016: 243–248).

¹⁴⁷ The Human Rights Violations Investigations Commission, which took the name of its president, Chukwudifu Oputa, a former high court judge.

into military regime embezzlement and human rights violations in the 2000s. Unable to judge and sentence the perpetrators of these crimes, the commission did at least manage to play a cathartic role by receiving the public's petitions and crushing the sense of impunity among officers who were sometimes ridiculed at their hearing. Yet nothing of this sort can be expected in the case of the "global war against terrorism".

2.1.2. National political pathways

Improvement or status quo

How the conflict evolves in practice will also depend on the political courses taken at national level. Along with democratic consolidation in the next presidential elections in Nigeria and Niger (in 2019 and 2021, respectively), successful transitions in Chad and Cameroon would, for example, defuse the jihadists' revolutionary rhetoric, which condemns social injustices by impious, illegitimate governments. Most probable, however, is that the region's hybrid forms of governance will persist, with a soft authoritarian regime in Cameroon and a hard one in Chad, and parliamentary systems with more or less fraudulent practices in Niger and Nigeria.

Worst-case scenario

We also need to consider the worst-case scenario. The lack of regional coordination already serves the interests of Boko Haram, whose combatants take advantage of international porous borders while the military of each country have to negotiate rights of hot pursuit. Yet the drop in government revenues in the zone's three main oil-producing countries—Chad, Nigeria, and Niger—could compromise the continuation of military operations by the anti-terrorist coalition. For reasons of domestic policy, the three main Western powers active in the region—the United States, United Kingdom, and France—are fortunately not prepared to take up the slack by sending boots on the ground, which would be the best way to turn a jihadist combat into an anti-imperialist struggle and a war of liberation from foreign occupation. It is hardly conceivable either that the United Nations, already tied up in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and CAR, will decide to send peacekeeping forces into the quagmire of the most populous country in Africa. Such an option would in any case be rejected by Abuja.

Beyond controversies about alleged links to Daesh or Al-Qaida, it is essentially local dynamics that will determine whether the situation deteriorates. If the simultaneous deaths of Cameroon and Chad's presidents were to coincide with failed elections in Niger and Nigeria, the severity of the resulting unrest could force the anti-terrorist coalition troops to totally withdraw from the lake in order to restore order in other regions or take direct part in battles over succession

to power. Like the jihadist groups in the north of Mali following the 2012 coup d'État in Bamako, Boko Haram would then take advantage of the situation to regain ground, learning this time to govern societies and not just control territories. The conflict would spread, the humanitarian crisis would escalate, and the chaos would trigger an exodus of migrants trying to reach the shores of the Mediterranean, which is not currently the case.

2.1.3. Local governance

Crisis or status quo

In this scenario, political unrest at national level would have repercussions at local level. The collapse of government authority and the drastic fall in government revenues would foster the outbreak of new community conflicts over scraps from the tables of rentier states and the meagre resources still available on the ground, possibly even refuelling land tensions between locals and outsiders. However, this scenario is improbable. It is much more likely that local governments will continue to operate with few resources and the endemic corruption that saps basic public services, compromises development projects, and forces authorities with shaky electoral credibility to legitimise their social support via clientage networks, with the help of traditional chiefdoms and religious leaders.

Improvement

In the best-case scenario, governments and traditional authorities would improve governance. Local governments would receive financial and human resources to provide basic public services, reduce social inequalities, and serve justice. The increase in wages, now paid regularly, would make the local administration more attractive and enable skilled staff to be recruited: engineers, doctors, accountants, statisticians, economists, legal experts, urban planners, etc. More transparent and more legitimate local governments would also be accountable for their budgets and activities. Their representatives would be truly elected and not appointed by fixed ballots. Biometric identification systems would prevent fraud, and institutional safeguards would guarantee impartial vote counting, for example, under the supervision of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which currently supervises national elections and leaves each federated state to hold local elections, even if this throws the door open to interference by governors (Adams, 2016).

2.2. Economic choices

2.2.1. Emergency relief and official development assistance

International aid developments constitute one of the keys to the short-term future of the Lake Chad region. There are a number of immediate concerns to be addressed by political choices to steer this aid and make it more effective in economic terms.

International donors could:

- Carry on as they are now with a high level of funding to humanitarian aid NGOs, which run the same types of programmes throughout the study region. This status quo would provide for the immediate needs of the most vulnerable populations, particularly forced migrants, recognised by international conventions for refugees as having to be protected and helped. At the same time, maintaining emergency relief in the long term could increase economic dependence on international organisations and drip-feed entire swathes of the region without developing a local and regional economy. This could lead to an increase in local governments and populations refusing to be made a ward of an outside, unchecked intervention, as is already perceptible to some extent in northern Cameroon and Borno in Nigeria. Another risk, if the insecurity continues, is that more humanitarian aid could be diverted and turned into resources for the armed groups, hence helping perpetuate the conflict.
- Curb humanitarian aid in the short term, considering that the security situation is improving and the populations' resilience strong, especially in the case of outbreaks of other major crises calling for emergency funds to be redirected to other regions. Although this policy may suit areas largely unaffected by the insurgency and where counter-insurgency measures have been lifted, it could result in a sharp rise in mortality in other areas as populations fail to provide for their basic needs (access to food and water, etc.). This policy shift, moreover, counts on a rapid improvement in the security situation, whereas Boko Haram could long sustain strong residual damage capabilities. In addition, it would rule out working on the structural socio-economic problems that were among the factors that fostered the development of the insurgency, such as socio-spatial inequalities and the lack of economic prospects for a predominantly young population.
- Maintain a high level of diversified, localised international intervention in order to develop local and regional economic stimulus mechanisms backed by producers, traders, and authorities. This solution implies that donors and operational players have sound knowledge of the local situations to be able to adjust to the wide variety of needs and changes in needs in the different areas of the Lake Chad region. It means being

able to assist the institutional players (international NGOs, civil society structures, devolved government agencies, local government bodies, etc.) and the diverse population categories (farmers, fishers, herders, traders, and so on; internally displaced persons and refugees; but also returnees, non-displaced populations, etc.). This would support the emergency programmes and underpin the government's economic policies, especially in terms of investment in infrastructures and family farming.

2.2.2. Economic policies

Economic policies have to contend with contexts determined by variables over which the regional players have no control (commodity prices, official development assistance, and foreign investment). A number of forms of economic policies can be envisaged:

- Public policies combining family farming support with development of the domestic markets. The aim here would be to meet the food and employment challenges associated with the demographic boom while developing the outlets opened by expansion of the domestic markets, especially the urban markets. The resumption of farming support services (including credit and insurance) would be accompanied by a socially inclusive and secure tenure policy and investment in infrastructures (transport, water, energy, and communications) and agricultural produce processing.
- The status quo would be to maintain a heavy dependence on the extractive rents, mainly invested—when prices are buoyant—in city infrastructures. There would continue to be little public intervention in farming support and land governance, which would rule out any substantial increase in production and could fuel socio-political tensions.
- Policies designed to stimulate agricultural production and diversify government resources, driven by large-scale and specialised mechanised agriculture funded by domestic and foreign investment, ploughed directly into production—such as the agropole model, one of the fashionable manifestations of these policies in the region today (projects in Niger near Lake Chad and operational projects in Benoue in Cameroon and Adamawa in Nigeria). The economic efficiency of these business farming projects—as much in terms of creating agricultural value-added as creating jobs and increasing incomes—has been largely challenged, including by the World Bank in its recent report, *Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can it Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?* (Deininger *et al.*, 2011). Such a model therefore presents the risk of failing to meet the food challenge, of proving vulnerable to environmental changes (extreme weather events) and, more importantly, of being at odds with the major demographic implications of the stage of demographic transition that the Lake Chad

region countries are experiencing (massive influx of young people onto the labour market). It would also result in potentially socially explosive land exclusion.

2.2.3. Trade

Trade trends are fundamental to the long-term future of the lake region and a factor over which the regional players have a high level of capacity for action. Three policies can be envisaged:

- Promoting the development of local and regional trade as a factor for economic development and territorial integration and as a source of potentially government-controlled tax revenues. A series of measures could set the stage for the development of this trade: a gradual lifting of barriers to mobility associated with counter-insurgency operations and the return of security; government introduction of strict control of the illegal levies charged by their agents and removal of part of the checkpoints; investment in road infrastructures (trunk roads tarmacked and tracks rehabilitated and maintained elsewhere) and in landing stages along the waterways and markets, to enable the development and diversification of productive outlets; and the introduction of aligned, controlled, and measured state taxation on trade.
- Maintaining the status quo would effectively see the continued reconfiguration of the regional system, marked by substantial barriers to trade movements (insecurity and regional blockade and checkpoint strategy). This would exacerbate the economic situation for the producers and traders who do not have access to urban markets or can take their goods to market only by paying high transport costs. This situation would keep the general economic slump in place, but would doubtless benefit other territories by relocating certain trading channels.
- Blocking the regionalisation momentum with permanent border closures, more road checkpoints, unwarranted levies, and all manner of restrictions on movements would force the economies back onto their national markets, further the saturation of these markets in countries deprived of regional outlets, and probably cause major economic crises.

2.3. Settlement and mobility

2.3.1. The future of the populations displaced by the conflict

There are two possible developments with respect to the situation of internally displaced persons and refugees. These could combine depending on how the security situation evolves in the region's different areas:

- The refugees and internally displaced persons could stay in their host locations if the insecurity persists, especially in rural areas, and if a syndrome of dependence on humanitarian aid develops. This situation would perpetuate the needs of people who have become dependent on outside resources from international organisations and could increase tensions between migrant populations and unassisted host populations. It would also change long-term settlement patterns and consequently drive up land-use tensions in the rural host zones and urban sprawl in the host cities, creating huge infrastructure and job needs that emergency relief would find difficult to meet.
- The refugees and internally displaced persons could gradually return to their homes with the improved security situation and the end of the emergency relief programmes. Part of the returns could also be hastened by governments used to displacing their populations by force. Unemployment, lack of access to land, and tensions with local populations in the host spaces could also drive more spontaneous returns. These returns, as long as they are not connected with new violence, would rekindle complementarity between productive spaces and alleviate the land situations in current migrant host environments, but would entail a need for equipment, often in disrepair or destroyed, in the refugees' and displaced persons' places of origin.

2.3.2. Forms of urbanisation

This is a variable on which public policy can have a more or less direct medium- or long-term effect. Urbanisation can evolve in different ways, depending on the macroeconomic climate and the planning choices made, or not.

- A first configuration would see active regional development policies encouraging decentralisation and investment in secondary urban centre facilities. SME-SMI fabric take-off or modernisation incentives would be put in place to encourage handling, storage, and especially agricultural processing activities creating value and providing jobs.
- Conversely, persistent regional recession and an explosion of violence in cities such as N'Djaména, where urban warfare seen in the past (1979–1982) would re-erupt, could impede the progress of urban development and contain demographic growth in the cities at the rate of natural increase. This would result in a deficit of formal and informal employment and the absence of integrative economic dynamics.
- A rentier crisis point without any proactive regional policy, combined with persistent rural crises (economic, environmental, and security), would be conducive to rapid urban growth concentrated in the largest regional cities (N'Djaména primarily, followed by Maiduguri, Garoua, and Maroua to a

lesser extent, and then Diffa) and in the southern cities outside the Lake Chad region. It is here that state rent is mainly invested (in civil service wages and infrastructures) and here too where access to international aid is the most direct. The pattern of small towns would continue to stagnate with a very low level of service access and few agricultural processing activities. Metropolisation strategies drive economic growth and the migratory attractiveness of the large cities (Yaoundé, Douala, Abuja, Lagos, etc.).

2.4. Inequalities, cultural dynamics, and social relations

2.4.1. Relations between and within communities

The positive scenario

In a positive scenario, the political authorities stop using identity and religious rationales to rule by a system of clientelism that fuels antagonism between locals and outsiders. Instead, the authorities promote a civic-minded model that improves such factors as access to healthcare services, education, and information. Greater government transparency then disables the power of the rumours, “conspiracy” theories, and beliefs in invisible forces that usually feed the fears of witchcraft and outsiders. At the same time, the region’s governments build a constructive dialogue with the religious organisations to prevent extremism and the risks of sectarian escalation. Now working with codified, standardised, stabilised procedures, the Islamic and customary judges can also resume their traditional role and prevent the summary justice of militias and lynch mobs by mediating and informally settling conflicts between individuals or groups.

Status quo or crisis

The most probable scenario, however, is that the political authorities will continue to exacerbate inter- and intra-community tensions, which vary depending on the places and periods. A crisis situation would then provoke the spread and diversification of the conflicts. With an increase in the habitual abuses of the region’s coercive government apparatus, the brutality of the repression would fuel violence and lend credibility to the insurgent dynamics.

2.4.2. Intergenerational and gender relations

The positive scenario

In a positive scenario, the improvement in the economic and political situation creates jobs, effectively reduces poverty, and narrows social inequalities. Young people and women are the main beneficiaries of this, as they are of the phasing out of the male gerontocracies, such as in Nigeria where a recent

2018 constitutional reform is on course to reduce the qualifying age to run for political office. Displaced persons of rural origin are determined to stay in the urban centres rather than return to the countryside. They make the most of being closer to the corridors of power to assert their rights and demand better political representation. Militiamen and amnestied Boko Haram combatants receive vocational training to enable them to find a job, paid employment, or join the security forces.

Status quo or crisis

The most probable scenario, however, is that social discrimination will persist and add to tensions in the region. Reconciliation, in this case, would be problematic, as families in the conflict-stricken zones often know their victims' killers or have become torn apart by conflictual allegiances. The worst-case scenario would see a spread of youth revolts, an increase in violence against women, and total obstruction of access to power monopolised by a male gerontocracy.

2.4.3. Employment

In view of the demographic projections, youth employment is a major economic and socio-political challenge. Different choices are possible, although they are all constrained by the international economic environment:

- Public policies focus on strengthening urban dynamics through light industry and the development of information and communication technology services. Heavy investment would be required in infrastructures and training, which rules out the possibility of significant effects on employment in the short and medium term, especially since such a development assumes an improvement in the “business climate”, which is improbable in the current situation. This policy would most likely leave the outlying regions by the wayside (case of the Lake Chad region for Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon) and exclude rural youth (in the majority).
- The priority is placed on large-scale private investment to develop the food industry. This is currently the stated political option chosen by Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger for youth employment (among other objectives). Without massive investment in the upstream and downstream sectors (as is the case today with the first projects), these projects and their associated reforms (in land tenure and seed availability) will be detrimental to family farming,¹⁴⁸ which directly or indirectly employs the vast majority of young people.
- There is no active public policy for employment. International recommendations for the development of the informal sector could give rise to

¹⁴⁸ See, in particular, the recent study based on a comparison of agropoles in Cameroon and Burkina Faso (Blein *et al.*, 2017).

a proliferation of poorly coordinated “business facilitation” projects (development of behavioural competencies and commercial and/or technical skills, sometimes with credit facilitation measures) that are incapable of catering for all the constraints young people have to contend with. In the Boko Haram (post-)crisis context, short-term, stop-gap programmes (food-for-work programmes, cash-for-work programmes, and labour-intensive infrastructure works) could at best act as safety nets for a small number of young people.

- An active youth employment policy is put in place with a combination of support for family farming and the informal sector (rural and urban) in order to increase incomes and diversify the economy. The quality of education would need to be improved in the medium term for formal jobs to really develop in services. Cross-cutting approaches to the question could improve responses to problems, providing access to the necessary resources for economic independence (from parents and patrons) and the socio-political empowerment and recognition to which young people also aspire through access to employment.

2.4.4. Civil society

Civil society organisations are generally weak and lacking in structure in the Lake Chad region today.

Three developments could take shape:

- Firm establishment of decentralisation and relevant long-term support, focusing on institutional capacity building, could drive the development of more balanced local governance arenas, where civil society organisations (various associations, producer groups, and NGOs) would have their place. Civil society would then be able to organise and structure itself, to the point where it could set up regional (cross-border) networks for relevant matters (management of extractive industry impacts, defence of the interests of family farming against the food industry, cultural associations, ombudsman associations to manage farmer-herder conflicts, etc.).
- Continuation of the status quo with a weak civil society with highly imbalanced geographic coverage. In some places, there is virtually no civil society, with the few existing organisations open to opportunistic, sometimes hit-and-run, aid-siphoning strategies. In other places, organisations are strong locally, rooted in the social structure, sometimes endogenously and sometimes as a result of the region’s development history (cotton producer organisations in Cameroon’s North Region and Mayo-Kebbi Ouest in Chad) or outside interventions (Christian missions in the Mandara Mountains and Chad’s Mayo-Kebbis). They struggle to make their voices heard in local political choices.

- There is also the possibility that the existing organisations could disintegrate, incapacitated by the absence of funding options and political space—in the event of withdrawal by emergency players or a drop in development assistance—or otherwise crushed by the rivalries caused by an influx of too much support.

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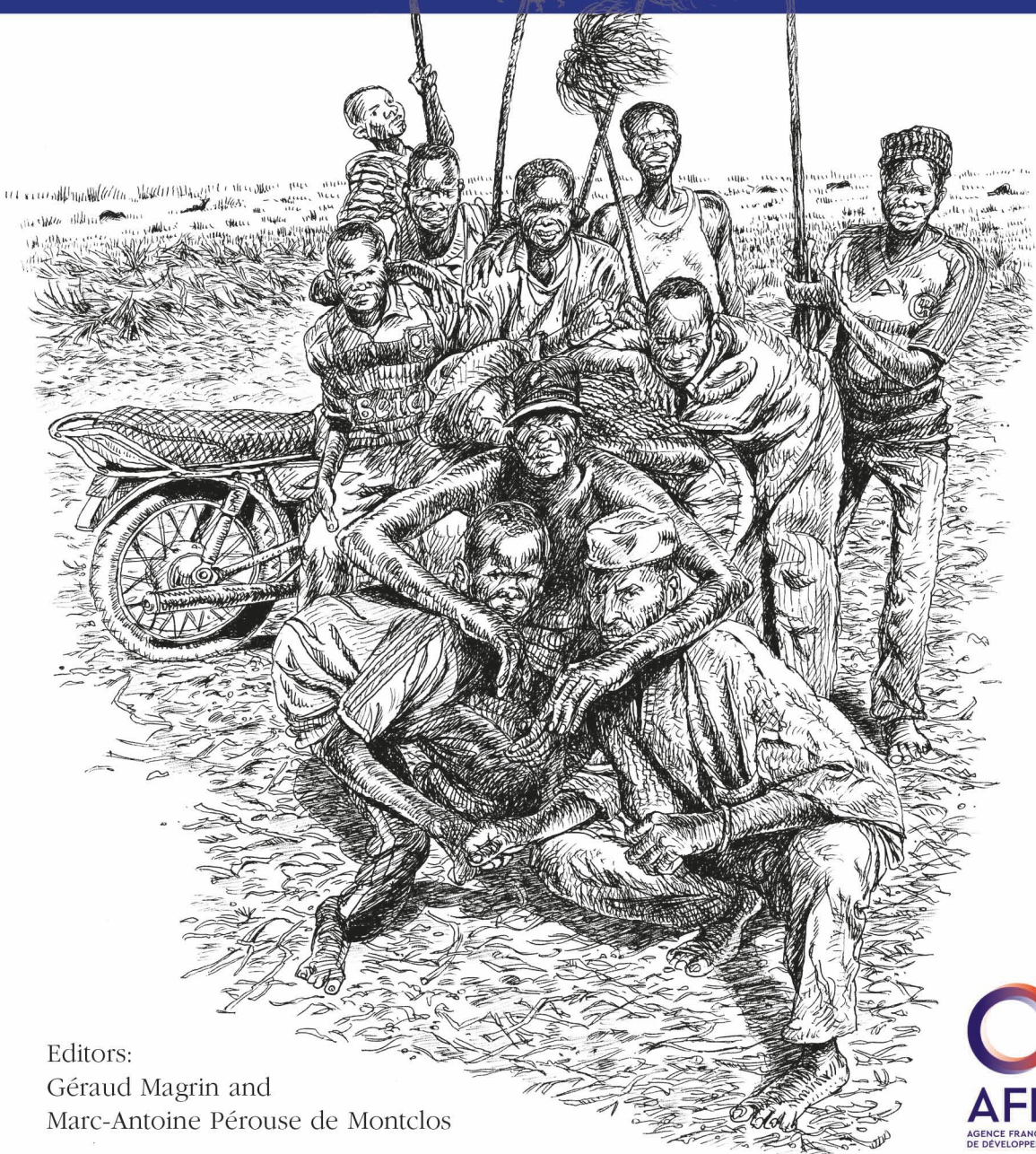
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Zakinet Dangbet, Goudoum Pierre Don-Donné, Ahmat Hessana,
Adam Higazi, Hadiza Kiari Fougou, Jacques Lemoalle, Géraud Magrin,
Abdourahmani Mahamadou, Kyari Mohamed,
Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Christine Raimond, Charline Rangé,
Ahmadu Abubakar 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.