

Chapter 7.

Policy options and scenarios

KEY POINTS

Development operators will have to make choices. First, they will have to reconsider their articulation to security policies that prioritise repression over the resilience of populations hit by the economic sanctions of the anti-terrorist coalition. Choices will also concern the types of possible partnerships with national governments, the private sector, local governments, traditional chiefdoms, and NGOs. Regional planning and agricultural production priorities, preferably socially inclusive, will also have to be established. Yet there is nothing to say that development efforts will have a lasting impact. It is possible that the current situation will continue, or that the combination of choices made could produce a positive, or negative, scenario. Given the current state of affairs, a status quo appears probable.

Considering the abovementioned variables, the choices facing policymakers concern primarily their priorities (security or development); the players in charge of implementing them (central or decentralised government, private sector or “civil society”); the economic, social, and regional development models to be promoted; and responses to the environmental challenges. Although we present individual options here, public policies are often ultimately the product of compromises and hybrid combinations of the possible options.

1. Policy options

1.1. Security and/or development: Where do the priorities lie?

The relationship between security and development is neither unequivocal nor necessarily positive. Poverty eradication cannot be equated with counter-terrorism. The idea that international aid could buy social peace around the lake is effectively based on two unproven hypotheses: that jihadism is driven by poverty rather than government corruption or authoritarianism; and that aid prevents conflicts, irrespective of its negative repercussions when it funds belligerents or exacerbates competition for rare resources.

A number of elements argue for a clear distinction to be made between the two approaches. First of all, military interventions intended to secure an area are supposed to be short term, whereas development assistance is seen as a long-term undertaking. The two types of engagement are not necessarily compatible and are liable to get in each other's way. Economic sanctions imposed by the military, for example, can totally jeopardise development, if not civilian survival itself. This is evidenced by the drastic measures taken by the anti-terrorist coalition armies to control population movements, set up border buffer zones, and deprive the insurgents of their supply sources around Lake Chad.

Development operators all too often do not have the choice: the priority is placed on security rationales, which amount to urgently treating the symptoms rather than the causes. Confusion between the two types of engagement can then place social players at risk when they are seen as agents of a military initiative trying to "win the hearts and minds" in order to dissuade civilians from joining the rebels. The war against terrorism can also wrongly point the finger at certain population categories, such as the Fulani and Koranic school students, who are collectively seen as potential jihadists. Instead of stigmatising them, aid players would do better to include them in community programmes (Inks *et al.*, 2016: 21).

1.2. Choosing between government and other players

Another important policy choice for development operators consists of working with central governments or, conversely, trying to sidestep corrupt administrations by opting for partnerships with the private sector, NGOs, customary authorities, and/or religious organisations. The pros and cons of all these options are well known.

Channelling aid through governments can help improve the performance and legitimacy of the public authorities. Yet this option also risks feeding corruption and aggravating social inequalities by strengthening the power of gatekeepers and intermediaries acting as development brokers. In the study area, governments are known for their capacities to divert funds and accept terms of reference they do not implement. In 2006, Chad unilaterally broke the agreement it had with the World Bank to reinvest a large share of oil revenues in health and education. In Nigeria in 1985, General Ibrahim Babangida committed to a structural adjustment plan whose reforms were postponed indefinitely. In practice, the junta used privatisation programmes to reward its allies and divert more funds from public companies (Dijkstra, 2004: 89–115; Browne, 2006: 48). Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the different governments in Abuja have also avoided applying the international financial institutions' "recommendations". In 2006, the agreement negotiated with the Paris Club provided for debt relief in return for Nigeria investing up to one billion US dollars per year in the Millennium Development Goals. In reality, that did not happen at all and evaluations showed that hundreds

of millions had vanished into thin air every year, reaching a hundred billion naira in 2015.¹⁴⁹ Any increase in aid can therefore only be envisaged in the long term and in a management context that will improve absorption capacities.

Opting for partnerships with the private sector is therefore a way to circumvent exclusive relations with corrupt administrations. The aim here is also to improve the performances of the projects undertaken. Nigeria, whose private sector is much more developed than in the neighbouring countries, is very much in favour of this. Presidents Goodluck Jonathan and then Muhammadu Buhari both banked on Aliko Dangote, known as “the richest man in Africa”, and Theophilus Danjuma, a former defence minister turned oil magnate. In 2014, a foundation called the Victims Support Fund (VSF) was consequently set up to raise private funds for the victims of Boko Haram, while the Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE) provided for the establishment of a part government-owned company, the North East Regional Development Corporation, which would have been 30% owned by the region’s states, 20% by the federal government, and 50% by investors supposed to keep a handle on its management by ensuring compliance with the rules of corporate social responsibility (PINE, 2014). Yet the projects did not deliver. Modelled on the huge post-independence agricultural marketing boards that became riddled with corruption, the North East Regional Development Corporation never saw the light of day. The VSF, established in July 2014 under the management of Theophilus Danjuma, took over a year to become operational. In practice, it has remained extremely dependent on government subsidies, to the tune of ten billion naira in 2016. While some businessmen use it as a public relations exercise to improve their philanthropic image, it has managed to raise only two billion naira, essentially from the banking sector and Danjuma’s personal foundation.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, the context in north-east Nigeria does not facilitate partnerships between the public and private sectors: multinationals did not invest in a region that has few entrepreneurs of any stature—unlike, for example, the south-east’s Igbo traders, who learnt to reconstruct without government assistance their devastated region after the Biafra War.

Opting to work with international or local NGOs therefore has the advantage of bypassing corrupt businessmen and civil servants, who are often associates in business dealings. This is the option preferred by a good number of respondents on the ground, who are suspicious of the political class’s misdeeds. The problem is that such an option also encourages a breach of social contracts, de facto privatisation of public services, and disengagement by governments losing their regulatory function. Furthermore, nothing guarantees that “civil” society will be more virtuous and less corrupt than civil servants. There are not really any

¹⁴⁹ Daily Trust, 8 May 2016, p. 64.

¹⁵⁰ Aliko Dangote never paid the billion naira he promised the VSF, possibly out of fear of embezzlement. Interviews in Abuja on 10 May 2016.

opposition parties or unions in the regions around Lake Chad, and the local NGOs in these areas are very weak. Many associations have been set up only recently to capture part of the humanitarian rent, sometimes for public officials, and they have neither the human resources nor the financial capacity to absorb the funds from the international community.

Going through the customary and religious authorities improves grassroots support in the local communities, but the question needs to be put as to their performance and representativeness. Traditional heads may have allocated land to displaced populations to get their hands on humanitarian aid resources. Some are extremely corrupt and prepared to resort to violence to stay in power. The informal representation and mediation veracity of the religious leaders should not be overestimated either. Lobbies such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) are highly politicised and fragmented. Islam's adherents are also divided, and their disputes have had their own role to play in the emergence of Boko Haram. In Nigeria, the Jama'atu Nasril-Islam (JNI) platform has failed to reconcile them, especially since it represents essentially the interests of the Muslim establishment. Throughout the region, Izala and Salafists are found in good number in trading and urban environments, while the "traditional" Sufi brotherhoods are found more in rural areas. In other words, associating them with development actions in such areas as education and health could end up confining the projects to specific communities, moreover with a risk of discrimination depending on certain religious characteristics. The same remark holds for the Christian organisations. In all cases, it would be a terrible mistake to discriminate between religious movements and give preference to Christians or certain Islamic traditions rather than others. Such an option risks aggravating suspicions and alienating entire segments of the population, by giving the impression that the development efforts serve first and foremost the security interests of "imperialist powers" engaged in the war on terror.

1.3. Central or local government?

In this context, it would be unwise to further weaken central governments by passing them over for private or informal institutions, which all have their own limitations. Instead, regional coordination and monitoring should associate public authorities, development players, international financial institutions, and local partners duly selected for their reliability. Given the rampant corruption, no option is entirely satisfactory.

Tying aid to improving governance, with all the time that would take, could well hasten destabilisation as revenues plunge amidst Boko Haram attacks. Imposing restrictions risks either rejection in the name of national sovereignty or an explosion of social unrest, as seen in Nigeria when the draconian terms of the structural adjustment plan triggered riots in 1985, or even a breach of contract as in Chad with the World Bank in 2006. Relaxing the conditionalities of highly

fungible aid risks aggravating the social inequalities by fuelling corruption for the benefit of the rich. This is the most probable option. After all, Chad and Nigeria hardly suffered for their breach of contract with the donor community in the 1980s and 2000s. Many international policymakers today consider that they are vital to stability in the Sahel, a position that makes it unlikely to see strong conditionalities to drive the political and economic reforms that these countries need.

If we are to accept the fungibility of aid and support the governments with a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, it is then important to consider the targeting of the interventions. Decentralisation proponents would surely argue that efforts should concentrate on local governments, especially in rural areas where needs run highest and citizen representation is weakest. The difficulty will be to avoid a Sudanese scenario, when humanitarian organisations supported local administrations that diverted aid, yet did not relax their tax pressure on the populations (Loane & Schümer 2001: 68). In the case of the Lake Chad region, the challenge is also that an improvement in local governance necessarily requires national reforms. Instead of democratisation, decentralisation could well end up decentralising corruption and institutional violence. Local governments are institutions whose projects are hardest to monitor. The development agencies have their offices in the capitals and have more influence with the central governments, which themselves see their implementation capacities plummet when they seek to enforce decisions at local level. Consequently, work needs to be conducted with the same intensity at all levels of administration.

1.4. Economic policy choice challenges

Public development policies are expected to take a position in a certain number of more or less long-standing debates, whose current and future implications for the Lake Chad region are worth noting. The underlying choices are not exclusive: they are meant to find a compromise between different focal points, the most significant of which are presented below.

1.4.1. Which transition between emergency relief and development?

A first choice concerns the place of aid in the development process and in the bridge between emergency relief and longer-term development planning. Can we settle for structural emergency relief or can we take it forward towards medium-term development programmes that strengthen links with local and national players, based on approaches that promote ownership of the mechanism and measures put in place? How do we see the bridge between maintaining humanitarian programmes and setting up development programmes?

1.4.2. Which structural transition?

Another fundamental debate relates to the structural transition forms. It has been accepted since Lewis (1954) that development goes hand in hand with the transition from a mainly rural, agricultural population to a mainly urban population employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors, with productivity gains in agriculture enabling accumulation. The pace and terms of the transition are to be defined depending on the context.

The World Bank (World Bank, 2007; Lin, 2012) believes that what is needed today in Africa is a sharp rise in agricultural labour productivity—implying the elimination of uncompetitive farmers and prioritising large-scale private agricultural investments—in order to invest in industrialisation and modern urban activities producing value and guaranteeing better integration into international markets.

Others (Losch *et al.*, 2012, 2013) believe that, in contexts of high demographic growth and youthful populations (as found in the Lake Chad region) and the constraints of globalisation associated with large productivity and competitiveness asymmetries, new regional development models need to be invented based on support for labour-intensive family farming, rural economic diversification, and massive investment in secondary urban centre facilities. Their reasoning here is that it is unrealistic to think that industrialisation and the metropolitan economy could create enough jobs in the short term to employ the many labour market entrants.

1.4.3. Control nature or support mobility?

Another major choice concerns the nature of the choices made to address the environmental vulnerability of agriculture (Lemoalle & Magrin, 2014). Should farming (and herding) be secured by major schemes and maximum control over nature (and therefore water), or should there be support for the models that the populations have used to date to cope with environmental variability (mobility, job diversification on farms, and multifunctional spaces)?

The region's development history has shown that attempts to control nature on a large scale have often ended in failure, like the large irrigation projects on the Nigerian shores of Lake Chad. The project to transfer water from the Ubangi River to Lake Chad, which remains on the LCBC's agenda despite the many obstacles (see Chapter 1., Box 1 and Chapter 2, Section 3.2), is a paragon of a major hydraulic project that claims to solve in one fell swoop (and at great expense) all the regional problems (Lake Chad's water level, availability of water in the basin for agriculture, stockbreeding, towns and cities, regional integration, etc.). However, any generalisation would be unwise when what is actually the recent history of water management in Central and West Africa needs to be interpreted from a dynamic point of view, where technical, social, and institutional difficulties exist alongside learning curves (Barbier *et al.*, 2009).

The rural societies' use of mobility, job diversification, and multifunctional spaces in response to environmental variability has proved effective in certain contexts, such as on the southern shores of Lake Chad (Rangé, 2016). Nevertheless, it meets with certain limitations. These may be climate-related in the case of total environmental change (prolonged drying of the lake's northern pool, repeated drought in the Sahel, etc.), but are mainly socio-political when local political trends lead to land exclusion amidst growing demographic pressure.

So demographic growth and climate change call for an improvement to the way the Lake Chad Basin's water resources are harnessed. Here too, hybrid public policies will need to be devised to optimise the water in a variety of forms (groundwater and surface water) by combining new schemes with tried-and-tested mobility and diversification responses.

1.4.4. Investment of rents in metropolitan development or more balanced regional planning?

One regional economic policy choice relates to the management of rents (extractive in the main). Is it better to invest them in the countries' largest cities (outside the study region, with the exception of Chad) in keeping with the World Bank's recommendations in its report on economic geography (2007), which advocates scaled-up metropolitan development as alone capable of creating high growth rates? In this case, development funding in the other spaces would concentrate on investments in human resources (education and health), based on the idea that they promote positive geographic and social mobility. In the long run, metropolitan development could have knock-on effects on the other national hubs. In areas such as those in the Lake Chad region, subject to very high socio-political tensions, there is understandably a risk associated with such a model based on priority investment in the most competitive places with the hope of gradual spillover to the other territories.

Yet investment in regional development—from the point of view of value-creating activities at the interface between rural areas with productive potential and the urban network of main and secondary cities—could conceivably drive more balanced development that is more conducive to peaceful socio-economic and political environments. This means devising a regional development model that mainstreams spatial (and social) inclusion (AfDB, 2015). One course of action could be to deepen the decentralisation processes, in particular by accompanying transfers of responsibilities (relatively far-reaching, especially in Cameroon and Niger) with corresponding financial transfers (and aid). However, the Nigerian example clearly shows that financial decentralisation is no silver bullet. Despite the large flows received by the federated states, they have failed, especially in the Lake Chad region states, to generate any significant regional development momentum. The decentralisation of public development funding can be effective only if it is accompanied by *(i)* sharing roles with devolved

government agencies to enable local players to effectively steer the projects, and (ii) introducing oversight and check-and-balance mechanisms to improve accountability, including at local level.

1.5. Choices in response to environmental change

Climate change is an unavoidable factor. However, the adaptation measures need to give due consideration to the uncertainty regarding their exact repercussions.

The rise in temperature across the entire cultivable area has created the need to improve agricultural practices (e.g. fertilisers, adapted varieties, agroforestry to improve soil carbon content) and farmers' incomes, in particular with better market access to maintain a rural population. If rainfall remains unchanged, the increase in evaporation will restrict the expanse and length of flooding of the temporary marshlands and small reservoirs used by the herds.

The populations on the southern side of Lake Chad have developed water channelling and retention systems to use the resource more efficiently. Water and soil conservation practices could conceivably be improved throughout the basin and cultivable study area. This adjustment would reduce, albeit not eliminate, the risk and impact of poor rainfall.

The inter-basin transfer project aims to provide fuller control of the water resource. The fear of Lake Chad drying up in the short term—bred by the lake's changes of state with the droughts of 1972, 1973, and 1984—was comforted by a misinterpretation of the few scientific data available at the time and a strong lobby for major works. After Transaqua had been presented in 1982, with its proposed transfer from the Ubangi River to the Chari River basin of an initial 100 km³ per year, Cima International conducted a feasibility study for LCBC (2011) at the request of Lake Chad's lakeside heads of state. Following this study, the solution chosen by the LCBC consisted of two dams for a total annual transfer of 6.4 km³ per year, which cannot meet the goal of restoring Lake Chad to its medium state (Magrin & Lemoalle, 2015). The 2012 Summit of the Heads of State then decided, as a first step, to improve the water flow in the Chari–Logone system and to launch dredging and weeding operations to develop Lake Chad (LCBC-GIZ, 2016). A new study is scheduled concerning a transfer of 50 km³ per year, following an agreement signed by LCBC and Power China in 2017 (LCBC, 2017).

2. The scenarios

These six main variables (climate, international economic situation, demographics, security and governance, economic choices, settlement and mobility, and inequalities and social relations) could combine in all number of ways that would be difficult to analyse.

This section draws on a summary of the regional system's recent history up to the current period to present a description of three scenarios for the three decades to come, chosen by combining a steady trend for the "external" variables (unaffected by regional scene players' choices) and variables presenting strong structural inertia, which is not the least improbable state of affairs, with a description of the implications of different political dynamics in terms of governance and development choices.

2.1. The variables considered

2.1.1. Average external and structural variables

The scenarios here consider an average trend for the climate, commodity price, and foreign financial flows (aid and foreign direct investment) variables, similar to the current situation or perceived as the most probable at this time.

The gradual increase in temperatures could be accompanied by a slight upturn in rainfall over the basin. Yet as rising temperatures also bring an increase in evapotranspiration, we consider that Lake Chad's natural annual inflows will stay stable at the current level (some 20 km³). Precipitation will remain similar to the 1991–2017 period (wetter than the 1980s and 1990s and drier than the 1950s and 1960s), but rising temperatures and the frequency of extreme weather events will make agricultural production more uncertain.

Commodity prices will stay at a relatively low level, albeit with a slight upturn as the growth upswing in India and post-Brexit Europe offsets the Chinese slowdown and recession in emerging countries. Oil will sell for an average \$60 per barrel (\$49 in July 2017; it held at over \$80 from 2009 to 2014).

Foreign financial flows will remain at a level similar to that observed since the early 2000s. Development assistance will increase slightly in the Lake Chad region, despite budgetary constraints as a rule among Western donors, since the region is seen as a highly vulnerable area whose stabilisation is strategic for France and Europe (security and migration); it is also a priority region for climate change adaptation funds. Foreign direct investment will remain stable at a relatively modest level, with sectors designed to serve the domestic markets (cement, construction and civil engineering, telephony, agricultural equipment, etc.) gradually replacing investments in the extractive sector. However, the geographic position of the Lake Chad region makes investment in the area less profitable than in the metropolitan areas of the Gulf of Guinea.

Demographic growth will fall slightly as a result of the development policies (education for girls and healthcare) and emigration to Gulf of Guinea cities, but it will remain high (2.5% growth per year): the region will grow from 29.3 million inhabitants in 2017 to 66 million in 2050.

2.1.2. Weight of politics

Our scenarios are conditioned by trends and choices in the areas of security, national and local governance, and development policy. We assess their implications for the other variables and the order of the regional system as a whole. We believe that the most probable scenario is a status quo.

2.2. *Three scenarios*

2.2.1. A bright future picture: Formulation of an inclusive regional development model

A first scenario would see the gradual return of security as the Boko Haram group is depleted, with some elements eliminated while others are driven to the negotiating table after losing all support from the populations due to their abuses and the gradual return of governments providing public goods. This development would be accompanied, gradually as security progresses, by a transition from emergency relief to a more coordinated, long-term development approach. Some displaced persons would gradually return to their original places of residence, especially when they had good land situations there, while others would settle in the host locations to develop new and possibly non-agricultural (trade and crafts) activities there or otherwise would migrate to the cities. The governments would help local authorities manage land-use tensions as displaced persons returned to the most coveted spaces.

At the same time, positive political developments would take shape in the countries bordering Lake Chad—peaceful elections in Nigeria and Niger, and peaceful transitions conducive to progress with democracy and the rule of law in Chad and Cameroon. Empowered, the central governments would concern themselves with creating the conditions for effective local governance. This would imply transferring responsibilities and significant—and most importantly, regular—financial resources to local government. It would also call for a more efficient distribution of roles between local government and devolved government agencies. Scaling up these agencies' resources would be a condition for their capacity to usefully serve the local government bodies. The consolidation of oversight and check-and-balance mechanisms, at both central and local levels, would help reduce corruption and improve the quality of the public services provided. Regional governance would be improved by building local elected officials' capacities and means of action, and by their working with local stakeholders (civil society organisations and universities) in legitimate, participatory arenas. This entails, in particular, clarifying the land access rules and establishing mechanisms to secure resources based on democratic principles.

Public development policy choices would consolidate these developments. The priority would be placed on developing the production and trade systems (between

countries and between urban and rural areas), which provided most of the wealth before the crisis. The vulnerability of family farming would be considerably alleviated by introducing a set of farming support services (access to credit, inputs, insurance, extension, advisory services, and research) in addition to improving the other services for rural communities (access to education, healthcare, water, transport, energy, etc.). High-productive-potential areas would receive priority investments in access (roads), post-harvest operations (storage and processing), and production support. Light engineering works would secure and improve the harnessing of water resources (for herding and agriculture), using local know-how where appropriate (temporary levees to protect against high water and mini irrigation channels in Lake Chad, etc.). These would be combined with spatial management systems. Support for mobility and multifunctional spaces would form responses to climate insecurity. Diversification of the forms of water use (groundwater, surface water, and main and secondary valleys)—vital to increasing and securing production in a context of climate change—would be organised considering the resource's balances and its transnational dimension, in keeping with the provisions of the LCBC's Water Charter.

Funds for local development and regional planning would be invested in infrastructures for secondary cities and roads. Political agreements on regional integration would be implemented with concrete local cooperation measures to manage circulation tensions (in the event of food shortages, insecurity, and health risks).

In the main cities, training programmes would be developed to improve the return on commodities produced in the region (agricultural or extractive) for domestic and regional consumption. An attractive tax policy would be put in place to promote investments for the regional market (CEMAC and ECOWAS). Rents from the extractive economy would be invested in regional development and economic diversification, in association with institution building. A high level of environmental regulation would limit the negative impacts of production. It would promote a shift away from the enclave economy and the creation of linkages with the national and local economy through the development of strict local content policies.

Progress with urbanisation, better access to services, and the improved situation of women (access to education and employment) would expedite the reduction in fertility and consequently expand the window of opportunity for a demographic dividend.

2.2.2. Status quo: compartmentalisation and slow deterioration

A second scenario would see the continuation of currently observed trends.

In security, Lake Chad's lakeside governments, plagued by huge economic straits due to low oil prices, would tolerate the persistence of a certain level

of violence in some regions (central Borno, Sambisa Forest, Lake Chad, and Yobe River), considering that the Lake Chad region's dynamics ultimately have little effect on their vital interests. The humanitarian community would remain in place working for the survival of millions of displaced persons in difficult conditions, but also sustaining corruption and rivalry between the "winners" of the emergency relief system and the others. Mobility between host locations and former lands would continue to develop, enabling stakeholders to benefit from humanitarian resources (and protect acquired land rights) as they modestly resume production in their areas of origin.

The governments' current weaknesses would continue: dependence on commodity prices (stable at a fairly low level), financial and institutional dependence on international cooperation (especially for Niger, Chad and, to a lesser extent, Cameroon), and inability to design and implement coordinated development policies (in the four countries). Elsewhere, basic public services would continue to suffer from public policy sector segmentation rationales; rivalry between ministries, devolved government agencies, and local governments; and corruption at different levels. Authoritarianism and clientelism, which dominate politics, would also generate growing tensions in a context of reduced rent.

At local level, tensions—especially land-use tensions—would be perpetuated by unfinished decentralisation (in Cameroon, Niger, and especially Chad) and local governance dysfunctions amidst so much clientelism and identity manipulation. These are becoming particularly acute as displaced persons return to former lands, often occupied by other groups in between (Fulani herders in the northern Nigerien lobe of Lake Chad, for example). In the longer term, growing land pressure on high-potential areas due to demographic growth and deteriorating productive conditions in the ordinarily rainfed crop zones could also exacerbate tensions, short of a significant improvement in local governance, and create extremely negative impacts on biodiversity.

The development situation is gradually becoming intolerable, owing to a combination of the depressed modern national economy—compelled by low oil prices to cut public procurement and civil servants' purchasing power—and recession in the informal sector (cross-border and urban–rural trade), which is severely hampered by barriers to movement set up to combat Boko Haram. In the cities, the situation is provoking growing strikes in the industrial sector and the civil service, creating a bleak climate for investment. The sluggish urban economy cannot create enough jobs to absorb demographic growth; many university-trained young people remain jobless, forming further vehicles for instability. The cities are prevented by their poor attractiveness (mediocre services and insufficient jobs) from absorbing a large proportion of the young rural labour market entrants. Rural areas are seeing a fresh upsurge in insecurity—in the classic forms of rural banditry seen prior to Boko Haram, with or without political or religious agendas—and an upturn in emigration flows to the cities of the Gulf of Guinea.

The fertility rate is falling very slowly, with barely a chance of benefiting from the demographic dividend.

Deterioration in the situation due to the stability of the currently observed variables could morph into a third scenario.

2.2.3. Glimpse of an undesirable future: Fragmentation

Entry into a deep crisis for one or more of Lake Chad's lakeside governments (following a succession crisis in Chad or Cameroon or the degeneration of elections in Nigeria or Niger) would force an immediate let-up in the combat against Boko Haram, who would then find refuge in the territory(ies) concerned to be able to reform and expand. This situation could be the result of protracted aggravation of the tensions created by the current national dysfunctions, ignited by a specific event (death of a head of state or poorly handled election unrest).

Boko Haram refugees aside, development policy choices could exacerbate the regional situation by countering the long-run models underlying the region's order: multifunctional spaces and mobility to cope with environmental variability.

The Chinese project to transfer water from the Ubangi River to Lake Chad could be deemed beneficial to offset the rise in needs and meet the agricultural challenges induced by climate change. It would develop the uses of water for irrigation in the basin and the cities, while continuing to supply water to Lake Chad. In addition to its predictable environmental and social impacts (drying of the channelled Chari River's floodplains and wetlands; reduction in the usable floodplain areas at Lake Chad; biodiversity changes, etc.), it would expose the Lake Chad Basin to a high level of geopolitical dependence on the upstream countries. The cost of the project would be driven up further by the fact that financial compensation would have to be paid to the Congo basin countries (DRC and CAR) for the resource drawn from them. The transfer would divert a large proportion of financial resources to the detriment of other needs (whatever the estimates, it represents a cost equivalent to decades of official development assistance to Chad, all sectors combined). Only a massive influx from the private sector could be conceivable for such an infrastructure to pay off, which would leave the door open for all number of large-scale capitalist hydro-agricultural developments.

With or without an inter-basin transfer, unregulated neo-liberal policies promoting large-scale agricultural investments as the key to the regional development equation would have extremely negative repercussions. The promotion of agribusiness in forms more or less proficiently interfaced with surrounding family farming would give private players water and land resources denied family farms by partially public investments (such as the inter-basin transfer and large-scale hydro-agricultural developments). These capital-intensive agropoles would proletarianise part of the rural population, but not enough to absorb

demographic growth. Vertical integration would eliminate part of the chain of informal urban–rural interface jobs (handling, storage, transport, trade, and processing) to the benefit of a much smaller number of more highly skilled formal jobs, inaccessible to rural populations.

In this toxic climate, the promotion of extractive investments (oil and mining) would open the door to the arrival of unscrupulous corporations (if not “rogue firms”). The social and environmental impact of their activities, poorly regulated by governments seeking quick rents, would fuel regional tensions.

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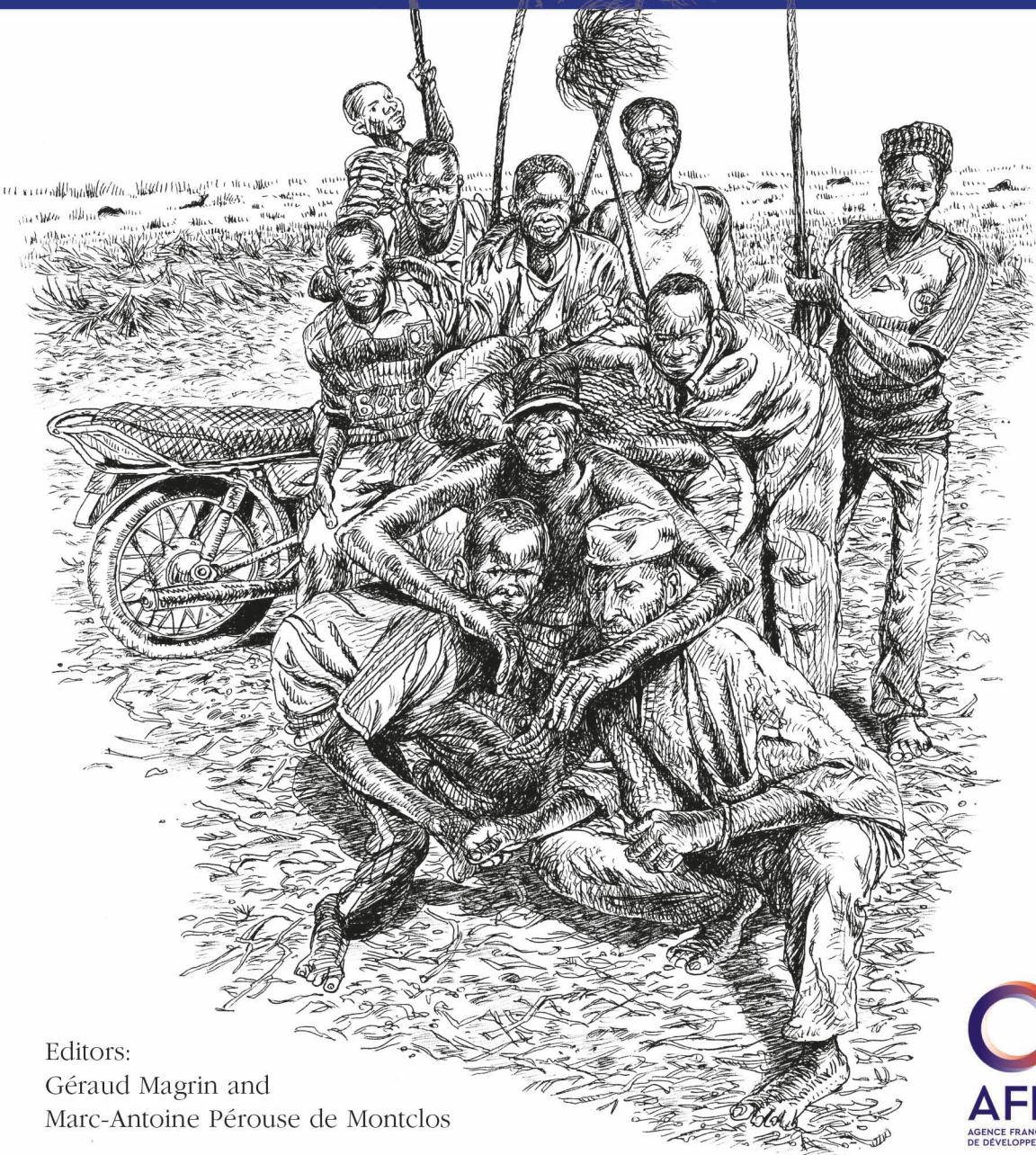
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Crisis and Development

The Lake Chad Region and Boko Haram



Editors:

Géraud Magrin and
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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.

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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.