Introduction

Conflicts, Violence and Risk in the Lake Chad Basin

Emmanuel Chauvin, Olivier Langlois, Christian Seignobos and Catherine Baroin

From Boko Haram to the war in the Central African Republic, insecurity is a major factor in reshaping the societies in the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Niger, Nigeria, Chad). Little known and hard to access, the areas of violent conflict in this region of the world can be assessed through fieldwork. Calling upon various disciplines of the social sciences, this book proposes a reading based on the study of local dynamics and lived worlds of the people in question. It discusses the various aspects of insecurity – from everyday violence to war – and their historical roots, as well as the economic and political issues at stake. Presentations and discussions between social science scholars took place during a colloquium of the Mega-Chad network.[1] This book is the result of these debates, but its broader aim is to offer, to an audience beyond the scientific world, keys for understanding a major phenomenon in contemporary Africa. Students, researchers and decision-makers will find information and analysis on risk, violence and conflicts, as well as on the struggle against insecurity, be it military, political or developmental.

Insecurity: Diversity and Entanglement

The notion of insecurity refers to the notion of danger, which is complex to define because of its diversity of experience and perception. Three social situations discussed in this book – conflict, violence and risk – are among the main factors of insecurity.

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The Experience of Conflict, Violence and Risk

Conflict is a confrontation between actors, usually between individuals or groups pursuing incompatible goals (Aron [1962] 1984) or, to put it less goal oriented, with behaviours that challenge their mutual interests. It is therefore a form of social relationship, among other relations such as cooperation between actors or the avoidance of others. Conflicts can be differentiated according to their spatial scale (from local to global), their intensity (from tension to war) and their object (e.g. politics, resources, environment). Conflict implies 'the scenario of a duel, a face-off between two declared adversaries, an open and risky confrontation between two autonomous wills or at least perceiving themselves as such' (Bazin and Terray 1982: 12).

Violence, on the other hand, pictures aggressor and victim in a relationship of subjugation. In this relationship, force is used to subdue, coerce or obtain something from someone. Violence can therefore involve physical aggression against others or their property, but its meaning can also be more intangible, as is the case with notions of structural and symbolic violence (Galtung 1969; Bourdieu 1980). Among the forms of violence, we can distinguish political violence, linked to authority and society, and social or everyday violence, the latter being exercised at a more strictly local level and in inter-individual relationships (Crettiez 2008).

Risk can be defined as the probability that an event leading to damage will occur. It combines the notion of hazard, an event that is more or less likely to occur, and that of vulnerability, the level of social impact of such an event. The source of insecurity is not so much the risk itself but the lack of anticipation of hazard and failure to reduce vulnerability. A risk can be natural, technological, health-related, food-related or geopolitical.

Insecurity therefore has a variety of forms and causes, all the more so as the forces that generate it are subject to the interpretation, perception and representation of the people who experience it. Danger, which is the basis of insecurity, is in fact formed at the crossroads of an objectifiable threat, a real fact or a measurable risk plus an internal state of fear or anxiety (Gros 2012). It is important to note that this threat can be pure fantasy, while at the same time provoking a very real feeling of insecurity, particularly when it is fuelled through false news of war (Bloch [1921] 1999). The study of insecurity thus requires an interest in those who experience it, in their own time, and in their living space – in this case in the Lake Chad Basin (Figure 0.1).

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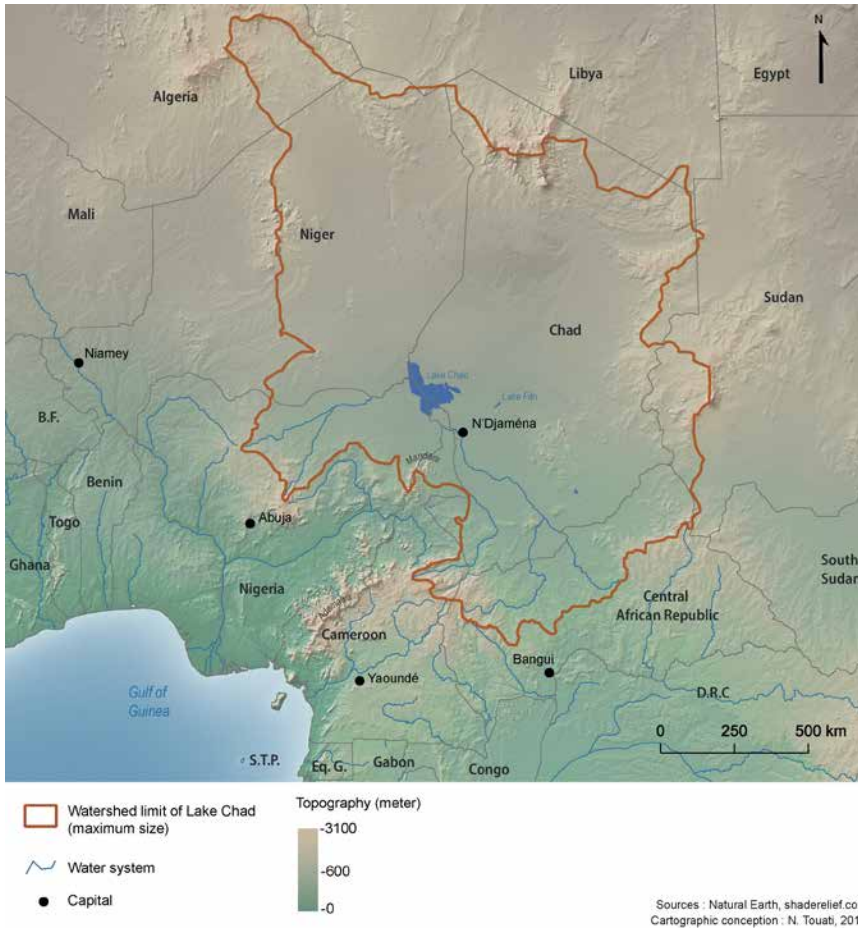
The Lake Chad Basin. The Lake Chad Basin is a vast area that extends over five countries located around Lake Chad (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Niger, Nigeria and Chad), reaching the borders of Sudan, Libya and Algeria (fig. 1). Thus considered, this Basin corresponds to the maximum historical extension of the hydrographic basin of Lake Chad, called Mega-Chad, between 7,000 and 4,500 years BP (SYLVESTRE, 2013). The Lake Chad Basin also forms a single region in the present day, formed by common practices, exchanges and factors of social homogeneity (RAIMOND et al., 2005).

Figure 0.1. The Lake Chad Basin. © Emmanuel Chauvin, Olivier Langlois, Christian Seignobos, Catherine Baroin.

Map 0.1. Location of the Lake Chad Basin. © Najla Touati.



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Forms and Levels of Insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin

Insecurity is diverse in nature, both in social arena and spatial scale, as well as in frequency. Micro-social insecurity is routinely found in the living space – that is, in the places frequented on a daily basis by an individual or a group (e.g. houses, villages, neighbourhoods) (Frémont 1979). Everyday risks and violence fall into this category. In the history of the Lake Chad Basin, food and health risks are chronic (e.g. deficiency, malnutrition, the pre-harvest gap,[2] undernourishment), and those that are exceptional in their intensity or spatial extension are recurrent (e.g. food shortage, famine, epidemic, pandemic) (Gado 1993). Moreover, everyday violence has a structural place within the relations based upon generation, gender and social class. Even if their main habitat is daily life, risks and ordinary violence are nonetheless part of more global systems: they are generated by environmental constraints, the effects of which are often aggravated by socio-political systems (Gourou 1982; Gallais 1994; Cambrézy and Janin 2003) and are closely linked with the strong inequalities experienced by youth, women and the poor (Janin and Marie 2003; Bouju and de Bruijn 2008).

Meso-social insecurity is more likely to be found at the societal level: interactions between groups and between networks, usually at a stable temporal rhythm. Resources, identity and power are the central issues in meso-social insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin. In rural areas, strong demographic growth, combined with the extensive nature of agriculture and the multiplicity of regulatory arenas, can lead to conflicts over activities of production. The Sahelian wetlands (Raison and Magrin 2009; Raimond et al. 2019) and the southern wet savannahs (Boutrais 1990; Blench 1994; Clanet 1996) where these activities accumulate are particularly vulnerable. In cities and their peri-urban fringes, conflicts over land or water resources are common (Piermay 1993; Pélissier 2000; Baron and Bonnassieux 2011). The broader socio-political structures, including regional, ethnic and religious structures, can also be sources of insecurity through the role they play in conflicts by instrumentalizing belonging and essentializing territory, which leaders cultivate or construct in order to secure their hold on power (Cambrézy and Magnon 2012). Although these types of meso-social insecurity are often formed in interactions between social groups, they affect the living spaces of individuals living in these groups and are often led or relayed by national political leaders.

Macro-social insecurity is more a problem of large-scale political systems and their (dys)functioning. Although rarer, it is nevertheless frequent on a continent particularly marked by armed conflicts.[3] These have been frequent in the contemporary Lake Chad Basin and most

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often are civil wars (e.g. Chad, Darfur, Central African Republic) without secession (apart from the off-centre case of South Sudan), while they sometimes lead to a *de facto* partitioning of states, as in Chad in the 1980s (Lanne 1984) or in the present Central African Republic (Chauvin 2015). On several occasions these civil wars have been regionalized within conflict systems (Chad–Darfur) (Marchal 2006) or through regional conflict escalation (Central African Republic) (Chauvin 2018a). The rather rare inter-state conflicts have been low-intensity and centred on disputed borders, such as around the Aozou and Bakassi strips, or Lake Chad. Large-scale violence can have various referents: religious, as in the case of Boko Haram (Pérouse de Montclos 2012; Seignobos 2015); criminal, such as the banditry of highwaymen (Saïbou 2010; Seignobos 2011; Chauvin and Seignobos 2013); or state-based, whether through the authoritarianism of the central government or the arbitrary practices of the 'uniformed forces' (military, police, etc.) (Debos and Glasman 2012). Macro-social insecurity has to be read at several scales: 'The violence that is carried out in political relations in the strict sense cannot be dissociated from the violence that permeates all social relations' (Janin and Marie 2003: 6). This book shows how multi-level types of insecurity intersect.

The Entanglement of Forms of Insecurity

This book's broad focus on insecurity is in line with work that in recent years has zoomed in on various forms of political violence or intermediate situations of 'neither war nor peace' in Africa and in the Lake Chad Basin in particular (Andersen, Möller and Stepputat 2007; Saïbou 2010; Debos 2013; Lombard 2016; Chauvin 2018a; MacEachern 2018; Magrin and Pérouse de Montclos 2018). But the choice to consider conflict, violence and risk as a whole also stems from a desire to highlight the temporal and spatial entanglement of forms and levels of insecurity.

In time, types of insecurity can follow one another or coexist. Thus, there may be a socio-cultural field of material and symbolic violence (e.g. socio-political tensions, land insecurity, inter-ethnic cleavages) that can encourage the emergence of violence or macro-social conflicts (Janin and Marie 2003). Conversely, political violence infuses existing social issues,[4] reshaping for instance the competition over fishing and agro-pastoral resources or land conflicts. A major theme in this book is the long-term experience by social groups of various forms of insecurity – for example, civil war, local conflicts, banditry among pastoralists in Batha (Chad), pre-colonial conflicts, anti-colonial revolts, the Second World War, banditry and then civil war among the pastoralists of Adamawa (Cameroon,

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Central African Republic), rural banditry and Boko Haram versus the brotherhood of Kotoko hunters (Cameroon), or the raids and colonial violence on the mountain people of the Mandara Mountains (Cameroon). The first chapter in this book shows how ancient violence (slave raids) and contemporary violence (Boko Haram) merge through the prism of memory.

From a spatial point of view, this book shows how in many cases various forms of insecurity coexist at the same time in the same space: land, food and physical insecurity in Lake Fitri (Chad); physical, environmental and health risks in gold mining sites (Niger); camel theft and revenge killings among the Tubu and Bedouins (Sahara); and so on. Also, insecurity coexists with security policies. State security policies may themselves create insecurity for the population, as several authors point out (e.g. forced evictions, practices of 'uniformed forces', migration politics).

This book therefore shows the complexity of the types of insecurity experienced by the populations of the Lake Chad Basin, which are not limited to media coverage of armed events, but permeate the social body and its spaces on several levels. This complexity and this experience of insecurity have been captured through the fieldwork conducted by the contributors.

Insecurity as Seen from the Field: The Field of Insecurity

The authors stem from various disciplines (agronomy, anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, hydrology, linguistics, political science) but share a common research method: fieldwork. These studies conducted in the Lake Chad Basin make it possible to overcome a common paradox in situations of insecurity: the saturation of secondary sources and the scarcity of primary sources. Obviously, insecurity makes it difficult to obtain empirical data and thus reshapes field methods.

Fieldwork to Understand Insecurity

Second-hand sources on insecurity are numerous and vary both in nature (e.g. news, grey literature, testimonies, public reports) and in type (e.g. diplomats, states, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations (respectively NGOs and IGOs), the military, journalists, travellers), but these often have one thing in common: their poor quality.[5] Field research can address the lacunae in this information, in particular by assessing the technical and socio-political conditions in which

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it is produced. Thus, it is possible to show how very different insecurity phenomena, such as hunger, conflict, child labour and rape, can be interpreted and modified by these secondary sources through the media or, for example, by rumours (Arditi 2005; Frère et al. 2005; Moufflet 2008; Bonhomme 2009; Janin 2010; Ceriana Mayneri 2014; Pommerolle 2015).

However, there is little first-hand empirical evidence on insecurity because on the one hand, observers – whatever their profession – will have to place themselves in situations of violence or in the vicinity of danger in order to collect data, while on the other hand, insecurity implies working on subjects that are traumatic or taboo or politically sensitive (e.g. rape, exile), which can block communication (Ayimpam and Bouju 2015). Yet, only field studies conducted with caution can make up for this scarcity, through the collection of direct sources.

Insecurity Reshapes Field Practice

Whether insecurity is the very object of the research or merely a working condition of the researcher, it disrupts field practices and methods. For a long time, most researchers have been able to deal with everyday risks (e.g. health, food), but armed violence shows itself to be of a different order. And confronting it has probably never before been so common for researchers in the Lake Chad Basin.[6]

Armed violence and security policies put up a series of obstacles, since they introduce a socio-spatial distance between the researcher and the societies under study. First, institutional or political obstacles. The research centres in the global North routinely follow the restrictive recommendations of their ministries of foreign affairs in granting travel mandates.[7] The Lake Chad Basin states avoid issuing research authorizations on subjects that are considered too politically sensitive. If the researcher relies on an NGO or IGO to gain access to a study area, he or she is subject to the often drastic security rules of that organization. Thus, socio-spatial distance results from the multiplication of intermediaries between the interviewer and the respondent (e.g. 'fixers', local interviewers) – intermediaries who, while they do facilitate access to the field, also limit direct contact with the respondent. Finally, more personal and inter-individual obstacles hinder the interactions between interviewer and respondent, depending on the appetite for risk and emotional habitus of the researchers and the people they meet.

This distancing is often accompanied by shorter research periods. Travel mandates, research authorization, 'security interview' at the embassy, signature of a liability waiver and insurance represent ever so many doors to be opened in order to get to the field, since one has to respect legal

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procedures. Furthermore, the volatility of the security often makes it difficult to anchor *in situ*, which partly explains why few researchers actually work in the present situation of violence, preferring to study *a posteriori* (Bouju 2015) or in a space adjacent to the violence.

Reflexivity on Field Practices and Insecurity

The contributions to this book are based on empirical data, most often from interviews, sometimes supplemented by observations (social situation, landscape) and the analysis of written documents (press, administrative acts, archives, etc.).[8] It is perhaps regrettable that some authors have reservations about using these research techniques in uncertain security conditions or, more positively, it should be emphasized that some contributors offer reflections on how to overcome the obstacles created by insecurity. In a chapter dealing with gold mining in northern Niger, Laurent Gagnol and Emmanuel Grégoire write about the impossibility of conducting field research *in situ* for security reasons. They circumvent the inaccessibility of these sites by two methodological choices: remote research, study of discourses and rumours about gold mining from the capital of Niger, Niamey; and the use of an intermediary (co-author of the chapter) who could carry out field surveys *in situ*. Another example, Mirjam de Bruijn's chapter, deals with remote investigation through the new information and communication technologies, which can be both a bypass of insecurity and an object for its study as a means of contesting central power.

Thus, field studies, even if they are made difficult and have to be reformulated in situations of insecurity, remain the main method to understand the modes of insecurity experienced and to grasp their local dynamics. However, insecure areas often experience a vicious circle: the more insecurity increases and the less accessible areas become, the more information about them decreases; and the more the interpretation of insecurity becomes globalized, the more inappropriate policies are implemented to combat insecurity.

The Themes of the Book: History, Resources and Power

The forms of insecurity experienced by societies, seen from the field, are addressed through three main themes: history, resources and power. A regional and theoretical framing allows us to situate the contributions to this book within the scientific literature on these subjects.

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The History of Insecurity: From Ancient Times to Memory

The Lake Chad Basin is often presented as an area marked by chronic violence and perpetual war. Yet, while violence may have been an important factor in the history of this geographical area, like other social phenomena it has been transformed. As in the West (Gros 2012), several periods can be identified on the basis of factual agents and of the discourse on what security and insecurity mean.

In the pre-colonial era, insecurity is mainly conceived through the violence of slavery. 'Slaves are always, in one way or another, physically, intellectually or morally alien to the society in which they are enslaved' (Lefebvre 2012: 119). It is in the split between the inside and the outside of societies, the citizen and the foreigner, that the relationship between aggressors and victims is established. Within the slave trade, the Lake Chad Basin was above all the scene of the Saharan–Sahelian one, carried out by the Muslim states of the Sahel–Sudan zone towards the Mediterranean, against segmentary 'pagan' societies, forming an archipelago of small, political and settled units generally located further south. The razzia, a raid carried out in enemy or foreign territory with the aim of stealing goods, was the main technique of domination by physical strength, which allowed subjugation (Bazin and Terray 1982).

The colonial administrations would establish a new vision of insecurity by progressively putting an end to the slave trade and imposing their own domination by force. The idea of pacification is central to this joint dynamic: repression and deterrence by force are legitimized by the colonial administration in order to put an end to the 'state of war presented as endemic or permanent' (Joly 2009: 113; El-Mechat 2014). Its basis is established by a dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized, with security being the consequence of the submission of the latter to the force of the former. The two main figures of (in)security then become the military and the administrator. The military conducts the restoration of order, the administrator consolidates it. This movement of pacification is achieved through the technique of squaring off, partial occupation (the so-called 'oil stain strategy'), then total occupation (the enveloping march) of the colonized territory (Mazenot 1966), the rifle, then the partitioning off of territories through linear limits (border, boundary, communication network, control of mobility, etc.).

Since independence, 'the threat … is [mainly] internal: it resides in any supposed or real attack on the exercise of power' (Bangoura 1996: 41), as shown by the essentially civil nature of wars. But power cannot be reduced to its central and state dimensions, since its arenas (village, state,

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international institution, etc.) as well as its sources of legitimacy (traditional, patrimonial, bureaucratic, clientelist, militant, etc.) are multiple. It is through a plurality of norms that insecurity and security are defined and deployed: conflicts between systems of norms result from it, which can be accompanied by violence and exclusion of entire social groups; conversely, the use of different registers leads to arrangements between conflicting groups (Chauveau, Le Pape and de Sardan 2001). In addition, the meaning of the notions of security/insecurity has broadened, through the policies of reduction of vital risks by international agencies (donors, IGOs, NGOs, etc.) and by the states of the Lake Chad Basin, particularly in relation to health and food.

The old mechanisms, the razzia and territorial division, are not disappearing, for that matter: the layers are superimposed without cancelling each other out. This implies potential resurgences of old modes of government and practices of insecurity in a different form, such as razzias (Seignobos 2011) or defensive systems (Cordell 2002; Chauvin 2014).

Various current modes of insecurity have a historical depth that allows us partly to understand the emergence of these phenomena. Thus, Christian Seignobos sheds light on the historical roots of the Salafist sedition by Boko Haram in Nigeria. Without being the only cause, the loss of hegemony of the Bornuans since the 1970s has encouraged a popular uprising of radical religiosity, which the Kanuri people have used to compensate for their loss of political power within regional inter-ethnic relations. Through a geo-historical approach, Christine Raimond, Audrey Mbabogo, Robert Madjigoto and Dangbet Zakinet analyse the growing sources of conflict around Lake Fitri. Demographic pressure, the arrival of new agents and the weakening of customary power create insecurity over land, food and social relations in this 'oasis' of the Chadian Sahel.

Several chapters attempt to offer a lived history of insecurity. Dangbet Zakinet offers a local reading of the conflictual history of contemporary Chad, through the eyes of the Batha Arabs. These herders have adapted in an evolutionary manner to several types of insecurity (civil war, banditry, local conflicts), through avoidance of or alliance with armed forces, taking up arms or changing production, with pastoral wealth as their permanent concern. Two chapters tell the story of insecurity through memory, reactivation of the past into the present through remembering and forgetting.[9] Walter van Beek and Melchisedek Chétima note that the populations of the Mandara Mountains (Cameroon) draw parallels between the Boko Haram insurgency that marks the beginning of this century and the Fulani slave raids of a century earlier. This memorial continuity is achieved by considering Abubakar Shekau, the head of

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Boko Haram, as a reincarnation of Hamman Yaji, former chief slave raider. Gigla Garakcheme shows how the toponymy of refuge sites and battlefields constructs a collective memory of insecurity in the same Mandara Mountains in Cameroon. Through place names, it is not so much the external aggression from the plains that the mountain people recount, but rather their own history of insecurity, centred on endogenous conflicts.

Moreover, though questions of the existence and reliability of sources do arise in any historical analysis of insecurity, by examining the state of insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin before the fourteenth century, Olivier Langlois shows their particular complexity when dealing with early periods. In addition to the rare and more or less easily interpretable classical archaeological traces of violence (e.g. bone trauma, evidence of the destruction of settlements, weapons), he points to a particular ceramic technology that, when recognized in unusual topographical contexts, makes it possible to identify an upsurge in insecurity from the tenth century onwards in certain parts of the southern Chadian Basin.

Resources and Insecurity: Reciprocal Influences

Competition over resources, their exploitation, use and representation is another central issue in the origin, course and resolution of conflicts in the Lake Chad Basin.

In the scientific literature on conflicts, the role of resource capture, scarcity or abundance and resource representation is analysed as a cause and mechanism of strife. Most articles show the importance of resources in the dynamics of struggles, while refuting an overly economic interpretation of conflicts. The competition over resources is a trigger as well as a motor for conflicts, but these are not exclusively concerned with resource capture (Marchal and Messiant 2002; Kalyvas 2003; Rosser 2006; Chauvin, Lallau and Magrin 2015).

Resources influence the formation and evolution of conflicts. When politicized, the unequal distribution of resources tends to foster cleavages between social groups (Réseau Impact 2007), either at the national level around statal revenues between regional or ethnic clienteles, or at the local level around primary shoreline agro-pastoral and extractive resources, or between professional, lineage and age groups and the like. In addition, the cost of conflict is obviously furnished by resources. In the context of internal armed conflicts, the cost of war is paid for by the central government, by the export of primary products (Bayart 1999), and on the rebel side by the resources of the territories they control. On both sides the extraction of these resources is done through mining, looting,

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racketeering and taxation. The distribution and nature of resources also influences the geographical form of armed groups (Le Billon 2005): their dispersion has facilitated armed factionalism on several occasions – for example, in Chad (Lemarchand 1986; Buijtenhuijs 1987) and in the Central African Republic (Chauvin 2015).

Conversely, conflicts transform resources (nature, distribution, control, marketing). Various authors have demonstrated, for example, how conflicts create income sources at the external or internal borders of states (Nassa 2010; Chauvin 2014); reshape the location of pastoral production basins (Betabelet, Maïna Ababa and Tidjani 2015); decentralize income resources from the state to armed bands (Chauvin 2015); or 'informalize' marketing channels (Prunier 1983). These mutations also reorganize territories, down to the level of regions, while conflicts reshape the inter-state resource flows that characterize these geographical areas, as is currently the case around the Bangui–Chad axis (Chauvin 2018a, 2018b) and Lake Chad (Magrin and Pérouse de Montclos 2018).

The role of resources in conflict resolution seems to get less attention in the scientific literature. It has been shown that international, humanitarian, development and disarmament aid policies can be vectors of peace, but can also prolong conflicts (Cambrézy 2001; Favre 2008; Lombard 2012), or even war (Pérouse de Montclos 2001). Except for these international resources, little attention is paid to the distribution of internal resources in the resolution of conflicts, since economy often takes a back seat to the military, and politics-*cum*-law to mediation between actors.

Two chapters examine how the creation of a resource or its potential loss lie at the origin of insecurity. Géraud Magrin and Jacques Lemoalle take the opposite view to the discourse that sees environmental issues as the source of conflicts in the Sahel. The arrival of Boko Haram to Lake Chad takes place in a hydrological situation that is favourable for productive activities. Environmental and political insecurity each follow their distinct, partially entangled temporal order. Laurent Gagnol, Emmanuel Grégoire and Boukari (Aboubacar) Ahmed analyse the gold rushes in the Sahara in Niger. While gold panning is an important resource, the rushes create physical insecurity for the population and government.

Two other chapters focus on the consequences of insecurity on exploitation of resources. Lise Archambaud, Ibrahim Tidjani and Benoît Lallau analyse the trajectories of pastoral systems in the context of the war in Central Africa (Ouham). Using notions of resilience as a conceptual basis, the authors show the diversity of these trajectories and the adaptations of pastoralist households that have remained in place while others have fled abroad to escape the violence. Hadiza Kiari Fougou describes the socio-economic changes in the Lake Chad area in Niger as a result of

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https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/ChauvinConflict
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Boko Haram and government counter-insurgency measures. After an exposition of the vernacular terms to designate Boko Haram, she studies the productive and commercial mutations of agro-pastoral and fishing resources through the economic strategies of forced migrants.

Finally, other chapters choose a more transversal point of view, by analysis of the evolution of a resource before, during and even after insecurity phenomena. Thus, Charline Rangé looks at the evolution of the land issue on the Cameroonian shores of Lake Chad before and during the Boko Haram crisis. Managed in a fluid manner until the beginning of the 2000s, in the form of multiple activities, the land issue more recently has been marked by strategies for control over land. The arrival of Boko Haram only multiplies the clientelist powers already at work. Jean Boutrais describes how the Mbororo pastoralists changed their cattle breeds due to insecurity in the Adamawa massif (Cameroon, Central African Republic). In times of war, these pastoralists are now revalorizing one breed of livestock with marked mobility and herdsmen attachment, versus a peacetime breed that is more sedentary and placid, well fleshed out and requires less transhumance.

Insecurity and Power: The State and Beyond

The relationship to the state is another fundamental dimension of insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin. According to opposing views, the state can be viewed as a source either of security or of insecurity, and then insecurity itself can be seen as a factor in state building or state breakdown. Other contributions seek to go beyond an exclusively state-centred viewpoint in order to analyse other circles of power in relation to insecurity.

Some authors are of the opinion that security is the state (as it is conceived and as it should function). The state is the subject of security: it is the reason why the state is created. It is also the object of security: the state is what generates security (Gros 2012). Until the 1950s, the absence of the state was pointed out as the main source of insecurity. The idea that African societies were anarchic, even ruled by barbarism and savagery, dates back to the Enlightenment (Montesquieu 1748). Thereafter, colonial administrations readily presented themselves as centralized political authorities capable of putting an end to anarchy and bringing peace by importing the state (Joly 2009). From the 1960s onwards, the unfinished state was invoked in the scientific literature as an explanatory factor for insecurity. This idea is based on a departure from the Weberian model of the legal domination of the state (Weber [1922] 1995), expressed through the notions of the 'soft state' (Myrdal 1969), the 'patrimonial political

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Insecurity in Central Africa
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model' (Adam 2002) or the 'neo-patrimonial state' (Médard 1983). More recently, links have been made between insecurity and state weakness, state collapse (Zartman 1995) or the creation of ghost states, with weak bureaucracies but strong informal networks that are gradually infiltrated by warlords (Reno 1998).

Other authors, while admitting the weakness of the state in terms of bureaucratization and services offered to the population, stress the strength of central powers in the production of violence. In a somewhat caricatural way, in this perspective insecurity is the state (as it actually functions). War and violence are one of the modalities of its genesis (Bayart 1989; Berman and Lonsdale 1992). This idea is studied through the violence of political elites, such as Jean-Bedel Bokassa and his personal power based on arbitrary and spectacular violence (Bigo 1988), or through its uniformed forces (military, customs officers, police, etc.), since the uncertainty of their loyalty and their arbitrariness can be used to bolster the state (Debos 2013).

Some consider that war builds the state. In Europe, war could be thought of as a means of productive accumulation towards political centralization, passing through a period of resource extortion, then a progressive legitimization of the state through the protection it provides (Hintze 1975; Aron [1962] 1984; Tilly 1985). While this view may serve to relativize the idea that insecurity is the consequence of the lack of a state, it does not tally with the realities of sub-Saharan Africa; it cannot be excluded, but it cannot be observed (Bayart 1999). In the panorama of (post-)conflict states, it is indeed difficult to find a state that has been generated (and legitimized) by war. Similarly, cases of bureaucratization, taxation and centralization that are sustainable and legitimate in the eyes of the population, while resulting directly from non-conventional armed bands, do remain exceptional (Somaliland). Indeed, it is not uncommon for a population to find it legitimate to be under the control of predatory and taxing armed gangs when they provide security: rebellions can copy state structures in their organization, particularly from a territorial point of view, by establishing a grid pattern – but this lasts for a short time only (Menkhaus 2008; Chauvin and Seignobos 2013). Some will see this as the effect of competition between armed gangs, of their communal nature and, above all, of the international recognition of already existing states (Reno 2007), but it can also be the result of two choices: on the one hand, that of the 'refusal of the state', since the implicit ideal of the armed factions is, over time, the perpetuation of the war, not the capture of the capital and even less the construction of a state (Triaud 1985); on the other hand, the choice for intangibility of the borders, decreed by the African states themselves.

Conflict and Violence in the Lake Chad Basin
Insecurity in Central Africa
Edited by Emmanuel Chauvin, Olivier Langlois, Christian Seignobos and Catherine Baroin
https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/ChauvinConflict
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Three chapters show how state security policies are sources of insecurity and how violence is a mode of state government. Julien Brachet looks back at the policies of containment of trans-Saharan irregular traffic, which are said to be 'secure' from an international point of view, but often are experienced as 'insecure' from a local viewpoint. These policies encourage many people engaged in transport to go underground, and stimulate a flourishing 'industry' for the management and control of mobility. Ronan Mugelé focuses his attention on the militarized Water and Forestry agency in Chad, mobilized by the state to control rural territories. Through an analysis of its historical trajectory and its local role, this agency emerges as a factor of insecurity for rural populations and for their practices of natural resource exploitation. Alessio Iocchi questions the forced evictions at the N'Guéli bridge in Chad, placing them in the political and financial context of urban planning in N'Djamena. Security measures, urban governance and the setbacks of the war on terror are analysed at a local level.

Two chapters, although different, can be grouped together because they offer original points of view on the link between the state and insecurity. The first one focuses on a mode of contestation of central power. Mirjam de Bruijn examines the influence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on political life in Chad. Young people are using ICTs to create new possibilities for communication and for steering information flows, challenging central power through digital tools. The second chapter deals with violence and its regulation in a supposedly stateless society. Catherine Baroin defends the idea that structural violence in the societies of desert herders is the consequence of their exploitation of their very sparsely populated environment, with the breeding of camels, which are not very gregarious animals. Violence is nevertheless regulated by social codes, notably the values of shame among the Tubu and of honour among the Arab Bedouins.

Finally, two other chapters deal with the link between insecurity and power arenas other than the state. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos questions the causes of Boko Haram's unequal distribution in Nigeria, starting from the case of the community of Kwaya Kusar, which is little affected by violent mortality. This case makes it possible to question, more broadly, the different variables that explain the success or failure of the Islamist insurgency. Mahamat Adam describes a society of traditional hunters among the Kotoko of Makari (Cameroon) and its evolution in the context of Boko Haram. This hunters' guild has been reclassified as a vigilance committee to fight against the actions of the Islamist movement, like many others in the region.

Conflict and Violence in the Lake Chad Basin
Insecurity in Central Africa
Edited by Emmanuel Chauvin, Olivier Langlois, Christian Seignobos and Catherine Baroin
https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/ChauvinConflict
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Conclusion

This book on the Lake Chad Basin, based on field research, attempts to grasp the ways in which the populations experience insecurity. In any scientific and editorial project, it is always possible to regret the absence of certain authors and themes that could have enriched the understanding of the intersection of forms of insecurity. Gender-based violence, domestic violence, witchcraft and banditry are probably not sufficiently dealt with, given their importance in the Lake Chad Basin. But this present substantial work, resulting from the 17th colloquium of the Mega-Chad network, will, we hope, allow researchers and those interested to better understand the dynamics of insecurity in this region of the world.

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Notes

1. The 17th Mega-Chad Colloquium, on the issue of variants of insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin, took place in June 2017 at the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis.
2. The period between the exhaustion of the harvest of one year and the consumption of the harvest of the following year. [Translator's note: The French use the term *soudure* (lit. 'welding') for this structural time of food shortage.]
3. For details on the intensity of armed conflict in the world and in Africa, the reader can refer to two databases: Uppsala Conflict Data Project of Uppsala University, by the research institute of that name; and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, from the Peace Research Institute at the University of Oslo.

Conflict and Violence in the Lake Chad Basin
Insecurity in Central Africa
Edited by Emmanuel Chauvin, Olivier Langlois, Christian Seignobos and Catherine Baroin
https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/ChauvinConflict
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4. As authors have shown in a country somewhat removed from the Lake Chad Basin: Ivory Coast (Chauveau and Richards 2008; Banégas 2017).
5. The poor quality of information on insecurity is almost standard because of ignorance of local societies, the rotation of work teams, the obsession with statistics without a rigorous survey protocol, working in a hurry, restrictive security measures, etc.
6. In 1974, the kidnapping of archaeologist Françoise Claustre by a rebel group in Chad – one of the longest of its sort – marked an important step in the closure of the Sahara–Sahel terrain. Elsewhere, other researchers were able to work in sensitive terrain and review the way they performed their research (Nordstrom and Robben 1995; Agier 1997; Bouillon, Fresia and Tallio 2005; Bouzama and Campana 2007; Sriram et al. 2009). However, armed violence is probably more widespread in the Lake Chad Basin today.
7. On the extensive measuring of insecurity in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs presentation, see for example Choplin and Pliez 2011. An analysis of risk mapping in Africa by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Quai d'Orsay), the Ministry of Economy (Bercy) and insurance companies was also proposed by Christian Bouquet (2012).
8. Chapter 4 deals more specifically with the use of archaeological data.
9. It has also been shown that memories of violence are important in the logic of division between social groups (Arditi 2003; Martinelli and Pénel 2015).

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