

Unpacking Democratic Transitions: The Case of Mali

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Executive Summary

Richard Schuett

The Republic of Mali is located in West Africa and has a long history of colonialism, dictatorship, and rebellion. Over the past twenty years, Mali experienced a military coup that was followed by the first general elections that continued to the first democratic transition in Mali's history in 2002. However, this model for African democracy has been recently rescinded as Malian military officers staged a second military coup in response to the government's inability to counter a nomadic Muslim uprising, led by the Tuareg's, in Northern Mali. This uprising and government takeover was met with international attention and caused the French to deploy troops to the region and broker a deal between the Tuareg's and the Malian government. Since 2013, peace has been restored and democracy has resumed although there are concerns of institutional shortcomings such as corruption, difficulty in the administrations ability to respond to ethnic difficulties in the North arising from Mali's porous borders, as well as the erosion of basic human rights as caused by the most recent coup d'état.

The economy of Mali has recently been estimated to have huge growth potential as Mali's economy grows at above world average rates. While this is a promising indication of Mali's future, Mali remains one of the world's 25 poorest countries with life expectancy to be around 55 years. The country is divided into three major economic sectors: the service sector, agricultural sector, and the industrial sector. The service sector comprises around 40% of Mali's economic activity and includes construction, tourism and public services and is most vulnerable to civil unrest and contracted by upwards of 40% during the most recent unrest in 2012. The agricultural sector comprises around 36% of the economy and includes the production of sorghum, rice, cotton, livestock, millet, corn, and other vegetables. Mali is heavily dependent on this sector as 70% of the population is directly employed and depends strongly on exports of cotton. Finally, the industry sector comprises in 23% of the nation's GDP and includes 10% based on chemicals, and includes food processing, construction, phosphate, diamond and gold mining. Gold is of particular importance as it accounts for 20% of the government's income and incorporates 80% of Mali's exports and makes the Malian economy vulnerable to international commodities markets.

Mali is a member of multiple international organizations including the United Nations and UN Economic Partnership Agreements, negotiates with the European Union, IMF and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and has recently been reinstated in the African Union following the democratic transition following the 2012 military coup. As a result of Mali's history with European colonialism, Mali and its institutions are heavily influenced by the French and EU member states and can be exemplified by the French deployment of 2000 troops, with the help of the Netherlands' 368 troops, and further support from Chinese peacekeeping forces

of 400 servicemen limited to non-combat roles to contain the northern Malian rebellion coordinated by the Tuareg's. Major corporations in various sectors include those of gold mining, agribusiness and water divergence projects that are sponsored by foreign nations such as the French and German in agricultural development.

Military-civil relations in Mali have recently come under much attention due to the coup d'état of 2012 that required foreign intervention by a French led coalition of forces. One of the major problems in Mali is the large land mass and inadequate military forces to administer security coupled with historically contentious ethnic groupings that are nomadic in nature. Most notably, the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion led to the overthrow of the Malian government by Captain Amadou Sanogo as the government was improperly handling the northern rebellion and not providing enough funding to quash the rebellion. Furthermore, it must be noted that many of Mali's military-civil problems lie in the political corruption that occurs in the capital of Bamako, most notably the allowance of cocaine trafficking that undermines the legitimacy of law and order, and consequently, of military respect.

The ethnic composition of Mali has been formed based on history and geography. The Niger separates the sparsely populated and arid deserts of the northern Azawad from the fertile soil of the south where a majority of the population resides. The main ethnic groups are the Mande, the Peul, the Voltaic, and the Tuareg, which each respectively comprise 50%, 17%, 12%, and 10% of the population. However, while these ethnic groups are apparent throughout the territory, the Tuareg largely reside in the north and have historically rebelled for independence since French colonialism claimed the north as part of the greater Malian region. To combat many of the ethnic problems in the north, the EU along with the African Union have begun a project that aims to provide security through economic and infrastructural development.

Political Overview

Emily Wilchesky and Ethan Gordon

Political Profile

Mali's recent political history has been one constituted of stable optimism and volatile unrest all within the last twenty years. In 1991, a military coup overthrew the one party rule of Moussa Traore, who had held the title of President for nearly 25 years. He was succeeded by the free general election of Alpha Oumar Konare, who was an academic and was not involved in the military coup.¹ Despite tension within the government, Konare was elected again in 1997, and stepped down in 2002, paving the way for the first fully democratic transition in Mali's history. The winner of this election was Amadou Toumani Toure, the lieutenant colonel who led the coup in 1992 and had now retreated to civilian life.² Toure governed for ten years, until 2012, when Malian military officers, angered over Toure's handling of the Tuareg rebellion in the North of the country, deposed him and installed the National Committee of the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDRE), with Amadou Sanogo as its chairperson.³ The CNRDRE governed the country for just under a month until it was forced by the Economic Community of West African States to cede power to interim President Dioncounda Traore until elections could be held.⁴ During the July-August elections, former Prime Minister Ibrahim Boubacar Keita was elected with more than 77% of the popular vote.⁵ While a June 2013 peace accord with the Tuareg rebels had been signed in part due to military intervention by France, it has since been broken and fighting has continued, although it appears that Mali's democratic control has been restored. Amadou Sanogo was arrested in November of 2013 and charged with kidnapping and remains detained awaiting trial.⁶

A Brief History of the Politics in Mali

¹ Zeric Kay Smith, "Mali's Decade of Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 12.3 (2001): 73.

² "Mali Country Profile," Library of Congress, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Mali.pdf>

³ Adam Nossiter, "Soldiers Overthrow Mali Government in Setback for Democracy in Africa," *New York Times*, March 22, 2012, accessed February 1, 2013.

⁴ "Mali Profile - Timeline," BBC News Africa, accessed February 1, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13881978>

⁵ "Ibrahim Boubacar Keita Wins Mali Presidential Runoff," *The Guardian*, August 15 2013.

⁶ "Mali: General Sanogo arrested and taken into custody in the 'Missing Red Berets' Case" International Federation for Human Rights, last modified December 3 2013. <http://www.fidh.org/en/africa/mali/14323-mali-general-sanogo-arrested-and-taken-into-custody-in-the-missing-red>

The republic of Mali is a recently independent state that used to be colonized by the French. It received independence in 1960 becoming a one party system.⁷ It was overthrown by a coup in 1991 and became a multi party system now referred to as the Third Republic of Mali.⁸ The nation developed its own constitution and rid itself of the anti democratic institutions attempting to gain power. The constitution included an electoral code and a charter to govern political parties. It would seem as though these changes would put Mali on the path to a stable and successful democracy; however, Mali is still attempting to gain its democratic strength and stability with some obstacles in the way.

The Political Structure

The current political structure of Mali has a few main branches. Each branch reinforces the *idea* that Mali is on the right path to a functional democracy. However, the underlying tensions within the nation corrupt each institution making it a failed democracy. The first institution is the office of President, which is also the commander of armed forces.⁹ The elections for the office of President are held every five years. Each President is limited to two terms. The President appoints the head of government who is referred to as the Prime Minister. The cabinet directs the political institutions of the nation; the head of this branch is the Prime Minister¹⁰. With the President appointing the Prime Minister, who is then head of the cabinet directing all political institution, there are limited checks and balances. The cabinet directs and coordinates government action and ensures laws are executed effectively. The National Assembly (currently being completely renewed and voting entirely new members) is the legislative arm of the government.¹¹ The members of the National Assembly have terms that last five years and they debate and vote on legislation. The Supreme Court has both judicial and administrative powers. It is part of the government and political system, which is different from the American system, which is separate and looked at as a separate branch all together. The President appoints the Supreme Court judges. There are separate courts to deal with civil issues and government issues. The constitutional courts determine the rights and freedoms of individuals and public liberties. They debate on the constitutionality of certain laws in terms of its violation of strictly civil rights.¹² In contrast, the high court of justice judicially reviews the President and ministers when accused of treason.¹³

⁷ BBC News Africa, 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13881370>

⁸ Europa World Plus

⁹ Embassy of the Republic of Mali, <http://www.maliembassy.us/index.php/about-mali>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Embassy of the Republic of Mali, <http://www.maliembassy.us/index.php/about-mali>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

The Key Institutional Problems (A Framework)

The problem with these institutions is that although the people *do* hold a Presidential election, there is a fearfully low voter turnout rate of around 34%.¹⁴ There have been numerous resignations and coup d'états throughout the short period of Mali's existence, such as the 2012 military coup that removed President Toure. After the coup on President Toure, a civilian government was put in place and the 2013 election held that President Boubacar would be the elected President (head of state).¹⁵ The current Prime Minister is Tatam. Both President Boubacar and Prime Minister Tatam are attempting to uphold a democratic system after the rebellion of 2012, however, there are troubles with this because of the rebellions in Mali's northern regions with groups (primarily the nomadic Islamic Tuareg's) that are discontent with these governmental changes.

The reason for the amount of insurgencies could be that Mali's borders are porous and that the government does not have the resources necessary to defend their territorial claims, these reasons, along with a military that is not well disciplined or equipped has resulted in numerous uprisings that often require foreign military aid when threatened or attacked. Thus, the problem that prevents a full democratic system is the inability of the government to appropriate resources to suppress insurgencies and settle territorial claims that are often caused by ethnic tensions in the northern regions.

The ethnic tensions can further be described by the tensions between the northern desert regions and the populous and more ethnically homogenous south.¹⁶ The north consists of nomadic Islamic groups that create democratic difficulties as the government is unable to respond quickly to insurgent attacks as well as leaves the state unable to provide stability with a military that is ill-equipped to handle domestic uprisings. The lack of checks and balances and the rising tension between the north and the south has created a lot of ethnic and racial divides and corruption within the system that is difficult to rectify. In turn the Republic is not unified in their appreciation for democratization and has caused rebellion to appear due to the rejection of the relatively new political system.¹⁷

Additionally, under every new regime in Mali, the respect and appreciation for new constitutional rights erodes. Arguably more important than the government respecting civilian rights, civilians need to also respect the rights of other civilians, which seems to be a difficult

¹⁴ Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *Voter turnout data for Mali*, February 10, 2014. <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=ML>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Freedom House. *Freedom in the World: Mali*, 2013.

¹⁷ Ibid.

scenario in Mali. The situation suggests that Malians are resorting back to rules of the old dictatorial regimes after being given civil rights and freedoms. It seems as though the people of Mali are not equipped to appreciate these freedoms, which makes it nearly impossible to sustain a proper democracy.

One of the main areas of concern in Mali is the dissemination of information throughout the country. While Mali does have 14 daily newspapers and upwards of 170 radio stations, information about political and national news is reliant on a centralized news service that is government funded.¹⁸ This creates a system with few societal checks on the new political structure and leaves Malians with little reliable and objective news on the governing institutions and offices of its elected officials. In addition, most citizens of Mali are apathetic or uninformed of the political situation and institutions in Mali with an alarming 64% reporting they are “not interested in national politics.”¹⁹ While this could be related to the general discontent with the political climate of the country, a more logical explanation for political passivity could be the high poverty levels that leave Malians discontent and skeptical with their current governing structure.²⁰ This lack of interest in the Malian political system caused by poverty is an issue that future foreign aid programs can help to combat apathy and bring about an appreciation for the political system.

However, one of the underlying problems associated with foreign aid is that the President chooses where foreign aid is allotted; the people have no influence on the matter. Thus, it is possible that the President is overlooking the social issues in the Republic and rather focusing aid on economic stability rather than political and social stability. In response to this, Human Rights Watch noted prior to the swearing in of President Boubacar: “The new President, who is to be sworn in on September 4, 2013, is inheriting numerous challenges, including a culture of impunity, graft by officials, indiscipline within the security forces, ethnic tensions, and crushing poverty.”²¹

Future Goals for the Republic

The main goals for the UN, with main support pledge by France’s President Hollande, are to stabilize the north, as it seems as though regional nomadic tribes are creating numerous serious obstacles for Mali to democratize. Second, the democratic transition should focus on education and alleviating poverty in rural Mali that will optimistically improve ethnic tension

¹⁸ Michael Bratton, Mass Coulibaly and Fabiana Machado, “Popular Views of the Legitimacy of the State of Mali,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 36, no. 2 (2002), 206.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Human Rights Watch

and political apathy. Third, Mali should create stronger institutions within the government, such as shifting to a focus on strengthening the respect for the rule of law and the guarantee of human rights and freedoms, while also separating the judiciary from direct government influence. Finally, the Republic should decentralize and empower local governments that will create regional accord, rather than a distantly effective centralized government.²²

²² Millennium Development Goals. http://www.betterbytheyear.org/mali/mali_challenges.htm

The Economic Forecast of Mali

Ron Najibzadeh

General Facts about Mali's Economy

Mali is one of the world's 25 poorest countries with a below average life expectancy of approximately 55 years. Mali's GDP in 2010 was \$18.01 billion and grew by 5.8%, in 2011 Mali's GDP was \$18.5 billion and grew by 2.7%, finally in 2012 at the peak of Mali's civil unrest it's economic GDP was \$18.28 billion contracting 1.2-1.5%.²³ These figures summarize Mali's huge growth potential as Mali's economy grows above world average rates with the exception of a year that was plagued by civil unrest.

In 2012 the government faced civil unrest as it clashed with northern nomadic Tuareg rebels that eventually seized control of the northern half of Mali. After being asked by the government of Mali, France and the United Nations entered Mali in January 2013 and brokered a deal between the two parties in June of 2013. However, since this agreement, there have still been incidents such as two French journalists who were killed by Tuareg rebels in November of 2013 in retaliation for the Malians government allowing French troops to enter Mali.²⁴ In an effort to mitigate the forecasted negative economic situation in 2012, the Malian government effectively decreased expenditures to only \$1.95 billion while bringing in tax revenue of \$1.82 billion. This means that Mali's government revenue (or tax base) is only 17.6% of the nation's GDP and therefore one the lowest percentages of a nation's GDP in the world. Further, this means that while although Mali faces a debt issue, it was not compounded drastically in 2012 during the civil unrest. Mali's economic forecast depends in part on the situation of its main export partners: China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and India.²⁵ Mali's economy can be analyzed more attentively by its services, agricultural and industrial compositions.

Services Composition of Malian Economy

The service sector of the Malian economy that includes careers in construction, tourism, and public services, accounts for 39.7% of the Malian economy.²⁶ This composition of the economy was the only composition effected by the ongoing civil unrest in 2012 and contracted

²³ "CIA World Factbook: Mali." Last modified November 7, 2013. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

²⁴ "BBC Mali Profile." Last modified November 17, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13881978>

²⁵ "CIA World Factbook: Mali."

²⁶ "CIA World Factbook: Mali."

35-40%.²⁷ However, the service sector of the economy is expected to expand as soon as the civil unrest ends.

Agriculture Composition of Malian Economy

Agriculture is Mali's second largest economic sector, forming 36.9% of the country's economy. Mali produces and exports sorghum, rice, cotton, livestock (which includes sheep, cattle and goats), millet, corn, vegetables and peanuts. Mali is heavily dependent on this sector of the economy with agriculture employing over 70% of the working population. In particular, Mali depends heavily on cotton; however, there are divestment opportunities within the agricultural sector that Mali has the resilience to satisfy as it has done in the past.²⁸ For example in the 1972 to 1974 drought, Mali resiliently replaced many cotton fields along the Niger River which required extensive rainfall with sorghum, a crop which requires less rainfall and is used to make cereal.²⁹ In 2012 during the peak of the Tuareg Rebellion, Mali's "agricultural production increased by 14%" which, along with Mali's divestment opportunity from cotton, serves as an indication that Mali's agricultural sector will continue to grow regardless of violent civil unrest.³⁰

Industrial Composition of Malian Economy

Mali's final economic sector is industry, which forms 23.4% of the nation's GDP, of which 10% comes from chemicals. Aside from chemicals, Mali's industrial composition creates employment in food processing, construction and the mining of phosphate, diamonds and most importantly gold.

The mining of gold, in particular, accounts for over 20% of the government's income.³¹ There are currently 7 gold mines being operated in Mali, the majority of which are in the Southwest of the nation, which is not as heavily effected by the civil unrest. Gold forms over 80% of Mali's exports, making Mali Africa's third largest gold extractor and presents the nation with a large short-term economic opportunity. As of December 10, 2013 gold trades at \$1,200 per ounce on international commodities markets leaving Malian exporters of gold with significant margins because it costs \$600 to \$700 per ounce to extract gold from current Malian

²⁷ "The Malian Economy Holds Steady in Face of Crisis." The World Bank (2013). Accessed December 10, 2013. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/03/14/the-malian-economy-holds-steady-in-the-face-of-crisis>

²⁸ "CIA World Factbook: Mali."

²⁹ "United States Department of State: Mali." Last modified April 30, 2013.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2828.htm>

³⁰ "The Malian Economy Holds Steady in Face of Crisis." The World Bank (2013).

³¹ "CIA World Factbook: Mali."

mines in operation.³² As aforementioned, gold is a short-term economic opportunity for Mali because resource extraction typically takes on five phases: construction, recruitment, transition, maturity and decline. During the construction phase of a gold mine in Mali there are typically 800 to 1,000 jobs created which last 2 to 4 years. Between the recruitment, transition and maturity phases of the Malian mines there will be 300-400 permanent jobs which will last years or decades depending on the availability of the resource and external factors such as commodities markets making the particular gold mines extractions feasible. Gold production was virtually unaffected by the civil unrest and increased by 9% in 2012 demonstrating that the industrial sector will continue to expand.³³

³² Aljazeera, "Mali's Golden Opportunity." Last modified August 10,2013.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/countingthecost/2013/08/2013882910628720.html>

³³ "The Malian Economy Holds Steady in Face of Crisis." The World Bank (2013).

International Influences

Jessica Stol

Mali's Participation in International Institutions

Mali participates in numerous international institutions. It is a member of the United Nations and many of its subgroups; the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP) where the countries are divided into five regions (Economic Partnership Agreements groups) and negotiate with the European Union (EU); the International Monetary Fund; the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; and the World Health Organization.³⁴ Mali is also active in regional groups such as the African Development Bank and the West African Economic and Monetary Union.³⁵ It was a member of the African Union until it was suspended because of the Malian coup d'état in 2012.³⁶

International Military Involvement in Mali (The Deployment of French Forces)

The French President, Francois Hollande, deployed French forces after the Malian military coup overthrew Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure in 2012. France originally sent 3,200 forces to the northern provinces of Mali where Islamist insurgents took the county's weakened government and Tuareg rebellion as an opportunity to filter into the country. After pushing back against the rebels, France stated they would be reducing their Malian forces to 1,000 troops by February 2014. Following the murders of two French journalists on November 2, France sent reinforcements to Mali's northern town of Kidal;³⁷ France insists that they will continue to disengage themselves from the area.³⁸

The journalists were abducted after they had interviewed a Tuareg rebel in Kidal; their bodies were found the same day. Kidal was one of the Islamist militant strongholds that contributed to the military-led coup that took place in 2012. After the coup, French forces entered the regions to fight the Islamist insurgents and secure the area.³⁹

³⁴ The World Factbook, "Mali," *Central Intelligence Agency*, December 9, 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Celeste Hicks, "Mali Suspended from African Union," *The Guardian*, March 23, 2013, under "World News," <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/23/mali-suspended-african-union-coup>

³⁷ "French journalists killed in Mali were shot," *CBC*, November 2, 2013, under "World," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/french-journalists-killed-in-mali-were-shot-1.2335749>

³⁸ John Irish, "Sorting out Mali isn't our job, France says," *Reuters*, December 5, 2013, under "World," <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/29/niger-telecoms-idUSL5N0JE33L20131129>

³⁹ "French journalists killed in Mali were shot," *CBC*.

Tuareg rebels were confirmed to have killed the RFI journalists, with al Qaeda in the Islamist Maghreb (AQIM) claiming responsibility. AQIM said the killings were a “response to crimes committed by France against Malians and the work of African and international forces against the Muslims of Azawad.”⁴⁰ AQIM added, “This is just the beginning...Hollande will pay more in response to this ‘new crusade’ against Muslims.”⁴¹

After Islamist groups have been steadily increasing their operations in northern Mali, French forces are continuing their mission in the north. In early December, French forces killed 19 Muslims during security operations around Timbuktu.⁴²

United Nations’ Involvement in Mali

Following the news of the killings of two French journalists, the UN Security Council issued a statement condemning the murders. The Council demanded that all parties in the armed conflict adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law; therefore, all media and the associated personnel should be protected as if they were citizens. They also called for the Malian government to immediately investigate the killings and hold the perpetrators responsible.⁴³

UN peacekeepers were deployed to the area in April, originally made up of soldiers from other neighbouring African nations.⁴⁴ However, the Netherlands proposed to send 368 troops to aid in the UN’s peacekeeping mission – including 220 troops for intelligence gathering, as well as four Apache helicopters.⁴⁵ In addition, China agreed to send peacekeeping troops, which is the first time the country has ever dispatched security forces for a peacekeeping mission; China’s contribution will be in the form of 400 servicemen, including engineering, medical, and guard teams – no combat forces.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Katarina Hojje, “AQIM claims responsibility for Mali killings,” *CNN*, November 6, 2013, under “World,” <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/06/world/africa/mali-journalists-deaths-arrests/index.html?iref=allsearch>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Joe Bavier, “UPDATE 1-French forces kill 19 Islamist fighters in north Mali,” *Reuters*, December 10, 2013, under “World,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/10/mali-france-idUSL6N0JP45Z20131210>

⁴³ UN News Center, “Security Council, UNESCO strongly condemn killing of French journalists in Mali,” *UN News Service*, November 3, 2013, under “News,” http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46408#.UqvUg_RDuHA

⁴⁴ Alissa J. Rubin, “France Begins New Anti-Islamist Sweep in Mali,” *The New York Times*, October 24, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/25/world/africa/france-begins-new-anti-islamist-sweep-in-mali.html?_r=1&

⁴⁵ Anthony Deutsch, “Netherlands to send peacekeepers, helicopters to Mali,” *Reuters*, November 1, 2013, under “World,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/01/us-netherlands-mali-idUSBRE9A00LV20131101>

⁴⁶ Xinhua, “China to send security force for peacekeeping mission in Mali,” *Ministry of National Defense: The People’s Republic of China*, June 28, 2013, under “Defense News,” http://eng.mod.gov.cn/DefenseNews/2013-06/28/content_4456755.htm

The UN is changing its efforts to tackle the starvation and poverty in the Sahel belt – a region that includes northern Mali. Even with this year’s good harvests, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that 16 million people are at risk for hunger next year. Due to the regional conflict and higher birth rates, food prices have risen. The conflict includes “instability in northern Mali, and violence in the Central African Republic and northern Nigeria.” Though the weather is often blamed for starvation, the instability of surrounding regions is having a significant impact and will require international aid.⁴⁷

International Businesses in Mali

There are numerous multinational gold companies that operate within Mali. A growing international business for the country is agribusiness. The Malian government has expressed an interest in being able to irrigate land and has brought and continues to bring in foreign companies and consultants to implement these irrigation initiatives. While this may seem to bring about a solution to hunger problems in Mali, in many situations, companies are given unlimited water to produce crops that are taken back to their own countries – most of which are facing their own water shortages. While this does little to solve Mali’s hunger problems, this aids Mali’s economic growth and employment opportunities as well as creates and benefits its international ties and partnerships.⁴⁸

Current international projects include the US government’s Millennium Challenge Corporation, China’s Light Industrial Corporation for Foreign Economic and Technical Cooperation (sugar farming), and the Malibyan Project (rice farming).⁴⁹ However, these three plans were stopped indefinitely when political instability began and ethnic tensions in Mali escalated before the 2012 coup.⁵⁰ Other plans included French and German agricultural development.

However, the Malian government and international corporations have created barrages to slow the Niger River’s flow and canals to divert the water to corporation’s land instead of flowing to villages and wetlands downstream. In response to the Malian governments want to

⁴⁷ Mish Hussain, “West Africa: 16 Million Risk Hunger in Sahel Despite Good Harvest,” *All Africa*, December 10, 2013, under “Mali,” <http://allafrica.com/stories/201312120141.html>

⁴⁸ Fred Pearce, “Mali’s Lush Wetlands Drained by Foreign Agribusiness,” *National Geographic*, November 30, 2012, under “News,” <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/12/121214/mali-wetlands-drained-foreign-agribusiness-water-grab/>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Soumaila T. Diarra, “Malian Farmers Want Their Land Back,” *Inter Press Service: News Agency*, September 12, 2013, under “Development & Aid,” <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/09/malian-farmers-want-their-land-back/>

diverge water flow, the head of Wetlands International – a science-based NGO – warns that the diversion will damage the country’s food security and Malian citizens’ livelihoods.⁵¹

⁵¹ Fred Pearce, “Mali’s Wetlands.”

Military-Civil Relations in Mali

Craig Moorhead

Introduction

In understanding the context of the rebellion and subsequent coup d'état it is worthwhile to take a look at the raw numbers. Mali has only 7,750 standing military forces with \$174 million USD in military expenditures, which is 1.9% of their GDP.⁵² This ranks Mali around 107th in the world for military spending with the 24th largest country by landmass. To put this situation in perspective, the Canadian city of Toronto has more police officers than Mali has soldiers for the entire country (5400 TPS, 2000 Peel, 1500 York).⁵³ The military resources Mali has at its disposal are clearly painfully inadequate to administer security.

Tuareg Rebellion

The Tuareg are a seminomadic, pastoralist people of Northern African Berber origin; they are nominally Muslim and presently number approximately 1.5 million.⁵⁴ In the early 1990s, a wave of Tuareg Nomads returned to Mali who had migrated to Algeria and Libya in times of drought. Efforts by the Traore government of 1991 to sign a peace agreement failed to find a lasting peace.⁵⁵ There have been repeated efforts to integrate the Tuaregs into the existing Malian institutions (military and civil sectors) via treaties in 1994, 1995, and 1997, which have not met much success.⁵⁶ Each successive agreement has been undermined by continued violence and banditry in the north. In May of 2006, Tuareg rebels seized the town of Kidal and several military bases, forcing negotiations over the conditions in which Tuaregs had been forced to live during their integration into the army.⁵⁷ In February 2007, the integration efforts were ongoing but splinter groups of Tuaregs had formed an alliance with a Tuareg militia from Niger and were attacking Mali military units.

A series of failed peace measures from 2008 to 2011 ultimately resulted in further fighting in the North despite attempts to reduce violence by reducing the number of troops from both sides. In late 2011, the situation was exacerbated by Tuaregs who had fought in support of

⁵² "Military", *Africa Research Bulletin Political Social and Cultural Series* 49.3 (March 2012): 19212

⁵³ "Police officers and crime rates," Statistics Canada 2013 (June 19, 2013), <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-225-x/2011000/t004-eng.htm>

⁵⁴ Smithsonian Institute, "Who are the Tuareg," *Art of Being a Tuareg Nomad: Sahara Nomads in a Modern World*, October, 2007.

⁵⁵ "Mali: Tuareg Insurgencies: Europa World Online" *Europa World Plus*.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Qaddafi in Libya returning to Mali and forming a group demanding the independence of Northern Mali, culminating with the insurgency declaring Azawad as an independent state.⁵⁸ Violence continued as the rebels launched very effective military incursions into the south that the government was unable to stop. In May 2012, the Islamic Movement in the north, Ansar Dine, joined with the rebels to form the Islamic Republic of Azawad. The alliance quickly collapsed on itself and the Islamic group and the Tuareg rebels started fighting with each other. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) tried to negotiate with the groups and demanded the removal of the Islamic movement's affiliation with Al-Qaeda.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, Ansar Dine continued to gain territory in the south. Despite agreements at a summit in Burkina Faso to suspend fighting, the advance into Mali's south continued and an African led mission was approved by the Security Council to help end the insurgency. As the rebels got closer to the capital, President Traore pleaded for intervention aid from the French military, in conjunction with the UN approved African Mission. In January 2013, the rebel movement fully broke away from Ansar Dine to form a group which rejected the Al-Qaeda affiliation.⁶⁰ By the end of February, most of the main northern cities had been retaken and there were retaliatory suicide bombings in response to this. In April, the French forces pulled out amid concerns from the Mali Government and a UN Peacekeeping mission was established.

2012 Military Coup

In March of 2012, a military coup occurred, led by disaffected members of the military protesting the government's failure to contain the Tuareg rebellion in the north. The military officer leading the mutiny was Captain Amadou Sanogo. The reason for the coup was said to be anger over mishandling of the Tuareg rebellion in the North and gave the statement that "those sent to fight are not given sufficient supplies, including arms or food. Their widows have not received compensation."⁶¹ Captain Sanogo insisted that he acted to avert a national security crisis because the government was not providing the arms and ammunition needed to fight the rebels, who have killed scores of soldiers⁶² – but based on reports from the aftermath of this conflict, this was not the case; the rebellion had an opposing effect and was not very successful in its alleged mandate and rather led to the loss of large regions in the north and escalated domestic conflict resulting in a threat to national security.

The mutiny precipitated the fall of northern Mali to Islamist fighters linked to al-Qaeda, the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "Mali: Military Coup", *Africa Research Bulletin Political Social and Cultural Series* 49.3 (March 2012): 19183a

⁶² Ibid.

instability caused by the coup actually had a counter effect to the stated goal of ending the Tuareg rebellion⁶³ – the power vacuum actually allowed the rebellion to gain momentum and compounded the problem. The Malian military lost control of the regional capitals of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu within ten days of Sanogo's assuming office.

It is worth noting that the conditions in which Malian soldiers are sent into battle point to a deeper political corruption. It was no secret in the Malian capital, Bamako that officials close to ousted President Touré made fortunes out of cocaine trafficking through the Sahara.⁶⁴ Despite the unrest brought on by the coup, very few expressed regret with the ouster of President Toure as monuments of his image have been defaced and destroyed in the Capitol.⁶⁵ There has been relatively little backlash to Sanogo in the country's institutions - banks, schools and businesses all reopened quickly. The population of Mali may not agree with the act of overthrowing the government but most agree with the motivations of Sanogo and his troops. A Malian businessman was quoted as saying, "People want the military to cede power but it's impossible in less than three to six months...they need to clean out [the political rot], put down the rebellion by Tuareg terrorists and then restore democracy as fast as possible."⁶⁶

As a consequence of his forces' actions during the overthrow of the Toure Government, Sanogo is now being called to answer questions at the Ministry of Justice. Military support for the coup has not been universal. The coup deepened a rift within the army between the Red Berets, loyal to Toure, and the Green Berets, who were broadly pro-junta. Sanogo has been implicated in the disappearances of Red Berets after a failed counter-coup on April 30. There are allegations that Sanogo's men, the Green Berets, killed 20 soldiers loyal to then President Toure in the town of Kati.⁶⁷

Amadou Sanogo

Captain Amadou Sanogo, the military officer responsible for the coup underwent military training in the United States. Sources say this is not unusual and that "it would be difficult to find officers whom haven't received training."⁶⁸ Mali has been deemed a reliable partner in regards to coordinating counterterrorism-training efforts with the US International Military Education and Training program. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that to participate in the US backed program, foreign officers must be handpicked by US embassy officials in that country, meaning that Sanogo must have been known to US officials prior to his involvement in the

⁶³ Julius Cavendish, "Mali's Coup Leader: Interview with an Improbable Strongman," *TIME*, March 28, 2012

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ African Free Press, "Mali coup leader summoned before judge," *Al Jazeera*, October 31, 2013.

⁶⁸ Craig Whitlock, "Leader of Mali military coup trained in U.S." *Washington Post*, March 23, 2012.

events of 2012.⁶⁹ Additionally, US military trainers at the International School Sanogo attended never marked him as leadership material⁷⁰. This revelation brings his leadership capabilities into question. It is perhaps an indication why Sanogo's coup has been relatively unsuccessful and perhaps a reason why many of the army have tried a counter-coup to wrest control from him.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Julius Cavendish, "Mali's Coup Leader: Interview with an Improbable Strongman," *TIME*, March 28, 2012.

Ethnicity

Michael Beatty

Geography and Origins of the Tuareg, Mande, and other Groups

Ethnic groups in Mali are rooted in its history and geography. The Niger River divides the country into the north and south. The north, also known as Azawad, is quite arid and sparsely populated. The south is known for its fertile soil and ability to sustain life. Throughout history, many cities have been built close to the Niger River – cities like Timbuktu and Gao. The south is home to the Mande people, and the north is home the Tuareg people. There are three other main ethnic groups, including the Voltaic, the Songhai, and the Peul. There are about 12.7 million people who live in Mali, where the Mande comprise about 50% of the population, and the Tuareg only 10%.⁷¹ The Peul, which is 17% of the population, live throughout the Republic; Voltaic, only 12% of the population, live closer to the region of Mopti, and the Songhai, which is 6% of the population, live along the river banks.⁷² These different tribes are known for having different occupation. For example, the Songhai are fishermen, the Valtaic are herdsman, and the Peul are farmers.⁷³ Today, 75% of the population lives off the land, and when market trips are made, the common language used is Bambara, yet French is deemed to be the official language.⁷⁴

History of the Tuareg and Mande

In 1200 CE, the Malian Empire was united by the trading city of Timbuktu. The Malian Empire was a wealthy country, and the expanding economy with many trade routes throughout northern Africa. Its borders reached to the Atlantic Ocean through what is now Senagal and Mauritania.⁷⁵ The goods that it traded were salt, ivory, literature, slaves, and, most importantly, gold.⁷⁶ The resources came from the southern parts of the country and they were transported by land, up the Niger River to Timbuktu and Gao, and through the trade routes to northern Africa. The trade routes were known as the trans-Saharan trade network that reached as far as Tripoli and Cairo. The Malian Empire continued to rise through the next 300 years, but in the 16th century, Western Europe began to expand its sea trading routes.⁷⁷ The Malian Empire

⁷¹ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Mali Country Overview.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Andrew Lebovich, “Northern Mali: Politics of Ethnicity and Locality.”

⁷⁴ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Mali Country Overview.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

found economic benefit in the sea transportation instead of transporting goods through land. Cities like Timbuktu and Gao no longer had goods being transported through them, and as a result, their economic wealth and populations decreased. The people of north Mali became more independent, and the divide between the Mande and the Tuareg grew.

In the 1880, the French government colonized South Mali because of the gold mines and other resources found in the south.⁷⁸ The colonization was called Le Soudan France. For the French, north Mali was not an area that had any economic value, so the French did not want to waste resources by stationing their troops there. The local clans were independent, and under French rule, Azawad's borders changed a number of times. Each time the French changed the border parameters, the divide between the Mali north and south grew, and so did the ethnic composition of the country.

In the 1920s, the French decided that Azawad should remain a part of Mali as it had historically. In the 1960, Mali became independent. The Tuareg of the north rebelled for an independent Azawad. There have been many Tuareg rebellions, most notably were the 1962-1964, 1990-1994, 2007, and 2012.⁷⁹ All rebellions were based on the difference of ethnicities, economic foundations, and political beliefs.

Ethnicity and Religion

Islam has been a major religion in the country since the Malian Empire. The Tuareg are a secularist group, yet many members are Islamic.⁸⁰ However, there are many other factions like Islamist fighters known to be al Qaeda. During the rebellions, the Tuareg and the Islamist fighters fought on the same side, yet their political and religious beliefs differed, and during some of the rebellions, they fought each other.⁸¹ There are many other religions in Mali like Christianity, but Islam and Muslim are the most prominent.⁸² The Mande people have been predominately Muslim, which is yet another divide between the Tuareg and the Mande.

Ethnicity and International Intervention

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch warn that ethnic violence and tension threatens future peace for the country. The French and African forces continue to fight in an

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Andrew Lebovich, "Northern Mali: Politics of Ethnicity and Locality."

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Mali Country Overview.

attempt to rid the north of its Islamist and Tuareg insurgency.⁸³ Since 2013, up to 20,000 people fled to neighbouring countries like Mauritania.⁸⁴ From the 2007 rebellion, the insurgents have organized themselves into a group called the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA).⁸⁵ Under this name, many Tuaregs returned from fighting under the Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.⁸⁶ Many cities, villages and outposts have been taken by the MNLA, which caused France and the United Nations to call a ceasefire.⁸⁷ Another group called the Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) also accompanies the MNLA. The AQIM is an Islamic militia that also fights for an independent Azawad, but the two groups differ because the MNLA is a secular group fighting for democratic ideals while the AQIM want to overthrow the state and institute an Islamic state.⁸⁸ Both of these groups have fought each other in the past, and both are known for drug and weapons trafficking.

The Mali government has been accused of not putting enough effort into the decrease of rebel groups in the north. For this reason, the United Nations, and the European Union, and the African Union have implemented a plan of action to increase the level of security in north Mali and throughout the Sahel belt. The former Malian president, Amadou Toumani Touré, argues that the resources needed to act upon the rebels were limited, and there was a fear of further destabilization of the Azawad.⁸⁹ The UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and the United Nations Office of Drug and Crime work closely with related organizations and the Mali government to decrease the ethnic violence and drug and weapons trafficking.⁹⁰ The EU has a four-step strategy to reduce the rebel factions and decrease drug and weapons trafficking. This four-step plan entails security through development. It includes economic and infrastructure development, cooperation of neighbouring regions and countries, pinpoint specific areas of economic and resources needs to ensure equality of life, and provide extra security personnel in conflict areas.⁹¹ The AU has a similar plan and works closely with the EU and the UN in order to achieve its goals.

⁸³ Lohmann. "Who Owns the Sahara?: Old Conflicts, New Menaces: Mali and the Central Sahara between the Tuareg, Al Qaida and Organized Crime."

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Kalif Keita, "Conflict and Conflict resolution in the Sahel: The Tuareg Insurgency in Mali."

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Lohmann. "Who Owns the Sahara?: Old Conflicts, New Menaces: Mali and the Central Sahara between the Tuareg, Al Qaida and Organized Crime."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

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