STATE LEGITIMACY, STABILITY AND SOCIAL COHESION IN LOW POPULATION DENSITY AREAS

THE CASE OF NORTHERN MALI[1]

July 2014

SUMMARY

Mali has experienced conflict on a regular basis since independence in 1960. The first rebellion took place in 1964. Since then, rebellions have been cyclical and recurrent. The last rebellion of 2012 and the subsequent March coup have, however, resulted in unprecedented levels of insecurity and fragility. The roots of the crisis can be found in long-standing challenges related to Mali's governance structures and the lack of implementation of previous peace agreements promising greater autonomy to groups in the north. Low population density areas in Mali's northern regions adds to the complexity of governance, and the reemergence of the conflict in May 2014 provides stark evidence to show the significant costs of not addressing these challenges and the grievances that underpinned the rebellion. This study reviews both international experience with service delivery in low-density areas and Mali's experience with contested state legitimacy, stability and cohesion. It presents examples and recommendations on how to mitigate particular governance challenges in these situations to encourage a positive state presence and improved access to services. While the study focuses on the case of Mali, it draws conclusions that are relevant for other countries in the Sahel, as well as for low population density areas in other parts of the world.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AQIM   Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb

ANICT   Agence Nationale d'Investissement des Collectivités Territoriales

CFA   Communauté Financière Africaine

FY   Fiscal Year

IBK   Ibrahim Boubacar Keita

ICT   Information and Communications Technologies

IDP   Internally Displaced Person

MAA   Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad

MFUA   Mouvements et Fronts Unis de l'Azwad/United Movements and Fronts of Azawad

MNLA   Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad/National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad

MINUSMA   Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali

MUJAO   Movement of National Unity and Jihad in West Africa

NGO   Non-Governmental Organization

NSP   National Solidarity Program

PSPSDN   Programme Spécial pour la Paix, la Sécurité, et le Développement du Nord/Special Program for Peace, Security and Development in the North

TDRL   Taxe de Développement Régional et Local/ Local and Regional Development Tax

URD   Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement

USD   United States Dollars

INTRODUCTION

Background and Research Question

After two decades of multiparty democracy following its transition to civilian rule in 1991-1992, Mali was viewed as West Africa's "success story" and termed by many as "beacon of democracy and political stability."[2] Approaching its fifth presidential election, however, Mali was wracked by internal instability and rebellion. Fighters from the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (*Mouvement national pour la Liberation de l'Azawad*, MNLA) attacked the towns of Aguelhok, Menaka and Tessalit in the north of the country in January 2012. The Malian army fared poorly against the MNLA, which triggered protests in the capital. After the alleged killing of Malian soldiers in Aguelhok and continued military setbacks, waves of unrest culminated in a coup d'état by junior officers in the Malian army on March 22, 2012.

What followed was a year-long occupation of the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu by different armed groups including the MNLA, Ansar al Din, Al Qaida of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement of National Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). In January 2013, the Malian army, in cooperation with French troops, was able to restore Mali's territorial integrity by driving Islamists from northern cities. Constitutional democracy was reinstated following presidential elections in July and August 2013, which were won by Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) after unprecedented voter turnout.

While Mali has experienced conflict on a regular basis since independence in 1960, the 2012 rebellion and subsequent March coup resulted in unprecedented levels of insecurity and fragility that continue to undermine state-society relations. Several factors can explain Mali's instability and near collapse in 2012, including regional events linked to Libya's revolution, the growing influence of criminal networks and terrorist groups in the Sahel. Yet at the core of the crisis were long-standing challenges related to Mali's governance structures and the lack of implementation of previous peace agreements. In short, Mali's progress in building a democratic political system, reflected by peaceful democratic transfers of power during the past 20 years, did not translate into an effective and accountable governance system.[3] The policy of decentralization that went hand in hand with democracy was not implemented in full, creating a system of overlapping central, decentralized, and deconcentrated actors that left local governments largely incapacitated to deliver on their allocated responsibilities. Compounded by challenges facing the Malian Government in delivering services to areas of low population density, relationships between state and society were undermined, creating opportunity for non-state actors at the local level to establish multiple governance structures that weaken state legitimacy, stability and social cohesion.

The crisis in Mali highlights challenges that governments face when maintaining a presence and delivering services in areas of low population density. In northern Mali, which had a population of 1.2 million before the crisis spread across a territory the size of France, villages are far from each other, rural populations are far from urban settlements, and the northern regions are far from the capital. This makes all forms of connectivity more challenging and expensive. Low levels of population make it difficult to achieve a critical mass that would allow for economies of scale for goods and services. This does not allow services to be provided in the same way as in more densely populated areas and the costs of connecting people are proportionately high.

This study explores the main governance-related drivers of the conflict and instability in Mali that continue to challenge state legitimacy. The study asks two important questions:

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[2] "Mali Interim Strategy Note FY14-15". 2013. World Bank: Washington DC.
[3] Ibid

(i)   What would a positive stabilizing presence of the state in Northern Mali look like, taking into consideration the low-density nature of the region; and

(ii)   What options should be considered to deliver the types of services that would strengthen social cohesion and state legitimacy going forward?

Methodology and Definitions

This report's analysis and findings are based on: (i) a review of existing academic and policy relevant literature on service delivery and governance in Mali, (ii) a study on international experience with service delivery in low population density and insecure areas and (iii) empirical research on perceptions of state legitimacy, stability and cohesion in Northern Mali and the refugee camps of Mauritania and Burkina Faso, with a total number of 524 people interviewed.[4] The findings and conclusions also benefitted from discussions with local government representatives and national and international experts during a conference on territorial governance and state presence in the Sahel, and from consultation meetings with government, civil society and donor representatives in Bamako.

This report makes an important empirical contribution. To date, the majority of surveys of populations affected by the crisis do not include direct consultations with one group of people most affected by the crisis – refugees. This report draws on interviews of 260 refugees, almost half of total respondents. Of these 260, 17% identified as Arab and 71% identified as Tuareg. It is important to note the absence of refugee voices in the literature, as these populations have distinct ideas about the way forward relative to other groups in Mali. Limitations to the report's methodology must also be noted. Given the context of continued insecurity, interviews were predominantly conducted with male respondents in urban areas, thereby resulting in this report's urban, male bias. The relatively small sample of female respondents totals 26%, while respondents under the age of thirty interviewed for this report total 19%. Insecurity also affected the research team's geographic reach. Due to security limitations, the research team was unable to interview citizens in Kidal although they did interview 13 citizens from Kidal who were displaced in refugee camps.[5]

The study places a primary emphasis on understanding the most pressing grievances of different actors as well as types of services that might best address these concerns given the geographic challenge of low-density areas in Mali.[6] Services are conceptualized as the provision of public goods responding to a population's human development needs. The original conceptualization that was used to inform the design of the field work focused on three broad categories of services: Basic social services, administrative presence and security, and markets and employment. During the research process, these themes were further refined to reflect those most commonly cited by stakeholders themselves**: Security, Justice and Livelihoods**. This categorization is consistent with findings from the recent December 2013 Afrobarometer poll in which security (defined as a strong state), justice, and jobs (defined as development) are three of four most commonly cited solutions to the current crisis in the north.[7] Terminology and definitions related to security, justice and livelihoods are also guided by the framework proposed in the World Bank's 2011 World Development Report.[8] Nonetheless, they should be understood in broader and more fluid terms in the context of this study. For instance, security could involve both immediate efforts to address physical security concerns and longer term efforts to strengthen economic

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[4] Each respondent or focus group is identified in the report by a unique identification number (N#). For more details on the methodology and approach please see the annex.

[5] Please see annex for a breakdown of respondents by ethnic group.

[6] Three population categories are identified in Chapter 2 internally displaced people, refugees living in camps outside Mali's borders, and populations that stayed or have returned to conflict-affected zones.

[7] In terms of recommended solutions to the current crisis, Afrobarometer respondents prescribed a strong state (95% nationally), justice to all involved (89%), civic education (86%), and development of the North (76%). Coulibaly. (2014) "Popular Perceptions of the Causes and Consequences of the Conflict in Mali." Afrobarometer Policy Paper 10

[8] World Development Report on Conflict, Security and Development". (2011) World Bank: Washington DC

security (i.e. disincentivize idle youth from joining rebel groups, addressing climate change). Justice could include both the formal justice sector and broader conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts. Livelihoods could address both specific income generating activities and the broader enabling environment for poverty reduction, including access to certain basic services.

Low density population zones also require some explanation. Their significance relates to challenges associated with the presence of a multiplicity of non-state governing authorities, which is common in areas of low population density.[9] Low density population zones also carry a higher-than average cost of social service provision. It therefore becomes critical to understand how state and non-state provision of social services and/or the absence thereof affect citizens' relationship to the state, non-state authorities, and to each other.[10] A review of literature pertaining to low-density populations indicates the lack of universally accepted criteria for defining a country as 'low density', which in turn makes it difficult to establish a benchmark figure for comparative purposes. Instead, the qualifying criterion is a relative concept that varies by country and region. Recognizing that Mali is already far below most other parts of the world in terms of population density,[11] the study defines the threshold of low population density as *cercles* below the Mali average of 11 inhabitants per square km.[12] Based on this definition, the study focuses its attention on the *cercles* in the regions of Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu.[13]

Chapter Overview

Drawing from substantive field research in northern Mali and the refugee camps, as well as secondary literature, Chapter 2 presents trends in grievances and concerns among the most conflict-affected populations. It identifies security, justice and livelihoods as the three most pressing services that would promote state legitimacy, stability and cohesion going forward. Chapter 3 provides an overview of past government attempts to address grievances through political commitments to decentralization and increased local autonomy. The chapter then reviews the mixed experiences with implementation of these commitments, which so far have failed to consolidate territorial integrity and strengthen state legitimacy and social cohesion in the northern regions. Chapter 4 discusses the challenges of service delivery in low population and insecure areas, provides examples of international experiences with approaches to delivering services in these contexts and maps these experiences to Mali's past efforts with service delivery in the north.

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[9] Raleigh & Dowd. (2013) "Governance and Conflict in the Sahel's 'Ungoverned Space'. Stability" International Journal of Security & Development, 2(2): 32, pp. 1-17

[10] Cammett & Maclean. (2011) "Introduction: The Political Consequences of Non-state Social Welfare in the Global South." Article in special issue of Studies in Comparative International Development on "Non-State Actors, States and Citizens and the Provision of Social Welfare in the Global South." 46, no. 1:1-21

[11] The OECD defines rural areas as those with a population density below 150 inhabitants per square km for example (Source: http://epthinktank.eu/2012/11/28/4589. Accessed on 20 May 2014.

[12] As defined in "Mali Interim Strategy Note FY14-15". 2013. World Bank: Washington DC.p. 42.

[13] Using 2012 population estimates, 11 of 13 cercles in the three northern regions, with a total population of just above 1.1 million, have a population density well below the threshold of 11 per square km. The only exceptions are the Timbuktu cercles of Dire and Niafunke.

I.   NARRATIVES OF CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRISIS

"The North" is not a cohesive category in itself - several different perceptions and perspectives exist alongside each other on the causes of the recent crisis. This chapter identifies three competing narratives on the past from three groups of people most affected by the crisis: refugees, displaced persons living within Malian borders, and those who stayed in the occupied areas during the crisis or have subsequently returned. Each narrative tells an overlapping part of the same story that will need to be factored into efforts to restore state legitimacy, stability, and cohesion. The chapter identifies the effect of the recent crisis across the different perspectives and highlights the need to prioritize activities to improve security, justice and livelihoods. While some variance exists, together, these three service areas were identified by the population as most critical that would have the highest impact on state legitimacy, stability and cohesion.

The crisis in Mali has resulted in large numbers of internally displaced, a substantive refugee population outside Mali's borders, and a rise in inter-community tension and violence in the conflict-affected areas. Communities have been left with a profound sense of injustice as a result of national, regional and ethnic inequities and the violations committed by all sides during the crisis. Northern populations have experienced economic hardship, as result of lost homes, land and herds, and many farmers have lost out on revenue as a result of missed planting seasons. While some challenges and frustrations are perpetuations of past grievances, others are a direct consequence of the most recent crisis. This chapter will capture multiple narratives and perceptions of the grievances stemming from current and past crises, drawing both on the testimonies of those Malians interviewed by the field team and other survey data from secondary literature when available.

Concerns related to violence and criminal activity

All respondents, regardless of the region of origin or current location, highlight security concerns as the most pressing issue they currently face. This is consistent with broader public opinion nationally.[14] While all population groups are extremely concerned about insecurity, the perceived source of that insecurity varies dramatically. For refugees, the state is the primary source of predation, while for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and many living in the formerly occupied areas, armed movements, bandits, and inter-communal tension continue to be of concern. IDPs and those who remained in the north under occupation reference violence committed by occupying forces, while some refugees emphasize greater security under occupation than post-Serval. Inter-communal violence, including feuds between sedentary and nomadic populations, has been exacerbated by rebel groups' favoritism and recruitment along existing political cleavages. In addition, electoral entrepreneurs[15] have further heightened ethnic cleavages in the wake of the crisis by attempting to keep some groups from the polls. For IDPs and those living in formerly occupied zones, the solution to insecurity is a stronger state. Violence in Mali is multifaceted, with multiple levels of violence and variation regarding perceived insecurity and actors. Actors undertaking security provision will need to consider perceptions facing each population group.

A.   Violence and Security during the Occupation

The perception of security and violence during the occupations varies between groups and regions. IDPs stress violence by different rebel actors. In a June 2013 survey of IDPs in Bamako and Mopti, over 80% of respondents claimed to have left their homes due to "rebels" as opposed to food security, the Malian army or other concerns; the majority had fled their homes between the start of the occupation and

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[14] In December 2013, 2,486 individuals including 200 from the Northern 3 regions and 219 displaced persons in Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso, and Bamako named security as the priority issue facing the country. www.afrobarometer,org - Mali, Round 5.5. Accessed on 20 May 2014.
[15] Electoral entrepreneurs were party agents or local leaders who sought to mobilize their base of party supporters, typically along ethnic lines, and discourage participation of other groups through violence or threats.

June/July 2012[16]. This sample includes 15% of respondents whom were Tuareg. In an open-ended question about the causes of the crisis, 61% of displaced persons, including 60% of Tuareg respondents, blamed the MNLA as one of the primary causes of the crisis.[17] In the Afrobarometer survey of northern respondents (N=200), 7% of respondents from Gao claimed to have suffered physical aggressions, 3% suffered torture, while 15% claimed receiving sharia punishment. In Kidal, 46% claimed to be intimidated or threatened, 20% had their homes destroyed, 10% suffered physical aggression, and 3% claimed to have been tortured. Six percent of respondents from Timbuktu claim to have suffered physical aggression, 3% suffered torture, while 5 % were subject to sharia punishment.[18]

The occupation was particularly difficult for women. Female respondents from Gao describe how the application of sharia restricted their movement and describe violence perpetrated against women. A thirty-four year old Songhai businesswoman describes her experience in Asongo: *I personally wasn't harmed during past rebellions, but this crisis is more serious, because it challenges the State's viability. In addition, this crisis focuses too much on women because of issues related to enforcement of Shari'a Law. Most men fled, and left women behind to look after children alone. I sell grains... Here in Asango, really we didn't see any protection from the state. State administration and services were the first to leave. ....It can be said that women had problems. We managed to resolve internal problems, and we women play our role. Obviously, relatives and other individuals of good will did what they could to assist us, because many young women and girls were attacked, raped and assaulted. We help each other very discreetly, because a woman who was raped and assaulted is misunderstood and may face acute discrimination. For us the only oppression [we feel] comes from armed groups and Jihadists. They have forced our men to flee, and imposed their laws on us... (N18).[19]*

A former NGO worker describes clothing restrictions as well as women's confinement in their homes during rule by MNLA and MUJAO in Gao. He confirms the disproportionate violence targeting women. *«There were many stories about rapes and forced marriages, and we were very afraid for our sisters. A friend of my cousin was raped by MNLA men, and then she killed herself (N59). »*

In contrast, refugees compare greater security under rebel occupation to their current situation where they fear predation by the state. While many respondents initially fled during the rebel occupation,[20] the more immediate threat of violence emanating from the state forced a positive retrospective comparison of armed movements. A Tuareg herder from Lafia compares security while the zone was under Islamist control to current interaction with the Malian army: *The peace that we found with Islamists, we didn't find it with the state; Islamists didn't separate us from our communities, whereas the state divides everyone. When Islamists ruled, nobody lost anything; their security services were effective (N43).* For the many Malians living as refugees, fear and suspicion of the army also generates a favorable comparison with armed groups. Even if respondents are not ideologically aligned with the goals of the occupying groups, they report to have felt safer with armed groups.

Some respondents who stayed in Timbuktu during the occupation also feel that the period of occupation brought relative calm to the occupied area. This narrative is consistent with Afrobarometer data, which

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[16] Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014) "Reconstructing the Malian State: Perspectives of Internally Displaced Persons Results from a Survey Conducted June 2013." Working Paper

[17] Additionally, "44 % named poor governance and corruption, 6% mentioned drought and famine, 16% mentioned rebel groups other than the MNLA, 15% blamed ATT, and 8% had other suggestions ranging from discrimination by the state and southern ethnic groups, French intervention in Libya, favoritism toward the Tuareg/MNLA, and the lack of domestic military capacity." Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014) p. 16

[18] Coulibaly (2014)

[19] A high school student from Gao explains how her classmates were raped before they were able to flee (N1)

[20] Early in the conflict, analysts suggested that popular support for the MNLA was not very widespread: See http://africanarguments.org/2012/04/05/mali-how-bad-can-it-get-a-conversation-with-isaie-dougnon-bruce-hall-baz-lecocq-gregory-mann-and-bruce-whitehouse/ and http://africanarguments.org/2012/02/28/the-tuareg-between-armed-uprising-and-drought-baz-lecocq-and-nadia-belalimat/ Accessed on 20 May 2014.

suggests that the conflict was more violent in Gao and Kidal where 57% and 58% of respondents claimed to have witnessed beatings or killings as compared to only 18.4% in Timbuktu.[21] Some respondents who were in Timbuktu during the occupation praised service delivery by occupying groups: *Jihadists efficiently delivered a number of services, which the state previously had great difficulty managing, and which are still lacking to this day. They delivered health services, by assisting all facilities (hospital, ambulances), by giving access to fuel, which was free. They helped the agricultural sector by, on the one hand providing fuel for the pumps, and on the other by establishing a bus service to transport agricultural workers to the fields. Finally, they provided real security, since everyone could go about their daily activities without worrying about theft or racketeering* (N302).[22]

Irrespective of respondents' initial allegiances, the course of the crisis has dramatically shaped perceptions of the state as well as other groups. For some respondents, social service provision by occupying groups in Timbuktu demonstrates their ability to provide on fronts where the state previously failed. In contrast, selective violence and violence against women by rebel groups has incited hatred and fear towards these groups by many IDPs and those who were living in Mali during the occupation. These populations seek the return of a strong state in order to protect them from further attacks.

B. *State-Generated Violence*

State-generated violence has been cited mainly by the refugee population. Refugee perspectives on violence have been largely defined by their experiences over the course of the crisis, but particularly subsequent to the French intervention in 2013.[23] Many respondents reference violence, including exactions, assassinations, disappearances, torture, arbitrary detentions and theft that were perpetrated by the Malian army as well as neighboring sedentary populations.[24] Many respondents describe the violence as consistent with patterns of predation since independence. They continue to see the state as a predatory force, generating a cycle of violence perpetually disrupting productive development in the North (N51).

A Fraction Chief[25] from Lere living in the refugee camp in Mauritania describes the range of army abuses. *Nobody dares go get their cattle, because the Malian military kills, tortures, arrests those who try. The army killed one young man, and then threw his body away. They also took people in Foita, they tortured them; some of them were sent to Nouakchott. Rumor has it that at least 600 cattle were stolen and sold with the complicity of the Malian army (N49).[26]*

This targeted violence has sent an additional wave of Malians to refugee camps since 2013[27], but with fewer possessions or planning than the migration to the camps in 2012. By autumn 2013, refugee camps

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[21] Coulibaly (2014)

[22] Similar testimony from N72

[23] "The abuses, which targeted suspected Islamist rebels and alleged collaborators, included at least 26 reported extrajudicial executions, 11 enforced disappearances, and over 50 cases of torture or ill-treatment." Human Rights Watch. (2014). Accessed at http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/mali

[24] In an analysis of 76 transcripts, we found that 23 transcripts (all of which were recorded in refugee camps) told stories of friends, relatives, or community leaders being targeted by this violence.This is consistent with secondary reports: A September 2012 Human Rights Watch report (http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/01/mali-big-step-justice-disappearance-case) notes that some ethnic groups already feared victimization by political and military leaders who were politicizing ethnicity. News reports claimed that the January intervention was followed by the looting of shops and homes owned by Arabs and Tuareges by both civilians and military who accused them of supporting the rebels. (VOA, 29 January 2013; RFI, 11 February 2013). Many members of these groups fled in fear military reprisal killings against those considered 'infiltrators,' or ethnic targeting (IRIN, 31 January 2013; Solidarités, Médecins du Monde, February 2013).

[25] A fraction is a group within a larger ethnic group. These are all sub groups from within the Tuareg and within the Arab population.

[26] Consistent with the narrative of refugees, a Tuareg respondent living in Menaka described the state as targeting Tuareg and Arab respondents and accusing them of being affiliated with the armed movements (N22).

[27] An Arab Fraction Chief from Arouana now living in M'Bera explains: We arrived in March of 2013. Prior to that, we never had any problems in our village, so we stayed; neither the Islamists, nor the MNLA ever caused us any harm. We have been protected from any harm. But in February 2013, one of our people and my other three brothers were traveling back from Taoudemi on two trucks loaded with salt…. So they all reached Timbuktu at the end of February…On the 8th day, X and his brothers were arrested by the Malian army, and we never heard from them again. We believe they are dead. The salt was seized and no doubt sold by the military. Our trucks are still at the military camp. We made

were populated by mostly Tuareg and Arab Malians who feared or had experienced state-generated violence.[28] A respondent at the Mentao Camp in Burkina Faso explains: *Unlike refugees who arrived in 2012, these populations arrived suddenly, and brought nothing with them. In 2012, people took the time to take the minimum necessary, in some cases their animals even. This time, we saw families with barely enough to drink. Hundreds of new people arrived daily at the Fassala transit area, overwhelming HCR's registration processes, as they had not anticipated such high numbers* (N303).

An Army defector, now affiliated with the Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad (MAA) in Nouakchott, explains how he left the army in response to these abuses*: I decided to join the army in order to protect my family. But I can't remain with an army that kills my parents instead of protecting them... Some high-ranked army officers contacted me to return, but it would have been absurd. I cannot imagine going back to an army that is the cause of the fear and exile of our populations. How could I be proud of being a senior army officer when my family is currently exiled in refugee camps? (N65)* Another former member of the Malian Armed Forced cites discrimination, violence, and killings of Tuareg and Arab soldiers by their peers in response to the 2012 occupation (N68). These events have forced many soldiers to flee to refugee camps, where they are scared to return. In addition, this in-fighting within the armed forces has left many Tuareg and Arab soldiers unsure about where to turn. A respondent from M'Bera explains: *The issue of army officers in refugee camps is sensitive. We are treated as deserters, while in fact we tried to save our lives and our families. If the refugee issue gets solved, I see two options for myself and those in a similar position: either I take responsibility for deserting, people let me explain myself and accept that I did not desert to join the rebels but to protect myself; or I simply remain a deserter and I get removed from the army (N68).*

Some respondents accuse Malian army troops of fueling inter-communal conflict, suppressing civil society, and ignoring local perspectives. A Songhai notable from Timbuktu city confirms the accusations coming from the refugee camps: *After Serval, the Malian army came back. They told people to help themselves to the property of our absent Arab and Tuareg brothers, to take their stores. As far as they were concerned, all those who stayed were Jihadists, regardless of their community. It was difficult, for us Songhai elders to hear this, after such difficult times. We questioned the notion that this army represented us in any way. During the war, we created a crisis committee, to manage things. Once the army returned, we were no longer allowed to hold our meetings; nor were we permitted to create our non-profit organization (N74).*

For many, the current cycle of violence is a reminder of previous experiences of violence with the Malian army in the 1990s, which one respondent refers to as a "nightmare that repeats itself" (N356). Another respondent explains: *Amongst these families, a man X went to the Timbuktu market with his two donkeys. Since he had no food left, he had to go to the market to see if he could sell them. In the first neighborhood, a Malian army vehicle picked him up, took him to a camp where he stayed a week, and then he was transferred to the camp in Bamako. He died as a result of torture. His wife and children joined us here in the camps. His father had died in similar circumstances in the 1990s. He was tortured and burned* (N42).

Regardless of citizens' previous sympathies or perspectives towards rebel actors, those with light skin fear that they are perceived as being supportive of rebel actors (N301). Refugees that returned to Mali live in fear and operate out of public view (N 303). They claim that neighbors from other ethnic groups who

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inquiries, but never received any answers….Today, we wait for peace and ask that the bodies of our brothers be returned to us; they left orphans, we want to bury them. (N50)

[28]As of January 2014, Mauritania, Burkina Fast and Niger are hosting around 180,000 refugees, the majority of which are Tuareg and Arab (over 90%). http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/mali. Accessed on 20 May 2014. See also: UNHCR (2014) « Synthèse Globales des données des refugiés maliens au Niger et Burkina Faso, Février 2014 »

know they had no affiliation with the armed groups are scared to vouch for their innocence (N50). A Songhai hotel owner in Timbuktu explains that his wife was the only Arab living in Timbuktu post-Serval and faced discrimination on a daily basis (N75). A June 2013 IDP survey found that when provided with an opportunity to record a message to American or Malian political authorities, Tuareg and Arab respondents were less likely to communicate with these leaders.[29] Twenty-two percent of Tuareg and 33% of Arab respondents chose not to leave a message as compared to only 14% of Songhai who did not leave a message.[30] This hesitancy is suggestive of lingering fear toward the state, consistent with the interviews in refugee camps.

Respondents feel that MINUSMA (Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali) and French troops have added little security. Contrary to pro-France polling within Malian borders,[31] many refugees maintain that French and MINUSMA troops generate greater insecurity and/or enabled the Malian state to attack Arab and Tuareg populations.[32]

C. Persistent Banditry and Insurgent Violence

Banditry and insurgent violence has become a problem particularly after the liberation of the north. Populations living in the formerly occupied areas of Mali also describe lingering insecurity despite the presence of the Malian army and MINUSMA. In contrast to the narrative of the refugees that focused on state abuses, those living in Mali describe insecurity as linked to banditry, the presence of smaller armed groups, and inter-communal violence. These problems appear particularly salient in Gourma and the "l'intérieur de la boucle du Niger" at the junction of the regions of Mopti and Gao (N17, N12, N31, N41). However these phenomena are widespread. A civil servant who worked in Kidal explained that bandits continue to steal government and NGO vehicles in Kidal (N7).

Respondents living in northern Mali describe opportunistic armed groups as taking advantage of the atmosphere of insecurity. Pastoralists' herds appear to be a primary target of these groups. These cycles of violence build on previous inter-communal feuds between pastoralists (N20). An Arab herder from Goundam explains his frustration with the Malian Army's failure to provide security to displaced herders: *Yesterday we got the news that Peul bandits stole 180 steers in a camp of Mopti, while the army is only at 7 kilometres from the camp. The army told the owner they could not follow him, and so the problem had to be solved through the aid of corruption. The authorities pretend they don't see anything but in fact they participate to all of this. It is always the same problem, with banditry benefitting people who are supposed to protect us and make us feel safe. In such conditions of injustice, we are determined not to return (N41).[33]*

MINUSMA is equally viewed as incapable of preventing or policing this violence.[34] As one Peulh herder from Menanka explains: *From time to time, the Malian army, and sometimes MINUSMA forces patrol the area, but it doesn't change anything. Because of insecurity and cattle thieves, everyone is scared* (N312).[35]

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[29] Tuareg and Arab refugees were also more skeptical about transparent elections as the solution to the crisis in the north than Songhai respondents indicating their perception of deeper, more pervasive structural problems.

[30] Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014)

[31] In June 2013 survey of IDPs in Bamako and Mopti, 86% gave a positive assessment of France's efforts.

[32] One respondent from Lere explains how he believes Serval has facilitated targeted violence, "We have the clear feeling that Serval lets the Malian army steal and kill us, and that France works for the Malian government." (N35).

[33] Another accusation of the complicity of Army in banditry (N51) or unwillingness to prosecute sedentary populations (N36)

[34] Other comments on the Malian army's lack of capacity: (N60).

[35] In some instances, the return of state security has provoked greater tension by disrupting the existing balance of power. For instance, tensions in Kidal, which had been under MNLA control since January 2013, rose with the arrival of Malian soldiers in a region (AFP, 8 June 2013).

D. Inter-communal Violence

The current crisis has greatly increased inter-communal violence and tension (N51). Refugees feel vulnerable to attacks by neighbors and vigilante groups. Some recount stories of innocent civilians being killed by the local population. A former teacher at M'Bera refugee camp shares one such story: *People have stopped trying to return, when one of their leaders, Bolla Ag Mohamed Ali, was slaughtered. He went searching for peace, and was killed on August 11, 2013 in Léré by the local population, while authorities and the army passively looked on (*N304).

In other instances, community members have destroyed or commandeered Tuareg and Arab possessions to discourage them from returning. A Tuareg member of the coordination committee of the M'Bera refugee camp describes his experience: *They made a list of all Tuareg and Arab leaders, and we are all on the list. The same people completely destroyed houses belonging to Arabs and Tuaregs and stole cattle carrying Arab and Tuareg marks; either they slaughter it, or they sell it. And it is still happening. There is no one here who hasn't lost at least all or some of their animals* (N34).[36]

Armed groups, including MNLA, MUJAO and the *Milice pro gouvernementale Imghrad*, recruited youth in ways that deepened existing cleavages and displayed favoritism towards certain ethnic groups (N62). The occupation was characterized by in-group fighting, which then spilled into the local population. For instance, the current crisis has heightened an existing conflict in the Ansongo and Menanka zones between local Peul populations as well as those from Niger and the Tuareg population, particularly from the Dawashak, where dozens of people have been killed and hundreds of cattle stolen. Respondents describe the MNLA as targeting sedentary populations and those associated with state power.[37] A Peul respondent describes why many Peul joined MUJAO: *Previous Tuareg rebellions didn't tarnish relationships between Peuls and Nomads. With the current crisis and armed groups, there have been kidnappings and animal theft, mostly by MNLA members. Many of our Peul relatives joined the MUJAO for money, but also to seek revenge against the Kel Tamacheks and some Arabs. On the ground, the rules were initially made by the MNLA, then by the Jihadists. Some Peul groups reacted by joining the MUJAO and other self-defense groups in the South towards Mopti (N17).*

However, the presence of rebel groups and resources did not only reinforce existing cleavages, but also created new divisions, even within the same families. One respondent describes how two brothers sided with opposing groups after their father remained uncommitted to any group (N30).

Infusion of money from jihadist groups has further contributed to a growing religious cleavage. Respondents note the gradual emergence of "religious fanatics" in Kidal and Gao regions in 2011 (N3; N16). Despite their success at recruiting young men, the ideology of rebel groups is largely described as inconsistent with most inhabitants' lifestyles and beliefs. A marabout describes how the influx of "foreign religious" leaders affected his work as a Quranic school teacher: ... *I was threatened several times by Arab and Sonrai Jihadi Islamists, as early as 2011. When the 2012 events took place, and the cities of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu were taken I decided to leave. ... with the arrival and settlement of certain religious strands, intolerant religious fanaticism grew, with the support of foreign religious activists (Algeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan)...* (N16). Others describe longer patterns of emerging religious tension in their zone of origin between "wahhabyis" and other populations. A Tuareg respondent explains: *For us Tuareg, it's rather strange to see women treated this way, because the Tamachek woman is very free. Islamic movements very quickly formed alliances with them and they still have powerful Marabouts. Controlling these movements is difficult, because it is very easy to go hide on the islands in Gourma: all you have to do is cross the river* (N24).

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[36] Transcripts N43 (A Notable from Gargando) and N44 (Arab Trader from Salam) describe stolen animals and looted boutiques respectively.
[37] For instance, in June 2012, many dark-skinned inhabitants of Kidal had accused the MNLA of abuses; these allegations which were denied by the group (RFI, 2 June 2012).

Refugees perceive the state as either unable to prevent violence between ethnic groups or, consistent with the historical narrative of dividing northern communities, actually complicit in or encouraging it. Some respondents describe the Malian army as supporting violence by Bella and Songhai populations (N35, N45), which ties into a broader historical narrative pertaining to the state's "strategy of divide and conquer" under the auspicious of liberating the Songhai and Bellas from Tuareg control (N53).

Additionally, many refugees pointed to electoral entrepreneurs inciting violence during the 2013 presidential election, and in anticipation of the 2014 municipal elections. Political leaders exploited existing fears and divisions in order to mobilize people to the polls and discourage others (Tuareg and Arab) from participating.[38] For instance, a respondent from Niafunke describe how electoral cycles generate instability: *Voters are distributed among political leaders on the basis of promises, including promises of immunity. I vote for X, and as soon as he is elected, he covers for you. The military completes the triangle. Elections have really exacerbated the situation. We've heard some elected officials say "Be careful, if you don't vote for my party, patrols will be harassing you". They are complicit with politicians. And what is going on right now is an effort to scare Arabs and Tuareg ahead of the election (N39).*

The above factors have all contributed to a decline in inter-communal relations, which threatens stability and social cohesion in the north. As noted by several locally elected delegates during a conference in Paris in May 2014, the rise in inter-communal violence has a high risk of changing the nature of conflict in Mali from regular rebellions against the state into a full-fledged civil war. It is clear that the hardening of communal divisions presents new challenges for local governance structures as government and communities seek to quell the violence.

Although security has improved in northern Mali with an increasing number of IDPs returning to their homes, in addition to civil servants returning to the northern regions, insecurity persists, and past and present violence influences peoples' perceptions. Refugees feel insecure by the presence of the army and fear reprisal by other populations who associate refugees with rebel groups, while internally displaced and those that remained in the north during and after the occupation fear bandits and insurgent groups. Inter-communal mistrust has risen dramatically, leading to violence and even death. It becomes clear that violence and security mean different things for different groups and that a nuanced understanding of fears and perceptions is required to ensure that security provision responds to multiple perceptions which drive fear and behavior. Ultimately, if the goal is to promote state legitimacy, stability and cohesion, the provision of security should build trust amongst and within populations in an equitable manner and with sensitivity to historic and more recent grievances and traumas.

Grievances associated with perceived impunity and injustice

The reconstruction process is plagued by the general population's apathy toward, and mistrust of, the justice sector, and this is reflected in respondents' testimonies. This section will examine attitudes towards judicial impunity, corruption and discrimination, formal versus informal justice mechanisms, the limited presence of justice providers in northern Mali, and urgent justice needs emerging from the crisis.

A. Judicial Impunity, Corruption and Discrimination

The majority of respondents view the Malian justice system as corrupt and illegitimate, fuelling illicit activities. The state's poor management and governance practice at the central and regional levels are seen as main reasons behind illegal trade, drug trafficking, the profitable business of kidnapping which contributed to the rise and consolidation of jihadist groups *(N9).*

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[38]A Fraction Chief from Lere describes (N35) the sedentary population in Lere as trying to prevent the nomadic population from returning to vote in the 2014 municipal elections (originally planned for Spring 2014). A Peul respondent confirmed that electoral candidates scare Arab and Tuareg with threats suggesting that they will call the military on them (N312).

Refugees repeatedly mention corruption and nepotism within the justice system. They demand a real reform of the justice system based on transparency and accountability (N66). They cite examples of judicial immunity being purchased by violent offenders, but also arbitrary detentions designed to illicit bribes. For refugees, the justice system is not only plagued by corruption, but is discriminatory. It is seen as an institution of a pro-southern, pro-sedentary state that contributes to their marginalization. In this historical narrative, which starts with colonization and continues up to the current period, respondents blame the state for systematic discrimination in terms of land rights, access to justice, and broader access to state resources in favor of sedentary populations. Modibo Keita's *réforme agraire* and it's slogan "*the land belongs to those who tend it*" is seen as setting up a system in which "*all conventions related to Tuareg land and their land rights, have been violated; their land has been taken out of official records, destroyed and definitely not recognized by the Malian Government. In this regard, the ransacking of administrative archives during the rebellion was useful to Mali...*" (N53).[39] Respondents claim that "*land discrimination has persisted until the contemporary period*" (N49). Many other respondents share related concerns about being denied access to water, the reduced power of traditional leaders, and the state's investment in sedentary farming populations at the expense of nomadic populations (N51).

Given the perception of historic marginalization and discrimination by the state in the eyes of Tuareg and Arab respondents, obstacles to generating a legitimate state-sponsored justice system are even more profound. Nearly all respondents think that extensive dialogue was necessary at both national and local levels. The former mayor of Doukouria, currently living in M'Bera explains that a durable solution will require: *a) a political agreement with the movements, b) a dialogue in which each party can feel satisfied and can represent and defend the specificities of its territory, c) a true state of security, as well as hiring processes and efforts of integration/rehabilitation within the army, d) an attitude of peace and forgiveness, e) a real, efficient and non-corrupted justice system accessible to all citizens, and that does not merely rely on the central state, and f) decentralization with a posteriori rather than a priori controls (N53).*

Corruption that pervades the judicial system disrupts broader rule of law. When asked about the causes of the current conflict, corruption was the second most popular response provided by displaced persons (44%) in a June 2013 survey.[40] Judicial corruption fuels the perception of state illegitimacy, but also favors those with the most money, leading to a widespread perception that money trumps authority and legitimacy. One respondent explains his skepticism that this deep-rooted corruption can change quickly: *Local government representatives and the military are also part of this system, which puts money above all else. IBK is no doubt different than ATT, but they share the same civil servants, the same army, the same passion for money* (N41). Despite the challenges that this reform poses, it is of central importance in any sustainable solution for security or livelihoods.[41]

B. *Formal versus Informal Justice*

Respondents maintain that informal mechanisms of governance and justice have been disrupted by corruption. It has been mentioned that the traditional leadership system had broken down due to corrupted access to power. This power is seen as illegitimate and fails to resolve the populations' problems. Traditional authority has not been integrated into the state system, despite the fact that is seen to work and to be able to manage a large part of people's issues *(N319).[42]* Some respondents suggest that

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[39] Similar sentiments from another respondent in N 53 that discusses the state as depriving Tuareg from access to water.
[40] The response was second only to the MNLA (61%).
[41] We note that dissatisfaction with the judicial system is widespread across the country. A 2009 study of 1,000 citizens from Bamako, Kayes, Timbuktu, Sikasso, and Mopti regions found that over 90% of respondents said they would not approach the police in case of a crime. Bleck. (2011) "Schooling Citizens: Education, Citizenship, and Democracy in Mali." PhD Thesis, Cornell University, Department of Government
[42] Another respondent lamenting the decline of the traditional justice system (N71)

decentralization and "political intrusion" accelerated this process by "rejecting" these informal institutions (N5, N8, N22).

In the absence of an effective justice system, some communities have adopted sharia-based courts at a local level. A respondent from Goundam explains that this system resulted in better governance outcomes for his community: *For 5 years, these Cadis enforced Islamic Justice. And during that entire time, they solved all our problems. Nobody died, no hand was cut, but thefts were adjudicated, [they solved not only] issues related to resource management, land conflicts, well sharing, debts, but also marriage, divorce and all the problems of everyday life (N69).*

Reliance on informal justice mechanisms that rely on traditional or religious leadership is widespread in Mali. A 2008 study[43] undertaken in several urban and rural municipalities of Mali indicated that in the event of a dispute, conflict, or arbitrage needs, citizens would turn primarily to traditional structures of conciliations and religious authorities rather than to the tribunals, de-concentrated representatives of the state, or mayors.[44] The 2009 Family Code protests, which prevented the passage of legislation that would improve women's rights, were fueled by a popular conception that the expansion of state judicial power would infringe upon the authority of these "informal" justice systems.[45]

C. Urgent Justice Needs Emerging from the Crisis: Dialogue and Reconciliation

Many respondents maintain that national dialogue as well as reconciliation between communities was necessary in order to ensure a sustainable peace (N54, N2, N8). In response to a survey question about solutions for the current crisis, the second most popular solution recommended by displaced persons (22%) was dialogue and discussion.[46] For those living in refugee camps, there is a need for local dialogue as well as dialogue between all groups including the armed movements (N54). A MAA sympathizer stress the importance of dialogue in contrast to quick fixes that perpetuate the same problems: *The State does not want a dialogue because it is still in a reasoning of coercion, revenge and non-viable solutions for the future. The same system is being perpetuated, which takes civil servants from the north and gets them aligned with a system that muzzles them while their own families are in refugee camps... We need to end this system of nepotism and favouritism that impedes the justice apparatus to work properly. Yet, for over a year the same system has been perpetuated (N66).*

Refugee respondents, predominantly Touareg and Arab, express the need for the state to initiate dialogue, to address the consequences of recent violence, and past grievances linked to past rebellions and unfilled implementation of previous pacts. Respondents see dialogue as a primary mechanism to ensure future peace, and describe dialogue as necessary at the local level amongst neighboring populations and leaders, and at the national level amongst government and armed movements. They stress the need for this dialogue to be inclusive (N54, 63, 54). Past dialogue undertaken by the government was deemed unsatisfactory: *We want a peace agreement between the State and the movements, so that people can live together again, and to end insecurity. I want a true peace, not the one that we had so far that always forces us to return to the refugee camps. As long as there is no lasting peace, I will not want to return. We want peace, which means everything for us (N43).*

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[43] Sidibe. (2011) "Recherche Transnationale. Décentralisation en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre: Apprendre des Expériences Locales et Sectorielles-Éducation, Eau, Santé—Cas du Mali." Rapport final. Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Éducation/ERNWACA

[44] See similar findings from earlier rounds of Afrobarometer in Coulibaly & Diarra. (2004) "Démocratie et légitimation du marche : Rapport d'enquête Afrobarometer au Mali, Décembre 2002." Afrobarometer Working Paper 35

[45] On family code protests see Soares, Benjamin F. 2009. "The attempt to reform family law in Mali." *Die Welt des Islams,* 49.3-4, and Bleck & Van de Walle. (2011) "Parties and Issues in Francophone West Africa: Towards a Theory of Non-Mobilization." Democratization 18(5): 1125-1145.

[46] The first most cited solution was improving governance in Mali – which resonates with the overall topic discussed in this study and the theme of justice presented in this chapter. Additionally, many respondents referred to the need for frank dialogue in their recorded messages to the Malian president. Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014), p. 23-25

Similar to respondents in the refugee camps, those living in formerly occupied zones also highlight a need for dialogue. A Peuhl respondent from Boni explains: *Peace will only happen if there is full reconciliation between the various displaced and refugee communities of the Boni area (N31).*

It should be noted that the selection of groups that participate in dialogue is likely to be contentious. Many respondents stress the importance of all relevant actors being included, but citizens are likely to have different ideas of who those parties should be. A 2013 Afrobarometer survey found that those living in Gao and Kidal were much less likely to be supportive of dialogue between armed groups and the state (35% and 38% respectively) as compared to a national average of 61%.[47] In contrast, 70% of respondents from Timbuktu were supportive of this dialogue.[48]

Beyond the desire for national dialogue, respondents from all groups also seek justice and punishment for those who committed crimes. In addition to violence against persons, destruction and theft of property, including homes and public buildings, land and livestock was common (N34, N69). Neighbors, army and rebel groups were each accused of destruction and theft, indicating that reconciliation should be broad-based. There does exist some disagreement as to what crimes should be punished. In a study undertaken by the Hague Institute for Global Justice, respondents differed as to whether insurgents or those responsible for crimes committed during the crisis, such as rape and harsh corporal punishment should be the focus of initiatives to punish perpetrators of violence.[49]

Marginalization, the lack of social services and economic opportunities

Similarly, the majority of respondents across all three groups view the northern regions as most marginalized by the state in terms of development and economic opportunities. It is clear that the crisis has decimated the tourism industry and weakened the NGO sector, leaving fewer employment opportunities aside from agriculture and herding. State absence has generated lucrative illicit economic opportunities for youth who face high rates of unemployment. Displaced persons and refugees have lost many of their possessions and thus face even greater obstacles to economic prosperity. Past grievances regarding government policies, youth unemployment, the illicit economy, as well as challenges of low population density characterize the discussion around livelihoods in northern Mali. Challenges around livelihood can best be understood when distinguishing between long-term challenges and grievances, and the immediate effects of the recent crisis. This section will outline the perceived marginalization from services and economic development, youth unemployment and illicit activities, and urgent needs culminating from the crisis. Exacerbating these issues is the challenge of low population density in large geographic areas populated with sedentary and nomadic communities.

It is important to note that, while some data is there to support the general perception of a marginalization of the north, the picture is not complete. Quite on the contrary, there is strong evidence to suggest that poverty levels, consumption as well as life expectancy are higher in the three northern regions relative to the rest of the country, after Bamako. Economic data indicates that 70% of all poor are located in three livelihood zones in southern Mali.[50] Kidal and Gao have lower levels of chronic malnutrition than the rest of the country,[51] and Kidal also registers the highest literacy rate among heads of households, the lowest mortality rate, and the highest levels of per capita consumption (after Bamako). Those living in Gao and Tombouctou also do better in terms of per capita consumption than those living in southern regions like Koulikoro or Sikasso. This tension between reality and a perceived marginalization suggests that

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[47] Coulibaly (2014), p. 18
[48] Ibid
[49] Lankhorst. (2013) "Peacebuilding in Mali: Linking Justice, Security, and Reconciliation." The Hague Institute for Global Justice, Policy Brief 6, p. 8
[50] Geography of Poverty in Mali, World Bank (2014), p. 75
[51] Geography of Poverty, World Bank (2014), p. 84

grievances might not be addressed through renewed investments in service delivery, but rather that the tension itself should be the focus of policy interventions.

A. *Marginalization of the Northern Economy*

While refugees and other Malian respondents differ in their views towards the legitimacy of state and rebel actors, there is a strong perception among those interviewed that the north had been marginalized by central government. Consistent with Tuareg and Arab narratives of marginalization, a diverse group of displaced respondents from Bamako and Mopti also described the three regions of northern Mali as the most marginalized. When asked to name the four most marginalized regions in Mali, 73% of respondents cited Timbuktu, 71% cited Gao, 69% cited Kidal, and 44% named Mopti.[52] In the 2013 Afrobarometer poll, northern and southern respondents are similar in their prescriptions for overcoming the crisis, including a strong state (95%), justice for all involved (89%), and civic education (86%). Northerners are more likely to emphasize development of the North as a viable solution.[53]

Nomadic respondents cite discrimination even in the context of broader marginalization of the North. They claim that any state-sponsored development that does take place favors sedentary populations over nomadic groups. Nomadic respondents cite subsidies for farmers from sedentary communities, while they claim they receive no support from the state for their subsistence or commercial activities. A respondent from a focus group in M'Bera explains: *There is no outreach to pastoralists, they receive no support. The entire pastoralist sector has never been developed. Tivisky (milk production company) in Mauritania buys Azawal cattle, and that same milk is then sold in Timbuktu. The one who cuts our hand doesn't protect us, the state doesn't protect us* (N53). More than 50% of the population in Kidal region is dependent on livestock, which makes this population particularly vulnerable to drought.[54] The 2012 crisis in Mali took place against a backdrop of severe drought, flood and food crisis.

While changing climatic conditions make agricultural and pastoral livelihoods increasingly difficult, northern residents express an unwavering desire to continue. Many respondents convey a desire for greater material support for their existing activities,[55] in addition to further investment in industries linked to livestock and farming. A Health Ministry Representative said: *Livestock farming should be developed by trading meat and milk products. But to do so, access needs to be opened up and power generation facilities must be installed to preserve the merchandise (N71).*

Nomadic populations also cite historic marginalization by the state education system, which has in turn prevented their communities from being adequately represented in government services. A respondent in M'Bera Camp explains: *Tuareg and Arabs were denied promotions, they weren't even hired. Some people were even deported. This is why Tuareg and Arabs were never properly represented; there was both a lack of schooling and harassment. It is also to weaken the Tuareg politically that no serious effort has been made to overcome their so-called "refusal to attend school* (N53).

In contrast, NGOs and foreign governments were described as outperforming the Malian state. For instance, an MAA sympathizer from Timbuktu explains that "*the little development that exists in his region is due to the Americans, now deceased Libyan President Colonel Gadhafi, Algeria, and an NGO, but that the state had done nothing.*" (N66) These unfavourable comparisons of the state to other service providers are not necessarily supported by data. Yet they raise questions about the impact of non-state providers on state legitimacy.

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[52] Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014), p. 25
[53] Coulibaly (2014), p. 18
[54] Pellerin (2014), p. 6.
[55] N25

While skepticism may abound at the prospect of returns to investment in this region, investment in key agricultural sectors and livestock-raising could be viewed as confidence-building exercises among populations who are struggling in the post-conflict environment.

B. *Youth Unemployment and Informal Trade*

While more pronounced in the north, the entire country deals with a crisis of employment. When displaced persons were asked an open-ended question about the two biggest problems confronting Malians today, the second most popular response, totaling 44%, was "unemployment, poverty, and underdevelopment."[56] There are few state civil servant jobs and Mali's private sector was weakened by the recent crisis.[57] Unemployment is a particularly pressing problem for youth from 15 to 35, forming 60% of the population, with unemployment rates in this age group estimated at between 40 and 45%.[58] The current education sector is misaligned with job opportunities, and university graduates face high levels of unemployment.[59]

Past peace agreements have attempted to generate greater opportunities for state employment for former rebel groups through the integration into the Malian administration or army. Integration, however, has failed in the eyes of those living in the north, in addition to their southern counterparts.[60] A Fraction Chief from the *Touareg Kel haouza* from Mopti interviewed in a refugee camp in Burkina Faso explains: *Even when we were integrated into government agencies, especially in politics, it didn't help us. Most Tuareg and Arab officials that you see in Bamako are unable to play their role of defending the interests of the most vulnerable, of the oppressed, because they depend on the Government for their jobs, their salaries, this Government that oppresses us. And the Government uses them to show that we are integrated. We have a word for this, it's Elemkara. It's the fact of skinning a calf, then making the birthing cow smell it, in order to milk it. The Government uses its role of mediator to divide us, and to create problems amongst us. Even if they hold high-level positions, we consider some of them to contribute to the harm that is done to us, because they remain silent and participate in the injustice (N 317).* Integration efforts are not necessarily supported by everyone; southerners view integration efforts as well as affirmative action programs targeting the north as unfair. They stress that Mali is poor in many locations, but most populations have not waged war on the government in response to economic or political marginalization.

The lack of formal job opportunities in low-density population zones, has led many rural youth to move to cities where they have difficulty finding employment or supportive social structures.[61] Urban youth increasingly make perilous journeys out of the country seeking work.[62] A January 2012 survey of 600 respondents in 10 villages in northern Mopti, found that one quarter of all households received monthly remittances; many young men from those remote villages were living in other West African cities, and village leadership lamented the loss of youth labor for farming.[63]

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[56] Unsurprisingly, the first choice was the crisis in the North. (70% of respondents named this) Additionally, 14% brought up corruption and good governance again, 14% mentioned governance of Kidal. 10% mentioned free and fair elections, 9% spoke of the the the coup d'etat, 5% mentioned the intra-military crisis between the green and the red berets, 7% mentioned drought and famine, 5% mentioned poor performance by politicians, 3% mentioned bad treatment of refugees, and 1% mentioned ethnic discrimination. Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014) p. 22
[57] See " Mali Interim Strategy Note FY14-15". 2013. World Bank: Washington DC.
[58] Sow & Ag Erless. (2014) 'Société et Culture au Mali: Problématiques du Changement." International Alert, London, p.22
[59] Sow & Ag Erless. (2014) p.24 and Bleck & Guindo. (2013) "Education for All? Education for Whom? Education for What?" Development in Practice. 23 (8): 1004–1017
[60] A former Army office who later quit the Malian army explained failed integration :*In fact, integration did not really work : it was part of a series of measures (the National Pact) that were never implemented by the State, or that were distorted by corrupted representatives of the MFUA (Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad). Our brothers from the army in the South never accepted us, never trusted us, with the exception of a few individuals that accepted to "do the dirty work", still for a low wage. (N65)*
[61] Sow & Ag Erless. (2014) p.24
[62] Ibid, p.25
[63] Bleck & Michelitch. (2013). "Voices from Fragile States: The Resilient Problem of Human Development." UN University World Institute for Development Economics Research: WIDER ANGLE

Increasingly, unemployed young people have been pulled into informal trade and illicit economies (N27). Informal trade across the Algerian and Burkina borders has generated employment opportunities, which profit from state absence. The recent infusion of drug money and arms into the region is viewed by many as destabilizing the social fabric of northern societies as the illicit economy competes directly with sustainable development.[64] Respondents explain how during the crisis, this chronic underemployment and the increasing difficulty of pastoral lifestyles has fueled recruitment into some rebel groups.

Consistent with reports of rebel recruitment of youth and child soldiers,[65] many respondents describe how young men were bought by rebel groups, in some cases attracted by monthly salaries of 250,000 FCFA (equivalent to around USD 500). An Arab respondent living in Boni, who sent his family to a refugee camp in Burkina Faso explains: *I have the feeling that the country was invaded by foreigners with ulterior motives, and that young and poor people are being exploited for money. In fact, the MUJAO recruited many young Peuls for that reason. I kept quiet, [I am] still in touch with the traditional leadership, which helped me a great deal (N15).* Other respondents describe theft and violence perpetrated by youth whose parents were not implicated in the conflict. The quote below stresses the opportunism of youth recruits, rather than significant ideological conversion. A customs agent from Douenza described youth participation in the rebellion: *Before I left, I witnessed acts of looting, abuse and theft committed by young members of the MNLA, all these young people are generally from a local "Nomad family". Some victims say that they recognized X's grandsons; X is an old Nomad who never joined any rebellion. This situation could seriously affect the return of exiled Nomads and [potential] reconciliation of Nomads and settled communities. From time to time, I would come to Douenza to assess the situation, see my house, and visit friends and family who had stayed behind. The MNLA was followed by occupation and MUJAO's enforcement of Shari'a Law. In addition to young Peul students from Islamic schools recruited by the MUJAO, we noted that young MNLA members became leaders of the MUJAO. The state had disappeared, and banditry, inappropriate behaviors, ,everything was controlled by MUJAO's Islamic police (N12).*The recruitment and participation of youth actors in the conflict raises significant questions about their future employment opportunities as well as their broader reintegration into society.

C. *Urgent Needs: Addressing Debt and Livelihoods lost during the crisis*

Debt is an immediate economic issue facing refugees who exhausted their own finances and borrowed to survive. Many refugees describe having exhausted the generosity of wealthier relatives and after months in the camps they had no one to turn to (N41). Some refugees have been forced to sell off their assets (N43) or use part of their food rations to try to pay off debt (N44). Similarly, many IDPs have lost property, wages, and have also accumulated large amounts of debt.[66] With no foreseeable return in site, there are few options for those who were once herding or operating boutiques in the city centers. The crisis also exacerbated unemployment. Business foreclosures and job losses were monitored by the *Institut National de Prévoyance Sociale* (INPS), which recorded that 707 employers were compelled to close their businesses in Timbuktu, 933 in Gao and Kidal combined, and 78 in Mopti. [67] Most remain unemployed and reluctant to return home, and have few opportunities to generate income to pay daily expenses or repay debt accumulated during the crisis: *The Nomads were here for two years and no one came to help them; the Government did nothing for us. People helped each other. People borrow from merchants and their relatives, who are reimbursed little by little. In Lerneb, you give your animals to someone, who then undersells them at 1000 Francs each. This is what we do to survive (N43).*

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[64] Tinti. (2014) "Illicit Trafficking and Instability in Mali: Past, Present and Future". *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime series on Governance, Democracy and State Fragility*. The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
[65] Amnesty International report on Malian child soldiers. Accessed at https://www.amnesty.org/en/news/mali-child-soldiers-2013-06-13 on 20 May 2014.
[66] Many IDPs reported fraud and difficulties accessing humanitarian aid, which is sold-off or claimed by those who are not actually displaced. Bleck, Dembele, & Guindo. (2014), p. 15
[67] République du Mali (2012) « Effets économiques et financiers de la crise politique et sécuritaire 2012 au Mali : Analyse de la situation et énoncé de mesures conservatoires »

Other respondents lament the loss of personal possessions as well as the destruction of public infrastructure in their zones of origin including administrative buildings, schools, dikes and irrigation channels (N44, N23, N47, N48). Increasing insecurity in the north has crippled the tourism industry, which once generated significant revenue for the region. The cumulative total number of visitors in hotels, from January 2012 to July 2012 fell by nearly 90% compared to the same period in 2011; 8,097 visitors in 2012 against 74,050 in 2011. This has resulted in huge financial losses leading to closures of establishments (44 in total including seven in Bamako), job losses at hotels (208) and technical unemployment in others (739).[68] An NGO representative from Kidal explains: *We tried tourism, but it worked well before the 1991 crisis, when people wanted to cross the desert or visit sand dunes, and stayed in settlements. Since then, especially with the threat of hostage taking, no one comes anymore. Kidal has become a transit town for African migrants trying to reach Europe, and since that has also been shut down, many people from all countries are stuck in Kidal; they now form the majority, and run all small trade activities (N30).*

In June 2012, 1.76 million people in Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal and Mopti regions were judged to be in a food crisis according to the Government of Mali.[69] Chronic drought and insecurity in 2012 disrupted traditional transhumance corridors and food distribution systems.[70] It is becoming increasingly difficult to find adequate water sources for animals as the dry season now begins earlier than was previously the case, and the scarcity of water and grazing lands has fueled inter-communal conflict. A Peul respondent from Menaka explains: *I came with my parents on pastoralist routes in Menaka during the hardships of the 1983 drought. We lived a long time with the Dahoussak Sections and other cattle farmers between northern pastoral areas in Menaka municipalities and Menaka and the river valley. As long as there was enough pasture, there was no hostility among farmers. Now conflicts have become increasingly serious, because of issues of access to, and ownership of resources. Among groups of farmers, the strongest rule. These days, Nomads are sometimes strongest, other times Peuls are* (N20).[71] These conflicts are exacerbated by battles over land rights. A Peul civil servant from Gao explains: *In districts, especially municipalities where land conflicts were numerous and substantial, the state doesn't address the issue and traditional practices are being overwhelmed by politics (N11).*

Even the NGO sector, which once provided some employment to those in the region, has scaled back its activities due to hardships generated by the crisis.[72] This has implications for the livelihoods that NGOs help to support, but also for those that they employed (N4).

The economic impact of the crisis coupled with the increased presence of criminal groups, poses the obvious danger of attracting more and more youth to participate in illegal activities. This does not only undermine stability and cohesion, but also state legitimacy as it further undermines state institutions.

Rebuilding trust in the absence of a legitimate state: Prioritize security, justice and livelihoods

The research and analysis above have captured multiple perceptions of the grievances stemming from current and past crises and shows that there is no single narrative of the north, nor any singular solution. Although at present most Malians are primarily concerned about security, different populations hold

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[68] Ibid

[69] "Mali-Complex Emergency". (2012) Situation Report No. 5. UNOCHA

[70] Others living in Mali described climate change and instability as heightening the competition for resources between groups: http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/mali/2013/stability-slowly-returning-but-durable-solutions-a-remote-possibility-for-many-idps

[71] Similar description from N17

[72] See Van de Walle. (2012) "Foreign Aid in Dangerous Places: The Donors and Mali's Democracy." Working Paper. 2012/61, UN University World Institute for Development Economics Research

different views pertaining to the primary sources of insecurity, in addition to governance solutions moving forward. While the majority of the Malian population views the Malian justice system as corrupt and illegitimate, the northern nomadic populations feel that they are systematically discriminated against by the state. While most of those interviewed hold the perception that the northern regions as the most marginalized by the state in terms of economic development, the narrative of this situation differs between groups, as does the impact and proposed solutions. We caution that even when groups fear a common threat or enemy, this does not guarantee solidarity, goodwill, or agreement on solutions between those groups.[73]

This chapter has shown convergence in perceptions around a number of priority themes that were identified by all respondents, yet the analysis also highlights the variation in perspectives among different stakeholders. While some Malians who are currently residing within the country's borders see immediate solutions linked to a stronger state, those Malians who remain in refugee camps currently view the state as negligent and predatory and may be reticent to embrace any short-term state-led solutions without a more substantial renegotiation of their relationship and sense of belonging to the state.

The 2012 crisis led many Malians who stayed behind to feel even more "deserted" by the state. Interviews in 2012 with ten villages in northern Mopti reveal that existing infrastructure gaps were made worse when state agents fled northern areas during the crisis, leaving populations feeling vulnerable and with little incentive to pay further taxes.[74] Respondents confirm this narrative, describing initial flight by government employees. A civil servant living as an IDP in Mopti explains: *The most senior state officials were the first to flee, because they had more means to do so. They took state resources, from projects, and left with their families, abandoning populations who had stayed. No more state authority, no more military forces; therefore the strongest armed groups prevailed. I personally strongly believed in the state, but with this crisis, I no longer trust it, because we need a strong country with resources* (N300).[75] Many refugees felt abandoned as there were no authorities or charitable agencies to turn to as they sought to flee the occupation (N47).

Despite the lack of confidence in past and current state performance, most of those living in the former occupied zones see a solution in a stronger state. Recent public opinion data suggests that Malians who remain in the north are still invested in the idea of a strong state and view rebel groups unfavorably. In a February 2014 survey of 3,495 individuals in Malian regional capitals, over 92% of respondents in every city except Kidal claimed that the "government should not negotiate with rebel actors while they are still armed." Residents of Timbuktu and Gao were some of the most adamant (at 99.1% et 98.4% respectively) that the government should not negotiate before the rebels were disarmed. Even in Kidal, 74% of respondents thought that the government should not negotiate with rebels while they were armed. Only a minority of those living in the North would prefer secession from the rest of Mali. Given the choice between a united and indivisible Mali and full autonomy for the north, only 7.5% of respondents from Gao, 12.5% from Timbuktu, and 27% from Kidal supported northern autonomy.[76] Afrobarometer data from December 2013 also suggest that those living in Mali want a stronger state.[77]

IDPs also see a stronger state as the solution to the current characterization of the north as the "law of the strongest, each for himself." However, they cautioned that the return of the state would need to be adequately financed (N5).[78]

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[73] For instance, Tuareg and Arab narratives are often presented as aligned, but it is important to acknowledge tension between these groups as well – especially in the context of rising insecurity and scarce resources. One respondent explained, "For these populations, life has become very difficult in 2013, as the conflict between Arabs and Touaregs prevented traditional solidarities to take place." (N66)

[74] Bleck & Michelitch. (2013).

[75] Similar sentiment from N 24 – a Tuareg respondent from Bourem.

[76] Guindo. (2014) "Sondage d'opinion sur les grandes actions du gouvernement." Working Paper

[77] Coulibaly (2014)

[78] Similar sentiments from a Songhai Marabout from Gao. (N16)

However, refugee populations are extremely weary for an expanded state presence. Violence subsequent to the French intervention has sparked not only distrust, but fear of the Malian state. It is for this reason that many refugees remain in camps as opposed to returning home. For these populations, judicial reform and rooting out corruption will be insufficient. It may require what some respondents describe as "a new social contract" binding northern communities to central state. A respondent from a focus group in the M'Bera Refugee camp in Mauritania describes his vision for reform: *Everything needs to be restructured in order for the state to represent the reality on the ground. The state that was inherited from the colonial period does exist, but not yet the Malian nation, ie a new social contract, a new will to coexist. The surface area is shared by heterogeneous entities; we don't speak the same language, we have different lifestyles. The state preceded the nation. But there first has to be a nation, i.e. a nation with a common history, a linguistic community, and a social contract. Without that, given the lack of cohesion, it is difficult; therefore each person must cope in his or her own way. Today, the contract that allows us to coexist and its processes need to be redefined (N53).*

The chart below demonstrates how the experience of refugees has dramatically shaped negative retrospective opinions of the state.[79] It provides some data on respondents' quantitative evaluations of the role of the state. While this is a relatively small sample, mean responses differ between from those living in Malian territory and those who fled abroad. State predation scores highly across all groups. Despite the fact that many respondents were ostensibly living in the same zones before the crisis, the discrepancies between scores provided by those in camps and those in Mali extend from oppression and protection by the state to the state's ability to provide services, and the quality of those services.

Figure 1: Respondents Evaluations of the Malian State by Current Location (N=63)
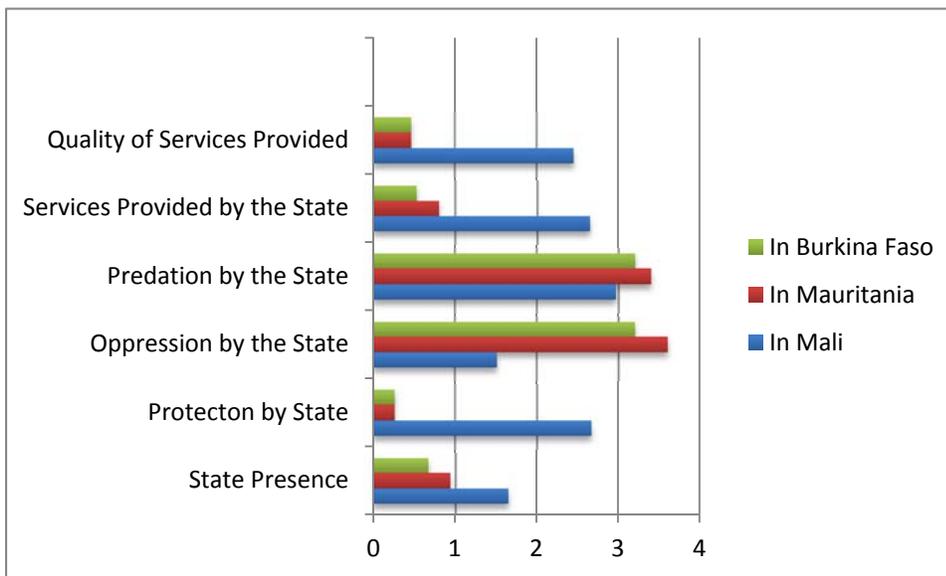
What is clear is that the experiences over the last year have resulted in a further loss of trust in the state and feelings of isolation and resentment among the many Tuareg and Arabs in refugee camps. The state is viewed as not only unable to protect these populations, but as a direct threat.

While this chapter has demonstrated a diversity of opinion concerning root causes, effects, and implications of the crisis, it has also demonstrated that all groups identify a fundamental governance challenge that will need to be addressed if a sustainable solution is to be found to the crisis. The

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[79] Scores range from a high of 4 (very good/a lot) to 0 (none/non-existent)

testimonies in this chapter also highlight a common concern by respondents around three key thematic areas: security, justice and livelihoods. Delivering on each to strengthen legitimacy, cohesion and stability will require the Government of Mali to adopt short and long-term strategies and rethink the types of services that it focuses on in the north. This is particularly important given the tension between perceptions of the north as marginalized and underserved, which is not necessarily supported by data. This suggests that state legitimacy and stability will not necessarily come from an increased state presence in the north and further investments in service delivery but may rely on a combination of traditional and state sponsored services focusing on security, justice and livelihood. To understand the extent of change required to address grievances and priority needs, we will now turn to a brief review of how the government has conceived its own presence in the past, and the existing challenges that will need to be addressed over the coming period for the state to strengthen its own legitimacy, and promote stability and social cohesion in the north.

II. THE POLITICS OF PEACEBUILDING: DEMOCRACY, DECENTRALIZATION, AND THE CHALLENGES OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN LOW DENSITY AREAS

Since Mali's democratic transition, decentralization reform has been employed as a critical policy response to address concerns about weak governance and lack of state presence and legitimacy. This chapter reviews the basic objectives behind the decentralization reform and its key components. It shows that while some successes were achieved, in particular in terms of political decentralization, implementation fell short – producing the legal framework and political decentralization, but failing to generate financial and functional responsibility. As shown by the 2012 crisis the incomplete reforms were unsuccessful in consolidating stability and territorial integrity in the northern regions.

The previous chapter has shown how different narratives exist in Mali to explain the lack of stability and territorial integrity, in particular in the northern regions. It has also highlighted how state legitimacy in northern Mali is linked to provision of key services in the areas of security, justice and livelihoods. The issues and concerns raised by different population groups are not new; they have been part of the state-society debate in Mali for several decades and highlight the governance deficit that continue to destabilize the country. Over the past decades the government has tried to improve governance of the whole country through various reform initiatives, most notably through a political commitment to decentralization and increased degrees of local autonomy as a response to popular demands. The following chapter will briefly review the government's commitment to these issues, as set out in the various peace agreements and policy documents since 1991. We will explain the basic elements and shortcomings of the decentralized governance system and the challenges faced with implementation that might help explain the continued lack of stability and integrity of the state in the northern regions.

Decentralized governance as a tool to promote peace and stability

Decentralization has been a component of Malian governance since independence in 1960, but became more pronounced as a core structural principle of state organization with the launch of the democratization process in the early 1990s. Unlike most other countries, the decentralization process in Mali was grounded in popular demand following the civil society uprisings that eventually led to the fall of Moussa Traore in 1991. Decentralization was largely seen as a policy reform intended to "restore the balance of political expression across Mali's vast and disparate territory"[80], and to consolidate and deepen democracy, improving the relationship between state and society, and providing specific development benefits through decentralized service delivery.[81] It came about through an elaborate national dialogue process that was appointed by the transitional government and was attended by 1,800 delegates, including representatives of the newly created political parties, religious groups, trade unions, women's groups, students and peasant representatives.[82] The conference confirmed that "the idea that greater vertical accountability could be achieved through decentralized local governance had great currency in Mali."[83]

In reality, decentralization quickly became framed in the context of territorial integrity, peace and stability. The new constitutional democracy had to tackle the Touareg rebellion in the north, and decentralization was presented as a conscious effort to distribute power downward in order to give multiple actors a stake in the political game. As explained by *Ouedraogo*, the country opted for decentralization "in an effort to win back the state's lost legitimacy and respond to popular demand".[84]

[80] Lemelle. (2008) "Capitalisation sur la décentralisation et le développement communal au Mali pour la période 2000-2006". Agence Française de développement, p. 17

[81] Ahmad, Shantayanan, Stuti, & Shekhar. (2005) "Decentralization and Service Delivery". Policy Research Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Bank

[82] Wiseman. (1996) *The New Struggle for Democracy in Africa*, Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, Vt., USA : Avebury, p. 88.

[83] Wing. (2013a). "Politics of a Crisis." *African Affairs* 112.448 (2013): 476-485, p. 480

[84] Ouedraogo. (2003) "M. G.: Decentralization and local governance: Experiences from Francophone West Africa", in Public Administration and Development, no 23, p 97-103

Early efforts to respond to Tuareg grievances and concerns resulted in the promotion of a "special status" for the north. The 1991 Tamanrasset Agreement recognized the special status of the three northern regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu, and promised to increase development-related efforts in these parts of the country.

The National Pact of April 1992 agreed to "a new administrative reorganization of the territory in the north of Mali, and at every level".[85] Some respondents from refugee camps felt as though this particular status was never actually implemented (N68)[86]; yet several still viewed the Pact as having potential to establish peace. As explained by a respondent from a focus group in M'Bera: The National Pact of 1992 offers some interesting answers, but the state refused to implement them and the international community did not provide the state with the necessary means for it. (N53) The National Pact also committed the government to integrate former fighters into the national army within 60 days, and to create separate army contingents of northern soldiers within the first year. These attempts were, however, viewed by many as unsuccessful. A former member of the Malian Army living in M'Bera refugee camp explained: *In fact, integration never really worked: it was part of a series of measures (the National Pact) that were never implemented by the State, or were distorted by corrupted representatives of the MFUA (Mouvements et Fronts Unifiés de l'Azawad). Our brothers from the army in the south never accepted us, never trusted us, with the exception of a few individuals that accepted to "do the dirty work," still for a low wage* (N65). Finally, in recognition of the cultural, geographic and socio-economic diversity in the north, the National Pact proposed a different way of organizing governance to promote peace and national unity. Three levels of local government was agreed - inter-regional, regional, and local – focused around directly elected regional assemblies. The Pact also agreed to a special fund and program for the development of the north.

The special status for the north was never realized. Instead, Mali opted for one integrated model of decentralization across the entire country. Three sub-national levels were designed, with a total of 761 devolved government entities -– *colectivites territoriales* – split into 703 communes, 49 cercles, and eight regions, plus the special district of Bamako. Contrary to the promise in the National Pact that the regions become the primary level of local governance, the decentralization law constituted the commune as the basic level of decentralization; the already 19 existing urban communes were maintained, and all villages were asked to organize themselves into rural communes. Local governance at the commune level would be decided based on direct elections, while cercle and region level representation would be decided through indirect elections. Security, which had been a major concern among northern groups, was retained as a central level responsibility.

Renewed violence in the 2000s resulted in renewal of the promises made in the National Pact. The Algiers Accord of July 2006 announced the establishment of a temporary regional council of coordination and a special investment fund to develop the north, and increased the region's responsibility for its own security through the creation of special military units.

The severity of the 2012 crisis brought back to life the debate about state presence in the north and the roles and responsibilities of decentralized governance. The topic has already has featured prominently in discussions regarding post-crisis reconstruction of Mali. In his 2013 election campaign, then candidate and current President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita insisted on the need to support decentralized actors and reform the national agency that liaises with local authorities. He has publicly recognized many of the remaining challenges with effective decentralization, including territorial disputes, uncertainties in the financial viabilities of municipalities, and administrative and capacity problems. Yet, as pointed out by participants during the recent Paris Conference on Territorial Governance and State Presence in the Sahel, all of these promises were already made in earlier agreements but not implemented. It will be important to

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[85] République du Mali. (1992) Pacte National Article 15
[86] Another respondent references the need to learn from the experience of the national pact, which has shaped Mali's trajectory. (N71)

understand the initial conditions under which decentralization arose, why agreed reforms were not fully implemented, and their particular impact in the north to avoid the same mistakes being repeated yet again.

Decentralization as a governing tool

This section will briefly review the implementation of decentralized governance in Mali with a particular focus on the north. It will look at political decentralization and links to traditional authorities, institutional and fiscal arrangements, and more recent efforts to improve security in the north by the central government. This section will not aim to provide a full overview of decentralized governance in Mali, but will rather draw on anecdotal evidence to explain some of the most urgent challenges faced.

A. Political Decentralization and the Breakdown of Traditional Authority

The decentralized system was founded on a significant degree of local autonomy through local elections, as a means to strengthen local governments' authority and capacity to both collect revenues and deliver services. During the presidency of Alpha Oumar Konare this policy seemed to have worked. While "previously, the central government was so weak that very few citizens came into contact with the state",[87] by 2002, more than half of Malians asked could correctly name the mayor of their municipality. In the period before the coup, turnout for municipal elections was consistently higher than turnout for presidential or parliamentary races.[88]

Popular satisfaction with decentralization started deteriorating following the election of Amadou Toumani Toure. His style of governing through consent undermined government institutions and capacities over time and resulted in a slowdown in decentralization, which became "a way for elites to access more rents by skimming from local budgets or tax collection".[89] A report from the International Crisis Group (ICG) indicated that under his governance, "relations between the center of power in Bamako and the periphery rested on a loose network of personal, clientelistic, even mafia-style alliances with regional elites with reversible loyalties rather than on robust democratic institutions."[90] Perceptions of corruption are also evident from looking at Afrobarometer data. For instance, in 2008, the majority of respondents said that local councils perform "fairly badly" or "very badly" in local services and in providing information to citizens. The result of his two terms was an increased disillusionment with the government.[91] This was particularly detrimental in the north, where the links between government officials and illicit traffickers were allowed to flourish and where "rule of law was bypassed in favor of personal connections."[92] A Tuareg herder from Lafia explained: *Poor people are the victims of a situation that persists in Mali since President Toure. To make money, they go along with Islamist kidnappers and narco-traffickers (N43).*

The lack of progress and transfers of resources and responsibilities resulted in increased frustration about slow implementation and lack of accountability. While local elections and autonomy was intended to strengthen state-society relations, a continued deconsentrated presence meant that the central state maintained a large degree of top-down authority, despite the fact that local governments are independently elected and have had expenditure responsibilities decentralized to them. This, combined with very limited fiscal autonomy, left the collectivities largely toothless in promoting local development. Participants at the *Paris Conference on Territorial Governance and State Presence in the Sahel* explained how the dual accountability dilemma tilted in favor of the central government, as sub-national actors were

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[87] Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi. (2005) "Public opinion, democracy, and market reform in Africa". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[88] For summary of voting rates: http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=ML;
http://africanelections.tripod.com/ml_2004communal.html. Accessed on 20 May 2014.
[89]Wing. (2013b) "Mali's Precarious Democracy and the Causes of Conflict". Special Report 331, *United States Institute of Peace*, p 7
[90] "Mali: Avoiding Escalation." (2012) Africa Report N189. International Crisis Group, p. 2
[91] Wing. (2013b)
[92] Tinti. (2014) p. 12.

increasingly incentivized to respond to demands from the top rather than to needs communicated from below.

The 2012 crisis brought to the fore questions around whether decentralized autonomy and local elections actually promote peace and territorial integrity. Beyond questions of fiscal viability of the system as a whole, the cohesion challenges of the northern regions seem to have been left unaffected by the different waves of decentralization reform over the past decades. This might be explained by the fact that administrative units in the north were drawn up based on existing socio-politico-economic bonds between communities while those in the south were drawn up based on the lines already created by the French colonizers.[93] This approach perpetuated a sense of ethnic and sub-national identify as basis for political organization in those parts of the country where state penetration was weaker, effectively making state authority more difficult to project. As sub-national governments remained fiscally incapable of delivering better basic service to these populations, social and ethnic tensions were allowed to blossom, as some territories were cut off from their traditional identities or economic dynamics.[94]

While decentralization did not contribute to higher degrees of confidence in the state, it did destabilize and contribute to the erosion of the power of traditional authorities.[95] Throughout history traditional authorities have played a critical role in Mali for managing community life and access to resources, and for resolving intra and inter-tribal conflicts. In the event of unresolved conflict, the traditional leader was normally the first to be informed and his proposed solution was generally accepted by all parties. The first republic abolished traditional authorities all together and while their roles were re-instated in the 1970s they have struggled to redefine their formal role within the modern Malian state. Over the past decades the gradual deterioration of this system in favor of the formal government administration has largely resulted in a vacuum in local conflict resolution and arbitration that the state has not been able to replace. Traditional leaders were largely left with the choice of either competing for positions inside the state, or to challenge the legitimacy of state authority. This dilemma has been further compounded by the competition that was introduced by criminal networks and fundamentalist religious groups.

B. The unfinished business of fiscal decentralization

Decentralization reform in Mali was based on a significant transfer of responsibilities and resources to local governments. The three levels of *collectivites territoriales* were handed responsibility for a substantial portion of public service provision in several areas. Key devolved responsibilities included health, education, and infrastructure. The communes in particular were designated as the main beneficiaries of these reforms, receiving responsibility for a number of important public services (see Table 1).

Table 1: Devolved responsibilities by sector and level

Sector	Commune Level	Cercle Level	Regional Level
Education	Primary schools Pre-schools Literacy	Secondary schools	Technical schools Professional schools Special education
Health	Health Posts & Staff (Centres de Santé Communautaire)	Health Clinics	Regional Hospitals
Infrastructure	Water Roads	Water Roads	Roads Communication

[93] Wing & Kassibo. (2010) "Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Mali Desk Study", Report prepared for U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC

[94] Interestingly, at least one Tuareg respondent claimed that commune boundaries were drawn in order to separate Tuareg communities and ignoring existing land and property rights.(N 53). This is consistent with a historical narrative raised in Chapter 2 in which some refugees perceived the state as actively dividing local communities and consistently depriving Tuareg communities of land and property rights.

[95] See for instance N17, N23.

	Communication Transportation	Communication	Energy
Other	Local markets Environmental Protection/Planning	N/A	Rural production Tourism
Source: Wing and Kassibo, 2010			

Devolution of responsibilities was also accompanied by the deployment of a large number of public officials across the country. In 2007, about 25,000 civil servants were working across the 8 regions of Mali (Bamako excluded). The table below shows that the three northern regions – Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal – are overrepresented when looking at both the number of civil servants and the cost, as percentage of regional population. Kidal in particular has a representation of civil servants per capita that is almost twice as high as Gao and more than three times that of any of the five non-northern regions.[96] The per capita cost of a civil servant in Kidal is also four times that of a civil servant in Mopti, even if the average salary is 16,000 CFA lower than in Mopti.

Table 2: Size and Cost of Civil Service per Region

Region	Population (2009)	Civil servants (2007)	% civil servants out of regional population	Average civil servant salary (2007)	Cost of a civil servant as a percent of the regional population
Kayes	1993615	3442	0.17%	140298	242.2
Koulikoro	2422108	4814	0.20%	145873	289.9
Sikasso	2643179	4779	0.18%	143059	258.7
Ségou	2338349	4551	0.19%	141030	274.5
Mopti	2036209	2993	0.15%	144042	211.7
Tombouctou	674793	1701	0.25%	135199	340.8
Gao	542304	1833	0.34%	136933	462.8
Kidal	67638	440	0.65%	127976	832.5
Sources: République du Mali. *Etude sur la Structure des Emplois dans la fonction Publique*, DOEF/ANPE, Juin 2007 and République du Mali. *4ème Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat du Mali (RGPH-2009), Résultats définitifs*					

Yet in spite of the significant push to devolve responsibilities to local governments, most of the public service consisted of deconcentrated agents of the central government. Of the total number of civil servants, only 10 percent - 2,627 civil servants – were directly employed by the *collectivite territorial*[97]. As in most other "francophone" countries, the state maintained its presence at all levels through its supervisory functions (known locally as "tutelle"). Deconcentrated representatives of the center – governors, prefects and sub-prefects – were appointed to assure the basic legality of local government actions and to provide technical support. Budgets of municipalities, districts and regions are subject to the approval of deconcentrated supervisors. The fact that most civil servants were attached to the central

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[97] Vergne Clémence. (2009) "Décentralisation en Afrique Francophone : Réflexions sur la Réforme de la Fonction Publique Territoriale", Division Réforme du Secteur Public et Renforcement des Capacités (AFTPR) Région Afrique, Forum d'Action pour la Gouvernance Locale en Afrique Francophone, p.7

government provided a clear impediment to delivering the responsibilities foreseen in the decentralization law.

Given the low population density in the north, the civil service has been largely staffed by recruits from the south, who have been sent there to perform their duties. These officials often do not have links to the local population, who see them as profiteers looking for positions in the north primarily to build their own careers.[98] A civil servant from Gao explained this perspective: *As a matter of fact, if there isn't someone from the North here to ensure that projects and assets are channeled to populations, the money would be embezzled. All those people from the South who accept to go to the North only want to get rich. They don't see it as a sacrifice, but rather as a gift of themselves. This is why there can't be any quality services in the North (N62).*

A significant degree of fiscal autonomy was also envisaged to accompany the devolution of responsibilities. According to the Code of Decentralized Authorities of April 1995, local governments, and in particular the communes, should have their own resources and autonomous budgets which should grant them the necessary means to fulfill those responsibilities transferred by the central state. Revenues were supposed to come from a combination of local revenue collection and intergovernmental transfers.

Local revenue collection was assigned as the primary source of income for local governments across Mali, and the decentralization law devolved responsibility for collecting a number of taxes. However, with the exception of a few bigger cities, most communes rely primarily on the local and regional development tax (TDRL, Taxe de Développement Régional et Local); a fixed head tax of 2,125 CFA/year (approximately US$4) for all persons of working age. Estimates from 2004 suggest that the TDRL alone accounted for about 80% of all own source revenues at the commune level in Mali.[99]

Tax recovery remains a key challenge, and highlights significant regional differences. In 2008 the national average recovery rate was approximately 46.6 percent (excluding Bamako) while the equivalent in Gao and Kidal stood at 28.2 and 1.8, respectively.[100] As most communes cannot function effectively without the TDRL, recovery rates of less than one-third should be understood as clear indications of the limited ability that subnational governments have to function in these two regions. During the Paris Conference participants highlighted several many reasons why sub-national governments (and especially communes in the north) are struggling to collect tax resources. First, some local taxes are considered unfair by the taxpayers. Second, the tax administration, which collects both central government and local taxes, often favors the collection of the former over the latter. Third, non-recorded population movements prevent a correct assessment of tax bases, especially since small rural municipalities do not have the capacity to identify taxpayers due to a lack of human resources.

Intergovernmental transfers are not nearly sufficient to fill the gap in local government budgets. The National Agency for Investment in Territorial Collectivities (ANICT) is primarily responsible for allocation of grants to sub-national governments. Allocation decisions are based on a set of equalization indicators, including local revenue capacity, remoteness, and population size, which seems to positively discriminate the northern regions. For 2013, Kidal had a budgeted allocation almost four times that of any other region. Yet overall transfers remain extremely limited and insufficient to deliver on the set of responsibilities of local governments. In 2010 ANICT had budgeted transfers of 20.5 billion CFA (about US$41 million), which represents approximately 2.3 percent of the total government budget for 2010 of 900 billion CFA (approximately US$ 1.8 billion).[101] The government also provides limited resources for

[98] "Stresses in the Sahel Region: Risk Vulnerability Analysis, A Case Study of Mali, Sahel Initiative". (2013) (P128192), Africa Region Conflict and Social Development Unit (AFTCS), World Bank: Washington DC

[99] "Decentralization in Mali: Putting Policy Into Practice." (2004) Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV)/Centre d'expertises sur la décentralisation et le développement local (CEDELO). Bulletin 362, Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute

[100] Sidibe. (2011) Table 7 P.48.

[101] ANICT 2010

technical and administrative support to local governments, although in 2010 the total level of discretionary transfers to the collectivities amounted to a meager 2 billion CFA, which represented about one-tenth of one percent of the national budget.[102] Budget execution data does not exist, and so it is difficult to assess the difference between budgeted and actual amounts available to local governments. Yet it is clear from discussions with mayors or their representatives at the Paris Conference that vertical transfers are largely insufficient to allow local government to exert their responsibilities, and that very often municipalities do not receive their money. A report of the French Senate indicated that in 2013 decentralized authorities in Mali had access to only 0.5 percent of the national budget.[103]

Given the limited availability of both local revenue and central budget transfers, the financial viability of the decentralized governance system in Mali has increasingly been put into question. As shown, there is recognition of the need to accommodate the higher costs of operating in low population density areas, including through a bigger civil service relative to the population and considerable willingness to send southern recruits to staff the local administration in the north. Yet as highlighted by the perceptions outlined in Chapter 2, these efforts have not necessarily resulted in better access to services, nor have they helped generate a sense of national identify and territorial integrity in the North.

C. *Unsuccessful attempts to create security and stability in the North*

As highlighted above, previous peace agreements had centered on efforts to reduce the footprint of the Malian army in the north. Instead, the local population would take greater responsibility for regional security through the creation of separate army contingents of northern soldiers. It is clear that the lack of implementation of these agreements has been major contributing factors to the most recent crisis. [104] In addition to showing the population in the north that the state was not serious about the promises made, the continued roll-out of increased local autonomy and reduced military presence created more opportunities for criminal behavior. Illicit trafficking over time became thoroughly integrated with political and military structures in northern Mali, while the policy of local autonomy "hollowed out the Malian state, undermining institutions and eroding the legitimacy of official systems of governance" in favor of personalized politics and connections.[105] One civil administrator from Gao described decentralization as prompting a disengagement of the state from the security and management of the collectivities allowing the infiltration of armed groups and jihadists (N11).

In 2010, President Toure launched the Special Program for Peace, Security, and Development (PSPSDN) in an attempt to reduce insecurity and terrorism in the north. This program has been attributed with contributing to instability in the region by reinforcing the sense that the government was ignoring the concerns of those living in the north. It also undermined decentralization by attempting to reintroduce the state security apparatus in the region (see Box 1).

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[102] MEF/RM, 2010
[103] Rapport d'Information du Senat N⁰ 513. (2013) Rapport d'Information du Senat N⁰ 513 fait au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, de la défense et des forces armées par le groupe de travail « Sahel », en vue des débats et du vote sur l'autorisation de la prolongation de l'intervention des forces armées au Mali
[104] Wing. (2013a), p. 481
[105] Tinti. (2014), p.2

Box 1: The PSPSDN

The Toure government launched the Special Program for Peace, Security and Development in northern Mali (PSPSDN) in 2010 in an attempt to reestablish security in the north of the country. The program aimed to reduce insecurity and terrorism in the region by "reestablishing a security and administrative presence of the state in eleven strategic sites". However, the 22 million dollar project failed to bring security to the north. The initiative was largely viewed as "top-down," administered directly from the President's office and it lacked the inclusive dialogue that is mentioned by so many respondents in Chapter 2. It emphasized police and military presence and resulted in a build-up of military forces in the north without a concomitant improvement in local perceptions of enhanced security, to the detriment of any other determinants of security. By introducing a stronger state presence of the state security apparatus in an environment where its presence was not universally welcomed, the PSPSDN increased tensions in an already fragile environment.

Sources: Wing 2013; Cooperation Mali Union Européenne

Conflict in Mali has largely been defined by regular rebellions against the state, as decentralization left local leaders the choice of either competing within the state structures or to oppose the state. The growth in criminal networks, the breakdown in traditional authority, and the continued inability of the state to stabilize the region has nonetheless resulted in increased levels of inter- and intra-communal tension. The security alliances that some groups had to enter into following the collapse of the army also contributed to a further breakdown in trust among northern groups. One participant at the Paris Conference explained how the increased levels of social tensions is about to change the nature of conflict in the north from one of regular rebellions against the state towards one that can generate a complete meltdown of social cohesion and result in civil war.

Addressing governance challenges through political commitment to dialogue and implementation

Mali's democratization process was founded on dialogue and its history of democracy through consensus dates back to the Malian Empire.[106] The country prides itself on this inclusive approach to decision-making, as indicated most clearly by the national conferences that took place in the early 1990s to agree on the design of the current governance system. Yet, as highlighted in Chapter 2, many people in the north feel that the political dialogue at present is not as inclusive as it should be. The population feels largely excluded from their governing system. Analysis of Afrobarometer data shows that 70% of Malians feel that their voices are not heard between election cycles, a number that is above the African mean of sixty-two percent who felt the same way.[107] These sentiments are even more profound in the north of the country. Researchers conducting the fieldwork for this survey in the refugee camps noted that respondents frequently referred to "Mali" rather than as their "state". This is compounded by a sense that elected figures from the north come to depend on the state for jobs and lose their ability to defend the northern population. These observations exemplify the attitudes of some northerners that they have no ownership over the Malian state at all.

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[106] Pringle. (2005) "Democratization in Mali: Putting History to Work". Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace
[107] Logan. (2010) "Citizens or Subjects? How Individuals Relate to the Local State in Democratizing Africa." Presented at the African Studies Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, p.25

As part of its tradition of dialogue, Mali also has a history of reaching negotiated agreements with opposition movements that aim to promote national unity and reconciliation. The most recent crisis is no exception. Following the signing of the Ougadougou Agreement in 2013 the transition government constituted a Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the mandate to promote reconciliation thorough an investigation of violence and atrocities associated with the 2012 conflict. Following the election of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, a ministry was established in charge of national reconciliation, and the commission was replaced by a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission with a more far-reaching mandate to address atrocities from Mali's creation in 1961 until today. However, as with previous peace agreements, implementation has proven difficult, and the commission has yet to initiate its work in earnest. There is also evidence to suggest that people in the northern regions are less likely to trust dialogue between elites and armed groups (see chapter 2), not least given the past history of unmet and broken promises in the north.

The above analysis has highlighted the mixed record of decentralization reform in Mali in terms of achieving many of its stated objectives of promoting state legitimacy, stability, cohesion, and more efficient service delivery. Following the crisis in 2012, some observers have concluded that Malian decentralization remains an "empty shell" relying on good laws but without effective implementation.[108] What is clear is that the decentralization process in Mali was successful in promoting a meaningful political decentralization process by establishing elected sub-national governments. Beyond this, achievements are less clear. Fiscal decentralization has lagged, as responsibilities have been transferred without accompanying resources, and institutional decentralization retains a significant role for the state's exercise of its "supervisory capacity." While effective in terms of providing a degree of structure and oversight, this system helped tilt accountability of locally elected officials away from the population towards the central government, thus undermining the very basis of democracy that it was intended to promote. The ambiguities of this supervisory capacity left it open to a significant degree of interpretation. Power to a large extent remained "organized in a highly top-down fashion within the state and between levels of government," as "a prime mechanism in truncating local autonomy." In short, "the transition to decentralized government might have occurred, but this has not yet been consolidated."[109]

Decentralization has been the forefront of the state's early efforts to respond to the crisis (see box 2). Participants at the Paris Conference recognized that some form of decentralization would be essential to the stability of the north, but that the existing system has not delivered intended results. A growing body of empirical research and international experience indicates that the impact of democratic decentralization remains inconclusive in low population density and post-conflict settings, for example with respect to reducing poverty, participatory decision-making processes, quality of services, administrative performance, and local resource availability.[110] Unsurprisingly, the evidence suggests that it is the extent and form of decentralization, and the nature of its implementation, as well as the nature of the broader governance environment, that are key determinants of the impacts on service delivery. When decentralization has contributed to improve local public services, it has typically done so in combination with other key factors, notably the existence of a strong central state, and where there is a coherent national and local policy environment.[111]

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[108] Rapport d'Information du Senat N⁰ 513. (2013)
[109] Wing & Kassibo. (2010), p 21
[110] Crook. (2003) "Decentralization and poverty reduction in Africa: The politics of central–local relations", *Public Administration and Development* 23(1): 77–88; Conyers. (2007) "Decentralization and service delivery: Lessons from sub-Saharan Africa", *IDS Bulletin* 38, No1; Robinson. (2007) "Does decentralization improve equity and efficiency in public service delivery provision?", *IDS Bulletin* 38(1) p1-17; Booth. (2012) "Development as a Collective Action Problem: Addressing the Real Challenges of African Governance." London: ODI/Africa Power and Politics ; Mansuri & Rao. (2012) " Localizing Development. Does Participation Work?" A World Bank Policy Research Report . Washington DC ; Wunsch. (2013) "Analyzing self-organised local governance initiatives: are there insights for decentralization reforms", *Public Administration and Development* 33: 221–235.
[111] Crook (2003) and Mansuri and Rao (2012)

Box 2: Renewed commitment to decentralization

In May 2013, the interim government recognized that any effort to address the root causes of the crisis would involve urgent reforms to: i) Strengthen the role of decentralized actors to resolve the current crisis; ii) Speed up the transfer of responsibility and resources from the state to decentralized actors; iii) Deepen the role of decentralized actors to govern, provide basic services, and promote local economy; and iv) Reinforce deconsentration with additional human, material and financial means over Malian territory. The government recognized that these measures will entail reviewing the past reforms on decentralization to address the need for better service delivery, and increased trust between the state and its citizens.

President Keita's action plan for 2013-2018 (Programme d'Actions du Gouvernement (PAG)) reiterates these priority areas and emphasizes the need to build strong and credible institutions, through the reform of the public administration, a deepening of decentralization with the design of programs to implement devolution, and the development of participative democracy. The government started working in December 2013 on a project to reform the security sector and strengthen the army's ability to fight against drug trafficking and crime organization. National reconciliation was also raised as a key priority, and a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission was created in December 2013 along with a program for rapid development of the north (Programme de Développement Accéléré du Nord (PDAN)). Yet beyond the political statements progress has been sluggish; the Ouagadougou Agreement of June 2013 announced the launch of talks between the parties 60 days after the completion of presidential elections, but disagreements between Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's government and Tuareg groups prevented the dialogue from progressing, resulting in the absence of the MNLA at the national consultations on decentralization in October 2013 (Assises de la décentralisation), and on the north in November 2013 (Assises nationales sur le Nord).

The timing and sequencing of decentralization processes matters. The internal political incentives for decentralizing may have little to do with bringing services closer to the population and political support for devolution policies may alter as political tendencies shift. This is particularly relevant when decentralization processes are developed as part of power-sharing transition periods – when there may be a greater political convergence, for example, around the desirability of retaining the concentration of power in particular regions/provinces or in limiting the central power of the state. Such incentives may no longer be present once transition has been completed – the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) provides one example of where this has been the case – and this may help to explain why in the African context, there can be a significant gap between formal decentralization reform processes and their implementation in practice. The question that many respondents have asked during the preparation of this study is whether the severity of the crisis in 2012 will result in a real commitment to move beyond the rhetoric to facilitate implementation of key decentralization reforms.

The design of the decentralized system also matters. The north had been offered special status in the National Pact, but this promise did not translate into specific governance models that recognized their cultural and socio-economic diversity. Asymmetrical arrangements have been tested with success elsewhere in response to diversity and to deliver services to marginalized areas. These arrangements can either be used to give greater power to local governments in response to secessionist pressures (i.e. France with Corsica) or by promoting stronger central government involvement in service delivery. In Canada, indigenous communities deal directly with the federal rather than the provincial government.

Renewed reform efforts are undoubtedly important for political signaling purposes, as part of ongoing political negotiations to solve the crisis. Yet, the above analysis points to a critical challenge that should

be reflected on as Mali rethinks its governance approach and efforts to promote longer term stability and territorial integrity: *To what extent was the original design of the decentralized state able to promote state legitimacy, stability and cohesion across the territory, and what "fixes" to this design could be envisaged to better respond to the regional, social, cultural and economic realities of the north?* Answering this challenge might mean going far beyond finding technical fixes to improve existing systems and procedures for more effective intergovernmental governance; it touches on the very fundamentals of statehood in Mali and links between the center and the population living in the north.

Leading away from aspects of decentralization is the challenge of security for Mali. Government provision of security services in the north remains an issue requiring further consideration as to modalities. Understandably intent on restoring law and order and countering extremism within Mali's borders, the government should also consider the effect of its security footprint amongst northern communities which remain suspicious of government security providers and their intentions. The government of Mali remains in an unenviable predicament and should be supported as it attempts to balance a responsibility to provide security for all its citizens while building relationships with communities in the north.

The above highlights the importance of returning to the original goals of democracy and decentralization as a tool to promote territorial integrity, state legitimacy, cohesion, and poverty reduction. For the government this could mean exploring different design options based on geographical and cultural differences, and to carefully consider options to prioritize those services that might have the highest positive impact on their legitimacy and on national cohesion and stability going forward. Chapter 2 has shown that these include services that promote a sense of security and justice, and improve livelihoods. The institutional transformation that might be required to fix local governance is a generational project but options exit to promote security, justice and livelihoods even in the interim. The next chapter will look at the international experience with delivery of these priority services in low population density areas, and the specific delivery options that could be considered in this regard.

III. WHAT INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE TELLS US ABOUT OPTIONS TO DELIVER SERVICES IN LOW-DENSITY AND INSECURE AREAS[112]

Service delivery in low density areas is challenging, not least in northern Mali where the average population density is far below the national average of 11 inhabitants per km2. Limited infrastructure, long distances, limited number of users, and fiscal constraints all contribute to the often much higher per capita cost of services in these areas. In northern Mali these are compounded by rampant insecurity, fragile ethnic relations and very limited trust in state institutions. This chapter will discuss the particular challenges involved when delivering services in low population density areas, identify innovative solutions[113] from international experience and review Mali's experience.

Delivering government services in areas of low population density, particularly where there has been experience of conflict or insecurity, where perceptions of marginalization and discrimination run large, and where there may be diverse and nomadic populations, can pose significant challenges. Due to limited infrastructure and fiscal constraints, as the per capita cost of services is much higher when the number of service users is lower, service delivery in low density areas is challenging. One such obstacle is the high prevalence of hard-to-reach populations living in physically remote areas. It is often not feasible to maintain a full network of services in low population density regions that have dispersed and remote communities. Roads are longer, cost more and are difficult to maintain. Transport times increase significantly and providing energy is challenged by long distance power lines which are more expensive and suffer line losses. It may be possible to reach some degree of critical mass where the population is clustered in a small number of communities, but where the population is dispersed, particularly in rural areas, the costs of connecting people are proportionally high.[114]

Governments of countries with large unpopulated areas are often faced with serious dilemmas regarding their management. The conglomeration of scarcely populated areas and limited economic activities does not often merit significant levels of public investment, at least not from an efficiency point of view. Yet, as highlighted by the recent crisis in Mali, a growing sense of marginalization amongst the local population and the presence of alternative non-state service providers and of criminal networks has significant challenges for state legitimacy, stability and cohesion. For a country like Mali, with constrained fiscal resources, the dilemma is even more acute as the issue may not be one of misallocation, but of insufficient resources overall. Reallocating resources from higher density areas and urban centers to scarcely populated regions may seem less attractive from a political and economic perspective, especially given the often higher cost of delivery in low population density areas and the relatively lower impact on aggregate poverty reduction. Experience shows that although countries have attempted to address these dilemmas this has often been done in a relatively incoherent and ad hoc manner. With the exception of a few developed countries with considerable fiscal resources such as Canada, Australia or Norway, others have rarely differentiated modalities of administrative presence between peripheral areas and areas of high population density. Few examples exist of attempts to provide public services in different ways, such as traditional community structures of nomadic populations and remote communities or through clustering multiple services through one provider.

More fundamentally, in many of these contexts the state is either absent or perceived as remote, and this in turn can reinforce a sense of mistrust and undermine state–community relations. Service delivery is a

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[112] This chapter is based on the background paper drafted by ODI ("Innovations in Service Delivery. International Experience in low-density Countries." (2013) Oversees Development Institute (ODI) Background Paper) for the purpose of this study. All examples referring specifically to Mali come from the field work conducted by Group URD.

[113] We define innovations as attempts to provide basic services to populations, or overcome barriers to service delivery, in ways that meet the contextual factors of low population density, socio-economic diversity and insecurity. In this sense our definition is very much driven by context – thus service-delivery approaches that have in some way attempted to address these particular contextual factors.

[114] See "Strategies to Improve Rural Service Delivery." (2010) OECD Rural Policy Reviews, OECD Publishing, p. 28

key indicator of the state's reach, and a real or perceived lack of services can have a direct impact on state legitimacy and national cohesion. This point is particularly relevant in northern Mali; data on service provision in the north shows that access in some sectors is actually compatible with or higher than in the south, yet the perception of marginalization and neglect has resulted in a fundamental lack of trust in state institutions.. Efforts have been made to rethink delivery models in response to these challenges, including through the use of local-level provision in the absence of state presence and through adapting, combining and tailoring services relevant to the specific needs of low-density populations.

There are some core features for delivering services in low-density areas, namely the ability to establish more mobile services, the potential for greater connectivity (including through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICTs)), the use of practical hybrids and processes of reconciliation and reconstruction linked to conflict. Relevant examples of international experience address at least one of the following key problems/issues:

- Nomadic or mobile populations
- Populations with indigenous, ethnic or religious diversity
- Conflict-affected populations, including a range of conflict patterns, from sub-national to international and regional.

Below we will review a number of such attempts to rethink delivery models in response to low density and insecurity, both from northern Mali and from other countries, with a view to identify possible solutions to overcome the challenges of improving security, justice and livelihoods.

Mobility & Adaptability

By definition, regions characterised by low population density have dispersed and remote communities, so it is often not feasible to maintain a full network of services, such as establishing health clinics and schools in each community. Given that the distances that some people must travel to obtain access to such services may limit them from doing so, there have been efforts to develop more mobile service-delivery mechanisms. In addition there have been efforts to adapt the nature of the services in order to tailor the types of services offered to the specific needs of low-density populations. Looking at how these have developed in different sectors provides some useful insights into the range of service-delivery options in Mali and the conditions needed to ensure these are effective.

Physical Mobility. State and non-state actors have used mobile schools to deliver educational services to isolated communities. In Mongolia, where most people are pastoralists, tent-schools and/or the use of cars as mobile training centers have had some level of success. The key elements of their effectiveness appear to have been compulsory school attendance, supported by effective enforcement, and the fact that teachers were also part of the nomadic community and received regular government salaries.[115] Another useful example is the Nomadic Skills Training and Vocational Education Project (STVEP) in northern Nigeria, a series of 258 schools accommodates children of nomadic communities who register for the program and then move from school to school throughout the year.

The key feature here is that mobile units and mobile staff allow the targeting of hard to reach groups by delivering services to particular communities. This can make service providers more visible and, over time, encourage greater interaction and trust between users and providers. The drawback is that it may not always be cost-effective to provide fully mobile services, particularly when these need to cover significant distances and rely on existing infrastructure such as accessible roads.

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[115] Krätli. (2001) "Education provision to Nomadic pastoralists. A literature review". IDS Working Paper 126. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

The experience in Mali has highlighted that, while mobile services may be relevant for hard-to-reach populations, in particular nomadic and pastoralist communities, they depend upon certain infrastructure. Contrary to more developed countries such as Australia and Canada where infrastructure and appropriate equipment including serviceable roads and off-road vehicles are easily available, mobile service provision in northern Mali relies on more rudimentary forms of transportation such as bicycles, motorbikes or pack animals. Thus, where mobile provision has been introduced, it has often focused on a particular gap rather than providing a full spectrum of services.

Adaptability. Service needs of low-density populations differ in certain circumstances, and as a result, there have been attempts to adapt the nature of services in order to tailor them to these specific needs. It may not be tenable or cost-effective for mobile services to provide all services, but it may be more viable to provide several services, including health, education and sanitation sectors, through the same infrastructure. School-feeding programs, for example, use schools as the entry point for health and nutrition-related services by training teachers in basic hygiene, nutrition and health issues who can then provide guidance, monitor children's growth and development and refer them to health centers when necessary.

Community Health Facilitators are another example of adapting to the context. Community members with a certain degree of education are trained in simple diagnostics and procedures. These do not necessarily delivery services but they are trained to sensitize the communities and provide information. Provision of services for livestock care in marginalized areas by Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) supplying para-veterinary services has improved livestock health at the local level. In Karamoja, in northern Uganda, the use of veterinary-supervised CAHWs was an important strategic element contributing to the eradication of infectious cattle diseases such as rinderpest. CAHWs played a key role in delivering vaccines and conducting surveillance to ensure control of the disease.[116] In north-west Kenya, pastoralist farmers ranked CAHWs as providing more affordable, accessible services with better treatment outcomes than other modes of delivery (public, private and NGO).[117] The success factors included community involvement in the design and implementation of these systems and the involvement of the private sector in supplying and supervising CAHWs, as CAHW systems are typically delivered in collaboration with government health services, the private sector and other non-state actors. Government veterinary officers also played a strong role in training, regulating and overseeing the work of the CAHWs, underlining the importance of supervisory and regulatory frameworks for more mobile services. Similarly in Kenya, one effective initiative has been the creation of boarding schools deep within nomadic regions, such as the SAKA in Kenya's North Eastern Province – run primarily by the communities.[118]

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[116] Catley, Leyland, Mariner, Akabwai, Admassu. Asfaw, Bekele, & Hassan. (2004) "Para-veterinary professionals and the development of quality, self-sustaining community-based services", Scientific and Technical Review, World Organization for Animal health (OIE) 23(1): 225–252

[117] Ibid

[118] Kelleher. (2007) "Reaching nomadic communities: Providing inclusive quality education" in Commonwealth Secretariat (2007) *Commonwealth Education Partnerships 2007* London: Commonwealth Secretariat

> *Mixed mobile and animal health teams in Mali*: In pastoral, low density areas and nomadic areas of northern Mali, animal and human health is equally important, and initiatives exist that provide animal and human health care in tandem. Human and animal health teams are protected by communities and can access remote areas. "*We let the people know about delays when there is a security issue or a vehicle breaks down; they are the ones who provide security or assist us when required.* […] *The CESCOM from which mobile health unite are staged was never attacked, no problem at all. The CESCOM is essential for the population. It has existed since 2007/2008*." (N52). This may have changed over the past year though, with increasing attacks and mines deployed on major roads in the north.
>
> *Fixed sites/sites of integration in Mali*: Mobile health units operating in northern Mali, for example, follow the "market calendar" and access communities in areas where concentrated economic activity and proximate interaction occur: "*Cattle markets should be expanded. We have two examples that worked very well in our region, the two sites of Tichift and Inagozmi. In two years, both markets had sold 20 times more animals. For us, this gave us leverage to open access to a market where products that we bring back from Algeria and Mauritania can be sold. This helps us maintain supply levels and deliver livestock near communities. Markets are also places where people meet each other, and local livestock farmers; also in health facilities, schools. The presence of mobile health units, as well as municipalities and AVSF teams, has turned these markets into transit sites. Nowadays, people from the most remote areas visit them not only to purchase their supplies, but also to seek health services* (N343)

Adaptation requires community involvement in program design and implementation, which requires direct participation from community members and strong central oversight to ensure the consistency and quality of services provided. This also depends on realistic assessments of capacity at the local level.

Great Connectivity through the use of ICTs

Where physical mobility is particularly difficult and there is limited ability to provide services based on full physical mobility, the growing use of ICTs is delivering improvements in virtual delivery and connectivity. ICTs have been used to strengthen the delivery of services for remote and hard-to-reach areas in a variety of ways. They have been effective in facilitating relationships and connectivity between service providers and users, and their use has been particularly promising in the fields of agriculture, markets and health.

In Ghana, basic mobile phone technology has enabled Community Health Workers (CHWs) to collect patients' data and upload records to a centralised database.[119] Through the Mobile Technology for Health initiative, patients' records are analysed to establish personalised care schedules, and reminders are sent to nurses and patients about heath visits. Recorded messages offering advice on pregnancy-related issues, important facts about foetal development and reminders about health visits are sent to pregnant women. Providers can also maintain contact with patients, for instance concerning antenatal care or diseases such as HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Innovative use of ICTs, including radio and mobile phones, is also being piloted to provide distance education to children from pastoral communities. This emphasises the use of radio as part of distance learning, alongside the use of mobile phones, so that teachers can exercise oversight.

ICTs can also facilitate access to agricultural market information. Farmers' physical distance from markets means they face substantially greater search and opportunity costs than their urban counterparts in sourcing prices, jobs, and the availability of potential buyers and sellers. This puts them at a disadvantage in negotiating prices with intermediaries. An analysis of grain markets in Niger, for

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[119] "Health: New Horizons for Health through Mobile Technologies". (2011) Global Observatory for Health Series, 3. Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO)

example, found that an increase in mobile phone coverage between 2001 and 2006 was accompanied by a significant reduction in price variations between rural and urban markets, particularly in more remote markets where physical distance and poor roads increase transport costs.[120] Although there are low-technology alternatives, such as radio broadcasts, to inform rural consumers and farmers of market prices, the news is often out of date. Mobile phone technology offers access to real-time and accurate information, allowing rural farmers in countries such as Ghana, Niger and Senegal to type in a code, send a message and immediately receive market information.[121]

ICTs represents an area of international interest at present, particularly as it pertains to facilitating access to financial transactions through mobile financial applications and mobile banking systems. These have significantly reduced the transaction costs and risks of transferring money, and family members who are living in towns and cities can send money to their rural families more quickly, cheaply and safely than before. These innovations have often provided a gateway to formal financial services and access to competitive micro-financing loans which were previously unavailable to sparse rural populations, to whom it is too costly to offer traditional banking facilities. Moreover, a safe and cheap savings system, in addition to the simplicity of transfers, makes it easier for rural households to respond to unplanned financial demands, such as unforeseen health care needs.

Mobile money transfer in Mali: In low density areas in the north, where the banking systems is practically non-existent, money transfers via mobile phones represent a new and interesting element of business transactions, such as Orange Money and Money Gram. This allow for the transfer of salaries, remittances and international aid.

In addition, ICTs can be useful for supporting the gathering of information and enabling service providers and the government to better understand and respond to the needs of users in more remote areas. This may be essential in order to be responsive to the needs of different populations, and thus contribute to greater trust and legitimacy.

Mobile phone technology can be used to collect data on service delivery, usage and needs and to feed this back to policy-makers. The use of EpiSurveyor in Senegal is an interesting example. Funded by a partnership between the UN Foundation and the Vodafone Foundation, and implemented by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), this trained CHWs to collect data using the EpiSurveyor software that can be used on standard mobile phones, smartphones and personal digital assistants (PDAs). The CHWs collected monthly information from health centers, which they sent to the district level for analysis following which it went to the Ministry of Health for synthesis across districts. Health officials used the data to reallocate budgets in order to respond to shortages or needs. It led to some key changes – for instance, the data identified the widespread lack of a Partogram, a basic and inexpensive method used to assist in childbirth, and the Ministry of Health increased its distribution as a result. There are now plans to broaden the software use in other health-related areas.

Similarly, EpiCollect is used in Kenya to improve the reporting of animal diseases outbreaks in livestock and to track vaccination campaigns. Working in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Royal Veterinary College, Vetoid (a local NGO) and Google Kenya, EpiCollect provides phones to field veterinarians so that they can provide real-time information on the early stages of possible disease outbreaks, even in areas that were previously inaccessible. It also allows for data on the total number of livestock and number of vaccinated animals to be stored and for herd movements to be tracked and updated.

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[120] Aker, J. (2008) 'Does Digital Divide or Provide? The Impact of Cell Phones on Grain Markets in Niger'. Berkeley: University of California
[121] Aker & Mbiti. (2010) "Mobile phone and economic development in Africa". Working Paper 211. London: Centre for Global Development

The use of ICTs can therefore accelerate data-collection and processing and enable the identification of critical constraints. At the same time, ICTs can make service providers more visible and, where information from local communities is acted upon, show responsiveness and follow-up, supporting better perceptions of delivery.

This type of data collection can also be used to support stronger transparency and information flows to foster proactive communication. In the fragile and insecure context of northern Mali, it is likely that rumors and misperceptions abound, which could be mitigated through better communication channels including through support by the media sectors. Regular surveys or updates from the population may also be interesting to support citizens' voice and allow for more real-time monitoring of people's perceptions on key issues around legitimacy, corruption and evolving attitudes. One approach could be to set-up something along the lines of a 'North Mali Barometer' aligned with a communications and dissemination strategy for dialog.

It is clear that while ICTs offer new opportunities to improve connectivity in low-density settings, the use of ICTs also requires key infrastructure, including good levels of coverage. While the rates of mobile phone coverage have expanded rapidly in North and sub-Saharan Africa in the past decade, they tend to be lowest in areas of low population density and in remote, isolated locations. Indeed, the landlocked countries of West and Central Africa, including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, have some of the lowest coverage rates on the continent.[122] Scaling up the use of ICTs as part of service delivery in Mali would require investment in infrastructure, such as base stations, electricity and Internet access, and hardware, such as computers and mobile phones. The use of ICTs can be facilitated by effective government regulation to ensure competitive pricing models to stimulate demand, and by partnerships between government and the private sector and/or non-state actors such as technology providers like Google or service providers such as mobile phone operators. Another constraint may be in charging up mobile phones in nomadic or isolated settings. This could be addressed through solar or other technology.

Hybrid Arrangements

Innovations for service delivery in low-density and diverse areas often take the form of hybrid arrangements. Hybrids recognize that very often service delivery involves a range of public and private, formal and informal arrangements. The term 'practical hybrid' reflects government efforts to adapt to local preferences. These can be particularly effective for engaging more remote communities and in areas where there are high levels of diversity. They can be useful in adapting to local preferences and building trust between state and society. Customary institutions are often central to hybrid arrangements because they reflect the cultural and social norms that govern peoples' everyday lives. Customary institutions may be seen as more culturally sensitive or, where the state has a weak presence, they may be the most visible institutions at local levels. There may, however, be trade-offs in working with both formal and informal institutions.[123]

A particularly relevant example involves the integration of Islamic schooling into more formal systems of education in the Sahel region. In the mainly Francophone countries of the Sahel, the French system of secular education has historically been perceived as out of touch with mainly Islamic populations. In response to the expectations of parents who want religious values to be an integral part of their children's education, this has encouraged the development of parallel systems of informal schools. In Mali,

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[122] Ibid
[123] Marc, Willman, Aslam, & Rebosio with Balasuriya. (2013) "Societal Dynamics and Fragility – Engaging Societies in Responding to Fragile Situations." Washington, DC: World Bank

madrassas and Quranic schools have flourished, and in Niger Franco-Islamic schools have become more popular than the Franco-Arab schools.[124]

While national policies to increase the number of children completing formal education have had limited success, these informal systems of education have continued to grow, but have not typically offered pupils the same access to employment opportunities as the official education system, the latter a priority for parents. Research examining recent reform processes in these countries indicates that there has been a conscious attempt to bring educational institutions more into line with local realities, partly in recognition of some of these gaps. However, there is a need to pay close attention to issues of education quality and equity, something not well addressed in recent research.

Franco-Arab, Islamic and madrassa schools in Niger and Mali: In Niger, state reforms have focused on borrowing elements, such as religious instruction, from Franco-Islamic schools in order to expand the Franco-Arab system of schooling, while in Mali, past reforms attempted to create incentives for 'madrassa' schools to adopt the official state curriculum without relinquishing their religious missions. It is important to note that parents' refusal to send their children to state schools in Niger and Mali did not reflect a rejection of the state, but responded to a demand that the state system better reflect the prevailing moral and cultural values of the mainly Islamic population.

In both Mali and Niger, parents have welcomed hybrid reform approaches and there are early indications that school enrolment rates have increased, particular among girls. In some hybrid schools, girls have outnumbered boys, sometimes significantly, although the study did not address questions of education quality and gender-differentiated teaching curricula.

Source: Villalón, Leonardo and Mahaman Tidjani Alou. 2012.

Bringing together formal and informal justice systems has been one interesting approach. Hybrid systems combining formal state institutions, customary leaders and other informal arrangements for dispute resolution have been used in other countries in response to the lack of presence and capacity of the formal justice system. Research in Ghana highlights the importance of hybrid arrangements between state and non-state, and formal and informal justice provision, drawing on a large-scale multi-method comparative study of three types of justice provision.[125] It found that while alternative dispute-resolution methods are available, they are mediated by the magistrate courts and, in particular, courts operating under the purview of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, a constitutional body established in 1992. Magistrates have been able to conduct procedures informally, using local languages and drawing on a variety of legal codes including customary law and cultural principles, such as respect for the elderly. Citizens report that such dispute-settlement has been fair, although it is important to note that such systems depend on the extent to which customary law is respectful of individual rights in the first place or steeped in societal hierarchies.[126]

Promoting local conflict resolution mechanisms in response to inter-communal tension also offers interesting examples. In Chad, a donor-financed program allowed the Chadian authorities to create water points and define the parameters of migratory corridors used by nomadic herders and their livestock.[127] This approach encouraged communities, private sector operators and customary authorities to use

[124] Villalón, Idrissa & Bodian. (2012a) « Religion, demande sociale et réformes éducatives au Mali ». APPP Research Report 7. London: Africa Power and Politics Programme ; Villalón, Idrissa & Bodian. (2012b) « Religion, demande sociale et réformes éducatives au Niger ». APPP Research Report 6. London: Africa Power and Politics Programme ; Villalón & Tidjani Alou. (2012) "Religion and education reform in Africa: Harnessing religious values to developmental ends." DFID: African Power and Politis Policy Brief 7

[125] Crook, Asante, & Brobbery. (2010) "Popular concepts of justice and fairness in Ghana: testing the legitimacy of new or hybrid forms of state justice". APPP Working Paper 14. London: Africa Power and Politics Progamme and Crook. (2011) "The state and accessible justice in Africa: is Ghana unique?" APPP Policy Brief 3. London: Africa Power and Politics Programme

[126] Booth (2012)

[127] « Tchad : Accompagner la transhumance et prévenir les conflits ». Agence Française de Développement, AFD Projets de développement rural

traditional forms of conflict mediation, known as 'abre de palabre', to negotiate boundaries for nomadic corridors. This improved herders' productivity and revenues, and enhanced relations between nomadic and sedentary populations, both of which underscored the efficacy of peaceful conflict resolution.

Conflict mediation during the crisis in Mali: At the local level, a number of conflict mediation approaches have been developed to reduce inter-communal conflict and decrease levels of social tension. Among the various examples of conflict mediation approaches, a key feature has been the involvement of customary authorities and traditional methods of mediation. Upon hearing of the return of fighters from Libya, community leaders in Gao region organized an inter-cultural peace delegation that was effective in building trust across groups to pre-empt violence. "*We had already experienced war and intercommunity conflicts in the 1990s in the Gao region. This is why, as soon as we felt tensions mounting, the men came back from Libya (September 2011). Since talks with the government weren't going anywhere, we decided to do something at our level to avoid the kind of violence we had known in the past. We organized a joint emergency mission in both nomadic and settled areas to sensitize people. The goal was to establish trust and ensure that, no matter what happened, populations would refrain from committing any act of revenge or killing. This mission visited the settled communities of Gounzourey, Soni Ali Ber, Gabéro, as well as Gao's urban district. As far as the Nomad and mixed communities, the mission reached out to rural communities on the river shore, including Soni Ali Ber, Gao, N'Tillit and Gounzourèye. This work aimed to build social cohesion, allowed us to meet people, and definitely helped avoid the worst in this area.*" (N311)

The practice of community policing has been increasingly used to enable communities and formal law-enforcement institutions to cooperate in contested settings and to reduce the perception of police officers as outsiders. In Afghanistan a key feature of the community policing program was that it retained the essence of the traditional social structures through which it is implemented. Information flows were enhanced due to the involvement of traditional leaders. Community policing can be particularly relevant for conflict-affected areas, where control over security provision has been contested. Community policing models have been put forward as useful in existing institutional arrangements and community relations, and as offering the potential to defuse local conflict and tensions.[128] In Niger, a community policing system has enabled the police to better understand its role among dispersed populations and has increased trust between the police and the population.[129] The police recruit and train volunteers to undertake patrols, and hold regular meetings with religious groups and mayors who finance the volunteers, supervise and organise community-policing patrols, and promote community dialogue. The system has connections with the criminal justice system as police can use conflict-resolution mechanisms to resolve some crimes, and do so in front of traditional leaders.

With a multitude of actors in northern Mali and a fluid and evolving security context which is characterized by increased instances of violence between armed groups,[130] a community policing approach may not be ideal for responding to communities' security concerns. Given Mali's history of rebellion and conflict, the current prevalence of armed groups and ethnic tensions, and past history of militia violence, the danger that community policing programs may encourage the formation of militias is high. On the other hand, since these brigades are already present in many areas, it may be beneficial to try to bring them under administrative control. As a first step, the existence of local security formations could serve to initiate a dialogue between government and communities pertaining to security provision goals and mechanisms. In any dialogue, the extent of community buy-in for any type of security provider is crucial for its success and sustainability. Mali's diverse ethnic and tribal composition must also be factored into a dialogue seeking community buy-in for security provision goals and mechanisms.

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[128] Denney & Jenkins. (2013) "Securing communities: the what and the how of community policing". Background Paper. London: Overseas Development Institute
[129] Ilkjaer. (2013) 'Niger', in Nalla & Newman (eds) *Community Policing in Indigenous Communities*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press
[130] See Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project: http://www.acleddata.com

> ***Recent attempts to strengthen local security through the use of community policing in Mali:*** The *Association des Municipalités du Mali* (Malian Association of Municipalities) is set to pilot a community policing project, in either Mopti or Ségou regions that builds upon informal night brigades already established in some rural areas. Representatives of the municipal association ideally seek local authority command and control and enhanced professionalization of these local security brigades in addition to coordination between local brigades and national police. Moreover, the initiative "also involves activities to strengthen existing mechanisms on which community leaders rely to prevent and solve inter-community conflict, such as by meeting to establish corridors through agricultural country that herders can use when the seasons change to bring their cattle to new pastures." (See Lankhorst, (2013), p. 9)

Although there is an important need to adapt the way in which services are provided to local realities, particularly in countries with high ethnic diversity, nomadic groups, and fragility, it is nonetheless necessary to separate the roles of formal and informal entities. A clear delineation, for example, of roles and responsibilities regarding dispute resolution prevents confusions pertaining to roles and responsibilities of those mechanisms entering into a hybrid system.

Delivering Services in the Context of Sub-national Conflict

This section focuses on two particular features of delivering services in contexts of sub-national conflicts: the role of non-state providers and community-based mechanisms.

One feature of many post-conflict environments may be a high level of non-state service providers, which is also often true in many low-density and remote areas. In these contexts, building in oversight roles for governments is particularly important. Afghanistan provides examples for how to 'contract out' to a range of NGOs, allowing for rapid delivery alongside the government gaining and maintaining policy leadership. National roll-out of health services was conducted by NGO implementers with government-set priorities, allocated geographic responsibility, and financial and performance monitoring by the Ministry of Public Health. NGOs also oversaw provincial implementation of the National Solidarity Program (NSP), itself a program of Afghanistan's Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development, and which was conceived as a mechanism for communities to prioritize and undertake small-scale development activities with block grants.

NSP also illustrates the effectiveness of a community-based mechanism to support community-level post-conflict reconstruction that is constituted as a form of social accountability. The assumption underlying development modalities such as NSP is the importance of community involvement in the design, planning, management and control of development projects in settings where there exists an absence of trust between communities and government, and where communities may also be divided. An independent evaluation indicated that NSP had a positive impact on the lives of villagers, in terms of improving access to critical services and creating opportunities for women to participate in local governance. Importantly, it found that NSP had an effect on perceptions of government and non-government officials, resulting in a higher proportion of villagers who believed that local and national government officials were working in the interests of all villagers.

While a sensible option in the short-term, as government entities such as line ministries build capacity and citizens require an immediate injection of basic services, testimonies in chapter 2 have highlighted how use of non-state providers over the medium to long-term can create resentment as indigenous governments attempt to transition to greater ownership of development processes but find that resources are habitually directed towards non-state actors. The frustration is understandable, particularly in insecure

environments where government service delivery often constitutes a confidence building measure that could lead to enhanced state-society relationships, while underpinning a new social contract that was previously absent.

> ***Private provision of veterinary services in Mali:*** Recognizing that the Malian government alone might not be able to cover the significant demand for animal health services from the pastoral community, attempts have been made to encourage private provision of veterinary services. Private veterinarians and para-veterinarians provide these services for remuneration. "*In the northern areas, the state lacks the means to intervene. For a while now, a parallel system has been set-up, including people such as myself, who are private sector veterinarians and have become service providers for the Government and NGOs. If we are paid, we are willing to take risks, to work in very harsh circumstances, because we also happen to love our profession as veterinarians. We then travel far into Gourma and Hausa territories, we observe the situation around "cursed lands" (anthrax contaminated) and the condition of "salty lands" (where natural mineral supplements are available to livestock). Populations respect us, and even protect us, because cattle are their most precious asset, sometimes even more than their children.*" (N28)

A range of models have been developed to support community-level reconciliation and reconstruction following a period of conflict. These approaches often favour community-based mechanisms, such as forms of social accountability, social funds and community-driven development prioritization as basis for channelling development assistance. The underlying assumption is that community involvement in the design, planning, management and control of development projects is essential in settings where trust is thought to be lacking and where communities themselves may be divided.

Experience also suggests the need for a broad view of services, to include both infrastructure costs and service operations, the latter to ensure that communities are involved in operating services, livelihood activities, and security.[131] The existence of arenas in which diverse and divergent socio-economic groups can constructively engage in problem-solving may be particularly relevant where there is a history of inter- or intra-group conflict or where specific groups or regions are perceived to have been consistently marginalized. Governance mechanisms that permit diverse communities to 'co-habit' may therefore be key to preserving peace and avoiding conflict, important prerequisites for ensuring trust and the provision of basic services.

The above has shown that attempts have been made more recently to adapt service delivery modalities to the specific challenges in northern Mali. The extent to which these attempts have been informed by international experience is unknown, but what is clear is that examples from other countries can provide both inspiration and specific design options that can help policy-makers as they look to enhance service delivery in northern Mali in the absence of a facilitative state presence. Yet the experiences listed above should not be taken at face value or considered prescriptive. Rather, they should be viewed through the prism of service delivery potential in Mali at a time when it is prudent to examine how best to provide a stabilizing presence in northern Mali, with a primary focus on security, justice and livelihoods.

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[131] Marc, Willman, Aslam, & Rebosio with Balasuriya (2013)

IV.   CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have highlighted the challenges faced as the government in Mali attempts to increase its legitimacy in the northern regions, and promote stability and social cohesion. Field research has shown the many different perceptions of the causes and consequences of the crisis, and the different narratives that should be factored into a calibrated response. **It has highlighted that a governance deficit in the form of a state without much legitimacy and presence lies at the core of the problem.** While the government has politically recognized some of these challenges, the review of past governance reforms highlight the difficulty of translating commitments into sustained political will and implementable reforms. The tension that exists between official data on government investments in the north and the perceptions of marginalization and discrimination is a testament to the fact that a real solution to the crisis will not come through more of the same, but through a better approach to improve governance and trust in the state. This is a generational project, and will require vision, focus, patience, and continued resolve from both politically elected leaders and technocrats. **Yet the alternative of non-action and status quo is a continued cycle of violence and destruction, as seen over past decades.**

This report asked two critical questions: What will a stabilizing presence of the state look like in northern Mali, and what options should be considered to deliver services in ways that can strengthen social cohesion, stability and state legitimacy. The analysis in the preceding chapters has started to crystalize what an answer to these questions would entail. In particular, from the testimonies of people interviewed and other empirical research outlined in Chapter 2, it is clear that a stabilizing presence of the state in the north could be characterized as a state that is able to maintain territorial integrity and counter the presence of criminal networks, rebel groups and corruption, that provides security and justice for all and that is able to facilitate and support job creation and income generation from other sources than illicit trade.

Recreating a state that is legitimate and present for all citizens will require significant governance reform, institutional strengthening and commitment to disengage from profitable business embedded in criminal activity. Above all, this requires strong leadership and strategic direction by the political leadership and a willingness to break with the past. That said, the review of service provision suggests that security, justice and livelihoods services can be delivered in remote, under-populated areas with minimal government presence so long as mechanisms for service delivery are nested within customary practices, ad-hoc community structures, and communities themselves are invested in the success of service delivery modalities. Concurrently, efforts of the government and the international community should focus on developing government capacity to deliver services in both the short and long term in ways that strengthen confidence in the state.

ANNEX A: METHODOLOGY

Empirical Research in Northern Mali

Empirical data collection in Mali and refugee camps in Burkina Faso and Mauritania was undertaken by the independent research institute, Groupe Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement (URD), in close collaboration with the World Bank team. The aim of this exercise was to collect data on the northern populations' perceptions, priorities and expectations related to state presence, state legitimacy and state and non-state service delivery.

The original data presented in this section was collected by Groupe URD between October 2013 and January 2014. It includes interviews and focus groups with 260 Malian refugees as well as additional interviews with 285 stakeholders from Mopti, Timbuktu, and Gao regions, for a total of 524 interviews. A significant percentage of the sample, 46% of respondents, were interviewed in camps in Mauritania and Burkina Faso to capture the perspectives of actors who have been among the most marginalized by the crisis, but also previously unreported. To date, few reports have captured their perspectives on the crisis, particularly in the context of renewed violence and migration to the camps in 2013.
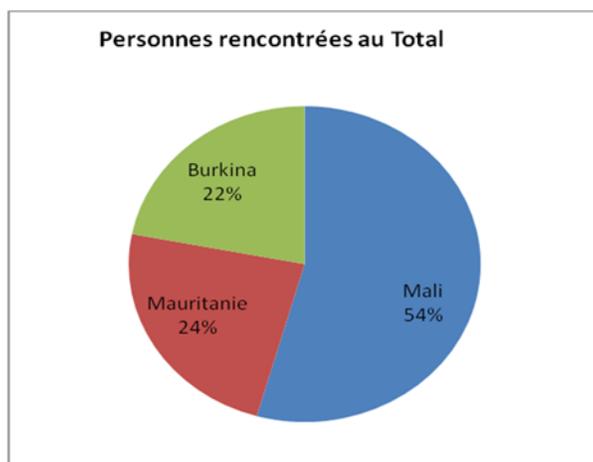
Sampling Framework

The geographic scope of this study was defined as areas that are below the Malian average of 11 inhabitants per km2. This includes all but one cercle in the three northern regions of Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu, along with one cercle in Koulikoro. It is important to note that population density varies immensely in Mali, reflecting seasonal migration, conflict, and other parameters.

Due to security, financial and time constraints it was not possible to randomly select a representative sample of the populations living in low-density areas, thus much emphasis was put into stratifying the sample along pertinent characteristics, to ensure systematic coverage of the most important groups. By mapping out socio-economic and cultural groups in the target areas, a thorough sampling framework was developed to ensure a balanced incorporation of all actors.

Samples were stratified as follows:
- Rural/urban zones

- Ethnicity (see chart below)
- Livelihood (see table below)
- State and non-state service providers at deconsentrated and decentralized level
- Age
- Gender

Caractéristiques socioculturelles

- Total, autres (Bambaras, Dogons, Malinkés etc.), 58, 11%
- Total, Touaregs, 226, 43%
- Total, Bozos, 9, 2%
- Total, Peuls, 51, 10%
- Total, Songhoys, 94, 18%
- Total, Arabes, 59, 11%
- Total, Bellas, 27, 5%
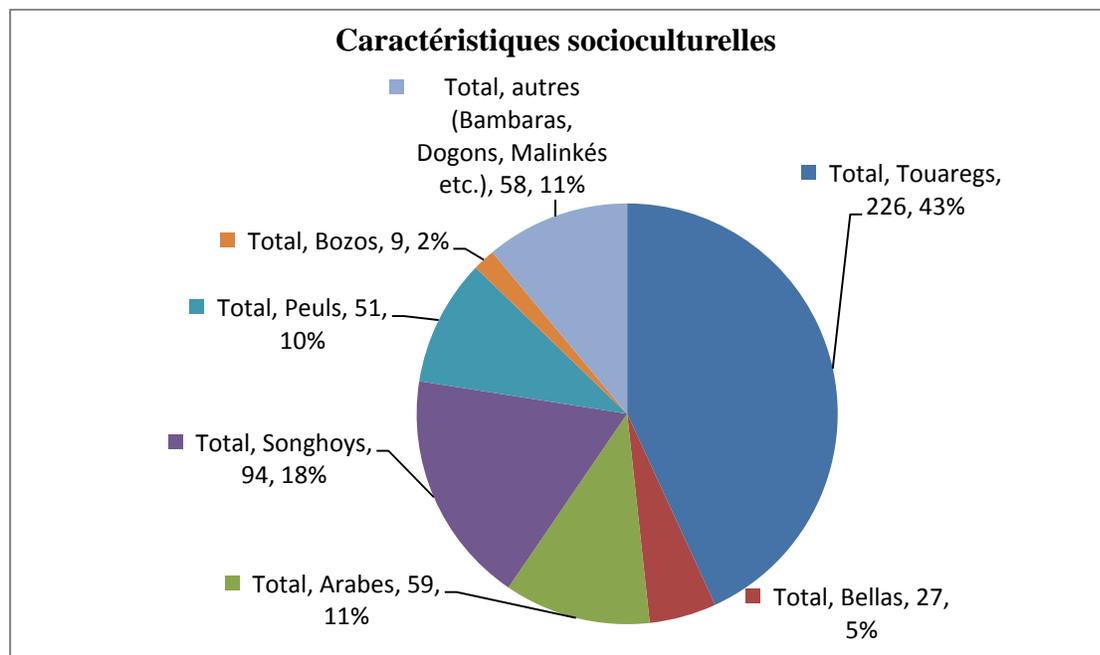
Socio-economic activities				
Livelihoods	Mali	Mauritania	Burkina Faso	Total
Chefs traditionnels et religieux/ notables/ Griots	4	18	17	39
Agriculteurs	35	10	4	49
Éleveurs	42	27	41	110
Pécheurs	6			6
Élus	4	4	2	10
Services administratifs et techniques de l'État	26	3		29
Militaires/gendarmes	2	7	6	15
Commerçants	15	13	6	34
Acteurs Santé	2	2	1	5
Juriste			1	1
Instituteurs	2	2	2	6
Tourisme, artisanat	1	5	3	9
Vétérinaire	2	2		4
Opérateurs du secteur privé	12	1		13
Agents d'organisations internationals	8	4	3	15
Société civile	2	1	3	6
Étudiants/ Universitaires	3	1	6	10
Autres (tâcherons, réparateurs informatiques, puisatiers traditionnels etc.)	14	4	5	23
Sans emploi	45	20	15	80
non indentifiable	60			

Total		285	124	115	524

Groupe URD used a convenience sampling strategy of searching out 'key informants.' This biased the sample population, so that the vast majority of respondents (over 75%) are male and only 25 respondents were aged thirty years or less. Although the camps shelter large numbers of women and youth, this report cannot claim to describe general preoccupations of "women" or "youth" from the camps that are outside of those themes raised by elder male family members.

Groupe URD interviewed respondents at three sites in Burkina Faso: in the capital Ouagadougou (25 people), a refugee camp "Coudebou" (23 people), and a refugee camp "Mentao" (88 people). In Mauritania, they interviewed 23 people in Nouakchott and 96 respondents at the refugee camp M'Berra. A little over 70% of refugees (185) were Tuareg, 17% were Arab (43), 5% were Bella, and there were only 3 Songhai respondents.[132] This reflects the ethnic composition of the camps in 2013. In Burkina Faso, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) recorded 77.6% Tuareg refugees, 12.4% Arab, 6.3% Peul and 2.2% Songhay. In the Malian Camp of M'Berra the majority of refuges were also Tuareg and Arab, with 44.7% and 54.7% respectively; 0.3% were Soghay and 0.1% Peul.[133] URD reported that many of those interviewed in the camps were telling their story for the first time; no previous mission or government representatives had attempted to understand their perspective, which is further suggestive of the disconnect these populations feel from the Malian state.

Ethnic Composition of Stakeholders Interviewed in Mali
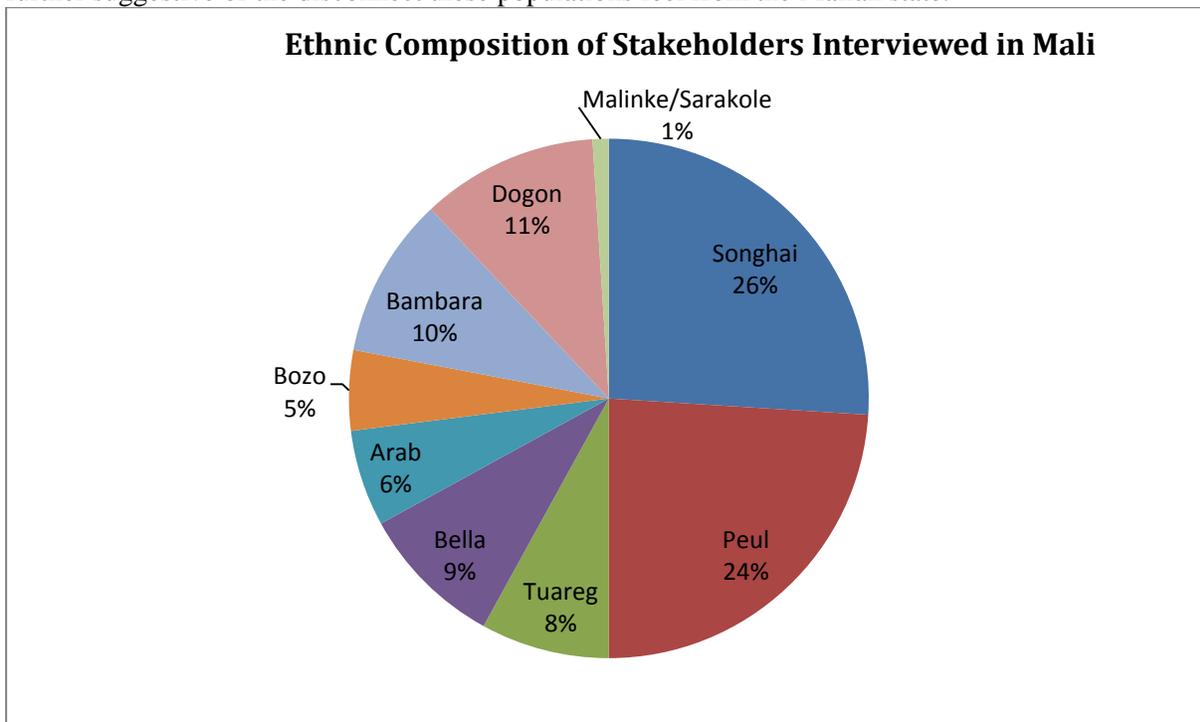
Groupe URD's research also included interviews with stakeholders living in Mopti (N=153) Timbuktu (21) and Gao (91) regions as well as 13 respondents from Kidal. The 285 person sample includes 82 women and 80 youth. It represents a diverse group of ethnicities including Songhai (26%), Peul (24%), Tuareg (8%), Bella (9%), Arab (6%), Bozo (5%), Bambara (10%), Dogon (11%), and Malinke/Sarakole

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[132] We note that the ethnic identity of 16 respondents was unreported.
[133] UNHCR (2014)

(1%). The respondents from Mopti include respondents living in formerly occupied zones (Douentza), but also displaced persons who fled other northern regions and currently reside in Mopti or Sevare city. There were seven displaced respondents living in Bamako. Though security concerns prevented the team from interviewing anyone currently living in Kidal, there were 13 displaced respondents from Kidal who provided testimony.

Interview *Guide and Rating System:* Individual interviews and focus group discussions were semi-structured and followed an interview guide organized along six thematic areas: (i) perceptions of the 2012/13 crisis; (ii) dealing with difficult circumstances (survival strategies); (iii) the perception of the state; (iv) roles of local actors (state, traditional and religious authorities); (v) perceptions of services (including economic activities and social services), and; (vi) lessons learned and good practices regarding access to services and service delivery, from the perspective of providers and users.

In addition, a rating system (SPIDER) was developed which allowed interviewees to rate specific indicators on a scale from 0-4 such as the presence of the state, intercommunity relations, state and non-state services, the quality of services, etc. This has allowed for more accurate comparability across groups and between individual actors. Spider interviews were conducted with 30 individuals and groups in the refugee camps (15 in Mauritania and 15 in Burkina Faso) and 33 people living in Mali. The spiders were used to generate the chart on Respondents Evaluations of the Malian State by Current Location in the conclusion of chapter 2.

Groupe URD submitted a final report with their impressions from the field as well as 120 transcripts or excerpts from interviews and focus groups, including testimony from 148 respondents, held in the camps as well as in Mali. Note that an individual transcript can refer to either an interviews or a focus group discussion, which means that in some cases the same number, for instance N53, can be used to reference multiple respondents in the same focus group. The transcripts include testimony from actors for all relevant ethnic groups, from those in camps, displaced persons, and those living in formerly occupied zones. Each transcript or excerpt was given a unique identifying number starting with N.[134] Due to the sensitive nature of the content of the transcripts, these are not included as a part of the Annex.

A series of interview were also conducted in Bamako, along with two workshops organized by the World Bank team to discuss preliminary findings: one with local experts, academics and representative of Civil Society Organizations and NGOs, and a second with international donors.

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[134] Full or partial transcripts have identifying numbers 1-76, while excerpts start with a N300 series.

Table: Disaggregated Total by Stratified Samples

DISAGREGGATED	CAPITALE Bamako	REGION DE MOPTI Mopti Ville	Commune Sevare	Commune Fatoma	Commune Douentza	Commune Boni	Commune Hombori	TOTAL MOPTI	REGION DE GAO Commune de Gao	Commune Assongo	Commune Menaka	Commune Bourem	TOTAL GAO	REGION DE TOMBOUCTOU Commune Tombouctou	Commune Salam	Commune Diré	TOTAL TOMBOUCTOU	KIDAL Kidal Ville	TOTAL MALI
Urbaine	7	12	18	5	24	3	7	69	22	10	11	16	59	9		1	10	10	155
Rurale		5	26	15	17	19	2	84	12	5	8	7	32	10	1		11	3	130
# Hommes	4	9	22	14	37	17	9	108	28	13	10	17	68	12	1	1	14	9	203
# Femmes	3	8	22	6	4	5		45	6	2	9	6	23	7			7	4	82
# Jeunes (moins de 30 ans)			20	3	3	14	3	43	20	4	10	3	37				0		80
Touareg	5						1	1	2				2	6		1	8	10	26
Bella			5		6	5	1	17	2		1	1	4	2			2		23
Arabe	2					1		1	8				8	3	1		3	3	17
Songhoy		7	13	8	4	1	1	34	15	6	7	10	38	3			3		75
Peul		4	12	12	6	7		41	1	8	9	5	23	3			3		67
Bozo		4	5					9		0		6	6				0		15
Bambara	2		5		1	7	1	16	6	1	2	1	10	2			2		28
Dogon		-			24		6	30					0				0		30
Groupes divers			4					4					0				0		4
# Entretiens individuels	4	2			6	6	4	18	7	7	5	5	24	5	1	1	7	7	60
# of *Focus Groups*	2	2	4	2	3	2	1	14	5	1	1	1	8	1			1	1	26
# of Spiders (full)	2	3	2	0	5	2	3	15	6	3	3	4	16	6	1	1	8	3	44
# total of people interviewed	7	17	44	20	41	22	9	153	34	15	19	23	91	19	1	1	21	13	285

DISAGREGGATED	REFUGEE CAMPS — BURKINA FASO Ouagadougou	Camp de réfugiés de Coudebou	Camp de réfugiés de Mentao	MAURITANIE Nouakchott	Camp de réfugiés de M'Berra	TOTAL CAMPS DE REFUGIES
# Hommes	24	23	58	14	78	197
# Femmes	1		30	14	18	63
# Jeunes (moins de 20 ans)	3	4	14	0	4	25
Touareg	14	23	76	7	73	185
Bella	3		8		8	13
Arabe	8		1	21	15	43
Songhoy			3			3
Peul						
Bozo, Bambara, Dogon ; Malinke						
# de discussions en *Focus Group*	2	1	7	5	6	21
# de schéma araignée	6 (soit 25 personnes)	0	4 (soit 51 personnes)	7 (soit 24 personnes)	6 (soit 87 personnes)	23
# total de personnes interrogées	25	23	88	28	96	260

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