

BTI 2016 | Mali Country Report

	scale	score	rank	trend
Status Index	1-10	5.18	# 75 of 129	
Political Transformation	1-10	5.85	# 62 of 129	↑
Economic Transformation	1-10	4.50	# 96 of 129	↗
Management Index	1-10	5.40	# 49 of 129	

This report is part of the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) 2016. It covers the period from 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2015. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of political management in 129 countries. More on the BTI at <http://www.bti-project.org>.

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Key Indicators

Population	M	17.1	HDI	0.407	GDP p.c., PPP \$	1599.3
Pop. growth ¹	% p.a.	2.9	HDI rank of 187	176	Gini Index	33.0
Life expectancy	years	55.0	UN Education Index	0.305	Poverty ³	% 77.7
Urban population	%	39.1	Gender inequality ²	0.673	Aid per capita \$	83.9

Sources (as of October 2015): The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2015 | UNDP, Human Development Report 2014. Footnotes: (1) Average annual growth rate. (2) Gender Inequality Index (GII). (3) Percentage of population living on less than \$3.10 a day at 2011 international prices.

Executive Summary

Between January and March 2013, France's rapid military deployment, followed by deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), recaptured major northern cities from Islamist fighters. In June 2013, a peace deal with Tuareg nationalists set necessary conditions for presidential elections in July and August. By the end of 2013, presidential and legislative elections had further re-established democratic governance, provided the framework for a UN stabilization mission (MINUSMA), and set Mali on the difficult path toward post-conflict peace. The impacts of the crisis and fighting of 2012/2013 remain apparent; the deteriorated human rights situation in many areas and setbacks to socioeconomic development are slowly being reversed. Notwithstanding serious obstacles yet to be overcome, Mali's twenty-year reputation as a model of democratization and development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa is being rebuilt.

Ranked at 176th of 187 countries (Human Development Index 2011), Mali is one of the world's poorest countries. The repercussions of war in northern Mali continue to perpetuate serious problems, including 100,000 displaced people and persistent food insecurity (and employment loss) impacting nearly one in three Malians. Production of gold, Mali's main export commodity was, however, maintained and has served to support economic performance over the last two years. The small GDP growth in 2013 (1.7%) showed the lingering effects of the conflict. GDP growth in 2014, however, is estimated at 5.8% percent. The new government's 2013 – 2017 growth and poverty reduction policy priority contends with the reconciliation and peacebuilding agenda. A cycle of ceasefires, peace negotiation attempts and breakdowns has plagued 2014. Indeed, even as peace negotiations continue in Algiers to reaffirm ceasefire-related commitments made in July 2014, the process is suffering setbacks from ongoing sporadic violence in the northern regions (beginning in October 2014 and continuing beyond January 2015, the end of the period under review).

No longer a poster child for democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, Mali continues to face political challenges in the capital and security challenges in the north. The good reputation Mali enjoyed

as a reliable partner in international cooperation, damaged by the conflict, has been quickly rehabilitated since the 2013 elections. Although Mali's socioeconomic development faces major constraints – aid dependence, low levels of undiversified production, and widespread elite rent-seeking and clientelistic behavior – economic progress that had been stagnant is now advancing again.

History and Characteristics of Transformation

Mali's transformation toward a market-based economy began in the 1980s under military dictator Moussa Traoré and the one-party regime UDPM (Democratic Union of the Malian People). Traoré cooperated with the IMF to liberalize the economy, secure foreign investment for industrialization and infrastructure development, and establish national universities for teacher training, administration and agriculture. However, as the balance of trade deteriorated, exacerbated by the oil crisis, the UDPM bureaucracy remained insulated from the impoverishment suffered by most Malians, especially northern communities. In the early 1990s, declining living conditions fueled escalating protests against the military-political-economic elite. Popular resistance against austerity policies grew, in particular among the politically powerful labor unions, the education sector and women's organizations. With the UDPM's internal rivalries increasingly unmanageable, Traoré was overthrown by pro-democratic elements in the military, led by General Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT). ATT led the military interim government, then stepped down to enable free presidential elections. Mali's constitutional National Conference of 1992 entrenched a strongly participatory transition to multiparty democracy. An elected president, Alpha Oumar Konaré, took office in 1992, and pursued economic and political reforms, while also negotiating the end of the second Tuareg rebellion (1992 to 1996).

Konaré initiated nation-wide administrative decentralization intended to grant northern regions some autonomy. Throughout Mali, this decentralization continues to this day, though with unevenly effective implementation. Konaré also dismantled state-owned enterprises (e.g., in electricity, water, textiles and telecommunications); deregulating pricing incentivized increased production, particularly in the agricultural sector. Commercial development of Mali's extractive sector was fostered by opening the mining sector to foreign investment, establishing commercial courts and simplifying administrative procedures related to foreign investment.

Re-elected in 1997, Konaré adhered to the constitutional limit of two presidential terms. In 2002, Konaré's successor, ATT, returned as the popular hero of the democratic transition, which strengthened Mali's democratic procedures and enhanced its international reputation. ATT was re-elected in 2007 and continued economic and political reforms. Under the IMF's Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and Mali's 2002 poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), Mali received debt relief to invest primarily in education and health. Some initial positive results in education contrasted with little improvement in health sector indicators. Thus, Mali's political success contrasted with a failure to bring economic growth with equity. With fundamental

structural constraints hindering medium-term socioeconomic development, the ATT government's once high popularity continued to decline.

Also under ATT, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) operated on Malian territory and through the Sahel zone, trafficking drugs, arms and people. In 2011, weapons and fighters from the former al-Qadhafi Libyan army entered Mali unhindered and supplied another Tuareg rebellion (in early 2012). Soon after the Bamako coup d'état on 22 March 2012 that toppled ATT – itself a reaction to the rebellion – two-thirds of Mali's territory was occupied by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and its Islamist allies (Ansar Dine, AQMI, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa). Soon after these Islamist groups captured the rebellion and introduced some provisions of Shari'ah law in northern Mali, interim President Dioncounda Traoré accepted a French military intervention, in conjunction with Chadian and other international forces, to aid the Malian army against the insurgent groups. France and Chad's rapid deployment (between January and March 2013), followed by deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), recaptured major northern cities from Islamist fighters. In June 2013, a peace deal with Tuareg nationalists set necessary conditions for presidential elections in July and August. Winning by a large margin, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) led his Rally for Mali (RPM) party and its allies to a 78% parliamentary majority in December 2013. French and other international (mostly Chadian) troops then ceded operations to the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), to support the Malian army, and donor-partners renewed pledges to help retrain the Malian army and to rebuild Mali. In 2014, progress towards political normalcy and stability faced worsening government relations and occasional clashes with Tuareg separatists, renewing the cycle of fragile truce, breakdown (in spring 2014), and subsequent renewing of talks. Moreover, since July 2014, these talks in Algeria occur in parallel to deadly attacks on MINUSMA (between October 2014 and January 2015), and between local pro-government militias and nationalist ("Azawadian") forces.

The BTI combines text analysis and numerical assessments. The score for each question is provided below its respective title. The scale ranges from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

Transformation Status

I. Political Transformation

1 | Stateness

Since the March 2012 insurgency, the Malian state has, with international support, largely regained control over two-thirds of its territory in the northern regions in which the Tuareg settle (most parts of “Azawad”): Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. Thanks to French and Malian forces, the cities of Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao were reclaimed in January 2013. However, ongoing fighting (mainly in Kidal, where Tuareg rebels defeated government troops in May 2014) between UN and Malian forces, on the one side, and splinter insurgent groups, on the other, continues to hamper the state’s progress towards a full monopoly on the use of force. More recent casualties among MINUSMA and Malian soldiers and confrontation between local pro-government militias and Tuareg nationalists temper the state’s monopoly on the use of force in the region. More widespread (and chronic) “banditry with impunity” along Mali’s transportation routes further question the state’s capacity to control violent crime.

The success of building a modern national identity among the people of the historical Mandé, Peulh and Songhai empires is evident by the majority of Malian citizens who affirm the nation-state. Persistent failures, however, include integrating more remote minority populations (e.g., Tuareg, Moor and Arab communities in the northeast), which has continued to threaten nation-building since the era of the independence struggles. The recent Tuareg uprising further questions the broad acceptance of the nation-state; this, however, has recently improved as a result of peace agreements with the (secular) Tuareg rebels.

In its constitution and in widely held principle, the Malian state is secular and political parties with a religious orientation are prohibited. Nevertheless, tensions between Mali’s majority moderate, tolerant, and peaceful Islam and the more radical Islamist orientations (both armed groups and others) point to the growing significance of religious and traditional leaders and associations to Malian politics. Such leaders’ faith-based reservations have successfully blocked legislative reforms (e.g., the proposed abolition of the death penalty in 2008 and the family law reform, which

Question
Score

Monopoly on the
use of force
5

State identity
6

No interference of
religious dogmas
6

aimed to bring women's rights closer to those enjoyed by men). Furthermore, members of the High Islamic Council (Haut Conseil Islamique, HCI) now occupy political positions. Beyond the question of state non-interference are lively (and sometimes conflict-prone) debates in Malian society about the appropriate place of Islam and religious values in public life, which disciplines the behavior of political elites and enriches political discourse. It thus made sense for Islamic leaders to play an active role in the post-coup negotiations, and through the post-insurgency period of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Post-crisis it is clear that an established, formal administrative structure is a lasting achievement of Mali's donor-supported democratization and decentralization process (which began in 1993). However, administrative performance is highly uneven across the country. Where the central administration is comparatively powerful, local administrations remain poorly institutionalized because the implementation of devolution plans (including resources) to regional and municipal administrations have been insufficient. This is the context of the post-crisis rebuilding of state structures that were harmed when fleeing government employees left services in the hands of village leaders (particularly in northern Mali); the nation-wide impacts of suspended foreign aid and curtailment of government services were most keenly felt in these communities.

Basic
administration
5

2 | Political Participation

The end of the Islamist insurgents occupation of Mali's northern territories allowed for negotiations with Tuareg nationalist actors, and for presidential elections (July and August 2013) and legislative elections (December 2013) to be organized. However, worsening government relations and occasional clashes with separatist forces in parts of Mali's northern territories, along with persistent weakness in administrative authority and services combined to limit for some populations the accessibility and security of voting. The stubborn lacunae of low voter turnout was exacerbated by problems with organizing the registry of voters. Notwithstanding IBK's presidential victory and support for RPM and its allies which have formed a governing coalition in Mali's legislature (between 78% and 86%), the low electoral turnout (37% to 38%) moderates any interpretation of these results as overwhelming support for IBK's government. Nevertheless, these elections reinforced Mali's longstanding reputation of holding regular elections considered generally free and fair by international observers.

Free and fair
elections
7

The transition to the current elected government has re-established the power of Mali's democratically elected political representatives to govern and to manage the influence of military and moderate Islamic elites. Nonetheless, the influence of Islamic actors over legislation remains buttressed by their representation of a significant proportion of popular opinion. Furthermore, significant legacies of executive dominance and incomplete administrative decentralization remain. In addition to the challenges of managing the influence of domestic actors, Mali's authorities also have to manage the collaboration of influential external actors. Mali's enduring dependence on military and development assistance, embedded in past clientelistic practices, continues to undermine credible and responsive governance capacities. The government's understandable policy emphasis on the north risks becoming an overemphasis, eclipsing the needed rebuilding of the Malian state and democratic governance across the entire country.

Effective power to govern

6

Another potential veto player are the armed forces, exemplified by the coup d'état in 2012. However, signs of disloyalty remained limited during the period under investigation, partially because of the presence of and dependence on foreign militaries.

Continuing into 2015, Mali's generally tolerant and vibrant political culture and civil society are reasserting the 1991 constitutional right to assemble. Nationwide, associations are returning to active levels seen during the democratization decades 1992 to 2012. Islamic non-state groups in Mali's northern regions are less able to restrict public meetings, and the 2013 presidential and legislative elections clarified the influence, relative positions, and inter-relationships among new political groupings that merged in reaction to the 2012 coup d'état. In light of the presence of MINUSMA and France's Operation Barkhane, the issues at stake (e.g., military reforms and discipline, accountable governance) remain pertinent and highlight both the persistent dynamism of civil society organizations and community-based activists in exercising association rights in Mali, and the growing space for such activities. However, the occupation of a public space in Gao to protest a draft proposal for a temporary security zone resulted in three deaths in January 2015. An investigation has been launched by MINUSMA.

Association / assembly rights

8

With the coup and transition period as an exception to the general pattern of expression rights, Mali is returning to its status of having amongst the freest media landscapes in sub-Saharan Africa (on Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index ranked 74th out of 197 ranks in 2014, in the category "partly free"). The excesses of the coup (e.g., occupation of state-run television, detention of national and foreign journalists) did not start a general pattern of creeping state-sponsored repression. Nevertheless, exceptions continue in parts of Mali's northern regions, where "persons in uniform" (with "state" or "non-state" affiliation) may act to hinder free expression. In light of ongoing fighting, notable security restrictions (on movement and access) have limited access to information and hampered press broadcasts from the field.

Freedom of expression

7

While state-run media continue to be an important voice in shaping the dominant threads of public opinion, Mali's media landscape is dense with actors and voices; to some observers, to the point of cacophony, rather than offering reasoned public discourse and debate.

3 | Rule of Law

The 2013 elections clearly re-established the rule of law in principle, which had been weakened through the coup and transition. Operational but ineffective through transition, the National Assembly and Constitutional Court have resumed their roles under President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) and his Rally for Mali (RPM) party (which has formed a governing coalition with its allies) and appear to be returning to their status quo of limited power to control the executive, similar to that seen during Mali's "democratic decades" (1992 to 2012). Beyond problems of executive dominance, particularly significant are returning past patterns of resolving conflicts at the community level and beyond through patron-client relations among national and regional government elites, and consensus politics incorporating opposition actors into the government.

Separation of
powers
4

The governmental turnover directed by the Malian president is also significant. Oumar Tatam Ly was prime minister from 5 September 2013 to 5 April 2014; Moussa Mara from 5 April 2014 to 9 January 2015; Modibo Keita, beginning in April 2014, chief representative for negotiations with rebels, has been prime minister since 9 January 2015. Additionally important for assessing institutional differentiation, division of labor and functions, and checks and balances is the ubiquitous presence of external actors in Mali's rule of law "mix." Clearly supportive of a stable regime, such international aid risks exacerbating certain governance problems. While these international donors are not directly to blame, their contributions re-establish particular forms and configurations of state power.

Insufficient material resources and professional training, as well as corruption undermine the Malian judiciary. The judiciary is also easily influenced by the High Judicial Council (Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature), which influences judicial careers and is chaired by the president. Me Mohamed Ali Bathily's tenure as minister of justice and human rights through the rapid succession of Ly and Mara governments, deepened his reputation of pursuing magistrates and bailiffs who embodied a certain judicial independence; this is now open for speculation as new Prime Minister Modibo Keita replaced Bathily with Mahamadou Diarra.

Independent
judiciary
5

Beyond these issues of formal justice are problems of de facto legal pluralism on certain matters in communities throughout Mali's territory. Not to be confused with the often brutal and unwelcome Islamic tribunal processes introduced by the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and

Ansar Dine in parts of northern Mali through 2012, the invigoration of alternative, non-state sites of social regulation, including claims to moral authority from religious or traditional/customary bases, revives questions about the capacity and legitimacy of judicial authority.

In everyday life, public officials accept small bribes, feeding resentment, raising transaction costs, and harming social trust and political stability. Public officials receive more substantial bribes from organized criminal networks to overlook illegal activities or to prevent them from being prosecuted.

Prosecution of
office abuse
4

Changes in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights are too recent to be assessed fully, but there are concerns that it reflects a high-level continuation of a recent course of prosecutions against magistrates. Although the Auditor General (AG) has been a major tool to reform public administration since 2003, and has produced corrective recommendations, only some of these recommendations have been carried out. Efforts continue to strengthen the AG's capacity to document financial irregularities by allocating more central and regional staff. While important in principle and norm-setting, these actions have not much shifted the pattern that office abuse is rarely sanctioned.

Given this backdrop, the public's contempt of corruption is widespread and corruption is denounced by all opposition actors – from within and outside of democratic politics – to challenge the government's capacity and even legitimacy. The waning legitimacy of General Touré's regime (2002 to 2012) was loudly proclaimed in 2012 by coup leaders and Islamist insurgents in an attempt to portray their actions as saving Mali from its own corrupt rulers. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's September 2013 inauguration speech claimed a steadfast commitment to eliminating corruption ("no one will again get rich illegally on the backs of the Malian people"). While the political leader's denouncement of corruption and embezzlement appears genuine, it remains to be seen how quickly and fully the Modibo government under IBK remedies Mali's poorly functioning administration (a diagnosis reported for numerous years by the AG). In 2011, the AG reaffirmed that the State is being robbed, "pure and simple."

Moderately encouraging, although the process for judicial consideration has been prolonged, the scope of AG's activities have been extended. There also is some evidence of willingness to act in the fight against corruption and bad governance, and to effectively apply existing legislation and prosecution mechanisms; for example, the AG's report on former CEO Idrissa Haïdara (of Mali's off-track betting company PMU-Mali) helped set up his arrest and secure his dismissal.

In principle, Mali's 1992 constitution guarantees civil rights. The Espace d'interpellation démocratique (EID) convened in 2013, but its recommendations had not yet been pursued by April 2014. Thus, Malians' public venue to interrogate the government directly on human rights abuses appears at best to be entering another period of quiescence.

Civil rights
6

Now emerging are some legacies of the serious civil rights violations that took place in various areas, committed by various state and non-state actors, through the rebellions, coup, insurgency, and interventions. The International Federation of Human Rights (Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme, FIDH), together with multiple Malian human rights associations, filed a complaint in November 2014 to address the rape and sexual assault of 80 Malian women during the crisis of 2012.

Politicians arrested and illegally detained under the junta were released in late 2013 and early 2014, upon the return of normal constitutional order. However, recent exchanges of alleged terrorists for hostages have led Malian and international human rights groups to decry the possible impunity offered to members of different Islamist insurgent groups that detained, tortured and killed the general population and soldiers of the Malian army. The French-led intervention and subsequent military action reduced the scope of human rights abuses in the northern cities. However, between past abuses and present insecurity, rights violations and discrimination are still of concern, particularly for women and other at-risk populations (such as slave-descended Malians). The lacuna of firmly established public order in northern Mali present "opportunities" for predation and violation, and point to the deeper issues of civil rights protection among Mali's most vulnerable groups.

4 | Stability of Democratic Institutions

Although the political crisis of 2012 weakened the functioning of democratic institutions, the Malian state is progressing towards status quo functioning, which itself is historically characterized by uneven effectiveness. Friction between institutions, in particular among the multiplying ministries (30 in total), exacerbates problems caused by frequently overlapping institutional responsibilities (and even redundant work by numerous state organizations).

Performance of
democratic
institutions
6

Related to issues of the separation of powers and the degree to which democratic institutions perform their functions effectively, international donors sometimes undermine state administrative structures – even while supporting these financially and technically – by substituting their own functions, systems, and, in some cases, key actors. This situation produces perverse incentives for ministries and their leaders to seek as much external financing as possible in order to increase their influence and satisfy their respective clients across the country. During elections, institutional incumbents enjoy significant advantages from their control of state functions.

As with the prosecution of office abuse, rebuilding democratic institutions to free Mali from corrupt elites was amongst the stated aims of the 2012 coup-leaders. As much as there was a trampling of democratic rights and a failure to follow constitutional provisions for the transitional presidency during the coup months, transition period and, to a lesser extent, recently, coup-leaders and the national separatist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) never seriously questioned democratic principles. Moreover, the MNLA rejected the legitimacy of the central state's democratic institutions, and claimed that the independent state of Azawad sought to establish institutions genuinely representative and responsive to the needs and aspirations of Mali's northern regions. Their stated position in peace negotiations remains consistent. This is an important contrast to other non-state actors in northern Mali, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar Dine, who harbor few particularly democratic goals.

Commitment to
democratic
institutions
6

In Mali, democracy remains the “only game in town” for relevant actors responsive to widespread popular demand and support for democracy, and rejection of authoritarian rule. The separatist and Islamist insurgencies are exceptions to this process of re-consolidation of political institutions, which was given an important boost by the, generally held credible, 2013 elections. Though far from unequivocal, there are continued positive signs in elite electoral behavior, respecting the “rules of the game” and accepting defeat as a normal outcome in competitive multiparty politics, even when there are questions around freedom and fairness of a particular election process.

5 | Political and Social Integration

Mali's system of political parties is somewhat fragmented, poorly institutionalized and highly personalized. There is also considerable voter volatility. A high degree of clientelism promotes party stability, while simultaneously entrenching the risk of instability. Although, Mali's ethnic and regional party cleavages are weaker than is typical in Sub-Saharan Africa, parties are personalistic in their structure and lack programmatic profiles. Thus, parties commonly split and have low levels of internal organization. Although the proliferation of parties further fragments the party system (14 of the over 130 officially registered political parties are represented in parliament), the tendency to build coalitions in “blocks” counteract the frequently shifting allegiances and preserve a certain stability (if not coherence). This tendency also contributes to a low level of polarization and reinforces consensus politics. The multitude of parties, however, has done little to link state and society. While more established parties, such as the Alliance for Democracy (Alliance pour la Démocratie au Mali, ADEMA) and the Rally for Mali (Rassemblement pour le Mali, RPM) garner support, they do not harness broad social interests. The tendency toward coalition-forming around the larger parties represented in parliament fail to address popular

Party system
4

discontent with the country's deficit democratic institutions and the poor performance of political representatives. A prime example is parliament's collective failure to scrutinize an increasingly discredited executive in General Touré's government. This led to parliament's isolation from their broader constituency, disconnecting popular discontent from formal political processes. Instead, parliamentarians simply aggregated the interests of their personal patron-client networks. Moreover, "consensus" – despite its problematic and persistent role in shaping Malian politics – for many Malians reflects successful democratic governance which encourages stability, rather than a failure of a multiparty system to give place to robust political pluralism. Indeed, Malian citizens' expressed distrust of political parties underlines their strong preference for consensual over partisan politics.

Mali's elaborate networks of mutual support, cooperation, and interest aggregation encompass economic (trade, agriculture, hunting), ethnic (community of Lebanese origin, Chinese, Peulh) and social (Islamic, NGOs, education) activities, ranging from the local community to the national level. With the new alliances formed in response to the junta (2012), interest groups have proliferated and realigned as they vie to influence or gain access to the post-transition government (2013) and the ongoing peace and reconciliation processes (2014). Most prominent, however, remains the Coordination des organisations des patriotes du Mali (COPAM), encompassing political parties, civil society organizations, and trade unions, now allied behind President Keita and his Rally for Mali party since the most recent (January 2015) re-shuffled "consensus government." Also, the Collective of Northern Citizens (Collectif des Ressortissants du Nord, COREN) continues to insert itself to play a role between the Malian government and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA).

Diverging interests are balanced in Mali through a dominant political culture of consensus. Also, a system of so-called joking cousins relationships (Bamanan: *sènèkunya*) cuts across many of the various ethnic groups. Both consensus and "joking cousins" elements make social conflicts relatively opaque (conflict often disappears behind the "veil of consensus") to foreign observers. Finally, and somewhat contrary to the "convergence" elements above, is the deeply rooted culture of public protests. Among the legacies of Mali's democratization since the early 1990s, has been how different actors (interest groups, community associations, and other non-state formations) can mobilize street protests to air their views and grievances about the new government in Bamako, the vestiges of the 2012 crisis, and the ongoing fighting in northern Mali. Indeed, in January 2015, 200 people (mainly women and children) occupied the Kidal airport to protest United Nations' airstrikes, in apparent support of the MNLA.

Interest groups
7

Maliens approve of democracy, but are dissatisfied with the one they have. Indeed, this dynamic shares features with the rule of law issues discussed elsewhere: Malian's may agree that a "strong state" is desirable, but have divergent views on what such a strong state is for and, thus, on what norms ought to frame its operation. Even before the 2013 elections, a Bamako-based, public opinion survey (FES February 2013) suggested that improving governance, organizing transparent and credible elections, and establishing a true democracy were the top solutions envisioned to address ongoing sociopolitical problems (and in which the military-security crises are embedded). Moreover, even as Afrobarometer notes (April 2014) that only 38% of Malian respondents combined support for democracy with a rejection of military rule (lower than the sub-Saharan average of 45%), it also affirms that support for democracy in Mali is nevertheless at a ten-year high (75%), that rejection of both "one-party rule" and "one-man rule" are similarly high (each at 78%), and that most indicators of democracy are trending upwards, notwithstanding the persistent fragility of post-conflict democracy in Mali. Underlying these figures is the persistent distinction that Malians make between the mechanisms of democracy (e.g., elections) and substantive and genuinely responsive and representative governance; in this, we see democratic principles affirmed in tandem with the rejection of status quo performance and practices.

Approval of
democracy
6

Notwithstanding Malians' high levels of mutual trust and the ability to self-organize, particularly among the rural population (73% of the total population), building trust within networks, including bridging trust across social cleavages, must still be deepened across those groups divided along a broadly north-south axis. Indeed, because extended family networks are the most important social reference points for mutual self-help, such traditions produce strong bonding social capital as well as preferential treatment between family members in public administration (clientelism, corruption). Moreover, the extensive network of civil society organizations (NGOs, associations) across the country – often with international donor support – provide both welfare services beyond family networks and substitute for the state's role (particularly in rural areas) as well as provide income through "small enterprises" to individuals or small groups. High levels of self-help remain a persistent legacy of ineffective integration of rural areas into Mali's socioeconomic development. Both during the political crisis and since then, many community leaders are involved in organizing basic public services.

Social capital
7

II. Economic Transformation

6 | Level of Socioeconomic Development

Question
Score

Socioeconomic
barriers

1

In Mali being poor is the norm, not the exception, and reflects persistent economic limitations rather than social exclusion: 78.8% of Malians live on less than \$2.00 per day (World Bank 2010). The success of donor and governmental poverty reduction efforts has been limited to a 1% reduction per year since 2001 (World Bank 2010). The dilution of relatively steady macroeconomic growth by population growth has kept per capita incomes largely stagnant. Moreover, the depth of rural income poverty is much greater than urban, and income distribution is highly uneven. Even though Malian society faces such major structural obstacles, informal economy activities and a high level of subsistence farming provide better livelihood than econometric statistics might suggest.

Adding to the impacts of recent droughts, warfare and displacement, agricultural production is also highly vulnerable to weather conditions, and food insecurity remains one of Mali's major problems.

Low educational quality also persists, despite high primary enrollment rates (2013: 88.5%), literacy rates remain low (2013: 33.2%). In addition, Mali has moderate secondary (44.5%) and very low tertiary (7.5%) enrollment rates. The gap between male and female literacy rates (2013: 43.3% and 24.6% respectively) further reflects broader gender inequality, notably in formal labor force participation: 38.6% of women versus 67% of men (World Bank 2014).

Incremental improvements in the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) (1.3% per year 2005 to 2013, Mali had a HDI value of 0.407 in 2013) nevertheless leave Mali's level of human development lower than the 0.502 Sub-Saharan Africa average and among the lowest worldwide, ranking 176th out of 187 (2013).

Economic indicators		2005	2010	2013	2014
GDP	\$ M	5305.3	9422.3	11111.7	12074.5
GDP growth	%	6.1	5.8	2.1	7.2
Inflation (CPI)	%	6.4	1.1	-0.6	0.9
Unemployment	%	8.5	8.1	8.2	-
Foreign direct investment	% of GDP	3.0	3.9	2.8	-
Export growth	%	8.7	-	-	-
Import growth	%	3.7	-	-	-
Current account balance	\$ M	-437.7	-1189.9	-374.7	-
Public debt	% of GDP	55.7	28.8	30.6	36.7
External debt	\$ M	3223.6	2455.8	3422.8	-
Total debt service	\$ M	100.0	61.6	96.9	-
Cash surplus or deficit	% of GDP	-2.5	-2.5	-1.4	-
Tax revenue	% of GDP	15.7	14.6	15.5	-
Government consumption	% of GDP	9.9	16.9	-	-
Public expnd. on education	% of GDP	4.1	3.8	-	-
Public expnd. on health	% of GDP	3.0	2.8	2.8	-
R&D expenditure	% of GDP	-	0.66	-	-
Military expenditure	% of GDP	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.4

Sources (as of October 2015): The World Bank, World Development Indicators 2015 | International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook, October 2015 | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Military Expenditure Database 2015.

7 | Organization of the Market and Competition

Mali's institutional framework for market competition remains weak, as shown in the further decline (2014 to 2015) in rank from 143rd to 146th (of 189) in the latest World Bank report on the ease of doing business, a decline reflected in most rankings (e.g., starting a business 159th to 169th, registering property 127th to 133rd). Conversely, by building on prior achievements in access to credit and streamlining taxpaying, Mali has reduced the time for dealing with construction permits (by expediting geotechnical studies), and better protected minority investors (by expanding

Market-based
competition
4

disclosure requirements). These improvements, however, bear little on the large informal economy, which centers on commercial activity. These retailing and trading activities on streets and markets are not reflected in official statistics.

Despite existing rules and regulations that prohibit monopolies and oligopolies, corruption severely curtails implementation. Thus, extensive price-fixing oligarchies exist in many economic areas, such as in grain trading and rice production (Office du Niger). Furthermore, the degree to which foreign rather than domestic interests are perceived as benefiting from impunity, taints popular confidence in the privatization of formerly nationalized industries (e.g., railroad Transrail). The large and vibrant informal sector helps keep retail prices competitive, but the “modern” retail distribution system remains limited.

Anti-monopoly
policy
5

The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) frame a large part of Mali’s trade. Following WAEMU’s Common External Tariff (CET), Mali levies an average tariff of 12.1%. However, Mali exploits the option given to each ECOWAS country to apply additional protection on certain products, including spirits, livestock and mining products (even those from the WAEMU-zone). Mali also imposes a special import duty on sugar from non-WAEMU states. While Mali does not subsidize exports, enterprises exporting above 80% of their production enjoy tax concessions. Gold and cotton exports are taxed at 3%. Additionally, government officials often extort unauthorized “fees” from cross-border transports, and import license fraud is widespread, which benefits individual companies. In order to improve its export strategy, Mali is establishing an Export Promotion Agency for Malian firms.

Liberalization of
foreign trade
6

A WTO member since 1995, Mali nevertheless still has some outstanding notifications to the WTO. Along with other “Cotton Four” countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, and Chad), Mali continues to seek the abolishment of subsidies for cotton exports (WTO Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton, November 2014). Mali enjoys ACP (the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) privileges under the Cotonou Agreement. In negotiations for an economic partnership agreement with the European Union, Mali is represented by ECOWAS and WAEMU. This negotiation process has stagnated, with Malian officials supporting the regional argument that aid (including financial) to modernize local industry is needed to counter the feared losses in customs revenues under the partnership agreement.

Institutional foundations for a banking system have been laid, but there are vulnerabilities due to extreme dependence on external factors. There are 13 commercial banks operating in Mali. Although the degree of foreign ownership of banks remains low, Mali’s second-largest bank, Banque International du Mali (BIM), has been bought by the Moroccan group Attijariwafa Bank; part of developing closer trade, financial and economic ties especially with Morocco, but also with Egypt and

Banking system
7

Tunisia (African Economic Outlook – Mali 2014). Despite the 2012 crisis, during which banks were closed in the three northern regions, the banking system has been stable since early 2013. Mali's membership in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and supervision by the independent Central African Banking Commission (COBAC) contributes to financial stability, and Malian banks have achieved the minimum capital requirement (IMF 2014). Although the financial system has sufficient liquidity, Malian banks lack resources for long-term financing. Nonperforming loans have again increased over 20% (2013) from below 20% in 2011 (IMF 2014). In May 2011, the government created a private-sector guarantee fund (FGSP) to guarantee bank loans made to small and medium-sized enterprises for 2 to 7 years. A capital-stock investment company (SICR) was also created to take shares in companies. Overall, however, the banking sector generally contributes little to fueling the economy, and access rates to bank and financial services remain very low.

8 | Currency and Price Stability

As a member of the African Financial Community (Communauté Financière d'Afrique, CFA), which is guaranteed by the French Treasury, Mali's monetary policy decisions are made by the Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO), and the CFA franc is pegged to the euro. Notwithstanding the impact of the political crisis on agricultural production and, thus, inflation, a return to relative political stability since elections in 2013 has allowed agricultural production to rebound and economic growth with moderate inflation to resume. Agricultural production, highly dependent on rain-fed crops has the greatest influence on inflation. From revised data, estimates and projections, inflation between 2012 and 2018 will average less than 3% per year (World Bank 2014, African Economic Outlook Mali 2014, IMF 2014).

Anti-inflation /
forex policy

8

After cooperation with donors was disrupted by the political crisis in 2012, Mali is returning to a stable macroeconomic framework, founded on robust cooperation with the IMF, World Bank and other international donors. The IMF reinstated funding flows in December 2014 (agreed to in December 2013) to help Mali address the ongoing political and military crisis in the north. This aligns with donors' resumption of confidence in Mali's longstanding "model aid pupil" status, with flows returning to pre-2012 levels (though somewhat lower than the post-crisis lending and grants released immediately after the 2013 elections).

Macrostability

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Highly financed by external lenders, Mali's public debt was 32.1% of GDP in 2013, up from a slightly higher than expected 29.9% in 2012. External debt in 2013 totaled

31.3% of GDP, marking a 4.9% increase since 2011. The debt service share of exported goods and services was 3.0% in 2012, 4.2% in 2013, and 3.8% in 2014, and projected to be 4.4%, 4.9%, and 5.8% in 2015, 2016, and 2017, respectively. The current account deficit increased from -6.1% of GDP in 2011 to -10.4% and -7.0% in 2013 and 2014, with an encouraging projected return to pre-crisis levels for 2015, 2016, and 2017 of -6.2, -4.9, and -4.9, respectively (IMF Country Report No. 14/337, December 2014). Thanks to continued debt management under the IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), Mali's risk of excess debt remains moderate (IMF and World Bank 2013), notwithstanding that the overall budget deficit increased to an unusually high 5.5% percent of GDP in 2014, primarily the result of regularizing off-budget military spending over current and future budgets.

9 | Private Property

In principle, Malian property rights are well defined and regulated. The Centre Malien de Promotion de la Propriété Industrielle (CEMAPI) implements the legal property rights protection regime for industrial property, including the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) treaties. As with other de jure versus de facto operations, widespread corruption within the Malian bureaucracy hampers implementation. Particularly in land rights, ubiquitous corruption increases transaction costs to seek legal title, which is further complicated by the fact that most land in Mali is not allotted for. On the ease of registering property, Mali ranks 133rd out of 189 countries. Of broader economic and political transformation interest are divergent concepts of property and customary access rights, particularly between nomads and the settled population, which reflect alternative, non-state sites of social regulation, which can be conflict-prone in rural areas. Moreover, because it is hard to get reliable data on the scope of foreign land acquisition in Mali, there is persistent and growing popular concern as well as accusation voiced by Malian civil society actors (e.g, Coalition des Alternatives Africaines Dette et Développement, CAD-Mali) that the government is supporting "land grabbing" by foreign investors.

Overall, private enterprises are as yet of little significance in the economic system; most Malian private companies are small and employ few staff. Insufficient infrastructure and corruption are the main barriers private companies face. Return to normalcy will afford scope for the (2011) investment code and (2009) National Investment Promotion Agency (Agence nationale pour la promotion des investissements) to foster private business and facilitate administrative procedures. Ongoing privatization will sell the Banque de l'Habitat du Mali (BHM) by the end of 2015, but this will not be immediately followed by the sale of the remaining subsidiary companies in the Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement du Textile

Property rights
5

Private enterprise
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(CMDT). With the 2012/2013 crisis preempting agreement on a final award decision, a reorganization plan tabled in July 2014 appears to signal a lack of urgency in the CMDT privatization process (USDA GAIN, September 2014). Thus, while the return to a post-crisis status quo eases the difficulties of attracting private investors to buy state enterprises, Malian authorities are measuring the potential political costs of further privatizations.

10 | Welfare Regime

The state's weak capacity and small revenues limits its measures to foster economic inclusion or provide compensation for exclusion. Insufficient health care and social infrastructure impact large segments of society, with almost no effective capital-funded schemes to guarantee welfare. The Malian state is not able to systematically combat poverty on its own. However, the Malian government has somewhat reformed the civil service pension fund (with IMF advice), reducing its operating deficit. More such efficiencies are crucial. Mali consistently allocates 3% of GDP to health spending, yet has seen only slight improvement in basic welfare indicators (e.g., Human Development Index).

The political crisis, its legacies, and persistent insecurity in the north have further weakened the country's social infrastructure and set back efforts to increase cereal production and basic food self-sufficiency. Thus, a large part of the Malian population remains reliant on the mutual self-help systems provided by the extended family, which are further supplemented (particularly in rural areas) by the extensive network of civil society organizations (NGOs, associations) substituting the state's role, often with international donor support. As with aspects of the informal economy that elude accurate measurement, the safety nets afforded by Malians to members of their networks (extended family, faith community) are deeply rooted and, if not robust enough to reduce poverty, work to keep many persons from life-threatening scarcity. Indeed, this widespread solidarity (commensurate with bonding more than bridging social capital) mitigates otherwise acute – and violence prone – inequality and cleavages of socioeconomic status. As insecurity persists at the community level, informal welfare provision capacities will be curtailed, exposing more of the most vulnerable Malians to greater risks.

Multiple barriers hamper equal opportunity in Mali. Prospects for economic success and access to influence and decision-making authority depend on personal connections in which social differences are very significant. Malian women are not afforded the same opportunities as men. Structural inequality between men and women is legally anchored in the widely contested family law (Code de la Famille), a barometer of popular resistance to legal mechanisms to enhance gender equality. The gap between female and male literacy rates (2013: 24.6% and 43.3%, respectively) is but one indicator of gendered inequality and matches the gender gap

Social safety nets
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Equal opportunity
4

in formal labor force participation: 38.6% of women to 67% of men (World Bank 2014). This is understandable in light of female to male enrollment rate ratios, that are somewhat unequal in primary (88.4% as many girls as boys) and secondary education (71.5%), and significantly unequal in tertiary education (42.6%) (World Development Indicators 2014, UNESCO). Given the broader context of Islamic resurgence in Mali, widely accessed state-regulated Islamic schools (*médersas*) offer little or uneven access to francophone state functions and opportunities. Different education paths produce unequal opportunities.

However, women's engagement in the informal economy, most often selling at markets, is substantial. Women's high informal economic and civil society engagement (as well as presence in leading bureaucracy positions) is not reflected in their presence in parliament (10% of all seats) and in government (three female ministers – two returning and one new – out of 29 positions in the January 2015 Keita government, down from five in the previous government).

In light of the 2012 Islamist insurgency in northern Mali, during which women's rights were substantially curtailed, the crisis also highlighted once again that persons in the slave-descended community remain structurally denied opportunities. In addition, even though 75% of Malian refugees have returned home, over 130,000 are still of concern to the UNHCR (January 2015).

11 | Economic Performance

After a solid growth rate of 5.8% in 2010 that was reduced to 2.7% in 2011 (poor rainfall reduced food production), the political crisis seriously affected the economy. Rising gold prices and new gold mines could not absorb the effects of the crisis and there was no growth (-0.4%) in 2012, despite a good harvest. A small gain of 1.7% in 2013 showed the lingering effects of conflict and harvests were again impacted by poor weather conditions. As weather returns to expected patterns, agriculture is recovering, the rebound is accelerating and business confidence is improving with donors' re-engagement and democratic governance. GDP growth is estimated at 5.8% percent for 2014, and projected at 5.5% in 2015. Inflation was slightly negative in 2013 (-0.6%), reflecting a decline in food prices. In 2014, food prices remained weak and a low level of positive inflation, ranging from 2% to 2.6% in 2015, is projected into 2017. Mali's general government gross debt remained stable around 30% of GDP (2011 to 2013, IMF Country Report No. 14/337). The current account deficit is steady around 5 to 6% of GDP (2013 to 2014), and will be financed with external assistance inflows and FDI, which have settled at their historic average of 3.2% of GDP (2013 to 2014), or slightly lower (projected into 2017 at 2.6% to 2.1%).

High unemployment impacts especially the younger population, the highest share of the overall population (49% of the population is under 15 and 30% is between 15 and

Output strength
6

35 years old). Poor economic growth rates and unsuitable job training combine with a high population growth rate to exacerbate unemployment. The unemployment rate has worsened (from 8.8% in 2004/2005 to 9.6% in 2011), while the employment-to-population ratio remains constant at 47% to 48% (IMF Country Report No. 14/337, World Development Indicators 2014).

12 | Sustainability

Mali's huge environmental challenges (desertification, loss of biodiversity and water pollution) stem from vulnerability to the effects of climate change. Efforts to date have rated poorly, with Mali slipping from a 156th rank of 163 countries to 177th of 178 in 2012 (Environmental Performance Index, EPI, 2010 and 2012, scores 39.4 and 18.43). Mali's only marked improvements in the EPI indicators over ten years have been in Water and Sanitation, in which Mali ranks 161st out of 178 countries, and in pesticide regulation (140th of 178).

Environmental
policy
4

Mali's institutional framework for environmental protection has existed since the 1990s. In the constitution (Article 15) is enshrined a right to a healthy environment and its provision by the state. In 1998, the government established a comprehensive legal framework, the National Environmental Protection Policy (Politique Nationale de Protection de l'Environnement, PNPE). Furthermore, the national growth strategy of 2007 to 2011 and the 2012 to 2017 poverty reduction strategy paper used the PNPE as a crosscutting issue to mainstream environmental and climate issues.

Notwithstanding these efforts, environmental problems have not yet been adequately addressed. A national Environment and Sustainability Agency (Agence nationale de l'environnement et du développement durable) was created and supports Mali's continued participation as a pilot country in the Climate Investment Funds' Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program in Low Income Countries (SREP) program. However, given the lingering impacts of the 2012 crisis, environmental protection has been slow to return as a priority on the government's agenda. Nevertheless, grassroots efforts, rooted in local cultural knowledge of natural resource management, are a basis from which communities interact with national and international partners, especially on water and forestry issues, and negotiate the optimal balance of formal and informal rules and practices that shape how natural resources are owned, used, and managed.

Given the recurring impact of low rainfall on agricultural production, which affects economic performance and food security, climate change impacts on desertification and drought in Mali are also relevant to consider from regional and global policy contexts in which Mali has limited influence or no membership.

Lack of employment-relevant education is a major factor in the country's relatively slow socioeconomic development. Poor data also plague effective action to remedy this, despite the importance of education to both domestic authorities and donors. Mali's U.N. education index is holding steady around 0.3 in 2011 to 2013 (rank 176th of 187), which is roughly commensurate with Mali's steady HDI score and ranking in the past five years. In 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively (no data were available for 2012 or 2013, World Development Indicators 2014), 17%, 19%, and 19% of government spending was for education; this reflects a GDP share of 4 to 5%. To date, educational policies have improved input indicators. For example, primary enrollment increased between 1995 and 2011 from about 42% to 92%. Critical in this was the spread and popularity of state-regulated Islamic schools (médersas, funded partially by Arab states). The crisis of 2012 lowered the rate to 88%, but this reflects an anomalous year and not the start of a new trend in declining enrollment. Furthermore, the narrowing gender gap in primary enrollment is a notable success, with 88.4% as many girls as boys enrolled (World Development Indicators 2014). However, ensuring that students regularly attend school and take examinations remains a major challenge and teachers and professors regularly strike for better work conditions. The influence of these education sector actors is a legacy of their organized opposition and mobilization against the dictator Moussa Traoré in the early 1990s. A lack of trained professionals exacerbates the situation: only 2% of the Malian population has a university degree. Thus, even improved inputs produce only moderate results, and output indicators remain extremely low. Indeed, adult literacy rates have made little progress (19% of adults were literate in 1996 and only 25% in 2011, World Development Indicators 2014) and a significant gap between urban and rural literacy rates persists. However, according to the World Bank, progress has been achieved with regard to youth literacy, which the same period rose from 24% to 43% among people aged 15 to 24. The absence of significant spending on research and development in Mali (1% of GDP in 2010, with a 30% decline in researchers per population 2006 to 2010) underlines important questions – beyond access, inputs and quality – about the relevance of educational outputs to the Malian and regional labor markets and economies.

Education policy /
R&D

3

Transformation Management

I. Level of Difficulty

Very serious international and domestic constraints hinder the effective governance of transformation in Mali. A landlocked geography hampers access to overseas markets and links Mali to neighboring countries' vulnerabilities (e.g., political upheavals in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 and Burkina Faso in the fall of 2014 as well as the 2014 Ebola outbreak spreading through Guinea). Almost two-thirds of Mali is Sahel zone where climate threats are high (especially the threat of insufficient rain for crops). Mali's heavily agriculture-dependent economy is vulnerable to droughts and inundations that regularly impact the northern and eastern regions of the country, thereby impacting the largest share of national income. In recent years, the only moderately good harvests have reinforced Mali's dependence on food and oil imports. The post-transition period faces the lingering impacts of the 2012 crisis, an ongoing MINUSMA presence, and general insecurity from multi-dimensional fighting (July 2014 to the present) in the Gao and Kidal regions. President Keita's 2015 New Year's message acknowledged that 2014 was a difficult year for Mali foremost because of the fighting (still ongoing) in the north among Malian soldiers, U.N. troops, rebel factions and pro-government militias. Indeed, confronting and managing the fragmentation of non-state and non-MINUSMA fighters – both pro- and anti-government – is critical, as this fragmentation will continue to significantly exacerbate structural constraints into the medium term.

Structural
constraints

8

Mali also faces a striking rural-urban socioeconomic gap, segregating more prosperous urban areas from rural regions (where most of Mali's poor live). Socioeconomic development is constrained by extreme poverty – 51% of the population lives on less than \$1.25 per day and 79% lives on less than \$2 per day (latest World Bank data 2010) – as well as by a comparatively small educated labor force and formal sector. Despite considerable funding, education remains poorly managed and notable progress is elusive. In addition, the incentives for internationally trained experts to work in government or with the international donor community tend to eclipse the appeal of entrepreneurial activities.

International factors also significantly constrain Mali's economic and political governance. One of sub-Saharan Africa's most aid-dependent states, Mali is prey to the logics of rent-seeking and patron-clientelism. Also, while the domestic population

might struggle to hold its government accountable, powerful donors do so readily. Thus, even when the Malian state is not overruled by international donors, its options are often conditioned and constrained by them. Indeed, notwithstanding donors' emphasis on "capacity building," Mali remains guided and disciplined by international constituencies and donors' procedures can tie up scarce government capacity.

Mali's capacity for economic transformation is further limited by the very low degree and character of global economy integration. Indeed, international investors and companies dominate key sectors (gold extraction and telecommunications), and their profits largely bypass public financial systems and contribute little to domestic development. Privatization of the state-owned cotton company has stalled under the current government, with the large scale sale of land prompting some resistance (and some international concern).

Mali's strong civil society organizations (CSOs) have helped strengthen pluralism since the democratic transition in 1991 and 1992. No longer controlled by the regime, organizations (e.g., of peasants, educators or women) that opposed the one-party system struggle to hold the elected regimes to account. In twenty years of expansion a kind of "NGO business" has flourished, incentivized by substantial financing from donors and donor-country NGOs. Explicitly Muslim organizations, often financed by Arab states, but also with deep roots in established lineages of religious leadership, are important in the CSO landscape.

Civil society
traditions

3

Illustrative is the esteemed membership of a January 2015 peace delegation to France, Belgium and Germany from Mali's civil society: Mahmoud Dicko, Islamic High Council president, the Archbishop of Bamako, Cherif Ousmane Haidara, among Mali's most influential Muslim preachers, as well as former Prime Minister Mohamed Ag Hamani, and the presidents of both the National Union of Malian Workers (UNTM) and the Malian Women's Organizations (Organisations féminines du Mali).

Different CSOs engage in politics to varying degrees and in different ways. The specific interests of groups such as women, students, or peasants are represented by large and medium-sized organizations, who engage in advocacy on particular issue areas: for example, for (or against) revisions to the family code, privatization or land grabbing. Service delivery NGOs, run more on business principles and usually apolitical, participate in the social sectors (e.g., education and health). In the context of the recent conflict and its aftermath, new organizations have emerged, positioned themselves, and continue to work through a post-election shakeout period. For example, the Northern Citizens' Collective (Collectif des ressortissants du nord, COREN) continues to be heard as one representative of northern populations' interests, adding to the larger conversation in which peace talk representatives are also participants. Furthermore, small CSOs, which might provide welfare services or

“small enterprise” income beyond family networks must also be seen as important survival strategies, especially in rural areas (and Mali’s north) that are poorly integrated into national socioeconomic development. Opportunistic expansion of CSO and NGOs has made Malian civil society dense with many organizations of limited internal capacity and coordination.

Characterized by tolerance and a political culture of dialogue, Mali’s recent conflict intensity is an exception to the rule. Hospitality (Bamanan: *jatigiya*) is proudly emphasized in public discourse. The “joking cousins” relationships, which bridge many of Mali’s ethnic groups, reinforce a political culture of consensus-seeking rather than conflict in communal relations. However, notwithstanding Mali’s deeply rooted culture of tolerance, dialogue and social mediation, communal conflicts persist over resource access and management (farmland, water, pasture, artisanal gold mining sites), education-sector crises remain chronic, and the northern situation remains unresolved. Social cleavages remain unaddressed by Mali’s brief history of democratic pluralism; the return to a pre-2013 status quo has insufficiently reduced conflict-prone divisions. Moreover, the state’s uneven capacity to maintain social order – by force as well as through consensus-building – hampers the control of criminal violence outside of core areas and regions.

Conflict intensity

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Indeed, the multidimensional conflicts begun in 2012 precipitated full-scale war in 2013 and the problems associate with fighting in 2014 persist into 2015. Perhaps over-relying on the tested strength of Mali’s consensus politics paradigm, the current government is strongly committed to restoring peace and democracy as well as to state-wide governance reforms. This capacity to seek peace, however, is hampered by the legacies and resurgence of northern conflict. Pro- and anti- government actors have committed human rights violations, including killings along racial, ethnolinguistic and clan lines. This living history threatens to exacerbate ethnically motivated violence between the light-skinned Tuareg and Berabiche Arabs and the black population. Reports of executions committed by the Malian army of alleged supporters of Islamist groups suggest that such crimes could continue to occur in the current context of a not-completely-ended war. Moreover, splits within ethnic groups – for example, between Tuareg clans Ifoghas (Gaita, MAA) and Imghad (MNLA, HCUA) – are increasingly militarized. The extensive range of actors at the peace negotiations – rebels, regional actors from neighboring countries and ECOWAS, the African Union, the European Union and MINUSMA – may yet leave out key voices that might subsequently constitute spoilers. Indeed, the absence of pro-government militia representatives gives some Malians the sense that – once again – the nationalist National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) is getting its way in peace negotiations, at the expense of robustly representative engagement with all of Mali’s northern populations.

II. Management Performance

14 | Steering Capability

The post-transitional government is beginning to address Mali's demanding and complex development challenges, which the 2012 crisis had moved into the background. Added to these, however, is the urgent challenge of establishing credible security in northern communities and, thus, moving towards post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding. The January 2013 transition plan set forth as priorities the management of the northern crisis and the organization of elections to establish a legitimate president and legislature, which has already seen three prime ministers. Mali thus returns to striving for democracy and a market economy. It does this while being more deeply dependent than ever on external support, which brings negotiations with external actors into every sphere of government priority-setting and implementation. In particular, a divergence of opinion may arise from Mali's international development donor-partners on how best to foster agricultural production, a policy priority according to the 2012 to 2017 growth and poverty reduction strategy (*Cadre Stratégique pour la Croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté*, CSCRP). The guidance and discipline of donors remains a contentious point, regularly reported in the national press, and likely to be further politicized by opposition politicians and some civil society actors. Indeed, to formulate its policies in response to citizens' wishes, Mali's government collides with the conditions of its external aid, which finances approximately 50% of the Malian budget. Faced with new challenges such as the repatriation of displaced people and reconciliation to return to democratic order, it is uncertain if the CSCRP 2012 – 2017 priorities will be realized.

After the transitional government's poor performance, the current government is now set to move forward on and implement major policy priorities, in cooperation with international actors. With the perceived need for leaders who fosters consensus and collaboration to address the country's peace and security priorities, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and Prime Minister Modibo Keita are well-equipped to fulfill this role. However, while the embedded culture of political consensus and unity may strengthen determination and coherence among different departments and ministries, Mali's governmental capacity to implement policy measures, its dependence on aid and external policy discipline are compounded with internal clientelistic practices, even when not undermined by outright corruption. With the wholesale resignation of government in spring 2014, recent ministerial shuffles, and the third prime minister in sixteen months (as of January 2015) it is hard to see how the Malian government will effectively maintain and achieve strategic priorities. The northern region,

Question
Score

Prioritization
5

Implementation
5

particularly Kidal, had not returned to normalcy as hoped as late as early fall 2014, and the peace negotiation process is foundering against continued fighting and insecurity. This places in doubt the re-prioritization of, for example, the 2012 to 2017 growth and poverty reduction strategy (Cadre Stratégique pour la Croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté, CSCRP), as a key cooperation framework for Mali and its international partners in the country's socioeconomic transformation.

Lacunae in the organization of rushed elections in summer and autumn 2013 show that the transitional government learned little from evaluations by the administration, civil society groups and international donors throughout Mali's democratic period. For example, producing a complete and transparent voter registration system remained a major challenge in 2013. The underlying issues in the north show other missed learning opportunities. While civil-military reintegration programs remain convincing and appealing to donors, they ignore lessons from the disarmament and integration programs of the 1990s, particularly the risks associated with sidelining anti-nationalist self-defense militias. Beyond re-stabilizing social order and fostering sustainable socioeconomic development (so as to dissuade border populations from turning to criminal activities), learning has been slow with regard to working with non-separatist populations (who see the state as either disinterested in or opposed to their concerns).

Significant media freedom and largely functioning markets, particularly in informal sectors, as well as the urban culture of demonstrations combine to provide feedback for the government. These allow the government to assess the impact and popularity of its policies, and change its approach (or not). The CMDT privatization debates are an ongoing example of this, and further highlight Mali's adaptation to external pressure from donors, learning from previous negotiation processes and exhibiting growing self-confidence. However, elite rent-seeking from external funds and international investments in primary sector mega-projects disincentivizes tackling the root problems of corruption. Moreover, the political leadership appears unwilling to abandon a deeply internalized high dependence on foreign aid in favor of greater self-reliance. The scope of France's operation Barkhane in the Sahel as well as the deepening need for an ongoing MINUSMA presence signal the government's dependence on external support to reform military policy.

Policy learning

6

15 | Resource Efficiency

Mali's resource efficiency remains disappointing. A large government bureaucracy (30 ministries in January 2015) relative to Mali's population continues from the General Touré government. With three cabinets already, the current government has not turned away from politically-motivated dismissals and appointments nor from politically influenced recruiting procedures. The ongoing struggles with and work towards effective decentralization continues to be an issue, which is both highlighted and made more difficult by the ongoing violence related to nationalist MNLA claims and anti-MNLA militias. Increasing tensions between local northern populations and MINUSMA forces underlines the persistent insufficiency of administrative decentralization. Government employees often remain absent from their offices. Clarity in government and the public about this problem (and others) is growing thanks to the Auditor General (AG)'s improving and more visible work. With foreign and internal efforts to improve transparency, the AG's annual reports have triggered substantial public debate and have forced spotlighted ministries and offices to explain themselves in public. However, irregularities thus exposed have not been officially punished.

Efficient use of assets

4

Steps to improve Mali's institutional framework are returning to the agenda in 2014 and 2015. The AG continued their work after the coup, even though the auditing process experienced setbacks, as many government documents were destroyed. Establishing a Court of Auditors through a constitutional amendment has been in process since 2011 and signals the Malian government's commitment to improve structures of financial oversight. Of particular note in post-crisis transformation is linking spending systems at the central and local levels, to improve budget documentation and provide up-to-date information on budget execution. Moreover, medium-term expenditure frameworks have been extended, to translate into budgetary terms the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper's sectoral strategies. Cultivating professionalism among auditors, however, remains a long-term process.

With the ongoing struggles of the current government to find solid footing in 2013 and 2014, and the as yet unresolved fighting in northern communities, four persistent legacies of poor policy coordination continue to trouble Malian politics. Competition for resources to redistribute among client networks, redundancies and tensions among the many government agencies hampers coordination. The increasing importance of support programs from China also threatens policy coherence in light of China's general disinterest in working within the OECD and multilateral organizations' norms and practices for development cooperation. Given Mali's gradual return to "donor darling" status among established donor-partners and the increasing importance of emerging donor-partners such as China, effective policy

Policy coordination

5

coordination will remain a complex challenge in Mali's highly "transnationalized" policy environment. Indeed, the ongoing security issues are expanding the scope of relevant multilateral actors in policy formulation and implementation (e.g., G5 Sahel, African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations). More directly donor-financed NGO activities further undermine policy coherence. A burgeoning "NGO industry" has emerged to pursue and access international financing, with the high number of uncoordinated and independent NGOs still ineffectively managed by a 2007 comprehensive reporting system to regulate NGO financing. The importance of non-state actors – whether in "civil" society and aligned with broadly liberal values or not – contributes both to supporting Mali's capacity and hampers coherent approaches to deploying that capacity.

High levels of corruption among the Malian political elite and bureaucrats have long fueled popular dissatisfaction with the democratic regime. Thus, fighting corruption continues to be on the agenda of the new government, which struggles to distinguish its promises to fight corruption from the former government's rhetorically strong commitment to fight corruption that showed limited success. The office of the Auditor General continues to investigate cases, with improved financial and organizational support; however, a lack of prosecutions by the Prosecutor General of cases provided by the Public Auditor is a regular complaint. The government suffers massive financial losses, and is being "robbed, pure and simple," yet there is only little and sporadic evidence of a willingness to act in the fight against corruption, and to effectively apply existing legislation and prosecution mechanisms. With the World Bank's support, Mali will implement Government Action Plan (GAP) 2013-18 with a transparency code and law on illicit enrichment as well as a budget line to enshrine Mali's Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) activities. Concerns about institutional quality and capacity to serve and protect citizens rest on rampant corruption, clientelism and rent-seeking behaviors at all levels of society. Regularly in public procurement, economic stakeholders are bribed in exchange for competitive public offers. These cases occasionally become public and pressure mounts for the guilty party to be punished. Money is siphoned off or redirected from donor funds and, without donors themselves tracking their funds vigilantly, such corruption is rarely punished.

Anti-corruption
policy

4

16 | Consensus-Building

Less than coordinating coherent policies towards priorities, the government manages conflicting objectives into a livable “consensus,” and indeed trades on this capability to defend its record and its future policy agenda. Rhetorically, the main political actors in Bamako agree on deepening democratic peace as a mid-term and long-term goal. Among the non-state groups that occupied northern Mali in 2012, however, only the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad explicitly declared its adherence to a democratic agenda, while rejecting the form of Mali’s democratically elected regime as one in which they did not recognize themselves or see their concerns addressed. The disagreements about parts of the implementation of peace negotiations and the role played by MINUSMA soldiers indicate the persistent divergences among Mali’s major political actors on the means of implementing democratic governance and sustainable peace; this can leave spaces for deep-cutting critique and searching questions about liberal politics and economics as well as attacks on the very foundations of the state thus constituted.

A qualified consensus on market economy principles is informed by a preference less for liberal market ideals than for economic democracy, in which the basic economic needs of all citizens are satisfied. While this does not directly challenge liberal norms, it offers a qualified convergence between reform-minded political actors and elites embedded in the social democratic tendencies of Mali’s political history. As the new government adjusts to the lingering insecurity and sets its sights on issues other than peace negotiations, economic issues are gaining importance in political debates. Indeed, debate over economic principles among political actors, labor unions, and strong civil society associations have been characterized a vibrancy of public discourse and slowed certain liberalizing reforms. More vociferous opposition to liberalization unites trades unions with social movement elements that question and resist the privatization of major state-owned enterprises, which has indeed seen delays (e.g., the state cotton company). The deeply and widely held notion that the state has an important provider role is reflected in, for example, few Malians questioning the feasibility of the state planning key sectors of agricultural production, such as in the government’s popular initiative to foster cereal production through subsidies.

While major political actors agree on the broad lines of a liberal democracy and market economy, minor yet still significant non-state groups are less well linked to state or donor funds, and are either less enthusiastic about the status quo forms of liberal democracy and market economy or are more radically alienated from notions of political and economic liberalism. In the Malian context, there is no automatic convergence or allegiance between different anti-reform actors and tendencies (e.g., anti-democratic non-state, anti-status quo civil society, anti-neoliberal civil society,

Consensus on goals

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Anti-democratic actors

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anti-family law Islamic, faith-based welfare providers). Many groups draw supporters by saying that Mali's eroded democratic institutions house corrupt, self-serving elected representatives.

As the excesses and abuses of the 2012 crisis either recede from memory or are relived in the ongoing insecurity (especially by vulnerable communities and social groups), the status quo experience of a corrupted democracy among many Malians risks increasing the appeal of not-necessarily-democratic means to restore the promise of the 1991 "People's Revolution."

After the widespread non-confidence in General Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT), the legitimacy of President Keita is a significant boost for reform, combating these tendencies ideally by bringing more voices to the table. This is qualified somewhat by an apparent willingness to incorporate some elements of those groups that oppose democratic principles in efforts for reconciliation. Indeed, popular perceptions of including too many alleged terrorists and criminals in peace talks, and failing to take seriously the self-defense actors and groups, risks exacerbating ongoing problems with the credibility of the negotiation process.

Islamic actors other than fundamentalist/salafist groups, while committed to public deliberation and free media, still tend to oppose some principles of liberal democracy such as equal rights for women. Thus they accurately represent the majority view of Malian society, yet their fragmentation into small, weakly organized groups limits their power overall.

The Malian state's options are heavily conditioned by international donors, particularly with the ongoing security issues. The external actors' large role in formulating and implementing Mali's policies can indirectly and unintentionally hinder democratization. This is increasingly recognized as an unfortunate legacy of Mali's donor darling status under the ATT regime. For instance, donors very effectively hold the government accountable to their own agendas and yet, at the same time, weaken the government's capacity to be accountable to the Malian people.

Notwithstanding the so-called joking cousins relationships (Bamanan: *sènèkunya*), which depolarize structural conflicts at the civil society level, when political leaders seek to establish as broad a consensus as possible through elite-driven patron-client relations, this has often merely moderated cleavage-based conflict, and only in the short-to-medium term, leaving little progress toward deeper resolution and leaving such cleavages conflict-prone. Indeed, existing cleavages have been aggravated and uncovered as legacies of the 2012 crisis. They include divides between marginalized northeast and central regions, tensions between the light-skinned Tuareg and Arab population and the black population of northern Mali, with modern-day slavery and human trafficking continuing issues. Also lacking sufficient progress is closing the socioeconomic gap between urban elites and the large poor rural population. Even

Cleavage /
conflict
management

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though the transition-period arguments and conflicts have receded since the establishment of the current government, the nature and rebuilding of the Malian state nevertheless remains a charged issue. This exposes key social cleavages along class and regional lines, which are further complicated by ethnolinguistic identities. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK)'s optimism for peace thus far rests on the anticipated success of the ongoing talks in Algeria, Mali's projected economic growth and its success with poverty reduction strategies. By bringing into the process notables from Mali's political past, IBK also hopes to signal the high national importance of managing the conflicts across Mali. This approach, however, based on a carefully managed "inclusivity" of leaders and participants, risks cultivating a superficial and only partial "consensus" that will merely moderate conflict-prone cleavages and inhibit their durable transformation.

Notwithstanding Mali's robust civil society space, which is richly structured with organizations, it is not consistently or effectively involved by the political leadership in decision-making, policy implementation or in the monitoring of government performance. Given the freedom and dynamism of the Malian press, one exception is the influence civil society actors have on agenda setting and deliberation and thus on the broadest lines of policy formulation. Indeed, Mali's dynamic CSOs and community-based activists continue to foreground the needs for military reform and discipline, and accountable governance, in light of the ongoing conflict and need for MINUSMA and France's Operation Barkhane. Nevertheless, issues thus discussed by citizens or even championed by civil society organizations are not necessarily taken onto the political agenda.

Civil society
participation
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From mid-way through General Touré's regime (2006 to 2009), numerous dissatisfactions unresolved from the second Tuareg rebellion (1990 to 1995) were rekindled and precipitated armed clashes between the government and Tuareg rebels in the north. As the events of the last five years show – connecting the 2011 influx of former Libyan army elements to the renewed rebellion in 2012 and the subsequent fighting up to the present – the previous reconciliation processes, which established ten years of peace, were not irreversible. Against Malians' long histories of self-governance and resisting the state (colonial, dictatorial, democratic) varieties of resistance to authorities whose legitimacy is not yet recognized is manifest as part of the identity of different groups. This is perhaps best known among – but by no means exclusive to – some Tuareg clans. Sometimes confounded with this conflict-laden past are elements engaged in the criminal trafficking and smuggling economies that flourish in the Sahel zone.

Reconciliation
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The commitment and capacity of Mali's political leadership, with its regional and international donor partners, for reconciliation is significant, as evidenced by the large majority of the Malian national assembly that voted in March 2014 to establish the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (Commission Vérité, Justice et Réconciliation, CVJR). Moving beyond calls for reconciliation in the mandate of the

short lived Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission (Commission Nationale de Dialogue et de Réconciliation, CNDR, March 2013 to March 2014), the CVJR's three-year mandate is to establish the truth about crimes committed in the north between 1960 and 2013, to help building durable peace in Mali. Quasi-independent while under the Ministry of Reconciliation, the CVJR has been stalled since July 2014. As of January 2015, its fifteen commissioners had yet to be named by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK). These appointments will add the moral authority of IBK to that of the appointees.

Indeed, the desire for peace and reconciliation is strong at the top of Mali's government. Daunting and complex, however, are the interconnected challenges to reconcile the victims and perpetrators of injustices arising from the rebellion, coup, insurgency, MINUSMA presence and ongoing fighting among state and non-state groups. Reconciliation between different groups at the regional and local level are a precondition for restoring social peace in Mali. Renewed expressions of prejudice against the Tuareg and Arab minorities as well as historic discourses of "lighter northerners'" superiority to the black population are also fuel for human rights violations by state and non-state actors.

17 | International Cooperation

Among the most aid-dependent states in sub-Saharan Africa, Mali cooperates closely with bilateral and multilateral international donors from the OECD-world. Based on 2012 OECD and World Bank figures, Mali's level of aid dependency per capita has roughly doubled from \$36 per person in 2000 to \$67 in 2012. Such steadily increasing support relied on the widely shared assumption that Mali was a success story of democratization and a strong commitment to development: the "donor darling" narrative. If General Touré's later years in office had begun to tarnish that image, the 2012 coup ended a chapter in Mali's "model aid recipient" story. After the 2013 elections, the largest OECD donors (the United States, World Bank, European Union, Canada and France) reinstated their aid – among them \$722 million of the total OECD donor ODA of \$1.0 billion. In November 2014, the World Bank approved a further \$63 million in grants and credits for the First Recovery and Governance Reform Support Operation, which supports the Mali Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework (CSRP-3) and the Government Action Plan (GAP) 2013-2018.

Expanding beyond the OECD, Mali has diversified its international cooperation. While Malian relations with China have progressively deepened throughout the last decade, the Arab Spring hindered further cooperation with North African regimes (such as Libya) on infrastructure and food security in the Niger delta. China's support is largely made up of unconditional concessionary loans and infrastructure aid.

Effective use of support

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After 2012, the effectiveness of international support has been more widely questioned, with donors now alerted by the crisis and its aftermath. Although donor evaluations show improved outcomes in specific sectors (e.g., education and health), the effectiveness of support has overall been limited. Elites' pervasive rent-seeking as well as policy implementation inconsistencies have become clearer in retrospect. The past donor practice of ignoring Mali's governance problems, and rewarding elites with more financial assistance and aid has come under increasing scrutiny. Donors acknowledge that their own uncoordinated policies limited aid effectiveness. Aid's record in removing the enduring structural barriers to equitable socioeconomic development and democratic consolidation remains poor. Although policy dialogue continues to harmonize donor activities and align them with Malian policies, less-coordinated programs still work parallel to harmonized policies such as general and sectoral budget support. In all of this, the role of aid in the new government's mandate for a strong state risks reproducing excessive executive dominance and reinforcing rather than reducing the large and growing socioeconomic division between urban elites and the rest of Mali's largely rural population.

It is now clear that Mali's unquestioned "donor darling" status has ended. However, the good reputation Mali enjoyed as a reliable partner in international cooperation has been quickly rehabilitated since the 2013 elections. Thus, donors have responded with intensive cooperation and high levels of official development assistance. However, this reputation cannot return to the status quo seen pre-2012. Persistent suspicions, if not demonstrated cases of aid embezzlement, will not be as readily ignored by donors. Rebuilding donors' trust in Mali's capacity to reform toward a deepener democracy and market economy will take time, as President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's government copes with persistent urgencies that distract from everything that is not about security and military cooperation. In this light, international donors' confidence in the IBK government's capacity to further pursue post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding to ground Mali's democratic commitments and market reforms is partly its own creation: Mali "needs" to be capable so that "aid" is at least somewhat credibly cooperative and not simply a well-meaning imposition. And yet, on the evidence of strong endorsements of the IBK government's commitments and capabilities, international actors are clearly invested in remaining engaged. Part of the issue is that among the most influential international actors (international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, foreign governments) there are at least two aims, which may not necessarily be fully convergent. One is state-building for security and counter-terrorism capacity; reinforcing past patterns of executive dominance might fulfill this criterion. Second is effective development cooperation – a constellation of tasks more complex to administer and assess in the nexus of donor-partner relations.

Credibility
8

Mali cooperates with regional and international organizations as well as numerous neighbors. One legacy (of both General Touré and previous President Konaré) that President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) is eager to recapture is to be a good regional neighbor, cooperating on arrangements to promote especially peace and security as well as sustainable development and prosperity. Indeed, just as Mali's former governments engaged actively in international and regional organizations, and promoted regional integration, IBK was quick to reiterate these commitments in thanking ECOWAS members for responding to Mali's needs. Mali becoming a recipient of regional crisis management shows a return on investment in cooperative neighborly relations. Indeed, the temporary suspension and then reinstating of Mali's African Union and ECOWAS memberships, the creation of the G5 Sahel, and Algeria hosting peace negotiations are all part of an effective regionalism of which Mali has been a strong proponent. With issues of national territorial sovereignty nevertheless heightened in the post-crisis period, and used by the opposition to criticize "intervention" by "outsiders," it is key that Mali continue to deepen such cooperation.

Regional
cooperation
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Strategic Outlook

No longer a model of democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, Mali faces continuing political challenges in the capital and security challenges in the north. For the current government, the political class, CSOs, the military and Mali's international partners the main task remains the renewal and preservation of security, democracy, and sustainable livelihoods. Renewal that combines political, economic and military approaches will focus on key short- and long-term issues: combining military and civilian measures to address security problems, deepen democratic governance, make equitable economic and social progress, and improve the effectiveness of international donor assistance.

For the current government (elected in 2013) to reestablish credible and durable democratic peace, political elites must re-commit to accountable and transparent processes and behavior, and work to surpass past practices. Democratic renewal depends on guaranteeing the rule of law and holding delinquent actors responsible. In addition, to preserve the constitutional order, the renewed salience of the military requires democratized civil-military relations.

Although reconquering the northern regions and establishing a U.N. mission has not brought stability, an effective military presence remains necessary to restrain new attacks in northern towns. Numerous non-state armed actors are in play: multiple Islamist, nationalist and pro-government militias. To face these, the Malian military must be reorganized and further professionalized, with better pay to disincentivize cooperation between soldiers and criminal networks in the Sahel. Anti-terrorist measures responsive to the economic motivations of non-state parties will also address local populations' desire for protection in the midst of a conflict zone. This security intervention must be combined with genuinely inclusive dialogue between different population groups: including groups that, while they do not challenge Malian territorial sovereignty, nevertheless seek the reform of the Malian state. Policy interventions are urgently needed to create lasting employment and livelihood resilience in extreme climate conditions.

Beyond the dynamics of the north, efforts to manage political and security challenges across the country must encompass economic and social policies. Consistent public goods provision remains crucial to strengthen Mali's democratic legitimacy, not only in northern regions, but across Mali's conflict-prone social cleavages. Sustainable socioeconomic development requires better anti-corruption measures as well as integrated and effective demographic, education and agricultural policies. High population growth rates continue to limit the impact of even significant economic growth on poverty reduction. This economic growth can be maintained, but is hampered by very low education and literacy levels. Although agricultural productivity increases continue, these are heavily dependent on weather conditions and output remains low.

Rent-seeking and clientelistic behaviors permeate all levels of the governing class and hinder economic growth. These practices deflect development aid away from improving output

indicators. Reactivating and adapting the Malian growth strategy (2013 to 2018) aims to replace short-term prioritization of single policies with long-term strategies that make Mali's policy landscape more coherent and integrated with donors' support. However, foreign actors' involvement can fuel unrealistic expectations, feed discontent and threaten the political gains made since 1990. As much as donors seek to reward good governance and economic progress, they rightly focus on actual advances made by the recipient government. In the case of Mali, however, openly admitting problems – endemic bureaucratic corruption and the expansion of criminal activities in the Sahel zone – have not yet significantly qualified donors' enthusiasm. Admitting failure is crucial to making rewards for success meaningful. In partnership with the dynamic forces in the country that desire foundational change, openly acknowledging the problems of poor governance, and reflecting these in their technical assistance and aid flows, powerful donors could contribute in a positive way to Mali's political and socioeconomic development.