



Centre FrancoPaix en résolution des conflits et missions de paix

POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY OF CONFLICT IN MALI

Christian Leuprecht & Philippe Roseberry

**A Stabilizing Mali Project Report
JUNE 2018**

Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en études stratégiques et diplomatiques
Université du Québec à Montréal
455, boul. René-Lévesque Est, Pavillon Hubert-Aquin
4e étage, bureau A-4410
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4Y2
chaire.strat@uqam.ca | dandurand.uqam.ca

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Foreword

The following report is a demographic analysis of conflict dynamics in Mali. It demonstrates how factors such as mortality, fertility and migration can expose the country to a greater risk of conflict, but without serving as causal explanations. These factors may be aggravating but do not necessarily result in violent or conflictual dynamics.

In the coming months, the Centre FrancoPaix will publish complementary reports and analyses that will cover different elements and dimensions of the situation in Mali. A final report will be available in the spring of 2018. The following is therefore part of a collective research effort.

Indeed, in September 2016, the Centre FrancoPaix launched a major research project on the Malian conflict and its international engagements. Entitled “Stabilizing Mali: the challenges of conflict resolution”, the project aims to produce a rigorous scientific analysis of Malian conflict dynamics. Through multidisciplinary and multidimensional analyses of the situation and opportunities for action, through a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods and with a team of eight expert researchers, the initiative seeks to establish the connections and relationships between multiple variables, notably the links between conflict dynamics and those of international intervention. As such, the Mali Project will develop an enhanced and detailed understanding of the conflict and opportunities for peace.

The complexity of the situation in Mali is undeniable. The difficulties of the peace process are obvious. The limits of mediation and international interventions are important and, some will say, counterproductive. We do not pretend to know or to have discovered the solution to the Malian conflict, but we are confident that our approach and our team can identify and analyse the crucial links between various dimensions of the conflict, and thus shed new light on it.

Good reading.

Bruno Charbonneau

Associate Professor of Political Science, Laurentian University

Director, Centre FrancoPaix en résolution des conflits et missions de paix

Chaire Raoul-Dandurand, Université du Québec à Montréal

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between conflict and demographic trends in Mali – notably fertility, mortality, and migration. Mali’s demographics are similar to those in neighbouring Niger, Burkina Faso, and Guinea, and reflect broader trends across Sub-Saharan Africa: rapid population growth, high fertility rates, poor government services and a surging urban, unemployed youth population. Those aggregate factors may put a country at greater risk of conflict, but, contrary to expectations, they do not actually offer a causal explanation for the conflict in Mali.



POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY OF CONFLICT IN MALI

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relationship between conflict and demographic trends in Mali – notably fertility, mortality, and migration. Mali’s demographics are similar to those in neighbouring Niger, Burkina Faso, and Guinea, and reflect broader trends across Sub-Saharan Africa: rapid population growth, high fertility rates, poor government services and a surging urban, unemployed youth population. Those aggregate factors may put a country at greater risk of conflict, but offers no causal explanation.

Mali’s demographics become more interesting when broken down by region: one might expect the conflict-prone North to be demographically stressed, but the opposite turns out to be true. High fertility and mortality rates are observed primarily in the urban South, Center and West. However, contrary to what one might expect, that is not the case in the conflict-prone Northern provinces, especially Timbuktu and Gao. Similarly, there is little internal or external migration to the North. To the contrary, Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal are actually depopulating and their demographic weight is decreasing relative to more populous parts of Mali. Nor do ethnic demographics appear to be driving the conflict, with the possible exception of the Tuareg (Tamasheq), which make up only 3,5% of the population but are overrepresented among Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania. Most of those refugees leave as violence erupts in 2012-2013, but few have returned and thus are not placing much of a stress on communities in the North. By contrast, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are causing some stress on communities in the South. In short, Mali’s demographic, ethnic, regional and migratory trends correspond with insurgency and terrorism in Central and Northern Mali, but with the bulk of demographic stressors in the South, demographics appear not to be a driver of conflict in the North. However, ongoing depopulation in the North may heighten concerns about political alienation.

Demographics and demographic trends in Mali and the Sahel

Mali’s demographics are typical of Sub-Saharan countries where an age pyramid that is skewed in favour of a large youth cohort is driven by high fertility (an average of 6,4 live births

per woman, 2010-15, UN 2017), high mortality (84 deaths per 1000 live births, 2010-2015 average, UN 2017), low GDP per capita and a low Human development index (HDI) score. In 2016, Mali had the highest population growth rate of all ECOWAS countries, at 3,0% (World Bank, 2016). Over the course of 30 years, Mali's HDI score improved from an extremely low score of 0,165 in 1980 to 0,442 in 2016, which still lags behind the Sub-Saharan Africa average, which increased from 0,293 to 0.523 over the same period. Prior to the 2013 insurgency, Mali experienced sluggish economic growth at rates slightly below the average for ECOWAS countries, although economic growth now surpasses the ECOWAS average. In 2008-2009, Mali's GDP had already decreased during the global economic crisis, and fell further following the rise of insecurity in 2012-2013. As a result, poverty, in absolute terms, remains ubiquitous¹. Although it rose from 55,6% in 2001 to 47,5% in 2006, the poverty rate has largely held steady around 43,6% since 2009 (UN 2017). The economy relies heavily on informal labor, especially in rural areas; while formal employment, concentrated in industry and services, is found mainly in Bamako. At less than 50% Mali's employment-to-participation rate for those older than 15 or older remains the lowest among ECOWAS countries.

The overall demographic situation in Mali is largely illustrative of the fast population growth-poverty- skewed age structure found in much of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel. Table 1 presents comparative demographic scores for Mali and all of its neighbours, all of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa except Algeria. Table 1 also includes the region-wide average scores².

¹ The absolute line is a restrictive definition and is defined by the World Bank's 2\$ USD PPP per day.

² All sub-Saharan African countries except high income countries (World Bank).

Table 1: Sahel region - Comparative demographic indicators (2014-2015)

Country	GDP per capita (PPP)	Fertility rate ‰	Crude birth rate ‰	Death rate‰ people	Mortality rate infant ‰ live birth	Population 0-14 (% of total)
Algeria	14 717	-	25,0	5,13	21,9	28,5
Burkina Faso	1 696	-	41,2	9,56	60,9	45,6
Cote d'Ivoire	3 513	-	37,1	13,55	66,6	42,5
Guinea	1 209	151,6	38,4	9,94	61	42,5
Mali	2 028	178,4	45,9	10,46	74,5	47,5
Mauritania	3 891	85,5	29,1	7,95	65,1	40,0
Niger	9 55	211,3	45,8	9,12	57,1	50,5
Senegal	2 421	92,2	37,3	6,21	41,7	43,8
Sub-Sahara (Developing)	3 712	114,0	-	10,1	56,3	42,9

Source: UN 2017, World Bank 2015

Mali score significantly worse than the Sub-Saharan Africa average on all main demographic indicators, including fertility and crude birth rates, higher death rate and mortality, as well as the second highest on the proportion of population in the 0 to 14 years old category. As Mali's statistical agency notes, this reflects poor general development conditions, very low access to contraception and low levels of education, particularly among women (INSTAT 2009, 47). The high fertility rate is partially compensated by a high mortality and death rate but the proportion of 0 to 14 years old persons remains high and stable at over 45% (World Bank 2015). In terms of regional comparison, Mali corresponds most closely to Niger, with similarly low GDPs, high fertility and high death rates. In Niger, however, the gap between the death rate and mortality rate is wider, suggesting that cause of death has more to do with conflict and health problems later in life than with infant death (as in the case of Mali). Overall, the demographic trends at play in Mali at the aggregate, national level lend credence to arguments about the reinforcing effects of high population growth, high fertility and mortality rates as well as a population composed almost in half of children and adolescents (Leahy 2010; Cincotta, Engelmand and Anastasion 2003; Leuprecht 2010).

Disagregated demographic trends within Mali

General population trends by province

Regional and urban / rural scores on key demographic and development indicators paint an overall bleak portrait of the socio-economic situation in Mali but they also highlight important trends that speak to long term stabilization and development action by the national government

and the United Nations. First, and unsurprisingly, the Malian government and the UN note a sharp rural / urban divide in terms of fertility rates, mortality rates, literacy and access to basic services. While the national comparative average rate of natality is 43 live births per thousand persons, it is 45,9‰ in rural areas and only 35,2‰ in urban areas.

Second, the same demographic indicators also reveal a strong North / South divide that mirrors the recent (post-2013) levels of insurgency following the Tuareg and AQMI uprising of 2012-2013. The living births rate is much lower in Mali's three Northern provinces of Timbuktu (31,8‰), Gao (32,3‰) and Kidal (29,3‰) than in the Southern provinces where the fertility rate ranges from 39,7‰ (Mopti) to 44,3‰ (Sikasso), with a rate of 35,7‰ in Bamako, Mali's most populous province and home to the capital city. As Mali's statistical institute notes, the gross and comparative natality rates in Mali cluster in a bipolar pattern, reproducing a North / South pattern that is evident in other socio-economic indicators (INSTAT 2009, 27-28). Table 2 presents fertility and natality patterns in Mali disaggregated by province.

Table 2: Population growth indicators by region (2009)

Province	Live births ‰ (Gross rate, 2009)	Live births ‰ (comparative index, 2009)	General fertility rate (2009) ‰	Synthetic fertility index (2009)
Sikasso	44,0	44,3	201,5	6,5
Bamako	43,0	35,7	164,2	5,1
Kayes	41,7	43,0	195,1	6,3
Koulikoro	41,7	43,0	194,9	6,3
Ségou	41,5	42,9	194,5	6,3
Mopti	37,4	39,7	181,1	5,8
Timbuktu	36,4	31,8	146,1	4,5
Gao	32,0	32,3	147,0	4,6
Kidal	26,9	29,3	120,4	3,6
National average	43,9	43,9	178,4	6,4

Source: INSTAT 2009; UN 2017

As Mali's Institut national de la statistique also notes, a particular pattern of natality and mortality rates is also at play in Kidal province, Mali's northernmost province which shares a common border with Algeria. The gross natality rate there is the lowest in Mali (26,9 ‰), a pattern

mirrored in other demographic indicators, such as the fertility rate (3,6 children per woman), with a national average standing at 6,4 children per woman (INSTAT 2009, 34).

Mortality rates also paint a pattern of strong North / South bipolarity, with infant mortality rates significantly lower in Mali's three Northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. Mali's statistical institute's explains Kidal's especially low infant and gross mortality rates by the northernmost region's low population density as well as the effect of health practices and institutions from across the border in Algeria (INSTAT 2009, 28). Bamako also displays a mortality rate significantly lower than the national average due to the concentration of health services in the capital as well as the higher level of education. Table 3 presents general population and infant mortality rates disaggregated by gender and region.

Table 3: Mortality indicators by region (2009)

Province	Gross mortality rate (‰)			Infant mortality rate (‰)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Kayes	13,8	16,7	11,0	117,0	123,5	110,6
Koulikoro	12,4	14,8	10,1	101,6	115,5	95
Sikasso	14,0	16,5	11,6	126,7	129,1	120,8
Ségou	13,2	15,5	11,0	129,6	132,5	128,3
Mopti	13,5	15,8	11,3	118,0	124,5	114,8
Timbuktu	15,6	19,0	12,3	102,5	107,5	95,1
Gao	13,4	16,2	10,7	95,8	102,1	92,8
Kidal	8,2	9,4	6,9	64,7	67,6	62,6
Bamako	7,5	8,1	6,8	69,6	73,0	59,3
National average	12,5	14,8	10,1	104,0	105,0	99,0

Source: INSTAT 2009; UN 2017

While the infant mortality rates reproduce the patterns of fertility rates and highlight the same North / South divide observed earlier, the general mortality rate requires further analysis. While the Kidal exception is sustained by both indicators of mortality, the general mortality is more pronounced, especially for males, in the Northern provinces of Timbuktu and Gao. Timbuktu, which has sustained the brunt of insurgency and military operations in 2012-2013 and new insurgency events in the 2013-2017 period, registers the highest rate of general mortality (19 ‰) in the 2009 census (INSTAT 2009, 28). The discrepancy with infant mortality, which is

closer to the national average, suggests that high mortality there is not entirely due to early life mortality and may reflect more violent general conditions.

More generally, demographic trends related to fertility, natality and mortality at the regional level do not sustain the argument of the demographic crisis pushing young men into insurgency. If this were true, we would expect to see high fertility and mortality in the three Northern regions, where most of the insurgency takes place. These regions, however, exhibit lower scores on both series of indicators. Only Timbuktu and Gao provinces, in terms of general mortality rates, exhibit a pattern that sustains the idea of a more violent Northern region. While Mali's overall mortality rate has declined overtime - a sharp decline from 18,2‰ (1976) to 12,6 ‰ (1987) followed by stagnation at 12,5 ‰ - and that the fertility rate has remained steadfastly high, thus bringing about conditions for a demographic crisis, the overpopulation phenomenon is markedly a Southern problem. It appears that the Northern, insurgency-prone provinces are actually seeing a decline in their demographic weight, leading to the decline of the Touareg population.

Ethnic demography

Ethnic demography is a fundamental aspect of Mali's population dynamics. As Thad Dunning notes (2010, 23-24), Mali is a highly diverse country, with more than 12 significant linguistically-defined ethnonational groups. Its fractionalization score of 0,84, which measures the probability that two individuals selected at random will come from different linguistically defined ethnic groups, approaches the score of ethnically diverse countries such as Kenya (.89) and Nigeria (.85) (Alesina et al. 2003, 184–9). Dunning (2010, 23) notes that opinion surveys in Mali place ethnic identity above other potential identifications including religion, occupation and gender. Moreover, specific languages are associated with particular regions of Mali and while Bamako has largely integrated neighbourhoods, some remain linguistically defined (Dunning 2010, 23). According to Mali's 2009 census, Mali's population is 94,84% Muslim, with Christians composing 2,37% of the population and animists coming third at 2,02% (INSTAT 2009, 74). Muslims are an even greater percentage of cities while animists are found mainly in rural areas. In terms of linguistically-defined ethnic groups, the Bambara language is spoken by 46% of Mali's population, followed by Peul at 9,6%. Tamacheq, a Berber language associated with Tuareg populations, is

spoken only by 3,5% of the resident population. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the main linguistically-defined ethnic groups of Mali and indicates which part of the country is associated with them.

Table 4: Main linguistically-defined ethnonational groups in Mali (2009)

Group	Proportion of population (%)	Associated region / province
Bambara	46,3%	-
Peul/foulfoulbé	9,4 %	-
Dogon	7,2 %	-
Maraka/soninké	6,4 %	-
Sonrhail/djerma	5,6%	-
Minianka	4,3 %	-
Tamacheq (Tuareg)	3,5 %	Rural / North
Bobo	2,1 %	-

Source: INSTAT 2009

It is important to note that linguistic groups also significantly vary in proportion along the urban / rural axis. Bambara, the main language, is spoken as a maternal language by 69,2% of urban Malians but only by 41,4% of the rural population (INSTAT 2009, 75). It is also noteworthy that Mali's Institut de la statistique, while mentioning ethnic groups specifically, collects and provides data only on linguistic groups.

The ethnolinguistic fragmentation of the country is thus important, but extent scholarship notes that despite the high importance of ethnicity for Malians, ethnolinguistic identity is surprisingly of low salience in political terms. Dowd and Driessen (2008, 6–8) calculate a measure of association between individual ethnicity and party identification, and find that Mali has one of the lowest scores among the seventeen African countries surveyed. Dunning (2010, 23) also notes that Malian cabinets typically include ministers from all main ethnic groups and that there is no major 'ethnic party' in the Malian political system since the return of competitive elections in 1992. Dunning, along with a vast amount of anthropological work in Mali and Western Africa, suggests that Mali possesses particular cross-cutting cleavages in the form of the informal institution of *cousinage*, which sees members of different ethnic groups establish collaborative and reciprocal obligations ties through exchange of names (Dunning 2010, 24-25). Cousinage is practiced in many

parts of the Western Sahel but is particularly strong in Mali where it is practiced by all main ethnic groups, with the exception of Tuaregs (Tamasheq) and Arabs. These anthropological insights add to macro-level data suggesting that the salience of ethnicity, ethnic group size, ethnic group differential growth or fractionalization and polarization do not adequately map out levels and directionality of violence in the 2012-2017 period.

Table 5: Indicators of state fragility in the Sahel Region (2015)

Country	Indicators of state fragility												Total
	Demographic Pressure	Refugees and IDPs	Group Grievance	Human Flight	Uneven economic Development	Economic decline	State legitimacy	Public services	Human Rights and Rule of Law	Security Apparatus	Factionalized elites	External Intervention	
Algeria	5,7	6,4	8,2	5,1	6,0	6,4	7,8	5,8	7,1	8,0	7,7	5,4	79,6
Burkina Faso	9,1	7,1	5,0	6,9	8,1	7,1	8,1	8,9	6,2	7,4	7,8	7,5	89,2
Côte d'Ivoire	8,1	9,0	8,7	6,7	7,9	7,1	8,5	9,0	7,9	8,3	9,1	9,7	100
Guinea	9,0	8,7	8,7	7,2	7,6	9,2	9,9	9,8	8,2	8,9	9,6	8,1	104,9
Mauritania	8,6	8,5	6,9	6,3	7,1	8,0	7,9	8,9	8,0	7,4	8,8	8,5	94,9
Niger	9,6	7,9	7,5	6,9	8,4	8,2	7,5	9,3	6,8	8,7	8,9	8,1	97,8
Mali	9,1	7,8	7,6	8,4	7,4	8,2	6,0	9,0	6,7	8,7	4,9	9,3	93,1
Senegal	8,0	7,8	6,3	7,4	7,3	7,3	5,5	7,9	6,2	6,2	6,6	6,5	83,0

Source: Fund for Peace (2015)

*Scores out of 10 for each category. 0 most stable, 10 least stable. Total score out of 120.

Data provided by the Fund for Peace's Fragile State Index (Fund for Peace 2015, see Table 5) indicate that while Mali finds itself in the category of high warning in terms of state fragility, along with Guinea, Mauritania and Niger, and just under Côte d'Ivoire, its vulnerability to conflict is moderated by two particularly low scores on the risk of elite fragmentation and challenges to state legitimacy. This suggests that no significant ethnic group is excluded from the state apparatus and that main ethnic groups do not put the territorial integrity of the country in question. Mali, along with regional peers, however scores high on demographic pressure and poor public services, reinforcing the idea that Mali's conflict prone situation reflects general population trends rather than a particular ethnonational tension.

Trends for internal and cross-border movement

Economic and social (recurrent) migration

Any study of migration in Mali must first recognize long term trends that pre-date and continue to operate in parallel with conflict-related migration in the 2012-2013 and later period. Mali's 2009 census documents recognize that migration is a common phenomenon in the country that includes a variety of purposes. Nomadism (in the North) and transhumance are traditional, adaptation practices that are difficult to capture through census numbers³. Nomadism, moreover, is confined to the proportionally small Tuareg population and economic migration represents an overwhelming proportion of all migration.

The 2009 Malian census reported that more than 16% of Mali's resident population is migrant, as defined by a delocalization of a minimum of six months from the previous permanent location (INSTAT 2009, 19). This corresponds to approximately 2 330 860 individuals. The migration rate is relatively evenly distributed between males (51,3%) and females (48,7%). Migration also appears as a distinctly urban phenomenon, with the proportion of migrants reaching 36% in urban districts and only 10,2% on average in rural districts (INSTAT 2009, 21). Bamako district has the highest proportion of migrants (45,9%) while Timbuktu region has the lowest (6,4%). Mali's Institut de la statistique also distinguishes between inter-regional, intra-regional and inter-communal (between urban communes within Bamako district) migration. Migratory patterns have a distinctly inter-regional direction, with 74,7% of migrants comprised in this category. Typical inter-regional migration involves the displacement of economic migrants from the urban centers of central and Western Mali towards Bamako and the South's largest cities, as well as rural migration from the North towards the same destinations in the South. Intra-regional migration stands at only 20,2% of life-span migrants and inter-communal migrants at 5,1% (INSTAT 2009, 20).

³ Transhumance refers to the movement of cattle and the populations living from economic activities associated with it. Migratory patterns of cattle are affected by climate, environmental and political conditions. INSTAT argues that transhumance is not migration per se but rather a movement of adaptation to environmental and economic production conditions: the search for land, grazing areas, bodies of freshwater (INSTAT 2009, 5-6).

As in the case of other demographic indicators, the regional patterns are also striking. As mentioned above, Bamako district has the highest proportion of migrants (45,9%) while Timbuktu district (Northern region) has the lowest (6,4%). Table 6 presents the distribution of migrant and non-migrant populations by type of area (urban or rural) and province of residence.

Table 6: Proportion of migrant and non-migrant population by type of area and region of residence (2009)

Region	Urban			Rural			Combined		
	Migrant	Non-migrant	%	Migrant	Non-migrant	%	Migrant	Non-Migrant	%
Kayes	22,9	77,1	100	9,2	90,8	100	11,1	88,9	100
Koulikoro	32,4	67,6	100	16,5	83,5	100	17,3	82,7	100
Sikasso	24,3	75,7	100	11,1	88,9	100	13,2	86,8	100
Ségou	26,2	73,8	100	9,3	90,7	100	10,8	89,2	100
Mopti	25,5	74,5	100	6,7	93,3	100	8,6	91,4	100
Timbuktu	14,3	85,7	100	5,2	94,8	100	6,4	93,6	100
Gao	15,3	84,7	100	4,3	95,7	100	6,6	93,4	100
Kidal	19,3	80,7	100	5,7	94,3	100	10,9	89,1	100
Bamako	45,9	54,1	100	---	---	---	45,9	54,1	100
Mali	36	64	100	10,2	89,8	100	16,1	83,9	100

Source: INSTAT 2009

The general trends are clear and highlight a concentration of migrant population in Bamako district, which is composed entirely of urban communes, as well as in other Southern provinces. The North as a low proportion of migrants in residence, that is, 6,4% in Timbuktu, 6,6% in Gao and 10,9% in Kidal. This is well below the national average of 16,1%. Kidal region has a slightly higher proportion of migrants but it should be kept in mind that absolute numbers are low (67 300) since Kidal is by far Mali's least populous region. In terms of region of departure, the only notable trends concerning the Northern part is that the majority of migrants in Timbuktu region came from rural areas. Overall, migratory patterns by region reinforce a North / South dichotomy already highlighted in general demographic trends, but clearly the North is not destabilized by any influx of economic migrants from the Center, West and South. Migratory patterns instead point out to a de-population trend.

Finally, in terms of international migrants, leaving aside the question of Malian and international refugees, the numbers are quite low and do not point out to any cross-border migratory shock that would affect in particular the Northern regions or any administrative region in particular. The 2009 census registered 313 354 life-span international migrants in Mali and only 163 504 (less than five years) recent international migrants (INSTAT 2009, 20). Mali estimates the total proportion of foreign citizens in the country as only 0,76% of the resident population, with Burkina Faso (22 174), Côte d'Ivoire (18 672) and Guinea (16 464) as the first three source countries (INSTAT 2009, vi). In the five years prior to the 2009 census, Mali estimated that only 107 316 persons emigrated permanently from the country (INSTAT 2009, vi).

Refugees: Foreigners in Mali and Malians outside the country

Relative to population size as well as in absolute terms, the refugee population in Mali is small and has remained stable over time, hovering between 15 000 and 17 500 since early 2012 (UNHCR 2017). The proportion of refugees is also small when compared to the number of non-refugee foreigners residing in the country at the time of the 2009 census. Refugees in Mali are overwhelmingly from Mauritania. Mauritania makes up 87,4% of the refugee population in Mali registered by the UNHCR. Mauritania has itself experienced a recent upsurge of violence following the fall of the Ghaddafi regime in Libya. Refugees from the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire are distant second and third at 5,6% and 5,3% of the total refugee population. Table 7 summarizes the proportion and number of refugees in Mali by country of origin and provides information on the location of refugees in Mali.

Table 7: Refugee population in Mali (as of December 2016)

Country of origin	% of refugee population	Population	Region / district of residence	% of refugee population
Mauritania	87,4	15,298	Kayes	87
Central African Rep.	5,6	986	Bamako	10,5
Côte d'Ivoire	5,3	923	Sikasso	2,5
Dem. Rep. of Congo	1,2	204	-	
Others	0,4	67	-	

Source: UNHCR 2017

The country of origin of refugees in Mali and the main countries of origin of non-refugees are completely different, which reflects different individual motivations and political situations in the country of origin. With refugees concentrated in Kayes district, the North has largely been spared any significant shock from refugees.

The number of Malian refugees outside the country dwarves the number of refugees within Mali. The Institut national de la statistique mentions in its 2009 migratory report that political disruptions linked to rebel insurgency in the three northern regions is a recurrent pattern in Mali but provides no precise numbers (INSTAT 2009, 6). In fact, that 2009 census report on migration does not use the term refugee to describe any group of individuals, either foreign or domestic. Small groups of refugees displaced from the North are included in the population of emigrants listing 'political' reasons as the motive of departure (0,1% of total). In the five-year period preceding the 2009 census, the Institut national de la statistique estimates total departures at 107 316. Emigrants are overwhelmingly rural (80%) and male (90,9%), and between 20-25 years of age (INSTAT 2009, 47-49). 86% of emigrants list economic concerns as the main reason for emigration. Pre-conflict emigration pattern also mirror demographic patterns highlighted earlier. In absolute and proportional terms, most leave Central and Southern districts: between 2005-2009, 30 872 left Kayes region while only 4 900 left Timbuktu region. Although Bamako district is the most populous, it records only 13 680 emigrants over the same period.

The UNHCR and the International Organization for Migrations (IOM) are the main organizations responsible for refugee emergency operations and generate the most reliable statistics. As depicted in Table 8, from a low of 10 584 Malian refugees in March 2012, numbers peak at 159 107 in August 2013 and stabilize at around 140 000 in late 2016 - early 2017 (UNHCR 2017).

Table 8: Malian Refugees and IDPs in the 2012-2017 period

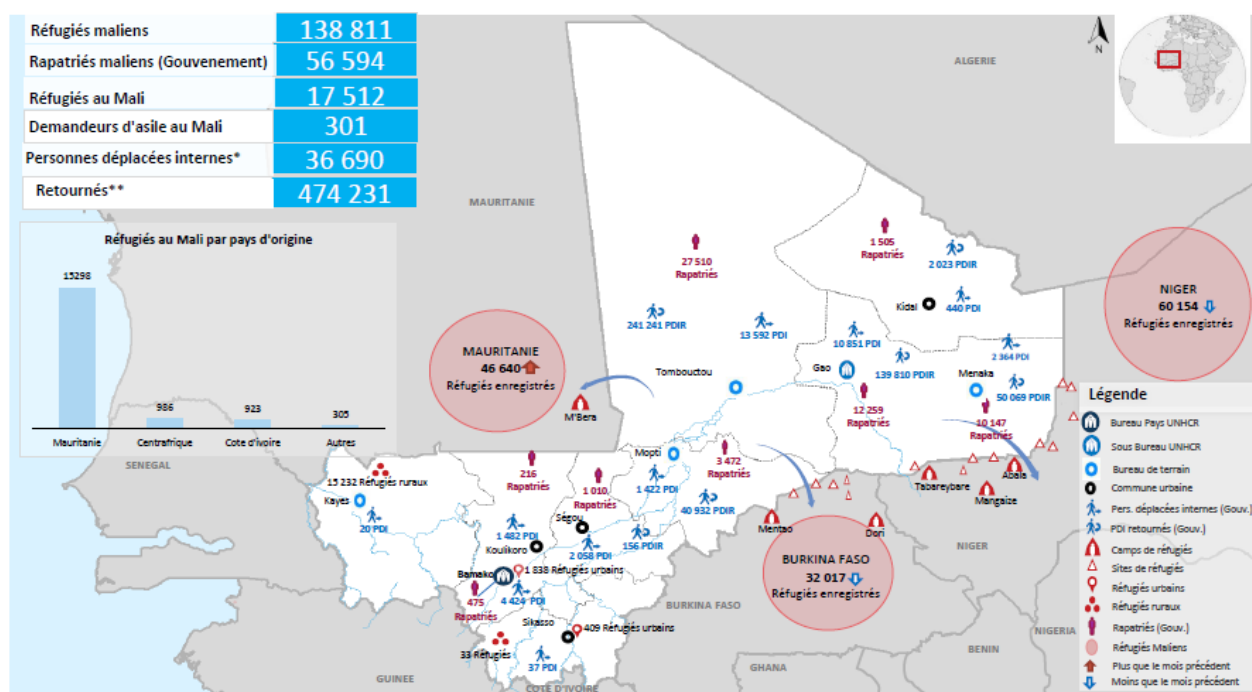
Type of person	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	03-2017
Refugees	10 864	112 244	146 345	133 816	135 304	141 450
Returned refugees		-	-	-	-	57 408
Internally displaced persons (total)	230 000	218 000	61 600	49 900	36 690	45 766

Source: UNHCR 2017; IOM 2017; IDMC 2017

Security conditions have deteriorated in the North since the beginning of 2017 and that the level of public services (schools closed, bridges and road unusable) remains dismally low (UNHCR 2017).

As of December 2016, Malian refugees are concentrated in three neighbouring countries: Niger (60 154 / 42,5%), Mauritania (48 798 / 34,5%) and Burkina Faso (32 498 / 23%) while 56 594 refugee had returned (UNHCR 2017). Almost all Malian refugees in Mauritania are located in the M'Bera camp and hail from Timbuktu region. Refugees in Niger are located in three main camps at Tabareybare, Mangaize and Abala, which are close to Menaka and Gao city, both in Gao region. Violence has increased markedly in Gao region since 2015. In Burkina Faso, the main camps are Mentao (on the border with Mopti region) and Dori, on the border with Niger. Figure 1 provides an overview of main refugee and IDP flows and location of refugee camps.

Figure 1: Refugee and IDP flows and location of refugee camps (Dec. 2016)



Source: UNHCR 2017

UNHCR also provides information on the socio-economic and ethnic background of refugees. Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, for example, are mostly from southern *cercles* (Departments) of Timbuktu province such as Rharous, Gossi and N'Tilit. The Southern part of Timbuktu region, Gao region and the Central Mali region of Mopti have been the site of most post-2013 violence. Tuareg refugees make up 75,9% of the UNHCR-registered refugees in Burkina Faso in December 2016, which is pretty significant proportion considering they represent only 3,5% of the total population of Mali. Peulhs and Arabs come a distant second with approximately 10% each (UNHCR 2017).

Overall Malian refugee patterns, expressed in terms of size, variation over time, location outside Mali and ethnic and regional composition track the evolution of the security situation in Timbuktu and Gao regions in the North, and Mopti region in the center. Refugee flows have increased dramatically at the time of the initial Tuareg / AQMI push North to South towards

Bamako and have risen slightly since. Few refugees have returned to Mali, which is indicative of a deteriorating security situation in the North and Center.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Proportionally, there are many more internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mali than refugees: Table 8 shows that IDPs peaked at 230 000 in 2012 with the Tuareg and AQMI rebellion, and state collapse in the capital, declined through 2016, and has since been on the rise. However, statistics on IDPs are notoriously unreliable: because they do not cross sovereign state borders they are not registered by the UNHCR. The figures that follow are drawn from government statistics, partial UNCHR numbers as well as data provided by the International Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), a NGO. Including returnees, the number of IDPs stood at 474 231 in October 2016. There are no IDP camps in Mali (Government or UNHCR); IDPs thus stress local communities and already stretched administrative resources (IDMC 2014). As of December 2014, the IDMC estimated that cities in the country's south hosted 32 038 IDPs, with the majority in Bamako (14 386), Koulikoro (10 456) and Ségou (2 106). The 29 583 IDPs in the north were concentrated in Kidal (11 990), Timbuktu (10 348) and Gao (7 245). Most IDPs rent their temporary accommodation or reside with family. Ratios between the South and the North are reversed. As of June 2014, 69 per cent of internally displaced households rented houses in the south while 25 per cent lived with host families. In the north, by contrast, 83 per cent lived in host families. Patterns of IDPs' location and return also strain Northern and Mopti regions. As of December 2016, Timbuktu region counted 13 592 IDPs and 241 241 returned IDPs, followed by Gao region with 10 851 IDPs and 139 810 returned IDPs, and Mopti region with 1 422 IDPs and 40 932 returned IDPs (UNHCR 2017). The bulk of IDPs from the North initially took refuge in the South and West and then returned.

Conclusion

Mali's demographic, ethnic, regional and migratory trends correspond to insurgency and terrorism in Central and Northern Mali. Mali's demographics reflect broader trends across Sub-Saharan Africa: rapid population growth, high fertility rates, poor government services and a surging urban, unemployed youth population. In that sense, Mali's situation is similar to that of its

neighbours such as Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea. These demographic trends however are more complex at the regional level, where high fertility and mortality rates are observed primarily in the urban South, Center and West. The same does not hold for the Northern provinces, especially Timbuktu and Gao. The same trends can be observed in relation to internal, non-conflict related migration, where Northern regions have few migrants. To the contrary, Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal regions are depopulating and their demographic weight is decreasing relative to more populous parts of Mali.

Nor does the 2012-2013 conflict and following insurgency appear to be rooted in ethnic demographics. Mali is ethnically fragmented and ethno-linguistic identification matters, but does not correspond to political affiliation. Tuareg (Tamasheq) are the sole exception: they make up only 3,5% of the population and is nomadic, but which has been closely associated with the 2012-2013 conflict and represents a large proportion of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania. Tuaregs are the only group in Mali that registers in the Minorities at Risk data project (Minorities at Risk 2009) and the Ethnic Power Relations dataset designates them as junior partners in the governing coalitions in Mali from 1996 to 2010, but they have been excluded from power ever since (Cederman et al, 2010).

Refugees and IDPs correlate more closely to conflict dynamics in central and northern Mali. Refugee flows closely follow the 2012-2013 violence when refugees leave Gao and Timbuktu regions in droves, seeking shelter in refugee camps closest to the border of their region of origin. Refugees are mostly from smaller ethnic groups such as Tuareg and Peuls. However, refugee flows are mostly a consequence of the initial violence rather than its cause. Since few refugees have returned, it is also improbable that the pressure of the returnees fuels the violence in Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti. The situation of IDPs is slightly different. Many IDPs sought refuge in their region of origin, while other sought shelter in the South but have since returned to their region of origin. This significant movement of people may have put pressure on local communities, labor markets and overstretched administrative resources.

These demographic and migratory trends should, however, be assessed in the context of other significant developments identified by the already substantial literature on the Malian conflict, including the exclusion of Tuaregs from local and national-level alliances (Kohl 2010;

Ronen 2013; Cline 2013; Saraceno 2015), changes in Sahelian political Islam (Aldrich 2014; Campana and Jourde 2017), ecological pressures (Boccanfuso 2011;) and Malian state failure (Bleck and Mitchelick 2012; Boas and Elin Torheim 2013).

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About the authors

Christian Leuprecht (Ph.D, Queen's) is Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership, Department of Political Science, Royal Military College, on leave as Matthew Flinders Fellow at Flinders University in South Australia. He is a recipient of RMC's Cowan Prize for Excellence in Research and an elected member of the College of New Scholars of the Royal Society of Canada. He is president of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee 01: Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution, Munk Senior Fellow at the Macdonald Laurier Institute and cross-appointed to the Department of Political Studies and the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University where he is also a fellow of the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations and the Queen's Centre for International and Defence Policy. An expert in security and defence, political demography, and comparative federalism and multilevel governance, he has held visiting positions in North America, Europe, and Australia, and is regularly called as an expert witness to testify before committees of Parliament.

Philippe Roseberry is a Research Fellow and Lecturer in Political Science at the Royal Military College of Canada and Queen's University specializing in intrastate conflict, civil war, ethnic conflict and nationalism. Philippe has regional expertise and field experience in Post-Communist Europe, especially the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine and has also researched conflicts in Latin America and Africa. His PhD dissertation examined the conflict behaviour of regular and irregular armed organizations in the 1991-1995 Croatian and Bosnian conflicts, with a specific focus on recruitment patterns. He has published articles in *Europe-Asia Studies* and *Publius* and is currently involved in several research projects on ethnic conflict and migration.

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- The production and diffusion of scientific research that focuses on conflict resolution and peace operations, particularly through knowledge production activities with policymakers and practitioners in the field;
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C.P. 8888, Succ. Centre-Ville
Montréal (Québec) Canada H3C 3P8
Tel. (514) 987-6781 | chaire.strat@uqam.ca

Canada 