



Centre for  
**Global  
Cooperation  
Research**

**G I G A**  
German Institute of Global and Area Studies  
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien

d.i.e

Deutsches Institut für  
Entwicklungspolitik



Years | 1964–2014

German Development  
Institute

## Workshop Report

# “Challenges to Democratization and Peacebuilding in Africa: The Case of Mali”

18 June 2014

German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg

Organized by the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Duisburg (KHK/GCR21), German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg (GIGA), German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Bonn

In collaboration with Institute for Development and Peace and Institute of Political Science (both University of Duisburg-Essen)

Conceptualized by Isaline Bergamaschi, Charlotte Heyl, Julia Leininger



## Challenges to Democratization and Peacebuilding in Africa: The Case of Mali

### Introduction

The multi-dimensional crisis which burst in Mali in 2012 is rooted in complex and intertwined factors. The coup d'État carried out in March 2012 was justified on moral and political grounds - against a defective justice system and the lack of *order*, the State's *weakness* and mismanagement of the Northern issue and rampant corruption. Through the crisis Mali has lost its status of "donor darling" in West Africa. Multilateral organisations, NGOs and diplomats now see it as a fragile / post-conflict State. Crisis management has been highly internationalised through the French military operation, the mediation undertaken by the Economic Community of West African States, the African-led International Support Mission to Mali and then the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission deployed since July 2013.

The workshop on the "Challenges to Democratization and Peacebuilding in Africa: the case of Mali" is composed of two slots: the one in June dealt with the issue of democratisation and was hosted by GIGA in Hamburg. The workshop focussed on different aspects of the democratization process in Mali such as political consensus, constitutional law, religion, social movements and external actors.

The second part of the workshop will look at international intervention and peace-building in Mali and will be held at KHK/GCR21 in Duisburg (December, 12 2014).

### Opening Remarks

The workshop began with the opening remarks of Andreas Mehler (GIGA), Tobias Debiel (KHK/GCR 21) and Julia Leininger (DIE). All three of them welcomed the participants and introduced their institutes and how the workshop fit into the institutes' research areas. Leininger further introduced the concept of the workshop and the programme.



## 1st Panel: “Political Consensus and the Constitutional Court in Malian Democratization”

In the first presentation Alexis Roy (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales Paris) delivered a talk on the political system of consensus established by President Touré after he was elected in 2002, how it echoed some values commonly attributed to the Malian society, and some of its political consequences. By emphasizing homogeneity and unity, consensus denied the country’s diversity and limited the possibility of a strong political opposition. The façade of consensus threw a veil on existing social conflicts, which materialised through a strong rivalry between the two biggest labour organisations: the “Confederation Syndicale des Travailleurs Maliens” (CSTM) and the “Union Nationale des Travailleurs Maliens” (UNTM). The lack of consensus in the country was also clear regarding the project to privatise the national cotton-producing parastatal, the Compagnie Malienne de Développement des textiles. Overall, consensus has been criticized by many citizens for weakening political debate and the deepening of democracy in Mali. Its future is still uncertain in the current post-crisis scenario, despite the election of Ibrahim Boubakar Keïta in July 2013.

Lisa Heemann (University of Gießen) focused in her presentation on the balancing of powers of government by the constitutional court in Mali. Although a large part of the court's decisions are on election-related matters, the court also rendered noteworthy decisions on the regular functioning of institutions like the legislature and executive. The court shaped the electoral system, for example, and also repeatedly insisted on the representative mandate empowering individual members of the parliament. Heemann concluded that the constitutional court of Mali acted strong on the regular functioning of the legislature but contributed only little to balancing powers of government because it hardly constrained the executive.

In the third presentation Charlotte Heyl (GIGA) talked on the Malian constitutional court as an electoral governance institution. The court validates the election results and judges on electoral disputes. The court has thus the potential to serve as an impartial referee and to thus increase the democratic quality of the electoral process. In the elections of 1997 and 2002 the court used its power to cancel votes extensively while in 2007 only a low share of votes was cancelled. The 2007 elections were less chaotic than previous elections what may explain partly the lower extend of annulled votes. However, the Constitutional Court was repeatedly criticized for the lack of transparency in its electoral decisions and it can be doubted whether it helped to foster the trust in the electoral process.



In his comment Alexander Stroh (GIGA) emphasized the role of elections and representation as a core element of democracy. He elaborated on the consensus dilemma with a lack of opposition and competition within the political spectrum and the limited power of the Malian constitutional court to intervene in the political system.

During the subsequent discussion questions were raised on the effects of consensus on democracy and on the institutionalism of a party system in Mali. Also the relation between civil society and the state institutions such as the parliament and the constitutional court was debated, as well as the societal effects of the consensus.

## 2nd Panel: “Religion and politics in Malian Democratization”

During the second panel Julia Leininger gave a presentation on the “Role of Muslim Actors in Malian Democratization”. Her research is based on the assumption, that Islam is compatible with democracy. Three hypotheses were generated from this research and shall inform further research of democratization:

- Muslim actors do influence the political sphere
- their political role was strengthened by creating laic institutions
- non-violent Muslim actors played no decisive role in the breakdown 2012 but filled a power vacuum in the transformation process.

Three types of influence of Muslim actors were analyzed, the constructive, the obstructive and destructive influence on democratization. Muslim organisations played three different roles in Mali; as veto-player, a social and an informal role. In conclusion, the analysis showed that the different Muslim actors in Mali did not influence the democratic outcome but specific policy fields. They accepted and fostered public acceptance of the political order but tend to hinder the establishment of liberal values (family laws).

Sebastian Elischer (GIGA, Leuphana University) discussed Leininger’s presentation by emphasising the distinction between Sufi and Wahabi Muslims. As Sufis are part of the clientelistic network in Mali they might be more likely to accept the democratic system. But one should not assume that Sufi Islam is inherently more compatible to democracy than Wahabi. Interpretation of Islamic norms depends on the socio-political context. . He also stated that the influence of Pakistani and Algerian groups on the north of Mali fostered the conflict and contributed to a radicalization of some Tuareg groups.

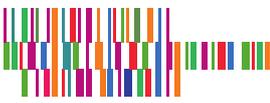


During the discussion the cohesion of Islam and state legitimacy was debated as well as the role of religion Malian political parties. Also the influence of Muslim actors on the moral debate on liberal values, for instance in the family law, and its effects on democratization was elaborated.

### 3rd Panel: “Social Movements and external actors in Malian Democratization”

The third panel started with a presentation of Johanna Siméant (University Paris-Sorbonne) on “social protests and democratization since 1991”. The presentation was based on the findings presented on her last book, called “Contester au Mali. Formes de la mobilisation et de la critique” just published by Karthala. She elaborated on three main points. First of all, despite the country’s image of consensus, Malian democratisation since 1991 has been punctuated by social mobilisations and sometimes violent protests which were not limited geographically to the uprisings in the country’s northern regions. For example, riots took place in the capital city, Bamako, in 1997 and 2005. Secondly, she argued that mobilisation and critique observed in the past decades are closely linked to the State. In its forms, social mobilisation has some bureaucratic dimensions and is (directly or indirectly) controlled by the State, especially in Bamako’s third commune. Also, most of the causes of mobilization are related to the decreasing role of the State as an economic planner, job provider and social protector. It is interesting to note that extreme-left parties, intellectuals and representatives of the global justice movement in Mali gained visibility in 2012 and 2013, mostly through the pro-coup coalition. Thirdly, she insisted on the symbolic role of 1991 in contemporary social movements. The democratic transition remains a central but ambiguous reference, both as an appreciated moment of political change and as a dangerous moment of violence.

The second presentation by Isaline Bergamaschi (GCR21), entitled “the fall of a donor darling: aid, democratization and the crisis” examined the influence of external actors in Mali since the democratic transition, and especially in the years 2000s. According to Bergamaschi, the 2012 crisis in Mali is also a crisis of extraverted development and donor-driven ownership. She presented four processes through which aid and donor practices have contributed to the context of fragility:



- aid has indirectly supported weak strategy in the north
- aid provided through budget support supported former president Amadou Toumani Touré's (ATT) consensus and fuelled into the degradation of governance countrywide
- the international community treated Mali as a model of democracy and stability despite growing domestic grievances against the regime and a decay of stability in the northern regions
- the conditionalities attached to aid regarding cotton production, the reform of the Family Code and migration flux have touched upon contentious issues and unpopular reforms. As a result, they generated unprecedented social mobilisation and widened the gap between ATT and ordinary citizens.

Jörn Grävingholt (DIE) discussed the two presentations. He questioned the role of social movements on stability and destabilization in 2012 as well as the influence of legacy and role models of 1991. He elaborated on the local ownership issue of aid and the problems of budget support and its conditions.

During the debate the cohesion between donors and the Malian crisis was debated as well as the trends towards a security-development nexus and an increasing competition amongst donors. Also the connection between social movements and Malian diaspora was discussed.

## Wrap-up

In a final conclusion of the workshop Tobias Debiel summarized the outcomes of the three different panels in ten points:

1. The decay of Mali's status as donor darling and prime example of democratization was reassured and differentiated by the panelists.
2. The political consensus in Mali was discredited due to the lack of diversity of political and social actors, taking part in the consensus.
3. The role of the constitutional court was analyzed in relation to the weak parliament and its' effect on the elections and the participation of civil society.
4. Muslim actors played multi-faceted role in Malian democratization. While strengthening the democratic order and practices, they hindered the establishment of liberal norms. .



5. It is decisive to carefully conceptualize the role of religious actors in democratization studies. .
6. Participation as key term of analyzing past and future and the development of protest movements was debated.
7. The influence of external actors, including their resources but also their conditions, is essential for Malian development.
8. The concept of democratization and its' narratives for Mali is questionable.
9. Beside the debate on coexisting narratives, also causal explanations of reality should be in the analytical focus of research.
10. The crisis of 2012 shed a certain light on the results from earlier research and revision of this research might be necessary.

After the wrap up Isaline Bergamaschi introduced a draft concept for the second workshop in December in Duisburg, which will focus on international intervention and peace-building in Mali after the crisis in 2012.

Isaline Bergamaschi, Charlotte Heyl, Annegret Kunde, Julia Leininger