

Mali

Ethnicity in Mali

Group selection

All sources available to me agree in their notion that the ethnic divisions existing in Mali are not politically relevant for the most part, i.e. there are no significant ethno-political cleavages in Malian politics (1913; 1914; 1915; 1916). The only exception has been the conflict between the Malian state and the nomadic Tuareg and Arab and Moor minorities in the north (escalating into civil war in the early 1990s). It makes therefore sense to code only three ethnic/racial groups as politically relevant: the black majority (consisting of Mande, Peul, Voltaic, Songhai etc.) and the "white" Tuareg and Arabs/Moors (1917).

The size of the black population is taken from CIA World Factbook (consistent with other sources): 90%. For the Tuareg from Notholt (1918, 2.50): 7%. For Arabs/Moors: 10% minus 7% = 3% - which is more or less in line with absolute figures provided by the Joshua Project (1919).

Power relations

1960-1990; Military and one-party rule: Besides the evident economic marginalization of the northern part of Mali – where the Tuareg and Arabs/Moors live –, these groups were also politically marginalized. From independence up to 1990, only 4 "white" ministers were appointed, 2 Tuareg officers in the army and no "white" heads of departments. The northern region, furthermore, was long time under military rule with (if from the region at all) black governors appointed by the central state (1920).

Discrimination, however, seems to have taken place more in the economic (e.g. issues of property rights) and cultural realms than in politics - as there have been at least some "white" ministers in Mali's governments during this period (1921). It seems more appropriate to me, thus, to speak of political powerlessness than targeted discrimination. Therefore: Both Tuareg and Arabs/Moors are coded as "powerless".

The black majority enjoyed a clear monopoly of power. The group is thus coded with "monopoly".

¹⁹¹³ [Baldwin, 2005]

¹⁹¹⁴ [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

¹⁹¹⁵ [Smith, 2001]

¹⁹¹⁶ [Villalón Idrissa, 2005]

¹⁹¹⁷ [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

¹⁹¹⁸ [2008]

¹⁹¹⁹ [Joshua Project]

¹⁹²⁰ [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

¹⁹²¹ [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

1991-1993: The transitional government led by Amadou Touré assigned 2 seats to "white" rebels. Peace accords were signed that promised the participation of the rebelling Tuareg and Arab/Moor groups in the civil service and the army (1922). Violence between the two sides (which had started in 1990) decreased first, and then flared up again. Besides the army operations, though, the government attempted to find a political solution by inclusion. Therefore, the blacks are coded as "senior partner", and the Tuareg and Arabs/Moors as "junior partners".

¹⁹²² [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

1994-1995; the civil war's peak: Inter-ethnic violence escalated in 1994. In the face of it, many northerners that had been integrated into the government now went into exile (1923). Hence, blacks had a "monopoly" of political power again.

¹⁹²³ [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

Because of the increasing systematic state violence (army) against (civilian) northerners (see e.g. ¹⁹²⁴, 259), the Tuareg and Arab/Moor groups are marked as being "discriminated".

¹⁹²⁴ [Kétouré, 2009]

1996-2005; termination of the conflict: With the end of the civil war, the peace accords that provided for at least a certain representation of the Tuareg and Arabs/Moors in the government (besides developmental investments) became effective (1925; 1926, 164). The northerners were now represented in all institutions of the state (1927, 263-4).

¹⁹²⁵ [Humphreys Mohamed, 2005]

¹⁹²⁶ [Wing, 2008]

¹⁹²⁷ [Kétouré, 2009]

Therefore, the Tuareg and Arabs/Moors are coded as "junior partners", the black majority group as "senior partner" in a new power-sharing arrangement.

2006-2012; renewed rebellion in the North: The view that ethnic divisions within Mali's black population are not politically relevant for the most part can be upheld. Different sources agree in that ethnicity is not of significant political relevance, ethnic cleavages are rare, and in that – especially in comparison with other African countries – Mali has been relatively successful in achieving ethnic harmony and creating a national identity bridging ethnic boundaries (due on the one hand to a great political will to do so, and on the other to the legacy of the ancient Malian empires), and that several different groups have been integrated peacefully into this "national identity" - with the notable exception of the nomadic groups of the north (the Tuareg, and Arabs/Moors) (1928, 256, 268; 1929). Survey data show that Malian parties are generally ethnically representative, and ethnicity is not a crucial factor in citizens' voting choices (1930). None of Mali's political parties is an ethnic party, and the party system as a whole is not ethnicized either (1931).

¹⁹²⁸ [Kétouré, 2009]

¹⁹²⁹ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

¹⁹³⁰ [Cheeseman Ford, 2007]

¹⁹³¹ [Basedau Stroh, 2009]

A new Tuareg rebellion erupted in 2006/2007. With reference to the not fully implemented 1992 peace agreement, the rebels demanded the withdrawal of the military from the northern Tuareg zones, a higher degree of administrative autonomy, and increased economic support (1932). However, according to the Bertelsmann

¹⁹³² [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

Country Report of 2010, this rebellion - in contrast to the previous ones - was guided more by economic and criminal motives than political ones, and it was essentially a "socioeconomically motivated conflict". It is true that the promised economic development in the north has not really taken place (¹⁹³³; ¹⁹³⁴). In the political realm, however, the northern Tuareg and Arab/Moor groups seem to have been included since the end of the civil war in the 1990s - also during the years from 2006 to 2009. According to Kétouré (¹⁹³⁵, 263-4), the Tuareg are represented in all institutions (also the government) of the state today, they participated in the national unity government of 2002 and, thus, are incorporated in the decision-making processes. Tuareg Ahmed Mohamed Ag Hamami was named prime minister by president Touré in 2002, for example. The Tuareg are also included in Mali's major political parties which have Tuareg candidates to maximize their electoral chances in the north. Also according to the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Reports from 2006 to 2009 (¹⁹³⁶), there were always members of the "historically marginalized nomadic groups of the north" in the cabinet. And neither in the Freedom House Country Reports from 2007 to 2010 (¹⁹³⁷) nor in the Bertelsmann Country Reports of 2008, 2010, and 2012 (¹⁹³⁸) was any evidence of political exclusion of the Tuareg or the Arabs/Moors. Rather, it seems that there are splits within the Tuareg community between forces pro and contra president Touré. No acts of vengeance toward Tuareg people in the south were reported after the renewed rebellion, and the Malian government has abstained from generalized discrimination against Tuareg citizens in the north (¹⁹³⁹). Overall, thus, the "white" Tuareg and Arabs/Moors groups should still be seen as "junior partners" in a power-sharing arrangement. Consequently, the last period of 1996-2005 was extended up to the year of 2012.

¹⁹³³ [Bertelsmann, 2008–2012]

¹⁹³⁴ [IRIN News, 2010]

¹⁹³⁵ [Kétouré, 2009]

¹⁹³⁶ [US State Department, 2006–2013]

2012-2013 In 2012, the situation in Mali changed rapidly. An increased intensity of fighting between the Malian Army and MNLA (Azawad People's Movement) rebels in the north triggered a military coup d'état on 21 March 2012. President Touré resigned shortly after, as did the coup leader, Cpt. Sanogo. The weakening of the state allowed MNLA rebels to overrun the Northern 1/3 of Mali's territory and to declare the independence of the state of Azawad on 6 April 2012. However, power in the North was overtaken violently by the groups Ansar Dine and MUJAO (a splitter group of AQMI), causing the MNLA to cooperate with government and French forces during the Operation Serval that started on 11 January 2014. By June 2014 a peace agreement between the MNLA and the Malian government was signed, but renounced unilaterally by the MNLA in September 2014. Acts of indiscriminate violence from the MNLA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, and the Malian Army are reported to have occurred against fighters and civilians. Amnesty International reports that soldiers of the Malian Army extra-judicially killed people said to have had links with the MNLA. In February 2012, a government

air attack led to the death of one civilian and the injury of at least 12 civilians (in April 2012 ¹⁹⁴⁰; ¹⁹⁴¹).

In April 2012 a transitional government was formed under president Dioncounda Traoré and prime minister Cheick Modibo Diarra (appointed in August 2012). It consisted of members of almost all ethnic and social fractions, members of ethnic groups from the North (including Tuaregs and Arab/Moors), and 3 members appointed by the ex-junta (¹⁹⁴²). Prime minister Diarra was arrested by soldiers and forced to resign on 11 December 2012. He was succeeded by Diango Sissoko. The new transitional government again contained members of most social and ethnic groups (again, including Tuaregs and Arabs/Moors), 3 ministers appointed by the ex-junta and members of ethnic groups from the North (¹⁹⁴³).

Seen from a national perspective, Arabs/Moors and Tuareg should therefore be coded as being "junior partners" in the government on 1 January 2013. One can argue that they represent the interests of their ethnic groups rather than the armed groups which had seized power of the Northern regions by 1 January 2013. The latter are reported to have committed a large number of civil rights abuses against the population (¹⁹⁴⁴). Although the human rights abuses conducted by members of the Malian army point towards discriminatory practices against individual Tuaregs and other minorities in the North, no sign was found for such practices being used permanently and against an entire ethnic group. Accordingly, under its chapter "Discrimination of Ethnic Minorities", the US State Department Human Rights Report (¹⁹⁴⁵) does only mention social discrimination of the Tuaregs, but not political discrimination.

With regard to regional autonomy, one can code the Tuaregs to have lost their status by 1 January 2013. Regarding the extremist rule and associated human rights abuses, it is difficult to speak of a "meaningful and active regional executive organ" which is influenced by Tuaregs acting in the interest of their ethnic group. One can therefore code the regional autonomy of the Tuareg as "no" for the year 2013. This status might however change for the year 2014 if the political situation in Mali returns to its pre-crisis status-quo.

¹⁹⁴⁶ reports approx. 132.000 refugees from Mali at the beginning of 2013. Since the calming down of the conflict in August 2013, this number has not declined. However, data on the ethnic composition of the refugees is not (yet) available. As the North of Mali is populated by many different ethnic groups (Tuareg, Peulh, Songhai, Bozo, etc.), it cannot be assumed that all refugees are Tuaregs. Therefore, no reliable correction of the relative size of the Tuareg population can be made here.

¹⁹⁴⁰ [Amnesty International, 2013]

¹⁹⁴¹ [US State Department, 2006–2013]

¹⁹⁴² [Jeune Afrique, 2012a]

¹⁹⁴³ [Jeune Afrique, 2012b]

¹⁹⁴⁴ [US State Department, 2006–2013]

¹⁹⁴⁵ [US State Department, 2006–2013]

¹⁹⁴⁶ [UNHCR]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Mali

From 1960 until 1990

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	MONOPOLY
Tuareg	0.07	POWERLESS
Arabs/Moors	0.03	POWERLESS

From 1991 until 1993

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	SENIOR PARTNER
Tuareg	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Arabs/Moors	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER

From 1994 until 1995

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	MONOPOLY
Tuareg	0.07	DISCRIMINATED
Arabs/Moors	0.03	DISCRIMINATED

From 1996 until 2012

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	SENIOR PARTNER
Tuareg	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Arabs/Moors	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER



Figure 470: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 1960-1990.



Figure 471: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 1991-1993.



Figure 472: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 1994-1995.



From 2013 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	0.9	SENIOR PARTNER
Tuareg	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Arabs/Moors	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER



Figure 474: Political status of ethnic groups in Mali during 2013-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Mali

From 1960 until 2013

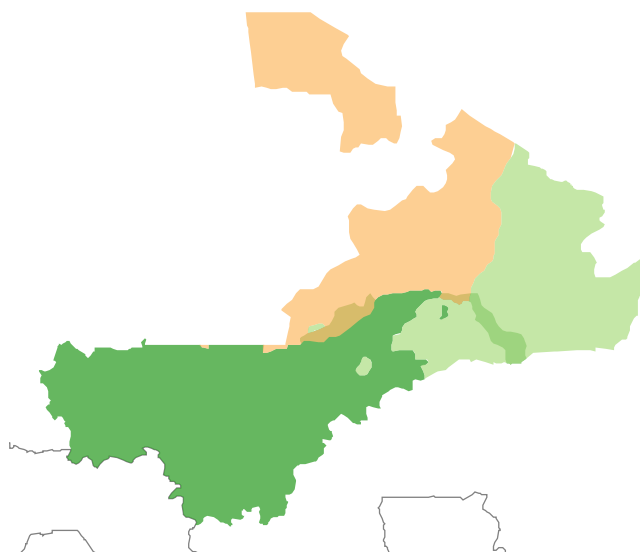


Figure 475: Map of ethnic groups in Mali during 2013-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.)	470 278	Regional & urban
Arabs/Moors	300 777	Regionally based
Tuareg	260 972	Regionally based

Table 143: List of ethnic groups in Mali during 1960-2013.

Conflicts in Mali

Starting on 1985-12-25

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Burkina Faso	Government of Mali		1985-12-25			

Starting on 1990-06-28

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Mali	MPA	Tuareg	1990-06-28	Explicit	Yes	
Government of Mali	FIAA	Arabs/Moors	1991-12-12	Explicit	Yes	
Government of Mali	ATNMC	Tuareg	2007-05-11	Explicit	Yes	No
Government of Mali	MNLA	Tuareg	2012-01-17	Explicit	Yes	Yes

Starting on 2009-06-14

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Mali	AQIM		2009-06-14			
Government of Mali	Ansar Dine	Tuareg	2012-01-20	No	Yes	
Government of Mali	Military faction (Red Berets)		2012-05-01			
Government of Mali	MUJAO		2013-01-12			
Government of Mali	Signed-in-Blood Battalion	Tuareg	2013-02-19	No	Yes	Split