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# ENDURING CRISES IN MALI: EXPLORING THE ETHNIC TUAREG'S QUEST FOR STATEHOOD IN MALI SINCE INDEPENDENCE

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#### ABSTRACT

The lives of the Tuaregs of the Sahel were disrupted with the arrival of the European colonial powers that balkanized the African continent with no consideration of Africa's cultural realities. With the demarcation of imaginary colonial boundaries, the Tuaregs lived in different countries including northern Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and southern Algeria. This article focuses on the Malian Tuaregs and seeks to explore the root causes of the failure of the Tuaregs' nationalist struggle for self-determination in post-colonial Mali. The article draws on Burton's human needs theory, which emphasizes the need for recognition of identity and the satisfaction of self-actualization, safety, cognitive and psychological needs as the prerequisites for human development. It argues that Mali will remain politically unstable so long as the country's economic and socio-political structures continue to prevent the Tuaregs from achieving their nationalist dream. In addition to their status as "second class citizens" today, the new dynamics of the international war on terror have socially constructed the Tuareg ethnic group as a "terrorist group." The paper concludes that sustainable peace in Mali will be more difficult to achieve without full integration of the Tuaregs in Malian society and successful national reconciliation processes.

Keywords: Mali, Intra-state and International Conflicts, Reconciliation, Democratization

#### **INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF HISTORY**

After the breakdown of the Mali Federation, which was composed of the Sudanese Republic and Senegal, the Sudanese Republic—also known as French Sudan—was renamed the Republic of Mali and proclaimed its independence from France on September 22, 1960. The newly independent country experienced bitter dictatorship rules from 1960 to 1991: first, under a democratically elected president, Modibo Keita from 1960 to 1968, and second, under the *Comité Militaire pour la Liberation Nationale* (CMLN) [Military Committee for National

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Liberation] or the *Junta* led by Lieutenant Moussa Traoré. Due to President Traoré's inability to meet the growing demands for political liberalization in Mali, he was overthrown in a military coup by the Transitional Committee for the Salvation of the People chaired by General Amadou Toumani Touré. The latter led the democratic transition with success and prepared the country's first democratic presidential elections that brought Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré to power in 1992 for two terms.

Retired General Touré made his come-back to power via the 2002 presidential elections. Despite a series of periodic internal instabilities in Mali, the country successfully maintained its democratic status from 1992 to 2012. However, the military coup d'état of March 22, 2012, not only led to a free fall of the country, but also it increased the likelihood of a protracted regional civil war for many social cleavages including the ethnic Tuareg still feel left out from decision-making processes in Mali. This paper purports to explore the Malian Tuareg's quest for statehood. It is structured in five sections. Section 1 presents the importance of the study. Data sources and the methodological approach are discussed in section 2. In section 3, the author uses Burton's human needs theory as a framework for analysis. Section 4 focuses on the root causes of the failure of the Tuaregs' nationalist struggle for self-determination in post-colonial Mali. In section 5, the author critically analyzes the Tuaregs' nationalist struggle and the new dynamics of war on terror in Mali is conducted in section 5. Section 6 concludes with the discussion of multi-diplomacy approaches of conflict management as useful tools to help promote full integration of the Tuaregs in Malian society, successful national reconciliation processes and sustainable peace in Mali.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

In a broader sense, this study will contribute to the literature on nationalism, but in a narrow sense, it will add to the collection of knowledge on how to restore stability and democratic practices in Mali. Lessons learned from this study will help prevent future devolutions of Sahel and West African states that are inhabited by Tuaregs. This study is extremely important to major stakeholders such as the United Nations, African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mali's former colonial power, France, and The United States for their concerted efforts on the war on terror. Speaking of war on terror, the U.S. Department of Defense has conducted a study on the Tuareg rebellions in Mali and Niger and concludes that such rebellions have destabilized the region and provide "safe-havens" to terrorist group known as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Defense, 5 January 2016). The United States' continued interest in the region because of its renewed effort to combat terrorism wherever it may be has made the world superpower closer to Africa more than ever before. Therefore, this study will be particularly important to U.S. policy-makers on finding ways to avoid a quagmire in Mali.

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#### DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This study uses archival research and a secondary data analysis to explore factors that explain past and current instability in Mali and the failure of a creation of a Tuareg state. To that end the author used the Afrobarometer online data analysis, reviewed newspapers and watched interviews at various reputable news channels (both local and international) such as BBC Africa, and IRIN News (a humanitarian news and analysis program). The author also browsed relevant online journals, such as *The Economist* and *Jeune Africa* and blogs. Moreover, the author browsed respected websites (local, regional, and international) including but not limited to AllAfrica.com, Koaci.com, and CNN.com. The use of these multiple sources for data gathering helped fill informational gaps and, at the same time, it helped minimize possible biases embedded in sources (Bernard 2006, Robson 2002).

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

To help explain the enduring crisis in Mali from conflict management standpoint, human needs theory is used as a theoretical framework for analysis. But how can one conceptualize the term "human needs" to help mitigate intractable conflicts such as the northern Malian conflict? Sandra Marker (2003) argues that human needs are not only about basic needs—food, water, and shelter—but also they include "love, dignity and safety" (p. 1). Not only are conflicts more likely to arise, but also they become intractable if these needs are unmet. While scholars such as Abraham Maslow and John Burton term these needs, human needs, Marker (2003) labels them as human essentials. She has done a great job in distinguishing Maslow's perception from that of Burton and other conflict theorists regarding the nature of human needs. She argues that while Maslow believes that human needs are hierarchical in nature, Burton and others contend that "needs are sought simultaneously in an intense and relentless manner" (p.1) (see for example, Burton 1990). In his *Needs Theory, Social Identity and an Eclectic Model of Conflict* Fisher (1990) lays out Maslow's seven hierarchical human needs from the lowest to the highest as follows:

- 1. Self-actualization needs: the ultimate motivation, involving the need to fulfill one's unique potential.
- 2. *Esteem needs:* the needs for achievement, competence, and mastery, as well as motives for recognition, prestige and status.
- 3. Aesthetic needs: the craving for beauty, symmetry and order.
- 4. Cognitive needs: the desire to know, to understand, and to satisfy one's curiosity.
- 5. Belongingness and Love needs: needs that are satisfied by social relationships.
- 6. Safety needs: needs that must be met to protect the individual from danger

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7. *Physiological needs:* basic internal deficit conditions that must be satisfied to maintain bodily processes.

However, Burton (1990s) argues that human needs should not be hierarchical. Marker (2003) presents Burton (1990a)'s non hierarchical view on human needs that include:

- Safety/Security: the need for structure, predictability, stability, and freedom from fear and anxiety.
- Belongingness/Love: the need to be accepted by others and to have strong personal ties with one's family, friends, and identity groups.
- Self-esteem: the need to be recognized by oneself and others as strong, competent, and capable. It also includes the need to know that one has some effect on her/his environment.
- Personal fulfillment: the need to reach one's potential in all areas of life.
- Identity: goes beyond a psychological "sense of self." Burton and other human needs theorists define identity as a sense of self in relation to the outside world. Identity becomes a problem when one's identity is not recognized as legitimate, or when it is considered inferior or is threatened by others with different identifications.
- Cultural security: is related to identity, the need for recognition of one's language, traditions, religion, cultural values, ideas, and concepts.
- Freedom: is the condition of having no physical, political, or civil restraints; having the capacity to exercise choice in all aspects of one's life.
- Distributive justice: is the need for the fair allocation of resources among all members of a community.
- Participation: is the need to be able to actively partake in and influence civil society.

Because of the persistence of unmet needs at the individual, group, and societal levels, conflicts become protracted or intractable. To resolve such conflicts, these unmet human needs must be addressed at all levels. The palpable example provided by Marker (2003) is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which she argues, is primarily driven by unmet needs of identity and security. While the Palestinians believe that their individual and collective national identity are being denied them (because they are not given the right to have a Palestinian state), the Israelis are still concerned with their individual and national security because of periodic suicide bombings and non-recognition by their neighbors. Therefore, to find mutually acceptable solutions by both parties, both the identity and security issues must be given a considerable attention and addressed at individual, group, and societal levels and even at the international level.

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In post-colonial Mali, the Tuareg are viewed as violent, criminal and lazy people. This negative stereotype put the Tuareg identity as inferior beings. Strongly sensitive of their self-perceived vulnerability due to their minority status in Mali, the Tuareg fear for their safety, freedom and cultural security. Being labeled as criminal and terrorists, the identity of the Tuareg is under a constant threat and their existence is also threatened by repressive Malian governments and militant jihadists who have trying to install their authority in the north. Given that the northern Malian regions are marginalized for years and remain underdeveloped, the Tuareg lack resources that can help them achieve their full potential.

Human needs approach helps to differentiate negotiable issues from the nonnegotiable ones (Coate and Rosati 1988). This argument is line with Carroll, Rosati and Coate (1988) who contend that while interests can be negotiated, needs are not. Human needs theories argue that negotiation models, including interest-based negotiation (in which conflict is defined in terms of win-win situations) and power models that dominate negotiation and international relations (by defining conflict in terms of zero-sum game) do not make any distinction between negotiable and nonnegotiable issues. Arguing in the same order of ideas, Rubenstein (2001) states that human needs theory "permits conflict resolvers to make a valid distinction between struggles that can be dealt with by employing the conventional trinity of force, law, and/or power-based negotiation, and those whose resolution requires other measures" (p. 4). Again, as John Burton argues, since needs and values are not negotiable, unlike interests-based conflicts, needs-based conflicts cannot be resolved through the use of traditional negotiation models.

For Rubenstein (2001), needs theory helps conflict analysts and practitioners not only to single out the difference between the concepts of "negotiation" and "dispute resolution", but also to design trainings and resolution processes accordingly so as to address underlying causes (that can either be unmet needs and values, or unsatisfied interests, or a combination of both) of conflict. Rubenstein (2001) argues that needs-based approach questions the traditional belief that violent and destructive social conflicts are caused by clash of civilizations or cultural differences, and/or by manipulation of the masses by few leaders. Human needs theorists offer an important conceptual tool that help address human needs at all levels: individual, group, and societal (Marker 2003). Human needs, such as identity, security, and recognition are the main underlying issues in many protracted or intractable conflicts.

The human needs approach takes into consideration the complexity of human life and the insistent nature of human needs (Carroll, Rosati and Coate 1988). According Marker (2003), it also "supports collaborative and multifaceted problem-solving models and related techniques, such as problem-solving workshops or an analytical problem-solving process" (p. 2). Addressing unmet human needs in conflict situations leads to a win-win or positive-sum situation where both

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parties are satisfies with problem-solving outcomes. For example, the day the Israelis have their security issue resolved and the Palestinians see their identity issue addressed, this will be a positive-sum process or win-win situation.

Unlike human needs theorists such as John Burton and Johan Galton who advocate for human needs approach as a way to address the root causes of protracted conflicts, others do not. For example Rader (1990) says in her discussion of the modernization of poverty that

"the basic needs approach adopted by authorities in times of social unrest assumes not only the oppressive political order but the oppressive economic order, which is the source of powerful dehumanizing forces: the obsession with material standards of living, the creation of artificial and chronic scarcity, the separation of needs from their means of satisfaction, and the weakening of family and community supports" (p. 227)

Human needs may not be the only concerns for conflicting parties. Parties may also have differing interests at stake in the conflict. Therefore, addressing the needs only does not necessary mean that the conflict is resolved. Parties will be mutually satisfied if both the needs and interests are properly addressed. Critics also argue that John Burton's assumption that basic human needs (such as identity, self-determination and freedom) are universal but their satisfiers are culture-bound does not hold given that "concepts like identity and security are not independently existing 'universals' rather, they are ideas abstracted from a multiplicity of concrete satisfiers" (Rubenstein 2001: 5). From this viewpoint, one can easily deduce that like satisfiers, most needs are also culturally determined.

In addition, many questions arise regarding the use of the human needs approach to find peaceful end to conflicts. According to Marker (2003: 3), these include, but are not limited to, (1) how can one define human needs? To address the issue regarding the definition of basic human needs, John Burton focuses on identity and recognition, while Johan Galton posits that there are two distinct but interdependent types of basic human needs (Rubenstein 2001). These includes material needs — security (violence), and welfare (misery) — and non-material needs (freedom/repression and identity/alienation). Galton also argues that while security and freedom are dependent on actors, welfare and identity are dependent on structures (see for example Galton, in Burton 1990b: 307). Furthermore, Rubenstein (2001) contends that human needs theory does not differentiate "wants" from "needs", and because of that the utility of the theory is questioned. 2) How can one know what needs are involved in conflict situations? (3) How can one know what human needs are being met and unmet? (4) Are human needs cultural or universal in nature? (5) If they are cultural, is the analysis of human needs beneficial beyond a specific conflict? (6) Are some needs inherently more important than others? (7) If some needs

are more important, should these be pursued first? The section below looks at possible factors of the failure of the establishment of a Tuareg state through the lens of human needs theory.

# TUAREG'S NATIONALIST STRUGGLE AND THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF THE CREATION OF A TUAREG STATE

Together with the Maures, the Tuareg constitute about 10 percent of the Malian population and are mainly in northern Mali (Cline 2013, Encyclopedia of Nations 2016). The south and the other part of the country are inhabited by other ethnic cleavages, including but are not limited to, the Mande, which alone accounts for 50 percent of the Malian population and it is comprised of the Bambara, the Malinke and the Sarakole, the Peul (17 %), the Voltaic (12%), the Songhai (6%), and other minor ethnic groups (Encyclopedia of Nations 2016). The ethnic heterogeneity in itself may not play any major role in the failure of the creation of the so-called "Tuareg State." However, if ethnic groups are manipulated, they can be a potential source of socio-political conflicts (Agbehonou 2014). Because of their lighter skin color, the Tuareg have always considered themselves as superior beings in comparison to other ethnic groups in Mali and elsewhere in the Sahel where they found themselves living at after the demarcation of imaginary boundaries by the European colonial powers. One can argue that the Tuareg owe their minority status in West Africa and in the Sahel to colonialism.

The Tuareg's problems have multiple sources. Scholars like Boas and Torheim (2013) associate the suffering of the Tuareg to colonialism and colonial legacy when they note that "The Tuaregs' position in the northern region was turned upside down by French colonialism and made permanent by the postcolonial state system" (p. 1281). Alesbury (2013) concurs and argues that the French military had completely destroyed the structures of the Tuareg's strength before granting Mali its independence in 1960. However, the latter had difficulties accepting the new reality.

During the decolonization of Mali, they openly and explicitly expressed their view in a letter to the French government asking it not to include them in a country with people with darker skin. In such a letter, on can read "We, the white people of the Sahara, will never accept being governed by blacks who used to be our slaves" (Cline 2013: 618) (also quoted in Giuffrida 2005, p. 532). This complex of superiority clearly manifested by the Malian Tuareg in the letter is what Sylvia Wynter calls Self/Other dynamic in her *Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after Man, its overrepresentation—an argument*, with "Self" representing the superior beings and "Other" being the inferior beings, created an atmosphere of rivalry and/or animosity between the Tuareg and the other ethnic groups in Mali since independence. On the other hand, the other ethnic cleavages have not been indifferent with name calling. As Cline

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(2013) notes it, "other groups also maintain negative stereotypes of the Tuareg" (p. 618). Dehumanization of the Tuareg has not only been an affair of black people in Mali, but it has also become an affair of external actors who have vested interests in post-colonial Mali. These foreign actors have even labeled the Tuareg as terrorist groups.<sup>1</sup> This negative stereotype that the Tuareg have been subjected to complicates the matter and dashes their nationalistic dream of establishing a sovereign Tuareg State.

Since the independence of Mali in 1960, the Tuareg have been engaged in a series of rebellions as a pressure tactic to bring the Malian government to the negotiation table that would allow them to discuss their agenda of a separate Tuareg nation. Given that the Tuareg community is highly segregated by a caste system, which distinguishes light-skinned Tuareg from Bellah or dark-skinned Tuareg (Randall 2005), they had difficulties mobilizing the whole community for their nationalistic struggle. In addition to the lack of mobilization, the caste system has created a suspicion and a lack of trust among various groups in the Tuareg community. As a result, they continue to find it very difficult to rally behind a single leadership who can coordinate their struggle for self-determination. Cline (2013) argues that "There was a little evidence of either a particularly strong strategic vision among the Tuareg or a unified leadership" (p. 619). Because of such a lack of unity within the Tuareg community, Lieutenant Colonel Kalifa Keita from the Malian Army states that "Tuaregs as a group have never demonstrated a unified political (or military) agenda" (Keita 1998: 9). During the first Tuareg rebellion of 1962, with as little as 1500 combatants, the Tuareg have engaged in guerrilla warfare against a well-equipped and well-trained Malian Army, which suppressed and repressed the rebel forces (Boas and Torheim 2013, Keita 1998).

To make the matter worse for the Tuareg, the Malian government headed by President Modibo Keita decided to place the Tuareg-populated regions under military rule (Douglas-Bowers 2013, Boas and Torheim 2013). It also ordered the destruction of Tuareg's livestock in the northern region and the poisoning of their sources of water such as wells (Alesbury 2013, Lode 2012, Lecocq 2010). Such a repressive tactic not only ended the rebellion in 1964, but it also provoked the displacement and alienation of many moderate Tuareg who had not pledged their support for the rebellion (Alesbury 2013, Keita 1998). The failure of this first post-independence rebellion marked the beginning of both the undesirability of Tuareg in Mali and the Malian protracted conflict.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See more discussion on the Tuareg as terrorist groups in the section of the discussion of the Tuareg's nationalist struggle and the new dynamics of War on Terror in Mali below.

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The nature has never been on the side of Tuareg given that Sahel in general and Mali in particular has frequently experienced harsh climate and unpleasant dry seasons that are detrimental to the survival of people, vegetation/plants, and the herds. As Whitehouse (2013) points out, "In terms of climate and geography, its people face daunting handicaps: malaria, regular droughts threaten agricultural production in southern Mali, while in its arid northern regions farming is only possible in few irrigated zones along the Niger River" (p. 36). The Tuareg-populated northern regions, deeply rooted in the Sahara desert, were at the mercy of or hit by the droughts of the 1970s and early 1980s that destroyed the sources of their fragile economy and disrupted their social structures.<sup>2</sup> The livestock of the herders was devastated and water sources such as wells and rivers around which they live were dried out. But the Malian government did little to assist these northern regions that were desperately in need. Consequently, many Tuareg had no choice but to seek refuge or migrate to neighboring states such as Algeria and Libya. While in Libya, thousands of these Tuareg received military trainings and were recruited to serve in Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's private militia group. According to Boas and Torheim (2013) and Keita (1998), these expatriated Tuareg fought in Gaddafi's Islamic Legion in Chad and Lebanon and later returned to Mali after they were laid off from Libyan workforce as a result of the collapse of global oil prices of 1985 to lead the 1990 uprising in Mali.

It is equally important to note that timing was neither on the side of Tuareg nor on the side of the Malian state in the 1960s. It was at the height of Cold War. The two antagonistic blocks, the communist and the capitalist, respectively led by the Soviet Union and the United States, were locked in proxy wars in Angola, Zaire (the present day Democratic Republic of Congo), and elsewhere in the world. Therefore, Mali's problem occupied no place on the agenda of international community. This lack of international community's attention and assistance exacerbated the Tuareg's situation and contributed to the loss of the first Tuareg rebellion but not their nationalistic struggle. However, things changed drastically in the aftermath of severe droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. Mali began to receive some traction at least on the humanitarian front as "Mali received massive relief aid" (Keita 1998: 12). But such a humanitarian relief program did little to satisfy the need of many unemployed Tuareg who returned to Mali as result of disbandment of the Islamic Legion of Gaddafi and internally displaced Tuareg who migrated to the southern regions in quest for fertile land near the Niger River.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Within the Tuareg community, there are five interdependent social classes: the ruling nobles (the *Imajeghen*), the vassals (the *Imghad* or *Imrad*), the Islamic Marabouts (the *Ineslemen*), the slaves (the *Iklan*), and artisans (the *Inaden*). For more discussion on Tuareg social structure, see for example Alesbury 2013: 109, Bernus 1975: 234, Murdock 1959: 407.

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One can argue that the droughts had created fertile conditions for intrastate conflict as resources became more and more scarce. At the same time, the Malian government led by General Moussa Traore, who seized power on November 19, 1968 via a military coup, was weak and unable to address the issue of scarcity of resources created by a forced southwards migration of the Tuareg (Boas and Torheim 2013). Not only was there a general dissatisfaction with Traore's leadership in Mali, but also more importantly the Malian Tuareg felt marginalized and feared for cultural destruction because of the way his government handled the relief program (Keita 1998). The Tuareg, with the help of their brothers (ex-combatants of the Islamic Legion) who brought in some military experiences, then profited of the climate of frustration of the Malian population and their dissatisfaction of the government and launched with some success the second Tuareg rebellion in June 1990 (Lode 2012). At the same time, the Malians responded to the international call for the democratization of the African continent with the organization of a political opposition that took the fight to the Traore's government from the country's capital, Bamako while the Tuareg, with their Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad [Mouvement *Populaire pour la Liberation de l'Azawad (MPLA)*], successfully crashed the Malian army from the north. Squeezed by the two fronts, the government sought and obtained a cease-fire accord with the MPLA and the Arabic Islamic Front (Le Ftont Islamique Arabe) in a series of mediations of good offices by the Algerian government. The agreement is known as the Tamanrasset Accords. It contains the main provisions as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- A cessation of military operations and all armed action in the entire territory of Mali and principally in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> regions.
- A commitment by all parties to ban all acts of violence, including armed elements coming from outside.
- Progressive reduction of the Malian Armed Forces in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> regions.
- Freedom of movement of the unarmed forces of the MPLA and the Arabic Islamic Front in the northern regions.
- Disengagement of the Malian Armed Forces from civil administration and suppression of certain military posts in the northern regions.
- Avoidance of zones of pasture land and densely populated zones in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> regions.
- Confinement of the Malian Armed Forces to the role of defense of the integrity of the territory at the frontiers.
- Integration of ex-combatants or rebel forces into the Malian Armed Forces.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For the full text of the Tamanrasset Accords, refer the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), available at http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/peace/mal19910106.pdf

- Exchanges of all prisoners and hostages within 30 days from the agreement.
- Equal representation of members of the Commission in charge of the enforcement of the cease-fire.
- Agreement on Gao as the Commission's headquarter.

An analysis of the above provisions reveals that the Tamanrasset Accords of January 6, 1991 granted autonomy for the Tuareg-populated northern regions without addressing the concerns of the democratic opposition movement of the south. It rather jeopardized the integrity of Mali. Therefore, the agreement was far from bringing about domestic tranquility in Mali. Civil disobedience continued until President Traore was deposited in a coup d'état on March 26, 1991 by General Alpha Toumani Toure (Lecocq and Klute 2013). One cannot say with certitude that it was only the second Tuareg rebellion that precipitated the fall of Traoré's regime. It was the accumulation of many factors, including, but are not limited to, the lack of resources to enforce the Tamanrasset Accords, and a strong desire of the Malian people to abort the military dictatorship in Mali and try something new, a democracy. The Tuareg failed to capitalize on their momentum and achieve their overdue dream of the establishment of Azawad, a Tuareg state. Internal distrusts and conflict of interests among the Tuareg prevented them from rallying behind a single group that would speak with one voice. Lecocq and Klute (2013: 426) note that:

The successful fight against Mali unleashed social and political dynamics within Tuareg society. From January 1991 onwards the rebel movement splintered under violent internal conflicts that were to persist until October 1994. The movements divided along tribal lines, reflecting power dynamics internal to Tuareg society which can be traced back to alliances and hostilities formed with the context of colonial penetration. But they also reflected internal political conflicts concerning the aims of the rebellion and the future structure of Tuareg society itself.

In the aftermath of the Tamanrasset Accords, social identity played a major role in the Tuareg's quest for statehood. Because of the caste system, Tuareg identify themselves more as members of social classes than they do as members of a whole Tuareg community. As a result they were embroiled in a perpetual battle that divided them instead of uniting them. The MPLA exploded into four independent factions such as: the Popular Liberation Front of Azawad [*Front Populaire pour la Liberation de l'Azawad (FPLA)*], the Revolutionary Liberation Army of Azawad (*Armee Revolutionaire pour la Liberation de l'Azawad (FPLA)*], the Popular Movement of Azawad [*Mouvement Populaire de l'Azawad (MPA)*] (Lecocq and Klute 2013, Keita 1998). The emergence of these different armed groups not only posed significant threats to the stability of the country, but also

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and more importantly it had helped annihilate the Tuareg's chance for accelerating the process that should lead to the establishment of Azawad as a Tuareg state.

The presence of multiple armed groups in the northern regions did not allow for a strict compliance of the Tamanrasset peace agreement by all parties. Therefore, after the overthrow of President Traoré, the new pro-democracy transitional government led by Gen. Amadou Toumani Touré rejected the Tamanrasset Accords. But under a strong pressure from Malian civil society, the transitional government organized a national gathering known as Conférence Nationale or National Conference, which was held between July 29 and August 12, 1991. Such a conference regrouped Malians from all regions and produced a new constitution that was overwhelmingly approved by nearly 99 percent of Malian registered voters on 12 January 1992 (African Elections Database, 2012). The main objectives of the National Conference was not to address Tuareg's issues and insurgencies in the northern regions of Mali, but to help move the country in a democratic direction. However, the representatives from the northern zones unsuccessfully tried to the Tamanrasset Agreement as their BATNA (Best Alternative Negotiated Agreement) or walk away point. The refusal by the transitional government to reject the Tamanrasset Agreement ignited another series of violence in the north. At this time the Malian armed forces would not tolerate any acts that were perceived as a disturbance of the social order in the north. Human rights abuses and violations resulting from political violence in the north became so rampant and disturbing that the government had decided to find some alternatives to the conflict by convening three separate meetings in Segou on November 25-27, 1991, in El-Golea, Algeria on December 10-13, and in Mopti on December 15-17, 1991 with parties to the conflict including the Malian civil society leaders, and all armed groups reunited under the umbrella of the United Movements and Fronts of Azawad (MFUA) (Lode 2002). Such meetings paved the way to another critical peace agreement reached by all parties in April 1992 in Bamako. It was called the *Pacte Nationale* or National Pact.

Unlike the Tamanrasset Agreement, which primarily focused on Tuareg issues and the autonomy of the northern regions, the National Pact was broadly designed to prevent the devolution of Mali and the creation of a Tuareg state as a separate and sovereign political entity. As mutually acceptable solutions to the conflict, all signatory parties of the National Pact vowed to do whatever it takes to bring about peace and security in the north. The pact also called for: 1) a national reconciliation that would help heal the wounds of the past, 2) socio-economic development in the northern regions, and 3) special status of the north within the state of Mali (Lode 2002). The National Pact facilitated the repatriation of 120,000 Tuareg refugees from neighboring Alegria and Mauritania, and the integration of about 7,000 Tuaregs ex-combatants in the Malian Army (Boas and Torheim 2013). While the transitional government was determined to restore the stability in Mali and organize the country's first democratic elections,

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armed groups within the MFUA had been locked in internal power struggle that resurrected another cycle of violence as a result of inter-ethnic conflict in the north, which jeopardized the implementation of the National Pact. Once again, the Tuareg have missed another window of opportunity that should have helped them achieve their nationalistic dream. However, on 26 April 1992, the election of Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré with 69.01 percent of the votes as Mali's first democratically elected president in the aftermath of the National Conference in 1992 gave hope not only to the Tuareg community that their concerned would be addressed, but also to the whole country that was entering in a brand new era of democracy.

To his credit, President Konaré managed to end the second Tuareg rebellion by acknowledging the problems faced by the Tuareg in the north, coopting the Tuareg in his Decentralization Mission (DM), aggressively engaging the public in regional consultations on how to consolidate their country's infant democratic process, and drawing new administrative boundaries and therefore delegitimizing the existing boundaries of the north. Seelly (2001:500) argues that:

President Konaré's government was motivated to undertake a programme of decentralization by a number of political factors, especially the threat by Tuareg separatist groups in the northern desert regions in Mali. Konaré's decision to decentralize was a pragmatic political response, not only to the threat to territorial sovereignty in the north, but also to the political consequences of coopting the Tuareg threat.

Although the concept of decentralization was not new to the Malian public, the way in which Konaré had tackled it attracted not only the Malian people, but also international community who had praised the president's leadership style and later cited Mali as a model of Africa's democracy. It is equally important to underscore that fact that "decentralization really began only in 1999, when local elections finally took place and the central government completed the hand-over of the administration of land, transportation, education, and healthcare to elected local governments" (Defense, 2016) (see for example, Seely, 2001: 499-500). As the World Bank Estimate suggests it, between 1994 and 2000, 84.88 percent of the Malian population lived below poverty line that is \$1.90 a day. However, the statistics decreased to 57.92 percent by 2001. Such a decrease in the percentage of people below poverty line can be credited to the decentralization effort undertaken by Konaré's regime. In fact, the politics of decentralization has helped President Konaré to legitimize his regime and consolidate his political power, which had helped derail the Tuareg from their achieving ultimate goal (creation of a sovereign Tuareg nation) during the two terms of his presidency.<sup>4</sup> On May 12, 2002, Amadou Toumani Touré

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> On 11 May 1997, the second democratic presidential election was held without the main opposition parties. As expected, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré was reelected with 95.90 percent of the votes.

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(ATT), who led the transitional government, won the presidential elections with 65.01 percent of the votes and made a triumphant comeback to power as a civilian independent candidate. By this time, the level of violence in the north was low, but the Tuareg's issues were not fully addressed. Additionally, overwhelmingly majority (57.92 percent) of Malians lived on \$1.90 a day from 2001 to 2005. Although, one can note a decline in the statistics to 50.58 percent between 2006 and to 49.25 between 2009 and 2014 (see Table 1 below), the poverty level was still high during Touré's watch.

Years	1994-2000	2001-2005	2006-2008	2009-2014
Percent of the	84.88	57.92	50.58	49.25
total population				

 Table 1: Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$1.90 A Day (2011 PPP) (% of Population)

Source: Poverty & Equity Databank: Geni Index (World Bank Estimate)

The poverty trend reveals how vulnerable the Malian population was. As both Konaré and Touré had openly acknowledged, the north was left out from development programs during both colonial and postcolonial eras. This suggests that the most affected of all were people living in the northern regions. The 2006 Tuareg anti-government uprisings followed by the attack of military bases in Kidal, Menaka, and Tessalit did not occur in vacuum. To the rebels, the government had been slow in implementing the decentralization. As in the past, the Tuareg armed groups resorted to violence as a useful tool to get their government attention. Indeed, by the endo of July 2006, the government responded by launching an economic development program known as "ADRE-NORTH" for the north. ADRE-NORTH was worth \$21 million and also supported by the European Union (*IRIN News*, 31 July 2006). According to President Touré, "This program will kick-start a new dynamic in economic development in Mali's northern regions and will contribute to wealth creation and poverty reduction" (*IRIN News*, 31 July 2006). But the government's continuous efforts to make more concessions to the rebels' demands gave more incentives to the Tuareg to continue their rebellion with the hope that President Touré would completely give in and grant them an independence from Mali.

Unfortunately, by the end of his presidency, President Touré was overthrown in a military coup on March 22, 2012 by some Malian junior officers who accused their Command in Chief of being "too soft on the insurgency" (*Defense*, 5 January 2016). The 2012 coup should not come as a surprise to anyone who follows closely the development of the country's socio-political events. The morale of the Malian people was very low. Between 2009 and 2012, nearly half of the Malian total population lived below poverty line (see Table 1). Such a coup created a chaotic situation in Mali given that the country has become a battleground for Islamic militant groups

and foreign actors, such France, and the United Nations in their mission to defeat international terrorism.

#### THE NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR ON TERROR IN MALI

The coup d'état that occurred on March 22, 2012 escalated the northern Malian conflict to a whole new level. It created a chaotic situation in the whole country with strong presence of Islamic militant groups and unprecedented involvement of foreign actors. It transformed the country's political landscape and derailed evolution of the negotiation and decentralization processes in the north. After the leader of the coup, Captain Sanogo, stepped down as a result of many pressures from foreign actors including the United Nations, France, Great Britain, and the United States, and regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the African Union (A.U.), President Dionconda Traoré of the Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) led the transitional government, which ended on September 4, 2013 with the election of President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita also known as IBK (CIA World Factbook 2016). The newly elected Malian president's position on how to deal with the Tuareg was quite clear. He and his political coalition (the Alliance Ibrahim Boubacar Keita) opposed further negotiations with the northern rebel forces. The coalition was never in favor of international intervention in Mali. As Boas and Torheim (2013: 1289) summarize it,

It says an absolute 'no' to any negotiations with armed groups and claims that people involved with MNLA and the IMA are not eligible to stand for election. The IBK's position on the international intervention is more ambiguous. It reluctantly supports it, but expresses some concern, the major fear being that France and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will use the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSMA) to force through negotiations with the MNLA as an exit strategy.

Like in many former French colonies, Mali is a unitary state where the power is consolidated in the executive branch of government. This means that any presidential acts outweigh any decisions made by both the judicial and the legislative branches. President IBK's decision not to continue negotiating with the northern rebel forces (MNLA and IMA) as it was the case during ATT's regime moved the rebels far away from a centric position they could adopt should the government opt for a negotiated settlement with them. These rebel groups have instead embraced radical Islamic principles. They have shifted their focus from the creation of a Tuareg state to the establishment of Sharia Law in Gao and Timbuktu (Alesbury 2013). Some, especially Ansar al-Dine and MUJAO, who pledged their allegiance to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb AQIM) have engaged in human rights violations and abuses by decapitating hostages in the northern regions. But with a swift international intervention in 2013, many jihadists were expelled and the

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MNLA decided to reconsider their initial position and go for autonomy as a negotiated settlement of the northern Malian conflict (*BBC*, 12 March 2013).

While the MNLA was willing to compromise on its original demand and support the international intervention, terrorist groups including Ansar al-Dine and MUJAO continued to pose serious security threats to Mali and the Sahel. In Mali, about 100,000 people have been internally displaced between 2012 and 2015. In May 2015 alone 57,000 people left their homes because of "renewed fighting between armed groups in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu areas in the northern Mali" (Michael, 2016). In addition internally populations within Mali, hundreds of thousand of Malians migrated in neighboring countries. Despite the 2015 Bamako Peace Agreement, the situation in the northern regions remains volatile. Jihadists have also spread attacks to Niger, Chad, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal, and Burkina Faso (Anyadike 2016) (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1: Map Showing the Spread of Militancy in the Sahel

Source: IRNNews.org. Available at http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2016/02/04/briefing-new-jihadist-strategy-sahel

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Labeling the conflict in Mali as a crisis is an oversimplification of what has been going on in the country for over half a century. The Malian conflict is not only a long lasting conflict, but also it is an intractable one in the sense that it has many root causes, including colonial legacy of divide-and-rule as exemplified by the French in the implementation of the direct rule policy in Mali and elsewhere in their colonies and carried out by successive governments in Mali; communal rivalries between a) Tuareg and the Malian state, b) Islamic militant armed groups or

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jihadists and the Malian state, c) Tuareg and jihadists, and d) among the Tuareg themselves; marginalization of the northern regions; and most importantly the lack of recognition of Tuareg as true citizens of Mali. Current Malian conflict has spillover effects. One of the main characteristic of protracted conflict is conflict enlargement. Azar (2002) notes: "Conflict spillover in terms of both actors and issues, so that the conflict is no longer intrastate or one-dimensional but regional and multicausal, with blurring of the internal and external boundaries of the conflict" (p. 16).

But what is a protracted conflict? In his work *Protracted Social Conflicts and Second Track Diplomacy*, Azar (2002) argues that protracted social conflicts are primarily motivated by unmet human needs, including "the need for acceptance or recognition of identity" (p. 15). Azar (2002) also maintains that "protracted social or intercommunal conflicts are breeders of crises and armed struggles as well as continued structural violence and underdevelopment" (p. 16). Protracted conflicts prolonged conflicts that tend to be violent in most cases. In Mali, the Tuareg have engaged in many violent armed struggles (Tuareg rebellions in 1962-1964, 1980s, 1990s, 2006 and 2012) with the Malian armed forces since independence. Any effort designed to satisfy these human needs will sustain both development and peace. Given that most protracted social conflicts (PSC) involve both state nonstate and actors, multitrack diplomacy, in which facilitation, collaborative and integrative problem solving are used, should be the appropriate strategy for addressing or managing such conflicts as it is the case in Mali.

The Malian government and international stakeholders have been using unsuccessfully Track I, which is dominated by mediation with muscle (sporadic use or threat of use of force) and includes negotiation with Tuareg leaders and armed groups, deploying both the Malian security forces and the United Nations' traditional peacekeeping missions as instruments to support various peace agreements from Tamanrasset Accords to the recent Bamako Peace Accord. Most violent conflicts erupt "where there is a perceived imbalance in the distribution of economic, political and social resources (social justice) that coincides with identity-group boundaries" (Davies and Kaufman, 2002: 2). Issues in these conflicts tend to be not only complex, but also emotionally charged. The likelihood to address these conflicts through track I diplomacy, that is, a model designed to serve the interests of states through negotiation, peacekeeping, arbitration, peace support, mediation with muscle where exchange and threat power dominate, is very low (Ramsbothan, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011).

A survey conducted by Afrobarometer between 2011 and 2013 (Round 5) reveals that an extraordinary majority (74.9 percent) of Malians views negotiations between the Government and armed groups as the best option to resolve the crisis in the north. In the same survey, only

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2.3 percent of Malians support secession of the north from Mali, 7.8 percent favor intervention of foreign armed forces in Mali (see Table 2 below).

	Number of cases	%Total
None of these options	15	1.2%
Negotiations between the Government and armed groups	899	74.9%
The war between FAMA and the armed groups	165	13.8%
The intervention of foreign armed forces	94	7.8%
North secession	27	2.3%
(N)	(1,200)	100%

#### Table 2: Best option in resolving the crisis in the North

Selected Samples: Mali (1200)

Source: Afrobarometer Round 6 (2011/2013)

Available at http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online

However, when asked in Round 6 (2014/2015) about the most effective way of dealing with problem in the north, participants were split between negotiations (24.6 percent) and strengthening military response or capabilities (24.1 percent) (see Table 3). These were the top two answers. But in another survey in the course of Round 6, only 1.3 percent of participants put an emphasis on negotiations as the way to go about the conflict in the north, 7.8 percent still were in favor of military intervention, while an overwhelmingly majority (70.6 percent) said that they there is no other answer to the conflict in the north (see Table 4 below). These descriptive statistics suggest that the Malian conflict is very complex and that negotiation with armed forces and military intervention in the north are not working and therefore different approaches are needed for the transformation the conflict.

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	Number of cases	%Total
Nothing	91	7.6%
The Government is already effective in fighting them	198	16.5%
Strengthen military response or capabilities	290	24.1%
Working with traditional leaders to tackle the problem	13	1.1%
Working with religious leaders to address the problem	32	2.7%
Improve the economy and create more jobs	43	3.6%
Improve the education system	1	0.1%
Govern more effectively / deliver better public services	45	3.7%
Treat the communities of original extremists fairly	20	1.7%
Give more power to local authorities to make their own decisions	6	0.5%
Negotiations	295	24.6%
Don't Know	5	0.4%
Other	161	13.4%
(N)	(1,200)	100%

## Table 3: Most effective way of dealing with problem in the North – 1<sup>st</sup> response

Selected Samples: Mali (1200)

Source: Afrobarometer Round 6 (2014/2015)

Available at http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online

# Table 4: Most effective way of dealing with problem in the North $-2^{nd}$ response

	Number of cases	% Total
Strengthen military response or capabilities	93	7.8%
Working with traditional leaders to tackle the problem	8	0.7%
Working with religious leaders to address the problem	23	1.9%
Improve the economy and create more jobs	45	3.8%
Improve the education system	7	0.6%
Govern more effectively / deliver better public services	41	3.4%
Treat the communities of original extremists fairly	32	2.7%
Give more power to local authorities to make their own decisions	6	0.5%
Negotiations	16	1.3%
No other answer	848	70.6%
Other	80	6.7%
(N)	(1,200)	100%

Selected Samples: Mali (1200)

Source: Afrobarometer Round 6 (2014/2015)

Available at http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online

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Therefore, according to Davies and Kaufman (2002: 2), there is a need to introduce "a collaborative process of peace building and sustainable development" in the conflict transformation mechanisms that will include influential members of local communities. This model is known as track II or second Track diplomacy. Also referred to as "citizens" diplomacy, track II is defined as "the bringing together of professionals, opinion leaders, other currently or potential influential individuals from communities in conflict, without official representative status, to work together to understand better the dynamics underlying the conflict and how its transformation from violence (or potential violence) to a collaborative process of peace building and sustainable development might be promoted" (p. 2). With a more specificity, the main players in second track should include nongovernment organizations (NGOs) professionals, ethnic and/or religious leaders, women's group leaders, and leaders of other cleavages (p. 6).

The track II approach complements official diplomacy or track I. It enlarges room for integrative or collaborative problem solving by "opening up opportunities for communication, cross-cultural understanding and joint efforts to explore how the needs of the parties might be addressed when official dialogue is blocked or constrained" (p. 2). A society that seeks to establish a democratic regime is strongly encouraged to implement track II model of conflict transformation as it helps engage civil society. A vibrant civil society constitutes therefore, an important tenet of both the emergence and survival of democracy.

Track II as a "multilayered diplomatic process aimed at transforming the contentious power dynamics of complex, protracted conflict into processes of constructive engagement joint problem solving" (Davies and Kaufman 2002: 3) helps transform zero-sum thinking to integrative peace building by promoting an expansion of alternatives that can help reach mutually agreeable solutions that all parties can live with. As such it requires the participation of all parties to the conflict. Track II diplomacy can help address Tuaregs' unmet human security needs that are sources of conflicts. It also aims at bringing a positive peace (presence of justice) as opposed to negative peace (absence of justice). Davies and Kaufman (2002) maintain that Track II "recognizes that sustainable peace requires social and economic justice, participatory political processes, and environmentally and economically sustainable supported by appropriate, long-term, endogenously driven structural reforms" (3). The authors therefore, argue that "a dynamic and just peace implies not only the absence of war but also the systematic reduction of structural violence and militarism that degrades the quality of life and respect for human needs and rights" (p. 3). Therefore, the key concern in Mali should not only be about how to contain this PSC as it is currently the case, but also and more importantly how to constructively deal with their root causes constructively and transform the already damaged relationships between all parties including the Tuareg, the Malian state, and other moderate armed groups into better and sustained partnerships or working relationships. Such a conflict transformation approach may not

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be popular and easy to use, but it can be very helpful in the long-run in preventing future violent conflicts and jumpstart the national reconciliation process.

Track II diplomacy bridges the divide between parties to the conflict, between process and product or outcomes, and between peace and justice, and other divisions that can slow the transformation process. These other divisions include, but are not limited to, "the divisions between government and civil society, between elites and grassroots levels within communities, and between different cultural worldviews and assumptions about how to manage conflict and change" (p. 4). Davies and Kaufman (2002) make an interesting point here when they put an emphasis on the legitimacy of states in the field of first track diplomacy model and how they have necessary resources and power needed for implementing peace agreements. This is just a starting point because a peacebuilding process requires more than signing and maintaining peace agreements. Translating these agreements into a sustainable peace requires the involvement of civil society, which is lacking at the official level. Hence, this shows the importance of the second track diplomacy, which must be used in the resolution of the Malian conflict not as a substitute to the first track diplomacy, but as its complement.

Unlike the power politics embedded in first track diplomacy, second track seeks to gather the perspectives of all conflicting parties based on their values, interests, and needs. Outcomes reached using second track are the results of collaborative efforts of all parties and not the ones that have been imposed to them by any external actors or a third party. The third party, in this context, plays the role of a facilitator and helps parties to recognize their interdependence and why finding peaceful solutions not only remains the responsibility of all conflicting parties, but also it is in their best interests. McDonald (2002) extends track II to nine tracks argues that government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), business, education, media, religious and donor agencies, activists, and private citizens are needed if a lasting peace is to prevail. NGOs and university research centers play a paramount role in facilitating direct foreign investment (FDI) into local communities so as to help develop these communities and prevent or reduce cycle of violence and instability. According to Davies and Kaufman (2002: 6),

A key function of second track diplomacy –along with addressing the 'horizontal' divisions between parties across multiple sectors, as above—is to address the 'vertical' divisions within each community, rooted in the absence of responsive and coordinated relations among top central government or military leaders and middle-level or informal grassroots opinion leaders (see for example, Lederach, 1999).

Citizens' diplomacy is used to empower civil society organizations (CSOs) for "generating advice for the elite and for engaging in grassroots-level dispute resolution" (Kaufman 2002:

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183). Track II is also associated with innovative problem solving workshops (IPSWs). IPSW is a model for working with unofficial citizen representative of contending parties as "Partners in Conflict" (Kaufman 2002: 183). The term "Partners in Conflict" denotes a common identity among participants in IPSWs. This common identity includes a shared profession, attributes, mutual concerns, or belonging to same geographical location. IPSWs help transform parties' perceptions and attitudes, improve their existing relationships and build new ones. Kaufman (2002) argues that "complementary to classical diplomacy, second track or citizens' diplomacy is considered an effective means especially for dealing with protracted communal conflicts— prolonged identity-driven disputes accompanied by fluctuating and sometimes high levels of violence" (pp. 183-184). IPSWs help bridge divides by emphasizing what the parties have in common. The author also suggests the development of what he calls an "epistemic community," that is, "a group of individuals who share collective understanding relating to their own issues and problems" (p. 184).

Due to the complexity of the Malian protracted conflict, there has to be a shift from using a thirdparty intervention as a means to bring a peaceful end to the conflict. The emphasis should focus on seeking contributions from local communities especially in the north and design approaches to peace based on cultural understanding of those communities. The model designed from this new perspective is called Track III diplomacy. Local resources are used by local actors who are the key players when it comes to managing conflicts in their communities. Ramsbothan, Woodhoose, and Miall (2011) argue that to have a lasting peace or sustainable peace, there is a need to build peace constituencies within the conflict, build social cohesion, and establish a common ground. In Track III, integrative and exchange power dominate (pp. 28-29). Fast paced implementation of the ongoing decentralization programs can facilitate the process of both citizens' diplomacy and Track III.

Above all, the ultimate way to completely transform the Malian enduring conflict is through a national reconciliation in which Malians from all social cleavages should accept to forgive one another their past wrongdoings and live with one another in one Mali. However, the 2014/2015 Afrobarometer survey analysis suggests that it will take a long time for the Malian society to be reconciled with itself given that only 17.4 percent of Malians want confession and forgiveness as compared to more than a third of the population who believe in conviction of the perpetrators (see Table 5 below). It is equality important to point out that only 23.5 percent of Malians support general amnesty, meaning set perpetrators free of jail sentences. At this point, a national reconciliation in Mali will be fragile and will not produce a lasting peace. It is strongly recommended that multi-track diplomacy approach be used to help mitigate the Malian conflict, repair broken relationships between contending parties and facilitate full integration of Tuareg before any attempt at organizing the national reconciliation in the country.

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	Number of cases	% Total
None of these options	20	1.7%
Prosecution of suspects and conviction of the perpetrators	433	36.1%
General amnesty	282	23.5%
Confession and Forgiveness	209	17.4%
Search for truth	172	14.3%
A combination of these options	82	6.9%
Don't Know	2	0.2%
(N)	(1,200)	100%

Selected Samples: Mali (1200)

Source: Afrobarometer Round 6 (2014/2015)

Available at http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online

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