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## Mali at 60

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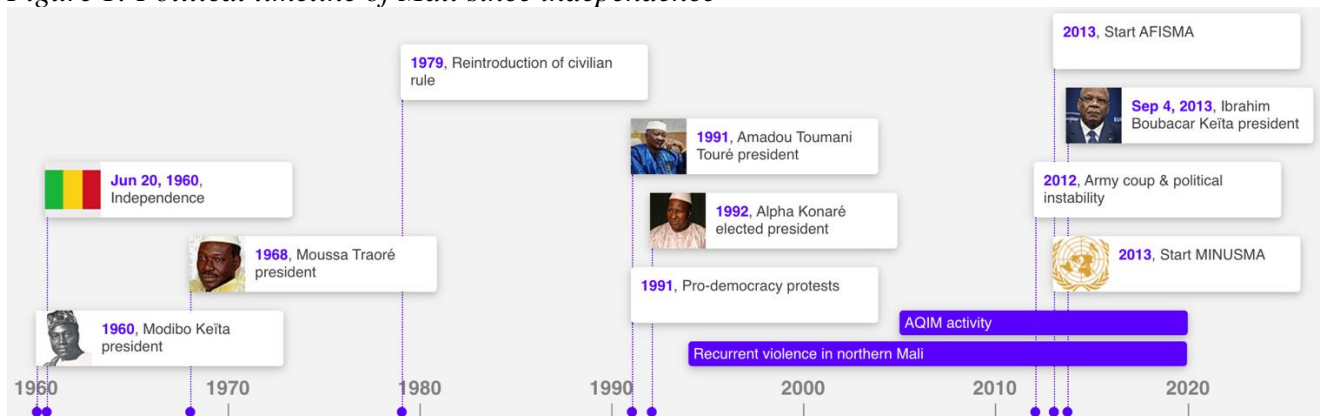
## Mali at 60

### Political history

1960 was the 'Year of Africa': many former colonies in Africa became politically independent. Of the seventeen colonies gaining independence in that year, Mali was the third one: on June 20th. Mali had been a

French colony from 1892, as Soudan français, and part of Afrique-Occidentale française (French West Africa) until independence in 1960 (see Fig 1 for a political timeline).

Figure 1: Political timeline of Mali since independence



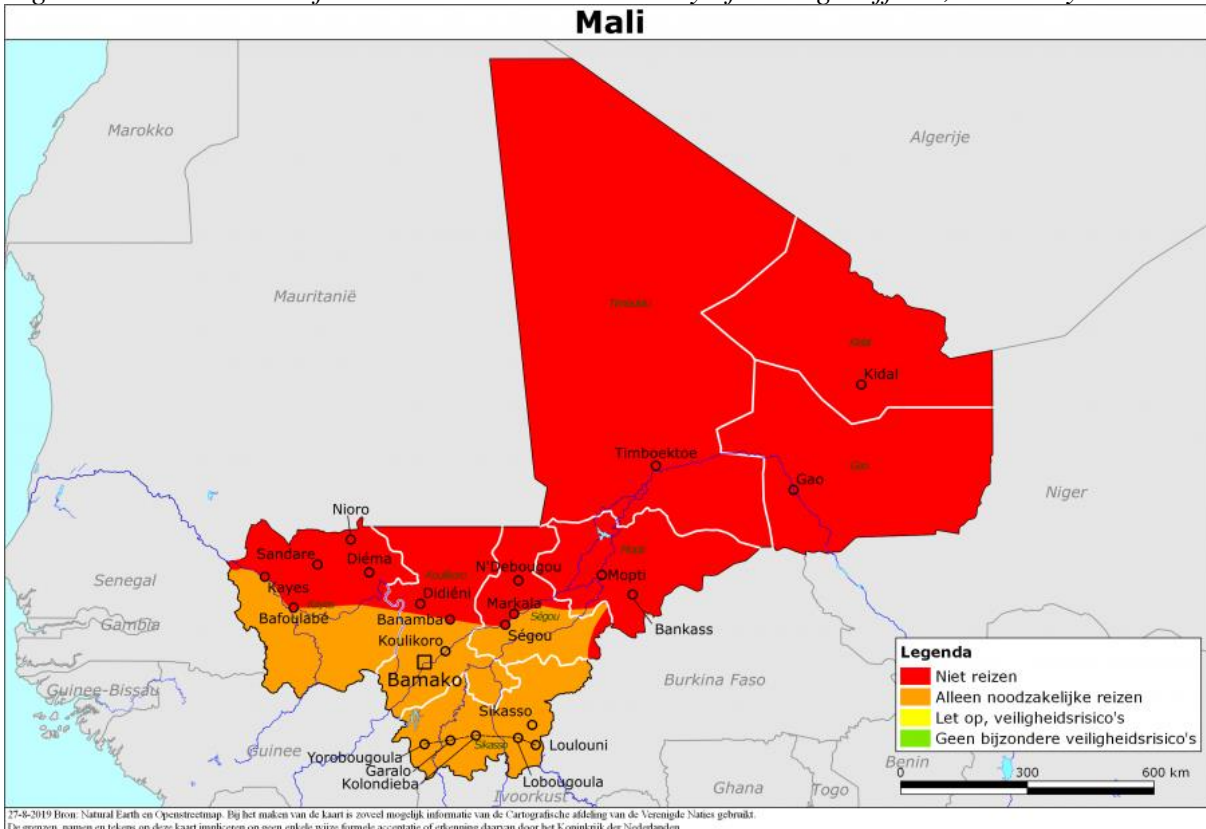
Mali's first president, Modibo Keita, sought ties to the Communist bloc and attempted to establish a state-run economy. These early years of political radicalism ended with the 1968 coup, in which Lieutenant Moussa Traoré took over the presidency and oversaw a slow transition to civilian rule and more democratic governance. From the 1990s, Mali experienced the pressures of desertification and drought, as well as growing demands for democratisation. The 1991 protests culminated in a new military coup that, under interim President Touré, transferred power to the newly elected Alpha Konaré in 1992. These developments, however, were increasingly overshadowed by economic problems as well as violent uprisings in northern Mali, which escalated to another military coup and civil war in 2012. The anti-government rebels included Tuareg groups as well as Islamic insurgents (e.g. AQIM), bolstered by arms and fighters returning from the battlefields of the 2011

revolt in Libya that made an end to the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, but resulted in political and military chaos, with major implications for neighbouring countries like Mali. International efforts at stabilisation, including AFISMA and MINUSMA operations, have had limited success, and the situation remains volatile.

### Conflict, state fragility, and travel risks

Since the civil war started in January 2012, the security situation in Mali has consistently been regarded as dangerous. During the first period only the northern parts of Mali were thought to be insecure for travellers, but currently a large part of the country is seen as a 'red area' by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('don't travel') and the other parts of the country, including the area of Bamako, as an orange zone ('only travel if it is really necessary').

Figure 2: Travel advice from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 2020



Source: <https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/landen/mali/reizen/reisadvies>

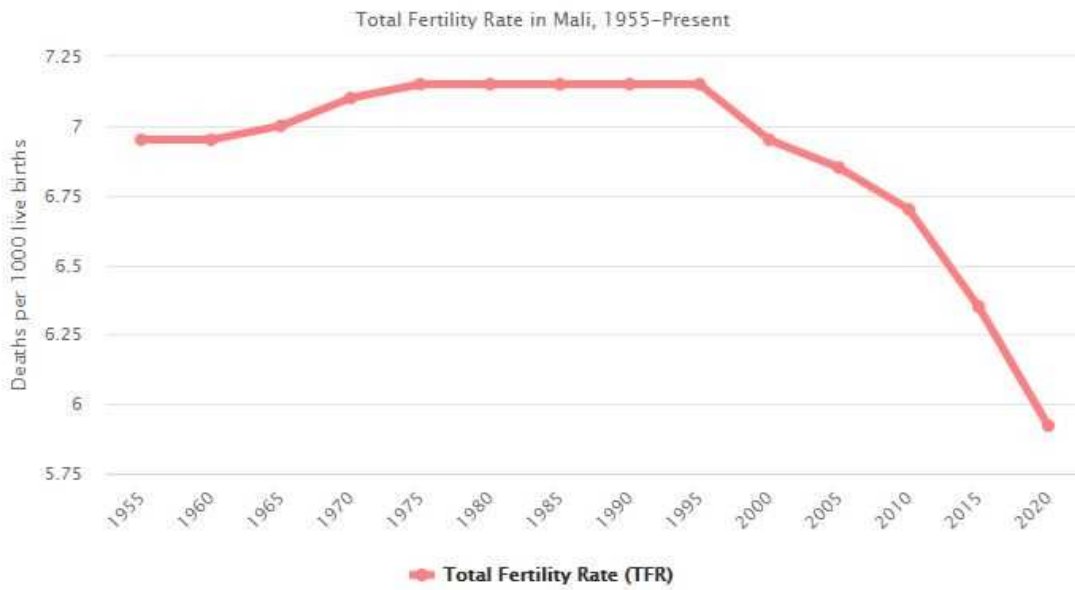
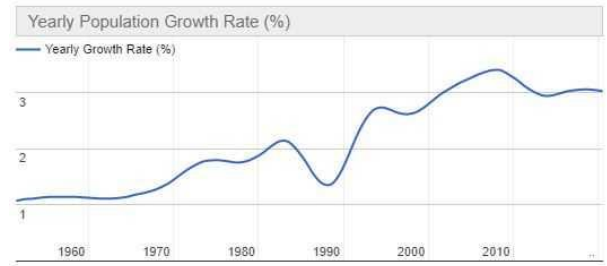
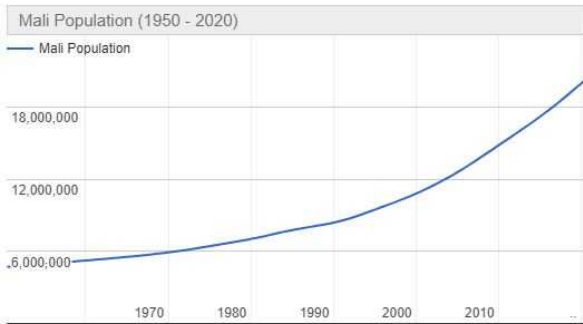
The State Fragility Index of the Fund for Peace puts Mali in the 'alert' category, with a score of 94.5 points out of a negative maximum of 120.0 points (twelve variables, with a maximum negative score of 10.0 each) (<https://fundforpeace.org/2019/04/10/fragile-states-index-2019/>). Mali scores in the range of 'extreme danger' for the variables external interventions and the quality of the security apparatus, and in the 'danger' zone for variables such as the quality of public services, refugees and internally displaced people, demographic pressures, human flight and brain drain, and group grievances. Mali has relatively benign scores for variables such as factionalised elites, and state legitimacy (but only if you look at the south of the country, we assume).

### Demography

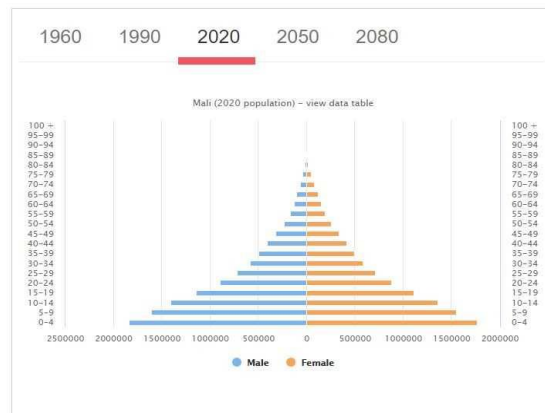
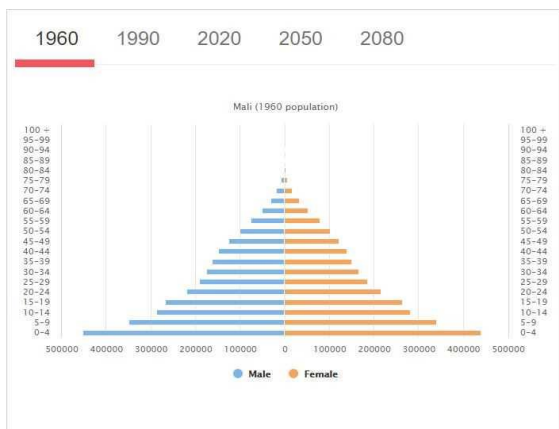
Mali's population almost quadrupled between 1960 and 2020, mostly through high fertility rates and longer

life expectancy for both males and females (also because of rapidly improving child and infant mortality figures). Population growth figures were below two percent per year in the decades before 1985 and around 1990 (mainly as a result of high outmigration), and beyond three percent per year after 2005. Currently the average growth rate is around 3.0 percent per year. Total fertility was around 7.0 per woman in 1960, and increased to above 7.0 between 1965 and 1995, after which a demographic transition started to take place, with currently 5.9 births per average Malian woman during her lifetime. As a result of these demographic developments Mali had and has an extremely skewed population pyramid, with many more young people, than adults and elderly people. The median age changed from 19.5 years old in 1960, to only 16.0 years old in 2015 and currently 16.3 years old, one of the lowest figures in the world. Urbanization is on the increase, but the majority of the Malian people is still rural.

# ASCL Infosheet 37/2020



Source: Worldometers



Source: Worldometers

**Demographic statistics, Mali as a whole, 1960 and 2020**

	1960	2020
Population	5.3 million	20.3 million
Fertility rate	7.0 children per woman	5.9 children per woman
Life expectancy (males)	27.8 years	59.7 years
Idem (females)	29.5 years	61.4 years
Median age	19.5 years	16.3 years
Infant mortality (< 1 yr)	207/1000	57/1000
Under-5 mortality	408/1000	92/1000
Urbanization rate	11%	44%
Urban population	0.6 million	8.9 million
Rural population	4.7 million	11.3 million

Source: Worldometers

**Human Development Index, Mali as a whole, 1990 and 2017**

Human Development Index data exist since 1990, with annual UNDP updates. Mali's Human Development Index started at a level of .232. The HDI consists of a health index, an income index and an education index, while UNDP also provides data about life expectancy, and some other variables. Between 1990 and 2017 total HDI increased with .194, to a level of .426. Between 1990 and 2017 Mali's population increased from 8.8 million people to 18.5 million people. Particularly the education index improved, but is still at a low level. The health index and life expectancy improved as well, but

the income index only a little bit. According to the UNDP the average income per capita (in 2011 US\$, PPP) increased from 1,271 \$/capita to 1,964 \$/capita. The education improvements can be illustrated by the fact that six-year olds could only be expected to spend 2.1 years in school in 1990, and that increased to 7.7 years in school in 2017 (but for boys the figures are probably much better than for girls). For adults of 25 years and above, the average number of years they have spent in school was only 0.7 in 1990 and improved to 2.3 in 2017, but that is still very low for African, and certainly for world standards.

**Mali: HDI composition, and data for 1990 and 2017**

	1990	2017	2017/1990
Health Index	396	592	X 1.5
Income Index	384	450	X 1.2
Education Index	82	291	X 3.5
Life Expectancy	45.7	58.5	X 1.3
Total HDI index	232	426	1.8

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/>; HDI x 1000.

**Trade statistics, Mali exports and imports, 2017**

In 2017 Mali exported products for a total value of 2.31 billion \$, but imported for a total value of 4.56 billion \$

(mostly from Senegal, China, Côte d'Ivoire, France and the Netherlands, in that order).

The most important export products and most important export destination in 2017 were:

Main export products (value in \$ million)		Main export destinations (value in \$ million)	
Gold	1,440	South Africa	780
Prepared cotton	131	Switzerland	578
Raw cotton	119	India	137
Bovine	109	Burkina Faso	110
Sheep and goats	79	Bangladesh	111

Source: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/mli>

### Protected areas and Forests

In 2017 10 million hectares were protected areas, which is 8% of Mali's total area

(<https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/ML>).

There are four national parks, and 26 other protected areas. Other areas are mainly unprotected forests, and

areas for livestock, crop cultivation, hunting and gathering. Forest cover was approximately 6.7 million hectares in 1990, or 5.5% of Mali's land area, and less than 4.6 million hectares in 2016, 4.6% of Mali's land area (derived from

<https://tradingeconomics.com/mali/forest-area-percent-of-land-area-wb-data.html>)

### Agricultural Mali

Crop Area (in 1000 hectares), and total production (in 1000 tonnes), 1961 and 2018

	1961		2018		2018/1961	
	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.
Millet	740	476	2158	1840	X 2.9	X 3.9
Sorghum	500	352	1347	1470	X 2.7	X 4.2
Maize	90	70	1129	3625	X 12.5	X 51.8
Rice (paddy)	182	185	970	3168	X 5.3	X 17.1
Seed cotton	43	12	578	750	X 13.4	X 62.5
Vegetables	36	145	379	3497	X 10.5	X 24.1
Groundnuts	175	110	328	312	X 1.9	X 2.8
Cow peas	100	20	284	158	X 2.8	X 7.9
Fruits	18	144	135	1908	X 7.5	X 13.3
Other crops (area)	90		148		X 1.6	
Total crop area	1974		7456		X 3.8	

2018/1961: red = 2018 is below 1961; green: 2018 is more than 3.6 times the 1961 figures (that is: more than population increase in Mali between 1961 and 2018); black: in-between.

Source: Faostat data. Vegetables include potatoes, sweet potatoes, sugarbeets and sugarcane, but exclude cow peas, which is a separate category. Fruits include bananas.

Mali's land area is 122 million hectares, and its crop area increased from 1.6% to 6.1% of its land area between 1961 and 2018. All major crop areas expanded, and most of them considerably, particularly for maize and rice, and for seed cotton, fruits and vegetables, crops for which the expanded urban areas, and an expanding middle class, created a major growth in demand, but also export crops increased considerably. Crop yields also increased for all major crops. For grains the average yield increased from 708 kg/ha to 1796 kg/ha. As a result, the total production of almost all major food crops expanded more rapidly than Mali's population, and the same is true for most export crops, with the exception of groundnuts. As food consumption is very much dominated by grains, it can

be calculated that grain production per capita increased from a mere 208 kg/capita in 1961 to a much better 533 kg/capita in 2018. The numbers of live animals also expanded rapidly, and mostly beyond population growth numbers, with the exception of cattle. As a result Mali increased its livestock importance from 0.66 stock units per capita to 0.75 stock units per capita between 1961 and 2018. It is interesting to note that the crop and livestock improvements (as assessed by FAOSTAT) did not seem to be negatively effected by the turmoil and civil war, most of which does not seem to touch the most productive agricultural area of the country, in the south.

Livestock numbers (x 1000)

	1961	2018	2018/1961
Camels	159	1217	X 7.7
Cattle	3513	11758	X 3.3
Chicken	10050	47255	X 4.7
Goats	4188	25225	X 6.0
Pigs	9	85	X 9.4
Sheep	4000	18270	X 4.6
Livestock units	3539	14280	X 4.0

Source: Faostat data; 1 livestock unit = based on 0.7 cattle; 0.1 goats/sheep/pigs; 0.01 chicken.

**International migration**

In 2015 1,006,000 people who were born in Mali lived outside the country (5% of Mali’s population inside and outside the country), of which 90% elsewhere in Africa (mainly neighbouring Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria, Niger, Guinea, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Senegal (in that order), but also Gabon and Republic of the Congo), and 10% outside Africa (0.6% of Mali’s total population: mainly in France, but also in Spain, and Italy; UN

Migration report 2015). In 2017 Mali had around 384,000 immigrants, mainly from neighbouring countries, and from D.R. Congo (UN Migration Report 2017). Between 1990 and 2017 there has been a steady increase of the immigrant stock, starting with 161,000 in 1990, and continuing after the start of the civil war in 2012. Mali’s crisis did not (yet) result in major refugee and return movements to neighbouring countries and beyond.

**Urban Mali**

Mali is becoming an urban country, with currently 44% of its population living in cities, while this was only 11% in 1960. Most cities tripled between 1976 and 2020, like the population of Mali as a whole, so a lot of the urban growth also happened in many small centres, scattered

around the country. But according to the agglomeration data (<https://www.citypopulation.de/en/world/agglomerations/>), Greater Bamako must have taken a major part of this growth, with currently 3.5 million inhabitants.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mali>

Cities (in Regions)	Population in thousands of inhabitants	
	1976 (census)	2020
Bamako	419	1297 (3525)
Sikasso	46	145
Mopti	53	108
Koutiala	27	99
Segou	65	92
Gao	31	87
Kayes	49	78

Source: worldometers, and <https://www.citypopulation.de/Mali-Cities.html>


### **Regional Inequality**

Mali has nine Regions, but the statistical information provided by globaldatalab combines the regions of Gao and Kidal in the far east of the country. Total population in Mali increased 220% between 1990 and 2017, and the highest population growth was experienced (or assessed to be) in Tombouctou and Gao/Kidal, followed by Koulikoro (and particularly the peri-urban area around Bamako, the capital city of Mali), and Sikasso. Relatively slow population growth was experienced in Mopti region. If we look at the regional distribution of the human development index, and of life expectancy and the education index, it is obviously clear that Bamako has the best position. The worst position shifted from Mopti to Tombouctou for HDI as a whole, and from Ségou to Tombouctou for life expectancy. The

education situation has always been worst in Mopti. In the arid areas in the northeast, Tombouctou, Kidal, and Gao (traditionally centres of Islamic learning), the education situation has always been better than in Mopti. However, Tombouctou experienced the least improvement during the 1990-2017 period. In total, however, inequality levels for subregional HDI as a whole were stable, for the education index improved, and for life expectancy deteriorated. And the people in Tombouctou (many more in 2017 than in 1990) had a lot to complain about relative neglect, one of the reasons for their revolt against the central authorities since early 2012.



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Map	Region / Région	Population x 1000		'17/ '90
		1990	2017	
	1 = Bamako	1014	2067	X 2.0
	2 = Kayes	1365	2440	X 1.8
	3 = Koulikoro	1437	3880	X 2.7
	4 = Sikasso	1612	4294	X 2.7
	5 = Ségou	1540	3511	X 2.3
	6 = Mopti	1391	2308	X 1.7
	7 = Tombouctou	51	727	X 14.3
	8 = Gao & Kidal	90	697	X 7.7
	Total	8500	18500	X 2.2

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org/shdi>, map: wikipedia

Region	Subregional HDI			Life expectancy			Education index		
	1990	2017	17/90	1990	2017	17/90	1990	2017	17/90
1	365	615	1.7	50.2	63.6	1.3	219	593	2.7
2	217	386	1.8	45.6	59.3	1.3	70	217	3.1
3	221	437	2.0	46.1	59.3	1.3	72	313	4.3
4	201	410	2.0	46.1	56.9	1.2	52	276	5.3
5	213	387	1.8	45.5	57.4	1.3	64	236	3.7
6	179	335	1.9	46.2	58.7	1.3	41	158	3.9
7	265	314	1.2	45.9	49.3	1.1	128	195	1.5
8	291	384	1.3	46.7	54.8	1.2	152	280	1.8
Mali	232	426	1.8	45.7	58.5	1.3	82	291	3.5
Ineq	2.0	2.0		1.1	1.3		5.3	3.7	

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org/shdi>; Indexes: x1000 ; Ineq = Inequality: high/low

### Further Reading

Country Portal: <http://countryportal.ascleiden.nl/Mali>

Selected publications: <https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/africa-2020-further-reading#Mali>



Reflecting on  
60 years  
of independence



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[www.ascleiden.nl/africa2020](http://www.ascleiden.nl/africa2020)

Country Information: Ton Dietz, David Ehrhardt and Fenneken Veldkamp.

Country Portal: Harro Westra

Selected publications: Germa Seuren

African Studies Centre Leiden, March 2020