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Beyond institutional blueprints: hybrid security provision and democratic practice in Mali

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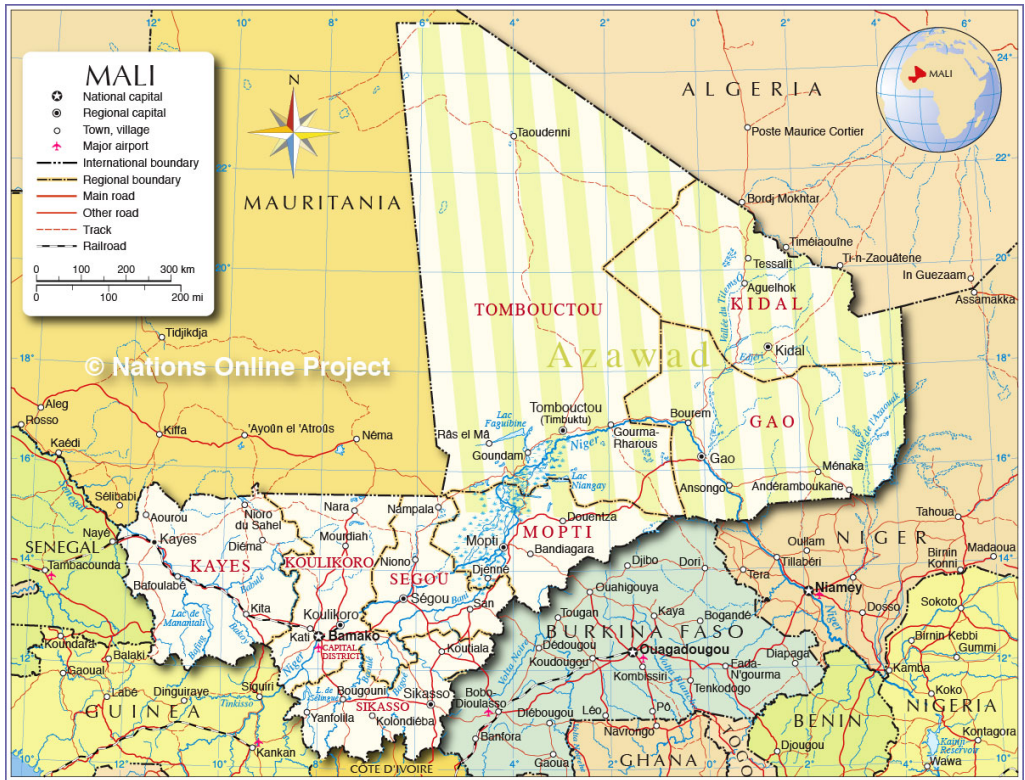


Figure 1: Map of Mali (© UN)

Chapter 1

Introduction

Theoretical and operational framework. Research design and methods.

From an historical perspective there is nothing particular about 'state weakness' in Africa. The state is not the only, not the historical and not the most likely form for the exercise of power.

Ulf Engel and Andreas Mehler (2005)
Governance in Africa's New Violent Social Spaces

In all too many cases, democratisation has been a matter of replacing a self-appointed dictator with an elected one.

Claude Aké (2000)
The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa

During 2012, Malian citizens encountered the logic of Murphy's Law in a most dramatic way as an unprecedented series of tragic events unfolded. A secessionist rebellion revived in northern Mali, disgruntled soldiers ousted President Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) while an opaque alliance of drug smugglers, radical Islamists and armed groups took control over almost two thirds of the national territory. The Malian state has struggled to regain a foothold ever since. By 2018, Malian state expenditure reached a mere 20 per cent of the national territory.¹ In the northern and central regions, state authority remained largely confined to isolated urban pockets. A wide variety of other power poles, including traditional and religious leaders, local militias, armed groups, international military actors, terrorist groups and wealthy smugglers exerted their authority across parts of the vast rural areas.

The 2012 military coup equally exposed widespread popular frustration with the political elites and displayed major challenges related to the democratic regime. In the early 1990s, citizens took to the streets to protest against one-party rule despite violent responses and fierce repression by state forces. This time around, there was no such popular outcry. In 2012, Malian citizens refrained from defending their democratically elected President. On the contrary, a survey conducted in the capital city, Bamako, showed that a majority of residents actually supported the military coup that ousted President Touré.² Moreover, less than a third of the electorate was satisfied with the way democracy functioned in 2012.³ Although most citizens

¹ Craven-Matthews, C. and Englebort, P. (2018) 'A Potemkin State in the Sahel? The Empirical and the Fictional in Malian State Reconstruction' *African Security* (11)1: 1-31, p.14.

² Whitehouse, B. (2012) 'Bamako's Lone Pollster Strikes Again', 1 June 2012.

³ Afrobarometer 'Mali Country Data', available at: www.afrobarometer.org.

still preferred democracy to authoritarian regime-types, this share dropped by ten percentage points between 2008 and 2012. Just over half of the population rejected military rule.⁴

The dramatic collapse of both state authority and democracy sharply contrasted with Mali's international reputation as a relatively stable anchor in a troubled region and a beacon of democracy on the African continent. That same year, US Secretary of State Clinton contended:

By most indicators, Mali was on the right path until a cadre of soldiers seized power a little more than a month before national elections were scheduled to be held.⁵

During an official state visit to the Netherlands months before the crisis erupted, President Touré emphasised that Malian democracy provided a vanguard for stability and strong checks and balances. In 2007, Mali hosted the prestigious Community of Democracies, a worldwide network of more than 100 democratic countries. Mali's reputation as a posterchild for democracy was rooted in the exemplary transition that the country witnessed in the early 1990s. Then Lieutenant Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré earned his nickname as a "soldier of democracy" by guiding the country to multi-party democracy after leading a military coup that ended almost 25 years of authoritarian rule. The political space opened up and associational life truly blossomed. The number of civil society organisations, media outlets, political parties and religious associations rapidly increased while Mali's democratic leaders respected both civic and political rights. During previous decades of authoritarian and predatory rule, the state merely served narrow elitist interests. The transition generated a sense of optimism that democracy would enhance state performance in the public interest.

This positive outlook reflected a much broader trend at the time. Strong popular demand for democratisation pushed and shaped many democratic transitions around the world.⁶ This third wave of democratisation, as Huntington famously characterised it, spread-out over Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere.⁷ A wind of change blew away one authoritarian regime after the other. Some scholars even celebrated the victory of liberal democracy as the final form of government of all nations, marking "the end of history."⁸ Thus, when Malian state

⁴ Dulani, B. (2014) 'Malian Democracy Recovering: Military Rule Still Admired', Afrobarometer (Policy Paper, No.12).

⁵ Clinton, H.R. (2012), 'Remarks on Building Sustainable Partnerships in Africa', 1 August 2012, University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal.

⁶ Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N. (1997) *Democratic Experiments in Africa. Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁷ Young, C. (1999) 'The Third Wave of Democratisation in Africa: Ambiguities and Contradictions', in: Joseph, R. *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, Boulder, Co and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

⁸ Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Penguin Books.

authority and democracy collapsed barely twenty years down the line, scholars and policymakers alike tried to understand what had gone wrong. A rapidly expanding body of literature offered detailed accounts of actual events on the ground⁹ and focused, amongst others: on the revived rebellion and the anchoring of terrorist organisations in northern Mali;¹⁰ the high-value smuggling economy;¹¹ the downfall of Colonel Gadhafi in Libya¹² and wider regional dynamics;¹³ the limited potential of centralised statehood in a vast geographical but poor economic context;¹⁴ major governance challenges;¹⁵ or the support provided by international donors to domestically contested state institutions and elites.¹⁶

Several scholars compellingly demonstrated that the developments in Mali reflected nothing less than a fundamental departure from the postcolonial order in which the state constituted the hierarchically dominant power pole in society.¹⁷ In the Malian context, non-state institutions increasingly operated as “horizontal contemporaries of the organs of the state.”¹⁸ In the absence of a clear hegemonic force, a much more heterogeneous “heterarchical political order” emerged and prevailed.¹⁹ Indeed, the classical notion of a state that obtained a monopoly on the legitimate use of force seemed ever further away as armed groups, communal militias, international military actors, wealthy traffickers, vigilant youth groups, bandits, terrorist groups firmly instituted their authority across Malian territory.

However, the functioning of Malian democracy and its impact on state formation (and deformation) in that period between the heydays of democracy in the early 1990s and

⁹ Lecocq, B. and Mann, G. (eds.) (2013) ‘The Blind and the Hippopotamus: A Multivocal Analysis of the Current Political Crisis in the Divided Republic of Mali’, *Review of African Political Economy* (40)137: 343-357; Whitehouse, B. (2012) ‘What Went Wrong in Mali?’, *London Review of Books*, (34)16: 17-18;

¹⁰ Siegel, P.C. (2013) ‘AQIM’s Playbook in Mali’, *CTC Sentinel*, (6)3: 9-11; Daniel, S. (2012) ‘*AQMI al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique, l’industrie de l’enlèvement*’, Fayard: France; Boeke, S. (2016) ‘Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism, Insurgency, or Organized Crime?’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27(5) 914-936.

¹¹ Lacher, W. (2012) *Organised Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Carnegie Paper); Sidibe, K. (2012) ‘Criminal Networks and Conflict-resolution Mechanisms in Northern Mali’, *IDS Bulletin* (43)4: 74-88.

¹² March, B. (2017) ‘Brothers Came Back with Weapons: The Effects of Arms Proliferation from Libya’, *PRISM*, 6(4): 79-96.

¹³ Whitehouse, B. and Strazari, F. (2015) ‘Introduction: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa’, *African Security* (8)4: 213-226.

¹⁴ Craven-Matthews, C. and Englebert, P. (2018).

¹⁵ ICG (2014) ‘Mali: Reform or Relapse’, 10 January 2014 (Africa report No. 210).

¹⁶ Bergamaschi, I. (2014) ‘The Fall of a Donor Darling: The Role of Aid in Mali’s Crisis’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 52(3), 347-378; Van de Walle, N. (2012) ‘Foreign Aid in Dangerous Places: The Donors and Mali’s Democracy’, United Nations University (Working Paper No. 2012/61).

¹⁷ Hüskén, T. and Klute, G. (2015) ‘Political Orders in the Making: Emerging Forms of Political Organization from Libya to Northern Mali’, *African Security*, (8)4: 320-337; Whitehouse, B. and Strazari, F. (2015) .

¹⁸ Ferguson, J. (2004) ‘Power Topographies’, in: D. Nugent and J. Vincent (eds.) *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, pp. 283-399, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; Ferguson, J. and Gupta, A. (2002) ‘Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality’, *American Ethnologist*, 29(4): 981-1002.

¹⁹ Hüskén, T. and Klute, G. (2015), p.324.

democracy's decay in 2012, received less attention in the literature. This thesis contributes to filling that void by analysing how prominent democratic institutions affected state legitimacy in the context of Mali's emerging heterarchical political order. It thereby focuses on three key pillars that underpin democracy's central proposition of legitimising state institutions: political participation, representation and accountability. The analysis provided in this thesis is limited to the performance of political parties (and the party system), the Malian legislature and local democratic institutions in shaping these patterns of political participation, representation and accountability. This choice stems from the fact that this thesis is developed based on a set of – considerably extended and reworked – individual academic publications focused on these specific democratic institutions. Hence, this thesis most certainly does not offer a comprehensive analysis of Malian democracy in the run-up to the 2012 crisis and its impact on state legitimacy. It rather provides an in-depth analysis of a limited number of influential components thereof.

The thesis consists of three main sections: (1) the first part provides a historical analysis of the gradual emergence of Mali's heterarchical political order well before the 2012 crisis; (2) the second and core section examines the performance of several key democratic institutions and their impact upon state legitimacy in the years preceding the 2012 coup; while (3) the third and final part examines the anchoring of Mali's heterarchical order in the aftermath of the crisis.

Section 1.2. below presents the overarching research question and ensuing sub-questions that guided this thesis in more detail. It also clarifies the conceptual and operational framework. First, however, the next section introduces the theoretical outline of this thesis. It clarifies the analytical shift away from a state-centred hierarchical political order towards the more diffused conceptualisation of a heterarchical order. Moreover, it introduces the theoretical foundations and context in which democratisation was expected to boost state legitimacy.

1.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1.1. From a hierarchical to a heterarchical political order

State-centred institutional perspectives

Many European states managed to expand their influence over other power poles in society and gradually emerged as the principal and superior institutional locus of authority. This centrality and supremacy of the state was closely linked to the idea of political sovereignty.²⁰ In 1648, the treaty of Westphalia formally established the principle of territorial delimitation of state authority. While the scope of religious authorities diminished, the internal sovereignty of states increased as they obtained the right to rule in an exclusive manner over specific territories.²¹ In this prevailing understanding of the concept, sovereignty referred,

[n]ot to just any political authority but to the authority of states and not just any form of state authority, but superior or exclusive, though not necessarily unrestricted, authority.²²

Sovereignty thereby avoided an infinite regress or a deadlock between competing authorities. It constituted the distinguishing characteristic of the state in this classical – and still prevailing – analytical stance.²³ Throughout the eighteenth century, numerous European states further extended their influence in society and affected the lives of ordinary citizens in a very direct manner. The sharp rise of per capita tax revenues during the seventeenth and especially eighteenth centuries attested hereto.²⁴ The state managed to expand its dominance over society through a body of administrative, legal, extractive and coercive organisations.²⁵ It underpinned its supreme authority, as Weber and his academic followers noted, with a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and the ability to extract revenues and govern expenditures through a professional “rational-legal” bureaucracy.

²⁰ The term sovereignty is derived from the Latin word *superanus*, meaning supreme.

²¹ See the *Max Planck Encyclopedia of International Law* for an elaborate historical overview, available at: <https://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1472>.

²² Krehof, B. (2008) ‘Legitimate Political Authority and Sovereignty: Why States Cannot be the Whole Story’, *Res Publica*, 14: 283-297.

²³ Mampilly, Z. (2003) ‘Parcellized Sovereignty: The State, Non-State Actors, and the Politics of Conflict in Africa’, *Ufahamu*, (30)1: 15-53.

²⁴ Karaman, K., and Pamuk, S. (2013) ‘Different Paths to the Modern State in Europe: The Interaction Between Warfare, Economic Structure, and Political Regime’, *American Political Science Review*, 107(3): 603-626.

²⁵ Evans, P.B., Rueschemeyer, D. and Skocpol, T. (eds.) (1985) *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Migdal, J.S. (2001) *State in Society: Studying how States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Giddens defined the modern state in terms of a:

[p]olitical apparatus – governmental institutions, such as a court, parliament, or congress, plus civil service officials – ruling over a given territory, whose authority is backed by a legal system and the capacity to use force to implement its policies.²⁶

These formal rules and regulations of the state applied to all citizens, including state representatives.²⁷ The hierarchically superior state thus obtained a considerable level of autonomy from society and functioned based on impersonal and technocratic lines. State-society and public-private spheres were functionally distinct.

The “Westphalian” state thus obtained a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in a well-defined territorial area and emerged as one of the central conceptual building blocks of classical political science, international relations and law. The state was separated from society in an analytical sense and placed in a hierarchical position “above” society.

These ideal-type notions equally emerged as a normative framework to assess the performance of states around the world. They set the norm against which many states were labelled as “weak” or “fragile” and some received support through internationally sponsored state-building initiatives in order to modernise into well-functioning states.

Mamdani (1997) fiercely criticised these labels as they sought to “understand the state in Africa through an analogy rather than through its own history.”²⁸ Indeed, influential historians such as Cooper (2002) and Ellis (2011) contended that this practice reflected a widespread pattern of portraying developments on the African continent in terms of “a lack of”, “a failure to” or “a distortion of.”²⁹ In other words, defining developments in terms of deficiencies prompted an analysis of what *was not* happening rather than focusing on what *was* actually occurring across the African continent. The normative stance also implicitly assumed that all states eventually emerged into the prototype Westphalian state. Gupta (1995) challenged this modernisation discourse and the applicability of the Westphalian conceptual toolkit and state-centred analytical perspectives for grasping statehood practices beyond the OECD world.³⁰

²⁶ Quotation from Barnett, M. (2006) ‘Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States after War’, *International Security*, 30(4): 87-112, p.91.

²⁷ Schlichte, K. (ed.) (2005) *The Dynamics of States: The Formation and Crises of State Dominance*, London and New York: Routledge.

²⁸ Mampilly, Z. (2003), p.22.

²⁹ Ellis, S. (2011) *Season of Rains: Africa in the World*, London: C. Hurst & Co.; Cooper, F. 2002. *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁰ Gupta, A. (1995) ‘Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State’, *American Ethnologist*, (22)2: 375-402, pp. 376-378.

These authors argued that processes of state formation (and deformation) were open-ended processes that varied across space and time. Politics did not progress along some single road towards modernity. Studying the historical trajectories of statehood was therefore critical.

Historical trajectories of statehood

This Malian case study contributes to a growing body of literature that challenges the universal validity of a state-centred perspective that constituted “the bedrock of the study of comparative politics since at least the beginning of the twentieth century.”³¹ Chapter 2 provides an historical overview of the gradual emergence of a heterarchical political order in Mali. This model sharply contrasts with ideal notions of the hierarchically supreme Westphalian state presented here above. This section provides a number of general observations about historical state formation processes across the African continent – in all its diversity – that emerge from the literature. The next chapter assesses the specificities of the Malian case in more detail.

First, geographical, economic, environmental and sociocultural factors all significantly affected the historical trajectory of state formation and deformation across the African continent. The challenging physical environment often made it very costly to extend authority into the rural hinterland. Herbst (2000) noted that the abundance of land combined with low population density prompted a form of statehood that prioritised control over people instead of land.³² State authority was concentrated in populated centres but decreased towards the peripheries. High levels of mobility of both goods and people further constrained the rise of centralised polities.³³ The Sahel-Sahara region constituted a geographical zone where it proved to be particularly challenging to sustain clear-cut boundaries or centralised sovereign entities.³⁴

Decentralised forms of authority thus prevailed across the African continent. Although vast empires emerged across Northwest Africa, such as the Ghana (originating in the fourth or fifth century), Mali (thirteenth century), Songhai (fifteenth century), Asante (seventeenth–late nineteenth century) and Maacina empires (nineteenth century), local power holders maintained a large degree of autonomy under these structures. Warner (1999) contended that the Asante

³¹ Migdal, J.S. (2001) *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³² Herbst, J. (2000) ‘*States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*’, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

³³ Mbembe, A. (2000) ‘At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa’, *Public Culture*, 12 (1): 259-284; Garcia, R. V. and Spitz, P. (1986) *The Roots of Catastrophe: The 1972 Case History*, vol. 3, London: Pergamon Press; Boesen, E. Marfaing, L. and De Bruijn, M. (2014) ‘Nomadism and Mobility in the Sahara-Sahel: Introduction’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 48(1): 1-12.

³⁴ Raineri, L. and Strazzari, F. (2015) ‘State, Secession, and Jihad: The Micropolitical Economy of Conflict in Northern Mali’, *African Security*, (8)4: 249-271.

regime developed bureaucratic structures similar to those encountered on the European continent. Yet, Hopkins (2000) nuanced this view based on an extensive review of the (historical) literature.³⁵ He emphasised the autonomy of the federal Asante states and the personalised, rather than bureaucratized, form of rule. The degree of local autonomy under the Maacina Empire was somewhat limited but the Mali Empire, encompassing over 400 cities, was bound together in a very loose manner.³⁶ Similarly, in reference to the Tuareg hegemony over northern Mali in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Olivier de Sardan (2012) observed

[...] a very particular kind of hegemony. It was neither centralised nor uniform, and was devoid of a common political ambition, of the state or imperial type. No administration, even indirect, of the regions and population subject to this hegemony was implemented.³⁷

The role of the colonial period in African history is a topic widely studied and vigorously debated. It is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of this vast academic field of interest and the perspectives advanced. Nevertheless, a number of observations regarding colonialism and state formation are critical by way of introduction.

The demarcation of state boundaries by colonial powers, regardless of existing socio-political and cultural ties, continued to affect state formation processes after independence. This certainly proved to be the case in Mali, where several communities in the northern regions opposed their inclusion into the colonial state boundaries in the run-up to independence, as illustrated in the next chapter. State building efforts instigated by European powers in the colonial territories fundamentally differed from the state formation trajectories in their home countries. Not only because of the very different objectives that guided the efforts undertaken by colonial forces across the African continent, but also as a result of the limited means they made available to this end. The colonial project was not about state building per se. Colonialism was a process of political competition between European powers who strived for power in Europe and elsewhere. Moreover, colonial institutions aimed to extract resources and maximise profits at minimum costs.

³⁵ Warner, J. (1999) 'The Political Economy of "Quasi-Statehood" and the Demise of 19th-Century African Politics', *Review of International Studies*, 25(2): 233-255; Hopkins, A.G. (2000), 'Quasi-States, Weak States and the Partition of Africa.', *Review of International Studies*, 26(2): 311-320.

³⁶ Jansen, J. (1995) *De Draaiende Put. Een Studie naar de Relatie tussen het Sunjata-epos en de Samenleving in de Haut-Niger (Mali)*, Leiden: Onderzoeksschool CNWS.

³⁷ Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (2013) 'The Tuareg Question in Mali Today', *Cahiers du Mapinduzi*, 3(1) 25-39, p. 30.

The colonial administration therefore concentrated its presence in areas of economic interest. The state bureaucracy did not reach far out or deep into the hinterlands of the African continent.³⁸ An important legacy of the colonial period, Mandani (1996) noted, was the “bifurcated nature” of the state that ensued from the very different types of rule between urban and rural areas:

Debated as alternative models of controlling natives in the early colonial period, direct and indirect rule actually evolved into complementary ways of native control. Direct rule was the form of urban civil power. It was about the exclusion of natives from civil freedoms guaranteed to citizens in civil society. Indirect rule, however, signified a rural tribal authority. It was about incorporating natives into a state enforced customary order.³⁹

Indeed, colonial states relied heavily on informal non-state authorities to administer the rural areas and to control vast territories at minimal costs. The degree of autonomy of these local leaders vis-à-vis the colonial forces differed from one place to the other. Yet, the impact of this system of indirect rule was felt almost everywhere. The position of local customary chiefs altered into that of an intermediary role between people at the local level and a superior colonial authority. Local chiefs expanded their regional authority as a result of their connections to the state administration. Colonial authorities collaborated with specific local chiefs and factional leaders to the detriment of others, thereby evoking tensions and altering local power balances.

The colonial state administration and francophone education sector further enhanced the ‘bifurcated’ character of statehood. Those small and predominantly urban sections in society educated in French and obtaining positions in the colonial administration would come to play a leading role in the postcolonial state after independence. The urban-rural divide developed into one of the principal cleavages in political, economic and socio-cultural terms.

As the decolonisation process unfolded, new African states emerged that rapidly obtained international recognition. In this context, Herbst (1996) contended:

[The] United Nations grant of sovereignty by administrative fiat, simply because a country had achieved independence, was a revolutionary departure from traditional

³⁸ Frankema, E. and Van Waijenburg, M. (2013) ‘Endogenous Colonial Institutions: Lessons from Fiscal Capacity Building in British and French Africa, 1880-1940’, Lund: Lund University, Department of Economic History (African Economic History Working Papers, No.11).

³⁹ Mamdani, M. (1996) *Citizen and Subject*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p.18.

practices whereby sovereignty had to be earned. [...] The notion that Africa was ever composed of sovereign states classically defined as having a monopoly on force in the territory across their boundaries is false.⁴⁰

The position that sovereignty was not necessarily “earned” in the case of many African countries did not do justice to the courageous independence struggle and the sacrifices many people made. Moreover, Brown (2013) aptly nuanced strong propositions about African state sovereignty by distinguishing sovereignty “rights” and “authority”.⁴¹ The first related to the *claims* of a state to rule over a given country and the latter to its *ability* to act and to control particular outcomes across its territory. He underlined that sovereignty rights of African states mattered. International donors, for example, could not simply bypass the African state and their governments. Nevertheless, state authority and the ability to implement policies was indeed highly restricted. At independence, many African states obtained “legal sovereignty”, referring to their right to external non-interference and their official position as principal internal authority. Yet, their “political sovereignty”, in terms of their ability to actually satisfy such claims was limited. Indeed, the external recognition of statehood at independence had “little or nothing to do with how effective, strong or legitimate a particular type of local statehood” was.⁴² Many non-state actors continued to play a major – and sometimes leading role – in shaping statehood practices in interaction with or besides the state. In the context of such hybrid political orders, conceptual boundaries between state and society, formal and informal institutions and the public and private sphere remained highly blurred, as the next section further illustrates.

Hybrid political orders

Independence gave birth to African states who, in many cases, depended on non-state actors to enforce authority and implement policies. The state “had to share authority, legitimacy and capacity with other structures.”⁴³ Gupta (1995) contended that the “conventional distinction between state and society, on which such a large portion of the scholarship on the state is based,” needed to be re-examined as boundaries between the categories were fundamentally blurred.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Herbst, J. (1996) ‘Responding to State Failure in Africa’, *International Security*, 21(3), 120-144, p. 121.

⁴¹ Brown, W. (2012) ‘Sovereignty Matters: Africa, Donors, and the Aid Relationship’, *African Affairs*, 112(447): 262-282, p. 268.

⁴² Doornbos, M. (2010) ‘Researching African Statehood Dynamics: Negotiability and Its Limits’, *Development and Change* 41(4): 747-769, p. 758.

⁴³ Boege, V., Brown, A., Clements, K. and Nolan, A. (2008) *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of ‘Fragility’*, Berlin: Berghoff Foundation, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Gupta, A. (1995), p. 376.

Institutions of public authority operated in the “twilight between the state and society.”⁴⁵ In their edited volume, Bellagamba and Klute (2008) demonstrated that no single institution exercised domination across the African continent and illustrated that “hybrid governance practices” prevailed. “The state within society only materialises through constant confrontations with other power poles.”⁴⁶ Likewise, Hagmann and Péclard (2010) emphasised the impact of multiple power poles “that exist within, at the interface, and outside of the bureaucratic apparatus” upon actual governance practices.⁴⁷ Statehood was thus “negotiated” in constant interactions between state and non-state institutions, constructively reinforcing one another, in some cases, or being in outright competition in others.⁴⁸ Public authority was thereby (re)conceptualised as a relational force that was not restricted to the confines of the state.⁴⁹

In other words, the focus on *state authority* – long taken as a normative reference for processes of statehood formation in very different contexts – evolved into *public authority* that involved both state and non-state actors. The supremacy of the state should therefore not be *a priori* assumed as “the exercise of authority is both multidimensional and multi-attributive.”⁵⁰ Moving away from a state monopoly on the use of violence, Whitehouse and Strazzari (2015) stipulated that public security provision across vast parts of the Sahel and the wider northwest African region involved several state and non-state actors.⁵¹

Beyond these *physical* and material aspects of statehood, which focused on the state as a set of institutions and practices, the *idea* of the state – how it was represented in society and how the nation was constructed – constituted important dimensions of statehood. Ruigrok (2011) underlined that the inscription of a shared history and the use of public rituals provided states with historical aura and local meaning.⁵² States constantly defined and redefined customs, symbols and rituals as national characteristics in order to underpin their national sovereignty.

⁴⁵ Lund, C. (2006), ‘Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa’, *Development and Change*, 37(4): 685-705, p. 686.

⁴⁶ Bellagamba, A. and Klute, G. (eds.), (2008) *Beside the State: Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa*, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Hagmann, T. and Péclard, D. (2010) ‘Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa’, *Development and Change*, 41: 539-562, p. 543. For an empirical illustration, see: Bierschenk, T. and Olivier de Sardan, J.P. (1997) ‘Local Powers and a Distant State in Rural Central African Republic’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35(3): 441-468.

⁴⁸ Hagmann, T. and Péclard, D. (2010); Menkhaus, K. (2008) ‘The Rise of a Mediated State in Northern Kenya: The Wajir Story and Its Implications for State-Building’, *Afrika Focus*, 21(2): 23-38.

⁴⁹ De Vries, L.A. (2012) ‘Facing Frontiers: Everyday Practice of State-Building in South Sudan’, PhD thesis, University of Wageningen, pp. 14-22.

⁵⁰ Krehoff, B. (2008), ‘Legitimate Political Authority and Sovereignty: Why States Cannot be the Whole Story’, *Res Publica* 14: 283-297, p.283.

⁵¹ Whitehouse, B. and Strazzari, F. (2015), p.222.

⁵² Ruigrok, I. (2011), ‘Negotiating Governance: Politics, Culture and the State in Post-war Angola’, PhD thesis, VU University, Amsterdam, p.55.

It was in this latter “realm of symbolic production,” as Bourdieu contended, “that the grip of the state is felt most powerfully.”⁵³ However, Doornbos (2010) underlined that “ingredients for common national myths at the level of the post-colonial African state [were] limited.”⁵⁴ Linkages in terms of shared commonalities and relevant symbols were indeed often poorly developed at the time of independence. Boege et al. (2008) noted:

In many of the newly independent states there was no history of pre-colonial unitary rule and people did not have a tradition of national identification; only few of these states shared one common language and one common culture.⁵⁵

In the case of Mali, Lecocq (2010) revealed a strong tendency of state authorities to tap into historical narratives and symbols of specific southern communities in representations of the postcolonial state and the construction of a national identity.⁵⁶ Moreover, he illustrated that Tuareg leaders constructed an alternative nation in contrast to the one promulgated by state representatives. Two, if not more, nations were thus being constructed in opposition to one another. This is not to suggest a static interpretation of nationhood or identity, which are always multi-layered and subject to processes of constant deconstruction and reconstruction. People are related to a wide variety of (imagined) communities, in the religious realm, as members of nations, local communities, factions and status groups within these communities and tied together through many other perceived bonds of affiliation. These different layers overlap or conflict with one another and their interaction changes over time.

Nonetheless, in the context of a hybrid political order, the analytical perspective moves away from *state* legitimacy towards *public* legitimacy by focusing on the interplay, in either a mutually reinforcing or undermining manner, “between actors having more or less access to more or less powerful public resources of legitimation.”⁵⁷ Multiple actors co-exist that may be competing over legitimacy from differentiated sources of power. Sears (2007) referred to Mali’s “triple heritage” of indigenous, religious and Western-democratic aspects of struggles for

⁵³ Bourdieu, P. (1994) ‘Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field’, *Sociological Theory*, 12(1): 1-18, p. 2; De Vries, L.A. (2012); Hagmann, T. and Péclard, D. (2010).

⁵⁴ Doornbos, M. (2010), p. 752.

⁵⁵ Boege, V. et al. (2008), p.5.

⁵⁶ Lecocq, B. (2010) *Disputed Desert: Decolonization, Competing Nationalisms, and Tuareg Rebellions in Northern Mali*, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, pp. 27-86.

⁵⁷ Andersen, M.S. (2012), ‘Legitimacy in State-Building: A Review of the IR Literature’, *International Political Sociology*, 6: 205-219, p.216.

legitimacy.⁵⁸ Likewise, Raineri and Strazzari (2015) demonstrated that non-state actors projected increasingly powerful alternative “geopolitical imaginaries” beyond the socio-political construct of the nation.⁵⁹ These actors advanced secessionist, jihadist or highly localised ethnic idioms and symbols in an attempt to legitimise their authority in specific territories across the northern and central regions.

Clearly, overlapping or competing webs of narratives and the construction of sociopolitical communities either in line or at odds with the nation thus characterised Mali’s hybrid political order. Scholars proposed many different ways to conceptualise the plurality of power poles engaged in instituting and legitimising their authority in the context of a hybrid political order. Mampilly (2003) referred to “parcellised sovereignty” to depict a situation in which non-state actors in areas de-linked from the power of the state (often as a result of conflict) claimed a form of sovereignty.⁶⁰ Such representation is problematic because, as noted in the above, the legal dimension of sovereignty is not parcellised or shared between state and non-state actors.

This thesis follows Hüsken and Klute (2015) and their conceptualisation of a “heterarchical” hybrid order because it aptly grasps the absence of a hierarchical power relation between state and non-state actors encountered in the Malian context. A key feature of the Westphalian state constituted its hierarchically superior position vis-à-vis other power poles in society. The state was on top, and so it should be. The hegemony of the state provided a certain stability to the political order. The alternative to such hierarchical political order was anarchy. Hüsken and Klute (2015) situated heterarchy somewhere in the middle of that scale between hierarchy and anarchy. It reflected a political order in which none of the actors, state or non-state, obtained the position of an overarching hegemonic force.

A heterarchical order, they noted, was characterised by:

The mutable as well as unstable intertwining of state and non-state orders and the plurality of competing power groups.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Sears, J.M. (2007), ‘Deepening Democracy and Cultural Context in the Republic of Mali, 1992-2002’, PhD Dissertation, Queens University, Canada, p.39.

⁵⁹ Raineri and Strazzari (2015), p.250.

⁶⁰ Mampilly, Z. (2003), p.21.

⁶¹ Hüsken, T. and Klute, G. (2015), p.321.

Likewise, Ferguson (2004) emphasised that non-state institutions increasingly operated as “horizontal contemporaries of the organs of the state.”⁶² The notion of heterarchy thereby provides a suitable analytical lens to depict the equitable power balance between state and non-state actors that prevailed in Mali by the end of 2018. Section 1.2. below operationalises the term in more detail by way of introduction to Chapter 2, which traces the historical roots of Mali’s heterarchical political order.

In conclusion, the post-colonial African state often remained a far cry from the ideal notions that underpinned the Westphalian state. In practice, hybrid political orders emerged and the state shared key statehood functions with non-state actors across society, including religious leaders, local militias or traditional chiefs. In some cases, state and non-state power poles even developed into “horizontal contemporaries” as an inherently unstable heterarchical political order emerged over time. However, several scholars also criticised the classification of political orders as “hybrid”. Two points of critique stand out in particular. The conceptualisation of political orders as “hybrid” emerged in response to the labelling of statehood dynamics as “fragile” or “weak” based on normative (Western) statehood practices. Certainly in its initial phases, the hybrid analytical perspective favoured a “more positive outlook” by emphasising the “strength” and “resilience” of non-state governance rather than the “weakness” of the state.⁶³ While Meagher (2012) acknowledged the increased role of non-state actors in hybrid security arrangements across Africa, she also questioned the (at times implicit) assumption that non-state actors were necessarily more legitimate or effective compared to state institutions.⁶⁴ She rightfully argued that popular perceptions about any attempt, either by state or non-state actors, to institute authority should be empirically assessed rather than *a priori* assumed.

A second point of critique concerned the risk of portraying dynamic statehood processes as too static simply by depicting them as “hybrid”. Defining the interplay between formal and informal institutions should be the starting point for further empirical analysis rather than a final analytical verdict. Otherwise, the term hybrid evolves into a catch-all concept with little analytical value. Examining how interactions between state and non-state actors or institutions evolve over time is therefore crucial. This thesis has adopted such a longer-term perspective focused on historical patterns of both change and continuity, as section 1.2. reveals.

⁶² Ferguson, J. (2004) ‘Power Topographies’, in: D. Nugent and J. Vincent (eds.) *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: pp. 383-399; Ferguson, J. and Gupta, A. (2002).

⁶³ Clemens, K.P. *et al.* (2007) ‘State Building Reconsidered: the Role of Hybridity in the Formation of Political Order’, *Political Science*, 59(1): 45-56.

⁶⁴ Meagher, K. (2012) ‘The Strength of Weak States? Non-State Security Forces and Hybrid Governance in Africa.’, *Development and Change*, 43(5): 1073-1101.

This thesis follows Doornbos (2010), who noted that the hybrid model of negotiated statehood:

[o]ffers a much-needed corrective to prevailing Weberian state notions and black and white dichotomies like state and non-state, or many discussions in terms of state failure.⁶⁵

Yet, empirical research must take into account popular perceptions about hybrid practices and allow for a dynamic approach that assesses changes in the interaction between state and non-state actors over time. The following and final part of this section briefly highlights the profound impact of transnational networks upon hybrid governance practices.

Transnationalism fuelling heterarchy

Long-distance networks historically secured the economic, social and political survival of Saharan towns. In this part of the world, Scheele (2012) noted, places exist as the result of permanent movement.⁶⁶ Human mobility and commodity circulation have always been critical elements of local survival strategies.⁶⁷ The “local” cannot be conceived without considering long-distance interconnections and interdependencies.

Several transnational networks have increasingly influenced Mali’s political order in recent decades. These networks ranged from international aid, high-value smuggling networks, a lucrative kidnapping industry, terrorist networks or international military operations. Both state and non-state actors tapped into and relied significantly on these and other transnational networks to extract resources that enabled them to underpin and expand their authority. Boås and Strazzari (2020) noted that a “plurality of rent-seeking opportunities” became available for local politicians and entrepreneurs beyond the state.⁶⁸ Non-state actors thereby managed to reinforce their authority in the context of Mali’s heterarchical political order because their dependence on state-provided resources decreased. Transnational ties thus considerably affected the power balance between state and non-state actors.

⁶⁵ Doornbos, M. (2010), p. 766.

⁶⁶ Scheele, J. (2012) ‘Garage or Caravanserail: Saharan Connectivity in Al-Khalil, Northern Mali’, in: McDougall, J. and Scheele, J. (eds.) *Saharan Frontiers: Space and Mobility in Northwest Africa*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 222-237.

⁶⁷ Mobility indeed remains critical to survival. Nonetheless, a great number of pastoralists actually settled down. Their survival strategy thus combines both elements of settling down and remaining mobile. Cf. Gremont, C. (2014) ‘Mobility in Pastoral Societies of Northern Mali: Perspectives on Social and Political Rationales’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 48(1): 29-40.

⁶⁸ Boås, M. and Strazzari, F. (2020) ‘Governance, Fragility and Insurgency in the Sahel: A Hybrid Political Order in the Making’, *The International Spectator*, 55(4):1-17, p. 5.

Local kingpins in the high-value smuggling economy emerged as influential powerbrokers as they boosted their resource basis and established well-armed militias to protect their interests. The relationship between power, conflict, accumulation and criminality thereby strongly influenced the trajectory of political order in this part of the world. A phenomenon already noted by the authors of the seminal publication “The Criminalization of the State in Africa” decades ago.⁶⁹ These transnational networks clearly challenged prevailing state-centred conceptions of sovereignty, territoriality and citizenship while reinforcing the diffused and heterarchical patterns of statehood. Bøås (2015) aptly depicted Mali’s northern regions as a geographical area characterised by overlapping and competing networks that were “neither entirely state nor non-state, local or global, but somewhere in between.”⁷⁰

In sum, this concise theoretical outline revealed an analytical move away from *state* authority and legitimacy in a *hierarchical* political order towards more hybrid forms of *public* authority and legitimacy in a *heterarchical* order. It is in such a context that democracy was expected to reinforce state legitimacy. The next section first clarifies the conceptual foundations of democracy’s contribution to state legitimacy and subsequently introduces key aspects of the institutional, political, societal and international context in which democratisation transpired across the African continent.

1.1.2. Democratisation in the context of a heterarchical order

Democratisation influences processes of state formation in multiple and complex ways. This thesis focuses on key elements of one of the most central propositions of democracy, i.e. that it constitutes a political system based on popular consent rather than coercion.

State legitimacy, following Weber, entailed the acceptance of power and voluntary compliance of citizens with state domination. A normative, procedural and state-centred analytical perspective long underpinned prevailing notions of legitimacy. The only state that is legitimate, Fukuyama contended, is a democratic one.⁷¹ This analytical stance chimes with the prevailing conceptualisations of state authority as presented in the previous section. According to these state-centred views, Andersen (2012) noted:

⁶⁹ Bayart, J.F., Ellis, S., and Hibou, B. (1999) *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey.

⁷⁰ Bøås, M. (2015), ‘Crime, Coping, and Resistance in the Mali-Sahel Periphery’, *African Security* 8(4): 299-319, p.299.

⁷¹ Andersen, M.S. (2012), p. 208.

Legitimacy can be objectively assessed by looking at the presence of certain defining features or properties at the institutional state level.⁷²

The literature links this “legitimising impact” of democracy upon state institutions to three key concepts: (1) participation; (2) representation; and (3) accountability (see Figure 2 below).

As a political system that requires a government *by* the people and *of* the people, both *participation* and *representation* constitute two central components of democracy’s contribution to state legitimacy.⁷³ Mobilising citizens and representing their interests, in a direct or indirect manner, are indeed critical building blocks of a political system that aims to connect people’s preferences with actual policy choices. Ensuring inclusiveness is crucial if that system is to adequately reflect the popular will. Persistently low levels of popular participation, in general or amongst specific groups in society, thus hollows out state legitimacy.

Accountability constitutes a third key pillar of democracy’s contribution to state legitimacy. In any representative democracy, people are only periodically mobilised and decision-making powers are transferred from ordinary citizens to a governing body. Precisely for that reason, mechanisms must be in place that compel rulers to inform, explain and justify their actions (answerability), while empowering citizens to impose sanctions (enforceability), ultimately by removing those in power.⁷⁴ These two core dimensions of accountability ties are shaped: (1) along vertical lines between those who govern and ordinary citizens; and (2) along horizontal lines amongst the different branches of government. Olsen (2013) underlined this relation between representation and accountability:

Those acting *on behalf* of the community and on authority and resources embedded in public office are accountable to citizens. [...] Office-holders are assumed to be more likely to act in the public interest when they are accountable to the governed – that is, when they have to explain and justify their behaviour and performance in public and face sanctions for misbehaviour and power abuse.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid., p. 210.

⁷³ Schmidt, V. (2010) ‘Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Output, Input and Throughput’, November 2010, Kolleg-Forscherguppe Freie Universität Berlin (Working Paper Series, No. 21).

⁷⁴ Lindberg, S. (2013) ‘Mapping Accountability: Core Concept and Subtypes’, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 79(2): 202-226.

⁷⁵ Olsen, J.P. (2013) ‘The Institutional Basis of Democratic Accountability’, *West European Politics*, 36(3): 447-473, p. 454.

Likewise, Scharpf (2007) noted that analytical perspectives on state legitimacy in modern, Western polities tend to:

[f]ocus on institutional arrangements ensuring democratic participation, the accountability of governors, and safeguards against the abuses of governing powers.⁷⁶

This thesis primarily assesses patterns of citizens' mobilisation, interest representation and accountability ties provided through: (1) the party system; (2) the legislature; and (3) democratic institutions at the local level. Both political party representatives and parliamentarians mobilise people into the democratic process. They equally play a unique, dual role in shaping accountability. They are individually held accountable by citizens along vertical lines but, in turn, collectively hold the executive to account at the horizontal level. The analysis provided in the core part of this thesis thus explores the contribution of these democratic institutions to enhancing Malian state legitimacy. This analytical scope is, however, restricted in two important ways.

Firstly, the assessment of these democratic institutions paints only part of the overall state legitimacy picture. State legitimacy certainly does not solely depend on the democratic processes that connect citizens to the state, based on which decisions are made or leaders are elected ("input legitimacy").⁷⁷ It hinges in no small part on the actual performance of state institutions and representatives ("output legitimacy"). The assessment of the different democratic institutions provided in this thesis therefore does not allow us to draw conclusions about the overall level of Malian state legitimacy but merely on democracy's contribution to state legitimacy.

Secondly, the thesis is centred on prominent but relatively few political mechanisms that shape political participation, representation and accountability ties. Other broader – societal, judicial, bureaucratic, financial – forms are touched upon in the individual chapters but certainly not assessed in a structured manner. Therefore, the analysis presented in this thesis merely provides an in-depth study of the performance of a limited number of democratic institutions and their impact on state legitimacy rather than a comprehensive assessment.

⁷⁶ Scharpf, F.W. (2007) 'Reflections on Multilevel Legitimacy', Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Cologne, July 2007 (MPIfG Working Paper 07/3).

⁷⁷ Scharpf, F. W. (1999) *Governing in Europe: Effective and democratic?*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; idem (1997) 'Economic Integration, Democracy and the Welfare State', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 4:18-36.

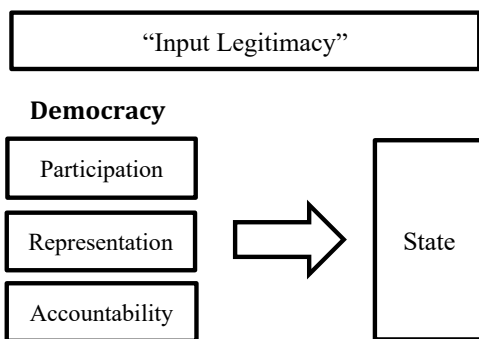


Figure 2: Key components of democracy’s impact upon state legitimacy

Without pretending to offer a comprehensive overview, the following section introduces key factors that shaped the context in which patterns of political participation, representation and accountability transpired on the African continent subsequent to the third wave of democratisation. This thesis thereby complements well-known institutional factors with socio-cultural dimensions of democratisation that prevail in the literature.

Institutional and political context

Initially, studies on democratisation strongly or solely focused on elections. This approach was rooted in Schumpeter’s procedural definition of democracy as a decision-making process through elections. Huntington (1991) even considered two peaceful transfers of power in successive elections, the so-called two-turnover test, as an indicator of satisfactory democratic consolidation.⁷⁸ The Mali case clearly revealed the limitations of such minimal procedural definition. The country was only months away from a second democratic turnover in the run-up to the 2012 elections when democracy completely collapsed instead of consolidating. More generally, an Afrobarometer survey revealed that citizens across the African continent continued to display high levels of dissatisfaction with the quality of elections as mechanisms of representation and accountability.⁷⁹ As ruling elites appeared to orchestrate elections to their advantage, scholars broadened the scope of research by focusing on the “enabling environment” of electoral competition. They assessed, amongst others, whether the electoral process provided equal access to citizens, a level playing field for the competitors and the extent to which authorities respected political and civic rights.

⁷⁸ Huntington, S. P. (1992) *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

⁷⁹ Etannibi, A. (2007) ‘Quality of Elections, Satisfaction with Democracy, and Political Trust in Africa’, Afrobarometer (Working Paper No. 84).

Yet, political trends across the African continent continued to reveal the limitations of too great an emphasis on elections (e.g. the “electoral fallacy”) as the principal driver of democratisation. Scholars noted an:

Unprecedented growth in the number of political regimes that were neither clearly democratic nor conventionally authoritarian.⁸⁰

A whole set of sub-categories of regime types emerged in the literature that ranged from liberal democracies, electoral democracies, ambiguous semi-democracies and competitive or hegemonic autocracies. Both “electoral democracies” and “competitive authoritarian regimes” prevailed in Africa.⁸¹ These regime sub-types both tolerated minimal democratic standards (to varying degrees) but concentrated political power strongly in the hands of executive presidents. Significant areas of decision-making remained beyond the control of other elected officials.

It was in this context that Carothers (2002) proclaimed the end of the “democratic transition paradigm” by the turn of the millennium. He contested the – often implicit – assumption that countries moved through similar stages after a democratic transition towards a predestined end goal of democratic consolidation.⁸² In reality, many democracies seemed lost in transition and authoritarian patterns displayed a high level of continuity throughout the democratic era. Several studies exposed severe institutional obstacles to effective accountability mechanisms vis-à-vis the executive branch of government in many of the “third wave democracies.” A comparative study conducted by Van Cranenburgh (2008) revealed particularly high levels of institutionally anchored presidential powers in 30 African countries, compared to electoral democracies in other parts of the world.⁸³ Kapstein and Converse (2009) showed that constraining executive power increased the probability of democratic survival. Their comparative research suggested that democracy did not easily take root in those places where political and economic power became too concentrated in the hands of the executive.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Diamond, L.J. (2012) ‘Thinking about Hybrid Regimes’, *Journal of Democracy*, 30(2): 21-35.

⁸¹ Haggard, S. and Kaufman, R.R. (2016) ‘Democratisation During the Third Wave’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19: 125-144; Bratton, M. (2004).

⁸² Carothers, T. (2002) ‘The End of the Transition Paradigm’, *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1): 5-21.

⁸³ Van Cranenburgh, O. (2008) ‘Big Men’s Rule: Presidential Power, Regime Type and Democracy in 30 African Countries’, *Democratisation*, 15(5): 952-973.

⁸⁴ Kapstein, E. and Converse, N. (2009) ‘Why Democracies Fail’, *Journal of Democracy*, 19: 57-68.

These views all echoed Aké's (1996, 2000) earlier well-known posture:

Even in the era of democratisation, African constitutions give far too much power to the presidency, sometimes to the point of constituting it virtually as a dictatorship. In all too many cases, democratisation has been a matter of replacing a self-appointed dictator with an elected one.⁸⁵

The concentration of power in the executive branch obviously affected accountability ties vis-à-vis other branches of government at the *horizontal* level. Based on an extensive review of the literature, Nijzink *et al.* (2006) concluded:

Powerful presidents seem to be one of the most important reasons why modern parliaments in Africa are generally regarded as weak institutions.⁸⁶

Equally, the electoral system in place constituted another important institutional factor shaping patterns of political mobilisation, representation and accountability ties.⁸⁷ Systems based on proportional representation generally produced higher voter turnout figures. Accountability ties between citizens and political representatives tended to be more direct and personal in constituency-based electoral systems. The possibility of holding individual parties accountable in systems of proportional representation (and coalition governments) were more restricted. Many party systems that emerged after the democratic transition also constrained patterns of accountability across the African continent. In great contrast to most democracies elsewhere, one-party dominance emerged and prevailed in a considerable number of African democracies.⁸⁸ This political trend indeed eroded the potential for horizontal accountability.

Institutional reforms undertaken in the area of decentralization were of particular interest in such highly centralised political contexts. Amidst the many definitions and dimensions, two forms stood out: *deconcentration* and *devolution*. The former entailed a transfer of centrally

⁸⁵ Ake, C., (1996) *Is Africa Democratizing?*, Ikeja: Malthouse Press/Centre for Advanced Social Science Monograph (no. 5), p. 6; *idem.* (2000) *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, Chippenham: Antony Rowe Ltd., p.187.

⁸⁶ Nijzink, L., Mozaffar, S. and Azevedo, E. (2006) 'Parliaments and the Enhancement of Democracy on the African Continent: An Analysis of Institutional Capacity and Public Perceptions', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, (12)3-4: 311-335, p.317.

⁸⁷ Cf. Lindberg, S. (2005) 'Consequences of Electoral Systems in Africa: A Preliminary Inquiry', *Electoral Studies*, 24: 41-64, for a comprehensive overview of the literature.

⁸⁸ Doorenspleet, R. and Nijzink, L. (eds.) (2013) *One-Party Dominance in African Democracies*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

appointed personnel or state agencies to the local level, with continued reporting lines to central state institutions. The latter – embraced in Mali in the 1990s – constituted a real transfer of authority, responsibilities and resources to more autonomous subnational layers of government. Municipal authorities obtained substantial discretionary authority in several policy areas. On paper, devolution changed the intra-state power balance between central and local tiers of government considerably. In practice, “decentralisation in Africa has been widespread but not deep” and research revealed the continued dominance of central government:⁸⁹

The main conclusion that emerges from African decentralisation experience is that governments have, on the whole, been reluctant to decentralise sufficient power to local level governments to enable them to have significant impact on local service delivery.⁹⁰

In sum, highly centralised institutional and political characteristics continued to characterise many African democracies despite the democratic transition and decentralisation reforms.

Socio-cultural context

This thesis assesses citizens’ mobilisation and interest representation by Malian political institutions around prevailing social cleavages such as class, religion, ethnicity and the urban-rural divide. Even so, the emerging literature revealed a notorious lack of programmatic differences amongst political parties and policy debates during electoral campaigns.⁹¹ Gyimah-Boadi’s (2007) view captured the wider stance that:

Contrary to what conventional political theory prescribes, [political parties] are hardly conceived and developed as mechanisms for representation, conflict resolution, opposition and accountability, or institutionalisation of democratic behaviour and attitudes. The continent’s parties are largely conceived and organised as vehicles for capturing the state.⁹²

⁸⁹ Cabral, L. (2011) ‘Decentralisation in Africa: Scope, Motivations and Impact on Service Delivery and Poverty’, Overseas Development Institute, March 2011 (Working Paper No. 020).

⁹⁰ Conyers, D. (2007) ‘Decentralisation and Service Delivery: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa’, *IDS Bulletin* 38(1): 18-32, p.24.

⁹¹ See: Walle, N. van de. and Butler, K.S. (1999) ‘Political Parties and Party Systems in Africa’s Illiberal Democracies’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 13(1): 14-28.

⁹² Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2007) ‘Political Parties, Elections and Patronage: Random Thoughts on Neo-Patrimonialism and African Democratization’, in: *Votes, Money and Violence Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet / Kwalzula-Natal: University Press, p.25. Also see: Randall, V. and Svåsand, L. (2002) ‘Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Africa’, *Democratization*, 9(3): 30-52.

Instead, voter mobilisation and representation appeared to be shaped along alternative lines, with a prominent role for clientelistic and patrimonial networks. In a context of largely agrarian and informal economies with poorly organised and institutionalised socio-economic interest, Van Walraven (2000) contended:

Ethno-regional and clientelist interests may indeed represent the most rational strategy for political actors to aggregate social interests.⁹³

In their seminal work “Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument”, Chabal and Daloz (1999) underlined the prevalence of patrons above policies. Citizens supported patrons – not necessarily parties – whom they considered capable of providing them with tangible benefits. Politics was shaped through hierarchical personalised ties rather than intermediary political institutions. At the heart of this patrimonial form of domination was an exchange of loyalty, political support and particularistic favours between patrons at the top and their individual clients (*clientelism*) or larger groups of supporters (*patronage*) in society.⁹⁴ Political elites were primarily held accountable for their ability to nourish an informal clientelistic support network on which their power rests.⁹⁵ All across the African continent, large segments in society expected their representatives to take care of them in a parental way.⁹⁶

The geographical dimension underpinning such networks proved particularly relevant. Several studies revealed that individual patrons often maintained a strong clientelistic support basis amongst kinsmen and, more specifically, their region of origin.⁹⁷ Citizens, from their point of view as clients, preferred to rally around a political *filis du terroir* as they believed: that “only a member of the community can be expected to be accountable to its members.”⁹⁸

⁹³ Reference from: Randall, V. and Svåsand, L. (2001) ‘Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Africa’, (Paper for ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Grenoble, 6-11 April 2001), p.18. Also see: Hyden, G. (2017) ‘The Decentralization Experience in Africa: Beyond Donor-Driven Approaches’, *Africa Review*, 9(1): 98-114.

⁹⁴ Daloz, J-P. (2005) ‘Trust Your Patron, Not the Institutions’, *Comparative Sociology*, 4(1): 155-174, p.166.

⁹⁵ Daloz, J-P. (2003) “‘Big Men’ in Sub-Saharan Africa: How Elites Accumulate Positions and Resources”, *Comparative Sociology*, 2(1): 271-285, p.278.

⁹⁶ Logan, C. and Bratton, M. (2006) ‘Voters But Not Yet Citizens: The Weak Demand for Vertical Accountability in Africa’s Unclaimed Democracies.’ Afrobarometer (Working Paper No.63).

⁹⁷ Basedau, M. and Stroh, A. (2009) ‘Ethnicity and Party Systems in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa’, Hamburg: GIGA, (Working Paper No. 100); Cheeseman, N. and Hinfelaar, M. (2009) ‘Parties, Platforms and Political Mobilisation: The Zambian Presidential Election of 2008’, *African Affairs*, 109(434): 51-76; Donge, J-K. van (2006). ‘Interpreting Political Culture: The Zambian Presidential Elections of 2006’, available at: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/gdai/residential-school/2009/file59660.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Hyden, G. (1999) ‘Governance and the Reconstitution of Political Order’, in: Joseph, R. *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa*, Boulder, CO / London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.188.

Scholars differed about the relative weight of patrimonial forms of domination in relation to official state structures. Chabal and Daloz (1999) contended that patrimonial forms determined political dynamics. Political elites and state officials merely instrumentalised their positions in the state apparatus to distribute public resources amongst their personal networks. The representation of particularistic interests persistently surpassed and trumped public service delivery in the national interest. Based on his extensive study of Nigerian politics, Daloz (2003, 2005) also portrayed patterns of “patrimonial rule” as the “principal mode of legitimation.”

Yet, others contended that the state administration was more than a mere façade. The “neo-patrimonialist” concept connected the Westphalian “rational-legal” type of domination with the “patrimonial” form in an analytical sense. Engel and Erdman (2007) defined neo-patrimonialism as:

The mixture of two co-existing, partly interwoven, types of domination: namely, patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination.⁹⁹

Exactly how the balance between “rational-legal” and “patrimonial” forms of domination played out in different contexts was simply a matter of empirical enquiry. The combination of strong powers vested in the presidency and patrimonial forms of domination enabled political elites to remain in power for a prolonged period in many countries across the continent. Indeed, both factors appeared to significant in terms of the relative “political stasis” (e.g. the lack of renewal of political elites), which Bleck and Van de Walle (2018) observed in their analysis of electoral politics on the continent since the 1990s.¹⁰⁰

While patrimonialism was widely recognised as a key factor shaping patterns of political representation and accountability in many African polities, it was also criticised and nuanced. Several empirical studies convincingly challenged its one-dimensional focus on the exchange of public resources in private networks as the sole – or at least primary – anchor of interest representation and accountability ties. The patrimonial framework tended to ignore or at least underestimate broader factors underpinning authority. Nugent (2001), for example, demonstrated the need for Ghanaian politicians to transform money into some kind of moral authority for it to become an effective campaign tool.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Erdmann, G. and Engel, U. (2007) ‘Neopatrimonialism Reconsidered: Critical Review and Elaboration of an Elusive Concept’, *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 45(1): 95-119, p.105.

¹⁰⁰ Bleck, J. and Van de Walle, N. (2018), *Electoral Politics in Africa since 1990: Continuity in Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-29.

¹⁰¹ Nugent, P. (2001) ‘Winners, Losers and Also Rans: Money, Moral Authority and Voting Patterns in the Ghana

Hansen (2003) offered a detailed account of an official visit by a minister to his hometown in Cameroon.¹⁰² During a public address, the minister emphasised his position as a patron for his region of origin. He assured his support base that he would mobilise state resources to the benefit of “his” area while sharing a big envelope with brand-new banknotes (public resources) amongst the local notables (personal network). Yet, he also legitimised his own position and state authority more generally with subtle reference to notions of honour, religion, violence and hierarchy. Hence, there is a need to shift from a one-dimensional patrimonial model towards a multi-dimensional approach of political representation and accountability.

Political agency was played out on a “cultural field” that was more complex than patrimonial or rational-legal forms of authority could account for.¹⁰³ Political culture has often been characterised as a deeply engrained and historically grown style of governance around a set of powerful symbols.¹⁰⁴ The impact of culture upon politics was studied in this perspective. Political culture constituted an historical pattern of continuity more than fluidity or change. Chabal & Daloz (2006) advanced an alternative interpretative approach to depict the relationship between culture and politics that recognised people’s agency and captured the dynamics of cultural change. Building upon Clifford Geertz, they argued that culture mainly provided meaning to political agency.¹⁰⁵ People have certain beliefs that influence political behaviour. Schaffer (1998), for example, found that Wolof speakers in Senegal understood the act of voting in the context of locally modified notions of democracy (“demokaraasi”). Voting, they believed, constituted an expression of solidarity ties amongst community members and an opportunity to obtain tangible support from patrons. Much more than a choice between candidates in a sturdy competition, people understood and used the institution of voting as an opportunity to reinforce cooperation and mutual ties. His study convincingly demonstrated the need to take popular perceptions, beliefs and understandings of political institutions, representation and accountability notions into account.

2000 Election’, *African Affairs*, 100(400): 405-428; Ellis, S. and Ter Haar, G. *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁰² Hansen, K.F. (2003) ‘The Politics of Personal Relations: Beyond Neo-Patrimonial Practices in Northern Cameroon’, *Africa*, 73(2): 202-225.

¹⁰³ Ruijgrok, I. (2011), p.53.

¹⁰⁴ Abbink, J. (2006) ‘Discomfiture of Democracy? The 2005 Election Crisis in Ethiopia and Its Aftermath’, *African Affairs* 105(49): 173-199; *idem* ‘The Ethiopian Second Republic and the Fragile Social Contract’, *Afrika Spectrum*, 44(2): 3-28.

¹⁰⁵ Chabal, P. and Daloz, J-P. (2006) *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*, London: Hurst & Co, p.21.

So far, this section has introduced key aspects of the institutional, political and socio-cultural national context in which patterns of citizens' mobilisation, interest representation and accountability were shaped through democratic institutions. This section ends with a short reflection on the influence of the international context on accountability ties. This analysis is further extended throughout the different chapters of the thesis.

International context

International aid instituted strong *external* accountability relations of receiving governments towards international donors, often to the detriment of *domestic* accountability ties. Mali proved to be a case in point. The country received an average of 15 per cent of its GDP from aid between 1967 and 2013. This amount increased to approximately 25 per cent (in terms of commitments) in subsequent years.¹⁰⁶ Per capita Official Development Assistance (ODA) tripled from \$26 in 2000 to a peak of \$84 in 2013. By 2015, international aid had risen to a staggering 75 per cent of central government expenditure.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, Mali's tax-to-GDP ratio decreased from 16.7 per cent (2017) to 14.1 per cent (2018). This percentage was well below the average score of 30 other African countries.¹⁰⁸ Only an estimated one per cent of international donor support provided to Mali benefitted democratic institutions (e.g. elections, judicial sector, promoting political and civil rights).¹⁰⁹ Moreover, aid dispersed in other policy areas hardly included interventions geared towards improving democratic governance in these sectors. International donor support thereby further boosted an already omnipotent executive vis-à-vis other branches of government and society at large. It weakened democratic oversight and widened the gap between rulers and ruled.

With regards to *horizontal* relationships of accountability, Burnell (2012) underlined the detrimental impact of development aid on national checks and balances by institutions such as the legislature.¹¹⁰ In the case of Mali, Van de Walle (2012) illustrated that budget support negatively impacted the balance of power between the branches of government.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Craven-Matthews, C. and Englebert, P. (2018), p.13.

¹⁰⁷ Brown, S. (2017) 'Foreign Aid and National Ownership in Mali and Ghana', *Forum for Development Studies*, 44:(3): 335-356, pp.342-343.

¹⁰⁸ OECD (2020) 'Revenue statistics Africa – Mali', available at: <https://www.oecd.org/countries/mali/revenue-statistics-africa-mali.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ Walle, N. van de (2012) 'Foreign Aid in Dangerous Places: The Donors and Mali's Democracy', United Nations University (Working Paper No. 2012/61).

¹¹⁰ Burnell, P. (2012) 'External Accountability Meets Accountability Assistance: The Case of Legislative Strengthening in Africa', in: Chirwa, D.M. and Nijzink, L. 'Accountable Government in Africa: Perspectives from Public Law and Political Studies', pp. 273-292, Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

¹¹¹ Walle, N. van de (2012), p.11.

Much of the socio-economic and monetary policymaking dialogue was shaped between donors and the government, outside the realm of the legislature. Parliamentarians often lacked vital information and the potential for parliamentary oversight was limited.

External accountability mechanisms appeared to be weak. Dijkstra (2018), for example, noted that although Malian authorities failed to implement critical reforms that they had committed to, such as the establishment of an Independent Court of Auditors, the donor community refrained from holding them to account.¹¹² This stemmed from the fact that cooperation in other policy areas was considered (more) satisfactory or because strategic interests were at play and donors preferred to maintain constructive ties with Malian authorities.

In terms of *vertical* accountability relations, civil society organisations received more support from international donors than institutions performing key roles at the horizontal level of accountability, such as the legislature and the judiciary. However, similar patterns of external accountability prevailed to the detriment of domestic ties across Malian society. Many (largely urban-based) civil society institutions lacked effective communication and consultation channels within society, most notably the rural areas. Policy priorities of external funding partners strongly influenced their agenda, often to the detriment of local actors. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2016) noted that some of the umbrella organisations in Malian civil society were:

Not sufficiently connected with their respective constituency bases to be inclusive, participatory or accountable.¹¹³

In fact, some of the most influential actors and networks that were strongly embedded in Malian society and provided effective forms of executive oversight along vertical lines developed outside the realm of official development aid, as is revealed in several of the following chapters.

In sum, this section briefly sketched key features of the context in which democratisation in general and patterns of citizens' mobilisation, interest representation and accountability ties in particular developed across the African continent (see Figure 3). Their influence on the performance of Malian political parties, the party system, the legislature and decentralisation is assessed in more depth throughout this thesis.

¹¹² Dijkstra, G. (2018) 'Budget Support, Poverty and Corruption: A Review of the Evidence' (EBA Report, No. 04/2018), p.55.

¹¹³ Nyirabikali, G. (2016) 'Opportunities and Challenges for Civil Society Organisations to Peace Building in Mali', SIPRI, (Working Paper, No.2016/1), p.14.

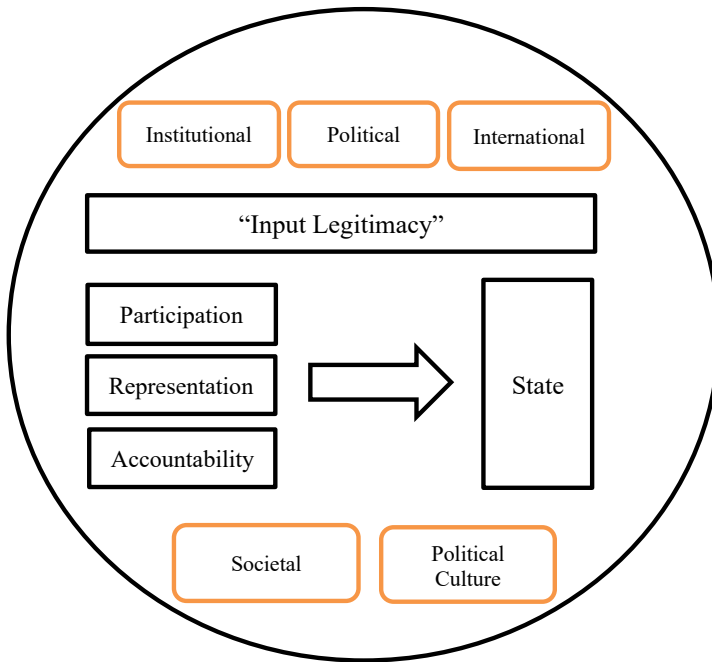


Figure 3: Context factors shaping “input-democracy”

The following section operationalises the overall research question and ensuing sub-questions. On that basis, the research design is specified as well as the various research methods used.

1.2. CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis contributes to a wider body of literature that emerged after the collapse of Malian state authority and legitimacy in 2012. In-depth country-specific and regional studies greatly contributed to improving our understanding of the factors that underlay the series of tragic events that rose to the surface in that troubled year. These factors included the rise of high-value smuggling networks, the increased terrorist threat, the downfall of the Libyan regime, major governance challenges and other factors highlighted in the above. This thesis seeks to complement the existing literature by assessing how central aspects of democratisation affected the challenging process of state formation (and deformation) in the period preceding 2012. Following an exemplary democratic transition that ended decades of authoritarian and often predatory rule in the early 1990s, Malian democracy was expected to shore up state legitimacy.

Democracy, as shown in the previous section, primarily enhances state legitimacy by providing mechanisms that allow for political participation, representation and accountability. Hence, the central research objective of the thesis is to reveal:

How the performance of key democratic institutions in the area of political participation, representation and accountability affected the legitimacy of the Malian state in the context of Mali's emerging heterarchical political order (1992-2012)?

More specifically, this thesis examines the performance of Malian political parties (and the party system), parliament and municipal democratic institutions in enhancing state legitimacy by shaping political participation, representation and accountability (1992-2012). This central research question is addressed in the core (middle) part of the thesis (Chapters 3-5). An introductory historical chapter first traces the historical roots of Mali's heterarchical political order (1960-2012). It illustrates the changing power balance between state and non-state power poles over time with a particular focus on hybrid forms of security provision. The thesis ends with a reflection on the anchoring of a heterarchical order in the five-year period that followed the crisis (2013-2018). Based on this overarching research objective, the remaining part of this section introduces and operationalises the ensuing sub-questions and defines the central concepts for each of these three main sections.

#1. The emergence of a heterarchical political order and hybrid security provision

Research question

What encouraged the emergence of Mali's heterarchical political order? How have patterns of hybrid security provision evolved over time, to the point of state collapse?

- How has the power balance between the Malian state and non-state actors engaged in public security provision shifted over time (*vertically superior* versus *horizontally equivalent*)?
- How has the nature of cooperation between state and non-state actors evolved over time (*complementary* versus *delegatory*)?
- What were the main channels of cooperation (*official* versus *unofficial*)?

Heterarchy

In a heterarchical political order, as noted above, the state operates as one institution amongst many non-state equals rather than obtaining a hierarchically superior position above other power poles in society. The analytical focus shifts from *state* authority to *public* authority.

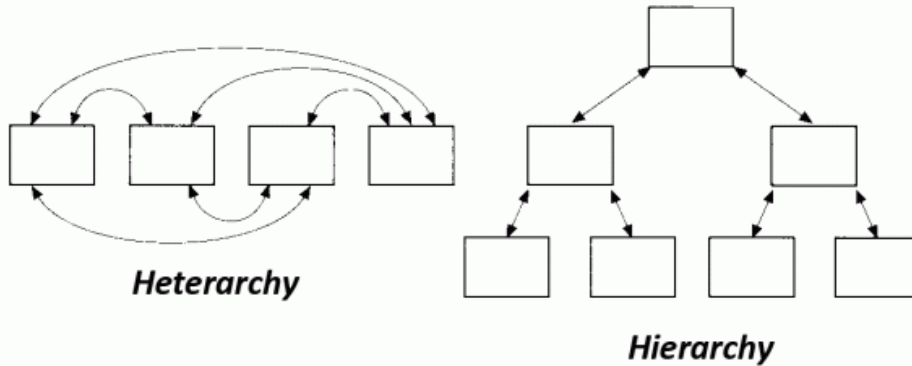


Figure 4: © Klute, G. *et al.* (2016)

In the absence of a hegemonic force, a heterarchical order is inherently less stable than a classical hierarchical political order. Different power poles institute their authority in either cooperation, isolation or conflict with one another and alliances frequently shift over time.

Hüsken and Klute (2015) contended:

The notion of heterarchy is appropriate to describe the fluctuating, entangling and disentangling tribal, state like, Islamist and jihadist, youth, civil, organised crime, and militia-like forms of political organisation. This comprises varying political practices and rationales as well as different conceptions of power, rule, and legitimacy.¹¹⁴

By 2018, the Malian state clearly operated as a “horizontal contemporary” rather than hierarchically superior institution vis-à-vis non-state actors in society. State expenditure, as noted in the above, reached a mere 20 per cent of the national territory. Meanwhile, a myriad of non-state power poles, including armed groups, local militias, self-defense groups, traditional and religious leaders had firmly anchored their authority across the rural areas.

¹¹⁴ Hüsken, T. and Klute, G. (2015), p.324.

A survey conducted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) revealed that respondents across the country perceived the Malian state as being incapable of providing basic social and security services, while non-state actors increasingly filled the void.¹¹⁵ Prior opinion surveys revealed that Malian citizens, much more than people in other West African countries, primarily raised their concerns with traditional and religious leaders.¹¹⁶ More in-depth studies showed that villagers living in the border area between central and northern Mali, for example, almost entirely relied on these non-state actors for (a minimal provision of) social services and local infrastructure.¹¹⁷

In 2018, the Malian state clearly shared most of its core functions with non-state actors in the context of a heterarchical political order. Chapter 2 traces the emergence of this heterarchical order and zooms in on historical patterns of interaction between state and non-state actors in the area of public security provision.

Security defined

Amidst the many definitions of and analytical perspectives on security, one important difference related to the main “referent object” of security that distinguished a state-centred approach from a human security perspective. Luckam and Kirk (2012) noted – in reference to Scott’s seminal work – that academic work on security long entailed “seeing like a state.”¹¹⁸ The state apparatus obtained the primary responsibility to protect citizens. The underlying assumption was that “if the state is secure, then so too will those that live within it.”¹¹⁹ This approach thereby strongly focused on the “supply side” of security. Empirical studies, however, increasingly revealed its limitations. State security forces frequently failed to protect citizens or even committed abuses against their own citizenry. In this context, the concept of “human security” (and many related variations, including “citizen’s security” or “personal security”) gained prominence. The individual, rather than the state, was taken as the principal referent object and security was re-defined in terms of an “entitlement of citizens.” The analytical focus thereby shifted from the supply side towards the demand side of security.

¹¹⁵ Tobie, A. and Chauzal, G. (2018) ‘State Services in an Insecure Environment: Perceptions among Civil Society in Mali’, SIPRI, December 2018 (Working paper, No. 2018/7).

¹¹⁶ Bratton, M., Coulibaly, M. and Machado, F. (2000) ‘Popular Views on Good Governance in Mali’, Afrobarometer, March 2000. (Working Paper, No.9).

¹¹⁷ Bleck, J. and Michelitch, K. (2015) ‘On the Primacy of Weak Public Service Provision in Rural Africa: Malians Redefine ‘State Breakdown’ Amidst 2012 Political Crisis’, Afrobarometer (Working paper No.155).

¹¹⁸ Luckham, R and Kirk, T (2013) ‘The Two Faces of Security in Hybrid Political Orders: A Framework for Analysis and Research’, *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(2): 1-30, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ Owen, T. (2004) ‘Challenges and Opportunities for Defining and Measuring Human Security’, United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (Working Paper), p.16.

A second difference constituted the scope of security. Scholars distinguished a narrow from a broad conceptualisation. The former approach perceived security primarily in terms of protection from violent threats. The broader approach defined security as the protection from a wide variety of threats. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for example, adopted such a multidimensional approach and distinguished as many as seven different sub-categories of security (e.g. economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, political security, community security).¹²⁰ This thesis largely focuses on the supply side of security in a narrow sense. The main objective is to assess patterns of hybrid security *provision* over time. How local citizens perceived these various efforts requires additional empirical and historical research.

Hybrid security

The above theoretical outline revealed that non-state actors played a considerable role in public service delivery across the African continent (and elsewhere). “Nowhere is this more striking,” Bagayoko *et al.* (2016) noted, “than in regard to the core security, policing and justice functions of African states.”¹²¹ On the “supply side”, *hybrid security* arrangements are characterised by complex interactions between state and non-state actors. These actors either compete or cooperate for power, resources, legitimacy and thereby determine patterns of both security and insecurity.¹²² The hybrid security approach thus moves away from the *state* as sole security provider towards a more heterogeneous conceptualisation of *public* security. The interaction between state and non-state actors is assessed based on a concise operational framework.

Operationalising hybrid security

Three indicators are used to study the historical interplay between state and non-state actors in the security realm under subsequent Malian governments, to the point of state collapse in 2012.

- The power balance refers to the position of the state vis-à-vis non state armed factions, either as *vertically superior* or *horizontally equivalent*;
- The channels of cooperation allude to the interplay between state and non-state factions shaped through *official* channels (a peace process) or through *non-official* channels (personal networks);

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.18.

¹²¹ Bagayoko, N., Hutchful, E. and Luckham, R. (2016) ‘Hybrid Security Governance in Africa: Rethinking the Foundations of Security, Justice and Legitimate Public Authority’, *Conflict, Security and Development* 16(1): 1-32, p.1.

¹²² Luckham, R. and Kirk, T. (2013), p.7.

- The nature of cooperation assesses whether security cooperation between the state and non-state actors is *complementary* or *delegatory*. In the former case, state and non-state representatives both participate in joint security efforts (e.g. patrols or assaults). In the latter case, the state transfers its formal authority to non-state actors.

This last dimension is based on literature in the field of hybrid warfare.¹²³ An important difference, however, is that this academic stream is largely focused on the motives of the state (or an external third party) to engage with non-state actors. Such an approach ignores the motives of non-state actors to align with or oppose the state. As a result of an alignment with state forces, local factions, for example, improve their position vis-à-vis other local stakeholders. Therefore, when Malian state and non-state actors engaged in complementary or delegatory relationships, this thesis reflects on the motives behind this engagement from both perspectives.

Security as ‘proxy’ for national public service delivery?

The first part of this thesis examines the emergence (Chapter 2) and subsequent anchoring (Chapter 6) of a heterarchical political order, in which the exercise of public authority in the public service involves the Malian state as just one institution amongst many non-state equals. It thereby zooms in on historical patterns of change and continuity in the area of public security provision in both northern and central Mali.

The conclusions drawn on this basis do not reflect nationwide patterns. Geographical inclusivity is only partially accounted for as the thesis follows the shifting sands of conflict in Mali. Chapter 2 is largely concentrated on hybrid security provision in the northern regions. Chapter 6 also examines the – even more heterogeneous – patterns of security provision encountered across central Mali as the level of security started to deteriorate. However, the thesis does not address hybrid security provision across Mali’s more stable southern regions. Initial research suggests that local coping mechanisms that emerged in response to state absence in those areas varied from the ones witnessed in the northern and southern regions.¹²⁴

Moreover, the historical analysis of hybrid public service delivery is predominantly focused on patterns encountered in the security realm. These patterns do not necessarily reflect similar trends of hybrid statehood encountered in other policy areas. The power balance or task division

¹²³ For an overview of that literature and more elaborate typology of “hybrid warfare”, see: Rauta,V. (2019) ‘Towards a Typology of Non-State Actors in Hybrid Warfare: Proxy, Auxiliary, Surrogate and Affiliated Forces’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 33(3):1-20, pp. 7-14.

¹²⁴ Tobie, A. and Chauzal, G. (2018).

between state and non-state actors potentially differs across sectors. Non-state actors such as international NGOs can, for example, play a central role in social service delivery while, at the same time, the state itself maintains a leading role in the area of public security provision. The assessment of hybrid security patterns cannot be extrapolated to other policy sectors.

Hence, additional research is required that complements the findings of this thesis to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of public service delivery in the context of a heterarchical political order.

Non-state armed groups loosely defined

Non-state armed groups are generally categorised based on: (1) their level of internal cohesion and organisation; (2) the objectives they pursue; (3) their main adversaries; and (4) whether they (aim to) control territory. Although recognising the benefits of such categorisation for analytical purposes, a strict application to the Malian case is challenging in light of the highly dynamic nature of alliances, group membership and objectives. Non-state armed groups in Mali are characterised by multiple and overlapping goals while their (pro- or con) stance vis-à-vis the state changes over time. There are examples of influential local armed factions who changed their allegiance to a terrorist group, a secular secessionist group and a pro-government militias during the course of just one year. This thesis therefore adopts a broad encompassing definition of non-state armed groups as organisations motivated by political, economic, personal, communal or other goals, capable of using violence against or in cooperation with the state, other armed groups or civilians.¹²⁵ The core objective is to study the historical interplay between state and non-state actors; not the functioning of non-state armed groups per se.

#2. Democratisation in the context of an emerging heterarchical order

Research question and sub-questions

How have key democratic institutions affected the legitimacy of the state in the context of Mali's emerging heterarchical order (1992-2012)? More specifically, what have been prevailing patterns of popular participation, representation and accountability provided through the party system, parliament and newly created local democratic institutions?

¹²⁵ NATO Strategic Direction South (2019) 'Informal Governance of Non-State Armed Groups in the Sahel', Canterbury: University of Kent, p.4.

Party system (Chapter 3)

- What have been prevailing patterns of *political participation and interest representation* provided through the party system?
- What explains the prevalence of one-party (1992-2002) and one-coalition dominance (2002-2012) in the Malian party-system?

Parliament (Chapter 4)

- How has the *accountability* performance of Members of Parliament (2007-2009) affected state legitimacy?
- How have Malian Members of Parliament MPs performed their particularistic constituency-oriented duties and collective legislative and oversight tasks in the years before democracy's decay?

Decentralisation (Chapter 5)

- Which social cleavages shaped *political participation and interest representation* at the local level during three consecutive local elections in one specific rural municipality (1999-2009)?
- To what extent and in which ways have newly established formal *accountability* mechanisms at the heart of Mali's ambitious decentralisation reforms affected state legitimacy (1999-2009)?

Participation, representation and accountability

The core part of this thesis assesses the performance of Malian political parties (and party system), parliament and municipal democratic institutions in enhancing state legitimacy by shaping political participation, representation and accountability (1992-2012).

Political participation is widely regarded as the “*elixir of life* for democracy” but conceptualised in many different ways.¹²⁶ The narrowest definition restricts political participation to individual behaviour designed to affect the choice of government through elections. However, most definitions move beyond the *choice of* government personnel and widened the analytical scope by including popular influence over the *choices made by* government personnel.¹²⁷ Political participation is then defined as “individual or collective behavior designed to affect the choice of government personnel and/or policies.”¹²⁸ Another definitional matter concerns the question of whether political participation is limited to activities directly expressed through the political system or whether it also encompasses “non-political activities used for political purposes,” such as popular protests, civil society activism

¹²⁶ Deth, J.W. van. (2014) ‘A Conceptual Map of Political Participation’, *Acta Politica* 49: 349-367, p. 350.

¹²⁷ Conge, P. (1982) ‘The Concept of Political Participation’, *Comparative Politics* 20(2): 241-249.

¹²⁸ Verba, S. and Nie, N.H. (1972) *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*, New York: Harper and Row, pp. 2-3.

or even political violence.¹²⁹ I consider such activities to be a type of *civic* engagement rather than political participation. The focus of this thesis, as highlighted above, is restricted to the contribution of a select number of democratic institutions in shaping patterns of popular participation “designed to affect the choice of government personnel and/or policies.”

A central debate in the literature on political representation is related to the question of whether representatives act as “delegates,” who strictly follow the preferences of constituents or operate as “trustees” with a considerable level of discretionary powers and autonomy and mainly follow their own judgements.¹³⁰ In practice, representative democracies feature a mix of both forms as no elected representative acts entirely independently or has the ability to consult citizens and determine voters’ preferences on *all* the political issues at stake.

This is precisely why accountability mechanisms are crucial in a representative democracy where political actors take decisions *on behalf of* ordinary citizens. This concept gained much traction in the literature towards the end of the 1990s, as the advantages of the third wave of democracy remained well below expectation.

Scholars revealed the prevalence of weak accountability mechanisms despite the democratic transitions, as highlighted in the above theoretical outline. This thesis draws heavily on the definition and key dimensions of accountability advanced by Lindberg (2013) based on an extensive review of the literature.¹³¹ A relationship of accountability involves an actor or institution that must give an account (e.g. an MP) to someone else (e.g. constituents) about a specific matter (e.g. a policy). The principal components of accountability, as already highlighted, constitute the obligation of – in this example – the MP to inform constituents and justify his or her actions, while the latter obtain mechanisms to sanction the MP. Three key dimensions of accountability emerged in the literature: the *source* of accountability (are political representatives being held accountable internally, within an institution, or externally, by citizens); the *degree of control* that people have over representatives (although difficult to quantify); and the *direction* of accountability (vertical upwards, vertical downwards or horizontal).¹³² These dimensions are introduced and operationalised in more detail in the respective chapters.

¹²⁹ Deth, J.W. van (2014), p. 358.

¹³⁰ Fox, J. and Shotts, W.H. (2009) ‘Delegates or Trustees? A Theory of Political Accountability’, *The Journal of Politics*, 71(4): 1225-1237.

¹³¹ Lindberg, S. (2013) ‘Mapping Accountability: Core Concept and Subtypes’, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 79(2): 202-226.

¹³² Lindberg, S. (2009), p. 11.

In sum, this thesis primarily focuses on the contribution provided by a limited number of prominent democratic institutions in shaping patterns of political participation, representation and accountability. In line with the above theoretical outline, a complementary socio-cultural and institutional approach guided the analysis of these democratic institutions.

Contextualising democratic institutions

Malian political parties, the legislature and a municipal council are the institutions analysed in the core part of this thesis. The assessment of their functioning in daily practices moves well beyond the formal roles and responsibilities and also includes influential informal tasks that their representatives are expected to perform.

The basic concept of an institution is commonly defined as the rules and procedures that structure social interaction by both *constraining* and *enabling* people's behaviour. Many scholars refer to the work of Douglass North in this regard.¹³³ He strongly emphasised the "constraining" aspect of institutions.¹³⁴ Others, like Hodgson (2006), underlined the "enabling" side of institutions in a more explicit manner.¹³⁵ By extension, formal institutions are defined as rules and procedures created, communicated and enforced through channels widely accepted as official and often codified in constitutions and legislation. The term official implies that the rules and procedures emanate from an authority, in this case, the state. This thesis addresses formal aspects of Mali's democratic regime, which are defined as the "sets of political procedures – sometimes called the 'rules of the political game' – that determine the distribution of power."¹³⁶ Informal institutions are defined as socially shared values, usually unwritten, which are created and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels. This includes patrimonial sources of legitimacy or cultural beliefs. Representatives of Malian political parties, parliament and local democratic institutions are thus embedded in a broader "incentive structure" shaped by a variety of formal and informal factors that influence their functioning. All chapters address the following contextual factors:

- **Institutional**: Relevant aspects of Mali's democratic regime, most notably the formal powers vested in the executive and legislative branch of government; the electoral system; political parties' regulation; as well as the institutional power balance between the different tiers of government;

¹³³ Cf. Levitsky, S. and Helmke, G. (2006) *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, p.5.

¹³⁴ North, D.C. (1991) 'Institutions', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5(1):97-112.

¹³⁵ Hodgson, G.M. (2006) 'What Are Institutions?' *Journal of Economic Issues*, 40(1):1-25.

¹³⁶ Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N. (1997), pp. 9-10.

- International: A concise analysis of the mechanisms of cooperation between Mali and international terms in terms of volume, internal distribution, policy priorities and working modalities;
- Societal: Mostly centred on an assessment of the cleavages in society that are most influential in shaping participation, interest representation and accountability ties through the political system.
- Political culture: Popular beliefs that affected political behaviour (e.g. perceptions about legitimacy; accountability; democracy; consensus versus opposition politics...).

The main objective of this core part of the thesis is to assess the performance of crucial democratic institutions and their contribution to enhancing state legitimacy in this particular context during the two decades that followed Mali's exemplary democratic transition.

However, the state is but one of a number of institutions exercising and legitimising authority in Mali's heterarchical order, as noted above. Influential non-state actors including traditional and religious leaders, non-governmental organisations, urban protest movements, youth networks and armed groups all play a major role in Malian society and institute their authority in reference to multiple sources of legitimacy. Each chapter will therefore also explore the interplay between democratic and other influential sources of legitimacy in a shift away from *state* legitimacy towards *public* legitimacy.

#3. The anchoring of Mali's heterarchical political order in the aftermath of the crisis

Research question

How has the power balance between state and non-state actors in Mali's heterarchical political order evolved in the area of public security provision and decentralised administration in the aftermath of the crisis (2013-2018)?

- A perspective "from below": What has been the role of both state and non-state actors in ensuring basic protection amidst prevailing patterns of insecurity in northern and central Mali? Have security actors started to play a more comprehensive role in decentralised administration as a result?
- A perspective "from above": What has been the impact of the Malian peace process and prevailing patterns of hybrid security provision upon the power balance between state and non-state actors?
- Democratic legitimacy: How have patterns of political participation, representation and accountability shaped democracy's input to state legitimacy in the aftermath of the crisis?

Basic legitimacy

The notion of "basic legitimacy of protection from violence" plays an important role in this chapter. It suggests "those who are able to offer protection from violence are at the same time

those with the best chances to accumulate power and position.”¹³⁷ This final chapter builds on the historical analysis provided in the first part of this thesis that revealed the increased role of non-state actors in the security realm as well as the assessment of hybrid decentralised administration in the second part.

Now that the research questions, theoretical and operational frameworks have been introduced, the next section specifies the research design and methods.

1.3. Research design and methods

This thesis started as a project in the “IS-Academy” of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which launched this initiative together with several research institutes and universities to increase knowledge about the functioning of, amongst others, fragile states.¹³⁸ The Ministry awarded several four-year grants to full-time PhD students and a number of much smaller scholarships to practitioners, enabling them to conduct research on a part-time basis. I was part of this latter category and received support for a study on Malian statehood and democratic institutions. The expected academic output encompassed a number of individual publications, bundled in a PhD thesis at a later stage. This set-up, structured around individual articles, enabled practitioners to combine policy and academic work as it divided the entire workload into manageable, smaller parts with clear deadlines. However, this structure also restricted the cohesion of the entire research project. In order to circumvent this challenge and to improve the overall coherence of this thesis, all previous publications have been considerably revised and extended. Moreover, an overarching post-hoc introductory as well as concluding chapter have been drafted. The expected output from my research also included policy-oriented publications.

In this context, I conducted and supervised an empirical study comparing local accountability mechanisms between municipalities in five sub-Saharan African countries. After summarising the various country reports in a policy brief, which I presented during a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), I published the main results in an easily accessible brochure.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the policy-oriented work included publications on constitutional reform processes. I first elaborated a policy paper on

¹³⁷ Hüsken, T. and Klute, G. (2015), p. 116.

¹³⁸ In 2019, the IS-Academy was renamed as the Academy for International Cooperation (AIC).

¹³⁹ Vliet, M. van. (2011) ‘Accountability and Improved Local Service Delivery in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy Orientations’, Leiden: African Studies Centre Leiden, available at: <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/18129>.

constitutional reform processes in Zambia and then became the lead author of a handbook presenting guidelines for international organisations supporting these processes in practice.¹⁴⁰ Building on the above theoretical and operational frameworks, the remaining parts of this chapter outline the research design and various methods used, highlight a number of important limitations of this thesis and provide a brief outline of the various chapters.

1.3.1. Research design: Implications of a single-country case study

This thesis focuses exclusively on Mali. As a research method, the case study has well-known limitations in terms of non-replicability, representativeness and generalisation. This section first clarifies why this research method was adopted and subsequently specifies the contribution it nonetheless provides to wider theory-building efforts.

The case study method aligns well with what I still consider to be a pioneering field of research focused on different aspects of newly emerging forms of political order across the African continent. The body of literature is rapidly expanding and innovative approaches are on the rise. However, prevailing theories, e.g. modernisation theory, and analytical frameworks remain too state-centric and unilinear, and have shown their limitations with respect to grasping the complex empirical dynamic across the continent. As a research method, the case study is particularly well suited to obtaining a rich analysis of such processes occurring within their specific context. Comparative studies pull together a large number of cases and define a limited number of independent and dependent variables. A case study, in contrast, enables one to observe and study multiple contextual variables in their natural setting. This is particularly relevant, for example, when studying aspects of public legitimacy, which really requires an in-depth and context-specific analysis. Instead of examining broader patterns of correlation between a limited set of variables, a case study tends to be guided by research questions geared towards understanding *how* and *why* these interactions occur in a certain context. So-called theory-guided case studies are a clear example. Guided by a conceptual framework derived from theory, they focus on interpreting a specific case “rather than to generalise beyond the

¹⁴⁰ Vliet, M. van. (2009) *Writing Autobiographies of Nations: A Comparative Analysis of Constitutional Reform Processes. The Case of Zambia*. The Hague: NIMD; Vliet, M. van, Wahiu, W. & Magolowondo, A. (eds.) (2012) ‘Constitutional Reform Processes and Political Parties: Principles for Practice’, The Hague – Leiden: NIMD, IDEA and ASC.

data.”¹⁴¹ However, science does remain a “generalising activity.”¹⁴² Despite the obvious limitations inherent to a case study as a result of its very small N, the method can nonetheless be designed in such a way that it can make a valuable contribution to *the process* of theory building – rather than theory building per se. A case study adds empirical data relevant to the testing of well-established theories or generates new insights in emerging fields of interest. This thesis examines or “tests” the impact of several factors, well-established in the literature, that influence the performance of democratic institutions. The combination of institutional and political with societal and cultural factors is of most interest in this regard.

The more exploratory dimension of the thesis concerns the heterogeneous context in which democratisation transpired in Mali. The thesis explores how the functioning of democratic institutions influenced the legitimacy of the Malian state in relation to other major power poles and sources of legitimacy in society. This explorative dimension of the Malian case study certainly obtains wider regional relevance considering the emergence of heterarchical orders in other countries across the Sahel, where the state operates as one institution amongst non-state equals. Finally, key components of this thesis were part of cross-country studies in order to improve the value of the Malian case study for comparative use and generalising efforts. This holds for the chapter on Malian Members of Parliament that builds upon (and extends) the methodology used in a previous case study in Ghana. Likewise, the chapter on one-party dominance was part of a comparative project involving all major regions in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.3.2. Research methods

The case study design allows for the use of a variety of research methods, including qualitative ones, such as interviews and participant observation, and an analysis of existing quantitative data and archival research. By applying such a combination of research methods and by checking and counterchecking findings through triangulation, I attempted to strengthen the overall research design. The empirical work of the thesis is based on a combination of the following methods: 1) participant observation; 2) semi-structured interviews and informal talks; 3) the analysis of archives and existing data from surveys such as the Afrobarometer.

¹⁴¹ Levy, J. S. (2008) ‘Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference’, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25: 1-18, p. 4.

¹⁴² Lijphart, A. (1971) ‘Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method’, *American Political Science Review*, 65(3): 682-693, p. 691.

Given my training as an anthropologist and development sociologist, *participant observation* constituted an important research method. I observed the implementation of Mali's decentralization policies and the organisation of three consecutive municipal elections in the rural municipality of Karan in Southern Mali for almost a decade. I regularly visited the area, staying for periods ranging from a number of weeks to five months, and I developed relations of trust with many of my respondents. Mitchel (2006) emphasises the benefit of this method when it is deployed over a longer period and assesses how respondents "constantly renegotiate their position towards each other in a rapidly changing socio-political context."¹⁴³ This is exactly why participant observation proved so valuable when analysing patterns of both change and continuity in socio-political trends at the municipal level over a longer period. The method also enabled me to observe events and human behaviour in daily practice, rather than relying solely upon interviews or formal legislation alone, which boosted the validity of my research. There was a significant difference between the formal mandate of the newly established municipal council and its functioning in daily practice, which I was only able to analyse because of my prolonged presence on the ground. Participant observation also enabled me to discover local sociocultural institutions, such as the *kabila* (a family group or "clan" across generations) and *kare* (a generational group across families), that I had been unaware of at the start of my research, but which turned out to be very influential in shaping local political affairs.

A more profound reflection on methodological matters related to this case study is provided at the beginning of Chapter 5. I also used the method of participant representation while studying the functioning of Malian Members of Parliament. I attended many public sessions of the legislature listening to the issues they raised and debated. This provided valuable additional data that contextualised the outcome of my interviews. In addition, I joined the two top contenders of the 2007 presidential election on the campaign trail to gain a better understanding of their interaction with citizens and the campaign dynamics on the grounds. Obviously, the method has a number of disadvantages, which I explain in more detail in the next section. Yet, overall, participant observation proved a valuable addition to the many interviews I conducted.

Throughout the entire research project, I used *structured interviewing* as a research method, but also held many highly informal discussions with respondents. The semi-structured interviews with Malian parliamentarians, for example, contained open questions, but also many closed-ended questions to enable a quantitative analysis of behavioral trends. The interviews were largely based on a questionnaire developed by the African Power and Politics research

¹⁴³ De Vries, L.A. (2012), p. 28.

programme in order to increase the comparative value of the case study. I deliberately chose to bring their voices into the wider academic field because this “actor-oriented” perspective adds value to prevailing institutional assessments of African legislatures.¹⁴⁴

Informal discussions proved to be a particularly useful research method for discussing sensitive matters. Conversations about local conflicts or tensions provided highly valuable research data. Chapter 5, for example, demonstrates competing (and contradictory) power claims by local actors who referred to different repertoires in order to legitimise these claims. Gathering these multiple perceptions and examining how they played out in actual practice increased my understanding of underlying patterns of change and continuity.

My use of *literature review* constituted an important research method for the historical parts of this thesis as well as for Chapter 6. My own archival research was limited to the parliamentary archives, therefore, I relied heavily upon existing studies for most of the historical parts of this thesis. Nonetheless, I do believe that this part of the thesis adds value to the current body of literature. Not only because it combines francophone and anglophone literature on Mali, but also because of its analytical perspective. This thesis provides a unique long-term assessment of patterns of both change and continuity in hybrid security provision strategies by pulling together data from different periods in history and multiple sources into one analytical framework.

I gratefully exploited the *results of the opinion polls* conducted by the Afrobarometer and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Mali-Mètre) in Mali, which complemented studies published by fellow researchers, policy papers and news outlets. Publications by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) provided particularly valuable data from rural areas in central Mali that are not easily accessible.

The final chapter, which focuses on the anchoring of Mali’s heterarchical political order in the period between 2013 and 2018, almost entirely relies on existing studies and public sources rather than empirical data and interviews. This is related to my position as a diplomat, first as an advisor to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRGR) in Mali and Head of MINUSMA; subsequently, as the Sahel Coordinator with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In these capacities, I encountered all relevant Malian and international stakeholders between 2013 and 2018. I gathered a wealth of data that would have certainly solidified the empirical foundations and scientific validity of Chapter 6. Nevertheless, I decided to keep my work as a diplomat separate from my role as researcher; a choice partly motivated

¹⁴⁴ Long, N. (2001) *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

by the confidentiality of my diplomatic role and the obvious ethical complications of using these data in my thesis without prior consent of the many actors I spoke with at the time. However, the use of this information would also have been problematic in a methodological sense. I interacted with Malian and other stakeholders on behalf of the UN or The Netherlands. The context (and related incentives) in which my interaction with these actors took place was therefore very different from the manner in which I would have talked with these actors (if at all) as a researcher in an interview setting.

Before presenting the results of my research, the following section highlights a number of limitations of this thesis and then briefly recapitulates the outline.

1.3.3. Limitations

The previous sections already referred to some limitations of this thesis caused by the structure of this research project, built around a series of individual publications. The thesis offers a detailed analysis of the functioning of a limited number of democratic institutions and their influence upon state legitimacy rather than a comprehensive assessment. This section briefly highlights additional limitations.

The considerable influence of Islam in the political realm is a subject of critical importance in Malian society but was not addressed in the individual publications that provided the building blocks of this thesis. Although not assessed in detail, the political role of religion is nonetheless incorporated in this final thesis and illustrated by a number of tangible examples. I also included references to the work of other scholars in both academia and policy circles who addressed these developments at greater length.¹⁴⁵ In a similar vein, this thesis highlights key socio-economic trends – most notably centred on the wide urban–rural divide – but certainly does not offer a thorough analysis in this regard.

This dissertation also lacks a balanced gender perspective. A vast majority of representatives of political and sociocultural institutions, who constituted the primary target group of my field research, was male. In my interviews, I primarily aimed for a balance between my respondents in terms of geographical representation, political party membership or membership of a specific

¹⁴⁵ See for example: Soares, B.F. (2006). 'Islam in Mali in the Neoliberal Era', *African Affairs*, 105, (418):77–95; Schultz, D. E. (2003) 'Political Actions, Ideological Fictions: The Controversy over Family Law Reform in Democratic Mali', *Islamic Law and Society*, 10(1): 132-164; Schultz, D. E., Meyer, B. and Moors, A. (2006) 'Morality, Community, Publicness: Shifting Terms of Public Debate in Mali', in: *Religion, Media and the Public Sphere*, Bloomington: Indiana: 132-151; University Press; Lebovitch, A. (2019). 'Sacred Struggles: How Islam Shapes Politics in Mali.' Policy Brief, European Council on Foreign Relations; Thurston, A. (2013) 'Towards an Islamic Republic of Mali', *Fletcher Forum World Affairs* 37(2): 46-66.

family or generational groups. It proved difficult to build up relations of trust with women, particularly at the local level, and to circumvent their limited inclusion in my research. This lack of a gender balance clearly constitutes an important limitation of this thesis.

Finally, it proved difficult to obtain access to and conduct empirical research about sensitive matters such as the rise of transnational criminality, the presence of radical Islamists in northern Mali or state infiltration in drug smuggling networks. I circumvented this difficulty to some extent by referring to publications of other scholars who had better access to important respondents in this respect. Hence, I certainly owe a debt of gratitude to researchers who gathered empirical data in these difficult circumstances.

1.3.4. Outline of the book

This thesis consists of three main sections. The first two sections focus on the period preceding the 2012 crisis, while the final part covers the five-year period thereafter.

The first part (Chapter 2) examines the emergence of Mali's heterarchical order and illustrates hybrid patterns of public service delivery, with a specific focus on security.

The second and core part examines whether and how patterns of political participation, representation and accountability shaped through the party system (Chapter 3), the legislature (Chapter 4) and municipal democratic institutions (Chapter 5) shored up Malian state legitimacy, against the background of the emerging heterarchical order.

The third part (Chapter 6) examines the anchoring of Mali's heterarchical order in the years that followed the 2012 crisis, despite considerable international efforts in support of the state.

In the general conclusions (Chapter 7), I return to the overarching research question and ensuing sub-questions presented in this introductory chapter.