*'Qui c'est ce monsieur Mali
qui remplace les Francais?'*

Analyzing the Kel Tamasheq
conflict of Mali
from the perspective of identity

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OI VA VOI[1,2]

Hora

It's all about identity
Construction of a family
Of difference and simile
What I give you and you give me

It's all about identity
This tribal sense of dignity
Of tolerance and unity
Of prejudice and bigotry

It's all about identity
A web of who we'd like to be
Let's cut and paste our memory
A dark and timeless industry

It's all about identity
A strength and solidarity
A dazed, confused desire to find
A place and time in history

It's all about identity
Or how the sheer majority
Impose a predetermined badge
And wait to judge you silently

It's all about identity
A retrospective odyssey
But where I live and who I meet
Are stronger in defining me

From the album: Laughter Through Tears (2003)

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[1] Saint Girons, 2008:27
[2] Oi Va Voi is a Klezmer/dance band influenced by folk music from eastern Europe. The band originates from London and most of the members have a Jewish background.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When writing the acknowledgements, I cannot help to ponder over the fact that I am so grateful that this work is now completed. The patience the people close to me have showed was unending. And so, the list of people I want to thank is quite extensive. Yet, I especially want to thank Peter Oosterveer, with whom I regularly discussed the content as well as the process I went through working on this thesis. I also want to thank my aunt Elizabeth Saltet. Though, or perhaps because? she must have travelled half Europe these last few months, she somehow had time to have a look at my English to point out the worst mistakes. She told me that my English writing is more Franglais than Dunglish… interesting! The third person I want to sincerely thank, for the inspiring conversations we had and his infinite patience, is my supervisor Henk van Houtum. Obviously, there are many other people who kindly contributed to the, sometimes tough, writing process I have been through. I will thank them personally. I sincerely that everyone who lent a hand will stay around as long as possible; life is a lot more fun with them!

Many students see the thesis as something bigger than the final assignment of their scientific education. I am no exception. Like these students I wish that my report will be of use to the world. Generally speaking, world peace is the responsibility of Miss World, and though my goal was a little less high-minded, I still wanted this analysis to contribute to sustainable conflict resolution by the creation of awareness and understanding of the situation for the few people interested in the field of democratisation, identity based conflict and state-minority dynamics in Western Africa. Well… we shall see how useful this paper will turn out to be now it is finished and ready to be published. Fortunately, this thesis has already gloriously succeeded in one thing. I, myself, have learnt a lot from it. Every drop of sweat, every sleepless night, every date with the people I love that I had to cancel, every time that the sun smiled at me through the window, every tear that I dropped on my desktop, and every time I was suddenly happy being alone, analysing something my heart was in... it was so worth it. Yes, the blood, sweat and tears, the energy I put into this report, not always useful to the actual final result, but certainly essential in the ongoing learning process with regard to my way of working... it was worth it.

Initially, this thesis was a scientific analysis of the stereotypes that I was left from an early childhood in West Africa. During the process of writing it became more and more a search for a way to combine my intrinsic beliefs with the field of work I am interested in. The bigger lesson I have learnt is both simple and obvious: to find the pearls in your live you just have to work on steadily and stay alert to the possibilities around you.

And suddenly, this thesis is finished and therefore my study is completed. And so it is time for something different. With a bit more knowledge of the problem of northern Mali and my way of working, I am looking forward to closing the chapter of my study of Conflicts, Territories and Identities and I am longing for a working live. So, enough theory for now and off we go, time to discover the world of working practice.

Map of Mali[3]

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[3] Wiki of Mali. Retrieved from http://lcfuncw.pbworks.com/Mali Visited in January 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This theoretical explorative study analyses the role of identity in the conflict between the sedentary Bambaran majority and the nomadic Kel Tamasheq minority of Mali. Two dominant theories on identity are used to analyse this conflict. The first theory concerns the cultural deterministic theory of Samuel P. Huntington, i.e. identity as a primordial concept. The second theory regards the theory of Amartya Sen, i.e. here identity has a more ambiguous role as a subject to rational and moral choice within the situation. Both theories are used to analyse identity features and the role of the terrain from the beginning of the conflict, in 1963, until today. Four identity features are used: collective history, language, religion, and lifestyle. The fifth factor in the analysis is the role of the geographical area where the conflict takes place. Considered factors are extensively mentioned in literature about the low intensity conflict. At first sight the identity features seem to play an important explanatory role in the conflict cause. Though, studying the conflict more profoundly it appeared that the difference in identity between the nationwide sedentary Bambara identity and the nomadic identity of the Kel Tamasheq minority did or does not play a determining role in the conflict. Yet, what does play an unambiguous role is the repressive nationalizing policy by the Bambaran majority government, named Bambarafication.

CHAPTER 1   THE PROBLEM OF THE NORTH

Ever since my childhood in the Malian Sahel, I feel attracted to the mythical atmosphere around the Tamasheq, generally known as the Kel Tamasheq or the Kel Tagelmoust 'the people of the veil'. In the early 90s, at the time of the first Tamasheq Rebellion, I lived with my parents in Niono, a small town at the end of the blacked topped road from the capital Bamako up north. Niono is one of the villages lying on the flood line of the desert, 100 kilometres north of Ségou. During the second Tamasheq war, the Dutch development workers were forbidden by the Dutch embassy, to travel through the Tamasheq region. As the region started north of our village, it was strongly advised by the Dutch embassy, not to travel further north than the village.

Back in those years I listened fascinated to the wild and frightening stories about the violent Tamasheq rebellion. Due to the fact that most people in Niono belonged to the Mandé speaking black African population of Mali (Abbink & Hesselink, 1998), few people were well informed about what was happening in the north among the Tamasheq or the white Africans. Niono, like most of the Mandé villages, was relying on the vigorous rumours that were circulating. The vivid stories were fed by the merchants and troops of the black African government, that passed through the town on their way north and back. Hence, the atmosphere that surrounded the nomads and their strife had a grand mythical load. In the eyes of a ten year old kid, and I guess more people without a notion of what was really happening, the Kel Tamasheq were an extremely violent tribe, intangible by their magical powers. I scarcely saw Tamasheq nomads myself, only sometimes on the weekly Sunday camel market.

When I moved with my family to the Netherlands, I brought my West African roots and the interest for the so-called *problème du Nord* along. I tried to keep informed by the internet, and occasionally we were informed about the situation by friends, who worked in or travelled through the area. As news from the country barely reached us by the regular media, the region does not seem to be of much importance to the international community.

At present the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) discourages travelling towards the northern territories of Mali. This is not exceptional, since the travel advice has generally been negative in the past decades. Currently, the reasons for this are explained by the MFA as follows:

> '*The political and security situation in the north has deteriorated. During 2008 the number of armed robberies related to Tamasheq rebels, drug trafficking gangs and*

terrorist groups in northern Mali has increased. In December 2008, two Canadian diplomats were kidnapped, and in January 2009, four Western tourists kidnapped. On November 25, 2009 a Frenchman was kidnapped in Menaka (the Gao region). All the abductions are carried out by the terrorist group AQIM (Al Qaeda in the country of the Islamic Maghreb). One tourist was eventually murdered by AQIM, the two other tourists and the diplomats were transferred to the Malian authorities, after a detention of several months. At present there is a risk that such abductions occur again.'[4]

As before mentioned, this situation is not exceptional for the region. From the little research that I did, I knew that there was often trouble in the area; since the independence in 1960 violent skirmishes took place occasionally (Abbink & Hesselink, 1998). Fifteen years ago causes of unrest could be found in the Kel Tamasheq Rebellions, nowadays it seems more a problem of terrorism and drug trafficking gangs than a Kel Tamasheq issue. Yet, brutal violence like the 1963 Adagh Rebellion and the 1990-1996 Kel Tamasheq Rebellion is not the issue in these times. In the new millennium there is still no peace in the desert region of Mali, and 'le problème du nord' or 'the problem of the north' (Berge, 1993), as the Malians call it, is still smouldering.

Though, I began to doubt the magical powers of the Kel Tamasheq over the years, their mythical image has stayed with me until today. What exactly is going on in that region that never seems to be quiet, and why unrest is still smoldering seems to be hidden 'in a haze of dust' (Lecocq & Schrijver, 2008).

Today, I have the opportunity to look for a hopefully less coloured image of the rebellion. By studying the literature and interviewing the experts about the problem of the north, I go back to the region where I grew up. This time in search of a hopefully completer vision of what happened and still is happening, without the frightening violent stereotypes. A vision that includes a better understanding of the role of the state of Mali and its Kel Tamasheq minority as humans instead of dark knights with magical powers. First of all, an outline of the actors and the main theoretical concept of the thesis, followed by the main problem, on which element of the unrest I will focus in this thesis and the relevance the study of this problem.

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[4] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Official website: countries and travel section. 20 January 2010. Visited on 16-04-2010. http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/Reizen_en_Landen/Reisadviezen/Reisadviezen_alfabetisch/M/Mali

1.1   The Actors on Stage

At the start of the second rebellion in 1990, the French press portrayed the Kel Tamasheq by striking photographs of veiled nomads on camels with Kalashnikovs in their hands; images highly appealing to the imagination. That was the reason that the news, from a country that hardly anybody knew, of yet another rebellion and famine in Africa, also scarcely reached Europe at the time of the first Gulf War (1990-1991). News about the region mainly hit France, for the reason that it all took place on the former colonial territories of the country. The occurrences in the desert were hidden behind a mysterious veil of stereotypes like 'The old mystic Saharans fight to regain their freedom' and 'the warriors seem to vanish into the Saharan sands after each attack' (Boilley, 1999). These images from the French media are incredibly similar to the myths that were circulating in our Sahelian village Niono. But then, who were these Kel Tamasheq nomads? Here follows a rough definition of the Kel Tamasheq and the other actor of the case, the central government of Mali.

The Kel Tamasheq are nomads with Berber ancestors that inhabit the various deserts of the Sahara. Before the wave of independence from the colonial powers in the sixties, these nomads lived an autonomous prosperous life. They were also seen as the nobles of the desert. Yet by the drawing of the boundaries to demarcate the newly formed African states in 1960, resulting in the minority position for many nations, and especially the severe droughts of the seventies and eighties, turned the once-rich aristocratic people of the desert into a marginalized minority.

The country that gives home to the second largest population of Kel Tamasheq is Mali. This late agricultural state[5] (Warren, 2003) is located in the Sahel of West Africa. Desert and steppe cover 65% of its territories.[6] Mali is one of the five free nations of the continent. According to Freedom House this means "A free country is one where there is broad scope for open political competition, a climate of respect for civil liberties, significant independent civic life, and independent media."[7] This explains why, despite belonging to the twenty-five poorest countries in the world, its multiparty democracy (since 1992) is an example for the continent (Abbink & Hesselink, 1998).

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[5] Late agrarian state means that the degree of de-agrarianisation is low and therefore the country is dependent on its sedentair population, in contrast with more modern countries who are more industrialized.
[6] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). World Factbook. Africa - Mali. January 2009. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html Visited on 20th of November 2009.
[7] Freedom house. Map of freedom in the world 2009. Retrieved from http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2009 Visited on 3rd of November 2009.

For an elaborated definition on the Kel Tamasheq and the African state of Mali, I refer to chapter four; the context chapter of the thesis. It is now time to concentrate on the conflict that brings the above mentioned actors and the concept of identity together; the problem of the north as it is euphemistically called by the majority of the Malians (Berge, 1993).

1.2   The problem of the north

The problem of the north is one of the least recognized conflicts, though it is one of the most geographically extensive conflicts of the African continent (Berge, 1993). In the past fifty years the situation has not been stable in the northern territories of Mali. Earlier, the problem appeared to be conflicting ideas of identity[8] between the Kel Tamasheq nomads of the northern desert region, i.e. the Azawagh[9], and the central Malian government (Lecocq, 2002). Recently, these last ten years, new actors have appeared on the stage of the desert region in Mali, e.g. drug trafficking and fundamentalist schools. This still makes it difficult to control the region for the central Malian government (Saint Girons, 2008).

According to Robert Pringle (2006), ambassador of the United States in Mali from 1987 to 1990, the problem of the northern desert region, where the peoples live relatively secluded from the rest of the country, is one of the most serious threats to stability in this country. He writes in his paper about example democracy in Mali that although Mali is an illustration of a working democracy in Africa, it has two serious threats. The first threat concerns the fact that Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world.[10] The second threat concerns the problem of the north, which causes an explosive situation that is largely underestimated, also by the Malian inhabitants. Besides the fact that the enduring poverty of the country undermines democracy, the government cannot control the northern territories and this is a second threat to its democracy. The issue is hard to solve internally, and external interventions like the Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara of the United States (OEF Trans Sahara) do not seem to have any grip of the situation either.

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[8] According to Stets and Burke (2009) the social construct of identity is based on three pillars, namely the personal-identity, the role-identity and group-based-identity. From these three pillars an image of the self is derived by self-categorisation. As this thesis will elaborate on conflict between group-based-identities, identity here refers to particularly social identity derived from group-membership.
[9] This region refers to the desert parts where the Tamasheq speaking nomads live. The territory does not coincide with the public administrative structures of the different states in which it lies, subsequently Mali, Niger and Algeria. In this thesis the term Azawagh refers to the Azawagh part of Mali, which concerns the Kidal region.
[10] Mali is rated as number 174 if 177 countries ranked in the UNDP table (Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006 Country Report Mali)

In my search to understand the northern problem I focus on the major actors who have been at the heart of the problem since the independence of Mali in 1960, i.e. the Kel Tamasheq and the central government. What is the past and present of the Kel Tamasheq nomads in the conflict? As it seems that the government is not able to control the area, nor it was in the past, than what is its past and present role in the region? As the conflict has been the fought out along the cleavage of the different identities of the Kel Tamasheq and the government for years, I will study the role of identity in the conflict. Subsequently, the main question of this thesis is formulated as follows 'What is the role of identity in the Kel Tamasheq conflict of Mali?' As the identity of the government is the majority identity, the sub question is easily derived from the main question; 'What is the influence of the Bambaran majority government on the minority identity of the Kel Tamasheq?'

The reflections on the reason behind the research question, governmental influence on minority identity, are based on my personal interest in the current policy in the area of international relations regarding conflict. Though, Crocker (2007) states that identity is almost never a direct cause of conflict, there is no clear view in international politics if strong identity provokes conflict or the other way round: that conflict provokes a strong identity. Applying this to the case of northern Mali, you can see the same doubt about the question if the Kel Tamasheq identity is seen as the cause of conflict, or on the other hand, if the Kel Tamasheq identity polarizes by governmental policy or the threatening situation of the last decade. (Cultural) identity plays an important and rather ambiguous role in contemporary international politics, and I want to study this in the case of Mali.

Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the subsequent changing world order, there was a need for new theories of conflict. Reasons of conflict were not based on economical causes anymore. Hence after the break down of the bipolar world structure, identity-based theories became increasingly popular in the conflict analysis. In order to study the role of identity in this conflict I used these two theories that are dominant in the current debate on the role of identity in conflict. The theory of 'The Clash of Civilizations' by Samuel Huntington and the 'Identity, the Illusion of Destiny' theory by Amartya Sen. The theory of Huntington searched for conflict causes in culture deterministic features. In the nineties his theory influenced thinking about conflicts. Foreign policy in these times is largely based on Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization theory (1997). And conflicts were seen in terms as a clash of civilizations, fought out along the line of identity cleavages as the West/Islam, tribal versus non tribal world, democracy versus dictatorship (Barber, 2003). Former president George Bush in particular based his Foreign Policy along these primordial principles. In this thesis I want to use Huntington's theory to analyze the unrest in northern Mali. Besides Huntington, whose theories are controversial but still of

influence today, I will use the more constructivist theory of Amartya Sen as opposed to Huntingdon's view. Where Huntington's theory sees cultural identity in an essentialist light, Sen defines identity as an ambiguous concept that differs per situation. Using these rather contradictory theories I will analyze the conflict.[11]

As mentioned before there is no general comprehensive vision of the conflict in northern Mali, and the discussion on the role of identity in this conflict seems to stand example for the discussion on the role of identity in conflict worldwide. Therefore this study is very relevant to the inhabitants of the Azawagh, to democracy in Mali, to the stability of the region and the world.

Obviously, the problem of the north is a relevant issue to the people who live there. Besides the Kel Tamasheq, this concerns the Songhai, the Bella, the Peul and the Maures (Boilley, 1999). After the reign of the authoritarian presidents before democracy in 1992, the severe droughts in the seventies and eighties, the first rebellion and the second rebellion, the peoples who live in the area need stability. It is already a harsh area to live in, and after these decades of instability there are not many reserves left, which makes that the temptation to occasionally make a little money from drug trafficking becomes more and more likely for marginalized people.

The problem of the north is also a national problem. The abovementioned quotation of Robert Pringle indicates that the unrest in the Azawagh is not only a local problem, but also a national problem due to the threat to democracy. This national problem is, in its turn, a problem for neighbouring countries facing similar problems with the nomads, drug traffic and Al Qaeda. Instability in the state of Mali threatens the delicate stability of the region. The situation is smouldering but explosive. Conflict in this area would be devastating, as the surrounding states belong to the poorest countries in the world,[12] and the Kel Tamasheq are scattered over the Saharan countries Mauritania, Algeria, Libya and the Sahelian countries of Burkina Faso and Niger. The situation in Niger is much more violent than in Mali (Saint Girons, 2008). The third level of the problem is the international level. Country borders, as defined in the Peace of Westphalia in 1682, are no longer important because of globalization and the evolving transnational movements as Al Qaeda and drugs trafficking organization do not operate along the criteria of these borders anymore. Thus safety in distant parts of the world becomes very relevant to local politics of safety.

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[11] The theories are associated with conflicting philosophical schools of thought as determinism and constructivism. Yet, I will not delve deeply into a theoretical discourse between the schools of thought from which these theories arise. I use the two leading visions on identity purely to explore this conflict.

[12] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). World factbook. Africa - Mali. January 2009. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html Visited on 20th of November 2009.

This literature study is relevant for international policymakers, to be aware of the different perspectives in which you can see the conflict. These are the cultural deterministic and the constructivist approach. The first perspective identity of the actors in the conflict is rather reactive and rigid to developments in the area; subsequently this does not leave much room for changes. In the light of the other approach, the identity theory of Sen, identity is ambiguous and changeable, which leaves more room for negotiation, for example with local and international actors on the stage.

In addition to the abovementioned scientific discussion between essentialism and constructivism, this thesis contributes to conflict analyses, because it analyses a long term conflict that is largely underestimated (Berge, 1996). Keeping the delicate situation in mind, this thesis aims on the one hand to generate awareness of the alarming situation for all involved actors, e.g. the government of Mali, NGOs that operate in the area (the central field office of ICCO in West Africa), international attendance like the Operation Enduring Freedom Trans Sahara of the United States (OEF Trans Sahara) or commercial concerns interested in the possible oil reserves at the place (Lecocq, 2002). On the other hand it pursues an explanation for the conflict in terms of identity. When involved actors and policymakers base their policies on a in-depth knowledge of the situation, and when they understand the identity of the Kel Tamasheq and other involved actors they are dealing with, in that case the intervention will be more efficient. And mutual understanding will pave the way for common goals like the control of the situation up north.

After this introduction to the subject matter and the relevance of it, the next chapter will address the structure of the paper and the methods used to carry out the research on the conflict per sub-question.

CHAPTER 2   METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

2.1   A Qualitative Single Country Study

During the fifties and sixties a wave of independence swept over West Africa. Boundaries were drawn between newly formed African states, peoples and resources were allocated to a newly formed authoritarian government. The desert region where the Kel Tamasheq lived, was divided by the borders of the following countries: Niger, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Burkina Faso (Lecocq, 2002). Though, the Sahara desert can show many faces, the area where the Kel Tamasheq lived was in general dry and with a low population density. The countries listed above have in common that they face the same problems regarding the Kel Tamasheq, and recently the drug trade and terrorism. Initially the idea of this thesis was to compare the Kel Tamasheq identities of the different countries they live in. Than the question would be: what would cause the differing identities? Could it be the result of the different governments that they have to deal with? Yet, this study would turn out to be a PhD dissertation. Consequently, the scope of the thesis is limited to a single-country study for practical reasons like time and money. Landman (2003) states in his book 'Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics' that 'single-country studies provide contextual description, provide new classifications, generate hypotheses, confirm or infirm existing theories, and explain the presence of defiant countries identified through cross-national comparison'. In this study I will search for the confirmation or infirmation of the two theories which are used to analyze the situation. Therefore, this theoretic explorative study could generate hypotheses, in case of further research, about the situations in the surrounding countries. In the context of present study the single-country analysis is used for a theoretical exploration on the role of identity in conflict.

Originally I had the plan to do fieldwork in Niger, the country with the largest population Kel Tamasheq. However, this proved to be too dangerous as the field office of Oxfam Novib did not want to take any responsibility for a trainee. The issue is simply too delicate to mention in the streets of the capital Niamey. E.g. Moussa Kaka, a reporter of Radio France International (RFI) was kept in custody for nine months in 2008. According to RFI 'Kaka was originally charged with "complicity and undermining the authority of the state" for being in contact with Kel Tamasheq rebels, a necessary part of his work as a journalist'.[13] The alternative plan was to go to Mali, which contains the second largest population Kel Tamasheq. I had an interview with Baz Lecocq about his dissertation on the conflict in Mali, and he strongly discouraged me to go, on my own, to Kidal, one of few cities in Mali with mainly Kel Tamasheq

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[13] Radio France International. October 2007. Retrieved from http://www.rfi.fr/actuen/articles/106/article_1790.asp
Visited on 18-02-2010.

inhabitants. The reason for this is that it is a very difficult area, the people are extremely poor and it is not easy to contact them. With these advices I decided to stay in the Netherlands and start with an exploratory theoretical desktop study, and choose Mali as a case, due to the fact that I had lived there. Who knows where it may take me later on…

This chapter describes the methods to study the central thesis question. To answer the main question there are several sub-questions to study first. Each chapter tries to find answers to these sub-questions. Chapter three treats the question 'What is the role of identity in conflict according to Samuel Huntington and Amartya Sen?', chapter four treats the question 'How could the problem of the north be explained using the two identity theories?' chapter five determines which of the two theories has the most credible explanation of the central question 'What is the influence of the government of Mali on identity (formation) of the Kel Tamasheq minority?'. Un chapter six the conclusions are presented. Below is described, per chapter, what method is used to study the sub-questions.

2.2   Content of the chapters

Chapter three – Theoretical framework: Identity in conflict according to Samuel Huntington and Amartya Sen
The third chapter contains the theoretical framework of the thesis. It contains a description of the two main theories on identity by Huntington and Sen, which will be used to find an answer to the main question. The chapter starts with Samuel Huntington's controversial 'Clash of Civilization' theory (1997). His well-known essentialist theory will be used to position the theory of identity and violence by Amartya Sen (2006) and the theory of James Scott (1998, 2009) to stress the geographical aspects of identity.

The chosen theories to analyze this conflict could have focused on the political, socio-economical or tribal versus national theories to study the concept. However, I choose two theories based on identity, because identity seems to vary from situation to situation without the need to stick to stereotypes by discriminative concepts as tribes or political groups. The term identity can refer to the national political features of a group without excluding the local cultural factors. And it is exactly the question which features of the identity are made salient for the conflict that is of interest in this thesis. This ambiguous (Sen's theory) or rigid (Huntington's theory) character of identity is studied through the case of northern Mali.

Methodology and data

The method used to obtain information about the theories is based on a literature study of primary, secondary literature and one audiovisual piece of information; namely the lecture by Sen at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London July 27th 2006.[14] The theories are briefly described in the key terms that the researcher considered relevant in the context of this thesis. The theory of Huntington will be described according to what he wrote in his book 'The Clash of Civilizations', the discussion that it brought about in reviews of the book. The theory of Huntington will be used to position the identity theory of Amartya Sen. The theory of Sen will be described according to what he wrote in his book 'Identity and Violence, the Illusion of Destiny' (2006), the lecture he gave at the ICA in London, and the reaction on his theory by others. In addition to the theory of Sen, a short description concerning a theory of identity and the influence of geography by James Scott is added. In so doing, the geographical feature of identity is stressed. This addition is necessary, because Sen's theory mentions the role of geographical identity only briefly, and James Scott does this extensively in his book 'The Art of Not Being Governed' (1998). In the context of the relation between the state and the minority at stake, the geographical feature of identity is stressed because the region where the conflict is situated plays a crucial role in every day desert life, for it is exceptionally harsh. The chapter closes with two short operationalisations of identity, one by Huntington and one by Sen. In the next chapter these operationalisations will be determined to see if they can help to find an answer to the main question.

Chapter 4 - The problem of the north: What is the identity of the Kel Tamasheq? What is the identity of Mali? What is the problem of the north?

The fourth chapter elaborates on the case of the problem of the north. This section contains three sub-questions. This section concerns the context questions, 'What is the Kel Tamasheq identity?', 'What is the identity of the national government?' and 'What is the profile of the conflict?' This results in a short profile of the Kel Tamasheq, the profile of Mali and the history of the conflict in a nutshell. For the profile of the Kel Tamasheq, the general history of Kel Tamasheq culture, the socio-political features, the Kel Tamasheq Diaspora, the geography of the area they live in, the demographics and the social-economical features are described. The section concerning the government of the African state of Mali describes a characterization of Mali and its modernization and democratization processes. The section of the third sub-question illustrates the major developments of the conflict, narrates the story of the conflict chronologically; from the onset of the conflict till today four major events are distinguishable; the First Tamasheq strife during 1963 in Mali, after this the endemic resistance during the droughts of the seventies and eighties, followed by the First Tamasheq War in the nineties and the last event concerns the developments in the international dimension of the new millennium. (Boilley, 1999)

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[14] http://www.ica.org.uk/Amartya%20Sen:%20British%20Identity+3754.twl

The data

Much of the information, primary literature, secondary literature and audiovisual information, of this thesis is gained by desktop research. I also visited the Library of the African Studies Centre (ASC) in Leiden, and the Library of Royal Tropical Institute (RTI) in Amsterdam.

After an intensive search for experts in the field of the subject, within Dutch NGOs (Oxfam Novib, ICCO, Pax Christi etc), the Dutch ministry of the Foreign Affairs, specialized organizations like the ASC and RTI, and universities I found a few experts on the subject. When the expert lived in Europe, not too far away, I contacted him or her for an interview. The people I sent an invitation to were more than willing to have a conversation with me. So I conducted five semi-structured interviews with experts on the subject of the Kel Tamasheq and/or the African State to construct the case and test the theory. Except for Gunnvor Berge (University of Uppsala) and Jeremy Keenan[15] (University of Bristol, Saharan Studies Program) who were too far away at that time, I had extensive interviews with the other experts which I was lucky to find. In the appendices there is more information on the interviews. Here I only mention the interviewees and their profession. Baz Lecocq (Department of Contemporary History at the Gent University, Belgium), Jan Ruyssenaars (Senior Lobbyist at Oxfam Novib, Division West African), Anne Saint Girons (Translator and Writer of the book 'Les Rebellions Touareges'), Tinariwen (Internationally known Kel Tamasheq group from the Adrar des Ifhogas) and dr. ir. Peter J.M. Oosterveer (Senior Lecturer at Wageningen Unversity). Additional research was done on the internet for (YouTube-)videos, blogs and newspaper articles. And lastly I had three skype discussion on the implementation of identity theories on the case with Anne Saint Girons to safeguard the internal validity of the study.

Methodology - Triangulation

I choose this non experimental and explanatory research to study which of the two theories is applicable to the situation in Mali. The selection criteria for the used data in the study are based on triangulation by sources, methods and theories. Triangulation stands for the principle that the information used for interpretation of the situation, is based on overlapping data. Consequently, the more sources refer to the same information, the more convergence in the findings and the higher the credibility of the information will be. Therefore, overlapping data is seen as more reliable than the non-overlapping data. There are four kinds of triangulation distinguishable, namely triangulation of source, method, investigators and triangulation of theories (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). In the case of this study, the data is gained from cross validation of different sources (e.g. same information by quotations of different interviewees or books)

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[15] With Jeremy Keenan I had a short discussion on the phone.

and triangulation of methods (i.e. primary literature, secondary literature, audiovisual information and interviewees).

The reason why triangulation fitted this thesis best, is related to the reason that the unrest in northern Mali is difficult to determine. There is not much attention for the distant problem, fieldwork in the area appeared difficult, and there is little unambiguous information about it. Consequently, a theoretical explorative study to provide a solid background to generate hypotheses for further studies seems necessary. Logically, for this kind of case study, triangulation is ideally suited for the cross validation of the data. Using information from various sources, methods and theories; different perspectives on the subject emerged. Subsequently, triangulation is used to compare the information, and to come to the most unambiguous and credible perspective.

Moreover, it turned out to be difficult to gain direct information, by dept interviews, of Kel Tamasheq or Malian policymakers in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, in the end it was more efficient to interview experts than people who really are involved in the delicate issue, e.g. Kel Tamasheq or Malian policy makers. Besides the matter that the Kel Tamasheq you may encounter here in the Netherlands, possibly represent a biased opinion, and probably not the vision of the average Kel Tamasheq in Mali. They do not talk about the issues back home easily. Apparently giving interviews about the situation there is not always without danger, so I was told by the manager of the Kel Tamasheq group Tinariwen. The tour manager himself was arrested three times by the French police, but then released after a few days without any clear reasons. According to him, it had to do with the fact that he very frequently stayed in Kel Tamasheq area. Yet, he did speak about the situation, contrary to the group members, who were not eager to talk about it. Hence, the choice for experts was an efficient one, for the reason that it was quite easy to obtain detailed information, and to exchange ideas on a theoretical level. However, the information achieved by the experts still had to be triangulated with literature and the perspectives of other interviewees.

Despite the fact that data have been selected carefully, and the method tries to enhance the plausibility of the study, biases could be present. A distorted image of the story could be provoked by the system of selection. Some issues I deliberately ignored, because it was delicately contradicted by different interviewees, and there was not much unambiguous information available.[16]

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[16] E.g. The Banana Theory of Terrorism by Jeremy Keenan (2007). In a nutshell, this theory states that the United States are intervening in the Sahara, with the OEF Trans Sahara Initiative, based on the same reasons (to create a power vacuum to control the resources) as they did in Iraq. Different sources tell different stories about this issue. Some experts perceived it as an extreme theory; with perhaps true elements, but also based on conspiracy theories.

Chapter five – Minority versus national identity: the application of the theories on the problem of the north

This chapter concerns the application of the two theories. How could the conflict of the north be explained using the two identity theories? The two divergent operationalisations of identity by Huntington, Sen and Scott, described in chapter three, will be applied to the knowledge gained by the elaboration on the sub-questions of chapter four. This results in an explanation of the conflict according to Huntington and an explanation of the conflict according to Sen.

Methodology

This section concerns the comparison of the two visions on identity in the conflict. No new information is used for this section, as it tries to interpret the outcome of the preceding chapters. The argumentation of is based on triangulation of sources. Consequently, this means that the interpretation of the theories is based on the information of the overlapping data of the previous chapter. This section determines which of the two theories explains the main question best. The selection criteria for the best theory are based on the credibility of the theories, i.e. which theory is based on the largest extend of convergent data. The more data are applicable to the theory, the higher the credibility, and the more reliable the interpretation via that theory.

Chapter 6 - Conclusive remarks

The sixth and final chapter draws the conclusive remarks about the influence of the government on the (changing?) Kel Tamasheq identity. Subsequently, it tries to answer the questions of the introduction, discusses the shortcomings of the study, and touches upon themes that need further investigation in the future.

Due to the lack of empirical evidence, and due to the fact that his main focus lies on Niger and Algeria in stead of Mali, I did not come to a conclusion about this theory. Hence, I only mention it aside. Just as the other new actors on the stage, the drug trafficking and terrorism, in the field. The attendance of these new players in the region is of influence on the whole situation; however I focus on the relation between the central government and the Kel Tamasheq minority. For further research it would be very interesting to study the impact of the new players on the identity of the Tamasheq.

CHAPTER 3   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

IDENTITY AND CONFLICT ACCORDING TO SAMUEL HUNTINGTON
AND AMARTYA SEN

Chapter 3 describes the search for a definition of the concept of identity according to which hypotheses will be formulated on the problem of the north. In so doing, this chapter searches for applied theories to analyse the situation in Northern Mali.

Today the concept of identity is a common field of study. However, identity has also become an umbrella term used within various disciplines of social sciences. Huddy (2001) cites in the introduction of her paper, on the relation between identity and political identity, the various applications of identity in social science. The concept of identity has been subject to change over the years. Taking into account the postmodernist philosophies of this day and age, the concept of identity is seen as variable through time and situations. From the fixed design of identity along the liberal humanistic movements of the 18th century it changed into a fluid and socially constructed concept in these postmodern times. The nuances in the research field differ per scientific area and per philosophical movement (Huddy, 2001).

In their book Identity Theory (2009) sociologists Stets and Burke describe the fundaments of the conception of identity, i.e. they describe 'who one is'. A person sees her or his identity as a cluster of meaningful concepts brought together by the structured society it lives in. According to the two sociologists the social construct of identity is based on three pillars, namely the personal-identity, the role-identity and group-based-identity. From these three pillars an image of the self is derived by self-categorisation. As this thesis will elaborate on conflict between group-based-identities, identity here refers to particularly social identity. In so doing, identity as referred to in the upcoming chapters, is derived from group-membership, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

This chapter on the theoretical framework contains an overview of the identity debate and two hypotheses to apply on the case of the Kel Tamasheq conflict. First, the turbulent nineties are discussed. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world order changed as well as the manner of warfare. International relations, before analysed in terms of economic dependence were now seen in the light of identity politics. After the description of this breaking point in world order and the characteristics of new wars, two controversial theories about identity will be discussed. These are the theories of Samuel Huntington and Amartya Sen; the theories can be seen in the light of the two oppositional philosophical movements, respectively

primoridalism and constructivism. Finally, at the end of this chapter two hypotheses are formulated on the basis of Huntington's and Sen's theories.

3.1   The end of History and the Beginning of Modern Warfare

Post Cold War - Changing perspectives of international relations.
From a world structured by ideology to a world structured by identity.
In 1992, the American political scientist and philosopher Francis Fukuyama wrote a book with the title 'The End of History and the Last Man'. In his book he described how the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 ended the bipolar world order. The Cold War was no more. The tension, which arose within the power vacuum left by the Second World War in 1946, was based on a severe security dilemma between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (SU). Until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the Cold War between the two superpowers was fought out in the peripheries. Although the tensions surrounding the arms race were occasionally towering, there was never a direct confrontation. By the end of the Cold War in the eighties, the Soviet Union collapsed, despite the glasnost and perestroika programs of Gorbachev, and the bipolar world order turned into a multi-polar and polycentric world order.
The fall of the Soviet Union symbolized the failure of communism and the victory of the liberal alliance. Francis Fukuyama was convinced that with the fall of the wall, the ideological evolution ended with a triumph for the Western liberal ideas, which had proved to be the strongest. Western values like democracy and free market economy would soon be universal values. The bipolar power structure during the Cold War turned into a unipolar world order with the United States as its hegemony.

Earlier Karl Marx spoke of 'The End of History', but in his application of the theory he thought communism to be the last remaining ideology. The idea that history has a start, a middle and an end, derives from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. By the beginning of the 19th century, Hegel stated that the world would have to go through different phases in order to achieve the end. After the era of slavery and religious wars there would remain just one ideology. Hegel thought the French Revolution, where the fundaments of liberal democracy have been laid, heralded the end of history (Fennema, 1995).

The two world wars and the victory on absolutism, fascism contributed to a further strengthening of the liberal structure. At the end of history, the ultimate liberal state, a legal system which assured the right to freedom and democracy in the sense that the state had a mandate from the people. This way no conflict would be needed, due to the fact that equality eliminated all contradictions and all needs were

met. History, in the eye of Fukuyama, was driven by contradictions, and if these contradictions no longer exist, history would come to an end.

At 'the End of History' not all countries have necessarily changed into thriving liberal democracies, but they have ceased to claim that there is a better alternative. 'International Life' would, according to Fukuyama and his preceding theorists, be lived more in economic terms than in political or strategic terms. Nations would not have the need to colonize or conquer each other anymore; there are no ideological reasons for conflict. So the prediction of Fukuyama came down to: more economic cooperation, less conflict between states. The conflicts that have flared up, caused by hostile groups such as terrorists, Fukuyama thought them to be a thing of in the past (Fukuyama, 1992).

With the changing world order, and the prosperous Western society at the top of the world order, many democracies turned shared out a peace dividend in the form of a large discount on the defence budget. However, the euphoric feelings of the nineties were violently disrupted by the war in former Yugoslavia (1991-1995) and the genocide in Rwanda (1994). Apparently, there was still conflict, which proved that 'the End of History' had not yet come.[17]

So, the ideological feathers are shed and the nature of international relations and conflict changed. The changing world order ensured neither a bipolar nor a unipolar, but a multipolar world structure. This means that the power at the international level had become fragmented since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Instead of the Western world as the centre of (liberal) world power after 1989, the world became polycentric with non governmental actors as transnational organisations playing a larger role than expected (Nye Jr., 2007).

In contrast to before 1990, the world after the Cold War shows fewer interstate wars. The Confederation of the United Nations has a role in this, but to the intrastate wars, fought out by religious or ethnic minorities against the state, there is no answer as yet. Mary Kaldor describes the differences between 'New and Old Wars' in her essay (1998). The central argument of her paper is that the 80's and 90's of the 20th century brought along a new kind of war, including a new type of organized violence. The 'New War' relates to globalization and the geographical regions of Eastern Europe and Africa. According to Kaldor the boundaries between Old Wars and New Wars are blurred. Old Wars are often defined as

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[17] Multiculturalism and capitalism are the main paradigms of this time. Though, in recent years, there is a fertile breeding ground, because of the economic decline and individualization, for populism. The Flemish philosopher Mark Heirman points out that it is not merely a response to a threat from the Muslim community, as in Western countries as well as in Muslim countries religious and ethnic opposition to modernity and liberalism increase (2009).

violence between states or organized political groups for political motives. New Wars consist of organized crime and human rights violations. New Wars are often seen as local 'low intensity', privatized wars or informal conflicts, and they often have transnational connections.

Kaldor's theory is based on her main statement that the wars must be seen in the context of globalization. Global interconnectedness, including the emergence of new information technologies, is an inevitable trend in the world now. The end of the Cold War was not so much caused by the victory of liberalism to communism, but rather it was caused by the increasing globalization. Not the end of the Cold War but also the increasing globalization has played an important role in developing the new way of warfare. In the dynamics of new wars transnational organizations, e.g. NGOs and the UN, play a very important role. The latter must be seen in the light of the eroding autonomy of the state and its monopoly of power. In addition, states will no longer easily fight each other, because of their fear of weapons for mass destruction. Thus, wars are now fought between non-state actors.

New wars also differ from the old wars in their goal, the way the war is fought and its financing. The objects of war is no new geo-political relations, but 'the claim of power by a certain identity', e.g. religious groups, clans, groups sharing the same language etc. Nonetheless, according to Kaldor, a form of 'identity politics' had already occurred earlier; between the nationalists and the communists in Europe. Nevertheless, that kind of 'identity politics' was based on how society relations in the future should look, while the current form of 'identity politics' harks back to the nostalgic past. Besides, the new form of 'identity politics' is characterized by two aspects: it is both local and transnational, and uses new technologies, e.g. internet. In combination with the rapidly globalizing world, caused by the ICT revolution amongst others, this brought a shift in the theoretical debate about international politics and war. The debate on international relations focussed on intrastate wars instead on interstate wars. Instead of a world structured by one or two widespread ideologies, the main entities of social organization appear to be identities in these times.

Looking at the situation in Mali, the problem of the north seems to fit the definition of new conflicts by Kaldor. It is a low intensity conflict, as the conflict of the Kel Tamasheq and the state drags on since 1960. The national identity and the minority identity played a crucial role during the rebellion in 1994, and again in the '90s and in 2007/2008. Before, the unrest in the northern region of Mali was restricted to the confrontation between the state and the nomads, nowadays also trans-national organisations are active in the region. The before mentioned features of this intrastate conflict fit the idea of new wars and identity politics of Kaldor. I chose to analyze the role of identity in this conflict because I could remember that few residents in Niono knew exactly who the nomads were, except for the widespread stereotypes that

they were violent and possessed magical powers. For me the war was based on certain stereotypes and I wanted to find out the role identity really played in the conflict. The above mentioned shows that the Malian situation fits the requirements of the 'new wars' of Kaldor's identity politics.

Thinking in terms of identity is not new, for example, the sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher Ernest Gellner already discussed cultural versus constructed identity in his book 'Nations and Nationalism' (1983) by the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties. During the nineties, however, there was a renewed focus and more intensified attention to the identity debate. For the hypotheses of my thesis I have chosen for Huntington's and Sen's vision on identity. Both men have a pronounced view of international relations and war in the world. The political realist Huntington and the political idealist Sen belong to opposing philosophical perspectives. These two approaches are frequently discussed in the identity debate and both scientists play a major role in the debate. Firstly, Samuel Huntington will be discussed. His book ´The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order´ is from 1997 and refutes the theory of Fukuyama. Though, it is written ten years before the recent crisis, the theory is still a hot item. Secondly, Amartya Sen will be discussed. I choose the theory of the economist and Nobel Prize winner Sen (Nobel Prize for Economy in 1998), because he is an influential thinker from the side of the constructivists in the identity debate.[18] Amartya Sen is a respected scientist; he opposes the primordial theories about identity, e.g. Huntington's theory, and he tends to overcome the 'use vs. them divide' by emphasizing the rationality of choice.

In order to study the role of identity in this conflict I used two theories that are dominant in the current debate on the role of identity in conflict. Both scientists are introduced in a brief explanation of the philosophical movement to which they are associated. The theories are associated with conflicting philosophical schools of thought. Yet, I will not delve deeply into a theoretical discourse between the schools of thought from which these theories arise. I use the two leading visions on identity purely to explore this conflict. The chapter closes with two hypotheses based on the visions of both scientists.

3.2   Huntington's Theory of Identity

Huntington is a controversial scientist. His book about *'The Clash of Civilisations'* is heavily discussed. His primordial thinking had a major influence on the Foreign Affair department of the United States of

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[18] The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, used his book 'Identity and Violence' for a workshop for the UN Staff in 2006, to create a discussion about the main ideas of the book. At this moment he advises the president of France Nicolas Sarkozy on how to measure growth in France with other parameters than the GNP.

America. Especially, in the times that the conservatives held power, his ideas were seriously taken into account. In his book, Huntington searched for a new paradigm to understand international politics after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Before 1990, states were the main political entities in the world stage. As there was no umbrella body covering the states, the United Nations was not powerful enough to play a decent role; this meant that on international level there was anarchy. After the Cold War and the changing world order this changed. Also the increasing globalisation played a relevant role in these. The bipolar world, with two main ideologies changed to a multipolar world which was also multicultural. States were less important and the upcoming new entities were identities. In recent days international politics communicate along identity interstices. In the time that the western states were slowly sobered by the fact that the end of history had not come yet, Huntington developed his civilisational paradigm. In his vision, future war would be mainly caused by identity features as religion and culture and occur along identity cleavages. Thus, identity has rather persistent characteristics in Huntington's view. But how does Huntington exactly define identity? First a short note on the primordial approach of identity, followed by an outline of the Huntington's interpretation of identity.

A primordialist view of identity

Primoridalism is characterized by the basic thought that identities are a fixed concept. This means that identity is rooted in the fundamental nature of a person, collective, or state. This implies that the social interaction occurs within the context of identity and that identity is not formed by the social interaction. Secondly, group membership is also a fact; a person feels a bond with the group to which he or she belongs, social interaction is not necessary for this bond. Furthermore, primordial group membership cannot be explained on the basis of social interaction. Lastly, primordial identity is qualitative different from imposed identities as a job or a particular class. This follows from the statement that the primordial identity is defined in irrational and emotional life, and therefore it is overwhelming and cannot be expressed in language. Someone is bound to another person, e.g. family or fellow believers, by the nature of the bond itself, which is just there, and cannot be explained. These elements of identity do not change over time (Eller & Reed, 1996).

The primordialist theory of identity has a reductionist nature. Shared religion, kinship and biological properties, e.g. DNA, are the fundaments of identity. Based on these primordial identity characteristics, people experience identity, people mobilize and groups with opposing identity features may conflict (Conversi, 2002). Huntington formulated his cultural deterministic view alike this essentialist analysis.

Definition of Identity by Huntington - Cultural Determinism

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Huntington describes his ideas of identity according to his assumption that cultural kinship binds people, where cultural differences are an inevitable cleavage and tend to lead to conflict. In his civilisational paradigm Huntington assumes that the 'us-them divide' is inevitable to political reality. The arguments for this statement are based on the following characteristics of identity.

Everyone has various identities; e.g. kinship, religion, job, territory, political party, ideology, education and sport. The various identities can be defined according to different levels of identities; e.g. from the personal level to a broader level, respectively from a clan, towards a ethnic group, nationality, religion and than civilisation. These identities can intrinsically conflict with each other when the line of priority is not clear to the person in a certain situation. The largest manifestation of identity is a civilisation.

Though people have plural identities, the growing importance that people attach to cultural identity is created by the increasing socio-economic modernization. With the globalisation of the world, the emphasis lays on the broader identities as religion and civilisation that one belongs to. The independence of others simultaneously creates a need for social connection at the cultural level.

Independence and identity, at every level, is defined by the outline of one's own identity against the identity of the other. It is an adaptive trait of mankind that people rate the in-group, i.e. 'us', with a more positive view than the out-group, i.e. the 'them'. In addition, Huntington states that it is intrinsic to the human nature to hate. According to Huntington self-awareness and motivation of people necessitate opponents, e.g. competitors in business, rivals in presentations, challengers in politics (Huntington, 1997).

It is along the cleavage of these civilisations, that conflicts will be fought out on the level of international politics. But what is this civilisational identity? A civilisation is defined by its culture and especially by the religion on which it is based; these two features of identity are the issues of conflict on the international stage.

There are nine main civilisations in the world, and those are the Islamic, the Western (Judea-Christian), the Chinese (Confucianism), the Hindu, the Latin American (Catholic), the Greek-Orthodox, the Buddhist, the Japanese and the African civilisation. Huntington quotes Dawson (1990) in this context, who said that the four major religions in the world are related to the boundaries of the major civilisations. International politics are based on inter-civilisational politics, and local politics are based on community politics. The world will be dominated by the Western civilisation as right after the fall of the Wall, yet increasingly the Chinese and Islamic civilisations will rise. To maintain its dominant position in de world, the Western world uses its international institutions, its powerful armed forces and economic measures to defend its interests and to spread its values. The Chinese and the Islamic civilisations are offended by this policy; especially when it comes to the Non Proliferation Treaty. In response to this Western liberal

arrogance the Islamic world developed religious fundamentalism. Huntington predicts that future wars will be especially fought out between the Western world on the one hand and the Chinese and Islamic world on the other hand.

Conflicting identities

Huntington mentions two different kinds of war, the first type of war concerns conflicts between entities, i.e. clans, tribes, ethnic groups, religious groups and nations. The second type of war, already mentioned above, is the fault line war, i.e. conflicts along the identity cleavages of civilisations. The first type of war, the one between communities, has always existed, and it is based on local interests. Obviously, the war is of major importance for the participating parties, for the rest of the world, however, there are no ideologies or political issues at stake. These conflicts between communities exist, simply because they are primordial to our identity; we define our own identity by being different from the other identity. Thus, the 'us-them divide' lies in the nature of our identity. Conflicts between communities are often very lengthy, due to the reason that identity is not something easily overcome, and destructive to a country.

The fault line wars did not occur before the fall of the Wall. Cultural identity became increasingly important after the multiculturalisation and multipolarisation of the world. Fault line wars are fought along the lines of civilizations. The actors in these wars are states, transnational organizations and non-governmental organisations. Subject to these wars is often a geographic area that is an important cultural symbol for both sides. These wars can be very brutal and widespread. Again identity is at stake, however, on a larger scale than community wars. Fault line wars rarely are solved without mass murder.

The difference between fault line wars and community wars is that the latter occur between groups with different ethnic identities races, religions or languages. Characteristic to fault line wars, however, are the identity features of culture and especially, religion. Due to the reason that religion is the main characteristic of the different civilizations, it is on the basis of religion that fault line wars are conducted. Another difference is the assumption that community wars are privatised, thus they will not spread rapidly. Fault line wars on the other hand, are related to different civilizations, therefore they can have a devastating effect on the both civilisations in affected. As the conflicting units will seek support from the rest of 'their' civilization. Fault line wars can be inter- or intrastate wars, as long as the identity boundaries are concerned, these do not necessary fit state frontiers (Huntington, 1997).

National Identity

A general theory of International Politics says that since the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, the state can be seen as a billiard ball. This refers to the properties that have been assigned to the state since these times; strong frontiers, sovereign central government with a monopoly on violence within its territory. In modern times state borders are more and more permeable, several state functions have become privatised, many organisations became transnational and governmental power and policies became decentralised. Though, states are not as important as they were before, and transnational organisations become more powerful in the international politics, states still are the most important political entity. The definition that Suny (2001: 889) gives about the primordial state fits Huntington's view:

> *'The primordial base of the nation is rooted in its genetic makeup, which is then reflected*
> *in its cultural production. Nation is not a choice but a fact'*

One of the reasons for the fact that the state remains the most concrete body in international relations, is that it is still the most efficient entity to look after the political interests of people. On the other hand the political answer is not the only answer to the question why the State as an entity is still so important in the world. The other reason is based on the need to belong to a country. Effective boundaries create a collective feeling and security. Perceiving national identity primordially, it appears that national identity rarely is based on rational or functional thinking. Just like any other identity it can be a strategic choice, but the choice is always based on emotional and overwhelming feelings. Just like Suny (2001:894) states:

> *'National identities, which have been created through teaching, repetition, and daily*
> *reproduction until they become common sense, are saturated with emotions, themselves in*
> *part the product or historical understanding of what might provide pleasure or pain, comfort*
> *or danger. The very rhetoric of nationalism reveals its affective base.'*

Also Huntington states that the state is still an important political entity in world politics. However, due to the statement that war will be based on culture and religion instead of ideology or economic reasons, the role of the states decreases in conflicts. And, it is the largest identity, the civilisational identity that is the crucial actor for conflicts in the future. In so being, the national identity is also a given identity, however, the religious and the cultural concepts identity on the civilisational level are dominant when it comes to conflict.

3.3 Sen's Theory of Identity

In his book *'Violence and Identity – the Illusion of Destiny',* Sen opposes the theorists that have a solitarist[19] view of identity. One of these thinkers is obviously Samuel Huntington with his cultural deterministic vision on identity. Multiculturalists, on the other side, just believe in a dialogue on the basis of culture within a state or civilisation. For the reason that both multiculturalists and mono-culturalist base their discussion on the concept of cultural identity, Sen classifies them both as solitary thinkers. Both are essentialists in the way they look at people as representatives of their culture or religion, not at the individual with various identities. Oppositely, Sen does not believe that identity can be reduced to a single feature. Consequently, a person's identity could not be limited to his religion only in his opinion. Then what is Sen's vision on identity? First, a short note on identity as a social construct, on which Sen partly bases his definition of identity, and then the interpretation of identity as described in his book 'Violence & Identity, the Illusion of Destiny'.

Constructivism - Identity is the Result of Social Organization
Constructivism is seen as a theory opposed to primordialism. Constructivists believe that identity is the result of economic, social and political processes. This makes the concept intrinsically flexible and liable to the circumstances from and in which it evolves. Groups with certain identity features have no determinically fixed limits, and do not stay the same through time. Identity is rather a dynamic collective entity that changes in size or shape according to changing circumstances.

This pragmatic view is based on situational and variable aspects of identity. The constructivist approach opposes the reductionism of the essentialist approach. For constructivists[20] identity features, are actually phenomena that do not exist, but are invented by people for strategic reasons. Identity characteristics are not of importance, but the actors who created them, namely, by individuals who belong to this identity. Identity characteristics such as ethnicity, language, culture, religion, etcetera are a rational response to a given situation or social pressure within a community or between communities. Identity in this sense is a form of social organization. So, the features of identity are not primordial but constructed during the development of the individual or group, the construction of a certain identity is based on strategic considerations. How important a feature of identity is to someone, differs per situation, time, culture and

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[19] Sen defines the solitarist view of identity as identity that exists in one major determined form. It is the opposite idea of Sen's view on identity as a social construct that is subject to change and can express itself in different forms.
[20] Constructivism and instrumentalism are almost similar, though constructivism emphasizes the historical perspective in which identity can be seen, and in which context identity should be seen as identity is constructed under the influence of experiences of the past. Also Sen sees identity inseparable from the past.

community. The affiliation of an individual with a particular community has nothing to do with feelings, according to the constructivist, but with the possibility for practical benefits for the self. So, the connectedness of an individual with a community stems from a rational choice. The community is a means to the personal goals of the individual. In this vision there is no room for altruism. When the individual rescues his community for instance, to safeguard the common interests within the community, that is based on self-interest.

Much research is done in the area of identity and how boundaries between different social entities are drawn. Concepts such as culture or clans are can be understood by the processes behind the identification with them, i.e. the politics. For profound studies in the field of identity as a social construct is refer to Frederik Barth (1995), who states that the essence of identity is the placement of social boundaries between human communities. The borders are constructed by self-definition and the definition of others. And I refer to Anderson (1991), who sees social identities as imagined communities. In her view only the family lines and bloodlines are primordial; all other social identities are social constructs. For this thesis I restrict myself to the theory of Huntington and Sen to analyse the Kel Tamasheq case. Sen is associates his view on identity with constructivism, however he also emphasizes the role of rational choice and a moral code in his definition. Below the elaboration on Sen's vision on identity as will be used for the second hypothesis.

Sen's View of Identity - 'Life has no Destiny'
Like Putnam (2000), Sen sees identity as a social capital. When identity is not in danger, and there is space enough to live your life, identity generates warm feelings of attachment and familiarity with for example neighbours, family or fellow countrymen at an international meeting. However, social capital can also become scarce. When identity becomes threatened, group-membership of a person is in danger. Consequently, the social capital is in danger, and people will defend their identity, by defending the group to which they belong. Identity in the context of conflict is rather an efficient way to categorize who is 'us' and who is 'them' than that it is a cause of conflict. The elite or leaders of the group are often the ones who define the social boundaries between the groups to mobilise the 'us' against the 'them'. This demarcation of social groups is subject to stereotyping. Social boundaries between groups are an efficient way to demarcate the difference between friend and foe. The groups in conflict are defined along a cleavage based on one characteristic identity. Consequently, the identity is reduced, efficiently, to a one-sided concept.

Identity according to Sen

Contrary to this solitarist theory, Sen argues that people have plural identities. There are different social groups, to which a person belongs, amongst which profession, family, nationality, history, culture, language, politics, comradeship, gender. Every role should be taken seriously.

> *'Identity is the sense of affiliation and association and concern with the group, to which you think to belong, your membership is important too; you have to be member of a group. You have to be a cat or a dog to have that identity not merely because you want to be a dog or cat or simply "like them". You have to have the same concerns'[21]*

The relative importance of the identity or the line of priority differs over situations. Within each situation there is a budget constraint; for example the roles, culture, responsibilities, nurture and nature you have been brought up with. These groups can have distinct features compared to each other. Within different situations different identities have priority. Sometimes, when a situation is crucial it is of major importance to be aware of the various identities you have. Subsequently, one must prioritise the relevant identities per situation. In the citation below, Sen makes clear that it depends on the situation and the availability of certain identities (i.e. the priority line of identity) which behaviour evolves.

> *'We have many groups to which we belong according to our comparable interests... literature, religion, politics, role and location. Each of these are a source of identity and it is our choice to let it influence our identity in a situation. It depends very much on the context, e.g. vegetarian identity when going to diner, literature identity when choosing a lecture'[22]*

As mentioned above, there is a budget constraint to each situation; however, within the given situation identity should be an active choice. By reasoning, critical thinking and rethinking, identity can be ´required and earned instead of ´discovered´ for the classification of different circumstances. Sen does not promote a reactive perception of identity but identity as proactive choices within every situation constraint.

> *´The issue is not whether identity can be chosen. But whether we do indeed have choices over alternative identities or combinations of identities, and perhaps more importantly,*

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[21] Sen, A (2006) *The British National Identity* In a lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. United Kingdon, London. (http://www.ica.org.uk/Amartya%20Sen:%20British%20Identity+3754.twl
[22] Ibid.

substantial freedom regarding what priority to give to the various identities we may simultaneously have.´ (Sen, 2006: p.46)

In order to avoid emotional and historical arguments and reactions, Sen argues that a person must reason and critically evaluate the identities, upon which he or she acts.

'We are not imprisoned in our installed locations and affiliations as the advocates of the discovery view of identity seem to presume. Furthermore, we have different ways of identifying ourselves even in given locations; belonging to a community does not overwhelm other associations or affiliations. You cannot simply discover what is your true identity; you have to address sometimes issues of conflict real or imagined, and ask about the implications of your loyalty to divergent priorities and differentiating affinities. These choices are constantly faced.' (Sen, 2006: p.46)

Contrary to the identity as a proactive actuality stands the reactive form of identity. A group with a reactive identity has the perception that its identity generally depends on a greater power. The perception of this greater power is an obsession to the mind of the group in case. Sen explains the reactive self-perception with the example of the 'Colonized Mind and its Fixation with the West'.

The main question in this study regards the role of national identity of Mali, on another identity, i.e. the nomadic minority in the enduring conflict. Here we reach a very relevant part of Sen's ideas, for this study, about a process between identities; 'the principle of otherness'. The aim of this thesis is a study of the process of otherness between State and Kel Adagh.

Sen defines the othering or otherness process as *'a general pattern of development of reactive identity'*. The othering process is therefore a development that occurs among people who do not make active choices by reasoning and critical thinking about themselves, but by the reaction to the other, because they make choices on the basic controversial idea that they are "the other". In this way it is hard to be able to reflect on the self. And in this way, the attributions of the other become consolidated. This generates a dissonance between the actual self and the real self. However, obviously the identity is not necessarily imposed. When the process of otherness emerges; the gap between images of the self and the other becomes bigger in certain situations. In these situations it is the choice of identity, that enhances differences or not.

Within each multicultural society with minorities which are generally dependent on the majority group, 'the other' is part of their underlying belief system. If both parties can live peacefully together, this does not have to cause friction of course. Clearly, if this is not the case, processes of otherness can cause dangerous situations. When identity becomes extremely relevant, due to threats like relative deprivation or threats by out-groups for example, the aspect of identity which is accessible and which fits the situation the best, will be most available. Then the process of stereotyping takes place (Sen, 2006).

Friction of the Terrain

Sen already mentioned that the geographical location can be of influence on identity. The theory of Scott (2009), who claims that the nature of the terrain, in his words 'the friction of the terrain', affects a population in the choice whether or not to join the state society. The geographical features as the nature of the territory and the nature of the climate can be of influence on lifestyle and therefore identity. The nature of the terrain plays a role here. Mountains and deserts are more difficult to control than agricultural regions. Certainly, if the mountain or desert people live a nomadic lifestyle. Scott´s theory states that people choose whether or not to live in the area and therefore they choose whether or not to live in the control zone of the state they formally belong to. Every country has its centre of power and the periphery. The peripheral areas are less easy to administrate for the government than the areas closer to the centre of the power. According to Scott, the role of the geographical and climatic properties of the terrain in this can play a crucial role. Therefore there can be tension between the national identity at the centre of the nation and the identity in the peripheries. Scott's theory is quite deterministic. Sen does states that the role of the terrain as rather ambiguous. It can be of influence on identity, however not as deterministic as Scott states.

National Identity

A special form of identity that is of importance in this thesis is the national identity. According to constructivism, a nationality is an example of an identity that is 'invented' or constructed by a community. Nationality is a certain (social) construct with a goal, e.g. administration of a group of people within a certain territory. The principle of nationality does not intrinsically have a goal. However, nationality is emotionally important to a community. The social construct of identity can have a major influence on human action that is based on these social constructs. Amartya Sen touches upon the importance of the national identity and its crucial role within the state in a lecture he gave at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London (2006). The crucial importance of national identity, Amartya Sen argues, lies in its constructive political and civil role. National identity should be seen as a concept that overarches other social and collective identities. Community identities, e.g. the Kel Tamasheq, the

Bambara and the Songhai in Mali, are federated in the national identity. 'The national identity does not exclude the communal identity; it simply plays a role at another level'[23]

3.4 Criticisms Against and Differences Between the Two Theories

Central to Sen's book *'Identity and Violence – the Illusion of Destiny',* is the question why people, that once lived peacefully together, fight each other to the death. According to Sen, people have various identities; so many that they cannot be reduced to one singular identity. One should always be conscious of the fact that identity is ambiguous and situational. The answer to conflict must be sought in the economic, social, political processes and in the mobilising factor that the political elite/leaders can play in stimulating the 'us-them divide'. Sen's criticasters note that his view of identity is the ideal identity. He seems to neglect the fact that in reality there is sometimes an 'us-them divide'. The concept that people have an identity by rational choice is understandable on the theoretical level, yet not every situation in everyday life seems to be based on rational choice. The political reality is characterised by singular identities between groups (Achterhuis, 2007).

Huntington bases his theory on political realism instead of political idealism. In his opinion the 'us-them divide' is intrinsic to politics. Within this political reality he tries to find the most peaceful solutions for international struggles.[24] The main issue of his book *The Clash of Civilisation'* is 'the role that culture and cultural identity plays as a creative force behind patterns of cohesion, disintegration and conflict in the world after the Cold War' (Huntington, 1997: p. 16). Arguments against Huntington's controversial ideas are the following: Huntington's definition of civilizations, based on religion and culture, leaves little room for the flexibility and the diversity that a civilization can also feature. Subsequently, Huntington pays no attention to the increasing interaction between civilizations. Moreover, he barely addresses the role of the state, which, despite being less powerful than before, still plays a major political role. Finally, many wars are inter or intra state conflicts; within the same civilization. When these wars are fought between groups with different civilization characteristics, they are often manipulated and mobilised by the ruling parties (Ronse, 1997).

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[23] Sen, A (2006) *The British National Identity.* In a lecture at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. United Kingdon, London. Retrieved from http://www.ica.org.uk/Amartya%20Sen:%20British%20Identity+3754.twl Visited on 16 November 2009

[24] VPRO Gids nr. 44 (3 t/m 9 november 2007). Retrieved from http://tegenlicht.vpro.nl/nieuws/2007/oktober/vpro-gidsartikel-identiteit-en-geweld.html Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.

Huntington has a primordialistic vision on identity; he assumes that nations are created by the people, and by their objective and pre-modern character. For that he refutes 'The End of History' theory of Fukuyama, instead he predicts that wars will be fought along the lines of religious and cultural differences. Sen, on the other hand, is a constructivist and believes that the modern and subjective nature of identity is plural and fluid. Thus, nations are created by the elites. Sen says that both multiculturalism and monoculturalism is nonsense.[25] The identity of people should not be restricted to one primordial feature; one must recognize the ambiguity of identity as a social construct.

The main difference between the two scientists is that Sen says that a community 'is' not her identity, but people 'have chosen' their identity, while Huntington sees the cultural and especially religious features of identity as insurmountable. Huntington is a realist and his essentialist view of identity attributes primordial features to identity. Sen is an idealist and his existential identity is socially constructed.

Below the operationalizations of both theories in the form of two hypotheses that will be applied to the situation of northern Mali.

3.5   The Two Hypotheses

Central to the thesis is the question 'What is the influence of the government of Mali on the identity of the Kel Tamasheq minority?' And, central in this chapter is the formulation of two hypotheses to analyse the situation of northern Mali. What are the implications of the two theories on the interpretation of the situation in Mali? By formulating two contradicting hypotheses, in the light of the primordialistic view of identity by Huntington and the contradicting hypothesis is based on Sen's constructivist view I analyse the kind of interrelationship between the government and the Kel Tamasheq. With the help of the two hypotheses I will analyse the situation of the Kel Tamasheq in the next chapter, chapter 4. The results of the analysis will clarify which hypothesis is applicable in the situation of the Kel Tamasheq, e.g. Huntington's primordial theory or Sen's constructivist theory. By defining the situation in Mali according to the theories, the role of the national identity and the role of the minority identity will become clear in the chaotic northern situation. Focusing on the role that identity plays in the situation, eventually the answer to the main question will evolve.

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[25] Monoculturalists and multiculuturalists both speak of identity in terms of culture. Monoculturalists emphasize the singularity of the culture of a state, and multiculturalism emphasizes the plurality of a state. Though, according to Sen, identity is plural and can not be reduced to cultural identity. The debate is between people with different identities, not between people as a prototype of the culture he/she stands for.

We head for the ultimate purpose of this chapter, namely the operationalisation of the two theories. The next chapter describes the actors and the context of the situation. In the next chapter it will become clear that I divided the period since 1960 into three periods by the different power situations in the north. Below, each theory will be summarized, in the form of a couple of questions per situation, before the formulation of the hypotheses. In chapter 5 I will answer these questions per period:

Huntington

If the hypothesis based on Huntington's view is applicable, the situation must meet the following requirements:

→ Identity as a primordial given

Are there one or two persistent causes of unrest, over the fifty years that the unrest occasionally breaks out? For Huntington's theory the causes should be based on primordial identity features that clashes between the nation and the minority.

→ Community war or fault line war?

Is the unrest occurring along a fault line of civilisational identities or is a community conflict?

→ Nationality

What is the minority identity and what is the national identity? What is the role of the national identity? Is it a choice or is it given?

Sen

To fit Sen's theory the questions are as follows

→ Identity as a social construct

How can the minority identity of the Kel Tamasheq be defined?

What is the national identity?

Identity is a (reactive) choice?

→ Friction of the terrain

Does the role of the terrain play a definite role in the situation? Is there a clear choice for the soil they live on in the peripheries?

→ What are the reasons for the unrest over the years?

What are the choices made by both identities in case, are they based on rational choices? Could it be a reactive identity?

If so, is it possible that the situation since 1960 is an evolving process of otherness?

Does the breeding ground differ per situation of unrest? If so, are the reasons accidental?

The Hypothesis Based on Huntington

Taking into account Huntington's theory, I came to the following hypothesis:

If the core of the conflict in Mali has not changed over the three periods, and the reasons of an insurmountable difference between the two nationalities remained the same, then the core of the problem is based on one or two incompatible identities, which causes clashes between the nation and minority again and again. The symptoms of these incompatible identities will be that in each polarised situation, cultural and religious concepts impose themselves inevitably on these situations and will result in conflicts. As these identities are primordial, it seems that the government does not have much influence on identity. Consequently, the unrest will not be solved. On the contrary, with increasing globalisation, the identity features become even more relevant. Thus, according to Huntington the future of the conflict would look bleak.

The Hypothesis Based on Sen's theory

According to the hypothesis based on Sen´s vision of identity it is a choice of the Kel Tamasheq to live in the desert, just to distance themselves from the state and the national identity. The terrain contributes to the isolated and pronounced identity of the Kel Tamasheq as their whole ancient nomadic lifestyle is based on the rhythms of the desert. However, the identity of the Kel Tamasheq is changing over time, due to the fact that the environment changes and due to choices made. The national identity also makes choices; the government influences the minority identity, because it is one of its contextual influences. However, the Kel Tamasheq can choose how much influence the government has, for the reason that they can escape the governmental policies by withdrawing themselves from the controlled areas and fly to the wastelands where the government can hardly follow them. The violence can be explained as follows: the situation in northern Mali is a political conflict. The state tries to impose its national identity, to construct a national identity to gain control over its territories. From the side of the minority identity, it is a certain group of Kel Tamasheq leaders that use their shared history to mobilise their constituency/people when needed. The reactive identity of the Kel Tamasheq can be seen in view of the fact that they once were a powerful nation, and became marginalised by the increasing power of the government. The social capital of the Kel Tamasheq decreased and that was a reason to fight. Nowadays the economical explanation for the Kel Tamsheq rebellion lies in the fact that the national pact promised investments in the region, but failed to realise them. This leads to a decrease in possibilities for the minority and therefore a decrease in the social capital.

In chapter 5 I will come to an analysis of the situation of Mali and its Kel Tamasheq minority, and an implementation of the two hypotheses of this chapter on the context of chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4   IDENTITY AND CONFLICT

Once, the Kel Tamasheq nomads of Mali were the noble and rich military aristocrats of the central Sahara (Fage & Tordoff, 2002). Until the mid-20th century, it was not unusual to see families with a wealth of more than one hundred camels (Lecocq 2002. Yet, sixty years later, after the creation of the independent state of Mali, two severe droughts, two rebellions against the (authoritarian) regime of Mali, the Kel Tamasheq of Mali still live in the Azawagh. Nevertheless, their lifestyle, and therefore identity, is highly influenced by these great events. From the noble aristocrats of the deserts they once were, they turned into a marginalized and culturally disturbed minority today (Saint Girons, 2009).

For comprehension of the influence of the national state on the minority identity of the Kel Tamasheq, it is important to have some idea of the context in which they live. The Kel Tamasheq society will be characterized along the cultural history, socio-political structures, and the demographical, geographical and socio-economic features. The Malian state will be described along these concepts as well. The third part of this context chapter concerns the major events in the past sixty years. During these major events the interrelationship between the government and the minority polarized, and therefore they characterize the history of the mutual relationship. Subsequently, the profile of the minority, the state and the conflict, provides an overview of the historical layers of identity and therefore its contribution to the present situation and identity of the Kel Tamasheq in northern Mali.

4.1   The Kel Tamasheq

The Ancient History in a Nutshell - Queen Mother of All Tamasheq: 'Tin Hinan'
It all started with the mighty queen (the so-called 'Tamenokalt') named Tin Hinan. Somewhere in the 4th century AD, she left the territory of her ancestors in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, and travelled the deserts to the Hoggar in Southern Algeria. It was Tin Hinan who reigned over the first Tamasheq. She gave birth to the culture and language the Kel Tamasheq still share today.[26] The Kel Tamasheq are internationally better known by the name Tuareg. This is the name the French used for the people living in Targa, situated in the Fezzan region in Libya. The Kel Tamasheq call themselves Kel Tamasheq; this means 'those who speak Tamasheq'. The pronunciation varies per region (Lecocq, 2002).

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[26] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.

Modern Kel Tamasheqs are seen as descendants of these Libyan Berbers, who lived in Western Sahara. Ever since Tin Hinan, the line of inheritance traditionally runs by the female descendants of Tin Hinan. Also the right of powerful positions is still arranged by the matriarchal line within some tribes in southern Algeria (Hoggar) and northern Burkina Faso (Udalan and Imeddedeghen). However, the tribes in the Azawagh region in Mali are following the patrimonial line of heirs. The fact remains that women have an unconventional position within the social structure of the Tamasheq also in Mali (Fage & Tordoff, (2002). In addition, the reason that the Tamasheq are also named as Kel Tagelmoust (which means 'the people of the veil') derives from the fact that the men wear the veil in public spaces. Traditionally, merely men wear the veil, of course the garment is a very practical safeguard against the dust during the long caravan journeys, and nonetheless it is also traditionally seen as a sign of respect towards the women.[27]

The nomadic lifestyle of the Tamasheq dates back to antiquity. Herodotus (485-420 BC) already described the ancient 'warlike folks', the Targa ancestors of the Kel Tamasheq, in book two and four of his famous work "Histories". He wrote that the Fezzan (he called the nomads by the name of the region) in Libya had chariots in which they went to war. Yet, it remains rather unclear where exactly the roots of the Kel Tamasheq lie. Anthropologist, archaeologist and Sahara expert Henry Lhote states that about 6600/4000 BC, mainly black Africans were living in the region which is known nowadays as the Sahara desert. In approximately 2500 BC Ethiopian and Europoidal peoples migrated into the region. Only later on, around 1200 BC a white migration came along from Europe, they fought the Egyptians and settled down in Libya.[28]

As stated earlier, Tin Hinan is often seen as the mother of the language and culture of the Tamasheq. This is put forward by many Tamasheq. The story of Tin Hinan is still sung by the oral traditions and described in Kel Tamasheq poetry. The Tamasheq language is seen as one of the dialects that belong to the Berber dialects. This is consistent with the traditions of Tin Hinan as a Berber princess. The linguists Cohen and Basset prefer to define the language of the Kel Tamasheq as a language standing on its own. The basic argument for this view is based on the fact that the Kel Tamasheq hardly understand other Berber dialects, since Berber language incorporated many Arab words.[29] In contrast, the language of the Kel Tamasheq remained very original for reasons such as lifestyle, social structure and their desert isolation. Similarly, Tifinagh, scientifically defined as a Berber script that was once used throughout

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.
[29] Ibid.

North Africa, is the only writing that has been preserved due to reasons of isolation and dry climate.[30] In recent times though, this script is not recognized in many countries, nor taught or used within any institution of the countries inhabited by the Kel Tamasheq.[31]

The Ancient Lifestyle

The political and social structures of these Kel Tamasheq are based on the traditional nomadic lifestyle. In his paper *The Tuareg Notions of Space and Place in Northern Mali* Gunnvor Berge (2001) describes the relation of the Kel Tamasheq to the soil they live on. The Tamasheq identity is closely attached to their pastoral lifestyle. This close relationship with the soil is based on its functionality varying along with the meteorological fluctuations. The desert can show many faces. Not only do the physical geographic features play a crucial role in the daily life of the nomads, also the rhythm of the season plays a crucial role. The nomadic locations are determined by the system of the streams of the wadis. A wadi is a streambed that contains water only in the wet season, and stays dry the rest of the year. In the wet season, less territory per herd is needed and relatives or befriended families gather. The wet season, from June to October, is the time for trade, family matters and news exchange. Like the old Tamasheq saying 'Aman Iman' makes clear: Water is life. Therefore water, meaning the systems of the wadis, determines the place of the herd, and therefore the pace of the nomadic family for the Tamasheq (Berge, 2001).

Besides the nomadic lifestyle, the Kel Tamasheq have an extensive tradition of poetry and Islamic scholarship. Around 1100 the city of Timbuktu was founded by Tamasheq traders. Half a millennium ago the city became an important spot for Muslim scholars around the world. The first institutions of Islamic scholars were built here around here 500 years ago. Inter alia, the Sankoré Mosque is the place where Muslim scholars learned medicine, astronomy and maths. This university is still in function today, though at less than half the capacity it once had. Nowadays Timbuktu is a sleepy desert city, yet it still contains libraries full of written African history. Although the connotation should be made, that treasure seekers travel the region in search for the surviving books of great historical value, and sell them on the black market.[32]

Social-Political Structure Since 1960

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[30] Al Jazeera Programmes: *Witness: Timbuktu Scribes*. Retrieved from http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/witness/2009/01/20091482854652890.html Visited on January the 4th
[31] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.
[32] Al jazeera series Witness *'Timbuktu Scribes'*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6Cl5qD1IiY. Visited on the 4th of January 2009.

The identity of the Kel Tamasheq is based on its functionality for the pastoral way of living. This pastoral community is socio-politically structured by a confederation of seven Kel Tamasheq 'ettebels'. An ettebel is a federation of tribes. The leading position is performed by the Amenokal, which is chosen by the 'imaghen', the wise elderly of the ettebel. At the 'ettebel' level of political and military decisions are made; e.g. policies about the support and protection of the ettebels, the management and cooperation between one ettebel and another, conflicts between ettebels (e.g. about pastures) and the control of caravan trade. Ettebel is the Tamasheq word for war drum, consequently in case of war the rivalling ettebels hit the 'ettebel' (Lecocq, 2002). The three and a half million Kel Tamasheq form seven ettebels geographically spread over the desert, namely the Kel Ahaggar from Algeria and Niger, the Kel Ajjer from Libya and Algeria, the Kel Air from Niger, the Kel Azawagh from Niger and Mali, the Kel Adagh and the Kel Tademekkat from Mali and the Kel Oudalan living in Burkina Faso (Nicolaisen & Nicolaisen, 1997). But the social structure is not that simple. The composition of the units differs per region and varies over time. Families can secede from one ettebel to join another. Whole tribes merge, others fall apart over time. The interrelationships also vary; from alliance to feud, and both kinds of relationships define the identity of the ettebel. The last thing to mention about the names of ettebels is that the name in itself can refer to a region where the tribe lives. E.g., the Kel Ifoghas, from the Adrar des Ifhoghas, is the same tribe as the Kel Adagh. And the 'umbrella' ettebel of the so-called Kel Azawagh, refers to the Kel Tamasheq who live in the Azawagh desert, which is situated in the northern territories of Mali and Niger (Lecocq, 2002).

The Kel Tademekkat as mentioned above does not exist anymore, this ettebel broke up before the colonial take-over. Another example of the changing nature of ettebels is the split up of the Kel Iwillimiden into the Kel Iwillimiden East and the Kel Iwillimiden West. Those two confederations of tewsits were suspended by the French. On the contrary, the Colonial Oppressor could also enhance the forming of a confederation of ettebels they were on relatively good terms with. E.g. the French left the region of the Adrar des Ifoghas relatively autonomous, due to the geographical difficulty of the area. Therefore they ensured that it was a loyal Tamasheq who was in charge of the ettebel. They appointed this man, named Attaher ag Illi, as an amenokal for the Adagh area. Consequently, they got a little control over the Adrar des Ifoghas. This Kel Adagh ettebel, consisting of a regrouping of the ettebels of the Adrar des Ifoghas (namely the Idnan, the Kel Tahlit and the Taghat Mellet), became later on the most active ettebel in the two Rebellions (Saint Girons, 2008).

Each ettebel in its turn consists of a federation of different 'family groups', which all descend from the same ancestors. These socio-political groups are the so-called 'tewsiten' (singular: tewsit). The

interrelationship within a tewsit is based on patrilineal or matrilineal lines. The head of each tewsit is nowadays a man, though the inheritance of power still can be matrilineal or patrilineal. Among the Malian Tamasheq tribes this is not the case, however. The fact remains that, also in the Malian tewsits, the woman occupies a special position in the social hierarchy (Lecocq, 2002).

The method of defining the internal structure of the tewsits and ettebels, still used by many researchers, is like the feudal system. However, this way of describing the Kel Tamasheq is based on a colonial vision of the feudal system consisting of five castes. Namely the Warriors (imouhagh, imoushagh or imajighen, this varied by region), the Religious (Ineslmen) the Retainers (imghad), the Craftsmen (inadhan) and the slaves (eklan) (Temoust Survie Touarègue).[33] Currently there is an ongoing debate on the internal social structure within the Tamasheq society. The section about the Contemporary Lifestyle of the Kel Tamasheq below outlines why the abovementioned classification is outdated and elaborates on a more appropriate definition (Lecocq 2002).

Throughout the independence of the state of Mali in 1960 Western standards of the sovereign state were implemented in Mali, i.e. a strong central government with a monopoly on violence within a strongly demarcated territory and a monetary system. Bordered by the boundaries defined and protected by a central national government and its legal monopoly on defence, the Kel Tamasheq nomads no longer had the possibility to herd their cattle without being administrated (Lecocq, 2002; Saint Girons, 2008). In so being, the Kel Tamasheq actually gained different national identities referring to the countries they live in today, namely Burkina Faso, Niger, Libya, Algeria and Mali. Looking back in history, it becomes clear that they have never been unified in one country, nor in an area bordered by frontiers as defined by modern criteria. In addition, geographical factors as the need to live widely spread over the arid region, contributes to heterogeneity within the Kel Tamasheq community. Ever since Tin Hinan, the Tamasheq people consist of a loose confederation of ettebels. The demarcation of the ettebels could be by cooperation as much as war with the other ettebels. Yet, until now they have kept a common cultural identity. Despite the fact that the Kel Tamasheq were never unified within a nation state, they had and still have a the strong sense of cultural identity. The term they use for this is 'temoust'. Despite the spacious distance between tribes and the difficulty of the terrain, they share the same ancient history, the same ancestors, language, social structure, and social and political features that are contributing to a homogeneous identity. Temoust is seen as an umbrella-identity and comes close to the term 'nation'.[34]

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[33] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.
[34] Ibid.

Recent Lifestyle and Diaspora

To elaborate on the recent lifestyle I will outline the recent diaspora of the Kel Tamasheq scattered over different countries in Western Africa. Besides, I will elaborate on the socio-political structure of the Kel Tamasheq in Mali, and therefore elaborate on the different tribes. In addition, it must be mentioned that the description of the different tribes is concise. With its extensive socio-political structure, it would definitely need a lot more words to describe all the tewsits of Mali, as there are many, not clearly demarcated but fluid and subject to change. For a comprehensive listing of all the Kel Tamasheq tribes and their interrelationships I refer to the book of Pierre Boilley 'Les Touaregs – Kel Adagh' (1999). For this explorative study I restrict myself to a broad description of the Kel Tamasheq culture as an umbrella social identity of the Kel Tamasheq of Mali. However sometimes, e.g. in case of the rebellions, I focus on the tribes living in the Adrar des Ifoghas for the reason that they were the most active in the first and second rebellion.

The Kel Tamasheq Diaspora

Since 1960 the confederation of the Kel Tamasheq is distributed over several countries in West Africa. The Tamasheq population consists of approximately three and a half million people, scattered over the region of the Sahara that is cut across by the political borders of Mali, Niger, Algeria and Burkina Faso. Approximately 85% lives in Mali and Niger. The largest concentration of Kel Tamasheq, 1.5 to 2 million, lives in northern Niger. Mali gives home to some 800 000 to 1 million Kel Tamasheq. Together with the Maurs, they form almost 10% of the Malian population of 13 million people. The remaining 500,000 Kel Tamasheq are scattered over Libya, Algeria, Mauritania and Burkina Faso (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009). It must be said that it is difficult to estimate the actual number of Kel Tamasheq; numbers vary amongst different studies, since it concerns a mobile nomadic tribe in a remote region (Saint Girons, 2008).

The Kel Tamasheq population in Mali lives in the Azawagh desert. This concerns the northern territories of the country. These Malian Kel Tamasheq derive from several 'ettebels', i.e. federation of tribes, among which the Kel Ansar around Timbuktu, the Iwillimiden around Menaka and the Kel Adagh in the Adrar des Ifoghas (Saint Girons, 2008). The Adrar des Ifoghas, i.e. 'mountains of the Ifhogas' in Arabic, are situated in north-western Mali (Figure 1).
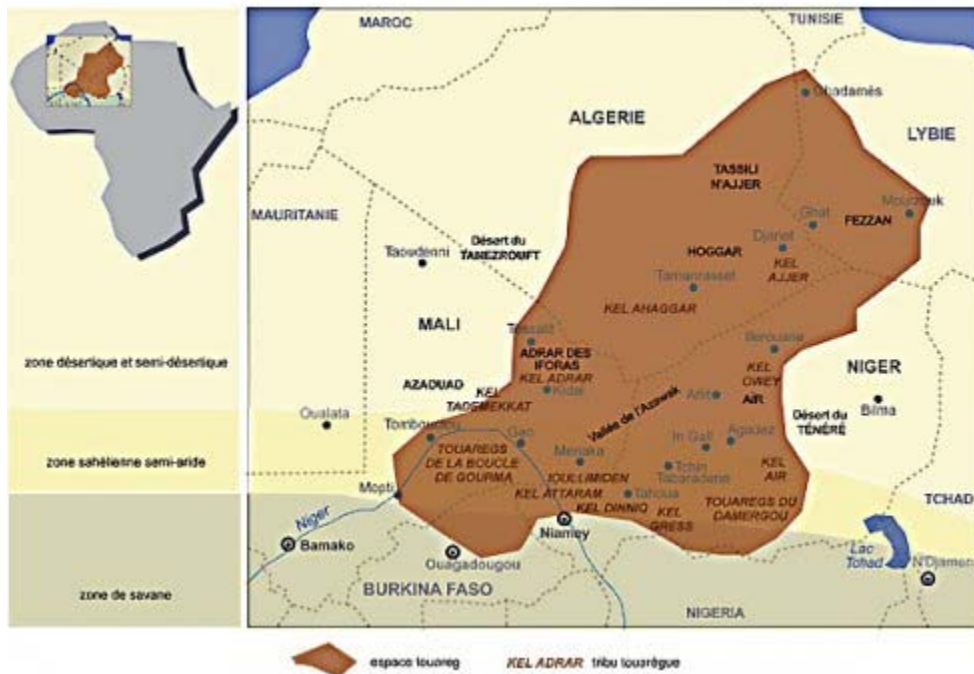
Figure 1: Kel Tamasheg Area[35]

The Contemporary Lifestyle

In the era before the conference of Brazzaville,[36] the Kel Tamasheq were relatively isolated from the rest of the world, due to the fact that it was hard to interfere in the desert region, also by the Colonial power of France. At the present time this is less the case, due to the transport revolution, the information and communication technology (ICT) revolution the Saharan desert is less impermeable than ever before. Still, the area is hard to control by the weak central government of Mali and new actors, i.e. transnational organizations, settled in the area. Additionally, during the severe droughts of the 70s and 80s the cattle decreased dramatically. This caused widespread underemployment especially among the younger generations. The current generation does not rigidly attach itself to the ancient traditional nomadic lifestyle. Even though pastoralism is rooted in the culture of the Kel Tamasheq, nowadays climate change and globalisation change the context of life and families are forced to move to the wet south (Saint Girons, 2008). The nomadic lifestyle is still carried on, though on a lesser scale than ever before since some tribes have turned to sedentarism.[37] In the last United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in

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[35] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.

[36] At the Brazzaville Conference in 1944, France and its colonies, reformulated their political, social and economic relationship. This resulted inter alia in more autonomy for the colonies and a decrease in the exploitative nature of the relationship between France and its colonies (Fage & Tordoff, 2002)

[37] Saint Girons, A. (2008) *Les Rébellions touarègues,* (p. 86). Paris, France: Ibis Press.

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Copenhagen 2009, the Kel Tamasheq were mentioned as the first so-called climate refugees of the world.[38]

Taking into account the abovementioned it seems that the social constitutions, the feudal system of casts as well as the system of ettebels are seen as remnants of the past. Yet, it is hard to ignore that these ancient structures still influence the local socio-political situation. E.g., this is illustrated by the fact that the violence in 60's and the 90's wars was based on mutual stereotypes; on this I will elaborate in the chapter concerning the conflict, and until today the Kel Tamasheq still have some difficulty with the fact that formal slaves can hold similar positions as the Kel Tamasheq. Thus, the ancient socio-political structure is still influential in local politics, though it is difficult to estimate how much influence they exercise nowadays. This is also illustrated by the rebels participating in the various movements during the second rebellion; most movements were joined by rebels of a particular set of tewsits (Lecocq, 2002). With the institutionalisation of new political structures of democracy and its principles of equality, the ancient socio-political hierarchy of the Kel Tamasheq is no longer functionally needed to participate in the political process of the state of Mali. Recently, the traditional political party with the established Kel Tamasheq lost the provincial elections in Kidal (Saint Girons, 2008). Hence, a sign that the old traditional socio-political hierarchy did change over the centuries, namely the cast system became less rigid (Saint Girons, 2009). For the cultural identity though it is difficult to determine whether such a social system is unnecessary.

The old traditions of music and poetry changed during the state forming process of Mali. The Bambaran style of music has became nationalised in the Bambarafication processes of the state in the sixties and seventies, the Kel Tamasheq have hardly been affected by this governmental incentive. In their isolation, they held on their own music. This music, often referred to as desert blues, was based on epic songs about Tin Hinan. However, since the sixties, recent history started to be an item within the music. Especially the first rebellion was memorised in tragic songs. The Kel Tamasheq band named Tinariwen was a pioneer in these. The band existed of several men from the generation that lost their fathers during the first rebellion. The music was a way of rebellion against the situation. Since, the eighties however, the traditional songs are not all about the epical heroic ancestors anymore. In case of the Kel Tamasheqs few bands started in the nineties to sing about the current situation of despair and their beloved desert-live. Tinariwen is one of the first which broke with the traditional way of singing.

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[38] France- Info. Retrieved from http://www.france-info.com/chroniques-le-plus-france-info-2009-12-04-les-touaregs-premiers-refugies-environnementaux-377033-81-184.html Visited on the 10th of December, 2009

Abovementioned factors contribute to the search for a new lifestyle and a new identity. The existing Kel Tamasheq social identity is still influenced by the abovementioned hierarchy of the cast-system plus the structure of ettebels and tewsits. The internal socio-political structure is subject of debate in the Kel Tamasheq culture. Also today a Kel Tamasheq is still born into one of these groups, yet the formal meaning of the predicate is not as it used to be. Every Kel Tamasheq is Muslim and therefore religious, slavery is abolished and craftsmen do not depend on the warriors to defend them against hostile tribes anymore. Therefore, Lecocq suggests a classification along other criteria. Namely the 'free and un-free', secondly the 'strong and the weak' and thirdly the 'people with a salient lineage or without'. Slavery is abolished in the French Colonies since 1848. However, reduction of social inequality is an issue in national politics, subsequently there still is a distinction between the free and the former un-free. It must be said that this inequality is experienced by the different peoples in Mali and not only the Kel Tamasheq. The second classification concept concerning 'the strong and the weak' refers to individuals as well as tewsits. This political status, of the strong that protect the poor and weak within the nation, is based on economic, cultural, physical and military concepts. It concerns not only the people that have the possibilities and the assets to be 'strong', but also the people who act strongly, no matter their assets. Last concept contributing to social status Lecocq observed between people that represent their genealogy versus people who do not. These three continuums seem to evolve slowly through time, in response to the changing environment. The concepts are inter-related and not isolated from another. Consequently, these issues are important concepts to the social status in contemporary times (Lecocq 2002).

In Sum

The population Kel Tamasheq in Mali has a rich history with distinctive cultural, political and geographical features. The ancient nomadic lifestyle of the Kel Tamasheq is based on the natural rhythm of wet and dry seasons. Until today this way of live is carried out, though on lesser scale than ever before as some tribes turned to sedentarism, others settled in cities. Due to several major developments throughout the past sixty years, the lifestyle of the Kel Tamasheq is subject to change. The contemporary identity is subject to the grievances of the past, the advancing of the desert southwards, and the settlement of new actors in the uncontrollable wastelands of the north.

Factors and actors, new to the ancient culture of the Kel Tamasheq, emerged over time. The next section treats the other actor in case, namely the Malian state. The identity of the Kel Tamasheq developed from a prosperous isolated cultural entity before 1960 towards a marginalized heterogeneous cultural entity today. The fact that they are very poor these days makes the people fragile in a changing world and a

changing region. The second and third section of this chapter concerns respectively the state of Mali, where it all takes place, and the major events of the past sixty years.

4.2   The Independent State of Mali

The central focus of this thesis is the Kel Tamasheq identity regarding the national identity of Mali. This paragraph elaborates on the identity of this youthful African democracy.

First of all, I would like to elaborate on the concept of the state. The sovereign state as we know it, i.e. strong frontiers, central government that has the political and the monopoly on violence, is the dominant political actor in the world of now (Nye, 2007). Since Western countries formally have concluded the Peace of Westphalia, signed in Munster in 1648, the world has gradually become structured with states according to this treaty. Scott states in his book 'The Art of NOT Being Governed' that every little piece of territory in the present world is becoming administered. In history roughly 4 eras can be distinguished by different administrative characteristics: '1) The stateless era (by far the longest) 2) an era of small-scale states encircled by vast and easily reached stateless peripheries 3) a period in which such peripheries are shrunken and beleaguered by the expansion of state power and finally 4) an era in which virtually the entire globe is 'administered space' and the periphery is no more than a folkloric remnant (Scott, 2009: p. 324).[39] Consequently, the transnational trends of the last decennium seem questionable if the Westphalian state as we know it retains its current features.

Nevertheless, the African sovereign state is a relatively new concept. Since the great empires (respectively the Ghana, the Mali and the Songhai empire), approximately 400 to 1800 AD, the economical and political power of the region went downwards. From 1863 to 1960, the colonial power of France dominated the economy and politics, using the same (tax-) structures as used before by the preceding empires. During the colonial period, by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the French structured the region by the same institutions and policies as they had in France. The agreements of the Conference in Brazzaville in 1944, from January 30th to February 8th, started the process of democratisation in different countries. From 1944 to 1960 several regions in Africa were engaged in the gradual dismantling of colonial rule. During these sixteen years the rules of democracy and the electoral system were slowly implemented. Concepts such the institution of the multiparty system, freedom of the press and development of the trade unions were gradually implemented until the

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[39] J.C. Scott (2009) *The Art of Not Being Governed – An Anarchist History of Upland Souteast Asia.* p. 324. London, United Kingdom: Yale University Press.

ballot box redefined the political power for the first time in the history of West Africa without violence. In Mali these processes were fairly successful, until the first rebellion of 1963 (Abbink & Hesselink, 1999).

Mali dates back only 50 years. The suggestion should be made that the African country and the African democracy is not the same as Western democracies.[40] One of these differences is that in African countries there is, more than in Western states, a dissonance between formal state institutions and government policy and the actual state of affairs highly influenced by informal institutions such as kinship and tribal structures.[41] For an elaboration of the African state of Mali, I refer to the profile described below which consists of a short history of the political structure of the state since 1960, the demographical characteristics and the economical situation.

The African State of Mali

The first republic, with a multiparty system, was led by President Modibo Keita who imposed a single party system when his popularity decreased. He reigned from 1960 until Moussa Traoré gained power by a military take-over in 1968.[42] The second president Moussa Traoré imposed a military regime by a coupe, and reigned from 1968 till 1992 with a one-party system. His dictatorship lasted until the second military take-over in 1991. This last coupe before democracy was led by Amadou Toumani Touré, who instituted a transitional government, for the multiparty transition, that took care of national politics and preparations of the election until the first democratic elections of the constitutional multi-party democracy in Mali in 1992.[43]

During these first democratic elections, there was a weak participation of voters as many people were sceptic about the new government, and moreover, war raged in the northern region. The Kel Tamasheq barely participated in the elections, for the reason that it was unsafe to go to the polling stations or for the reason that they lived in refugee camps of neighbouring countries. Consequently, there was no active Tamasheq participation, no electorate nor any participation in the national government (Lange, 2000). Alpha Oumar Konaré became the first democratically elected president after 32 years of authoritarian

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[40] Given the different characters of the areas, it is of course the question whether the areas will ever be the same. Yet, I intend to emphasize that, despite the implementation of Western democratic concepts, it is not my intention to analyze the region in comparison to the Western world.

[41] Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Retrieved from http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/Onderwerpen/Kennis_en_ontwikkeling/IS_Academie/Trajecten/De_Afrikaanse_Staat Visited on 10th of august 2009.

[42] African Elections Database. Retrieved from http://africanelections.tripod.com/ml.html Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.

[43] Ibid.

regime. He was re-elected in 1997. Though the second Tamasheq rebellion was over, the voters' interest remained low, no more than 40 percent of the population voted, just like in the preceding national elections. In this country with 80 percent illiteracy, these Western socio-political structures were received with scepticism. In addition, the need for an election by the Mali's administration was neither transparent nor accountable. These were all problems of the youthful democracy. For the country itself democracy was no more than a door to benefits of the state or a promise of international investments. 'Under the guise of 'pseudo-culture' of community concern, and profiting from lack of interest of the donor countries for the *state institutions,* members of the new civil organisations seized a large part of the funding that used to be allocated to state bureaucracy, although in many cases their practises are not so very different from those of the idling and incompetent state administration. Democracy has thus become a tool for making deals, either for making deals with the West or with the Malian masses.' (Abbink & Hesselink, 2000: 246)

In 2002 Amadou Toumani Touré was elected. Again, he was not supported by the peoples of northern Mali, for the reason that they had suffered military abuse during the months of rebellion, when he was in charge of the state. Furthermore, the nomadic voters in the north are difficult to reach. Leaving aside the fact that only 50 percent of the voting tickets ended up where they were intended to be distributed. In the northern region (Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal and Mopti) voting started one week in advance at mobile polling stations, so that the nomads had the opportunity to vote. Amadou Toumani Touré was easily re-elected in 2007. Voter turnout during the four democratic elections has remained below 40 percent. Still Touré is a popular president; his people call him affectionately ATT (Boilley, 2002).

The Bambara

Just as in many African countries different peoples were joined into a state. Other demographical groups in Mali are the Bozo, Fulani, Bella, Songhai, Moor and the Peul nomads. Yet all the presidents were Bambara, just like the largest population group (32%) in the country. The Bambara people are black Sub Saharan Africans descending from Sundiata Keita, founder of the Mali Empire.[44] Just like the queen mother Tin Hinan for the Kel Tamasheq, Sundiata Keita is the historical and cultural father of the Bambara speaking peoples. The king father was also a historical Bambara prince who conquered the Soso Empire and created the Mali Empire around 1230, which lasted till the beginning of the 16th century.[45] When the Malian nation became independent, for many Bambara this was a reaffirmation of the once

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[44] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). World factbook. Africa - Mali. January 2009. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html Visited on 20th of November 2009.
[45] Official site of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art – Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Retrieved from http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/?period=07&region=sfw Visited on 22th of November, 2009.

prosperous Mali Empire with its Bambara culture. During the early years of the independent socialist state of Mali, president Modibo Keita tried to spread the Bambara culture over the country to join the inhabitants into one national Bambara identity. The national history was based on the epics of Sundiata, the Mali Empire and other Bambara Kingdoms. The Keita regime tried to make one nation out of the different peoples within the state. The national saying is 'one people, one goal, one faith'. With the foundation of the socialist and late agrarian Malian state (Warren, 2003) on September 22nd 1960, it became clear that there were already people who fitted the identity of the state, namely the Bambara speaking population of Mali, but there were also people who had to be Bambaraficated to fit the state's dominant idea of nationalism (Lecocq, 2002). These days 80% of the Malians speak Bambara (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009).

90% of the Malian population is Sunni Muslim.[46] Mansa Musa (14th century) was the first king that institutionalised the Islam, which was introduced by Muslim traders from the north into the Saharan region as long ago as in the 7th and 8th century A.D. Ever since, tolerant Islam has been the major religion in Mali among the various nations. Still, the distinction should be made that the Islam in Mali, and other African countries, is often practised together with animalism. In some regions more than in others, the ancient African religions are dovetailed with Islam.[47] These years more and more people are speaking out for a stricter Islam, and not just in the northern region where fundamentalists are believed to have schools. Also in the rest of the country president Amadou Toumani Touré is sometimes seen as anti-religious. As this also implies a pro-western reputation, the president must handle this delicate issue by listening to his people without damaging his ties with the West (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009).[48]

Socio Economic Circumstances

In the prosperous times of the Big West African empires, much trade took place throughout the Sahara. Dromedary caravans of salt and gold travelled along the trade routes from oasis to oasis.[49] In the times that the Kel Tamasheq lived their nomadic lives undisturbed by national politics or transnational organisations. The Kel Tamasheq lived along the Moors and the Peul, other nomad tribes, and they did

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[46] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). World factbook. Africa - Mali. January 2009. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html Visited on 20th of November 2009.
[47] Official site of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art – Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Retrieved from http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mali/hd_mali.htm, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/06/sfw/ht06sfw.htm Visited on November 2, 2009.
[48] Official website of Pax Christi. Conflict Courant Bijlage. Retrieved from http://www.cmo.nl/conflictenbank/index.php?Afrika:Mali Visited on 27th of July 2009.
[49] Official site of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art – Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Retrieved from http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mali/hd_mali.htm Visited on the 2nd of November 2009.

not actively join the trafficking of gold and salt. That was more of an Arab business. The Kel Tamasheq raided the caravans on a regular basis (Saint Girons, 2008).

It is hard to understand that the country, which is today one of the poorest in the world, used to be one of the most powerful and prosperous empires. A striking anecdote to illustrate the wealth of the past empires: Mansa Musa the Magnificent (1312-1337), his father was a brother of the great King Sundiata Keita (1230-1255) and left for a pilgrimage to Medina from 1324 to 1325.[50] Like every devote Muslim, he went to Medina to do his Haji.[51] Together with his court of 8000 to 15000 people, he passed Cairo and spent that much gold, that the value of the metal was devaluated by 12 percent in the region (Fage & Tordoff, 2002).

As mentioned before the economic situation declined in prosperity at the end of the great empires, 400 to 1800 AD. The French oppressing power used the same structures and resources as the previous Empires, only the benefits from the tax structures and mined materials did not return to the region where they came from, but ended up in the Treasury of France. (Abbink & Hesselink AND Fage)

Today, Mali is a late agricultural state (Warren, 2003), based on rice, cotton and livestock mainly.The state also has some goldmines. Moreover, several interested parties are searching for oil in the north, but up till now no substantial sources have been found. Because agriculture is so important to the country, the economy is highly dependent on climate fluctuations and trade-relations with surrounding countries (with seaports).[52]

After the institution of democracy in 1992, the country slowly developed a stable economy. The GDP growth has averaged 4% per year since 1994 (GDP in 2006 was 486.9 dollars per capita). This has everything to do with the political stability since 1994 and the liberal restructuring of the economy in the nineties. Also the fact that no intense droughts have occurred in the last two decades ensures that the primary sector encourages the economy. With the limited growth, new industries are slowly but surely developing, e.g. transport and telecommunications.[53]

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[50] "Western and Central Sudan, 1000–1400 A.D.". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/07/sfw/ht07sfw.htm (October 2001)
[51] Someone who made his pilgrimage to Mecca.
[52] Worldbank country briefing of Mali. Retrieved from
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MALIEXTN/0,,menuPK:362193~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:362183,00.html Visited on May 23, 2009.
[53] Ibid.

Although the economy is growing very slowly, there is still a large state budget deficit of 9.4% of the GDP (2008). Besides the recent high oil prices, the decrease in cotton exports contribute to this growing deficit. The World Bank states that the economy of Mali needs structural reforms for the country to compete with neighbouring countries.[54]

The New Millennium

According to ex-ambassador of the United States, Robert Pringle, the country faces two major threats to its democracy in the new millennium. The first threat concerns the enduring poverty of the country. Despite the relative economicl stability since 1992, described above, there is not enough progress in the modernisation of the state to gain a significant stable position in the region and in the world. The second threat to democracy is the problem of the north, in the past this was mainly a Kel Tamasheq problem. Nowadays, however, it is more complex as other actors have settled in the area. In the end these two threats will undermine the broadly supported democracy (Pringle, 2006).

In Sum

Like the Kel Tamasheq, the other population groups of the current Bambaran state of Mali were once prosperous and powerful. The downhill process of the region goes like the situation of the Kel Tamasheq, i.e. from rich and prosperous during the Middle Ages towards poor and sensitive to contextual factors in this new millennium. In the past twenty years this situation seemed slightly changing towards a more stable position. Since democracy was instituted, the benefits of democratic leadership by Amadou Toumani Touré and his predecessor seemed stabilize the country. Yet, with the recent threat of the illicit flows and the AQIM settling in the north this stabilization process is endangered. The question rises of course: if even the state cannot control the situation of the Northern territories of Mali, what is its influence on the minority? And how does the minority themselves deal with the situation?

The third and last section of this chapter elaborates on the relationship between Mali and the Kel Tamasheq, and how this relationship evolved over the past sixty years.

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[54] Worldbank Country Briefing of Mali. Retrieved from http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MALIEXTN/0,,menuPK:362193~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:362183,00.html Visited on May 23, 2009.

4.3   The Problem of the North – Grievances of the Past

This part of the chapter is about the changing context in which the government and the Kel Tamasheq were engaged since 1960. Since the state of Mali has become independent from its white rulers in 1960, major changes in political, cultural and social aspects and the additional droughts in the sixties and seventies, have significantly impacted the identity of the Kel Tamasheq. Once they were nobles of the Sahara, today they are scattered over eight different countries, where they form minorities in a cultural, social and political aspect.[55] The Kel Tamasheq in Mali have been part of the nation ever sincs independence, and over the years the relation between the government and the nomads evolves. The past sixty years can be divided into four different power dimensions. I choose to distinguish these four periods because they differ in terms of power dimension within the independent state. So, the context of the interrelationship changes during the different periods, and below will be described how the character of the relationship between the minority and the government changed. The interrelationship is particularly described by the moments of friction between the two actors. The chronological narrative of the problem of the north is told along four periods, namely independence, the détente, democratisation and the new millennium.

Independence
'Qui c'est ce monsieur Mali qui remplace les Francais?'[56] (Saint Girons, 2008: 27)

The OCRS: a Kel Tamasheq Nation?
A salient detail in the preamble of the independence of Mali was the fact that the nomads had been promised a rather autonomous region for their own. The promises were made by leading French generals. In so doing, the French themselves hoped to keep some control in the region with its mineral sources, by the institution of the *Organisation Communes des Region Sahariennes* (the OCRS). Of course the African leaders involved were rather suspicious of the motives behind this French initiative. Until the last moment this initiative was still a possibility in the eyes of the nomads. When the French could not fulfil their promise, this issue became one of the grievances most difficult to overcome for the nomads. Instead of a semi autonomous desert region to keep the nomad community united, the nation became distributed over eight West African countries. And the desert territories were assigned to the newly independent sovereign states on the 20th of June 1960 (Lecocq 2002).

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[55] Survie Toearegue Temoust. Retrieved from http://www.halcyon.com/pub/FWDP/Africa/tuareg.txt Visited on 20th of November 2009.
[56] Translation: Who is this mister Mali who came to replace the French?

As a result, despite the promising words of the Conference of Brazzaville, not all groups were included in the process of democratisation. The Kel Tamasheq were definitely not the only nation, which became divided by the newly formed borders (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009). However, the boundaries that were drawn in this context had a devastating effect on the Kel Tamasheq lifestyle. The Kel Tamasheq ettebels and tewsits were separated by the country borders. In addition these borders limited nomadic action and therefore lifestyle. The Kel Tamasheq were forced to live in countries where they formed a minority. Consequently, the traditional nomadic identity was not the same as the national sedentary identity of Mali (and other countries). In addition the political structure was based on a financial system instead of barter. Due to the fact that they lived a highly mobile existence, and that the boundaries of the new countries severely restricted their movements and therefore lifestyle, contributed to a feeling of unrest that became explosive (Saint Girons, 2008).

The Breeding Ground of the First Rebellion - Black and White Africans, Sedentarism vs Pastoralism

Around the independence of the Malian state the clash between the white and black Africans became apparent. The primordial ties of the newly formed government to the Bambaran culture were needed to fit the idea of the dominant state nationalism (Lecocq, 2002).

During this reorganisation of the area the difference between sedentary and pastoral people of Mali was remarkable. The regime saw the Kel Tamasheq and Arabs as barbarians and labelled the 'uncivilized', lazy, anarchist, pro slavery, white nomads in the Sahel and Sahara the 'nomad problem'. The nomads were a problem to the state because they did not fit the picture that the regime had of the nation. This view was based on the development that the colonial power never intended to dominate the white Africans in the north out of anthropological interest. The French wanted to preserve the area for scientific reasons, hence the lifestyle of the nomads was scarcely interrupted by the colonial power. 'The new Malian power would change all this. Believing in modern techniques, rational production, socialism, and above all, the malleability of the human condition, the new regime was determined to put the Sahara to use and 'civilize' its population. In other words: to transform the mental state of the nomad from a lazy contemplative pastoralist to that of a rational sedentary ranch farmer.' (Lecocq, 2002: 171) The new process of nationalization included the political re-administration of the tewsits into fractions and tribes. Most tribes were not used to money-based systems, and with the arrival of the new nations this changed (Saint Girons, 2009).

The time that the Kel Tamasheq could live their traditional lives undisturbed, were over when Modibo Keita came into power. He directly formulated a five-year plan with economic targets and reorganisations

of the society and the economic systems (Lecocq, 2002). When the black Africans came to administrate the region, the Kel Tamasheq asked the question 'Qui c'est ce monsieur Mali qui remplace les Francais?' (Saint Girons, 2008: 27).

It must be said that not only the Kel Tamasheq were seen as people who did not fit the image of the national identity, the dominant Bambara identity, of the state. Also the Songhai had difficulties to fit the state. So they also were subject to the repressive regime and its bambarafication policies. However, the Kel Tamasheq rebelled against the other ideas of nationalism by force, where other people protested in less violent ways (Lecocq, 2002).

The Breeding Ground of the First Rebellion - Bambarafication
Keita and his local administrators organized *troupes artistiques,* activities organized after school to entertain the children and youngsters with scout activities and theatre plays. The stories used were derived from the Bambara culture. In addition there was a radio show that told stories about the Sundiata epics performed by griots, i.e. Bambara folksingers. In the Adrar des Ifoghas the Bambarafication of the state of Mali included education in French and Bambara, not in Tamasheq. The children in the Kidal region learned at school that all Malian citizens were equal and that they should renounce the political structure of the Kel Tamasheq. Besides these restructuring initiatives at school, the *troupes artistiques* were also organized by the local Bambara administrators (Lecocq, 2002). Furthermore, they treated the women very differently than was usual in Tamasheq culture. Women had to work, just like the Bambara women, though the women of the Tamasheq did not work. (Black) Slaves did the work. Women only did the cooking, built tents and taught poetry and epic songs to their children (Bosman, 2000).

The First Rebellion – the Kel Adagh Revolt
The reason that the Kel Tamasheq did not rebel under the French domination was that the French achieved power by military victory, and in line with the Kel Tamasheq martial law, you obey the law of the oppressor. Yet, with the independence of the state this was different. The Bambara did not conquer the French by military means; they just 'got' the power. In the eyes of the Kel Tamasheq the independence of the black Africans was not lawfully obtained (Saint Girons, 2008).

An additional breeding ground for the revolt was the clash between two different ideas of nationalism and the stereotype views of the other. The identities of both groups are so different, and the early Bambarafication politics were so overwhelming, that it seemed like the Kel Tamasheq minority had no

other option than to be ruled by the black Africans. The revolt was a sudden and unplanned rush of the Kel Adagh, based on the above-mentioned grievances (Lecocq, 2002).

'Les Guerriers du Sable'[57] (Lecocq, 2002: 111)

The First Rebellion – the Revolt of the Kel Adagh of the Adrar des Ifoghas

The rebellion against the state started in the mountains of the Ifhogas, north-western Mali. The rebellion was confined to this area for reasons described below, and did not spread to the rest of the Kel Tamasheq area (Berge, 1998). Lecocq (2002) estimates, that between the 120 and 250 men took part in the first rebellion in 1964. The insurgents were armed with automatic rifles from WWII and travelled on camels. The latter were rather more functional than a setback, since the animals were faster than many military vehicles in the rocky terrain. By guerrilla attacks the rebels directed their resistance primarily to government targets (Saint Girons, 2008). The new Malian government oppressed the first rebellion against the state in a manner, which was out of proportion to the size of the rebellion. The violence was not in proportion to the degree of rebellion. The Malian government sent armed forces with 2,200 troops, 35 vehicles and two airplanes to contain the rebellion of the northern area. Water wells were poisoned, hundreds of cows and camels were massacred; and the livestock of many families were wiped out (Saint Girons, 2008). Around 5000 nomads out of 20.000 inhabitants of the Adagh region, fled to Algeria. Contrary to the rebels, who, by their code of conduct, only attacked governmental targets, the Malian armed forces did not limit their actions to the rebels and also civilian targets were aimed. It is difficult to estimate how many people died during the first rebellion, as this is not discussed in the literature I consulted. Women and children were not killed directly, however due to the poisoned wells and severe circumstances of forced labour in prison and forced marriages with the oppressor the nomad families were profoundly disrupted (Lecocq, 2002). Given the fact that the number of rebels was small and the army undertook several actions to contain the community rather than to kill them, I expect several dozens of casualties, no more. If there had been more victims, this would be certainly have been discussed in literature and by the experts whom I spoke to.

As said before, most of the turmoil in the region was among the Kel Adagh tewsits. What are the underlying reasons for this? The reasons can be found in the geographical and demographical influence on the identity of the tewsits living in the Adrar des Ifoghas, the Kel Adagh.

Why was the Kel Adagh the most active tribe in the rebellion?

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[57] Translation: warriors of the desert

With the stereotype view of the Kel Tamasheq I had before I started this paper, I condemned it to be a history of conflict. Consequently, the entire Kel Tamasheq population were guerriers des sables, violent people with magical powers and the goal of ethnical cleansing the north from all the Black Africans, in pursuit of secession. Yet, narrowing down to the concrete rebels within the population Kel Tamasheq, i.e. the ones that are the actual actors in the violent interaction with the Malian nation, there is a clearly definable group, which used violence against the government. Namely the tribes in the Adrar des Ifoghas, i.e. the Kel Adagh, those were responsible for most of the violence against the state during the first and second rebellion. According to Gunnvor Berge, the reason for this lies in their geographical, demographical and emotional history.

In their studies Berge, Saint Girons and Lecocq described how the Kel Adagh from the Adrar des Ifoghas played an important role in the first and second Kel Tamasheq war. There were many reasons why their identity was so threatened that violence seemed necessary for the protection of the group. Below are the reasons why it was the ishomar, i.e. the working generation born at the end of the fifties, of the tribes of the Kel Adagh that were involved in the rebellion.

The Adagh area is located in north-eastern Mali. About 1000 kilometres away from the central political power seated in the southern capital of Bamako. Much trade in the Adagh area is directed to the north, and not to the Malian area. Especially Algeria and Libya are important neighbours of the Kel Adagh. Also the exchange of labour forces, the ishomar or the 'workers', is also directed to the north.

Even by the main Malian standards, which is not much referring to its ranking among the twenty-five poorest in the world, the Adrar des Ifoghas is a marginalized and poor region. Even compared to the other Kel Tamasheq regions in Mali, they are relatively poor (Berge, 1993). This is a big contrast to earlier times. In the early 20th century, Kidal, the main town in the Adrar des Ifoghas, had a large regional market, a crossroads of caravan routes. With the transport revolution, many commodities are transported by plane or truck instead of by camel caravan. The advantage that the Kel Tamasheq had with the city of Timbuktu and Kidal on major trading crossroads, is now gone. In addition, the area is poor in resources, unlike for example the Gourma region on the right bank of the Niger inside the *boucle*.[58] Moreover, the region is remote and hard to cultivate, that the central state invests very little in the area. During the droughts the central state did not supply the area with the aid goods. Nowadays, there are few NGOs operating in the area, because the area is frequently closed to foreign tourists and organizations. (Anne Saint Girons 2008)

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[58] As the bend of the river Niger in Northern Mali is named

The Kel Adagh lives in the Adrar des Ifoghas, which is very mountainous. The geographical features of rocky mountains are perfect for guerrilla warfare. This makes the Adagh area better suited for rebellion than the other regions where the Malian Tamasheq live, i.e. rocky plateaus and steppes. This geographical inaccessibility already played an important role during colonization. In contrasts to other tewsits in the Azawagh, the French have never been able to control the area, and therefore they left the area relatively autonomous. The Kel Adagh did not fight major battles against the French colonial power. Thus, unlike other Kel Tamasheq regions, they were not defeated and decimated by the French in the years before independence. Furthermore, it is also fairly homogeneous in terms of residents. In the past, this tribe had few slaves, and there are few other peoples in the area, unlike the other tribes of the Azawagh. Because the citizen community is homogeneous, the rebels in this area could count on broad support for their actions (Berge, 1993).

The détente

The violent crushing of the first Tamasheq rebellion was followed by a period *détente*. An era in which the new state developed continued to institutionalise a new political structure. It was against this political structure that the Tamasheq rebelled during the first rebellion. Due to the overwhelming defeat of the first rebellion, the policies of the new state were implemented after 1964 (Boilley, 1999). In this period between the two Kel Tamasheq wars, several developments took place that created the breeding ground of the second Tamasheq rebellion. First the grievances of the military administration, then the devastating effect of the droughts, and finally the movement of Ishomar are explained below (Lecocq, 2002).

Military Administration

The military administration of Modibo Keita (1960-1968) and his successor president Moussa Traore (1968-1991) placed the area under the military administration to keep control of the area (Abbink & Hesselink, 2000). Though officials of the government were present the Keita administration located in southern Mali neglected the northern Kel Tamasheq region. This lack of investment in the region had a terrible effect during the severe droughts of the seventies and the eighties (Saint Girons, 2008).

The Droughts

Where rainfall in the fifties was plentiful, towards the sixties it became scarce and by the beginning of the seventies the droughts worsened. The dry season in 1973 was devastating for the cattle. The lives of the nomads are designed to respond to periods of drought. By this time the circumstances were different from the droughts of 1910-1916 and 1940-1949 (Bosman, 2000). Since independence, the state of Mali has

administered and maintained its inhabitants. This resulted in delay for the cattle to leave for better pastures. In addition there was competition between nomads and farmers around the permanent water sources. It was also hard hit when the river Niger dried up and turned into a small stream where all the vegetation along the shores had been eaten. The final option was to move to markets in Algeria to sell the stock and buy food from the income for the rest of the cattle; nonetheless 80 percent of the cattle had already died by that time. The amount of people who died during the Sahel famine is not registered, it were mostly kids who died from malnutrition and diseases. 'the drought of 1973 meant a near total collapse of the pastoral economy of northern Mali. Anything what was left was taken by a period of severe drought in the early eighties, culminating in 1984.' (Lecocq, 2002: 172-173)

The government cannot be held responsible for these harsh meteorological situations. On the other hand it does have responsibility towards the unequal distribution of the supplies. However the severely neglecting government invested the donor money from the international community in southern regions and 'forgot' the northern Tamasheq regions. The poverty and grievances caused by this unequal policy contributed to creating the breeding ground of conflict. The droughts caused massive refugee flows to Niger, Libya, Algeria and Mauritania.

As a result of the fall down of the pastoral economy and the refugee flows there was much poverty and unemployment. The conditions of life changed, 'In the late colonial period and under the Keita regime the Kel Tamasheq consistently resisted the changes forced upon them by external political powers. But changes caused by the ecological disasters of the 1970 and 1980 droughts could not be circumvented.' (Lecocq, 2002: 191)

Ishomar
Especially the younger schooled generation lost their future perspectives. These unemployed young Tamasheqs were the so-called 'ishomar', the labourers. The first ishomars were the orphans of the Adagh revolt. After the first destructive drought many of these youngsters migrated to Libya, to join the leaders who had been able to escape the oppressive measures after the '63 revolt. Gaddafi welcomed them; in the 1980 he made a speech to Tamasheq people saying that their home was Libya; the older Tamasheq did not respond to this. But though the younger Kel Tamasheq were suspicious of the Libyan leader, they came to join 'le front populaire de liberation du Sahara arabe central' (Bosman, 2000). By the beginning of the eighties Gaddafi incorporated several Kel Tamasheqs in his army. His goal was to create a Saharan army to control all the deserts. Numerous soldiers of his army fought in Lebanon for example and in Chad. However, when oil reserves decreased and the international boycott hit Libya, the Tamasheq were

released from the army for those who would not take Libyan nationality, and fired from their jobs in the petrol or other businesses. During their time in Libya they started an underground network of militants. The Ishomars of various ettebels formed a revolutionary movement 'teshumara'. This network developed a different idea of Kel Tamasheq nationality. The traditional Kel Tamasheqs based their identity on the lifestyle they had. With the dramatic changes of the traditional nomadic lifestyle into sedentary wage labour the culture needed to change. Alternatively this worker generation urbanized, and they developed 'the way of the unemployed', i.e. the literal meaning of teshumara. The new identity was sought by nationalism. Not the nationalist ideas that Modibo Keita tried to force upon them, but in their own Kel Tamasheq ways they searched for 'one goal, one nation and on people'. This development can be illustrated by the Tamasheq word for identity 'temoust'. In the early meaning of the word was 'nature' or 'self', yet in the new nationalist context the meaning became 'nation' referring to all the Kel Tamasheq (Saint Girons, 2009).

Within the changing context, the lifestyle and the search for a way to deal with this, a resistance movement sprouted out of the ishomar called tanekra, i.e. the uprising. Three concepts were of importance within the movement: the concept of the nation state, hatred and revenge for the first war and the neglect by the government during the droughts, and lastly postcolonial ideas of Modibo Keita about social change. This movement carefully planned and prepared the uprising of the nineties (Lecocq, 2002).

In sum, the breeding ground for conflict was already present in the aftermath of the first Tamasheq rebellion. As president Modibo Keita nor his successor president Moussa Traoré, who seized power after a military take-over, were able or willing to handle the northern problem and the breeding ground of the conflict did not disappear (Abbink & Hesselink, 2000). On the contrary, through the years the breeding ground for conflict was even fed by developments as the Malian political reaction on the droughts, the Bambarafication processes and in the end also the fact that Libyan oil reserves decreased and Gaddafi was no longer able to keep up his extended army (Lecocq, 2009).

Second Rebellion 1990-1996
The second Kel Tamasheq rebellion was in many ways the same as the first in the 1963. Though this time the rebellion was carefully planned and involved various organized rebel movements. Though the Tanekra movement sought after one common identity, the traditional social structure by kinship along the tewsits still had a major influence as different rebel organizations stemmed from different tewsits.

In the period between the Tamasheq wars, several developments took place that contributed to the breeding ground of the second Tamasheq Rebellion. The first and most painful event, which can be seen as a direct cause of the second Tamasheq war, was the overwhelming defeat of the first rebellion. Most of the fighters, who died during the first rebellion, were the fathers of the men who took part in the second Tamasheq rebellion. Other reasons that contributed to the breeding ground were the marginalizing effects of the droughts together with the unequal distribution of goods and the military administration. Besides, after thirty years the same incompatible ideas of nationalism, only thoroughly revised by the Tanekra movement, were still present. Black and white stereotyping reoccurred; evidently the inhabitants of the Malian state have not got to know one another in the 30 years the officially shared the Malian nationality (Lecocq, 2002).

The Second Rebellion – The Tamasheq Revolt

The rebellion came at a time that the central power of the state was not strong as the second military take-over occurred. This time the state changed into a constitutional democracy (Abbink & Hesselink, 2000). The goals of the rebellion were the same as in 1963 but more precisely formulated and a lot better prepared than the first rebellion that was rather an impulsive action. Also this time the Kel Tamasheq opted for a nation state. The state of Mali directly started to negotiate with the rebels in Tamanrassat, Algeria. The Tamanrassat Accords of 5 and 6 June 1991 were never fully implemented. They were a model for later negotiations as the National Pact in 1996. The non-implementation of the peace-agreements and the revolt against the Kel Tamasheq by the black population of the north, the Songhai, prolonged the conflict until 1996. The 1200 casualties were not only Kel Tamasheq rebels. After promises of far going decentralization to all the provinces of Mali, the government kept the nation unity, the Kel Tamasheq gained a degree of self-governance and the rebels could join the national army (Humphreys & Habaye, 2005).

The New Millennium

After 1996 the representative democracy, under the leadership of Amadou Toumani Touré, made the promise to invest in the northern region and to promote Kel Tamasheq participation in the government.[59] Though not all promises made in the negotiations were kept, still there has been more governmental attention regarding the region. [60]

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[59] For the extended peace agreements I refer to www.temoust.org

[60] Afrol News. Retrieved from http://www.afrol.com/articles/29918 Visited on the 5th of November, 2009.

What makes the situation of today different from the two rebellions, however, is that more actors are active in the region. Besides the increasing governmental attention there are more players on the desert stage in the first years of the new millennium. New to the area are the threat of fundamentalism and the attention from the United States that seems to come together with this. The issue became sensitive since the abduction of a bus with 22 tourists in Southern Algeria in 2003. Nowadays it is generally known that they were abducted by the Salafist movement with the name *Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le combat* (GSPC) under the leadership of El Para. The GSPC joined Al Qaida in 2006 under the name of Al Qaida Organisation of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) (Saint Girons, 2008). Since that day the attention of the United States was drawn to the Sahara desert as a place where Islamic fundamentalist were schooled. Hence, the US came to help and stabilize Southern Algeria and therefore also the region. The Kel Tamasheq helped with their release but they never abducted anyone, even to this very day. However, it seems indeed that there are Islamic schools in the wastelands of the Sahara. But then… there have always been famous Islamic schools in Timbuktu for example, where the oldest university of the world is still situated, the Sankoré University.[61] In answer to the threat of fundamentalism the US developed a special Operation Enduring Freedom applied to the Sahara (Keenan 2007).

Still, there are casualties in the northern region in recent history. In 2000 it was a former Kel Tamasheq rebel, named Bahanga, who brought an armed group together. Later on another Lieutenant Colonel, Fagaga, deserted from the national army and founded a rebel group. The group pursued the establishment of Kidal as an autonomous region, more economic investments in the area and a better situation for ex-Tamasheq-rebels that joined the army. These rebellions were caused by the non-implementation of the peace agreements of 1997. In 2006 a new pact was signed between the Malian government, three senior tribal chiefs and the Kel Tamasheq rebelling groups. However, the problem in northern Mali still smoulders on. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon expressed his concerns by sending a special representative for West Africa. In 2008 the last pact was signed, however, one of the major rebel groups refused to sign the agreement. Until today the unrest continues to flare up occasionally (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009).

During the presidency of Amadou Toumani Touré there have been more investments in the area, so most Kel Tamasheq are not rebelling for secession anymore. The violence in northern Mali nowadays has more to do with mutiny by the Kel Tamasheq soldiers that deserted from the army because they felt unequally treated, than with the civil Kel Tamasheq population. Furthermore, with the dangerously increasing drug

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[61] Official site of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art – Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Retrieved from http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/06/sfw/ht06sfw.htm Visited on November 2, 2009.

trafficking the unrest in the north shifts from only Kel Tamasheq problems with the Black African government, towards a more incontrollable situation for a state that is one of the 25 poorest countries in the world. With the highly lucrative business of drug trafficking and the transnational organizations involved, with the United States and its Pan African Initiative and the Al Qaida of the Islamiq Magreb in the north, the country is incontrollable for a state like Mali.[62]

Another issue in recent years has a more socio economic character. The northern part of Mali has always been an area of trafficking. In the ancient days camel caravans were used for the gold and salt trade. After the industrialization camels were replaced by trucks and airplanes. In the seventies and eighties cigarettes were subject to trafficking. In this new millennium drug trafficking is booming business. Since 2005, the market for South American drugs is growing in Europe. The drug flow touches West Africa on its way to Europe, where people involved in trafficking are paid in drugs. The fragile states of Nigeria and Guinea Bissao are key actors in the drugs flow, because of the little territorial control there is in these countries. But it must be said that with the increasing international attention a slight decline can be observed since 2008. The route through the Sahara is favourable for drugs trafficking as the wastelands are hard to control. The drug flow concerns about a billion dollars in the region (UNODC, 2009). The region is uncontrollable and access to smuggling is easy and very tempting when one has little else (Keenan, 2007). In general, the Kel Tamasheq are not involved with the illicit transnational flows of traffic. Nonetheless, there is a lot of money to be made in trafficking. Furthermore, they live in the area and their profound knowledge of the wastelands is of much use to illegal traders. However, since Tamasheq tribes are basically very poor, they are not able invest on a large scale in this sector of business. Thus they are hardly involved. If they are involved this is usually in the role in the periphery of the drug flow; i.e. the guides or the drivers within the network (Saint Girons, 2009).

Since the threat of terrorism in the area due to the 2003 abductions in Algeria and the international attention on drug trafficking, there are fewer tourists. Instead the United States, with their war on terrorism, initiated a Pan Sahel initiative (Keenan, 2007). All these actors with their conflicting interests are intervening in a state that has barely the power to contain them (UNODC, 2009).

Where the first two rebellions have comparable root causes, the present unrests in northern Mali are based on new dynamics. Why does the unrest occasionally flare up? The fact that the area is hard to control and that Mali has no extensive means to control or make huge investments in the area, makes it a very

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[62] The UN Refugee Agency. Retrieved from
http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/category,COI,FREEHOU,,MLI,473c55dd268,0.html visited on November 20, 2009.

difficult problem. Though Mali is an example of democracy in Africa, its greatest threats are the enduring poverty and the problem of the incontrollable north (Fage & Tordoff, 2002).

4.4   Summary of Chapter 4[63]

Central to this thesis is the influence of the government on the minority identity of the Kel Tamasheq. This chapter is about the history and characteristics of the Kel Tamasheq community, the Malian state and their interrelationship of conflict.

Reading through this chapter of the Kel Tamasheq history, it seems impossible to formulate a comprehensive definition of the Kel Tamasheq identity. The reason for this is that the identity of the nomads is subject to the environment that changes over time and as a result also identity changes. At the beginning of this study I assumed that the Malian government played a major role in the identity formation of the nomads. Mali's role is indeed one of influence; however, there are other factors that play a powerful role in the northern region of Mali. Major developments occurred and new actors settled in the area; the power dimensions changed over the years. In this concluding section of the context chapter I shortly describe the identity of the Kel Tamasheq along the changing power dimensions. A note must be made that though the periods may differ in a transforming context, the Kel Tamasheq identity is a continuum of an ever-changing identity. Thus the identities I will describe according the periods are not isolated from each other, but dovetailed with one another.

In earlier times the Kel Tamasheq were masters of their own territory, after the independence of the state of Mali, this changed considerably. With the shifting of power in the region, also the socio-political and economic position of the nomads changed and subsequently their identity. When the power structure changed in the area, the relationship between the nomads and the government (the black nationality) changed. Due to the fact that several elements, e.g. the rebellions and the droughts, of the Kel Tamasheq identity refer to different moments in time, the discussion about the changing identity of the nomads is based on these historical periods. The identity of the Kel Tamasheq interacts with the contextual developments and appears to be subject to context change. With each power shift, the nomadic identity had to adapt to the new position in the society. In the past sixty years, three periods with different dimensions of power can be distinguished. Namely, the period before independence when the French were master of the area, the period of independence (1960-1992) when Mali had an authoritarian regime,

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[63] For the reason that chapter 4 is rather extensive this final paragraph concerns a summary of the abovementioned.

and the third period is the period of Mali as a new democracy (1992-present). Consequently, the power shifted in the northern region of Mali from the French (before 1960) that did not fully control the area to the state of Mali (1960-1995) who did try to control the region with its containment policies and than to new powerful actors that have settled in the area since the end of the millennium.

During the first period the rich cultural traditions were well preserved due to the isolation of the wastelands, which are hard to penetrate for outsiders. During the Middle Ages and after, the economic circumstances were prosperous. However with the transport revolution and later the institution of the independent state of Mali the situation changed dramatically. Though economic decline was not so much of a reason of conflict in 1964, the different ideas, however, of nationalism and the mutual stereotypes between government and minority were a reason for the nomads to rebel. The first rebellion in the Adrar des Ifoghas started due to the fact that the Malian civil administrators, who came to the northern territories, were strangers to the Kel Tamasheq. The nomads saw the independence as a white dominance followed by a black dominance. The situation changed thoroughly within a short time. It was the bambarafication politics and especially the abruptness of its implementation of it by the enthusiastic youthful state that caused the unplanned and sudden revolt among the Kel Tamasheq and especially the Kel Adagh. During the first Kel Tamasheq rebellion in 1964, the government came out strongest. In the first period, the nomadic identity of a rich, proud and independent people turned into a nation that was conquered and dominated by a nationality, which was considered to be inferior (i.e. the former slaves). This is one of the grievances that determined the Kel Tamasheq identity.

In the first period the identity of the nomads is characterized by a confidence based on their autonomy and integrity. The autonomy was based on social, political and economic wealth and thus independence from surrounding nations. The integrity of the nomads had everything to do with the geographical distance and impenetrability of the desert that inhabited and lived so close with. This resulted in a buffer that protected and isolated the people against other nations. The attachment of the nomads to the territory is well symbolized by the term they themselves use for identity, namely 'temoust' which means nation in combination with the land they inhabit. The fearless and noble identity of the nomads was resilient and stable through the protection that the geographical buffer offered in conjunction with the economic independence of the nation.

The second period, from 1964 to 1996, had an even further going devastating effect on the community. From 1965 to 1990, the north was neglected by the state in terms of economic investment. Meanwhile, the containment policies of the government, i.e. the Bambarafication and re-administration programs to administer the nomads according to national standards, which were initiated by the government since the

independence of Mali and it continued until 1990. However, most disastrous for the nomads in this period, were the two major droughts and the neglect of the government during these droughts. In the seventies and eighties there were two long periods of drought in West Africa. In the affected areas, many cattle died, and millions of people suffered from the droughts. The situation was appalling, and international relief aid was brought to the region. Yet no relief supports did find its way to the northern parts of Mali. Most of the relief goods benefited the people of southern Mali. The state could do relatively little about the drought. However, the unfair distribution of relief is a great grievance to the nomads.

The social-economical en political position of the nomads changed in thirty years, from independent and wealthy to poor and dependent. The desert wasteland is less a geographic buffer against external influences than before. Since the establishment of the state, Mali tried to control its territories. The transport revolution and the periods of droughts that forced nomads to move southwards have made the access to the area and therefore the administration of the nomads easier for the government than ever before.

By the nineties the nomads had still the same reasons to fight for secession as during the first Rebellion. What differed from three decennia before was that for the second rebellion the revolt was cautiously planned and not an instant rush of high disturbance. The rebellion was based on several grievances from the past, namely the humiliation and marginalization by the first rebellion, the bambarafication, re-administration, the devastating effects of the droughts, the lack of relief aid during the droughts and the overall lack of investments by the government in the region. The second Tamasheq rebellion took place during the same time as the democratisation of Mali in 1992. In these turbulent times the structure of power changed from an authoritarian regime to a multi party system. Due to a lack of internal organisation of the Kel Tamasheq and the fact that the new democratically chosen leader of Mali negotiated with the nomads, state and minority ultimately came to 'the National Pact' in 1996.

The identity of the second period is characterized by the dichotomy of pride and marginalisation, which resulted in a severe longing for the years of autonomy and welfare in the past. The pride and nobility were derived from their ancient culture, just like the identity of the first period. The proudly pronounced identity was not stable and intact anymore, but marginalized by governmental neglect, governmental mismanagement and, foremost, by the heavy droughts. Thus, the other part of the dichotomy concerned the different grievances that turned the nation into a marginalized minority of Mali. The second period is characterised by détente. Subcutaneous revenge, generated by the breeding ground of several humiliations and setbacks, played a major role in the Kel Tamasheq identity. The second rebellion aimed at independence from the state. As a stable state was not achievable due to the poverty of the region, secession was not realistic but reflected the stern intrinsically desire for the autonomous past.

Since the democratisation of Mali in 1992 and the National Pact in 1996, there is less need for insurgencies. The positive results of democratisation are more participation and a more equal distribution of state investments, the result of the National Pact was a radical decentralisation. However, it does not appear as though the region will ever be peaceful. Besides the fact that the governmental promises, recorded by the National Pact, were not implemented as intended, there were new developments that deranged the northern situation. In these times there are other disturbing factors in the north. By the transport revolution and the internet and communication revolution the Sahara desert is not only more accessible to the government; also other actors are interested in the region. By the end of the new millennium more powerful actors, like Al Qaeda of the Maghreb and actors involved with drug trafficking settled in the area. The northern part of Mali has always been an area of trafficking, but today the ancient trans-Saharan trade routes do not only transport gold, salt or cigarettes. In the ancient days camel caravans were used for the gold and salt trade. Today, drugs, cigarettes, weaponry and even immigrants are subject to illegal trans-Saharan trafficking. Unfortunately, Mali suffers enduring poverty and has no means to control the area. At this point in time, the context of the Kel Tamasheq is determined by powerful actors, and their own impoverished state. The democratic government has improved desert life, but in the new balance of power in the north, it is hard to define what is really going on, and in that respect it is a volatile situation. Moreover, considering the fact that the state is very poor the implementation of promised investments in the region is a problem. In the years 2006 and 2007 this resulted again for unrest in the region. Especially the fact that the nomads are still not a stable community, due to the continuing poverty, makes them vulnerable for powerful other actors in the region. Though Mali is an example of democracy in Africa, its greatest threats are the enduring poverty and the problem of the incontrollable north.

The third identity is characterized by volatility of the northern territories of Mali. The same dichotomy of pride and marginality is present, but with the region still being poor and the new powerful actors in the region the situation became more volatile and the identity instable. During this period, the challenge is not only a quest for individual identity despite the role of government. The relationship with government has improved, but the role of government in the northern area is rather marginal nowadays. Today, there are more powerful actors in the area that influences the socio-economic and political structure of the nomads. The third period is characterized by fragmentation of power in the northern region. The nomads do not have a stable socio-economic or political basis; the people are vulnerable to the changing environment. Consequently, the nomadic identity is less stable than ever before and is easily subject to the other actors at the stage. The identity of Kel Tamasheq is subject to contextual factors and the question is how the nation will cope with this.

The path towards marginalization of the north, started with a rich history of the Kel Tamasheq, and goes through independence, bambarafication, two rebellions, severe droughts and the characteristics of the new millennium, towards marginalization of the Kel Tamasheq and a power vacuum in the northern territories of Mali. There has been a tumultuous relationship between the government and the minority, and after the state structure reversion, the interference of international actors, and climate change, there still is a confusing interrelationship after fifty years. Returning to the main question of this thesis 'What is the influence of the government on the minority identity?' brings me to the issue that it seems that the change of the minority identity in relation with the government varies with the changing power dimensions. One sees that the relation did not exist before 1960, as the state of Mali did not exist in these days. Since the independence of the Malian state in 1960, the emergence of the state has played an important role for the nomads, who were instantly a minority. The relation was very distant in the first decennia, from 1960 till 1990. In this period the Kel Tamasheq lived a distant life in the desert and semi desert. The remoteness was not only geographically, but also mutual stereotypes caused a distance. In the third period, from 1990 till present, the relation between the two entities improved due to democratisation and the binding leadership of several presidents since 1992. The emergence of the state and the way to its stability played a crucial role in the identity formation of the nomads. At several times during recent decennia, not only the government was of influence to the identity of the nomads, because it was not the only powerful actor of influence in the region, yet the droughts, drug trafficking and the AQIM are also of major influence on the identity forming of this minority.

In the following chapter, the government has a central role in the analysis, but also the role of the different powerful actors in the area will be taken into account. In so doing, the role of the government is very important here, since it basically is a governmental task to preserve its territorial integrity and this seems quite complex in the Azawagh desert. The other powerful actors must not be forgotten in the analysis. In the next chapter, the theories of Sen and Huntington will be applied to the situation and its actors. How would Huntington define the situation of the Kel Tamasheq? What would be Sen's analysis of the relation of the minority and the government? The next chapter will elaborate on the views of the two theorists, Samuel Huntington and Amartya Sen, on the role of identity in the interrelationship between the minority and the state.

CHAPTER 5   MINORITY VERSUS NATIONAL IDENTITY

THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORIES ON THE PROBLEM OF THE NORTH

Here we come to the core chapter of the thesis. After the elaboration on the situation in chapter 3 and the methods in chapter 4, in this chapter the operationalisation will be applied to the situation of Mali. The main question of this study concerns the influence of the national identity of Mali on the minority identity of the Kel Tamasheq. In this chapter, the features of identity that are repeatedly mentioned in the literature about the northern situation in Mali are discussed and analysed by the two identity theories. The features of identity are described through the past five decennia and if needed for a better understanding of the development or perseverance of the feature also before independence. Using the two theories, the identity features are analysed to see if there is any development or that they are intrinsically unchanged. The results of the analysis will indicate what the conflict between the government and the minority is exactly about, i.e. which are the conflicting features between the two. And eventually whether the government influences the minority identity

The two operatonalisations of the identity theories will be applied to the concrete situation since independence in 1960. In so doing, I will search to explain the conflict between the state and the minority according to the primordial hypothesis on identity and the same goes for the constructivist hypothesis on identity. The operationalisations are outlined in chapter 3. The questions in the aforementioned tables are summarised by the following overarching questions; 'What is the minority identity and what is the national identity?' and 'What is the role identity plays in conflict?'. After the application of the theories to the situation, a summary will close the chapter.

To identify the sustainability of the hypotheses, several identity features of the minority and the state will be described by how they evolved over the four periods that differ in the power allocation of the northern territories of Mali. I will especially look at the identity features that seem important to interrelationships of the actors over the four periods of different power allocation described in chapter 4. The four identity features, shared history, language, lifestyle and religion, are chosen because the literature study shows that they were these identity features that seem particularly relevant during the conflict situations, the obvious clashes of the interrelationship between the two actors. The analysis of the dynamics of the identity features regards the moments of rebellion and conflict within the four power dimensions. The past will be analysed with the question if the violence or protest used was based on given identity features or on identity features that were strategically chosen.

The chapter begins with the short repetition of the four different periods of power dimension that I have discussed in chapter 4. Followed by the elaboration of the four identity features and how they changed since 1960. Per identity feature the interpretation of the two theories on the history of the specific identity feature will be outlined.

5.1   The Four Different Power Dimensions

The Power Dimensions

The four power dimensions discussed in chapter 4 are the independence, the détente, democratisation and the new millennium. With each power shift, the nomadic identity had to adapt to the new position in the society. In the past sixty years, three periods with different dimensions of power can be distinguished. Namely, the period before independence when the French were master of the area, the period of independence (1960-1992) when Mali had an authoritarian regime, and the third period is the period of Mali as a new democracy (1992-present). Consequently, the power shifted in the northern region of Mali from the French (before 1960) who did not fully control the area, to the state of Mali (1960-1992) that did try to control the region with its containment policies and then to the newest era of democratisation (1992-recent) during which new powerful actors settled in the northern area (Lecocq & Schrijver, 2008).

The nomads during these power dimensions

For the nomads this implied that before independence and during the first few years of independence, leaving aside the first rebellion, the Tamasheq were masters of their own territory and lived under prosperous social economic circumstances. Nomad families herded up to hundred camels and the socio-political situation was scarcely influenced by external forces. After the first years of independence of Mali, this changed considerably. During the détente (1969-1980) there were two major droughts and the government neglected the northern territories severely in terms of economic investment and relief aid. Especially during the two big droughts this had a devastating effect on the nomads, as the herds were decimated, and international relief aid was invested in the southern regions of Mali, leaving the northern area languishing. Meanwhile, the containment policies of the government, i.e. the Bambarafication and re-administration programs to administer the nomads according to national standards, which were initiated by the government since the independence of Mali, continued until 1990. By the nineties the nomads had still the same purpose, secession, as during the first rebellion. What differed from three decennia before was that in the second rebellion the revolt was cautiously planned and not an instant rush

of high disturbance. The rebellion was based on several grievances of the past, namely the humiliation and marginalization by the first rebellion, the Bambarafication, re-administration, the devastating effects of the droughts, the lack of relief aid during the droughts and the overall lack of investment by the government in the region. The second Tamasheq rebellion took place during the same time as the democratisation of Mali in 1992. In these turbulent times the structure of power changed from an authoritarian regime to a multi party system. Due to a lack of internal organisation of the Kel Tamasheq and the fact that the new democratically chosen leader of Mali negotiated with the nomads, state and minority ultimately came to 'the National Pact' in 1996. The positive result of democratisation was more participation and a more equal distribution of state investments, and the result of the National Pact was radical decentralisation. However, it does not appear as though the region will ever be peaceful. Because of the transport revolution and the internet and communication revolution the Sahara desert is not only more accessible to the government, but also other actors are interested in the region. By the start of the new millennium more powerful actors, like Al Qaeda of the Maghreb and actors involved with drug trafficking settled in the area (Keenan, 2007).

With this short overview of the power dimensions outlined in chapter 4, I now turn to the four features of identity that played a major role in the past decennia. Are these features changing through time?

5.2   The Four Identity Features – Huntington's View and Sen's View on the Situation

According to the first hypothesis the identity features are determining the identity through time. Reading the story with the deterministic view of Huntington, it will look like the identity features do not seem to change that much since the sixties. According to the second hypothesis this is not the case. Obviously, the identity features are based on the historical past of a prosperous realm, and until today the past is very important to the Bambara as well as to the Kel Tamasheq. Within the second hypothesis though, identity changes when contextual developments pass by over time. Below the identity features will be described and analysed by the operationalisation of Huntington and Sen.

5.3   Identity Feature I - Collective History and the Theories

What is the Minority and what is the National Identity?
Naturally, history shapes the present and when time passes by there is more history to recall. History does not always play the same role to people as the context and content of the history evolve. Consequently, history does not always the play the same role in everyday life. The current situation evolved from a

history of independence, conflicts and droughts. Below I will elaborate on the role that history plays in the Bambaran national identity and the role it plays for the minority identity of the Kel Tamasheq. Core to this elaboration is the question how history is lived by today and how history has changed from sixty years ago.

The National Identity – The Bambara

For the National Bambara identity of Mali history is honoured by the recitation of epic songs about the heroic ancestors of the past. Especially the epics concerning the life of Sundiata Keita play a central role in Bambaran identity.

Though the Bambaras were dominated by the French until 1960, the collective history recalling the Sundiata epic was a proud one. Every nation has it periods of glory and the story of Sundjata refers to the beginning of the 13th century when this Bambara prince defeated the Soso Empire and founded the prosperous Mali Empire. Ever since, griots[64] played a distinguished role in reciting the epics of his life and the Mali Empire. Traditionally, the griots were the only musicians in Bambara culture, and they sung epic songs about Sundiata and family chronicles only at baptisms, weddings or funerals of their patrons and family. Since the European colonization of West Africa, the relationship between griots and their patrons has changed. The introduction of taxes by the colonial rulers had as a consequence that the local rulers could not longer maintain their personal musicians. The griots had to broaden their clientele to other members their society by singing in streets and on markets and ask passers-by for money. Another change in of traditions was the creation of a written tradition during the period of the French domination. This development of the writings, phonetic script, went very slowly due to the dominant foreign culture (Fage & Tordoff, 2002).

After independence, the government was working on the revitalization of African values in general, i.e. Bambaran values, and they tried to create a national Malian consciousness. For the encouragement of a national identity, the government designed civilisation programs in Bambara only. In these programs the government prohibited other languages and writing at school and introduced various incentives to stimulate the Bambara culture and traditions, e.g. compulsory Bambara radio with the stories of Sundiata Keita, music and dance programs. Through the time music is not reserved for griot families only, and this process was enhanced by the independent government after 1960. Consequently, also people from a non-griot family begun to earn money with music. A growing interest from the West for world music and dance at the end of the 20th century stimulated the potential for non-griots to make money with music.

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[64] i.e. traditional musicians

Today, the Bambaran people are not dominated by the French any longer. They themselves are the dominating nation these days, just like 500 years ago, when Sundiata was in power of the region. The Bambara saw the independence in 1960 as justice that had finally turned on their side. Due to the changing power structures and their associated policy, also the role of epic songs in society changed.

With the advent of the colonial power and independence, the oral tradition plays slightly less important role in modern Mali, and slowly with the implementation of Western structures such as education and democracy, also a written tradition starts to evolve. History is not only referred to by the epics theme of Sundiata or family chronicles anymore. History is also tought at schools these days and history is more than stories about ancient heroes. Music is no longer reserved for griot families only; today's music is influenced by music from around the world. However, until present the recitation of family history and singing praises remains reserved for "real" griots (Lecocq, 2002).

The Minority Identity – The Kel Tamasheq

For the minority of Kel Tamasheq the epics of Tin Hinan are sung through the ages. The Kel Tamasheq have, contrary to the Bambara culture, the ancient writing Tifinagh, besides the oral traditions. For the reason that they were hard to dominate, the nomads remained relatively untouched by the French domination of western Africa, thus they could easily continue their traditions. When the power structure changed from the colonisation to the independence of the several West African countries as we know them now, this relatively autonomous nation of nomads changed into various minority identities in various West African countries with different majority identities.[65]

The epics of Tin Hinan have been sung and written in poems for ages. And this tradition continued after independence. Also during the Bambarafication programs, that the new Malian government stimulated a homogeneous national identity, the Kel Tamasheq refused to integrate and kept their traditions. In these programs the government introduced various incentives to stimulate Bambara culture and traditions, e.g. Bambara nationwide radio programmes with the stories of Sundiata Keita, music and dance programs which were compulsory for the nomads. In education Tamahaq was prohibited, and the language of the Bambara[66] became the official language besides French.[67]

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[65] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.

[66] Also named Bambara

[67] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/identite Visited on the 25th of November, 2009.

These civilization programs also promoted the teaching of national history at school, in this the pupils were taught that all Malians were equal. This was at odds with the historical values of the nomads for who the black Africans were seen as inferior, given the fact that until the beginning of the 20th century they were slaves, also within the Kel Tamasheq culture (Saint Girons, 2008).

Until today the Kel Tamasheq honour their prosperous history by their oral and written tradition, though the central role of these epics in everyday life is slightly changing as the context is changing. The context changed from rich and autonomous socio-economic circumstances towards a situation in which they were dominated by a people that were formally slaves to the nomads. A different context generates new and different history. The story of Tin Hinan is still sung by the oral traditions and described in Kel Tamasheq poetry. Since the seventies, however, recent history started to be an item within this typical Kel Tamasheq music. Especially the first rebellion was memorised in tragic songs often referred to as desert blues. The Kel Tamasheq band named Tinariwen[68] was a pioneer in these. The band consisted of men from the generation that lost their fathers, cattle and future in the first rebellion. The music was a way of rebelling against the situation. Since the eighties, however, the traditional songs are not all about the epical heroic ancestors anymore. In the case of the Kel Tamasheq, in the nineties a few bands started to sing about the current situation of despair and their beloved desert life. Tinariwen is one of the first which broke with the traditional way of singing that was only about epics, and also used guitars in addition to the traditional violin, tambour and drums. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the band enjoys international recognition (Tinariwen, 2009).

Is Collective History a Persistent Identity Feature or is it Subject to Change?
Over the decades new pieces of history were added to the existing history and the role of the past evolved.

Though, the Bambaran identity, in terms of music, epics and education, has been nationalised in the Bambarafication processes of the state in the sixties and seventies, the Kel Tamasheq have hardly been affected by this governmental incentive. They held on to their own history and music, furthermore, most of the Kel Tamasheq do not speak Bambara, and so it seems that the Bambarafication programme on these issues did not achieve its purpose, i.e. a nationwide homogeneous Bambara culture, by imposing a common history. The bambarafication process did however cause severe grievances which accumulated through the years and contributed to the marginalized identity of the Kel Tamasheq, and therefore breeding ground of the second Kel Tamasheq war.

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[68] They broke through internationally in 2000.

The marginalized Kel Tamasheq identity today still honors its queen mother by music and stories, instead of the king father of the Bambara national identity. For both the history of their heroic ancestors plays an important role in their lives. However, to these cultural traditions, new contextual developments changed the character of history and the role it plays within the society. The ancient epics of Tin Hinan and Sundjata Keita still are a persistent part of oral and written history, though its importance slightly changes due new developments. For the Bambara the role of the oral history changes as music is not only reserved for griots anymore. And for the nomads there are new grievances and easy desert lifestyle that play a role in everyday life. Thus, collective history seems to be accumulating and in addition the role it plays in everyday life changes by the way it is used.

5.4   Identity Feature II – Language

What is the minority identity and what is the national identity?
A persisting identity feature is the language of both identities. Though both identities speak French, the second language of the country, both identities barely speak each others language. An illustration of this is the Kel Tamasheq band Tinariwen. Interviewing one of the members of the band, we could hardly understand each other, as he spoke Tamahaq and Arabic, and I Bambara and French.

The National Identity & the Bambara Language
Before independence Bambara was the language only for the Bambara speaking in the area. It was a widely spread remnant of the once powerful Mali Empire. Initially it was a language without script, during the French colonization, however, a written tradition was initiated in the 20th century and the script was turned into Latin script, with some additional letters.[69] As said before, the new Malian government tried to create a national unity by implementing the civilisation programs to stimulate a homogeneous national identity. After independence Bambara became the first language nationwide and the Bambarafication program stimulated the use of the language throughout the country. The program included an education section to teach all the Malian inhabitants national history and Bambara. Other languages than French, the second language of the country, or Bambara were prohibited at school (Fage & Tordoff, 2002).

In the last two decades the literacy of the Malian inhabitants quickly increased. During the elections of 1992 the percentage of analphabetism was over 80 percent in Mali; the written tradition is slowly evolving but certainly not dominating. The CIA World Factbook indicates that the amount of

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[69] Universität Wien. Retrieved from http://www.univie.ac.at/sikwa/Bambara.htm Visited on 28th November 2009.

analphabetism from the age fifteen and over is 46 percent (2003). On average, men are more literate than women.[70]

The Minority Identity & the Kel Tamasheq Language Tamahaq

The Kel Tamasheq have already had their own oral and written tradition in Tamahaq since Tin Hinan, who is still seen as the mother of the language and culture of the Tamasheq. Berber inscriptions have been found on rocks as old as the 6th century BC. The written tradition, Tifinagh, has been very important to the Kel Tamasheq culture especially for its use in the art of poetry and symbolic inscriptions. And so, the script was used for other reasons instead of literature or the preservation of collective history.[71]

The language has relatively few words borrowed from other languages. A reason for this is that the culture of the nomads was isolated before the French colonisation. Since the transport revolution, the industrialisation and the drawing of the borders by the end of the sixties, the northern desert became less isolated, and with the increasing globalisation this isolation is even getting less. Despite the fact that the Kel Tamasheq had to enroll in different civilization projects during the détente, where Tamahaq was prohibited and despite the fact the last two decades brought more non Tamasheq people to the region, the nomads preserved their language. Consequently, these days the nomads still speak Tamahaq, and their second language it is Arab or French rather than Bambara (Boilley, 1999).[72]

Is the language a Persistent Identity Feature or is it Subject to Change?

Though the government tried to institutionalize Bambara with its programs to enhance the national Bambara identity also in the northern territories, this did not work out as planned. Instead of the policy that everyone should speak Bambara and French, only the regions where many black Malian lived spoke Bambara before independence and they speak it now. In the Kel Tamasheq regions they kept speaking Tamahaq and French, which is rather caused by the French domination rather than educational aspects of the civilization programs of the independent state of Mali (Lecocq, 2002).

The persistent character of the identity feature is the occurrence that language is something that you automatically learn in your upbringing and so obvious that you speak the same language as your parents and immediate environment, one cannot state that the choice for a certain language is a conscious one.

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[70] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). World factbook. Africa - Mali. January 2009. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html Visited on 20th of November 2009.
[71] Temoust Survie Touarègue - Lyon, France - Connaître et faire connaître le peuple Touareg - L'identité Touareg. Retrieved from http://www.temoust.org/les-origines-prehistoriques-et,10223 Visited on November, 2009.
[72] As described above: The members of Tinariwen with whom I spoke did not speak Bambara and some of them spoke hardly French. Most of them spoke Tamahaq and Arabic.

However, neither it can be stated that language is a primordial identity feature as it is learned by example and education.

In the constructive view on the role that language plays for the Kel Tamasheq identity, language is seen less persistent. Casajus states that the nomads made the choice to take care of their language, instead of a slow adaption to the new national language Bambara as they did for example with French. With respect to their language, the nomads made a choice that it is through the language, written and oral traditions, that they differ from the state; the nomads choose their language to demarcate their identity and to remain loyal to the language where the Queen Mother has laid the foundation for (Casajus, 2000).

Language is something you learn in your upbringing. However, it is a pretty persistent identity feature that is obviously is not easily changed by governmental re-education. For the nomads, however, their language plays a crucial role; it is one of the biggest differences between them and the majority identity. And the important role it plays to the nomadic identity seems to be preserved that way (Saint Grions, 2008).

5.5   Identity Feature III - Lifestyle

The political and social structures of the Bambara and of the Kel Tamasheq are based on, respectively, the traditional sedentary and nomadic lifestyle. Two third of people, mainly Bambara, are dependent on the sedentary way of living. One third, mainly Kel Tamasheq, Peul and Bella concentrates on livestock-raising.

National Identity –Sedentary Lifestyle
Since long, the Bambara have been a sedentary people. This has been the case before colonisation, during colonisation, independence and also in these days most people in Mali work in agriculture. Mali is a late agrarian country (Warren, 2003), agriculture and livestock dominate the economy. Almost 80 percent of the labour forces work in this sector which contributes for almost 40 percent to the GDP and 20 percent of the export value (European Regional Surveys *2010*). The dominant cash crop raised in Mali is definitely cotton. Besides also millet, sorghum, rice and groundnuts are grown. Yet, with the climate change, the sedentary people who live in the Sahelian belt are slowly forced southwards due to the advancing of the desert. Climate change has played a very important role since the two severe droughts in the seventies and eighties. There have been some welcoming wet rainy seasons in the past decennia, e.g. 1994 had the wettest rainy season since 1964 and 2007 and 2008 were also good seasons, but on average the Sahel belt

is becoming drier and the desertification of the Sahel plays a major role for sedentary life in the Sahel and the desert of northern region of Mali.[73]

Minority Identity – Pastoral Lifestyle

The Kel Tamasheq are one among several nomadic minorities in Mali. Their identity is closely attached to their pastoral lifestyle in the Sahel and desert. The lifestyle of the Kel Tamasheq nomads is fully adapted to the rhythm of the seasons. The route and pace of the herd is determined by the grasslands, and therefore it is defined by the height of the water that runs through the wadis (Berge 1996).

Pastoral life and livestock in West Africa have a very long history. Due to the vast plains and sparsely populated areas of the Sahel in particular, but also in other geographical areas the pastoralist segment of the West African economy is a sector with enormous potential. The heyday of this trade was in the early 20th century when the West African livestock industry grew explosively at regional and international levels. This prosperity in the livestock industry was closely related to the agrarian welfare on the Gold Coast. The abundance of cocoa, timber and minerals at the Gold Coast, increased the economical opportunities of the hinterland. The agricultural prosperity of the cocoa-producing countries south of Mali generated a surplus of cash for the purchase of meat. Therefore it is not surprising that, at the time of the booming Gold Coast, Gao developed itself into a major livestock market of regional and international importance. Gao in northern Mali, was a hub of trade routes in the sixties. The city had a huge cattle market, and merchants from Ivory Coast, Ghana and other neighbouring countries found their way to its cattle market.[74]

Since the withdrawal of the French colonial power and the independence, including the drawing of national boundaries of the West African states in 1960, the power dimension changed severely in the region. Within the boundaries, the government made it very difficult for the nomads to continue their traditional lifestyle. The government closed the borders for the herds and they forced every one to report annually. Consequently, the cattle routes were drastically curtailed. From the time of independence onwards, these states have a history in the marginalization of its own producers. Yet, by the marginalization of its own producers it marginalizes the state itself (Amanor, 1995).

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[73] France- Info. Retrieved from http://www.france-info.com/chroniques-le-plus-france-info-2009-12-04-les-touaregs-premiers-refugies-environnementaux-377033-81-184.html Visited on the 10th of December, 2009.

[74] IRIN: Humanitarian News and Analysis. *Mali: Nomadic lifestyle threatened by years of successive droughts.* Gao, 17 August 2005. Retrieved from http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=55892 Visited in October 2009.

Another factor that influences the lifestyle of the nomads is the successive droughts. In the seventies and eighties the number of livestock decreased considerably by the big droughts of Africa. The movement restriction by the government did not stimulate the pastoral sector; however, the persistent droughts had a devastating effect on the lifestyle of the nomads. Particularly the delicate Sahel region is prone to desertification and the droughts of the seventies and eighties (figure 1) caused a drastic reduction of the livestock. Of course, the government can not be seen as the cause of the droughts. However, the government may be reproached that they did not distribute the relief aid, granted by the international community, fairly. Almost no aid reached the north; everything was invested in the south. As a consequence of the major droughts and the mismanagement of the government, the nomads had to endure a significant decrease of their cattle. A loss that they have not overcome until today (Lecocq, 2002).

Looking at Figure 1 it becomes clear that after the big droughts, the climate did not return to the same balance as before the seventies. In the period after the big droughts, only more successive droughts and irregular rainfall followed. This makes it difficult to live the same traditional nomadic way as before. The desert is moving south and the number of climate refugees increases. In the old days Goa was a prosperous trade city, the nomads came to the city only for business. Most of the Kel Tamasheq still are nomads today. Nevertheless, more and more tents are permanently set up in the outskirts of the city of Gao.[75]

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[75] IRIN: Humanitarian News and Analysis. A project of the United Nations Ofice for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Mali: Nomadic lifestyle threatened by years of successive droughts.* Gao, 17 August 2005. Retrieved from http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=55892 Visited in October 2009.
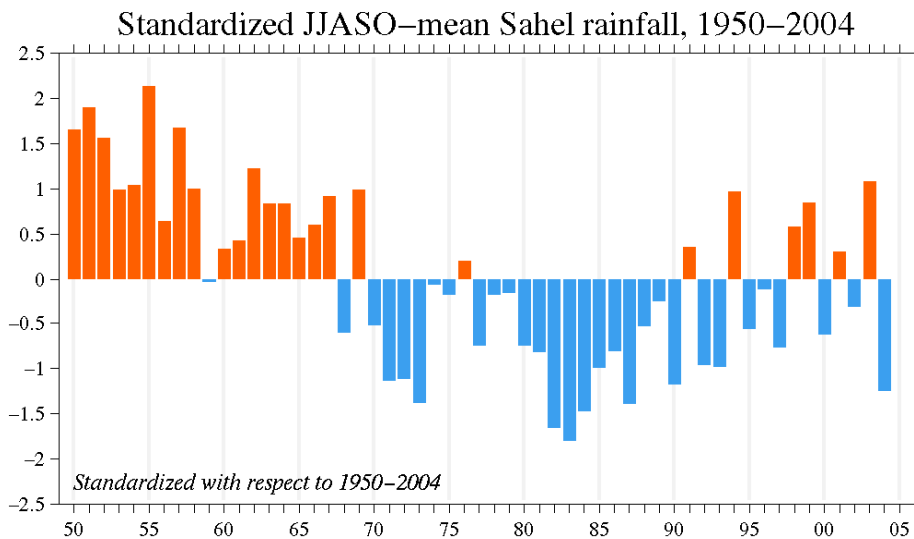
Figure 1.[76]

As mentioned above, the income of 33 percent of the Malians depends on livestock. In 2008 the national government counted 7.8 million head of cattle (dromedaries and cows) and 22 million sheep and goats and with that Mali has the largest herds of Western Africa. Though these numbers sound extensive, this is a mere pittance of what it used to be before the independence and the first years of independence. Before, a wealthy Kel Tamasheq family had over a hundred camels and also cows and goats (Lecocq, 2002).

The civil administration of the government and the persisting desertification of the forage fields of the cattle are of huge consequences for the lifestyle of the nomads. Though the government has its influence on the flexibility of the nomads, it were mainly the droughts that had a devastating effect on the number of cattle. The major events together with the persisting desertification of the forage fields of the cattle are of huge consequences for the lifestyle of the nomads. The nomads have to find pastures more southwards

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[76] Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean (JISAO). *Standardized JJASO-mean Sahel rainfall, 1898-2004*. Retrieved from http://jisao.washington.edu/data/sahel/022208/sahelrainjjaso18982004.png Visited in januari 2010.

currently, which is of course difficult to find as the surface of fertile soil is shrinking for both the pastoralists and the sedentarists. Some nomads have settled near the Niger and started raising crops. And more and more the mobile tents become a permanent presence in city outskirts.[77]

Is the Lifestyle of the Identities a Persistent Identity Feature or is it Subject to Change?
This lifestyle of the minority identity is quite different from the national identity. The national identity is based on the black African Bambara sedentary culture and the minority identity is the nomadic white Berber culture. According to the primordial theory this would imply that if the differences between both identities are fundamental enough and this feature will lead to conflict.

What is rather primordial in this case is the racial cleavage between the white nomadic Kel Tamasheq versus the black sedentary national identity, i.e. deriving from the Bambaran majority. This racial stereotyping occurs repeatedly in history. The nomads believe that black sedentary Africans, the former slaves, are stupid, poor and inferior. Though, since the droughts the socio-economic circumstances of the Kel Tamasheq have deteriorated to such a degree that they have less to spend than the average Malian these days. The Bambara in southern Mali are of the opinion that the nomads are arrogant, lazy and violent. This us-them thinking pops up during every violent conflict; the first and second rebellion and the turmoil in 2008 (Lecocq & Schrijver, 2008).

The lifestyle of the nomads changed over the past decennia. This had barely anything to do with the governmental policy of civilization programs; it had more to do with the two big droughts that occurred during the seventies and eighties. The droughts and the poverty that it caused forced different families to choose another way of life. The climate change particularly in this extreme vulnerable environment caused the change in lifestyle. From a prosperous autonomous people, free to follow the rhythms of the seasons with their cattle, towards a marginalized minority in the state of Mali. In times of conflict it was this difference in lifestyle that was used to differentiate the identities from each other (Saint Girons, 2008).

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[77] IRIN: Humanitarian News and Analysis. A project of the United Nations Ofice for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Mali: Nomadic lifestyle threatened by years of successive droughts.* Gao, 17 August 2005. Retrieved from http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=55892 Visited in October 2009.

5.6   Identity Feature IV – Religion

Religion is the fourth concept of identity that will be outlined. For the primordial view religion is very important. In Huntington's vision it is a key feature of identity, because it is along the lines of religion that conflicts are fought.

Religion and the National Identity - Islam

From the 7h century till the 9th century the Islamic religion spread over Africa. The reason why Africa became converted to the Islam seems to be an economic one. It were mostly the North African traders who brought Islam to Sub-Sahara Africa by the trade routes, e.g. from Ghadames to Gao. The spread of the religion came into three phases. Firstly, political leaders kept the Islamic communities segregated from other communities, secondly Islam slowly became mixed with the local religions which were mostly animist religions and the third phase was the conformation of the state, and though Islam lost political power in the 20th century, the number of Muslim communities increased (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009).

The Islamic religion is quite important to Mali. 80 Percent of the population is practicing Islam in Mali, 18 percent animist and 2 percent Catholic. Up to now however, Islam is the state religion. This is also the case for the various different nations in Mali. The Bambaran Islam has still some elements of animism, as these people found a way to integrate the Islam in their own ancient religious traditions. But the situation of enduring poverty of the country seems to enhance the tightening religious activity. And, in recent times there seems to be a call to practice the Islam more strictly in the country (Europe Regional Surveys of the World, 2009).

Though the Islam is the state religion, the current president is not religious. Nonetheless, he must be aware of his constituency that becomes more fundamental in the confession of Islam. And with the enduring poverty of the country religion stays very important (Pringle, 2006).

Another religious factor the government has to deal with is the increasing fundamentalism worldwide. As the northern region is hard to control for its wastelands, this is difficult to achieve here. It is said that in the new millennium there are few fundamentalist groups up north. But they do not seem to be connected to Al Qaeda as they operate independently. Probably, the reason for the abductions which haphazardly occur, is a ransom. This underlying reason of action differs from the principles on which Al Qaeda bases its actions, which is the spread of fear to disrupt society. (Keenan, 2007).

Religion and the Minority Identity - The Kel Tamasheq

As the Sahara trade was the gateway for Islam to the rest of Africa, the Kel Tamasheq, who were the masters of the desert, were among the first that converted to Islam. The nomads are also Islamic, though just like the Bambara they found a way to integrate their own ancient Berber traditions, also based on animism.

An example of an ancient traditional difference is the role of women in society. In the Islam the women play a less central role than in the tradition of the Kel Tamasheq. Ever since queen mother Tin Hinan, the line of inheritance traditionally runs through the female descendants of Tin Hinan. This is not the case in Mali, as here they follow the patrilineal line of heritage, but women do still have –in contrast to the Bambara- a special status. The civilisation program of the Malian government was based on the Islamic Bambara culture and therefore treated the Kel Tamasheq women, in the eyes of the nomads, without any respect. Obviously the government was not planning to be very gentle, in the light of the tradition of the nomads, however, it was an immense humiliation to see their women work that hard. As said before, in the Kel Tamasheq tradition every family had their slaves to do the hard work. Women were the housekeepers, especially when the male members of the family were out with the cattle, they had to stand firm and manage the possessions, the children and the slaves.

Is Religion a Persistent Identity Feature or is it Subject to Change?

According to Huntington religion is a core element of culture, and the largest manifestation of a culture is a civilization. If there is a cleavage between two groups on this identity feature, it will definitely lead to conflict.

Though Huntington mentions religion as the main aspect of conflict between cultures, this does not seem to apply to this situation as both actors have the same religion, i.e. Islam. The literature I studied for this thesis did not mention religion as such an important cleavage in the inter-communication between the state and the minority. Nonetheless, looking beyond the Islam, influences of the underlying ancient religions are definable. The underlying religion of the national identity (of the Bambara) as well as the traditional Berber religion of the Kel Tamasheq is based on animism. So looking beyond the umbrella concept of Islam, there could be some distinct differences between the two professings of Islam. For an analysis of the differences in the professing of religion there was no time in this report. For further research it would be interesting to analyse the role of the old faiths in the professing of Islam and everyday life.

Thus, religion does not seem to be a core cleavage between the two identities, and therefore it is not plausible that it is this feature of identity that is crucial to the inter-identity communication. By the vision of Sen religion is just one of the many features of identity which can be chosen by leaders to categorise groups, and so it is not merely the cause of the conflict.

5.7   The Role of the Terrain

The fifth and final feature of identity is a curious feature as it does not directly reflect a social concept but a physical concept. The role of the geographic circumstances was mentioned so often in the literature as a integral concept of the Kel Tamasheq identity, that I called it a separate identity feature. This view is supported by James Scott, who wrote an entire book on the role of the terrain, especially rough terrain, and the identity of its inhabitants (2009).

The Terrain and the National identity
The national identity lives in different geographical places than the nomads. The Bambara live in the southern semi-arid parts of Mali, where the climate allows agriculture. This has always been the division. However, the Malian government has to deal with the region as it lies within the Malian borders.

During the first rebellion, the military government had a very tough mission against the guerrilla attacks of the nomads. With military vehicles and heavy equipment it is more difficult to manoeuvre in the desert than with a camel and a rifle (Berge 1996). These days it is still hard to control the northern region of Mali. And that is exactly the reason why transnational networks like the drugs trade and the AQIM are settling in the area. Who does not want to be found, can easily hide in a desert region (Pringle 2006). In 2009 an airplane full of cocaine crashed in the desert, before the government reached the spot the airplane was burned and the occupants had fled.[78]

Though the government promised several investments since the National Pact in 1996, these promises were not kept. These days Mali tries to invest in the infrastructure of the northern region. But this is not carried out as promised either. Due to the fact that Mali is a poor country and that there is not much to get from the area, the policy for the north is rather ambiguous. There are some mineral sources, though not as much as in northern Niger (Keenan, 2007).

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[78] The guardian. Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/dec/09/sahara-drugs-trade-heroin-cocaine
Visited in April 2010

The government is very important here, since it basically is a governmental task to preserve its territorial integrity and this seems quite complex in the Azawagh desert. The role of the terrain is a severe factor in this case as the isolation of the region is rather an invitation to actors who do not want to be controlled by governmental or international institutions. The region stays uncontrollable this way (Pringle, 2006).

The Role of the Terrain and the Minority Identity
The Sahara used to have a connecting function; it was the area of trade and exchange of Islamic science. It was the gate through which religion came to sub-Saharan Africa. Prosperity from the north but also from the south penetrated the hinterlands. It's always been a geographically difficult area for people who do not know the way. People who know their way in the desert, always knew how to preserve their identities or interests. But now, after the industrial and the transportation revolution and the settling of new actors in the region this is made difficult (Saint Girons, 2002)

The nomads have a very close relationship to the soil they live on. Before the independence of Mali the nomads were so isolated that they could easily maintain their own culture, they needed little effort to counter outside influences for the fact that the desert wastelands of the Sahara were hardly penetrable for strangers.

From the open character the desert had during medieval times, it changed into a closed and inhospitable place nowadays. The independence of the state and the scattering of the nomads over the different states, meant a first threat to their autonomy and a mobility restriction. In addition, the nation became separated by the borders and they got a new national identity in return for it. However, it was still easy for the minority to hide from the Malian state by withdrawing into the wastelands where they lived. During the rebellions it was easy guerrilla warfare for the Kel Tamasheq, as they knew the desert by heart (Boilley, 1999).

However, this became more and more difficult, with the rapid globalisation of the world and most importantly with the occurrence of both periods of severe drought the nomads could not hide anymore, but had to participate within the nation, as they need the support of the government. However, for the same reason the difficulty of the terrain, the area stays difficult to reach for the government, also with the cooperation of the nomads (Saint Girons, 2008).

Today it is a place to hide for organisations which are shy for governmental intervention. An unfriendly and uncontrollable place for people who want to control it and so are the people living in it. For the

inhabitants themselves the area has been accessible until the early nineties when the first transnational actors arrived. It has always been the home for the nomads and desert traders. However, with the arrival of the new actors, the area is not even in control of the nomads any longer. In addition, the successive droughts this becomes less the case and the nomads are moving southwards. Before the nomads could easily withdraw to their homelands in case of external threats, now they have to turn towards the national government for protection (Berge, 2001).

5.8   Summary of Chapter 5[79]

To describe the identity features of the Kel Tamasheq and the Bambara as a primordial identity, I looked for persistence in the characteristics of both identities over time. For the constructivist approach I searched for the phenomena where identity seems fluid instead of unchangeable. Therefore the identity of the minority and the state were analysed for occurring intrinsic phenomena or for the development within the following identity features; shared history, language, lifestyle, religion, and terrain.

Looking back at the ancient traditions on which the current Kel Tamasheq culture is based, one can see that the proud and pronounced historical identity features are carried along and stayed unchanged until today. This is also the case looking at the national Bambara identity, which also repeatedly refers to its famous episodes of the past. Also in present times when the Kel Tamasheq strive for more autonomy, they are proud of their history of welfare and autonomy, though these days the strife aims for decentralisation and economical investments instead of secession. In so being, one can see that music, art, political and socio-economic structure and the role of the terrain are interspersed nowadays with aspects of the (rich) cultural past.

Looking at language, collective history and religion it appears that the identity of the nomads has not changes greatly in 60 years. Life style, however, seems drastically changed. From the rich and proud nomads they were 60 years ago, they turned into a marginalised minority with a drastically changed socio-economic situation. From independent people with an important economic position on the cattle market towards a dependent nation that needs the government to survive. Regarding the role of the terrain in the identity, the terrain itself changes very slowly under influence of the successive droughts, and this changed the nomad lifestyle.

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[79] Also chapter 5 has a summary due to the fact that it is a rather extensive chapter

The remains of the thesis are the conclusions of the findings. Which theory explains the core elements of the conflict? Does the government influence the minority identity? For the empirical and the theoretical conclusions I refer to the next chapter, i.e. the conclusions.

CHAPTER 6   CONCLUSIONS

"Identity is never a priori, nor a finished product;
It is only ever the problematic process of access to an image of totality"
(Bhabba 1994:51)

This thesis started with the curiosity of my childhood. With this study my own memories and stereotypes slowly turned into a broad vision on the northern problem of Mali. With the literature about the real situation I could test my own comprehension of the situation. Before this study I assumed that the nomads were severely limited in their lifestyle by the youthful state and its Bambara sedentary government. Therefore, it was not surprising that the nomads rebelled against the state to defend their pastoral identity. Not surprisingly, my comprehension turned out to be based on stereotypes and fears like everyone in the Bambara village where I lived long ago. Nevertheless 'What was the actual influence of the government on the minority identity?' Writing this thesis, it became clear that it was not only a matter of governmental mismanagement; also other factors were of influence. In this last chapter, everything comes together. Firstly, I will elaborate on the theoretical conclusion. This section regards the usefulness of the two theories used to analyse the conflict. After the theoretical conclusion the empirical conclusion will be discussed. The latter concerns the question 'What is the conflict really about?'. After both conclusions the main question 'What is the influence of the government?' can be answered. And finally the future of the nomads will be considered.

6.1   Sustainability of the Theories

The two theories on identity in conflict were used to analyse the empirical situation. Conclusions about the usefulness of both theories are described now.

The first theory was about the primordial character of identity. Huntington stated that the most important feature of the largest manifestation of identity, i.e. civilisation, is religion. The other theory is about the more ambiguous character of identity. Sen states that every conflict should be analysed for the choices made by the different actors; in a different context the choice can be different.

In the light of the primordial hypothesis one could say that the culture of the Kel Tamasheq was primordial and that it could not be changed by the government. In the vision of Huntington religion is one of the main causes of violent conflict. However, in this thesis religion did not appear to play a decisive

role in the relationship between the two identities and that is remarkable, especially as Huntington still sees religion as the main cleavage. In this conflict, religion seems not to matter. Nevertheless, deeper research is needed to check the tenability of this conclusion, because it seems that, though both identities profess the Islam, it is based on two old traditional beliefs that might actually differ, i.e. Berber animism and Bambara animism.

The concepts of identity regarding language and collective history do not appear to cause conflict either, even though they play a role in the conflict when it comes to the official civilization programs. The governmental civilisation programs that imposed Bambara language and Bambara history in order to create a nation wide identity, had little effect and nowadays the nomads still honour their queen mother Tin Hinan and still hardly speak Bambara. In that light it seems that these identity features are very persistent, nonetheless that does not mean that they played a major role in the conflict as causes of the unrest. They rather overlapped with the social economical cleavage between the two identities and confirming the differences between the two groups.

The fourth identity feature that seems to have persistent influence on the conflict are the differences of lifestyle between the two identities. Yet, as mentioned in the section above, it seems that also lifestyle is not intrinsically a reason of conflict between the identities. Nevertheless, it can be said that the lifestyle has some quite persistent features that can be used as a line of conduct in threatening circumstances.

Both theories can explain the situation to a certain extent. Sen embraces the ambiguity of identity; the priority of identity features differs per situation and explains the rationality behind the conflict. However, it seems that the reasons of conflict are not as impulsive and do not change as easily as a situational choice implies. Huntington's views, on the other hand, cite that the reasons for conflict remain consistent. Even so, the history of the conflict shows that the basic reasons for the conflict do change, this change is however not as variable as the Sen implies. Huntington's cultural determined perspective can not explain why some people develop properties and do not always remain the same. In the light of Sen, people are rational actors and can choose their identity within a certain budget constraint. The latter can explain the conflicts in retrospect; however, it is hard to predict a conflict when everything is a coincidence of the situation. Sen's theory fails in predicting conflict; the ambiguity of identity includes too many factors in its analysis.

The contradicting theories were useful to analyse the situation from a different point of view. Neither Huntington's theory, nor Sen's theory offers a convincing explanation of the conflict. Nonetheless,

together the theories have shown that the persistency of identity is rather ambiguous. Stereotypes and arguments of the past can be drivers of action. Identity can be used to act in a certain way. When the action is seen in the context of the derogation of identity it will be easier to understand what the original reasons are and what the situational reasons of conflict are. Identity in this case is not in itself the reason for conflict; it is the fact that identity becomes threatened and therefore the differences between the majority and the minority identity become emphasized.

If some of the identity features are ambiguously persistent, but did not cause the complicated relationship between the majority and the minority identity, what is the conflict about then? This will be outlined in the next paragraph with the empirical conclusion.

6.2   What is the Role of Identity in the Conflict?

Since independence in 1960, there has been a problem to control northern Mali. Before the nineties the actors concerned were the nomads and the government, today also other actors like drugs traders and the AQIM play a role in the northern problem. The conflict had its turbulent times; in 1964 the first Kel Tamasheq rebellion, 1992-1996 the second Kel Tamasheq rebellion and the unrest of 2007-2008. And its quiet times: 1965-1990 the détente, 1996-2006 the implementation of the National Pact and nowadays in 2010 new promises are made to the marginalised minority in the region.

The abovementioned is just a bare outline of the conflict's timeline. Yet, what was, and what is this conflict about? This thesis analysed the conflict in terms of identity in the context of the changing power dimensions. The concerned power dimensions are the colonial dominance, the authoritative regimes of Modibo Keita and Moussa Traoré, democratisation under the leadership of president Alpha Oumar Konaré and Amadou Toumani Touré since 1992 and the settlement of the new powerful actors in the northern region.

From 1960-1992 the government tried to create one nationwide identity, the majority identity of the Bambara. Despite the brutal suppression of the first Kel Tamasheq rebellion and the civilisation programs in which the nomads were required to enrol, this did not work out as planned, as the nomads upheld their traditional nomadic identity. Since the institutionalisation of democracy in 1992, the government under the leadership of Moussa Traoré and later on Amadou Toumani Touré, governmental policy focused more on investments and participation in the northern region, than on re-education. Within the National Pact promises were made to the nomads for a far-reaching decentralization and the investment of infrastructure

in the north. The latter, together with the fact that the nomads were so poor that they were heavily dependent on the state, thus state participation became more favourable than autonomy, meant that the situation became more stable in the north. However, violence flared up again in 2007-2008 because to the nomads claimed that the commitments made in the National Pact were not fulfilled by the government. A major problem for the government in implementing its promises is the fact that its budget is limited, the area is very difficult to control, and other players occupying the area now have more money and therefore more power than the Malian government.

In this thesis the conflict is studied by the analysis of five identity features that appeared to play a major role in the conflict. The differences between collective history, religion, lifestyle, language and terrain did not seem to cause any conflict between the government and the minority during the French domination. However, since independence, the allocation of power changed and a minority and a majority were created within a limited area. Ever since, the area seems prone to conflict, and the differences between the minority and the majority of the country seem insurmountable.

From the five identity features that came up in the literature, not every feature seems important to the conflict. Language and religion for example do not seem to be of major importance to the conflict. Collective history is of more importance as on many occasions today, the prosperous past is referred to as an example of how life should be. The feature that seems most relevant to the conflict is lifestyle. Indeed, the difference in lifestyle is the difference where it collides with one another in practice. The clashes on the division of territory and the distribution of socioeconomic goods are a threat to the lifestyle of both identities. However, the conflict does not seem to be caused by differences of lifestyle in itself. Climate change in combination with the already fragile nature of the Sahel marginalises the life situation of the minority. The successive droughts force the nomadic minority to migrate southwards towards the densely populated sedentary areas. Consequently the clash occurs between these two different lifestyles, however before the droughts it was possible to live side by side without conflict as it occurs in the past decennia.

Consequently, the strife for secession by the nomads was primarily based on the discontent with the shifting power relations in the area and its consequences for the nomadic lifestyle. The nomads were once powerful autonomous nobles of the desert and the sedentary Africans were seen and used as their slaves. In the past sixty years this changed; the nomads became a marginalised identity and the Bambara identity became the dominant identity. Therefore, initially the conflict was about the shifting social status of the different identities, and certainly in relation to each others´ position. Subsequently, in 1992 democratisation brought the possibility for the nomads to participate in the government, and the extensive

decentralisation of governmental power, secession became of less and less interest to the nomads. Nonetheless, there still is turmoil every now and then, and currently this is caused by the vulnerability of the marginalised minority which is neglected by the government, due to its enduring budget deficit. An additional difficulty to control the region is caused by the new actors in the region, i.e. the drugs trade and the AQIM. To analyse their exact roles in the situation and the relation between these transnational organisations with the nomads and the government of Mali, further research is needed.

At the outset, it seems that the conflict is based on the difference between nomads and farmers. The shortage of fertile land for both farmers and nomads seems to cause the clash nowadays. Looking back at the five different identity properties that were assumed to play a crucial role in the conflict, it appears that these identity properties do play an important role in the interrelationship between the government and minority, but they are not so much a source of conflict.

Thus, none of the identity features actually caused the conflict. With the changing power dimensions the social hierarchy changed and the different identities clashed with each other within the new power structures. The major issue in the interrelationship between the nomads and the government was the fact that the socioeconomic conditions of the nomads badly deteriorated in the past sixty years. Meanwhile the sedentary inhabitants of Mali, i.e. the Bambara, made some progress in as they became the dominant identity in the country and the government stimulated agriculture more than pastoralism. The differences in identity just seemed to provide guidance for both identities and give meaning to life in difficult times of ascent and descent on the social ladder.

6.3   What is the Influence of the Government on the Identity of the Kel Tamasheq?

From the first feature of identity, i.e. collective history, can be said that the famous episodes of history are still reflected today. Slowly the role of the history in society changes, however. The way it is used in daily life has changed. Despite the civilisation projects, i.e. the bambarafication policies, of the government, the majority identity hardly had any influence on the role that the collective history played and plays in the nomadic identity. These days a national history is slowly emerging. Obviously the government had a major role in the creation of the national history as the governmental interventions to create a nationwide identity and control its territories caused grievances still felt by the minority today. In addition the lives of the inhabitants of Mali became slowly intermingled; the droughts forced the nomads to move southwards and as the population increased, subsequently, the people have to live closer to one another in multi ethnic areas.

In spite of the educational programs in Bambara, within the civilisation programs, the second identity feature, language, was barely influenced by the government. The Kel Tamasheq hardly speak Bambara. Why the nomads speak the second language of the country, i.e. French, and refuse to speak the first language is an interesting question for further research. Especially in current times when the people are force to live closer to each other and more intermingled than ever before.

In the context of the third identity feature, lifestyle, the government tried to control the nomadic lifestyle by way of the civilisation programs. Though the lifestyle of the nomads changed slowly in the past decennia, and the government influenced this by the annual checks and the closure of the borders, this was primarily caused by the desertification of the Sahel in which they lived. The successive droughts caused an immense decrease in their livestock and with that it influenced everyday life heavily. The herds count fewer animals, some nomads became sedentary, many youngsters are unemployed, and subsequently the social-economical status of the nomads marginalised.

The fourth feature of identity, religion, was chosen in the light of its importance for the primordial view. In the end the role of the identity feature religion appeared to be unimportant. Religion hardly influenced the course of the conflict as both identities the governmental as well as the minority identity are Islamic identities. The literature did not show a cleavage based on different Islamic beliefs.

Regarding the above said, the influence of the government seems relatively unimportant in the context of the major droughts. Yet the government has influence on the minority identity. It has its influence on the lifestyle of the nomads, as annual checks and the closure of the borders do have a great influence on the lifestyle. Also the lack of investments lately and the lack of honest distribution of goods during the great droughts had devastating consequences for the minority. These governmental interventions resulted in grievances still felt, and sung in the desert blues, by the minority today.

On the other hand, it is not exclusively the government that influences the minority. The conclusion of this thesis is that the factor of climate change, i.e. the successive droughts, played a major role in the marginalisation of the minority, and was therefore a threat to its identity (features). The nomads never got back the number of cattle and the welfare they had before the droughts of the seventies and eighties.

As in the whole region of West Africa the successive droughts influenced the life of the inhabitants, a nuance should be made in the context of the role of the climate. Also the terrain on which the conflict is

staged is of importance. The Sahel is a delicate region where droughts imply penury and just a little rain may mean abundance. The geographical features of the terrain determined the character of the conflict. Due to the wastelands which are pretty inaccessible to outsiders, and very useful to guerrilla warfare, the conflict was low scale and enduring.

In sum, the nomadic identity changed from a proud autonomous people towards a marginalised minority that still respects its prosperous past but depends heavily on the central government nowadays in order to live a respectable life in the desert regions without being dependent on the new actors in the region. The role of the government becomes more and more important, in the past, however, the successive droughts had a greater influence on the nomadic identity than the bambarafication politics with its civilisation programs in order to create more national unity in the country.

6.4   The Future of the Minority, the State and their Conflict

It takes time to develop a shared history. Mali as a state is quite young, and especially after democratisations there seems more opportunities for everyone to participate in the state, subsequently the shared past is evolving.

In the new millennium there is a completely different situation compared to 1960. Today the history contains a lot of grievances by the rebellions and the droughts. Where the collective history in 1960 was based on economical and cultural welfare, today this has changed dramatically. The context changed from a situation where the Kel Tamasheq had to deal with a colonial power that did not interfere too much in its business and various nations of black Africans, among which the Bambara, were dominated by the colonial power, towards three decennia of climate change and the authoritative regime of the Bambara nation that caused many grievances, towards democratization of the Malian nation and the settlement of powerful actors –more powerful than the minority or even the nation- in the northern area. These days the nomadic entity in its marginalized situation is vulnerable to external influences and therefore has to participate in the democracy of Mali because it can not live autonomously in the northern area anymore. The future for the minority is uncertain as the enduring poverty of the country does not make it likely that the state will be able to control the north, including the drug traffic and AQIM. This makes the northern problem of Mali a volatile issue also in the coming years.

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APPENDIX 1   INTERVIEWEES

Who	Organisation	Position	When
Baz Lecocq	University of Gent	Professor	February 2009
Jeremy Keenan	Sahara Studies Programme	Professor	February 2009
Anne Saint Girons		Translator and writer	June 2009
Jan Ruyssenaars	Oxfam Novib	Senior ...	February 2009
Peter Oosterveer	Wageningen University	Senior researcher	Octobre 2009
Tinariwen	Music band		November 2009

APPENDIX 2:   ITEMLIST OF THE INTERVIEWS

Identity

- Identity of the nomads
- Identity of the government
- Important identity features (lifestyle, religion, language, history)
- Role of the terrain

Rebellions

- Clashes before independence
- First rebellion
- Second Rebellion
- Latest unrest

Causes of conflict (breeding ground and incidental causes)

- Identity causes
- Governmental causes
- Colonial power of France
- Minority causes
- Climate change
- Socio-economical causes
- Political causes
- Geographical causes

Globalisation, Al Qaeda and Drugs Traffickers

- What role does Al Qaeda play
- Influence on the nomadic minority