Afrobarometer Paper No.9

POPULAR PERCEPTIONS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN MALI

by Michael Bratton, Massa Coulibaly
and Fabiana Machado

A comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa.

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POLITICAL REFORM IN AFRICA

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and Fabiana Machado

March 2000

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For supporting research, capacity-building and publication, we are grateful to the Danish Governance Trust Fund of the World Bank and to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

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INTRODUCTION

Political and Economic Setting

Mali has recently embarked on an experiment in decentralized democracy. It has done so against a legacy of hierarchical and centralized governance inherited from ancient kingdoms, French colonial administration and, after independence in 1960, military and one-party regimes. By the end of the 1980s, students and public employees signaled their displeasure with postcolonial leaders who had violently repressed opposition, confiscated food surpluses from the countryside, and failed to pay public salaries and student stipends. With the help of the military, these popular forces ousted Moussa Traoré and convened competitive elections that, in May 1992, voted Alpha Omar Konaré into the national presidency with a mandate for political and economic change.[1]

The new government has accumulated a mixed record over the past decade. Perhaps its major political achievement is the negotiation of a peace agreement with guerrilla forces of the semi-nomadic Touareg peoples of Mali's northern zone, which culminated in the symbolic burning of weapons of war in a 1996 Flame of Peace ceremony. Through personal example, President Konaré has sought to cultivate a culture of democracy that includes regular citizen *concertations* on policy matters and the formation of the most vibrant network of community radio stations in West Africa. The government now seeks to institutionalize its political vision in a comprehensive decentralization program that, if fully implemented, would give some 700 elected communes substantial control over local budgetary and developmental affairs.[2]

Not all has gone well, however, especially on the governance front. Citing poor organization of voter registration, the Constitutional Court annulled the first round of the 1997 presidential elections and opposition parties subsequently called for election boycotts. Local government polls were repeatedly delayed and not completed until 1999. Konaré also inherited an empty treasury and education and health systems in lamentable disrepair. Within the public service, too many officials still see themselves as directive "state functionaries" rather than responsive "civil servants," while others have failed to wean themselves from habits of rent-seeking and corruption. Because the capacity of the central government remains weak, many citizens rarely come into contact with the state.

Due to devastating drought in the Sahel during the 1970s and 1980s, the liberalization of Mali's economy began early. In 1982, as a condition for infusions of food aid and budget support, the government agreed to fiscal and market reforms recommended by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These included the removal of restrictions on producer prices, the abolition of government's marketing monopoly, and the legalization of private grain trade. While the Traoré government (1968-1991) dragged its feet, the Konaré administration (1992-present) has been more active at implementing economic reform. Like other West African governments, it had no choice but to accept the fifty percent devaluation of the CFA franc in January 1994 but, of its own accord, has also adopted measures to introduce a value added tax and to start the privatization of public utility companies.[3]

Mali has begun to harvest the fruits of these reforms. Growth in real gross domestic product averaged 5 percent in 1994-1998. The production, productivity and export of rice have increased substantially and the country is approaching self-sufficiency in this staple food product. Livestock prices began to rise in 1994 and exports have boomed. Reforms in governmental financial management have allowed public employees to be paid on time.

But growth has since turned down. Mali's export commodities face stagnant or declining world prices and escalating input costs. Cotton production plummeted in 1999.[4] The devaluation of CFA franc has led to steep and unpopular increases in the cost of urban living. And in the Kidal region in the northeast, far from the national capital of Bamako, sporadic banditry by young men with too many guns and not enough education is a constant reminder that the quest for decentralized democracy in Mali is inseparable from the implementation of a viable strategy for rural development.

Themes of the Report

Public support is essential to the sustainability of policy reform programs in Africa. Democracy, markets and good governance are unlikely to take root in the absence of popular demand for these regimes. Yet, reforms are usually negotiated within closed circles of policy elites, and little reference is made to the political and economic preferences of ordinary Africans.

This report describes the distribution of public opinion in Mali at a moment ten years after the inception of a transition to democracy and twenty years after measures were first introduced to stabilize and adjust the economy. It finds the following general trends in popular perceptions:

- Malians prefer *democracy* to other political regimes that they have experienced. But they conceive of democracy in distinctive cultural terms and judge their satisfaction with this regime in terms of the personal performance in office of individual political leaders.

- In their economic orientations, Malians feel caught between state and *market*. On one hand, they wish the state to take the lead in delivering employment and development services. On the other hand, they are patient with structural adjustment, even as they do not understand it well.

- Citizens appraise the quality of *governance* in Mali partly in terms of their satisfaction with democracy and adjustment. More specifically, the legitimacy of the state depends on popular trust in public institutions and mass perceptions that public officials are free from corruption.

Background to the Survey

The present study reports results from a comprehensive public attitude survey of 2089 adult Malians conducted between January 3 and January 27, 2001.[5] The sample, which employed a multi-stage, area, cluster method with randomization at all stages, was designed to be nationally representative. Because every adult had an equal chance of selection into the sample, the results depict the voting age population of Mali as a whole.

The research instrument was a questionnaire containing over 100 items that was administered face-to-face by teams of trained interviewers. The questions covered a diverse range of topics: from the respondents' social background to their self-defined identity; from their attitudes to democracy to their opinions on economic reform and good governance; and from citizens' involvement in social capital networks to their voting behavior in elections.

In order to place Mali in comparative context, and thus to aid in the interpretation of results, the questionnaire contained a large core of items derived from Afrobarometer surveys already conducted in other countries in West, Eastern and Southern Africa. The wording of almost all such items was identical in each country. As a result, Mali now forms part of an ongoing, twelve-country project that tracks and contrasts public attitudes to democracy and economy across the continent.[6]

The margin of sampling error for reported results is plus or minus 2.5 percent.[7] Additional sources of possible error should also be borne in mind. We have learned in Afrobarometer surveys to be particularly sensitive to the likelihood that some citizens will try to provide socially or politically "correct" answers, especially when they are unsure of the identity of the interviewer. Such "interview effects" are discussed in Appendix 1. When using this report, therefore, readers should be aware of both sampling and response error.

Demographics of the Sample

As a representative sample, the survey population closely matches the distributions of subgroups within the national population in key respects such as gender, age and residential location (urban or rural) (See Table 1). The sample confirms, for example, the limited diffusion of education in Mali, where almost half of all adults have received no formal schooling and a further quarter have attended informal, Koranic schools only. Apparently, many families still prefer to their children to contribute to agricultural labor within the household rather than attending school.

Table 1: Demographics of the Sample (figures are percentages of the total sample)

Number of Persons Interviewed	**N = 2089**	**Languages**	
Male: Female ratio	**51:49**	Bambara	51
Median Age	**38 years**	Sonrhaï	8
Urban: Rural Distribution	**30:70**	Peul	8
		Soninké	7
Education		Dogon	6
No schooling	45	Malinké	5
Informal Schooling	26	Senufo	4
Primary only	20	Mianka	4
Secondary only	8	Bobo	3
Post-secondary	1		
		Income	
Occupation		None	2
Farmer/fisher/herder	42	Less than 10,000 fcfa	18
Housewife	27	10,001 - 50,000 fcfa	48
Informal marketer	11	50,001 - 100,000 fcfa	22
Businessperson	6	Over 100,001 fcfa	10
Office employee	5		
Student	4	**Region** (unweighted/weighted)	
Unemployed	2	Bamako	10 11
		Gao	4 4
Religion		Kayes	14 13
Muslim	89	Kidal	0.4 5
Traditional	6	Koulikoro	16 15
Christian	3	Mopti	15 15
		Segou	17 16
		Sikasso	18 17
		Timbuktu	5 4

The survey covers all eight regions of Mali (plus Bamako) in proportion to the relative size of each region in the national population. The sample also covers 44 of the country's administrative districts (see Appendix 2). Indeed, we made as special effort not to exclude Kidal region in the far northeast desert zone on the border with Niger and Algeria. In the past, Kidal has been treated by central governments as marginal to the mainstream of Malian development, a factor in the genesis of the Touareg rebellion. Not only did we rectify Kidal's usual exclusion from survey research samples in Mali, but we purposely over-sampled the population there (n = 112) in order to be able to generalize about the political and economic attitudes of the Touareg minority.[8]

To adapt the questionnaire to local conditions, we translated the French version into five local languages: Bambara, Sonrhai, Peul, Soninke, and Tamasheq (the Touareg language). All interviews were administered in the language of the respondent's choice (including 72 cases of field translations into Dogon).

In the analysis that follows, we consider the effects of numerous demographic factors.[9] Where social structure does not meaningfully influence public attitudes or behaviors, we maintain the discussion at a summary, national level.

Contextual Considerations

Before analyzing attitudes to political and economic reform, we wish to mention several potentially important contextual issues. Malians belong to a multicultural society in a low-resource economy, in which people have had no choice but to devise cooperative strategies for survival and livelihood. One would therefore expect that the way that individuals define themselves – in terms of group identity, poverty status, and in relation to social capital -- would shape popular attitudes towards political and economic reform.

Identity. Mali's rich multicultural history[10], combined with new patterns of economic and social mobility opened up by postcolonial developments, provides Malians with a varied repertoire of identities from which to choose. The survey asked: "Besides being Malian, which specific group do you feel you belong to first and foremost?" Verbatim responses were post-coded and are categorized in Table 2. As might be expected, Malians define their social identities primarily in terms of ethnicity, with the most frequent responses being Bambara, Peul and Dogon.[11] Touaregs are slightly more likely than other Malians to adopt an ethnic identity, as are the residents of the multi-ethnic Mopti region. In this regard, Malians resemble other West Africans: for example, 48 percent of Nigerians also define themselves primarily in ethnic terms.[12]

The next most common form of self-identification is religious, with 23 percent of the sample describing themselves first and foremost as Muslims. More than half the residents of the northern Gao region see themselves in terms of their religious faith.[13] Taken together, occupation and class identities also account for 23 percent. The relative prevalence of work-related identities depends on how one codes the response "peasant" ("paysan," cited by 14 percent of all respondents). Our Malian co-investigators felt that respondents were expressing class solidarity rather than an occupational identity (as, say, a farmer or cultivator), so peasants were classified in class terms in Table 2.

Table 2: Self-Defined Identity Group (percentage of sample**)**

Ethnic group	40	Political association	5
Religious group	23	Gender identity	4
Social class	16	Voluntary association	3
Occupation	7	Insist on being Malian	1

Relatively few respondents volunteered an explicitly political identity, that is, by seeing themselves as members of a political association (ADEMA, Club ATT etc.). The same held true for voluntary associations (groupe des jeunes, PTAs), gender (woman, husband), and individual talents (athlete, guitar player). In this report, therefore, we search mainly for effects arising from major group identities, that is, among people who see themselves in ethnic, religious and economic terms.

As we have learned in other African countries, there is no necessary contradiction between group and national loyalties. In Mali, respondents universally express pride in *both* their sub-national identity (97 percent) and in their identity as Malians (99 percent). For the first time in Afrobarometer surveys, we asked Malians to

choose which attachment was stronger. Interestingly, almost two thirds (64 percent) said that they felt closer to their identity group, a finding that suggests that work remains to be done on the project of nation-building in Mali.

Poverty. That Mali is a very poor country is an established fact. Its GNP per capita in 1999 ($240) is below average for sub-Saharan Africa and life expectancy is just 50 years.[14] More than half of all Malians lack access to clean drinking water and the rate of chronic malnutrition among children under 3 years is 25 percent.[15] Although rural poverty decreased somewhat as a result of economic growth following the 1994 currency devaluation, this trend may have tapered off since 1998. As such, the Government of Mali has expressed its willingness to make poverty reduction and the satisfaction of basic human needs its top development priorities.[16]

The Afrobarometer survey in Mali measures poverty in three innovative ways that depart from standard household income and expenditure studies. We ask respondents: (a) to report on the general state of their household finances (b) to enumerate shortages of basic needs and (c) to place themselves on a subjective poverty scale. While the first item conceives of poverty narrowly in monetary terms, the last item is more multidimensional, including not only economic, but also social and other dimensions of poverty.

We ask first about household financial status during the past year: "Did you save money, spend all of your income, spend some of your own savings, or (have to) borrow money (to cover basic needs)?" By this measure, only 12 percent of Malians are able to save compared to 57 percent who spend everything they earn. The remaining one-third of households survive through deficit financing, either by spending savings (13 percent), borrowing to cover basic needs (9 percent), or both (9 percent).

Which basic needs go unmet? The frequency of household shortages over the previous year for various key goods and services is shown in Table 3. Take a few examples. About one-third of Malians (33 percent) report that they go without water at least occasionally. A higher proportion, about four out of ten families (42 percent), say they sometimes go without food. And fully eight out of ten (81 percent) report intermittence in flows of cash income.

Table 3: Shortages of Basic Needs

	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Water for domestic use	68	19	10	4
Schooling for your children	64	20	10	7
Food for your family	57	27	13	2
Medical treatment for your family	49	26	18	7
Electricity in your home	29	4	3	64
A cash income	19	31	36	14

From a cross-national perspective, these are relatively high levels of reported deprivation, even in a context where the seasonal rains and the food crop harvest in Mali were relatively bountiful in 2000. For example, fewer Ghanaians report household shortages of food (32 percent) and many fewer Southern Africans go without a cash income (35 percent).

The third measure of poverty used in the survey is a subjective poverty scale. It is based on the question: "on a scale of one to ten, where one is 'poor' and ten is 'not poor,' what number would you give to your own household?"[17] By this measure, 55 percent of Malians see themselves as "poor" (score 1-4) and 20 percent as "not poor" (score 6-10). This compares favorably with an official estimate that places 69 percent below a poverty line.[18] But 25 percent of respondents give themselves what they take to be an intermediate score on the poverty scale (5). Many of these respondents may be balanced on, or close to, the official poverty divide.

Because all the above measures are inter-correlated in the Mali data, we conclude that each captures an aspect of poverty.[19] The strongest relationship is between shortages of income and shortages of food, a finding consistent with Sen's view that hunger arises more commonly from a lack of effective consumer demand than from inadequate food supplies.[20] Moreover, the Afrobarometer measurements of poverty confirm findings from existing household consumption surveys that poverty is more prevalent in rural areas (especially Kidal region, where felt economic inequalities are also wide) and among households without education.[21] We add that the various measures of poverty are also connected to mass perceptions of relative deprivation, namely that oneself and one's identity group are "worse off" than other Malians.[22]

Social Capital. Mali's material poverty may be partly offset by reservoirs of social capital. A reputable United Nations publication claims that "the ethnic harmony of Mali has for centuries astonished visitors from other regions of Africa; between every set of neighbors around the Niger valley, there is a relationship based on mutual respect and interdependence."[23] And certainly there is evidence that Malians have used traditions of inter-communal discussion to resolve deep-seated conflicts like the Touareg rebellion in the North.

At first appearance, our survey findings cast doubt on the existence of any special endowment of social capital in Mali. When faced with a standard barometer question, Malians reveal less interpersonal trust than many other Africans. We asked: "generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you must be very careful in dealing with other people?" Mali ranks eighth out of ten African countries, below even conflict-prone places like Nigeria and Uganda (see Table 4). The 13 percent in Mali who express generalized trust falls below the 18 percent average for the African countries surveyed in the Afrobarometer so far.

Table 4: Interpersonal Trust, Cross-National Comparisons

Malawi	44	Uganda	15
Namibia	32	Botswana	14
South Africa	20	**Mali**	**13**
Zambia	19	Zimbabwe	12
Nigeria	15	Lesotho	4

Interpersonal trust rises greatly once one specifies the identities of "other people." In Mali, about three quarters say they have confidence in the trustworthiness of their relatives, their neighbors and their "own tribe." But respondents are more cautious about "Malians from other ethnic groups" (57 percent). In none of these instances, however, does Mali lead the pack in interpersonal trust: it generally ranks above Nigeria, but below both Ghana and Uganda.

To probe further into social capital, we examined people's behavior in times of need. When Malians encounter a shortage of food, water or other basic necessities, to whom do they turn? Table 5 shows that, at one extreme, 36 percent of Malians lack informal networks when faced with a shortage of schooling since they reply that they rely on "no-one" or on their own resourcefulness ("self"). More likely, they turn to their families or the government. At the other extreme, 82 percent of Malians have nowhere to turn fill a need for electricity, though this surely reflects a lack of infrastructure more than a social capital deficit.[24] The existence of an informal system of social insurance is more evident in relation to cash, health and food needs (where over 30 percent turn to their families), as well as to education and water (where 15 and 14 percent respectively turn to community groups).[25]

Table 5: Networks for Meeting Basic Needs

	No-one	Self	Family	Community	Govt	Market
Schooling	18	18	23	15	23	3
Medical treatment	12	28	31	10	14	5
Food	9	33	30	13	0	15
Cash income	10	37	34	9	2	9
Domestic water	12	37	20	14	13	4
Electricity	67	15	5	2	10	1

The presence of informal support networks in Mali is confirmed by further survey evidence. Three out of four Malians (74 percent) consider that, if need be, they could borrow as much as a week's living expenses from a friend or a relative (compared to just 16 percent who think they could get a loan from a bank). Similarly, if they fell ill and needed help at home, Malians think they can count on help from someone within their family (87 percent) or even outside it (60 percent). And Malians are twice as likely as Nigerians and four times as likely as Ghanaians to report being able to turn to a community group during a time of food shortage. Thus, while Mali may not be a paragon of social capital, as some commentators would have it, the country does possess meaningful reserves of this resource.

DEMOCRACY

Mali constitutes a test case of the "law" that socioeconomic development is a precondition for democracy.[26] The country clearly completed a transition to democracy in 1991-92. But can it sustain a democratic political regime over the long run? In sum, can democracy be consolidated in a poor country?

This section of the paper reviews the attitudes of ordinary Malians towards democracy and their participation in making it work. The discussion starts from several assumptions: that democracy cannot be consolidated unless a country possesses citizens (as opposed to mere subjects, clients or apathetics); that these citizens must be committed to democratic principles, and; that, if necessary, citizens should be willing to stand up and defend the regime. Since the orientations of Malians to democracy have never been systematically studied, the following findings are largely new. We will be particularly interested to know whether individuals' poverty and educational status affect their commitments to democracy.

Interest in Politics

Citizenship begins with interest in public affairs. Yet Malians seem to lack political curiosity. Few people declare themselves "very interested" (10 percent) or even "somewhat interested" (24 percent) in politics and government. Almost two-thirds (64 percent) proclaim that they are simply "not interested." Thus, Mali displays the lowest levels of political interest in any country surveyed so far in the Afrobarometer (See Table 6). Just 34 percent express interest in politics, which compares very unfavorably with Uganda and Ghana. Indeed, Mali lags behind even Botswana, whose citizens otherwise show the lowest levels of cognitive engagement with politics on the continent.

Table 6: Interest in Politics, Cross-National Comparisons

Uganda	85	Malawi	49
Ghana	72	Lesotho	48
Namibia	66	South Africa	48
Nigeria	65	Botswana	38
Zambia	54	**Mali**	**34**

These findings are confirmed by the small proportions of Malians who report often entering into political discussions with others (15 percent). Political knowledge is also low, since few can correctly name the incumbent Minister of Finance (4 percent), the governor of their region (9 percent), or their parliamentary deputy (26 percent). While Malians are more likely to know their legislative representatives than South Africans, they are less likely to do so than other Africans surveyed (mean = 35 percent).[27]

What explains low levels of political interest and political knowledge in Mali? One possibility is that respondents may have understood "politics and government" to mean national affairs, from which they feel isolated. We have evidence

that Malians are relatively engaged by, and well informed about, local affairs. For example, even though they claim not to engage much in political discussion, 43 percent think that they can influence the opinions of others. And more than half (56 percent) can correctly name the mayor of their local commune, perhaps because they recently voted for these leaders in 1999 municipal elections. In a large country with poor communications, all politics may be especially local. National affairs are remote from most people's daily lives as evidenced by the majority (56 percent) who consider that "the way the government operates is sometimes so complicated that I cannot really understand what is going on." Only 32 percent find government easy to understand.

The strongest explanation, however, is socio-demographic. An individual's level of formal education has strong and consistent effects on all indicators of political interest, knowledge and efficacy. For example, Malians who have completed primary school are more than twice as likely to be interested in politics (56 percent) than those with no education (25 percent). They are also considerably more engaged with political ideas than those with Koranic education alone (32 percent). And Malians with secondary education or above are more than twice as likely to partake in the deliberative aspects of democracy by discussing politics and influencing the opinions of friends and neighbors.

Political Participation

To what extent have Malians become actively involved in public life? There are many forms of political participation, of which we briefly review three main types here: voting, contacting leaders, and community-based participation.

Like people everywhere, Malians claim to participate in electoral politics at higher rates than they actually do so in practice, usually because voting is widely regarded as a socially approved act. But the gap between actual and claimed voting behavior in Mali is extremely wide. Whereas the Independent National Election Commission (CENI) reports a 28 percent voter turnout rate in the last presidential election of May 1997, 65 percent of respondents claimed to have voted then.

Discrepancies of this size do not arise merely from over-reporting by citizens seeking to give an "approved" answer (see Appendix 1, which estimates interview effects at no more than 7 percentage points). We suspect a combination of other factors. Respondents may well have confused their participation in the May presidential elections with other elections, including legislative and municipal elections or the round of presidential balloting that was annulled. Moreover, official voter turnout rates may be calculated on the basis of total eligible population (or even total national population) in which case actual turnout could be higher officially reported.[28] Whatever the reason, we withhold analysis of voting behavior in Mali until these discrepancies can be resolved.

The survey results on participation between elections seem much more plausible. They are consistent with what we have already learned about political interest, knowledge and efficacy. We asked: "In the last five years, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem?" Table 7 shows that this sort of lobbying is more likely to take place through informal political networks than

through the formal hierarchy of the state. Malians are more likely to take their problems to local traditional or religious leaders than to public officials. In their interactions with the state, they prefer to approach local elected officials like the mayor of the commune, before seeking help from the deputy of the National Assembly. Remarkably, only 3 percent of Malians have had any recent direct contact with a representative of a central government ministry.

Table 7. Inter-Electoral Representation (percentage citing at least one contact)

Traditional ruler	29	Local government official	11
Religious leader	24	Political party leader	9
Maire de commune	19	National Assembly deputy	5
Other influential person	13	Central government official	3

In their reliance on traditional political networks, Malians resemble other West Africans. For example, 24 percent of Ghanaians and 17 percent of Nigerians have recently contacted a customary chief. Yet other West Africans make greater use of more modern networks by approaching religious leaders (42 percent in Ghana) and influential patrons (43 percent in Nigeria). The extent of contact between citizen and state in Mali is strikingly low for the region. For example, 12 percent of Ghanaians have contacted an elected legislator and 13 percent of Nigerians have met with a government official. These levels are two to four times higher than in Mali.

The gap between state and citizen in Mali appears to derive both from the supply side – an eroded public bureaucracy with limited capacity for outreach – and the demand side – a passive citizenry that places few pressures on its leaders. Political passivity is related to poverty. For example, the more that respondents see themselves as "poor" (on the subjective poverty scale), the less likely they are to contact any leader. The strongest effects of poverty are to reduce contacts with deputies and central government officials.[29] Poor people evidently feel that they lack the standing to approach officials in the formal state system in order to ask for service.

The most encouraging finding in this set is that Malians make some use of local government institutions, especially at the commune level, via contacts with both elected and appointed officials. This relatively activist public orientation to local government is highly consistent with the government's commitment to decentralize most public functions to the commune level.

We end this subsection by mentioning community-based participation, which we measure by attendance at meetings and work-parties in the locality. More than half of the Malians interviewed (52 percent) said that they had attended a community meeting over the course of the previous five years, a figure that falls between that of Nigeria (45 percent) and Ghana (64 percent). Some Malians have also seized the political or developmental initiative, with 29 percent saying they have "got together with others to raise an issue." As might be expected, the motivations for local activism are mixed: most commonly, people participate in community affairs to advance a personal material interest, though sizeable minorities also report getting involved for social reasons (e.g. "to have a chance to work with others") or to do their duty as citizens (e.g. "to help bring services or opportunities to our community").[30]

Popular Understandings of Democracy

How do Mali's proto-citizens understand democracy? A good starting point for any discussion of this sort is to define terms. Accordingly, the survey inquired: "What, if anything, do you understand by the word 'democracy'?" Although the question was asked in local languages, the key word was always presented in French (*la démocratie*). Answers were solicited in open-ended form, that is, without predetermined response categories. Thus the survey respondents could say whatever they liked in their own words and we coded their verbatim responses only after the fact.

As Table 8 reveals, Malians have rather distinctive understandings of democracy. The most common response is that the concept has no popular meaning, with almost one-third of all respondents saying that they "don't know" what democracy means. Only Lesotho and Namibia out of eleven African countries surveyed have more citizens than Mali who do not understand the meaning of democracy.

While the next most common response refers to civil liberties, particularly free speech, we hesitate to argue, as we have done for other African countries, that Malians therefore evince a "liberal" conception of democracy. First, fewer than one-quarter of Malians refer to civil liberties in a cross-national context where more than one half of Malawians and Zambians do so. Secondly, almost one in ten Malians (8 percent) attach a negative meaning to democracy (e.g. "conflict," "corruption") compared to fewer than one percent of other Africans. And thirdly, Malians make sparse reference to other core procedural attributes of liberal democracy such as voting rights or "government by the people."

Table 8. Popular Understandings of Democracy

Don't know	30	Peace and unity	7
Civil Liberties	22	Government by the people	6
Equality and Justice	11	Self-determination	6
Mutual Respect	8	Working together	5
Negative Meanings	8	Voting rights	2

Instead, the Malian conception of democracy is communitarian. It centers on a set of political values such as "equality and justice," "mutual respect," "unity" and "working together" that describe an idealized version of political community derived from the country's past. This cluster of communitarian values amounts to one-third of all responses (33 percent) and together outweighs, or at least counter-balances, any liberal cluster. The reference point seems to be a form of village-level democracy in which social relations are respectful and harmonious and in which decisions occur by consensus after extended discussion. Indeed, Malians seem almost to equate democracy with social capital, so central is the element of mutual trust to their conception of democracy.

Understandings of democracy are distributed among the Malian population in predictable ways. People who live in rural areas and who possess limited education (primary school or less) are most likely to be unable to define democracy. Poor people tend to associate democracy with equality and justice though, interestingly, rarely with substantive economic development. Rural and less educated people are most

likely to be communitarians, though a distinctive Malian interpretation of democracy is also common among some town dwellers. Any liberal interpretations are concentrated among urban, educated, non-poor groups. In this respect, Mali's urban elites, like other Africans, are adopting universal political values while its rural masses remain attached to indigenous, culturally specific conceptions of democracy. A major challenge for further democratization in Mali is to reconcile these two different sets of expectations, especially in relation to the inherent tension between political competition and social consensus.[31]

Support for Democracy

Without a doubt, Malians consider the existing political regime in their country to be a democracy. Asked directly "how much of a democracy is Mali today?" only 6 percent say that it is not a democracy at all (See Table 9). By the same token, only 24 percent are willing to venture that it is a "full" democracy, compared to 46 percent in Botswana who think that their own democratic regime is completely consolidated. More than one third consider democracy in Mali to have "major problems" and one-fifth to have "minor" shortcomings. With this profile, Mali more closely resembles contemporary Nigeria (where citizens correctly view democracy as fragile) than any other country in the Afrobarometer.

Table 9: Is Mali a Democracy?

Not a democracy	6
A full democracy	24
A democracy, but with minor problems	21
A democracy, but with major problems	37
Don't know	8

Rural dwellers are more likely than urban dwellers to declare Mali a full democracy (28 percent versus 18 percent), especially if they live in Segou or Sikasso, the relatively prosperous rice and cotton regions. In one of the few cases where identity seems to matter, people who define themselves as members of an ethnic group are more likely to see Mali as being a "full" democracy. Perhaps they extend this vote of confidence to Mali's current political arrangements because opportunities for free association and political representation have improved since the democratic transition, including for people who choose to affiliate along lines of kinship, clan or language.[32]

The key issue in this discussion is popular support for democracy. Barometer surveys worldwide tap support for democracy with the following standard question: "Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion? A. Democracy is preferable to any other form of government. B. In certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable. C. To people like me, it doesn't matter what form of government we have." The results for Mali are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Support for Democracy?

A. Democracy is preferable to any other form of government.	60
B. In certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable.	16
C. To people like me, it doesn't matter what form of government we have.	24

From a cross-national perspective, Mali now begins to creep up the African league tables (see Table 11). There is greater popular support for democracy in

Mali than in Lesotho and Namibia, and the country displays essentially the same level of support for a regime of elected government as South Africa. Unlike in Malawi and South Africa, however, support for democracy in Mali is not reduced by nostalgia for a previous authoritarian regime. Instead, support for democracy is constrained by a large, neutral minority who don't care which form of government they have, as in Namibia and Lesotho. This neutral group is composed in good part of those politically disengaged persons who are either uninterested in public affairs, or who don't know what democracy is.[33]

Table 11: Support for Democracy, Cross-National Comparisons

Botswana	83	Malawi	66
Nigeria	81	**Mali**	**60**
Ghana	77	South Africa	60
Zambia	74	Namibia	57
Zimbabwe	71	Lesotho	39

On the other side of the coin of support for democracy is rejection of authoritarian alternatives. As suggested in the previous paragraph, very few Malians wish to return to the one-party or military regimes of Modibo Keita or Moussa Traoré. Thus strong majorities reject military rule (70 percent), one party rule (74 percent) and "getting rid of elections so that a strong leader can decide everything" (73 percent). Malians are not as vociferous in their rejection of authoritarian alternatives as Nigerians and Ghanaians, but they are generally pro-democratic nonetheless.

In only two instances are Malians willing to accept a diminution of democracy. First, they are split down the middle on the desirability of returning to a traditional form of rule in which all decisions are made by a council of elders: 47 percent agree and 47 disagree, demonstrating once again the quest among Malians to adapt democracy to familiar cultural forms. Second, Malians are willing to countenance a form of rule in which "the most important decisions, for example on the economy, (are) left to experts." As we will see below, citizens find macroeconomic management hard to fathom and they long for clean and competent governance in this realm. Technocratic rule is not necessarily incompatible with democracy, but the high level of support for this option (78 percent) makes one wonder whether Malians may be rather too quick to surrender their democratic rights.

Similarly, Malians show little appetite for defending democracy in the event that it comes under threat. We asked what respondents they would do if the authorities shut down newspapers that criticized the government, dismissed judges who ruled against the state, or suspended the National Assembly and cancelled the next elections. The responses were consistent for each of these scenarios: 25 percent would join a protest or boycott, 12 to 15 percent would contact an elected or opposition leader, but 43 percent would do nothing at all. About 10 percent would support the authorities. This tepid reaction bespeaks a shallow commitment to democratic standards that is underlined by the much stronger popular reaction to the prospect that the government would "tell you which religion to follow." In this case, 68 percent would protest and only 14 percent would do nothing at all.[34] Hence Malians clearly feel more strongly attached to their religious convictions than to the principles of democracy.

Before turning to a new topic, let us note that we find no relationship between support for democracy and a person's poverty status or group identity. In this sense, Mali resembles other African countries. It also suggests that support for democracy is sufficiently widespread throughout society that the regime faces no immediate organized threat from any economically-based or sectional interest.

Satisfaction with Democracy

It is one thing to support democracy as one's preferred political ideal; it is quite another to be satisfied with the way that democracy works in practice. In most countries in the world, and especially in Africa, actual popular satisfaction usually falls well short of popular support for democracy in the abstract. In fact it is commonplace for analysts to fret about the unrealistic expectations that African citizens heap upon fragile new political regimes.

In this regard, Mali is something of an anomaly. The levels of support for democracy (60 percent) and satisfaction with "the way democracy works in Mali" (60 percent) are identical. How so?

The main possibility is that "supporters" and "the satisfied" are different groups of people, an inference backed by the lack of correlation between the two variables.[35] In other words, many supporters of democracy are indeed dissatisfied with its performance in Mali (44 percent). At the same time, other people say that they are satisfied with democracy's performance even though they express no preference for democracy itself (16 percent). Prominent in this group are members of the rural poor who are disengaged from political life. They may have low expectations of democracy that derive from the pervasiveness of rural poverty. Or they may be easily satisfied, for example by President Konaré's quick action to remove the head tax after the democratic transition of 1992. The replacement of this levy with an income tax was particularly beneficial to the rural poor (most of who live outside the formal wage economy) and may have induced their satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Leaders

We have found that democracy is not well understood in Mali and that support for democracy, while fairly widespread, is only skin deep. Under these circumstances, citizens are likely to form their judgments about political regimes on the basis of time-tested habits. In African politics, which are highly personalized, would-be citizens may lapse into the habits of clientelism by forming their opinions on the basis of the performance of powerful political patrons. For this reason, we introduce here the concept of satisfaction with leaders, which, while conceptually distinct from satisfaction with democracy, may underpin it in Mali.

The survey measures satisfaction with various leaders by asking: "since the last elections, how satisfied have you been with the performance of (the leaders listed in Table 12)?." President Konaré received a very favorable job performance rating in January 2001 (73 percent satisfied). Also positively appraised were the mayors of the recently formed communes and the appointed governors of the regions. There were significant differences across regions, however, with the governor of Timbuktu receiving

the highest rating (77 percent) and the governor of Kidal a much lower rating (51 percent). Also, the governors of Koulikoro and Segou seem not to have made an impression since many people could not venture an opinion about their performance.

Table 12: Satisfaction with Leaders

	Very unsatisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know
The President of the Republic	10	12	38	35	4
The Mayor of this commune	13	15	36	28	7
The Governor of this region	12	15	33	18	21
Your National Assembly Deputy	20	17	33	15	15
Political party representatives	18	27	32	12	10
Judges or lawyers you have met	28	16	14	16	27

Fewer than half of all Malians express satisfaction with the work done by their elected representative to the National Assembly though, again, many don't know about the deputy. Judges, magistrates and lawyers are even less well known. Judicial officials are held to be doing the least acceptable job, since more Malians are dissatisfied than satisfied with their performance (42 versus 30 percent).

Much depends on the perceived responsiveness of leaders, a topic that opens the discussion of good governance in this report. Malians are undecided on the question of whether "politicians and civil servants are trying their best to look after the interests of people like me" (48 percent agree, 45 percent disagree). But they seem to have confidence in their own abilities "as a community, (to get) our elected representatives to listen to our problems" (56 percent agree, 33 percent disagree). The perceived responsiveness of leaders is a function of identity politics. People who define themselves in gender terms, especially women, are most likely to think that leaders are trying to look after the interests of people like themselves. And people who define themselves as members of identity groups (ethnic, religious or work-based) are more likely to think they can make leaders listen than people who define themselves as individuals.

Given that many people in Mali define democracy in terms of social justice, one would expect that political leaders would be judged in terms of their distributive performance. Generally speaking, Malians do not harbor deep communal grievances, either in terms of feeling that their group is worse off than others or is treated unfairly by government. The Touareg are an important exception. Some 71 percent of this ethnic group cite at least one instance of unequal treatment at the hands of government compared to 56 percent of all Malians. And almost half of the Touareg think that they cannot make political leaders listen, compared to one-third of Malians as a whole.

We close this section by constructing a *scale of satisfaction with leaders* that combines ratings for all the leaders listed in Table 12. Factor and reliability analyses confirm that these ratings hang together into a single component, whose mean score of 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 4 indicates that Malians are slightly more satisfied than dissatisfied

with their leaders.[36] This summary scale turns out to be a powerful predictor of popular perceptions of good governance in Mali (see last section, below).

For the moment, we simply note that, as suspected, satisfaction with leaders is highly correlated with satisfaction with democracy.[37] We take this as evidence of the personalization of politics in Africa, according to which ordinary people judge the performance of political regimes (like democracy, which is not easy to understand) in terms of the performance of political leaders (whom they more easily recognize and feel they know well).

ECONOMIC REFORM

Building democracy is a large enough challenge on its own. But Mali is simultaneously embarked on a second transition from a command economy to a more market-oriented system. A change of economic regime has been underway in Mali since the first IMF/World Bank stabilization program in 1982, but is less complete than the political regime change. Whereas democratic transitions end decisively with competitive elections and new governments, economic transitions are much more open-ended processes in which the introduction of new reforms mingles with the consolidation of earlier ones.

If there is any end point to a transition to a market economy, it is probably the privatization of the means of production, whether small-scale landholdings or the last public corporation. In intent and in practice, economic reforms in Mali fall well short of such a thoroughgoing liberalization of markets. Indeed, Mali's economic reform program anticipates a significant enabling role for a streamlined public sector. We therefore assess public orientations towards economic reform in the midst of a drawn-out phase of transition to a mixed economy in which the private sector has yet to be fully born.

Most Important Problems

Economic concerns predominated when the January 2001 Afrobarometer asked in Mali, "in your view, what are the most important problems facing (a) you personally and (b) the country, which the government should address?" The question was open-ended, allowing multiple responses. The results can be thought of as a "people's agenda" for personal and national development.

As indicated in Table 13, and consistent with Mali's location in the Sahelian rainfall zone, hunger is the most frequently cited personal problem. Even though it constitutes only 19 percent of all problems cited, hunger is actually mentioned by 39 percent of respondents, since most people offered more than one response. Hunger was most frequently mentioned in Mopti (62 percent of all respondents), followed by Gao (59 percent), Timbuktu (45 percent) and Kayes (41 percent), all semi-arid or arid regions. When added together, economic concerns (hunger, income, capital, agriculture, poverty, unemployment) account for more than half (59 percent) of all the problems that people volunteered.

Table 13: Perceptions of Personal Problems (as percentage of total problems cited, n = 6267)

Hunger	19	Poverty	5
Household income	18	Household water	5
Household health	13	Unemployment	3
Capital/equipment	8	Housing	2
Education	6	Other problems	13
Agriculture	6	No problems	1

Social problems (such as ill health or lack of access to education, water or housing) are mentioned about one quarter of the time (26 percent). The most important

concern is with the health of members of the household, which is raised by 27 percent of all respondents. In a related finding, 47 percent of Malians reported that their daily routine is inhibited "a lot" (plus 43 percent "a little") by "feeling tired, stressed or sick." Women are more likely to mention social problems and men to cite economic problems, especially access to agricultural capital. Only 1 percent of Malians claim to have "no problems." And no political or governance issue made the list of personal concerns in Mali, unlike in Uganda where respondents in the west and the north were concerned about insecurity in the face of political violence.

Perceived national problems follow a similar pattern (see Table 14). Hunger again tops the list, being mentioned 15 percent of the time by 31 percent of the respondents. Poverty gains greater prominence at the national level, where it ranks third. Women are somewhat more likely than men to make mention of hunger and poverty as issues requiring governmental attention. All told, the "people's agenda" accords closely with stated government and donor priorities to reduce poverty and increase food security.

Several new problems are mentioned at the national level such as the lack of well-maintained transport infrastructure, the mismanagement of the macro-economy, and discrimination against women. Interestingly, only 2 percent of the responses (and 5 percent of the respondents) cite the quality of governance -- including corruption, favoritism, and overcentralization -- as an issue of national importance. In this case, the "people" and the donors seem to have rather different agendas.

Table 14: Perceptions of National Problems

Hunger	15	Capital/equipment	3
Health	13	Macroeconomic management	3
Poverty	13	Roads and bridges	3
Education	12	Other infrastructure	3
Agriculture	10	Governance	2
Water	6	Exclusion of women	1
Unemployment	6	Other problems	5
Insecurity/instability	4	No problems	1

Economic Satisfaction

Malians are discontented with the economic conditions prevailing in their country. Only minorities say that they are satisfied with their own current living standards (46 percent), the state of the national economy (34 percent), and "the general situation in the country today" (41 percent). But their discontent reflects a widespread popular malaise across the sub-Saharan subcontinent. In surveys conducted between July 1999 and January 2001, a majority of the population expressed satisfaction with the condition of the national economy in only two out of ten countries: Uganda and Namibia (see Table 15).

Nevertheless, Malians can take some solace. Popular satisfaction with the national economy in Mali is about average for Africa, on a par with Ghana, and higher than in five countries in Southern Africa.

Table 15: Satisfaction with the National Economy, Cross-National Comparisons

Uganda	64	South Africa	30
Namibia	56	Malawi	29
Nigeria	45	Zambia	25
Ghana	34	Lesotho	16
Mali	**34**	Zimbabwe	6

Malians apparently derive their assessments of their own living conditions on the basis of comparisons, both with other Malians and from economic experiences in the recent past.[38] When asked to compare their living conditions to those of their fellow citizens, 63 percent said they were "about the same" (23 percent "worse," 12 percent "better"). And, when asked to weigh living conditions today against those five years ago, a majority reported declining satisfaction (51 percent, versus 28 percent who were more satisfied). This downbeat mood may reflect the recent slowdown in the economic growth rate and the steady rise of consumer prices.

Which segments of society are most economically satisfied? The survey revealed no gender or urban-rural differences of economic conditions, whether personal or national, past or present. Instead, age and poverty had consistently strong effects. For example, younger people (aged 25 years and below) were significantly more likely to be satisfied with current national economic conditions than older persons (over 60 years). And 71 percent of persons in households earning over 200,000 fcfa per month (about US$300) declare themselves satisfied with current personal economic conditions, compared to 42 percent of those earning less than 10,000 fcfa (about US$15).

Negative evaluations of the past and present are counterbalanced by a certain optimism about the future. Many more Malians expect their economic prospects to improve over the upcoming year (58 percent) than expect life to get worse (9 percent). In their hopefulness about the future, Malians generally resemble Africans in all other countries where the same question has been asked.

Basic Economic Values

Where do Malians stand in the great debate of our time about the relative roles of states and markets in development? The survey reveals some ambiguity, even contradiction, on basic economic values.

On one hand, we find a popular predisposition for self-reliance. Many more respondents believe that "people should be responsible for their own success in life" (65 percent, 47 percent "strongly") than hold the government responsible for "ensuring the well-being of people" (33 percent). They even say that employment is best created by individuals who "start their own businesses" (66 percent, 50 percent "strongly") rather than by "the government providing employment for everyone who wants to work" (29 percent). And, once employed, people should be "free to earn as much as they can" and the government should refrain from placing controls on income.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to conclude that most Malians are converts to a neo-liberal vision of a market-run economy. As Table 16 shows, there is strong popular sentiment for an interventionist state. The first column of figures indicates

the proportions of survey respondents who think that responsibility for delivery of various developmental services rests with government.

Table 16: Preferred Providers of Services

	Government	Private Businesses	Individuals	Combination	Don't know
Protecting national borders	82	1	2	13	3
Reducing crime	82	1	1	16	1
Providing schools and clinics	78	2	3	17	1
Creating jobs	74	2	3	19	1
Extending agricultural credit	70	10	6	13	2
Producing and selling cotton	30	14	24	29	4
Selling consumer goods	25	18	29	27	1
Building houses	8	2	78	11	0

By significant margins, Malians want the government to take the lead in delivering development services. Some of these services are the rightful preserve of even a minimal state, such as protecting national borders and reducing crime. Other services might arguably be more effectively delivered if shared between the public and private sectors with the state playing a facilitative role rather than engaging only in direct provision. Yet Malians essentially say that they prefer the state to be the principal sponsor of schools, clinics and jobs, with almost no role for market initiative in these functions.

The private sector (defined to include businesses and individual entrepreneurs) is the preferred provider for only for the last three activities listed in Table 16. People seem to accept the advantages to the business partnership in the production and marketing of cotton between the governmental Compagnie Malienne pour le Développement des Textiles (CMDT) and the farmer–controlled Syndicat des Producteurs de Coton et de Cultures Vivrières (SYCOV).[39] This sentiment for a public-private partnership is most widespread (53 percent) in the cotton zone of Sikasso region, where just 26 percent of respondents prefer a purely government marketing board. Malians see an even larger role for private enterprise in trading consumer goods and they fully shoulder personal responsibility for house construction. Malians are more open to market-based solutions for house construction than South Africans, who still depend heavily on the state for this function. And they show more acceptance of market competition in the trade of agricultural export commodities than either Botswanans or Ghanaians.[40]

How do we square the contradictory opinions that Malians present about job creation? At one moment, they tell the survey interviewers that self-reliant individuals should generate their own employment; yet, a few moments later, they name the government their preferred principal provider of jobs. We can only conclude that they believe that the government *should* be the fount of employment but, on the basis of their experience with poor state capacity at this task, reluctantly conclude that they cannot rely on it. We discuss this issue further below.

Support for Economic Reform

The survey asked a battery of questions about popular attitudes to the stabilization and adjustment of the Malian economy. First, had people heard about the country's economic structural adjustment (SAP) program, which for purposes of identification our Malian colleagues chose to describe as "le programme d'ajustement FMI/Banque Mondiale"? Overall, only 40 percent of respondents claimed some familiarity with the SAP. While Mali seems to rank lower than other African countries on this measure (see Table 17), its score is statistically indistinguishable from the scores for Ghana, Zambia and Nigeria.[41]

Table 17: Awareness of SAP, Cross-National Comparisons

Zimbabwe	85	Zambia	42
Uganda	55	Nigeria	40
Malawi	51	**Mali**	**40**
Ghana	42	South Africa	13

As might be expected, awareness of SAP is far higher among urban residents (59 percent) than among rural dwellers (33 percent). And education had profound effects: whereas only 25 percent of people without schooling had ever heard of SAP, fully 95 percent of secondary school leavers had done so. Thus, educational disadvantage probably explains a good deal of Mali's ranking on SAP awareness in relation to other African countries.

But what precisely do people understand about adjustment? To those who had heard of the SAP we asked: "What, in your opinion, is the adjustment program supposed to do?" Beyond the 33 percent who said they didn't know, respondents were extremely vague. Most (39 percent) couched their answers in terms of development assistance: "to help to poor countries," "give credit and grants," "to help the government," "to help the population." Fewer than 5 percent could point to measures to stabilize and adjust of the economy by mentioning "improved productivity," "budget equilibrium," "privatization," "increased investment," "reduced inflation" and "financial and administrative transparency." Even more than in other African countries, economic literacy is limited in Mali. And, because economic reforms have been introduced from abroad as conditions for food relief and budgetary support, popular economic thinking is imbued with an ethos of aid dependence.

To reliably measure public attitudes to economic reform, however, the adjustment package must be split into its component policies. We asked about four such policies: market pricing for consumer goods, user fees for educational services, the privatization of public corporations, and the restructuring of the civil service. To a greater or lesser extent, all these measures have been in place in Mali since the 1980s. We therefore expected that people would have formed opinions on these policies and their effects, often on the basis of direct personal experience.

Let us summarize. Far from being wholly for or against economic liberalization, most Malians (like other Africans interviewed) express discriminating views. In some respects they support market-oriented reforms. Even though formal education may be valued less loftily in Mali than in other African countries, citizens are

still willing to pay fees for good quality schooling (64 percent). To a lesser extent (52 percent), most citizens will accept competitive pricing for consumer goods perhaps because, as markets are deregulated, many people have taken up trading.[42]

Against toleration for "getting the prices right," we note strong public resistance to public sector reform. Only a minority support the streamlining of the civil service by holding the view that "the government cannot afford so many public employees and should lay some of them off" (40 percent); most people feel that "all civil servants should keep their jobs, even if this is costly to the country" (59 percent). An even larger majority opposes privatization: 69 percent want the government to retain ownership of its factories and farms; only 25 percent want the state to sell all its holdings. Support for privatization is particularly low in Mopti region (16 percent), which suggests that respondents give at least some credit to the para-statal *Office du Niger* for recent increase in rice production.

Malians do not advocate a substantial reduction in the economic role of the state. Beyond regarding the public sector as the main purveyor of health and education services, they depend on the public sector to generate employment. Through opposition to privatization and civil service cutbacks, they indicate that they do not believe that a foreign-dominated or small-scale private sector can deliver a reliable supply of secure and remunerative jobs. Our Malian colleagues suggested that, too often, private employers take advantage of employees by violating fair terms and conditions of service. Malians have never had the chance to observe an indigenous, large-scale, appropriately regulated, private sector at work. As such, we suspect that they have no model on which to base more liberal economic opinions or to imagine and fashion more entrepreneurial behaviors.

Satisfaction with Economic Reform

Among those aware of SAP, a plurality of 39 percent declare themselves "satisfied" with its results, while 30 percent "don't know" how they feel about it. A minority of 18 percent say they are "dissatisfied" and 13 percent say "neither."

These results compare very favorably with other countries where the same measurement has been made[43] (see Table 18). But caution is required in interpretation. We find it plausible that Ugandans and Ghanaians should be relatively satisfied with SAPs since comprehensive adjustment reforms have generated economic growth in these places. The government of Mali has been more half-hearted in embracing adjustment and its economy has been slower to grow. Thus satisfaction with SAP in Mali must be due to other factors. We find, for example, that Malians who think that adjustment's purpose is to provide development assistance, rather than to stabilize and restructure the economy, are most likely to be satisfied.[44] Thus, satisfaction with the economic reform program stems in good part from people who do not fully understand its scope and purpose.

Table 18: Satisfaction with SAP, Cross-National Comparisons

Mali	**39**	Malawi	18
Uganda	32	South Africa	14
Ghana	29	Nigeria	14
Zambia	19	Zimbabwe	3

As an alternate measure of satisfaction with economic reform, we also asked whether "the government's economic policies" have "helped most people" or "hurt most people." Like most Africans, Malians tend to think that economic reform has negative distributional effects in which an elite is "helped" but ordinary people are "hurt." But fewer Malians hold this view (52 percent) than respondents in six other African countries (average = 68 percent). Because they do not always perceive increasing economic inequality, Malians may be somewhat less resistant to market reforms than other Africans.

Also, they seem to be more patient, allowing time for adjustment to work. More Malians think that "in order for the economy to get better in the future, it is necessary to accept some hardships now" (49 percent, almost an absolute majority) than express the view that "the costs of reforming the economy are too high; the government should therefore change its economic policies" (37 percent). In this respect, Mali displays about the same level of economic patience as Uganda (47 percent) and more economic patience than Ghana, where "adjustment fatigue" has set in (38 percent).

We conclude that a constituency for economic reform may exist in Mali. The segments of the population that express willingness to stick with the adjustment program over the long haul include urban, educated elites, especially in Bamako, Gao and Timbuktu. The core supporters of reform also include members of households who are able to save some of what they earn and people who define their identities in individual and occupational (though not class) terms.

GOVERNANCE

Good governance legitimates the state. Public officials who perform effectively, efficiently, openly and accountably, demonstrate that the institutions of the state deserve the compliance of citizens. In so doing, they can generate the valuable resource of political legitimacy. If citizens regard the state as worthy of their allegiance and respect, they will cooperate voluntarily with its commands. By building political legitimacy, good governance reduces the need for, and likelihood of, official corruption and state coercion.

The Legitimacy of the State

From a public opinion perspective, good governance, broadly conceived, can be measured in terms of the popular legitimacy of the state. The Afrobarometer measures state legitimacy by means of a battery of questions about the way that political authority is established and exercised (see Table 19). Do citizens consider that the national constitution reflects popular values? In their opinion, was the current government duly elected? Does this elected government exercise authority in acceptable ways? Must citizens therefore obey the state?

Table 19: The Legitimacy of the State

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Our constitution expresses the values and aspirations of the Malian people	5	12	49	19	15
Our government exercises power in a way acceptable to citizens of this country	8	25	38	24	5
The presidential elections of May 1997 were conducted honestly	11	14	33	22	20
Our government has the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by, whether or not they agree with them	18	35	27	15	5

In Mali, a clear majority (68 percent) of survey respondents agrees that the national constitution embodies "the values and aspirations of the Malian people." This widespread sentiment seems plausible enough since, for the first time in their history, Malians gave themselves constitution in 1991. It was drafted by a national conference of political, military, economic and intellectual elites representing an array of organized interests in society and approved overwhelmingly in a referendum[45]. Note, however, that 15 percent of respondents hold no opinion on this subject, no doubt because many know little about "constitutions."

Slightly fewer respondents (62 percent) think that the government exercises power in acceptable ways. Malians find government behavior to be less than fully legitimate for at least two reasons. They consider that since the political transition in 1992, the new regime has been least effective in enabling "ordinary people (to) influence what government does" and in ensuring that "everybody is treated equally and fairly." Both these perceptions are common among those who think that the government exercises power in unacceptable ways.[46]

Even fewer Malians regard the most recent presidential elections as having been free and fair. Just 55 percent regard the controversial 1997 polls as having been honest, though a significant proportion (20 percent) admits to not knowing. The opposition boycott of this electoral contest may well have left people with a negative or uncertain impression of the authenticity of these elections.

The defining feature of political legitimacy is that citizens regard official decisions as binding. In this regard, the legitimacy of the state in Mali is incomplete. Only a minority (42 percent) agrees with the proposition that "our government has the right to make decisions that all people have to abide by, whether or not they agree with them." This seems to suggest that Malians have not yet developed a sense of attachment to the state that brings about widespread compliance with public policy, especially with unpopular decisions. Offsetting this finding, however, Malians extend more legitimacy to the state than citizens of six other countries in Southern Africa, which averaged 34 percent on this item in a range from 20 percent in Zimbabwe to 44 percent in Lesotho.[47]

With regard to the national constitution, members of the Touareg minority are just as likely as other Malians to endorse its legitimacy. The National Pact of 1992 (which granted special status and representation to the North) and the Flame of Peace agreement of 1996 (which decommissioned weapons and integrated armies) have apparently given the Touareg a stake in supporting the country's legal framework. But when it comes to obeying official injunctions with which they do not agree, the Touareg remain unassimilated; they are significantly more likely (71 percent) than other Malians (56 percent) to assert the right to resist.

In order to summarize whether Malians as a whole generally regard the state as legitimate, we construct an *index of state legitimacy*. As confirmed by factor analysis, the responses to the four survey items listed in Table 19 comprise a single underlying concept.[48] On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 is minimum legitimacy, 4 is maximum legitimacy), Mali scores 2.75. We interpret this to mean that overall, Malians are inclined to see the state as a bit more legitimate than illegitimate. Even if some official decisions meet with popular resistance in some quarters, the quality of governance is sufficiently good to induce voluntary compliance from most citizens. We make extensive use of this index in the last section of this paper, where we search for the sources of state legitimacy in Mali.

Trust in Public Institutions

The quality of governance is also reflected in citizen trust for public institutions. A considerable literature exists on this topic, especially in relation to the secular decline in confidence in public institutions that has occurred over the past four decades in the advanced democracies of Western Europe, North America and Japan.[49] Citizens are likely to extend trust to the agencies of the state only if these deliver on public policy promises, respond to popular felt needs, and treat their clients equally, openly and honestly. We can expect, however, that citizens will differentiate among state agencies, finding some more trustworthy than others.

Malians certainly do (See Table 20). Whereas 87 percent apparently consider that the national broadcaster (L'Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision du Mali) provides reliable and believable information,[50] only 42 percent find political parties trustworthy. Between these extremes, Malians tend to trust the army but to distrust the courts of law.

Given the mass popular rejection of military rule (as discussed above), we interpret trust in the army to refer to its professional role in national defense or public works rather than any approval of soldiers as political rulers. Even so, the positive view of the army probably also derives from its role as the midwife of democracy: it ruled for a year in the transitional government of 1991-2, convened a national conference of popular forces, and voluntarily ceded power to elected civilians. By contrast, it is troubling to see the low esteem in which judicial institutions are held.[51] This opinion is reinforced by low performance ratings that citizens give to judges and high levels of perceived corruption in the judiciary (see next section). Moreover, judicial procedures based on imported legal codes often seem forbidding and obscure.[52] Taken together, these data on the judiciary should be read as a structural threat to democracy in Mali.

Table 20: Trust in Public Institutions

	I do not trust them at all	I distrust them somewhat	I trust them somewhat	I trust them a lot	Don't know
The national broadcaster (ORTM)	4	5	22	65	3
The army	8	8	25	55	4
Local government authorities	12	18	35	31	5
The National Assembly	14	16	29	26	15
The police	25	18	30	19	9
The Electoral Commission	16	17	24	22	21
The courts of law	29	19	28	15	9
Political parties	25	27	28	14	7

The police in Mali receive a modest vote of confidence. Slightly more people trust them (49 percent) than distrust them (43 percent) and the police rank fifth in trustworthiness on a list of eight public institutions. These results differ markedly from those in other ECOWAS countries such as Nigeria, where only 29 percent trust the police, and Ghana, where the police are the least trusted of all public institutions. One possible explanation is that recent reforms to the administration of criminal justice in Mali, including the demilitarization and professionalization of the police. Now housed in the civilian Ministry for Internal Security and Civil Protection and driven by a new mission of community service, the police in Mali have managed to gain a higher-than-normal incidence of public trust.

Another encouraging sign is the significant amount of trust that citizens extend to local government authorities (66 percent). Malians again stand out from other Africans, displaying more confidence in local government than Ghanaians or Nigerians (both 57 percent), though not quite as much as Ugandans (74 percent). We attribute this result in part to the genuine commitment to decentralization made by the Konaré government, including the plan to devolve responsibilities over health, education and some infrastructure.[53] Note, however, that since reforms are incomplete to establish

representative "communes in all local government jurisdictions, any trust may be directed at appointed officials rather than elected representatives.

Indeed, as discussed earlier, the institutions of democratic representation are not well known among the public. Fully one out of five persons (21 percent) don't recognize or can't evaluate the Electoral Commission, closely followed by the National Assembly (15 percent). While both these institutions are deemed to be more trustworthy than not, only the National Assembly commands trust from an absolute majority. Taken together with the low levels of trust in political parties, lack of knowledge about the national institutions of democratic representation suggests a pressing need for civic education.

For purposes of further analysis, we constructed an *index of trust in public institutions*. This index is made up of all eight items in Table 18, which factor analysis confirms to be a single component.[54] The mean score of this index on a scale of 1 to 4 is 2.76, which again suggests that overall, Malians find public institutions to be somewhat more trustworthy than untrustworthy.

One would not expect trust in government to be uniform across all social groups and regions. Interestingly, it declines with education (mean index score = 2.56) and urban residence (2.66). As in other African countries, increasing sophistication begets political skepticism. Beyond these slight but significant differences, we also discovered a markedly lower level of trust in government among the Touareg minority (mean index score = 2.20), which probably marks a residue of suspicion from the 1990-95 civil conflict. Touaregs remain especially distrustful of the army.[55]

Perceptions of Corruption

We suspect that popular perceptions about the quality of governance are influenced by official corruption. The survey measured corruption from three angles. First, we asked respondents for their views on the present-day governance climate in Mali: is it permissive or restrictive of corruption? Then we asked for perceptions of the prevalence of corruption in particular state (and non-state) agencies. Finally, we sought to document actual experiences of bribery that the respondents had encountered in their daily lives.

First, the climate for corruption. At the most general level, Malians overwhelmingly agree (85 percent) that "the best way to get ahead in this life is to have contacts with important people in high places." Reflecting as it does the reliance by clients on ties with patrons, this sentiment is not a direct measure of corruption, though it may set the stage for unapproved acts. A smaller proportion of the population considers that "bribery is common among public officials in Mali" (44 percent), an issue on which Malians are essentially split (45 percent disagree). Even fewer hold the opinion that "corruption is a worse problem (these days than) under the old government (of Moussa Traoré, 1968-1991)." Only one out of three (35 percent) people think that corruption has become worse under the present, democratically elected government.

The figures on the governance climate in Mali compare favorably to the responses to the same questions asked elsewhere. For example, 69 percent of Zimbabweans and 73 percent of Nigerians think that official corruption is "common" in their countries. And more than half of Ghanaians (56 percent) think that corruption has worsened since the introduction of competitive elections in the early 1990s. But Mali cannot match Botswana, where just 32 percent of citizens think that official corruption is commonplace and only 22 percent think it has recently worsened.

Turning to particular state agencies, the Presidency under Konaré receives a relatively clean bill of health. Half of the respondents (51 percent) think that "rather than protecting his friends, the President will fight corruption wherever he finds it" (19 percent "don't know"). And 40 percent reject the proposition that "the President's region of the country (Kayes) gets more services than any other region" (29 percent "don't know"). The public's ratings on whether corruption is "common or rare" among other officials is given in Table 21.

Table 21: Corruption Among Officials

	Very Common	Fairly Common	Fairly Rare	Very rare	Don't know
State					
Customs agents	55	21	7	4	14
Judges	47	23	9	6	15
The police	44	23	12	6	15
Civil servants	27	32	17	12	12
Elected leaders	23	25	18	16	17
Non-State					
Malian businessmen	38	23	10	7	22
Foreign businessmen	30	19	11	10	30
Teachers	10	12	16	51	11
Women's organizations	8	10	19	48	16
Imams	5	5	9	66	16

When the survey asked about particular officials in named agencies, levels of perceived corruption rose. Respondents may see an increase because they define corruption to include misdeeds like favoritism, nepotism and theft, that is, acts beyond bribery alone. Whatever the reason, Malians see corruption most commonly among customs agents (76 percent), closely followed by judges, magistrates and other judicial officers (70 percent). The police in Mali emerge again with a moderate reputation in a context where the police are seen in other parts of the continent as the most crooked officials of all. Elected leaders are perceived less negatively, but many people don't seem to know enough about the behavior of officials like parliamentary deputies to hazard an opinion on their honesty.

Generally speaking, however, state officials in Mali are regarded as more corrupt than the leaders of non-governmental or private organizations. Only private businessmen, Malian and foreign, are tarred with a reputation for graft at levels similar to civil servants and elected leaders. Otherwise, teachers, leaders of women's organizations and Islamic imams are seen as significantly more honest than state officials.

Finally, we sought to verify public perceptions against actual citizen experiences with unethical acts. We asked: "How often, if ever, have you been required to give a bribe, a gift, a favor, or anything else in return for getting something you were entitled to?." Even using this generous definition of corruption, reported violations dropped dramatically. Only one quarter of all respondents in Mali said that they had ever had to offer a consideration in return for a service (8 percent had done it "once," 11 percent "several times," 6 percent "often"). Fully three quarters (75 percent) had "never" had to do so. As points of comparison, 97 percent of Botswanans and 70 percent of Ghanaians say they have never had to offer an illicit inducement.

As in other African countries, the gulf between perceived and actual corruption in Mali is strikingly wide. This gap is a testament to the power of rumor and hearsay in shaping public opinion about the probity of officials and institutions. Regardless of whether perceptions of corruption are accurate, they pose an important political challenge that can only be ignored at the risk of damaging faith in good governance. Indeed we suspect, and will test later, that perceptions are more important than experiences in determining the legitimacy of the state.

Accessibility and Predictability

How do Malians appraise the performance of the state, especially at delivering development services? Are services accessible? If not, can citizens obtain redress? Do public agencies perform better in some policy areas than others?

We begin again with the public's assessment of the climate for governance, in this case regarding the predictability of the policy environment. Do Malians think that the government's laws, policies and rules are stable enough to allow people to plan for the future? Or do policy goals and bureaucratic rules change so often as to create uncertainty? Almost one-quarter (24 percent) of the survey respondents were unable to answer this question, which suggests that some Malian citizens are only dimly aware of the legal and policy environment. Otherwise, 46 percent are frustrated in dealing with a government that they regard as changeable and unpredictable (28 percent "strongly agree"). Only 30 percent find the governance environment acceptably stable.

Nevertheless, Malians report that it is quite possible to obtain the documents that ordinary people need in order to interact with the state bureaucracy. Some 72 percent say that it is "easy" to obtain a birth certificate and 85 percent say the same about getting a voter registration card. Men are slightly more likely than women to report easy access to these state services. But, perhaps unexpectedly, education and urban residence improve access only to birth certificates, but not to voter registration cards. And, quite surprisingly, members of the Touareg minority report better access to both these services than non-Touareg. For those who report difficulty in obtaining identity documents, most people cite high cost as a barrier to getting a birth certificate and long delays, such as queuing, as a deterrent to voter registration.

Some development services are much more accessible than others. For example, few Malians report that it is "difficult" to obtain a place for a child in a primary school (24 percent). And there are no reported demographic differences - of gender,

education, ethnicity, or urban or rural residence - in the perceived accessibility of basic education services. The lack of systematic barriers to education seems to confirm that some families make a conscious choice to keep their children out of school, though 19 percent mention that the costs associated with primary education are a deterrent.

At the other extreme, certain development services are perceived as inaccessible: 77 percent find difficulty in getting an electrical hookup to the household and 74 percent say the same about a telephone connection. Not surprisingly, the cost of these services is a factor limiting access for two-thirds of the respondents, though one third mention long delays in service delivery as a problem as well.

To pursue the issue of bureaucratic delay we asked: "What should a person do who is waiting for a government permit if a public official says 'just be patient'?," a question that was also asked in a barometer survey in Russia in 1997.[56] More than half of all Malians (55 percent) would "not worry, just wait" on the assumption that the permit will eventually come. The next most common tactics in Mali are to offer a tip or a gift to an official (17 percent), to use a connection to an influential person (12 percent), or to give up because "nothing can be done" (9 percent). Very few people would write a letter to the head office (5 percent) or admit that they would do as they please anyway, that is, without a permit (1percent). From a comparative perspective, the Malian approach to "working the system" is very different to the Russian. In Russia, far fewer respondents would resign themselves to waiting for a slow service (20 percent) and many more would try bribery (32 percent) or use informal connections (38 percent).

Public Policy Performance

To close this section we report on citizen evaluations of several aspects of public policy performance. Table 22 lists responses to the question "How well would you say the current government is handling the following problems?"

Table 22: Public Policy Performance

	Very Badly	Fairly Badly	Fairly Well	VeryWell	Don't know
Macroeconomic Management					
Ensuring food security	22	36	27	13	2
Creating employment	19	37	26	10	8
Reducing poverty	26	39	20	12	4
Reducing the rich-poor gap	27	39	21	8	6
Controlling inflation	29	42	20	8	2
Social Service Delivery					
Preventing the spread of AIDS	6	12	34	30	18
Improving health services	11	25	44	20	1
Addressing educational needs	16	23	41	18	2
Reducing crime	22	27	31	17	3
Fighting government corruption	25	26	22	16	12

Malians assess the macroeconomic management of President Konaré's government in a rather negative light. For all such policies, more people think that the government is doing "badly" than think it is doing "well." In the aftermath of the 1994 CFA franc devaluation and facing escalating food prices last year and in 2001,

respondents are particularly dissatisfied with the government's performance at controlling inflation (71 percent "badly") , though two-thirds disapprove of its handling of poverty and economic inequality too.

Malians are more forgiving of the Konaré government's performance in delivering key social services. Clear majorities say that it is performing "well" with regard to improving health services (64 percent) and addressing educational needs (59 percent). They also give the government high marks for preventing the spread of AIDS, though many more "don't know" about its anti-AIDS performance. (We note in passing that 16 percent of Malians say that they know a close friend or relative who has died of AIDS.)

Finally, the Malian public is divided about government performance in the realm of political order, notably in reducing crime. The survey shows that more than one-third of Malian respondents, or their friends or relatives, have been victims of crime. Within the past two years, 35 percent have been attacked or robbed while walking about in public and 40 percent have suffered a break-in or theft in their homes. These experiences drive down popular satisfaction with government performance at crime control.[57] But people do not seem to blame the new regime of democracy for an increase in crime since they regard their personal security situation to be much the same today as it was in the past.

The government receives a low performance rating for fighting official corruption. More people think that it is doing "badly" (51 percent, a bare but absolute majority), than think it is doing "well" (38 percent). Reflecting the opaqueness of many corrupt acts, 12 percent "don't know."

To conclude this section, we construct an *index of policy performance* based on popular performance ratings of both economic and social policies. Factor and reliability analyses again confirmed a single dimension underlying the ten items in this index.[58] On a scale of 1 to 4, Malians rate the policy performance of the current government at 2.39. Since this score falls below the mean (2.5), we conclude that, overall, Malians are inclined to see the government as doing "badly" rather than "well." This finding is offset, however, by the 43 percent who say it is doing well and the 30 percent who say it is doing badly when the survey asks for a global appraisal of the government's overall performance.

SOURCES OF STATE LEGITIMACY

This last section summarizes and explains popular perceptions of good governance in Mali. It does so by estimating a linear regression equation[59] for state legitimacy.

Modeling State Legitimacy

As we argued earlier, the index of state legitimacy developed in this report is the broadest and most comprehensive measure of the quality of governance available from Afrobarometer surveys. It is constructed from a combination of popular perceptions: of the authenticity of the constitution, the honesty of elections, the government's demeanor in exercising power, and right of the state to require obedience from citizens. We argue that the index of state legitimacy captures essential attributes of good governance.

As Table 23 indicates, the model explains about 40 percent of the variance in the legitimacy of the state in Mali. The main explanatory factors are public evaluations of the performance of leaders and policies, as well as mass satisfaction with democratic and market reforms as recorded in the January 2001 survey. The model also eliminates numerous non-significant factors and demonstrates that demographic considerations are relatively unimportant in getting to good governance.

Table 23: Mali: Multivariate Regression Estimates of the Legitimacy of the State

Model Summary	**R**	**S.E. of the Estimate**	**R squared**	**Adjusted R.squared**
	.644	.486	.415	**.408**
	B	**S.E.**	**Beta**	**Sig**
Attitudinal Factors				
Satisfaction with leaders	.242	.028	.279	.000
Evaluation of policy performance	.197	.025	.220	.000
Trust in government	.141	.024	.168	.000
Satisfaction with economic adjustment	.008	.013	.149	.000
Perceived government corruption	-.112	.022	-.134	.000
Perceived corruption climate	-.008	.023	-.086	.001
Satisfaction with democracy	.003	.017	.053	.054
Demographic Factors				
Education	-.121	.045	-.065	.007
Household financial situation	-.003	.013	-.054	.024
Non-significant Factors				
Experience with corruption	-.002	.016	-.023	.330
Perceived government sponsorship	.003	.034	.020	.406
Touareg	.004	.066	.005	.832
Constant	1.964	.149		.000

Attitudinal Factors

Let us discuss the various sources of good governance in order of importance:

Satisfaction with leaders. The best predictor of state legitimacy in Mali is whether citizens are satisfied with the performance of their political leaders. The independent variable is an *index of satisfaction with political leaders* made up of evaluations of the job performance of six such leaders from local mayors to the president of the Republic. Satisfaction with the governor of the region and the National Assembly deputy are the central elements in the index. In African politics, which are highly personalistic, citizens clearly appraise the quality of governance in the light of the performance of individual leaders, especially those who connect local citizens to the central state.

Evaluation of policy performance. The next best predictor is an *index of policy performance* across ten policy arenas. This highly coherent measure is driven by citizen assessments of how well the government is doing at ensuring food security, alleviating poverty, and fighting official corruption, all highly salient issues in Mali. In other words, Malians grant legitimacy to the state to the extent that its agencies prove themselves capable of solving basic economic problems. As such, the Malian approach to governance is highly instrumental: to win popular approval in each policy arena, state agencies must deliver desired goods and services.

Trust in government. The legitimacy of the state also depends on whether citizens find public institutions believable and trustworthy. The independent variable in the regression equation is the *index of trust in public institutions*. The core items in this index are trust in the National Assembly, the Electoral Commission, and local government authorities. We therefore infer that Malians base their trust in government and, in turn, their assessments of the quality of governance, primarily on the reputations of electoral and representative institutions.

Satisfaction with economic adjustment. State legitimacy is also affected by citizen satisfaction with the economic policy regime, in this case a partially liberalized, quasi-market economy. The survey item that asked respondents directly about satisfaction with the structural adjustment program was not significant in the model. Instead, an alternate measure -- have government economic policies helped or hurt most people? -- had explanatory power. If Malians perceive that adjustment policies bring broad-based economic benefits, then they more are more likely endorse the quality of governance.

Perceived corruption. Two indexes of corruption add predictability to the model. The negative signs on the regression coefficients confirm that as popular perceptions of corruption rise, so state legitimacy falls. The most influential factor is an *index of government corruption* that taps popular perceptions of graft among public officials in six state agencies, foremost among which are the police and customs departments. Less influential, though still significant, is an *index of the corruption climate*, the key element of which is the popular perceptions (held by half the population) that corruption is worse in Mali now than it was under the previous political regime.

Satisfaction with democracy. Finally, satisfaction with the political regime of democracy contributes a small measure of legitimacy to the state. Though technically insignificant, this variable is included in the model to indicate that citizens appraise governance according to the effectiveness of political as well as economic regimes. The effect of satisfaction with the regime (democracy) is suppressed in the regression equation by the effect of satisfaction with incumbents (leaders), suggesting that respondents conflate these evaluations.

Other Factors

Generally, we find that structural or behavioral factors are less important than attitudinal factors in explaining the sources of popular support for good governance.

Demographic factors. Differences in the structure of society -- like gender, age and location (urban or rural) -- have no effect on how citizens view good governance. Nor do subjective self-definitions of one's group identity or poverty status. Instead, only two social indicators warrant inclusion in the model: education and household financial situation. While these variables are partially inter-correlated, each has independent, negative effects.

The more education that Malians receive, the more skeptical they become about the right of the state to command their obedience. This finding is consistent with observations from elsewhere that formal and civic education programs make citizens more critical of mismanagement in the polity and economy.[60] Furthermore, Malians who are able to save some of what they earn (as opposed to spending it all or going into debt) are also less inclined to accept the authority of the state. Perhaps their relative financial independence provides a platform from which to speak out about bad governance. Freed from the obligations of clientage, they can criticize the quality of rule doled out by political patrons.

Non-significant factors. Finally, we wish to note that several contending variables failed to enter the model. Each has interesting theoretical or practical implications.

First, citizens' first-hand encounters with corrupt practices do not seem to undermine their view of state legitimacy. When it comes to appraising the quality of governance, perceptions of corruption are apparently much more important than actual experiences.

Second, our concerns about interview effects seem to be largely unwarranted. Even though half of the sample mistakenly thought that "the government" had sponsored survey, this misperception did not influence responses one way or the other. We found evidence of dissembling only in relation to trust in public institutions, where respondents reported more trust if they thought the survey was government-sponsored. But on all other variables, including state legitimacy, there were no significant interview effects.

Third, to all appearances, the Touareg minority have accepted the legitimacy of the Malian state. There was virtually no observable difference in Touareg assessments of the quality of governance and those of other Malians. This is not to say that this ethnic minority trusts all state institutions (notably the army) or has surrendered the right to selectively resist unpopular policies. But the survey results suggest that the Touareg have accepted the framework under which Mali is governed.

CONCLUSION

Consolidating Democracy and Markets

- Support for democracy in poor country like Mali may be quite wide but it is also very shallow. Although many Malians prefer democracy to most other regimes, they are unsatisfied with its performance and are unlikely stand up and defend it.

- More people support democracy than prefer a market economy. There is some evidence of support for price reform but very little public acceptance for reducing the size of the public sector.

- The legitimacy of the state, and with it good governance, hinges on popular satisfaction with the personal performance in office of individual leaders. The legacy of patron-client culture leads Malians to conflate their evaluations of states, regimes and incumbents.

- The survey evidence indicates that demographic factors, including self-defined identities, do not significantly limit the legitimacy that citizens grant to the state. This suggests that Malian society may not be too seriously divided by the ethnic and other communal tensions that threaten new democracies elsewhere in the world.

- The prospects for reform programs in Mali depend in good part on reconciling contradictions between liberal and communitarian values. To the extent that Malians prefer "consensus" and "unity" to political and economic competition, democracy and a market economy will be difficult to consolidate.

Strategic Implications

- Hunger is the most important problem on the "people's agenda" in Mali, at both household and national levels. Hence any comprehensive strategy for poverty reduction and good governance should maintain food security at its core.

- In and of itself, good governance is not a high national priority for most Malians. Public debate and education are required about (a) the connections between good governance and development and (b) the gap between perceived and experienced corruption.

- Malians continue to regard the state as the most reliable provider of employment. Before people will put their faith in the private sector they need to see models of indigenous private sector enterprise that can generate a reliable supply of secure and well-paid jobs.

- Formal education induces citizenship. For example, primary schooling doubles interest in and knowledge about public affairs; secondary education doubles

discussion and deliberation. Investments in basic formal education will therefore generate a dividend for democracy. But policy-makers should also understand that education breeds a more discontented and critical citizenry who are cautious about blindly extending legitimacy to the state.

- While citizens are detached from central government, they trust local government institutions and contact local leaders. The Government of the Republic of Mali should be assisted to make a reality of its promising policy for decentralized democracy. But if this policy is poorly implemented (for example, by excluding traditional political leaders or allowing political cronies to capture local control) then decentralization could undermine support for democracy.

ENDNOTES

[1] For insightful accounts of the political transition in Mali see: Vengroff, 1993; Smith, 1998; and Clark, 2001.

[2] For further details on these achievements see: Lode, 1997; Poulton and Youssouf, 1998; Davis, 2000; Seeley, 2001.

[3] The early evolution of the economic reform program is described in Dioné, 2001. Recent updates can be found in World Bank, 2000b, esp. pp. 10-20.

[4] See Sikoro, 2000.

[5] For details on the organization and management of the survey see *Mali Afrobarometer Project Coordinator Report* (Smith, 2001).

[6] The Afrobarometer is a joint venture of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), and the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, Ghana).

[7] At the standard 95 percent confidence level.

[8] The sample was weighted to correct for the overrepresentation of Kidal. All descriptive statistics in this report reflect this weighting. For the purposes of this study, the Touareg (n =125) are defined as persons whose state that their home language is Tamasheq. Within the sample, they are distributed across regions as follows: Kidal = 105, Gao = 17, Timbuktu = 2, Mopti = 1.

[9] No relationships are reported unless they are statistically significant at the .001 level.

[10] See Konaré and Konaré, 1983.

[11] In addition to offering "tribal" appellations, respondents also said they belonged to family, clan, linguistic and regional groupings, all of which were combined here in the general category of "ethnicity." Even so, the concept of ethnicity is elastic in Mali, where inter-marriage has long been common.

[12] Lewis and Bratton, 2000, p. 25.

[13] Note that, in some cases, people who identify themselves as Bambara, Malinke or Dogon are making a statement about their religion as well as their ethnic identity. They may be professing attachments to indigenous religious practices as a form of historically-based resistance to conversion to Islam.

[14] World Bank, 2001, pp. 5 and 33.

[15] World Bank, 2000a, p. 5

[16] Ibid, p. 1.

[17] The Afrobarometer is indebted to the Social Weather Station project in the Phillipinnes, which developed and field-tested this item.

[18] Ministère du Developpement Social, 2000, p.156.

[19] But correlation coefficients were not particularly high and factor analysis revealed three components that were difficult to interpret. More work remains to be done in measuring poverty.

[20] Spearman's correlation = .316, sig =.000. See especially Sen, Ch. 4, "Poverty as Capability Deprivation."

[21] World Bank, 2000a, p.7. The mean score on the poverty scale is 3.14 in Kidal region versus 4.82 in Bamako region. The standard deviation on the poverty scale is 4.04 in Kidal versus 1.72 in Sikasso.

[22] E.g. Spearman's correlations with the subjective poverty scale = .204 and .102 respectively, sigs. = .000.

[23] Poulton and Youssouf, 1998, p. 15.

[24] The World Bank's *African Development Indicators* (2001) have no data for Mali's electric power consumption per capita. Like neighboring Senegal (for which there is data), Mali surely falls well below the sub-Saharan African average on this indicator, even after the exclusion of Nigeria and South Africa.

[25] See also Davies, 1996, esp. Chs 6 and 7.

[26] For the latest contribution to this long debate, see Przeworski et al., 2000.

[27] In large part because South Africa has a proportional representation electoral system, in which candidates are selected from party lists rather than territorial constituencies, only 0.3 percent of South Africans can name "their" MP. South Africa is excluded from the average for "other Africans."

[28] There is no proactive nationwide voter registration in Mali: Voters are listed as a result of an electoral census.

[29] If not absolutely strong, the correlations are highly significant: .088 and .092 respectively, sigs. = .000.

[30] For a discussion of participation among Malian workers see African…(PADEP), 1999.

[31] Amundsen comments that "intense consensus seeking is making distinctions between parties in terms of political programmes and ideologies almost worthless," 2000, p.27.

[32] Fully 86 percent of ethnic identifiers think these opportunities have improved.

[33] Contingency coefficients = .198 and .331 respectively, sigs. = .000.

[34] Interestingly, people who identify themselves primarily in faith-based terms (or as Muslims) are no more likely to protest restrictions on religious freedom than any other Malian.

[35] Pearson's r = .046, sig = .218.

[36] The scale was constructed by adding raw scores and dividing by six. "Don't knows" were excluded and mean scores were inserted to compensate for missing values. The single component in the factor analysis (principal components method) accounts for 54 percent of observed variance. Cronbach's alpha = .830.

[37] Pearson's r =.456, sig. =.000.

[38] Past and relative assessments are correlated with present assessments: Pearson's r = .196 and .186, sigs =.000.

[39] See Bingen, 1998 and Davis, 1999.

[40] See Bratton and Mattes, forthcoming 2001.

[41] Differences between scores for these countries fall within the margin of sampling error for Afrobarometer surveys.

[42] More than one-third of respondents (35 percent) say that they "buy and sell goods" as part of their livelihood. This group is significantly more likely to support market pricing of consumer goods than Malians who do not engage in trade.

[43] The wording of the question varied slightly across countries. In West and East Africa we asked whether people were "satisfied" or "unsatisfied" with SAP on a five point scale with a neutral middle category. In Southern Africa we asked whether SAP had made the respondent's life "better" or "worse," also on a five point scale with a neutral middle category.

[44] Fully 60 percent of those who see SAPs in Mali as a source of aid funds are "satisfied" with adjustment Contingency coefficient = .798, sig. =.000.

[45] Clark, in Bingen et al. 2000, p. 260.

[46] Gamma = .356 and .437, sig. = .000.

[47] Mattes et al., 2000, p. 26.

[48] Factors were extracted by the principal components method. The single component encompassed 51 percent of the variance in the battery. The four items scaled reliably at alpha = .610.

[49] For a definitive statement on current research on citizen trust in political institutions, see Pharr and Putnam, 2000. As Hardin argues in this volume (p.31), "confidence" is a more accurate term than "trust," since attitudes to institutions are not fully analogous to interpersonal trust

[50] On average, national broadcasters are also the most trusted public institutions across six Southern African countries. Mattes et al. 2000, p.27.

[51] Especially when compared to Zambia, where the courts are the most trusted of all public institutions (64 percent). See Mattes et al. p.27.

[52] One of the few sources in English on the status of the judicial system in Mali is USAID, 1994, pp. 40-51.

[53] For a political analysis of decentralization as a means to placate and integrate Mali's fractious regions, wee Seeley, forthcoming 2001.

[54] Extraction by principal components analysis. The single component encompassed 49 percent of the variance in the battery. The eight items scaled reliably at alpha = .872.

[55] Whereas non-Touareg strongly trust the army (at 3.33), Toaureg barely trust the army (at 2.13.) (sig. of t =.000).

[56] We are grateful to Richard Rose for this question, which comes from the New Russia Barometer VII, 1998, 35. See also Gibson, 2001.

[57] Gamma = .196 (for attack) and .174 (for break-in), sigs. = 000.

[58] The extraction method was principal components analysis. The single component encompassed 50 percent of the variance in the battery. The ten items scaled reliably at alpha = .890.

[59] Ordinary least squares.

[60] Blair, 2000, pp.12-13; Finkel et al., 2000, pp.1864-6.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Effects

How reliable are opinion data collected by survey techniques in Africa? Especially on sensitive topics, respondents may try to protect themselves by offering answers that they think are socially or politically "correct." We suspect that respondents tailor their responses according to:

(a) who they think the interviewer represents;
(b) how they judge the climate for free expression in their country;
(c) and whether they are influenced by others during the course of the interview.

We tested for these types of interview effects against a battery of politically sensitive questions. These included:

(a) Did you vote in the presidential election of May 1997?
(b) Do you feel close to any political party?
(c) How much do you trust President Konaré?
(d) How satisfied are you with the performance of the President of the Republic?

We found that the proportions answering positively to all these questions was consistently higher if the respondent thought that the interviewer represented the government. At the end of the interview, we asked: "Who do you think sent us to do this interview?." Despite carefully introducing the survey as an independent, non-partisan, research exercise, fully 72 percent replied that we had been sent by "the government," "the authorities" or "le chef d'état." These respondents were significantly more likely to say they had voted and that they felt close to a party, usually the ruling ADEMA (both by a margin of 7 percentage points). They were also more likely to express "trust" in the person of, and "satisfaction" with the performance of, President Konaré (both by a margin of at least 11 percent).

Perceptions of the climate for free expression cut both ways. People who think that "in this country, you must be very careful what you say and do with regard to politics" sometimes offer safe answers. For example, they are more likely to say they have voted (by a 6 percentage point margin). But fear of speaking out can also lead to a backlash. Those who say that "you must be very careful" in revealing political beliefs are significantly less likely (by a huge 19 percent margin) to trust the President.

Finally, we found no evidence of social pressure within the community. Although interviewers were trained to conduct the interviews in private, in only 44 percent of the cases was it feasible to do so. Some 13 percent of respondents consulted with others before answering, and interviewers felt that the answers of 14 percent of respondents were "influenced" by others. Importantly, however, the responses of these groups to politically sensitive questions did not differ from the responses of those who answered by themselves.

Thus, while Malians seem to engage in a measure of self-censorship when they think they are talking to a representative of government, they do not necessarily feel inhibited by community norms from speaking out. And sometimes, they may even react against perceived constraints on free expression by downgrading their evaluations of top political leaders.

APPENDIX 2

Distribution of sample by region and districts*

Bamako		**Mopti**	
Bamako	226 (10.8%)	Bandiagara	45 (2.2%)
		Bankass	55 (2.6%)
		Djenné	26 (1.2%)
	27 (1.3%)	Douentza	27 (1.3%)
Gao	21 (1.0%)	Koro	40 (1.9%)
Ansongo	42 (2.0%)	Mopti	115 (5.5%)
Bourem			
Gao			
	25 (1.2%)	**Segou**	63 (3.0%)
	20 (1.0%)	Bla	41 (2.0%)
Kayes	88 (4.2%)	Baraouli	33 (1.6%)
Bafoulabé	16 (0.8%)	Macina	16 (0.8%)
Diéma	76 (3.6%)	Niono	42 (2.0%)
Kayes	11 (0.5%)	San	110 (5.3%)
Kéniéba	28 (1.3%)	Segou	29 (1.4%)
Kita		Tominian	
Nioro			
Yélimané	9 (0.4%)		58 (2.8%)
	52 (2.5%)	**Sikasso**	32 (1.5%)
	9 (0.4%)	Bougouni	12 (0.6%)
Koulikoro	122 (5.8%)	Kadiolo	83 (4.0%)
Banamba	29 (1.4%)	Kolondiéba	124 (5.9%)
Dioïla	52 (2.5%)	Koutiala	16 (0.8%)
Kangaba	39 (1.9%)	Sikasso	36 (1.7%)
Kati		Yanfolila	
Kolokani		Yorosso	
Koulikoro	54 (2.6%)		31 (1.5%)
Nara	58 (2.8%)		13 (0.6%)
		Timbuktu	24 (1.1%)
		Diré	14 (0.7%)
Kidal		Gourma-Rarhous	
Kidal		Niafunké	2089 (100%)
Tessalit		Timbuktu	
		Total	

* Excluded from the sample are the following districts: Menaka (Gao), Abeibara and Tin-Essako (Kidal), Tenenkou and Youwarou (Mopti) and Goundam (Timbuktu).

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