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Religious issues and ethnicity in Southern Mali



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Introduction

From June 7 to 20, 2014, Fafo conducted a field survey to identify the popular perceptions of Malians on "The implications for future public policies of Islamism". The survey covered a total of 1210 individuals aged 18 years and above, where 56 per cent of respondents were women. To do this, as many households have been selected, and the total number of household members were 15,363. 51 per cent of the household members were women and 56 per cent of them lived in rural areas. The study site was urban and rural areas of all the regions in Southern Mali (Kayes, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Segou, Mopti and Bamako), 6 of the 9 regions of the country, thus excluding the 3 regions of the north of the country. The sample of 18 years and over represents 45 per cent of the population of the selected households, 48 per cent of women and 43 per cent of men members of households.

The present report deals with the perceptions of 1210 respondents. The results are weighted in proportion to their respective sizes in the sample. These perceptions are more specifically related to ethnic and religious issues in Southern Mali in terms of group identity of individuals, perception of religion, the place of religion, knowledge and practices of Islam in Mali, and finally of Islamism. Each of these elements is available in several aspects of the ethnic and especially religious problems.

1. Group Identity

The identity of the group of respondents is presented in ethnic and religious groups of membership (including the religious brotherhoods if there is place), in national preferences versus ethnic or religious, and in terms of choice between the ethnic group and religion practiced.

1.1. Ethnicity

When they were asked about their membership groups, the Southern-Malians identify themselves both by nationality and by ethnicity. More than 7 out of 10 identify themselves either more or equal as much as Malians as by their ethnic group, at 37 per cent as much as the other and 35 per cent only Malians. This last option is by far more common than to claim only of his ethnic group (12 per cent). It is curious that the rate of those who define themselves more Malians than by ethnic groups is the same as those who identify themselves conversely i.e., more to their ethnic groups than Malians (8 per cent). By contrast, people living in rural areas have a tendency toward "ethnic group" more pronounced than those living in urban areas (23 per cent more group than Malian and 14 per cent to group only). Similarly, the age group 18-24 years are distinguished from other age groups by their little commitment to ethnic compared to others. Similarly, the Senufo-mianka, the Soninke and Dogons have an ethnic preference slightly above average, just as the inactive, the farmers and housewives compared to other types of activities (Table 1).

1.2. Nation and Religion

A little less than 7 Malians out of 10 (68 per cent) equally show their religious and ethnic affiliation, 47 per cent are equally Malians and their religion, and 21 per cent are only Malians. Once they have chosen to be Malian and have chosen their religion, they feel they belong even more to their religion than the Malian nation (11 per cent against 4 per cent). These first observations are not related to the level of well-being of households, nor even related to gender.

Beyond the position of the median (equally Malian and religion), the two extreme groups (more Malian than religion to only Malian and more religion than Malian to only religion) appear to contrast by area, those living in rural areas being proportionately more extreme than those living in urban areas. Similarly, the religious affiliation almost double with age, in passing from 22 per cent for people aged less than 25 years to 41 per cent for people over 64 years.

From an ethnic point of view, most Malinkés feel as equally Malians and religion (61 per cent) against a national average of 47 per cent. In contrast, the Peulhs seem to have a more pronounced religious preference (36 per cent against an average of 28 per cent or 18 per cent among the Malinkés). When it comes to religion, non-Muslims feel significantly more Malians than the Muslims who feel rather equally Malians and Muslims, without identifying more to

Table 1. Distribution of perception of ethnicity versus nationality (in per cent)

		Only Malian	More Malian than ethnic	Equal Malian and ethnic	More ethnic than Malian	Only ethnic
Area	Urban	39	8	39	5	9
	Rural	33	8	36	9	14
Age group	18-24 years	34	9	41	8	8
	25-39 years	35	9	35	5	16
	40-64 years	37	6	37	11	9
	65 years and older	31	5	39	7	19
Ethnic Group	Bambara	37	5	39	6	13
	Peulh	33	6	43	8	11
	Soninké	35	13	28	8	16
	Malinké	38	13	34	10	5
	Dogon	32	10	32	12	13
	Sénufo-mianka	28	4	43	6	19
	Other	38	7	37	8	10
Main Activity	None	27	7	39	16	12
	Farmer	34	7	35	9	15
	Merchant	42	5	36	8	9
	Employee	55	7	33	2	4
	Craftsman	23	9	62	2	5
	Student	26	11	54	3	6
	Housewife	35	10	34	8	14
	Other	36	2	46	4	13
Total		35	8	37	8	12

their religion than their nation. Therefore, we cannot say that a Muslim would socialize more with a foreign Muslim than with a non-Muslim Malian. By activity, craftsman, merchants and students are all mostly on the median situation of «equally Malian and religion», constituting without a doubt the largest bastion of Islam (Table 2).

1.3. Ethnicity or Religiosity

With regards to the comparison of ethnic and religious membership, Malians have a slight bias toward religion compared to ethnicity (29 per cent against 16 per cent) with, of course, a majority who identifies itself equally to their ethnic group and their religion (54 per cent). Besides the fact that there is no gender effect for all the other determinants, the majority of respondents are located in the median axis equidistant between the ethnic group and religion. Exceptionally, non-Muslims are not on this axis as they are being more ethnic group than religion (48 percent against 16 percent of all citizens, and only 29 percent «equal group and religion» against a national average of 54 percent). On the other hand, the Senufo-mianka are only 45 per cent on the median, but with a more religious than ethnic tendency (35 per cent against 20 per cent). They share that tendency with merchants (35 percent against 7 per cent)

Table 2. Distribution of national and religious preferences (in per cent)

		Only Malian	More Malian than religion	Equal Malian and religion	More religion than Malian	Only religion
Area	Urban	19	4	51	10	15
	Rural	22	3	44	12	19
Age group	18-24 years	25	4	49	10	12
	25-39 years	21	3	49	10	17
	40-64 years	20	3	44	14	18
	65 years and older	12	9	39	10	31
Ethnic Group	Bambara	20	3	48	6	22
	Peulh	20	2	41	24	12
	Soninké	21	9	36	12	21
	Malinké	17	3	62	6	12
	Dogon	28	1	41	19	11
	Senufo-mianka	19	6	43	12	20
	Other	24	3	51	8	14
Religion	Non-Muslim	43	5	20	7	25
	Only Muslim	17	3	52	11	17
	Member of Muslim order	24	6	42	13	15
Main Activity	None	24	4	29	25	19
	Farmer	21	4	42	10	22
	Merchant	18	3	50	13	15
	Employee	29	2	42	9	18
	Craftsman	10	4	69	10	7
	Student	16	6	58	9	10
	Housewife	22	4	48	11	15
	Other	21	1	53	9	15
Total		21	4	47	11	17

as well as Bambaras (35 per cent against 14 per cent). However these two other entities are predominantly «equal group and religion» (respectively 57 per cent and 50 per cent) unlike Senufo-mianka (45 per cent). It would probably not be exaggerated to infer that a Muslim Senufo-mianka would socialize more with a Muslim non-Senufo-mianka than with a non-Muslim Senufo-mianka. Finally, we must add that those having a bad level of well-being also have a slight tendency toward religion (a third of them) while being only 49 per cent on the median axis (Table 3).

1.4. Religious Brotherhoods

In the regions included in the survey, the overwhelming majority of respondents (approximately 96 per cent) declares itself of Islamic religion. Three out of five of these Muslims declare themselves "Muslims only". The other two out of five are declaring themselves to belong to

Table 3. Distribution of ethnic and religious preferences (in per cent)

		Only group	More group than religion	Equal group and religion	More religion than group	Only religion
Area	Urban	7	5	57	12	19
	Rural	13	6	53	8	20
Age group	18-24 years	14	6	57	12	13
	25-39 years	13	4	56	10	17
	40-64 years	8	7	52	7	27
	65 years and older	9	8	49	6	28
Ethnic Group	Bambara	8	6	50	5	30
	Peulh	9	4	58	15	14
	Soninké	7	11	55	15	12
	Malinké	10	1	64	11	14
	Dogon	22	3	58	6	12
	Sénufo-mianka	16	4	45	14	21
	Other	14	6	55	8	17
Religion	Non-Muslim	43	5	29	3	21
	Only Muslim	8	5	57	10	20
	Member of Muslim order	10	6	54	10	20
Well-being	Good	11	4	57	8	21
	Neutral	12	7	59	9	13
	Bad	11	6	49	11	23
Main Activity	None	12	4	54	14	17
	Farmer	14	8	50	7	22
	Merchant	4	3	57	10	25
	Employee	9	2	48	14	27
	Craftsman	2	0	80	9	10
	Student	10	2	64	10	14
	Housewife	13	6	55	11	16
	Other	8	5	56	5	25
Total		11	5	54	9	20

various religious brotherhoods (8 identified in the survey), and are spread out without any majority. However, three major brotherhoods have been identified: the ancara, hamadiya and tidjanite, representing 61 per cent of members of Muslims orders. Wahhabists and Sunnis each represent 12 per cent, which is nearly a quarter of the brotherhoods. The kadriya and hamalite are the least numerous with 6 per cent each. The largest Muslim order «Ancara» recruits predominantly among people living in rural areas, among people less than 25 years old, farmers, housewives and Senufo-mianka. The Wahhabists include more Dogons and Sonikes, merchants and craftsman. There is no gender effect on the distribution of Muslim orders membership (Table 4).

Table 4. Distribution of Muslim orders (in per cent)

	Only Muslim	Sunnite	Kadriya	Tidjanite	Hamalite	Wahabite	Hamadiya	Ancar/ancardine	Malinké
Area									
Urban	66	6	1	6	3	3	5	5	1
Rural	60	2	3	4	1	4	5	11	0
Age group									
18-24 years	58	5	0	3	1	4	4	15	1
25-39 years	66	2	1	6	2	4	5	8	1
40-64 years	65	3	3	6	2	4	6	5	0
65 years and older	44	6	12	5	6	1	9	6	0
Ethnic Group									
Bambara	63	1	1	3	1	1	8	9	1
Peulh	71	3	5	8	2	0	4	4	0
Soninké	53	12	2	6	9	10	4	3	0
Malinké	57	3	2	5	0	5	7	12	0
Dogon	57	5	2	4	0	12	1	10	0
Sénufo-mianka	72	1	0	0	0	0	0	16	0
Other	59	5	3	8	1	4	5	9	1
Religion									
Non-Muslim									
Only Muslim	100								
Member of Muslim order		12	6	16	6	12	17	28	2
Well-being									
Good	62	4	2	6	1	4	5	9	1
Neutral	63	4	2	5	3	7	2	8	1
Bad	62	2	2	4	2	2	7	9	0
Main Activity									
None	62	0	6	11	0	2	7	0	0
Farmer	61	2	2	3	2	3	6	13	0
Merchant	70	5	1	4	2	6	5	3	2
Employee	66	3	1	10	3	3	4	6	0
Craftsman	74	2	1	3	0	5	2	6	0
Student	71	6	1	7	0	1	3	3	1
Housewife	58	5	1	4	2	5	5	11	0
Other	58	7	6	12	3	0	5	2	1
Total	62	4	2	5	2	4	5	9	1

2. Knowledge and Practice of Islam

The investigation sought to know the level of knowledge and practice of Islam in Mali. Also, some questions have only been asked to respondents who reported being of Muslim religion. They have been asked to name the 5 pillars of their religion, to tell the frequency of their reading of the Quran, their observations of fasting and prayer, as well as their attitude in regards to Koranic school or militant Islamist group.

2.1. The 5 pillars of Islam and the reading of the Quran

Only 2 per cent of people claiming to be Muslims are familiar with the 5 pillars of Islam in their order. These pillars are faith, prayer, zakat, fasting and pilgrimage. This knowledge, or rather this ignorance, is not influenced by any gender effect, nor educational, area or other effects. The percentage slightly increases depending on whether the respondent has attended or not a Koranic school or medersa. The rate goes from 1 per cent for those who have not attended Koranic school (representing 77 per cent of nearly 12,000 members of households aged 6 years and more of the sample) to 6 per cent for those who have attended a Koranic school more than 6 years, and 9 per cent for those who have attended a medersa. They are only 18 per cent to know the 5 pillars of Islam in the disorder while one Muslim out of five (20 per cent) knows the 5 pillars of their religion, in both order and disorder. According to certain characteristics, that is only 16 per cent of Muslims living in rural areas compared to 26 per cent of those living in urban areas, 14 per cent of women compared to 28 per cent of men, 17 per cent of Muslims only compared 27 per cent of member of Muslim orders. By activity, the differences are quite substantial: 50 per cent of employees compared to 12 per cent of housewives, 21 per cent of merchants and 24 per cent of students.

Among the Muslims (representing 95 per cent of the population of the country), only 20 per cent know the 5 pillars of Islam (or more exactly in the regions covered by the survey, but representing 90 per cent of the total population). It seems very low, but would reflect the reality. At the very least, knowing that they are 12 per cent of Muslims who do not know any pillar of their religion, we would have 83 per cent of declared Muslims where less than a third are familiar with the 5 pillars of Islam. Finally, we must add that one Senufo-mianka out of four knows no pillar, 17 per cent of farmers or 15 per cent of the Bambaras (Table 5).

Among those declaring themselves Muslims and who know, partially or totally (in any particular order) the pillars of Islam, the overwhelming majority recites the prayer (73 per cent) and practices fasting (56 per cent) among those pillars. Prayer and fasting are the two most common practices in Mali, and also the most widely publicized, especially in urban areas or among the Soninkés. More than half of those saying they are Muslims do not know that faith in God is a pillar of Islam. The same conclusion can be seen with three fifths of the Senufo-mianka up to nearly two thirds of the Dogons (Table 6).

It has also been observed that very few Muslims devote their free time to read the Quran. Also, three-quarters of Muslims of Mali never read the Quran, four fifths of people living in

Table 5. Knowledge of the 5 pillars of Islam by the Muslims (in per cent)

		No pillar	A few pillars	5 Pillars in disorder	5 Pillars in order
Area	Urban	9	64	24	2
	Rural	13	71	14	2
Gender	Man	10	62	25	3
	Woman	13	73	12	2
Ethnic Group	Bambara	15	69	15	1
	Peulh	8	66	22	4
	Soninké	1	68	25	6
	Malinké	8	72	20	0
	Dogon	4	79	13	4
	Sénufo-mianka	25	59	16	0
	Other	18	63	17	3
Religion	Non-Muslim				
	Only Muslim	14	69	15	2
	Member of Muslim order	8	66	24	3
Well-being	Good	14	65	19	2
	Neutral	5	73	19	3
	Bad	13	69	15	3
Main Activity	None	16	69	10	5
	Farmer	17	64	17	2
	Merchant	11	68	18	3
	Employee	5	45	48	2
	Craftsman	0	72	27	1
	Student	9	67	22	2
	Housewife	9	79	10	2
	Other	10	56	30	4
Total		12	68	18	2

rural areas or among women, and even more among the Dogons or Sénufo-mianka. They are 5 per cent to pretend reading the Quran every day against 4 per cent reading the Quran each week or each month and 12 per cent even more rarely (Table 7).

2.2. The Prayer and the Fasting

We saw earlier that 73 per cent of Muslims knew that prayer is one of the pillars of Islam. Yet, they are only 68 per cent to pray 5 times per day, and 1 per cent not praying at all, or 5 per cent not praying each day, and 13 per cent praying less than 5 times per day. Young people under the age of 25 pray the least. Three tenths pray less than 5 prayers per day (same as among farmers) with a tenth which has no daily prayer. The latter observation is not seen among people over 64 years old (Table 8).

Regardless of the place of residence, the primary place of prayer for Muslims remains their own home, and not the mosque. 84 per cent pray mostly at home while 15 per cent do it at

Table 6. Percentage of Muslims knowing that this is a pillar of Islam (in per cent)

		Faith in God	Prayer	Zakat	Fasting	Pilgrimage
Area	Urban	58	81	57	66	53
	Rural	44	68	37	49	28
Gender	Man	54	76	54	58	48
	Woman	46	71	38	54	28
Ethnic Group	Bambara	42	68	39	49	31
	Peulh	50	73	45	56	41
	Soninké	70	95	69	81	53
	Malinké	63	85	49	64	38
	Dogon	35	64	34	42	30
	Sénufo-mianka	40	59	41	49	37
	Other	53	70	44	56	39
Well-being	Good	47	69	43	53	40
	Neutral	57	79	53	62	41
	Bad	48	74	42	56	32
Main Activity	None	36	75	46	65	26
	Farmer	46	66	40	47	32
	Merchant	55	74	39	59	38
	Employee	74	87	75	74	79
	Craftsman	62	95	63	58	61
	Student	50	82	58	62	54
	Housewife	47	72	39	54	24
	Other	52	78	59	73	66
Total		49	73	45	56	37

Table 7. Percentage of Muslims reading the Quran during his free time (in per cent)

		Every day	Every week	Every month	Rarely	Never
Area	Urban	6	7	7	14	65
	Rural	5	3	2	10	81
Gender	Man	8	4	3	16	69
	Woman	3	4	4	8	81
Ethnic Group	Bambara	3	3	4	11	80
	Peulh	12	7	4	13	64
	Soninké	9	7	6	10	68
	Malinké	3	2	5	13	77
	Dogon	4	2	3	7	85
	Sénufo-mianka	1	2	0	12	85
	Other	6	6	4	15	70
Main Activity	None	9	3	6	10	73
	Farmer	5	3	2	13	76
	Merchant	5	9	3	13	70
	Employee	3	1	3	19	73
	Craftsman	21	5	5	17	52
	Student	3	7	4	9	77
	Housewife	2	2	5	9	81
	Other	17	10	2	7	64
Total	5	4	4	12	75	

Table 8. Distribution of the number of daily prayers among Muslims (in per cent)

		None	Not every day	Less than 5	5 Prayers	More than 5
Area	Urban	1	4	7	75	14
	Rural	2	6	17	64	11
Age group	18-24 years	5	13	13	59	10
	25-39 years		4	17	70	8
	40-64 years		2	10	73	15
	65 years and older			10	66	24
Ethnic Group	Bambara	1	4	21	63	10
	Peulh	4	2	11	74	10
	Soninké		1	9	67	22
	Malinké	1	14	8	59	18
	Dogon	2	7	9	79	4
	Sénufo-mianka		8	14	71	7
	Other	1	4	10	73	12
Well-being	Good	1	4	13	69	12
	Neutral	2	7	5	72	13
	Bad	1	5	19	64	11
Main Activity	None		3	3	75	19
	Farmer	2	7	20	63	9
	Merchant		5	9	69	17
	Employee		2	9	82	8
	Craftsman			4	90	6
	Student	2	9	8	63	18
	Housewife	2	4	15	68	11
	Other		4	1	76	19
Total		1	5	13	68	12

the mosque. Women pray home even more than men, and people younger than 40 more than the others. Those going to the mosque are mainly the 65 years and over as well as craftsmen, categories both dominated by men (Table 9).

If 56 per cent of Muslims know that fasting is one of the pillars of Islam, they are 48 per cent to have observed the entire month of last Ramadan. This practice increases with age, from 35 per cent of people less than 25 years to 61 per cent of people aged 65 years and over. The fasting is relatively more observed in urban areas than in rural areas, by men more than by women, by the Soninkés compared to other ethnic groups, as well as by employees compared to other occupations. Curiously, the Dogons would have observed fasting the least during the last Ramadan (Table 10).

2.3. The Family code and penal code according to the Sharia

Interviewed on a possible use of the family code according to the Sharia in Mali, 55 per cent of respondents were in agreement with 62 per cent of member of Muslims orders against

Table 9. Distribution of places of prayer for Muslims (in per cent)

		Do not pray	Mosque	Home
Age group	18-24 years	5	8	88
	25-39 years		11	89
	40-64 years		22	78
	65 years and older		35	65
Gender	Man	1	27	72
	Woman	1	5	93
Ethnic Group	Bambara	1	12	87
	Peulh	4	16	81
	Soninké		16	84
	Malinké	1	22	77
	Dogon	2	20	79
	Sénufo-mianka		11	89
	Other	1	16	83
Main Activity	None		12	88
	Farmer	2	24	74
	Merchant		10	90
	Employee		15	85
	Craftsman		35	65
	Student	2	10	89
	Housewife	2	4	94
	Other		29	71
Total		1	15	84

only 26 per cent of non-Muslims. There are no area or age effect, nor ethnic group, nor even professional. The greatest supporters of such a way of thinking are found in households having a good level of well-being, in which inheritance has a meaning, contrary to poor households. Malians would be less favourable to the use of a penal code, according to the Sharia (47 per cent) compared to the family code, but with up to 58 per cent of members of Muslim orders against 27 per cent of non-Muslims. On this aspect, women are more significantly supporting such an option than men (Table 11).

2.4. Supporting Islamic groups

Approximately 3 per cent of respondents would accept to join a militant Islamic group. The inactive, the farmers and, more generally, people from rural areas, are more inclined to accept that their children join militant Islamic groups (Table 13). By asking why people think young people join militant Islamic groups, nearly two Malians out of five (39 per cent) believe that young people can join militant Islamic groups to earn their living, and nearly three in ten (27 per cent) because they have nothing to do, and to get drugs (26 per cent). This means that people do not feel that young people join

Table 10. The observation of fasting at the last Ramadan by Muslims (in per cent)

		Non	Some days	A few days	The whole month
Area	Urban	15	6	26	53
	Rural	28	5	19	46
Age group	18-24 years	28	7	25	35
	25-39 years	20	6	28	46
	40-64 years	23	4	13	59
	65 years and older	22	5	13	61
Gender	Man	21	3	14	61
	Woman	25	7	28	38
Ethnic Group	Bambara	29	6	21	43
	Peulh	18	4	20	54
	Soninké	19	1	18	61
	Malinké	20	14	34	32
	Dogon	35	3	12	48
	Sénufo-mianka	23	8	21	48
	Other	15	4	26	55
Religion	Non-Muslim				
	Only Muslim	25	6	21	45
	Member of Muslim order	19	3	23	54
Main Activity	None	28	4	15	53
	Farmer	30	3	13	52
	Merchant	16	7	32	45
	Employee	16	5	18	61
	Craftsman	11	2	28	58
	Student	12	8	32	47
	Housewife	24	7	27	41
	Other	18	9	19	53
	Total	23	5	22	48

Table 11. Use family/penal code according to the Sharia in Mali (in per cent)

		Use family code according to the Sharia	Use penal code according to the Sharia
Gender	Man	52	42
	Woman	58	50
Religion	Non-Muslim	26	27
	Only Muslim	55	43
	Member of Muslim order	62	58
Well-being	Good	63	49
	Neutral	47	39
	Bad	52	48
Total	55	47	

militant Islamic groups for ideological reasons, but rather for economic reasons. These statistics are independent from gender or age group, religion or professional activity of the respondent (Table 12).

2.5. The Koranic School

There were two questions on the subject: one for all members of the household, and the other for the only individual respondents of the sample of 18 years and over. The first was related to the Koranic school attendance for all household members aged 6 years and over. It showed that 22 per cent of them have attended such a school, 26 per cent for men and 19 per cent for women, or 31 per cent of people living in urban areas compared to 18 per cent of people living in rural areas. The attendance of a medersa is much lower, 9 per cent in total, 12 per cent for people living in urban areas and 8 per cent for those living in rural areas, without great man-woman distinction.

Then, Muslims only, from the sample of 18 years and over, were asked to say if their daughters or sons attend Koranic schools. If they answered affirmatively, they were then asked if they perceive this school as a plus or as an alternative to the formal school, and if their children had to beg for the Koranic master as part of Koranic teaching. In total, 14 per cent of Muslims have children attending a Koranic school, 13 per cent of the sons and 4 per cent of the daughters. The highest rates are observed among craftsmen (36 per cent) followed by merchants (21 per cent) as well as among the Dogons and the 40-64 years group (20 per cent each). In general, the parents believe the Koranic school as a plus, not an alternative to the formal school, 71 per cent against 29 per cent. However, for the Dogons, the Koranic school is as much an alternative as a plus. A fifth of respondents felt that the begging of students is an integral part of Koranic teaching with even higher rates among the Dogons (45 per cent) or the Peulhs (36 per cent) or even the craftsmen (41 per cent). By contrast, no employee admits the begging of their children for their Koranic master (Table 14).

Table 12. It is important for young to join a militant Islamic group to... (in per cent)

		Fight	Make a living	Get drugs	Nothing else to do	Believe in the cause	Join friends	Encouraged by families
Area	Urban	14	30	23	29	20	15	15
	Rural	22	44	28	26	24	28	27
Ethnic Group	Bambara	16	35	21	18	15	18	18
	Peulh	20	44	26	33	30	24	25
	Soninké	29	39	25	33	26	29	29
	Malinké	17	27	27	31	26	20	20
	Dogon	26	60	34	34	33	31	29
	Sénufo-mianka	12	30	22	16	11	20	19
	Other	20	46	33	36	26	28	27
Well-being	Good	17	42	21	23	18	20	18
	Neutral	36	55	45	46	39	40	41
	Bad	11	28	20	20	17	17	17
Total		19	39	26	27	22	23	23

Table 13. Accept that ... join a militant Islamic group (in per cent)

		Son(s)	Daughter(s)	Yourself
Area	Urban	0	0	1
	Rural	4	2	4
Age group	18-24 years	0	1	2
	25-39 years	3	1	3
	40-64 years	2	1	4
	65 years and older	7	9	6
Gender	Man	2	1	4
	Woman	3	2	2
Ethnic Group	Bambara	1	0	2
	Peulh	6	3	4
	Soninké	3	3	3
	Malinké	6	5	7
	Dogon	3	3	4
	Sénufo-mianka	0	0	1
	Other	2	0	3
Religion	Non-Muslim	0	0	1
	Only Muslim	2	1	3
	Member of Muslim order	5	2	4
Main Activity	None	8	2	6
	Farmer	5	2	7
	Merchant	0	2	0
	Employee	0	2	1
	Craftsman	0	2	4
	Student	0	2	0
	Housewife	1	2	1
	Other	0	2	0
Total		2	2	3

Table 14. Attendance and perceptions of the Koranic school (in per cent)

		Children attend Koranic school				Koranic school alternative to school		Koranic school students begging	
		None	Sons and daughters	Daughters	Sons	An alternative	A plus	Do not beg	
								Beg	Beg
Area	Urban	68	17	4	11	18	82	89	11
	Rural	72	11	3	14	35	65	74	26
Age group	18-24 years	86	1	6	7	40	60	92	8
	25-39 years	75	10	4	11	23	77	76	24
	40-64 years	64	20	3	13	33	67	81	19
	65 years and older	58	12	3	27	22	78	78	22
Gender	Man	75	12	3	10	35	65	78	22
	Woman	67	15	4	14	25	75	80	20
Ethnic Group	Bambara	75	10	3	12	31	69	88	12
	Peulh	67	18	2	13	30	70	64	36
	Soninké	72	15	4	8	24	76	90	10
	Malinké	73	11	5	11	17	83	91	9
	Dogon	56	20	5	19	50	50	55	45
	Sénufo-mianka	88	4	1	7	33	67	100	0
	Other	61	18	4	18	20	80	82	18
Main Activity	None	68	11	0	20	3	97	51	49
	Farmer	78	10	2	10	36	64	76	24
	Merchant	59	21	6	14	21	79	84	16
	Employee	77	12	7	3	12	88	100	0
	Craftsman	58	36	2	4	18	82	59	41
	Student	100							
	Housewife	70	12	5	14	35	65	81	19
	Other	48	23	2	27	29	71	90	10
Total		70	14	4	13	29	71	80	20

3. Role and Weight of Religion

The social role and the weight of the religion, especially Islam, are measured in this survey through the more or less important place of religion in the daily lives of Malians, their activism in the religious bodies, the assistance received (possibly from religious institutions), the importance of the imam or the marabout, and the responsibilities expected from religious authorities.

3.1. Place of religion

For nearly two Malians out of three (65 per cent), religion is today more important than it was 10 years ago, and it would be less important today than 10 years ago for only one Malian out of ten. These rates are respectively 72 per cent and 5 per cent of Muslims belonging to brotherhoods against respectively 29 per cent and 44 per cent for non-Muslims. Over the past 10 years, religion has become more important in the urban areas (70 per cent), for the member of Muslim orders (72 per cent), merchants (77 per cent) and employees (73 per cent). The Dogons seem to have reached their saturation point since the importance of religion has not varied over the past 10 years, with 47 per cent of opinion against only 46 per cent who felt that it would have become more important (Table 15).

Interviewed on a set of claims to know if whether or not they were in agreement, the Malians are predominantly in agreement with 6 of these assertions, against 4 in disagreement. First, with an overwhelming majority (84 per cent), they believe that religion, whatever it may be, is a personal matter not to be mixed with politics. Such a large majority would make a principle out of two bans in favor of religion, namely that it should be forbidden to criticize religions in Mali (83 per cent), and that it should just as much be forbidden to criticize the religious leaders in Mali (78 per cent). More seriously, almost 3 Malians out of 5 (58 per cent) believe that Islam should be established as a State religion. Similarly, 54 per cent of interviewees would be favorable to the application of the Sharia, which, according to them, would be consistent with Islam. Therefore, they are only 48 per cent to admit that Islam can lead to excess. They acknowledge with difficulty that Islam advocates violence against non-Muslims (15 per cent), and that it can be incompatible with the economic and social progress (25 per cent). Yet, for a little more than half of the respondents (51 per cent), Islam is incompatible with freedom of expression. Finally, it should be noted that 47 per cent of member of Muslim orders feels that a Muslim should not vote for a non-Muslim (Table 16).

Table 15. Importance of religion in comparison to 10 years ago (in per cent)

		More important	As important	Less important
Area	Urban	70	22	8
	Rural	62	26	12
Ethnic Group	Bambara	68	20	12
	Peulh	63	32	5
	Soninké	70	24	6
	Malinké	66	14	18
	Dogon	46	47	6
	Sénufo-mianka	70	16	13
	Other	64	24	12
Religion	Non-Muslim	29	21	44
	Only Muslim	65	25	9
	Member of Muslim order	72	23	5
Well-being	Good	70	23	6
	Neutral	58	29	13
	Bad	63	23	14
Main Activity	None	63	22	15
	Farmer	63	28	9
	Merchant	77	20	3
	Employee	73	25	2
	Craftsman	60	28	12
	Student	54	26	20
	Housewife	63	23	13
	Other	73	18	8
Total		65	24	10

Table 16. Mixed Perceptions of the religion (in per cent)

	Religion			Well-being			Total
	Non-Muslim	Only Muslim	Member of Muslim order	Good	Neutral	Bad	
Religion is personal and should not be mixed with politics	90	84	84	83	89	83	84
Islam should be established as the State religion	22	56	70	62	54	56	58
A Muslim should not vote for a non-Muslim	14	43	47	45	37	42	42
To apply Sharia law in Mali would be consistent with Islam	20	55	61	58	50	53	54
Islam can lead to excess	70	49	39	40	65	46	48
It should be forbidden to criticize religions in Mali	74	80	90	81	90	80	83
It should be forbidden to criticize religious leaders in Mali	75	75	85	79	84	74	78
Islam is incompatible with economic and social progress	55	25	19	21	26	28	25
Islam is incompatible with freedom of expression	57	52	47	47	47	57	51
Islam advocates violence against non-Muslims	53	12	13	8	17	22	15

3.2. Religious Militancy

A lot of other investigations show that Malians willingly join community organizations like village groups more than any other political or civil society organizations. Here, they are members, to various degrees, of such associations in 28 per cent of cases against only 10 per cent of member in an association of mosque or 6 per cent of member of a religious group or Dawa, which group would hold meetings outside hours of worship. For Muslims member of orders, they are 9 per cent to join a religious group, of which 1 per cent of leaders and as many active members. Just as for the associations of mosque, farmers and craftsmen mostly join such group, the latter proportionately more active than the first (Table 17).

3.3. Assistance received from Religious Institutions

In the last 5 years, individuals or their families have been able to benefit from an aid of some sort from a number of agencies, including the State or religious institutions. In total, they are 18 per cent to declare having received assistance from the Government against 3 per cent from Islamic organization and 2 per cent from Christian organizations. The little amount of philanthropy of Islamic institutions is compensated by the fact that mosques, particularly those built these last 5 years, offer assistance to the poor, in 51 per cent of cases with 58 per cent in urban areas, environment in which the Muslim institutions contribute the most, unlike the Christian institutions, proportionately more present in rural areas (Table 18).

3.4. Importance of the marabout

As could be expected, Malians are turning to parents or friends first when they have personal decisions to take or when they want to borrow money (more than 4 Malians out of 5). They would only turn to a marabout in 9 per cent of cases or turn to a religious leader in 2 per cent of cases. By contrast, they are 57 per cent to consult a marabout for advice on disputes around the inheritance first, way before parents and friends (27 per cent). We now understand why the family code has aroused so much interest, even if we would only consider the question of the inheritance (Table 19).

The use of religious leaders for disputes around the inheritance is even more pronounced among people over 24 years old. However, it is over 64 years old that they would use more religious leaders to take difficult personal decisions (18 per cent against 8-9 per cent for all other age groups). The same is true for consultation in the event of illness (Table 20).

Table 17. Militancy in some groups (in per cent)

	None	Farmer	Merchant	Employee	Craftsman	Student	Housewife	Other	Total
Leader	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	1
Active Member	6	3	0	1	5	0	1	2	2
Passive Member	1	14	7	2	2	0	4	8	7
Non-Member	93	82	93	97	93	100	94	84	90
Leader	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0
Active Member	0	2	3	0	6	3	1	4	2
Passive Member	5	5	5	2	4	0	1	5	3
Non-Member	95	92	93	95	91	97	98	88	94
Leader	0	5	0	3	1	1	1	2	2
Active Member	0	8	5	6	11	11	3	3	6
Passive Member	8	30	20	8	30	11	15	12	20
Non-Member	92	57	74	83	58	77	81	83	72

Table 18. Having received help from ... in the last 5 years (in per cent)

		Government	Islamic Institution	Christian Institution	Assistance to the poor from new mosques
Area	Urban	24	6	1	58
	Rural	14	2	2	44
Religion	Non-Muslim	13	0	6	46
	Only Muslim	13	3	2	49
	Member of Muslim order	29	6	1	56
Total		18	3	2	51

Table 19. Who to consult first to ... (in per cent)

		Area		Age group				Total
		Urban	Rural	18-24 years	25-39 years	40-64 years	65 years and older	
Take difficult personal decisions	Friends	22	21	17	22	24	21	21
	Family	71	55	70	64	53	42	61
	Marabout	4	12	8	9	9	18	9
	Traditional Leader	1	7	1	3	8	12	5
	Other	2	5	4	3	5	7	4
Borrow money	Friends	26	28	25	30	28	24	27
	Family	57	53	65	54	48	46	55
	Marabout	1	2	1	2	1	3	2
	Traditional Leader	0	3	0	1	2	10	2
	Bank/tontine	8	8	5	7	13	4	8
	Other	6	5	3	5	7	11	5
Disputes over inheritance	Friends	4	2	2	5	3	1	3
	Family	26	24	40	24	15	14	24
	Marabout	59	56	42	59	66	63	57
	Traditional Leader	5	14	10	10	12	10	11
	Bank/tontine	0	1	0	0	0	4	0
	Other	5	3	4	2	3	8	4
Consult if sick	Doctor	67	38	46	51	50	43	49
	Nurse	9	30	19	24	25	12	22
	Pharmacist	6	1	5	3	1	1	3
	Healer	9	17	15	10	16	30	14
	Marabout	0	3	2	2	1	5	2
	Market	6	7	12	6	5	1	7
	Other	2	3	2	3	2	8	3

Table 20. Go first to the marabout/religious leader for... (in per cent)

	Area		Age group				Total
	Urban	Rural	18-24 years	25-39 years	40-64 years	65 years and older	
Take difficult personal decisions	4	12	8	9	9	18	9
Borrow money	1	2	1	2	1	3	2
Disputes over inheritance	59	56	42	59	66	63	57
Consult if sick	0	3	2	2	1	5	2

3.5. More Roles

It is not obvious for people to expect more roles or more responsibilities from religious authorities to help populations get access to a set of social services such as education, health, employment, taxation, or the protection of waters and forests. On a dozen of such services, the main entities responsible for their provision remain the State, civil society organizations or even the town hall. A minimum of responsibility would be expected from religious authorities in only two cases. It is the maintenance of law and order (3 per cent of respondents) and national security (2 per cent). In some special cases, a few roles may be expected depending on the regions, except on issues of employment, health and hygiene, food safety, drinking water, roads, and taxation. Similarly, the urban area would expect a certain role in relation to the distribution of land (Table 21).

Table 21. Religious authorities should be responsible to provide ... (in per cent)

	Area		Religion			Total
	Urban	Rural	Non-Muslim	Only Muslim	Member of Muslim order	
National Security	1	2	2	1	2	2
Maintaining order	3	3	1	4	3	3
Create jobs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food Security	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water and Sanitation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roads	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cleanliness of community	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distribution of land	1	0	0	0	0	0
Collect taxes on income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protection of waters and forests	0	0	0	0	0	0

4. Perceptions of Religion

The perceptions of religion are here identified in terms of confidence to the religious bodies, perception of corruption in these bodies, age of marriage, and the place of the mosque among the basic social services. Prior to that, allusions to the religious personalities of reference of respondents are made. These personalities of reference are coming from the Muslim world, given the absolute dominance of this religion in Mali, and also from show business.

4.1. Personalities of Reference

The personalities of reference of the people surveyed are as much from the Muslim world (the famous preacher Haïdara, president Dicko of High Islamic Council and the Sharif ME Bouille Siby in Nioro,) as from the Malian show business (the singers Salif Keita and Djeneba Seck). The reference to Muslim personalities grows as we move from non-Muslims to Muslims declaring themselves to be a member of such or such brotherhood, including Muslims without any specification. The preacher Haïdara is the first personality of reference of Muslims followed by the Sharif in Nioro. Among the non-Muslims, the singer Djeneba Seck supplants the preacher who himself supplants by little the other singer Salif Keita (45 per cent against 42 per cent). However, if almost everywhere Haïdara and Djeneba Seck are way ahead in the references of Malians, for the employees and the students, the references are first to show business (the two singers of the sample) then to the Muslim world, with a slight advantage for M'ouillé on Haïdara for employees (Table 22).

4.2. Trust in Religious Bodies

Like the personalities of reference, the confidence of Muslims in religious bodies is very important. This differs from non-Muslims who represent barely 5 per cent of the population in the regions surveyed. Regardless of the body considered, the confidence of member of Muslim orders is greater than that of Muslims with no specification, except for the Islamic groups. In general, religious leaders are the most trusted compared to any specification, either institutional or personal, a certain belief about leaders, not necessarily embodied in specific physical persons, therefore disembodied. Also, the HIC is more highly regarded than its chairman, with the sole non-significant exception of craftsmen (Table 23).

Table 22. Distribution of personalities of reference (in per cent)

		Haïdara	Dicko	M'Bouillé	Singer Salif	Singer D.Seck
Area	Urban	76	67	73	62	74
	Rural	72	48	56	46	68
Age group	18-24 years	79	52	64	58	78
	25-39 years	76	60	65	56	75
	40-64 years	69	51	60	46	65
	65 years and older	64	49	51	33	38
Gender	Man	70	53	59	54	68
	Woman	77	56	65	50	72
Ethnic Group	Bambara	78	55	67	52	75
	Peulh	60	44	57	40	53
	Soninké	78	67	72	53	69
	Malinké	74	59	70	77	90
	Dogon	64	34	29	22	49
	Sénufo-mianka	84	63	59	72	85
	Other	75	57	64	50	66
Religion	Non-Muslim	45	19	35	42	56
	Only Muslim	73	53	61	55	73
	Member of Muslim order	81	66	71	48	68
Well-being	Good	72	58	62	49	70
	Neutral	78	47	58	54	72
	Bad	73	55	64	53	70
Main Activity	None	58	37	47	35	45
	Farmer	72	51	55	46	69
	Merchant	82	62	73	65	73
	Employee	65	65	71	71	79
	Craftsman	87	65	68	48	65
	Student	70	64	70	76	78
	Housewife	78	54	65	50	75
	Other	63	51	61	43	54
Total		74	55	62	52	70

Table 23. Distribution of the confidence in religious bodies (in per cent)

		Religious Leaders	HIC	President HIC	Islamic Groups	Sharif in Nioro,
Area	Urban	57	67	57	3	69
	Rural	67	60	50	5	58
Religion	Non-Muslim	39	20	16	6	32
	Only Muslim	59	62	50	5	61
	Member of Muslim order	77	73	65	4	70
Main Activity	None	59	49	38	6	55
	Farmer	65	59	51	7	57
	Merchant	69	73	63	3	74
	Employee	37	53	43	1	52
	Craftsman	72	68	70	5	69
	Student	36	51	47	5	56
	Housewife	71	68	54	3	66
	Other	64	68	50	2	62
Total		63	63	52	5	62

4.3. Corruption of religious bodies

Correlatively to the confidence, the perception of corruption in the religious bodies is relatively low. In total, they are 63 per cent to think that political parties are corrupt and only 15 per cent suggests that the religious body is corrupt.

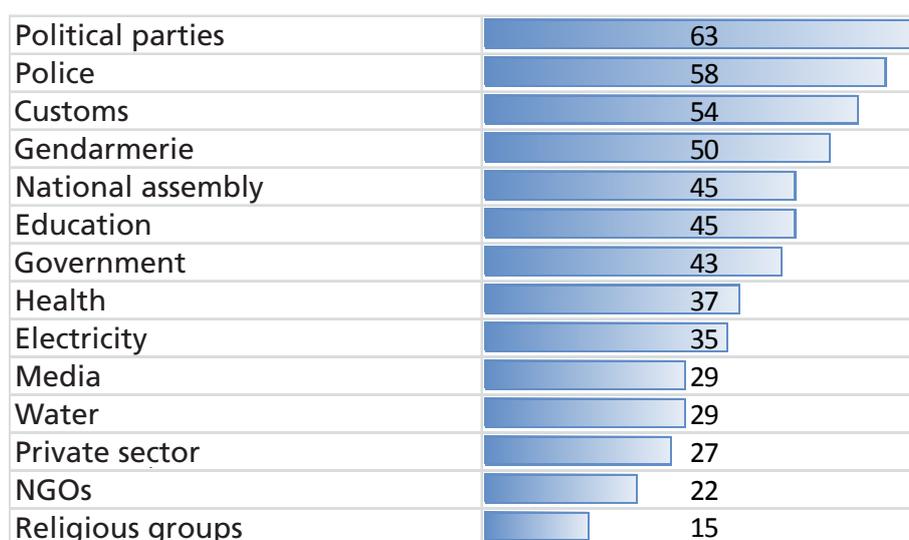


Chart 1. Distribution of the authority which is considered corrupt or very corrupt (in per cent)

4.4. The Age of Marriage

The influence of Islam is without a doubt the most felt in the answers to the question "what should be the legal age of marriage" for women and men respectively. For more than 7 Malians out of 10, the girl should be married before the age of 18 years, 15 per cent wish the girl to get married before the age of 15 years, and 57 per cent say between 15 and 17 years. Early marriage is approved by a large majority. At the same time, only 7 per cent of respondents feel the legal age for marriage of boys should be less than 18 years old, 1 per cent at less than 15 years, and 6 per cent between 15 and 17 years. The highest rate of early marriage of girls is desired in rural areas (80 per cent) and among those over 64 years (85 per cent), in which categories we did not imagine a girl getting married after 24 years. It is interesting to note that women are more favorable to early marriage of girls than men, especially the housewives.

The students and employees are the most favorable to the marriage of girls starting at 18 years, and its tolerance seems a little bit larger than in Bamako, where half of the respondents is for marriage before 18 years and the other half after this age (Table 24).

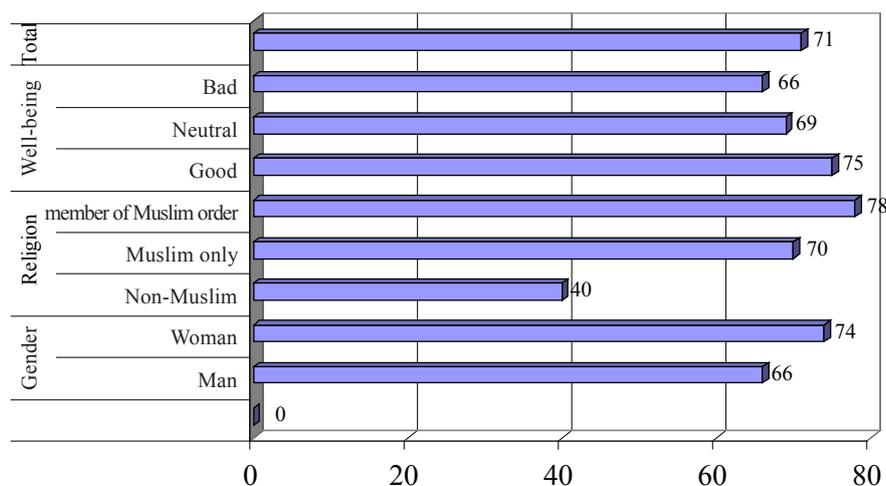
Table 24. Distribution of the age of marriage, by region and age group (in per cent)

		Legal Age of marriage for women				Legal Age of marriage for men			
		Less than 15 years	15-17 years	18-24 years	25 years and older	Less than 15 years	15-17 years	18-24 years	25 years and older
Area	Urban	11	47	42	0	0	1	64	35
	Rural	17	63	20	1	1	8	67	23
Age group	18-24 years	10	46	42	1	0	1	66	32
	25-39 years	14	60	25	0	1	4	70	24
	40-64 years	17	61	22	0	1	8	62	29
	65 years and older	25	60	15	0	3	19	60	18
Gender	Man	14	54	32	0	1	5	72	22
	Woman	15	60	24	0	1	7	61	32
Main Activity	None	18	58	24	0	0	12	61	27
	Farmer	19	59	21	1	1	8	72	18
	Merchant	15	59	26	0	1	5	56	38
	Employee	5	39	56	0	0	1	79	19
	Craftsman	6	49	44	0	0	0	68	32
	Student	3	19	76	2	0	0	63	37
	Housewife	13	68	19	0	0	6	59	35
	Other	22	52	26	0	3	3	77	17
Total		15	57	28	0	1	6	66	27

4.5. Mosques and Basic Social Services

Of all basic social services, Malians are concerned the least about the place occupied by mosque, at least in terms of their increasing number in the neighborhood/village. This is probably because the number would be already too high, at least in the cities. The most important public services for the quality of life of citizens remain the health, safety, food and drinking water. The improvement of such services greatly enhances the quality of life of citizens, far before the increase in the number of mosques, or even the fight against corruption. However, we must admit that all public services remain highly requested by the respondents, without large significant difference of preference.

By analyzing the increase in the number of mosques separately, we find that its importance decreases with the level of education, from 77 per cent for people with no level of education to 53 per cent for the upper level. The importance also decreases with the well-being, from 89 per cent of importance for the rich to 54-65 per cent for the poor. Similarly, such a public service would improve the quality of life of member of Muslim orders (78 per cent) compared to Muslims only (70 per cent), and even less for non-Muslims (40 per cent). It is difficult to see how such a service can improve the quality of life of non-Muslims (Chart 2).



Graph 2. Perception of the increase in the number of mosques (in per cent)

Conclusions

By order of preference, the Malians would claim citizenship first, followed by their religious affiliation, and finally their ethnic identity. Most Malians consider themselves as Muslim, and the religion is present in the daily life of the people. Interviewed on a use of the family code or the penal Code, according to the Sharia, about half of the Malians are voting affirmatively. This indicates that in Mali, the law still relies on religious rules, but at the same time, the practice of Islam in Mali is based on few particular knowledge of religion. For example, only 20 per cent of Muslims knows the 5 pillars of Islam. People are having a lot of confidence in the authorities and in religious figures influencing society. The Koranic school also has a relatively strong status in society. About 22 per cent of the population attend Koranic school, and 20 per cent believe that it should be mandatory. Finally, they are 3 per cent in Southern Mali to accept to join a militant Islamic group. Thus, the religion in Mali rather seems a popular current, and the Malians are generally sceptical when it comes to fight for religion.

Religious issues and ethnicity in Southern Mali

While the increasing significance of radical Salafist Islam in the North of Mali is well known, religious reorientation in the South has received much less public attention. In a series of reports, we focus on changes in views on politics, religion and social conditions among Muslims in Southern Mali. The studies are based on data collected in Mali in June 2014, both during in-depth interviews with religious and political leaders, and in a perception survey among 1210 adults in Southern Mali. The study was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This report presents how people in Southern Mali claim citizenship first, followed by their religious affiliation, and finally their ethnic identity.

Other reports in this series are:

- Religious reorientation in Southern Mali – A summary
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