



**Programme Point Sud 2016**

**Sahelian Identities in Times of Crisis,  
Past and Present**

**10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Bamako**

**Report**



## **1 Conveners**

Dr. Amy Niang, International Relations, University of the Witwatersrand

Prof. Baz Lecoq, History, Humboldt University of Berlin

Prof. Isaie Dougnon, Anthropology, University of Bamako

## **2 Themes and Objectives**

The aim of the workshop was two-fold. It firstly sought to provoke a critical reflection around ongoing socio-political processes in the Sahel region, particularly in Mali by linking them to historical and political configurations that have given shape, and continue to give shape and form to the Sahel as a geographical, a political, a moral as well as an ideological field of enquiry. In particular, the workshop aims to explore the nature of Sahelian identities in a context of political instability on one hand, and an increasing internationalization of local politics on another.

In the second instance, the workshop was expected to provide an opportunity for scholars working on the Sahel to come together and to (re)think seriously the nature of the knowledge produced in and on the Sahel in relation to the historical, economic, political, social and cultural processes under study, more especially in the relation to the formation and the transformation of identities.

## **3 Methodology and Results**

The workshop opened on December 11, 2016, with a welcome speech by Moussa Cissoko and the organizers followed by a first keynote by Naffet Keita entitled “Clivages sociaux et reconfigurations tribales à Kidal et à Ménaka sur l’émergence de la citoyenneté et de la démocratie des sociétés segmentaires au Mali” about social and clan organisation and hierarchy among Tuareg of Kidal and Ménaka. A second keynote was delivered by Leo Villalon from the University of Florida. Villalon discussed “Education and National Identity in the Sahel: Citizenship between the Secular and the Religious”, focusing on the role of Islamic education in various Sahelian countries strategies to construct a viable national identity that takes into account religion and pluralism.

The first panel, entitled “Identités, mutations/reformulations statutaires et identitaires et autres formes d’adaptation”, examined the history of, and strategies of identity mutation among a number of Sahelian populations, for instance among slaves and griots along the Senegal River Basin (Racine Ndiaye), among Bellah refugees in Niger (Souleymane Diallo), and among Fulbe and Tuareg migrants in Niger specifically involved in activities that are often shunned by local Nigerien men. In all three instances, mutation forms part of attempts at emancipation from categorical confinement or a range of strategies of survival in the midst of displacement, crisis, or alienation.

Panel Two, entitled “Boko Haram: Origines, mutations, imbrications socio-religieuses”, focused on Boko Haram, its part and present dynamics, its impact on communities on both sides of the Nigerian and Cameroonian borders. In particular, the connection between Kanuri ethnic membership and membership and support of Boko Haram were explored (Djanabou Bakary). Given a common association of Islam scholarship with Kanuri identity both in Cameroun and Nigeria, the prominence of Kanuri in the ranks of Boko Haram has been read

in a way as an attempt by the former to revive the past status of the theological kingdom of Usman Dan Fodio even though one of the panel members demonstrates that parallels between the campaigns of the Sokoto Caliphate and Boko Haram jihads would be far-fetched (Jennifer Lofkrantz). There were other reasons to do with a long-standing stigmatization and marginalization of minority groups (Adama Mahamat) both in Nigerian and Cameroun and the more vexing question of the uneven integration of various groups in the postcolonial state and its schooling system.

Panel Three, entitled “Conflit Touarègue: Discours identitaires, projets sécuritaires et reconfigurations socio-politiques au Mali et Niger”, revisited the Tuareg question from the perspective of the 2012 crisis and a number of debates that have been reignited. Belalimat analyzed the role of Toumast TV in giving a voice to Tuareg actors keen to offer a more balanced and accurate view of the Tuareg question and to mitigate the effects of stereotypical treatment of the Tuareg by mainstream media. Given the recent travel restrictions imposed by the CNRS to its employees, Nadia Belalimat could not join us in Bamako so we skyped her in with mitigated success given and instable internet connection. Fiona McLaughlin analyzed the relationship between language and society through visual representations. In the context of the conflict in northern Mali, visual inscriptions served to reframe identities from national, regional and ethnic angles. Casey MacNeil looked at how the securitization strategies of external actors, particularly the United States, contribute to perpetuating an idea of the Sahel as a no-man’s land.

Panel Four, entitled “Discours identitaires, projets sécuritaires et revendications diverses sur le Sahel”, was mainly articulated around transnational Sahelian trajectories and the particularization of the crisis as a threat to ethnic cohesion. Denise Dias Barros and Mahfouz ag Adnane followed the narrative trails of Sahelian students at the University Al Ahzar in Egypt while Marie Brossier analyzed the training of Arab literates from Senegal and the strategies of reinsertion of returning students in the professional world. Andrew Herman discussed the militarization of the Gand Koy movement in northern Mali in the context of the occupation of northern Mali by militant jihadist groups.

Panel Five, entitled “Pulaaku: Mobilisations identitaires, enjeux socio-économiques et dynamisme transnational”, focused on the Fulbe/Fulani community within and beyond the Sahel. In particular, changing perceptions of Peul community from herders to jihadists and their status, therefore, of internal enemies (Anais Leblon). The panel put forward the idea that the media played a crucial role in consolidating an image of the Fulani as a threat to internal cohesion. Abdoulaye Kane reflected on the formation and the evolution of Tabital Pulaaku as a movement that seeks to reconfigure an identity, linguistic, religious, transnational, for the Fulani in the context of tensions, both internal and external to Fulani communities within Sahelian countries. Lotje Anne de Vries examined the crisis of autochthony among the Mbororo of the Central African Republic, their ambivalent status as both, actors and victims, autochthons and strangers. In the history of recent conflict in RCA, the Peul are strongly perceived as a source of threat and insecurity and they are objected to discrimination and violence by state, non-state and international actors.

Panel Six, “Jeunes, Identités, Dissensions”, was held at the University of Bamako in the hope that there would be a sizable number of Malian colleagues who would be interested in interacting with various scholars working on questions that are quite important in the current socio-political context. Attendance was however very poor. The panel examined the dynamics of youth involvement in movements and processes of dissent in northern Mali (Mahfouz ag Adnane) and in Senegal (Mamadou Drame) using music as a form of protest but also as a

form of legitimating of attempts at integration and exit. It also examined the resources of/in language and artistic expression in the reaffirmation of particularity, values and esthetic sense in the context colonial and postcolonial Senegal (Ibrahim Wane).

Panel Seven, entitled “*Résurgence des conflits ethniques et relations intercommunautaires*”, delved into the dynamics of inter-community conflicts framed around claims on land (Modibo Galy Cisse) and political autonomy (Dida Badi). It also looked tensions generated by prohibited forms of affiliation, for instance the endogamy system (Hamidou Issaka Maga) and the relationships between the enactment of ethnic and group differentiation and an idea of a national citizenship.

Panel Eight, “*Tensions interethniques*”, examined more closely the sources and forms of interethnic tensions that contribute to fueling instability in the Sahel, namely acute competitions over resources among farmers and pastoral herders in the Boboye (Bomberi Assane Adamaou). Mahamadou Abdourahamani was meant to join this panel but he seems to have been unable to catch his flight.

Panel Nine looked at “*Radicalisation et marginalisation; migrations et mobilités comme ressources*”. In particular, it examined the articulation of demands by a collective of former migrants who had been deported from Libya and Algeria. Mamane Tassiou Amadou reflected on violence, idleness, and the radicalization of young people in the Zinder region of Niger. Finally, Luca Raineri shed light on the geopolitical aspects and ramifications of radicalization in the Sahel and the context of inequality, economic opportunities and political vacuum that characterize the current political instability.

From the organizers’ perspective, the workshop was very successful. The quality of contributions was very good and they were engaged and constructive discussions and exchanges among colleagues.

Participants also expressed their satisfaction at the efforts made by organizers to ensure a smooth participation for everybody. Colleagues also expressed their appreciation of the visits inserted in the program, namely (1)the La Commission Vérité, Justice et Réconciliation (CVJR), a lunch and guided tour of the Museum, and informal visits to the market and the Maison des Artisans. In addition, a dinner organized at the Tuareg center of Toumast was an opportunity for the ‘cultural contextualization’ of the Tuareg question in Mali.

In addition to themed panels, there was a specific panel (*Recherches sur les questions identitaires au Sahel: méthodologies, particularités, expériences diverses*) that was meant to discuss the research endeavor in the context of the Sahel. Organizers asked a group of senior and junior, male and female scholars to reflect upon their experience with regards to (1) researching questions of ‘identity’ in the Sahel and (2) working in Sahelian contexts. The session proved to be rather useful given the particularity of the Sahel as field and the sensitive and often divisive nature of questions of identity.

There were however a few glitches on the organizational front due to a lack of communication from Point Sud on the feasibility of proposed activities and the timing. We were not for instance able to attract a big crowd for the public session held at the University of Bamako.

## Final Program

### 10 Décembre 2016

9.00-9.30

Discours de Bienvenue: Point Sud et Organisateurs

9.30-10.15

Keynote Un: Naffet Keita (Université de Bamako, Mali)

*Clivages les clivages sociaux et reconfigurations tribales à Kidal et à Ménaka: sur l'émergence de la citoyenneté et de la démocratie des sociétés segmentaires au Mali*

10.30-12.30

Panel UN: Identités, Mutations/Reformulations statutaires et identitaires et autres formes d'adaptation

Chair: Isaie Dougnon, Panelistes:

Racine Ndiaye (Université de Nouakchott, Mauritanie)

*Stratégies de mutations identitaire et statutaire en Afrique de l'Ouest: Le cas des esclaves et des griots des deux rives du fleuve Sénégal*

Souleymane Diallo (Université de Cologne, Allemagne)

*"The Truth is that we are not Tuareg": Constructing and Contesting Tuareg Identity among the Malian Bellah-Iklan Refugees in Niger*

Scott Youngstead & Sara Keough (Saginaw Valley State, USA)

*The Sedentarization of Tuareg and Fulani: Water Vending in Niamey*

14.00-16.00

Panel Deux: Boko Haram: Origines, mutations, imbrications socioreligieuses

Chair: Amy Niang, Panelistes:

Djanabou Bakary (Université de Maroua, Cameroun)

*Islam et ethnies: les fausses similitudes en zone frontalière entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria*

Adam Mahamat (Université de Maroua, Cameroun)

*Discriminations induites par Boko Haram: analyse des actions et discours récents sur les Kanuri du Nigeria et du Cameroun*

Jennifer Lofkrantz (St. Mary's College of California, USA)

*Intellectual Traditions, Education and Jihad: The (Non)Parallels between the Sokoto and Boko Haram Jihads*

### 11 Décembre 2016

9.00-9.45

Keynote Deux: Leo Villalon (Université de Florida, USA)

*Education and National Identity in the Sahel: Citizenship between the Secular and the Religious*

10.00-12.00

Panel Trois: Conflit Touarègue: Discours Identitaires, Projets sécuritaires et Reconfigurations sociopolitiques au Mali et Niger

Chair: Amy Niang, Panelistes:

Fiona McLaughlin (Université de Florida, USA)

*Sahelian Warscapes: Inscribing Identity in Mali's Public Sphere*

Casey McNeil (the Johns Hopkins University, USA)

*"Ça deviens le Texas la-bas": Territoriality and the Diagnosis of Crisis in the Sahel*

Nadia Belalimat (EHESS, France)

*Toumast TV: Naissance et défis d'une TV satellitaire communautaire*

13.30-15.30

Panel Quatre: Discours identitaires, projets sécuritaires et revendications diverses sur le Sahel

Chair: Amy Niang, Panelistes:

Denise Dias Barros (avec Mahfouz ag Adnane) (São Paulo University/ Amanar Casa das Áfricas, Brésil)

*Narrative trails of Tamasheq students in Egypt: routes, reflections, and connections between Sahara spaces in the Twenty-First Century*

Marie Brossier (Université de Laval, Canada)

*The politics of Arabic Literates in West Africa*

Andrew Hernann (Université d'Auckland, Nouvelle Zélande)

*Ganda Koy: Ethnicity, Politics and Militarization in Northern Mali*

## **12 Décembre 2016**

9.00-9.45

Table Ronde: Recherches sur les questions identitaires au Sahel: méthodologies, particularités, expériences diverses

10.00-12.00

Panel Cinq: Pulaaku: Mobilisations Identitaires, enjeux socio-économiques et dynamisme transnational

Chair: Isaïe Dougou, Panelistes:

Anais Leblon (Université Paris 8, France)

*De l'image du pasteur à celle du djihadiste*

Abdoulaye Kane (Université de Florida, USA)

*Reconfigurer une identité peule dans le Sahel: le rôle de Tabbital Pulaaku International*

Lotje Anne de Vries (GIGA-Hamburg, Allemagne)

*Crisis of Autochthony: the Peulh in the Central African Republic*

Séance publique à l'Université Bamako

14.00-16.00, Panel Six : Jeunes, Identités, Dissensions

Chair: Baz Lecocq, Panelistes:

Mahfouz ag Adnane (Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo/ Amanar Casa das Áfricas, Brésil)

*La guitare de la Teshumara et la mouvance contemporaine de la jeunesse Tamasheq (1960-2012)*

Ibrahima Wane (Cheikh Anta Diop, Sénégal)

Wolofal et suweer comme mode d'expression privilégiée

Mamadou Dramé (Cheikh Anta Diop, Sénégal)

*Discours rap et problématique religieux*

### **13 Décembre 2016**

9.00-11.00

Panel Sept: Résurgence des Conflits ethniques et Relations Intercommunautaires

Chair: Baz Lecocq, Panelistes:

Dida Badi (CNRPAH, Algérie)

*Les dynamiques politiques à l'œuvre dans l'Azawad/Nord-Mali*

Modibo Galy Cisse (Université de Bamako, Mali)

*Conflits fonciers/identité/islam*

Hamidou Issaka Maga (Abdou Moumouni, Niger)

*Modernisation et déconstruction de l'endogamie ethnique au Niger*

11.15-13.15

Panel Huit: Tensions Interethniques

Mahamadou Abdourahamani (Paris 1 et Abdou Moumlouni, Niger)

*Tensions interethniques suscitées par le phénomène Boko Haram*

Bomber Assane Adamaou (Abdou Moumouni, Niger)

*Agriculteurs, pasteurs et islam dans le Boboye*

14.30-16.00 Visite guidée du Musée

### **14 Décembre 2016**

10.00-12.00

Panel Neuf : Radicalisation et marginalisation ; migrations et mobilités comme ressources

Chair: Baz Lecocq, Panelistes:

Julie Kleinman (PennState, USA)

*The Adventurer's Return: Migration and Identity in Mali*

Mamane Tassiou Amadou (Université de Bale, Suisse)

*Migration, déplacements et identités chez les jeunes Sahéliens*

Luca Raineri (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa, Italie)

*The Crisis of the Neopatrimonial Orders and the Religious Radicalization of Sahelian Youths*

13.30-15.00 Remarques de clôture

## **4 Sustainability of the Event**

It was decided that the proceedings of the workshop would be published in an edited volume. At present we are in the process of putting together a proposal to be sent to an academic publisher such as Karthala and CODESRIA. The book will be published in French in the first

instance and we also to publish an English version at a later date if we manage to secure the funding for it. We are hoping to build, through continued engagement among scholars interested in the Sahelian, an informal network that can be tapped into for further exchange, for sharing information and for testing ideas.

While during the workshop, the question of language was managed rather well with most participants having a satisfactory level of understanding of French. For the publication however, the choice of publisher will most likely depend on the language chosen. At any rate, additional funds will be needed for translation, editing and other publication related costs.

## 5 Participants

1. Mahamadou Abdourahamani, M.A., Geography, IRD Niamey
2. Mahfouz ag Adnane M.A., History, Sao Paulo University
3. Intagrist el Ansari, M.A., Bamako
4. Dr. Bomberi Assane, History, University Abdou Moumouni, Niamey
5. Prof. Dida Badi, Anthropology, Centre national de recherches Préhistoriques, Anthropologiques et Historiques, Algiers
6. Dr. Djanabou Bakary, Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) Maroua
7. Prof. Denise Diaz Barros, Sociology, Sao Paulo University
8. Prof. Marie Brossier, Political Science, University of Laval
9. Modibo Galy Cisse, M.A., University of Bamako
10. Dr. Souleymane Diallo, Anthropology, University of Cologne
11. Prof. Isaie Dougnon, Anthropology, University of Bamako
12. Dr. Mamadou Drame, Language, FASTEF, Dakar
13. Dr. Andrew Hernann, Anthropology, University of Auckland
14. Mohamed Ismail, M.A., Bamako
15. Prof. Abdoulaye Kane, Anthropology, University of Florida
16. Prof. Naffet Keita, Anthropology, University of Bamako
17. Prof. Sara Beth Keough, Geography, Saginaw Valley State University
18. Dr. Julie Kleinman, African Studies, Pennsylvania State University
19. Dr. Anais Leblon, Anthropology, University Paris 8 Vincennes Saint-Denis
20. Prof. Baz Lecocq, History, Humboldt University Berlin
21. Dr. Jennifer Lofkrantz, History, St. Mary's College, California
22. Prof. Hamidou Issaka Maga, Sociology, University Abdou Moumouni, Niamey
23. Dr. Adam Mahamat, History, Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) Maroua
24. Prof. Fiona McLaughlin, Linguistics, University of Florida
25. Casey McNeil M.A., Political Science, John Hopkins University, Baltimore
26. Prof. Racine Ndiaye, History, University of Nouakchott
27. Dr. Amy Niang, International Relations, University of the Witwatersrand
28. Abdou Sékou Ouloguem, M.A., Bamako
29. Dr. Luca Raineri, International Relations, University of Pisa
30. Mamane Amadou Tassiou, M.A., Anthropology, University of Basel
31. Prof. Leo Villalon, Political Science, University of Florida
32. Dr. Lotje de Vries, Sociology, Wageningen University
33. Dr. Ibrahim Wane, Literature, University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar
34. Prof. Scott Youngstedt, Sociology, Saginaw Valley State University