

# **On the Edge: What Future for the African Sahel?**

**The 2017 Annual Carter Conference in African Studies  
Center for African Studies at the University of Florida  
Organized by the UF Sahel Research Group**

**23-25 February 2017  
University of Florida, Gainesville**

## **Conveners:**

**Leonardo A. Villalón, Abdoulaye Kane, Sebastian Elischer, Sarah McKune,  
Fiona McLaughlin, Renata Serra, Benjamin Soares, and Alioune Sow**

## ***Conference theme***

There is unprecedented interest in the countries of the West African Sahel. Among the very least developed countries on earth, they were long on the margins of both scholarly and policy concerns; yet as the region has attracted world attention as a key battleground in the global “war on terror” there has been a proliferation of writing on the region. The vast majority of this recent attention, however, has been through the prism of security concerns: terrorism, violence, and “radical Islam.” While fully recognizing the immediate challenges that have brought the Sahel into international headlines, a primary goal of this conference is to move beyond this narrow and often superficial focus to provide a multidimensional and interdisciplinary assessment of the region in all of its complexity.

Beyond the security concerns, the region is at an important crossroads, under multiple pressures of diverse kinds: environmental, political, demographic, and economic, as well as rapidly changing social and cultural dynamics. Indeed there is a growing understanding that the security concerns of the region are intricately interrelated with broader socio-economic dynamics, and with the challenges of underdevelopment, population growth, social and religious transformations, climate change, and more.

This conference will bring together an interdisciplinary set of scholars from Europe, Africa and North America to offer perspectives on key issues shaping the region. The focus will be on the six Francophone countries at the heart of the geographic space of the Sahel—Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad—considered in the context of their neighbors, notably Nigeria to the south and the countries of the Maghreb to the north. An important contribution of the conference will be to explore the historical and contemporary interconnections that make this set of countries, collectively, an identifiable sub-region.

## ***Conference schedule (tentative)***

(Note: exact times of specific panels and presentations are subject to change)

### ***Thursday, 23 February 2017:***

**1:00-1:30: Welcome and conference introduction**

**1:30- 2:30: Panel I: *The Sahel as Region***

**3:00-5:00: Panel II: *The Environment and the Challenge of Climate Change***

**6:30-7:30: Keynote Lecture I: *The Construction of States and Societies in the Sahel***

**7:30-9:30: Dinner buffet reception**

### ***Friday, 24 February 2017:***

**8:30-10:30: Panel III: *Ideas and Thought in the Sahel***

**11:00-1:00 Panel IV: *Identities and Social Dynamics***

**2:30-3:30 Keynote Lecture II: *The Quest for Political Order in the Sahel***

**3:45-5:45 Panel V: *The Challenge of Governing***

### ***Saturday, 25 February 2017:***

**8:30-10:30: Panel VI: *The Challenge of Development***

**11:00-1:00 Panel VII: *The Religious Landscape in Flux***

**2:30-4:00 Panel VIII: *On the Move: Urbanization, Migration, Transnationalism***

**4:30-5:30: Roundtable**

## **CONFERENCE INFORMATION**

The conference is free and open to the public, but advance registration is kindly requested. Please send an email with name and institutional affiliation, as well as expected dates of attendance to: [ufsahelresearch@gmail.com](mailto:ufsahelresearch@gmail.com). Please use "Sahel Conference Registration" in the subject line.

As a courtesy, we have reserved a block of rooms at the Holiday Inn University Center, at the special university rate of \$139 plus tax per night, available until 23 January 2017 on a first-come, first-served basis. You will need to use a personal credit card to guarantee the rooms, and will be responsible for all charges. For reservations please contact the hotel directly at 352-376-1661 and mention the group code **CC7** or use the group link at:

[https://www.holidayinn.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=hi&localeCode=en&regionCode=1&hotelCode=GNVUC&\\_PMID=99801505&GPC=CC7&viewfullsite=true](https://www.holidayinn.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=hi&localeCode=en&regionCode=1&hotelCode=GNVUC&_PMID=99801505&GPC=CC7&viewfullsite=true).

The Holiday Inn is located at 1250 West University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601, a 10-15 minute walk from the conference venue.

All panels will be held in the Reitz Union of the University of Florida campus, except for the first keynote lecture and the opening reception to be held at the UF Harn Museum of Art. (Transportation to the Harn will be provided).

The conference is made possible thanks to a Minerva Initiative grant to the UF Sahel Research Group, as well as a Title VI US Department of Education grant to the UF Center for African Studies. Additional support has been provided by the UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the UF International Center, and the UF Office of Research.

## *Abstracts*

### **PANEL I: THE SAHEL AS REGION**

#### ***Mapping the Sahelian Space (Olivier Walther and Denis Retaillé)***

The Sahel has long been envisioned as an arid strip of land in which sedentary and nomadic peoples clash periodically in a struggle for survival, traffickers compete for the control of transnational routes, and terrorists thrive in the absence of the state. Building on a general interpretation of the Sahel territoriality developed over the last 20 years, our paper challenges this view. Unlike other approaches that define the Sahel as a bioclimatic zone or as an ungoverned area, we argue that the Sahel is primordially a space of circulation in which uncertainty has historically been overcome by mobility. The first part of the paper discusses the various strategies developed by Sahelian societies to cope with the irregularity of rainfall across time and space, recurring economic crises, and political instability. We argue that mobility relies on a network of markets and cities and on a transnational network of people that can facilitate trade and social relationships across the region. The second part explores alternative ways of mapping the Sahel. We show that traditional mapping is often based on a static and ‘sedentary’ conception of space in which territories and localized resources are more important than networks and flows. The third part discusses the current contradiction between the mobile strategies adopted by local herders, farmers and traders in the Sahel and the territorial development initiatives of modern states and international donors. Regional development policy in the Sahel, we conclude, should build on the knowledge embedded in the community’s actors and institutions and take into account the fundamental mobile nature of Sahelian societies.

#### ***French Colonialism and the Making of the Modern Sahel (Gregory Mann)***

Would there be a Sahel without France, and specifically French colonialism? The question might seem absurd—certainly the word and arguably the region it now designates long pre-date the French colonial conquest of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, it was under French rule and immediately afterwards that the common Arabic term came to designate, as a proper noun, the long, thin band of arable land just south (rather than north) of the Sahara. Under colonial rule, the Sahel was more integrated politically and—at least by the 1950s—infrastructurally than it would be in the decades that followed. At independence, the new governments of the Sahel featured identical, if parallel, political institutions modeled on those of the French Fifth Republic (1958-), extending to its strong presidential prerogatives and its secular (*laïc*) identity. They shared other characteristics as well. These include most notably a common military culture, the subordination—without integration—of the Saharan societies to their southern neighbors, and the official non-recognition of slavery in what were only recently (and only partially) post-slavery societies. In that sense, colonial rule went a long way towards making the modern Sahel. However for Sahelian societies, unlike in other parts of Africa, French colonialism did not represent a profound epistemological break. Rather, internal intellectual dynamics continued to prevail; Bruce Hall’s study of the evolution of idioms of ‘racial’ thought demonstrates this convincingly, and it is only one case in point. If any single event or phenomenon ‘made’ the modern Sahel, it was post-colonial drought

and its political effects rather than imperial domination. Nonetheless, the French colonial experience laid the foundation and conditioned the possibilities for much that would come.

## **PANEL II: THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE** (*Sarah McKune, convener*)

### ***Agriculture in a Changing Climate Environment*** (Chris Reij and Gray Tappen)

Since the middle of the 1980s, farmers in parts of the Sahel, notably in some densely populated areas of southern Niger, have begun to protect and manage naturally regenerating woody species on their farmland. The vast scale of this on-farm re-greening was discovered and mapped between 2004 and 2009 using high-resolution satellite imagery in combination with multiple field visits. This chapter examines the Sahelian socio-economic and agro-ecological context in which this large-scale on-farm re-greening has emerged. It also examines the multiple benefits it generates for farmers. The dominant narrative is that re-greening of the Sahel is caused by higher rainfall since the middle of the 1980s. Although rainfall can facilitate re-greening, this chapter shows that there are strong indications that human management, forest legislation and multiple local benefits are the determining factors for on-farm re-greening. Over the last 30 years, demographic growth has led to continued degradation of natural vegetation in the Sahel through agricultural expansion, demand for wood fuels and other pressures – a trend we see in the field and through the remote sensing record. This stands in sharp contrast to the areas of re-greening. Since the ‘discovery’ of large-scale on-farm re-greening in southern Niger, other examples of on-farm re-greening have been found, for instance, in Mali and in Senegal. The chapter profiles these other cases of re-greening, and examines the diversity and density of on-farm trees, within the broader context of Sahelian agriculture. For many smallholder farmers in the Sahel, on-farm re-greening is the only way to intensify agriculture. The chapter will show that building new agroforestry parklands is a key pillar of climate-smart agriculture, but it will also discuss how farmers still face major challenges such as keeping up with food and water demands of a growing population.

### ***The Challenge of Food Security and Nutrition*** (Sarah McKune)

The African Sahel is projected to be among the areas most affected by global climate change in the coming decades. In a region regularly facing food insecurity and extremely high rates of malnutrition, the nutritional consequences of climate change are likely to be dire. Recent research projects the impact of climate change on child stunting – a marker of chronic malnutrition – to be significant. In West Africa as a whole the model estimates a 36% increase in severe stunting by 2050; estimates for the Sahel are likely to be even greater. The Sahel, however, is inhabited by populations across the livelihood spectrum – from urban populations, to agriculturalists, to agro-pastoralists, to nomads – and thus the impact of climate change on food security and nutrition will be highly variable and nuanced. Recent studies of nutrition among children under-five, and particularly children under two years of age, underscore the significant role that animal-source foods play in long term childhood development and growth. Given the

interconnectedness of livestock and people throughout the Sahel, these findings hold important implications for understanding the future nutritional status of people in the region. Links between agriculture and nutrition, long neglected, are progressing, and researchers are investigating how to ensure the translation of production of livestock to consumption of nutrient rich foods. Livelihoods have historically served as strong predictors of diet, with particular attention to milk among livestock-holding communities and meat among urban populations. But with increased sedentarization of pastoralists, increased urbanization of rural populations, and increased globalization, we are witnessing shifts in food security, dietary diversity, and nutrition. This chapter examines the issue of nutrition in the Sahel, with a focus on the role that climate change is playing in this evolution. It investigates the various pathways by which climate may be affecting the food security, dietary diversity, and nutrition of populations across the Sahelian livelihood spectrum.

### ***Demography and Health in the Context of Climate Change (Malcolm Potts and Alisha Graves)***

The Sahel has the highest birth rates in the world and the rate of natural population growth is unprecedented in human history. It includes some of the world's least-developed countries. United Nations medium-scenario projections for 2050 indicate the population will grow by nearly three times that of today. Climate projections suggest that by mid-century crop yields will plummet and the cattle will not survive. By the second half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century more people than live in the USA could become ecological refugees. Mortality rates are likely to rise, especially among infants and possibly also older people. The climate projections suggest that there may be more precipitation, but the further warming of an already hot area will still be associated with ever increasing food insecurity. The rapid population growth also undermines effort to improve educational levels. Poorly educated young men with few job opportunities could escalate conflict and populate extremist groups. There are achievable ways to mitigate this humanitarian mega-crisis. These include (a) taking measures to help farmers adapt to climate change; (b) raising the level of secondary school education, especially for girls; and (c) improving access to voluntary family planning. However, bold policies and national-level programs must be put in place rapidly. Humanitarian organizations need to recognize the imperative to support family planning. Much greater financial investment by the international community, as well as domestically, will be essential. Mobilizing the necessary resources will involve working with the security community, especially in Europe, but to a lesser extent in North America. Failure to take these steps will be extremely costly to the international community.

### ***Climate Change and Human Conflict (Tor A. Benjaminsen)***

Climate scientists generally stress that there is a great deal of uncertainty as to how global warming will affect the climate in the Sahel. While some models support the theory that this region will become drier, most models actually suggest that there might be more rain in the future in the Sahel, but possibly with more concentrated rainfall in fewer showers. Since the droughts of the 1980s, there has been an increase in rainfall throughout the Sahel, which has led to a re-greening of the entire region. Despite this greening and the uncertainty in the impact of climate change, there is a dominant

narrative in international politics and media presentations that postulates that climate change will lead to drier conditions in the Sahel, which again will lead to resource scarcity, widespread migration and the emergence of new conflicts or the re-fueling of existing ones. This narrative seems in particular to be attractive to politicians and bureaucrats and is also championed by some influential scholars. The chapter will critically investigate this narrative based on a review of international research. This research basically concludes that the droughts in the 1980s only played a minor role in explaining conflicts, while the root causes were political and historical. In addition, there does not seem to be any clear link between resource scarcity in the Sahel in the 1980s and global climate change. An association between scarcity and increased conflict levels cannot, however, be dismissed, even if empirical results from international research question the validity of such a correlation. The causes of conflicts in the Sahel are in general associated with state policies, which result in the marginalization of pastoralists. In areas where pastoralism and farming overlap as the main forms of land use, there are continuous conflicts of varying scale and intensity. These conflicts are primarily caused by politics, not climate change.

### **KEYNOTE LECTURE I: Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan**

#### ***The Construction of States & Societies in the Sahel***

Beyond the colonial legacy—which is more important than is often acknowledged—African states and societies have been deeply impacted in the post-independence period by many factors of change. The most significant of these factors has been the rise of humanitarian and development aid. Such aid has not only provided infrastructure, social services, food relief, and business opportunities, but it has also induced aid dependency, opportunistic strategies, doublespeak, and rentier practices. This may be particularly true in the Sahel; in many ways, Sahelian states are now rentier states. Across the region, the mode of governance based on development projects stands side by side with the bureaucratic mode, as well as some others, in a context of generalized co-production of public goods of poor quality. The “capture” of the state by national elites, related to the capture of aid by local elites, and the collusion between large merchants and politicians, are other important features of the post-independence process of constructing states and societies in the region. A more recent factor has been the emergence of formally democratic political systems, albeit characterized by a high level of clientelism and favoritism, and by marked discrepancies between official norms and the actual practices of civil servants. In such a context, the slow but real growth of a middle class does not fill the widening gap between the privileged class and the masses of the population (poor peasants, informal sector workers, the unemployed). This gap has paved the way for the rise of anti-Western and anti-state Islamic fundamentalism, and for ethnic entrepreneurs.

### **PANEL III. IDEAS AND THOUGHT IN THE SAHEL (*Alioune Sow, convener*)**

#### ***Intellectual Figures and Political Thought (Abdourahmane Idrissa)***

The relative affluence of the Sahel in the historical period when it could produce the agricultural surplus necessary for state formation—including a series of large empires

able to engage as part of the *économie monde* of the Mediterranean and the Middle East—helps to explain the region’s cultural distinctiveness. It is also at the source of the central theme of Sahelian moral and political philosophy that is the focus of this chapter: the relations (and tensions) between nostalgia and utopia. The chapter will examine distinct traditions of Sahelian political and moral thought, using in particular the works of three giants of twentieth century Sahelian philosophy as an introduction to these traditions: Boubou Hama, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, and Amadou Hampâté Ba. All three are illustrative of a politics of nostalgia and utopia, each with a religious/moral subtext: spiritualistic animism in the work of Hama, a form of African humanism tinged with Islam in the work of Kane, and Sufi/Fulani wisdom in the work of Ba. While the chapter will draw largely on these authors, it will also position other Sahelian thinkers in relation to the powerful ways in which they have developed these themes. While nostalgia harks back to a lost but still inspiring – and subtly enduring – civilization, utopia gestures towards a horizon that is often lost from sight among the peoples of the Sahel, but which is ever present on their mental map. The chapter will examine not only the works of writers, but also of movie-makers, given that there is a distinctive tradition of Sahelian cinema in which the relations of nostalgia and utopia take a particularly vivid salience. The chapter concludes with an examination of both the perils and the benefits of these themes as they relate to the present-day cultures and politics of the Sahel.

### ***Cultural Production and Political Change (Alioune Sow)***

Several features characterize what may be considered the unique trajectory of cultural production in the Sahel. First is the fact that several national political leaders were also men of letters. Second is the ambitious and innovative cultural integration program implemented by leaders who, despite political differences, adopted and relied on the same models, convinced that the constitution of solid “national bibliographies” and investment in multiple cultural fields were the necessary support for political emancipation and social cohesion. The third element is the controversial transnational “francophonie” project, not in fact born in France as often stated, but rather solicited and initiated by leaders from Senegal and Niger, determined to use the French language to facilitate cultural exchange and consolidate national cultural capital.

Comparatively surveying several “literary fields” in the sense of Bourdieu, this chapter examines the impact and the outcomes of the first set of reforms and initiatives conducted after independence. It will demonstrate that despite unequal outcomes and different types of literary production, the Sahel region features strong and often uniquely structured and interconnected national literary fields. In addition to discussing the dominant literary logics and dynamics of the region and their relation to historical transformations, the chapter will also show how, at different moments in time, the development of “literary niches” such as the novel, oral poetry, or autobiography, and the constant fluctuation between the decline and the re-emergence of genres such as the epic and memoirs should be read as strategic responses to postcolonial political crises and not the expression of unstable and unpredictable literary fields. The chapter will conclude that instead of envisioning these different literary productions as manifestation of cultural scarcity, they should be perceived as distinctive and adaptable cultural fields fostering cultural processes characterized by innovative and fluid generic tendencies.

### ***Ruptures, Imaginaries, and Changes in the Sahel (Felwine Sarr)***

African intellectuals have written extensively on the sociopolitical realities and cultural dynamics of the continent, producing a noteworthy library of critical and reflexive writings as well as significant historical, juridical and theological texts. How do contemporary African intellectuals relate to this production? How do they engage with conceptions inherited from the Ethiopian philosophical tradition written in Amharic during the Antiquity or the 17<sup>th</sup> century reflections generated by Ahmet Baba and the members of the Songhai elite in Timbuktu, who studied the impact of Islam on African politics?

Focusing on the Sahel, the aim of this chapter is to describe dominant currents of thought and examine how intellectual habits as well as social and cultural practices have been transmitted from early thinkers to contemporary intellectuals. To do so, I will first consider the particularities of the Sahel as a specific area of production and circulation of ideas, then identity and analyze the intellectual genealogies and the socio-cultural convergences of the region. In doing so, I will pay particular attention to the processes that led to the constitution of dominant current of thoughts despite the ethnic diversity and the mobility of the populations that characterize the region. I will investigate the particular role Islam has played in these dynamics and examine further the legacy of earlier matrices on contemporary thinkers such as Hampâte Bâ, to outline a history of ideas in the Sahel.

### **PANEL IV. IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS (*Fiona Mc Laughlin, convener*)**

#### ***Hierarchy and Contestation: Caste, Slavery and Inequality (Cédric Jourde)***

This chapter both presents and engages the main debates surrounding social status hierarchies in the Sahel ('caste systems'), whose meanings are context-dependent but nonetheless still very influential. This chapter explores three themes. *1: Intersecting Islam and status categories*: there is an inherent tension between Islam and status inequalities. The theological equality of believers before God is often contradicted in practice: since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, positions of Islamic leadership have been mostly monopolized by ruling 'free-born' lineages. But Islamist movements and reformed Sufi movements (and possibly jihadist groups) challenge this hierarchy and attract individuals who reject the significance of status differences. *2: Intersecting ethnicity and status categories*: the colonial and postcolonial politicization of ethnicity in the Sahel has raised critical questions regarding status categories. As traditional chiefs and ethnic entrepreneurs seek to mobilize an 'ethnic We' against threatening 'Others' (we the Tuaregs; we the Moors; we the Peuls), they trigger intra-ethnic debates around status hierarchies. Whereas some claim a fairer inclusion for subaltern status groups in the 'ethnic We', if not the elimination of such categories, others call for the separation of these subaltern groups from their former exclusionary ethnic community. *3: States, regimes and status categories*: Postcolonial state elites hold ambiguous views about status categories, especially since the democratic reforms of the 1990s. Officially, status categories do not exist: citizens are all equal under the Law. But informal state practices

differ: being state official themselves, individuals from free-born lineages often perpetuate status inequalities. By contrast, subaltern movements appeal to the rule of law to overcome informal/traditional status inequalities. Three sites of contention between formal and informal rules, where free-born and subaltern groups clash, will be explored: access to land; legal sanctions against crimes of slavery; and local elections.

### ***The Linguistic Ecology of the Sahel (Fiona McLaughlin)***

This chapter explores the complex linguistic ecology of the Sahel, a highly multilingual region of Africa where three of the continent's four language families are represented, often within a single individual's repertoire. Proceeding from the premise that named languages – like ethnic groups – are social (and often colonial) constructs, this chapter privileges the notion of linguistic repertoire, namely the ways in which groups and individuals deploy their linguistic resources, both spoken and written, for various purposes. This chapter first presents an overview of the social roles attributed to different types of languages, including lingua francas, official languages, urban vernaculars, religious languages, and minority and endangered languages, to make the case that lingua francas are the most important of these in terms of the relevance they have to people's lives and the opportunities they afford them. Particular attention will be paid to the politicization of language, to its intersection (or not) with ethnicity and religion, and to its association with power and social hierarchy. The second focus of the study is literacy. Here the chapter will provide an overview of the literacy ecology by looking at everyday literacy practices that include *ajami* (Arabic script) writing of local languages, indigenous writing systems such as N'ko and Tifinagh, and literacy in the official languages, French and Arabic, as well as the ways in which such literacies are acquired. The third and final focus of the chapter is on discursive genres, namely the acknowledged forms of stylized speech through which individuals interact verbally, including teasing relationships and speech mediated through a third party. The themes of this chapter reveal the Sahel's francophone veneer to be just one aspect of a robust and vibrant linguistic ecology where multilingual ways of speaking constitute the fabric of social life.

### ***Pastoralist societies in the Sahel: Persistence and adaptation (Wendy Wilson-Fall)***

In the 1990's the greatest menace for Sahelian pastoralists was the increasing shift of family-owned herds to herds owned by sedentary, town-based entrepreneurs. More recently, however, the more critical threats have been constraints on mobility, criminal activity, and religious radicalism. Engaging recent literature on Sahelian farming and pastoral communities, this chapter argues that intra-regional issues of land use policy, shaped by the tension between extensive regional pastoral production systems and projects of nation-building, are at the center of current political instability in pastoral communities. The chapter suggests that recent disturbances are more the result of economic and political opportunism than of religious fervor, and that sentiments of 'nomadic nostalgia' (idealizing the past) are a response to the vacuum left by failed state attempts to create a public civic culture. Due to the region's geography and political past, Sahelian pastoral communities exhibit notable cultural continuities over an immense geographic space, characterized by economically interdependent zones and the tension between mobile and widely spread communities and centralized, mostly distant, polities.

This dynamic, as well as the networks that support it, continue to affect identity and social relations among nomads and between pastoralists and farmers. The chapter emphasizes the interdependency of Sahelian pastoral systems, presenting pastoral communities as an archipelago of contiguous cultural niches that run east-west across the Sahel, and that are tied to related systems in the savannah grasslands (and, in some cases, to desert oases). The chapter examines current socio-political and cultural challenges to pastoral reproduction, including the production of cultural identities. The discussion engages issues of local, national, and regional identities of pastoralists vis-a-vis the modern state (including past and present government policies on land use and education) and local social processes.

***Education and National Identity: Citizenship between the Secular and the Religious***  
**(Leonardo A. Villalón and Mamadou Bodian)**

The formal educational systems inherited by states in the Sahel were solidly rooted in the 19th century French model of secular schools (*écoles laïques*) as instruments for creating citizens imbued with “republican” values. At the popular level, and especially outside of urban areas, these formal public educational systems found little popular appeal, and often faced clear resistance. In this context, alternative religiously-based systems of education, with traditional Qur’anic schools at the base, persisted and indeed thrived following independence. By the 1980s newer models of “Franco-Arabic” or “Arabo-Islamic” schooling began to spread, providing a parallel alternative educational system that found growing popular appeal, but which remained officially marginalized or unrecognized. In some cases, such as Mauritania or Chad, this duality intersected with ethno-racial issues of national identity.

Across the region, a number of factors began to call into question the viability of this bifurcated educational system by the late 1990s. This included rising religiosity and a crisis of secular identities, the reduced capacity of states to absorb graduates in the era of structural adjustment, and the rise of an Islamic public sphere in the age of democratization. In a strikingly parallel set of policy initiatives Sahelian countries have embarked on efforts to reform education so as to incorporate the vast informal religious educational systems into the formal national ones. These initiatives have been further reinforced in the age of violence and terror, even if they have also been quite controversial. This chapter will survey the trajectory of educational systems the Sahel, and consider how reformed systems are diverging from the historical secular model, with the clear potential for producing new models of citizenship deeply imbued with religious identities. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the longer-term implications of these changes for national identity and citizenship in a changing Sahel.

**KEYNOTE LECTURE II: Augustin Loada**

***The Quest for Political Order in the Sahel: The Role of Civil Society***

Following the accession of African countries to sovereignty, ruling elites in the Sahel undertook to implement a new political order through the appropriation of the colonial state. In the name of state-building, promoting national integration, and fostering socioeconomic development, they gradually established an authoritarian political order, challenging the political pluralism inherited from the colonial period by restricting individual and collective freedoms, and by repressing social movements and their leaders.

A combination of internal and external factors, however, led to a crisis of legitimacy by the late 1980's, and ruling elites were forced to liberalize their regimes according to the criteria of democracy and good governance, and to revive liberal constitutionalism and its corollary, the rule of law.

In the reconstruction process a new actor whose voice had been stifled for a generation has emerged: civil society. Across the Sahel, civil society groups participated alongside political parties in fomenting socio-political movements, leading to the political openings of the early 1990s. Almost nonexistent in the first three decades of the postcolonial state, civil society has now become a real power with which conventional internal and external political actors must contend. Initially confined to the demand for a more democratic political order, it has now become a vector for the social and political transformations taking place in the Sahelian countries, reflected in the emergence of myriad associations, including new movements such as *Y'en a marre* in Senegal or *Balai citoyen* in Burkina Faso. These movements have used "the street" as a space to express claims for a new political order grounded in justice and integrity. This chapter will examine the role of civil society, addressing two key questions: What are the factors behind the rise of civil society as a key player in the new political order in the Sahel? What are its repertoires of action and its effects on the political order?

## **PANEL V. THE CHALLENGE OF GOVERNING (*Sebastian Elischer, convener*)**

### ***The Democratic Struggle (Mamadou Badian and Leonardo Villalón)***

As elsewhere in Africa, the countries of the Sahel found themselves under intense pressures to undertake political reforms in the name of democracy in the early 1990s. Incumbent governments varied significantly in their initial responses; trajectories have diverged in important ways; and the current degree of democracy ranges widely across countries. Yet in each country the democratic struggle has been at the center of national politics for over a quarter century, and there have been striking similarities in the issues that have been at the center of debates. This chapter will survey both the variations and the similarities in how the fight for democracy has played out in the Sahel. It will first lay out the ways in which governments responded to the pressure to democratize, and examine how these responses set countries on distinct paths. The chapter will discuss some initial fundamental questions related to the nature of a democratic state that were raised by the transitions—notably the issue of secularism or *laïcité*, but also in some cases of the place of ethno-racial groups. The chapter will then turn to an extensive discussion of the core issues defining the political struggles for democracy, including the intense debates around presidential term limits. Elections are the crucial institutions of democracy, and the chapter will examine the key points that have been at the heart of political conflict over their organization and administration: the electoral system itself, the processes for voter registration and identification, the maintenance of electoral lists, the structure of the ballot, the administrative institutions in charge of managing elections, and the place of gender and other electoral quotas. It concludes with a balance sheet assessment of the state of democracy in the Sahel.

### ***Surviving Democratization: Authoritarian Resilience (Daniel Eizenga)***

Despite that all Sahelian countries embraced multi-party elections and ‘democratic’ political transitions during the 1990s, relatively few of these transitions or subsequent elections produced peaceful political change. These newly adopted democratic political systems produced a variety of outcomes ranging from the continued rule of a certain political party and elite, to the fracturing of political parties, to military intervention, to near state collapse. While these outcomes suggest a great degree of difference and variation in each case, there are also intriguing similarities. Sahelian countries demonstrate both the complexity and variety of political regimes which hold multi-party elections, but do not fully embrace the trappings of democracy. Instead within these regimes ruling parties and their leaders have guarded certain authoritarian traits which shape the rules of the game in their favor. This chapter explores these traits across the countries of the Sahel connecting the roles of political parties, civil society, and civil-military relations in the development of the contemporary regimes. These three factors combine in each case to produce a wide variety of narratives which illuminate the nuances of the different regimes, but one similarity across the region is the resilience of authoritarian features. The countries of the Sahel demonstrate that political change is a slow process during which political leaders will manipulate the rules of the game in their favor. The chapter relies on comparisons of pairs of countries in an effort to draw out specific factors which help to explain how political parties and leaders have sought to survive democratization.

### ***Militaries in Politics (Sebastian Elischer)***

With the notable exception of Senegal, all the countries of the Francophone Sahel have had periods of military dictatorship since independence. This chapter will first analyze the nature and duration of military rule, as well as the manner in which the military exited power, in each of the five countries that have known such rule. It distinguishes between three clusters of countries. Senegal constitutes one extreme on the civil-military spectrum as it has enjoyed continuous civilian rule. Mauritania, Chad, and (until very recently) Burkina Faso, constitute the other extreme. With the exception of very short spells of civilian rule, military rulers have remained part of the ruling elites since the 1970s. In these three countries the armed forces have constituted so-called “ruler-armies,” i.e. armies intending to stay in power indefinitely. Niger and Mali are located somewhere in between. The military ruled these two countries for several decades, ending only when the liberalization of Africa’s political sphere in the early 1990s caused the military to withdraw from power. Since the early 1990s the military has again intervened in civilian politics, yet each intervention has proven short-lived. Since the end of the Cold War, the armed forces in Niger and Mali have been transformed from “ruler armies” to “arbitrator armies.” The chapter then offers an explanation for the diverging trajectories between and within individual countries. It acknowledges that the armed forces are never a unitary actor in any given country. Rather, they consist of different factions pursuing different goals. The chapter offers measures of the composition and the strength of the armed forces vis-à-vis other factors and social forces to help explain these diverging patterns.

### ***The Politics of Security Provision in the Sahel: Capability and Legitimacy (Cristina Barrios)***

Security concerns in the Sahel have brought the region into international headlines: Islamist terrorism, organized crime, conflicts driven by economic grievances, violence and protracted crises driven by ethnic and territorial competition. This chapter addresses the question of whether the countries of the Sahel can provide security for themselves and for the region, and how? Given the fragility of institutions and authoritarian trends, the chapter argues that the Sahel faces important problems of state capacity and state legitimacy, which damage security provision and shape the prospects for both individual countries and the region.

The chapter comparatively explores the politics of security provision across the region along four related areas. 1) Monopoly on the use of force: To what extent is this held exclusively by *state* forces? Are there armed contenders in control of national territory? 2) Legitimacy deriving from a popular “social contract”: To what extent does the state have a security strategy that evokes allegiance among the population? 3) Legitimacy deriving from civilian control of armed forces: Are military/police constrained by a democratic institutional setting? 4) Capacity: To what extent are armies of effective size and equipped with training and resources to face different and new kinds of conflict (e.g. counterterrorism)? The chapter will comparatively examine Sahelian countries along those four areas, underlining their diversity. Some lack capacity; others lack legitimacy. In fragile states there are powerful armed-contenders. In others there may be a capable military but under the control of an authoritarian regime. These factors crucially impact the possibility of regional cooperation, notably in the realm of efforts such as the “G5-Sahel” but also within the regional settings of ECOWAS/ECCAS and the African Union. While Sahel regional security is an urgent necessity, the analysis of the politics around it does not offer optimistic prospects for a lasting peace.

### ***France and Other External Actors in the Sahel (Roland Marchal)***

This chapter will examine the impact of external actors in the Sahel, with a particular focus on the regional crisis since 2012. At first glance, France and the USA have been the sole strategic actors in the crisis. These two countries have indeed framed events, reshaped political and military dynamics, and convinced other external institutions—states and international agencies—to play a role in the crisis. While the massive 2013 French intervention was ultimately instrumental in reducing the visible threats, the American mode of involvement relied on other methods; “leading from behind” as in the Libyan war seems to have continued as a Sahelian strategy for the USA. It is true that the stakes are very different for each, and certainly much more strategic for the French than for the Americans. Consequently, “Operation Barkhane” has established a major and indefinite French presence in the region in the name of anti-terrorism. It is clear that this French presence will be more difficult to close down than the various smaller American military facilities, and the local and regional implications of any withdrawal will be very different.

In addition to these two countries and their collaborators, the chapter will also discuss those countries on the edge of events but which have regularly acted as gatekeepers for international policies in the Sahel. Algeria and Morocco have long rivaled each other for influence, and their competition is a determining element in shaping the international interventions and what is optimistically described as the “solutions” for the regional crisis. At the heart of the region itself, Burkina Faso has also

played an important intermediary role at various stages. This chapter will focus primarily on the American and French involvement, but it will also examine the role of these more peripheral actors in shaping the likely future of the region.

## **PANEL VI: THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT (*Renata Serra, convener*)**

### ***The Structure of National Economies: Formal and Informal Sectors (Ahmadou Aly Mbaye and Fatou Gueye)***

While Sahelian countries share most of the features of other Sub-Saharan African countries, they face some peculiar economic challenges, which merit particular scrutiny. They are mainly low-income countries, with limited economic diversification, and are mostly dry and/or landlocked. Fertility rates and population growth are the highest in the world. Youth make up more than 65% of the total labor force and are mostly either unemployed or underemployed. These demographic trends are putting strong pressure on living standards, as well as on access to infrastructural services and to decent jobs. Poverty incidence is higher in the Sahel than in other African countries, with up to 80% of the population living on under \$2 per day. The picture is further darkened by critical governance weaknesses, political turmoil and radical Islamist threats that have brought about serious security challenges in and across borders.

All these factors have contributed to a downsizing of the formal sector and an expansion of the informal sector, which represents a significant, albeit underestimated, share of national production and employment. This chapter will assess the relative weights of the formal and informal sector in Sahelian national economies. It will then focus in particular on the dynamics of informal sector growth, and evaluate its determinants and consequences for employment, firm productivity, and economic growth. It will also examine broader implications for institutions and governance, social inclusion and stability, so as to trace how fragile contexts may affect policy responses. Since informal trade and trading networks have a strong presence in the urban informal sector, the chapter will incorporate a discussion of this key dimension of urban economies.

### ***Agricultural Policies in the Sahel: Policy Processes and Developmental Outcomes (Renata Serra)***

The 2003 Maputo Declaration committed all signatory African governments to devote at least 10% of state revenues to the agricultural sector. Since then, several countries have launched ambitious plans to foster national food production and develop agricultural value chains. In the Sahel, governments and other stakeholders have renewed their support of the agriculture and livestock sectors in an attempt to reduce poverty, improve nutrition—especially among children—boost national food security, and promote economic development. The impact of these initiatives on nutritional outcomes, sector development, and rural poverty is, however, mixed at best, in part because of unique environmental and demographic challenges, but also because of weak market governance and poor coordination of policies.

This chapter will focus on the unique governance and institutional challenges of the Sahelian countries. It first offers an overview of the resources allocated by the

government and international donors to the agricultural sectors in the six countries, as well as of the main policy instruments affecting agricultural sectors. The chapter will then turn to the analysis of the alignment between policy implementation and stated objectives, the coherence between multiple policy instruments, and the political economy factors underlying the selective support of some agricultural sectors over others. Drawing from specific examples from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Senegal, implications will be derived in terms of prospects for agricultural development, and of the well-being of the countries' populations.

### ***The Political Economy of Aid: Appropriation and Reform in the Sahelian Countries*** **(Isaline Bergamaschi)**

This chapter investigates the articulation between foreign aid and domestic politics in Sahelian countries, which are heavily dependent on aid and appear amongst the poorest countries in the world in socio-economic development rankings. In these countries, core development policies, key reforms of the economy and governance are negotiated, co-produced and implemented by Sahelian governments and aid donors through a daily partnership. The chapter builds on existing analytical frameworks and adopts a political economy perspective to study aid relationships in Sahelian countries in the 2000s. The chapter focus is both on the design and implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs), the controversial and incomplete reforms promoted by donors, as well as on the geostrategic priorities (e.g. the war on terror) that drive foreign aid flowing into these countries and which affect the negotiations between governments and their international partners.

Drawing on the anthropological notion of “appropriation”, the chapter offers a typology of the strategies used by Sahelian governments in appropriating themselves of aid's financial resources and normative recommendations (ownership, poverty reduction, civil society participation). These strategies include: compliance with conditionalities or autonomy towards donors, the instrumentalization of donor agendas or divisions, amongst others. The article scrutinizes how aid and donors have influenced national policies in Sahelian countries but has also been oriented (and sometimes manipulated) by governments to suit their priorities, foster change or the status quo in complex political scenarios such as: coups d'états (Mauritania, Mali, and Niger), democratization (Mali before the 2012 crisis, and most certainly Senegal) and authoritarian regimes (arguably Burkina Faso and Niger, and surely Chad). The chapter hence identifies and describes these strategies and further the factors explaining the different strategies and processes of aid appropriation observed in the six Sahelian countries.

### ***What Role for Extractive Industries?*** (Oladiran Bello)

The almost decade-long upswing in Africa's economic performance and improving security outlook gave impetus to a new paradigm of “Africa Rising”. Since mid-2014, this renewed optimism about the African continent has been abruptly punctuated by fresh political, economic and geopolitical uncertainties occasioned by the most severe commodity downturn in recent memory. This new conjuncture raised important questions about the future of the Sahel, and the outlook for sustainable development of the extractive resources for social, political, economic and ecological

stability in the region. As home to some of the leading resource-rich African countries, the Sahel's future is crucially dependent on improved security and more sustainable use of extractive resources found within countries in the region. The research will explore how regional states are engaging with new thinking on extractive development in Africa. This will be explored along the dimensions of extractives and community benefit (e.g. through procurement/local content development policies, evident for example in Niger's bid for greater community participation in uranium mining projects); mining-led poverty reduction interventions (e.g. Mali's push for a vibrant artisanal gold mining sector); and an environment focus in extractive developments (e.g. national and integrated regional energy plans to achieve a green economic transformation). Within the relevant contexts, this analysis will also explore the potential for co-management approaches to natural resource development as driver of shared prosperity and regional cooperation. Finally, we will re-examine regional insecurity dynamics through the lens of mining-labor conflicts, the expanding roles of private security providers, and emerging trends in internal security as local communities agitate for greater control over extractive resources and proceeds, etc. Ultimately, the region's positioning vis-a-vis the emerging paradigm of extractive-led structural economic transformation beyond mining and oil and gas exploration will be critically assessed.

## **PANEL VII. THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE IN FLUX (Benjamin Soares, convener)**

### ***Islamic Intellectual Traditions in the Sahel (Rüdiger Seeseman)***

The recent turmoil in various parts of the Sahel has thrust Islam, and Islamic extremism in particular, into the limelight. Several attempts to explain the apparent surge of radical Islam have cited the power of religious ideas as a major factor behind this phenomenon. Zooming in on ideology alone, however, will hardly allow us to understand the reasons and the modes of the emergence of militant Islamic movements more generally and in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Nonetheless, the careful analysis of religious ideas and practices among Sahelian Muslims is indispensable if we seek a deeper understanding of the current situation.

This chapter proposes to analyze Islamic currents in the Sahel not through the lens of religious ideology, but through the lens of different approaches to and concepts of Islamic knowledge. Drawing on fieldwork in Mauritania, Senegal, Chad, and Sudan, the chapter discusses three epistemological patterns tentatively called traditionalist, reformist, and Islamist, linking them to broader intellectual developments within global Islam. In the traditionalist paradigm, knowledge practices are rooted in classical Islamic notions of character formation expressed in the inculcation of *adab*, described as a habitus that can only be attained through personal interaction and internalization rather than the acquisition of "book knowledge." In the reformist paradigm, which largely corresponds to "Salafi"/"Wahhabi" epistemology, the primacy of the textual evidence tends to replace the authority of the master. The Islamist paradigm, connected mainly to the eclectic thought of intellectuals such as the late Hasan al-Turabi, pursues a new epistemological approach that seeks to fuse Islamic and "Western" knowledge. In conclusion, the chapter

demonstrates how different epistemologies intersect with broader worldviews and political agendas, highlighting the way in which militant ideologists draw on “Salafi”/“Wahhabi” epistemology in order to legitimize their Jihadist action.

### ***Islamic Practice in the Sahel: Sufism, Islamism, and some of their Alternatives*** **(Benjamin Soares)**

This chapter will examine changing modalities of religious expression and modes of belonging among Muslims in the West African Sahel. On the one hand, much scholarship about Islam has focused on the centrality of Sufism and Sufi traditions in many places in the region, and it has usefully traced the broader implications of Sufism and Sufi orders for social, political and economic life in various settings. On the other hand, a considerable but smaller body of scholarship has looked at so-called Islamic “reform” movements with frequently pronounced anti-Sufi orientations, which have manifested themselves in various forms, including “political Islam,” Islamism, and jihadism. The chapter will argue that the teleological assumptions implicit in such a schematic model cannot capture some of the most recent, salient changes in the practice of Islam in the Sahel, particularly among the region’s youths. Changes in modalities of religious expression and in the practice of Islam among youths must be understood within a context of considerable political instability, economic uncertainty, and increased transnational and global interconnections. As the chapter will show, the recent media revolution and greater use of new media technologies are also key, not least given the thwarted expectations faced by most of the region’s increasingly globally interconnected youths. The chapter will consider some of the newer modalities of religious expression in the region, including some which draw upon various Sufi traditions and other globally circulating discourses (Islamic or otherwise) as well as those which explicitly reject Sufism, to refashion ways of being Muslim in sometimes unexpected ways.

### ***The Jihadi Challenge (Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim)***

The recent rise of jihadi movements in the Sahel, including Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) in Northern Mali, has puzzled many observers: How did a region known for the peaceful character of its religious beliefs and practices end up developing some of the deadliest jihadi movements in the world? Why, despite significant similarities among Sahelian countries, has jihadism tended to emerge and grow in some places and not in others? Efforts to try to explain the phenomenon of jihadism in the Sahel have focused on three main factors: the spread of a global jihadi ideology; the incapacity of states to control territory; or driven by local ethnic and economic grievances. While these factors are all important in explaining the emergence of jihadism in the Sahel, the approach taken in the existing literature offers only a partial explanation of the phenomenon. This chapter takes as its point of departure a conceptualization of jihadism as a complex phenomenon that requires an integrated approach to decipher the way in which factors at macro, meso, and micro levels interact with one another to produce the phenomenon. The chapter will survey the emergence of the most significant jihadi movements in the region in the 2000s. It will then offer an analysis that situates global jihadi discourse within the spectrum of broader Islamic discourses, and provides a typology of the jihadi discourses emerging in the Sahel. The chapter will then elaborate on the dynamics, both at the state

and local levels, that favor or disfavor the emergence of jihadi insurgent groups. The chapter will thus examine both similarities and variations in the dynamics of the jihadist phenomenon across the Sahel.

### ***Muslim Women's Reform Movements (Ousseina Alidou)***

Since the 1990s the countries of the Sahel have been experimenting with democratic systems that have resulted in both political pluralism with a gendered dimension and a renewed place for Islam in the public sphere. This chapter will focus on the emergence of Muslim women's social reform movements advocating for women's rights in the region. These movements manifest a diversity of trajectories and objectives. Strikingly, however, the majority converges on a common quest for gender justice against cultural and state patriarchy. They also display a range of responses to external hegemonic forces—including neoliberalism, violent religious extremism such as *Boko Haram*, the influence of AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), human trafficking, and ethno-regional inequalities and rivalries—which continue to negatively affect the lives of women and their communities. The chapter will first present three models of Muslim women's reform movements: A first are those led by secular Muslim women leaders who advocate for women's rights through an endorsement of universal principles of gender equality as articulated in such documents as the UN's "Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." A second type of movement is based on Islamic feminism to challenge patriarchal readings of Islam by re-examining Islamic exegesis as a basis for achieving gender justice. A third model is provided by movements that focus on religious piety and moral agency as the source of women's empowerment. The second section of the chapter will examine variations and similarities across countries in the Sahel, illustrating with discussion of cases of social changes resulting from Muslim women's reform movements in education, public health, politics, the law, the arts, and the use of old and new media.

## **PANEL VIII. ON THE MOVE: URBANIZATION, MIGRATION, TRANSNATIONALISM (*Abdoulaye Kane, convener*)**

### ***Urbanization and the Dynamics of Change in Sahelian Cities (David Lessault and Florence Boyer)***

A significant body of empirical data on the main urban centers of the Sahel has been produced over more than a decade, drawing largely on socio-demographic surveys carried out in such cities as Bamako, Ouagadougou, Niamey, and Dakar. This accumulated knowledge provides us with a current opportunity to examine recent trends in Sahelian urbanization from both a regional and a comparative perspective. Based on an approach squarely rooted in a reading of urban dynamics in terms of spatial mobility, this chapter has three major objectives. The first section will evaluate the extent of urbanization, and describe the evolution of its patterns in the post-colonial period, from "metropolitanization" to the proliferation of small urban agglomerations as a key part of the Sahelian urban network. Beyond this macro-economic and historical framework, the second section will focus directly on the main urban centers, in order to examine the

variations in metropolitan conditions and the status of urban dwellers across the region. This diversity is as evident in the variations in development among Sahelian cities (notably between coastal and interior cities) as in the internal processes of differentiation among urban spaces. Sahelian cities are thus not all at the same level of population densities, a fact that has a clear impact on the fabric of urban life and on socio-spatial stratification. Finally, a third section of the chapter offers a holistic current assessment of the three classic issues usually recognized as limiting factors in mitigating the effects of “urban crisis” in the Sahel: the informal sector, multi-local family residence, and social networks of solidarity.

### ***Crossing Borders: Intra-African Migration (Sylvie Bredeloup)***

Intra-African migrations have received scarce attention from researchers, policy makers, or governments, both home-country and host-country. These migrations remain widely invisible and undocumented, or are most often reduced to the movements of refugees within the continent. In fact, however, African migration is still primarily an intra-African phenomenon, and the Sahel has long been a zone of extensive movement and out-migration of people. This chapter will examine patterns of migration from the Sahel across national borders within Africa, beginning in the colonial period. During colonization, the French often recruited West-African workers across borders. Known as “*laptots*,” they served in the army (“Senegalese riflemen”), and provided security for French trading posts along the West African coast, and later the coasts of Central Africa. At the time of decolonization, shopkeepers in marketplaces, as well as big merchants or gem traders from the Senegal River Valley or other parts of the Sahel were also entrepreneurs who functioned in two worlds, and were active in what has been referred to as the “Diams’pora.” Their practices echoed those of middlemen minorities, occupying an intermediate position between native populations and national authorities in international trade networks. Over the decades a number of factors, including tougher controls at borders and intensified deportations despite regional agreements on the free movement of people (e.g. in Gabon and South Africa), the breakout of civil wars (Ivory Coast, Angola, Libya), or of political turmoil (Congo) have all had a significant impact on population movements from the Sahel, and have also significantly increased insecurity for Sahelian migrants. These factors have resulted in a multiplication of both the number of stages or steps in the processes of migration, and of the time taken for each leg, now often measured in years. Sahelian migrants in other regions of Africa are faced with increasing economic difficulties, often unable to pursue the journey they have begun, but also unable also to return home in dignity and reinvest in family relations.

### ***Irregular migration and border controls in the Sahelian crossroads (Ruben Andersson)***

The Sahel region has in recent years come to be seen in many powerful quarters as a source of insecurity, danger and – not least – as a ‘threatening’ conduit and crossroads for ‘unwanted’ migrations towards North Africa and Europe. Through ‘subcontracted’ policing to African states, new technologies of surveillance, and multifarious official interventions, European states have promoted a pre-emptive ‘fight against migration’ in the region – setting the blueprint for similar efforts to crack down on unauthorised cross-border movements elsewhere. While controlling the vast terrains

of the Sahel and Sahara was always a losing prospect, these state-driven efforts have moreover ignored and side lined (and at times undermined) statistically and culturally much more significant intra- and inter-regional mobility patterns. With this in mind, this chapter takes stock of the literature on (the control of) irregular migration from and through the Sahel with specific reference to other, less ‘spectacular’ and politicised forms of mobility as well as to recent displacement trends owing to conflict in Mali. Seen through such a transversal lens on multiple mobilities, the chapter argues, the ‘crossroads’ of the Sahel speaks volumes about the intersection of migration and security agendas in the contemporary world.

### ***Sahelian Transnational Networks (Abdoulaye Kane)***

Over decades, Sahelian transnational migrants have established satellite communities across Europe and America that are connected to both rural and urban communities across their countries of origin. With the environmental and economic challenges facing the contemporary Sahel, these transnational migrants have become a vital resource for meeting the socio-economic needs of families and communities in areas particularly affected by climate change in their home countries. Through their remittances and their investments, Sahelians in the diaspora have attracted the attention of states and international financial institutions like the World Bank for their potential in contributing to poverty reduction and socio-economic development at the local level. This chapter will examine the transnational engagements between Sahelian migrant communities and their home communities, through communication, remittances, and return. Both as individuals or as established social networks (“hometown associations,” religious associations, national or ethnic associations, network of traders, and such.), Sahelian migrants remain connected to their home countries even when they become citizens in their host countries. The chapter will examine the patterns of Sahelian transnational experiences looking at the different ways ethnic, national, and religious identities are shaping transnational practices. The preeminence of hometown associations from Senegal river valley communities in Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal will be contrasted with the importance of religious networks among the Murid Sufi order as well as with Hausa trade networks from Niger. The existence of national associations in the diaspora, notably among Senegalese and Burkinabe migrants, will be analyzed in contrast to pan-ethnic social networks that cut across national boundaries. The chapter will examine the modes of organization of Sahelian transnational communities and offer an assessment of their impact on a changing Sahelian space under significant pressures.

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Sciences-Po, Paris. His research focuses on armed conflicts and power politics in Africa, as well as on French and other great power policy towards Africa. He has written and lectured extensively on conflict and on French policy towards Africa, and he is a frequent participant in policy discussions.

**Aly Mbaye** is Professor of Economics and Director of the Center for Applied Economic Research at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal. He has published extensively on economic development issues in West Africa, including international trade, employment, education and entrepreneurship. He is the co-author of *The Informal Sector in Francophone Africa: Firm Size, Productivity, and Institutions*, a pioneering study on the measurement and analysis of the informal sector in several West African countries, published by the World Bank.

**Sarah McKune** is the Director of Public Health Programs at the University of Florida. She earned a PhD in Interdisciplinary Ecology after nearly a decade of work on development projects throughout West Africa and the Sahel. For the past seven years, her research has focused on food security and nutritional status of women and children within the context of climate change, with recent focus on the role of animal source foods in reducing stunting of children under the age of two.

**Fiona Mc Laughlin** is Associate Professor and Chair of the Linguistics Department at the University of Florida. She has published extensively on the sociolinguistics of language contact in urban West Africa as well as on the phonology and morphology of the Atlantic languages. She is the editor of *The Languages of Urban Africa* (Continuum 2009), and co-editor of *Language Documentation and Endangerment in Africa* (Benjamins 2015), and serves as Senior Editor for Sociolinguistics and Language Contact in Africa for the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*.

**Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan** is Professor of Anthropology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, and Emeritus Director of Research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France). He is also the cofounder of LASDEL (Laboratoire d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local) and an Affiliated Professor at the Université Abdou Moumouni in Niger. He has lived and conducted research in Niger and across the Sahel since the 1960s, and has published very extensively on governance and the anthropology of the state in the region.

**Malcolm Potts** is an obstetrician and reproductive scientist and is the first holder of the Fred H. Bixby Endowed Chair in Population and Family Planning at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health. He is co-director of the Berkeley International Group (BIG) with Dr. Julia Walsh and co-founder of the OASIS Initiative (Organizing to Advance Solutions in the Sahel). Potts has published ten books and more than 200 scientific papers. His books include *Ever Since Adam and Eve: The Evolution of Human Sexuality*; and *Sex and War: How Biology Explains War and Terrorism and Offers a Path to a Safer World*.

**Chris Reij** is a Sustainable Land Management Specialist and a Senior Fellow of the World Resources Institute in Washington. He has worked on the West African Sahel since the late 1970s. His research has focused on restoration of degraded land in semi-arid regions, farmer innovation in agriculture, long-term trends in agriculture and environment and analysis of successes in agriculture and land management in Africa. He is a co-editor of *Sustaining the Soil* (Routledge) and co-author of *Farmer Innovation in Africa, A Source of Inspiration for Agricultural Development* (Routledge).

**Denis Retaillé** is Professor of Geography and Director of the ADES research unit (Aménagement, Développement, Environnement, Santé) of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique at the Université of Bordeaux III. His work has focused extensively on the understandings of space in the Sahel and the Sahara, and he has published extensively on these topics.

**Felwine Sarr** teaches Economics at the Université Gaston Berger in Saint-Louis, Senegal where he is the Director of the Laboratoire de Recherche en Economie and coordinator of the Faculty of Civilisations, Religions, Arts et Communications. He is the author of several articles and essays on development economics, macroeconomics and finance in Africa as well as religion and philosophy. He is the founder of the publishing company Jimsaan and is the author of *Dahij* (2009), *105 Rue Carnot* (2011), *Méditations africaines* (2012) and *Afrotopia* (2016).

**Rüdiger Seesemann** is Professor of Islamic Studies and Senior Fellow at the Graduate School of African Studies at the University of Bayreuth (Germany). He is also a research affiliate with the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) at Northwestern University. He has published extensively on Sufism, Islam and modernity, Islamism, and Islamic education in Africa, including the book *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niassa and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival* (Oxford University Press).

**Renata Serra** is Senior Lecturer in the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida. A development economist, she has carried out extensive research and international consultancy on agricultural development policies, political economy, gender and child labor issues, especially in the context of Mali and other Francophone West African countries.

**Benjamin Soares** will join the University of Florida as Professor of African Religion and Islamic Studies in January 2017. He has been Senior Researcher at the African Studies Centre Leiden (Netherlands) and Professor of the Anthropology of Islam in Africa and its Diaspora at the University of Amsterdam's Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. His research focuses on religious life in the African Sahel from the early 20th century to the present. He has published widely, including *Islam and the Prayer Economy: History and Authority in a Malian Town* (University of Michigan & Edinburgh University Press).

**Alioune Sow** is Associate Professor of French and African Studies at the University of Florida. He is currently working on a book project on Malian cultural production and its relation to political power and transitional processes, focusing on testimonies, memoirs,

and confessional narratives. His research also includes the study of the interplay among migration, diasporic experiences, theater practices, and transformations of genres in France and West Africa. His most recent publications include co-edited issues of *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, and of *Etudes Littéraires Africaines*.

**Gray Tappen** is a Geographer with the U.S. Geological Survey, EROS Center. He has worked on the West African Sahel since the early 1980s, in the fields of bio-geography, land use management, and long-term natural resource monitoring. He has led projects in West Africa that use remote sensing and socioeconomic data to characterize landscape changes and land management practices, including successes in land restoration. He is a major contributor to a new atlas: *Landscapes of West Africa: A Window on a Changing World*.

**Leonardo A. Villalón** is Professor of Political Science and African Studies at the University of Florida, where he also currently serves as the Dean of the International Center. He is the author of numerous works on democratization and on religion in the Sahel, including *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal* (Cambridge University Press). He is currently co-editor of the *Journal of Modern African Studies*.

**Olivier Walther** is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Southern Denmark and a visiting professor at the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Lausanne. His research in the Sahel focuses on social networks and cross-border trade, cross-border cooperation, and the spatial patterns of transnational terrorist organizations. He is the Africa editor of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies*.

**Wendy Wilson-Fall** is Associate Professor and Chair of Africana Studies at Lafayette College, and a former Director of the West African Research Center in Dakar. Her work has addressed themes of identity, local history, and social space, and she has carried out extensive research on Sahelian pastoralists across the region. She has published a number of works on these topics in relation to Sahelian pastoralist communities, as well as within African diasporas.

**Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim** is a PhD candidate in Political Science and a research affiliate with the Sahel Research Group at the University of Florida. He has carried out extensive comparative fieldwork on the politics of Islamic contestation and on jihadi movements and new religious dynamics in the Sahel, notably in Niger, Mali and Mauritania.

## INVITED PARTICIPANTS

**Ketil Fred Hansen** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Stavanger. He holds a PhD in African History from the University of Oslo. His research focuses on democracy and security in francophone Africa with a particular interest in Chad. He has published numerous articles on civil-military relations, rebellions, the political economy of oil, and politics in Chad.

**Ernest Harsch** is Adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs where he has taught courses on African development and political instability in the Sahel and is a research scholar affiliated with Columbia's Institute of African Studies. He is the author of *Thomas Sankara: An African Revolutionary* (Ohio University Press) and has published extensively on social movements and protest in Burkina Faso.

**Lisa Mueller** holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles and is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Macalester College. She is the author of numerous publications on protest and democratization in sub-Saharan Africa with a particular focus on Niger.

**Boubacar N'Diaye** is Professor of Political Science and Africana Studies at the College of Wooster. He has published extensively on democracy, civil-military relations, and security governance in Africa, notably in Mauritania and the neighboring Sahel. His recently completed book manuscript is entitled *Mauritania's Colonels*.

**Bruce Whitehouse** is Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Lehigh University. He has conducted research and published extensively on migration, development, marriage, demography, and Islam with a particular focus on Mali. His widely-read blog, *Bridges from Bamako*, offers commentary and analysis on contemporary developments in Mali.