

THE VICISSITUDES OF MALI'S EMPIRE

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Abstract

This article begins with a discussion of Mali's great dynasties comprising three main empires: Mali's Empires, Ghana's Empires and Songhai Empires. The second part examines how these empires which occupied the Savannah region influenced it with the gold trade, Islamic scholarship and manuscripts. These manuscripts exist in Malian main institutions such as Ali Ahamad Institute in Gao and University of Timbuktu today. The article then examines the empires' rise and the impact of its fall on the French colonial penetration of Mali in the 1850s. Both developments have an interesting historical setting which this article examine. First, the historical development of Mali's dynasties; and second, the historical development of French slave trade and colonial agenda in Mali where the foreign regime conspired and forced Malian dynasties to fall. Indeed this factor was considered as reasons for their fall. Different tribes of Mali which existed at the time were in fact the base for the origins of Mali's empires. In this ancient era, they mainly concentrated on different business interactions and religious activities for national interests and Islam throughout the Savannah, which was much influenced by their trade and transactions for Mali's economic integration including Islamization of the region.

Introduction

This article analyses the Malian empires' trade and Islamization during the ancient era which was not yet appraised in details by sociologists and historians. This article has determined that the authors did not

concentrate on traditional ancient Malian history of Savannah trade and Islamizing Africa, in particular, Mali because the country has remarkable position in its regional trade and Islamic activities. The early researchers focused intensively and extensively on political war and conquests narrations in their citations in writing, reporting and editing. Perhaps, it could be construed that these confrontational elements did not influence the evolution of Mali's empires' or their origins and their civilizations because Mali or Savannah in general in that era were both fully at peace and secured. Interestingly, the historical determinants; cultural, political and economic dimensions or the trade trends of Mali's regional policies' relations for its national trade growth and cultural developments, were considered as its empires' administrative preoccupations. The same were used in reorienting accountability policy towards transforming the nation.

It can be said in these aspects that one of the major determinants of Mali's background is Mali's history, both its distant and recent history. Potentially, it can be highlighted generally that the historical make-up of the pre-colonization era of Mali's empires were made of great dynasties. These empires were characterized by Islamic civilization and cultural influences based on religious teachings (Islamic scholarship), politics or Islamic polity and the role of Mali's grand kingdoms or "Grand Royaumes". Regionally, these kingdoms namely Great Dynasties of Mali comprise the Ghana, the Mali, and the Songhai Empires in West Africa, whose rulers have mighty historical accounts of great civilizations. It also discusses, historically, the impact of its trade on West African states in African Savannah, inclusive of World Empire and their traders in the region.

It is understandable that these activities were motivated especially in Mali and its rulers' location in Timbuktu, Gao, Mopti, and Kidal. It explains essentially, Mali's historical context in terms of its regional policies of the Empires. These empires enjoyed eras of development in gold trading and partnership. Security threats and other external challenges posed by other nations with different cultures and civilizations were also present. The focus of this article is to identify, analyse and estimate factors of their strength and extent of military, economic and cultural influences and the extent in which they influence Mali's regional policies for its national development. In the same context, consideration is given on the covert operations of French socio-economic influences which conspired to undermine the political stability of the empires in the Savannah region; and thereby instrumental in the tribal division and the fall of the Malian kingdoms. These must also be studied from a

dynamic perspective; not simply at a given moment but in their historical settings of opportunities and challenges based on Malian perspective and African context.

The Historical Origins of Mali's Great Empires

Histories are seen to be among major determinants in founding great empires of Mali. Examples of distant history are the Ghana, the Mali and the Songhai empires, which covered almost all regions of West Africa in terms of trade relations, language, ethnic configurations, and cultural uniformity. Religion, specifically Islam determines Mali's regional policies towards its national development to a large extent. Currently, more than 95 percent of Mali's population is Muslim, a large number of which make the pilgrimage to Mecca for Hajj every year. As such, Mali received and continues to receive a large amount of Arab bilateral and multilateral development aid.¹

In the beginning of Mali's great dynasties or empires was Mali's ancient kingdoms era, whose historical development of stability and harmonious influence flourished across the Savanah region. Historically, these factors have been linked up within the regional policy formulations and implementation where the empires strategically pursued their diplomacies and trade policies for national advancement in the 12th century. However, they regionally adapted for trade integrative universalities for investments through different capabilities through exchange and cooperation to enhance the regional political economy across the African Sahel. These royal efforts were strategically aimed at achieving the national interests and trade development at the regional level. These historical empires as dynasty co-opted relationships to the cultural identities of tribal populations and historical background of their geographical location, geopolitics and scholarship. Malian kings or the major rulers have represented them in local governance and even abroad within the African region in West Africa in particular.²

However, the local small and big cities and towns were occupied by the diplomats of the Malian Great Dynasties. Most importantly for the domestic affairs of the kings within different cities, (i.e. Kidal, Bamako) villages (Kita) and big towns or regions (i.e. Timbuktu, Koulikoro, Kays, Mopti, Sikasso), they were represented by religious actors namely Malian empires' wazirs or religious ministers. Essentially these wazirs must be characterized with virtues including knowledge, spreading activities for Islamization and ability for economic integration and cultural unifications of tribal fractions towards harmonious environments.³

Ghana Empire

The empires of Ghana, the Mali and Songhai covered almost all regions in West Africa. This was evident in terms of trade relations, language and ethnic configurations and cultural uniformity mostly set with knowledge and virtues or Islamization. These Islamic influences were brought about by Malian monarchies who were faithful to their religious principles and Islamic universality derived from non-compromising scholarship.⁴ There were great dynasties or empires in the early days of Mali. Mali's history is considered as a major part of black African historical platform and legacies. From the earliest times, the people or population of Mali comprised of various tribes which still exist today, the Kakolo, Sonike, Malinka, Malinke, Bambara Khassonke, Kagoro and Dogon. Other tribes comprise of the Songhai, Fulla, Bobo, Tuareg, Senufo, Koroboro, and Mamara (Moorish people).

Between the 8th and 15th centuries, Arabs, Jews, and Tellen co-existed as well. The first emergence of other foreign populations such as the Jews and Arabs was in the 8th century. Also, there were the people called Tellen, who lived in the region of Bandiagara until the 15th century. The Dogo people who originated from the Mande region expelled the Tellen from the region.⁵ However, during the colonial period the Wolof, Moorish and French people started to infiltrate the area to control its policy administration, trade activities and performance.⁶ Historically, the Republic of Mali is the heir to great empires, such as that of Ghana in the 13th century. In the 10th and 11th centuries Islam started to enter the northern part of the country and became strongly established there.

During the 14th and 15th centuries relations with the Arab world were enriched and consolidated. It was also at this time that Mali established its first university, the University of Timbuktu which was considered as one of the oldest universities in the Islamic and the secular world. In addition, this medieval university existed in 12th century, attended by 25,000 students in the city of 100,000 populations from all over the globe, particularly in African Sahel or West Africa. Those centuries also generated their first distinguished translators and writers of Arabic documents and findings. Mali became a center of civilization, cultural richness and Islamic scholarship. In early West African civilization, there existed two main significant great empires; Mali and Ghana. The Ghanian Empire (800-1200) was located in Southern Mali; it was a trading empire, which specialized in the gold trade with northern Africa, southern Europe and other areas of West Africa. It also exported rock salt and other handicrafts to most parts of the West African sub-region particularly to the forest areas.⁷

The Ghanian Empire which was also called Wagadu expanded its borders up to the Atlantic near Lake Debo and the Sahara near the equatorial forest. Its foundation developed, according to certain hypotheses, due to the existing commercial relations with North Africa in the 8th century.⁸ Regionally, the Ghanian Empire was influenced and dominated by the Soninke people who are also called Maraka/ Sarakoleh of Mali and centered on the area along the present Malian-Mauritanian border. It was a dynamic and powerful trading zone from about A.D. 700 -1075. The Malinke Kingdom of Mali had its origins on the upper Niger River in the 11th century. It expanded rapidly in the 13th century under the leadership of Soundiata Keita (Emperor) and reached its height in about 1325, when it conquered the City Empires of Timbuktu and Gao. Later, the empire started to decline and collapse, and by the 15th century, it controlled only a small fraction of its previous glory. The Malian Soninke state of Ghana was the earliest of these empires.⁹

The Mali Empire centered in Genne (Genneh) and became a center of Islamic scholarship. People from all the regions of West Africa and North Africa came to Genne and Timbuktu to learn Islamic law (Shariah) and classical Arabic literature. Briefly, there were smaller Malian Empires and Rayoumes or Kingdoms which existed during the era of Soundiata Keita (1234, he was Emperor for 30 years). Actively, he tackled physical handicaps, social disgrace and powerful opponent to rein with his rule the West African trading empire of Mali. In fact, this development occurred historically by the 13th century.¹⁰

The Emperor of Mali, Mansa (King) Kankou (Kanku) Mousa (Musa, 1322-1337), Mansa (meaning of Mansa is great sultan/king) Moussa was a vital king of Mali, who expanded the country influence over the Niger City states of Timbuktu, Gao, and Gene. He also expanded Islamization/ Islamic thought by building Islamic centers as universal institutions where many African and world scholars graduated from. In addition, he also built many mosques in Mali and Africa and a huge army that kept peace and security. His armies secured the country from the Atlantic Coast in the west beyond the cities of Timbuktu and Gao in the east. He also did an expansion from salt mines of Taghaza in the north to the gold mines in the south.¹¹

Another Mansa (King) is Souleyman (Sulayman, 1342-1360) and the other Empires of Mali such as the Songhai (Songhai Empire).¹² By 1235 in the Kirina region, Sundiata Keita developed for his Manding tribe agricultural alliances, which was to become the principle base of the economy and oriented the trans-Saharan trade and commerce towards the trade in gold. Presently, Mali is the cultural heir to the ancient African empires such as Ghana, Mali and Songhai that occupied the West African Savannah. These empires had an impact on Saharan

trade and were in contact with the Mediterranean and the Middle Eastern centers of civilization. In the state of Mali after the rise of the Ghanian Empire, arose the Mandingo Empire of Mali. Two important personalities dominated the history of this empire, Sundiata (1230-55) and Mansa Musa (1312-37).¹³ Both of these empires were major in Mali's dynasties and assets.¹⁴

A great deal of the development of Mali can be attributed to them. However, the various interpretations given to events in their empires and their achievements represent the dichotomy which becomes pronounced in the evidence for the history of the Sudan, particularly after the adoption of Islam as an imperial cult. The tendency was for the 'ulama to gloss over the achievements of those rulers who appeared hostile to Islam, whilst lauding to the skies those who openly professed Islam. In the context of the Mali Empire, it was Sundiata, whom the traditional historians regarded as the founder of the empire. In contrast, he has been given little regard by the 'ulama' who hailed Mansa Musa, a more devout Muslim, as the architect of the empire. Under the leadership of Mansa Sundiata, the Mandinka were organized into Dugu (small village) with rulers called Dugutigi (chief of a village).¹⁵

These small villages coalesced into the state of Kangaba by the end of the 12th century. Sundiata was from one of these villages and succeeded in defeating the neighbouring Susu state of Kaniaga, and finally, in capturing Ghana in 1240. He established a new capital at Niani and there after started a career of conquests, which led to the emergence of Mali and his own transformation from a dugutigi (the chief of a village) to an emperor.¹⁶ His work of imperial expansion was carried on by his successor Mansa Uli (1255-1270) and under him Mali came under stronger Muslim influence. The ruling dynasty appeared to have degenerated. During the term of his administration, there is no doubt that it was under Mansa Musa that Islam received its greatest boost, and that his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 gave a new life to the religion in the region. It served to advertise the wealth of Mali and attracted to the state more traders and Muslim scholars who contributed to the economic and cultural development of the country. He also took the initiative to develop close relations with the Muslim world. He established diplomatic relations with the Merinid Sultan of Fez (Morocco) in North Africa.¹⁷

Songhai Empire

The Malian Songhai Empire emerged also as a center of Islamic scholarship and international trade. Besides being rich in terms of culture and material wealth, it was also a center of manufacturing of clothing,

leather products, handicraft, jewelry, and swords.¹⁸ The Malian Songhai Kingdom started to expand from the small region it occupied (chiefdom). Its capital city, Koukia (Kukia) was renamed Gao. The dynamism of its development or growth (political and socio-economic reforms towards regional integration) and that of its capital was a result of the salt trade that came originally from the Taghza mines in the Saharan areas, and the gold trade, of which Songhai assumed control after the decline of Mali. Trade became a more significant input of development in the Gao region; it aroused the greed of the empire of Mali and by the 13th century it was under Mali's domination. By the end of the 14th century, however, Songhai had freed itself from Malian domination and under the old dynasty eventually renamed itself Sunni and began to expand its borders at the expense of Mali in the 15th century.¹⁹

The success of Mansa Soudiata's campaign was due not only to his energetic leadership but also due to his able organization of his forces; he placed in strategic regions, as overseers, his officials, such as the Tondi Farma (in charge of the Hombori mountains), and the Hikoy, the officer in charge of the fleet (in order to maintain the Niger). In addition, Emperor *Kanku or Mansa* (great king who has all powers to rule and influence nations with his policies i.e. economic, Islamic orientations etc).²⁰ Musa was a devout Muslim and under him Islamic influence became a motive to be reckoned with in the Malian Songhai historical development.²¹ In spite of the 'ulama's endeavor and efforts to attribute his success (like Mansa Musa's) to Islam, it is doubtful whether his Islamist policy went beyond the patronage of the Muslim intelligentsia. Through conquest of Tuaregs and the capture of Agades, his Northeastern border was also made safe. His famous administration was to a large extent rooted in past administrative practices. Working within this context he started the departmentalization of government into administrative, fiscal and military units. He divided the empire so that Timbuktu was under the Kan Fari and the Dendi region was under the Dendi Firma. At the lower level, he maintained the old system of administration under the local chiefs.²²

Within the cultural context, Islam had lost its influence and declined; it no longer enjoyed a privileged position, as the imperial aspiration or cult. Instead, Muslim preachers and scholars had to practice their religion under pagan rulers. The cultural differences had accompanied into insignificance; chaos, negligence and gravity. Similarly, Islam in Mali also declined from the economic level and from the perspective of its being one of the great centers of Islamic civilization. The trans-Saharan trade no longer enjoyed the popularity it used to have and caravans that frequented the Sudan were fewer and far between; articles of trade had

also deteriorated, from harmless goods such as gold and ivory to harmful ones like human flesh, dangerous drugs, assassinations and espionage.²³

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to observe the decline of the Songhai Empire only from the perspective of its retrogressive tendencies or measures. There were some positive political developments in an Islamic perspectives; the central Mande region of the old Mali Empire produced some energetic military leaders who helped found the two vitally significant pagan states of Kaarta and Segou/Segu. Their emergence represented the glory and triumph of their pagan cities in developing politically and economically, in Islamic way. However, they were not fighting and conquering just for the sake of monopolizing the nations' development as it is in the case of secular approach to development²⁴. The Mali Songhai Empire played a remarkable and crucial role in the Islamization and growth in trade relations by the beginning and middle stages of the expansion of its reign. However, it collapsed due to external Moroccan invaders in its region.²⁵

Historically, there was a praise on the historical national environments of Mali, in terms of its old cultural and economic history or ancient Empires (Mali, Ghana and Songhai - royal dynasties for the first time, have constant government of reform) specifically highlighting Mali's decision making processes. In this case, the royal policies were taken as routine, usually and historically have been taken by kings and their scholarly ministers known as 'Wazirs' of the local states. The foundation of Malian empires stemmed from these royal decisions making them elite from 4th century to the end of 17th century; eras which have seen the occupation the sub Saharan Savannah in terms of possessing huge resources of gold and other minerals. Their economic capabilities and political accountability have given those regional actors premier leadership and economic responsibilities to lead the region within economic exchanges across the region in West Africa. These economic or trade activities did not only cover the region, however, they were activated universally from Africa until Mecca in Saudi Arabia due to Pan-africanism and Islamic scholarships' friendly relationships.²⁶

Mali's Empire Heritage

Knowledge, virtues and manuscript: Many manuscripts that are stored in Malian libraries have not yet been studied by modern researchers. Certainly, they contained a lot of knowledge beyond the Islamic history in Mali and North Africa. More importantly, there is abundant information and manuscripts about early Islam which are mostly unavailable elsewhere but still stored in Timbuktu. The ancient kingdom of Mali Empire is the largest, advanced and wealthiest as

a result of trading across the Sahara in the 14th century. Before that, Mali was ruled by Al-Murabitun (Almoravides), a firm believer of the group Maliki and Darqawiah Sufi. This Sufism is still practiced in some parts of North Africa. Al-Murabitun conquered not only North Africa but also Andalusia in Spain in the 8th century.²⁷ These factors of developments were motivated particularly in Mali. Insurgents found that Mali historically had huge reserves of manuscripts and historical testimonies on Islamic scholarship and knowledgeable *imams* observing Islamic virtues since the earliest eras of its great empires. These historical and cultural values expanded from Malian royal territories to reach its representations in Ghanian empires whose dynastic bureau was led by Malian Islamic tribe namely Sonike people, and Mali's Songhai Folani tribe with diplomatic religious and trade representation in both Niger and Guinea.²⁸

In business transactions, the group traded in utilizing gold and silver as currency, the Dinar and Dirham. The use of this currency is considered mandatory as in Islamic Law or jurisdictions or the *syariah* for business Islamic transaction with outsiders in the region. As their policy, only by this system, interest or unjust gains in business can be avoided and the actual justice can be served based on the Islamic legal suits.

So the ancient era of Malian empires namely Great dynasties of Mali or Grand Royaumes du Mali, which empires comprise Mali, Ghana and Songhai Empires. Mali's empires was spearheaded by many royal policy decision makers, and great religious and enterprising kings such as Mansa Kankao Moussa, who created Mali's first diplomatic relations, with not only its West African neighbours in the region, but expanded the diplomatic and trade missions with Muslim and non-Muslim world around the globe.²⁹

With the 'Muslim world' in place, he has been able to expand Mali's regional foreign policies to spread in the region and the continent for Pan-Islamism and Islamic states independency by restoring trade, regional and international partnership for Muslim communities and humanities in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. These policies of Malian empires were not challenged for many decades by non-Muslim communities in the West until the onset of the French colonization.

The Fall of Mali's Empire

The decline of Mali's empires started when they created international ties with Europe, particularly with France in agricultural activities, cultural exchange, recruiting the empires' low labour for the industry and claiming to educate them. This diplomatic arrangement and

cooperation was signed officially between the two countries for their mutual exchanges of capabilities. Based on this bilateral friendship France agreed to contribute its technologies in mining Malian gold. However, the tricky socio-political agenda by creating '*fitnah*' or sedition, caused extreme tribal sensitiveness amongst different Malian empires, and '*wazirs*' and their followers with their local representatives in different towns, cities and provinces in order to divide tribal integration and harmony.³⁰

Objectively, France planned all these means in achieving its colonial policies and imperialistic objectives and monopolistic administration in infiltrating the local policies for its gains. In fact, the focus in capturing Mali was due to its huge gold resources. In such situations, eventually those Malian empires could fall for this foreign colonizer along with its peaceful royal environment and instruments of trade opportunities, Islamic imperial cult and education. This targeted ideological mission of imperialism and secular manipulation expedited its monopolistic military colonialism in using force for a return to slavery and socio-economic and political dependency.³¹

The major objectives of France included the manipulation of Malian resources for three decades by using force and colonizing it in an aggressive and barbarian manner which caused the decline of Mali, including its affiliated empires. Hence, this external intrusion for materialistic and imperialistic gains a major factor in destabilizing the empires' harmonious check and balance environments, towards France's greed and favour.³² This was executed forcedly by using administrative policy sabotages, embargoes and chaotic actions against the national interests of security and peace that was restored and developed by Malian great kings and their local representatives (*el-Wazirs*) of the local states in Mali. This had also resulted in a rift and division among the Malian population to the point that the entire royal system was destroyed and France instituted its own system of total penetration with its arm forces into Mali. Purposely, France targeted to take over Mali's entire socio-political and economic affairs from the Malian divided rulers in order to control, influence and replace Malian decision making administration.³³

Regardless, of this current colony, the legacy and heritage of Malian empires remain in Malian memories through reporting, editing and writing their own historical significant and unforgettable events. In fact, the Malian fondly write about their empire did well for their cause and continued performance for their national interests in promoting actively the region and Islam including even the Pan-africanist Islamization which remained as an external dream. All these ideological domains were considered as a clash of Islamic and secular capitalist orientations

in questioning their interests. Unfortunately this was not perceived positively by the Malian and regional population.³⁴

As a result, the pre colonial and post colonial history of the Republic of Mali, its political interactions, and its royal diplomatic relations with West African neighbouring countries for trading and Islamization have become an interesting question to investigate literarily and politically. The decline of a once wealthy, prosperous state to the present one that is riddled with poverty and hardship after Mali's Empires peaceful eras could be attributed to numbers of internal and external factors.

These factors contribute to Mali's tribal conflicts. The French manipulations of its national interests caused Mali to lose self-reliance and huge natural resources in the entire region of Savannah.

The Decline of Mali's Empire

On the other hand, the French colonization was intended to cause conflicts; crises caused tensions and ultimately war among empires, giving rise to French hegemony. In the end, the French penetrated Mali easily as a result of weakened empires who were already fighting each other. The French colonized Mali for many years in order to expand its own interests abroad.

Soon, there came a time when the Malians were moved to action to free themselves from the colonizer. This awakening gave birth to the federation of Mali with its battle towards independence in 1960. This Malian history of colonization and decolonization was historically a bad experience that the country had gone through for many decades with France. The French colonization of Mali did not leave behind much beneficial development, such as education, training and agriculture.³⁵

The recent history of Mali started from French colonization from 1850 to 1959; 30 years of colonization. In the recent history, French colonialism exerted pressure on Mali's political and cultural policies of national bureaucracy and governance from independence in 1960, until the present Post-independence 2007. Aside from that, the French language is still the official national language of the country; the French legal system and administrative systems still govern the country.³⁶

However, Mali's pre-independence is considered as a bitter part of its history characterized by a violation of sovereignty and its territorial integrity that have been safeguarded and secured by the dynasties across Mali.³⁷ This includes corrupt practices over the national economic resources, increase of mass-unemployment among the Malian youths, together with social abuses and communal genocides, ethnical discriminations, and population isolations. All these were rooted in her empty promises, conspiracies and her privatized anti-Malian agenda.³⁸

The systematic colonization of Africa also began in the colonization of Mali in the 1890s. Among known personalities in the colonization were Faidherbe, Galliéni and others, who gradually invaded Malian territory, with the intent of reforming Mali's legitimate empires into colonial dominations and monopolies. They were met with fierce resistance from kings and emperors such as El Hadj Oumar Tall and Samory Toure, and others. These Malian patriotic rulers were great warriors and skillful rulers in their states' leaderships, management, administrations and their war policy.³⁹ Historically, in this era of Malian kings, their policies and public administration was based on practical promises and trade activities across the region. This rather 'bad' part of the Malian history will remain in hearts and minds of Malians for generations. This colonial experience violated the Malian sovereignty and has taken away all these privileges from Malian nationhood.⁴⁰

Historically, the Malian kings or the rulers in previous era were victorious in war. At the outset, colonial France went on to strip Mali of most of its cultural wealth. Precious copies of the Koran for instance, were carried off.⁴¹ Between 1909 and 1915 revolts broke out by the Kuntz and the Bobo, Beledougou, but they were unable to overthrow the colonial government resulting in a political struggle.⁴² In Malian modern history, a new generation was born who was intent to struggle for Malian independence from the French colonists; all for Mali being African origin and Pan-Africanism and Islamic traditions. This new birth was formed as Malian social and political movement called the *Union Soudanais-Rassemblement Democratique Africain* party (US-RDA) or the Sudanese Union; an African Democratic Rally or Citizen Party of the Rebirth whose political organization comprised of many parties or alliance was established nationwide to struggle for liberty and national interests. Faced with this in 1956, the law authorizing the establishment of semi-autonomous governments in the colonies was promulgated. On January 17, 1959 Mali and Senegal formed a federation, which historically declared independence in June 1960.⁴³

In terms of economic relations, the construction of the Dakar-Niger Railway was of great significance. The majority of the Niger Valley's external trade passed through Dakar. In Pre-colonial era of Malian empires the trade survived within socio-political and economic stabilities. Interestingly, salt traders still brought Saharan salt to Timbuktu and Gao, while other desert traders still journeyed through the Sahara to Algeria and Morocco. Still other traders travelled from the Middle Niger Valley south towards Ghana and Ivory Coast, and east to Mossi country in Burkina Faso, and further east to Hausa country in Niger and Nigeria. Historically, the country's name was taken from the greatest period in its regional history. From this point of view, eighty

years of the 'French Civilizing Mission' had failed to obliterate the Pre-colonial background. Diplomatically, based on the religious relations, Malian Muslims regularly made the *hajj* to Mecca or to other shrines like Touba in Senegal. On the other hand, the conflicting consequences of French colonial rule were still obvious such as the bureaucracy; centralized state; belief in economic progress; politics dominated by charismatic individual leaders and mass parties, the desire for French citizenship. Historically, the country was taken from its greatest period in the region's bitter history. Thus, eighty years of the 'French Civilizing Mission' was unable to completely obliterate Mali's Pre-colonial history which was even then a better civilized and peacefully progressive nation.⁴⁴

This developing independence has a colonial 'thorn' that irritates Mali's progress. That thorn is in the form of previously initiate colonial treaties that remain perpetual. In the current times the elements of dignity and rights of persons is predisposed in every memorandum and treaty. Therefore there has to be a re-negotiation of all colonial origin agreements and treaties. The International Community is duty-bound to have a forum on the matter and formulate the re-negotiation with emphasis of its time-frame and dynamics.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Based on what has been tackled above, it is quite clear that the West African relationship pertains to historical dynasties and empires so that there is still the spirit of natural unity between countries of this region. They share common historical background and is composed of the same ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. As such, development of the Ghana, Songhai and the Mali's Empires that existed in this region were composed of the same people in the same territorial area and background of their cultural heritage and civilization. Another angle of analysis is that, political complexities in Mali's regional policies for its national development are by no means unique to the country. Other regional states in West Africa, in particular, and Africa, in general, have the same problems.

Obviously, the problem which this article dealt with is one of considerable complexity and beset with accounted obstacles or difficulties in Malian histories such as its cultural, socio-political and economic determinants. Mali's empires' era, its kings' regional economic policies towards Savannah Trade for its national development as national resources of gold are determined by a whole set of factors acting simultaneously and not always in the same direction. Nevertheless, these have determined and guided Mali's trade and Islamic activities with

regional policies of economic integration. These were directed towards national development.

Due to these reasons, the following have been determined or accomplished: First phase, this paper aimed to identify the major governmental structure of Malian empires in order to highlight their ruling method of adopting Islamization as knowledge and virtues in their religious activities across the Savannah population. Second phase, it analyzed the economic activities of Malian empires which were pursued to promote trade and cultural interactive programs in order to influence the Savannah economic actors in line with Islamic methods of trade instruments. Third phase of that was observed was the comparison and evaluation of the impacts of Mali's policies both external and internal on the Malian royal rulers in terms of their systemic decline after the country had enjoyed opportunities of socio-political and economic stability. This stability was derived from its huge revenue of gold resources and industrial promotions including its generosity in providing economic support for social reform and nation building.

Observably, this good sense of focus of integration, derived from its initiatives for reform and development could not be achieved fully due to French conspiracy and material greed; and slave trade which as caused the fall of Malian kings, and their kingdoms.

Notes

- ¹ Mali Empires' History Archives in Timbuktu's Ahmed Baba Institute IHERIAB, 2001. *Mali History Data*. Ministry of Communication and New Information Technology, Timbuktu, Mali.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud and Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, *Knowledge, Language, Thought and The Civilization of Islam*, Skudai: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2010, pp. 199-282.
- ⁴ Ibid., pp. 59-118.
- ⁵ Attilio Gaudio, *Le Mali*. 2nd.ed. Paris: Karthala, 1988p. 35. Referred also to M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, *Le Renard Pale*, Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1965, pp. 7-9; and Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Le Soudan Occidental au Temps des Grands Empires*, Paris: Presence Africaine, 1975, p. 35; Similar statements were elaborated by during Interview with Alpha Oumar Konare at Salle de reunion Residentiel Bamako Mali, 2 March 2009; and Interview with Dembo Sissoko at School A. Conference Room, Bamako: Mali, 12 January 2009.
- ⁶ Niane, *Le Soudan Occidental au Temps des Grands Empires*, p. 37; Sekene Mody Cissoko, *Tombouctou et l'empire Songhay*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975, pp. 20-23; Mali Empires' History Archives in Timbuktu's Ahmed Baba Institute IHERIAB, "Mali History Data."

- ⁷ Ibid. Referred also to Archives Nationnelles Sure L'Informations Historiques du Mali, 1993. "*L'Empire du Mali*." Bamako: Hamdallah. These data were collected from National Museum during the researcher's visit for interview in Mali 2009. Restrictly, these archives were not allowed to be duplicated or taken out, due to its confidentiality and internal regulations; Munawar Haque, Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman, Bachir Soualhi and Syamsuddin Arif, *Islam Knowledge and Civilization*, IIUM: IIUM Press, 2009, pp.58-126. In this article Journal in Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman article in his sub-topic titled Islamic Civilization: Meaning, Origin and Distinctive Characteristics as supportive source to this article on Malian case study that his Islamic definition of the concept have showed the important of man in a civilization one required at the first place to understand well its meaning, origin and distinctive factors that man is created for by the creator almighty Allah, who all messengers were granted in Islamizing the community namely Islamic *Ummah* in a Islamic state in the past, present and future. However, divine domain of making man able to read, interact and communicate within an Islamic environment that respects all mankind. Relating his argument to this current article on Malian empires as significant origin of Islamic culture and civilization that kings were representing Almighty and in Islamizing Savannah with their economic and Islamic promotion which activity was comprehended in Malian Islamic orientations and attempt to Islamize Africa to be united Muslim Community believe, practice its principles and civilize culturally other African in particular Savannah region.
- ⁸ Niane, *Le Soudan Occidental au Temps des Grands Empires*, p. 35; Frank Columbus, 'Politics and Economics of Africa', New York : Nova Science Press, Vol. 4, 2003, pp. 38-184. Similar statement was referred to during Interview with Dembo Sissoko, 12 January 2009.
- ⁹ Niane, *Le Soudan Occidental au Temps des Grands Empires*, p. 42; Columbus, "Politics and Economics of Africa," p. 184.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., Abdul Hamid A. AbuSulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, 2nd ed., Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997, pp. 35-36.
- ¹¹ Ibid. Referred also to Cissoko, *Tombouctou et l'empire Songhay*, p. 20 ; and African Holocaust Society. *African History, African King and Queens*. [online] Available at [http://www.africanholocaust.net/african legends.htm](http://www.africanholocaust.net/african%20legends.htm), Accessed 10 December 2004.
- ¹² Charles Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali - Etude D'histoire et de Sociologie Soundanaise*, Paris: Maisonneure et Larose, 1929, pp. 18-19.
- ¹³ Columbus, 'Politics and Economics of Africa', p. 187; Cissoko, *Tombouctou et l'empire Songhay*, p. 22.
- ¹⁴ W. Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, London: Macmillan, 1984, p. 2.
- ¹⁵ Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Mali and the Second Mandingo Expansion*, UNESCO: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 116-143.
- ¹⁶ Joseph Roger de Benoist, *Le Mali*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998, pp. 39-42.
- ¹⁷ Gaudio, *Le Mali*, p. 35; Griaule and Dieterlen, *Le Renard Pale*, pp. 38, 39.

- ¹⁸ Cissoko, *Tombouctou et l'empire Songhay*, pp. 20, 23 ; Niane, *Le Soudan Occidental au Temps des Grands Empires*, p. 37.
- ¹⁹ Benoist., D, *Le Mali*, p. 53. Referred also to Niane, *Mali and the Second Mandingo Expansion*, pp. 147-149; H.A.R. Gibb, *The Evolution of Government in Early Islam: In Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, pp. 12-13.
- ²⁰ H.J. Hugot, The Prehistory of the Sahara. In J. Ki-Zerbo (eds), *General History of Africa, Vol. 1, Methodology and African Prehistory*. Paris; UNESCO, 1981, p. 596; See also M. Posnansky, Introduction to Later Prehistory of sub-Saharan Africa. In Mokhtar, G. (eds), *General History of Africa: Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, Paris: UNESCO, Vol. 11, 1981, p. 534.
- ²¹ Djibril Tamsir Niane, *General History of Africa IV: Africa from the Twelfth to Sixteenth Century*, California: Heinemann and UNESCO, 1984, p. 198.
- ²² Nehemia Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 55; John O. Hunwick, *Religion and State in The Songhay Empire 1464-1591*, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 312.
- ²³ Gibb, 'The Evolution of Government in Early Islam', pp. 34 -46. Referred also to A. Rahman I. Doi, *Spread of Islam in West Africa: Islam in Empire of Mali*. [online] Available at <http://worldupdates.tripod.com/islamintheworld/id26.htm>, Accessed 17 December 2005.
- ²⁴ Zeenath Kausar, *Political Development – An Islamic Perspective*, Petaling Jaya: The Other Press, 2000, pp.1-23. She explained the philosophical foundations of the Islamic approach to development such *Tawhid* or God;s unity and sovereignty; *Rububiyyah* which divine arrangement for nourishment, sustenance etc.; *khalifah* means man's role as God's vicegerent on earth; and last one *Tazkiyah* which means purification plus growth. In this Islamic pretext this article narrated the approach that the Malian empires were adopting in restoring their trade and Islamic implications across the Savannah region; Chandra Muzaffar, *Religion and Governance*, Selangor: Arah Publications, 2009, pp. 69-81, 91-102, 109-119. This source of articulated by Asghar Ali Engineer in article book edited by Muzaffar is supportive to this paper's argument that the government or polity misused their role towards faithful populations in particular the Western principles or foundations which merely materialistic and monopolistic actions against society in a peripheral states such as in Africa and Asia. Comparatively made analytical surveys on western method of democracy and its types comparing to the Islamic approach of polity that have been in a controversial and critical sets made; Abul A'la Maududi, *Human Rights in Islam, Rights of Citizens in an Islamic State*, 2nd ed, Lahore: Islamic Publication Pvt, 1995, pp. 5-19.
- ²⁵ Doi, 'Spread of Islam in West Africa: Islam in Empire of Mali
- ²⁶ The researcher accessed to this information was based on his pro-reading on Mali's history in these sources and for more details referred to Monteil, *Les Empires du Mali – Etude D'histoire et de Sociologie Soundanaise*, pp. 18-19; Niane, *Le Soudan Occidental au Temps des Grands Empires*, p. 35; and Centre d'Etudes d'Afrique Noire, 'Alpha Oumar Konaré, President de la

République du Mali', *Journal de l'Afrique Contemporaine*, 1st Trimestre, No. 13. 1993, pp. 7-9.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., Abdul Hamid A. Abu Sulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, 2nd ed., Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997, pp. 38-43.

29 Ibid.

30 Louay M. Safi, *Truth and Reform – Exploring the Patterns and Dynamics of Historical Change*, Petaling Jaya: The Open Press, 1998, pp. 9-28, 38, 112-138. In this context of civilizing exchange between the West and Islamic civilizations' empires need a probe of the pattern of historical in both Mali's empires and France civilizations led us in this article to observe that the role or the responsibilities of Islam in the rise of empires civilizations of Mali is indicated to a reorientation of action and to give liberty in establishing the human development. In which era the kings and rulers in Mali faced also other civilization of France who slave's masters penetrated in it to destabilize the Savannah trade and Islamic culture flourished with their (empires') dignity and respect that its population enjoyed them under an Islamic diplomacy or divine approach and monarchic rule in reforming Malian population and developing their trade for social humanity within the region. In fact, there was no any rejection to learn from other civilization such as France, which deviated from human sympathy and cultural mutual respect to deceive the empires based on their humanitarian agreement for civilizing exchange which was signed between both different civilizations' actors; Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud and Muhammad Zainiy Uthman, *Knowledge, Language, Thought and The Civilization of Islam*, Skudai: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2010, pp.119-134. Both neo-Ghazalian, Attasian perspective emphasized the different understanding of modernity through traditions will remain differently in implementing it in Muslim and non-Muslim soils because one is Islamic oriented and another one is secular mode of doing it culturally. However, most important orientation of these two civilizations is the best one can serve human development in securing its dignity and respect to live in peace and security without dominating other community's rights. The best which is also based on acceptable principles of faith or humanity which method can advance a nation for political development and other essential needs of existence of human population in establishing and practicing any civilized thought. This condition has to be zero profit that divine approach avoid a nation or state from clash of civilizations and crisis of politics' thought. This ideal has been demonstrated by M. Afifi al-Akti and H.A. Hellyer in their article book edited by Wan Daud and his colleague.

31 B. Davidson, *Modern Africa: A Social and Political History*. London: Longman, 1994, p. 198; Zeenath Kausar, *Colonization to Globalization: 'Might is Right' Continues*, Selangor: Thinker's Library Sdn. Bhd, 2007, pp.11-22. In this part two: definition and objectives of Europe emphasized how a western colonizer keens to conspire, influence, penetrate and occupy a sovereign state in this civilized world as mankind is not living under

other ideological attacks due to materialism, secularism and colonization to take away a legitimate ruler from their thrown or to cooperate with a state against own population to share that polity national resources, if rejects the powerful state demand that peripheral state will no longer exist or its soil will be targeted for invasion. This is what is applicable by most advanced nations such France which country destroyed Malian empires for her materialistic greed and politics of manipulations and monopolies; The researcher in systemic environments of the history and national capabilities where he investigated Malian case study in its regional economic and political context in accessing to questions explanations in the similar information received through his pro-reading from Oladeji O. Ojo, *Africa and Europe: The Changing Economic Relationship*, London: Zed Books, 1996, pp. 178,182, 208.

32 R. H. Jackson and C.G. Rosberg, 'Democracy in Tropical Africa: Democracy versus Autocracy in African Politics', *Journal of International Affairs*, No. 38, Vol. 2, 1985, pp. 295-297.

33 Ibid.

34 Abul A'la Maududi, *Human Rights in Islam, Rights of Citizens in an Islamic State*, pp. 5-21.

35 Safi, *Truth and Reform – Exploring the Patterns and Dynamics of Historical Change*, pp. 9-28, 38, 112-138. This source's argument is supportive to the current article's orientations in investigating the western and Islamic perspective of cultural political and economic developments in both ancient and modern history of civilization and colonial secularism that goes to comprehend two schools of thought; M.Umer Chapra, *Islam and the Economic Challenge*, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992, pp.1-13, 71, 113-146.

36 Henri Brunschwig, *Noirs et Blancs dans l'Afrique noir Francaise ou coment le Colonisateur Devint Colonise*, Paris: Flammarion, 1983, p. 143.

37 G.S. Liebenow, *African Politics: Crisis and Challenges*, Bloomington Indian University Press, 1986, p. 21; S. Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa: Origins and Contemporary Forms." In *Journal of Modern African Studies*, No. 4, 1972, pp. 503-521.

38 Henri Brunschwig, *Noirs et Blancs dans l'Afrique noir Francaise ou coment le Colonisateur Devint Colonise*, Paris: Flammarion, 1983, p. 143.

39 Ibid., pp. 143-145; See also Alain Maharoux, *The Industry in Mali*, Paris: L'Harmattan et CNRS, 1991, pp. 13-14; Referred also to Doi, 'Spread of Islam in West Africa: Islam in Empire of Mali'; United Nations, 'Foreign Policy of Mali': Economic Growth, In *Encyclopedia of the Nations: World Leaders*, 11th ed. London: Gale Group. 2003.

40 Abul A'la Maududi,(ed.) *Human rights in Islam, Rights of Citizens in an Islamic State*, pp. 22-39; Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1980, pp. 51-106; Abdul Hamid A. Abu Sulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, 2nd ed., Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1997, pp. 22-27.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ G.S. Liebenow, *African Politics: Crisis and Challenges*, Bloomington Indian University Press, 1986, p. 21; S. Amin, 'Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa: Origins and Contemporary Forms', In *Journal of Modern African Studies*, No. 4, 1972, pp. 503-521.

⁴⁵ Ibid. These sources are supportive to the researchers' argument, by observing the foreign manipulative interferences to the Malian domestic affairs that as negative impact on its progress and development since 1850 and its struggle for liberty in 1950s until today.