The demographic consequences of conflict, exile and repatriation: a case study of Malian Kel Tamasheq

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1. Introduction

‘The demography of conflict’ conjures up the human costs in terms of deaths on battlefields or in bombed out cities. Looking beyond the immediate mortality costs of conflict there are myriad other short term demographic consequences; forced and voluntary migration, increased mortality through destruction of health and sanitary infrastructure, decreased fertility as a result of spousal separation, or psychological stress. Indeed it is hard to delimit where the demographic consequences of conflict stop, since conflict reconfigures the social and political landscape, often causing serious economic deprivation; subsequent social change will be associated with changing demographic behaviour in all spheres of demography: fertility, mortality, migration and nuptiality and intergenerational echoes in the age-sex structure.

Conflict is part of the human condition and therefore should be integral to all analysis and interpretation of demographic behaviour. Yet it is possible to focus in on particular situations and events in order to establish more specific conflict-induced demographic responses. Immediate consequences of conflict (deaths, migration, births averted may be difficult to measure because of social disorder and priorities for humanitarian relief rather than data collection and although we should recognise that such consequences represent a huge human cost, in a sense they are of less intrinsic importance to an understanding of the demography of conflict than the medium to long term changes that conflict generates in the surviving population. It is the latter that form the basis for the emergent society with its population dynamics.

Few studies have focused on the longer term impact of conflict on demographic dynamics in contemporary developing countries – although much demographic research has been undertaken in populations involved in or recently emerged from conflicts (most DHS) where demography is inevitably shaped by not only the conflict but post-conflict political and economic reconstruction. Agadjanian and Prata’s (2002) analysis of Angolan fertility is an exception in their use of time periods and regions, which are likely to have experienced different intensity of conflict. Contrary to their expectations, the capital Luanda, which had least direct experience of conflict, had the strongest fertility response. This could be interpreted two ways – that ‘advanced urbanization made residents more responsive to changes...and at the same time better able to control their fertility’ (p227), the other being that the fertility decline in Luanda was largely unrelated to the conflict. Lindstrom and Berhanu’s analysis of Ethiopian data also focuses on probability of births in particular time periods known to have had intense conflict. Such periods also tended to be times of drought and it is hard to separate the two but there seems to be a fertility depressing effect of conflict. More long-term consequences are not considered although they consider whether ‘the experience of fertility limitation under the duress of political and economic crises may have increased couples’ awareness of the real and opportunity costs associated with each additional child and the benefits of reduced fertility’ and thus have contributed to subsequent fertility decline. On the other hand one could equally well anticipate a pronatalist response with children
perceived not as costs but as longer term security as well as being increasingly vulnerable to death. Such pronatalists responses to conflict are particularly evident for Palestinians whose fertility is substantially higher than would be expected from their level of socio-economic development (Courbage 1995, 1999, Khawaja 2000, Pedersen, Randall & Khawaja, 2001, DellaPergola 2001).

Neither of the African studies consider the impact of conflict on nuptiality, which is unfortunate since, in low contraceptive prevalence communities – such as most conflict-affected populations in Africa – nuptiality is the major determinant of fertility differentials, the primary arena for reproductive decision making and far more pertinent to the fertility of disenfranchised rural populations than contraceptive use, showing remarkable elasticity (Chojnacka 1994). Nuptiality responses to conflict are critical not only for their impacts on fertility but because marriage remains the principal forum for recruitment to and reproduction of the social group. Conflict frequently threatens specific social groups. Disruptions to or substantial changes in patterns of couple formation are indicative of psychological responses to the perceived or real threats to the group: positive attitudes to population reconstruction and rebuilding; retrenchment towards marriage behaviours which reinforce a specific ethnic or lineage identity through endogamy and consanguinity; expansion of marital networks in order to maximise strategic alliances in case of future conflicts. The potential for nuptiality responses to conflict may be ultimately more far reaching than those of mortality or fertility, because they have not only demographic consequences but also profound socio-political meanings.

2. A Framework for conceptualising demographic consequences of conflict

A framework developed for conceptualising the impacts of forced migration on fertility (Randall 2002) can be expanded to include both mortality and nuptiality (Figure 1) although not all five categories of forces apply to both mortality and nuptiality. This framework considers the demographic consequences of conflict in different stages all built upon and reacting with the pre-conflict regime, including the perception of the demographic dynamics of both one’s own group and neighbouring populations. The different forces will vary in importance as the phases of conflict and post-conflict advance: speculation about the weight of each force on fertility is represented by the thickness of the arrows in figure 1.

Three basic periods of conflict and forced migration can be identified whilst recognising that each specific situation will have its own complexities. Disorder at the beginning of conflict may include flight or movement, and early responses to a different environment. During Limbo, conflict is established, people have learnt how to cope but the future is totally uncertain. Refugees are not yet able to rebuild their lives but the immediate danger may be past, and for them at least, the basic logistic problems of health-care and sanitation have often been resolved. The same is not true for people who remain in conflict zones in a limbo of uncertainty with productive economic
activities often restricted. This phase may be very short or may last for many years; one could argue that Palestinians have spent half a century in limbo. ‘New Order’ is the post-conflict reconstruction of an independent economic life and the reestablishment of social and political order which, for refugees is contingent upon resettlement or repatriation. This is not a return to the past: ‘the return process is not about going home or back in time to regain something that once existed, it creates an entirely new situation’ (Haug 2002, p71) – and this is as true for demography as for social, political and economic relations.

In each phase of conflict demography will be influenced by many voluntary and involuntary forces which can be grouped broadly into five categories (figure 1) each of which will have a different degree of importance in terms of impact on pre-crisis demographic norms. During ‘disorder’ biological impacts will often resemble those in famine situations: nutritional crisis, disease, stress, loss of libido, infant deaths and curtailed breast-feeding (Ashton 1984, Dyson 1991, Watkins & Menken 1985, Hill 2002). Biosocial impacts on fertility and nuptiality will be a consequence of spousal separation or lack of privacy; the risk of rape may be important. Psychological factors may have a major impact at this stage.

In ‘Limbo’ all five forces operate although with different intensities and outcomes according to the particularities of the situation; biosocial and psychological factors usually being more important than biological or those of the political economy. The latter, along with socio-economic impacts will probably dominate fertility and nuptiality in the New Order. All impacts on fertility in each of the phases will operate through the proximate determinants but in terms of conceptualising the specific impact of conflict it is essential to consider the specific modifying forces in each situation.

An alternative perspective of the demographic consequences of conflict is to consider conflict related events and changes which have a direct impact (which include most of the biological and biosocial forces and some psychological ones) and those which have an indirect impact – through the socio-economic changes generated by the conflict. A third level of impact is that of conscious demographic manipulation and strategies which emerge either as a response to the threats which originally led to conflict or as a form of insurance against renewed persecution.

Using both these approaches I will analyse the particular case of Kel Tamashq in western Mali to show the importance of community history, past experiences and pre-conflict relationships with other populations for understanding the trajectory of post-conflict demographic responses. It will become clear that one cannot just consider ‘the demography of conflict’ – every conflict-affected population will interpret the causes and consequences of conflicts according to their prior experience and will respond accordingly. Each population will be subject to unique conflict generated socio-economic changes which are predicated upon the pre-conflict socio-economic organisation, political context and international responses to the conflict. It will be shown how conventional demographic understanding of both mortality
and fertility transitions may need to be reconsidered in both the immediate and longer term post-conflict reconstruction.

3. Background

Kel Tamasheq (or Tuareg) live across Northern Mali, southern Algeria, Niger and northern Burkina Faso and most used to be archetypal nomadic pastoralists, herding goats, sheep, cattle and camels according to the local environment. Two populations were studied in 1981 and 1982 (Randall 1984, 1996) when western Kel Tamasheq spent the dry season using pastures in the inner Niger delta, leaving in the wet season to move north and west into drier areas. This transhumance pattern was itself relatively recent with the Kel Tamasheq first entering the delta in substantial numbers after the 1913 drought, a movement which frequently engendered local conflicts between different groups. The populations surveyed were all nomadic pastoralists practicing no agriculture and were socially heterogeneous with representatives of all the different Tamasheq social classes; warriors, religious maraboutic groups, vassals, lower status groups, blacksmiths, and Bella - slaves and ex-slaves.

The imushar, maraboutic classes and imghad along with some other lower status free Kel Tamasheq are descended from Berber populations who crossed the Sahara, in the 15th and 16th centuries. Tamasheq is a Berber language and physically most higher status Kel Tamasheq are Berber and are variously referred to both by themselves and other Malians as red (rouges). Like in many West African communities, slavery was a well established institution in pre-colonial times and most Kel Tamasheq slaves were originally captured in raids on villages and other communities living in the area and further south. Bella are black African and although they now all speak Tamasheq, they clearly have different genetic origins to the Berber Tamasheq. Many Bella were liberated in the colonial period and after independence, although de facto ownership of slaves still continued at the time of the 1981-2 surveys with many high-status Tamasheq having resident Bella to do most domestic and herding work. The 1981-2 surveys included both domestic Bella and pastoralist Bella who had been freed for several generations. Another group of Bella, not studied in 1981-82 or 2001, are sedentary sharecroppers who work fields owned by some red Tamasheq – particularly around Lake Faguibine.

The blacksmiths are an endogamous caste group. Unlike Bella they are ‘free’ Tamasheq but are not Berber. Traditionally they made and repaired all the metal, wooden and leather articles in return for milk, grain, cash and protection.

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1 Eg 32 Tamasheq killed by Peul in 1931 in the delta (Archives IE 18, rapport politique 1931. The Peul had managed and exploited the pastoral resources of the delta for centuries.
2 The Tamasheq term for the exslave class is iklan but this has pejorative overtones and although still used by red Tamasheq it is often unacceptable. The Songhay term – Bella is frequently used.
3 This terminology of black and red Tamasheq will be adopted here since physical differences largely determined different Tamasheq roles and fates during the rebellion.
The 1980s surveys showed the Tamasheq to be demographically unusual for sub-Saharan African populations. Heterogeneity in terms of production, environment and social organisation within the Malian Kel Tamasheq population means that we cannot generalise about their demography — but some of the specificities almost certainly apply elsewhere\(^4\). The demographic regime was typified by low(ish) fertility\(^5\), largely a function of the nuptiality regime, and unusual patterns of mortality differentials. Higher status (and usually wealthier) red Tamasheq children had much higher mortality than lower status black blacksmith and Bella children (Hill & Randall 1984, Randall 1984). High status women had higher mortality than low status women but the opposite was the case for adult men. Although extra marital childbearing was more acceptable for Bella, overall their total fertility was similar to that of the red Tamasheq (Randall & Winter 1985).

The economic and social role of women had a major impact on the demographic regime (Randall 1984, Fulton & Randall 1985). Traditionally, high-status women were respected within the home and expected to do little domestic work. This was possible because of the existence of the dependent slave population. Differences in behaviour were reinforced by force feeding rich high status girls and young women and subsequent obesity limited their physical activity. Red women were expensive to maintain — often contributing little to the household economy, housework and even childcare. In the total absence of access to effective health services, childcare patterns were partially responsible for the differential mortality rates between social classes (Randall 1984, Hill and Randall 1984).

Nevertheless there was substantial diversity over both time and space. The extent of both force feeding and slavery had been declining for at least two decades before the 1981-2 demographic surveys but in the populations studied they were still quite frequent. Elsewhere in Mali, Kel Tamasheq had become less nomadic as a consequence of herd loss in the 1973 drought and the domestic slave population had declined with Bella moving to urban areas, becoming independent herders or turning to agriculture. In the 1980s there was a small urban minority of educated Kel Tamasheq, but in both the populations studied in 1981-2 everyone was nomadic, few had been to modern school and there was little contact with health services. Most people lived in relatively small isolated camps (20-50 people) and although men had contact with the outside world through travel and markets, most women led very socially restricted lives.

\(^4\) The Bella proportion of the population was always much higher in the more southern Tamasheq populations (reaching more than 50%), which included the Gourma and Delta populations surveyed. In the far north Bella were rare and red women much more active.

\(^5\) TFR between 5 & 6 compared to over 7 for other rural Malian populations.
The 1984-5 drought led to substantial herd losses, population movements, food aid and a mushrooming of international and local NGOs. Dependent Bella left their owners, people moved temporarily to the towns and some groups started to sedentarise (Randall & Giuffrida 2003). Those who remained nomadic became less isolated, with increased knowledge about the outside world and contact with development projects.

3.1 Conflict
In 1990 rebellion first broke out in Niger and was followed by an attack in east Mali. Thereafter small bands of armed Kel Tamasheq attacked military and administrative posts – sometimes killing the incumbents, usually stealing vehicles. The MPLA (Mouvement Populaire pour la Libération de l’Azawad) was created with the aim of liberating Tuareg territories in the north. The Malian Army responded at first by patrolling the areas and then clashed with the rebels. Despite negotiations mediated by the Algerians, the rebel attacks increased in intensity throughout early 1991 and gradually expanded westwards towards Tombouctou and the Mena. As the rebel attacks increased so did those of the Malian army on the red Tamasheq and Maures with men, women and children being killed in camps, villages and towns. The Malian population became incited against the ‘reds’ and there were attacks and raids on shops owned by Tamasheq and Maures throughout northern and central Mali. Skin colour and physical appearance was a major factor identifying those who were attacked and after the ‘massacre de Lere’ in May 1991, red Tamasheq in the Delta and Mena areas fled en masse to Mauritania (elsewhere people fled to Algeria, Niger and Burkina Faso) just across the border. Some took their herds and tried to continue to be mobile pastoralists in Mauritania – facing major problems with access to water and wells. Others left everything behind or consumed most of their animals during the flight.

UNHCR, WFP and NGOs responded rapidly to the huge influx of people and three refugee camps were set up. Conditions were poor at first because of the scale of the crisis and the isolation of the area. People continued to flood into the refugee camps through 1991 and 1992 and into 1993 and 1994. The majority stayed until 1996, having spent 4 or 5 years there, although spontaneous repatriations occurred throughout the period. Nevertheless the main waves into the Mauritanian refugee camps were in 1991-2 and the main wave out was in 1996 under a repatriation programme run by UNHCR and GTZ after the signing of various peace agreements. Although the majority of camp residents had previously been nomadic pastoralists, there were also people who had sedentarised after the 1985 drought, along with civil servants, teachers, traders, craftsmen and students. A few domestic Bella fled with their masters but black Tamasheq were not persecuted and many stayed behind, some with the animals, some leaving the pastoral sector altogether. The majority nomadic pastoralists experienced substantial changes in the refugee camps, including being fixed in one place with large numbers of people from different social groups alongside the educated and those who

6 Most people in the Mena left because there was nowhere there to hide. Further north, around Goundam and Tombouctou, some fled but others hid with their animals in the mountains and the desert. The massacres in the North were later – around 1994 – and more people fled then.
had left pastoral sector and zone. Many young people enjoyed a varied and active social life. Rudimentary health care provision developed into immunisation programmes, free health and maternity care. Whereas previously nomadic Delta Kel Tamasheq had drunk water from marshes and the river, now boreholes provided clean tap water. In later years schools were set up in the refugee camps and some women received training to facilitate economic independence after repatriation.

Repatriation made further changes to lifestyle. Part of the reconciliation and repatriation package developed by the Malian government with UNHCR and other international organisations (République du Mali 1995) included promises to build schools, drill boreholes and develop infrastructure in the specific destinations refugees were obliged to name and return to as well as in other northern communities. For repatriated refugees infrastructure was to be proportional to the population registered. This encouraged sedentarisation and has led to a proliferation of wells surrounded by small settlements (Randall & Giuffrida 2003). People with few or no animals no longer needed to be nomadic and many of those who retained animals claim to have seen the physical benefits of a sedentary lifestyle although there are also clear political aspects to this transformation.

Thus in 2001, 4 years after repatriation, much of the population is sedentarised, fewer are totally dependent on a pastoral economy, unpaid domestic labour is rarely available and women are thinner, more active and doing more household labour. Formal education is more acceptable and available, there is an increased knowledge about and demand for modern health services and good quality water is usually close by. The population is highly politicized and feels vulnerable about being physically conspicuous in Mali with many believing there could be future violence against them.

3.2 Demographic aspects of the conflict

Although it would be fallacious to think that this conflict was underpinned by demographic causes, past migrations, population dynamics and spatial distribution of populations certainly contributed to some of the underlying tensions. High status Tamasheq and Maures had migrated southwards across the Sahara in previous centuries and their racial distinctness combined with traditions of raids and slave capture among the black African cultivating populations mean that there is a culture of racially determined suspicion. This is exacerbated by the fact that many red Tamasheq perceive the black population in the light of slaves with what they see as slave-like qualities – stupidity, ugliness, inferiority. In the early 1980s many red Tamasheq women could not understand how a black government could possibly be capable of running a country and they mourned the passing of the French (although the archives testify to substantial Franco-Tamasheq conflict). According to Berge

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7 In Malian French there is a distinction between ‘sedentarisation’ – which implies both ceasing to be mobile and becoming cultivators – and ‘fixation’ which means ceasing to have a mobile lifestyle but retaining a pastoral economy. This is largely a legacy from the colonial tax categories of ‘sédentaires’ who paid tax on agricultural production and ‘nomades’ who paid per capita livestock tax. Following more conventional English usage I use sedentarisation to refer to ceasing to live a mobile lifestyle, whatever the economic activity.
‘...many Tuaregs however now feel that the Malian government rather than France, is the main cause of their troubles’. This racial prejudice was more at a population level than between individuals. Many Tamashq men had excellent individual reciprocal relationships with Songhay and Peul whom they encountered over negotiations about pastures and in the market. These relationships were essential for survival in the zone: “Only human groupings made up of different societies and endowed with natural and human resources which assured the basic complementarities starting with grain and livestock were viable. Only systems which favoured adjustments and exchanges between ethnic groups, between zones and between different economic activities all of which were indispensable for each other, could ensure stability in this sahelian environment of resources which varied considerably in both time and space’. (Marty 1999, my translation). Marty makes the point that in the early 20th century the French tried to sever the mututally beneficial economic social and political links between the sedentary and the nomadic populations who had long evolved an effective (although not conflict-free) co-existence and interdependence. Nevertheless distrust of the ‘other’ was always present and this flared up once the conflict between the army and the rebels was established. From the Tamashq perspective an element of this distrust was an ever-present perception that they were a demographic minority who had never had their fair share of political, administrative and military power, that they were effectively discriminated against by the Malian government. There was a strong perception that the black populations were growing faster than them because of higher fertility and lower mortality. It is unclear to what extent this perception arose out of intellectual Tamashq reading the colonial archives – which continually portrayed red Tamashq as a population in decline, with very low fertility – and to what degree it was an accurate observation of the polygamous Songhay, Bambara and Peul maintaining most reproductive age women continuously married and reproducing.

Over recent decades, driven by population growth and by drought induced economic transformation, the expansion of agriculture along the banks of the Niger and into areas which were previously dry season pastures is very evident. There is no escaping the fact that there is increased competition for natural resources – in particular water and productive land – and the mobile pastoralist groups have lost out. One of the original aims of the rebellion was a separate land for the Tuareg which may have been as much a plea for inalienable land rights as one for political autonomy.

These demographic undertones to the conflict are particularly relevant to understanding some of the demographic repercussions and responses – in particular some of the outcomes operating through the socio-economic and political determinants. However contemporary Tamashq demography cannot just be interpreted in the light of the conflict which this population has endured. This study was undertaken nearly 10 years after the start of the conflict and over 4 years after repatriation. In these 10 years Mali has undergone rapid democratisation and at the time of the survey a massive decentralisation programme was being established. This itself has serious
implications both for demographic outcomes but also for deliberate manipulation of demographic behaviour

4. This study

4.1 Data
In both 1981 and 2001 demographic data were collected using a single round retrospective survey and birth histories for women (table 1). In 2001 marriage histories were also collected for women aged 12-55 and for present men. For absent women summary data were collected on children ever born and dead children by sex. In 1981 we attempted a total enumeration of the Tamasheq population who spent the dry season in and on the periphery of the Niger inland delta. By 2001 most of this population no longer transhumed into the delta and the aim was to enumerate all the Tamasheq population living in or transhuming around the sites\(^8\) to the west of the delta (the Mema) where most of the groups enumerated in 1981 were known to live. In 2001 we also enumerated both sedentary and nomadic communities in part of the Daouna further north, some of whom had previously transhumed in the delta, and some communities north of Goundam which included nomadic groups who had not fled during the rebellion, and was also the area of a linked, intensive anthropological study into the demographic consequences of the rebellion.

Table 1: Population characteristics 1981, 2001

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<tr>
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<th>Delta Tamasheq 1981</th>
<th>Kel Tamasheq 2001</th>
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<tr>
<td>de jure population</td>
<td>6125</td>
<td>8270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Tamasheq</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Tamasheq</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.06</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
<td>All women 15-50</td>
<td>Ever married women 12-55</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1289 interviews done</td>
<td>1313 interviews done</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89% eligible women</td>
<td>979.1% eligible women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage red</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
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4.2 Fertility
A population level comparison of age specific fertility rates and parity by age shows that fertility has barely changed over the last twenty years (figure 2 & 3). This is a population where age reporting is poor (and was even worse in 1981) and where surveys encounter substantial suspicion. The anomalies can largely be explained by reporting problems such as the deficit of children for older women in 1981.

\(^8\) A ‘site’ is a sedentarised community of former nomads.  
\(^9\) + 23 interviews with women over 55
This stability is more remarkable when one considers all the crises that this population has endured: drought, forced migration, repatriation; social changes – a move from nomadic pastoralism to semi-sedentary living in a more diverse economy, changing social composition from half the population black slaves, ex-slaves and blacksmiths reduced to less than a quarter; for rich families the quasi-total loss of unpaid domestic labour and a general impoverishment of a substantial majority of the population alongside a substantial decline in child mortality.

Figure 3: Age specific fertility rates by period:
Total population using 2001 & 1981 data
This stability in the face of conflict suggests that the fertility response to crisis is not homogenous. Conflict may engender very different responses to an economic slump. In urban West Africa, faced with a major economic problems, fertility has fallen rapidly, largely through postponement of marriage (Antoine and Djire 1998), yet this rural population which has faced more intense economic, social and political crisis is not responding by fertility decline but by stability. The general consensus is that fertility transition is stimulated by some (although not necessarily all) of modernisation, education, a move away from subsistence production, exposure to mass media, declining infant and child mortality (Bulatao & Casterline 2001). All these have occurred in these Tamasheq populations over the last few years, but the starting point was so low that the enormous social and economic transformations may only be visible to those who knew this population twenty years ago. Within Mali (itself one of the least developed countries in the world) this population remains peripheral, impoverished and underdeveloped.

In fact, the low level of socio-economic development coupled with the substantial social change gave good reason to anticipate an increase in fertility. In 1981 total fertility was around 6, total marital fertility around 10. Fertility was low compared to the rest of rural Mali largely because of the marriage regime – although there was some evidence of slightly higher levels of primary and secondary infertility and subfertility (Randall 1996). Although Muslim, most Kel Tamashq are monogamous in a country where other populations are highly polygamous (République du Mali 2001, table 6.2: 42.6% women were in polygamous unions rising to over 50% for women over 35; Tamashq 0.5% red women in polygamous unions and 5.5% black women). There are substantial spousal age differences (median 10 years) and a general inclination to divorce with no stigma attached. These characteristics, alongside young female age at first marriage and high male adult mortality mean that a substantial proportion of reproductive aged women are unmarred at any one time (Randall 1984, Randall & Winter 1985, Fulton & Randall 1985, Randall & Giuffrida 2003) and reducing total fertility significantly. Yet two simple changes in the marriage dynamics would allow a substantial increase in proportions of reproductive aged women married and thus fertility: a reduction in male age at first marriage (SMAM 1981=28.1, 2001=29.4)) or the adoption of polygamy – acceptable because they are Muslims and ubiquitous in surrounding populations. Men do attempt polygamy from time to time, but with the exception of one lineage where it is said to be acceptable, and where three cases of polygamy were observed during fieldwork, few men attempt it and even fewer women accept it.

4.21 Expectations of conflict induced fertility change
Using the framework it becomes clear that there are many reasons why one might expect conflict-induced increases in Tamashq fertility in the New Order phase.

Biological and Biosocial factors. These will have most impact on fertility in the disorder and limbo phases of conflict (see Randall 2002) rather than post-conflict.
Psychological: The Kel Tamasheq studied in 1981-2 believed themselves to be a minority who were being outpaced demographically by other (black) Malian populations. The conflict, with its racial overtones and forced migration reinforced this self-perceived vulnerability. The period spent in the refugee camps allowed for plenty of exchanges between traditional rural pastoralists, modern, educated ‘intellectuals’ and young radical rebels and time to reflect on the Tamasheq position vis à vis Mali (and Mauritania). It would have been surprising if a pronatalist discourse had not developed. The exile occurred simultaneously with the world-wide popularisation of fundamentalist Islam. Improved communications and contacts with former migrants to Libya, Algeria and Saudi Arabia certainly facilitated the spread of some fundamentalist Muslim ideas including that a good Muslim has many children to increase the Muslim population, and that God will provide for all. The melting-pot in Mauritania of intellectuals, nomads, religious leaders and returned migrants combined with militant rebels campaigning for a separate Tuareg state, was almost certainly a fertile discussion-ground for a development of pronatalist attitudes. Yet in the anthropological study, such pronatalism was really only expressed by a few intellectuals and not the mass of refugees. Many men and women believe that it is a sin to control fertility within marriage\(^\text{10}\), but this is just the traditional interpretation of Islam and unrelated to the conflict. Some women clearly felt a conflict of interest – terrified of childbirth\(^\text{11}\) and not wanting too many children yet believing that fertility control was haram (forbidden). Thus there were many psychological reasons why fertility might increase, or at least there be a determined pronatalist stance, but other than that associated with interpretations of Islamic doctrine such pronatalism does not appear to have materialised. On the other hand there was also no evidence of an anti-natalism consequent upon despair and trauma as documented among some urban red Tamasheq by Canut and Iskova (1996).

Socio-economic: The socio-economic impacts of the conflict were substantial for most rural Kel Tamasheq continuing a process of herd loss, impoverishment and loss of a dependent labour supply which had started in the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. In the process of flight many households lost much livestock: abandoned in panic, consumed en route, sold to pay the extortionate price that Mauritanians asked for access to wells. Not all animals were lost. Some people managed to maintain herds outside the refugee camps in Mauritania, some were able to build up herds of small stock through trade and investment in the later days of exile. Some families – especially in the north – never left during the rebellion and maintained their herds and a highly nomadic lifestyle in hidden inaccessible places in the

\(^{10}\) Although not necessarily before marriage and in adulterous relations where there is heavy petting and possibly coitus interruptus (Nicolaisen 1997)

IZ35vf03: (interview from the anthropological study)

I: And what happens if the [married] woman gets a child with her lover?

R: It’s impossible that her lover has children with her. Is that possible?… There are lots of sorts of love. The woman’s body also has lots of parts. It’s not just because a man follows you and courts you that you have to have children with him. As your body has lots of parts you can give him the parts which give him pleasure. It’s because of this pleasure that they are united and her lover respects her because of this pleasure, but they don’t need to have children.

\(^{11}\) The estimated lifetime risk of maternal mortality was 1 in 8!
mountains. In general though, it seems there has been a substantial decline in wealth and herd size (although some of the rich have probably got richer). This impoverishment appears to have no impact on reproductive decision-making. Children are not perceived as a consumers who must now be fed from a smaller pot. God is the ultimate provider and within most communities there are poor households partially or totally supported by richer kin. Substantial resources are flowing into the area through NGOs and their associated projects, and although these projects do produce infrastructures, it seems that some of the resources can be converted into assets and cattle for rich people with the right networks. Traditions of kinship support networks remain strong and can mitigate temporary absence of resources. Their very strength motivates people to want children, because children are the basis for future networks and are seen (sons at least) as far more of an asset than a cost.

A further motivation for high fertility might have been the final erosion of social hierarchies and dependent (slave) labour. In 1981 there were some dependent Bella in every red Tamaseh camp surveyed, although there were also independent Bella. By 2001 most Bella living in mixed communities were either independent Bella who had chosen to live in there, or paid servants. Most red women had to do substantially more domestic labour than before and one might imagine that children as a source of labour would be more valued. However observations in the sedentary sites indicate that many older children (especially boys) have little economic, or other, role to play, with many just hanging about. There are too few animals for them to learn herding and little in the way of other economic activities. Many men also spend much of their time sitting around talking 12, although those with herds, blacksmiths and those working as masons building the many new houses, work extremely hard. Thus, although conflict-induced diversification of economic activities and the loss of slave labour might have led children to become more desirable for their labour – in fact there is little evidence of this because such diversification is not very evident.

The conflict and exile transformed demand for and participation in education. Schools were set up in the refugee camps and many children attended for one to three years (table 2).

---

12 This is not new: the same was true in the 1980s
Table 2: Percentages literate in French by age 1981, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attitudes to education have changed. In the refugee camps those who had any schooling were easily able to get employment with the NGOs and UNHCR and education is now seen as one path to employment and future security. Provision is now easier; modern education and a nomadic lifestyle are practically incompatible whereas now that many people are sedentarised and have few animals, education is not competing with animal husbandry training. The repatriation package for larger sites included the construction of schools (Papandiek et al 1999), some of which have teachers supported by the government and others which are community schools. Many more teachers in local schools are now Tamasheq – presumably attracted by the possibilities of living in a sedentary Tamasheq community. Elsewhere in Africa, increased educational participation has driven fertility decline because of the costs to parents, but here the minimal costs of schooling are not a brake on fertility with material costs often met by NGOs or rich kin. School attendance remains low (table 3) by international standards but high compared to 1981.

Table 3: Percentage of each age group attending school (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>girls</th>
<th>boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is possible that if a substantial proportion of girls goes through primary school there may be future repercussions for fertility. Only 17/1110 women had ever used modern contraception and 22 had used traditional methods (4 both). Literacy in French or Arabic was significantly associated with contraceptive use, as was living in a town or village: having been a refugee was not. The conflict has transformed Kel Tamasheq socio-spatial distribution. In 1981 the few people who had received education left the area and pastoralism in order to use their education in appropriate urban occupations. Decentralisation and sedentarisation – both linked to the conflict – have attracted educated former urban dwelling men, accompanied by their cosmopolitan wives and daughters. They have chosen to be based in the
sedentarised communities – where there is now more appropriate employment because of the schools, the NGO projects and the administrative posts in the new decentralised communes. This increased educational heterogeneity may eventually contribute to fertility decline – although comparing parity distributions of French speaking men (6.9% of over 20s) with non-French speaking suggests not (figure 4).

Figure 4: Male parity by age
By education or ability to speak french

![Graph showing male parity by age, education, or ability to speak French.](image)

age 5 year groups
The post-conflict political economy has substantial potential for an impact on fertility through pro-natalist agendas. This is particularly the case here in Mali where democratisation and decentralisation emerged partly as a consequence of the conflict. Decentralisation and more local financial and development autonomy were a concession to the original demands for a Tuareg state. In practice, the decentralised communes in the North are often tiny because each group wants autonomy; many are likely to be unviable in terms of tax collection, provision of services and in paying the salaries of the elected office holders. Future fertility and population growth is likely to become an issue since all these communes need to attract more people and again one would expect the changes engendered by the conflict to trigger pro-natalist attitudes but this certainly had not manifested itself in increased fertility by the time of the survey.

Another consequence of the rebellion and the subsequent peace process is the huge amount of development aid being syphoned into the area (Giuffrida & Randall 2003, République du Mali 1995). To the demographic observer, it is not clear where all these resources are going, but a substantial population with few visible means of support is thriving. In visiting over 50 communities few obviously malnourished babies or children were observed and although women are no longer seriously obese, many would be classed as overweight in Europe. If, as seems likely, many of these ‘development’ resources are subsidising the survival of individuals and communities then this too will influence perceived costs and benefits of reproduction in favour of pronatalism.

Thus in terms of demographic logic and the socio-economic and political changes consequent upon this conflict, one would expect Tamasheq fertility to increase. Yet there is no evidence for this at all. Does this mean that our predictions were wrong or do other consequences of conflict counteract or inhibit changes in fertility? Given that nuptiality is the major determinant of Tamasheq fertility an examination the dynamics of the marriage regime before, during and since the conflict contribute to our understanding of why conflict crisis may induce different responses to economic crisis.

4.3 Nuptiality
Both in 1981 and 2001 Tamasheq were monogamous, with early but variable age at first marriage for women, and late for men, high frequency of divorce and widowhood and substantial numbers of currently unmarried women usually living with close male kin. 5-10% women never married. This is very different from the rest of Mali (figure 4) where most women marry in their teens with little variance in age at first marriage, where polygamy is frequent, all women marry and most women are married throughout their reproductive years. The uniqueness of the Tamasheq marriage system is compounded by their very high levels of consanguineous marriage. Most rural Malian populations have marriage preferences for close kin but the Tamasheq encourage all forms of cousin marriage (in contrast to Bambara, for example, for whom only cross cousin marriage is acceptable) with half of all first marriages being between first degree cousins or once removed. Parallel patrilateral cousins are preferred but cross cousins and matrilateral
cousins quite frequent. Because of previous consanguineous marriages most spouses can trace their kin links in various different ways.

The aspect of demography which has taken precedence both during and since the conflict is marriage – in an attempt to secure various ends which are partly conflict related. Other than migration, marriage is the demographic behaviour over which people have most control. In a situation of conflict, marrying off one’s daughters or sisters secures alliances, reinforces bonds and may also ensure women’s safety. Marriage increases the number of men who are responsible for a woman. During the conflict the proportion of first marriages of very young girls (under 15) and of older women (over 19) increased (table 5) reverting to the pre-conflict distribution after the end of the conflict.

Table 5: Red Tamasheq: percentage distribution of first marriages by age and period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Young &lt;15</th>
<th>Average 15-18</th>
<th>Mature 19+</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985-91 before rebellion</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-5 during conflict</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996+ after peace</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This marital response could be interpreted as a pronatalist strategy to try and get women who might normally have remained unmarried into reproductive situations; this might have been the case for the older women. The large numbers of people in the refugee camps allowed for matching of couples who might otherwise have had problems in finding a spouse. It could also have been protection for women. In the refugee camps parents lost much control over their unmarried daughters who attended the frequent marriage celebrations. Accounts of camp life by young unmarried girls show that they had a lot of freedom and enjoyed themselves considerably. Premarital
preganancies are totally unacceptable for red Tamasheq and one way of protecting daughters was to marry them off. Both of these explanations could account for the increased proportions of young and old marrying. A third possibility is that the camps provided both the opportunity and the need to reinforce old alliances and create new ones. Many people commented that in the refugee camps they met kin who they had known about but had never met before. Marriage has long been a Tamasheq strategy to generate alliances and networks and during the rebellion there was probably more need than ever before. However this would imply an increase in marriage rates though during the period of conflict and exile for which we have no evidence (figure 5). It seems therefore, that young vulnerable girls were married off in the conflict\textsuperscript{13}, that some otherwise less desireable older women managed to find husbands but not that there was an excess of marriages in a pronatalist fervour.

![Figure 5: Annual first and remarriage rates: red Tamasheq](image)

An examination of the choice of spouse can also give some indication of particular priorities in a conflict. From women’s marriage histories we have data on the kinship link with husband – recorded using Tamasheq terminology - from which it can be seen that the kin distribution of first spouses remained fairly constant from the pre-conflict, through the conflict and then post conflict (table 6a).

\textsuperscript{13} There is no indication that rape was perceived to be a problem either in Mali or in the refugee camps
Table 6a: Percentage of marriages in each period according to spousal kinship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1st gen cousins &amp; once removed</th>
<th>2nd gen cousins &amp; once removed</th>
<th>Other kin</th>
<th>Not kin</th>
<th>Total marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1985</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-91</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996+</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6b: Second + marriages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1st gen cousins &amp; once removed</th>
<th>2nd gen cousins &amp; once removed</th>
<th>Other kin</th>
<th>Not kin</th>
<th>Total marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1985</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-91</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996+</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Usually a girl’s parents organise her first marriage, often to a close kinsman. The motives for marriages may be political alliances, economic networks, a desire or an obligation to please close kin, although the couple themselves have strong expectations of love. Sometimes either or both of the couple do not want the marriage at all but go through with the proceedings to make their family happy and then divorce a few months later, although many close kin first marriages do succeed (Randall & Giuffrida 2003). A woman generally has more say in choice of spouse for second and subsequent marriages but many still prefer to marry close kin. Kinship bonds are seen as being much stronger than marital bonds – therefore the inherent love between close kin will contribute to making a marriage strong. A closely related husband cannot mistreat his wife because of the kinship links, and she cannot insult her in-laws because they are also kin. Although substantial bridewealth may be declared for a marriage – either in cash or animals – it seems that, in the case of close kin marriage much of this bridewealth is never actually exchanged.

The pattern of spouse choice for second marriages (table 6b) has changed considerably since the end of the conflict with a substantial increase in the proportion of close kin second marriages. This is clearly a response to the post-conflict situation but from the demographic data we cannot tell whether more second marriages are being arranged as strategic alliances or whether women are choosing close kin in a atmosphere where kin are more certain than something more distant. Given that remarriage rates have declined (figure 5) the decrease may just be an overall reduction in marriages to distant kin and non-relatives with no concomitant increase in close kin. Whatever the case the population appears to be turning inwards.

These marriage patterns can be seen as a particular ‘Tamasheq’ response to this conflict through the maintenance of traditional marriage behaviour reinforcing an identity far apart from ‘others’ in the conflict. Monogamy is an important identifying characteristic of being Tamasheq and one which can be maintained, as can consanguineous marriage which is frequently used to reinforce links between different tiwsaten, the patrilineages, where the towsit
is another important element of people’s identity. People are kel Tamasheq but more importantly they belong to a specific *towsit*. Many other characteristics which contributed to Tamasheq identity in the past have had to be or have been largely abandoned: nomadic pastoralism; most of the material culture associated with the tent and pastoral production; fat women who could be admired as expensive objects but who need do no work; traditional values of hospitality and generosity, undermined by loss of resources and conflict generated suspicion of others; the social hierarchy. Monogamous marriages with close kin are an element that can be retained, that the conflict and social change has been unable to destroy, and they can simultaneously serve a purpose reinforcing alliances, guaranteeing the pedigree of the next generation, demonstrating a solid Tamasheq front to the outsiders, and reinforcing links and networks within the society that can provide some security to the impoverished and develop power and influence for certain individuals and groups.

Traditionally much African marriage serves political and economic ends, generating or consolidating alliances usually validated through the children born to the couple. Marriage is the means of legitimising reproduction which is an important goal for both men and women and the unmarried adult (or the childless adult) is a social anomaly. This is true of Tamasheq marriage to an extent, although reproduction is rarely given the primordial position that it is in other societies. The importance of the links and networks and obligations created by Tamasheq marriages should not be underestimated and may go a long way towards understanding why the conflict seems to have consolidated marital behaviour rather than leading to change. Around 20% marriages are with girls aged 14 or less, few of whom have reached menarche and clearly where immediate reproduction is not the goal. These precocious marriages are often quite brief and may be unconsummated; the girls are not interested in having children, finding such thoughts totally shameful. The motives for these marriages are about the links and obligations they generate at the time, not about future fertility. This reinforces the idea that the stability of Tamasheq marriage in the face of this conflict and concomitant socio-economic changes is because marriage is not serving primarily fertility functions, but is reinforcing aspects of Tamasheq identity which the conflict has made all the more important to demonstrate to others.

14 Ensuring virginity is not the aim either. Virginity is not a particularly sought after virtue in tamasheq society (Nicolaisen 1997)
4.4 Mortality
The immediate and longer term impact of conflict on mortality is too self-evident to merit much space. There were massacres and attacks which resulted in death, and the epidemics and poor conditions in the early days in the refugee camps also resulted in increased infant and child mortality (Randall 2001). Nevertheless, on the scale of many African conflicts excess deaths were probably not substantial, although that is not to deny the trauma caused by those that did occur and the conditions under which they happened. According to individual biographies, specific attacks and massacres were frequently the trigger for flight into Mauritania. Estimation of the impact of the rebellion on adult mortality is difficult because the indirect methods available make assumptions about timerelated patterns of mortality which may not apply in conflict. Direct measures of child mortality from birth histories are more robust and demonstrate the role of biological factors in the disorder phase of conflict( figure 6) having most impact on infants but arresting the mortality decline for children aged 2- 5. This ties in with accounts of epidemics at the beginning followed by the development of good, free, health care and vaccination campaigns.

Ultimately however the social change for which the conflict was a catalyst was largely beneficial in terms of infant and child mortality if one looks at the substantial decline between the 1980s and the late 1990s with child mortality now lower than elsewhere in Mali.\footnote{Tamasheq mortality may be underreported because people dislike talking about dead children, but also because of high adult female mortality. From the men’s marriage histories (men 60 & under who are likely to have wives of reproductive age) marriages which ended in the death of the wife included 8.6% of all children born but 14.3% of all dead children. These children have no mother to report their births or deaths.}

Figure 6: Infant and child mortality from birth histories

-1981 (2001 data)
-1981-90 drought
-1991-95 conflict
-1996+ new order
Table 7: Child mortality - Kel Tamasheq & Rural Mali *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neonatal</th>
<th>1q0</th>
<th>4q1</th>
<th>5q0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Mali 1991-2001</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>131.9</td>
<td>139.8</td>
<td>253.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kel Tamasheq 1991-2001</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kel Tamasheq 1971-81 (1981 data)</td>
<td>(34)*</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* source République du Mali, 2001 (table 6.2)

There are several reasons why this should be so, influenced by both socio-economic and political forces. Although many people have lost livestock and become poorer, ironically this has had beneficial consequences for children’s health. With fewer livestock, and changing residence patterns most children no longer transhume into the inland Niger delta where they all spent the hot season in the 1970s. The water in the delta was atrocious – marsh and river water - and malaria was a constant problem. Now, in the drier Mema and Daouna where most people now spend most of the year, malaria is less intense, and water quality is improved with wells, boreholes and water pumps, many created as part of the reconciliation and repatriation package (République de Mali 1995, Papandiek et al 1999). High status women are now thinner and more active leading to more continuity of child care. Observations suggest that children are washed much more frequently than in 1981-2, and with soap. All the children who had been in the refugee camps were immunised, and at the time of the survey there was a new mobile immunisation campaign. Primary health care workers have been trained in the refugee camps, and although they have little in the way of drugs, people do consult them and are prepared (and able) to travel to health centres if they feel it is necessary because communications and transport are much improved.

Thus the social change caused by the conflict has generally led to changes with positive impacts on infant and child health and mortality, although there is one exception related to the marriage patterns outlined above. Consanguineous marriages has deleterious health and mortality consequences for the offspring (Bittles 1994) and this population has extremely high levels of consanguinity. From table 8 we see that children born before 1981 with closely related parents had significantly higher mortality than those of unrelated parents, as have those born since 1996. In the intervening period the differences were not statistically significant but they were in the same direction. For children born in the last 5 years the differences are highly significant: Given that only about 30% couples are in the low risk group, the maintenance of consanguineous marriage strategies will have an important impact on child survival.

16 There was substantial underreporting of neonatal deaths in 1981
Table 8: Proportion surviving by age 5 by period and relatedness of parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of birth</th>
<th>1st cousin &amp; once removed (1)</th>
<th>2nd/3rd cousin &amp; once removed (2)</th>
<th>Distant kin or unrelated (3)</th>
<th>P (between kin 1&amp;2 and not kin 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1981</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td>0.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-90</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>.787</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-95</td>
<td>.835</td>
<td>.815</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996+ (to age 3)</td>
<td>.807</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>P&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consequences of conflict for child mortality therefore can be summed up as favourably influenced by biological factors with a generally improved physical environment and maternal health, but deleterious influence of biosocial factors through increased consanguinity. Socio-economic and political changes are ultimately responsible for the improved physical environment with livestock loss and impoverishment one of many motives for sedentarisation. However NGO and UNHCR policies both in the refugee camps and in the conditions for repatriation also contributed to new attitudes towards health services alongside increased provision and access.

4.5 Spatial distribution
The most dramatic impact of the conflict has not been on population dynamics but on the spatial distribution. Whereas in the early 1980s they were all nomadic pastoralists, living in small flexible camps, now over half the population are semi or permanently settled in fixed communities with houses built of mud bricks. Even the more nomadic households tend to remain close to a site for much of the year to use the well or borehole. Some of this sedentarisation occurred before the conflict as a result of drought but the rate accelerated after repatriation for many reasons – economic, political, a response to policies of development agencies and all were directly influenced by the conflict (see Randall & Giuffrida 2003 for detailed discussion) and by the social change generated by the refugee camp period. However alongside the socio-economic and political changes, sedentarisation, or at least the building of permanent settlements, also has a psychological dimension which is grounded in the conflict. People are very aware that mobile pastoralists living in tents were somewhat invisible with little evidence that they had ever been in Mali after they had fled. Many likened themselves to birds – when they have flown away you cannot tell they have ever been there. Fear of future conflicts and a determination to render themselves much more visible is one of the dimensions behind the rapid construction of mudbrick houses – if forced to abandon them in the future there is hard evidence that people lived there. This determination to make their mark upon the landscape may have some grounds in their experience of access to land. In Mali throughout the colonial and Independence periods those who claimed rights over land had to exercise a ‘mise en valeur’ which

17 GTZ subsidised the housebuilding providing free doors and windows and transporting the wood. (Papandiek et al 1999)
effectively meant cultivating the land. Pastoralists who merely grazed the land had few rights and they had gradually been eroded throughout the 20th century. Building houses in sites is a way of physically demonstrating one’s presence and one’s use of the land. Many sites have also attempted cultivation – although it is not clear with how much success.

5. Conclusions
Aspects of both sedentarisation and nuptiality can be seen as part of the same range of responses to conflict – attempts to make the Tamasheq population visible and readily identifiable in case of future conflicts, so that they are unable to disappear from Mali. The maintenance or even exaggeration of traditional marital behaviour, much of which distinguishes this population from other rural Malian groups is part of consolidation of group identity as red Tamasheq. The tendency for conflict and crisis to reinforce interethnic divisions and delimit identities (Marty 1999) is clearly evident both in the creation of these solid Tamsaheq communities and in the retention of monogamous marriages and the frequency of consanguineous marriages.

How can this case study contribute to a conceptualisation of the demography of conflict? It seems unlikely that one will ever be able to generalise about a demography of conflict save that in the short term mortality is inevitably going to rise. In order to understand or even predict responses in any situation it is essential to have a historical perspective – conflict does not emerge from nowhere – there are past tensions, past relationships, past conflicts which contribute to the range of responses (Berge 1992). In the north west Mali tensions between different ethnic groups, between groups using different modes of exploiting the natural resources had been documented in the French archives throughout the twentieth century – although it is true that many of these tensions may have themselves been generated by the French colonial administration (Marty 1999). The same archives also document substantial conflicts within ethnic groups, between different lineages and the groups behind different chiefs. Nevertheless the tensions between red Tamasheq (and Maures) and other groups were very real by the 1990s and demographic responses to the conflict include attempts to respond to those tensions through reinforcing identity as Kel Tamasheq or more usually in terms of the tiwsaten – the lineages. One must never forget that fertility is the primary mode of recruitment to most social groups and marriage is the legitimisation of fertility. Thus when a group feels itself under threat a major response is going to be one where the boundaries between the aggressor and the threatened are made more clear – in this case by reinforcing marriage rules and conventions and by constructing communities that are both visible and Tamasheq.
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Figure 1: Conceptualisation of phases of forced migration or conflict on demography

**Conflict: impact on reproduction, mortality & nuptiality**

**Disorder**
- Early phase of conflict
  - Flight, early refugee camps
- Biological effects
  - Nutrition & malnutrition
  - Disease
  - Physical/mental stress
  - Libido
  - Infant deaths & amenorrhoea
  - Fertility / mortality

**Limbo**
- Prolonged conflict / uncertainty
  - Established refugee camps: Dependence
- Biosocial effects
  - Spousal separation
  - Rape
  - Population density
  - Marriage
  - Fertility / nuptiality
- Psychological effects
  - Trauma
  - Multiple deaths
  - Rape / torture
  - Uncertainty
  - Despair
  - Fert / mort / nupt

**New Order**
- Reconstruction
  - Resettlement / repatriation
- Socio-economic effects
  - Economic activities
  - Loss of capital
  - Loss of land
  - Education & training
  - Social hierarchies
  - Fert / mort / nupt
- Political economy
  - Development Aid
  - Political context
  - Other populations
  - Religion
  - Fertility / nuptiality

**Demographic outcomes**
- Pro-natalism / anti-natalism
- Access to and use of reproductive & other health services
- Child / adult survival
- Nuptiality regime

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