Age structure and the Political Future of the Sahel

Richard Cincotta
Wilson Center Global Fellow

Environmental Change and Security Program

and

The Stimson Center
rcincotta@stimson.org
The Sahelian Countries

- Senegal
- Mauritania
- Mali
- Burkina Faso
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Chad
- Sudan
- South Sudan
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia

9 States (1975)

11 States (2015)
The Sahel: When it’s difficult to “be a state”.

• **Deep ethno-linguistic cleavages** (Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Mali).

• **Borders** initially fixed by colonial-era agreements.

• Significant portions of populations that are **transhumant**, and difficult to service.

• Extraordinarily **rapidly growing urban populations**.

• **Declining per-capita levels of renewable resources:**
  • cropland,
  • renewable fresh water, and
  • seasonally viable perennial rangelands.
The Age-structural Transition, 2010

11 Sahelian States
YOUTHFUL
Origin of ~80% of all “new” intra-state conflict. ~15-20% assessed as a liberal democracy, but most unstable.

INTERMEDIATE
~50% assessed as a liberal democracy.

MATURE
~80% assessed as a liberal democracy.

Updated from Cincotta & Leahy, 2007
General Model: *Liberal Democracy*

![Graph showing the probability of freedom over median age](image-url)
Gain & Loss Models: Liberal Democracy

Cincotta, 2015
States achieving “Free” from 1973 to 1993

Liberal regime decay functions

“Free” regimes remaining from original set

Years after achieving “Free”
Median age: UN Population Div., 2013 (medium var.)
FREEDOM HOUSE: Regime Status

Data: Freedom House, 2014
Expectations: Cincotta, 2015
Age structural “general models”

Cincotta, unpublished
Sahel: The Future

- Continues at relatively **high risk of intra-state conflict**.

- **Low probability of stable liberal democracy**. *(Senegal more stable than expected)*.

- Possibility of spillover conflict from Nigeria.

- Possibility of breakups of some states.
End

Richard Cincotta
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Wilson Center Global Fellow
Sahel: Fertility, 2015

UN Pop. Div., 2013 (medium var.)
Core Development Conceptual Model

Diagram:
- Fertility
- Educational Attainment
- Per-capita Income

Arrows indicate the flow of influence between these concepts.
Age Structure + Core Development

- Slowed growth of school-age population
- Slowed growth of working-age population
- Higher proportion of population in the working ages (taxes, govt. savings)
- Opportunity for increased per-pupil investment
- Educational Attainment
- Per-capita Income
- Fertility
The Authoritarian Bargain and the Age-structural Transition

Net Benefits

Unconstrained executive power

Civil liberties & political rights

Median Age (Years)

15 25 35 45 55
Ethno-linguistic Polarization

“Deep cleavages”

Data: Desmet, Ortuño-Ortí & Warciarg, 2012