

THE STATE INSTRUMENTS AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF LINEAGES IN THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: LEGAL POWER VERSUS TRADITIONAL POWER – THE CASE OF GUINEA-CONAKRY

Herbert Schutzer*

Abstract: The articulation originated in Guinea-Conakry of legal and traditional policies and the observance of the nature of their geopolitics, the former, statewide, and the latter, of lineages, are discussed in the text. In two parts, the instrumentality of the State machine, which seeks a good governance in a newly-established democracy, and the characteristics of the traditional power, with its important task of building up sociocultural identities, are established not disregarding the friction point of the articulation of both unequal powers that seek in this articulation to overcome this chronic condition of underdeveloped that the country has maintained since it rose as an independent State. In a national perspective of Guinea-Conakry, the changes that a new political class with international formation and articulation has been undertaking in sub-Saharan Africa can be observed.

Keywords: Traditional power. Legal power. Geopolitics. Articulation. Instrumentality.

1 Introduction

The theme approached herein is not restricted to a sub-Saharan African locality only; it is a sample of the general panorama of the area, except for some of its timely cases. This study aims to bring forth a key issue of the subcontinent, the issue of lineages and traditional power that it has caused in its social and economic organization manner, and it is concerned with observing the changing panorama that comes

* He holds a Bachelor's and a Teaching Degree in Social Sciences (USP), a specialization course in International Relations and Politics (FESPSP) and a Master's Degree in Geography (USP). He is a Professor at Estácio/UniRadial-SP. E-mail: hschutzer@globo.com.

with the ascension of post-crisis political elite of decolonization and comes together with the sub-Saharan political maturation.

As well as in other sub-Saharan African countries, the Republic of Guinea has been developing, for two decades and a half, the insertion of the traditional power of lineages in the country's political scenario. After having been unprecedentedly repressed in the socialism period, in its attempt to change society, the traditional power has shown its might through recognition of its legitimacy.

In order to carry out the changes in a post-socialism scenario, the government of Guinea has been promoting the liberalization of its economy and reforming its administration so as to arrange it into the country's new reality. In this new panorama, the State's geopolitics has been articulating with the geopolitics of lineages that control the country's rural environment, which still holds the majority of its population.

The articulation of these two types of geopolitics is the key point of the country's stabilization and its own future. However, we know that, in the contact area of one-sided geopolitics, the tensions may undermine the country's development and stabilization plans or its domination and lead the country to a new stage detached from the post-colonial disagreements.

Thus, the Guinean government has been preparing itself so that the panorama of materialization of its policies has the propitious juridical-administrative environment to its effectiveness. Amending the Constitution and national, regional and local plans have been proposed and have been put into practice in the search for the objectives outlined by the country. And knowing the mechanisms that have been provided for its effectiveness constitutes the first part of this work.

A more timely look on the geohistorical presence of the traditional power in Guinea-Conakry with its geopolitical mechanisms is the task of the second part of this study, as they have maintained the country's several ethnical groups in diverse institutional areas, with no loss of their privileges within the communities, and assuring their force and legitimacy in the country's territorial arrangement, but not omitting the problems coming from the coexistence of the geopolitics overlapping that support the country's life today within the newly-established democratic scenario.

2 The instruments of political dissemination

Guinea has faced, for more than a decade, the misfortunes of bad governance. With the public institutions weakened, there has been a degeneration of the socioeconomic environment, which has limited the development attempts and impelled the population to serious poverty rates. In face of the country's democratization begun in 2010 with the election of Alpha Condé, the medium-term perspectives are promising. The benefits that the country may attain at the African institutions (ECOWAS and BAD – African Development Bank), the European Union (EU) and the international community are added to this. This latter has claimed for long the return of the State of Law in the country and opens possibilities to bilateral agreements on mutual assistance, e.g., the message of the Head of the Australian Government to strengthen cooperation relations between Conakry and Canberra, in May this year (Africaguinee.com, 2011), and the agreements with China, which has even donated 80 million yens to Guinea, with no counterbalance (Africaguinee.com, 2011).

The political situation until 2010 had been marked by the inability of maintaining the State of Law and controlling corruption. The Corruption Perceptions Index has rated (Transparency International – TI, 2009) the country among the five African countries that have the worst rates in the last ten years, which has led the president to threaten those who have embezzled, this last July (Africaguinee.com, 2011). From that, it can be seen that the political class lacks unblemished leaders and was unable to reach a national consensus to deal with the great domestic issues, the economic growth and the fight to poverty.

The political process, in the last decade, passed through several electoral and military crises: in 1998, 2001-2002, 2006-2007 and 2009. The opposition in the country was exposed to violence on the part of the State, in addition to being poorly organized, chiefly made up of unprepared teams of social and labor union movements, but they kept periodical upheavals against government supporters, increasingly worsening the political situation.

The democratization occurred after a tumultuous electoral process will be continued with the parliamentary elections, general and local, which will take place in the second half of 2011. The return to

the civilian regime, after the constitutional gap that lasted for two years, after the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD, from French) had revoked the constitution and dissolved the National Assembly, in 2009, filled the country with hope. The new challenges began to be faced through the Development and Transparency Plans, which will pave the way for the discussions with development partners. In the electoral plan, the government should organize transparent parliamentary elections, promote a new registration of voters before the elections, in order to help solidify democracy and strengthen the institutions, as well as their transparency for the population and international observers. Reinforcing the political participation from the actors and civil society in the democratic process aims to set the country's administrative engineering in motion, which promotes dissemination, and to harmonize the State's formal power with traditional local power, through the participative structure, which seeks to introduce the local forces into the localities' public administration and, thus, bring the State's geopolitics near the geohistorical familiar geopolitics.

The political-administrative model implemented there seeks to assure the traditional political local forces the participation in the decision-making process of public policies through sub-prefectures (or communes) and, in this manner, meet the different groups' demands and their particular needs and, simultaneously, preserve the power of lineages and their traditions. This administrative architecture also seeks to contain the different ethnocultural groups that live in the country's territorial area.

An important aspect of a country's political-administrative structure regards their Public Finances. As a rule, a State presents three basic functions, for which it needs to finance itself: the stabilization function, the allocation function and the distribution function. Equilibrium conditions in a country's Public Expenditures, therefore, will decide on its larger or smaller degree of fulfilling these functions. In other words, the governments have debts to pay and means to allocate resources for this payment.

It is through macroeconomic policies that the governments reach for their objectives, which are:

- GDP growth;
- low and stable inflation rate;

- full employment;
- income distribution;
- low interest rate;
- expanding investments;
- equilibrium in the balance of payments.

The objectives, when reached for individually, tend to keep the economic situation converging towards the solution of problems, which allows achieving them. The difficulties show up when the government tries to achieve more than one objective at the same time. For example:

- the GDP growth is incompatible with the objective of low inflation rates;
- the tax reduction is incompatible with the domestic debt growth.

Frequently, other objectives can only be achieved indirectly, such as:

- increasing the employment level does not depend only on the decision to make it; it is indispensable that the government possess instruments to achieve the objectives.

A rule is that the government needs at least one instrument for each objective. A government may achieve as many objectives as the instruments it possesses to assign its purpose.

At the macroeconomic level, the governments have five instruments to use in stimulating the policies implemented, aiming at achieving their objectives (Santos Filho, 1996, Cardoso, 2003):

- fiscal policy;
- monetary policy;
- incomes policy;
- foreign exchange policy;
- trade policy.

The fiscal policy consists of the government expenditures, the

taxes it collects and the difference between spending and revenue, that is, the budget control. The monetary policy is made up of the offer of money, the control of the interest rate and credit. The incomes policy is applied in the control of prices and wages. Foreign exchange policy is that controlling the inflow/outflow of foreign currency, as well as the formation of the exchange rate. The trade policy defines the practices of international trade, the mechanisms of incentive to exports and the trade relations with other countries.

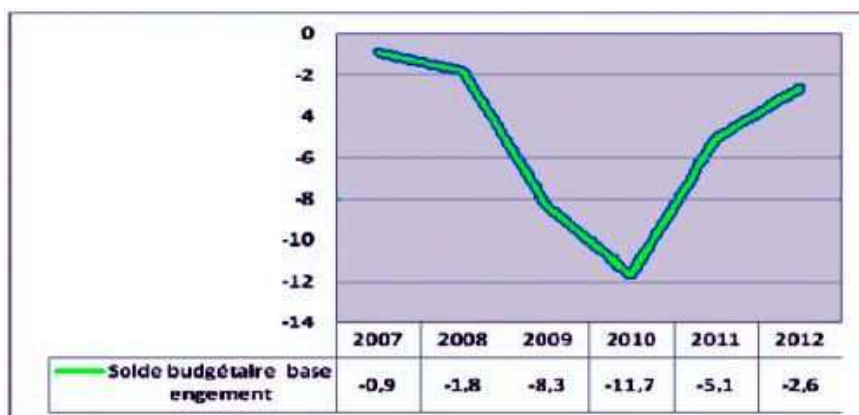
In terms of fiscal policy, the government faces the functional aspects (Blanchader, 2004), which are: allocative, distributive and stabilizing:

- allocative nature: providing security and health services, or investing in mineral exploration;
- distributive nature: as the government transfers resources between areas and spends in social programs;
- stabilizing nature: decisions concerning the spending level to keep the employment rate stable.

The government expenditures constitute the current expenses and the expenses to form the fixed capital. The current expenses are: government consumption, subsidies, transfer payments and interest payments.

The use of legal instruments to achieve the government's objectives in Guinea is a part of the fiscal policy. The 2011 Budget aims to drastically reduce the excessive expenses from the previous years, lest there is any type of additional bank financing. The first budget estimate, in comparison to 2010, includes a series of public expenditures cuts, including the emergency action plan and, in this manner, it can satisfy the need for financing 13% of the GDP, which, if not accomplished, may affect the inflation control. Thus, the government expects to attack the budget deficit, progressively reducing it. In Graph 2.1, the government's projections reach a decrease in the deficit in at least 50% in the next two years.

Graph 2.1 – Progress of the 2007-2012 budget balance.



Source: *Cadrage macroéconomique avril 2011, Direction Nationale du Plan*

In order to achieve the objectives, the government possesses a legal framework with which it assures the necessary resources to the development of the economic policy. However, this is not a governmental decision; it depends on endogenous and exogenous economic factors so that the plans may result in the desired effects. The international, regional and continental scenario may result in the success or failure of the economic project. For that, it is necessary to join all sectors of society, aiming at supporting the project that cannot come from one government, but from the collective.

2.1 Guinea's macroeconomic policy

The macroeconomic policy put into practice by the Guinean government chose as major objective the poverty fight (Figure 2.1.1), which can be achieved with the set of the previously mentioned attributes. This fiscal policy should support the development of several movements necessary to achieve the major objective. The fight against poverty as planned by the government is intended to develop other activities that require resources, e.g. improvement of the infrastructure, defense and security bases. The five bases making up the poverty fight policy bring the necessary stages to achieve the objectives.

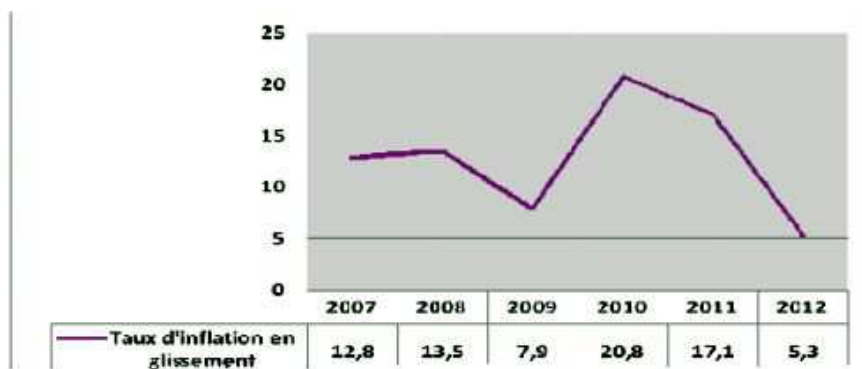
Figure 2.1.1 – Priorities of Guinea’s 2011-2012 Action Plans



Source: *Document de stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté (2011-2012)*.

The bases for the poverty elimination should control several instruments intended for maintaining the process, progressively advancing from one basis to another in a medium- and long-term policy. The rates that the government projected for improving and supporting the growth are shown on Graph 2.1.1, goals that the government should reach for, but that face, as we already warned, some obstacles, e.g. increase of the interest rate to contain inflation and the increase of the public expenditure, due to the need for investments to make the economy dynamic.

Graph 2.1.1 – Inflation rate and projection for 2012.



Source: *Document de stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté (2011-2012)*.

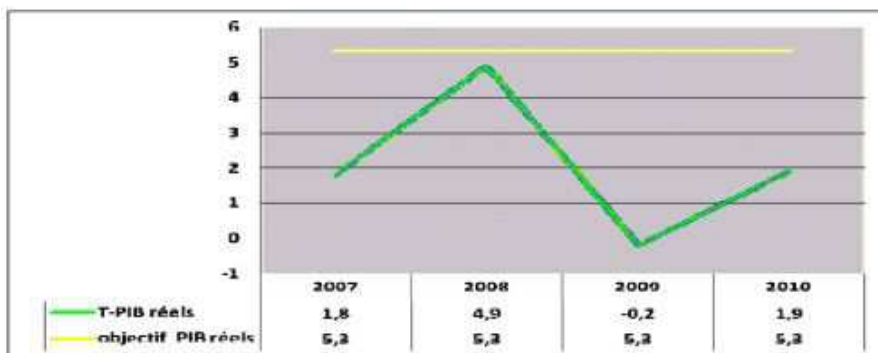
There is the idea that the Administration is made dynamic in preparing the instruments to effect the poverty reduction program,

through regional surveillance for all the sector departments, whose major task will be focused on:

- i) coordinating the prefecture structures of the sector;
- ii) assuring the upholding of laws and regulations;
- iii) developing sector reports to be nationally transmitted;
- iv) suggesting proposals to improve the technical performance of sector structures;
- v) formulating a response to any request from the governor on the functioning of the services sector.

Thus, in the Spatial and Economic Development Planning called “Regional Development and Planning Office” (PDRF), its oblique size is established as a regional advisory company, which will expand its activities in all sector areas and collaborate in formulating the macroeconomic development plans to reach for the objectives, which, as seen in Graph 2.1.2, it could not achieve.

Graph 2.1.2 – Real GDP and projection for 2010.

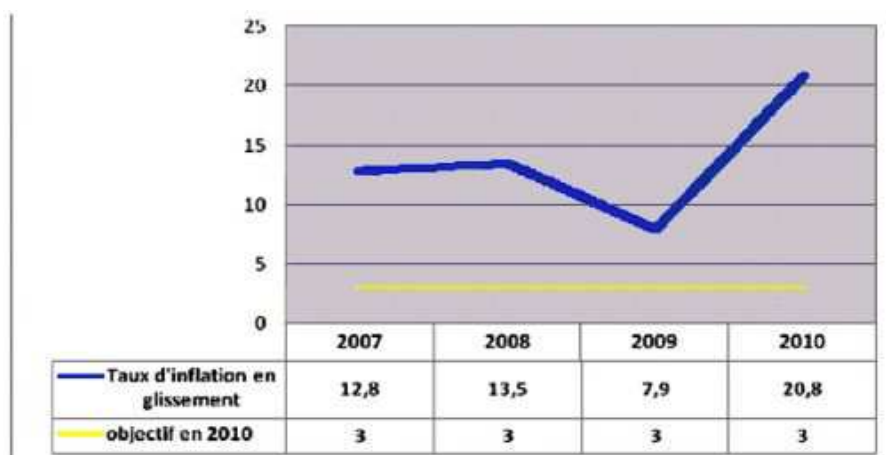


Source: *Document de stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté* (2011-2012).

The theories on macroeconomic policy caution for the dangers in choosing the objectives that need many instruments, but they first go through the good governance, which can improve public finances so as to achieve the objectives reached for. The government needs to reverse some rates (Graph 2.1.3) that threaten the country’s macroeconomic policy, e.g. inflation, which has a trend to increase in 2010, but the optimistic

projections are grounded on the existence of instruments and the improvement capacity of the government management to fulfill the action plan's expectations that estimate improvements in the inflation and GDP rates, which is a firm disposition of the government. The public finances system in Guinea, currently, has weaknesses and several factors limit the circulation of public resources and efficiency of expenditures, which concerns the BAD (African Development Bank), but, even so, the bank released 8.6 million Euros to help raise conditions for the economic development (ADB, 2011). The management of public finances should improve with strengthened governance and the resources are intended to satisfy the deficiencies in elaborating and executing the budget.

Graph 2.1.3 – Progress of the Inflation Rate 2007-2010.



Source: *Cadragre macroéconomique, Direction Nationale du Plan*

In the following Table 2.1.1, it is possible to observe that not all the indicators projected for 2010 were achieved. Only the investment rate achieved the goal and there are many factors contributing to the failure of expectations. The instruments for implementing the economic policy need to work for producing the ambitious results and that is why the GDP and inflation rate projections need to achieve the goals proposed by the government. So as to help the country, the Management Board of the African Development Fund (ADF) approved a subvention of 20 million Units of Account (equivalent to 30 million USD) to finance an

economic and financial reform support program (PAREF) on May 18, 2011, which shows the confidence on this new governance era of Guinea.

Table 2.1.1 – Progress of the main macroeconomic indicators

Indicators	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Avarage 2007 - 2010	Objective 2010
Participation of agriculture in the GDP	13,4	13,6	13,4	13,9	14,2	13,8	13,3
Real GDP growth rate	2,5	1,8	4,9	-0,2	1,9	2,1	5,3
Real GDP growth rate per capita	-1,1	-1,4	1,7	-3,3	-1,3	-1,1	1,9
Annual inflation rate	39,1	12,8	13,5	7,9	20,8	13,7	3,0
Agricultural growth rate	4,4	3,3	3,8	3,2	3,2	3,4	4,8
GDP budget deficit in %	-2	-0,9	-1,7	-8,3	-11,7	-5,7	1,5
Investment rate	22,4	19,2	21,3	16,4	18	18,7	17,4

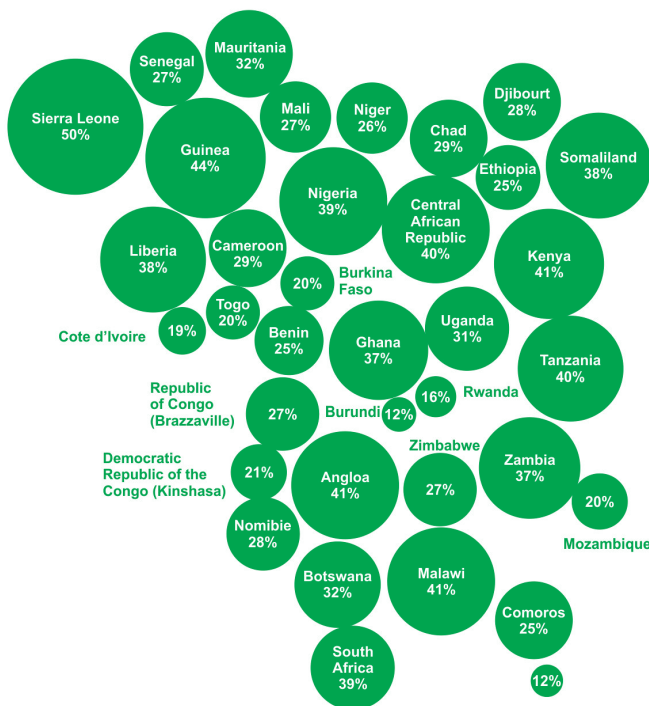
Source: Adapted from *Document de strategie de reduction de la pauvreté* (2011-2012).

The macroeconomic objectives are:

- 1) to reach a yearly production growth of 4% in 2011 and 5.5% in 2012 to allow for an increase of the GDP per capita of 0.7% and 2.2% in 2011 and in 2012;
- 2) to lower inflation to 17.1% in 2011 and 5.3% in 2012;
- 3) to have gross international reserves equivalent to 1.7 months of imports of goods and services for 2011-2012, against 1.4 months and 1.9 months of imports in 2009 and 2010;
- 4) the total revenues (excluding donations) should be brought to 18.0% of the GDP in 2011 and 19.3% of the GDP in 2012, and the budget deficit (commitment base, excluding subsidies) reduced to -5.1% of the GDP in 2011 and -2.6% in 2012. As for the total expenses in percentage of the GDP, it should be around 16.8% in 2011 and 16.1% in 2012. Furthermore, the foreign debt-related services should be reduced to 57.7% of the GDP in 2011 and 51.3% of the GDP in 2012.

The Guinean plans greatly depend on the international disposition. The economic help for the plan has been coming. A survey from the Gallup Institute has identified Guinea as the third country receiving more donations in the continent (Figure 2.1.2). The survey has asked the population of the developed countries which country they preferred the resources to be destined for and identified that, in those countries, there is a preference for the donation to African countries. The World Giving Index places Guinea in the 18th position in those populations' preference.

Figure 2.1.2 – International economic help to Africa.



Source: BBC/Africa, 2011.

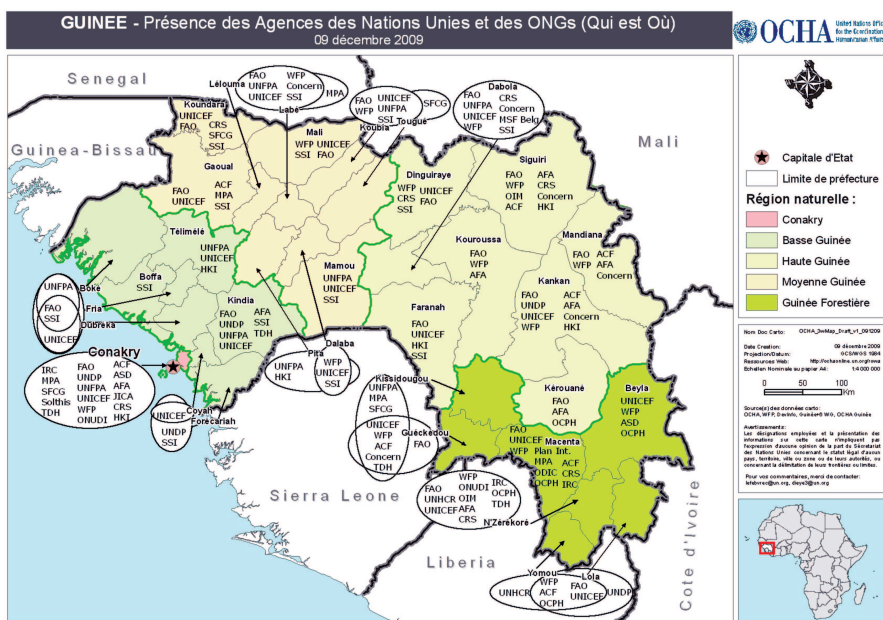
By means of this indicator, we can observe that there is a great world expectation for the recovery of countries that went through exception periods with social upheavals and those found among the

worst life quality. Guinea is in the 156th position, with a 0.34 index in 2010.

The synthesis that the context shows urges the establishment of the economic recovery plan to fight poverty that is widespread in the country, which goes through the effectiveness quality and requires a strong governmental commitment and international collaboration.

The precarious condition the country has been going through for decades led several NGOs to establish succor projects (Map 2.1.1) in the educational and health areas, especially by building schools, community health centers, and by donating equipment to hospitals. In this latter action, it is innocuous, as most of the country does not possess electrical power and depends on gas-powered generators.

Map 2.1.1 - UN agencies and NGOs in Guinea.



Source: OCHA, 2011.

The presence of international organizations denotes the concern that the country still produces on the international community. The many needs of the population and the still existent insecurity are worrisome, and the UN seeks to occupy the country in an attempt to

preserve security and stability, improving the assistance to disadvantaged communities with medium-term emergence programs in all administrative regions.

3 Dissemination/decentralization and the lineages

In the early 18th century, the ethnic group Peul moved to the Fouta Djallon region, driving the former inhabitants out, the Susus, to the west and to the coast. The coastal settlements were occupied by the Baga and the Landona and were slowly ruled by the Susus, who settled little States based on clan and filiation.

In Fouta Djallon, the Peuls built a centralized Islamic theocratic State ruled by two families, the Soriyas and the Alfayas. The men in these families took turns in the power every two years and divided the region into nine provinces.

In the savannah region, the upper-Guinea, where the Maninka kingdoms were settled, descendants of Mali's great kingdom, people converted into the Islam formed, in the 17th century, the city-state of Bate, which had as the capital the city of Kankan. Established as an enclave in the upper-Guinea, the city served as an attractive center for other Islamic peoples.

In the forested Guinea, no large civilization was established due to the very nature of the tropical forest environment. The human groups that established the region formed small dispersed villages with around 100 to 200 people. As a result of their vulnerability, the small groups settled on top of the hills for more protection and, surrounded by the forest, they were not much influenced by the Islam.

As of the 19th century, the conflicts increased in the several regions and a large Maninka kingdom was formed, with armies and a central administration, which organized the territory and was spread from the upper-Guinea to Mali. The French, during their occupation of Western Africa, starting from Senegal, clashed with the Maninkas and confined these to the north of Côte d'Ivoire, whence they resisted the French occupation.

The French fixed the boundaries of the colony in 1900, created a bureaucracy to administrate the territory and established taxes to capitalize the natural resources. The lack of a French staff forced the

colonial administration to join the local leaders to manage the everyday activities in the colony. Many were labeled ‘undercover collaborators of colonialism’ and endured strong political restrictions in Sekou Touré’s administration, when they were not recognized as local officials.

The poor French imposition in Guinea allowed the clannish and familiar structure to prevail with no need to be adapted. When the country rose to independence, both power structures, the western contemporary, of the modern State, and the traditional one, of lineages, started to dispute the control of the territory so as to impose their geopolitics. At first sight, the State prevailed by using its exclusive attribute, the enforcement, and it sought to promote reforms that secured it as the only institution producing geopolitics. However, it was not secured and the lineages geopolitics¹ remained and have remained until now, which caused a political engineering that seeks to articulate both geopolitics on the same territory, one of a national range and another of a local range. For them to be articulated, the government promoted a political reform that brought both parties to the negotiating table in localities where policies are materialized and disputed over, seeking a consensus from them, both the government and the local power.

In order to meet the needs of this geopolitical articulation, the government organized the country into:

- Administrative region;
- Prefectures;
- Sub-prefectures;
- Urban community;
- Rural development communities.

¹ Previously, the 17th-century European colonization and the familiar systems of sub-Saharan Africa were ordered, according to the affiliation manner of individuals, into patrilineal, matrilineal and bilinear. The affiliation manners created collective groups called lineages that, with their territorial dimension, constituted the tribe likewise called clan. Thus, a plot was built that included each individual at the same time bound to other individuals by genealogical connections within certain spaces or territories (Baia, 2007).

Map 3.1 – Guinea's administrative chart



Source: *Document de strategie de reduction de la pauvreté (2011-2012)*.

This territorial division was elaborated in President Lansana Conté administration, in 1985, and transformed into fundamental law in 1990. The circumscriptions aimed to gradually decentralize and thus strengthen the country's public administration. The territorial regionalization is made up of two cells, which seek to solve the geopolitics, the administrative regions, with their units, and the local communities, which organize dissemination and decentralization. The administrative regions and the prefectures do not have any judicial and financial autonomy; the regulations and finances are centralized in the national government. The officials, governor of the administrative region, prefects and sub-prefects are appointed by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs, with the President's approval. This structure is used to transfer functions of the central government to local communities, to which the government acknowledges judicial and financial autonomy. It was the acknowledgement of the existence of the local power by the State authority that has always existed in the rural area of Guinea. It is a way to disrupt with the colonial dogma of savagery and primitivism attached to these rural communities in Guinea and all over the sub-Saharan Africa,

emphasizing their capacity of social and economic ordering (Baia, 2007).

The officials chosen by means of elections are those of Urban Communities², made up of neighborhoods and sectors, and those of Rural Development Communities, made up of districts and sectors, who have executive and deliberative positions. The elections are quadrennial and the population chooses a representative for each unit in both communities. In addition to the chosen to work in functions concerning the communities, leaders are also elected for each one of the units. It is in this instance that the traditional power is manifested in full force. The founder families, those who first occupied the place, their patriarchs, are the natural leaders despite the existing electoral process. In this sense, the democratic process coexists with practices similar to those of “coronelismo”³, an election whose result is already known before the process is carried out. The system is legitimated by the population due to the belief in the dominant traditional power. The government officials, however, understood the need to esteem the traditional power, as being the foundations of the administrative organization of rural localities, the base of social life in the country’s rural areas. Thus, they seek to recover the relationship between the State power and the local power, acknowledging its influence in orienting life in the community and recovering its political space, institutionalizing the traditional leaders through this implicit acknowledgment of participation in the locality’s political life and its legitimacy as masters of local traditions and management of the political relations traditionally established in the rural communities (Lourenço, 2007). According to the philosopher Franz Joseph Hinkelammert in an interview to the *Revista Fórum* (2011, p. 22), “the cultures that have always been regarded as backward show today the way to be followed, as the previous cultures were not as suicidal as the modern-western culture”. The sub-Saharan

² This type of organization is bound to the establishment of States, the creation of public services and the execution of development policies in the colonies and that have caused migrations to the cities (Baia, 2007).

³ A term concocted by Victor Nunes Leal in the book “Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto” [“Coronelismo, Hoe and Poll”], published in 1949 by Forense publisher, in Brazil. According to the author, Coronelismo is a manifestation of the private power – of the landlords, in the proper sense –, which coexists with a political regime of an extensive representative base. It is basically referred to the land structure, which provided the supporting base of the private power.

societies have been looking for the solution of this civilization stalemate that has paralyzed the region since the colonization.

Despite the existence of both communities, a disruption of the practices entailed in the countryside and the city cannot be assumed. On the contrary, actually, there is an extension of traditions adapted to the environment. The symbolic layer is maintained on a new spatial organization (Baia, 2007). The lineage geopolitics in the city and its presuppositions of modernity have not been opposed to those of the rural areas; they keep the flow, although they work differently in reproducing subsistence, but that slowly tend to modify their nature and may come to break up with the lineage system, which in practice have already been occurring with no need for the relations between the countryside and the city to be respectful, what may demand a new political-administrative organizational structure in place of the one created, in order to incorporate the traditional power existent in both environments.

The founder families are the possessors of the lands and they distribute them for agriculture purposes; therefore the communities' members depend on the cession of the land to reproduce their subsistence, which can be carried out by means of kinship or lease to other non-kinsfolk members and even to foreigners. Thus, the lands are not available and are not part of the housing market system; they constitute a non-negotiable good and, if any foreigner wants to settle in the place, he or she must address the head of the family to request an authorization. The traditional leaders are not only a political leader; they are an important factor of sociocultural cohesion and identity, legitimating the authority and regulating the social and environmental relations. The State is for this traditional structure a mere alien that does not have in its framework any conditions to understand the sociocultural customs of rural localities (Lourenço, 2007).

The representatives and the leaders of the Urban Communities – neighborhoods and sectors – interact by means of the prefectures, whereas those of the Rural Development Communities – districts and sectors –, by means of the sub-prefectures. It is in these places where the dissemination and the decentralizations are interrelated in the organizational structure of the State. In the scope of Urban Communities, the relations occur in the prefecture, where a secretary-

general appointed by the government manages the locality together with a Communal Council formed by nine representatives chosen by the people and that together appoint the prefect and the community's vice-prefect and treasurer, who will form the local executive. Thus, there is a representative of the dissemination that works in the scope of decentralization, inspecting the fulfillment of local development plans, which are adjusted to the central government's directives. The decentralization also counts on the local leaders and the council of sages of each unit composing the Urban Community.

The rural and urban communities constitute the legitimacy environment of traditional power. This power has unique characteristics and they usually work in societies where social inequalities are nonexistent or are minimal and unimportant. The traditional power in societies where it is manifested changes its representations as the social changes occur. The important in this issue is to observe that the power is manifested differently in societies with little or no inequality and in unjust societies and it is especially in the border of dissemination/ decentralization that we have the rift of both powers at the communities' level (Gomes, 2010), where these traditional leaders organize several foundations of the rural life, e.g. weddings, divorce, heritage issues, conflicts resolution and performance of rites of passage. They are responsible for the management of the rural world. They are also in charge of the lineage geopolitics that counsel and coordinate the social relations. Their delegitimation may cause a higher incidence of delinquency in the communities (Lourenço, 2007).

Empirically, according to Mércio Gomes (2010), the individuals do not realize the relationship between the different and the unequal. They usually use an evaluation of what is negative and what is positive and define, whence, the differences. But, in order to establish the inequalities, they need a process of abstraction to highlight the differences. In the case observed, it is sought to understand the articulation among unequal powers, in which one, the formal/constitutional, emanates its power through the State and the other, the traditional, with no State, act as the powers in egalitarian societies, or where the inequalities are minimal, and in unequal societies, which is the case of local and national communities in Guinea.

The building process of this perception had as a theater the

numerous conflicts through which the lineages and their powers went. The force of the traditional power started to lie on the fact of tolerating the progressive changes imposed by the relations between traditional and modern practices, which emancipated some and granted prerogatives to others, within a symbolically coherent framework. This is where the traditional lineage societies, managing the traditional and the modern, with no rupture in their organizational structure, have survived the political changes imposed by the African kingdoms, since the antiquity, and the States created by the Europeans in the 19th century (Baia, 2007).

The survival of traditional power and its geopolitics in sub-Saharan contemporaneity are constituted of vectors that strengthen it as the crucial factor of social and political organization. From this perspective, the traditional power needs to be understood, from its material and symbolic relations, as an element of maintenance of the social framework that brings security and a sense of belonging to individuals. The belief in its action of social stability that permeates the community has at the source reciprocity and solidarity that support the fragility of human life.

As we all know, the traditional power was developed within a State; therefore its existence presupposes another political locus without the typical coercion of state entities. Firstly, the convergence is related to the forms of kinship, as an institution capable of maintaining the unity of clans, families, tribes etc. The other forms are the religious one, usually centered on the shaman or witch doctor, who manipulates the supernatural and the medicine world, and that of the skilled warrior, who used to gather the group under his command in war times, but that did not use to work well in peaceful times. It is likely that these leaders have not had an absolute power, as it is usually proclaimed, and have not had an arbitrary characteristic, but they have been leaders that were able to ready the collective work in competing for accumulating goods with other groups, which were then distributed in festivities that served to highlight the leader's political power and the lineage's social prestige. However, as mentioned before, it was a non-coercive power, that is, socializing, persuasive and exemplary, applied to safeguard the continuity of existence, reproducing the usual conditions (Gomes, 2010).

The structure of traditional power described is at work hitherto in the Guinean State and, through its legitimacy, influences the way of

living of rural and urban communities. Its insertion in the State's political-administrative process grants it a prestige and stands it out in the presence of the group granting, also, a sense of belonging of the community to the national community. However, the friction points are tautened by elements that seek to advance towards the domain of the traditional, disarticulating it and seeking to impose the modern western model. One of them is urbanization; another is the land organization, a determinant factor of the lineage geopolitics, which has been exerting a pressure on the territory's organization, seeking to urge a national land structure that disregards the different ethnic groups and cultures of the Guinean population mosaic.

The land structure is balanced from an apparently simple solution, lest the land is changed into merchandise. As it is common in the capitalist market system, the State, through a Decree published in 1983, initially adopted the State's absolute ownership over the land, distributing then title deeds based on development projects. In this manner, the State assures the perpetuation of the practices developed by the rural communities and their traditional forms of spatial organization and applies the arbitrage of areas where customary issues disappear, in addition to monopolizing the land taxation. Nevertheless, this form of organizing the territory dissipated the unwritten law, which started then to claim the primacy of the traditional over the modern. In response to the claims of the rural leaders, the government passed, in 1992, the Guinea Land Code [*Code Foncier et Domanial*], which started to regulate the real estates in Guinea, an instrument that judicially warrants the land property and restricts ousting this right. The right to dispose of the property is assured by the Constitution, however, it should follow the restrictions established on the Civil Code and the Land Code (Replublic of guinea, 1992). Therefore, there are restrictions to the full enjoyment of the property. The decentralization policy places the land registry at the level of the Urban Communities, which are endowed with the legal powers to control the registries and demand an ownership plan to register the property. The article 39 of the Land Code assures the customary rights of the lineages that may obtain the necessary land registries. Thus, the lineage rights are preserved, which gain a judicial prerogative and may even grant, under a contract, part of their lands that were not distributed by the tradition rules. In 2001, the government passed the Rural Land Policy [*Déclaration*

de la Politique Foncière en Milieu Rural], which strengthens the customary rights of the lineages over the land. In practice, the traditional rules of soil use and occupation in Guinea are still ruled by the lineages and their traditional power. Even though, the land in the country is subject to two rules, the legal and the customary.

Empirical and historical evidence built by the customary land structure permit to define the rural family as the smallest production, consumption and distribution unit of rural societies that is protected by the traditional power. It is understood that agriculture represents an indispensable source of income, but not exclusive, and that the behavior of each unit is part of a whole where the social reproduction and the risk insurance dwell (Negrão, 1995).

4 Concluding Arguments

The articulation undertaken by the government of Guinea in the last decades to bring the traditional power back to the public sphere indicates, first, the acknowledgement of its importance in the country's rural communities, and, second, the need of its participation together with the government to achieve the objectives outlined. The fight against poverty, which has been dramatic in the country for a long time, needs the sum of political and social forces so that the governmental actions result in the desired effects.

The power of lineages in rural areas is, in fact, a driving force of communities and its capacity of group cohesion led kingdoms, metropolises and the State to attempt to dissolve it, as it was seen as a force of primitive societies and that was opposed to the changes planned by the invading nations and, later, by the State a legacy of the French colonizer. The attempts to subdue the traditional power or to wipe it out ended up in failure due to the traditional mechanisms that assure the human groupings order and security, an elementary requisite of the individuals survival. The tradition's force, its values, beliefs, myths, alliances and reciprocity made the policies that promoted its removal from the social scenario unfeasible; and, with no official legitimacy, the traditional power continued to exist in the communities' everyday practices, constituting the actual power that permeated the sociocultural relations of the Guinean society.

The acknowledgement of the lineages force by the State gave rise to, in the political scenario, the traditional power again, which for long has claimed the prestige come from its communal legitimacy and, with that, the symbolic and material benefices surrounding the power and that for long the lineage leaders had hoped to officially possess. The structure of relations and reciprocity present in the communities centered on the leaders of lineages could no longer be apart from the country's politics. Their everyday action started to be regarded by the government as fundamental so that the national government's objectives could be achieved, without which their political survival would constantly be threatened due to the decisive influence of leaders of lineages in democratic processes. In authoritarian periods, the traditional power has always been seen as an obstacle to the government's objectives, but, in democracies, it cannot be disregarded; it is an incontestable political force and decisive in electoral results.

The survival to all actions to its disruption has not achieved the expected results in an economic panorama where production is intended to subsistence, which has not changed for centuries. Thus, the force of traditional power has not been affected, and it has been the cohesion element in the communities; it is from it that the security satisfaction emanates and it provides the survival forms. Actually, it is perceived and acknowledged as legitimate in the heart of human groupings for the fulfillment of their elementary needs. Thus, the abstract and violent power that has attempted to subdue the communities since the pre-colonial period could not take roots within it, due to its incapacity to satisfy their basic needs.

The current Guinean democracy has strengthened the poverty reduction policy in the country and, for that, it has sought to strengthen the participation of local leaders for executing it. The instruments created in the administrative framework should make the necessary actions to transforming the current panorama of needs run smoothly and then be able to penetrate the heart of the communities ruled by local powers and promote the improvements proposed by the government's action plan. These actions can be beneficial to the government and the development objectives from overcoming the traditional production methods in the localities and assuring a life condition on better levels. On the other hand, these actions can strengthen the traditional power

as the attempter actor of distributive policies, which has always manipulated, consolidating it, within the modern State, the geopolitics of lineages, being able to strengthen, on a larger level, the local power, which may claim a larger autonomy and participation in governmental decisions beyond the boundaries of communities or sub-prefectures in the Guinean chaos. And, especially with these new assumptions, the patrimonial practices contrary to democracies weaken them, as in a development panorama, the capitalist forces go towards the individualization of actions, chiefly in urban areas and a new familiar organization that alters the traditional patriarchy with the opportunity of core families. Simultaneously, the market accumulation economy may be more acceptable and consolidate the western way of living, changes not yet tried by the traditional structure in the country.

The clash between political and geopolitical forces in Guinea is just commencing. The beginning democracy seeks stabilizing means that do not disregard the existing traditional power in the country, but we do not know whether it will have social forces capable of maintaining its ideals in the cloudy construct of the geopolitical overlapping. The idealized pathway follows the liberal-democratic precepts, in a newly-established democracy and that is subject to endogenous and exogenous factors to be consolidated as a social value. The assault against the President Alpha Condé, on July 19, 2001, showed that democratic practices are still fragile in face of arbitrary solutions, which pose doubts and, concurrently, hopes to the Guinean nation to overcome this stage in the country's life.

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