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**SOCIAL BOUNDARIES,  
POLITICAL ELITE BARGAINS  
AND (DIS)ORDER IN GUINEA-BISSAU,  
1974-1998**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Development

2013

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the establishment, breakdown and re-establishment of political order in Guinea-Bissau by examining the evolution of the shape and character of its political elite bargains from independence to the outbreak of the civil war in 1998. While there are a variety of scholarly approaches that focus on the structural conditions under which violent conflict is prone to erupt in underdeveloped countries, this thesis adopts an interactional approach to better appreciate how Guinea-Bissau's political elite bargains have evolved and how these developments explain the outbreak of conflict at a given time. It takes off from and develops North et al's (2009) framework on *limited access orders* and the Crisis State Research Centre's approach to state fragility and resilience and contributes to the study of political elite bargains by proposing that a social boundary analysis is central for assessing degrees of a bargain's inclusivity/exclusivity and for better understanding what lead to changes in the bargains shape and character. It suggests that as relationships are both the "glue" and the "scissors" underpinning every elite bargain, the analysis of their evolution is key to problems of order and disorder. Applying this method of analysis, it provides a detailed examination of how elite relationships in Guinea-Bissau have changed over time based upon extensive documental research and interviewing with key actors and informants. It explains which, why and how different political identities have emerged, gained and decreased in political relevance, and how their interactions have shaped subsequent interaction and produced political change.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Assembleia Nacional Popular
CEL	Comité Executivo da Luta
CFA	Communauté Financière d’Afrique
CIDAC	Centro de Informação e Documentação Amílcar Cabral
CSL	Conselho Superior da Luta
CSRC	Crisis State Research Centre
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FARP	Forças Armadas Revolucionárias do Povo
FLING	Frente da Luta pela Independência Nacional da Guiné
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEP	Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa
ISCTE	Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa
JAAC	Juventude Africana de Amílcar Cabral
MFDC	Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde
PAIGV	Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde
PCD	Partido da Convergência Democrática
PIDE	Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado
PRS	Partido para a Renovação Social
SOCOMIN	Sociedade Comercial e Industrial da Guiné-Bissau
UCP	Universidade Católica Portuguesa
UD	União Democrática
UN	United Nations
UPANG	União Patriótica Anti-Neocolonialista da Guiné-Bissau
WB	World Bank
WBDI	World Bank Development Indicators

## GLOSSARY

<i>assimilado</i>	inhabitants of the colonies who had <i>assimilated</i> into Portuguese culture and had legal benefits
<i>armazéns do povo</i>	people's stores; government import-export warehouses
<i>bermedju</i>	literally red; refers to a creole elite
<i>chefe de posto</i>	Portuguese district officer
<i>civilizados</i>	inhabitants of the colonies considered to have been fully integrated into Portuguese norms
<i>crioulo</i>	creole language; Guinea-Bissau's <i>lingua franca</i>
<i>feitor</i>	Portuguese trading officials
<i>feitoria</i>	Portuguese trading-posts
<i>grumete</i>	local labourers who assisted Portuguese traders
<i>lançado</i>	Portuguese traders
<i>mestiço</i>	person of mixed race
<i>pontas</i>	plantation farms
<i>ponteiros</i>	plantation farm owner
<i>pretu-nok</i>	literally dark black; the term refers to Guineans who are perceived and accepted by others to be of pure Guinean-African descent, that is, from the national ethnicities (excludes Cape Verdeans perceived to be mestiço)
<i>régulo</i>	traditional authority



## BASIC DATA

Capital	Bissau
Land area	36.125 km <sup>2</sup>
Main crops	Groundnuts, rice, oil palm kernels
Regions	Bissau (autonomous sector), Bafatá, Gabú, Biombo, Cacheu, Oio, Bolama/Bijagós, Quinara, Tombali
Languages	Portuguese (official) and Creole
Main religions	Islam (30%), Animism (65%), Christian (<5%)
Population (1979 census)	767,731
Population (1991 census)	979.203
Most populous ethnic groups (1979 census)	Balanta (27%), Fula (23%), Mandinga (12%), Manjaco (11%), Papel (10%)
Most populous ethnic groups (1991 census)	Balanta (30%), Fula (21%), Mandinga (12%), Manjaco (15%), Papel (8%)
Percentage of most populous ethnic groups in Bissau (1979 census)	Balanta (11%), Fula (4.5%), Mandinga (9.48%), Manjaco (12.8%), Papel (32.23%)

## TIMELINE

September, 1956	The PAIGC is founded
August, 1959	Pidiguiti Massacre
January, 1963	Beginning of the armed liberation struggle
February, 1964	PAIGC's First Congress, Cassacá
January, 1973	Amílcar Cabral is assassinated
September, 1973	The PAIGC unilaterally declares independence in the its Second Congress
July, 1974	Portugal officially recognizes Guinea-Bissau as an independent state
November, 1977	PAIGC's Third Congress
November, 1980	<i>Coup d'état</i> and the end of the bi-national project between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau
November, 1981	PAIGC's First Extraordinary Congress
October, 1985	Imprisonment of various Balanta military officials under the accusation of plotting a coup
July, 1986	Excecution of six of the accused
October, 1986	PAIGC's Fourth Congress
January, 1991	PAIGC's Second Extraordinary Congress
December, 1991	PAIGC's Fifth Congress
March, 1994	First multiparty elections
May, 1997	Entry into the CFA zone
May, 1998	PAIGC's Sixth Congress
June, 1998	Civil war

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Core Themes

After ten years of armed struggle against the Portuguese colonialists, the *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC) unilaterally declared Guinea-Bissau's independence in 1973. A year later, with the Portuguese Revolution in April 1974, the war came to an end and Guinea-Bissau was officially recognized as an independent state. Supported by the majority of the population and geared by its socialist ideology, the PAIGC took control of the state apparatus and was committed to the construction of a New Society. The feeble and imbalanced socio-economic structure left by the colonial ruler and worsened by the war, posed enormous difficulties to their desire to create an economically autonomous state aimed at bettering the lives of Guinea-Bissau's people. By 1977 the revolutionaries were already far from their envisioned revolutionary path and ideals. In 1980 a *coup d'état* put an end to the Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean bi-national project. Moving even further from their socialist origins, the PAIGC, led on by the international financial institutions, undertook economic and political liberalisation reforms in 1986 and 1991, respectively. In spite of a democratically elected government and president, a dispute between elites led the country to civil war in 1998. In between these two episodes of overt political breakup and violence, there were (alleged) armed attempts to overthrow the President, ethnically-motivated imprisonments and assassinations of political and military officials and countless cases of corruption.

This brief summary of Guinea-Bissau's post-independence political trajectory from 1974 to 1998 does not stand out as very unique in the midst of other Sub-Saharan African states. In hindsight, independence brought about by a "people's war" did not usher in a radically distinct post-colonial socio-economic order nor did it form a "true" revolutionary regime. Whether independence was gained through a "'softer' passage" (Cooper 2008: 169) in the 1960s or

through strenuous armed struggle,<sup>1</sup> time dictated their similarities: optimism in the immediate post-independence period, rocked later on by intra-state conflict, *coups d'état*, repression and other forms of violence. Whereas during the 1970s and mid-1980s - despite Africa's "non-alignment" diplomatic stand - patronage from the two hegemonic blocs financed post-colonial rulers' "clients" and state-building projects, the post-Cold War scenario bolstered new formulae for regime survival (Reno 1997: 494). International financial assistance would continue but with other strings attached: the conditions involved adjusting their statist economies and undemocratic political systems in line with the "neoliberal" paradigm. Despite the diversity within which this transitional process unfolded and the variety of outcomes in each African country, the same general features occur throughout the continent - a clientelistic political system, socio-economic strain provoked by the structural adjustment programmes and the more frequent outbreak of armed conflict after this liberalisation phase. These also led to a generalized conclusion: changes and inconsistencies in revenue flows compelled rulers to pursue extraction through other more informal and predatory means, thereby weakening the state and erasing its "earlier post-colonial [state's] claim to unencumbered hegemony" (Young 2004: 43). This, in turn, resulted in a spread of violence and civil war in Africa (Ibid; Reno 1997). This patrimonial logic, deemed as an inherent particularity of post-colonial African states, alongside uncontrolled global capitalism, therefore explains why political disorder, corruption and conflict are prevalent in Africa (Bayart 1999; Chabal and Daloz 1999).

Guinea-Bissau (in part) fits this depiction. It also fits into a variety of other perspectives for explaining why political violence and civil war erupted during the period under analysis in this thesis. For example, explanations for the widespread onset of violent conflict in Africa have also been based upon the contention that their states are "weak" and "failed" (Zartman 1995; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Rotberg 2002). The argument goes like this: since the colonial predecessor left behind state structures of an authoritarian nature aimed at extracting resources at minimum cost (Chazan et al. 1999), African states emerged with no capacity to provide their citizens with public goods and governments lacked institutional authority (Jackson 1990), thereby losing credibility and legitimacy "in the hearts and minds of its citizens" (Rotberg 2004: 1). The inability of these states to control their territory, to build and

---

<sup>1</sup> For examples: Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

strengthen democratic institutions, to ensure economic development and “promote human flourishing” (Williams 2009: 20) explains why they are unable to prevent internal violence and manage conflict. The underlining idea is that certain attributes of states - usually associated with their levels of democratization and economic strength - determine levels of violence.

Guinea-Bissau also fits into studies that suggest that low growth (Collier and Hoeffler 2004) and extreme levels of poverty are linked to the onset of civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003). With an annual real GDP growth of 1-2% in the early 1990's (IMF 2005: 5), a US\$250 GNP per capita in 1996 (Kovsted and Tarp 1999: 2) and with an estimated of 88% of the population living under less than US\$1 per day (National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2000: 5), Guinea-Bissau possessed the structural conditions that encouraged the outbreak of the war in 1998. Guinea-Bissau's conflict trajectory also lends support to theories that try to establish a relationship between the outbreak of large-scale violence and ethnic fragmentation (Huntington 1996), or the ethnic exclusion in state power (Cerdeman et al. 2010).

While Guinea-Bissau's trajectory of political violence and its dynamics may lend itself to these theories and explanations, two central themes of this thesis derive from what neither of them, or their combination, can explain: why and how was political order maintained during the periods between 1974-1980 and 1980-1998 and why did the two blatant moments of political violence - the 1980 *coup d'état* and the 1998 civil war - occur precisely when they did? This thesis is as much about how political order is upheld in a poor developing country as it is about the processes which lead to political disorder and violent conflict. As such, it explores the bases of the stability of the state in Guinea-Bissau from 1974 to 1998 and explains how and why its capacity to maintain itself varied throughout this period.

By focusing on the trajectory of political (dis)order in Guinea-Bissau up until the outbreak of its civil war, this thesis seeks to provide empirical contributions to the debate around the problems of state fragility and resilience. The relevance of this research object is justified, on the one hand, by the need to confront empirically ahistorical and imprecise generalisations found in the literature on political (dis)order and civil war in so-called “failed” African states. It is justified, on the other hand (and as will be argued below), by the need to further develop research based on the view that political order depends upon the balance of power between contending elites (Khan 2000; Di John and Putzel 2009). By suggesting that political order rests upon the relations established between elites, this thesis then also speaks to practitioners and

policy makers whose aim is to strengthen stability in late developing countries by institutional design: it suggests that such interventions may actually destabilize power relations.

## 1.2 Central Concepts, Questions and Propositions

This thesis draws on a particular theoretical framework in order to scrutinize how political order was upheld in Guinea-Bissau and why, at certain moments, it succumbed to disorder. However, using Guinea-Bissau in particular as a case-study has provided an opportunity to test and fine-tune important points of the theoretical approach based upon the study of elite bargains.

This research project takes off from a political economic theoretical approach that considers the analysis of the unequal distribution of assets within a society to be key to the study of its development and that challenges of change to this distribution provoke conflicts that drive its development. It posits that these distributional struggles, even violent ones, - as historical observation has shown - are not necessarily a sign of “development in reverse” (Collier 2004). It stems from the idea, that the privileged few who possess more assets and who decide on how privileges and entitlements are allocated - the elites - are not a homogeneous group; they are composed of contending fractions. Following North et al’s (2009) model of *limited access orders* then, this thesis proceeds from the notion that these powerful opposing few do not fight each other when it is in their interest not to do so: this mitigation of strife occurs to the extent that they limit access to resources to other individuals, thereby enabling the generation of rents<sup>2</sup> relative to those excluded. Since violence jeopardizes the production of these same rents, the proposition put forward is that rent creation can contain violence between elite groups. Political order is thus upheld when contending elites establish relationships amongst themselves based upon interest. The state, the authors advance, is the constellation of elite interests, that is, it is not a single entity controlling the monopoly over violence, but rather a “coalition” of elites who cooperate through creating and sustaining rent-creating organizations.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this thesis rents are understood as the “return to an economic asset that exceeds the return the asset can receive in its best alternative use” (North et al. 2009: 19).

The means by and the forms in which violence is contained thus shapes organizations and therefore elite behaviour and relations (Chapter 2 re-engages and further discusses this theory in detail).

Building upon this perspective, the work of the *Crisis State Research Centre* (CSRC) has contributed additional concepts and propositions towards the elaboration of a more comprehensive framework for explaining diverging paths of violence and development between countries and within them. Defining *bargaining* as a process through which contending elites commit to cooperate and not to fight, they develop, and seek to corroborate through qualitative research, the proposition that the existence of an inclusive elite bargain is determinant in explaining state resilience (Di John 2010; Lindemann 2010b). In other words, political stability requires that all (or most) of the significant competing elites be included as the outcome of the bargaining process. In contrast, an *exclusive elite bargain*, one in which the interests of a significant elite group are not being secured, is prone to promote armed challenges to the existing arrangement for the distribution of rents - and is hence conducive to political instability, insurgencies and civil war (Golooba-Mutebi 2008b; Lindemann 2010a). The examination of enduring states has also allowed the CSRC to advance as a second proposition the idea that specific forms of political organization have played a relevant role in ensuring an inclusive distribution of rents between contending elites. They propose, in effect, that centralized forms of rule supported by a dominant political party tend to produce strong executives with an interest in and power for accommodating rival elites in a bargain (Putzel and Di John 2012: 20-26). Attempts by international donors to promote "liberalised" institutions - such as democratic ones - "might aggravate fragility" (Putzel 2010: 4) as they disrupt these stable power arrangements.

While this thesis picks up on the work of the CSRC and is about the relationships that sustain political order, it is also about how these relationships can change for the most diverse, and sometimes not obvious, reasons and lead to disorder. The central proposition that this thesis has to offer to the study of political elite bargains is that sources of fragmentation and elite relations may change over time and these changes may alter the bargains' shape and nature. Interaction between contending elites, independently of whether they have an interest in cooperating, can either sharpen or deactivate the social boundaries between them. These social boundaries may be (the rather expected) boundaries of ethnicity or they may in fact be of some other character. However, regardless of which identity comes into play, it is the changing degrees of their salience that affects social interaction and the relations between



elites, which in turn influences the bargain's arrangement (and thus also the empirical interpretation of its shape). Based on this proposition, two other interrelated hypotheses are advanced. The first is that as social boundaries increase in salience, contending elites' interests become more difficult to reconcile and even an executive power interested in upholding order will tend to get caught up in these shifts and seek to alter the outcome of the bargain according to its interests - in that way reconfiguring the bargain into an exclusive shape and thereby producing instability. The second is that since boundary shifts are the result of social interaction and since social interaction can have unanticipated consequences, elite bargains and thus political (dis)order are dependent upon these contingencies.

This thesis has selected to focus on Guinea-Bissau, a country with a centralized rule upon independence supported by a single dominant political party and several episodes of political violence, in order to test the relevance of these propositions. It analyses the processes of the establishment, breakdown and reestablishment of political order focussing on the composition of elite bargains. It asks specifically:

*What are the shapes and character of political elite bargains in Guinea-Bissau from independence until the outbreak of the civil war in 1998? How have they evolved and to what extent has their degree of inclusivity/exclusivity been associated with moments of political (dis)order?*

By formulating the research question as such, this thesis intends to go beyond the investigation of how the shape of the political elite bargains are linked with recurring moments of political (in)stability. It is interested in examining the processes that lead to alterations in the shapes and character of the bargains. As a result it focuses both on differing forms of manifest political violence<sup>3</sup> and on the "nonviolent forms of contention" (Tarrow 2007: 596) from which the latter emerge. It thus seeks to understand (elites') "local and private conflicts rather than the war's driving (or 'master') cleavage" (Kalyvas 2003: 475) since those are the foundations that make it possible to discern the shape of the bargains at each moment. With this intent and purpose, the primary research question necessarily required appreciating elite interactions and in that way to ask:

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<sup>3</sup> As the introductory summary on Guinea-Bissau exposed, besides the 1998 internal conflict, there was a *coup d'état* and purported ones which subsequently led to political assassinations.

*Precisely who were the contending elites in Guinea-Bissau and how and why were social boundaries and relations between them altered and transformed at different times?*

The anecdote below is about how social boundaries and changes in relationships are closely intertwined with the contours of political elite bargains. The story is illustrative of circumstantial manifestations of the type of relationships that this thesis considers to be crucial to sustaining political order among contending social groups, that is, relationships that are based upon interest. It suggests that each of the members involved in such a relationship must perceive on-going benefits in order for it to endure.<sup>4</sup> It further shows how social interaction can lead to the deterioration of these relationships and how this may signal a possible break of the relationship.

### **1.3 An Anecdote on *Friendship* Relations: President Malam, João and Me**

*Amigo* - the Portuguese and Creole word for friend - can be used in Guinea-Bissau, in our understanding, in a frivolous way. For example, when calling for a waiter or a taxi driver you will get their attention by calling them *amigo*. It is also common to be asked on the streets by someone you have never seen before whether you want to be his friend - and this is especially frequent if you are a woman. The employment of the word friend, in particular circumstances in Guinea-Bissau therefore connotes exchange of favours or services. While friendships *may* last a lifetime *friendships* terminate when one ceases to return a favour or when the service is completed. Therefore, *friends* come and go with some ease.

At the political level the word *friend* is also often employed. Borszik (2008), for instance, reached the conclusion that Big Men - *régulos* - in the Gabú region<sup>5</sup> establish *friendship* relations with central state actors as a coping strategy. This strategy entails “successful 1) networking, i.e., establishing and maintaining a range of contacts, facilitates 2) cliquishness, i.e., exchanging favours and mutual support, which in turn is conducive to 3) ‘friendships’” (Ibid: 78). In an interview she conducted, her interviewee stated in this respect, “...one *régulo*

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<sup>4</sup> This specifically refers to a scenario in which there is no third party enforcer to ensure that the bargain is upheld.

<sup>5</sup> Gabú is the most eastern region of Guinea-Bissau and is predominantly Muslim.

is a certain Minister's *friend*, who belongs to the party X, while another régulo is another Minister's and the President's *friend* [...] People depend on such relations" (local political advisor in Ibid: 79).<sup>6</sup>

This anecdote is about three *friends*: President Malam Bacai Sanhá, João and me. João was one of the first people I established contact with in Bissau. He belongs to the Fula ethnic group and at the time I arrived in Bissau he was not only a *régulo* (Big Man) in the region of Gabú, but also a political counsellor to the President. However I was oblivious to either one of his positions. I was interested in interviewing him as a war veteran who had fought alongside the colonial administration in the independence war.<sup>7</sup> In our first encounter I was informed of the positions he held and through him, and especially because I had a letter of reference addressed to the President by a Portuguese political analyst who was acquainted with him, a few weeks later I was able to formally meet President Malam Bacai Sanhá (who was elected in 2009). On that occasion, the President invited me to accompany him and his committee on a presidential tour to the North of Guinea-Bissau, that was to take place the following month, and asked João to be my chaperon during the trip. Indeed, a month later I was on a three day road trip through the country with the President, his advisors, various Ministers and Secretaries of State, important figures from the Armed Forces and some parliamentary deputies.

During the trip João often referred to the President as his friend. The two times I asked how they had become friends he was vague and answered that their friendship went way back - which I found intriguing since the President was a liberation war veteran and João had fought on the opposite side. Curiously, I was also being referred to as President Sanhá's and João's friend by the rest of the Presidential committee. It was only further on that I understood that being called their *friend* meant that we were perceived as having a mutually advantageous relationship. I was not clear as to what others (or the President or João for that matter) expected I could give back in return, but I surely had an interest in maintaining a good rapport with them for the purpose of my research. I had established a relationship with them based upon interest. As for the President and João, yet another *friend* revealed to me that their

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<sup>6</sup> Italics are my own.

<sup>7</sup> I had gotten his contact through a Portuguese war veteran who had served in combat in the colonial war in Guinea-Bissau.

relationship originated after the 2005 presidential elections: Sanhã had lost and the results showed that he had been unable to sufficiently mobilize the Muslim vote in his favour, namely amongst the Fula.<sup>8</sup> In 2009, however, having set-up the networks needed to win, he won by a wide margin in this region. Therefore implicit in the revelation was that in exchange for Fula votes, Sanhã had promised favours to João in return - and I suppose that having sworn him in as his advisor was one of them.

There were three occurrences throughout this trip, which, on the one hand, signal the fragility inherent in relationships that are solely based on interest, and, on the other hand, demonstrate how relationships may change and boundaries can sharpen through incidental interaction.

The presidential committee all had brand new and fully equipped cars. João's car, however, was old and did not have air conditioning. The high temperatures required that we keep the windows open, which also meant that, since the roads were unpaved, we were covered in dust. The discomfort was such that, at a certain point, João commented that he had to remind the President that the situation was unbearable. His *friend*, who was accompanying us, nonetheless added that, because the President had no intentions in running in the following presidential elections, he no longer needed to court João. The insinuation was that João's allegiance was dispensable to the President at that point in time.

João's dissatisfaction became apparent once again when he stated that he saw no point in getting out of the car to hear the President's speech since he was always put in a peripheral position on the stage, while others in the committee were seated at the centre. His complaints were later reinforced when we reached our final destination, the city of Farim. While the majority of the committee had been given priority and was lodged in the only two hotels in the city, João - two other deputies, a secretary of state and I - had nowhere to sleep that night and had to drive 50 km in search of a hotel.<sup>9</sup> João did not hide the fact that he was angry with the way he was being treated, affirming that the President should instead have told one of his other advisors to go to this hotel in his place.

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<sup>8</sup> This goes in line with Vaz and Rotzall's (2005) analysis of the 2005 Presidential electoral results. They refer that Sanhã's inability of getting a hold of Fula voters was most likely a result of the historic inter-ethnic hostility between them and the Biafada - Sanhã's ethnic group (Ibid: 542).

<sup>9</sup> This search entailed crossing a river by canoe in the middle of the night.

During the rest of my stay in Guinea-Bissau João remained President Sanhá's counsellor; however, by the end of this trip their relationship, at least according to João, had degraded.

Such apparently unimportant incidents, as in the story I have just recounted, are revealing - even if superficially - of alterations in social boundary salience between contending elites and affect subsequent interaction between them. These, and others, are examples of the type of incidents that this thesis aims to expose for they reveal underlying explanations as to why elite bargains shift in shape and character and contribute to an intensification of political disorder.

Regarding my relations with both the President and João they were maintained and remained cordial until my research in Bissau was complete: our interaction did not result in genuine friendship and once my interest ceased, so did the relationship.

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is organized chronologically since its aim is to uncover how social boundaries between the elites and their bargains evolved throughout Guinea-Bissau's post-independence period until the outbreak of the civil war in 1998. Beforehand, Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework that orients this analysis. It first addresses some of the problems within the current conceptions of the African state in light of the work of Khan (1995; 2010), North et al. (2009) and the CSRC (2012) and proposes that the state be seen as a set of power relations between contending social groups. The following parts of the chapter expand theoretically upon the work of these references by bringing to the forefront the question of the social boundaries underlying the relationships amongst the elites. It emphasizes that these may change over time and argues that these changes may alter the configuration and character of political elite bargains. It thus suggests that political elite bargains are subject to contingencies that change relationships. As relationships are both the "glue" and the "scissors" underpinning every elite bargain, the analysis of their evolution are key to problems of order and disorder. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the research methods employed in order to ascertain the shapes of the political elite bargains in Guinea-Bissau.

Chapter 3 identifies Guinea-Bissau's pre-colonial and colonial sources of social fragmentation. It then revisits the armed liberation struggle and principally stresses the PAIGC's capability of politically mobilizing the Bissau-Guinean people to engage in a national war and its efforts to

reconstruct the liberated areas according to its revolutionary ideals. It highlights how the party's original political institutions made possible the centralisation of its authority in the post-independence years and argues that its achievements and the overall support it obtained from the majority of the population point towards the emergence through consensus of an inclusive bargain, even before the war came to an end.

Chapter 4 examines the post-independence period from 1974 to 1977. It argues that, amongst PAIGC militants and leaders, the inter-ethnic and class unity forged during the war was held up during the first years of independence. It examines the development policies undertaken by the PAIGC and demonstrates that its leaders were determined to follow through with their rural oriented economic and political programme. This analysis indicates that in spite of an overwhelming predominance of Cape Verdeans in positions of power, those excluded from the political elite bargain were in fact the colonial privileged urban Bissauan minority. This chapter concludes that evaluations of these first years of independence have tended to be made in hindsight based on what followed - the 1980 *coup d'état* that marked the end of the unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau - and by doing so not only lead to misinterpretations of the bargain but also to losing sight of the changes in relations and social boundaries within the PAIGC leadership.

Chapter 5 explains why and how these changes occurred between 1977 and 1980. It sheds light on how the apparent source of social and political fragmentation shifted from class to nationality. It suggests that understanding subsequent sources of social conflict between the elites and thus the shape of the following elite bargains depend upon this analysis. It concludes by considering the shape of the elite bargain and its link to the 1980 *coup d'état*.

Chapter 6 highlights how political power became highly concentrated at the executive level. It is principally concerned with revealing the processes that led ethnicity to become politically salient from 1980 to 1985. It analyses to what extent overrepresentation of the Balanta ethnic group in the armed forces and their underrepresentation to top positions in the PAIGC and the government is related to the *coup* attempts that led to the arrest and killing of various military and political officials in 1985.

Chapter 7 focuses on the period between 1986 and 1998. It looks into how liberal interventionist policies catalysed social boundary changes amongst the elites and exposes the processes that led these boundaries to sharpen. It suggests that, in spite of the President's initial efforts to appease the emerging factions within the PAIGC, the heightened salience of

the boundaries, together with circumstantial incidents, explains the shifting shape of the bargain and thus the eruption of the civil war.

The conclusion of this thesis is presented in Chapter 8. It re-engages with the theory and explains how Guinea-Bissau's case has provided additional theoretical and methodological considerations for future studies on political elite bargains. It ends by summarizing and discussing the main findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### SOCIAL BOUNDARIES AND POLITICAL ELITE BARGAINS: BRINGING IN SOME CONTINGENCY

#### 2.1 Setting the Ground on the State

When this research project started in 2009, some of the more recent conceptualizing of the African state was already being re-considered and re-thought. Rightly so, vague and blurry terminologies such as “weak”, “quasi”, “fragile”, “failed” and so on were deemed as unsatisfactory adjectives for characterising states in less developed countries (Hill 2005; Hameiri 2007; Boege et al. 2008; Hagmann and Hoehne 2009). In part, these re-assessments and critiques of the failed state discourse stemmed from exasperation with liberal interpretations of state-building.<sup>10</sup> At a minimum, such terms needed major clarification and precision if donor assistance and policy interventions were to be effective (Putzel 2010).

One of the conceptual problems is that defining these states as anomalous presumes that there is an ideal-type of the state out there and that it is more or less attainable;<sup>11</sup> indeed, it is presumed to be attainable since the western states that we know happen to resemble it. Their

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<sup>10</sup> Since the September 11 attacks so-called failed states have been focus of further attention. The reason for this has rested upon the argument that the failure and weakness of these states are a severe international security threat for they attract international terrorist groups, cartels and organised crime. So while during the nineties these states were more or less perceived as solely a humanitarian concern, they now came to pose a strategic significance (Stewart 2006: 27). This in turn has translated into heavily framed state-building and development policies meant to deal with the fragilities of these states as a prerequisite to combating transnational security threats. Thus, in order to construct these states, it is necessary to point out where they are failing. From this emerges a range of indicators and criteria used to measure the capability and willingness of a state to provide positive goods to its population.

<sup>11</sup> According to Clapham though, “the attributes ascribed to states by the mythology of statehood very often do not actually coincide at all. There are few, perhaps no, states in which they are all realised in their entirety” (Clapham 1996: 11).



close coincidence and correspondence with Weber's sociological conception of the state is the theoretical underpinning behind this understanding.<sup>12</sup> The trouble with this normative conception of the state is that, on the one hand, it generally confounds what the state *is* with what it *ought* to be; and it assumes that the state *ought* to have the capacity to perform a certain set of functions.<sup>13</sup> It is thus presupposed that certain forms of institutions can be adopted or adapted through a strategic technical exercise - this is the idea behind the design of the international community's interventionist policies - and that those forms<sup>14</sup> will lead to stability, development and economic growth.<sup>15</sup> All that is needed is "fixing" (Ghani and Lockhart 2008) in order for these *less-of-a-states* to start behaving "properly".

Herein lay part of the exasperation: on the one hand, such interventionist policy made a rationalistic but unjustified leap in its logic. Human actors' practices and behaviour do not necessarily change or automatically respond positively to such rationally determined incentives as if institution building were a question of proper recipes (Chang 2007: 5); on the other hand, it jumped over uncomfortable conclusions that could be drawn from the historical evolution of the referential Western states themselves: historical observation not only suggests that the European state model was the result of a development process (Di John 2008: 31),<sup>16</sup> but further also points out that the states have rarely been formed, and are unlikely to

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<sup>12</sup> Succinctly, in Weberian terms, the state is "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Weber in Held 1983: 111). The specificity of the modern state is that this force is a legal legitimate domination, this is to say, rules held valid by the subjects in a given territory (Ibid: 112). It is to be added that these established rules are impersonal, meaning that the modern state is the outcome of a process by which politics is not intermingled with personal whims, but rather is the result of the institutionalization of autonomous political institutions. The existence of an independent state bureaucracy is the epitome of the establishment of an impersonal rule.

<sup>13</sup> This implies at the very minimum that the state be able to secure its own territory (Zartman 1995), and also be able to provide other public goods such as education, political participation, economic opportunities, health, physical infrastructures, etc. (Rotberg 2003: 3-4).

<sup>14</sup> For example, private ownership, decentralization of power, democratization, etc. In short, liberal democratic and market institutions.

<sup>15</sup> The most evident case exposing the fallacy of the 'right institutions-right path nexus' is the introduction of competitive elections and the belief that this will yield stability and respect for ethnic diversity: Kenya 2007/08 and Rwanda are but two examples pointing to the risks of this approach. For a list of the most frequently imposed institutions sought to foster economic development see Chang (2011: 474).

<sup>16</sup> Chang (2009) argues that the mainstream discourse on development emphasizes the need of reducing poverty and improving health and education, but has nonetheless neglected development's preconditions and lost sight of the very notion of that development requires the transformation of

be formed, without the recourse to force, conflict, violence, illegality and even banditry (Tilly 1992; Barkey 1994; Gallant 1999; Volkov 2002; Cramer 2006). The idea that developing countries are failing because of the prevalence of corruption or violence are prevalent neglects the real history of processes of state formation. The spread of violence is therefore not necessarily a deviation from this process, but may be part of it. Thus, in other words, countries placed under the *chapeau* of “failed” may be behaving normally and those who think otherwise suffer from a sort of “historical amnesia” (Cramer 2006: 9).

This said, it does not follow that an exact rerun from the European experience is necessarily taking place in Africa - especially because it is impossible to think of African development processes without consideration of their subordination to the logics of colonialism and imperialism.<sup>17</sup> However, critical analyses of state formation are necessary in order to make sense of what appear to be irregular manifestations of violence, deviant and corrupt practices by state officials and high levels of crime and illegal activities. Such studies might suggest that such behaviour is not necessarily indicative of state degeneration but rather of the relative predictability of its emergence and consolidation and in fact may be conducive and even inherent to its development (Khan 2005; Di John 2008: 33).<sup>18</sup>

This thesis concurs with the advances of such critical analyses and takes additional care when looking at the processes of state formation: while the conceptual framework reminds us that no state is “failed” because it has not yet been formed, it has generally been used in a teleological manner. All states in some sense are in a constant process of formation and yet

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productive capabilities and structures; it is like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark, he says. For a similar argument see Khan (2004).

<sup>17</sup> In fact, Tilly was clear to make mention of this in his last chapter ‘Soldiers and States in 1992’ (Tilly 1992). Jeffrey Herbst (2000) and Miguel Centeno (2003), for instance, take off from Tilly’s argument and highlight different historical and territorial variables in order to explain variations in state-formation in Africa and Latin America, respectively. Similarly, Leander (2004) emphasizes that the current context in which wars are taking place in Africa differs substantially from that in pre-modern Europe and that this war process - rather than centralizing control at the central state level (as in Europe) - is empowering local militias and thus having everything but a development role. See also Taylor and Botea (2008) for a review on the war/making-state/making thesis.

<sup>18</sup> In contrast, it is purported that (civil) war is “ruinous” and a powerful retarding force on development (Collier 2004). However, it is critical to note that the disorderly and violent process of states’ formation does not entail any sort of war fetishism or that it means that every war is constitutive of development, but rather that violence and conflict have been a constant feature in the formation of states and that it may indeed be critical to its constitution.

the reference to “states in formation” is rarely applied to “consolidated” Western states. Thus, although the idea behind the concept is precisely to demonstrate that all states are continuously in the process of their making and that a “final state” is not out there, its usage has been exclusively applied to the transformation and developing processes in post-colonial and underdeveloped countries, hence inevitably passing on the idea that the state trajectory continuum ends once the appearance of westernization has been achieved. While this point may seem periphrastic, the issue at hand is to emphasize that states, however Weberian looking they may be, can both progress and regress. This backsliding, for example, need not be associated with the eruption of violent conflict but rather with the weakening of a state’s capacity to perform in certain areas.<sup>19</sup> The matter at stake is to recognize both that there is no unilateral direction of state progress and that states and their capacities to perform vary considerably between them and within them across time. These last points are fundamental to highlight since inattention to these differences and a “one-size fits all”-type of state-building reform approach towards so-called failed states may produce unintended consequences and intensify or provoke their fragility (Putzel 2010: 4).

On the other hand - and to go back to the neo-liberal critique of state-building -, this approach that expects “state-ness” to be manifested as the concretization of the Weberian ideal-type not only disregards the contextual and historical specificities of other non-state political entities and organizations but also considers them as deviations.<sup>20</sup> In this lies the other source of exasperation: Euro-state-centric views may be undermining unique political dynamics and forms of governance that combine, interact and penetrate with formal and central state ones. The idea put forward by Boege et al. (2008) is to adopt a less state-centric view and consider other actors as relevant on a political stage that may be as strong, or stronger, than the state.

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<sup>19</sup> An issue at heart to this author concerns the current crisis in Portugal and the weakening of the state’s economic capacity. Although social unrest has remained under constitutional parameters – such as strikes, protests and demonstrations –, austerity and structural adjustment policies have increased unemployment, have severely contracted and cut wages, frozen public investment, substantially reduced budget allocation to health and education, and so on: the Portuguese state, at least in what concerns the provision of goods sub-category capacity, has certainly regressed.

<sup>20</sup> Rotberg (2003), for instance, posits that reliance on non-state actors for the provision of political goods is an indication of state failure. While various scholars have tried to move beyond explaining the *breakdown* of the African state through the lens of state failure (Chabal and Daloz 1999; Reno 1998; Bayart 1999; 2009), the political realities and dynamics of the (whole) continent are yet portrayed as being of a different kind and appear to point to a deterministic path in the development of the African state – and hence unavoidably falling into the dichotomised logic between “good” and “bad” states.

In fact, these actors may share authority and legitimacy along with the state, and indeed may compete with it, and provide security and welfare to segments of the population. Accordingly then, the African state is not “failed”, it is a hybrid political order (Boege et al. 2008).<sup>21</sup> What is more, it is suggested that these orders (non-state ones, this is) should be celebrated and policies should work with and promote these promising forms of governance arrangements in Africa (Ibid; Hagmann and Hoehne 2009).<sup>22</sup>

However, while this thesis acknowledges the sensitizing role offered by the concept of hybrid political order - since it demonstrates that the state is not something static and homogeneous and considers its formation to be the outcome of diverse historic, social and political processes - it disputes its actual theoretical utility. To start with, the idea of formal and informal institutions intermingling and overlapping as being uniquely African (or of late developing countries) neglects the hybrid nature of all political orders.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, by considering the state as one among various other relevant actors within a political order, it ends up rendering insignificant the differentiation between formal and informal organizations. To put it differently, the term hybrid in itself is confusing because it is concurrently used to refer to an apparently distinctive formal-informal merger and to the co-existence of different, yet equally relevant forms of public authority. Primarily though, by relegating the role of the state to a residual, the result is an ambiguity of what the state in these countries might actually be. In a laudable effort to de-stigmatize African political realities, this anti-Westphalian approach loses sight of the fact that the state remains pivotal in processes of economic development (Chang 2003) and in the forging of political order. This observation does not imply that formal and informal spheres do not (and should not) blend and co-exist but points out that multiple

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<sup>21</sup> The idea that the state is not the superior or ultimate form of order has already been stressed by Christian Lund in his analysis of the multiplicity of African institutions, for example. In a similar vein, Menkhaus (2006/07) refers to the “negotiated state”.

<sup>22</sup> For a critique on the indiscriminate praising of these non-state security systems and how legitimizing them may indeed perpetuate predatory forms of governance see Meagher 2012. The author emphasizes the need to carefully scrutinize to what extent hybrid security situations are in fact producing positive and accountable forms of governance. While in South Africa, for example, coalitions between traditional and central state leaders worked relatively well (Beall and Ngonyama 2009), Meagher’s analysis of two hybrid security systems in the DRC and in Nigeria offer examples of the contrary.

<sup>23</sup> Take for example the institution of the church in some countries. Even though it is not integrated within the state, it can have a determinant influence depending upon its relations with who is in government. Similarly, civil society, multinational enterprises and international organisations are all influential in the constitution of political order in Western states.

institutional arrangements (Di John 2008: 33) are in fact the underbelly of any state, albeit differentiated in character and more predominant and conflictual in some of them.

Rather than considering that the state should be treated as an autonomous and monolithic entity (Hobbes 1995; Weber 1947; Skocpol 1979; Mann 1984; Tilly 1992)<sup>24</sup> or that it should be analysed in contrast with an institutional ideal-type or that it reveals insufficient analytical validity for the comprehension of African political dynamics, by drawing on social-conflict theory and historical political economy and following the work developed by the CSRC (2012), this thesis sustains the view that the state is an organizational shell within which the historical development of social and political conflict takes place between contending groups and within which power (access to resources, rights and entitlements) is distributed between them. This is to say that at the very basis of every state is a political settlement – understood as the arrangement/solution arrived at for resolving the problem of violence (Khan 2010: 20)<sup>25</sup> - that emerges from an intense and contentious *bargaining* process between the various opposing groups in a society (Di John and Putzel 2009; 2012). This perspective allows for a dissipation of the strict definitional boundaries between state and society imposed by statist and statist's critics and to see these concepts less as autonomous entities but rather as a more complex relational process. Indeed, this approach begs that the state be seen as a set of relations – rather than a single entity. It is “an organization of organizations” (North et al 2009: 17) underpinning dynamic and on-going power relations between diverse actors, whether they be state or non-state ones.

A political settlement varies across countries and throughout time within them since, after all, societies not only differ in their composition and in their economic foundation - thus meaning different institutions, organisations and patterns of resource distribution - but also evolve and change (CSRC 2005: 4). One central strand of the work developed by the CSRC has been aimed precisely at understanding the organisational basis behind a political settlement in a given polity and to what extent its shape and character are determinant in explaining a state's capacity to endure peace or breakdown and experience conflict. Indeed, if the objectives are

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<sup>24</sup> Although during the 1980's a strand of researchers argued (Callaghy 1984; Migdal 1988) that the state could not be conceived independently from societal forces, the fact of the matter is that both – state and society, that is – were treated as single entities: a point from which this thesis departs.

<sup>25</sup> For various definitions of political settlements see Laws 2012.

economic growth, development and poverty eradication (United Nations Millennium Goals 2000), then it is critical to understand how political stability is upheld.<sup>26</sup> Their important and needed query derived from the rather manifest observation that states labelled as “fragile” are not a homogenous landscape and that international donor’s’ focus on their “fragility” has obscured the fact that many of these countries (such as Tanzania and Zambia) have actually been able to sustain peace for a prolonged period of time (although economically ineffective), while others, though having experienced internal conflict, have been able to recover and return to a stable political path. Still others have been intermittently vulnerable to warfare (Ibid). To return to the issue of state progression and capacity: the former is not unidirectional and the latter “varies substantially across functions and sectors *within* polities” (Di John 2008: 39). From this it follows that there need be a distinction between stages in progression - “a state fragility to resilience spectrum” - and the identification of four dimensions which allow situating where a state (more or less) stands in this headway (Di John and Putzel 2012: 8).<sup>27</sup>

This understanding - that is, that at the centre of a political settlement is a set of power relations, which can be indicative of a state’s fragility or resilience - might allow for better informed reforms and progressive institutional change (Ibid: 1). It should be noted that state resilience is not synonymous with superior economic development, less poverty or increased respect for human rights; it refers to a state’s capacity to avoid conflict and to better endure internal and external shocks (Hesselbein 2011: 5). Simply put, it points to a stage of progression that is a bit less far on taking-off on the development path.<sup>28</sup>

At the core of this thesis is precisely the analysis of Guinea-Bissau’s state security capacity from 1974 to 1998 – one of the basic attributes of the state. In other words, it investigates how political order was maintained and varied throughout time (or to put it differently, how and why it has moved along the fragility to resilience spectrum with respect to its security

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<sup>26</sup> While conflict (and, sometimes, even war) can be linked to development, pervasive violence and warfare reduce growth (Polachek and Sevastianova 2010), destroy infrastructures, aggravate poverty, diseases and death, etc. Also to emphasize, the point is not to endorse this “messy, murky, complex, and local stability” (Shepard 2010: 11), but to understand that changes in the wider political settlement may be unsettling.

<sup>27</sup> The four indicators of fragility: violent challenges to the power of the state, limited state territorial reach, state inability to tax and the existence institutions which conflict with the ones of the state.

<sup>28</sup> Once again, it should also be noted that it may regress from this stage or remain in it (resilient but non-developmental) during an undetermined time, even centuries (Hesselbein 2011: 6; North et al. 2009: 13).

dimension). It scrutinizes how stability can be attained in spite of the “wrong” institutions being in place<sup>29</sup> and in spite of low economic growth and poverty (and what leads to disorder). The explanation put forward departs from North et al.’s model on limited access orders (2009) and is closely intertwined with the work developed by the CSRC; although it adds on to the framework and gives it a contingency twist. The following two sections will provide the theoretical basis from which this research project stems.

## 2.2 Political Order (I): Rents, Elites, Bargains

Armed challenges to state power are deemed as the most evident sign of state “failure” (Zartman 1995; Rotberg 2002).<sup>30</sup> In more precise and less normative terms, failure to trump all other security forces is an indication that along the fragility-resilience spectrum the state stands at the bottom of the continuum, at least where its security dimensions are concerned (Di John and Putzel 2012: 8). The presence of political violence and conflict in a territory has been perceived as state dysfunction (Weber in Held 1983: 111; Ignatieff 2002), or, in fact, as quite functional on occasions in serving the political and economic interests of a few members of society (Berdal and Keen 1997; Keen 2000; Reno 1998; Kaldor 1999; Duffield 2001),<sup>31</sup> or, as an inherent characteristic of neo-patrimonial (African) states (Chabal and Daloz 1999; Bayart et al 1999). While the first perspective assumes that the state *a priori* retains the monopoly of violence (thereby discarding the discussion above regarding the state development process), the second and third perspectives referred to, although enlightening with regard to how war and politics can function, do not explain why given polities become more vulnerable to warfare and others are able to avoid it.

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<sup>29</sup> Although the “rules of the game” (North 1990: 3) in Guinea-Bissau were fully put in place in 1994 with the first democratic elections, as touched upon, their implementation alone did not create altering behaviour incentives.

<sup>30</sup> That armed challenges against and violence towards the state, in and of itself, is indicative of its failure is a rather simplistic observation. The Spanish central state, to just give one example, has until very recently been attacked by ETA and it is far from being considered a “failed” state.

<sup>31</sup> The underlying idea behind these approaches is precisely to put in evidence that war may not be a sign of dysfunction, as is often forethought, but that it can be a source for generating resources and a means to sustain power: thus in the interest of certain individuals to initiate it and perpetuate it.

In order to understand why wars commence, one needs first to start with how political order is reached: it is in this vein that the more delimited conceptual framework of *limited access orders* proposed by North, Wallis and Weingast in *Violence and Social Orders* (2009) is taken as a starting point.<sup>32</sup> Their own starting point, however, is Hobbes's state of nature. Taking off from the idea of a natural state in which violence is dispersed and constant, but departing from the unrealistic notion that peace is attained through the transfer of individual rights to a sovereign authority by which a social contract is accorded, North et al. posit that men will refrain from attacking each other indiscriminately when it is more (economically) beneficial for them not to do so. That is, men will cooperate, rather than fight, if and when privileges and rents amount proportionally to their given power and when they perceive that it is also in the other's interest to refrain from picking up arms (Ibid: 13; 19). In other words, commitment to peace resides in ensuring that each member is receiving "more" in peace than he would in war.

All social orders have to deal with violence, and, according to the authors, human history has presented us with three types of order: the *foraging order*, the *limited access order* and the *open access order* - they focus on the latter two (and the focus in this thesis is on the first of these two). The way in which violence is contained differs in each of these societies and it is precisely because of this difference that human interaction and political and economic organization contrasts between them as well. This is to say that the form in which violence is contained determines societal dynamics.

*Open access orders* can be thought of as the Weberian type of society: the means of violence are legitimately controlled by the state (Ibid: 12). The military forces are consolidated and subject to the political system, which in itself is constrained by rules, beliefs and norms. There is political and economic competition and citizens have the right to form impersonal organizations in a wide range of activities (economic, political, religious, social, and educational) without the consent of the state. The law applies equally to all. However, this is not the dominant pattern of social organization in recorded human history (Ibid: 13) and no society simply possesses the monopoly over violence; it transits to this stage. The previous and prevailing social order is the *limited access order*.

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<sup>32</sup> Whereas the framework proposed by the authors encompasses the mechanisms in which limited access orders transit to open access ones, this thesis is solely concerned with dynamics and patterns of the former.



Also referred to as natural states,<sup>33</sup> *limited access orders* resolve the problem of violence when the most powerful people in a society - the *elites* – agree<sup>34</sup> on a distribution of privileges, access to resources and rents between them (such as the division of land, labour and capital). By limiting access to resources and privileges to members of this coalition - and hence excluding others - these same members will preclude from fighting one another since it would be detrimental for them to do so as violence would threaten the generation of rents. Political order is thus sustained through the establishment and maintenance of relations of interest between elites. To put it differently, contending elites cooperate because it is simply not profitable to do otherwise. These elites compose what North et al. define as the dominant coalition in order to refer to the organization in which the interests of the powerful are assembled and coordinated (Ibid: 18); in other words, the organization of organizations: the state.

While in *open access orders* organizations are variegated and operate outside the state, in *limited access orders* there are a very small number of organizations and generally, if not only one (the state), operate within the state itself.<sup>35</sup> The mere existence of independent organizations poses a threat to the dominant coalition as it opens the door for competition over resources and, as seen, it is precisely the limitation of competition that promotes order. Furthermore, the commitment to abide by the functioning of the organizations differs from one order to another. In *open access orders* it is not only the incentives that bind members to hold to the bargains; it is the existence of third-party enforcement contracts, which are upheld by impersonal rules. In other words, it is the enforcement of rules together with “incentive-compatible arrangements” that safeguard each party. Conversely, adherence to the bargains in *limited access orders* depends in every instance upon incentive-compatibility, that is to say, the

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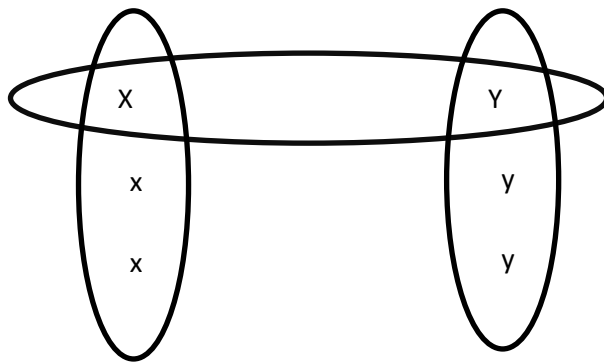
<sup>33</sup> Not to be confused with the state of nature. In general terms, natural states refer to a pre-industrial stage.

<sup>34</sup> By no means is this agreement obtained pacifically. From here on the term bargain will be employed (as previously referred to and as used by the CSRC) in order to denote that this outcome may be the result of a conflictual process.

<sup>35</sup> North et al distinguish three types of states that operate within the logic of limited access orders. The differences lie in their ability to support organizations. At the beginning of the spectrum are the fragile states which are characterized by the inability to support any other organization besides the state itself. The basic natural states are those in which a small number of organizations exist but do not operate independently from the state. Lastly, the mature natural states are those in which are able to support a number of organizations outside the scope of the state but are run by elites (North et al 2009: 21). In a sense, these state progressions can be framed within the state fragility-resilience spectrum.

state is a self-enforcing organization. Therefore, when the costs of abiding to the bargain are superior to the benefits, members will most likely not commit to it. This possibility – that is, the non-existence of positive rents - and the predictability that each member will pick up arms if this occurs, means that the individuals who compose the dominant coalition remain armed. Force is needed not only to maintain the balance of power within the dominant coalition, but also to restrain and intimidate other individuals within the elites’ coalition - their clients: those who the elites protect in return for patronage. Elites and their clients, besides sustaining a relation based on interest, are also related by the same social identity, i.e., same ethnic, religious group, etc. (see Figure 1 for a - simplistic - representation of the societal organization in a *limited access orders*).<sup>36</sup>

Figure 1. Depiction of a basic natural state



Source: Wallis (2011): 8

The means of violence are therefore dispersed, which signifies that there is no effective monopoly of violence and, depending upon the number of organizations and degree of tolerance for their operation outside the scope of the state, specialization and division of labour is inexistent or much reduced. To put it another way, members of the dominant coalition have a hand in all spheres (especially in what concerns violence, economics and politics). Violence is always an immanent possibility and, according to this perspective, it is most likely to occur when the balance of power is affected through internal (policies or

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<sup>36</sup> X and Y, the horizontal axis, form the dominant coalition, while the vertical axis corresponds to the elites’ patron-clients.

decisions made by leaders) or external (fluctuation in relative prices, technological change, etc.) changes and when renegotiations of the distribution of rents and privileges fail.

Transition from the *limited access order* to the *open access order* occurs when, through and due to repeated interaction and continued rent creation, members of the dominant coalition find it in their interest to increase coordination between them in order to sustain and increase rents, and to avoid that a faction of the sub-coalition deposes them (those in the vertical axis). They gradually expand and create other organizations, which thereby creates specialization and division of labour. The development of independent state-supporting economic organizations comes together with the opening of politics: intra-elite competition requires impersonal access and rules concerning the creation of organizations – “elite factions find it profitable to allow wider access, but they also want to ensure that their rights are protected” (Ibid: 27). Open access to the economic and political system is thus the critical stepping-stone for the consolidation of the military since it provides the background under which the elites have an interest in abiding by an impersonal rule of law. Until this transition takes place though, “the *glue* holding the coalition together is the rents that individuals enjoy from their organizations, rents created either from peace or coordination within the coalition” (Wallis and North 2011: 24).<sup>37</sup>

While organization implies an “iron law of oligarchy” (Michels 1959; 2003: 211) and that a powerful few and their “configuration” (Higley and Lengyel 2000) are central in determining state trajectories, political processes and transitions (Burton and Higley 1986; Huntington 1991), this does not signify that elites are necessarily disconnected or autonomous from society since the basis of their power is grounded in and dependent upon the linkages they build with non-elites: X and Y in Figure 1 need their ‘x’s and ‘y’s to produce rents; the ‘x’s and ‘y’s rely on their leaders for protection and the redistribution of rewards. Thus, whereas elites may represent the interests of a determinate societal group, failure to satisfy non-elites’ needs, interests and aspirations can result in their overturn (Gurr 1970; Tilly 1978; Skocpol 1979; Moore 1991). However, this transposition of elites (in *limited access orders*), while indeed bringing about certain political and economic transfigurations, does not result in a reshaping of social order since “successful revolutionaries” themselves, in order to remain on

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<sup>37</sup> Italics are my own.

the top of the hierarchy, need to contain violence and thus “are likely to be just as much specialists in taking rather than making” (Nye 2011: 55). Impersonal rules, as seen, require that (contending) powerful actors find it not only attractive to create them but - even more-so to obey them (Wallis and North 2013: 5).

Recognizing the vital role that elites play in influencing the trajectories of peace or war in a given polity and upholding the view that stability within late developing countries takes place when the dominant coalition limits access to resources by other contending groups, enabling the generation of rents to the detriment of those excluded, the CSRC has suggested that this outcome, that is, the *elite bargain*, is but a starting point to understanding degrees of state fragility or resilience (Di John 2009: 32; Di John and Putzel: 14). The forging of a bargain between contending elites is not sufficient in itself to explain stability since: trajectories of peace and war differ substantially between countries and within them. What is needed is a framework that is suitable to explain what types of coalitions lead to these different paths.

### **2.3 Political Order (II): Inclusion, Centralized Rule, Malleability**

If each one of the many variable specific approaches for explaining the eruption (or the risk) of conflict came even partially close to depicting (and predicting) reality, the whole African continent would be immersed into “coming anarchy” (Kaplan 1994). This is because these econometric models understand the root causes of war to be located in a combination between structural factors - which are widespread throughout the region - and a conception of human nature as greedy and opportunistic. Starting with their conception of rational individuals, they identify variables, such as environmental scarcity (Homer Dixon 1999) or its abundance (Collier and Hoeffler 2001; Ross 2004), mountainous terrains (Hegre in Hegre and Sambanis 2006: 509) and low income (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004) as significant causes for explaining the eruption of civil war and insurgency. In other words, given determinate conditions and certain opportunities, men will fight. Although, evidently, the arguments are more nuanced than resumed here, none of these studies explains either why certain countries, in spite of the presence of one or even all of these variables, have avoided

large-scale violence or “why conflict at a particular moment when many of the ‘variables’ have been in place for long periods of time without provoking violent conflict” (Lemarchand paraphrased by Cramer 2002: 1856).<sup>38</sup>

If rents are what bind together “specialists in violence”, it follows that *all* these powerful individuals have to be given incentives in order to not be tempted to put their specialization into practice. In other words, stability in *limited access orders* not only depends upon the generation of rents, but also upon their allocation. In the terms of the CSRC, an *inclusive political elite bargain* is central in determining a state’s stable trajectory (Putzel and Di John 2012: 3).<sup>39</sup> An inclusive bargain refers to the distribution of rents, rights and entitlements between contending elites. Thus, only if the presence of individuals placed in formal institutions reflects the pattern of power-holding of competing elite groups in a society,<sup>40</sup> and if the benefits derived from all types of institutions (formal and informal) in the country are proportionally distributed between them can the bargain be said to be inclusive. The arrangements arrived at for resolving the problem of violence (the political settlement) can be enduring when economic outcomes include all rival elites. In a more “sophisticated” state, that is, when organizations exist beyond the state itself, elites are more varied in their nature. This is to say, the coordination of different forms of organizations permits a wide-range of individuals to retain some level of power. Relevant elites can therefore be those in possession of capital-generating resources (such as landowners or owners of an industry), those at the top of an institution whose position enables them to decide who gets what (regional and central political leaders, traditional chiefs), those who represent deep-rooted and historical

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<sup>38</sup> The problems surrounding these types of studies override this observation: from pinpointing dubious proxies to measure human “greed”, motivations and economic opportunities to rebel, confusing correlation with causation, to (and perhaps even more serious) undermining political issues and social relations. For a thorough critique on this approach see Cramer 2002.

<sup>39</sup> The CSRC makes this affirmation drawing to some extent upon the literature on power-sharing (Lijphart 1977). However it only partially assumes the power-sharing approach as its theoretical support because this approach does not go beyond the presupposition that the solution to peaceful relationships resides in inter-group inclusivity at the level of central state institutions (Horowitz 1985; Walter 1997; Hartzell and Hoodie 2003). Power-sharing arrangements have also been questioned and criticized in regard to their adequacy in post-conflict scenarios. The underlying argument is that they may enhance and crystallize social divisions, provoke political deadlocks (which can eventually lead to violent conflict) and economic inefficiency, and damage democratic principles and behaviour (Sriram and Zahar 2009; Mehler 2009; Le Van 2011).

<sup>40</sup> “Holding power is partly based on income and wealth but also on historically rooted capacities of different groups to organize” (Khan 2010: 1).

organizations (religious leaders) and those who can influence the course of politics through their capacity to collectively mobilize members of a society (leaders of a political party, of trade unions or of civil society movements) (Di John and Putzel 2009: 15). Exclusion of those who hold some degree of power in the allocation of rents and privileges is a signal of a state's fragility since it engenders elite dissatisfaction, thereby motivating challenges to the existing political settlement.<sup>41</sup> The shape of the elite bargain therefore matters in explaining (dis)orderly state trajectories.

Historical observation has shown that the inclusion of contending elites into a bargain (and thus the overcoming of social fragmentation) has been facilitated by a particular form of political organization. In various countries the existence of a dominant political party, able to reform the political system inherited by the colonial ruler and replace it with a centralized-bureaucratic form of rule, seems to have provided the basis for the emergence of a strong and authoritative executive power capable of firmly controlling resources (Allen 1998: 305).<sup>42</sup> The bureaucratization of party-state authority provides the mechanisms that limit the executive's predatory actions and the incentives to co-opt rival elites into the bargain.

To better explain, rulers, once in power, have one of two options: 1) share the "spoils" between all elites (and enjoy relative legitimacy) or 2) limit the allocation of resources to a personalized clientele (and therefore rely on repression and violence to regulate discontented groups). Of course their options are constrained or shaped by the path through which their power emerged: if the dominant political party held an all-encompassing social constituency (connections across ethno-regional groups, for example) then resource allocation would most likely reflect these linkages and thereby prevent intra-elite competition; if their base of

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<sup>41</sup> This goes in line with the idea that horizontal inequalities, between different ("cultural") groups, breeds motivation and opportunities for collective mobilization and violent action (Gurr 1993; Wood 2003a; Stewart 2009; Østby 2009). The principal difference in the argument here presented is that the emphasis is put on elite inequalities.

<sup>42</sup> Whereas Allen (1998) argues that, in some countries, reforms to the political system did not result in centralised forms of rule but rather in "winner takes all" systems (that is, an exclusive form of allocating resources), I hold that the latter does not necessarily imply that power could not be (or was not) centralized. The difference between the two systems is in the degrees of inclusivity or exclusivity of resource distribution and support. The point here is that a centralised state structure enables centralised patronage.

support was narrow, then resource distribution would generally tend to flow narrowly as well (Ibid: 307; Di John and Putzel 2012: 21).<sup>43</sup>

For example, political infighting between various forces in Congo after its independence from Belgium in 1960, and Mobutu's ascendance to power through a coup in 1965 are significant factors that influenced the patrimonial practice he employed throughout his rule. That is, Mobutu's narrow base of support encouraged that he use a divide-and-rule strategy in order to maintain power, "creating an environment in which any person or group could be rewarded or punished selectively" (Acemoglu and Robinson 2004: 169).

In contrast, in Tanzania, the nationalist movement led by Nyerere integrated all societal forces giving rise to a political party (TANU) with extensive support. The ruling party, once in power, institutionalised its authority by creating party organs at all levels of society and integrating them within the state structure. This provided the means for the executive authority to regulate competition but also enabled the emergence of counter forces within the dominant coalition - such as civil servants and party cadres - to deter its rule from following a more predatory path. It therefore created the incentives for political leaders to uphold their broad-based support by accommodating in the patrimonial distribution the main contending factions (Putzel and Lindemann 2011).

Thus, a centralized form of rule, backed up by a strong national party, has encouraged the ruler to be "stationary" and, in fact, less of a "bandit" (Olson 1993). This is to say, it sets the conditions for the political leader to find it in his interest to maximise rents by sharing the "spoils" across contending elites in order to avoid armed challenges to his rule (Di John 2008: 40). On the other hand, "lack of political mediation" (Allen 1998: 308) poses no constraints on rulers which have tended to reflect in more selective patterns of patronage and repressive and violent forms of rule. To put it succinctly, the character and form of the political organisation that controls the state, influences resource allocation, and, as a result, the bargain's shape.

Thus, through an examination of case studies at the national level it has been shown that the first example tended to result in exclusive political elite bargains, and, consequently, in violent

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<sup>43</sup> This goes along with the literature on political party organisation and forms of patronage (Kopecky 2011; Katz and Mair 1995; Roberts 2002)

conflict (Lindemann 2010a). The second, tended to result in inclusive political elite bargains and consequently, in political stability (Di John 2010; Lindemann 2010b; Putzel and Lindemann 2011). It is in this sense that Di John and Putzel (2012: 20) affirm that the “executive authority within the state...is the ‘glue’ or ‘solvent’ that holds together or dissolves an elite bargain” for it is at that level that elite competition can be regulated, whether through rewards or coercion. Indeed, political order depends equally as much on providing the right incentives, as it depends on providing negative ones (that is, those who challenge the power of the executive will suffer some sort of punishment).

Since “no political pact, however inclusive it may be, can ever be carved in stone” (Chandoke 2010: 2), it is also at that level where the bargain can be reshaped and accommodate the interests of emerging powerful actors. Therefore, political order depends upon the inclusion of existing and reemerging elites into a bargain (hence the need for the bargain to be malleable) since their exclusion increases the probability of violent protest.

This research project, by looking into Guinea-Bissau, - a country with a centralized form of rule upon independence, supported by a dominant political party, - sought to provide this literature with a further case-study by asking *what are the shapes and character of its political elite bargains from independence until the outbreak of the civil war in 1998? How have they evolved and to what extent has their degree of inclusivity/exclusivity been associated with moments of political (dis)order?*

However, the propositions initially put forward left unanswered the question as to why, when such conditions are in place, the same executive opts (at times) to change strategy and limit the - already limited - patronage to a certain coalition. Also, in the absence of a powerful, institutionalised and structured political party - which may prevent the executive from acting in an exclusionary and predatory manner since it reinforces certain “checks and balances” to its power -, what explains the shifting strategy and behaviour of rulers? Therefore, an additional issue to consider is why, in the absence of a third party enforcer, the same ruler may include contending elites in the bargain at times, and, at other times, exclude them and act in violent ways?

It is suggested that political order also depends upon the types of relations established between elites. If elites establish distrustful and inimical relations, then rents and even an executive authority with its interests set on the long-term horizon may not be sufficiently adhesive factors.



## 2.4 Contingency: Social Identity, Relations and Boundaries

Thus far the central theoretical proposition is that rents are what sustain minimum cooperation between contending elites and therefore they are what contain violence and uphold political order. To go back to the depiction of the basic natural state in Figure 1, X and Y have *one* thing in common and that is the interest in maintaining peace to enable the generation of rents. They do not really trust each other though. In the absence of impersonal rules and third-party enforcement, each member of the dominant coalition knows (or at least can predict) that in the eventuality of the other not obtaining enough rents to their satisfaction, someone will resort to violence. As seen, it is an adherent organization, that is, coordination simply endures because of a reciprocal interest (Wallis 2011: 8). X and Y have established a relation based on interest (they are *friends*). Cooperation therefore exists without trust (Cook et al. 2007) and in the presence of diversity we do *not* hunker down and act like turtles (Putnam 2007).

Of course this previous statement depends upon how one defines trust. If trust is an “encapsulated interest” (Hardin 2004), then X and Y trust each other since they both have an incentive to maintain the relationship in the future. The problem with defining trust simply as a relation maintained by a mutual and well-defined interest is that it fails to capture that it is precisely because of such continued interaction that individuals *may* forge a trust relationship. Trust can derive from various sources, such as “morality, habit, or encapsulated interest” (Levi 1998: 81), but sources of trust all originate from repeated social interaction. This means that the relationship of interest between X and Y can turn into one based on trust - an issue which will be expanded upon below.

This thesis, by framing trust in terms of risk taking, that is, depending on the actions of others in activities with important future outcomes (Tilly 2005b: 12),<sup>44</sup> suggests that elites who take upon political activities in *limited access orders* will attempt to minimize this risk – because, as

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<sup>44</sup> This approach is in contrast with accounts of trust that conceive it either as the belief or attitude that other agents are expected to act in a predictable way and stick to their obligations without third party enforcements (Wolfe: 1976; Coleman 1990; Cohen and Prusak 2001; Fukuyama 1995) or either as being dependent upon a certain setting or structure (McCauley & Kuhnert: 1992; Levi: 1996). The first refers to a dispositional approach, the second to a systemic one. Here trust is treated as an “effect of social interaction”; it is a transactional approach (Tilly 2005a: 25).

has been already established, any political mistake can make death a serious risk since the threat of violence is pervasive, constant and real (North et al. 2009: 42) - by opting to form coalitions with individuals with whom they have “established a whole way of life” (Zablocki in Tilly 2005a: 70).<sup>45</sup> In other words, we join with whom we trust thinking that those with whom we identify will abide to a bargain not only because they are coerced or have opportunistic incentives to do so, but because there are meaningful social ties and commitments in the relation.<sup>46</sup> This is represented in Figure 1: the individuals in the horizontal axis share the same identity. Yet, as shall be argued, social interaction between contending elites may result in a change of their relationship, which, in turn, alters this depiction. In other words, over time, contending elites may in fact end up sharing the same identity. When the state apparatus becomes the primary (and in Guinea-Bissau at least, the sole) form of obtaining rents, the linkages between non-elites (the ‘x’s and the ‘y’s) become subordinate, coalitions are exclusively formed between elites and thus societal cleavages may not reflect elite ones.<sup>47</sup>

Three issues that are key for the examination of political elite bargains and their relation to political (in)stability emerge by bringing social identity and different types of relations (such as relationships of interest, trust or foe) to the forefront. The first point to take note of, and as briefly touched upon above, is that both identity and social relations can change (Barth 1998; Brass 1991; Somers 1994; Tilly 2005a; Migdal 2004; Norval 2004; Paredes 2007; Wimmer 2008; Purdekova 2011). This proposition not only affects the way one should scrutinize the shape of

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<sup>45</sup> Any activity for that matter can produce risk since the absence of impersonal rules and laws brings about uncertainty.

<sup>46</sup> That we trust those who belong to the same group has been pointed out by a vast array of scholars from diverse research areas. In social psychology for example, Henri Tajfel developed a theory of social identity – theories that “focus on how categories become groups, with the emphasis on inter-group processes” (Jenkins 2008: 112) - and stresses that groups will generate attractive characteristics towards members and negative evaluations towards out-groups (Tajfel 1981). This in turn leads to in-group favouritism which influences perceptions of trustworthiness within the group (Brewer and Kramer: 1985; Fiske and Taylor: 1991). Janet Landa, offering a more economic view, considers the importance of trust that is embedded in kin and ethnic groups, when trade takes place in an environment bereft of contract laws (Landa 1995). With a more sociological approach, Monica Boyd shows that newly arrived immigrants more readily trust already settled immigrants of their own ethnicity to provide them with assistance and information of the host country (Boyd in Nee and Sanders 2003: 375).

<sup>47</sup> This in turn has implications in pinpointing which social cleavages to consider for assessing the shapes of the bargains. Having said this, this does not imply that the elites have no connection whatsoever with non-elites, for these conflicts can quickly extend and manifest themselves at the local level. This is what happened in Guinea-Bissau with the assassination of political and military officials of the Balanta ethnic group in 1985. It also applies to the civil war which started as an elite faction fight and only extended to the masses when foreign troops came in support of the government forces).

the elite bargains in a given polity, but fundamentally suggests that these changes can alter the bargain's shape and nature.

In the first place, changes in identity can influence assessments of the shapes of political elite bargains. Identity categories, such as ethnicity or religion - which are often believed to be essentialist attributes -, may change (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Anderson 1991; Barth 1998; Brubaker 2004; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Purdekova 2011). This approach does not dispute the idea that these forms of identity are less persisting and lasting, for examples, than ideological beliefs or party affiliations (Shills 1957; Geertz 1973; Isaacs 1975; Horowitz 1985; Hutchinson and Smith 1996).<sup>48</sup> Yet, the idea that people's strongest and most natural affections are towards their immediate attributes "given at birth" falls short in explaining authentic empathy in relation to other forms of identification, such as those that go beyond so-called primordial sentiments (Balcha 2008: 7). Thus, acknowledging Green's view that "if political economy studies of ethnicity...are to move forward, scholars must first examine their preconceptions on ethnicity" (Green 2005: 31),<sup>49</sup> it follows that any form of categorization (ethnicity, language, religion, race, etc.) has varying degrees of resonance. As Tilly puts it:

*"any analyst of interaction must pay attention to the categories people employ as they deal with each other but must also stringently avoid the straightforward incorporation of those same categories into explanations of the interaction under examination"* (Tilly 2006: 524).

What thus ought to be considered problematic is the treatment of identity categories as constant units of analysis, not only comparatively throughout countries, but also within countries throughout time (Brubaker 2009). Studies that consider a single identity category -

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<sup>48</sup> Although on the other side of the ethnicity debate (an instrumentalist approach), Fearon puts forward the argument that political coalitions aimed at capturing political "pork" are based on ethnic criteria in order to limit the share of the spoils between the winners. The idea is that ethnicity, rather than other forms of identity, cannot easily be chosen or changed by people and therefore limits the size of the winning coalition (1999: 5).

<sup>49</sup> This thesis adopts Chandra's (2006: 3) definition of ethnicity: *"ethnic identities are a subset of identity categories in which eligibility for membership is determined by attributes associated with, or believed to be associated with, descent"*. This definition provides room for considering as an ethnic identity any grouping that goes beyond having "common culture, a common history, a common territory and a common language". This may be a particular subset of this type of identity (Ibid ibidem) and suggests that ethnic properties are not fixed but result from "constrained change". In other words, ethnicity may change depending upon the underlying attributes - which is thereby suggestive of the fluidity of the concept.

and on the African continent, this generally refers to ethnicity - to be the potential source of conflict and the cause of civil war across regions (Collier and Hoeffler 2002; Blanton et al. 2001; Roessler 2011), and even the entire world (Wimmer et al. 2009), assume that there is a single social cleavage that is a uniformly relevant and weighty influence in political claim-making.<sup>50</sup> They therefore also assume an ahistorical perspective since different countries possess different sources of fragmentation as the consequence of a variety of factors, from environment to the previous strategies of colonial domination and processes of economic development. To identify a precise source of fragmentation in a country and then treat it as a constant point of (potential) tension across time (Lindemann 2010a; Lindemann 2010b) may lead the researcher to disregard that at certain instances “social groupings and the maps they project coexist harmoniously, causing minimal dissonance” (Migdal 2004: 8).<sup>51</sup> This is not to say that such sources of fragmentation would become residual or that such “cultural markers” (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 186) would suddenly vanish, but it does suggest that previously competing groups and their distinct forms of contestation may become less central in professed political claims at varying times. In other words, the socially constructed line that separates “us” from “them” – the pertinent *social boundary* – can become less salient in time.

Social boundaries are therefore created at the moment one is confronted with an other; they are inevitably the result of social interaction and can shift - become more or less salient in accordance with the directions of social interaction. They can also “dissolve to produce...new forms of categorization” (Ibid: 187). The encounter of distinct and competing groups may “deactivate... [an]other boundary in favour of one or more other divisions” (Tilly 2005a: 144). Consequently, if the criterion for assessing the shapes of political elite bargains in a country is to pinpoint a dominant fracturing social cleavage and then examine how the distribution of rights and entitlements are being distributed between the contending elites representative of

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<sup>50</sup> Even though some of the abovementioned studies consider that it is not ethnic diversity *per se*, but degrees of polarization (that is, salient ethnic differences) to be more conducive to tensions and conflict (also Estaban and Ray 2008; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2004) and yet others are less ambiguous and take into consideration that what increases ethnic polarization is state power exclusion (Wimmer et al. 2009), all of them consider ethnicity to be the fundamental (or potential) source of social fragmentation.

<sup>51</sup> Migdal conceives boundaries as incorporating two elements which he has defined as checkpoints and mental maps. Check points refer to the ways and forms that groups use to differentiate members and monitor and enforce separation; mental maps “incorporate elements of the meaning people attach to spatial configurations, the loyalties they hold, the emotions and passions that groupings evoke, and their cognitive ideas about how the world is constructed” (Migdal 2004: 7).

this same cleavage, it also requires attention to such boundary changes: the fracturing line that was once relevant may be of less relevance in a following period since boundaries are in “need of continuous renewal, recomposition and realignment”(Goodhand et al. 2009: 682).

This view of social boundaries follows the idea that when people think a group exists and that they belong to it, then the identity is real (Jenkins 2008: 9). By proposing that identities can be recognized when differences are asserted and that difference implies the relations established between individuals or within groups - this is to say that affirmations of “us” and “them” are what identities reside upon (Tilly 2002; 2005a) -, it is argued in this thesis that varying identities come into play and become more salient depending upon context and interaction. Ethnic, religious, linguistic or regional differences are not pervasive and constant divisive factors. People hold multiple identities, as many as the relations they establish, and these are but one form of identity. At times these forms of identification may become the preponderant influence upon behaviour and at other times they may be of little importance.

Having said this, this thesis also recognizes the likelihood that when elites representative of these “basic group identities”, that is, groups which derive from blood, language, history and myths (Shills 1957: 142), are inclusively included in the bargain, the potential influence of these sources of social fragmentation may wane down (Langer 2009). Such inclusion may thereby provide the setting in which other “secondary” forms of political identity materialize and become central. This notwithstanding, the proposition remains the same: it matters to investigate what were elites’ claims based upon and whether they changed in order to determine how to evaluate the shape of bargains. It may precisely be due to the fact that when the bargain does not accommodate these “secondary” forms of political identity between elites (for example, ideology) this leads to sequences of action that generate political and violent conflict based on “basic group identities”.

This following point is closely related to another crucial matter for the study of the shape and nature of a political elite bargain. If social interaction between individuals and groups is what enables boundary and (therefore) relationship changes, it signifies that contending elites within a bargain at time A can have a common answer at time B to “who are we?” and to “who are they?” questions. Put simply, they may end up on the same side of the social boundary (i.e. share the same politically pertinent identity). On the one hand, this alters the configuration of the bargain for it suggests that the dominant coalition is socially organized with reference to different parameters. On the other hand, these different parameters in themselves will have

an impact on how rents, rights and entitlements are distributed - since different identities are necessarily associated with different interests. Furthermore, and to go back to the linkages of elites with subordinate x and y (society), changes in the sources of contention and relationships between elites may not exactly reflect societal cleavages and conflicts. This discrepancy may tend to be especially characteristic of polities with a centralized form of rule supported by a single national party since 1) this type of political organization can create space at central elite level where indeed ethnic, religious or regional affiliations may be transcended to the extent that 2) a “ruling class” (Sumich 2010: 682) or ruling elites, with similar objectives but yet, with different tendencies is forged by the power deriving from common access to the state. In a similar line to what was previously argued, it is exactly these relationship changes and different factions (tendencies) that have to be identified for it is at this level that the bargain takes shape and is reshaped. In light of these observations, this thesis, in order to answer its primary research questions, had to ask *precisely who were the contending elites in Guinea-Bissau, and how and why social boundaries and relations between them were altered and transformed at different times.*

The second point is that, just as social boundaries can become less salient and be deactivated, they can also be activated and hardened (Abbot 1995a; Tilly 2003). This is where the contingency twist resides: there is no guarantee that the inclusion of competing elites in a bargain will ameliorate their relations. They can remain *friends* (interest), become friends (trust) or turn into enemies (hate). While access to rents is what restrains contending elites from fighting, it need not be the factor causing their relationship to turn sour. Social boundaries can sharpen for the most diverse reasons, from a leader who deliberately seeks his own personal interests and engages in fomenting group differences “by throwing a grenade into a mosque” (Goodhand et. al 2009: 683), to a negotiation or even a mere conversation having gone badly. Boundary shifts can thus be the consequence of intended but also unintended actions and interactions, and (generally always) have unexpected results.

The sharpening of a social boundary between contending elites included at any one moment in the bargain points towards a process by which a relationship of interest is turned into one of hatred. The issue then has to be framed in terms of whether rents (and coercion) are sufficient deterrents for elites not to resort to violence when they have become foes and hate and

distrust each other. By bringing identities to the forefront, this thesis is inclined to suggest that some social ties entail weighty commitments and beliefs that lead actors in varying contexts to engage in genuinely destructive or altruist actions.<sup>52</sup> Where this thesis is more assertive, and this is the third point, is in putting forward the proposition that elites will preferentially form coalitions with those with whom they hold a relationship of trust and manage a dominant coalition with those with whom they have established a relationship based on interest. However, since relationships may change for the most diverse and unexpected reasons, and since those with whom we identify and trust can turn into those we distrust, even a leader interested in upholding order may be caught up in the games involved in these relations. As social boundaries sharpen not only do the interests of contending elites diverge but can become irreconcilable, and, as such, those who have more authority will forge a bargain reflective of their own interests - that is, with those they identify and exclude those with whom they do not.

Maintaining an inclusive bargain depends upon the relationships established between elites and social boundaries are the analytical link to understanding differing executive “strategies”. If social boundaries and the forging of a political elite bargain (and the outcome of negotiations) are closely intertwined then no matter how inclusive a bargain may be at one time and how willing (and constrained) the executive power is, it can (quickly) assume the inverse shape. If there is to be a theory of political order, then let it contain an element of unpredictability.

## **2.5 Why Guinea-Bissau as a Case-Study**

Guinea-Bissau, a lesser known country in the literature on West Africa, came into the international spotlight around 2004 with the first major apprehension of cocaine. The immediate reaction by the international community was to reinforce the image of a corrupt and failing state that was further deteriorating due to the massive incursion of the drug trade into the territory and the collusion by high state officials and members of the Armed Forces. Just a few years later Guinea-Bissau was labelled as Africa’s first narco-state (*The Independent*,

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<sup>52</sup> On actions beyond self-interest, Mansbridge (1990)

18 July 2007), “the new hub for cocaine trafficking” (UNODC 2008b: 4). The assumption was that drugs were creating political disorder. These images were questionable and worthy of further research. The illuminating and thought provoking work by Khan (2000), Snyder (2009), Goodhand (2008; 2009; 2010) and North et al.’s (2009) *limited access order* model were a particularly good place to start: political (dis)order depends in great measure upon the shape of the elite bargain, independently of whether benefits are accrued through formal, informal or illicit activities (Hesselbein 2011: 9). From this point of view, drugs and illegal markets as such are not forcibly connected to violence and disruption, but need to be placed in the context of the forging of an elite bargain.

My initial research project was to examine how and if the money derived from the drug trafficking was reconfiguring the elite bargain, how it was being distributed, and to what extent patterns of distribution - inclusive or exclusive - were linked to moments of political (dis)order. The particularities of how the trafficking was (is) being conducted in Guinea-Bissau, that is, its use as a transit platform by Latin American drug cartels rather than for internal production or trafficking, did not provide the scenario for non-state or peripheral actors to emerge. The concentration of power at the military level required that the (mostly Colombian) drug traffickers negotiate with members of the high echelons of the Armed Forces - and their respective connections with civilian politicians - in order to use Bissau-Guinean islands and the mainland to refuel their planes and to redistribute the drugs into other means of transport, such as boats or by trucks, in order to avoid European law enforcers. Access to state power positions was therefore the means to control the drug trade and, in a country where it is purported that the value of the cocaine trafficked is greater than its entire national income (UNODC 2007b: 1), competition for both the drug trade and the state apparatus increased. By the end of the decade faction-fighting, believed to be connected to the drug trafficking (Embaló 2012: 272), led to episodic violence - the epitome of this being the brutal assassinations of two members of opposing factions, the President and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in 2009.

There are three reasons for the project to have changed at a very early stage. In the first place, in order to understand how the drugs were re-shaping the elite bargain it was necessary to



understand the character and nature of the previous bargains,<sup>53</sup> as well as the sources for the “*longstanding* internal feuds of the politico-military power elite” that were seemingly being stimulated by the drug trafficking (Kohnert 2010: 6).<sup>54</sup> In other words, *a priori*, there was a necessity of doing a historical political-economy analysis of Guinea-Bissau’s political settlements. This preliminary investigation, based on secondary sources and the few interviews I conducted in Lisbon with former Bissau-Guinean political elites, led me to the observation that these contending elites at one time were not contending at all; they had been part of the same group, despite coming from different ethnicities. Although both the secondary sources and the interviewees roughly pinpointed when divergences started, the explanations as to why these occurred not only varied, but above all, within the same explanation there were incongruences. On the one hand, the feuds were due to “longstanding” ethnic divergences, but on the other hand, they were not. Consequently, the origin of contention between them was far from being evident, which thereby impeded understanding of what was the basis for the forging of past and more recent coalitions and thus the logic as to how rents were distributed. This in turn made me realize that in order to appreciate the dynamics and power relations between present-day contending elites a greater deal of historical analysis was required. The focus of the project started to assume a different contour.

It was also through these first interviews and conversations with academics and practitioners’ working on Guinea-Bissau - and this is the second reason - that I was warned that my access to key elite informants would be extremely limited and cut-off if I were to even mention the drug trafficking. While this was a challenge that I foresaw in the proposed research project, I did not expect that individuals who were not living in Guinea-Bissau or not (known to be) connected to the trafficking would be hesitant and uncomfortable talking about it. It became apparent that while they were eager to openly discuss past events, and their participation in them and even to disclose past political intrigues, they became uneasy and apprehensive when questioned about more recent political occurrences. Therefore, I became mindful to the fact that these

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<sup>53</sup> This was from the start one my research questions, this is to say, I questioned what the previous shapes of the elites bargains were and to what extent were they associated to moments of political violence. Therefore, although there was evidently a change in focus, this thesis does not deviate substantively from its initial proposal.

<sup>54</sup> Italics are my own.

challenges and difficulties would most likely limit the amount of data and information I would be able to obtain.

A third reason had to do with my own personal safety. A few months before I left for Bissau, a journalist, who had published an article in *Diário de Bissau* on the drug trafficking and its links to high state officials and military men, had been beaten and threatened with death (Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos 2012: 52). The danger involved in conducting research in this area thus became even more obvious. Although these were some of the obstacles that I was confronted with, by looking into Guinea-Bissau's political elite bargains from 1974 to 1998 and by discerning the changes in the configuration of the Bissau-Guineans elites, this thesis hopes to provide the underlying basis for future research projects focusing on post-1998 distribution of power between contending elites in Guinea-Bissau.

Having revealed the initial motivation of this research project, I have also clarified the rationale behind it. Guinea-Bissau possesses several characteristics that are interesting for the study of political elite bargains and political (dis)order and that make it a worthy selection as a case-study. To start with, it provides an example of a country where, despite its extreme poverty and low economic growth, a certain degree of political order was upheld during extended periods of time (1974-1980 and 1980-1998). At the same time, it also provides an example of a country that, during the years under analysis, experienced two different types of political violence: a *coup d'état* in 1980 and a civil war in 1998. Therefore, it not only offered the possibility to analyse peace and war trajectories within the same country (thereby understanding why conflict erupts at a particular moment in time), but also to comprehend whether different forms of armed challenges to the state can be related to the shape of the political elite bargains.

Furthermore, the process by which Guinea-Bissau's dominant political party (the PAIGC) centralized its form of rule even before independence was obtained, and how this centralisation was gradually deconstructed, particularly from 1980 onwards, by concentrating power in the hands of the President, allows comparison with other countries with a similar type of political organization but which ultimately led to different outcomes. Lastly, although there is a significant amount of bibliography concerning Guinea-Bissau's independence struggle (Davidson 1969; Cabral 1984; Chabal 1981, 1983a), its first years of independence and the PAIGC's attempt to follow-through with the revolution (Chilcote 1991; Rudebeck 1972; Chabal 1983b) and its liberalisation phase (Forrest 1992; Galli and Jones 1987; Lopes 1987),

first-hand research carried out at the elite level and encompassing all these periods until the eruption of the civil war is missing. While Guinea-Bissau has just recently become the focus of attention of the international community and scholars due to the incursion of drugs into its territory, this research project is a bridge for a better understanding of changing nature and dynamics of the politico-military elites' relations today.

## **2.6 Research Methodology and Methods**

This research project set-off to understand how political order is maintained in an underdeveloped country and to explain the outbreak of political conflict and violence at a particular moment. The project therefore called for a qualitative case-study approach.

On the one hand, these are essentially “why” and “how” questions focussed on the particularity of a country chosen because of either its unique or exemplary character. So, they are necessarily comparative questions. However, the starting point for the framing of this project derived precisely from the critical idea that large-n quantitative studies fall short in explaining dynamic processes (Cramer 2002: 1856; Tarrow 2007: 589) such as those that my questions aimed at. Indeed, from this point of view, it is at the country case study level that significant comparisons can be drawn in depth and in that way enable a balance between the particular and the general (Lange 2013: 2) - which is, nevertheless, not to imply a method with universalizing ambitions (Byrne 2009: 1).

The project posed “why” and “how” questions that involved an interest in finding explanations for the occurrence of specific events or outcomes and the mechanisms that drive or sustain these outcomes. The research questions required a methodological approach that would make it possible to grasp social realities and processes that were likely to be multi-layered and complex. They implied the need for in-depth and on-going analysis and called for the use of qualitative methods for gathering and analysing data. In effect, the strength of qualitative methods is to appropriately draw together varied resources that describe how a phenomenon is constituted (Silverman 2006: 43) and to understand the action, interaction and perception of actors (Brockington and Sullivan 2003: 57). They provide the flexibility and possibility of reflexive iteration in data gathering that can lead to a more “refined focus and understandings” (Srivastava and Hopwood 2009: 77) and permit the researcher to explore what is unexpected.

The following section will present the methods employed in this research project by concurrently explaining the “spiralling” course (Berg 2007: 24) and reasoning that I went through.

## **2.7 Explaining the Investigative Process in Three Interconnected Phases**

Berg (2007) recommends that qualitative research ought to move forward spirally. This entails questioning and re-examining theoretical assumptions while data collection is in process. In other words, a parsimonious theory is not required before engaging in research nor is extensive research required before coming up with a theory; this approach is meant to go beyond these linear progressions and spirals forward, each stage of the process feeding off of the previous one (Ibid: 7).

Although I did not adopt this approach consciously, the preliminary research undertaken during August and September of 2010 - which entailed scrutinizing the secondary literature available in both London (largely at SOAS and the British Library) and Portuguese (ISCTE and UCP) libraries - involved meeting and discussing my research objectives with practitioners, academics and researchers focused on Guinea-Bissau, and Lusophone Africa more generally. It also involved conducting a combination of life histories and semi-structured interviews with three Bissau-Guinean politicians, two of whom were liberation war veterans, about the period under analysis.

This preliminary research was sufficient to force me to question one of my original theoretical assumptions. In order to assess the shape of the elite bargains my original plan was to consider ethnicity as the main source of fragmentation between the elites and ascertain to what extent each of the various ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau were included in it. Surprisingly though, this first data did not reveal ethnicity (religion or region) to be a consistent point of contention amongst the elites across time. In a general sense, and with the exception of the case of the Fula (an issue discussed in the subsequent chapters), my sources suggested that class and nation rather than ethnicity, were the driving identities during the war and during the first years of independence. Furthermore, none of these interviewees, or the following ones, employed ethnicity as a consistent category when explaining “lesser” contentious episodes between them and other elites while interpreting political events in Guinea-Bissau. While ethnicity and nationality (whether Bissau-Guinean or Cape Verdean) clearly featured in their

discourses and were indeed related to certain fracturing political moments, other elite cleavages and modes of claim-making were brought up and appeared to contain similar relevance.

Reflecting upon these issues, I incorporated three interrelated theoretical refinements into my research project that consequently shaped the way I was to obtain my empirical data. The first was that varied modes of claim-making are played out throughout time and different identities can emerge and become politically more salient. The second was that these sources of elite fragmentation can differ from (perceived) societal ones. The third was that interaction between elites (and society) is what generates different identities to emerge. The implications for my empirical research had to be twofold if the shapes of the political elite bargains were to be accurately discerned: 1) it required that I grasp - through primary and secondary literature and through elite life histories and other interviewing - what were the main sources of contention between them at any given time; 2) it required that through these same research tools I get a sense of how these identities changed and became salient. Why and how these specific methods were employed will be explained, but beforehand it is necessary to highlight how the shapes of the elite bargains are measured and what types of political disorder are to be linked with their shape.

### **2.7.1 Data Collection (I): Political Elite Bargains and Political Disorder**

While this thesis concurs with the premise that determining the shape of a political elite bargain requires more than just considering who has been appointed to state offices - since this in itself is not indicative of whether rents, privileges and entitlements are being distributed in an inclusionary manner (Di John and Putzel 2012: 3) -, it posits that the validity of this indicator may *depend* upon the country under analysis. This proposition not only derives from the view that those in state power positions<sup>55</sup> “ultimately determine the distribution of rights and entitlements” (Lindemann 2010a: 5), but also comes from the observation that in certain countries access to state offices might just be the primary (and only) manner for elites to obtain rents. This, on the one hand, is an indication of the fragility of a state’s economic capacity (or, in line with the idea of state progression in North et. al, reflects the fragility of the

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<sup>55</sup> As referred to in Lindemann (2010b: 5) and mean positions of political, military and economic authority

*limited access order*), since the polity does not support organizations outside the scope of the state itself. On the other hand, it has very much to do with the nature of the rents that sustain the ruling coalition. If, for example, significant rents flow exclusively from foreign aid (which in turn produces political dependency), then benefits are principally reaped at the central state level and elite competition is mostly centered upon access to state power positions. It is relevant to emphasize this point because, during the periods under analysis, state positions were in fact the significant form of accumulating wealth since there was no relevant capital accumulation outside of the formal state's structures. Therefore the top positions in the state apparatus, in the armed forces and in the ruling political party, constitute a particularly accurate indicator for measuring the character of the bargain in the country. This said, it was also necessary to take into account how these appointments influenced the bargains' outcomes by analysing how rights and entitlements were being distributed. However, a further implication of this observation is that in Guinea-Bissau the elites are to be located in this sphere, since the power that is relevant to rent distribution emanates from access to these positions of power in the state. This point was central to identifying the key informants to be interviewed.

The character and shape of the political elite bargain, as briefly mentioned, is principally captured through identifying who was appointed to top positions in the government (Ministers and Secretaries of State), in the armed forces (Chiefs of Staff and Vice-Chiefs of Staff) and in the PAIGC (Secretary-General, Political Bureau, etc.). The highest bodies within the PAIGC changed throughout this period and these alterations are taken into account within each measurement of a bargain.<sup>56</sup> Coinciding with the power-holders and according to each time period, an "inner core" – that is, weighty positions - is also identified in order to reveal which groups were being primarily benefitted. Due to the various transitional periods and constitutional changes, the forms in which the bargains are measured necessarily follow these institutional alterations.<sup>57</sup>

Leading positions are represented throughout this thesis in simple linear graphs or pie charts in order to facilitate the visualization of the bargains' configurations and are referred to as

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<sup>56</sup> The PAIGC was the ruling political party from 1974 to 1998.

<sup>57</sup> The "inner core" positions and these changes are identified in the chapters.

positions of power. Additionally, the form in which rights and entitlements were being distributed in each given time was assessed through primary and secondary literature (local newspapers, reports and statistical data made available by various organisations such as the Bissau-Guinean National Statistics Office and the UN and scholars writing during and about these periods) and through the data obtained through the interviews.

It was an arduous task to obtain a comprehensive list of the individuals who composed the various governments, the high echelons of the armed forces and the PAIGC. It required time, patience and help from a range of people. The 1998 civil war in Guinea-Bissau had destroyed most of the governments and the PAIGC's' documents and memoranda. The information was scattered and sometimes non-existent. As a result I had to resort not only to a variety of institutions, but also to the memory of interviewees with whom I had established a close rapport. The compilation of the list of individuals who composed the various governments was found in the yearly official state bulletins in INEP's library. The frequency of government alterations required I go through each bulletin and law amendment systematically. The list of members of the PAIGC was obtained through the party's historical reports, some of which could be found in the INEP's archives, but the majority were copies stored in CIDAC's archives in Lisbon. Regarding the list of military officials, these were located in the archive of the armed forces, *Clube das FARP*. However, not only were these lists incomplete but also, in this case, I was not given access to enter the *Clube*. It was only through the help of my research assistant, and due to his family connections with one of the soldiers, that he was allowed to shortly consult some of the documents. The gaps in this list were overcome by asking military officials, who I interviewed, who were the people in these remaining posts.

In order to identify and categorize the individuals on these lists I relied mainly on the help of four different people: two were my research assistants who were well connected and related through family with people who had actively taken part in the military and political spheres during the period I was analysing. The other two were former politicians who I interviewed and with whom I maintained on-going conversations throughout my 9 month stay in Guinea-Bissau. This ensured a certain degree of triangulation of information. Due to inter-ethnic marriages, ethnic identification was not always straightforward. There were cases where an individual was known to be of mixed origin, but, nonetheless, during the period in question, was manifestly perceived as being representative of one of his ethnic links. In these cases, this recognition was what defined categorization. However, where this perception was not strong or commonly held by my informants, in order not to risk distorting the data, the person was

placed under “other”. Other forms of categorization (class, ideology, military or civilian background, age and so on), involved other difficulties, essentially because: 1) most of these identity categories are not as easy to pinpoint (whereas ethnic categorization can be facilitated through name markers, identification of these categories through recollection, while possible, involves more subjectivity); 2) they are not as constant (in the sense that people change ideology more easily than ethnicity). Primary and secondary sources in these cases were a fundamental channel to complement this data. Given these limitations, it is *not* purported that the information presented in these graphs or charts is an exact and precise representation of inter-group distribution of military and political posts, but rather an approximation.

In fragile states, where political instability is constantly present, it is generally armed conflict, such as civil wars, that provide situations with sufficient contrast with some *status quo* in order to study conflict trajectories. However, in Guinea-Bissau from 1974 to 1998 there were three distinctly different episodes of overt political breakup and violence that this research project was interested in investigating and linking to the shape of the elite bargains: the 1980 *coup d'état*, the (supposed) *coup d'état* attempts in 1982-84 (which led to the imprisonment of over 50 Balanta military and political officials in 1985 and the killing of 6 of them in 1986), and the civil war in 1998. By extending the research to different types of political violence this project not only sought to test whether the elite bargain model could be used to analyse other manifestations of political violence, but also aimed to understand the processes and sequences of action and interaction that can lead to “bigger” contentious events, such as civil war or *coups d'état*. Furthermore, including unsuccessful attempts at *coups d'état* into the analysis permitted the identification of other conditions necessary for upholding order (such as a strong and authoritarian executive power).

### **2.7.2 Data Collection (II): Grasping Contending Elites Through Stories**

Alongside the list compilation, I conducted a combination of life histories and semi-structured interviews with national political and military officials who had played an active part in the political processes from 1974 to 1998 (many of whom still held important functions in these



spheres).<sup>58</sup> These interviews were conducted between September 2011 and July 2012. Both the review of the literature and the lists that I was collecting enabled me to identify the key people to interview – in a general sense all were based in the capital city, Bissau. This previous selection of potential interviewees sought to provide a sufficient sample of the different relevant elite groups and factions I had detected during the time period under analysis (politicians and military men from different ethnic groups and generations, liberation war veterans, PAIGC militants and dissidents, etc.). However, while the 36 interviews and life histories<sup>59</sup> I was able to obtain are a good representation of the different contending elite groups,<sup>60</sup> the sample was not attained by using conventional sampling techniques. The most effective approach for elite interviewing was the “snowball” or “referral” sampling approach. This strategy involves starting with a limited number of previously identified informants who can refer to other relevant actors (Berg 2007: 44). This is especially effective in a society such, as in Guinea-Bissau, where the density of elite interconnections is high.

This sampling technique was put into practice in a short exploratory visit that I conducted in March of 2010 to Bissau and the contacts made then were a good starting point. Two people in particular, though, facilitated my access into the Bissau-Guinean elite circle. One of them was one of the interviewees in Lisbon who provided me not only with a list of and direct contacts to key actors, but also contacted them beforehand and conveyed that I was an independent researcher, that I would be arriving shortly in Bissau and was interested in interviewing them. The second person who eased my way in was a Portuguese political consultant on Lusophone-African matters who retained close connections at the highest level: I arrived in Bissau with letters of reference addressed to the President, the Prime-Minister, the Minister of Economics and the Portuguese Ambassador. Once I established an initial rapport with these individuals, they all referred me to other actors. The President and the Prime-Minister were not only significant political figures during the years I was looking into, but also represented opposing

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<sup>58</sup> The interviews were all conducted in Portuguese. Although I did take a creole language course it was not necessary to use these skills for my research since all my interlocutors spoke Portuguese.

<sup>59</sup> I also conducted interviews with a number of officials in international organizations, such as the UN and the EU; however, the information provided through these interviews had little influence in this thesis’s analysis. I also continuously engaged in various informal conversations with relevant Bissau-Guinean actors which fine-tuned my understandings of the historical dynamics of the country.

<sup>60</sup> It is important to note that in the majority of the cases the same interviewee is simultaneously representative of differing contentious groupings.

PAIGC factions. It is also worth mentioning that certain particularities of Bissau itself, namely, its small dimension, offered a scenario in which it was not unusual to meet relevant elite actors in more informal settings (cafés and restaurants, for example) and made it possible to initiate a first casual conversation, which eventually led to interviews. Notwithstanding these opportunities, scheduling the interviews and winning the confidence of the selected individuals took time and persistence. To be sure, many potential interviews fell through (especially with active military officials).

The interviews were always held in a place of the interviewee's choice.<sup>61</sup> From the start, all were informed of the anonymity and confidentiality of the provided information and I explained the nature of my research project (the fact that it was a historical analysis made them more at ease). Although several of the interviewees consented to be recorded, there were many instances in which they asked me to turn the tape recorder off. It became apparent that when the interviews were not being recorded they would disclose more information, which made me reduce its usage. The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents have been safeguarded by ensuring that the information disclosed cannot be tracked back to them - thus some of the quotes omit certain information in order to protect the identity and not compromise the safety of the respondents. I have circumvented issues of validity by providing a list of interviewees that specifies the positions they held and other relevant information (Appendix 1).<sup>62</sup>

The formal semi-structured interviews always followed life history interviewing. This is to say, my set of guiding questions - which were posed to all interviewees - were left for the second part of the interviewing session.<sup>63</sup> The questions posed were essentially formulated in order to obtain the respondents' views on why certain politically violent episodes took place and of how certain elites related to each other (Appendix 3).

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<sup>61</sup> The settings varied immensely: from their homes, to offices, to cafés, etc. The two locations that I most enjoyed for conducting interviews were a large conference room in the PAIGC's worn down headquarters with Amílcar Cabral's photographs hanging on the wall and a small open air kiosk in the military's air force base that faced the only two small abandoned airplanes in the lanes.

<sup>62</sup> Although I never felt I was in a dangerous situation, with respect to my own personal safety, I made sure that my circle of friends were informed before each interview of where it was to take place.

<sup>63</sup> These interview sessions were extremely long (three to four hours long). In many cases I met with the interviewee a second (and even third) time.

Life histories are “a fairly complete narrating of one’s entire experience of life as a whole, highlighting the most important aspects” (Atkinson in Plummer 2004: 1) and they are a particularly useful research tool for understanding how personal narratives connect to the broader macro-political and historical environment. In other words, a person’s life story gives a sense of how biographies intersect with the larger system as a whole and enable the researcher to come “closer to actual experience and is capable of capturing the wider problematic” (Denzin 1989: 69). This type of method proved to be essential in order to apprehend how the various political and military actors “navigated” (Vigh 2006) their ways through the various periods. The recounting of elite life trajectories therefore also revealed the processes by which these individuals negotiated their identities and their interpretation or engagement with norms and situations. It was also a central tool not only for understanding how the interviewees related to each other, but how and when their life trajectories interweaved or differed at certain stages. Accordingly, it was through these stories that I was able to get a sense of when (and sometimes why) social relations and boundaries between the elites changed. Generally, the life history interviews began by asking the interviewee’s age, place of birth, ethnic identity and whether he/she went to school. I would follow with questions on how they experienced the liberation war (whether they had fought in it, for how long, etc.) and the first years of independence, their positions after the 1980 *coup* and so on. Their answers generally led to distinct questions, however, for some I kept to standard probes see Appendix 2.

It was essential that I prepare myself in advance in order for this type of interviewing to be successful. Knowing something of the interviewees’ life histories and background beforehand enabled me 1) to position myself within the interviewee’s norms of behaviour, thereby creating a good rapport from the beginning (Mikecz 2012: 483); 2) to use follow-up techniques in order for the interviewing process to flow (Ruane 2005: 123; 149); and 3) to detect certain omissions (which could just as well be non-intentional and caused by memory failure). Starting the interview session with this type of method allowed the following questioning to take place in a much more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere since after two hours or so of conversation, the interviewer and I generally had established a good rapport.

There were, however, a set of challenges with this form of interviewing. The first was that the way the “story” was narrated was not always structured or neat, which consequently made the analysis of the material quite difficult. This required that I go through either the recording or my notes analytically and rearrange the information coherently and highlight the topics that

were most relevant. A lot of the information given was not directly related to my research questions. The second had to do with reliability, that is, the extent to which the interlocutor was accurately recounting a story and my ability to judge that. The third had to do with recognizing when the past was being interpreted in relation to the present, that is, certain occurrences could have gained or lost importance depending upon the present circumstances of the interlocutor. These challenges were, to an extent, bypassed through the semi-structured interview. The succeeding questions that were posed to the interviewee were of a less personalised nature, that is, they were questions that aimed to distance the interlocutor from the events and get his opinion on why certain violent episodes unfolded as well as his thoughts on the relationships between *other* contending elites. On the one hand, this allowed for the interviewee's discourse to change and to present his version in a more dispassionate and "objective" manner. On the other hand, it also allowed comparing how the interviewee's life story fit into these explanations and how these explanations fit with other interviewees' explanations. The veracity of the facts told was of less importance than their construal: the point was to be able to identify elite divergences and forms of alliances and relations.

### **2.7.3 Data Assemblage (III): Getting *Close* to The Story**

Elite life histories and interpretations of events provided me with a set of stories. Stories are the narratives that constitute identities, that is, the answers to those questions that were pointed out as revealing identity – "Who are we?" and "Who are they?". Identity is constituted then by a set of collective stories about each side of the boundary (Tilly 2002; 2005a). They are accepted accounts that convey and represent divisions along each line. Stories emerge *a posteriori* to an action or interchange and they are constructed by individuals in order to explain (justify or excuse) such actions.<sup>64</sup> It was precisely through the collection of these varying accounts that different identities and forms of claim-making were located. However, it also mattered to locate them in time. Yet, on occasions, these accounts contained incongruences: certain episodes enclosed two contrasting stories. That is, in order to explain one action, the stories narrated explaining previous actions either became of lesser importance or vanished. In addition and complementing this, the accounts were not clarifying

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<sup>64</sup> Narratives involve more than a social science research method; stories indeed affect social action, explain the formation of identities, provide explanations of social processes; all in all it is through them that "we make sense of the social world" (Somers 1994: 606).

as to why elite relations had changed and why differing identities came into play. Therefore, in order to situate contending elite cleavages in time, the analysis of primary and secondary literature was essential. Scrutinizing which identity categories were being employed in articles in local newspapers and speeches, PAIGC reports, and academic literature written during the different periods was critical for situating in time which social fracturing line was salient. In order to determine why and how relations and boundaries changed (to situate these cleavages in time it was necessary to understand why and how they altered), I resorted to all the above mentioned research tools in an effort to connect the several existent stories and attempt to put forward an explanation *close* to what occurred.

## **2.8 Limitations to the Data**

Perhaps the biggest limitation is precisely the information I was not able and it was not possible to gather: the measurement of the political elite bargains would be more representative of their shape if it had been possible to obtain a more comprehensive list of individuals in other significant authority positions. Due to lack and inexistence of official documentation and records (and in some cases, due to restrictions of access, as was the case in the armed forces), the list does not include, for example, those who controlled key public and private enterprises. While taking this indicator into consideration may be of less importance before Guinea-Bissau's economic liberalisation phase, it becomes a significant element for grasping how rights and entitlements were being distributed after this phase. I have circumvented this gap by using secondary sources in order to locate in whose hands lied the economic power. Likewise, this study would have benefitted from a more inclusive list regarding people in the armed forces. While I was able to obtain a more complete list from 1974 to 1986, from that period onwards I was only able to assemble those who were positioned as General Chief of Staffs, Chiefs of Staff and Vice-Chiefs of Staff in the three military branches.

# CHAPTER 3

## REVISITING THE NATIONAL ARMED STRUGGLE

(1963–1973)

### 3.1 Introduction

In order to analyse the evolution of the political elite bargain in Guinea-Bissau's post-independence period, which is the objective of this thesis, it is necessary to examine the historical background that configures the periods under study and identify the pre-colonial and colonial sources of social fragmentation.

This chapter then revisits the relevant thought of Amílcar Cabral and the achievements of the PAIGC: its capacity for engaging and mobilizing all groups of the population in the armed struggle and its concerted efforts in the economic, social and political reconstruction of the liberated areas in the midst of the war. It concludes that these achievements, alongside overall national support and the establishment of elections, point, even during the war and before official political independence was obtained, towards a subsequent inclusive political elite bargain, emergent through consensus, in the areas controlled by the PAIGC.

### 3.2 A Brief Historical Background: Sources of Social Fragmentation

#### 3.2.1 Pre-colonial Period: Indigenous Kingdoms and Polities

The modern state of Guinea-Bissau and Bissau-Guinean society are a result of inter-ethnic and social exchanges, alliances, conquests, absorption and merging of traditional African peoples within the territory that encompasses what today are its borders. The region the Portuguese encountered, and in which they later established trading posts and settlements in the 14th and 15th centuries, is part of Senegambia and the Upper Guinean Coast, which extends from

contemporary Senegal to Sierra Leone. The first land settlements by animist groups such as the Balanta, Beafadas, Nalus, Felupe, Mandjack, Papel and Brame can be traced back as early as A.D 900. Although the cartography produced in the colonial period is still used today to delimit ethnic geographical distribution, the identification of specific and exact territories associated with these groups is difficult to determine precisely since, from pre-colonial times, they have constantly shifted for diverse reasons such as war, economic or the search for fertile land (Forrest 1992: 9 and Nóbrega 2003: 54) - but also because ethnic demarcations are not specific or exact.

Small political systems were in place, however, when the Portuguese arrived. The biggest and most influential was the Gabú Kingdom, which was established as a tributary centre of the Mali Empire in 1250 (Forrest 1992: 9). This Kingdom – from the Gambia River to the Futa Jallon Mountains (today the interior of Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and the Casamance region in Senegal) with Kansala as the main center - was a composition of satellite states of Mandinga origin. The Mandinga came from the River Niger and settled in this region in the beginning of the 13th century. While initially the Mandinga adapted to the local practices of the host populations (Bainuks, Beafadas, Balantas and Brames), respected their land ownership and lived peacefully, with the expansion of the Mali Empire, they progressively absorbed local groups. This process of Mandinga expansion and their domination of political, cultural and religious practices has been referred to “Mandiguization” (Lopes 1990: 23). A counter-argument to this idea considers that the Kingdom maintained a multi-ethnic leadership and allowed for inter-ethnic marriages and exchanges so that those initial groups were able to preserve their cultural identity and internal political structures. It is argued then that instead of a “Mandiguization”, there was mutual acculturation (Forrest 2003: 40). In this respect, it is alternatively stated that Mandinga hegemony manifested itself solely at the economic level through the payment of tribute by the other ethnic groups to the king, but that there was religious tolerance and animist practices were thereby accepted (Có 2010: 7). There is an intermediate position: the outnumbered Mandinga arrived were forced to accept the local realities of the host ethnic groups, embedding themselves within their social cultural values. Consequently, the foundations of the Gabú Kingdom were built upon a *mestiçagem*, that is, a mixture between the first settlers and the Madingas (Mané 1989: 19). Either way, it is agreed upon that Gabú expansion provoked some resistance between certain groups, namely the Beafada and the Balanta, and the movement of these same groups and others to coastal and southern areas.

The political structure of the Kingdom of Gabú was most like a federation. The Kingdom was divided into provinces that were ruled indirectly by governors, with an administrative center in place and each with their own armed fort (*tata*) and soldiers. This allowed for effective and coordinated military action in the empire when faced with external threats, but at the same it permitted autonomy at the political and territorial level (Forrest 2003: 41). Ruling the federation was the king (*mansa*) who, as in the Malian Empire, held a combination of secular power and religious authority (Filho 1998: 13). Only members of the reputed Sané and Mané families were allowed to be kings and the process of succession was rotational, in accordance with matriarchal traditions (which differs from the Islamic patriarchal Malian system), through election by the three main provinces: Jimara, Sama and Pathiana (Lopes 1982: 20; Forrest 1992: 10; Filho 1998: 13).

The Kingdom of Gabú lasted for five centuries and its development and flourishing during this extensive time span has, in great part, to do with its ability to relocate the long distance trade circuit between the Sahara and Sudan to the coast, but was due above all to its position as an intermediary with European merchants in the profitable slave-trade. By the 17th century the Kingdom of Gabú was in regular commercial contact with Portuguese trading posts in the Upper Guinean Coast (Lopes 1982: 20). In addition to controlling the slave trade in West Africa, they were also involved in other commercial exchanges, such as gold, salt and ivory. By the 18th century the Kingdom reached its apogee and its military, political and territorial influence extended from the Gambia River to the Southern regions of modern day Guinea-Bissau (Forrest 1992: 10). However, as history has repeatedly shown, empires eventually come to an end and the Kingdom of Gabú is no exception. The slave-trade and the decentralized form of governance, which had been catalysing factors for the consolidation of the Kingdom's strength and power, turned out to be the causes of its decline: the coastal vassal states of the Kingdom, through accumulation of wealth, gained increasing autonomy, refusing to pay taxes and provide soldiers to the general army (Forrest 2003: 66 and Mané 1989: 24). Internal political feuds made the Kingdom fragile toward external aggressors. The Fula, allied to the Futa Jallon, who had been repressed under Mandinga domination, were quick to take advantage of this fragility and violent hostilities began in 1843. Through a series of battles over the following twenty years, Kansala, the capital, was finally controlled and the Gabú Kingdom came to its end, the region becoming dominated by the Fula. Interestingly though, Mané argues that the Mandinga civilization outlived the end of the Kingdom. He explains that, in great measure, its



survival is due to the political impact of “Mandiguization”, as well as the strong cultural unity that was preserved in the Gambian region for centuries (Mané 1989: 29).

Fula domination accelerated the process of Islamization. Nonetheless, the Fula were never able to attain the influence of the Gabú Kingdom. The divisive social structure (noble lineages, professional classes, slaves) of the Fula and their diverse family and historical origins (the Fulbe-ribê and the Fulbe-djiábê) led to recurrent disputes. The small political polities in place were rivals to each other and their rivalry became more entrenched once colonial hegemony was achieved as the Portuguese strategically involved the Fula in their governing networks. Portuguese colonial involvement with the Fula “intensified the conflicts, prolonged the wars and introduced changes between local ethnic groups, as well as Portuguese and Fula relations towards the different autonomous authorities” (Cardoso 1989: 41). Despite its poorly consolidated power, the Fula Empire lasted until 1903.

This expansion and its wars had an impact on the initial settlers of this region. There was an acculturation of traditions, values and political practices of the most powerful ethnic groups and there were also resistance, exodus and migratory movements.

The Balanta were the people that resisted and fled the most. In contrast to the social organization of the Fula and Mandinga, the Balanta have been described as having been a “stateless society” (Pélissier 1989: 33), politically decentralized, i.e., political power was diffused amongst members of the community. Confronted with this Balanta reality, Jesuit priest, Alonso de Sandoval, remarked in the 16th century that they [the Balanta] are “a cruel people, a race without a king” (Sandoval in Hawthorne: 5). The Balanta are referred to as a gerontocratic society, meaning a society in which elderly men detain power; yet there was no concentration of power in the hands of a ruling class in society at large and the biggest political unit was the village (Forrest 2003: 35).<sup>65</sup>

Balanta, in Mandinga language, means “those who refuse (to accept the faith or be subdued)” (Forrest 1992: 10). They were named as such because they fought against religious conversion

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<sup>65</sup> The Balanta are still one of the largest ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau today (in the last census they were the largest group but it has been argued that the Fula have been increasing since then and today outnumber the Balanta), accounting for around 30% of the total population. They currently reside along a central vertical line, from North to South of Guinea-Bissau. They are a heterogeneous group, subdivided into Balanta-Mané (or Bejaa), Brasa, Mansoanca (or Cunante) and the Banaga.

and forced labour imposed by the Gabú Kingdom. Indeed the Balanta were the Mandinga's major source of slaves. The Brasa and the Banaga comprise the subgroup that avoided defeat by the Mandinga. They moved into what has been called the "slaving frontiers" in order to avoid slave-raiding: swampy regions and isolated mangroves in the frontiers of the Kingdom of Gabú (Hawthorne 2001: 1). This resettlement forced the Balanta to change their social structures and agricultural practices. While previously, they were yam and maize farmers, the conditions on the ground now required them to start producing rice. According to Hawthorne's thorough study of the matter, the Balanta not only developed sophisticated techniques for the production of paddy-rice, but also developed new methods for new crops, built defensive villages and adjusted their daily lives to a new reality of regional and global changes. All of this took place within the borders of a powerful state that depended upon the slave trade. This led Hawthorne to conclude that "in the era of Atlantic slave trade, the stateless Balanta managed not only to survive but to thrive" (Ibid: 3).

The "Mandiguized" Balanta are the Mané and the Mansoanca. These came under the influence of Mandinga culture around the 16th and 17th centuries. In fact, many Mandiga today trace their ascent to Balanta lineage since, at the time, intermarriage was common. They are socially and politically organized in a more hierarchical way in comparison to the Balanta subgroups mentioned above (Hawthorne 2001: 5). These groups later settled in the Region of Oio. This region, although it paid tribute to the king of Gabú, in practice was never really controlled by him (ibid ibidem). Oral tradition reports that Balanta-Mané's antecessors took part in the primordial phase of the Gabú Kingdom's expansion, but refused to take part in the following expansionist wars. The Balanta-Mansoacas settled the region of Mansoa. The Banagas are also another case of a Balanta subgroup with affinity to other ethnicities. Residing near the Mancanha and Brame peoples, they were culturally integrated and intermarried.

The Papel, Mancanha/Brame and the Mandjack were among the first settlers of what is now contemporary Guinea-Bissau. They were the first populations the Europeans encountered in the 14th and 15th centuries. The reason for this is simple: they were located in the coast, north of Bissau, in a region called Cacheu. These ethnic groups are known to compose the Bak language-speaking people. The designations of these ethnic groups were most likely given by the Portuguese and were used indifferently, that is, they would refer to the Papel and the Bramesas one and the same even though they were communities living in different regions - the Papel were located mostly in the island of Bissau and along the Cacheu river.

The Mandjack proper are reported to have only emerged towards the end of the 18th century when the Papel kingdom and its king began to lose power in relation to other chiefs that were incorporated in the federation. Two Papel kingdoms arose as a result, one in the island of Bissau, and the other, in Bassarel. Those loyal to the king of Bassarel were to be called Mandjack, who, according to Forrest only began to take on a coherent ethnic identity when this kingdom began to expand in both size and influence (Forrest 2003: 30). Thus the Mandjack are descendants of the Papel and Brame. Besides having a very similar language they also share cultural and religious affinities and it is actually only in the 19th century that boundaries between them became more visible (Jao 2003: 113).

The Bassarel kingdom incorporated various groups of different origins, but since they paid tribute to the king this led the Portuguese to consider them all under the name of Mandjack. Their territories were divided in small autonomous polities that were ruled by petty kings who were considered as sacred entities and belonged to royal clans from four different lineages. In a certain sense this led to a sort of dual identity: one that was loyal to the Bassarel king, and the other to local village communities.

These ethnic groups resisted Islamization and maintained commercial relations with the Europeans (slave-trade), while being able to restrict them to small enclaves and secure the payment of a tribute (Gable 1978: 7). These groups had more contact with the Portuguese than others, but were also the ones that most resisted colonial domination and put up a deadly fight during the colonial pacification wars (Filho 1998: 38).

The Biafadas, also part of the first settlers who later fled Mandinga domination, spread through various parts of today's Guinea-Bissau, but mostly to the region of Oio. They were an important element in the various types of trade that emerged between different societies throughout western Africa. Their market, located in Guinala, attracted the Papel, Nalu, Bijagós and the Mandinga (Ibid: 39 and Forrest 2003: 36). Similar to the case of the Mandinga, the Biafada also had a stratified society. Some Biafada came under the control of the Mandinga and were assimilated, hence explaining the alliance between both these groups when fighting against the Fula. They were to lose the war and were subjugated by the Fula. According to Filho, the mass conversion to Islamism is proof of this political and social subjugation (Filho 1998: 43). However, it is important to note that a large portion of the Biafada population maintained its animist practices and distinct culture.

All of these political-ethnic structures, inter-ethnic alliances, trade relations were in place when the Portuguese reached the West African coast and continued to develop alongside Portuguese presence. Sometimes the Portuguese were involved in these dynamics, but other times, they were situated at their margins.

### **3.2.2 Portugal's Centuries' Long Consolidation of Colonialism in Guinea-Bissau**

At the height of its discovery period in the beginning of the fifteenth century (1449), Portugal was the first European power to reach the Gulf of Guinea. The first Portuguese settlements along the Guinean coast date from around 1470.

There they came into contact with the various coastal ethnic groups, such as the Papel, the Felupe, the Mandinga and the Balanta, discussed above. The Portuguese maintained, for the most part, a cooperative commercial relationship with the coastal chiefs (Newitt 1981: 1).

By mid to late fifteenth century the voyages to the coast of Guinea had become a lucrative routine and exploitation of the slave trade was a major part of this revenue (Enders 1994: 21). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Portuguese efforts were directed at the fortification of the north-western city of Cacheu and the monopolization of its commerce, which engendered enormous resistance from the people of Cacheu, who were essentially of Papel ethnicity (Mendy 1994: 107 -120).

Portuguese Guinea became essentially a trading colony, exporting wax, palm-nuts, rice and mostly groundnuts (Newitt 1981: 69). In reality, the bulk of the Portuguese presence in Guinea-Bissau remained solely in the coastal areas around the Portuguese trading-posts, known as *feitorias*. As Pélissier says, it is convenient to take into account that during almost half a millennium, Guinea-Bissau, in the mind of Portuguese elites, remained a historical trampoline to open the way to their subsequent exploration of the rest of the African continent and the East. Up until 1879 it was no more than a "forgotten dependency of a miserable archipelago, in other words, the colony of a colony" (Pélissier 1989: 40-41). Perhaps due to a combination of a lack of will to effectively dominate the terrain and to "indigenous praetorian strength" (Forrest 2003: 44), until the beginnings of the twentieth century, the Portuguese remained dependent on the Bissau-Guinean leaders and chiefs.

Indeed, if the Portuguese settlers envisioned making profit out of the slave, gold, ivory, wood, palm oil and cloth trade, they had no other choice but to maintain a certain subservience to

the local societies and this was done by paying tribute, taxes and bearing gifts to the chieftaincies: (evidently) the Portuguese were clearly outnumbered and in military disadvantage, for although they had the approval of the monarch to settle in these areas, it was a private enterprise and these sailors-traders-entrepreneurs were basically on their own. In fact, these settlers were called the *lançados*, which in Portuguese means “the launched ones”, referring to those who had taken the initiative themselves for the Guinean “adventure”. In reality, the *lançados* were somewhat of *persona non grata* in Portugal since they were either Jews who were escaping from the Inquisition, outlaws or victims for some other political persecution, so it could be that the term “launched” would mean those who had been thrown out of Portugal (Forrest 1992: 15; Forrest 2003: 47; Galli and Jones 1987: 14).

The *lançados* had two impacts noteworthy of mention, or as Lopes puts it, “the seeds for two important contradictions” (Lopes 2005: 11). First, since these Portuguese traders, considered “of low moral character” (Barreto in Galli and Jones 1987: 14), were diverse and spread out over the coast, the Portuguese crown had extreme difficulties in regulating their commerce. Portuguese officials called the *feitores*, representing royal interests, tried to control the *lançados’* trade activities through the imposition of large royal companies and the implementation of a separate and tightened bureaucracy, but were unsuccessful. Secondly, Lisbon’s incapacity to impose a monopoly on trade has a lot to do with a new identity - the *mestiços* - that resulted from the inter-racial mixing of the *lançado* population. Consequently, and in addition to this, even though local rulers still regarded the *lançados* as intruders, imposed taxes on them and sometimes even raided them, their relationship became tighter when the Portuguese crown interfered with their trading business. Furthermore, the *lançados* hired local labourers to work as boatmen, translators and other tasks, and these – the *grumetes* – become intermediaries between the European traders, the *lançados* and the local communities (Forrest 2003: 47; Lopes 2005: 12; Galli and Jones 1987: 15). As a result, an Afro-Portuguese community emerged which in part explains the origin of Portuguese Creole (today the most widely spoken language in Guinea-Bissau) and initiated, what has been called by some, the process of *creolization*, that is,

*“a process of cultural change that leads to the rise of third entity: a hybrid cultural unit that results from a kind of compromise achieved by societies which had entered the original encounter”* (Filho 1998: 60).

As seen thus far, the Portuguese were dependent upon and limited by the will of the locals and even the payment of tribute did not guarantee them respite from attacks upon their forts and

villages – *praças* - (in Cacheu, Bissau, Farim, Bafatá), which, more often than not, resulted in Portuguese defeat.

Up until the eighteenth century Cacheu was the main trading post, where ships docked to transport thousands of slaves. Later, Bissau became the major slave *entrepôt*. These slaves were taken to the islands of Cape Verde, where they worked on sugar plantations and from there on to Brazil and other South American countries (Gali and Jones 1987: 17). This trade had the active collaboration of local groups such as the Mandinga, Papel, Biafada and Fula. On other occasions, though, the procurement of slaves led to armed resistance against the Portuguese, and provoked conflict between local groups as well as intra-group divisions between privileged and underprivileged (Rodney 1970: 117).

Thus, until around the Conference of Berlin in 1885, Portuguese presence in Guinea-Bissau was limited, fragile and constrained. Only in 1879 was the administration of Portuguese Guinea detached from Cape Verde to become a separate Portuguese province with independent political jurisdiction (Rudebeck 1974: 7).

The Berlin Conference though resulted in increasing pressure upon European powers to colonize their respective overseas territories and had an effect on Portugal's attitude towards Guinea-Bissau. Portugal had already lost its influence over the Congo to Britain and the region of Casamance in Guinea-Bissau to France, so it was even more important for the Portuguese to show commitment to their overseas provinces (Enders 1994: 66). Although financially in debt, Portugal allocated economic and human resources in order to affirm its intentions in occupying *de facto* this colony that it "knew almost nothing about except that its populations were hostile to them, and where they had not a single post beyond sound of sea" (Davidson 1969: 22). It is in this context that Portugal embarked on its "pacification" wars and only in 1915 was the territory considered to be fully "pacified". In reality though, the last battle was fought in 1936, with the so-called Canhabaque campaign in the islands of the Bijagós, and even then there were areas where the Portuguese had only "feeble" or "spasmodic hold" of the country (ibid: 23).

To a great extent, even though Lisbon was fully committed to achieving real occupation, it would not have been possible without the support of its African "auxiliaries", as they were called. In order to achieve military occupation the Portuguese needed the aid of local allies. The tactic of "divide and conquer" was used and was especially successful amongst the Fula, who, at the time, were fighting amongst each other. The engagement of the Portuguese in

Fula affairs precipitated the decline of their overall military power, which facilitated manipulating them into actively supporting Portuguese troops in their campaigns in exchange for colonial administrative positions (Forrest 1992: 17).<sup>66</sup>

The military alliance with Senegalese Abdul Njai was another case in point and proved to be crucial for the Portuguese to effectively control Guinea-Bissau by the 1920's (Bowman 1986: 468). Portugal's weak military position in Guinea-Bissau made necessary the use of terror and intimidation in order to hold on to power, although it appears not to have become as consolidated in practice as with other European colonial powers (Forrest 2003: 117).

### **3.2.3 Portuguese Colonial Rule**

Following 1915 the time had arrived to consolidate the colonial state and develop its administration. In practice, however, little effort and insufficient resources were dedicated towards advancing these goals.

While Portuguese government policy encouraged large-scale white settlement in Mozambique and Angola, Guinea-Bissau did not receive the same attention (Chabal 1983: 20). It had scarce resources from which the Portuguese could make profit and therefore it did not appeal to their interest and, apart from the agricultural products that were sent to Portugal, very little investment and effort was put towards its development (Chabal 1981: 78). Portuguese engagement in the colony was practically limited to private enterprise<sup>67</sup> and little investment was made in creating an administrative structure. No attention was given to local reinvestment or development programs. The mentality was one of economic exploitation at the minimum possible cost. So, besides being economically more backward and underdeveloped than Angola or Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau remained politically and administratively neglected.

In 1930, António de Salazar, as Prime-Minister of Portugal, promulgated the Colonial Act, which defined the principle of centralized administration at political and economic level, established separate legal frameworks for the white settlers and the indigenous people,

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<sup>66</sup> The Fula later collaborated with the colonialist army during the independence war. As a result, even present-day perceptions of other ethnic groups towards the Fula appear to be significantly influenced by their past allegiance to the Portuguese. Indeed one frequently hears of the Fula referred to as disloyal, traitorous and unreliable.

<sup>67</sup> The *Companhia União Fabril* (CUF) had a monopoly on trade and shipping (Chabal 1983: 24).

declared that the colony should be self-sufficient and outlawed all political parties (Lopes 1982: 67). Salazar's colonial policy aimed at integrating the colonies as closely as possible to Portugal by building a common economy and by "civilizing" all Africans, with the end of making them all Portuguese citizens (Newitt 1981: 185).

All colonial politics and administration were under the direction of the Minister of the Colonies, a position that was considered vital in the eyes of the Lisbon government. Each Portuguese colony was under the control of a governor, who was assisted by a secretary and a military command (Lopes 1982: 64). The governor had executive power, and was the chief legislator, supreme judge and chief of police. In short, the governor had "absolute" power (Mendy 1994: 292). Below the governor were the administrators who were in charge of civil and judicial affairs, administrative issues and fiscal and political economy. District officers (*chefes de posto*) assisted the administrators in their numerous tasks and were responsible for the collection of taxes, having more direct contact with the indigenous people. In reality though the administrators were colonial functionaries who ruled the rural areas in a climate of terror (Ibid: 292). Since they were responsible for law and order, they held the right to utilize force whenever it was considered necessary and could resort to the colonial army for this end.

In fact, a system of *indigénat* had been in place since 1917. The reinforced distinction in status between those who were considered "civilized" and the "uncivilized" made it possible for the Portuguese authorities to absolve themselves from any responsibility, political or social, with respect to the Africans and permitted further neglect in investment in infrastructures and public services. "Civilized" were the Portuguese settlers or the *assimilados*, who were entitled to the same rights and benefits as Portuguese citizens, such as equal salaries and the right to protest. However, to gain the status of *assimilado* one had to own property or exercise a profession, and had to speak, read and write Portuguese correctly. With no educational structures in place (and the very few schools that did exist were reserved for the settlers), there was little possibility of achieving this status. Only the Cape Verdeans, who received special privileges from the Portuguese, due to their mixed European and African background, had a viable chance of entering the colonial administration. They ended up forming a local elite on the mainland and occupied some senior posts in the colonial administration. The Portuguese depended upon their cooperation and collaboration in order to rule the colony. In this respect, Lopes points out, that



*“the colonialists found themselves obliged to weaken the cohesion of the African society. They created an indigenous ‘elite’, educated a certain number of ‘natives’, permitted some Africans access to university courses and trained technical cadres”* (Lopes 1987: 12).<sup>68</sup>

Salazar’s determination in achieving his unified vision of Portugal with its colonies was such that, when other European colonial powers were negotiating independence with their respective colonies and making political and social progress in the 1950s, he rejected international pressures towards decolonization. Salazar was actually able to avoid Resolution 1514 of the United Nations, which called for the independence of all colonies, by having changed the status of the colonies to “provinces” of Portugal. Slight modifications in the regime, such as the abolition of forced labour in 1957, were brought about at a gradual pace but in reality these policies did not bring about change in the administration of the colonies, especially in Guinea-Bissau where Portuguese rule was far cruder (Chabal 1981: 77).

Although Portugal did not accompany the historical movement of decolonization and refused to see its “provinces” separated from the mother-country, the philosophy behind the liberation movements in other neighbouring African countries reached the Portuguese colonies. The economic backwardness of Guinea-Bissau inspired a sentiment of revolt amongst Bissau Guineans against the Portuguese colonial administration. This sentiment was not initially expressed by the peasants, but rather by the intellectual elite who had studied in Portuguese universities and by urban salaried workers (Lopes 1983: 28). The most prominent figure in the nationalist movement was Amílcar Cabral, a Cape Verdean who was born in Portuguese Guinea, studied in Portugal and returned to Guinea-Bissau to study the agricultural conditions in the colony. He was to become a national hero.

### **3.3 Amílcar Cabral and the PAIGC: National Mobilization and War**

Without overemphasizing the role of leaders in history – context and opportunities matter a great deal - one cannot disregard Amílcar Cabral’s prominence in the liberation struggle and, in

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<sup>68</sup> As will be seen in the following chapter, the privileged position of the *assimilados* became a factor of conflict between Bissau Guineans and Cape Verdeans in the post-independence period.

particular, his role in constructing national unity. His importance to Guinea-Bissau was not limited to his lifetime and the liberation struggle, but rather remains relevant until today. His image and recollection have served a dual purpose.

Firstly, not only does Cabral represent, more than anyone else, the historical period of the national liberation war and the emancipation of the Bissau-Guinean people, he also symbolizes the very idea of nationhood, of a united Guinea-Bissau. He is a national hero, providing a “mythical figure” related to the birth of the nation. His remembrance has become central to any recollection of the liberation struggle and hence, to the shaping of national identity.

Secondly, however, the image of Cabral – portrayed as an incorruptible man of principles who genuinely wanted to better the lives of Guineans – and what he has come to represent – the embodiment of Bissau-Guinean unity - have also been used to reinforce the authority and legitimacy of those in power and who happened to have fought in the liberation war. Therefore, it has been in this group’s interest to preserve the memory of Cabral and the war. The war narrative and the image of Cabral have been monopolized by the PAIGC and by the war veterans: having fought with Cabral in the war that led to Guinea-Bissau’s independence makes them heroes as well. Thus, Cabral and the PAIGC, more broadly, have shaped both the national identity and the sub-identity of the veterans of the liberation war.

What were Amílcar Cabral’s thoughts on the nation and national integration? How was the PAIGC able to forge a national consciousness during and after the war in such a socially fragmented society? How was it able to deconstruct the politicized boundaries that the Portuguese colonial rule had created? These are the questions the following section addresses.

### **3.3.1 Amílcar Cabral and his thought on nationhood and national liberation in Guinea-Bissau**

The House of Students of the Empire (*Casa dos Estudantes do Império*), in Lisbon, was a residence for African and Asian students who had been able to obtain access to higher education in Portugal. Some of these students decided, after obtaining permission, to establish a Centre for African Studies with the purpose of learning African languages. In reality though, it became a space where they met and vividly discussed strategies on how to raise political consciousness amongst the colonized peoples (Davidson 1973: 29). Amílcar Cabral was one of these privileged students (amongst others such as Agostinho Neto, Mário de Andrade and Eduardo dos Santos) and became a reference for this group of African intellectuals (Lopes

2006a: 2). Having studied Agronomy in Lisbon and having distinguished himself as a brilliant student, he was sent to Guinea-Bissau at the service of the colonial administration to do an agricultural census during 1952-54. During this time he took the opportunity to study at length the specificities of the country and its rural people, "making himself ready for what should come later" (Davidson 1973: 30).

Although refusing to be defined as a Marxist, and although he was never a member of a Marxist or communist party, Cabral's work and thought were much inspired by Marxist theories concerning social development. Chabal affirms that, above all, Cabral was a nationalist (and a humanist)<sup>69</sup> and that his value resides precisely in his creativity in applying Marxian theories to colonized societies: its relevance to the socio-political analysis of Bissau-Guinean nationalism (Chabal 1983: 169 - 171).

According to Cabral, common submission to the colonial state provides the basis for a unified Guinean and Cape-Verdean society. Cabral was well aware of societal divisions and wrote extensively on social stratification in the urban centres, as well on the distinctions between ethnic groups. Indeed, Cabral knew that it was only by identifying and recognising these divisions that a concerted mobilization for independence and a united struggle would be possible (Chilcote 1991: 53).

Cabral distinguished ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau according to their social structures. On the one hand, he found that there were groups that had a vertical structure: politically and socially stratified. He points out that the Fula are an example of such. The Balanta, on the other hand, provide the example of a horizontally structured society: "stateless" groups with no defined form of state organization (Cabral 1976: 103). Cabral recognized that the Portuguese could use the semi-feudal structure of the Fula to their advantage by privileging the traditional chiefs within the colonial system in order to facilitate their rule. The Fula, more specifically the Fula chiefs, were therefore the group that most resisted the PAIGC's mobilization efforts since adherence to the struggle would mean losing their privileged position and status. In contrast, Cabral refers to the Balanta as the ethnic group most willing to collaborate with the nationalist

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<sup>69</sup> According to Chilcote the most appropriate characterization of Cabral is written by British historian Basil Davidson. He portrayed him as "...large hearted, entirely committed, devoted to his people's insistence on the study of reality...the intellectual groundwork of an overall theory of society....always riveted to the reality of time and place..." (Davidson in Chilcote 1991: 4).

struggle. Not only were they the most affected and repressed group by colonial rule, but their horizontal structure also made them more receptive to PAIGC aims (Ibid ibidem; Peterson 2007: 127).

As far as the urban social classes are concerned, he pointed to the existence of a *petty bourgeoisie* – a class created by the colonial ruler and indispensable to it – and what he called the *déclassé* – mostly composed of unemployed youth. Now, in a refinement of Marxist theory, as distinct from the European experience, the *petty bourgeoisie* in Guinea Bissau had a dual function in the nationalist movement:<sup>70</sup> to raise awareness of colonial exploitation and to take charge of the state apparatus once independence was achieved (Cabral 1976: 202-203). They were the only ones capable of doing so since they had been trained and educated by the system. The peasants were a necessary element, but they were not in a position to lead. Such thoughts may seem problematic because there would be no guarantee that the *petty bourgeoisie* would not take control of power in favour of its own interests. Cabral addressed this issue with caution and offered no guarantee that this would not occur. Nevertheless, he identified a central paradox that the revolutionary leadership would have to transcend and put forward a (surprising) solution – and, when looking back in retrospective, may seem unrealistic – that envisaged “class-suicide”. In other words, social differences would only emerge and be a matter to deal with after independence. The onus was put on those who led the national liberation process, that is, the *petty bourgeoisie* had to be capable of identifying itself with the people and of renouncing its class interests in order for the revolutionary process to take its normal course of development. If they were to strengthen themselves as a class, they would be betraying the objectives of national liberation (Cabral 1969: 55).

Above all, for Cabral, men, not ideology, led revolutions. Lopes, a Bissau-Guinean sociologist, notes that theorizing on man’s moral behaviour was crucial in Cabral’s thinking (Lopes 2006b: 138).<sup>71</sup> In a similar way, Chabal refers to Cabral’s statements regarding trust and reliance in those who led the party (Chabal 1983: 179). This meant that Cabral put a great deal of emphasis on the moral and human attributes of his fellow party members and nurtured,

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<sup>70</sup> Cabral was specifically referring to the Bissau-Guinean context. He made it clear that in different countries the conditions may be different.

<sup>71</sup> Cabral’s speech in Cairo, in 1964, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Heads of State and Governments of Non-Aligned Countries is illustrative of the emphasis he put on African and anti-colonialist solidarity, for example

through his speeches, the need for responsible, honest and dedicated PAIGC leaders (Ibid ibidem).

*“...Oblige every responsible and educated member of our Party to work daily for the improvement of their cultural formation...Oppose tendencies to militarism and make each fighter an exemplary militant of our Party...Educate ourselves, educate other people, the population in general, to fight fear and ignorance, to eliminate little by little the subjection to nature and natural forces which our economy has not yet mastered. Convince little by little, in particular the militants of the Party, that we shall end by conquering the fear of nature, and that man is the strongest force in nature...Demand from responsible Party members that they dedicate themselves seriously to study, that they interest themselves in the things and problems of our daily life and struggle in their fundamental and essential aspect, and not simply in their appearance. Learn from life, learn from our people, learn from books, learn from the experience of others. Never stop learning...Responsible members must take life seriously, conscious of their responsibilities, thoughtful about carrying them out, and with a comradeship based on work and duty done... We must practice revolutionary democracy in every aspect of our Party life. Every responsible member must have the courage of his responsibilities, exacting from others a proper respect for his work and properly respecting the work of others. Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories...”* (Cabral in Gjerstad 1974: 32-36).<sup>72</sup>

So, while the comprehension of the social reality of the country was essential for successful political mobilization and transformation, the contradictions in themselves were secondary for Cabral. The main contradiction was the colonial state, necessitating awareness of the people's common submission to the colonial ruler that a sense of union between all ethnic groups and social classes would emerge.

*“How can we unite all these people, all these ethnic groups, in such a way that they will march together like one man? Listen to what our antecessors said: ‘It can't be*

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<sup>72</sup> The new society as envisaged by Cabral required such exemplary behaviour from the party cadres. Yet the post-independence PAIGC has been, as was mentioned before, marked by internal conflicts and based on mutual accusations of betrayal of the objectives of national liberation. The reasons why these accusations have been framed discursively as personal betrayal to Cabral becomes clearer upon reading his writing towards his party members. He spoke to all. As a result, there is little doubt as to the extent that Cabral influenced those who met him, fought with him and heard him speak. The majority of my interviewees were not only his comrades in war, but also held important political and military positions throughout Guinea-Bissau's independence and all of them – especially those that personally met Cabral - without exception spoke of him with such a positive emotional charge, indeed praising him as a hero.

*the work of men; it must be the work of God'. Maybe they are right, as long as in the face of this adversity we can conserve and strengthen this big weapon of our struggle: the unity of our people, of all its ethnic groups, of all its social strata*" (Cabral in Lopes 1988: 162)<sup>73</sup>

It is in this sense that Cabral talks about a "nation-class". In the colonial context, in Guinea-Bissau, it was not class struggle that blocked history and evolution, but rather the colonial state. That some had been more privileged under colonial rule only hid the fact that oppression discriminated all. It was just one "class," the indigenous society in a common front that could successfully put history back on track.

Cabral wrote extensively on culture and its role in national liberation. Culture is none other than the product of history, "like the flower is product of the plant", and therefore, like history, it has its base in the forces and means of production (Cabral 1974: 13). Thus, Cabral assumes a Marxist perspective although he places a great deal more importance on culture in battling domination (Chabal 1983: 182). The "seed of protest" was in culture and national liberation was an act of culture. The act then could not be the prerogative of some; culture must be popular in character (though not uniform).

Colonial rule had destroyed, neutralized and paralyzed national culture (Cabral 1974: 12). Similar to other colonial powers, Portugal formulated a racist theory of progressive assimilation as a means of ensuring its dominance and negating Guinea-Bissau's own cultural development. The creation of an indigenous elite served to widen societal divisions and fostered assimilation of a colonial mentality within an African elite that thought of itself as culturally superior to the popular masses. So, while repressing culture in general, the Portuguese colonial system also culturally alienated a sector of the population – the *assimilados*, the *petty bourgeoisie*. Cabral writes that the colonial created elite would need to be *re-africanised* and this would take place through contact with the masses before and during the struggle (Ibid: 14).<sup>74</sup> However, this "return to the sources" did not extend to the rural

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<sup>73</sup> My translation.

<sup>74</sup> Cabral opposed theories of a common African culture: "The fact of coming across the existence of specific common traits in the cultures of Africa's peoples, independently of the colour of their skin does not necessarily imply that one and only one culture exists on the continent. In the same way that from an economic and political point of view one discovers the existence of several Africas, so also are there several African cultures" (Cabral 1974: 15)

masses that in great measure had not been affected by the colonial ruler. In fact, it was precisely the existence of traditional culture that underlies the force of political action. Plus, in no way did Cabral mean by a popular culture the elimination of local traditional culture. It was rather in a coming together of all positive elements of cultural difference through which the national liberation movement and struggle would slowly develop one national culture (Ibid: 17).

A fundamental aspect of Cabral's thought is found in this concept of culture: the unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. National liberation could only be achieved if these two countries formed a cohesive united force. The principal contradiction, i.e. Portuguese colonial domination, was a sufficient bond for him to envisage a bi-national project. However the links between the two did not solely reside here. Armada (1984: 55) rightly points out that Cabral's analysis on the connections between Cape Verdeans and Bissau-Guineans were significantly more profound than that: Portugal's assimilation policies – which were directed towards Cape Verdeans - had obscured the links that Cape Verdeans had with the popular masses. Colonialism in Cape Verde had been equally coercive and violent but it was processed in a somewhat different form. As Cabral refers, in Cape Verde the populations were not able to take refuge in the “forests” and preserve their culture; the colonized Cape Verdeans were not able to resist the hegemonic culture of the colonial ruler, which led to the negation of their African inheritance (Ibid: 59). Furthermore, the colonial authorities in Guinea-Bissau, in order to compensate for the lack of sufficient white Portuguese settlers who could take up functions in the administration, turned to Cape Verdean manpower since they were “assimilated” and more “cultured” (Viegas in Mendy 2006: 10). By 1963 at least 75% of colonial officials were Cape Verdeans (Mendy 1994: 307). So, when Cabral raises the issue of a “return to the sources” he is specifically directing this need to the Cape Verdean population in general, and in Guinea-Bissau, to the so-called *assimilados*, who were in great measure Cape Verdean. As Mendy concludes,

*“Fundamentally, being ‘civilized’ meant the internalization of most of the racist assumptions of the Portuguese. In the main, the civilizados remained spiritually and psychologically amputated from Africa, such that special efforts had to be made to ‘re-Africanize’ themselves”* (Ibid: 12).

Cabral understood that to bring this privileged class to identify itself with the masses would be an arduous task; however, as mentioned, it was through the political and armed struggle that this process would occur. That he was able to foster unity between both people – Cape

Verdeans and Bissau-Guineans – and that this unity was maintained during the struggle, after his death (in 1973), and in the immediate period following independence was indeed a signal of the success of the liberation movement.<sup>75</sup>

The PAIGC was the instrument through which awareness of colonial exploitation and national consciousness would be raised. It was the instrument that would create the new society. As such, it was the instrument to better the lives of people before and during the armed struggle.<sup>76</sup> Once independence was obtained the PAIGC was to lead state affairs: “in our circumstances the Party equals the State because there is no other means of making the State a truly national, truly liberating organism” (Cabral in Lopes 1983: 35).

Cabral was committed to socialism<sup>77</sup> in as much as it brought prosperity to the lives of all. The new society should not be imposed by force; it should be gradual, progressive and internally accepted. According to Cabral, the PAIGC would be a legitimate political agent and gain popular support if it indeed showed genuine commitment to developing the country.

The following discussion is an account of how Cabral’s theory was put into practice. It attempts to show that national unity was not just in the minds of an intellectual minority, but reflected a reality. National mobilization led by the PAIGC would overcome ethnic differences and unite all groups.

It is easy to criticize Cabral’s ideals about a national identity, the contradictions of Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean integration, and the continuation of a second colonialism in light of what followed, but this is beside the point. Nevertheless, the intention here is not to romanticize the armed struggle or present it in heroic terms - as it has been and continues to

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<sup>75</sup> Chabal notes that compared to all the other Lusophone African liberation movements it was in Guinea-Bissau where a greater cohesion and national unity was achieved.

<sup>76</sup> Cabral exhorted his comrades to understand the concrete betterment of the people’s lives as the basis for mobilisation. “Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children...” (Cabral 1974: 70)

<sup>77</sup> However committed he was to socialism he noted that “...national liberation and social revolution are not exportable commodities; they are, and increasingly so every day, the outcome of local and national elaboration, more or less influenced by external factors (be they favorable or unfavorable) but essentially determined and formed by the historical reality of each people, and carried to success by the overcoming or correct solution of the internal contradictions between the various categories characterizing this reality” (Cabral 1969).



be by many of those who fought in the war. It is also not the intention to make the point that a national identity has been uncontested, consolidated and coherent throughout Guinea-Bissau's post-independence trajectory. The idea is actually the contrary: to demonstrate that boundaries and identities change. If this chapter emphasizes the predominance of a national conscience (which is later in this chapter narrowed down to and termed a PAIGC identity) and a feeling of "us-ness" between Cape-Verdeans and Bissau-Guineans (particularly among the elites), Chapter 5 shows how the feeling of "us" disintegrated into "us" and "them".

### **3.3.2 The PAIGC and National Mobilization**

On September 19, 1956, as a football match was being disputed, Amílcar Cabral, together with his brother Luís and four other men, met near the stadium. In what looked like a social gathering to place bets on the game, they discretely laid the foundations of the PAIGC (Dhada 1993: 1 – 3).

By 1958 several anti-colonial movements had emerged in Guinea-Bissau and among exiles in Senegal, such as the *Popular Union of Guinea*, the *Liberation Movement of Guinea*, and the *Liberation Front for the Independence of Guinea*, amongst others. However, it was Cabral's African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde that, by 1962, had ended up taking the leadership in the armed struggle, acting exclusively in the political and military spheres.

As referred to above, Cabral believed that independence could only come about with a political and military strategy that bound Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau together. Thus, at its creation, the PAIGC established two main principles. The first was the total independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, and the second was the political unity and integration of the two countries following independence (PAIGC Programme 1969 in Cabral 1974:136).

The PAIGC started off as a small political party. Its founding members and its support base were initially composed of Cape Verdeans, precisely those who Cabral described as the *petty bourgeoisie*. In the beginning, the PAIGC was made up of little more than *petite bourgeoisie* settled in their subaltern role as colonial auxiliaries who were far from sharing the day-to-day preoccupations, humiliations and anguishes of the rural masses (Ziegler in Silva 2005: 154). Nevertheless, this group initiated protest and the number of the "civilized" who adhered to the nationalist movement grew in proportion to the increased repression of the Portuguese police.

The PAIGC consolidated itself ideologically and organized its internal structure in order to prepare and better guide its political action. The founding members proceeded to give courses to the new members of the party and Cabral himself tutored classes on African and Guinean history and political theory. The PAIGC's attention was initially directed towards urban workers and encouraged strikes and protests. It was thought that this would call the attention of the Portuguese authorities to the extreme discontent in the colony. This strategy was soon abandoned, though, since the Portuguese were totally unreceptive to any kind of dialogue.

On August 3, 1959, the Portuguese killed fifty dockworkers, who were protesting for an increase of salaries and better living conditions. The incident became known as the *Pidiguiti Massacre*. This episode, together with the intransigent Portuguese refusal to negotiate independence with Cabral in August 1961 marked the turning point of the PAIGC's strategy: a move towards military action (Dhada 1998: 572). Struggle against the Portuguese had to be conducted through "all possible means, including war" (Davidson 1933: 31). The PAIGC was now to mobilize peasants and rural society, for they were to be the main social force and base for the armed liberation struggle. "Amílcar once told me" said one interviewee,

*"that his biggest crime was having written to Salazar where he expressed his willingness to sit down with him and negotiate with the Portuguese government the self-determination of our peoples. Salazar then sent a message through his ambassador in the United Nations in which he said he would rather prefer military defeat in Guinea-Bissau than negotiating with terrorists! From then on there was only one way to go: an armed struggle. We had to structure our bases and prepare for a long liberation struggle"* (Interview 2)

How the PAIGC advanced militarily falls out of the scope of the topics at issue here.<sup>78</sup> What is intended is rather to understand how the PAIGC "developed and reinforced unity...of all ethnic groups and social strata" (Cabral in Davidson 1973: 32),<sup>79</sup> which as Cabral knew was the

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<sup>78</sup> For an account on the military and war strategies of the PAIGC see Dhada, Mustafah (1998), "The Liberation War in Guinea-Bissau Reconsidered", *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 62, No. 3, pp. 571-593

<sup>79</sup> The PAIGC report of the meeting that marks the change of strategy reads as follows: "Having reviewed these three past years of clandestine political work [since the foundation of the PAIGC in 1956] and analysed the political situation, the enlarged meeting of 19 September concluded, in the light of Pidiguiti experience and the nature of Portuguese colonialism, that the only way to liberate the country is through struggle by all means, including war.

necessary condition for the success of the armed struggle and post-independence. At the same time, it was the armed struggle itself – properly conducted and organized – that would bring about unity: urban workers’ contact with the population in the rural areas would lead the former to identify with the interests of the latter.

Firstly, Cabral’s thorough analysis of Guinea-Bissau’s social structure and the levels of discontent with colonialism amongst villagers turned out to be an extremely useful tool from which to proceed to mobilization (Mendy 2006: 13). As Cabral had pointed out, it would be harder to win over those groups that collaborated with the colonial administration (such as the Fula). Therefore mobilization started with the groups he characterized as having a horizontal structure. Mobilization took place through informing the populations about the Party’s principles. Violence was not a means for mobilization. Of course there were cases in which party members acted “inappropriately”, but this mode of operating was highly condemned by the party’s leaders.<sup>80</sup> Villagers’ sympathy for the party was crucial; traditional and customary practices were respected.<sup>81</sup>

That the PAIGC leaders were in a position to effectively mobilize had a great deal to do, on the one hand, with prior preparation in understanding the ways of life of the various ethnic groups; on the other hand, with the preparation and political training that the party cadres were subjected to. As seen, Cabral put much emphasis on the quality and humanity of leadership and this, in practice, translated into dedicating resources and time in forming the

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To prepare for this new phase, and on the principle of ‘expect the better but prepare for the worse’, the enlarged meeting adopted the following plan of action:

1. Without due delay mobilize and organize the peasant masses who will be, as experience shows, the main force in the struggle for national liberation.
2. Strengthen our organization in the towns but keep it clandestine, avoiding all demonstrations.
3. Develop and reinforce unity around the Party of the Africans of all ethnic groups, origins, and social strata.
4. Prepare as many cadres as possible, either inside the country or abroad, for political leadership and the successful development of our struggle.
5. Mobilize émigrés in neighbouring territories so as to draw them into the liberation struggle and the future of our people.
6. Work to acquire the means that will be needed for success.

So as to guarantee the security of a part of the leadership, and to develop the struggle outside, the Party decided to transfer its general secretariat outside the country” (Cabral in Davidson 1973: 32).

<sup>80</sup> In the PAIGC’s First Congress in Cassacá, in 1964, the party leaders took actions against guerrilla fighters who had been accused of abusing the population.

<sup>81</sup> Cabral often refers to the dialogues he maintained with the traditional chiefs, calling them the intellectuals of their society (Wick 2006: 58).

future PAIGC leaders, in Guinea-Conakry, the new headquarters of the party. The following quotations from interviews I gathered serve to illustrate the time dispensed in the political training of the party cadres.

*“I met Amílcar in Guinea-Conakry. I did not want to study; I wanted to contribute to the armed struggle. I wanted to fight, but Amílcar told me ‘we not only need men to fight, but we also need capable men, intellectuals, men that will be capable of mobilizing people for our national cause. I’m sending you to the interior of the country so you can see the reality, so that you can learn’. This was how our fight developed. We had hundreds and hundreds of people joining” (Interview 2)*

*“I was studying in Lisbon...In 1967 I decided to go back. During my adolescence I constantly heard about our nationalism. You know, in that time, Africans in Europe, not only in Portugal, were very politically conscious, we were all nationalists. Already in 1962 me and some other students formed the first PAIGC committee in Lisbon. I was eager to join the forces by then. When I arrive in Conakry, Amílcar tells me I need to go learn. I told him I had just spent 3 years in the university. He said that I might know a lot about engineering, but now I needed to learn about the people in whose name I was fighting for” (Interview 19).*

*“The PAIGC’s work in politically mobilizing the people was, I think, extraordinary. Most of the traditional chiefs before the war started already knew what their role was in the struggle. There was total collaboration with the PAIGC. And it was a dynamic collaboration” (Interview 28).*

*“It was only after training that we sent the young members to go to the villages. Only after those youths had had full political and humanist formation in Conakry did they go to the regions and convince the peasants. Of course there it was harder to explain. There, they were not as directly affected as the workers in the city” (interview 34)*

Political and military mobilization was extremely successful. By the end of 1963 the PAIGC had consolidated its presence in the southern part of the territory. The following year some of the Northern regions were controlled. During that same year the first congress of the Party took place and the People’s Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARP) was formed. By 1967 the PAIGC claimed control of forty per cent of the territory. However, the involvement of the popular masses in the national movement was not limited to participation in the armed struggle. PAIGC political legitimacy was not to be derived from force, but from genuine popularity. The primacy was winning the political souls, hearts and minds of the people (Mendy 2006: 18) and, as mentioned, this was to be accomplished by bettering the living conditions of the people. So, alongside political development, the PAIGC put all its efforts into reconstructing the country at

the social and economic level. There was concern for building institutions that would foster a “society based on justice, equality, and mass participation” (Washington 1980: 16).

The new society that would come about after independence envisaged the political participation of all - it was a democratic revolution. Hence, at the same time that there were military advances and as the PAIGC gained control over parts of the territory, it began to establish political institutions at the local level.

After travelling through Guinea-Bissau in 1970, Rudebeck (1972) described some of the practice of the PAIGC at the political level. He revealed a good notion of how popular participation was put into effect: the Village Committees, the basic unit of the PAIGC’s political and administrative structure, seemed to be considerable in number and in their effectiveness. These Committees were composed of five members elected by the inhabitants,<sup>82</sup> each member in charge of leading a specific activity, which ranged from agriculture, helping the soldiers when they passed by to rest, to health and child care (Rudebeck 1972: 10). Policy decisions at the top level were made in consultation and in discussion with the population, and the application of policies necessarily required their consent (Chabal 1981: 97).

Above the Village Committee was the Sector, a subdivision of the Regional Committee serving as a link between the party and the people: both villagers (a member of each village in the regional sector) and party cadres were represented. At the Regional level three men from the party were responsible for political and military leadership of the national movement, economic and security issues and health and education. Moving up the ladder, there was the National Committee and, further up, the Permanent Commission, of which Amílcar Cabral was Secretary-General. Seeing this organized structure in operation led Rudebeck (1972: 4) to affirm that:

*“From the sympathetic villager upwards there is a gliding scale of gradually more active membership to the totally committed cadres and leaders who devote all their time and energy to the party”.*

In 1972 the PAIGC held its Second Congress. It provided a first opportunity for Bissau-Guineans to vote. Certainly this democracy was restricted to the space within a single-party institution,

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<sup>82</sup> According to the rules of the Party, two out of these five members had to be women (Rudebeck 1972: 10).

but out of the 120 members that were to constitute the National Popular Assembly, 80 were elected from the masses and only the other 40 were from within the party. The intention was to build institutions that would bond the people and the party (Cabral in Rudebeck 1974: 146) and to ensure that as an independent state the party would not rule in a dictatorial manner.

Support and villagers' sympathy were maintained through concrete action. In 1968 when Cabral spoke to the General Secretariat of the Organization in Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAL) he declared that 127 primary schools were already functioning in the liberated areas, in contrast to the 56 schools when the war started (Cabral 1974: 101). Lobban reported that by 1974, more than 200 schools opened with 250 teachers to staff them (Lobban 1973: 18).

From this following recollection of a female ex-combatant (who served as minister in the post-independence period) it is possible to obtain a sense of how the PAIGC was indeed working on various fronts in order to develop the various areas that had been liberated.

*"...some of these people [villagers] had not really felt colonialism. It was not sufficient to explain our causes. Our fight was also to develop the country. I and other women were sent to the Soviet Union to learn medicine in 1965. The war had already started by then and the health system needed to be organized, not only to serve the populations but also the soldiers that were fighting in the different regions. When I came back in 1966 I was put in front of the Escola-Piloto, which was a sort of orphanage that assisted children. Its functions were educational and dealt with all other social areas. After that I was put in charge of the division of health and hygiene in the South Front. From there - since I had become active in the Party, Amílcar had always guided me towards women's issues - I became the representative of the party for Pan-African Women's Organization" (Interview 21)*

Women also were sent to Guinea-Conakry to nursing schools, increasing the number of trained nurses from 6 in 1964 to 132 in 1972 (Gomes 2009: 10). At least 9 hospitals and 117 sanitary posts were built by 1969 (Rudebeck 1974: 206). "Small as the figures undoubtedly are" says Chabal, "in the context of Portuguese Guinea they represented significant advances over what colonial rule had provided" (Chabal 1981: 96).

Economic development in the liberated areas was a main concern. In order to increase production of crops,

*"new areas of land were planted with rice and other crops during the last rainy season. Other products (leather, rubber from the forests, crocodile and other animal*

*skins, and coconuts) have been shipped and sold abroad, although only in small quantities” (Cabral 1974: 97)*

Notwithstanding the infrastructural difficulties, small local industries and artisanal work had been developed and the People Stores - *Armazéns do Povo* - supplied the basic needs of the population (Cabral 1974: 98). These *armazéns* not only served the needs of the population (by distributing supplies) but were also an instrument of war: they served to disrupt Portugal’s commercial networks (Washington 1980: 21; Chabal 1981: 95).

At the juridical level a new system was established. In 1968, People’s Courts -*Tribunal do Povo* - were instituted in the villages already liberated. These were composed of three judges, all of whom inhabitants of the village, and dealt with minor offences. The original innovation of this system was that disputes were to be settled according to customary law. Only when there were difficulties in reaching an agreement or when the crime was more serious, would the issue go to the Regional or Supreme Court (these were composed of PAIGC members). The architecture of the new judicial system therefore not only utilized customary law, but also maintained a degree of separation between the party and the villagers (Chabal 1983a: 120). Rudebeck mentions, however, that while there was indeed a serious attempt to synthesize traditional with modern law, some matters posed problems. PAIGC laws, such as voluntary marriage –before marrying a woman would have to declare that she was doing so of her own free will – were radical changes in the lives of the locals (Rudebeck 1974: 14).

All in all, the PAIGC had institutionalised its authority and was acting as a state, with broad popular support. Political mobilization for development, together with the military advances (in 1972 at least three-quarters of the territory were liberated) were both crucial factors that led Cabral to declare that Guinea-Bissau was already a state, although, internationally, it did not enjoy legal existence. His brother, Luís Cabral (who became the President of Guinea-Bissau), in a chronicle written on the liberation war, pointed out the incongruous absurdity in the fact that despite their independence and sovereignty in practically almost all the territory, at the international level, the only nationality they could legally resort to was the Portuguese (Cabral 1984: 413). The PAIGC knew that international recognition of Guinea-Bissau as a state would lead the way to independence. Thus a diplomatic fight was another front on which the PAIGC organized its battle.

The 1972 elections referred to above were a serious step towards building the foundations of the new state, having established the supreme organ of state power - the National Popular

Assembly. That same year, a United Nations' mission was sent to visit the country and the liberated areas. The end result of the mission was a striking success for the PAIGC: UN envoys concluded that the PAIGC controlled and administered two-thirds of the territory and that it was the legitimate representative of the Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean people (UN 1971: 19). Consequently, the United Nations Security Council in November 1972 passed a resolution that demanded the Portuguese initiate negotiations in order for these countries to achieve self-determination. Luís Cabral affirmed, "all the conditions were set to give birth to a *de facto* sovereign state which already existed in our liberated land" (Cabral 1984: 415).

Amílcar Cabral was assassinated in January 1973 in a plot engineered by the Portuguese secret police just before independence was proclaimed. His assassination, although the subject of a lot of controversy, did not put an end to unity or to the struggle.<sup>83</sup> Aristides Pereira, who substituted Cabral as the leader of the party, considers that "...his disappearance just had the effect of instigating a stronger impetus in all fronts of the struggle" (Pereira 2002: 229). In this respect, a war veteran and minister in the post-independence period recalled what Amílcar Cabral once told him:

*"I remember him telling us, 'We're together in this crossroad and I do not know how long it is going to take; maybe 5, 10 or 15 years. One thing is sure, if I fall tomorrow, the fight must continue'. When I think about his death, it saddens me...we did everything we could to continue our fight"* (Interview 2)

On January 8, 1973, while the Liberation War was still going on, Cabral declared the creation of the ANP. In its first session on 24 September 1973, in the *Colinas de Boé* the President of the ANP, João Bernardo Vieira (Nino), a Guinean commander of Papel origin, in the name of the PAIGC, unilaterally proclaimed the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.

The Constitution was also promulgated and the organization of the state was defined. A Council of the State was formed, composed of the 15 members who had already been elected, for a three-year period, in the ANP. This declaration of independence resulted in recognition by 65 states who drafted a resolution presented to the United Nation's General Assembly (Milano 2006: 159). In November 1973 the United Nations adopted the resolution that recognized Guinea-Bissau and Cape-Verde as independent states (UN 1973). Nevertheless,

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<sup>83</sup> The controversies around Amílcar Cabral's assassination will be brought up chapter 5.



only when Portugal's new government assumed power in 1974 and started its process of decolonization did Western governments recognize Portugal's former colonies as independent.<sup>84</sup>

### **3. 4 The Political Elite Bargain**

The PAIGC's strategy for armed mobilization, the institutions it had established at the local level and its efforts in reconstructing the economy resulted in overall support in the areas it controlled. Cabral's leadership qualities undoubtedly provided the basis for the PAIGC's success and cohesiveness (Chilcote 1968: 388; Chabal 1981: 98). His determination in training and politically educating the party cadres and his insistence that they be in contact with the people and they not resort to violence are clarifying as to why the PAIGC obtained widespread popularity in the rural areas. The form in which the villagers nominated their regional representatives and the holding of general - free and fair - elections for the National Popular Assembly in 1972 are a further indication that party leaders, traditional authorities and the populace in general perceived the PAIGC as the legitimate authority, even before the war had come to an end. Thus, the reconstructing efforts and the unity felt amongst PAIGC leaders, militants and supporters point towards the inclusive political bargain that had emerged through consensus in the liberated areas. This is where the next chapter picks up the story.

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<sup>84</sup> Lobban (1974) analyses how NATO and the United States remained an obstacle to overall recognition of Portugal's colonies as independent states. In this respect it is also interesting to read Charles Diggs, Jr.'s – chairman of the US Subcommittee on Africa - declaration to the U.S House of representatives (1974) in which he attempts to convince US authorities on the need of recognizing Guinea-Bissau's independence by stating that the country fulfills the pre-requisites for statehood.

# CHAPTER 4

## ALL FOR ONE

(1974–1977)

### 4. 1 Introduction

This chapter first examines the social composition of the PAIGC's newly elected political bodies. It then picks up on the conclusion of the previous chapter – that is, that the nomination of those in positions of power emerged from consensus – and emphasizes the bonds and ties that were forged amongst the PAIGC leaders during these years.

The chapter specifically looks at the development policies undertaken by the PAIGC and demonstrates the leaders' commitment to pursue the party's original programme. It shows that the unity felt during the war amongst the elites transcended it and contends that the perceived national differences amongst them only "later" became salient. It suggests that the new circumstances brought about with independence precipitated a boundary shift, but only in 1977 does this boundary in fact change.

The chapter concludes by arguing that there is a general tendency to evaluate elite boundaries retrospectively through the lenses of past and subsequent events. It suggests that by doing this, analyses tend to fall short in explaining shifts and changes in boundaries and intra-elite dynamics themselves. In light of all this, it evaluates the shape of the elite bargain and questions to what extent its shape can be grasped by considering national divergences as the main source of fragmentation during the first three years of Guinea-Bissau's independence.

## 4.2 Positions of Power

Upon independence the PAIGC indisputably and legitimately assumed control of the state apparatus. As stated previously, much of the political structure of the future state had already been established before independence was officially obtained.

To analyse the social composition of the positions of power from 1973 until 1977 it is necessary to register the composition of the party and state leadership and what in effect could be considered the agents of an “inner core” of the power structure. In order to do so, I identified the relevant state and party positions at the top of the apparatuses and through consideration of the functions, analysis of information in written reports and other articles of the time, as well as of information provided by the recollections of interviewees, I elaborated Figure 2 which shows the ethnic composition of the power structure and its relation to the population.

For reasons that will be examined in detail in this chapter, the state and the party were intertwined. As a result, the top leadership positions of the PAIGC need to be considered not only with regard to the overall positions of power, but as present in the inner core of power.<sup>85</sup> Identification of the positions and agents in the relevant apparatuses at the top of the state and party is therefore extracted from the elections to the ANP and the results of the Second Congress of the PAIGC of the same time and takes into account the following considerations:

1. The 1972 elections for the ANP, established by the national constitution of 1973 (art. 28<sup>o</sup>) as the highest organ of state power, designated 273 Regional Councillors, who in their turn chose 91 deputies to the ANP; the other 29 members were representatives of the party.
2. The Council of the State was formed and composed of the 15 members who had already been elected, for a three-year period, in the ANP. The function of this organ was, above all, to control the activities of the Council of Commissariats (positions equivalent to ministers).<sup>86</sup> Luís

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<sup>85</sup> According to article 6<sup>o</sup> of the constitution the PAIGC was charged with orienting state policies and politically leading the society. As a result, the overlapping of party and state personnel is recurrent. Just to give one example, all the members of the Permanent Secretariat have important positions in the state as well.

<sup>86</sup> Besides nominating and dismissing and overseeing the work of the commissariats, the Council of the State also ought to defend the constitution and assemble the ANP when it thought necessary.

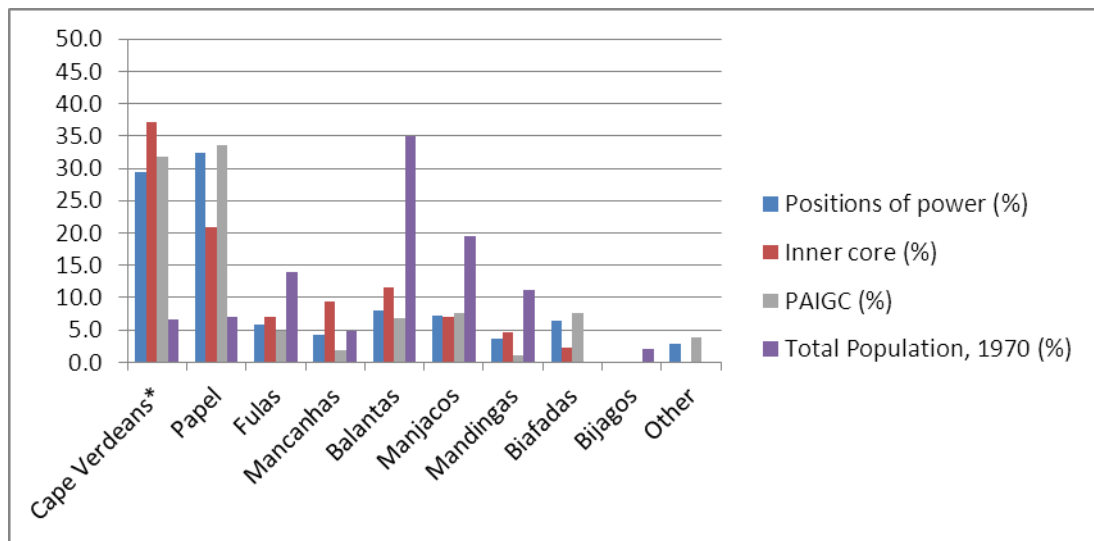
Cabral, Amílcar's half-brother, was elected President of the State Council. As President, Luís Cabral, a Cape Verdean, was also Guinea-Bissau's President and the supreme commander of the armed forces (article 39<sup>o</sup> of the 1973 constitution). I have considered both of these state positions to be (not only *de jure*, but also *de facto*) the highest organs of power in the organization of the state. Therefore, the members that composed these organs were considered as being a part of the inner core of the positions of power during this period, that is, those members who held the most important leadership positions.

3. The Party's Second Congress defined the PAIGC's internal organization. Following the assassination of Amílcar Cabral, Aristides Pereira was elected as Secretary-General of the PAIGC. Pereira (Cape Verdean), together with Luís Cabral (Cape Verdean), Francisco Mendes (Papel) and Nino Vieira (Papel) composed the Permanent Secretariat, which was the main guiding force of the party (Galli and Jones 1987: 61; Forrest 1992: 51).<sup>87</sup> These four members were elected by the Conselho Executivo para a Luta (CEL). The CEL was one of the highest political organs of the Party and Cape Verdeans comprised a majority of its 24 members. These two organs, together with the President and members of the Council of the State constituted the top leadership positions. The PAIGC's Congress also elected the members for another political organ, the Superior Council of the Struggle (CSL).

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<sup>87</sup> In the Party's First Congress the Permanent Secretariat was composed of Amílcar Cabral (Cape Verdean), Luís Cabral (Cape Verdean) and Aristides Pereira (Cape Verdean). The enlargement of its composition – the addition of two Guineans of the Papel ethnic group - following the PAIGC's II Congress demonstrates a will to balance one of the most important organs of the party.

Figure 2. Inter-ethnic distribution of Positions of Power (absolute distribution and relative to population share, 1973-1977)



Source for population: Algiers: CONCP, 1970

\* Due to lack of precision of the data in the 1970 population census, it was necessary to calculate estimates for the Cape Verdean population as well as various other ethnic groups. The percentage of 6.6% used here for Cape Verdeans in the total population is based upon the highest possible estimate for the Cape Verdean population during these years, i.e., the percentage of all other ethnic minorities that were not specified in the census estimates and therefore may be as much as four times higher than what it was in reality.

Figure 2 thereby represents an approximation for the distribution of positions of power within the PAIGC and the state. The blue column represents a calculation for the percentage for the total of people in all the leadership positions belonging to an ethnic group. These positions include the Commissariats, the Sub-Commissariats, top military posts, and the President of the National Assembly.<sup>88</sup> The red column shows the distribution by percentage of members of the ethnic group within the positions of the inner core of the leadership of the country. The grey column represents the total percentage of members of the ethnic group in positions of power within the PAIGC (Permanent Secretariat, CEL and CSL).

<sup>88</sup> The President of the National Popular Assembly has been included in the positions of power because although this was more of a presiding function, in practice it was a position of important political status.

As can be seen in the figure, Cape Verdeans were generally disproportionately predominant in the highest-level political positions of the state and the party. The data indicate that Cape Verdeans were practically double in number in relation to the Papel, the second most represented group in the inner core. The exception to this trend was the CSL, where the Papel outnumbered the Cape Verdeans.<sup>89</sup> While the Papel also outnumber the Cape Verdeans in the Sub-Commissariat positions, in the Council of State (the highest executive state organ), they were not present. Although overall there were more Papel in positions of power in the party and state, they held secondary positions in comparison to the Cape Verdeans.

As can be gathered from these findings, while the leading positions did not exclude any of the main ethnic groups, their representation was not balanced. Undoubtedly there were proportionately more Cape Verdeans and Papels in positions of power. The balance in absolute numbers between these groups does not necessarily correspond to a hierarchical balance, this is to say, Cape Verdeans retained the most important leadership positions and this is reflected in their preponderance in the inner core posts. This said, and considering the main source of social fragmentation to be national (that is Cape Verdeans vs. Guineans) it is unquestionable that the Cape Verdean minority was significantly over-represented in terms of its population share.

#### **4.2.1 Diversity and Unity**

The social composition of the positions of power has shown that a substantial predominance of Cape Verdean leaders dominated the PAIGC and hence state positions, as state and party were confounded as Cabral had foreseen. On the one hand, the PAIGC itself was formed by a small group of nationalist intellectuals who had studied either in Europe or in the colonial schools. As seen, the Portuguese colonial administration depended upon an indigenous elite to ensure its rule, the great majority of them Cape Verdeans who had immigrated to Guinea-Bissau. There they became the “assimilated”. To a certain extent, the Cape Verdeans, were seen by Guineans as a second colonizer and looked upon with distrust. Nevertheless, in

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<sup>89</sup> The CSL was formally the highest organ of power, whose members in turn chose the Executive Committee of the Struggle. In practice, however, this organ had diminished influence in relation to the Executive that it chose since it only met once a year (Forrest 1992: 50; Galli and Jones 1987: 61; interviews).

contrast to what the Portuguese intended, many from this elite became conscious of colonial exploitation and were the first to take up the cause and lead the transformation of their society (which, according to Cabral meant their “class suicide following independence) since they possessed adequate levels of education and had knowledge of how to administer political bureaucracy.

On the other hand, what is particularly noteworthy of the whole national mobilization movement led by the PAIGC is not only the degree of inter-ethnic mixing (with exception of the Fula), but also how the colonial created division was suppressed. The way the PAIGC was organized and structured, the way it developed, its basic principles and its conduct of the war in itself were all factors that diluted these differences. There was considerable determination to connect the *petty bourgeoisie* to the popular masses. What must also be stressed is the PAIGC’s flexibility in accepting into its higher organs elements of the population that Cabral had termed the *déclassé* – the newly arrived rural youth of the urban areas who were unemployed and had connections with both the urban and rural regions.<sup>90</sup> As Cabral mentions, this segment of the population adhered immediately to the struggle since they suffered on a day-to-day basis the hardships imposed by Portuguese colonialism and understood “the sacrifices being borne by the Africans”. He also points out that the party had been able to recruit cadres from amongst this group (Cabral 1974: 46 - 48).<sup>91</sup>

The composition of the leading political positions is illustrative of this. Putting aside the Cape Verdeans, the figure demonstrates an over-representation of the Papel ethnic group in the

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<sup>90</sup> Cabral also refers to prostitutes and beggars as part of a subdivision of the *déclassé*.

<sup>91</sup> In this respect Cabral’s says: “Many people say that it is the peasants who carry the burden of exploitation: this may be true, but so far as the struggle is concerned it must be realised that it is not the degree of suffering and hardship involved as such that matters: even extreme suffering in itself does not necessarily produce the *prise de conscience* required for the national liberation struggle. In Guinea the peasants are subjected to a kind of exploitation equivalent to slavery; but even if you try and explain to them that they are being exploited and robbed, it is difficult to convince them by means of an inexperienced explanation of a techno-economic kind that they are the most exploited people; whereas it is easier to convince the workers and the people employed in the towns who earn, say, 10 escudos a day for a job in which a European earns between 30 and 50 that they are being subjected to massive exploitation and injustice, because they can see. To take my own case as a member of the petty bourgeois group which launched the struggle in Guinea, I was an agronomist working under a European who everybody knew was one of the biggest idiots in Guinea; I could have taught him his job with my eyes shut but he was the boss: this is something which counts a lot, this is the confrontation which really matters. This is of major importance when considering where the initial idea of the struggle came from” (Cabral 1974: 47).

PAIGC organs and in the overall positions of power; an over-representation of the Mancanha in the inner core positions; the Mandjack, though under-represented in terms of their share in the population, had representatives in all the organs of power; and, although there is no data available on the total number of Biafada in Guinea-Bissau in 1970, an educated guess suggests that they were much less numerous than the Mancanha,<sup>92</sup> which indicates that they were also over-represented in all the organs of power. The over-representation of some of these ethnic groups is associated with the fact that they were predominantly settled near the urban areas, migrated to the cities and composed the class mentioned above.

The Brâme language-speaking group (Papel, Mandjack and Mancanha), for example, inhabited the coastal areas, from Bissau to Cachéu.<sup>93</sup> These were the regions where the Portuguese first settled and set-up their trading posts. This explains how the Papel, who were historically located in Bissau, were very present in employment on the waterfront, such as dockworkers. The Mancanha, for instance, were predominant in the Cacheú region (also a major Portuguese settlement) and it is reported that during colonialism a large proportion of its population migrated into the cities and occupied positions in public administration and commerce (Nóbrega 2003: 82). The same applies to the Mandjack (although they also immigrated out of the territory, mostly to Senegal); in fact their name itself was attributed by the Portuguese to refer to those that migrated from their villages to seek work in the trading posts (Gable 1990: 6).<sup>94</sup> The Biafada, an Islamized ethnic group, inhabited the southern coastal parts of the territory but gradually during colonial rule also migrated to Bissau.

Furthermore, the PAIGC also incorporated people from the rural areas within some of its superior organs. To be more specific, people who contributed to the armed struggle and who distinguished themselves in combat were allowed to rise politically in the party, and some were later nominated to state positions. To a certain extent, these people were generally from

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<sup>92</sup> According to the 1991 census the Biafadas compose only 3.2% of the total population.

<sup>93</sup> It has also been pointed out that these ethnic groups are a colonial creation; the Portuguese classified this coastal population with different names according to the different geographical zones they inhabited.

<sup>94</sup> The under-representation of the Mandjack in relation to the other Brâme-speaking language groups may be due however not only to their intense immigration movement into Senegal, but also to their conflictual relation with the Balanta. The Balanta were the first group to be mobilized and the PAIGC in its maturity was closely identified with them. This may also explain some of the support amongst the Mandjacks for the FLING (a Bissau-Guinean liberation movement composed mostly of Mandjack, Mandinga and Fula) based in Senegal that took more moderate positions than the PAIGC).



the Balanta ethnic group who, in their great majority, lived in the south. Although the Balanta were much under-represented in relation to their overall percentage of the total population, the figure shows that they were the second largest group to have representation in the inner core positions and the third most representative group within the PAIGC. As was touched upon when looking into Cabral's description of Guinea-Bissau's social structure, the PAIGC began its mobilization in the south amongst the Balanta because it was projected that their "stateless society", their consistent resistance to colonial subjugation and the fact that they had considerably suffered from Portugal's domination were all factors presumed to facilitate recruitment amongst them (this assessment was correct and the first battles were fought and won in Balanta territory).

The incorporation of people from the *mato*, as some Guineans refer to it – meaning people that come from the rural areas with no education, into positions of power indicated that the PAIGC was not only willingly, but genuinely, envisaging a society which would be strengthened by indigenous participation. The ascendance of rural people into positions of power has led Cardoso to affirm that the national liberation war constituted an authentic social revolution as it permitted rapid mobility of those at the bottom of the social pyramid (Cardoso 2002: 18).

The integration of elements from the varied fractions of Guinean society into the structures of the party - and later into state positions - is one of the most important factors that explain the degree of cohesiveness and unity that was felt amongst practically all during and right after the war. In accordance with this argument, Chabal states that it was the commitment to an indigenous ideology that avoided splits in the PAIGC and was a cause of its success (Chabal 1983: 192).

Figure 2 also highlights the representation of two other ethnic groups, the Fula and Mandinga, both of which are Islamized and located predominantly in the North Eastern regions of the country. The Fula are clearly under-represented in relation to their share in the population and are also one of the groups with the least presence in absolute numbers. However, this is not surprising. If Cabral's analysis of the country's social structure permitted him to understand that the Balanta would more readily adhere to the nationalist movement, it also predicted the difficulty that the PAIGC would encounter in mobilising amongst the Fula. The Portuguese were able to strategically use the Fula's vertical social organization, that is, their highly stratified society, and their loyalty to their traditional and religious chiefs to their benefit: they established close relations with the Fula chiefs by giving them *régulo* positions in the

administrative sectors of the colonial territory – that is, the native chief chosen by the villagers through their local practices, and was the direct representative of the administrator of the district.<sup>95</sup> In cases where the villagers had not chosen a chief – the Balanta, for example, due to their horizontal functioning, rarely appointed them – the Portuguese chose one for them. Consequently many Balanta villages, but also Mandinga ones, were headed by Fula *régulos*, which created much animosity between them and the ethnic groups that they were administering.

Political and military mobilization amongst the Fula was therefore greatly diminished and, when the PAIGC did approach them, they were not all that successful since the Fula were “very closely tied to the Portuguese authorities” (Cabral 1974: 47). It is reported that around 10,000 to 17,000 men fighting for the Portuguese were Fula; they composed what were called the African Commandos (Lyon 1980: 162). Having said this, it may nevertheless be surprising to find members of this ethnic group in the inner core and positions of power within the liberation movement. Their inclusion should be understood in light of the PAIGC’s effort towards uniting all groups.

Lastly, while the Mandinga, who composed less than 12% of the total population, are slightly over-represented in inner core positions, they are the least represented group in positions of power. In this regard, it is relevant to point out that, while the Mandinga are said to have been difficult to recruit in the first years of PAIGC mobilisation, they were quicker to adhere in the 1970’s. Their reduced membership in the PAIGC in the beginning of the struggle can be explained by their initial proximity to the *Frente de Libertação e Independência Nacional da Guiné* (FLING), another Guinean liberation movement. Their increased membership in the PAIGC in the following years can be explained by the FLING’s incapacity to act decisively in any manner against the Portuguese. Furthermore, their willingness to join the armed struggle can be explained by the fact that the Fula, with whom they had a conflicting history due to the latter’s cooperation with the Portuguese, were also linked to FLING (Ibid: 164).

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<sup>95</sup> They were responsible for securing law and order in the village, gathering men to defend the territory and putting them to work in the construction of roads and other services, facilitating the collection of taxes and so on (Art. 48º and 51º of the 1912 Portuguese Administrative Law in Schoenmakers 1987: 110)

What comes across then is that while the PAIGC paid attention strategically to ethnic particularisms and class differences in order to guarantee successful mobilisation, it was through the PAIGC itself that these particularities were overcome. This is not to say that ethnic antagonisms disappeared in their entirety during this time period. The Fula, for example, remained on the whole quite averse to the PAIGC and collaborated with the Portuguese authorities. It is also known that from the start there were many who opposed the bi-nationalist project as envisaged by Cabral (both Cape Verdeans and Bissau-Guineans). Nevertheless, the contention here is that PAIGC members, cadres and leaders were very much united upon gaining independence. The leading political positions, which emerged even before official independence, were composed of people from diverse ethnic groups and social classes whose interests had been tentatively reconciled and who now felt unified.

The nationalist movement did not solely have as its objective independence; it aimed to transform society and build a nation devoid of any type of exploitation. That the PAIGC in its new state functions encountered extreme difficulties in realizing its revolutionary ambitions, or that a truly new socio-economic order did not come about and that divisions amongst the elites became marked in the following years, in no way confirm an analysis based on the idea that these divisions were already prevalent or even latent.

In the countryside, the PAIGC had established the foundations for its envisioned socialist state and it now needed to consolidate its efforts at the centre, in Bissau – which had been under Portuguese control until independence was officially recognized. Strengthening the ties between rural and urban areas was a requirement for successfully applying the party's principles. Yet the contradictions with which the PAIGC would be confronted with in Bissau, that is, the dilemmas created by bureaucrats trained by the colonial administration (and a lack of new ones to substitute them) and an administration inherited by colonialism, proved to be serious obstacles to the party's cohesiveness. In addition to this, as is known, after centuries of colonial underdevelopment and a decade armed struggle, the country was in a disastrous state. This said, the political obstacles during the first years of independence were overcome and the government initiated its development plans. That the PAIGC was initially able to resist the effects of such obstacles is indicative of its strong cohesiveness.

### 4.3 All For One?

Given the disproportion of Cape Verdeans in positions of power following independence, one might rightly hypothesize on the influence that the unbalanced ethnic composition of the dominant coalition may have had in generating the *coup d'état* that took place only six years after independence. On the surface, there seems to be a direct relation between the two, that is to say, the ethnic imbalance in positions of power generated growing dissatisfaction among the under-represented, which consequently led them to throw the over-represented out of power.

In hindsight, this outcome gives the impression of being inevitable. Everything seems to indicate that this was the case - and the contrary is by no means claimed here. The thinking goes as follows: in order to maintain control over the territory, the colonial power divided the population. The colony, ruled by the Portuguese, had been administrated by a Cape Verdean minority who enjoyed civil and political privileges. Thus, upon independence, Guinea-Bissau inherited a socially and ethnically fragmented society. While these divergences were suppressed during the national liberation war, once the common enemy was out of the way, the antagonisms created by colonialism reappeared. Thus the 1980 *coup d'état*, led by a group of Guineans who composed the dominant coalition, ousted from power the Cape Verdean elite and put an end to the Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean bi-nationalist project.

The social boundaries that separated the Cape Verdean from the Guinean political elites were visible and relevant from the moment independence was obtained. The shared stories that emerge on each side of the boundary (that is, the stories told by Bissau-Guineans and by Cape Verdeans), *after* the *coup*, point to this reality. However, the image of unity that is portrayed during the armed struggle and during the first few years of independence dissipates and the image that resurfaces is of long-lived bi-national antagonisms.

What happened then to the story of unity, to the story of the success of the national political mobilisation and war, and of the widely acclaimed – both internally and externally (through the work of academics and journalists writing at the time) - revolutionary institutions that had been put in place in the liberated areas and in the first years of independence? This story is told and is remembered with a certain nostalgia; sometimes it is recalled in order to foster a nationalist sentiment; many times it has been used by former liberation combatants in order to legitimize their power; but when it reaches the 1980 *coup d'état* episode, the story, as told

by Guineans and external observers, becomes centred on the cleavages and disunion between Cape Verdeans and Guineans.

#### **4.4 Talking about a Revolution**

The country's first constitution made it clear that the PAIGC was to have an active, controlling role in state activities. For example, Article 32<sup>o</sup> states that if the party was discontent with a minister it could destitute him from his functions. This led to parallelism in party and state positions. Going back to Figure 2, one can see that the number of positions in the PAIGC is practically equal to the overall number of positions of power. In 1974, 11 out of the 15 Commissars belonged to the main organs of the party, that is, the CEL and the CSL. Furthermore, sector committees had been created and were a combination of party-government administration units (Forrest 1987: 97). In essence, the party was the state and the state was the party.

The participation in the ANP by villagers outside of the PAIGC attested to Cabral's attempt link the people with the party and the state. Nevertheless, this would only be as achieved to the extent that the party and the state were able to maintain their connections with the rural areas, where its main base of support resided. From 1977 onwards there was a turn and the PAIGC became gradually disconnected from the countryside. This reflected, in part, a change of direction by some leaders in relation to this fundamental party orientation: the strategy of a social revolution rooted in the countryside. This change of direction, among other things, was what later fomented divisions within the PAIGC leadership. Why this occurred and how it fed the contention that eventually led to the 1980 *coup d'état* is the subject of the following chapter. However, what can be said here already is that the core causes of the later emergence of such contradictory political forces can be traced back to the difficulties that the PAIGC confronted upon assuming control of the state.

What the PAIGC had been able to achieve in the liberated areas – political legitimacy and new political and administrative structures – remained to be achieved in the country's capital. In Bissau the political structures in place upon independence were those left behind by the Portuguese. Here the PAIGC not only faced an extremely debilitated economy but confronted a section of the urban population that had remained under the control of the Portuguese throughout the entire liberation movement and war. The British historian, Basil Davidson, who

accompanied the whole liberation movement *in loco*, and, was with the PAIGC leaders when they drove into Bissau upon independence, describes the entrance into the city.

*“Bissau continues to confirm this undisturbed transition... Cities which liberate themselves rejoice: one remembers that from other wars, other liberations. Cities which are liberated from outside themselves go through a period of stunned quiescence, wondering how to behave. This is how it is in Bissau. There are PAIGC slogans on the walls, a few banners: otherwise it is a city of people who do not seem to know what has really happened to them. This will be one of the major problems for the PAIGC: to absorb this relatively huge urban population, around 100,000 whose best sons and daughters have long since joined the struggle, leaving behind a mass of those who have suffered in silence; or have not suffered; or, again, have even made a good thing out of the war” (Davidson 1974: 13)*

Many of those who lived in Bissau had worked for the colonial administration and had remained at the margins of the nationalist movement. Some even opposed the movement for the simple reason that they thought their interests were better served during colonial rule.

The following extract of an interview is illustrative not only of a certain type of resistance that the PAIGC was to encounter in Bissau, but also the extent to which the Portuguese had been able to, to use Cabral’s words, acculturate and assimilate a segment of the urban population.

*“I’m originally from Bula which was a region frequently attacked during the war. In 1965, two years after the war had started, I witnessed my grandfather die right in front of me. They were PAIGC militants. It wasn’t that the PAIGC as an institution had planned to assassinate him, but since he worked for the Portuguese, those militants that had adhered to the struggle wanted some sort of revenge. My father was also killed; he was caught in an ambush when going to work... The intensity of the attacks made it necessary for my family and I to move to Bissau, it was calmer there. I have never left Bissau since then. I finished my studies in Bissau. Already I had an aversion to the PAIGC as you can imagine. Seeing my grandfather lying on the floor is an image that has not disappeared. In Bissau I lived next to the colonial military base. I became very close to the Portuguese soldiers. They would come to my house and eat, we would talk, and they offered me clothes. They helped me a lot. I would only speak Portuguese; I almost forgot how to speak my native language. My proximity with the Portuguese military and the assassination of my family members naturally made me position myself on the “other” side. The others [PAIGC] were the terrorists. Only years later, I think only in 1972 or 1973 did I listen to some clandestine radio, you know, PAIGC propaganda. I’m from that generation. When the PAIGC enters Bissau they find us with a completely different mentality. It was a political-military organization with a well implemented pro-marxist regime in the liberated areas and when they arrive in Bissau their confrontation with us was very complicated. The*

*PAIGC, the new political power, wanted to impose sovereignty on the internal order. We were forced to join the party. To us it did not make any sense” (Interview 5)*

The interviewee mentions that he is from a specific generation, however, it was not just a generation of the urban population that was opposed to the PAIGC, it was also a social class; that same class of people that had been educated, trained and privileged by the colonial authorities. Their interests did not lie with the countryside and they had barely any connection, if any at all, to the rural population or the indigenous society - as the interviewee mentions, he did not even speak his ethnic language anymore. So, while the PAIGC was welcomed with general enthusiasm in the liberated areas and in some of Bissau’s poorest neighbourhoods, there was also a minority urban elite who posed problems for the party after independence. Alongside rebuilding and developing the country, mobilising this segment of the population was now one of the PAIGC’s biggest challenges - and as the newly elected Secretary-General of the PAIGC, stated, it was necessary to “decolonize the minds” (Pereira in Andréini and Lambert 1978: 35).

Looking at the issue through this perspective, that is, considering one of the opposing factions to the PAIGC as constituting a fraction of a certain urban social class (the *petty bourgeoisie*), rather than assuming that the cleavage was essentially between Bissau-Guineans and Cape Verdeans (as is commonly affirmed), allows us to grasp in their entirety the divisions that would later materialize amongst the PAIGC leaders themselves. The point is that while on the surface this opposition appeared to be closely linked to the Cape Verdean population - since the majority of those who worked for the colonial administration were indeed Cape Verdean, this perspective fails to see that these divergences reflected the interests of an urban elite who envisaged maintaining the *status quo* and were not ready to easily give up their privileged positions. The PAIGC’s “pro-marxist regime”, as the interviewee calls it, with its large rural based constituency, was therefore seen as a threat to their interests. To see the overarching cleavage as social at its core not only makes better sense of the underlying causes of the disagreements that emerge between the PAIGC leadership, but also enables us to see that opposition went beyond the Cape Verdeans. While Portugal’s assimilation policies were very much directed to the Cape Verdean population, there were also individuals from other groups

that had made it into the so-called “civilized” population of Guinea-Bissau.<sup>96</sup> The interviewee quoted above, for instance, referred to himself as an educated Mancanha.

Thus the PAIGC and its leaders found themselves in a somewhat paradoxical position. While their base of support was rural and peasant and while they aimed to transform and build a new society, the political and administrative structures that they inherited in Bissau reproduced mechanisms of colonial exploitation and the people that had the know-how to run the administration were an urban elite whose interests did not necessarily envisage rural development.

Confronted with this opposition, and in contrast to the mobilisation in the rural areas, the PAIGC proceeded to “convince” the urban populations of their political legitimacy through more forceful means. The same interviewee recalls the following:

*“The attempt to impose their supremacy made it mandatory for everyone to integrate the mass organizations of the party – such as the Amílcar Cabral African Youth. They looked to establish a nexus between the school and the party. People were forced to join it. Even in the neighbourhoods they followed every step of people’s lives, who joined and who did not join; you would see political police. Everyone needed to profess the party’s ideology. A lot of people were murdered during those 6 years. There were a lot of killings. Innocent people, victims of defamations...”* (Interview 5)

In spite of the clear divergence of interests between the rural and the urban population, PAIGC leaders were determined to follow its political and economic programme. The PAIGC spoke in favour of common interests, of society as a whole; it had been the national liberator and therefore it now also represented national interests. The PAIGC therefore maintained itself cohesive and, faithful to Cabral’s line (although Cabral probably would probably have been very much against the violence employed), it fought against those who refused the party’s socialist orientation. It organized village committees in the countryside, and, neighbourhood committees, in the urban areas.<sup>97</sup> Besides the *Amílcar Cabral African Youth*, which was a school

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<sup>96</sup> For example, in 1950 the Portuguese colonial authorities racially divided the “civilized” population (1.6% of the total population) as follows: 27% were white, 55% were of mixed-raced and 18% were black (Mendy 1994: 311).

<sup>97</sup> The committees were generally well-received by the villagers with the exception in the north-eastern regions, inhabited by Fula (Forrest 1992: 52).



for politically mobilizing the youth, a woman's commission (Democratic Union of Women – UNDEMU) and trade unions (National Union of Workers of Guinea-Bissau – UNTG) were also formed, which were all under the direction of the party and the state.

In this respect, it is interesting to read Andréini and Lambert's description of Guinea-Bissau's first years of independence and their comments on how PAIGC's leaders remained truly committed to their rural popular support base. The citation below refers to declarations that Luis Cabral made when addressing the people of Tombali (one of the first regions to be liberated). He had affirmed that all people of the party and the state should defend the party's interests and hence of all Guineans and not just their own. Soon after he made these declarations the Council of the State formulated a law that prohibited the Commissars to possess private property.

*“Le Conseil des Commissaires qui a suivi la déclaration du président de la République, a formulé l'interdiction pour tous les Commissaires d'avoir des propriétés privées. Ceci peut être considéré comme une forme de 'suicide' puisqu'ils s'enlèvent la possibilité de profiter de leur pouvoir.”* (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 36)

The authors consider this move to be an attempt of the leaders to encourage committing class suicide. Such a move suggests that measures were indeed taken in order to proceed with the party's envisaged societal transformation.

What was now critical for the consolidation of the nation and the construction of the state was developing the country's economy.<sup>98</sup> According to Cabral and the party's programme, economic development was first and foremost to begin with the agriculture sector, as the State Commissioner for Economic Development and Planning stated,

*“Beyond political independence, which we have already won, we are seeking to achieve economic independence as well. We have therefore defined a development strategy, responsive to our country's economic reality, which begins with agriculture as the highest priority, since 86% of the population is agricultural labourers. Since the majority of the population lives by subsistence farming, we want to take advantage*

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<sup>98</sup> The war and colonial rule had left the country's economy extremely debilitated. To just give a few striking examples of how bad it was: exports only covered 7% of imports and in order to meet the rice demands of the population it was necessary to import six times the amount; the secondary sector employed a mere 3.2% of the population; the primary sector – which employed 86% of the population – was estimated to account for 8.2% of the GDP (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 67 - 68).

*of this circumstance to take even more return from the products of the land than the colonialists could.” (Vasco Cabral in Lopes 1987: 99)*

The priority given to agriculture and the rural areas dissatisfied much of the urban elite. This approach necessarily meant planned state intervention whose investments were to be concentrated in the countryside. Industries were to suit the needs of agricultural production and economic decentralization was to take place. The ANP approved nationalizing the land (CIDAC 1976: 72) and despite the urban resistance, the first three years witnessed the formation of small agricultural cooperatives (Chilcote 1977: 36), the distribution of rice seeds and the recuperation of rice plantations, the channelling of international aid to finance agricultural projects (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 87 and 95) and the decentralization of the economy with the expansion of the People’s Stores that placed control of the internal market at the local level (Washington 1980: 21). In 1975, for instance, the government increased peanut prices by 420% in order to give incentives to production; rice was sold with a 2.4% over production price; and an education campaign was launched aimed at informing peasants how to diversify their production (Goulet 1978: 22; CIDAC 1976: 79).

In addition to this and in other areas of national reconstruction, the ANP abolished the colonial tax and substituted it with a national reconstruction tax. The education system was reorganized in order to emphasize the formation of the “new man” (Ibid: 22) and it is reported that one-fifth of the country’s budget was allocated for its improvement (Goulet 1976: 26). Efforts were made to decentralize the health system, and local courts were established in all villages of all sectors (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 192).

Thus, what we see in the first years of independence, through analysis of the concerted actions of the state and the party, is a unified party leadership trying to push forward the revolutionary ideals of non-capitalist development. This is backed up through the writings of academics (*connoisseurs* of the Guinean reality) who published at that time. Chilcote, for example, in 1977, wrote:

*“Leaders such as Luís Cabral do not model their development upon capitalist advances that have occurred elsewhere. They desire autonomy and development related to national needs.” (Chilcote 1977: 38)*

When asked if the objective was to establish a proletariat in the country, Luís Cabral, the President of Guinea-Bissau, answered:

*“It is not our objective to have large national capitalists. We struggled for independence. We can have certain private initiatives but they must be within the limits of our poverty. We cannot allow private interests to work against the interests of the large masses of people”* (Luís Cabral, 1977 in Chilcote 1977: 38)

Chabal affirmed as late as 1981,

*“This extreme emphasis on the importance of political mobilisation and on the cadres' ability to live with and relate to the villagers continued throughout the war and is evident today”* (Chabal 1981: 82)

In an article written in 1980, before the *coup d'état*, on the new institutions of development in Guinea-Bissau, Washington states:

*“For more than ten years, the PAIGC was an organization of unpaid fighters. President Luís Cabral, upon taking power, limited the salaries of high officials, and reduced others while raising those of the lowest ranks. The PAIGC leaders are determined not to create another capitalist society with its inherent contradictions and injustices”* (Washington 1980: 21)

Crucial then to the argument put forward here is that, while the majority of the party's leaders and government ministers were from the class that Cabral had classified as the *petty bourgeoisie* (the President and practically half of the ministers were Cape Verdean), there was an attempt to not succumb to the interests of their own class. In other words, they consistently upheld and maintained the bonds with the other leaders that came from different backgrounds. Therefore, the boundaries between the diverse groups that composed the positions of power continued to be diluted, as they had been during the armed struggle, because the PAIGC was still keeping to its principles. The party's leaders remained united during the first three years of independence. In fact, as the stories told to me reveal, they shared an identity.

#### **4.5 A PAIGC Identity: Boundaries and Stories**

Why is it that I refer here to a PAIGC identity, and not a national identity, when the war had been fought for the nation, liberation had been attained for the nation, and the state claimed to act in the interests of all? The reasoning behind this derives from the observation that in fact not all segments of the population in the territory identified themselves with the PAIGC.

In the first place, the stories that were shared amongst PAIGC members and the populace in the countryside differed from the stories shared by those who resided in the urban areas, held privileged positions in the colonial administration, and had a somewhat friendly relationship with the Portuguese. On the PAIGC side, the story was about an extremely long and strenuous armed struggle that had finally put an end to colonial exploitation and was now determined to alter society and the minds of those who had not been able to “see” the colonial contradictions. On the side of the urban colonial elite, the story was about a party machine trying to impose its ways, by force, and wanting to alter the functioning of things to the detriment of their interests. This is how the story is told by those on both sides. The following quotes from my interviews establish the terms of opposing discourses regarding the PAIGC at the onset of independence:

*“My father was put in prison in 1974 by the PAIGC, precisely because of this issue of the privileged, of the Cape Verdeans. My father had money. To give you an example, we were 7 brothers and six of us were studying in Lisbon. My father was benefitted by Spínola’s [the Portuguese Governor and Commander-in-Chief in Guinea-Bissau] policies “For a Better Guinea”.<sup>99</sup> Because of this situation [referring to Spinola’s policies] there was a group of people, the so-called Guinean petty bourgeoisie, who suffered in the hands of the PAIGC, some of them were even killed. My father and many others were in the ‘corridors of death’ various times. Anyone that they considered assimilated or from the petty bourgeoisie or that did not belong to the PAIGC had a very difficult time. Businessmen were put in prison. The state began controlling the whole economy. There was an obvious discomfort during these years” (Interview 18)*

*“I was born in Bissau in 1956. I am a son of Bissau. I finished my studies in Bissau. I then taught in the Portuguese schools with other Portuguese teachers. We became very good friends. In fact just the other day I talked to one of them...We can say that in the city we did not feel oppressed; we worked together, we got along...When independence was proclaimed and the process of decolonization takes place, all the Portuguese left. Some of them were happy for us; they explained that now the country was ours. We did not really know what this meant. I was sad to see my friends leave. What makes me sadder though is to remember the amount of PAIGC repression during those years. They had just come from a long war and were angry*

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<sup>99</sup> General Spínola, in an attempt to “win the minds” of Guineans, introduced a number of policies during the last years of the war which envisaged not only health and education reconstruction, but also the recruiting of more Guineans and Cape Verdeans in the colonial administration.

*and aggressive. They wanted things changed immediately. It was unthinkable; how could you change everything like that? Only by means of force” (Interview 6)*

*“I was born in Bafatá. My father was Portuguese and my mother Guinean. I did my primary and secondary studies there. I only went to Bissau later; I was already in my twenties... During the colonial war I served the Portuguese military – we were forced to enlist - and worked for the Portuguese authorities...Never did I affiliate myself with the PAIGC. Before independence I did nurture some sympathy for them, for all the nationalist cause and the movement. After independence when the PAIGC enters I immediately distanced myself from them, I did not like their practices, I did not agree with their socialist outlook”. (Interview 35)*

The recollection on the PAIGC side,

*“I was raised by my uncle here in Bissau. He was revolutionary and I was brought up hearing about the PAIGC and the fight. His friends would meet at our house and I would be in the middle listening to their conversations. It was because of this that I had a political consciousness at a very young age. The war was not really felt in Bissau, I do remember some episodes though: the attack of the airport, for example, and hearing some bombs at a distance, but that is all I recall. After the 25<sup>th</sup> of April [Portuguese revolution which put an end to the regime] we finally are independent and the PAIGC militants enter Bissau. We that had followed every step of the struggle saw this change with good eyes. But here in Bissau not everyone saw it this way. They saw this as a threat to their positions. They needed to be ‘educated’ to understand the revolution. For example, The African Youth Amilcar Cabral was formed for this purpose.” (Interview 14)*

*“Some of them [referring to the people who had worked in the colonial administration] were more Portugal’s patriots than the Portuguese themselves! The ones that understood our causes were extremely inferior in number to the ones that opposed us” (Interview 30)*

It is in this sense that a PAIGC identity is referred to. In the liberated areas during the struggle we get the impression of being able to talk about a national identity or at least of a national identity in formation. On the other hand, the PAIGC entered Bissau, encountering people with whom they had not interacted up until independence. This experience activated a boundary that separates PAIGC leaders and their supporters from those who opposed them. Relevant to

this argument as well: one should not forget that some eastern parts of the country, inhabited mostly by Fula, remained outside of PAIGC control up until 1974.<sup>100</sup>

Secondly, it is clear that during the first three years of independence there was a feeling of unity among the party-state leaders and yet the events that followed seem to show otherwise. In other words, if we know that the 1980 *coup d'état* - which resulted in the end of Cape Verde's and Guinea-Bissau's bi-national project – stemmed from acute disagreements amongst the party's leaders and that Cape Verdean predominance in the party and state apparatuses had been pointed out as a reason for the *coup* to take place, and if we know that stories about Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean dissimilarities and antagonisms came to the forefront during that time and after, what evidence do we have to suggest that these points of contention were not already critical upon independence? In fact, in hindsight it appears that the problems were there from the start. A more careful analysis, though, reveals that cleavages amongst those who held positions of power only became visible and relevant in the following years. The following summarizes the points already touched upon and adds new highlights in order to establish and validate the argument.

A great part of this chapter has sought to show how Cabral, the liberation war and the whole political mobilisation process had the effect of forging inter-ethnic and social group alliances to a point at which previous differences were no longer salient and dividing. It was through a common anti-colonial discourse and project that they had united. Few would disagree that this was the case during the armed struggle. In fact, it is very noticeable that academics and journalists writing on Guinea-Bissau at the time commonly acknowledged the success of the PAIGC's political mobilisation and its construction of a national consciousness out of such a heterogeneous society (Biggs-Davidson 1971; Rudebeck 1972; Lobban 1974).<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> It was reported that in 1975, for example, Fula mercenaries who had fought alongside the Portuguese were still resisting PAIGC dominance and attempted to assassinate PAIGC leaders (Lyon 1980: 165).

<sup>101</sup> Essack (1973: 1633) for example, writing in 1973, right after the PAIGC's Second Congress states that "the spirit of Cabral lives on. His death did not leave a void, nor did it lead to the division within the ranks of the PAIGC which the Portuguese had expected. Rather it had the opposite effect. Militants closed ranks. With unity established and with increased vigilance the struggle will continue with greater momentum and determination. The people of Guinea-Bissau can look to the future with confidence." Lopes (1987: 43) writing a few years later states: "The national liberation movement achieved an outstanding mixing of inter-ethnic groups. During the armed struggle the different ethnic groups shared

That the Guinean national war was to unite all groups against a common enemy is not what makes this struggle exceptional (although this in itself is quite remarkable); there are examples of liberation wars elsewhere that had managed something similar. What was pointed out as special in this case is how, during the war, the PAIGC in the liberated areas (three quarters of the country) was able to establish new political, social and economic structures that were to be the basis of a new society.<sup>102</sup>

For these and other reasons - such as the willingness of the party to let people from different social backgrounds and origins to ascend to its top organs, its training and political education of the leaders and militants, and the decisive influence of Amílcar Cabral - a united and cohesive PAIGC leadership emerged upon independence. The following quotations are selected from interviews with PAIGC leaders and individuals appointed to leading positions during that time, who were asked about the first years of independence and whether divergences were felt amongst the leadership. The first is from a member of the CSL who remarks on the continuance of Guinean and Cape Verdean unity, between PAIGC leaders, after the war.

*“Amílcar’s death and the suspicions that it had been a faction of Guineans, who were against the unity of the two countries, behind the assassination made it apparent that there were some problems. But you know, the Cape Verdeans were truly integrated with us, the whole process of mobilisation of the peasants masses helped a lot. For example, the Duarte family in the south, they were Cape Verdeans, and they had a very important role in transmitting the party’s message...there is no way of going around, if they had more education than us so naturally they assumed the lead. You can see the divergences later through this issue of alphabetization; the Guineans were sensitive to this issue. But it made sense [that the Cape Verdeans outnumbered Guineans in the positions of power]. The mistakes came later. As I see*

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a common cause. They interacted. They believed in the same watchwords. They discovered collective purposes.” Peter Mendy 2006: 16), a Guinean historian, describes “a war in which Guineans and Cape Verdeans, in spite of the colonially-generated antagonisms and, in the context of an armed liberation struggle, colonially-promoted hostility between them, fought and died bravely, side by side, against an enemy armed to the teeth with the latest conventional weapons, and stubbornly determined to defend the colonial status quo” (Mendy 2006: 16).

<sup>102</sup> As referred above, the PAIGC had achieved sufficient genuine support in the rural areas - which led the UN to recognize its political control and legitimacy to represent the Bissau-Guinean people and had already held its first elections before independence. Muslow (1981: 110) sustains that the elections not only had a significant impact in wielding together the various Guinean ethnic groups in support for the party, but also the “partially separate and lighter skinned population of the Cape Verdean islands.”

*it, the problems in the party arise later. Cabral's teachings were still very much in our mind. In the end maybe our unity did not make sense but it made sense at the time, it came from the war and we had all fought together. And that does not lose meaning from one day to another" (Interview 28).*

The second quotation is from a mestiço who held a governmental position and who comments how divergences between the PAIGC leaders originated only in 1978.

*"After Cabral's death things got a bit more complicated. After independence of course we had difficulties, but Cabral's [Luís Cabral, the President] government was good, probably the best that we've had. I travelled a lot in order to get external financial aid for the country. We were trying to develop the country. We had industries in soap, milk, Citroën... I would not say that the 1980 coup was an ethnic [referring to Bissau-Guinean and Cape Verdean antagonisms] question. That only came later, during Nino's regime. It was more of a misunderstanding, divergences that could have been overcome. It all starts when the Prime-Minister dies [in 1978] and Luís Cabral calls Nino to substitute him.<sup>103</sup> Nino was a good person and very much liked, but he wanted power and he did not like this change. I think that Guinean resentment against us originated from outside of the party, from those who never wanted our unity, and Nino was influenced" (interview 2).*

The next interview, also a member of the CEL, shows the extent of Cape Verdean involvement in the struggle and how the PAIGC's problems in the first years derived from external opposition to it.

*"Let me give you an example of the Cape Verdean involvement in the struggle. My father, he was Cape Verdean, he had one of the biggest commercial enterprises at the individual level. He came from Cape Verde at a young age, he was 17 when he came to Guinea. He occupied extremely high positions in the colonial administration. When he heard about the massacres by PIDE [Portuguese police] he did not hesitate, he joined the PAIGC. He was arrested later and taken to Lisbon... There had always been some Cape Verdeans that did not want unity, but the divergences that led to 1980 are much more complex than the simple dichotomy between Cape Verdeans and Guineans. We were a party-state. Anyone who questioned this unity was pushed away. The first years our problems were not internal, of course not everything was a bed of roses, but we managed, taking everything into consideration. The problem was that during the years the party got bigger and bigger and developed into*

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<sup>103</sup> This substitution was seen as a demotion since, on the one hand it removed Nino Vieira from his ulterior position as the Armed Forces commissary, on the other hand, because there had been talks about Luís Cabral's intention of suppressing the position of the prime-minister in the state organization.



*something else. It was distancing itself from Cabral's line. Natural that divisions would later emerge" (Interview 27).*

Finally, a high positioned government official at the time demonstrates how ideological coherence was what bonded and later separated the PAIGC leaders.

*"We had just come from the struggle with an enormous will to do things right; fighting in this war affected all of us for the positive. We also came with a huge ideological baggage. Looking back I think we suffered from ignorance. We did not know how to manage a state. We committed a lot of mistakes in what concerns the economy. At the time I thought we were doing what was right, but this turned into an ideological problem amongst the party members. The 1980 coup, to me, above all was about ideological differences. And the competition between two men [Luís Cabral and Nino Vieira]. As time passed they forgot what had brought them together" (Interview 19)*

Whatever the reasons alleged for the *coup d'état* in 1980 - personal rivalries, ideological divisions, Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean antagonisms - there is one thing in common in these testimonies: the time-frame. All, one way or another, mention that internal divisions inside the PAIGC were felt later, in the following years. Before that, the sentiment of unity, felt during the war, was still preserved when the PAIGC took control of the state. Of course, these terms are vague in the sense that they do not give us an exact time period for when social boundaries changed amongst the elites. However, what matters, though, is not to pinpoint the precise time when differences started to be perceived but rather to understand that there was a boundary shift throughout those six years of independence.

The logical question that follows from this is what happened during those years? The next chapter looks precisely into these boundary changes, however, it has already been affirmed that it was the problems which the PAIGC encountered when reaching Bissau – a city that retained colonial structures and a powerful, albeit minority, segment of the population with a colonial mentality - and the (predictable) difficulties it had in reconstructing the country's economy that precipitated the boundary change. Other factors, as we will see, contributed to the activation of intra-elite boundaries. Importantly though, independence and the new circumstances precipitated the boundary change, but did not yet constitute change in itself (as in Tilly 2005a: 135).

While the existence of a powerful Bissauan *petty bourgeoisie* constitutes one of the factors explaining intra-elite splits, in the first years of independence the encounter with this resistance had the contrary effect: it activated a PAIGC identity. As seen, the PAIGC acted in

repressive ways when confronted with this opposition. The assertion of this identity produced a boundary between those who were for the revolution and those who were against it. In consonance with their revolutionary ideals, the PAIGC leaders, as also seen, advanced with economic, social and political policies. That these policies did not have the intended effects is another issue. Nevertheless, what we see is a united party leadership trying to extend what it had been able to accomplish during the war in the liberated areas to the rest of the country.

Lastly, although it has been stated that it is somewhat secondary to identify the exact moment in time when the boundary amongst the elites starts to become salient, 1977 has been demarcated as the turning point in which divisions start to become contentious. There are three reasons for this. The first reason, and the most obvious one, is that in November 1977 the PAIGC held its Third Congress which resulted in a change in the composition of the organs of power, which brought about an increase in the number of Cape Verdeans in the superior party positions and critical reactions to this. It is also during this time that contending voices in the party started to be heard in relation to the path of economic development. Secondly, the interviewees affirm that divergences between them only came to the forefront “later”.

Thirdly, after analysing the work of academics who wrote on Guinea-Bissau, it is interesting to note two things. The first is that when they point to ruptures in the party leadership or to deviations in the revolutionary path, the dates are all after 1976. The second thing to note is that there tends to be a change in perspective in relation to how those first years are portrayed depending upon when one writes and observes Guinean reality. This is to say, academics who wrote about Guinea-Bissau during the last years of the war and during the first years of independence put emphasis on the incredible success of the PAIGC’s political mobilisation in uniting ethnic and social groups, the cohesiveness of the PAIGC, the genuine commitment of the PAIGC leaders to the development of a new society, the originality of the new institutions in place and so on. Those writing after the 1980 *coup d’état* tend to refer to foreseeable fractions amongst the party and its leaders during the war and after. In no way do I argue that there were no divisions within the party; in fact, in the quotes above, two interviewees mention Cabral’s death as a point at which problems arise. However, should we not question to what extent these interpretations are influenced by the stories and interpretations that emerged “later”? Or better, if indeed the cleavages between Bissau-Guineans and Cape Verdean leaders had been so pronounced, why did it take six years to overthrow the Cape Verdean faction when the alleged justifications to do so were there from the start (that is, an overwhelmingly unbalanced distribution of privileges and rents)?

## 4.6 The Political Elite Bargain

The composition of the positions of power under analysis shows that there was a majority of Cape Verdeans, especially in the top leadership positions. In absolute numbers they are predominant and if we take into account this group's share of the population then this over-representation becomes even more striking. Nevertheless, we also find that the main ethnic groups (meaning the most populous) that inhabit Guinea-Bissau are also represented; some, in fact, are over-represented in relation to their percentage in the total population. So while the positions of power are not excluding any of the main ethnic groups, they are, however, unbalanced and clearly favouring the Cape Verdean side.

Six years after Guinea-Bissau's official independence a *coup d'état* led by Nino Vieira and other individuals of Guinean origin who held positions of power ousted the Cape Verdean President, Luís Cabral, and other state and PAIGC personnel of Cape Verdean nationality (or descent). It put an end to Guinea-Bissau's and Cape Verde's integration and it was seen as the inevitable culmination of inherited colonial created antagonisms between the two.

The social composition of the leading political positions appears to have had a direct causal relation on this outcome, this is to say, the fact that a Cape Verdean minority dominated the positions of power, in detriment to a Guinean majority, may have been one of the main causes that led to Guinean dissatisfaction. It has not been argued otherwise here. In fact, in the following chapter, the point is made that Cape Verdean predominance in key political positions is indeed a critical factor behind the reasons for the *coup*. Yet, to assume that this problematic contention was always present is to miss out on the intra-elite dynamics and shifts that occurred throughout those six years and obscures the initial efforts made by PAIGC leaders in the first years of independence to include the Bissau-Guinean population in the bargain – at least in the rural areas.

It has been shown that this predominance was not always seen as essential or problematic and suggested that the unity that was forged during the armed struggle did not dissipate immediately once independence was obtained. It has been put forward that those who composed the dominant coalition, closely identified with each other; they formed a political identity that has been here designated as the PAIGC identity.

The idea behind the proposition that the elite ties broke once they assumed control of the state is that the ethnic and social integration was only made possible because all knew that a

common enemy could only be defeated through their combined forces. So, it goes, once the enemy vanished, so did unity. It has been pointed out however that unity, amongst the elites, went beyond a circumstantial tactical alliance. The decade and more of social interaction between them, in the context of war, where they had to rely on each other in order to survive and where they had put in place the structures of the “new society”, had the effect of producing relationships based on trust (and not *friendship*). Let us not forget that this dominant coalition was formed even before the war is over, in the midst of the intense feelings associated with unity in action. Taking into consideration the extent of the external shocks or changes upon independence, this dominant coalition could only have resisted as long as it did precisely because of these strong ties between all. Moreover, the party’s collegial organisation and political institutions surely provided the mechanisms that secured party cadres and leaders together. Nonetheless, relationships change and it has also been suggested that independence and the Bissauan context had the effect of precipitating this change and (re)activating boundaries between certain groups. This change was not immediate and therefore, for reasons already mentioned, 1977 has been demarcated as the breaking point in which boundaries changed.

Having said all this, what does the social composition of the positions of power actually tell us and can we conclude that the 1980 *coup d’état* came about because the PAIGC was incapable of proportionally including all groups in the leading positions? My answer is yes and no. It depends upon the angle and time when one is looking at this. Boundaries between the elites appear to have become salient only after 1977; before that, divisions between them had been overcome or were at least latent. If boundaries between the elites were diluted then the balance of power, which tended in favour of the Cape Verdean side, did not matter significantly. The political elite bargain, at this time, was not about an unequal distribution of rights and entitlements between two nationalities and diverse ethnic groups. At this time, the outcome of the bargain resulted from an inability to assimilate or win over a privileged urban Bissauan minority who, based upon class interest, did not support the PAIGC during the armed revolutionary struggle and who did not favour its socialist ideology and rural-oriented developmental policies.

The underlying argument is that there has been a tendency to consider cleavages based on retrospective reinterpretations of events (for examples, Havik 2012: 44; Embaló 2012: 260). By doing this everything that happens in between become secondary, when, in fact, they are

what explain the shape and character of the political elite bargain in a determined time and space.

# CHAPTER 5

## ONE BECOMES TWO

(1977–1980)

### 5. 1 Introduction

In 1979 Luís Cabral, the President of Guinea-Bissau, stated that the greatest strength of the PAIGC and of the entire national liberation struggle was the commitment to national unity within the party leadership (in Lopes 1987: 135). He spoke of “that unity which never weakened an inch or wavered and which is the basis of the friendship and boundless trust that all elements of the leadership feel to their comrades in arms”. He was referring precisely to the unity that was described in the previous chapter. Yet, at the very moment of Luís Cabral’s declaration the PAIGC’s leadership unity was in fact weakening and wavering. A social boundary had been activated amongst the elites. A year and half later a coup reflected the extent of the real division within the PAIGC leadership.

After the *coup d’état* in 1980, the President of the Revolutionary Council, Nino Vieira, announced that this *Readjustment Movement* should not be interpreted as an act against the Cape Verdeans and that its motives resided in the deviation from the party’s line by some of the leaders. Nevertheless, the majority of the leaders ousted from power were Cape Verdean or of Cape Verdean descent; Cape Verdeans were not present in the Revolutionary Council and the unity between the two countries came to a premature end.

If the previous chapter emphasized the strongly felt unity between those in positions of power, this chapter stresses the antagonisms between them. It explains why and how boundaries and relationships between the elites altered. It emphasizes the social and political character of the underlying cleavage and explores the processes that lead it to become grounded on the basis of nationality. The chapter finishes by examining the shape of the political elite bargain and the

social composition of the positions of power and its relation to the first moment of overt political violence in Guinea-Bissau's post-independence trajectory.

## 5.2 Positions of Power

In November 1977 the Third PAIGC Congress revised the party's statutes and elected new delegates to the National Popular Assembly. While it maintained the party organizational structure intact, it increased the number of members in its main organs. The Permanent Secretariat, for example, which had become the most powerful organ in the PAIGC and the state, was renamed Permanent Commission and had its membership increased from four to eight.

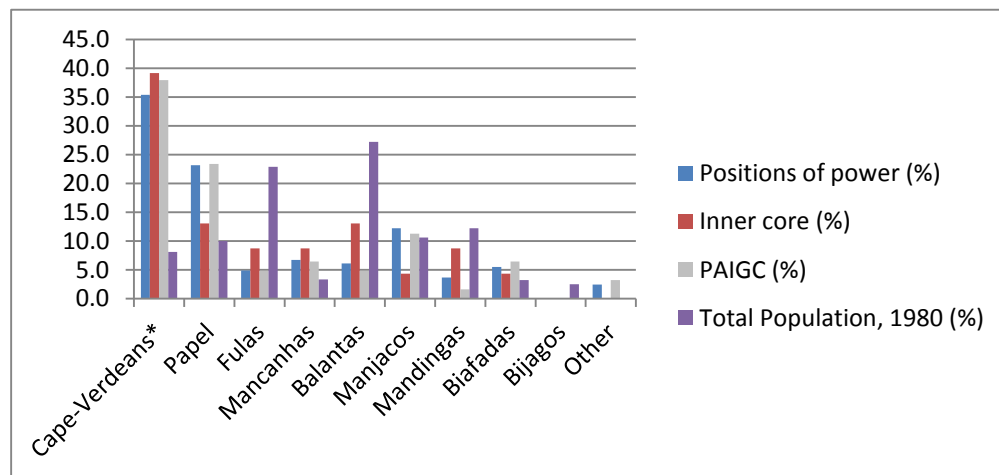
As can be seen in Figure 3, this expansion significantly increased the disproportion in Cape Verdean participation in leadership positions as a whole.<sup>104 105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> It is necessary to emphasize that the share of the Cape Verdeans in the population indicated in the graph is an overestimation. Due to lack of data, the percentage of Cape Verdean and "other" ethnic minorities population had to be estimated. The Cape Verdean population could never be over those 8% (and of these, for instance, 1.8% are Felupes). Considering various proxies (such as the Portuguese census referred to in the previous chapter and including estimates on Cape Verdean migration into the country), they were probably less than 2% of the overall Bissau-Guinean population in reality.

<sup>105</sup> It is not possible to ascertain through Figure 3 the extent to which this cleavage correlates with a division based in social class, as will be argued, since it was impossible for me to trace the social backgrounds of every single person who passed through a position of power. Nonetheless, the distribution of these posts by ethnicity is suggestive of social composition along these lines.

Figure 3. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Positions of Power (absolute distribution and relative to population share, 1977-1980)



The data indicate that there was a disproportionate increase of Cape Verdeans in the CSL (from seventy to ninety members) and in the CEL (from twenty-four to twenty-six members). For example, while three Cape Verdeans and one Manjaco entered the CEL, the Papel and Balanta each lost one member. Figure 3 also shows that the Cape Verdeans were by far the group most represented in the PAIGC leading positions.

As for the overall positions of power - all of the above, plus the Commissariats, Sub-Commissariats, top military positions, the President of the ANP and the Council of the State -, there was also a disproportionate increase in Cape Verdeans, namely in the Council of Commissars. In the remodelling of the government four ministries were added and some Commissariats were replaced or switched around. What comes out in the data gathered is an increase in both Cape Verdeans and Mancanhas in these positions to the detriment of other groups.

The effects of the increase in Cape Verdean participation are exemplified by the changes in the Permanent Commission. Up to now, this organ had expressed a balance between the Cape Verdeans and Guineans, that is, two members of each group were represented. However, this balance was lost with 1977's doubling of the members in the Permanent Commission. Of its



eight members, four were now Cape Verdean, three were Papel and one was Fula.<sup>106</sup> The two Cape Verdean additions came from the top positions of the Cape Verdean state structure. Out of these now, five held top government positions in Guinea-Bissau and three in Cape Verde's state structure.

Based on the assumption that the predominant cleavage amongst the political elites was national, it might seem that a balance was maintained, since in fact there was a total of four Guinean and four Cape Verdeans in the Permanent Commission. However, the imbalance in the composition of this top party organ - that is, as it was perceived by the actors - would go undetected if the split were seen as strictly between Cape Verdeans and Guineans.

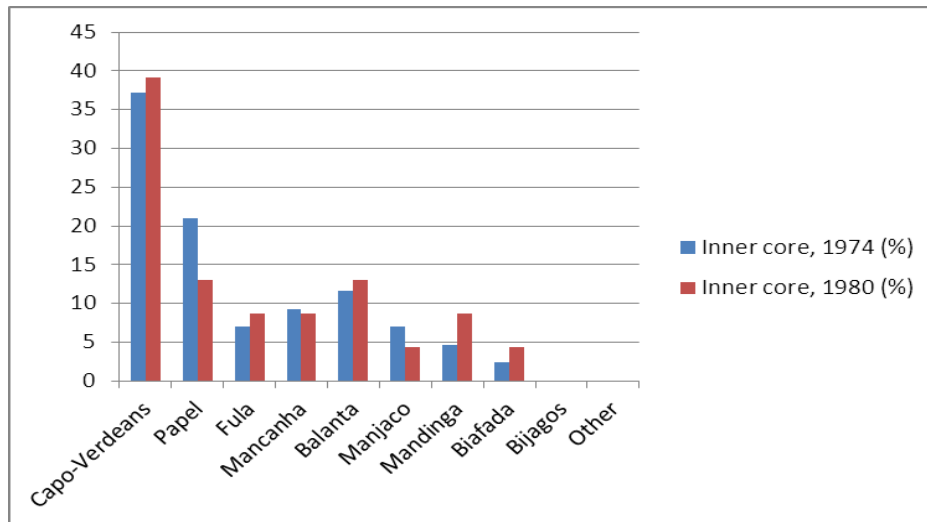
Recognition of the imbalance requires closer attention to who was ousted from power with the 1980 *coup d'état*. Analysis of the elite political networks of the time, based upon secondary sources, reveals that Umarú Djaló and Constantino Teixeira, respectively Fula and Papel, were seen as Cape Verdean "insiders". This observation is corroborated, for example, by Lopes (1988: 44), who considered the increase in membership in the organ to be a strategic move by Luís Cabral aimed at decreasing the power of Nino Vieira and Francisco Mendes by promoting those ideologically closest to him.

As in the previous chapter, Figure 4 shows the distribution of inner core positions of power between main ethnic groups. For this time period the inner core positions have been considered as including the Permanent Commission, the President and the Council of the State. In contrast to the previous period the positions within the CEL have not been included as there seems to be a consensus that it either met too infrequently to have been relevant to effective policy-making, or that real decision making power was in the hands of the President and the rest of the Permanent Commission (Forrest 1992: 50; Galli and Jones 1987: 92-94; Lopes 44-48). This alteration in the composition of the inner core, together with the increase in the number of Cape Verdeans, necessarily had implications: as illustrated in Figure 4, the already substantial over-representation of the Cape Verdeans in the top leadership positions increased after 1977.

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<sup>106</sup> Aristides Pereira (Cape Verdean), Luís Cabral (Cape Verdean), Pedro Pires (Cape Verdean), Abílio Duarte (Cape Verdean), João Bernardo Vieira (Papel), Francisco Mendes (Papel), Constantino Teixeira (Papel) and Umarú Djaló (Fula).

Figure 4. Inner core positions of power distributed between main ethnic groups, 1974 and 1980



In sum, although the largest ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau were represented in positions of power, with the changes that occurred, there was no attempt to maintain proportionality of representation within the leading political positions. Instead, what we see is political power moving increasingly into the hands of a Cape Verdean minority.

### 5.3 National Reconstruction: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

The PAIGC had basic goals from the start: rural-oriented development, political and economic decentralization, the bettering of the lives of all people and the complete break with any colonial mechanisms, in short, aims to extend to the rest of the country and further what had been achieved in the liberated areas. Despite the obstacles initially encountered upon independence, the PAIGC aimed to transform Guinean society and pushed forward policies that envisioned a revolution rooted in the countryside. In fact it was the adherence to this fundamental objective that kept the leadership for a time united. However, notwithstanding the intentions of the political leaders towards national reconstruction, the obstacles that they encountered upon taking hold of the state structure not only impeded them from achieving their goals, but also eventually provoked divergences amongst them.

The principal difficulties resulted from their encounter with the reality of Bissau. While colonialism penetrated the whole country, its presence and legacy were more pervasive in the

urban areas. Bissau embodied the contradictions of colonialism: a city whose existence had been tied to serving the interests of the Portuguese and whose political and economic structures had followed this purpose.

Bissau had been built to serve the colony's metropolis. This meant that the country's capital was not only where the main industries were located (in 1970 out of the 105 industrial units, 65 were in Bissau [Lopes 1987: 113]), but also where the economy was most active due to the presence of Portuguese troops (Munslow 1981: 111), and where a segment of the population profited from this situation. With the Portuguese withdrawal, such economic opportunities shrank, leaving many dissatisfied and susceptible to the idea that the PAIGC's rural development policies were disadvantageous for their interests.

It was clear that the PAIGC needed to break with this colonial legacy and politically mobilize Bissau, as it had effectively done in the other parts of the territory during the armed struggle. But, there had not been much forethought given to the means to achieve the party's objectives and even less long-term planning with respect to the political objectives of the independent state. As one interviewee mentioned, they had good intentions, but did not know how to manage the state (Interview 19). Thus, while it was the PAIGC's initial intention to transform and change Bissau, there are strong reasons to assert that Bissau changed the PAIGC.

In this sense, the PAIGC's encounter with Bissau and its transition from the rural areas to the city can be thought of through the analogy of a nail in a "magnetic field" between two magnets. The PAIGC is the nail in this analogy. The liberated areas represent a strong magnet and, immediately after independence, the PAIGC, the nail, is closely attached to it. Bissau is the other extremely strong magnet. When the nail starts getting closer to the stronger magnet it begins to be pulled towards its side, yet there is a moment in which there is some resistance or force from the opposite side and in which the nail jiggles in between both poles. Yet, the stronger magnet necessarily has more force and the nail is quickly drawn in that direction, and there it stays fixed. With time and under certain circumstances the least strong magnet becomes weaker and ends up being demagnetized, exerting no force at all, and thereby reducing any sort of connection with the nail and with the other magnet.

Although Cabral had pictured the new independent state and its government spread throughout the various regions of Guinea-Bissau,<sup>107</sup> due to lack of previous planning, practicality and time constraints, the PAIGC – to continue with the analogy – was pulled towards Bissau, and assumed control of the state apparatus that remained, for the most part, unaltered from what the colonialists left behind. The “jiggling” in between both poles represents those first years of independence in which party and state leaders, despite opposition and obstacles, show commitment towards their initial aims. In the following few years, though, the Bissauan contradictions left little room for manoeuvre for concerted policy action in favour of a rural-oriented development. Furthermore, the economic measures that had been taken produced little overall improvement. The PAIGC gradually succumbed to the powerful forces of the urban pole. Bissau became not only the *de jure*, but also the *de facto* centre of the country and national reconstruction came to mean centralizing and strengthening the power of the state and dealing with urban “vices”. This concentration of government officials in Bissau, together with the preoccupation in empowering the state machinery had the effect of breaking the link between the state and rural society (Forrest 1992: 45). While public statements and declarations by party and state leaders during those years still manifested some signs of preoccupation with peasants’ interests, what was in fact happening was a “demagnetization” of the rural areas. This change in the PAIGC, in turn, as will be shown, led to divisions within its leadership.

### 5.3.1 Going Economically Urban

The plan was to achieve economic independence through rural development. The will was there, but so were the structural hindrances. Despite the obstacles, the national leaders were not disheartened and kept to their planned goals (Lopes 1987: 98).

The previous chapter identified the economic measures that were put in practice upon independence. The socialist ideology guided the party and the state and led to the

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<sup>107</sup> In an interview with Basil Davidson, Amílcar Cabral (in Davidson 1981: 107) insisted that “*we do not want to copy any structures of that kind [colonial chains of command]*”. He favoured decentralization and is further cited: “*one reason why we’re inclined to think that Bissau will not continue to be our capital in an administrative sense. In fact, we are against the whole idea of capital. Why shouldn’t ministries be dispersed? After all, our country is a small one...Why should we saddle ourselves with the paraphernalia of a presidential palace, a concentration of ministries, the clear signs of an emergent elite which can soon become a privileged group?*”

nationalization of all the Portuguese businesses. For example, in 1976, the Ultramarine Commercial Society (later called SOCOMIN) was turned into a state/private international capital venture. Although not all private trade was abolished and the law did leave space for private entrepreneurs, the state attempted to establish a near monopoly of trading activities in order to obtain revenue (Galli and Jones 1987: 109 and 113).<sup>108</sup> The idea was to increase domestic production (especially primary necessities) and exports in order to balance the budget and inject foreign exchange into the country's market, which would then be, utilized for furthering diverse development objectives in the interests of the masses (Forrest 1992: 80 – 81). However, the success of such a strategy necessarily depended on peasant production and so, in order to stimulate their productivity, land was made accessible to those who wanted to work it. Incentives were offered to the peasants to produce crops beyond their subsistence and to sell their surpluses to the People's Stores (the network of state stores). From there, the state would be responsible for exporting the goods.

Regardless of these measures, production did not increase substantially. None of the main crops - groundnuts, rice, palm oil and sugar cane - reached pre-war levels. By 1977, in fact, agricultural production declined. There were serious problems, but worse, were the contradictions and unintended consequences that proved to be counterproductive. Since much of the underdeveloped infrastructure that had been built by the Portuguese had been destroyed in the armed struggle, the connections between Bissau and the rest of the country were insufficient to transport the domestic products into the city and ports, and imports to the country. Consequently, there were no incentives for the peasants to produce more than what they needed for their own consumption, which in great measure explains the food shortages, experienced both in the urban and rural areas.

The scant revenues derived from production made it necessary to fall back on international aid and donors: "All I did during that time was travel in order to mobilize financial aid for our country", said one interviewee who had been in the government at the time (interview 2). Importantly, though, and to add one more reason to why production incentives were

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<sup>108</sup> Galli and Jones (1987) refer to 30 private traders who were permitted to import goods that fell out of the scope of state enterprises. Nevertheless, the state closely monitored, taxed, and regulated their activities.

ineffective, the world market was not favourable to Guinean exports. In order to sell commodities, international competition required the lowering of prices, which in turn would bring an even lower rate of return.

Another significant contradiction was the unequal conditions of trade of products for currency between the state and the peasants. Both Lopes (1987) and Galli and Jones (1987), in their comprehensive evaluations of Guinea-Bissau's economy, figure that not only were the exchange rates unfavourable for the peasants, but the goods that were being imported did not meet their needs, or in fact they did not even leave Bissau. Lopes mentions in this respect that this was only natural since those in Bissau were more interested in other "luxury" commodities (Lopes 1987: 100). Galli and Jones, pointing to another contradiction in production incentives, stressed the failure of the state with regard to infrastructure development. While the state was seeking to motivate an increase rice production, reconstruction of dikes and dams that had been bombed by the Portuguese during the war, was left to the peasants to deal with; rebuilding by the government (with Dutch finance) only took place in Bissau and its surrounding areas (Galli and Jones 1987: 111).

So while the intention was to increase agricultural productivity in order to reach the broader purpose of benefitting the masses, what we see with the PAIGC's transfer into Bissau is a growing detachment from the preoccupations and realities of the rural people. This is not an abrupt change in its political and economic programme, but rather a gradual shift of direction in favour of a privileged urban *petty bourgeoisie* and, in large measure, is the effect of the centralization of state officials and party cadres in Bissau. Whether their limited visits to the interior regions of the country were due to the lack of existent infrastructures, which made them difficult to reach (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 53), or to their overload of paperwork, lack of time or the new social status that was now associated with office work (Forrest 1987: 46), the result was to give way to the pressures and demands that were closest to them. Public resources were directed mostly towards financing the state administration and almost all investment ended up being allocated to the capital.

So, PAIGC leaders found that while they could repress opposing forces, they could not break away completely from the economic colonial legacy and the concentration of the economy in the city. Thus the maintenance of the existing economic activities (albeit now nationalized) also signified the preservation of a workforce and commercial *petty bourgeoisie* that was not

allied with the PAIGC and socialism and yet the integration of this powerful social class into the state economy was essential for urban oriented development.

Already in 1975, Juvêncio Gomes, a member of the CSL and president of the Municipal Chamber of Bissau had acknowledged the difficulty involved in “dealing” with this socio-economic class;

*“In the city we still have the petty bourgeoisie. For the most part, the bourgeoisie was composed of the Portuguese colonialists. As to the ‘nationals’, there was a petty bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie was, and still is, a comprador bourgeoisie, that is, some national commercial businessmen buy everything from abroad. Within our political objective of building a just society, we have to take this petty bourgeoisie into account, which, for the most part, are merchants or the old colonial administrators who, during the colonial times, were able to accumulate some riches and thus transformed themselves into a petty bourgeoisie. And thus, still today there is a whole thinking to be changed, and this is not easy. However, in this new phase we need to take into account these classes so that we are able to concretely define them and place them in their respective place” (in Chilcote 1991: 131)*

The economic disparities between urban and rural modes of life were brought to the attention of party and state leaders during the third session of the ANP in May, 1976. Representatives of the rural regions spoke of the isolation of the villages, criticized the ministers for their lack of attention to the other parts of the country and pointed to government errors (such as not having followed-up on the construction of roads). Nevertheless, as writing during the first three years of independence points out, while this session of the ANP revealed the growing discontent within the PAIGC’s main base of support, it was also a clear demonstration that the power the deputies held on behalf of the people was still meaningful, and how the government took these criticisms seriously (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 57). In other words, what has been referred to as the “demagnetization” of the rural areas had not yet occurred and the political elites were still making efforts, even if in contradictory ways, to maintain the link with the people in the rural areas.

However, the socio-economic detachment of Bissau with the rest of the country was to become more marked at this time with a rapid increase of the state bureaucracy: in 1977 there were a total of 24,359 salaried employees of which 19,455 were state functionaries including 12,478 were based in Bissau (Lopes 1987: 113) – which necessarily meant that state expenditure was destined to pay their salaries. This continued Bissauan policy of expenditure was considered both by Chabal and Munslow as an attempt to politically win over those who

were not committed to the PAIGC (Munslow 1981: 111; Chabal 1983: 198). The same people opposed to the socialist ideology and PAIGC principles were benefiting to the detriment of those that had been the party's base.

Bissau "was living only to serve Bissau", a situation that was recognized in a report by the Commissariat of Planning (in Galli and Jones 1987: 118). It warned that if the economy was to be consistent and sound and not dependent upon foreign aid, activities in the interior of the country, where the bulk of the population lived, needed to be stimulated and mobilized. Yet, investments, consumer goods, and industries all remained in Bissau. The same report showed that 54.8% of the state budget was allocated to the capital, a region inhabited by only 14.1% of the population.

The party's Third Congress in 1977 reaffirmed the PAIGC's core principles and economic orientations. The Secretary-General of the PAIGC, Aristides Pereira (1977: 59, 63), stated that the PAIGC should and would be able to direct the forces of production in accordance with the necessities of the people and that industry should be moulded in accordance to these needs. However, urban demands and foreign pressures inevitably influenced industrial policies towards a different sort of development. It is precisely this question - the launching of various industrial projects that were not favourable to the countryside - that hastened the development of divergences among the leading elites.

Many factors were leading to discontent both in the rural and urban areas, ranging from the disastrous state of the economy and the apparent incapacity to achieving any noticeable improvement. Criticisms arose over concern with food shortages, decline in agricultural production, insufficient organization of agricultural cooperatives, ever greater reliance upon foreign aid, decreasing reliance upon the rural peasants, excessive state spending in the capital, the state deficit, inflation and so on. All of this coupled with grandiose industrial projects for Bissau, most of which were decided upon solely by the President Luís Cabral, and the Minister of Trade, Armando Ramos (Galli and Jones 1987: 94), contributed to what one of my interviewees - a member of the government - identified as one of the main causes of the 1980 *coup d'état*: ideological divergences between the main party and state elites (Interview 19)

Bissau was consuming the bulk of the state budget, resulting in a nearly complete separation between the city and the countryside. The decisions in favour of the President's industrial initiatives, despite opposition amongst the top party and state leaders, showed a clear disregard of peasants' preoccupations and rural realities. *Cumeré*, for example, a megalithic



industrial complex that was to process groundnuts and rice, was, from the start, unfeasible and unsustainable. It envisaged processing 1,500 tons of groundnut oil – which would require production of around 70,000 tons of groundnuts - in a country whose production of groundnuts at the time was estimated at 30,000 tons (Barros 2011: 18 and Galli and Jones 1987: 119). The Secretary of State of the Presidency of the Council of the State at the time, Filinto Barros, criticized not only the unrealistic production demands of the project, but also its use of expensive technology, which made little sense in the case of Guinea-Bissau, and consumed the largest part of the project's overall budget (Barros 2011: 20). He also claims that *Cumeré* and its implementation were not unanimously supported amongst the political leaders, that it was severely criticized and ended up as one of the justifications for the *coup d'état* (Barros 2011: 20). Dumont's assessment of this industrial project refers to it as nothing but a disaster and remembered that smaller processing units would undoubtedly have been more efficient (Dumont in Chabal 1983: 200)

The investment in an enterprise for assembling Citroen cars was another example of the lack of thought regarding rural necessities. It envisaged assembling 600 cars a year that would supposedly be absorbed by both the internal and external market. Galli and Jones remark that, while it was true that these cars circulated on Bissau roads, they were of little use in the countryside (Galli and Jones 1987: 120). Commenting on this project Filinto Barros (2011: 24) states:

*“the reality was that the implementation of this enterprise was to turn the poorer more poorer in order to permit that a middle class could circulate in plastic cars!! Ridiculous! If there was a project that had no reason of existing, it was this one!”*

Other new industries that were established either only benefited Bissau or indebted the state.<sup>109</sup>

Economic decisions were being made by the President and his closest collaborators, leaving out the other members of the Council of State who disagreed with these industrial policies.

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<sup>109</sup> Sandino, for example, was a factory of prefabricated elements that only operated in the capital; the joint venture on industrial fisheries – with the USSR, Algeria and France - only supplied fish to the city. A list of the new unproductive industrial projects can be found in Lopes (1987: 155).

Thus, what we see is not only the government of the PAIGC acting contrary to what it had pledged, but also promoting social disparities that, in turn, divided the elites.

With the economy showing no signs of improvement, differences emerged among the party and state leaders. One faction, comprising the (Cape Verdean) President and his inner circle, were now embarking on policies that assumed a strategy based upon urban and industrial development; the other, advocated the need to be faithful to the thought of Amílcar Cabral and supported industrialization based on agricultural development.<sup>110</sup> Some, such as one of my interviewees (Interview 2) became aware that something was wrong with policy: “Luís Cabral had big ideas. He did not realize our country was small. We had a lot of industries, but everything ended up being externally financed”. Others, such as another interviewee (Interview 27) commented on how problems within the party were due to the distancing from Cabral’s line. Chabal (1983: 204) refers to the conflict in class terms, pointing out that part of the PAIGC’s political coalition, those who favoured a rapid urban industrialization, was aligning with a bureaucratic bourgeoisie. This situation was later stressed by those who led the *coup*, who claimed that they had supported allocating more resources to the rural areas in the discussions in the Council of Ministers, and that their voices were not heard (Galli and Jones 1987: 94).

During the PAIGC’s Third Congress the Secretary-General pleaded for ideological cohesiveness from the party members and spoke of the need to maintain revolutionary morality (Pereira 1977: 48). However, in the second meeting of the CSL, five months before the *coup d’état* took place, his speech now emphasized how important it was to overcome ideological differences and resolve internal cohesion.

*“ideology is, thus, the true line of battle that we have to fight for the construction and reinforcement of national consciousness and unity, for the unity of Guinea-Cape Verde and for the economic and social progress of our people”* (Pereira in PAIGC Congress Report 1980: 14).

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<sup>110</sup> Though Amílcar Cabral had not defined precisely what sort of socialism ought to be followed (in fact he endorsed ideological flexibility), he had been quite emphatic regarding an economic development strategy based in agriculture (Lopes 1987: 108).

Thus, it is rather ironic that the PAIGC's ideological flexibility and vagueness with regard to economic and political programme for independence may have made it possible initially for disagreements to be suppressed. However, in the face of economic difficulties different tendencies surfaced and became contentious.<sup>111</sup> As Lopes affirms, "in newly liberated countries, it is impossible to maintain a balance of competing tendencies for long, since they support opposing strategies of development" (Lopes 1987: 108). It remains to be seen, though, how these differing strategies of development came to be identified along the national differences.

### **5.3.2 Sympathizing with the Non-Revolutionary *Petty-Bourgeoisie***

Amílcar Cabral outlined that a new administration would

*"be completely new in personnel and structure when compared with the apparatus of colonial times. We may take over some technical personnel from the colonial apparatus, though none who have exercised political responsibilities. But, so far as we do, these men will be placed inside a framework entirely different from the one in which they were formed"* (quoted in Davidson 1981: 101).

Although the colonial-educated technical personnel did not immediately take over high-level state functions upon Guinea-Bissau's independence, Cabral's perspective remained wishful thinking.

While decentralization of the state remained a lingering goal for the PAIGC leaders during the first years of independence, it eventually dissipated due to the demands and pressures coming from Bissau. Lino Bacari, a PAIGC militant, reported, for example, how Luís Cabral initially resisted relocating the party's headquarters and the capital to Bissau, but was unable to avoid this change since he had to demonstrate that he and the PAIGC were in control (Bacari in Galli and Jones: 74). Over time and under financial pressure, and somewhat unconsciously, the PAIGC - now acting as the state - essentially took over the political structures, which had been left by the Portuguese. The original popular and rural political structures that had been built up during the war thus came to function alongside centralized urban structures detached from the masses. However, since the bulk of the administration was in Bissau, the trained party

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<sup>111</sup> When asked what the PAIGC's ideology was, Amílcar Cabral answered that it was nationalism; the ideology of the party, to him, should be based on the actual situation and reality of the moment.

cadres were transferred from the rural areas. Moreover, in order to put the state machine to work, since the PAIGC could not rely on their rural-trained militants alone, it had to assimilate those who already knew the system and had been taught how to run it - the remnants of the colonial administration. As Lopes (1987: 86) mentions, “only the colonial civil servants could ensure the application of existing state procedures, from producing a civil document or identity card to managing public finance”

The majority of the civil servants originated in that same segment of the population that, throughout this chapter has been referred as the *petty bourgeoisie* and that had not been politically mobilized during the armed struggle. To reiterate, this class was composed of people who had been quite satisfied with Portuguese presence (since they were privileged and enjoyed more rights than the rest of the population) and did not sympathize with the PAIGC’s ideals and principles. Davidson (1981: 166) refers to this *petty bourgeoisie* as “former officials” and “colonial hangers-on” who had no intention of following Cabral’s “suicidal” advice and who “simply were ‘there’ waiting for the most part to see which way various cats were going to jump”. Andréini and Lambert (1978: 34) also referred to the colonial administrators:

*“The people that worked in the colonial administration are not ready to put at stake their privileges as a class...the ‘opportunists of the right’ have sought to retain their advantages and to obtain new responsibilities by conciliating to favours of the leaders”*

Thus, the newly independent state apparatus integrated a strong force opposed to the changes aimed at bringing about the new society. Though these bureaucrats were not placed in decision-making or leadership positions, their influence within the state administration was strong.

If this class did not identify with the national liberation movement, it most certainly was not going to commit the “class-suicide” hoped for by Cabral on its own. The idea of the PAIGC leaders when entering Bissau was that it would be possible to alter the minds of those who had not yet become conscious of their cultural alienation by the colonial rulers. Their conversion to the revolutionary ideals, as we saw, was to be accomplished through contact with the rural masses. Various mass organizations were created for this purpose and even force was surely used towards this end (Interviews 5 and 35). Nevertheless, the adoption of its “colonial” personnel undoubtedly undermined the PAIGC’s objectives.

Bureaucrats, administrators, and “entrepreneurs” were in their great majority Cape Verdean - the epitome of the colonial legacy. According to documentation of the time, in 1980 there were two hundred Cape Verdeans in government and administrative positions (Galli and Jones 1987: 93) and, while some of these had indeed participated in the armed struggle and were militants of the party, the majority in fact were former colonial functionaries. As a result, the President, and his inner circle (mostly of Cape Verdeans), whose views on economic development and policies favoured urban and rapid industrialization, became associated with the interests of this bureaucratic *petty bourgeoisie*. The worsening of the economic situation and the pursuit of urban-oriented industrial projects - that were leading the state into greater indebtedness - were perceived of as serving the interests of a few already privileged people tied to the Cape Verdean segment of the leadership. It then becomes understandable how resentment came to be directed towards the Cape Verdean elites and society in general.

The emerging situation involved increasingly conspicuous corruption. The two most strident examples, which are repeatedly pointed out in accounts of these years, were the prosecution of government officials for use of state money for their personal benefit and the accusation that many of those running the People’s Stores were illegally trading state products. As a result corruption amongst the bureaucratic elites and leaders became identified with the Cape Verdean population since the majority of those in these state functions were of Cape Verdean origin or descent (Galli and Jones 1987: 93; Forrest 1992: 55). The testimonies of those who led the 1980 *coup d’état*, alleged that the President and his closest inner circle were taking advantage of deals with certain companies investing in the country (Galli and Jones 1987: 94; Barros 2011: 20 – 30).

In his analysis of the gradual deviations from the PAIGC’s guiding principles, Lopes argues that the two tendencies of the *petty bourgeoisie* had reached a “pact”. In other words, the revolutionary *petty bourgeoisie*<sup>112</sup> - that had participated in the struggle and now held top state and party positions - was shifting the PAIGC’s and the state’s interests (which ought to represent the interests of the masses) towards the interests of the urban *petty bourgeoisie*,

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<sup>112</sup> Lopes (1987: 90) observed: “Some PAIGC leaders come from peasant backgrounds. Undeniably, however, in great measure PAIGC leaders are of city origin. They come from the petty bourgeoisie, which the Portuguese regarded as elite”

who opposed the values of the national liberation movement (Lopes 1987: 90-92).<sup>113</sup> Whether this was a conscious or tacit pact is hard to say, but Lopes suggests that both the bureaucratic and commercial *bourgeoisie* exercised such a strong reactionary influence against the aims of the national liberation movement that ultimately they were successful in degenerating the party's orientation. He also notes that there were government employees and leaders that opposed these tendencies (Ibid: 89).

What is important to note is, on the one hand, that elite divergence came about due to the lack of ideological coherence in the party, and, on the other, that these ideological splits were in great measure linked to the social backgrounds of the leaders (which seemed to reproduce the class distinctions existing during colonial rule). As touched upon earlier, this approach also provides an explanation of why there were individuals of non-Cape Verdean origin in Luís Cabral's inner circle. Some were *mestiço* (the Director of Security, António Buscardini, for example), some were Papel (Minister of the Interior, Constantino Teixeira, and the Minister of Trade, Armando Ramos) and others were Fula (General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Umarú Djaló). Likewise, there were those who were Cape Verdean and protested against the President's economic decisions. However, even though the overall elite cleavage is social at its core, the fact of the matter is that since the President and most of those he relied upon were Cape Verdean,<sup>114</sup> since Cape Verdeans in the islands had a direct say regarding Guinea-Bissau's domestic policies, and since the policies being implemented seemed to be disproportionately benefiting the Cape Verdean population in Bissau and Cape Verde,<sup>115</sup> the Bissau-Guinean population began to blame their hardships on the Cape Verdeans.

In the second part of this chapter more immediately recognizable explanations will be offered for why dissatisfaction was directed towards the Cape Verdean population, and, most importantly, for how divergences amongst the elites came to be linked with this. Nevertheless, at this point, it should be noted once more that there had been elements of the Bissau-Guinean population (as well as Cape Verdeans) that opposed the bi-nationalist project from the very beginning of the liberation movement and struggle. These more "narrow" Guinean

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<sup>113</sup> A setup which resembles Bayart's "reciprocal assimilation of elites" (Bayart 2009).

<sup>114</sup> The former Minister for Health and Social Affairs commented that Luís Cabral differed from his brother Amílcar as he was not able to break away from his *petty bourgeois* origins (João da Costa in Lopes 1987: 137)

<sup>115</sup> Guinea-Bissau transferred primary goods to Cape Verde in order to support its industries.

(and Cape Verdean) nationalists most certainly had an influence on mobilizing Guinean grievances.

To summarize, while the PAIGC's national reconstruction project was all about breaking with the colonial structures and legacy, it ended up not fulfilling its aim. The colonial civil servants, who had not been politically mobilized, remained in their former positions. Though these bureaucrats were not aligned or politically committed to the PAIGC, in order to secure their positions, they became members of the party. The bloated ranks of the bureaucracy, which was all based in Bissau, and the ability of these bureaucrats to protect their interests - if not simply for the fact that a large portion of the state's resources went to pay their salaries - necessarily had an important impact on the orientation of the PAIGC's policies. The numbers of the state budget in 1979 say it all: 21% was to pay public administration and 55% of the state's investment went to the Bissau region (Galli and Jones 1987: 91). To be sure, in the discussion of the budget in the ANP the deputies representing the other regions disapproved, but they were nonetheless powerless to change it (Ibid: 92). What we see then is the PAIGC serving the interests of an urban minority population that was disproportionately Cape Verdean. Indeed, the PAIGC was changing its orientation. However, we also see members of the government, deputies, and party cadres opposing this change, thus witnessing fissures in what was referred to as the PAIGC identity.

### **5.3.3 The Party, the State and Society: Breaking the Links**

In theory, national reconstruction and the building of a new society depended upon the link between the party, the state and people. At the Third Party Congress in 1977 Aristides Pereira, Secretary-General of the PAIGC reaffirmed this idea: the party's programme and directives should orient the activities of the state, which in turn should serve the interests of society as a whole.

*"It is the state, under the direction of the Party, that is responsible for the execution of the economic, social, cultural, defence and security Programme. The subordination of the state to the Party, as foreseen in the fundamental texts of our two Republics, cannot signify in any way the blending of these entities or the substitution of the former by the latter...Conscientious of the fact that only a good functioning of the state apparatus will guarantee the objectives of the Party's Programme, the militants will have to give the example, being the best, the most active, zealous and committed among those providing service in their workplace. Only in this way will they hold the necessary moral force to mobilize - as is their duty - non-militants to*

*fulfil and abide to the just decisions and directives of the Party and of the organs of the state” (Aristides Pereira in the Third Party Congress: 126: 128)*

In his statement to the party’s Congress, Pereira also emphasized the necessity of a separation between the state and the PAIGC. Yet most of the top state leaders already coincided with the top personnel of the party. Of the fifteen members that composed the Council of the State, for example, eleven of them were PAIGC leaders.

On the one hand, the authority of the one-party state was manifested in the increasing amount of repression. A climate of fear and control was already referred to in some of the interviews cited in the previous chapter. In fact, António Buscardani, who was in charge of National Security, was known for arresting and even executing voices of opposition to the regime. Even village committee members avoided expressing their opinions, as well as ANP deputies (Forrest 1992: 54).

On the other hand, the problems were reflected in the decreasing role of the ANP. The ANP “was the most outstanding feature of the Guinean state at independence” (Chabal 1983: 194) and the institutional balance between the party and the state depended upon its functioning: it was where both regional councillors - elected by the population - and party cadres would or could discuss, decide and vote on state policies. So while the PAIGC was the guiding force of society, the ANP, where the people itself were represented, had to have a say in the undertakings of the state. This was the original form that Amílcar Cabral had found to avoid the risks inherent in the supremacy of the party. In practice though, from 1976 onwards, the ANP increasingly became a mere artifice to show that the interests of the people were being considered. However, besides abusive practices, such as PAIGC’s interference in the election of the Regional Councillors (Galli and Jones 1987: 92), the Assembly’s sessions became increasingly demonstrative of the deputies’ lack of power. In previous sessions the deputies had had space to discuss and challenge policies, but by 1979, despite significant criticism, a state budget was approved in which half of the state’s money was apportioned to Bissau (Ibid ibidem).

In large measure, the reasons for these changes can once more be located in the contradictions and obstacles that derived from the concentration of ministries and other state structures in the capital Bissau. The party itself also moved its headquarters to Bissau and transferred to the centre most of its party cadres and militants. This meant, on the one hand, less contact with the rural regions and therefore less awareness of the people’s needs and of



the real impact of state policies; on the other hand, it meant a concentration upon and constant dealing with Bissau's demands and problems. For example, the village and sector committees were not monitored by party officials and neither tied with the national bureaucracy in Bissau. In this respect Forrest remarks that lack of centralisation over these administrative structures meant that traditional institutions trumped central state ones (Forrest 1992: 52).

In other words, Bissau itself became a national priority demanding the attention of the state leaders and consuming disproportionate resources and share of the state budget. The overall result was a gradual, and soon a complete, distancing of party and state from society. Amílcar Cabral's unique form of building a system in which party, state and society would balance and check each other proved in practice to be inadequate. By 1979 we can hardly talk about a unified elite leadership. As the PAIGC became more disconnected from its principles and from those who gave the party political legitimacy, it became less unified. As power became more concentrated at the executive level, it also became the centre of tension.

#### **5.4 Bissau, a Social Boundary Precipitator**

The PAIGC entered Bissau with a unified leadership intent on furthering what it had been able to achieve in the liberated areas during the war. The first years of independence resulted in a tightening of bonds between the leaders of the dominant coalition and an activation of the PAIGC identity. The leaders of the party assumed control of the state and began implementing policies in line with the PAIGC's principles. However, as noted earlier, the encounter with Bissau, the difficulties and obstacles encountered, most notably the resistance and opposition of the *petty bourgeoisie* led them to act in contradiction to what they stood for. The *petty bourgeoisie* of Bissau were one of the sources of PAIGC incongruence. Its influence and strong hold on both the state bureaucracy and the economy was in great measure responsible for deviating disproportionate state expenditure upon interests in Bissau and for weakening of party-state and rural links. State and party decentralization, one of the most important factors required for carrying out the PAIGC's project of a revolutionary democracy and a new society was undermined.

This situation inevitably produced a boundary between those who were for the revolutionary project and those who were backsliding due to the influence of Bissau. As the influence of

Bissau intensified it produced a merging of two identities and the activation of a boundary, to the point that, as Lopes later asserted, revolutionary PAIGC leaders (coming from a similar social background) had aligned with the bureaucratic and commercial Bissauan *petty bourgeoisie*. The union that had previously come from social diversity, and which had been the strength of the PAIGC, now seemed to be its weak link. The approximation of part of the elite leaders with this social class provoked faction-fighting within the PAIGC.

Years later, Aristides Pereira affirmed as much:

*“I think all of our disintegration came from basing ourselves in Bissau. Indeed, Cabral himself predicted that, more or less: arriving in Bissau was a disaster for us. Spínola had rotted the scene for us.<sup>116</sup> The propaganda against Cape Verdeans, the trend towards a consumer society, luxurious houses, cars, women, etc., all of that was our end”* (Pereira in an interview with José Vicente Lopes 2012)

Two important observations can be drawn from Pereira’s retrospective explanation of the causes for the end of the bi-national project. The first is how Bissau and its “vices” turned out to be a cause of the PAIGC break up into factions. The second is how this fracturing came to be based upon national lines, that is to say, Cape Verdeans opposed to Guineans. Thus far it has been clear that many Cape Verdeans were part of the privileged class and therefore a source of resentment amongst the Bissau-Guineans. It has also been demonstrated that there were changes in the functioning of the PAIGC, as decision-making became concentrated in the hands of the Cape Verdean President and those closest to him, who were largely - though not exclusively - Cape Verdean. It now remains to be shown how resentment at the level of elite leadership also took a national shape.

## 5.5 Contesting Incidents

*“Cabral saw in the unity of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde the way to win the war. It was a very good project. It was a project that worked in the war context. After independence it became difficult. It is hard to have one party for two countries. It is easier to have two parties in one country. After the war it was hard to say no to this,*

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<sup>116</sup> The Portuguese Governor to Guinea-Bissau, as a strategy to thwart the liberation war, was known for turning Guineans and Cape Verdeans against each other.

*we had just all fought together, but the outcome that we know happened was inevitable” (Interview 7)*

This interviewee, a liberation war veteran, refers to the inevitability of the end of the unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. One of the main points of the previous chapter was to question this inevitability, or, to put it better, to avoid assuming that the divergences that were felt at the elite level on the eve of the *coup d'état* were already felt during the first three years of independence - (I argued that they were not). Nonetheless, the bi-national project definitely posed problems to some Guineans as well as Cape Verdeans and there were challenges to this unification project even before the armed struggle started. On the one hand, due to the nature of Portuguese policies towards Cape Verde - Cape Verdeans were considered “civilized” because they were a miscegenation of Portuguese and African. Cape Verdeans, generally, did not perceive themselves as a colonised people. Furthermore, they did not identify with Bissau-Guineans.<sup>117</sup> In a sense they did not even feel African and hence Amílcar’s special concern for the need to explain to the Cape Verdeans how they derived as a people from the slave trade.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, some Guineans felt hostility towards Cape Verdeans and could not disregard the fact that they had played an active role in the colonial administration. For example, the *Movimento da Libertação da Guiné* (MLG), one of the Guinean liberation movements that emerged in the late 1950’s and 60’s, clearly demarcated itself from the PAIGC by stating that it fiercely opposed a national movement with connections to Cape Verde. Yet, the PAIGC (because of its internal cohesiveness, its founding leaders’ vision and ability to obtain international support and its understanding that independence would only be achieved through struggle - rather than through diplomatic means as was thought by the other liberation movements) took the lead and the unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau was established as the fundamental basis of the party.

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<sup>117</sup> The liberation movement *União do Povo das Ilhas de Cabo Verde* (UPICV) led by Leitão da Graça, for example, in 1974 planned to organize a demonstration to protest against the forced union with Guinea-Bissau (Lloyd-Jones and Costa Pinto 2003: 23)

<sup>118</sup> In 1964 Amílcar Cabral wrote an open letter/manifesto to all Cape Verdeans resident in Senegal. In it he explained the reasons why all Cape Verdeans should adhere to the nationalist movement and specifically answers the questions “Why has the Cape Verdean emigrant been considered a ‘Portuguese citizen?’” and “Why are Cape Verdeans African?” (Cabral’s Manifesto to the Cape Verdeans residents in the Senegalese Republic in Pereira 2002: 152 – 160)

What is relevant here is to understand how, within the PAIGC's united leadership, such divisions along national lines emerged. Through interviews and documental research, three moments have been identified as having activated tensions amongst the PAIGC leaders. One of these moments took place before independence,<sup>119</sup> the others after 1977. These post-1977 moments, nonetheless, have to be seen in conjunction with the previous discussion. Had the shift in centre to Bissau not been a boundary precipitator these episodes might not have assumed the importance that they eventually did. In fact, the post-1977 moments are a consequence of the boundary change between the elites and not its cause.

### 5.5.1 First Sign: Amílcar Cabral's Assassination

*"Amílcar...I do not even have words. He was an educator, he was a psychologist; he was everything. He knew immediately when something was wrong with you. In the morning if he saw me down he would always ask what was wrong. He would worry about the problems of each and every comrade, every comrade. And he always tried to help us and guide us. To us, he was really a father, a leader, a professor, he was everything to us, everything. He was really a father to me" (Interview 21).*

Cabral was assassinated in Conakry, January 20 1973, just months before independence was proclaimed: "The assassination of Amílcar Cabral brought no joy for the Portuguese Army as the guerrilla fighters intensified their struggle" (Chabal 1983a: 132). Indeed, this was the case, as one interviewee said when recalling this sad episode "...we did everything we could to continue our fight" (Interview 2). However, his assassination raised two issues: firstly, someone or a group was responsible for his death; secondly, a new Secretary-General of the PAIGC had to be nominated.

Regarding the first, the US State Department's Information and Investigation Services, who were closely following the developments of the war in Guinea-Bissau, stated that "most signs indicate [that Cabral's assassination] was the result of a feud between mulattoes from the islands of Cape Verde and continental Africans [Bissau-Guineans]," and they further concluded

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<sup>119</sup> This occasion is indicated not as a moment in which Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean divergences were felt at the level of the PAIGC leadership; it rather suggests that at the societal level these were tensions that the elites could not disregard.

that Lisbon was complicit.<sup>120</sup> In a tragically poetic way, four years before his death, Cabral had anticipated this end: “when I am killed, I will be so by a man of my own people, of my party, probably a founder, albeit guided by the hand of the enemy”.<sup>121</sup>

The *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (Portuguese Secret Police [PIDE]) had for a long time been infiltrating agents into the liberation movement, paying party militants in exchange for information, and listing potential insider assassins (Tomás 2007: 266 – 267). They were mainly looking for former party militants who, for one reason or the other, had been dismissed from or abandoned the PAIGC. As Cabral stated, “the enemy knows our weaknesses” (in Pereira 2002: 212) and one of them was to exploit Cape Verdean and Guinean differences.

Rafael Barbosa, Aristides Barbosa and Momu Touré were all Guinean nationals and members of the PAIGC who had either been imprisoned by the Portuguese and convinced that Guinean independence would be possible and better off without Cape Verdean elements, or who had been accused by the PAIGC of being involved with the PIDE in their anti-Cape Verdean campaign (Galli and Jones 1987: 70; Tomás 2007: 271; Pereira 2002: 214-215). Rafael Barbosa, one of the founding members of the PAIGC, for example, after being imprisoned by the Portuguese and set free in the beginning of the 1970’s, publicly declared that he had joined General Spínola’s movement “For a better Guinea”. Subsequently, he was called the *traidor*. A liberation war veteran close to Cabral remembers the incident as follows:

*“When Amílcar Cabral died all the radios accused Rafael Barbosa. I, with the impetus of my youth, went to Rafael Barbosa’s house to kill him. I had my gun and I was ready to kill him. I would have killed him. I find his wife and him. I was afraid he would take out his gun. Instead he shows me a postcard sent from Accra. It was a postcard from Cabral dated 16 January 1973. It said ‘this is a beautiful free and independent capital in Africa. One day our mission will also give our people the same’. And it was signed Secretary-General Amílcar Cabral. I don’t kill him. I was convinced there was no animosity...Until today I still have doubts whether Rafael was an enemy or a true nationalist” (Interview 30).*

Inocência Kani, a PAIGC naval commander and member of the CEL, was in fact the man who pulled the trigger. He had been demoted from his position after being accused of clandestinely

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<sup>120</sup> US State Department Information and Investigation Services document in Afro News, 7 June 2006

<sup>121</sup> Amílcar Cabral in a conversation to Manuel Alegre, 4 July 1998, *Expresso*, Portugal

selling a motorboat (Tomás 2007: 271). The next morning, Kani, those accompanying him, and his prisoners were caught by the PAIGC. A trial was held and ten people were executed (Chabal 1983a: 133).

There are still doubts on who exactly were the agents of the assassination, though there are strong indications that the “enemy” had a predominant role. PAIGC leaders certainly had interest in accusing the PIDE and those outside of the party, rather than making it appear as an internal rift between Guineans and Cape Verdeans, and that was the version of the episode that publicly circulated. Indeed, this was most probably the accurate version of the story.

Chabal’s discarding of views that sustain the contrary version, that is, the argument that the assassination came from within, is reasonable. There is no evidence that suggests the party leadership was fragmented during that time (indeed the interviewees stressed exactly the contrary, that it was united), and there is reason to suppose that separatist tendencies were being overcome. However, there is some evidence that Cabral’s replacement did not proceed as smoothly as Chabal suggests (1983a: 142). In fact, the stories regarding the nomination of the new Secretary-General of the PAIGC actually reveal signs of some uneasiness with the selection of another Cape Verdean to the top party position. While this is not to imply that the leadership was divided over Aristides Pereira’s nomination, it does point out a moment that the interviewees retrospectively commented upon as having displayed tension between Cape Verdean and Guinean party members (Interviews 2, 24 and 30).

Aristides Pereira felt in the aftermath of Cabral’s succession that

*“many Guineans were not only stirred by an anti-Cape-Verdeanism, but also by a fear that the continuation of a Cape Verdean in the top leadership position could signify the destruction of the Party or could lead to another assassination”.*

He identified Fidélis Cabral de Almada as a spokesman of the Guinean leaders, who feared that outcome and noted that there were people that said “in order to avoid more deaths, let us put a Guinean in front [of the party] and the important people as Aristides or Luís stay right behind to give support” (Pereira 2002: 223).

Pereira continues by saying that Cabral de Almada’s proposal in advancing Nino Vieira’s name as Amílcar’s successor was not driven by an anti-Cape-Verdean sentiment but rather reflected the generalized distress. According to Pereira, at the time Nino Vieira felt he was not capable of directing the party and rejected his candidacy to the position (Ibid ibidem). After discussions,

Pereira's name was put forward and he was elected as Secretary-General of the PAIGC. It was also at this point that the Permanent Secretariat was enlarged with the addition of two Guinean members, thereby demonstrating the concern with the Guinean and Cape Verdean question.

At the leadership level the main concern was to resolve the succession issue as quickly and smoothly as possible without creating animosity amongst the party militants. They were able to overcome this crisis within a few months, which is evidence of their internal cohesiveness. In fact Cabral's assassination ended up providing a new impetus to combat in the battlefield. However, in spite of their cohesiveness, those in the top party organs of the PAIGC ended up expressing their views and worries regarding the bi-national project. As one informant observed:

*"I think the PAIGC worked until the January 20, 1973 [when Cabral was assassinated]. It is like a car. Cars work when they have a battery. You start the ignition, you put the car running and if you take the battery out, the car still keeps on going. If you stop it though, it won't go back on. You need to put a new battery. When Cabral dies the car continued running, but it did not have a battery"* (Interview 33)

This episode in itself is far from sufficient evidence to use in order to predict the ruptures that would occur in 1980; nonetheless, as another interviewee put it, "it made it apparent that there were some problems" (Interview 2). Within the party elites, this was the first sign that showed preoccupation along national lines.

### **5.5.2 Second Sign: Chico Té's Death and the FARP**

The Principal Commissariat and member of the Permanent Secretariat of the PAIGC, Francisco Mendes, better known as Chico Té, died in a car accident in 1978. By this time, as seen, the economy was in a terrible state and there were constant food shortages and repression. Differences were also appearing amongst the elites over which industrial policies to pursue. Meanwhile, while a strong bureaucratic civil service was getting its way, the rural population was clearly dissatisfied. Guineans had begun to show signs of resentment towards Cape Verdeans and the deviations of the PAIGC in relation to its principles as well as of their incapacity to influence or even discuss the decisions made by the President and the few others calling the shots. In addition to this, and specifically relevant to this issue, there had been rumours that the post of Principal Commissariat was to be eliminated, which would mean still

added power in the hands of the President. As the state apparatus became the centre of tension amongst the political elites, any change in its composition was looked upon with suspicion.

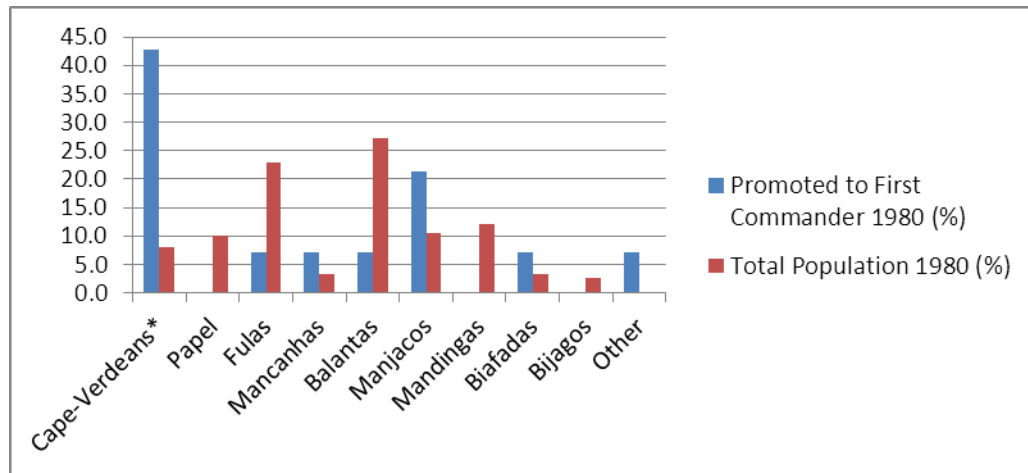
The death of Chico Té, although appearing to be an accident, remained a mystery to some and a conspiracy to others. He is remembered as having been critical towards Luís Cabral's economic policies and as having had divergences with some state leaders (Interview 24). To substitute him, the President at first nominated his close ally Constantino Teixeira as Principal Commissariat but two months later he called upon Nino Vieira to assume this post. While this appeared to be a promotion, there were already indications of real intentions to suppress this position in a redrafting of the constitution. Indeed, in 1980, Cape Verdean Commissariat, José Araújo, redesigned the constitution, which relieved Nino Vieira of his functions, and, in turn, gave Luís Cabral even more power (Lopes 1987: 138). Thus, this change meant that a Guinean national, who was also known for opposing the Presidents' policies, had lost power to a Cape Verdean.

This constitutional reform also designated the head of state as head of the armed forces. The already discontented military of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Guinea-Bissau perceived this change as a breach of their institutional autonomy. However what really had created resentment amongst Guineans within the FARP were the changes in 1979 to the structure of the military hierarchy. The idea behind these alterations "was to give the armed forces modern structures" and for this there was "the need for a hierarchy of ranks" (Carvalho in Galli and Jones 1987: 96). The creation of ranks necessarily meant promotions. Yet, to most Guineans, the criteria for these promotions were unsound. At the elite level, for example, not only were Cape Verdeans in the majority amongst those promoted to the top military positions, they were Cape Verdeans who, although they may have had technical and educational qualifications, had spent less time fighting in the liberation war or had actually remained in the party's headquarters in Conakry. Therefore, it seemed that these promotions were a way of giving more power and prestige to the President's base of support, rather than to those who



had fought in the front lines of the war. Figure 5 clearly shows that Cape Verdeans were disproportionately promoted to First Commanders.<sup>122 123</sup>

Figure 5. Promotions to First Commander, February 1980



The following interviewee expresses the resentment created by these promotions:

*“There is something that is not told and that President Nino even expressed to Luís Cabral when he was imprisoned; it is the issue of the military rankings. This is what originated the coup d’état or at least turned things more complicated. Guinean combatants felt diminished. They saw that so many Cape Verdeans were promoted and they were not. The big and well-known combatants thought this was unfair. The first combatant to think this was unfair was Nino. Nino was promoted to Brigade Commander. We had four people who were promoted to Brigade Commanders, the highest rank in the military: Nino Vieira, Pedro Pires, Umarú Djaló who is still alive and old, and Constantino Teixeira who is already dead. Four Brigade Commanders. Nino, for example, thought that Pedro Pires [Cape Verdean] should not have been promoted because he had always been highly superior to him in the military field. And that is not a lie. And so he could not accept this. I mean Cape Verdean cadres that had never even been in the battle field became Majors!” (Interview 6)*

<sup>122</sup> Notable here as well is the under representation of Balanta First Commanders. The Balanta – subject of the following chapter – were, as we saw, the first to be mobilized for the armed struggle and fought fiercely against the Portuguese.

<sup>123</sup> The percentage of the total population of Cape Verdeans here represented corresponds to my own calculated estimate of the highest possible number that the Cape Verdean population could be during these years

The comradeship that had been forged during the war between Guineans and Cape Verdeans was now being put into question. PAIGC leaders had once perceived they were one, fighting for the independence, unity, and social transformation of the two countries. That perception had now changed. The quote above demonstrates that comparisons were being made regarding which nationality had most contributed to the war. “There is a difference”, said another interviewee,

*“we had a war in our territory, and they did not. And more, we had a Presidential system with a Cape Verdean President and they had a Semi-Presidential system with a President of their nationality”* (Interview 26)

Lastly and importantly, by looking solely at the social origins of those in the positions of power, the intra-elite dynamics that were signalling a deterioration of relationships would be obscured. Had such changes in the government after Chico Té’s death been solely represented in a graph, there would be no visible difference: both Chico Té and Nino Vieira were Papel and therefore this episode would not appear as causing a change in intra-elite relationships. A more contextualised analysis was necessary in order to observe the personal rivalry that had emerged between the President and Nino Vieira and how this promotion in fact signified a demotion. Likewise, if we were to consider the promotions to Brigade Commanders through a national lens, it would appear that the President had nominated three Guineans and just one Cape Verdean to the highest rank in the military hierarchy in order to calm down Guinean grievances. Yet, through analysis of the interviews, what is revealed is the perception of the promotions as of the promotion of one Cape Verdean, two Guinean “Cape Verdean insiders” and one Guinean.

### **5.5.3 The evident sign: Two Different Constitutions**

At the institutional level, efforts were being made to unite the two countries. In 1976 both National Popular Assemblies had elected the deputies who would constitute the Unity Council. The idea was to draft a common constitution. The following year the Cape Verdean and Bissau-Guinean commissions met in order to draw up a work plan. At that time, Nino Vieira (President of the National Popular Assembly, member of the Permanent Secretariat of the PAIGC and Commissariat for the Armed Forces) stated:

*“Our two National Popular Assemblies were born out of our victorious liberation struggle and express the sovereign will of our people of Guinea and Cape Verde. Since their creation, according to the principles of our Party, the National Popular Assembly of Guinea-Bissau and the National Popular Assembly of Cape Verde had as their task to search for the path that should orient the constitution of the Superior Assembly of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde”* (in Fernandes 2007: 62)

In addition to this, work commissions in diverse areas were created in order to enhance cooperation between the two countries and an intergovernmental conference took place in 1976 for the same purpose. The party’s Third Congress in 1977 had as its motto “Congress of Independence for Unity and Development” and the PAIGC Secretary-General reiterated that the principle of unity that guided them was not merely theoretical and urged the permanent coordination and integration of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (Report III Congress of the PAIGC 1977: 139; 141).

From 1977 onwards, though, little was done to put this plan into effect. In fact what occurred in 1980 was perceived as evidence that confirmed to the Guinean elites and society that Cape Verde did not want unity, but instead wanted to overpower and rule Guinea-Bissau.

The newly drafted Guinean constitution was up for discussion and approval in the National Popular Assembly’s extraordinary session in November 7, 1980. Meanwhile, the Cape Verdean constitution had already been ratified and differed in two significant points from what was to be approved in Guinea-Bissau. As mentioned in the previous section, the Cape Verdean jurist had modified the structure of the state, making Nino Vieira’s position as Principal Commissariat dispensable and giving additional power to President Luís Cabral. Moreover, while the Bissau-Guinean constitution permitted its head of state to be of Cape Verdean nationality, the same did not apply to Guineans in Cape Verde. The constitution that had just been approved in the archipelago considered only Cape Verdeans to be eligible for the position of its head of state. Furthermore, while capital punishment had been abolished in Cape Verde, it remained in the Guinean constitution. “Does this seem to you that they really wanted unity?” asked one interviewee commenting on this episode (Interview 28).

The deputies in the ANP were given little opportunity to discuss the proposal and make amendments. Nino Vieira tried to extend the session in order to allow a proper debate to take place, but the President got his way and, perhaps out of fear, the deputies voted in favour of the constitution (Galli and Jones 1987: 93). Four days later, a *coup d’état* led by Nino Vieira put an end to the unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

## 5.6 The November 14, 1980 *Coup d'État*

*“Nothing really changed after that [the coup d'état]. I was put into prison, not knowing why. Well, maybe because I'm Cape Verdean!”* (Interview 19).

This interviewee, as well as the President, Umarú Djaló, Constantino Teixeira and others, was imprisoned and, with the exception of the assassinations of two party-state leaders, the overthrow of Luís Cabral's government by some of its members occurred without any major violent incidents. It was enthusiastically welcomed by Guinean society at large - “Thank you Comrade Kabi” (Kabi was Nino Vieira's war name) and “The end of injustice” were the headlines in *Nô Pintcha*, the Guinean newspaper (*Nô Pintcha*, 29 November 1980 in Ulrich and May 1981: 185). Victor Saúde Maria commented:

*“We want it to be clear that we did not make a coup d'état. It is a readjustment, the removal of a comrade of ours who was one of the founders of our Party that, at a given moment of our struggle, began to deviate from the orientation that was outlined by our beloved Amílcar Cabral”* (Victor Saúde Maria, *Nô Pintcha*, 24 November 1980)

The coup was termed the *Movimento Reajustador* – Readjustment Movement - and such declarations as this immediately after the episode attempted to justify the motives for the action. The underlying message was that the movement had been a necessary step in order to remain faithful to the PAIGC's principles and to the thoughts of its founder, and that nothing in it implied hostility towards Cape Verdeans as such (Nino Vieira in *Nô Pintcha*, 24 November 1980). Nonetheless, as will be shown, anti-Cape Verdean feeling was stirred up.

The Revolutionary Council that led the Readjustment Movement was formed and in 1981 a provisional government was constituted. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, Amílcar Cabral's name was repeatedly brought to the forefront. The Portuguese newspaper *Diário de Lisboa*, for example, considered this episode to be “The Second Death of Amílcar Cabral” (*Diário de Lisboa*, 17 November 1980 in Ulrich and May 1981: 46) and both Cape Verdean and Guinean elites accused one another of having betrayed their national hero. This is illustrative in the series of letters exchanged between the Secretary-General of the PAIGC, Aristides Pereira, and the leader of the Council of the Revolution, Nino Vieira. The first claimed that the declarations announced by the Council of the Revolution were in complete opposition to the thought of their “dearly missed Comrade” and that the *coup d'état* represented a complete

deviation from the party's principles (Aristides Pereira, 17 November 1980 in Do PAIGC ao PAICV 1981: 42); the latter, accused the first of being complicit and responsible for the anti-democratic behaviour and positions of President Luís Cabral (he is specifically recollecting the absence of discussion on the drafting of the constitution); in his representation, what indeed went against "the missed Comrade Amílcar Cabral's thought" was the "intolerable situation" that Guineans had been subject to (Nino Vieira, 17 November 1980 in Do PAIGC ao PAICV 1981: 44). Notwithstanding the claims of both parties to loyalty to Amílcar Cabral's thought, in this instance, his memory was not being invoked with the intent of fostering unity between the leaders. They were competing for legitimacy using his memory and reinterpreting his thought.

Relations between Cape Verdeans and Guineans deteriorated even further when five hundred Guinean corpses were found buried. The great majority of those assassinated were part of the African Commandos, that is, the Guinean troops who had fought alongside the Portuguese colonial army in the war. Nino Vieira denied any knowledge of these killings and *Nô Pintcha* published the names of all those who were murdered as evidence of the mounting terror that reigned under Luís Cabral's presidency (*Nô Pintcha*, 29 November 1980 in Ulrich and May 1981: 179).

On 20 January 1981, the separation between the two countries took an institutional step forward: the congress of Cape Verdean national militants announced the creation of the *Partido Africano da Independência para Cabo Verde* (PAICV) and on that same day elected their new party leaders. In Guinea-Bissau, the party maintained its original name. Despite the incongruence after what had happened, both the PAICV and the PAIGC called for loyalty, honour and glory to Amílcar Cabral in their subsequent congresses (Do PAIGC ao PAICV 1981).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> The PAIGC held its I Extraordinary Congress in 1981.

## 5.7 Cape Verdeans and a National Guinean identity: Boundaries and Stories

It has been argued that the initial fractures amongst the elites were grounded in social differences, which thereafter translated into diverging policy paths and subsequently put into question the ideological basis of the PAIGC. Following the *coup d'état*, the declarations of the Council of the Revolution pointed in this direction and the leader of the Readjustment Movement specifically mentioned that the “revolution” had not been an act against the Cape Verdean population (Nino Vieira in *Nô Pintcha*, 24 November 1980; image 1).

Image 1. “A Revolution to honour our Heroes”, *Nô Pintcha*, 24 November 1980 (in Ulrich and May 1981)

No Pintcha, 24.11.'80

Uma revolução para honrar os nossos Heróis

«Nesta Revolução, nós não somos contra ninguém. Há especulações de que nós somos contra os caboverdianos. É mentira! Não somos contra os nossos irmãos caboverdianos, porque muitos deles, como o comandante Manecas e outros, pegaram em armas e lutaram juntamente conosco pela liberdade da Guiné-Bissau. Nós somos, sim, contra a injustiça, por isso resolvemos fazer o reajustamento na nossa terra».

*“In this Revolution, we are not against anyone.*

*There have been speculations that we are against the Cape Verdeans. That is a lie! We are not against our Cape Verdean brothers because many of them, like Manecas and others, picked up arms and fought together with us for Guinea-Bissau’s freedom. We are, yes, against injustice, and that is why we decided to do a readjustment in our land”*

However, while the *coup* leaders publicly affirmed that they were still “brothers” of their Cape Verdean comrades, their actions and the stories told about them differ from the content of their public affirmations and demonstrate that the main elite cleavage at this time was national. I have pinpointed incidents that demonstrate the effects of this boundary change and explain why divisions within the PAIGC and state leadership assumed a national contour. This military officer sums up the various occurrences that were touched upon:

*“A lot of awful things happened under Luís Cabral... Osvaldo died in a mysterious way. And if that was not enough Chico Té dies prematurely...then the changes in the constitution which prohibited Guineans from being head of state in Cape Verde; Guineans could only rule in Guinea. Why could a Cape Verdean rule us and a Guinean*

*liberation war hero could not do the same in Cape Verde? And I also think that there was an attempt to blame Amílcar's death solely on Guineans. When Chico dies I understood, because of other things that already had happened – a poisoning and a previous accident that he was in -, it was planned. At the time we were already tired of all these things. There was nothing you could do without the national security knowing about it. Anyone who spoke against Luís would disappear. Killings of Guineans had no end. I'm telling you this so you can understand the level of repression. A bunch of us went to Nino and said 'we are tired of this and we need a leader' and he accepted" (Interview 24)*

The dominant contending groups were “us, Guineans” and “them, Cape Verdeans”. The differing stories on each side, at the elite level, are illustrative of this. The following interviewee (who is *mestiço*), for example, recalls a conversation with Nino Vieira after the *coup d'état*.

*“One day Nino told me, ‘you know, Amílcar was a bit racist’ and I was stunned with this and I asked him why and he told me ‘look, I was a commander, a war commander; with the exception of Amílcar, I was the number one man in the Armed Forces. I drove an old car and one day we received a new modern car and he decides to give it to Pedro Pires instead of giving it to me. He preferred giving it to his Cape Verdean countryman’. He told me this. The little things that showed their inferiority complex” (Interview 30).*

This story has a double function: on the one hand, Nino's story - if this interviewee is retelling it accurately - is demonstrative of how Guineans felt discriminated by Cape Verdeans (in this case by their own national hero!). At the same time, the way this interviewee recounts Nino's story is enlightening of the way a Cape Verdean viewed the issue: Guineans had an inferiority complex.

Similarly, another interviewee (a *mestiço* of Cape Verdean descent and who was part of the CSL) remarked that a lot of important state positions were occupied by illiterates and concludes that Guinean resentment derived from their lack of education (Interview 27).

However, a significant observation that needs to be made about these recollections is that many of these stories are accounts voiced by the very same people that in the previous chapter had spoken of elite unity during the armed struggle and the first years of independence. Their discourses and stories change when addressing these two different experiences, that is, of the liberation war and on the 1980 *coup d'état*. One story speaks of unity and inter-group bonds, the other, of long held inter-group splits. This change of

perception is not a sign of incongruence, but rather of the social boundary shift that occurred during these years.

The same interviewee, who had commented on the level of Cape Verdean participation in armed struggle and on their commitment to the national movement's ideals, when asked about Guinean and Cape Verdean divergences, says:

*"I need to explain something to you. This thing of the unity between Cape Verdeans and Guineans was not in the Cape Verdean mentality. They did not want unity. They were against it. They would talk to us and say 'unity in Guinea-Bissau but not in Cape Verde. We are Cape Verdeans and we will remain Cape Verdeans'. In these exact words they would say this"* (Interview 28)

Another PAIGC top party cadre stated "the Cape Verdean elite never accepted Cabral. They did not recognize him as a Cape Verdean. They would call Amílcar 'Guinean!'" (Interview 27)

The decisions and actions taken at the time of the coup also reflect contention along national lines. The Council of the Revolution was composed of nine elements, none of whom was Cape Verdean or of Cape Verdean descent. All, but one, were military men, or rather all had participated in the liberation struggle - only one had not actually seen combat in the battlefield, and, as referred to above, this had become a particularly sensitive issue following the promotion in the Armed Forces of Cape Verdeans soldiers who had spent less or no time in the combat zone, in detriment to Guinean combatants. It was even more sensitive in fact since the Guineans were aware that their previous ascension to top leadership positions in the party had been due precisely to their outstanding achievements as warriors in the armed struggle. The quote in Image 1 shows that this was an issue at heart to those in the Council of Revolution.<sup>125</sup>

Furthermore, the 1980 *coup d'état* appeared as an initiative by Guinean PAIGC elites in the construction of a national identity. With the Cape Verdean leadership out of the way, the feeling was as though the country had finally liberated itself or had gone through a second liberation (*Expresso*, 29 November 1980 in Ulrich and May 1981). As Nino stated, this revolution had been led by "the real sons of our land" (Nino Vieira in *Nô Pintcha*, 24 November

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<sup>125</sup> Manecas dos Santos, a Cape Verdean, immediately after the *coup d'état* was imprisoned, however, due to his reputed fame as war commander and the bonds that he had established with Nino (and others) during the liberation struggle in the battlefield, he was not only released, but was nominated as Minister for Transport, Tourism and Communication in the 1981 provisional government.



1980). It was as if they now were finally in a position from which they could pursue their true Guinean identity. “We needed to reaffirm our identity. There were things about the Cape Verdean culture that we did not identify with” (Interview 14).<sup>126</sup>

This sentiment of finally being free from Cape Verdean rule expressed itself in various manifestations. Firstly, immediately after the *coup d'état* the Council of the Revolution proceeded to liberate all Guineans who had been imprisoned during Cabral's presidency. Amongst those liberated was Rafael Barbosa, the same person who had been considered a PAIGC traitor. Others, who had been tortured for opposing the bi-national project, had their testimonies heard and published. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, a number of PAIGC and state leaders of Guinean origin, considered to be close to Luís Cabral or of being “Cape Verdean insiders”, were put in prison though set free five days later (*Diário de Lisboa*, 19 November 1980) and some of them were even appointed as ministers in the provisional government. The action of the Council of Revolution pointed to real efforts at forging a new elite alliance on the basis of a national identity. What is interesting to note, however, is that the construction of this Guinean identity was based upon an anti-Cape Verdean sentiment and that the national liberation war was maintained as its constitutive element. In this sense, Amílcar Cabral, the mentor and true believer of the unity between Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, was maintained as the symbol of the nation.

Lastly, while important to note that many Cape Verdeans left Guinea-Bissau at this time, others opted to stay. One interviewee tellingly affirmed, “the Cape Verdean that stayed is Guinean” (Interview 9) and another one stated, “I have this light skin colour but I am above all Guinean” (Interview 30). Nonetheless, while there has been no claim-making or assertions on the basis of a Cape Verdean identity since the 1980 *Readjustment Movement*, there remain significant boundaries that are reminiscent of this colonial created antagonism and during the

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<sup>126</sup> In this respect, it is noteworthy to mention that in the first six years of independence one of the measures taken by the government was the eradication of the *régulos* and *regulados*, Big Men and local territories respectively, and their substitution by PAIGC village committees in the name of building a nation-state (Carvalho 2000: 37 and Georg et al. 2006: 9).

following years after the coup, this was manifested, albeit in a different way: fragmentation based on skin colour.<sup>127</sup> This issue will resurface in Chapter 7.

The recollection of the 1980 *coup d'état* brings to the fore intense memories of Guinean and Cape Verdean hostility; yet, when the armed struggle and the first years of independence are remembered, the story alters and turns into one of unity. The existence of these two diverging story lines is consistent with the change in the social boundaries within the elites during these six years of independence.

## 5.8 The Political Elite Bargain

The social composition of those in positions of power was diverse. Its members were of varied social backgrounds, nationalities and ethnic groups: from Balanta to Papel, Mancanha and Mandinga, from Guineans to Cape Verdeans, from those of the *petty bourgeoisie* to the *déclassé*, from civilian to military, from urban to rural. That there was a predominance of Cape Verdeans in both the top party and state positions or that there was an under-representation of Balanta in the positions of power had at one time bared little significance. From 1973-1977 PAIGC leaders felt closely attached. The configuration of the positions of power did not exclude or under-represent any specific ethnic group or nationality; rather in the early years of independence the elite bargain left out segments of the population that had not aligned with the national movement's ideals or PAIGC principles: mostly from the urban colonial privileged population of Bissau, as well as Guinean nationalists who opposed the bi-national project. The former ended up being (re)integrated within the bureaucratic state apparatus and exercising a significant reactionary influence contrary to the initial aims of the PAIGC; the latter, ended up imprisoned, tortured or killed. However, from 1977 onwards, elite relationships changed and the shape and nature of the bargain altered.

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<sup>127</sup> For example, one interviewee stated that because of his skin colour he often hears people on the streets calling him *Burmedju* (the creole word for red but in this context signifies someone of mixed race, and also imply someone who is acting socially-culturally like a Portuguese) and in these moments he needs to be "strong and not pay any attention" (Interview 30).

This chapter has examined how this occurred and why the main cleavage shifted to one based upon nationality. But to state that the main cleavage between the elites was rooted in national divergences appears to be pointing out the obvious. The aftermath of the *coup d'état* and the actions taken by the Council of the Revolution give little doubt that this was the case. Yet, not only was this not the initial source of the split, it was also not its central - or its sole - basis. If we had started out with assumptions that social boundaries amongst the political elites had been salient since independence, we would expect that only stories of disunity would prevail and that the elites in power positions had established only a circumstantial alliance or a *friendship* relationship. But this was not the case. Closer analysis has made it possible to see that the presence of two diverging stories means that there had been a boundary change through the years. The intricate processes of these shifts in social boundaries are fundamental when examining political elite bargains: they are what enable us to make sense of subsequent elite alliances and relations and thus to identify the rationale behind subsequent policy directions and pattern of resource distribution.

To give a concrete example, the imprisonment of Cape Verdean commander Manuel dos Santos and his subsequent designation as Minister in the 1981 provisional government would seem rather illogical had we not looked into the specificities and nature of Guinean elite hostility towards their Cape Verdean counterparts. Amongst other things, Guinean resentment was due to what was considered to be discrimination in the promotions within the top military echelons. The unfairness was associated with the fact that the majority of promotions were of Cape Verdeans who had spent less time, or none at all, in combat during the liberation armed struggle. However, there were also Cape Verdeans "who had picked up arms and fought together [with us] for Guinea-Bissau's freedom" (Nino Vieira in *Nô Pintcha*, 24 November 1980) and Manuel dos Santos was one of them. The bonds that had been established during the war with his Guinean comrades ended up being sufficiently intense to override the national boundaries between them, suggesting that individuals do hold multiple identities and shift from one identity to another. Why is this important to take note of? Because it implies that following political elite bargains will need to be interpreted in light of these relationships, rather than assuming that, for example, social cleavages reside exclusively on the basis of ethnicity or nationality.

Having arrived at the observation that the social boundaries within the elites had assumed national contours during this period, it now remains to appreciate whether the shape of the political elite bargain had had a significant influence in the *coup d'état* of November 14, 1980.

There are two issues that need to be taken into consideration. The first is that concentration of authority in Bissau resulted in an elite bargain favouring an urban populace. In the rural areas, the peasants, were being excluded from both resource distribution and political-decision making - in contrast to the early revolutionary years. Peasant dissatisfaction could easily be transposed to PAIGC party cadres and military officials since many of them had rural backgrounds. In addition to this urban-rural divide, in Bissau, it was really only a political and bureaucratic elite that was benefitting from state resources - in great measure derived from foreign aid - and policies.

The second regards the composition of the positions of power. With the PAIGC's III Congress party membership increased and there was a disproportional intake of Cape Verdeans into its highest organs. Again the Cape Verdeans were over-represented in positions of state power. In addition to this, the stories indicate that Guinean dissatisfaction was spurred on by the elimination of the Principal Commissariat position - which had been held by a Guinean - with its consequent concentration of power in the hands of the Cape Verdean president, and the unbalanced promotions of Cape Verdeans in the military hierarchy.

There are therefore strong indications that the predominance of Cape Verdeans in the party and state positions of power from 1977 to 1980 and the exclusionary shape of the bargain - deemed to be solely benefiting Cape Verdeans - are related to the first (or at least most palpable) moment of overt political instability in post-independence Guinea-Bissau.

One final consideration comes through the analysis of boundary shifts and relationship changes: these changes are closely linked to the shape that political elite bargains assume. When boundaries between the PAIGC leaders shifted, we observe the concentration of decision-making in the hands of the President and a restricted group, proliferation of assassinations or suspicions, policy stalemate and contested internal decisions. All of these incidents had the effect of sharpening the boundaries between the two main coalitions - that is, Cape Verdeans (and those who sided with them) and Guineans. Once boundaries are sharp the question remains open as to whether an inclusive bargain is sufficient to dilute boundaries between the elites and hence to deter armed challenges to the state. From the analysis of this case, it appears that one of the consequences of the boundary change between the elites was an executive (the President) opting to distribute rents and privileges to those he identified with while gradually excluding those of the opposite side.

# CHAPTER 6

## WHEN ETHNICITY BECOMES POLITICALLY SALIENT

(1980-1985)

### 6.1 Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the *Readjustment Movement* there was a widespread sentiment that Guinea-Bissau, now truly free from external imposition, could now embark on national integration. The PAIGC would remain the political body that would guide and monitor the state's activities and the proclaimed intentions of the leaders were to resume Amílcar Cabral's rural-based socialist project.

The assumption was that Cape Verdean political domination had been an obstacle to this undertaking, and, in their absence, a shared sense of unity could be fostered. This perspective, though, was grounded on the notion that the nature of the divergences was first and foremost the product of opposing nationalities. However, despite the fact that relations between Cape Verdeans and Guineans had become the central point of contention, divergences amongst the elites were rooted elsewhere. The previous chapter revealed how Bissau's contradictions and the difficulties in putting Cabral's economic programme into practice led the leaders to act inconsistently with regard to the PAIGC's principles and permitted the emergence of divergent and conflicting opinions concerning paths towards development. The elites favouring industrial policies and pushing for urban investment were influenced by and assimilated the interests of the privileged former colonial elite who had been integrated into the state's bureaucracy and were in their majority Cape Verdean - hence the confounding between deviations from *Cabral's line* with the Cape Verdean wing of the leadership.

The analysis of how social boundaries amongst the elites were altered makes it possible, on the one hand, to understand why PAIGC faction-fighting persisted despite the ousting from power of Cape Verdean elements, and, on the other hand, to identify the sources of

fragmentation that appeared amongst the elites during the first year after the 1980 *coup d'état*. The first part of the chapter seeks to account for these emergent identities in order to assess the shape of the elite bargain. It looks at how they interact in its attempt to explain the subsequent shifts that occurred in the bargain's shape.

The following part of the chapter examines how these interactions led ethnicity to become politically salient. While in the previous years ethnicity was not at the heart of political conflict, after the 1980 *coup d'état*, and in the course of a two to three year period, it became the principal factor in understanding intra-elite dynamics and relations. In light of this cleavage alteration, the composition of the positions of power and the shape of the political elite bargains are analysed<sup>128</sup> and I ask to what extent their shape can be associated with the various alleged attempts to overthrow the President (which then led to the ethnically motivated assassinations of political and military officials).

## **6.2 Two Lesser Contentious Episodes**

### **6.2.1 A Short-Lived National Alliance**

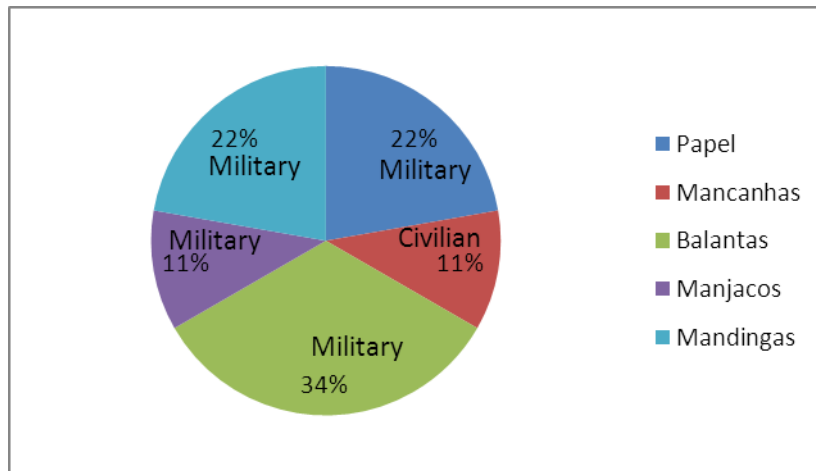
After the 1980 *coup d'état* the Council of the Revolution proceeded immediately to dissolve the political organs of the previous regime. The Council of the Revolution was now the leading political body of the country and its composition revealed the sources of contention of the previous regime: it was composed predominantly of military officers and excluded Cape Verdean elements (Figure 6).<sup>129</sup> All nine of its members were PAICG militants and only two of them had not come from the highest organs of the party.

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<sup>128</sup> The "measurement" of the positions of power varies according to the political arrangements of the time: it was only in 1984 that the National Popular Assembly approved the new constitution and up until then the country went through a long transitional period.

<sup>129</sup> The only civilian in the principal members of the Council of the Revolution was Mancaha.

Figure 6. Composition of the Council of the Revolution, 1980



In spite of the *Readjustment Movement's* leaders claims that the *coup d'état* had been necessary to restore the party's essence and remain faithful to Cabral's thought, they were also promoting unity amongst Guineans, all, independently of whether or not they were PAIGC militants. The statements by the President of the Council of the Revolution, Nino Vieira, suggested that separation with Cape Verde had been needed in order to safeguard a Guinean national identity. Similarly, Vice-President Vítor Saúde Maria, affirmed that the real aspirations of the Guinean people could now be heard (*Nô Pintcha*, 24 November 1980 in Ulrich and May 1981). The high-point in the attempt to forge national unity came with the announcement of a policy of "national concord": the President declared that the means to build a strong and a united nation, where social justice would prevail, was through the unison of all Guinean nationalistic and patriotic forces and urged Guinean citizens residing inside and outside of the country to adhere to the *Readjustment Movement* (Ibid).

What this national concord actually entailed and how it was going to function in practice remained unclear. Those who the new leaders had asked to align with the movement were none other than those more "narrow" nationalists who had opposed the PAIGC from the start and who did not share the party's ideology. Considering that the official position maintained the role of the PAIGC as the "guiding force of society", the quest to include these contrasting elements within the party's seems problematic. How could such a reconciliation take place?

The vagueness surrounding this issue led the *Amílcar Cabral Centre for Information and Documentation (CIDAC)*<sup>130</sup> to characterize the political atmosphere in this first year as one of contradictions and confusion (CIDAC 1982: 1).

Regardless of the doubts this subject created, by the beginning of February 1981, the Council of the Revolution had nominated a provisional government, supposedly, under the policy of national concord. Nonetheless, all the government's ministers and secretaries of state belonged to the PAIGC. The composition of the government was, in fact, quite similar to the one that had just been overthrown - more than half of the ministers held the same positions as they had previously, i.e., before the *coup* (Official Bulletin 1981). While the Council of the Revolution had no Cape Verdean elements, they were the second largest group to be represented in the government. In spite of the apparent contradiction with the Guinean character of the movement, their incorporation in the government confirms what was argued here so far: that although having assumed national contours the divergences were initially social and ideological. Indeed, that the "Cape Verdean that stayed is Guinean" (Interview 9). For example, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, Manuel dos Santos (former Sub-Commissar of the State for Information and Tourism, and nominated Minister of Transport, Tourism and Communication) was a Cape Verdean whose military participation in the liberation war had produced strong and lasting connections with his Guinean comrades in arms.

Regarding the national concord policy, Rudebeck, who was accompanying political developments, reported that amongst nominees to second-level positions, two had been former collaborators of the colonial regime and Viriato Pã, the General Procurator, had previously been an activist in the *União Patriótica Anti-Neocolonialista da Guiné-Bissau* (UPANG, a nationalist movement in opposition to the PAIGC). These nominations indicated a certain *petite bourgeois*, technocratic and anti-socialist thrust in the government, although, nothing was just "yet clear or definitive" (Rudebeck 1982: 45).

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<sup>130</sup> During the liberation struggle, CIDAC (which until 1977 was called the Anti-Colonial Bulletin Group) clandestinely gathered and disseminated information against the Portuguese colonial regime. Upon independence it established a development partnership with Guinea-Bissau (and other Lusophone countries) and continued accompanying its political development.



## 6.2.2 Balancing the Factions

The uncertainty around the national concord policy, and whether this compromise would eventually jeopardize the PAIGC's relationship to the state, was resolved with the PAIGC's National Council meeting and Extraordinary Congress in May and November 1981, respectively. At that point, there was a clear reaffirmation of the PAIGC's claim to a predominant role in the conduct of the political affairs of the country and there was a broad agreement among PAIGC leaders and members that national concord signified neither reducing the status of the party, nor a reorientation of its socialist ideology and commitment to the popular masses (CIDAC 1982: 5; Rudebeck 1982: 46). Referring to reconciliation, Mário Cabral, Minister of National Education and Official spokesman of the PAIGC Congress, stated:

*"We say they can come back [counter-revolutionaries] to the country as citizens. Guinea-Bissau does not belong merely to the PAIGC. But we have made it clear that political leadership comes from the PAIGC and nowhere else" (in Mozambique Information Agency 1982).*

These reassurances satisfied many of the party's militants, particularly those in the Armed Forces, who had already expressed their concerns to the President of the Council of the Revolution in their I National Conference.

*"We certainly know that there are various personalities who are pretending to integrate the historic (moment) of 14 November but who had been 'spínolistas' [i.e., collaborators of Spínola] and who have eaten with the tugas [the creole word for the Portuguese], and other groups which had been partners of Luís Cabral and who now proclaim themselves to be more 'quatorcistas' [i.e., members of the 14 November movement] than all of us. But, comrade President, we the FARP, allied to our people, we know the political meaning of the 14 November. We want you to know that we are determined to defend this country of Cabral, sacrificing our lives if necessary, in order that our people may live freely and build a society free of the exploitation of man by man" (Galli and Jones translation, reported in Rudebeck 1982: 48)*

In a similar vein, before the PAIGC's Congress took place, certain party militants were cited by CIDAC expressing a similar position:

*"We cannot admit that a group of opportunistic individuals, who only served the colonialists, who served imperialism, until today, have pretences of making believe that they are able to achieve better things for this country..." (CIDAC 1982: 5)<sup>131</sup>*

These claims and manifestations of discontent were reasonable. The Armed Forces had actively participated in, and other party militants supported, the *Readjustment Movement* precisely because the PAIGC was going through an ideological crisis. Deviations from its guiding principles had resulted in an exclusive distribution of rights and entitlements and in the implementation of policies that benefited some members of the government and an urban elite. The incorporation of anti-PAIGC elements into the state apparatus and debates on national concord were therefore a cause of concern.

Furthermore, the predominantly military composition of the Council of the Revolution and the leadership of Nino Vieira, one of the most highly reputed commanders from the liberation war, raised expectations within the armed forces for a bigger role within both the party and state structures (Forrest 1992: 58; Embaló 2012: 261). Military participation in the liberation war - as opposed to militant and non-battlefield participation in the struggle for independence - and its lack of recognition and compensation by the previous government, as seen, when non-combatants had been promoted in the ranks, had become a source of resentment within the military. The reaffirmation of the PAIGC's force and influence in society, and public statements like the one below, thus reassured PAIGC militants.

*"PAIGC's enemies have to be put in the position of PAIGC's enemies, and they will only be with us if they modify their ways of acting and thinking. We do not recognize heroes outside of the PAIGC" (Minister of the Armed Forces in CIDAC 1982: 7)<sup>132</sup>*

While this period of reassertion of the PAIGC as the essential instrument for the progress of Guinean society was characterized as one of ideological precision or rectification (CIDAC 1982: 1-6), in reality the declarations of faith to "Cabral's line" were vague and the break up with Cape Verde could hardly result in the dissipation of ideological divergences and military claims to power.

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<sup>131</sup> Own translation.

<sup>132</sup> Own translation.

At the PAIGC's 1981 *Extraordinary Congress for National Unity and Social Justice Readjustment* there were signs of discord. Factions were organized according to "military", "national revolutionary" and "anti-party" biases, each represented by leading figures of the party (Ziegler in Galli and Jones 1987: 99). The PAIGC's Central Committee represented diverse social interests and this was recognized in the party's report when it affirmed the party's opening to people of all social strata, as long as they were devoted to national liberation (Rudebeck 1982: 52). This constituted an appeal particularly to the (non-revolutionary) *petty bourgeoisie* and a bridge for reaching a political compromise amongst all forces existing within the PAIGC. The emergence of differing ideological stands is attested to by CIDAC's reference to lively debates held within the working groups that were established to discuss the party's future. CIDAC also remarks that opposing positions were expressed by the new leaders of the PAIGC (CIDAC 1982: 11). Nevertheless, with the exception of a singular intense struggle between two factions (which will be mentioned shortly), the newly elected top ruling organs of the PAIGC represented a balance between the various tendencies that had emerged and had become visible throughout the congress' discussions.

Analysis of the distribution of the top PAIGC and government positions during this first transitional phase following the Congress suggests that there was an effort to incorporate the diverse tendencies, which had evolved from the previous regime, in these political bodies. Although the national concord policy was short-lived, the PAIGC did encourage those who had not been PAIGC militants to join the party which led to the adherence of non-revolutionary elements

The Political Bureau (the new designation for the CEL) was now composed of twelve members and four alternate members. Of the twelve, half were military and eight were members of the Council of the Revolution. Commander Nino Vieira, "the guarantor of national unity, of independence and the continuity of [our] Party" (General Resolutions of the I Extraordinary Congress of the PAIGC), was unanimously elected as Secretary-General, the highest position in the PAIGC. It is in this sense that it has been stated that all these different factions revolved around the extremely popular "and populist" President (Rudebeck 1982: 53; Galli and Jones 1987: 99; CIDAC 1982: 20). Two members, Vasco Cabral and Carlos Correia, had demarcated themselves from the 1980 *coup d'état* (CIDAC 1982: 21). Vasco Cabral (also Minister for Economic Coordination and Planning) represented a more orthodox Marxist line and was the main figure behind the "national revolutionary" faction, while Vítor Saúde Maria was the leader of the "anti-party" wing. One of the alternate members, Manuel dos Santos, was Cape

Verdean, the exception who proved the rule affirmed by all the anti-racist proclamations referring to the need to normalize relations with Cape Verdean comrades.

The most heated issue in the Congress arose when discussing the party's new hierarchy. The position of Vice-Secretary General was initially destined for Vítor Saúde Maria, number two on the Council of the Revolution, however, a proposal to eliminate this post was put forward and voted favourably (CIDAC 1982: 21; Rudebeck 1982: 58). In contrast, the Congress created the position of Secretary to the Central Committee and Vasco Cabral was elected to it. These alterations appeared to favour the more "national revolutionary" wing in relation to the so-called "anti-party" wing. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that Vítor Saúde Maria was not only a member of the Political Bureau, but also of the Council of the Revolution and was simultaneously Minister of Foreign Affairs. Those who were "ideologically close" to him, such as Vítor Freire Monteiro, Avito José da Silva and João Cruz Pinto were Ministers in the provisional government (Interviews 1 and 2; Nóbrega 2002: 238; Galli and Jones 1987: 104). Thus, to a certain degree, the composition of the government favoured a more liberal and urban PAIGC clique, while the party leadership inclined to a more revolutionary-wing.

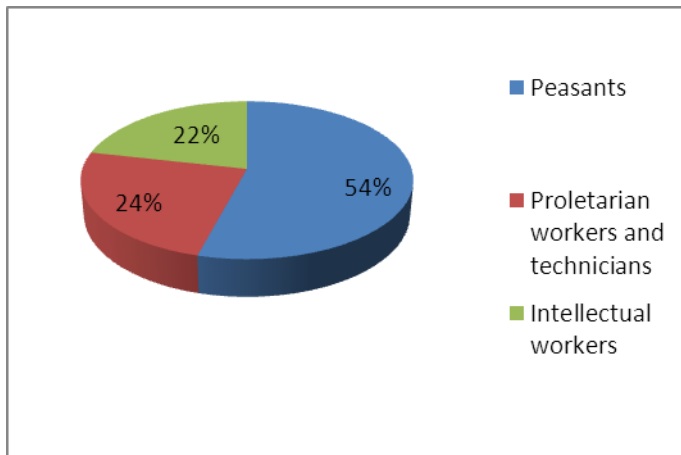
The Central Committee (former CSL), was composed of 35 members<sup>133</sup> who were elected by and from the party's delegates. Taking into account the varied social composition and professional occupations of the 301 delegates that were present in the Congress (Figure 7 and 8), Rudebeck's conclusion makes sense:

*"In its entirety, the composition of the Central Committee represents a judicious compromise between all the different trends and interests that oppose one and other inside the PAIGC, and in Guinea-Bissau's political system. We find communists, modern technocrats, peasants, as well as traditional leaders"* (Rudebeck 1982: 58)

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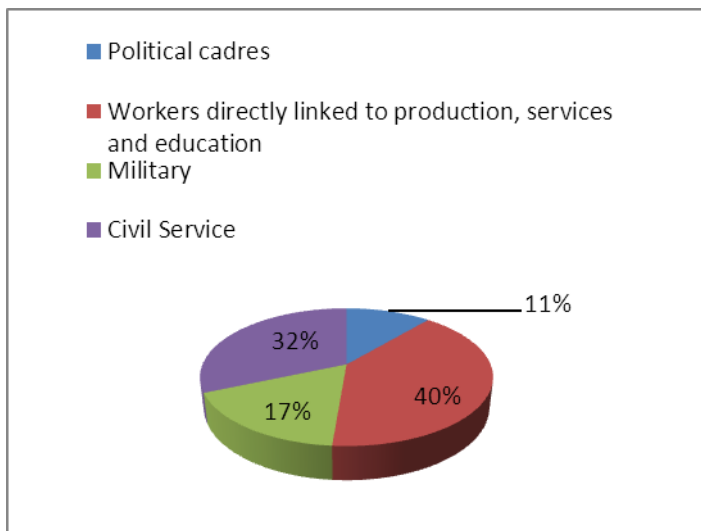
<sup>133</sup> Rudebeck mentions fifty two permanent members. However, according to both CIDAC and to the PAIGC's report only thirty five names are listed as permanent members and ten as alternates.

Figure 7. Social Composition of the PAIGC's delegates in the First Extraordinary Congress, 1981



Source: Mandates Commission Report to the PAIGC's First Extraordinary Congress, 1981

Figure 8. Professional Occupation of the PAIGC's delegates in the First Extraordinary Congress, 1981



Source: Mandates Commission Report to the PAIGC's First Extraordinary Congress, 1981

### 6.3 Ethnicity?

The analysis of documentation and newspapers written and published between 1980 and 1982 reveals that the predominant source of social fragmentation within the elite was centred on ideology and PAIGC background. These lesser contentious episodes, however, have become trivial in light of what followed: (supposed) armed challenges to the state in March, 1982, June, 1983 and October, 1985, and associated resultant killings apparently of ethnic character.

Ethnicity, in a short period of time, was to materialise as the predominant social cleavage. Despite the collective relegation of ethnicity to residual status as a cause of conflict in the first year after the 1980 *coup*, both by the respondents and scholars publishing after 1985, the fact that “ethnic problems only become a real issue with the killing of Balanta leaders” (Interview 2) suggests that boundaries and relations among the elites had changed sometime in between. Even though this less contentious year is overlooked, ethnicity appears to only become a part of Guinea-Bissau’s post-independence political narrative “around the mid-80s” (Interview 18) when these overtly violent incidents took place.

*“Ethnic divergences? One of the great virtues of the PAIGC was to fight ethnic distinctions. Perhaps in the Armed Forces you can say that there was a fight between the various ethnic groups which heightened after 14 November [1980], but especially after that. Tribalism was amplified with the 17 October [refers to the imprisonment and killing of Balanta political and military officials in 1985]” (Interview 10)*

*“I only started hearing the ethnic discourse around the mid-80’s, before that, no. The Paulo Correia episode [the Balanta military leader who was executed in 1986] is when the ethnic problems start” (Interview 18)*

These comments by interviewees situate the discourses relating ethnicity to conflicts in a particular point of time. Therefore conclusions taken on the basis of reflections upon the inter-ethnic distribution of positions of power prior to these events can be misleading. However, by bearing in mind these observations and reservations, considerations based upon the ethnic background of those appointed to the provisional government in 1981 may explain why the initial source of contention originated in the Armed Forces and was predominantly based on military assertions to power.

Figure 9. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Government and Party Positions (absolute distribution and relative to population share, 1981)

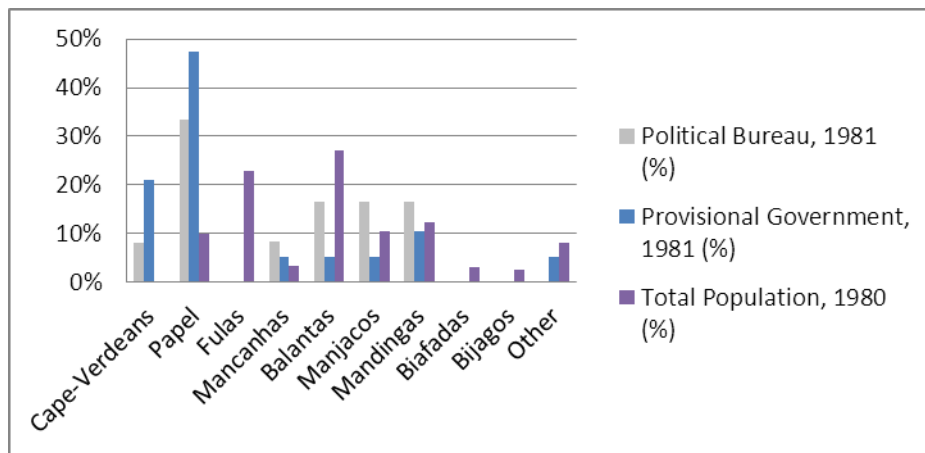


Figure 9 shows the inter-ethnic configuration of the 1981 provisional government and of the Political Bureau. Although there was a substantial decrease of the number of Cape-Verdeans/mestiço in comparison to the previous regime, their continued weighty representation in the government, as well as that of the Papel ethnic group,<sup>134</sup> is suggestive of the urban and *bourgeois* character that the elite bargain would eventually take on. The similarities between the 1981 provisional government and the previous one (12 ministers were the same) shows that the changes that the *Readjustment Movement* ought to have brought about had not been significant. Though there was an overlap of members in both these organs (of the sixteen members of the Political Bureau, eleven were ministers), the Balanta were considerably represented in the PAIGC, but significantly underrepresented in the government. The relevance of this point derives from the weight of the Balanta in the armed forces: the Balanta made up the greater part of the Armed Forces during the independence war and after, and were also representative of the rural-based populace (I return to this relevant point in the penultimate section of this chapter). Thus, in spite of the apparently strong influence of the revolutionary wing in the PAIGC bodies, the affairs of the state were in the hands of those who

<sup>134</sup> The Papel ethnic group, as referred to in chapter 3, is predominantly based in the region of Bissau.

were perceived as having collaborated with Luís Cabral and who had not fought in the liberation war.<sup>135</sup>

The inter-ethnic distribution of these positions can be potentially indicative of the source of tensions that would eventually emerge but are not reflective of the group perceptions shared amongst the elites at this precise time. As was the case with the previous chapter, had it not been discerned that ideological and social divergences were the primary cause for PAIGC divisions, this first part of the chapter, following the analysis of the inter-ethnic distribution to the positions of power, may have arrived at a hasty conclusion regarding the shape of the political elite bargain based on *post-hoc* assessments. The next part of the chapter, picking up upon military dissatisfaction, explores the processes that in fact led ethnicity to become politically salient.

#### **6.4 A Social Boundary Shifting Incident**

Discontent in the army was already widespread by 1979. The reform of the ranking and hierarchy of the armed forces had caused serious frustrations among the soldiers and the low wages and pensions further aggravated their dissatisfaction (Forrest 1992: 57). Government money – coming from foreign aid and loans - had not been going their way, but rather into Luís Cabral's "modern" projects and urban needs (Galli and Jones 1987: 119). The hope of the insurgents was that the end of Cape Verdean dominance would put an end to this impoverishment. Nino Vieira - President of the Council of the Revolution, Head of State and Secretary-General of the PAIGC - was the "legendary warrior who all loved" (Interviews 10 and reflected in interviews 11, 24, 27, 28 and 30), and, as such, soldiers expected they would benefit greatly from his leadership. Nino symbolized the comeback of the true PAIGC heroes and their legitimacy to power.

The army's condition, however, did not improve within the first year after the 1980 *coup* and the common soldier could barely make ends meet (Sambú in Nóbrega 2002: 242). The

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<sup>135</sup> It should also be pointed out the absence of Fulas in these positions, which is demonstrative of how this ethnic group remained politically demobilized and distant from the PAIGC.



government's justification for insufficient food distribution and funding to the armed forces was lack of resources. However, as Forrest (1992: 58) points out:

*“although these were almost exactly the arguments put forth by former President Luís Cabral, Vieira's greater personal legitimacy among the soldiers enabled him to articulate these points without incurring military hostility in the initial year of his rule”*

At the level of the military elites, the officials who had fought together with Nino in the liberation struggle and who helped him overthrow Cabral's regime expected that this movement would signal their rise to political prominence. However, only three of the military officers from the Council of the Revolution had been nominated as ministers and, with the reposition of constitutional legality, envisaged for the first semester of 1982, the Council of the Revolution would be dissolved and their power would be substantially diminished (Rudebeck 1982: 58). These PAIGC leaders of military background, who had ascended to their positions because of their repute and fame as combatants in the independence war, had not been compensated for their efforts. As representatives of the armed forces - the armed branch of the PAIGC and its “guardian” (Constitution 1973; Duarte Silva 2010: 5) - they aspired to be in a position to guide and monitor the activities of the state. As a senior official of the military recalled to me, the protagonists of the *Readjustment Movement* all wanted a leading role.

*“Nino was not a politician, he was a soldier. Military wise he was a phenomenon. But now he was in front of the state and the maximum responsible for the party. In the end he only knew how to be a soldier. This is the big difference that the 1980 coup d'état brought. He now needed to administer the state, not as a military man, but as a politician. I think at the time he should have honestly told his comrades that it was time for them to go. They [the military officials in the Council of the Revolution] all wanted to be ministers. They were the protagonists of the change and now they all wanted protagonism” (Interview 24)*

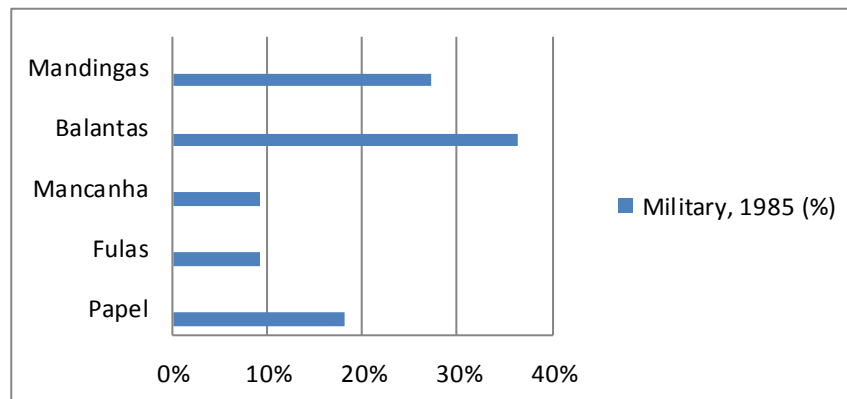
Political developments, however, did not look promising for the military. A government composed predominantly of anti-revolutionaries indicated to them that the *Readjustment Movement* that they had headed had not done enough readjusting. It is in this context of general military dissatisfaction that ethnic divergences emerge.

As already alluded to, Nino was perceived by his peers and soldiers, independently of their ethnic origin, as “the most famous, charismatic, most feared commander of the war. No other combatant managed to have the aura that he had. All of us worshipped him” (Interview 30). As one of the most respected commanders of the liberation war, he was the natural

representative of the military faction (Ziegler in Galli and Jones 1987: 99; Forrest 1987: 108). Having commanded the southern fronts of the war in the independence struggle, that is, regions mostly inhabited by Balanta, he had thus fought alongside this ethnic group and developed strong ties with it. Although of Papel ethnicity, his war name was of Balanta origin - Kabi Na Fantchama. In the armed forces, Nino did benefit those who he was closest to, and, once in power, he nominated his Balanta war companions to the higher echelons of the Armed Forces (Barros 2011: 96): “Nino felt as Balanta as any other Balanta. It is natural that suspicions started to be raised about the Balanta” (Interview 24). Accordingly, alongside generalized military dissatisfaction with the composition of the 1981 government, these nominations triggered ethnic tensions in the army.

Furthermore, since Guinea-Bissau’s independence it has been assumed that the Armed Forces have been composed predominantly of Balanta. Although there is no data to confirm this, there is evidence (related, as explained in Chapter 3, to the initial political and military mobilization during the struggle for independence) that this was (and remains) the case.<sup>136</sup> Although the data gathered corresponds to the highest military positions<sup>137</sup> in 1985, it suggests Balanta predominance in the Armed Forces (see Figure 10).<sup>138</sup>

Figure 10. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Military Posts, (absolute distribution), 1985



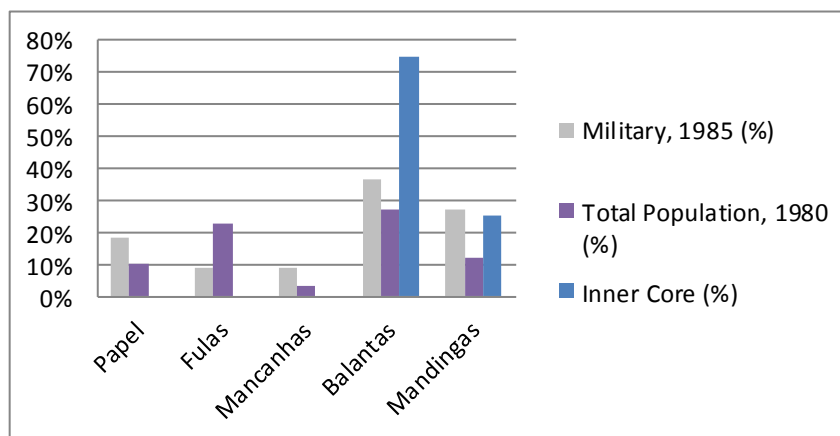
<sup>136</sup> Mobilization initiated in the most southern regions of Guinea-Bissau which is predominantly inhabited by Balanta. As projected by Amílcar Cabral, Balanta military adherence in the war was swift. They fought on all fronts and composed the bulk of Guinea-Bissau’s forces (Temudo 2009: 53).

<sup>137</sup> The positions are relative to Chiefs of Staff, Adjuncts, Commanders and Chief of Departments.

<sup>138</sup> This data is prior to 17 October 1985 episode.

The data also indicate that the Mandinga were the second most highly represented group in the highest positions in the army. While they were almost as prominent on the whole as the Balanta in these positions, disaggregating the data by hierarchical importance<sup>139</sup> confirms Balanta dominance (see Figure 11). Although the Papel, the Mancanha and the Fula were appointed to some weighty positions, they were not represented at the Chief of Staff level. Given what was exposed above, and taking into consideration more recent estimates of the ethnic composition of the armed Forces, which are suggestive of Balanta “control of the army” (ICG 2008: 21), it is reasonable to accept that the army, was, in its majority, made up of Balanta. Therefore, military uprisings and unrests were (and are) easily confounded with Balanta discontent. The effects of this association had important effects upon boundary definitions and were reinforced by the incidents of unrest in the Armed Forces that follow.

Figure 11. Inter-ethnic distribution of Inner Core Military Posts, 1985 (relative to population share)



The first suspicion that a *coup d'état* was being engendered was in March 1982. The details and exact proceedings of this event are confusing and unsettled. It is reported that on March 13, 1982 there was military uprising in the Brá Battalion and a Balanta Captain was shot. The Minister of the Armed Forces, Paulo Correia, and the General Procurator, Viriato Pã, were accused of plotting to overthrow the President (Nóbrega 2002: 233; Forrest 1987: 111; Barros

<sup>139</sup> Inner core refer to the Chiefs of Staff.

2011: 89). Both were Balanta; amongst the accusers - members of the Council of the Revolution such as Iafai Camará, Vítor Saúde Maria, Manuel Saturnino da Costa and João da Silva – none were Balanta (Barros 2011: 90; Sambú in Nóbrega 2002: 234).

The inquiries conducted by the national security concluded that there had not been a plot to overthrow the government. Nino publicly stated that the accusations were rumours and that it was “not fair to hate or be jealous of the Balanta for having higher ranks in the Armed Forces” (Vieira in Nóbrega 2002: 235). While Nino’s words were intended to soothe tensions, this first military disturbance led to a categorical distinction between the Balanta and the rest and a labelling that is a step in boundary definition.

In May 1982, two months after this incident, there was a remodelling of the structure of the government and various ministers were rotated. The return to constitutional legality was postponed and the Political Bureau, the Council of the Revolution and the provisional government continued to command the political affairs of the country. On the one hand, the alterations point towards an increase in the President’s institutional power and, on the other, suggest that the military uprising and the accusations against Balanta military and political officials had affected the President’s relations with senior military officials.

The President’s Office now retained direct power over the armed forces and national security. Nino’s influence in the military was further consolidated with the creation of “revolutionary party cells” intended to both politically educate the soldiers and monitor their activities (Forrest 1992: 59). Regardless of the *de facto* concentration of power in the presidency, the position of a prime-minister was created. The position of minister of the armed forces was abolished and in its stead a vice-minister was given charge of the army’s activities. These changes concurrently entailed the demotion of Paulo Correia, a Balanta, as minister of the armed forces and his transfer to the ministry of rural development, while Iafai Camará, a Mandinga, was appointed as vice-minister of the armed forces. At the same time, Viriato Pã, a Balanta, was moved from the position of general procurator to a civil service position in the ministry of public administration.

Whereas Nino had declared that there was no veracity to the accusations, the downgrading of these two Balanta, who had been named as suspects in a coup attempt, and the exclusion of Balanta party leaders from ministerial and state secretary positions (see Figures 12 and 13; note also the persistent non-representation of the Fula) substantiate the claim that the March

1982 incident had had an effect in substantially altering the President's relationships with these officials and in activating ethnic boundaries across all governing institutions.

Figure 12 Inter-ethnic Distribution of Government Positions, 1982 (absolute distribution and relative to population share)

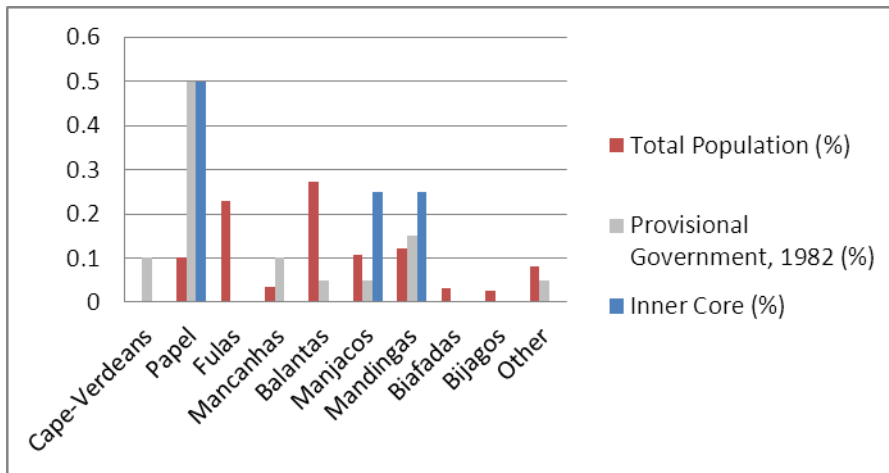
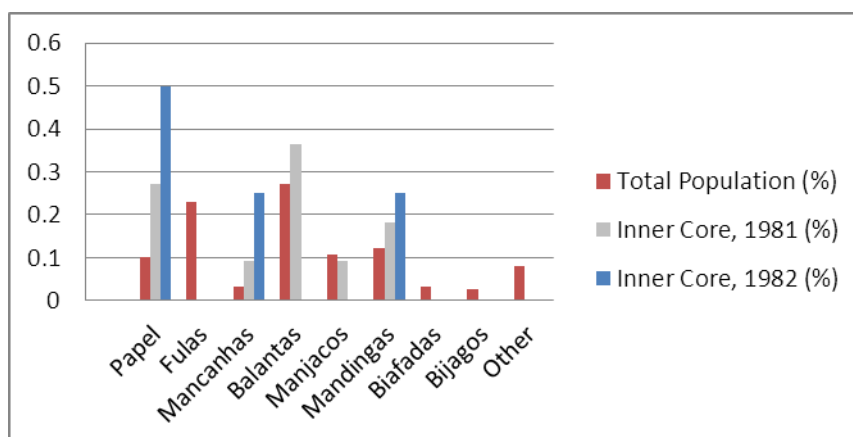


Figure 13 Inter-ethnic distribution of Inner Core Government Positions (absolute distribution and relative to population share), 1981 and 1982<sup>140</sup>



This ministerial reshuffling resulted in a government largely dominated by the military presence. But the government was also significantly influenced by liberals and the “anti-party wing” (see Figure 14). The label “anti-party wing” denotes a deviation from “Cabral’s line” and refers a tendency in the PAIGC that would probably be better designated as liberal and technocratic rather than anti-party, since all those supporting this faction were in fact PAIGC militants. The leading figure of this PAIGC faction was the newly appointed Prime-Minister, Vítor Saúde Maria (former Minister of Foreign Affairs).<sup>141</sup> His appointment to this position was in compensation for his loss of power within the PAIGC’s Central Committee in relation to Vasco Cabral - the representative of the more revolutionary wing.

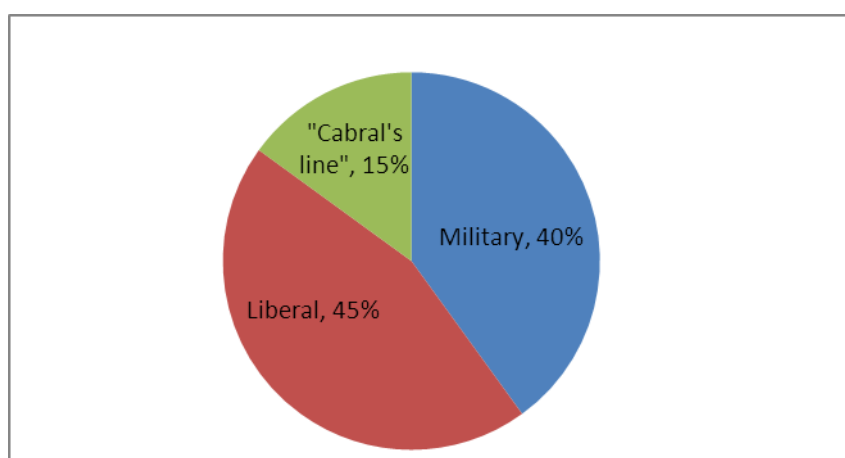
The revolutionary faction was rather underrepresented in the 1982 provisional government. Vasco Cabral, Minister of Economic Coordination and Planning and responsible for elaborating

<sup>140</sup> Inner core state positions for 1981: President, Minister of the Armed Forces and Minister of National Security, members of the Council of the Revolution (since it had prominent role in state decisions in the first year after the 1980 *Readjustment Movement*). In 1982, the role of the Council of the Revolution diminished substantially (the alterations in the government were neither discussed in this organ and neither were its members previously informed of the alterations which is signalling of the increase in power in the presidency) and therefore its members are not taken into account in the state positions with most power and influence. Thus, the inner core in 1982: President, Vice-Minister of the Armed Forces, Vice-Minister of National Security and Prime-Minister (the role of the Prime-Minister was beyond symbolic; he presided the Council of Ministers).

<sup>141</sup> To a certain extent, this faction was associated with the *petty bourgeoisie*. It is relevant to point out that the individuals composing this faction were in the majority of mixed race and the creole elite.

a three year socio-economic development plan, which had given priority to the agricultural sector, was substituted by Luís Sanca (former Ambassador to the CEE in Brussels and nominated as Secretary of State for Planning) and by Vítor Freire Monteiro (former Director of the National Bank and nominated as Minister of Economics and Finance). Both were related to a more liberal and technocratic wing. Likewise, Mário Cabral, Minister of Education - well-known for his revolutionary speeches and for stressing the necessity of investing in educational training in the rural areas - was replaced by Avito José da Silva who was closely aligned to the Prime-Minister (Galli and Jones 1987: 104; Rudebeck 1982: 62).

Figure 14. Distribution of Government Positions Between the "Three Tendencies", 1982



The depiction of these three tendencies, however, is not illustrative of the ethnic cleavages that cut across these factions. The fact that the military-wing enhanced its representation in 1982 did not dilute the ethnic boundaries that had been activated with the military uprising incident. Furthermore, to be here categorized as part of the military faction does not signify that these individuals abstained from having sided ideologically. Manuel dos Santos, for instance, a military commander in the Liberation War, was known for being in support of liberalizing the economy.

It therefore becomes extremely difficult to accurately interpret the composition of the members of the government and this difficulty derives precisely from the nature of this phase during which social boundaries were being renegotiated and new relationships were being established amongst the elites. The exemplary illustration of these relationship shifts is

portrayed by the two Balanta military men who became suspects for allegedly having attempted a *coup*, Paulo Correia and Viriato Pã.

Pã had been nominated as General Procurator under the national concord policy and, ironically, specifically symbolized those who the military, in their I National Conference, had spoken out against: he had been an overt opponent of the PAIGC. In fact, Paulo Correia had earlier stated that anti-PAIGC militants were enemies of the PAIGC and would never be recognized as heroes (Paulo Correia in CIDAC 1982: 7). Yet, Viriato Pã and Paulo Correia, both Balanta, were being accused together of mentoring a coup.

Whether they actually did plot to overthrow the President because of Balanta underrepresentation in the government (Forrest 1991: 59), or whether these were false accusations levelled by other military officials in the Armed Forces in order to prevent future Balanta dominance (Sambú in Nóbrega 2002: 333 – 235) can only be speculated upon since all sources of information - including my interviewee's answers - are distinct and unclear. It may have just simply been strife in the military barracks. One way or the other, at the core of either explanation seem to be references to the overall military dissatisfaction at the time and Balanta predominance in the army and in its highest positions. In any case, this incident marks the activation of a salient ethnic cleavage and a degrading of Nino's relations with his Balanta war comrades.

## **6.5 Kiyang-Yang**

In 1983 Guinea-Bissau was going through its worst period of food shortage. The 1979-1980 and 1983 droughts had severely impacted upon crop production (Olaniyan 1996: 46) and the mismanaged state-owned agricultural cooperatives irregularly provided overly expensive supplies of food (Galli and Jones 1987: 114). Dissatisfaction reached its peak when a group of junior soldiers claimed they would not tolerate the situation any longer and demanded to receive more benefits. President Nino Vieira assured the soldiers that from then on they would be the first to receive basic necessities, such as rice, oil and butter and promised the soldiers new uniforms (Forrest 1987: 109).

Alongside this turmoil, there occurred another incident similar - if not an identical – to the previous alleged coup attempt of 1982. Balanta senior military officials and soldiers were once



again accused of planning to overthrow the President. Paulo Correia and Viriato Pã were, once more, the main suspects. Yet again, there was no grounded evidence that suggested the accuracy of these accusations and Correia remained in his positions. If ethnic boundaries had been apparent with the first incident, with this other episode it was clear to both sides - Balanta and the rest - that there were coordinated plans of attack to get rid of one another.

During this time a woman named Maria Ntombikte initiated a movement in the South of Guinea-Bissau, the *Kiyang-Yang*. It propagated rapidly amongst the Balanta and became a “national security” concern (Havik 2012: 61; Temudo 2009: 54). The movement sought to introduce social and religious changes within the Balanta ethnic group. Ntombikte urged Balanta “to move forward”, to “develop” and to forget about shrines and spirits and worship just one God (Joop Jong in Temudo 2009: 55). She deemed Balanta pagan/animist practices “backward” in relation to their Muslim neighbours and encouraged “modern practices” so that Balanta would not lag behind other ethnic groups (Ibid: 55; 66).<sup>142</sup>

Adherence to *Kiyang-Yang* was far-reaching and the government sent an investigation commission to the villages in order to contain the movement. They arrested Ntombikte and forbid the movement’s activities. The Minister of Natural Resources and Industry, Filinto Barros, during this period recalls:

*“Paulo Correia’s reaction to this was negative. He went after the investigative teams and he took care of giving back to the [Balanta] people in the interior all the possessions that had been taken away from them. This procedure was interpreted as a sign of tribal solidarity and intensified even more the social and political atmosphere”* (Barros 2011: 91 - 92)

A tendency with a clearly ethnic character that had started off with general military claims to power and personal rivalries at the elite level now gained widespread proportions.

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<sup>142</sup> Maria Ntombikte suggested that Balanta children should go to school, that hospitals rather than witchcraft were the form of getting cured, that they should learn how to cultivate other crops besides rice, that women should also work and that wealth accumulated by hard work is something that they should respect (Temudo 2009: 56).

## 6.6 Institutionalisation of Presidential Power

Throughout this period the concentration of political power in the presidency signified a concentration of power in the figure of Nino Vieira.

The National Popular Assembly approved Guinea-Bissau's new constitution in May 1984 and formally established a presidentialist regime. The Council of the State replaced the Council of the Revolution. Nino Vieira was elected President of the Council of the State

The discussions that preceded its approval confronted the PAIGC's two ideological factions. Whereas the liberal technocratic faction fought to maintain a semi-presidential political system - and supported maintaining Saúde Maria as prime minister, the revolutionary-wing was in favour of its suppression (Nóbrega 2002: 236). Deliberations on the issue were to take place in the PAIGC's Central Committee, however, before they did, Saúde Maria was accused of plotting a *coup d'état*.<sup>143</sup> He was then expelled from the PAIGC and those closest to him were excluded from the 1984 government (Ibid ibidem; Barros 2011: 90; Galli and Jones 1987; 105).

Together with the new constitutional arrangements, this episode signalled an increase in President Nino's power. With the extinction of the position of prime-minister, Nino, simultaneously Head of the Council of the State, commander of the Armed Forces and Secretary-General of the PAIGC, held overarching control over the government, the army and the party. With the transfer of security affairs to the presidency, the creation of security agencies and a National Security Council managed by and reporting directly to the President provided Nino with additional control (Forrest 1992: 59).

Party and popular participation atrophied in these circumstances. The party's delegates lost their voice and the role of the National Popular Assembly became merely symbolic. Mass organizations came under tight control by the party apparatus. This contrasted with a complete de-linkage with the party at the level of rural village committees (Ibid: 60). Thus, the initial pledges of a return to a rural-oriented PAIGC remained exactly mere pledges. On the other hand, employment in the State and the privileges derived from it had created a new class of political leaders and "excluded the great mass of people from participating effectively

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<sup>143</sup> This accusation was most probably unfounded since Saúde Maria was a civilian and had few connections in the military.

in politics and pressing for a more equitable distribution of national resources” (Galli and Jones 1987: 108).

While the concentration of institutions and resources strengthened Nino’s control and power, it would be misrepresenting to equate this outcome to a personalized form of rule. National decisions revolved around the persona of the President but the course of events were not determined by him alone. Interaction between the diverse PAIGC factions and Nino’s mediation and negotiation with each one of them is a better depiction of how the regime operated. Saúde Maria’s expulsion and the retreat of the liberal wing are an example of how interaction between factions produced an outcome, which is in this case, a change in the governments’ configuration and the defeat and exclusion of one of the factions. The decision to honour and grant special privileges to Guinea-Bissau’s “freedom fighters” in the 1984 constitution (article 5) is an example of Nino’s role. His intervention on behalf of the military clique and liberation war veterans certainly influenced the decision.

With regard to the sharpening of ethnic boundaries, it is commonly maintained, as will be shown, that Nino alone instigated this development. This interpretation falls short however by neglecting to see the versatility of Nino’s strategic and tactical manoeuvring. Nino applied differing strategies at different moments according to circumstances. It is argued here that he operated and ruled through interaction and that his varying strategies and tactics were dependent upon the changing relations established with the contending social groups. This does not discard the image of the calculating (and sly) Nino making personal decisions, but rather seeks to put his action into the context of emergent relations and previous actions.

## **6.7 “Was Nino Afraid of the Balanta?”<sup>144</sup>: The Episode of October 17, 1985**

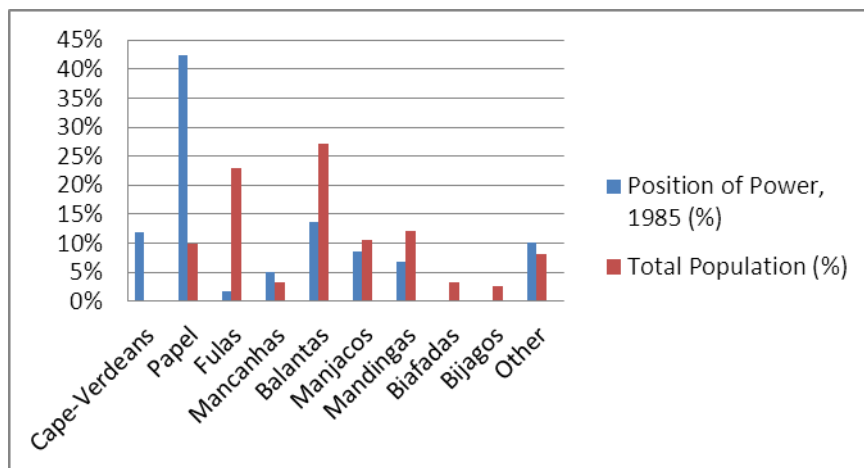
The organization and social composition of the Council of the State reveals that there had been an effort to accommodate the personal rivalries and ethnic divergences which had arisen. The suspected leader of the “Balanta *coup*”, Paulo Correia, and his Mandinga accuser, Iafai

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<sup>144</sup> Question posed to Major Tagme Na Waie in “A Revolta dos Mais Velhos”, 1998-99.

Camará,<sup>145</sup> were the embodiment of these antagonisms; the solution found to dissipate the tension between them was the creation of two Vice-Presidencies in the Council of the State and their appointment to these respective positions (Interview 6; Galli and Jones 1987: 105). The same strategy was employed in the government: Correia was appointed as Minister of State of Justice and Local power and Camará as Minister of the Armed Forces. In accordance with this, the inter-ethnic distribution of positions of power demonstrates that care was also given to ensure an increase in Balanta representation (see Figure 15). In the Council of the State, for example, Balanta representation doubled and there was concern in balancing the two rival ethnic groups in the positions considered of utmost power (see Figure 16). However, in spite of these considerations, the highest echelons of armed forces and the army were predominantly composed of Balanta (see Figure 17).

Figure 15. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Positions of Power (absolute distribution and relative to population share), 1985<sup>146</sup>



<sup>145</sup> Iafai Camará was purported to have been behind all incriminations (Interviews; Forrest 1992: 61; Barros 2011: 95).

<sup>146</sup> Positions of power: Council of the State, government (ministers and secretaries of state), Armed Forces Chiefs of Staff, National Security Council and Political Bureau.

Figure 16. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Inner core Positions of Power, 1982 and 1985 (absolute distribution)<sup>147</sup>

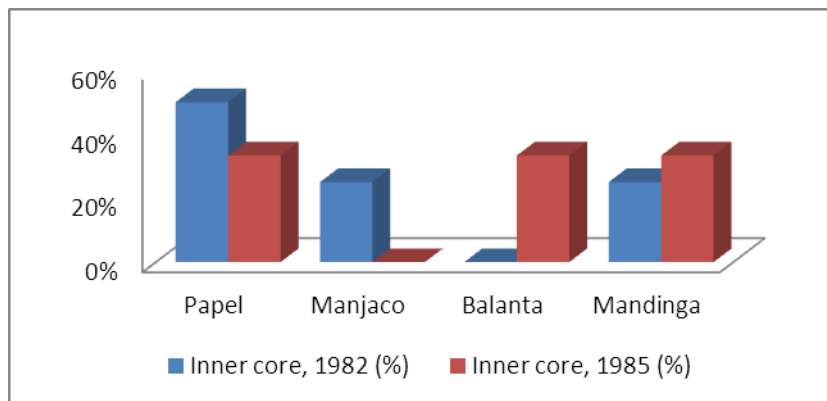
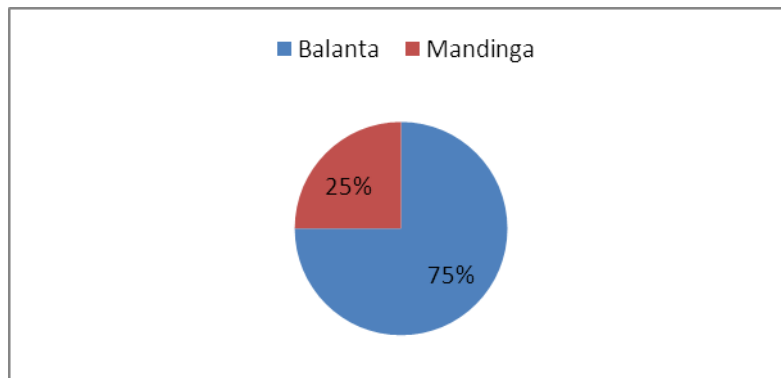


Figure 17. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Military Positions in the Armed Forces, 1985<sup>148</sup>



Five months into these governmental alterations, on October 17, 1985, over sixty high ranking military and political officers were indicted on charges of conspiring against the President and were imprisoned. In contrast with the previous incidents, these arrests did not seem to result from confusion in military barracks or an actual uprising, but were based upon circumstantial evidence due to the gathering of a number of Balanta officers at a party. The case became known as the “The October 17 Episode” and is pinpointed as the moment when ethnicity

<sup>147</sup> Inner core positions in 1985: President, Vice-Presidents of the Council of the State, Minister of the Armed Forces, General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and National Security Council.

<sup>148</sup> Highest military positions in the Armed Forces: Chiefs of Staff.

became politicized in Guinea-Bissau's post-independence period. In 1986, the military court sentenced to death twelve of the "ambitious and opportunist, that through a terrible gesture wanted to turn Guinea-Bissau in an authentic Chad" (Nino Vieira in *Nô Pintcha*, 1 August, 1986).

*"The Military Supreme Court has sentenced Paulo Correia to death penalty by gunfire...the Court considered him the main person behind the coup d'état attempt of last October, known as 'the October 17 Episode' and sentenced to death as well have been Viriato Rodrigues Pã, Binhanquerem Na Tchanda, Tagme Na Waie, Wagna Na N'Fade, Pedro Ramos, Braima Bangura, K'Pas Kull, Sae Braia Nhakpa, Lamine Cissé, N'Bana Sambú e Malam Sané"* (in *Nô Pintcha*, 16 July 1986).

As can be seen, amongst those accused and sentenced were major actors in PAIGC and government politics. Six of the twelve accused - ten of whom were Balanta - were actually executed.<sup>149</sup> The remaining six who were absolved spent over five years in prison and were brutally tortured. While missing prisoners were reported to have died of natural causes (Joseph Turpin in *O Dia*, 17 June, 1986), in 1999 twenty-two bodies were found buried (Nóbrega 2002: 248).

As for the motives for the charges, there is no one answer. For one interviewee, who was a war veteran and caught up in the incident, the episode remains an enigma. He expressed perplexity in relation to the situation:

*"In 1985 I was sent to prison. I was in prison for three years. Until today I do not know what I did. I was heard in the military court and was absolved but astonishingly they kept me in prison for another year and nine months. If you want me to tell you something with all honesty, the 17 October case, to me, remains an enigma. I never felt or saw any signs that a coup d'état was being planned or conspired. If they wanted to do a coup d'état, they would have done it. The majority of Nino's personal security was imprisoned. They arrested other groups such as the Fulas and the Madinga in order to make it seem that it was not an ethnic thing. What he really wanted was to destroy those who were the true gems of the Guinean army, those big names of the liberation war that were part of Nino Vieira's Praetorian Guard. Many of them had become men alongside Nino. They knew him since they were fifteen*

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<sup>149</sup> It is reported that international pressure - namely the pleas for clemency by Pope John II and the President of Portugal - averted the execution of the other six accused (*Expresso*, 19 July, 1986; *Nô Pintcha*, 19 July, 1986).

*years old. It was them, together with him, that led the coup d'état against Luís Cabral" (Interview 30)*

For others, such as this lawyer who was a prominent figure in Bissau and was involved in the defence, the case was an outright frame up:

*"In 1985, when the supposed coup attempt takes place, they call upon lawyers to assist in the trial [...] It was a hard process, as you can imagine. I have a clear conscience, I did everything I could and I think my efforts were recognized. There are many military officials, almost all of them Balanta, who I am friends with because they acknowledged the fight we [the defence attorney's] put up. Although we did not exactly reach our objective, we were still able to save a lot of people. We reduced a lot of sentences. In the end of the trial we asked for all of the accused to be absolved because for us it was a set-up. To me and to my colleagues it was nothing but a lie" (Interview 18).*

The promotions and demotions of Balanta and Mandinga between 1981 and 1985 has led to the "ex post facto rationalization" (Tilly 1996: 600) that Nino strategically devised a divide and rule strategy based on ethnicity in order to control the army. For example, this interviewee, who was a minister during this time, is clear on this:

*"Nino was an ethnic minority within the military, he was Papel. He was able to impose himself inside of the two main forces in the Armed Forces, the Balanta component and the Mandinga. He played a lot with this. He would alternate, either giving importance to the Mandinga and at other times, more importance to the Balanta. And that is how Iafai Camara [Mandinga], Paulo Correia [Balanta] and Ansumane Mané [Mandinga] passed each other. There was always this game to balance the forces. This could only go wrong" (Interview 20)*

Another interviewee, secretary of state at the time (later minister), makes the same point.

*"Two people in particular exemplify this ethnic rivalry, Paulo Correia, a Balanta military chief, and Iafai Camará, who had had an important role in the 1980 coup d'état. This is where the whole tension starts. Ansumane Mané [Mandinga] was number two of Iafai Camará. Iafai Camará becomes Minister of Defence substituting Paulo Correia. Paulo Correia understands this was on purpose, that this was deliberately against him. Ansumane ascends with Iafai. He [Ansumane] then becomes General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Nino played around with these rivalries and took advantage of them" (Interview 6).*

Nevertheless, although this point of view is expressed by participants and witnesses to the events, this interpretation is questionable and problematic. It is questionable because it leaves unanswered why Nino would have promoted Balanta military officials to the highest ranks and

positions in the army in the first place, to have kept them in positions of power despite the accusations made upon them, and then to have attempted to balance the ethnic and personal rivalries that had evolved, and, after all that, to end up executing them. In other words, Nino's strategy's altered significantly (and perhaps erratically) throughout this period. It is problematic because it presumes that all that occurred was derived from a well-thought-out scheme by Nino to remain in control and leaves little room for "updating and revised actions" (Eden 2008: 8). Nino's decisions certainly reveal a strong disposition to do everything to stay in power, but they also expose how his decisions were contingent and shaped by the course of events.

Nino's relations with the Balanta military elite changed over time. Nino went from being treated by a Balanta *nom de guerre*, and practically feeling himself Balanta (Interview 24), serving as a "voice" for the Balanta (Forrest 1987: 102), to discriminating against them (Interview 2). He went from having fought alongside them and defending them by publically admonishing others for being envious of their combating qualities and high military ranks, to being afraid of them and accusing them of tribalism (Vieira in Nóbrega 2002: 235; Temudo 2009: 57; Havik 2012:61). He went from friend to foe, from trusting the Balanta to mistrusting them. To describe how exactly this process occurred is challenging, if not impossible - since it would have required *in loco* participant observation, nonetheless, some already mentioned points of information support a possible explanation. First, Nino identified with the Balanta and as such, once in power, promoted them in the army. Second, when he does so, it triggers ethnic and personal grievances; the 1982 incident is a manifestation of these tensions. Despite attempts to alleviate disagreements between the two individuals who personified the ethnic rivalry, the Balanta still held the highest ranks in and composed the bulk of the Armed Forces. Military dissatisfaction with poverty that the overall population was subject to, in conjunction with the constant accusations against the Balanta for plotting to overthrow the President, resulted in increased suspicions. In this context, the emergence of the *Kiyang-Yang* movement raised the possibility of Balanta affirmation and doubts regarding the future development of their group ambitions. Third, in the end, Nino could have practically felt Balanta, but he was not one. He was, together with soldiers of other ethnic groups, in a minority in the army. This process, and its unintended consequences, is hinted at in the following passage by the Minister of Natural Resources and Industry - who was also a member of the Council of the State - at the time.



*“Apparently for a lot of analysts, Nino was the principal beneficiary of this process of eliminating potential competitors...Contrary to this position, I have always defended that the biggest loser of this process was Nino himself....I do not believe he embarked on a suicidal mission. Nino was what he was thanks to the support of Balanta combatants. Nino, better than anyone knew that without his men from the South, his [warrior] myth would not exist. In fact, that he preferred the name Kabi to Nino says everything. After the 14 November, Nino pushed away those commanders from the North and the creoles with the objective of being alone with his faithful combatants of the South, convinced that they would remain forever grateful to the legendary commander that taught them everything. Therefore an action against the Balanta was not in Nino’s horizons” (Barros 2011: 96).*

## **6.8 A Balanta Political Identity: Boundaries and Stories**

The episode of October 17, 1985 has provided two distinct interpretations of Guinea-Bissau’s ethno-political trajectory. On the one hand, as my interviews confirm, it symbolizes the moment when ethnicity became politically salient and “prepared the ground for future development of ‘political tribalism’” (Temudo 2008: 248) and “identity politics among the Balanta” (Temudo 2009: 57). On the other hand, and in contrast, it marks a shift in understandings of the role that ethnicity has played throughout the post-independence period. That is to say, it gave cause to analyses - published after 1985 - to retrospectively highlight Balanta underrepresentation in leading party and government positions as the source of their dissatisfaction and resentment *since* 1974, especially since they had greatly contributed to the liberation war (Fernandes 1995; ICG 2008: 8).

This chapter (and the previous two) has suggested that ethnicity and its politicization in Guinea-Bissau be seen through an alternate perspective. Indeed Balanta were the major contributors to the independence war and, as the data has pointedly shown, they were minimally represented in the most important positions at the political level - which becomes even more conspicuous when considering their overall share in the total of the population. However, between 1977 and 1980 ethnicity was not the principal source of fragmentation: rural impoverishment and Cape Verdean predominance in key posts were the principal drivers of the *coup*. Moreover, in the armed forces the form in which promotions and ranks had been assigned in February 1980 - right before the *coup* occurred - had been an especially strong

cause of resentment. The principal reason for anger was the belief that those being promoted did not deserve to be since their military participation in the liberation war had been minimal.

Military, rural and Balanta grievances can be easily confounded in analysis of the rise of ethnicity. As this chapter has exposed, my own interpretation is that ethnic antagonisms emerged in the post-1980 period due to a mismanaged distribution of political positions between the military officers who, alongside Nino, had overthrown Cabral, and to the hierarchical promotions in the armed forces. The merging of the three variables - rural, military and ethnicity - is explained by the following: rural discontent (for the reasons enumerated in the previous chapter) “was directly transmitted to the soldiers, the vast majority of whom continued to retain direct ties with their rural homes” (Forrest 1987: 102). The majority, indeed, the greater part of the army, consisted of the Balanta, who comprised the largest ethnic group in Guinea-Bissau and are concentrated in the most southern and rural regions. Yet, each one of these variables differs in relevance depending upon the context and moment.

To interpret the episode of October 17, 1985 in light of a ubiquitous Balanta resentment leaves room to question why the Balanta had not attempted to overturn the previous regime before 1980 on their own (rather than align with the other members of the Council of Revolution of various ethnic groups) and neglects a needed assessment of the ethnic rivalries in the armed forces between Mandinga and Balanta during 1981-1985. The argument put forward is that October 17 has shaped interpretations of the past by privileging the ethnicity variable over the other two without taking into account the very evolution of relationships. This shift is noticeable by, once again, comparing academic literature and documentation written prior to and after the episode and by contrasting two distinct stories: 1) that of a PAIGC able to unify all ethnic groups and committed to the socio-political struggle, which then deviated from its path, and where the 1980 coup marked both the return to its path and Guinean unity and 2) that of an ethnic group that is constantly marginalized. The point is not to discard the evidence that the Balanta were underrepresented at the political level but rather to point out that the rationale for the contention emerged first in accordance with military and rural considerations and only after 1982 did ambitions to power become ethnically based.

In spite of pinpointing this episode as the moment when ethnic antagonisms in Guinea-Bissau start, it is necessary to untangle a complex process in which original intentions gave rise to consequences that were not necessarily what was expected. The problems had already started in the armed forces with the promotion of Nino’s Balanta liberation war friends. The first

military disturbance in 1982 and accusations made against Balanta by non-Balanta military officials are a fair indication that this had had a significant effect in altering relations between them. The lack of clear evidence as to what actually occurred in these events is of rather less importance for the purposes of explaining the activation of an ethnic boundary.

Nino Vieira himself publicly stated that this had not been an act against the Balanta:

*“It was not the Balanta people that tried to overthrow Nino. Who tried was a little group of people who wanted power; but power can only be given by the people”*  
(Nino Vieira in Notícias, December 2, 1985).

Nevertheless, repression of the *Kiyang-Yang* movement by the government made it seem that this purge had not been directed solely against “a little group of people”, but rather reinforced the idea that the group as a whole was its target. So the episode itself is a consequence of its activation in the relations of the military elites. In the time span of a few years, an army that was composed of liberation war heroes became perceived as an army predominantly composed of Balanta.

The episode is thus constitutive of a Balanta historical narrative of injustice and victimization and provided the cultural material for political entrepreneurs to subsequently mobilize support. In spite of Nino’s denials of acts against the Balanta, the 1994 presidential campaign, for example, was opportune for the PRS candidate, Kumba Yalá, to exploit the narrative of Balanta victimization in order to mobilize Balanta voters (Temudo 2008: 249).<sup>150</sup>

As for the further issue of whether this episode prepared the setting for a Balanta political identity, the next chapter will expand upon the idea that the liberalisation process created the conditions and context in which this became possible.

## **6.9 The Political Elite Bargain**

The feeling of enthusiasm with getting rid of the “second colonizer” was momentary. The political break-up with Cape Verde had not signified a genuine alteration in the government’s

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<sup>150</sup> To note that Yalá’s base of support is largely rural.

composition and direction. In spite of reaffirmations of the PAIGC's role as the revolutionary "guiding force of society", it extended incentives for all groups and social forces to adhere to the party. The result was felt less with regard to less mobilized ethnic groups; the Fula ethnic group, for example, remained largely outside of the ruling coalition and was excluded from practically all top political positions. However, the incentives did encourage more technocratic and anti-socialist elements to enter the PAIGC, which set the stage for new political discordances divided along more ideological lines underlining class and urban/rural divisions. As the more revolutionary wing of the PAIGC was mostly located in the armed forces, the predominance of the urban elites - denoted by the many Cape Verdeans/mestiço and Papel in ministerial and state secretary positions - and the meagre number of military officials in leading governmental positions converged and gave rise to discontent in the armed forces and resulted in the two lesser contentious episodes examined in the beginning of this chapter.

Urban-rural economic imbalances persisted. While the government maintained itself through foreign aid (alluded to in the next chapter), the majority of the population was not benefitting and, worse, experienced chronic food shortages. To a large extent, the constant military disturbances, at the bottom level, signalled the break of the political elites with the masses. President Nino Vieira's military prestige provided legitimacy to the *coup* and his assurances that the soldiers would be taken care of (through constitutionally guaranteed privileged resource distribution) impeded the unrest from escalating. But this concentration of power in the military provided the context in which further divergences within the military emerged.

In the highest military echelons, Nino privileged Balanta military men and pushed aside the creole elite who had rapidly ascended to their positions in the previous government. It motioned the beginning of ethnically motivated *coup d'état* suspicions. The constant suspicions increased levels of distrust amongst the military cliques and attempts to proportionally include them at the governmental level did not dilute the boundaries between them.<sup>151</sup> The preponderance of Balanta in both the top military positions and in the armed forces, once boundaries were sharp, seems to have motivated subsequent repression.

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<sup>151</sup> If the inclusion of contending groups does not water down the boundaries between them, then it can only be a matter of speculation whether a more balanced representation in the armed forces and a more proportional distribution of Balanta state and party positions of power, in relation to their total share of the population, would have been a sufficient condition to circumvent the following episodes of political disorder.

Whether the Balanta officers were planning to overthrow President Nino Vieira, or whether the President and the other military officers acted in their defence remains an “enigma”, while the succession of ministerial manoeuvrings and the October 17 episode indicate that a changing of relationships between the elites had resulted in a changing shape of the bargain. From then on - as will be demonstrated in the next chapter - the Balanta were excluded from top party, government and military positions. As an interviewee mentioned, “the Balanta were not satisfied, but Nino had the power. He had control and he thought he would have it eternally” (Interview 2).

# CHAPTER 7

## “YOU CAN’T PLEASE GREEKS AND TROJANS”

(1986-1998)

### 7.1 Introduction

Since the alleged attempts to overthrow the President in the mid 1980’s there had been no outbreak of collective violence until the eruption of the civil war on June 7, 1998. Thus, for well over a decade, a certain degree of political stability had been maintained.

Two parties went to war in the June 7 conflict: the *Junta Militar* led by Brigadier Ansumane Mané and the Government forces headed by President Nino Vieira. These were far from being homogenous entities. Each side combined multiple actors with different motivations and objectives who had forged a circumstantial allegiance.

Identifying those who fought on the government’s side poses few problems. Guinea-Bissau’s geostrategic switch from the Lusophone orbit to the Francophone - the most evident sign of which was its entrance into the monetary zone of the CFA in 1997 - tightened its ties with its neighbouring countries. Three days after the fighting began, and in accordance with the “secret” mutual defence pact signed by Nino and the three other neighbouring Heads of State, troops from Senegal and Guinea-Conakry entered the territory and “inflamed the conflict” (Massey 2004: 79).<sup>152</sup> The remainder of the government forces were composed of the small number of Nino’s personal guard and the *Aguntas*, an “irregular militia” of young men of

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<sup>152</sup> After an armed rebellion in the Casamance region and suspicions that Bissau-Guinean soldiers were providing the rebels with arms, Senegalese President, Abdou Diouf, pressured Nino Vieira to take measures to close the borders and ensure that the trafficking stopped (Drift 1999:230). Intervention in Guinea-Bissau’s conflict therefore posed an opportunity for the Senegalese state to attack and dismantle the MFDC rebels (Massey 2004: 82).

Papel ethnicity that were recruited for small amounts of money and promises of becoming a part of the President's patrimonial network in the post-war scenario (Vigh 2006).

The lack of internal support for the President and generalized support for the Military Junta suggested that the war was being fought by Nino "and his foreign allies [...] against the people of Guinea-Bissau" (Drift 1999: 227). The "war's driving (or 'master') cleavage" (Kalyvas 2006: 475) was, simply put, "anti-Nino". This observation, while indicative of what had become the shape of the elite bargain preceding the war, is nonetheless not elucidative of either the elite disagreements that led to the eruption of the conflict and therefore does not in itself shed light upon which identity categories ought to be considered when assessing the distribution of the positions of power and the composition of the inner core of power underlying the bargains throughout these twelve years. Generalizing the motivations of the actors fighting for the Military Junta as being "against Nino Vieira's authoritarian regime and the ruling PAIGC" (Embaló 2012: 266) conceals, or at least de-emphasizes, the importance of diverse identities of a variety of actors fighting him. It thus loses sight of previous conflicting claims and the emergence of new ones. What is more, as the following excerpts from my interviews demonstrate, the actors fighting on the same side had once been at odds. For example, ethnic divergences were pinpointed as the underlying motive for the order to have unravelled.

*"The disagreements that led to the war have all to do with the Mandinga and Balanta rivalries. The 1980 coup was in the name of Guinean nationalism against the Cape Verdeans. The next day, confusion starts within Guineans, between the Balanta and the Mandinga. They start accusing each other of wanting to dominate"* (Interview 6 and the same idea is also reflected in Interviews 13 and 26)

The civil war, however, did not have "any evident ethnic dimension" (Embaló 2012: 266) to it and Balanta and Mandinga fought on the same side. Similarly, despite unrelenting infighting between PAIGC members and leaders throughout this period, an apparent majority was nevertheless quite satisfied with the overthrow of their own President. Actually, as one party and government leader stated, "it was those inside the PAIGC that are responsible for the war; they manipulated Mané to get to Nino" (Interview 12). As for the divergences between generations, both young and old fought against the same enemy.

*"In truth, he [Nino Vieira] was the one that created the problem. You can say that Nino took advantage of the Armed Forces using a strategy to divide the old and young generation. He had to deal with his war companions and with a younger generation of soldiers and politicians. You can't please Greeks and Trojans"* (Interview 29)

The existence of these contending groups and their readiness to join forces and depose the government points towards the existence of a bargain between others that was indiscriminately excluding all of them. Accordingly then, in order to analyse both the composition of the positions of power and the shape of the bargain this chapter necessarily has to identify and explain the emergence of these and other contending groups throughout these years. It thus first picks upon the ethnic rivalries mentioned in the first quote above, and amply discussed in the previous chapter, and demonstrates the persisting exclusion of Balanta from the positions of power. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the impact of liberal interventionist policies in unsettling previous elite power relations. It highlights the subsequent interactions between the competing elites leading to the eruption of the civil war and argues that in spite of the President's initial attempts to please the two predominant PAIGC factions, their claims became irreconcilable.

## 7.2 Positions of Power

Following October 17, 1985 Balanta were effectively excluded from positions of power. For example, in the elections at the PAIGC's Fourth Congress in 1986, Balanta representation in the Political Bureau went from 19% to 0%. Similarly, no Balanta was appointed as minister in the government and only one was nominated as Secretary of State. Camará (Mandinga) remained as Minister of the Armed Forces and Balanta were totally absent in the highest positions in the army.

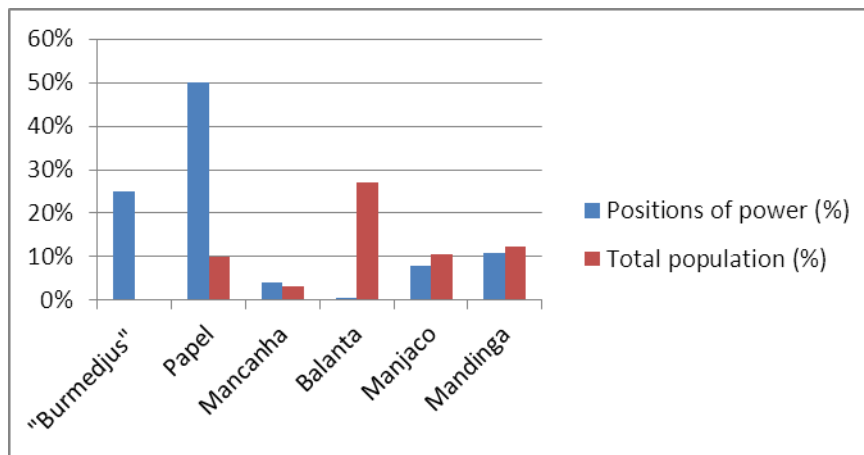
Figure 18 shows the inter-ethnic distribution of the positions of power as of 1987. The overrepresentation of Papel and individuals of mixed race - *Burmedjus*<sup>153</sup> - once more indicates the urban character of the elite bargain. Also, to be noted again, there are no Fula in any of these positions.

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<sup>153</sup> Rather than separating Guineans of Cape Verdean descent from other members of mixed race, the term *Burmedjus* is here used to refer to both. The reason why this designation is now employed is because, on the one hand, it is the Creole term that is used to denote all people of mixed descent (whether Cape Verdean, Lebanese or Indian, for example); on the other hand, it is this form of categorization that becomes a point of tension in the 1991 PAIGC elections.



Figure 18. Inter-ethnic Distributions of Positions Power (absolute distribution and relative to population share), 1987<sup>154</sup>



The marginalisation of Balanta from positions of power led one informant to state that “the Balanta were eager to overthrow the regime and even though Mané<sup>155</sup> most probably was linked to the October 17 episode they did not hesitate to side with him in the conflict [in 1998]” (Interview 8).

Balanta demotion and exclusion from the positions of power were rather consistent up until the eruption of the armed conflict and their discontent was widespread and generalized throughout these years. The following remark by a Balanta commander in the midst of the 1998-1999 conflict is telling of the degree of built up resentment: “this is not a war of hatred. There are many that adhered to the Junta and did not come because of hatred. But me, personally, I have a hatred war against Nino” (Major Tagma Na Waie in *A Revolta dos Mais Velhos*, 1998-1999). Yet, it was only after over a decade of exclusion that Balanta picked up arms, forming the largest base of support of the Military Junta in the civil war. Thus, political order was upheld, in spite of their exclusion at this level. Several factors may explain the delay in Balanta reaction.

<sup>154</sup> Positions of power: government, party and armed forces positions.

<sup>155</sup> Mané was Nino’s bodyguard and General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces from 1990-92 and 1994-1998.

First, although Balanta were being excluded, the other elite PAIGC factions referred to in the previous chapter were represented in the positions of power. That is, other contending elites were *pleased* or placated. For example, the composition of the Political Bureau (which remained the same until 1991) shows that the three tendencies were rather balanced (Figure 19). With respect to ethnic composition, the majority of the ethnic groups are represented (although with a significant overrepresentation of Papel and *mestiço*). Only the most populous ethnic group - Balanta - is not represented (Figure 20). Regarding the inter-ethnic distribution of positions in the government between 1987 and 1990 (Figure 21), the only other ethnic group as underrepresented as the Balanta are the Fula. Furthermore, if we consider the inter-ethnic distribution of the top positions in the armed forces in 1992 (Figure 22) - pointed out by the interviewees as the institution in which ethnic cleavages were most pervasive - there is an equilibrium amongst the minority ethnic groups that constituted the military. In contrast, the Balanta, who composed more than half of the armed forces, were not to be found in any of these positions.

Figure 19. Composition of the Political Bureau by "tendencies" (%), 1986

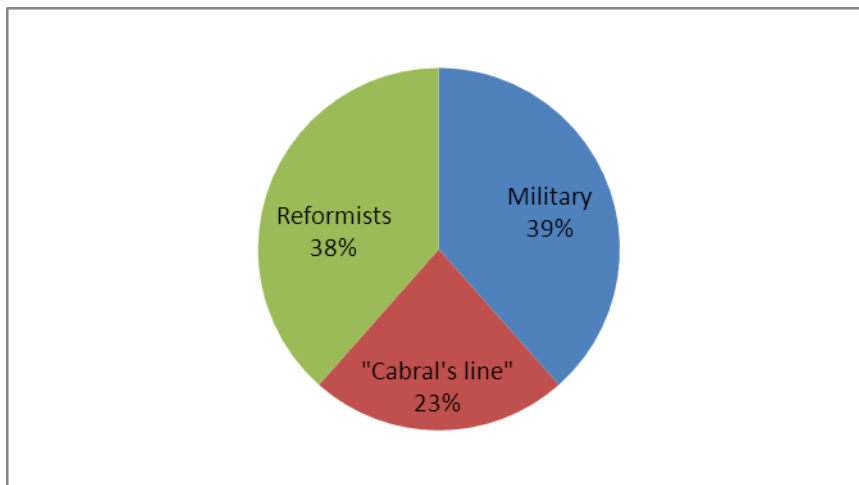


Figure 20. Inter-ethnic Composition of the Political Bureau, 1986

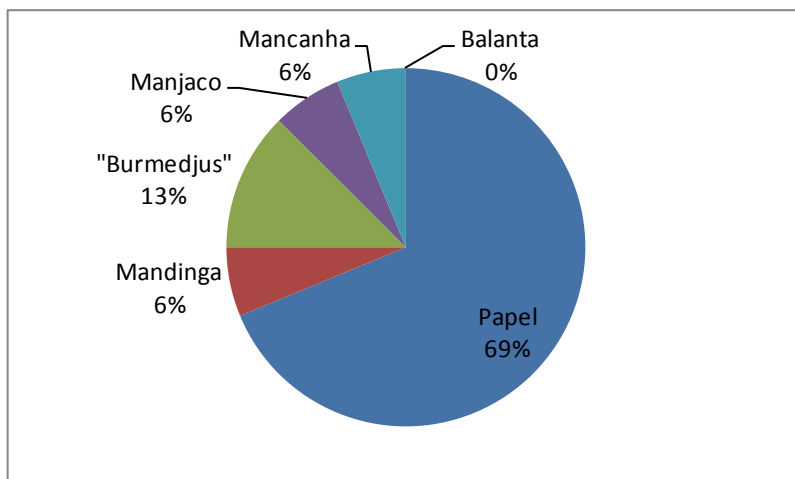


Figure 21. Inter-ethnic Distribution in Government Positions (absolute distribution and relative to population share), 1987, 1989 and 1990

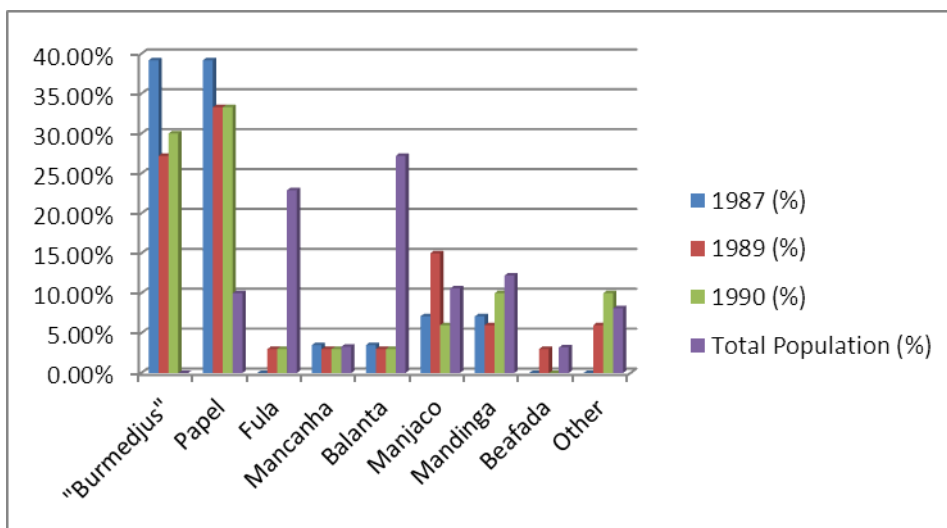
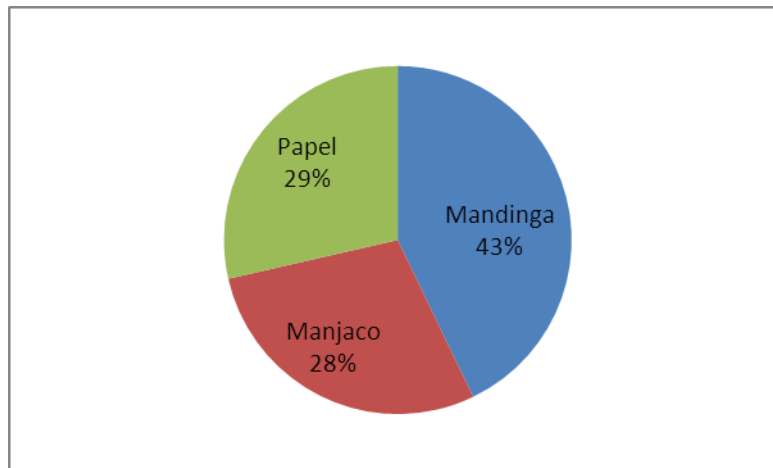


Figure 22. Inter-ethnic Distribution of military positions, 1992



The distribution of the key positions therefore demonstrates that power was balanced between the other PAIGC factions. Their representation at this level suggests that there were disincentives for them to alter the regime and hence not available for forging alliances with the Balanta. Second, Balanta exclusion in the highest positions in the army may have limited their capacity in obtaining resources necessary to conducting armed rebellion, and, to be sure, the imprisonment and execution of key Balanta officers eliminated potential leaders of potential collective action. A third explanation resides in the state's capacity to create disincentives for armed challenges to its rule. As seen, President Nino tightened national security and contained any opposition. As one informant suggested, there was a climate of fear during his rule (Interview 30) and the Sub-Saharan Africa Report (1987: 39) affirms a growing role of police power in state affairs, censorship and constant surveillance.

So while other contending elites, during this time period (1985-1992), may have perceived Nino's regime as legitimate, the cohesiveness of the PAIGC was greatly reduced by having opened contestation along ethnic lines. However, the adoption of liberal institutions further aggravated contestation within the PAIGC along other, cross-ethnic, lines.

### 7.3 Overtly Deviating from *Cabral's Line*

The PAIGC's broad socialist ideology and its non-aligned positioning during the armed struggle and the 1970's made the government eligible for aid from a variety of diverse countries, such

as Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, the USSR and China (Galli and Jones 1987: 121; Forrest 1992: 69). Whereas during these first years 64% of foreign aid inflows were received from bilateral donors (Olaniyan 1996: 44), mostly from countries of the Eastern bloc, in the 1980s it derived in great part from multilateral creditors and western states (Galli and Jones 1987). In 1982 international aid accounted for 25% of the government's total fundings (Kovsted and Tarp 1999: 4). The shift to western assistance, however, occasioned an overt deviation from the PAIGC's revolutionary beliefs.

After the 1980 *Readjustment Movement* President Nino Vieira evaluated the economic situation as alarming: a deficit in the state budget that could not cover the salaries of public functionaries; grave and increasing foreign debt; no returns from previous investments; a concentration of investments in Bissau (47%); a systematic decrease in agricultural production; and lack of control and rigor on the allocation of donor money (Nino Vieira's communication to the National Council, 1981). Rather than return to the PAIGC's orientation towards self-sustained rural based socialist development, the option was to backtrack along liberal lines.

In 1983 a two year Development Plan was set-out with the intent of stabilizing the economy by liberalizing commerce, by rationalizing the use of external funds and by controlling expenses (Cardoso 1995: 261). These measures created the bases for the soon to come internationally-led economic reforms. Then in November 1986 the PAIGC's Fourth Congress - under the motto *Reinforcement of the Party for National Development* - decided decisively to liberalise and privatise the economy.

*"The IV Congress of the PAIGC recommends that the state's activities as economic centralizer cease, apart from a few already created industries and its intervention in the commercialization of basic products... [and decides to] widen the private sectors' intervention in all commercial domains, agricultural production, exported products, small industries, and construction industries, and in the service sector"* (Resolutions of the PAIGC's IV Congress, 1986)

In 1986, in face of a deteriorating economic situation and an aggrieving foreign debt, the structural adjustment programmes led by the IMF and the WB were perceived as the national salvation route (Cardoso 1996: 18). The government agreed to embark on a six-year programme which would completely replace its centrally planned economy by a private-sector led, market-oriented economy (IMF 2005: 5). The strategy entailed a particular focus on agricultural development since, 1) 80% of the population lived off rural production and 2) there were insufficient qualified workers necessary for industrial expansion (Sanhã 1996: 87).

The first two credits were attributed in May and October 1987 by the WB and IMF, respectively. While the first years of the programme's implementation may have given the impression that "broad liberalization of the economy contributed to reduce large macroeconomic imbalances" (WB 2006: xvi), the following years proved that it gave rise to greater societal imbalances by turning the "market into an instrument of the state class and its friends" (Galli and Jones 1990: 58).

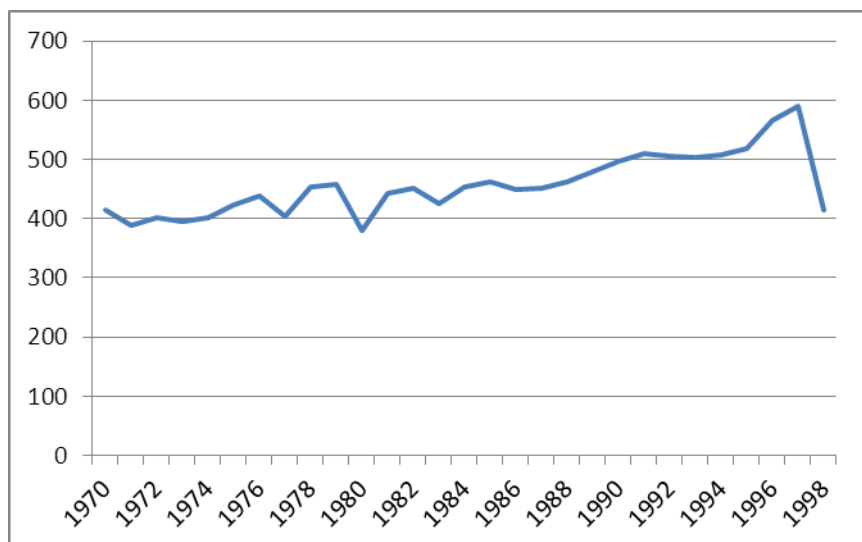
### **7.3.1 Socio-Economic Effects of the SAP**

Removal of legal impediments to the private sector, liberalization of prices and external trade, devaluation of the currency and the introduction of a flexible exchange rate (IMF 2005: 4) indeed led to a modest increase of production as Figure 23 indicates - especially with respect to primary export commodities, such as rice and cashew nuts (Cardoso and Imbali 1993: 19). However, this increase in production and export of cashew nuts,<sup>156</sup> for example, ought to be seen in light of the favourable world market prices at the time, which have been decreasing ever since (Forrest 2002: 243; Abreu 2012: 135). Moreover, GDP increase was fundamentally induced by the commercial sector, although, in reality, this corresponded to an "artificial" boom: only 25% of the credit concessions were allocated towards enhancing production and hence to the accumulation of fixed capital and, over 50% was used to import consumer goods (Sanhã 1993: 90). Guinea-Bissau's external debt had increased from US\$473 million in 1987 to US\$631 million in 1992 (Van Maanem 1996: 35), which is demonstrative of the negative return on investments and of the continued dependency on international assistance.

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<sup>156</sup> Cashew nuts accounted for over 50% of export returns (Sanhã 1996: 84).

Figure 23. Guinea-Bissau's GDP per capita (constant 2005 US\$), 1970-1998



Source: WBDI

The formal sector of the economy expanded but this was not so much an effect of the liberalization of commerce, but rather a consequence of the restrictive fiscal policy adopted. Cuts in state expenditure implied laying-off state civil servants and a reduction of their wages,<sup>157</sup> and, thus, a large sector of the urban populace was “forced to improvise survival strategies in a truly unequal social space” (Padovani and Delgado 1993: 162; Gomes and Duarte 1996: 100). Cuts in public services necessarily had negative consequences in what concerns the areas of health and education (Paulo and Jao 1996; Almeida and Drame 1993; Monteiro and Delfim da Silva 1996). For example, health clinics’ infra-structures deteriorated and, thirteen of them close in the time-span of three years (Paulo and Jao 1996: 253).

The number of private firms increased; however both privatisations and credit concessions benefitted an already privileged minority of the population. Economic enterprises were purchased or transferred to the state’s bureaucrats and to some highly-ranked government officials whose bureaucratic-economic power placed them in an advantageous position during the economic liberalisation phase: they were the first to be given IMF credits and evidently

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<sup>157</sup> In a four year period, around 30% of state functionaries were dismissed and salaries decreased by 20% (Van Maanem 1996: 36-37).

benefitted from other bureaucratic conveniences (Cardoso 1995: 264).<sup>158</sup> In this respect, the Minister of Natural Resources at the time stated that the concession of credits represented blatant corruption and promiscuity between the undistinguished private and public actors (Barros 2011: 45). Galli reconfirms this claim with the observation that loans and credit allocation were determined by the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Coordination, Commerce and Tourism which “made possible for public officials and their friends to acquire large shares of the economy including both enterprises and land” (Galli 1990: 53, 62).

The main aim of the SAP, as mentioned, had been to foster agricultural development, however, the form in which land and credits had been distributed was, from the start, an impediment to this objective. This was largely due to the new pattern of land ownership resultant from a process parallel to the liberalisation referred above. The privatisation of land led to an expansion of *pontas* - state approved commercial farms - and their owners - the *ponteiros* - were the principal beneficiaries of loans. These loans were meant to be used for productive purposes (Galli 1990: 62), but, since the *ponteiros* were in their great majority from the urban state elite, they had neither experience nor interest in developing their plantations (Forrest 2002: 242). As for smallholder producers, they had “no access to the national credit system...and barely assured sustenance to their families” (Dias 1996: 426-427).

Few sectors of civil society had the resources to counteract these development tendencies. Teachers, ironically because of their privileged position, were one group that was able to put up some resistance. In spite of repression, in 1991 teachers protested and demanded a salary increase. This was followed by an illegal one month strike by Bissau’s municipality workers and many, who had not been paid for months, opted to resign (Cardoso 1996: 23).

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<sup>158</sup> Upon independence, the nationalization of commerce and industrial enterprises had permitted state bureaucrats to detain a substantial amount of leverage on the means of production leading to what Cardoso (2002: 21) called to the “bureaucratization of the economy”.



## 7.4 Unforeseen Political Consequences

Credits and loans, however, did not benefit the entire urban state elite. The state's bureaucrats - largely the PAIGC's latecomers - had been able to take advantage of the process to the detriment of many of the PAIGC's historic leaders. While the former wielded significant economic advantages, the latter held on to political and military power. This reality produced an untenable power struggle.

The PAIGC's *nouveau riche*, nonetheless, were dependent upon access to the state apparatus. As mentioned, credits had been used unproductively, which, despite having resulted in some capital accumulation lacked the backup of a "solid economic base" (Cardoso 1995: 265; Mendy 1996: 45) in order to systemically obtain revenues.<sup>159</sup> Maintaining their economic power thus required they be in a position from which to continue to receive foreign aid and to control the distribution of entitlements. As one informant, who best exemplifies these bureaucratic-economic elites, recalled to me:

*"Finally the country's economy was liberalized. Before that everything was controlled by the state. We could not do anything. I started off with one little business and then gradually opened more. In a few years I managed to outgrow all those [businesses] controlled by the state. With that money I was able to buy company X...But the change was not complete. We thought that the Party should change its structure, it should reform. We had a lot of obstacles from those who came from the fight"* (Interview 36)

Consequently, economic liberalisation activated a cross-ethnic (class) boundary in the PAIGC between the party's historic members, who retained political legitimacy from their role in the independence struggle, and its latecomers. On the one hand, latecomers' entry into leading political positions required democratic reforms in the PAIGC's internal structure, and, thus, encouraged that the party's leaders be elected by the people. On the other, the "boys of the struggle" (Cardoso 1995: 269) were reaffirming their faithfulness to *Cabral's line* and emphasized the party's leading role in society. This elite cleavage - which has been called generational - intensified with the political conditions imposed by the IMF and the WB, eventually leading to a breakdown and the outbreak of the civil war in 1998.

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<sup>159</sup> Some *ponteiros* had even contracted debts (Galli 1990: 64).

The notion of a generational cleavage, however, while useful for elucidating the main point of contention within the PAIGC throughout the 1990's, ought not to be considered *strictu sensu*. Firstly, underneath this distinction between those who entered the PAIGC during the armed struggle and those who entered in the post-independence period was also an urban/rural and class divide. Those who later enlisted in the PAIGC - the younger generation – and who were now pushing for democratic reforms within the party were, in a general sense, part of that urban privileged colonial class. Even though after the *Readjustment Movement* some Cape Verdean bureaucrats had been replaced by Guineans, the ones that stayed in the country were later re-incorporated into the same positions (Forrest 1987: 114). What is more is that Guinean replacements did not add up to a qualitative transformation in that they too were recruited from an urban elite of skilled labour able to perform civil servant functions - as stressed, privilege was not solely limited to Cape Verdeans. Thus, the bureaucrats, the principal beneficiaries of credits and loans, were also the “new commercial *bourgeoisie*”.<sup>160</sup> Also of note is how, after the political breakup with Cape Verde, these elements of the urban elite came to be known as the *Burmedjus*. The word translates as red and is used to refer to mixed raced skin colour. However, it also connotes someone of a privileged social class. One need not be of a light skinned colour in order to be (called) *Burmedju*. Consequently, a younger generation pushing for reforms merged with an urbanized elite perceived as of lighter skin colour. This combination of variables, as will be demonstrated, occasioned racial cleavages to come to the forefront in the PAIGC's Second Extraordinary Congress in 1991.

The second reason why the generational cleavage ought to be taken in a broad sense is because there were also high-ranking government officials from the older generation who consolidated their power with credit and loan concessions. Indeed, the most emblematic case was President Nino, “who owned *pontas*” (Galli and Jones 1990: 62). Nino's positioning within

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<sup>160</sup> A most significant example of this process is Carlos Gomes Junior, who in 2002 was elected as President of the PAIGC and in 2004 elected as Prime-Minister. Son of a businessman and former colonial collaborator (in 2008 Carlos Gomes's father wrote memoirs in which he appears as a former liberation fighter. This, however, was widely contested since he had not belonged to the PAIGC and nor had he participated in the guerrilla struggle). Cadogo, as he is known, studied in Lisbon and in Bissau. He then was placed in the Ministry of Finance during the colonial regime. After independence he worked in the central bank and was Director-General for the distribution of petrol. In less than four years of the country's economic liberalization he founded a Petrol company. In 1991 he was elected for the first time as a delegate to the Central Committee of the PAIGC and in 1998 became member of the Political Bureau.

this generational cleavage and the way he interacted with both sides is of importance for interpreting certain decisions and their effects in the composition of the positions of power and the bargain during the period. Although his legitimacy had substantially decreased within the Balanta ethnic group, his reputation and respect as a war hero continued to grant him a certain degree of loyalty within the armed forces and with the older generation in general. However, his economic power, as well as international pressure to introduce multiparty elections, also positioned him on the other side. The following parts of this chapter look into the processes that heightened the boundaries between these two (and other) groups and attempts to explain why and how the President, who cut across this generational cleavage, ended up clearly being perceived and identified with one side. As the following quotes from interviews with three liberation war veterans, who had once been close to Nino, point out, “he changed” and “transformed”.

*“There were people who came from the struggle with Cabral’s ideals, with a dream of putting the country in good conditions. Nino belonged to that group. Until the end of the 1980’s he surrounded himself with those people. After that, people from outside, intellectuals, who had studied in Lisbon surrounded him and they eliminated those feelings for our people. They were connected to business and they would give Nino money. I saw. They would come with big sacks of money and give it to Nino. He changed” (Interview 27).*

*“He transformed. From a legendary guerrilla fighter who everyone felt was special, he became a dictator, a man hungry for money and power. He created so many contradictions around himself. He created fear as a form of establishing his regime” (Interview 34).*

*“I’ll give you an example. Until 1987 Nino every Thursday came into Amura [the military base in Bissau] to work, he was a military commander. He would come, he would hear our problems, and he would try to resolve them. After that he just separated from us” (Interview 28).*

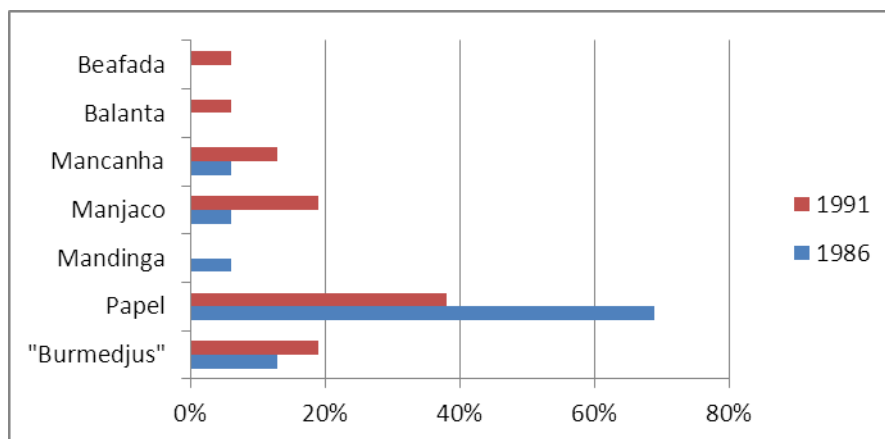
#### **7.4.1 Delaying the Inevitable**

Further international funding was conditional upon the implementation of a multiparty system (Forrest 2002: 252; Mendy 1996: 48; Chabal 2002: 96). In 1988 the PAIGC made a concession to the international community with the creation of a broad-based committee open to various tendencies and with the hope thereby that this would be seen as an opening to political pluralism. While the Permanent Secretary of the PAIGC’s Central Committee made a declaration of intentions to the effect that the internal structures of the party would need to

be rethought in order to accompany societal transformations, such rhetoric did not point the way towards effectively ending the PAIGC's special role in "guiding society" (Cardoso 1996: 25). It was only two years later that President Nino publicly declared that there was a necessity for political change (Mendy 1996: 55), and, in January 1991, at the PAIGC's Second Extraordinary Congress, the party delegates recommended the removal of article 4 of the constitution and the undoing of the party links to the armed forces and the workers trade union (UNTG). Only then did the PAIGC formally recognise the end of the one-party state.

Notwithstanding this formal recognition of pluralism and institutional autonomy, the PAIGC was internally divided. By then there was a clear separation between party members who were for and against reforms and events prior to and during the Congress displayed this political infighting. However, as argued, this PAIGC faction fighting translated into a racial issue. Firstly, since the older generation of party members - also known as the conservative tendency - remained predominant in the party's highest organs, they were able to block entry of individuals known for their liberal tendencies and of mixed descent (such as Pedro Godinho Gomes and Aristides Menezes [*Público* 1991: 17]) into its group's assembly elections. Secondly, the results of the elections for the Political Bureau demonstrate the association of skin colour with political positions. As can be seen in Figure 24's comparison of the social composition of the Political Bureau in 1986 and in 1991, what comes across from the data is a slight increase of the so-called *Burmedjus*, a significant decrease of urban ethnic groups (Papel and Mandinga) and an increase of those considered "pure Guineans" or *Pretu-Nok* (dark black). In this light, the Minister of Natural Resources at the time, recalling the Congresses' elections, is quoted as pointing out "let us remember that no one of light skin managed to pass!" (Barros 2011: 57).

Figure 24. Inter-ethnic Composition of the Political Bureau, 1986 and 1991

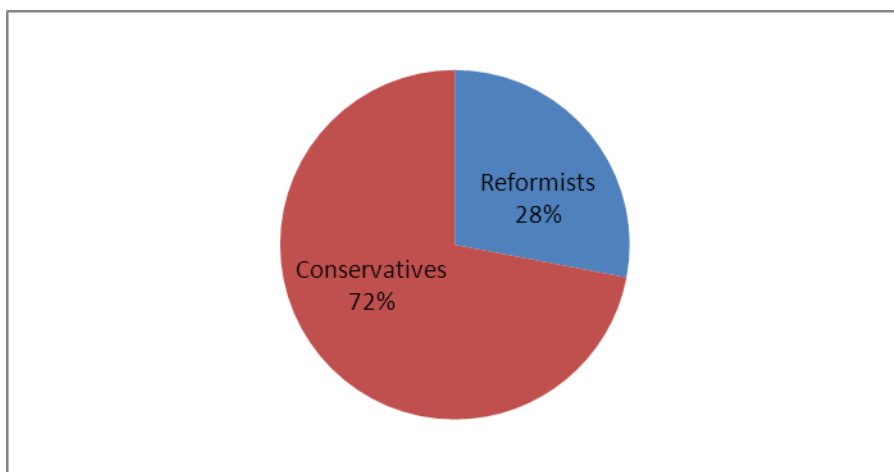


*A posteriori* reactions to these elections are also suggestive of conflict based on racial grounds. For example, a newly elected member of the Political Bureau commented how *Burmedjus* looked upon “pure Guineans” as intellectually inferior (Malam Bacai Sanhã in Nóbrega 2002: 263) and a Cape Verdean informant spoke of the newly elected members as being illiterate (Interview 19). Cardoso, for example, refers to the conservative wing of the PAIGC as being averse to *Burmedjus*.

*“A lot of people thought that the PAIGC was going prove that it was willing to reform. However, what happened in this Congress was a reinforcement of the conservative wing, which translated into their incorporation in the highest posts of direction. This conservative wing is characterized not only by an aversion to change, but also by an ‘anti-Burmedju’ feeling”* (Cardoso 1995: 270).

“Historic members win the PAIGC Congress” and “Group of Guinean reformists defeated in the PAIGC elections” were some of the headlines in the Portuguese newspapers on the PAIGC’s Extraordinary Congress (*Público* 1991: 18; *Diário de Notícias* 1991: 17), and, indeed, as Figure 25 shows, reformists were a minority in the PAIGC’s Central Committee. As for Nino, it was reported that he was trusted by both conservatives and reformists (*Diário de Notícias* 1991: 20).

Figure 25. Composition of the PAIGC's Central Committee by Ideological Tendency, 1991



Source: Juará, 2006

The reformists, having been excluded from the high levels of the party and unable to participate actively in this transitional phase, demonstrated their discontent by writing a public letter to President Nino Vieira in which they expressed the severe crisis that the PAIGC was going through and urged that the PAIGC's internal structure be democratized. It was signed by 121 people and became known as *Grupo da Carta dos 121*. The group, in its majority, was constituted by the state's bureaucracy and by the commercial *bourgeoisie* - the younger generation. As one informant belonging to this group commented "the old would not hear us. This was the way we found to tell them that things were not right" (Interview 36).

Strong resistance to political change delayed the democratic transitional process. Although the ANP in May 1991 approved a law that allowed the formation of new political parties, the non-approval of other necessary laws blocked its application (Cardoso 1996: 28), thereby demonstrating that the willingness to accept multiparty competition was "exceedingly unhurried" (Chabal 2002: 125). In 1992 a national multiparty electoral commission was created but political and legal disputes between the PAIGC and the opposition parties caused the postponement of elections (Forrest 2002: 252).

## 7.5 Multiparty elections, 1994

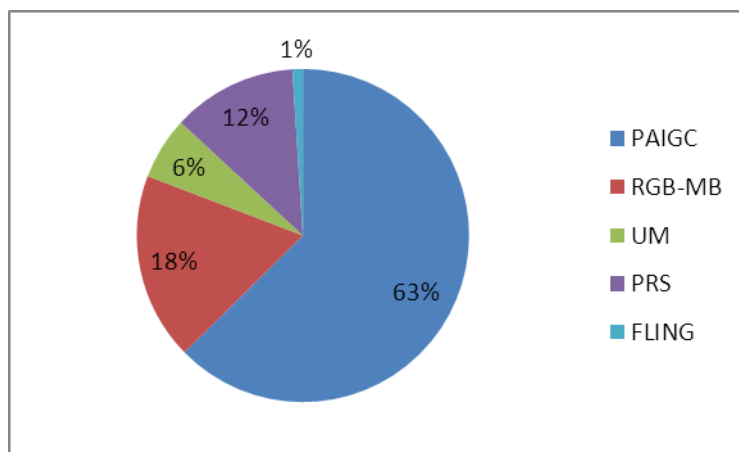
From 1991 until the presidential and legislative elections in 1994, political parties mushroomed and civil society became increasingly vital. The departisation of the workers trade union (UNTG) and the end of its monopolization of trade union representation, for example, resulted in the emergence of various autonomous unions and an increase in labour conflicts and protests. National NGOs diversified their areas of intervention such as the promotion of human rights and environmental protection (Koudawo 1996: 90, 97).

The political parties that formed were, in their great majority, representative of urban interests and their political leaders stemmed either from the state's bureaucracy - many of whom had been signatories of the *Carta dos 121* and then founded the *Partido para Renovação para o Desenvolvimento* (PRD) - or from a small sector of urban salaried workers (Cardoso 1995 272). Some political parties, however, were founded outside of Guinea-Bissau, prior to the end of the one-party state (as was the case of *Resistência da Guiné-Bissau-Movimento BaFatá* [RGB-MB] and the *Partido de Convergência Democrática* [PCD], for example). As such, either due to lack of outreach to the rural population or a solid national organization, political support for these newly emerging parties remained restricted. The exception was the *Partido da Renovação Social* (PRS). The PRS's presidential candidate, Kumba Yalá, voiced both rural and Balanta dissatisfaction. Yalá became the "uncontested chief in the eyes of Balanta peasants" (Temudo 2008: 249) and reinforced their grievances against Vieira and the PAIGC by playing the "ethnic card to the fullest extent" (Forrest 2002: 253).

In spite of the emergence of twelve new political parties and the creation of a united platform of the *Fórum Democrático* (FC), the elections in 1992 were favourable to the PAIGC and to the President. Opposition to the PAIGC was fragmented, which resulted in the FD's split, and, in some cases, party infighting occasioned further splits (as was the case of the PCD). The PAIGC's propaganda machinery, Nino's influence (Forrest 2002: 253), censorship (Cardoso 1995: 275) and lack of unison between the opposition parties are explanations as to why the PAIGC won the legislative elections (see Figure 26). Although the opposition parties had obtained a significant number of seats in the ANP - thereby demonstrating the increasing unpopularity of the PAIGC by this time, their inability to agree on a broad-based coalition, allowed the PAIGC to gain a parliamentary majority. As for the Presidential elections, Yalá managed to put up a strong challenge against Nino. However, in the second round, the latter won with 52% of the votes. It is important to note nonetheless that, while the Balanta contributed to Yalá's

achievements, there is little that suggests that the electoral results on the whole were especially determined along ethnic lines. As Forrest mentions, both Yalá and Nino obtained cross-ethnic support (Forrest 2002: 253). Since the constituencies of the majority of the political parties were overwhelmingly limited to urban elites political mobilization did not take place on ethnic grounds, i.e., in the rural areas where expressive ethnic groups were located.

Figure 26. ANP seats (%), 1994



Source: National Electoral Commission

While the objectives for political changes of the external organizations aimed at a decentralization and legitimization of political power, their conditions had the opposite effects. Opposition towards the regime was repressed,<sup>161</sup> political competition instigated greater political divisions and the form in which the campaign was conducted provided little legitimacy in the eyes of the population towards those in power. The subsequent institutionalization of a prime-ministership position, as will be shown, intensified institutional instability and personal antagonisms (in spite of his coming from the same political party as the President). Thus, multipartyism, instead of producing stability and the commitment to democratic values, “contributed to the informalisation of power and to the exacerbation, rather than easing, of autocratic rule” (Forrest 202: 254).

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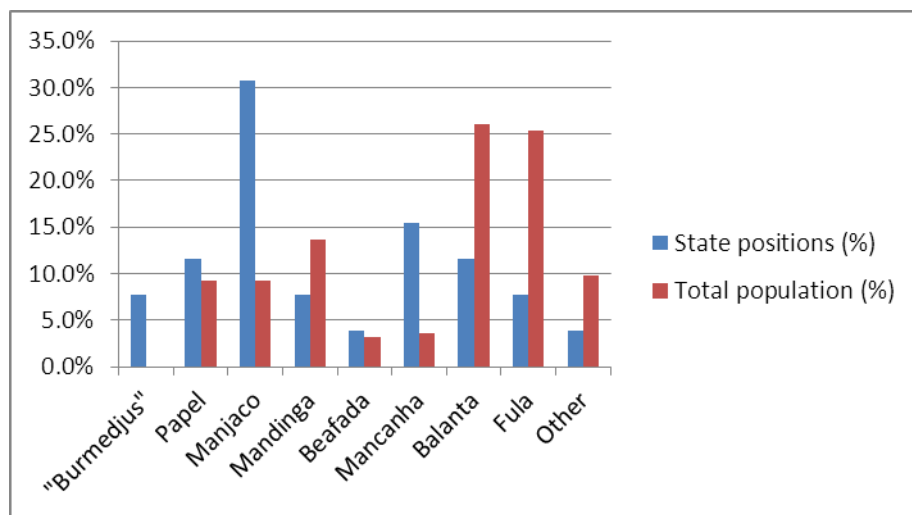
<sup>161</sup> In 1990, for example, João Guilherme Furtado, a member of the RGB-MB was arrested and allegedly tortured (*Independente* 1991: 22).



## 7.6 Old vs. New

The PAIGC formed its government in November 1994. Since the PAIGC's highest political bodies favoured the historic members of the PAIGC, liberation war veteran Manuel Saturnino da Costa, who was also National-Secretary of the PAIGC, was nominated as Prime-Minister. The result was a government "from the old regime, for the old, by the old" (Dhada 2001:90). The minimal representation of the urban and *mestiço* elite and the increase in Manjaco (Saturnino da Costa's ethnic group), Balanta,<sup>162</sup> Mancanha, Beafada and Fula is suggestive of the merger between racial, generational and social class divisions (see Figure 27). Comparing the inter-ethnic distribution of government positions in 1990, for example, these shifts become more obvious (see Figure 28).

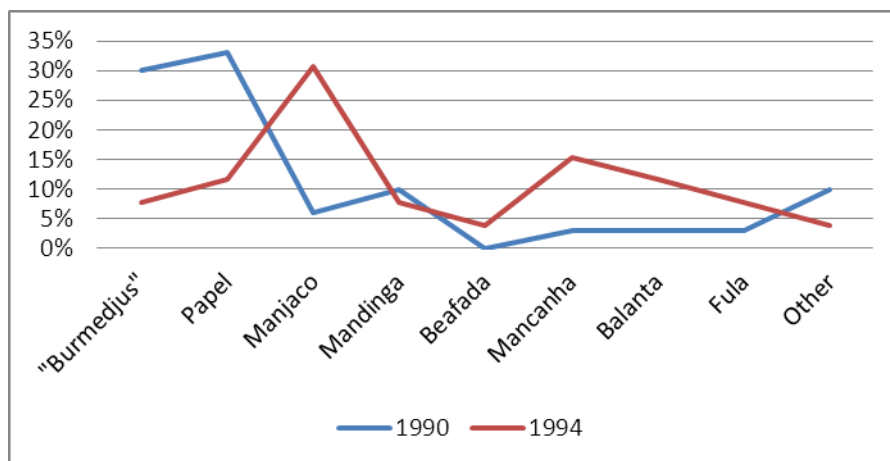
Figure 27. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Government positions (absolute and relative to population share), 1994



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<sup>162</sup> The increase of Balanta can be explained by the result that the PAIGC's older generation was as a group defending their entitlements to power. This had the effect of diluting the ethnic boundaries between them. Signalling to this dilution of ethnic boundaries, as will be expanded upon, is the congregated efforts of both Mandinga and Balanta liberation war veterans in the civil war to overturn Nino's regime.

Figure 28. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Government Positions, 1990 and 1994



The *anti-mestiço* government, the triumph of negritude and the africanization of political power are some of the terms used to classify Saturnino da Costa's prime-ministership (Viegas and Kuodawo 2000: 10; Henriques da Silva 2012: 192). However, skin colour and ethnic background were the most visible cleavages, while obscuring the underlying logic of a PAIGC old guard protecting its interests from younger and wealthier party members struggling to gain access to the state.

This cleavage crossed all political institutions - armed forces, PAIGC and government. That this was the case is comprehensible since until 1991 they were fairly undistinguishable. In the armed forces, liberation combatants had a special status (as envisaged by the constitution), and, since independence, held the highest ranking positions and promotions. However, then there were military officers, who were indeed younger and because of that had had the opportunity to be educated and trained abroad during the armed struggle (in an earlier phase they were sent to the Soviet Union and later to the United States and Portugal). Some may have perhaps only fought in the liberation struggle in the last two years, but others, had not fought at all. In the opinion of the liberation war combatants, these younger officers ought to have remained in subordinate positions and they questioned, as expressed by one of my interviewees, how someone could be "a commander if he never commanded anyone in a war? That is what the word means; you need to have commanded in order to be a commander" (Interview 10). The perception of the younger officers, as expressed by various interviewees, was that liberation military officers were illiterate - and therefore without the necessary qualifications to be in leading army positions, still acting as if they were still in the struggle, and

blocking them from ascending to higher positions, (Interviews 26, 29 and 33). The fact that younger military officers were claiming rights to promotions during the beginning of the 1990's led the Portuguese Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau to report the following back to Lisbon:

*"It is evident that 'Nino' Vieira, attentive to the evolution of his time, cannot solely rely upon the 'veterans' of the armed struggle - without putting in question the personal relationship that he maintains with them and without forgetting the historic debt that he owes to them (independence war, the 14 November coup d'état, etc.). He will have to obtain sympathy from the new cadres in the military hierarchy. A group that in principle is not close to him but its growing weight he surely cannot ignore"* (Henriques da Silva 2012: 113).

In 1992, after de-linkage of the armed forces from the PAIGC, there was a general promotion in the army. Perhaps as a strategy to "obtain sympathy" from the younger generation of military officers, Nino promoted some of them to the highest ranks in the army (Interview 29). This stirred tension in the highest echelons of the armed forces and set off generalized discontent among the liberation combatants.<sup>163</sup> Once more, some interpreted Nino's move as instigating divisions on purpose. A highly-ranked military officer from the younger generation, for example, implied that although Nino got along well with both sides, in the end it was a game for him.

*"There came a time when President Nino realized that there was a need to change things and with the old combatants it would not be possible to go anywhere. But he did not want to express this position overtly; he tried to be a knife with two sides. He got along well with his liberation war comrades and did not want to disappoint them. But he also got along well with the so-called reformist wing. To the liberation war combatants he would say 'not one centimetre forward with the reform, we refuse this project'. To the reformists or the moderates he would say that change was needed. But this was a sort of game he played"* (Interview 26)

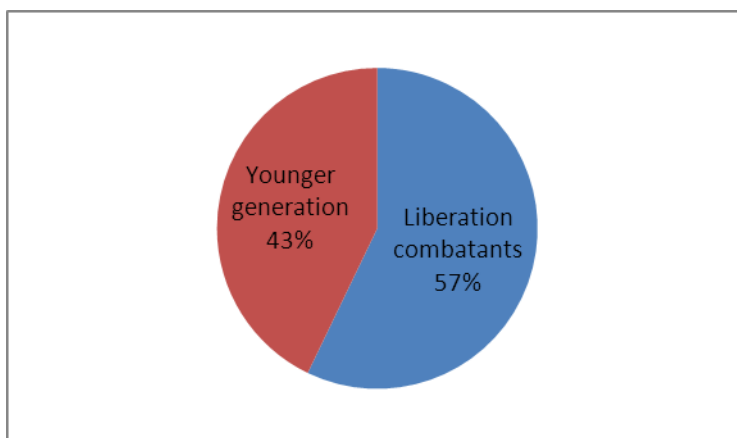
In a recent chronicle, the Portuguese Ambassador of the time also argues that Nino would benefit one group and then other depending on the circumstances (Henriques da Silva 2012: 113). Figure 29 demonstrates the generational composition of the highest positions in the

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<sup>163</sup> In March 1993, a military mutiny led to the shooting of the head of a security unit - Major Robalo de Pina. The mutiny was purported to have been due to the soldiers' unpaid salaries, but there were also complaints amongst the war veterans concerning the "unfair promotions in favour of military graduates" (Amnesty International 1993). Later, the mutineers were accused of attempting to overthrow the regime.

armed forces in 1994 and points towards a rather balanced representation of both contending factions.

Figure 29. Distribution of Military Positions by Generation, 1994



Thus, Nino's attempt to "please" one group - by including them in the army's positions of power - and in so doing providing incentives for them not to challenge his regime, did not alleviate tensions in the armed forces, but rather provoked greater ones. The divergences were observable at various levels: differing positioning's concerning Guinea-Bissau's international military cooperation and bilateral relations; exclusive meetings and non-compliance with each other's decisions and orders; the old repelled and the young pressed for security sector reforms (Henriques da Silva 2012: 114). Accordingly, their interests were increasingly opposed.

On the one hand, those who had fought for years for independence understood these promotions to be illegitimate and unfair but, on the other hand, they represented the necessary changes to modernize the armed forces, which, up until then, had been controlled by combatants who were already approaching retirement. As declared by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the time (himself a representative of the younger a generation):

*"Although twenty years have passed since the liberation war, there is a generational stagnation...these young officials may have less of a past than the older, but surely they have more future than the respected older combatants. And the country should move towards the future and not the past"* (in Vieigas and Kuodawo 2000: 20).

It appears then that pleasing both groups is simultaneously perceived as a form of manipulation.

## 7.7 Nino's Shift and a Widespread Crisis

By the end of 1992 international donors stated that the changes in the economy had not had the expected turnout (Cardoso 1996: 19). Private investment did not respond to the stimuli of the free market - for which, later, the IMF attributed "political instability and lack of good governance as negative factors, despite a move toward multiparty democracy" (IMF 2005: 5). Yet, growing instability appeared to be a consequence of the political and economic impositions.

During the three years (1994-1997) of Saturnino da Costa's government, the economic situation worsened. Inflation rose steadily, prices of the few exportable products - mostly cashew nuts - kept falling and the basic food staples meant increasing imports (Augel 1996: 42). The salaries of public servants were not paid for months and the public health and educational systems were on the verge of collapsing. Strikes and protests were recurrent and the common soldier literally did not have enough money to eat.<sup>164</sup> In addition to this, state officials were accused of corruption, which in turn led to the suspension of loans (Nóbrega 2002: 273). In this context, PAIGC opposition urged the dismissal of the Prime Minister.

Whereas Forrest (2002: 254) affirms that Nino replaced the Prime-Minister in May 1997 in order to deflect criticism, the following informant observed that Saturnino da Costa's appointment would have never been his first choice and that his exoneration was mostly occasioned by bitter personal rivalries.

*"Nino did not want to nominate Saturnino however the PAIGC claimed that the Prime-Minister had to be the Secretary-General of the party. Nino wanted to maintain Carlos Correia because he performed well with the WB and the IMF. Nino wanted to keep him but because there was so much pressure from the party, he was forced to nominate Saturnino. It was against his will. And it was a disaster. Salaries were not paid, social turmoil with teachers and student strikes, a total confusion. And Nino found a way to exonerate Saturnino and calls Carlos Correia. The war starts here" (Interview 5).*

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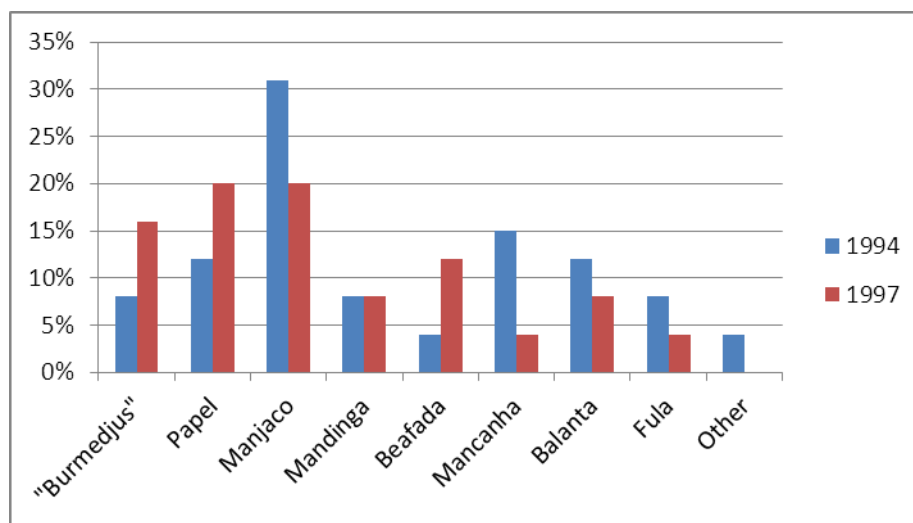
<sup>164</sup> In 1998 it is reported that a soldier stepped in front of Nino's car and conveyed that he had not eaten in days (Cardoso 2000: 95).

Similarly, Vieigas and Koudawo (2000: 14) confirm that the nomination of Saturnino da Costa over Nino's preferred choice (Correia, who was also a war veteran but "performed well with the WB and the IMF") marked a profound schism between the President and the government leading to a "ridiculous situation in which protagonists belonging to the same group" entered into a personal and grave conflict.

Nino, without consulting the ANP, and taking advantage of the growing discontent towards the government, dismissed Costa and nominated Carlos Correia. Although opposition parties favoured the governmental changes, the anti-constitutional form in which the exoneration took place resulted in a four month constitutional crisis. Nino was required to consult the parliamentarians and re-nominate Correia (Nóbrega 2002: 274).

While many ministers and state secretaries from the previous government remained in their positions, the data discloses that those removed were replaced by those favouring more liberal and technocratic tendencies - revealed by the increase in number of *Burmedjus* and Papel to the detriment of the ethnic groups considered "pure" and rural (see Figure 30).

Figure 30. Inter-ethnic Distribution of Government Positions, 1994 and 1997



The personal rivalries between Nino and Saturnino da Costa - the representative of the historic members of the PAIGC - also resulted in demarcating the President from the old guard. The newspaper, *Diário de Bissau* stated that the institutional conflict had inevitably become a confrontation between two liberation war veterans "because the bad image of the

government and the chaotic state of the PAIGC require a clear definition of who is who in the PAIGC” (in Vieigas and Koudawo 2000: 15). However, alongside this clash between the two veterans were the younger members of the party “whose political ambitions” (Ibid: 16) were opposed to Saturnino’s wing, and, as result, Nino ended up being connected to their side. The conflicts between these two opposing groups were pervasive until the PAIGC’s Sixth Congress in May 1998 and, as will be shown, its outcome was a significant factor leading to the outbreak of the war.

The PAIGC was thus extremely divided. Efforts to decentralize power with the creation of a prime-ministership position, therefore, not only caused institutional confusion, but also private conflicts. PAIGC fights were predominantly between the old and new elite (this cleavage of course condenses the varying contours of antagonisms among PAIGC elites) and Nino - while up until now had been more or less trusted by both sides - following the removal of a liberation war veteran and subsequent association with the younger militants, was perceived as having shifted sides. This marks a change in his relationships with his comrades in arms.

Moreover, dissatisfaction among the political opposition and the sweeping impoverishment of the population - no matter what age, regional area or ethnic group - constituted a more widespread fracturing line: a rich PAIGC urban minority versus a destitute populace.

## **7.8 Triggering Incidents: Arms Trafficking and a New PAIGC**

Nino’s and Mané’s (General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces) friendship dated from the liberation struggle and they had been extremely close ever since. Nino’s mother referred to both as her sons - denoting a brotherly relation - and together they had overthrown Cabral’s regime (Forrest 2002: 255). Yet, in the 1998 conflict they became the leaders of the two opposite warring parties.

Their inimical relation results from what was considered an act of betrayal. Nino, following heavy pressure from the Senegalese government to control the smuggling of arms that was supplying Casamance separatists, suspended Mané in January 1998 on the suspicion that he

and his soldiers were involved in the trafficking.<sup>165</sup> As a high-ranking state official of the younger generation commented, the onus had to be put on someone.

*“I suggested that Mané be suspended. I remember telling Nino that this was a strong sign to the international community that we were dealing seriously with the case. After the investigations took place I told Nino that then Mané could go back to his post” (Interview 5)*

An Inter-Ministerial Commission was formed to further investigate the charges. Since all members of the Commission were known to be close to the President, opposition parties put together a *Parliamentarian Commission of Investigation on the Illegal Trafficking of Arms to Casamance Separatists*. Though the report only became public in 1999, there were already indications that highly-ranked officials close to the President were implicated in the trade and that the President himself was aware of it (Massey 2004: 79). Indeed, the chances that the trafficking of arms was occurring without the President’s knowledge were slim.

*“Do you really think Nino did not know this was going on? He knew everything. They were soviet guns that came from Guinea-Bissau. A gun would be exchanged for a bag of rice. Nino’s soldiers sold them because they were not being paid their salaries. It was their way of getting money and of course they did it and Nino knew. The people realized this was an invention” (Interview 2).*

The Minister of Defence, Samba Lamine Mané, was temporarily nominated to Mané’s position. Lamine Mané was far from meeting the approval of the liberation war veterans and further increased tensions by speaking of the urgency of approving a national defence legislative package, which, among other things, would alter the military officers’ status and the organization of the armed forces (Henriques da Silva 2012: 158).

Mané’s suspension and Nino’s discarding of any responsibility in the trafficking increasingly heightened tensions among the soldiers, particularly amongst the liberation war veterans. Since the episode with Saturnino da Costa, Nino’s inner circle consisted mostly of the younger generation of military officers and politicians. On February 28, 1998, a letter written under the name of all freedom fighters demonstrated the extent to which relations between them and

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<sup>165</sup> Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean relations during the 1990’s tightened: Guinea-Bissau joined the Franc Zone and a military accord was established between the two countries envisaging a collective defence arrangement (Massey 2004: 79)



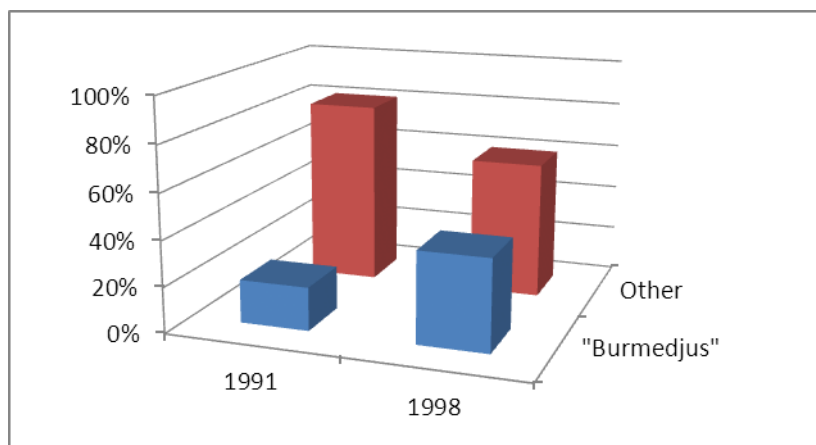
Nino had deteriorated. They depreciatively referred to the younger generation of military officials and political commanders close to Nino Vieira as “so-called Lieutenant-Colonels” and questioned Nino as to why he now was surrounded by them.

*“We are tired of a defence without laws, or in simpler words, of a Defence with Political Commanders who never did anything good for our country...we cannot continue with these officers, because besides their dirty services we do not know what they have done of so dignifying to deserve the trust of our comrade Nino...We fought and set free our country with clean hands...during the independence struggle, maybe they did something important in secret, as a contribution to the war...No combatant became rich from the struggle and during the first years of independence no one strived for personal enrichment. Today some are capable of bloody actions in order to become rich. This is not what Amílcar Cabral wanted for our land” (in Induta 2001: 45-48).*

While the Casamance arms trafficking investigation was increasingly a matter of tension - among other reasons, because Nino’s loyalists refused to testify in the Parliamentary Commission -, the lead up to the PAIGC’s long awaited Sixth Congress was characterized by accusatory public statements between the two factions. The National Secretary of the PAIGC and Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, for example, that it would be “a congress of hatreds, of pay-backs and stories of our glorious past and personal vindications...” (in Zeverino 2003: 59). On the other side, Saturnino da Costa commented that his wing did not want “bandits and mercenaries in the PAIGC” (in Vieigas and Koudawo 2000: 16).

Within the same accusatory and tense atmosphere, the May 1998 congress lasted for six days. Whereas the disconcerting issue of Mané’s suspension and the arms trafficking was not discussed (Zeverino 2003: 61), the election of the new PAIGC Secretary-General occasioned protests: the electoral regulations were changed and in contrast to the norm, the vote was by overt acclamation. The party delegates later claimed that the President’s security apparatus intimidated members from voting against him. Nino was indeed elected and the Political Bureau favoured his side - which translated into an increase of mixed race/*Burmedju* delegates in the Political Bureau (figure 31).

Figure 31. Composition of the Political Bureau by Racial Background, 1991 and 1998



One informant elected to the Political Bureau recalled that this result “was a sign the party’s members wanted change. The old were defeated in this congress” (Interview 36). Nino, at the time, stated that it was an inclusive result and a unifying congress (Henriques da Silva 2012: 197). Yet, one of the leading protagonists of the losing faction commented that “it was the worst congress ever. It took place in a climate of fear, with threats, and we left more divided than when we entered” (in Nóbrega 2002: 279). A former minister and war veteran summarized its outcome in the following way:

*“Unfortunately, the results were catastrophic. The party was under the direction of people who had nothing to do with its tradition. Newcomers to the party who only managed to attain leading positions due to the simple fact that they presented themselves as unconditional supporters of the President. And he took advantage of this in order to obtain a majority in the Political Bureau” (Barros 2011: 64).*

By this time, Nino’s regime was being severely challenged on all fronts. Opposition political parties, Balanta, liberation war veterans, Mandinga, low-ranked soldiers, unpaid civil servants, peasants and PAIGC “Cabral’s line” militants were all “anti-Ninists”. Even opposition parties were siding with the losing PAIGC faction. For instance, the leader of the RGB-MB party remarked that the PAIGC congress “occurred in an anti-democratic manner...it should have been secret voting...Nino’s regime is strongly dictatorial” (in Viegas and Koudawo 2000: 21). Thus, the fracturing line that was taking shape was Nino and his few loyalists against the rest.

On June 5, 1998, two days before the ANP was to make public the conclusions on the arms trafficking investigation, the President exonerated Ansumane Mané and “for the bulk of the armed forces, this was the final blow” (Forrest 2002: 256). He nominated a new General and

Vice-General Chief of Staff of the armed forces and with these changes the social composition of the leading positions in the armed forces took a radically exclusive shape.

## 7.9 The June 7, 1998 Conflict

On June 7, 1998, the first gunfire was heard. The Minister of National Defence announced and reassured the population that this was none other than a group of bandits causing trouble and that the situation would be resolved in a few hours (Induta 2001: 121). However, two days later the supposed bandits identified themselves as the *Military Junta for the Consolidation of Democracy, Peace and Justice*, informed that their leader was Brigadier Ansumane Mané, demanded the President's resignation and that democratic elections be held as quickly as possible.

On that same day Senegalese troops entered Guinea-Bissau and by July 13 there was intense open fire. The President, lacking internal support - out of 6800 soldiers only a little over a hundred of them sided with him (Massey 2004: 80) - had asked for regional back-up. Both neighbours, Senegal and Guinea, promptly provided Nino Vieira with over 2000 troops, which "suggested the extent to which Vieira had invested his own political loyalties externally and symbolised the final abandonment of his erstwhile popular base" (Forrest 2002: 256).

*"He [Nino] was desperate. He had some soldiers that were loyal to him, but the Aguentas for example, were an act of despair. They were of the Papel ethnic group, just like Nino. He realized that it would be hard for him to win the war and he had to resort to the Aguentas. He met with them in the bushes, sent them to Conakry for military preparation. He promised them things" (Interview 17).*

Thus, the Aguentas, a small number of government troops and a few more Senegalese and Guinean, were the meagre forces that President Nino Vieira could rely on. Mané, on the other hand, could militarily count on the bulk of the armed forces, liberation combatants and veterans, while politically obtaining the support of the Bissau-Guinean population at large.

*"The war in Guinea-Bissau has been a war of a President and his foreign allies against the majority of the political parties, against parliament, against the Bishop and all prominent actors of civil society, as a matter of fact against the people of Guinea-Bissau" (Drift 1999: 227).*

Whereas internally the Military Junta obtained broad-based support, the government side was better off in terms of international backing. President Nino Vieira had been democratically elected and therefore the international community (OAU, ECOWAS, EU, and CPLP) condemned the Junta's acts and insisted that power be handed over to him (Drift 1991:231; Massey 2004: 82). Nonetheless, while initially there was international unanimity with regards to the mutineers' acts, the mediation process took a different contour.

Under the endorsement of the OAU, ECOWAS was deemed the organisation most fit to mediate the conflict. However, this was not a consensual decision. ECOWAS's leading role in the process signified increasing Francophone influence in Lusophone territory. Consequently, in order to counter French influence, Portugal, under CPLP auspices, got involved as well. The result was a "multiplicity of would-be mediators" with contrary objectives and agendas which "exacerbated and prolonged the conflict" (Massey 2004: 95). While ECOWAS (and France) favoured Nino, Portugal and CPLP established linkages with the Military Junta.

After various and failed attempts at cease-fire, on November 1, 1998, Nino and Mané both signed the Abuja Peace Agreement. The agreement called for the withdrawal of foreign troops, a deployment of an ECOMOG interposition force that would secure the border between Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, the immediate formation of a government of national unity that would include representatives of the Military Junta and the government, and the holding elections before March 1999 (S/1998/1028). The government of national unity was sworn in on February 20, 1999 but on May 8, 1999 the war commenced anew. The Military Junta swiftly took control of Bissau, burned the presidential palace and Nino was forced to surrender and then later authorized to leave Guinea-Bissau for exile in Portugal. A ruling junta was formed and took control of the government until the holding of elections in 28 November 1999.

While there were only two warring camps, both sides merged various identities. What had started as PAIGC infighting, turned into an "anti-Nino" war. Various actors, who had once been at odds, allied with each other to overturn the regime. As the quotes from my interviews below indicate, it did not matter whether they were politicians from opposing political parties, Balanta and Mandinga or liberation war veterans, they identified Nino as the culprit of their divergences and converged into the Military Junta.

*"I did not know the soldiers, I had no relation with them but we were witnesses of the situation that was going on, we knew that the situation was unbearable. Nino did not have any political vocation and was ruining the country. There was a need to*

*end the rotten peace... The Junta said they were a Junta with a capital J. I entered because I realized that the soldiers were going to have a hard time explaining why they had legitimacy; democratic legitimacy was irrelevant in face of the indignity the country was in. Those in power became illegitimate and so they should be removed. So I thought I could contribute and help the Junta in order to clarify and elucidate the international community” (Interview 14).*

*“The Balanta are put apart from all positions. When the war starts on the 7 June everything changes; all those Balanta that had been pushed aside by the Mandinga side with Ansumane! Why is this ironic? Because the tension that existed between the Mandinga and the Balanta in the 1980’s disappears during the 11 month war.” (Interview 6)*

*“I lived very badly, no conditions. The house was more or less, but it did not have furniture or anything else. I did not have money to buy a television...a man that fought [in the liberation war] for eleven years!” (Bubo Na Tchuto’s statement in the midst of the civil war in A Revolta dos Mais Velhos, 1998-1999).*

The identification of these past conflictual relationships is necessary for understanding post-civil war and present-day relationships. As suggested by one informant, the conflicts that arose immediately after the war were more or less predictable.

*“When Ansumane Mané is dismissed he knew that it was just a matter of crossing the road and he would find many of Nino’s old enemies who wanted to settle the score. They were more than willing to come together in order to fight Nino. What is funny and maybe predictable is that after the 7 June war followed a period of political and military instability between them” (Interview 32)*

## **7.10 A Friend’s “Betrayal”: Boundaries and Stories**

After a friendship that lasted for thirty-seven years, Nino and Mané fought a war against each other. Independently of the informants’ siding in the war, this story is recalled with disbelief of how such good friends turned into foes.

*“He [Mané] and Nino were best friends. He was Nino’s bodyguard. He accompanied Nino in every big operation. To have someone as your bodyguard you need to trust him. They ate from the same pot. Nino would not give a step forward without Ansumane Mané. When Nino was imprisoned by the Portuguese, Mané went there and got him out. Nino owed him his life. And after all that, they fight each other” (Interview 2)*

*"I remember going to visit Nino in Paris in the hospital when he was sick, after Mané had been suspended from his position as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, and I warned him that Ansumane was seen in Bissau gathering troops and armament. Nino called Ansumane on the telephone and asked him what this was all about and he told Nino, 'these guns are to defend you, you should not doubt me; this is all to defend you'. Nino believed him. He never imagined that Ansumane would ever turn his back on him. They fought in the [liberation] war together; they knew each other for over 37 years" (Interview 6)*

Yet, when the supposed act of betrayal occurred (Mané's suspension) their relations had already changed. If anything, they were *friends* by then. The degrading of their relationship has to be seen in light of the regime becoming ever-more "alienated from Vieira's own original power base, the military" (Forrest 2002: 225) and of Nino's overt, but incidental, demarcation from his liberation comrades in 1997.

Although Nino, at first, attempted to gain the sympathy of both contending groups in the armed forces by promoting the younger military officials, this displeased his liberation comrades. As boundaries heightened the interests of the two PAIGC generations became irreconcilable - hence pointing towards the difficulty of pleasing "Greeks and Trojans" (Interview 29). Despite Nino's military background associating him with the veterans and his economic interests linking him to the urban younger elite, the sharpness of the boundaries between the two groups made it impossible for him to keep a foot on both sides. Since 1997, after the personal rivalries with Saturnino da Costa, Nino became identified and surrounded himself with the younger "so-called Lieutenant-Colonels" and younger politicians. Consequently, this relationship change influenced who he opted to place in the highest positions of power, ultimately leading to the exclusion of the historic independence combatants in the highest positions in the armed forces.

In an interview, right after the end of the war, Nino Vieira was asked how he thought it was possible that Mané, a man he trusted, revolted against him. His answer was the following:

*"I ask you how it is possible. If he did not revolt during all these years, why did he do it when he was suspended from his military position? I do not know who pushed him to do it. He got along well with me for 37 years and only now he thinks I am a dictator?" (Independente 26 August, 1999).*

However, by the time Nino suspended Mané he did not trust or identify with him. The act of "betrayal", driving Mané to revolt, is already the consequence of Nino's social boundary change.

## 7.11 The Political Elite Bargain

This chapter started off by looking at the inter-ethnic distribution of positions of power between 1985 and 1992. The data revealed that since the October 17, 1985 episode, the Balanta ethnic group was excluded from leading positions in the PAIGC, government and armed forces. Their marginalisation, however, did not result in immediate armed challenges to the state. It was suggested that their inaction may be explained by the tightening of the regime's security and by their limitation in forging alliances with other contending elites - who were represented in these positions. Political order was thus upheld throughout the following years despite the exclusion of the most populous ethnic group in Guinea-Bissau.

The adoption of liberalization policies aggravated the divide between Bissau and the rural areas and further unsettled PAIGC cohesiveness. Foreign loans and credits benefitted a few highly-ranked government officials and state bureaucrats while excluding the PAIGC's old guard (and the population in general). Alongside other things, the use of credits for consumer purposes - rather than for enhancing agricultural production - led to an artificial growth of the economy and to a commercial *bourgeoisie* reliant on the state itself to reproduce its capital. Access to the state apparatus thus became the object of competition between these two PAIGC factions. The advent of multipartyism exacerbated PAIGC infighting while at the same time gave rise to the formation of a political party - the PRS - along ethnic lines (albeit also representative of the rural population).

The inclusion of the two predominant contending groups in the armed forces amplified tensions. Successively, the overwhelming representation of the younger wing of the PAIGC in the Political Bureau created greater dissatisfaction among the older. However, it was only with the exclusion of the liberation combatants from the highest positions in the armed forces that the war erupted. It therefore required pushing aside those who substantially controlled the means of violence for an armed challenge to the state take place. Nonetheless, the exclusion of practically all social groups in the elite bargain and Nino's autocratic rule prompted overall support for the Military Junta.

# CHAPTER 8

## CONCLUSION

### 8. 1 Avoiding Generalisations and Judgements

This thesis has sought to contribute to the literature on state resilience and fragility through a case study of Guinea-Bissau's political development from the time of independence until the outbreak of the civil war in 1998. It has focused on an analysis of the changing shapes, composition and character of elite bargains throughout this period as an approach to explaining the processes whereby political order has been established, broken down and re-established.

The first thing to point out is that this in-depth qualitative approach has made it possible to challenge certain imprecisions and generalisations inherent in linear comparative explanations, generally structural in character, for Africa's political trajectories and its states' (in)capacities to perform and the incidence of violence and war.

For example, Guinea-Bissau's state is commonly labelled as "weak" and "failed" due to the inefficiency of its political and economic institutions and the recurrence of political violence throughout its post-independence history. In fact, with regard to economic development since independence, Guinea-Bissau has maintained low growth rates and secured its place as one of the poorest countries in the world. Yet, as shown, for a time, the state had been rather resilient, with sufficient capacity to avoid armed challenges to power. Rather than considering that the *coup d'état* in 1980 and the civil war in 1998 had been inevitable due to some array of structural factors, this thesis analysed the interactions among the elites and circumstantial events as constituting processes whose unravelling is necessary for understanding why and how these violent episodes did actually occur. Right from the start, granted the existence of so many potential sources of conflict, it is notable that the first moment of political violence after independence took six years to germinate. Did this have to do with structural factors or the political factors, such as the widespread support that the PAIGC held upon independence and



the form in which it was initially able to accommodate the interests of the varied elites and non-elites? Conversely, liberalisation of the economy in 1986 and electoral competition in 1994 - attributes of states deemed by neo-liberal ideologists to promote economic development and political stability - did little, or worse, to enhance Guinea-Bissau's economic and security capacity. This interactional analytical approach applied to the role of ethnicity as well: ethnicity was not necessarily a constant factor of cleavage weakening the state or stimulating conflict. As shown, the marginalisation of the Balanta ethnic group from state power over almost two decades was certainly a significant reason for their rapid adherence as a group to the Military Junta during the civil war, and yet, this identity had not always been politically relevant; other forms of identity had come into play. Thus such broad and judgemental terminologies based upon comparative generalizations from structural factors lose sight of the fact that the performance of the state in Guinea-Bissau has differed according to the functions attributed to it overtime and that its performance within the same function has varied.

The drive behind policy decisions and the complex and contingent reasons for their alterations are precisely what many generalisations on Africa's (dis)orderly political dynamics have disregarded (Reno 1995; Chabal and Daloz 1999). Furthermore, generalising ruling elites' strategies as reproducing disorder tends to "ignore the political imagination of these elites" and deny "the very possibility that they may have state-*building* aspirations" (Jones et al 2013: 4). While the PAIGC's revolutionary struggle did not bring about such a distinct post-colonial order when compared retrospectively to other African polities, it did have a significant degree of influence on how state leaders came to pursue developmental policies during the first years of independence. Surely measures reflecting the aims of this struggle, such as the campaigns to educate peasants on the benefits of production diversification (Goulet 1978: 22), the imposition of limits upon the salaries of high-ranking state officials and increases of those of the lowest ranks (Washington 1980: 21), or the prohibitions upon property ownership by officials and ministers (Andréini and Lambert 1978: 36) were, at minimum, serious potential influences upon the post-liberation development path. That the leaders' objectives were not achieved and that their aims subsequently changed does not diminish the significance of their programme. Furthermore, the strains provoked by the structural adjustment programmes that contributed to Nino Vieira's decline did not by themselves determine the course of events that produced the civil war of 1998: are the eleven years of absence of violent conflict and relatively orderly elite interaction to be treated as trivial? As Chapter 7 attempted to

demonstrate, the configuration of coalitions and the regime's autocracy sustained order for a time. The war occurred precisely when it did due to shifts in elite relations.

## 8.2 Boundaries and Bargains

This thesis has also tried specifically to make a theoretical contribution to the study of political elite bargains through its application of an interactional approach to the analysis of Guinea-Bissau's elite coalitions from 1974 to 1998.

This thesis has put forward the idea that understanding the changing shape and character of bargains and assessing their inclusivity or exclusivity depends upon analysis of who exactly are the competing elite groups at *specific times*. This approach entails a detailed examination of intra-elite relations and social boundary shifts. Furthermore, while it has been noted that the durability of a stable bargain also depends upon its ability to incorporate new emerging elites' interests (Chandhoke 2010: 3), it is also necessary to recognize how changes in relationships amongst the elites who compose the existent bargain alter its shape and nature.

### 8.2.1 Empirical Examination

The assumption, for example, that ethnic, regional or religious cleavages, within a society, are a constant and determining factor for explaining cleavages and competition amongst elites across time obscures the possibility that relations amongst groups may alter so that different political identities come into play and have varying degrees of relevance over time. Such assumptions can possibly derive, and generally do, from either treating previous violent episodes in the political history of a country, and the alignment of contending groups involved in them, as invariably characteristic or, similarly, from pinpointing the groups involved in present-day political contention and making *post hoc* assessments based upon an understanding of the salience of current elite boundaries. Either way, to identify a certain category as a line of division and not consider its possible evolution in political significance risks leading to misinformed conclusions on the shape of political elite bargains. As Kalyvas (2003: 486) sustains,

*"...the fact that ethnic or religious local cleavages are generally easier to discern by outside observers than are factional ones may also cause a bias in reporting, coding, and interpreting evidence."*

If studies that measure access to state positions on the basis of ethnicity as the sole politically relevant cleavage across polities and over time (such as Wimmer et al 2009) tend to fail to recognize that sources of fragmentation depend upon the specific country under analysis (Lindemann 2008: 16), identifying specific sources of fragmentation in the pre-colonial and colonial contexts (Ibid: 5) may equally fall short of identifying relevant cleavages at specific times. These not only may bare no political significance during certain periods (while other salient cleavages may have come to the forefront), but also may not be reflective of the social boundaries perceived or felt amongst the elites.<sup>166</sup> The relevant cleavages need to be ascertained from empirical research based upon the idea that they may vary relative to other factors.

For instance, while Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea-Bissau strategically created and fomented racial, ethnic and class divisions, the PAIGC - due especially to Amílcar Cabral's vision and formidable leadership capacities - was able to instil a degree of unity among party militants and supporters from the most varied social backgrounds during the liberation war. The legitimacy and support it had acquired throughout the greater part of the territory, and the commitment of its leaders and members to the liberation movement and to the creation of the *New Society* were all factors which strongly indicated that the pre-colonial and colonial cleavages had been relatively diluted by the time of independence. Although, there were undoubtedly those who questioned and even objected to the bi-national project between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, and although there were segments of the Bissau-Guinean population who clearly resented Cape Verdean participation in the colonial administration, the predominant line of political fracturing during the first years of independence was in fact between those who accepted the PAIGC as the dominant political force - and supported its socialist principles (the great majority), and those who did not (mainly those from other less influential liberation movements, the Fula, and the Bissauan colonial privileged social class). Focusing on the ethnic composition of the positions of power during the first revolutionary

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<sup>166</sup> This is not at all to imply that in the specific case-studies that Lindemann analyses - Uganda and Zambia (2010a; 2010b) - the cleavages which have been determined as dominant have not remained pervasive and consistent throughout the post-colonial period nor that these divisive lines were not perceived by the elites. The suggestion is: rather than assume they are constant, examine whether they are.

years revealed little about the bargain's shape and character; at that point in time, since social boundaries had changed, the more salient cleavage was defined by the anti-colonial struggle.

Another case in point is the *generational* cleavage amongst PAIGC elites: it was only activated with economic liberalisation and with the transition from a one-party state to a multi-party electoral system. To have based the analysis upon a hypothesis of generation as a critical fracturing line before this period would have been inaccurate and in turn would have resulted in a misleading assessment regarding the shape of the elite bargain. Besides, I have argued that the real cleavage involved class, the rural/urban contradiction and the combatant identity - not generation *per se*.

To acknowledge that cleavages shift in relevance and form is to realize that the same individual, say, for example, a minister, in different periods can be representative of a different category (i.e., individuals have multiple and changing identities); it all depends upon the way social boundaries have changed and been activated. In other words, even if the composition of the positions of power does not alter - in the sense that the same individuals are maintained in their positions - boundary shifts (which can occur for the most diverse reasons) modify relations, which consequently signifies that the line dividing one group from another may have become irrelevant or vice-versa. This necessarily has an effect on the shape and nature of the elite bargain.<sup>167</sup>

Locating these relational shifts and the salience of boundaries is precisely what make it possible to identify the predominant fracturing line(s) and factions at any given time, thus enabling analysis to ascertain whether the distribution of rents and state power positions is including or excluding the main contending political forces. It therefore follows that a coalitional analysis requires precisely identification of who the contending elites are and what are the claims at different times.

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<sup>167</sup> To exemplify this let us recall the 1985 October episode and the involvement of Paulo Correia and Viriato Pã. Paulo Correia was a PAIGC liberation war combatant from the Balanta ethnic group, who in 1980, as a member of the Council of the Revolution represented the military faction. By 1982, while still a member of the Council of Revolution, he represented the Balanta ethnic group. Viriato Pã, the General Procurator, in 1981 epitomized Correia's rival faction - not only was he not a PAIGC militant but was an opponent to it. For reasons explicated in chapter 6, boundaries between the elites had altered and ethnicity had become politically salient. So since they were both Balanta, by 1982, they were on the same side.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that, to a large extent, the country case chosen for the project of this thesis required such an approach to its inquiry (the who) and its form of analysis (the identification of boundary changes between the elites) in order to assess the shape of the political elite bargains. Guinea-Bissau, from the start, provided a case in which there was a necessity of empirically discerning the various fracturing lines among the elites since they were not all evident *a priori*.

While during Guinea-Bissau's liberation struggle the emphasis was upon local structures - thereby granting a certain level of political power to non-executive authorities, such as party cadres -, the increasing concentration of authority at the executive level signified that power emanated from the central state itself. This observation also has implications for the identification of cleavages since it suggests that the dominant elites are re-located at this level and the sources of contention may not entirely and immediately reflect societal ones - thereby making it more difficult to discern the character of cleavages and coalitions. The broad national support which the PAIGC held upon independence and its centralised one-party state rule, while having the effect of limiting outside challenges to the state's authority, did not result in erasing infighting between its leaders - who suffered varying influences and pressures at different moments. In fact, it was, among other things, the activation and an increase in the salience of boundaries between PAIGC factions that led to the 1980 *coup d'état*, to the episode of October 17, 1985 and to the civil war. Therefore the significant point to take note of is that, in addition to the more "basic group identities", another additional layer ought to be considered: elite claims and "private" conflicts. Analysis has to see through this layer in order to explain the emergence of "bigger" identities and the character and shape of current and subsequent elite bargains.

### **8.2.2 Changes in Relationships Change the Elite Bargains Shape**

The consideration of social boundaries within elite relationships takes on particular importance for the study of political elite bargains in polities where lucrative economic activities rely heavily, or solely, on state control, where the appropriation of surplus is weakly related to production, and where rents are used inefficiently.

In the context of economic underdevelopment, namely within processes of primitive accumulation, access to state resources is the crucial object of elite competition. Political and economic actors, in such contexts, thus tend to be indistinguishable, and contending elites are

unlikely to become, at least in the near future, interdependent. Processes of accumulation, and the lack of labour specialization that goes with it, therefore reduces any possibility of “political vertical integration” - that is, the merging of interests between political factions and economic groups - which enables the creation of commitment mechanisms between contending elites (Haber et al. 2004: 35). Consequently, control of the state apparatus - political power - becomes an indivisible conflict (Wood 2003b: 13) and, in the absence of a solution to the commitment problem, there is therefore no guarantee that those in power will not act in a predatory and exclusionary manner...

unless, as conceptualized by Olson (1993), the dictator, or “bandit”, has long-term horizons and recognizes that, in order to stay in power, it is in his self-interest to distribute patronage along encompassing lines and thereby formulate the conflict in more divisible terms - that is, a conflict that is solved through negotiation. This “secure autocrat”, as discussed in Chapter 2, has tended to emerge in countries with centralized forms of rule supported by a dominant political party since these historical circumstances tend to provide the mechanisms making it possible to deter an executive power from acting in a selective and predatory manner (from this it follows that an inclusive redistribution of rents produces stability, thus, enabling economic accumulation).

Yet, this does not explain why, in the absence of any of these commitments or a third party enforcer, the same ruler, at times, opts for different strategies: to forge inclusive and exclusive bargains. The close analysis of elite social boundary changes in Guinea-Bissau has made it possible to offer an explanation based on the type of relations established between them. Rulers’ commitment to the existent bargain depends, in large measure, upon the extent to which they identify and trust members of the elite coalition. That is, the distribution of rents is inevitably tied to personal connections and so the analysis of the evolution of relationships is key to problems of order and disorder.

During Luís Cabral’s regime, for example, the activation of a boundary between party leaders led to coalitions with irreconcilable interests: those who favoured urban industrial policies and those who favoured rural development. These divergences, in turn, drove Cabral to begin restricting both economic policy and security decisions and to start confining privileges to those closest to him (who were mostly Cape Verdean but also included others who sided with his urban industrial policies). His change in strategy therefore, on the one hand, reflects that he no longer shared interests with a faction of the ruling coalition and, on the other, reveals

that, once this occurred, he opted to forge a coalition with others he trusted. Thus, in spite of the existence of a political party, which had organised itself along broad lines, alterations in elite relationships resulted in a change in the bargain's character and shape which ended up leading to protest along (bi)national lines.

During Nino's eighteen year presidency there are two particular examples of how changes in elite relations explain his more violent and exclusionary actions at a precise given time. Chapter 6 demonstrated how Nino identified closely with the Balanta military officials and therefore promoted them in the armed forces. However, this action triggered ethnic conflicts, particularly between Mandinga and Balanta. The following years the Balanta were accused by other ethnic groups of plotting to overthrow the President. In spite of these accusations, Nino made efforts to balance Balanta and Mandinga representation in the leading party and government positions. However, the constant suspicions of potential Balanta dominance - particularly since they composed the bulk of the armed forces - led to Nino's degrading of his relations with them, that is, he ceased to trust them. Only after various accusations were the former Balanta comrades executed and then in the following years were Balanta marginalised from positions of power. There is insufficient and incongruent information to suggest that representatives of the Balanta were indeed plotting to overthrow the President, however, the question to be posed is what prevented Nino from executing them before and what explains his change of strategies? While the answer may perhaps seem superficial, the deterrent and the incentive for Nino's choices that led to violent and exclusionary actions towards the Balanta are illuminated by the changing nature of his relationships with them.

Chapter 7 explained how economic liberalisation and foreign aid gave rise to a small number of asset holders, but did not increase productive investment. These economic actors continued to be dependent upon the state itself to sustain their power. This unleashed a struggle between them and the PAIGC's old guard over what is perceived as an indivisible stake: the state. As also shown, Nino was trusted by both sides - due to his affiliation with the two groups - and tried to please both. However, the irreconcilability of their interests and the non-divisible tension made it difficult to "gravitate" between both sides, and, as a result of a personal feud with the Prime-Minister, he ended up being demarcated and attached to the "younger" PAIGC faction. After this incident, Nino gradually surrounded himself with younger politicians and military officials to the point of excluding his former friends in leading positions. Thus, once clearly identified with one group, he reshaped the positions of power towards that same side - those whom he now trusted.

Nino's actions have led to interpretations that his rule was based upon a strategy of "divide and conquer". Closer examination, however, has suggested that attempts to please contending groups, when the end result has been violent, have led to retrospective perceptions of such a thought-out manipulative ruling strategy. The impossibility of conciliating the contending groups' interests, and, the contingencies that change relationships, positioned him on one side. When that occurred, the elite bargain took an overtly exclusionary shape.

As a result, the Bissau-Guinean case has indicated that, when boundaries have been activated and sharpened between the contending elites, distrust between them intensifies and the fear of being overthrown by the opposing faction through violent means increases substantially. In order to prevent this from occurring and to protect "our" interests from "theirs", the tendency in these situations has been to reshuffle and replace ministers, limit decision-making to fewer hands, substitute army chiefs of staff and so on. Paradoxically, this is done at the expense of excluding contending elites.

Thus, by looking into intra-elite relations and changes in social boundaries in conjunction with the shape of the political elite bargains, this thesis ended up explaining not only the more overt moments of political violence, but also more subtle ones - such as ministerial turnovers, suspicions/accusations of engendering *coup d'états* and policy stalemates - that led to major ones. Social interaction may activate or sharpen the boundaries between the elites, influencing the bargaining process and hence the bargains' shape. While the "glue" holding the bargain is at the executive level (Putzel and Di John 2012: 21), what really makes it stick together may just well be the type of relations established between the elites. That is, in spite of an inclusive bargain providing the conditions under which contending elites may settle their disagreements through more negotiable means, if their interaction does not generate some degree of unity between them, then a divisible conflict can become an indivisible one.<sup>168</sup>

The way this thesis approached the examination of political elite bargains has made it possible to go beyond this moment in the analysis. It has looked in detail at how social boundaries have shifted and changed in Guinea-Bissau. By doing so, it has explained which, why and how

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<sup>168</sup> In a similar line of thought, for example, Higley and Burton (1989: 19) argue that stable regimes require a "consensually unified national elite", that is, when elites share the "rules of the game" they "view decisional outcomes as a positive-sum or 'politics-as-bargaining' game, rather than a zero-sum or 'politics-as-war' game"



different political identities have emerged, gained and decreased in political relevance, and how their interactions have shaped subsequent relations and produced political change. Equally important though, by analysing the various alterations in boundaries, it has explained how relations of trust turned into relations of distrust, how friends can become *friends* (and vice-versa) and, sometimes, even enemies. It has pieced together the various recollected *stories* on Guinea-Bissau and provided a new (and more just) story, which hopefully demystifies the idea held by many of the interviewees that it is a country full of traitors.

The following sections will review and highlight some of the key implications and findings and it will do so thematically: stories and *friendships*. The last part of the chapter points to final conclusions that may be drawn from Guinea-Bissau's case.

### 8. 3 Stories

The following list of oppositions does not include all of the main sources of fragmentation and faction-fighting in Guinea-Bissau from 1974 to 1998, but it succinctly points out some of the most critical ones: "us" PAIGC militants in favour of building the *New Society*, "them" Bissauan *petit bourgeois*; "us" *faithful* to Amílcar Cabral's principles and rural development path, "them" favouring urban and rapid industrialisation; "us" Bissau-Guineans, "them" Cape Verdeans; "us" revolutionaries, "them" liberals; "us" Balanta, "them" Mandinga and non-Balanta; "us" liberation war combatants, "them" young, who did not fight for independence, with a foreign education; "us" *burmedjus*, "them" *pretu-nok*; "us" reformists, "them" PAIGC conservatives; "us" *Ninists*, "them" *anti-Ninists*.

This is what the stories have told: different forms of political claim-making and assertions were activated during these years that go beyond the most frequent divisive categories generally assigned to Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, ethnicity has been a cause of polarisation and to be sure the fragmentation generated by colonialism between Bissau-Guineans and Cape Verdeans was an integral source of contention during Portuguese rule and in the post-independence period. Yet, neither the ethnic nor the bi-national cleavages were consistently pervasive. In fact, amongst the elites, at times, they have been rather extraneous. Thus, differing points of contention have had varying degrees of resonance.

The stories, though, have also told us that they themselves - the stories, that is - do not project this social reality in a straightforward manner. The stories need to be unravelled in at least three ways. Firstly, the recollections of those who, one way or another, “participated” in these moments, frequently explain contentious events or episodes by referring to the intentions or motivation of certain individuals/actors as the reasoning behind their occurrence. To be more concrete, the interviewees’ interpretations of the various politically tense or violent moments in Guinea-Bissau generally focused on pinpointing specific individuals as being responsible for them. In fact, political and personal intrigues, accusations and “secrets” were revealed - like the one quoted below by an interviewee who had been a member of the government in 1998:

*“The thing that is most dramatic and that most causes me discomfort is that all these coups and the June 7 conflict have always been initiated by politicians. They made Ansumane Mané look like a hero, almost like Amílcar Cabral. Politicians who are out there. The people who provoked this tragedy are out there. I know perfectly well who was responsible for the June 7 conflict. It is terrible how this happens inside our own party. This is the first time I say this to an outsider [foreigner]. Everything I’m telling you I lived through intensively, I know... It was X and that group of people. He was the one who talked Mané into picking up arms against Nino” (Interview 6)*

Nonetheless, many of these vivid and juicy details have been, when possible, left out of this thesis. This is not to say that these fine points of information are not valuable, quite the contrary. They fed this analysis. Not so much the opinions regarding the personality of certain individuals (whether they were greedy, competitive and so forth) or the revelation of supposed facts *per se*, but rather who was stating them, how they were stated, who they were involving and most critically what they had already revealed (and what they omitted) before describing the moment they were now concerned in explaining or the person/group who they were now downgrading/upgrading. The unravelling in this first sense was to embed these accounts and life trajectories within the wider socio-political and interactional context in order to grasp who were the “us” and the “them” in the various specific periods (Tilly 2002; Tilly 2005a). The intersection of life histories and the various interpretations of contentious episodes given by the elites enabled me not only to detect on what basis claims were being asserted at a specific time (and thus providing the information necessary to identify the

cleavage to be considered), but also whether the nature of the relations between them had changed.<sup>169</sup>

Secondly, on various occasions the activation of boundaries and boundary shifts was revealed by the *incongruence* or contradictions in personal discourse, group references and academic accounts. In other words, the unravelling in this second sense involved discerning to what extent prevalent stories were interpreted in the light of certain significant episodes or even present conflicts. That the past is viewed in light of present concerns or that collective memories have been shaped by a specific group in order to serve its own interests is far from being a theoretically new affirmation – “memory is not shaped in a vacuum; the motives of memory are never pure” (Young in Baumel-Schwartz 2010: 45). Indeed, the liberation war narrative in Guinea-Bissau and its story of ethnic unity and heroism has been promoted and preserved by the PAIGC, and particularly by those who fought, in order to legitimize and continue their hold on power.<sup>170</sup> Yet, the story line differs when it concerns the 1980 *coup*

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<sup>169</sup> As an example the following extended quote gives both an idea of how contentious identities traverse the discourse and life history of the same individual and of how I had to extrapolate the “us” and “them” from the “me”:

*“I defended Nino [in 1980]. To me he symbolized the best of the revolutionaries, the nationalist hero. We needed to affirm our Guinean identity...*

*[...]*

*The first big crisis in the PAIGC was when the ‘121 Group’ was formed. I did not hesitate to integrate the group; I wanted to give my contribution. In the end it did not go anywhere. Some did not want to cut completely with the PAIGC. So only a little over twenty people resisted and we formed an opposition party [...]. I was doing my work as a member of the opposition. I denounced acts of corruption, I criticized his [Nino Vieira] way of governing and he counter attacked by making fun of me. I answered back and asked him if he had no respect for me and for the people who educated me. He did not like what he heard and ordered someone to give me a lesson [a beating]...*

*[...]*

*You are right; I have this dual contradictory sentiment in relation to him [Nino Vieira], antagonistic to a certain extent. I have the utmost admiration for him as a hero, as a patriot, as a nationalist. The man embodied the defence of a Guinean identity, which is for me the pillar of any political project. As a politician he completely disappointed me. But in a general sense I have a lot of respect for him. If we accept a son it is not to kill him, it is to make him better” (Interview 14).*

Such a discourse raises a number of questions that require diverse extrapolations: why did he support Nino Vieira in 1980? Why was it that twelve years later he did not? What changed during those years? Who were the twenty people who formed an opposition party? Who were the ones that did not want to cut completely with the PAIGC?

<sup>170</sup> As an example of how inconsistent references are weaved into discourse in light of present interests, we can look at Manuel dos Santos, a Cape Verdean war commander of the South flank of the liberation struggle. After the 1998 internal conflict he was imprisoned and accused of betraying his liberation war comrades (since he was close to Nino Vieira and supported his regime), but in June, 2012 he states - now as a justification for the *coup d’état* in 2012 that removed the Prime-Minister Carlos Gomes Junior

*d'état*. The story line differs once more when regarding the October 17, 1985 episode. And what should the researcher make of accounts on Nino's authoritarian and unscrupulous rule by people who had been not only part of the regime but also known to be part of his closest inner circle? Thus the stories also told us that their incongruities or inconsistencies needed further digging into - generally it pointed to boundary changes and at other times signified that certain events were interpreted differently depending on the interviewee's pertinent social identity.

Thirdly, the stories also told us that most of the time they are incomplete; unravelling, in this sense, has meant picking up the bits and pieces in order to explain how interactions between groups lead to subsequent divergences. Their incompleteness is shown in two senses. In the first place, Guinea-Bissau's political history is generally told by describing moments of rupture: independence, the 1980 *coup d'état*, October 17 episode, the first democratic elections in 1994, the civil war in 1998 and so on.<sup>171</sup> Thus, the processes (the "lesser" contentious moments) that led to these episodes tend to get lost in between. For example, between the 1980 coup and the episode of October 17, 1985 there are two widespread (counter) story lines: 1) President Nino Vieira felt threatened by the large proportion of Balanta in the armed forces and therefore killed them; 2) the Balanta army officials were dissatisfied with the distribution of state positions and therefore attempted to overthrow Nino on various occasions, and ended up being detained and sentenced to death (Forrest 1987: 111 - 112). What neither of these narratives explicates though is why and how Nino and these Balanta officials went from being on the same side of the boundary to being enemies. It is precisely this process that needed unravelling since, indeed, relations between them changed during these five years. Through the various interviews, for example, an additional piece of

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from power - *"Guinea-Bissau does not honour its sons; the nations' true liberation war combatants are not respected...this year is my 50 anniversary as a PAICG militant. I became a militant in 1962 and today I am 69 years old. We need to assume our responsibilities towards our Party"* (Lusa, June 6, 2012). By making such a statement, on the one hand, he suggests that at least in 2012 he had crossed certain boundaries and at this point in time was identifying himself with his liberation war combatant comrades; on the other hand, he instrumentalizes the past to serve his present interests and of those he now identified with.

<sup>171</sup> For example, in a study on collective memory in Guinea-Bissau, university students were asked to list what they considered the 5 most relevant historical moments of their national history. By far the moments most referred to were the civil war, the liberation struggle, the declaration of independence and the 1980 coup (Cabecinhas e Nhaga 2008: 119).

information was disclosed about Mandinga and Balanta rivalry - epitomized by two men in particular - in the armed forces,<sup>172</sup> which enabled us to have a better understanding as to why their relations altered.

In the second place, incompleteness also appeared in the sense that the stories (told by both the interviewees and by analysts) tended to leave out (plausible) explanations as to why one situation led to another. To give an example of what is meant by this: if nationality was the main source of fragmentation during the first six years of independence - as was perceived and as is commonly understood - why was it that after the *coup*, with the Cape Verdean faction out of the way, similar divergences persisted in the PAIGC? Or why was it that at the PAIGC's Second Extraordinary Congress, skin colour determined the direction of the party's militant's votes rather than stands on whether they were for or against political pluralism (which was the main issue preceding the congress)? In both cases, it has either been suggested that it was because of the competitive/greedy traits of specific individuals or in fact no explanations were given at all.<sup>173</sup>

By putting the bits and pieces together, this thesis has offered a line of explanation for these and other (unintended) outcomes. Having identified the underlying source of contention on the basis of social and ideological distinctions and clarifying how these later assumed a national contour shed significant light and enabled us to answer the first question raised. As for the second question, this thesis put forward that those who favoured political reforms were to a great extent state bureaucrats who had been able to benefit from credit loans and concessions; they were also the so-called *Burmedjus* who, to a great extent, were of lighter skin colour.

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<sup>172</sup> As far as I am aware, this piece of the story has never been told.

<sup>173</sup> For instance, concerning the first question raised, Forrest states that immediately after the 1980 coup the President and the Prime-Minister were foes but does not explain why (Forrest 1987: 110). Regarding the second issue, for example, Nobrega (2002: 264) remarks that it was *surprising* that racial cleavages proved to be the source of contention rather than that of reformists vs. conservatives - hence no explanation given.

## 8. 4 Friends, *Friends* and Enemies

This thesis started off with an anecdote on relations that were based on interest: President Malam Bacai Sanhá, João and I neither had any other significant link that bonded us, and no other reason for establishing a relation between us apart from wanting to get what we wanted out of this relationship. As long as none of us had gotten what we wanted, there were strong incentives to act cordially and uphold these ties. Once one of us got what we were looking for (or realized that the other could not give us what we expected or that there were indications that the other had no intent in fulfilling the implicit agreement), the motives that sustained our connection died away and, unless through these interactions we had established relations based on something else besides interest, the relationship could come to an end.<sup>174</sup>

What is more, and significant for what is to follow, though the relations between us were asymmetrical - that is, at that specific time the President was in a stronger position and thus able to give us more than we could give him in return, consequently making us to some degree more disposable - the fact that, at least during those three days, we all had some interest in sustaining an agreeable relation between us made us *friends*. Yet, during those three days there were signs that pointed to a deterioration of the President's and João's *friendship* relation. According to the latter, the President was not abiding to his part of the bargain. The benefits he expected to reap as the President's counsellor were not being met and he thought he was being treated with less consideration than the rest of the President's entourage during the trip. From what could be observed there was a growing resentment towards the President and the social boundaries between them were hardening. Since both had incentives to hold the bargain together (and disincentives to break it: on the one hand, the President could lose legitimacy among his Fula constituents; on the other hand, João would lose his prerogatives at the centre level), as far as I know, they remained *friends*.<sup>175</sup> Nonetheless, at least in what concerned João, their relations were rather unsteady.

These are the type of relations that hold a political elite bargain together and maintain a certain degree of order. In other words, mutual relations of interest are what sustain cooperation between contending elites and preclude them from resorting to violence.

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<sup>174</sup> As was the case once I left Guinea-Bissau.

<sup>175</sup> While writing this thesis, President Malam Bacai Sanhá died of illness in Paris on 9 January 2012.

However, relations solely based on interest, as the case above suggests, also tend to be unstable and short-lived: if and when the relationship assumes a non-reciprocal contour, for example, when one faction is generating less or no rents at all (an elite, through time, may lose its political/economic significance depending on the context), there are no other ties that will guarantee that cooperation is sustained.<sup>176</sup> This is one of the reasons why members of the same coalition are parties of the same social identity as it provides the significant and strong ties that constrain their behaviour (which is here referred to as friends) and rents need not be what bind them together. To go back to President Malam and João's anecdote: those who were given new jeeps and put in the same hotel as the president were those who he identified with and thus with whom he held a range of other obligations that went beyond interest; João was not one of "them".<sup>177</sup> As long as there are rents, *friendship* relations are maintained, however they erode a lot easier than friendship ones.

The issue though - and this is what came across through the analysis of these two types of relations - is that both of them can change, despite the presence of incentives that ought to set the conditions that lead contending factions to credibly believe that neither will pick up arms against each other. The identification and explanation of the processes of how friends became *friends* or enemies in Guinea-Bissau (and, as was seen, the inverse may also occur) has hopefully demystified this (general) idea:

*"The other day someone told me that Guinea-Bissau was a country of traitors and you know, the more I think about it, the more I think he is right. There have been so many betrayals and it starts with the assassination of Cabral. Cabral used to say that the only people who can destroy the party are its own militants and he was right."*  
(Interview 19)

If there were betrayals, then this has also meant that there were (genuine) friendships. The act of betrayal is the epitome and consequence of a boundary change: he who betrays is an enemy, but the feeling of being betrayed means that he was once a friend. What matters is to explain what happens in between in order to understand that the one who is now considered

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<sup>176</sup> This issue is especially relevant in political organisations where there is no third party to enforce, or at least to overlook, that arrangements are upheld.

<sup>177</sup> To a large extent, those close to the President were *historic* PAIGC liberation veterans such as himself.

a traitor is being loyal to some (his) side. Though the form in which this occurs is not always evident or easy to discern, this thesis has hoped to shed some light on how that happens.

## 8.5 Final Conclusions

Guinea-Bissau's post-independence political elite bargains have had varying shapes and varying consequences. The link between them and political (dis)order is, at times apparent, at other times, not that obvious. This final section will draw some conclusions and implications from Guinea-Bissau's case.

Firstly, although the PAIGC was the ruling party throughout these years, it shifted ideologically: from socialist and rural-oriented in the 1970's to a more liberal and pragmatic perspective, barely justifying rent-seeking (obtained through international donors or illicit activities such as the trafficking of arms) from the 1980's onwards. This shift had an effect on the shape of the following bargains, that is, the PAIGC's rural constituency - its initial base of support - was gradually excluded, while an urban minority was privileged. Yet, while this exclusion was related to the motives for the 1980 *coup d'état*, the even more pervasive alienation and disempowerment of the people in the countryside in the following years did not spur any violent protest or action at that level.<sup>178</sup> Along another line of thought, this also points out that the ideology of the ruling party influences the shape of policies which consequently have a significant influence in determining who is to be excluded and included in the bargain.

Secondly, the PAIGC's all-encompassing ethnic composition at the time of independence was also altered. From 1985 to the outbreak of the civil war the Balanta were left out from

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<sup>178</sup> This has been the case throughout Guinea-Bissau's post-independence period. The population has remained at the margins of elite in-fighting and struggles. Even in 1998, although the majority supported the Military Junta, the population "stayed out" of the war. This is one of the reasons why Bissau-Guineans generally do not term the armed conflict as a civil war - they refer to it as the June 7th conflict - since they regard it as a dispute between elites. Drift, for example, describes this Bissau-Guinean "apathy" as "an expression of realism": the population is not interested in its government because it knows its government is not interested in them (Drift 1999: 229). However, one explanation for this so-called apathy resides perhaps in the fact that political parties - apart from the PRS (see footnote below) - remain urban in character (that is, representative of a meagre Bissauan middle class) and thus do not tend promote popular mobilization.



positions of power in the military, government and party.<sup>179</sup> Still, it is important to note as well that the PAIGC's previous ethnic inclusivity had had its limitations: the Fula, during these years, were significantly underrepresented in all positions of power (especially when taking into account their importance in the population). Despite the underrepresentation and exclusion of both these groups, the state remained unchallenged. However, there are differences between these two ethnic groups and their relation to state power. While the Balanta, to an extent, between 1980 and 1985 did benefit relatively from access to political and military power, the Fula, had always had a minimal role in relation to the PAIGC and their involvement in the post-colonial state. So although the repressive nature of the regime and its control over the military (indeed, up until the mid-90's, its allegiance was towards Nino) explain why the outbreak of conflict was delayed, it also may well be that the Fula, contrary to the Balanta, did not have the will or motivation to challenge the authority of the state because of their very marginality to it.<sup>180</sup> This second point indicates, on the one hand, that the link between exclusivity and conflict is not linear since it depends on the force of the regime to deter violent action; on the other hand, it suggests that this link may at times not be that linear because it may depend upon the motivation of the excluded group to actually engage in violence.

Thirdly, the historical contingencies of the military mobilization in the liberation struggle resulted in an army predominantly composed of Balanta. Their weighty representation in the armed forces, and particularly the irregular manner in which they were incorporated in its highest positions after the *Readjustment Movement*, resulted in ethnic conflict at that level. The October 17, 1985 episode appears to be a result of this ethnic group's overrepresentation in the military. The analysis of this case suggests that an inclusive distribution of the inner core positions in the armed forces may be a significant deterrent to avoid armed challenges to the state. On the other hand, Balanta underrepresentation in leading government positions may have been behind the military uprisings and thus suggestive that representation of contending

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<sup>179</sup> In the post-civil war period, this loss of power was inverted: Kumba Yalá, a Balanta and candidate for the PRS, won the 2000 presidential elections. Once in power Yalá disproportionately nominated people of his own ethnic group to political, administrative and military positions. By 2003 a military coup overthrew him. Since then Guinea-Bissau has gone through great political instability which, at the level of the elites, has been simultaneously associated with high levels of violence (various assassinations).

<sup>180</sup> This goes in line with Lindemann's conclusions (2010: 59) regarding the Karamojong in Uganda. He suggests that their persistent exclusion in the post-colonial state explains their lack of insurgency: they were not motivated to fight for something that they never had. In contrast, those ethnic groups which had experienced loss of power were motivated to do so.

elites ought to encompass all domains of power. This said, since there is no conclusive evidence of what indeed occurred so it is perhaps more sound to suggest that the elite bargain at the time continued to privilege a Bissauan elite and that military discontent stemmed from this outcome. In a general sense, though, Nino ensured the military's allegiance throughout a long part of his rule by including them in the bargain (for example, by ensuring that the soldiers received the first food staples). Nonetheless, his reliance on the military through his personal connections and the division that later emerged between the war veterans and the younger soldiers impeded his ability of forging a viable bargain between these two factions. Thus, this confirms the proposition that whereas "a centralised patronage and rule with well developed political organisations is more likely to create a loyal and unified military" (Di John 2010: 8), patronage that is dependent upon personal connections tends to decay more easily.

Fourthly, although at times the positions of power were inclusive of the main contending factions or groups, whenever there were periods of constitutional transition and/or foreseen changes in the structure of the top bodies of the party or the government, there was increased internal strife. Sometimes these expected changes even led to divisions within the same faction, that is to say, new boundaries were activated – as was the case in the military in 1981-82. In other words, although the composition of leading positions may be inclusive, anticipated alterations give rise to expectations of exclusion in the forthcoming ones and can thus be conducive to violent struggle. Accordingly then, conflict during these moments of institutional change may be avoided by giving assurances or guaranteeing that each faction will have representation in the coming positions.

Fifthly, liberal interventionist policies made the political settlement fragile. In the absence of a regulatory power, the privatisation of state enterprises and donor-credits benefitted an elite and created greater horizontal and vertical inequalities. The introduction of multi-party elections in 1994 enabled the emergence of a political party with an ethnic base (PRS). While the 1994 elections did not unleash an overt move to ethnic politics since the rest of the political parties that emerged were of urban character, it did exacerbate regime repression. Furthermore, the exclusion of the PAIGC's historic leaders in the liberalisation process aggravated tensions and was certainly a contributing factor to the eruption of the war. Thus, the attractive characteristics of democratic regimes and market economies can have unattractive results.

Sixthly, the exclusionary shape of the bargain was linked to the start of the 1998 civil war. However, there were many other social groups that were being excluded during this period: the war only erupted once those who retained significant control over the armed forces - the veteran combatants of the liberation struggle - were marginalised from the top positions in the army (and from the rents obtained through the arms trafficking). Therefore, conflict prevention largely depends on whether the interests of the diverse factions within the “specialists in violence” are accommodated.<sup>181</sup> In Guinea-Bissau, although the armed forces were formally “depoliticized” in 1991 (with the establishment of a multi-party political system) civilian sources of fragmentation infiltrated the fragmentation within the military elite. This symbiotic relationship between civilian and military elites is, to an extent, demonstrative of the fragility of the Bissau-Guinean state: division of labour was rather rudimentary, that is, those who specialized in politics were also specialized in violence.<sup>182</sup> While not all elites were able to directly resort to arms (namely PAIGC later-comers and state bureaucrats), they had connections with those who could (the younger *generation* of military men). This tight and pervasive connection between civil and military elites is also very much context specific, that is, the liberation armed struggle and the *Readjustment Movement* set the passage for military men to figure centrally in the political process.

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<sup>181</sup> Envisioned reforms in the armed forces or incapability of granting satisfactory positions to the generation of liberation combatants, for example, have been regularly associated with moments of greater instability and given rise to military interventions in the political theatre. In 2010, for example, a faction of the army seized the army chief of staff and the prime-minister (*younger generation*).

<sup>182</sup> In the *limited access order* spectrum of development (North et. al 2009), indivisibility of labour qualifies a societal order as fragile (versus a basic or mature one). *However*, it should be noted that this indivisibility of labour and its association with orders of greater instability is also not that linear; the form in which the state is politically organised influences patterns of rent distribution. In other words, and for example, a broad-based one-party state, such as the PAIGC, may be able to allocate rents in a more encompassing form than a democratically elected political party but yet with a more narrow-based constituency, such as the PRS – hence influencing order trajectories. Indeed, this was precisely the case in the aftermath of the internal conflict when the PRS was in power. Non-distinction between political and military actors on its own does not necessarily imply instability. In addition to this, it should also be mentioned that though there is now a more visible separation between civilian and military men (the generation of historic PAIGC leaders is gradually coming to an end), the fact of the matter is that throughout the post-1998 period, the military (in the armed forces; there are no non-state - organized - violent actors outside the scope of the armed forces in Guinea-Bissau) has had an over-predominant role in the forging and reinforcing of elite bargains by recurrently intervening in the political process. Thus, and this seems to go in line with Giustozzi’s conclusion on armies and elite bargaining (2011: 23-25), the PAIGC as a single party regime seems to have been able to better control the military than in a multi-party system.

Seventh, applying the political elite bargain framework to the *coup d'état* and the civil war allows us to suggest that both these forms of overt conflict result from exclusive elite bargains. Yet, a swifter and less violent (and successful) armed challenge to the state - the coup - is more prone to occur when the military are unified and when those reaping the most benefits have meagre connections with them. In contrast, when the armed forces are composed of contending factions, they most likely will fight each other.

Lastly, Nino Vieira's highly respected military background, together with the ties he forged with the emerging bureaucratic *commercial bourgeoisie* enabled him to *please* these two groups during an extended period of time by including them in the positions of power. As long as the two were included, conflict was averted. Thus, a political leader who is representative of various factions seems to go a long way in explaining the appeasement of contending elites.

However, even leaders with this added advantage have an Achilles' heel: the inescapability of being embedded in relations which are subject to contingencies.

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# APPENDIX 1

## LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Interview No.	Information on Interviewee	Place	Date
1	Liberation war veteran (LWV)/Member of the CEL	Lisbon	09.2010
2	LWV/Member of the CSL	Lisbon	09.2010
3	PAIGC reformist and newcomer	Lisbon	09.2010
4	Traditional authority	Bissau	10.2010
5	PAIGC newcomer/High-level government official	Bissau	11.2010
6	PAIGC newcomer/Minister/member of the Central Committee	Bissau	11.2010
7	LWV/member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau	Bissau	11.2010
8	LWV/Business men	Bissau	11.2010
9	LWV/Secretary of State	Bissau	11.2010
10	LWV/member of the Central Committee	Bissau	11.2010
11	LWV	Bissau	11.2010
12	PAIGC newcomer/Civil servant	Bissau	11.2010
13	Nino's Presidential guard	Bissau	12.2010
14	PAIGC newcomer/"121 group"/PAIGC dissident	Bissau	12.2010

15	Journalist	Bissau	12.2010
16	PAIGC newcomer/Civil servant	Bissau	12.2010
17	Senior military official/Younger generation	Bissau	01.2011
18	Urban elite	Bissau	02.2011
19	LWV/member of the CSL/member of the Political Bureau/Minister	Bissau	02.2011
20	LWV/member of the CEL	Bissau	02.2011
21	LWV/member of the CSL/Political Bureau/Minister	Bissau	03.2011
22	Urban elite (minister post-1998)	Bissau	03.2011
23	Urban elite (presidential candidate post-1998)	Bissau	03.2011
24	LWV/High-level military official	Bissau	04.2011
25	Aguenta	Bissau	05.2011
26	Senior Military Official/Younger generation	Bissau	05.2011
27	LWV/member of the CSL/Senior military official	Bissau	05.2011
28	LWV/CEL	Bissau	05.2011
29	Military official/Younger generation	Bissau	05.2011
30	LWV/Presidential adviser	Bissau	05.2011
31	Journalist	Bissau	06.2011
32	PAIGC newcomer/member of the Central Committee	Bissau	06.2011
33	LWV/High-ranked military official (younger generation - education abroad and fought only in the later years )	Bissau	06.2011

34	LWV/Member of the CEL/Minister	Bissau	06.2011
35	Urban elite/Civil servant/Business men (minister post-1998)	Bissau	07.2011
36	PAIGC newcomer/Business men/"121 group"/member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau	Lisbon	01.2013

## APPENDIX 2

### LIFE HISTORY PROBES

Full name

Date and place of birth

Ethnicity

Father's and mother's occupation

Where were you raised?

Where did you go to school?

#### **Liberation War (1963-1974)**

Did you join the PAIGC? When, how and why?

If not, why?

Can you describe your experience during the liberation war was? i.e., did you participate in combat? How long were you in combat and where? How was your training? Did you receive any advanced or specific training?

At the time, were you fully aware of the reasons of why you were fighting?

What was your position in the PAIGC?

Can you describe how the political and military mobilization process took place?

Did you personally meet Amílcar Cabral? How would you describe him? What did you feel when he was assassinated?

Can you tell me how you related with your war comrades? Did you make close friends during that time?

How did you relate with comrades of other ethnic groups? How did you relate with Cape Verdeans/Guineans?

How do you relate with your war comrades today? Can you describe how the war experience affects the way you relate to them?

Can you tell me a little about how you experienced the 1974 independence? Did you move to Bissau?

### **Luís Cabral's Regime (1974-1980)**

What was your professional occupation? Can you tell me how you got that position? What were your main duties? Did you enjoy it?

After the war, do you recall how you felt towards the PAIGC?

Can you describe what the first years of independence were like?

Did you personally know Luís Cabral? How did you feel towards him?

Did you make close friends in the government?

Did you maintain the same occupation during those six years? If not, why did you change?

Did you personally know President Nino Vieira? How did you meet him? How did you relate with him at the time?

As a Bissau-Guinean, did you feel you were discriminated by the government's policies?

### **Nino Vieira's Regime (1980-1998)**

After the 1980 *coup d'état*, what was your professional occupation? /Position in the PAIGC?

Did you have to leave the country or know of anyone who had to?

Can you tell me how you felt towards the 1980 *coup d'état*?

As a Cape Verdean, did you feel discriminated or in danger after the *coup*?

Did you maintain the same position/occupation? Why did you change?

Did you maintain a good relationship with President Nino Vieira? How would you describe him?

Did you personally know any of the people who were imprisoned in 1985?

Did you stay in Bissau during all this time?

Did you enlist in another political party? If yes, which one?

Can you tell me about Nino Vieira's regime?

Were you in Bissau during the 7 June 1998 conflict? Did you participate in it?

What did you do after the war?



## APPENDIX 3

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Do you consider that the PAIGC during the liberation war was able to forge a genuine sense of national unity? If yes, how was this achieved?

To what extent do you think this unity prevailed in the post-independence period?

What is your view concerning the causes that led to the 1980 *coup d'état*?

In your view, what led to the 17 October 1985 episode?

What explains the eruption of the civil war in 1998?

How would you describe President Nino Vieira's relationship with General Ansumane Mané?