

Introduction

The Upper Guinea Coast in Global Perspective

Jacqueline Knörr and Christoph Kohl

For centuries, the Upper Guinea Coast region of West Africa has been characterized by connections and interactions with societies and thought worlds in various parts of Africa and beyond. This book explores these regional and global encounters and exchanges, and points to the disruptions and continuities they caused as well as to the region's influences on other parts of the world. Its chapters focus on the region's entanglements with different societies, entanglements triggered by the expansion of colonialism, the Atlantic slave trade and, more recently, densifying transnational networks and increased global interaction – processes and institutions that are interconnected and interdependent in manifold ways. Authors investigate various aspects of the Upper Guinea Coast's connections with societies in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe as well as the region's exposure to external orders and value systems, including resulting creative adaptations and transformations. While historical perspectives are employed, this volume focuses primarily on current developments and present-day effects of historical interactions.

The notion 'Upper Guinea Coast', as it is understood here, follows Walter Rodney's (1970) influential monograph *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800*. It refers to a littoral West African region that stretches from present-day Senegal in the north to the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, including the Cape Verdean archipelago. Thus, it entirely or partially covers the territories of Gambia, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cape Verde. As elaborated in Knörr and Trajano Filho (2010: 2), we conceptualize the Upper Guinea Coast as a 'primarily geographic label that helps us to place and correlate historical, cultural, linguistic, and social phenomena and processes in regional terms'. Besides their physical contiguity, the parts of the region are characterized by many similarities, from social and cultural forms and institutions to historical experiences, political structures and specificities concerning modes of social and societal interaction and processes of integration and conflict (Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010: 2–10).

The headings of the following sections reflect our focus on four major dimensions of the Upper Guinea Coast's global connectedness: 'Creole Connections', 'Diasporic Entanglements', 'Travelling Models' and 'Interregional Integration'. Combining anthropological and historical perspectives, we look at the social interactions, societal and political conditions, and historical contexts of the Upper Guinea Coast's global connectedness, thereby trying to capture contemporary globalization in this particular region of the world in its synchronic and diachronic relations and complexities.

Creole Connections

Trans-Saharan trade networks (see Austen 2010) have linked littoral commercial hubs with Africa's interior for centuries. They contributed to the spread of Islam and expansion of Mandingo and, later on, Fula domination over parts of the region, entailing both religious and ethnic conversions and migrations (Person 1968–1975; Robinson 1985; Gaillard 2000). Coastal trading posts founded by the Portuguese and Cape Verdeans have linked Europe with the Upper Guinea Coast and Africa's interior since the late fifteenth century. By also opening new ('third') spaces for European-African encounters, these entrepôts fostered the emergence of Luso-Creole culture and identities (including Luso-Creole language varieties and localized forms of Christianity) (Mark 2002; Brooks 2003; Havik 2004). 'Eurafricans' (Brooks 2003) often functioned as intermediaries in economic, social and cultural interaction and exchange. In many cases they were also involved in the slave trade that connected West Africa with the Americas and Europe (see e.g. Green 2012; cf. Lahon 1999; Rodrigues 1999). The Upper Guinea Coast (Cape Verde, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia) was not only a slave hub but also a final destination for slaves and freed slaves. Mark and da Silva Horta (2011) have recently shown the outcomes these historic networks had in the Upper Guinea Coast region, outcomes that included resilience as well as the constant reshaping of identities and alliances. However, Upper Guinea's relationships were not exclusive to the 'Atlantic World' (Falola and Roberts 2008). Rather, the Upper Guinea Coast also served as a transit station for European colonizers and their concepts en route to Asia. Christoph Kohl picks up this finding in this volume. Taking the examples of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka, he investigates how Portugal's maritime expansion led to the emergence of Luso-Creole groups and languages along the Upper Guinea Coast, the Gulf of Guinea, and South and South-East Asia. The latter shared Portuguese features that were adapted in various ways to respond to the given local needs and interests (cf. Alpers 2012).

The end of the Atlantic slave trade in the Upper Guinea Coast region was due not least to the activities of British and American philanthropists and abolitionists (cf. Everill 2013). From the late eighteenth century onward, freed slaves were 'returned' from the Americas and England to settle in Sierra Leone and

Liberia. Many Africans were rescued from slave vessels bound for the Americas and came to live along the Upper Guinea Coast (Peterson 1969; Shick 1980). Hence, in most parts of the Upper Guinea Coast, creole groups and categories of people emerged against colonial and philanthropic backdrops. Their interaction among themselves as well as with local populations led to the emergence of new identities and sociocultural practices and institutions incorporating features of their respective backgrounds. These populations – such as the Luso-Creole categories of people in Guinea-Bissau, the Krio of Sierra Leone, the Aku of the Gambia, the Americo-Liberians and the citizens of the ‘*quatre communes*’¹ in Senegal – forged intra- and interethnic as well as regional and transnational ties to ensure their own reproduction and to gain and maintain social, economic and political influence. They incorporated people of heterogeneous origins from Africa, Europe and the Americas and have often served as intermediaries between peoples of different ethnic, cultural and regional backgrounds. Depending on social and political demands, they distinguished themselves from the indigenous local populations by stressing their relative European-ness or emphasizing the African dimension of their identity to strengthen links with local populations and power holders, not least by marrying women of local descent (Liebenow 1969; Knörr 1995, 2010b; Trajano Filho 1998; Hughes and Perfect 2006; Jones 2013). As Bruce Mouser shows in his contribution on Eurafrican families in the Rio Pongo area of Guinea, creolization also resulted in the establishment of local families who, having integrated into host societies, identified with both their respective local residence and their American or European background. Starting in the late eighteenth century, transcontinental merchants originating in the United States and Great Britain established factories in the Rio Pongo area. Their limited number and dispersal throughout the area facilitated their gradual integration into local kin networks and power structures characterized by landlord-stranger relationships (cf. Sarró 2009).

Depending on their social contextualization in a given historical situation, creole groups or sections among them have enjoyed elevated status and privileged lifestyles, or suffered ridicule and discrimination, as the result of their being heterogeneous, (relatively) foreign in origin and more or less distant from (more) native populations (Knörr 1995, 2009a, 2010a, 2010b; cf. Kopytoff 1987; Eriksen 2002; Geschiere 2009). More often than not, despite their numerical inferiority and often ambivalent status, creole populations managed to play influential roles in different sectors of public life in both colonial and postcolonial times. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, creoles were major figures in the battle for independence and in the conceptual implementation and political realization of the postcolonial nation state (Trajano Filho 1998; Havik 2004; Kohl 2009, 2011). As elsewhere, they have also contributed significantly to the respective national culture through the languages they speak. In both Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, creole languages have become *lingua francas* that are mastered by (almost)

everyone, thereby functioning as a means of interethnic communication and transethnic and national identification and integration (cf. Vikør 2004).

The chapters by Bruce Mouser, Nathaniel King and Christoph Kohl show that conditions in the Upper Guinea Coast region often facilitated the integration of creole features into social, cultural and political repertoires. Nonetheless, creole groups have often triggered conflict in relation to exclusionary discourses and policies. Nathaniel King's contribution explores how marginalized groups and individuals have appropriated so-called secret societies in Freetown for the past six decades. A culture of secrecy is ubiquitous in Sierra Leone, and in Freetown secret societies used to function as a means of social status reproduction by the Krio group (Cohen 1971, 1981). In recent years noncreole and transethnic secret societies have emerged in Freetown as urban counter-institutions. Their members are mainly marginalized urban youths and adults using proclaimed Yoruba (hence, Nigerian) origins and related ritual practices as strategic means to increase their social and symbolic powers as well as their political influence.

The contributions in this volume illustrate that whether creole groups and identities play divisive or integrative roles largely depends on their social contextualization within society at large.

Diasporic Entanglements

Throughout its history the Upper Guinea Coast has produced and received diasporas, whose narratives of common origins and destinies constitute a vital dimension of their members' identities. Slave communities of Upper Guinea Coast origin lived in Portugal (cf. Lahon 1999), in South America (cf. Tardieu 2001) and in the Caribbean (Morgan 2011). The notion of diaspora has been discussed controversially. However, at least three identifiable analytical core criteria are widely believed to be constitutive of diasporas. First, most agree that dispersion in space is one crucial element – despite the fact that the division of ethnic communities by state borders may also be a salient criterion. Second, diasporas entail a homeland orientation, though in some cases diasporas are not oriented towards their ancestral homeland. Third, boundary maintenance occurs over an extended time period, albeit boundary erosion is an important feature of diasporas, too. This analytical understanding contrasts with 'diaspora' conceptualized as a substantialized category of practice, serving as a mobilizing, even political vehicle (Brubaker 2005).

Early diasporic entanglements in the Upper Guinea Coast region were prompted by the expansion of the Mandingo and Fula empires. European traders' early settlement along the West African coast and subsequent European colonial penetration of the interior resulted in colonial migrant diasporas. With independence came temporary development workers, diplomats and 'expatriates'. Vice versa, the (former) European colonial metropolises as well as the United States

and Canada attracted migrants from the Upper Guinea Coast. In recent decades, armed conflicts have produced new categories of forced migrants – refugees and ‘internally displaced persons’ – who sometimes turn into more or less permanent diasporas. Diasporic relations include personal and political ties as well as the exchange of people, money, goods and ideas. They entail networks between individuals and groups, families and nation states, family-run enterprises and consortiums. Diasporic entanglements – patterns of exchange and interaction between ‘diaspora’ and ‘home’ – are manifold and multifaceted.

Most studies dealing with diasporas focus on the diasporas as such but less so on their interactions with relatives and friends left behind at ‘home’. Recent research has turned attention to diasporas’ countries and societies of origin, stressing the perceptions, expectations and relationships that migrants experienced in their homeland societies. For instance, a recurring pattern concerns the social status paradoxes of African migration diasporas in the Global North: migrants who enjoyed high prestige in their homelands must now endure low social status in the countries of the Global North, as many of them work at unskilled jobs (Nieswand 2011). Against this background, the chapters by Anita Schroven and Heike Drotbohm are dedicated to the repercussions diasporic communities must confront at ‘home’ and to the contestations and negotiations their (diasporic) roles are subjected to. Anita Schroven analyses the perception of the Guinean transnational community’s engagement in both local and national politics ‘back home’ in Guinea. In doing so, she focuses on transnationals not as agents but as objects of (Guinean) discourses. Heike Drotbohm analyses the interaction between resident islanders and cognate visiting migrants from the United States, who meet during an annual patron saint festivity in Cape Verde. She points to commonalities, such as shared beliefs and origins, and to differences as well, like socioeconomic inequalities in the diaspora’s ‘home’. As a major hub for slave ships bound for the New World, Cape Verde was among the places that played a crucial role for the slave trade; the resulting dissemination of Upper Guinean social, cultural and even agricultural models (cf. Carney 2001; Fields-Black 2008; Hawthorne 2010) and, consequently, in the making of the ‘Black Atlantic’ (Gilroy 1993). More recently, the slave trade gave way to more or less voluntary migration, turning the impoverished archipelago into an early migrant labour reservoir par excellence. To this day, young Cape Verdeans search for jobs abroad in North America, Europe and other former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Both forced and voluntary migration have sustainably influenced social relationships and contributed to the proliferation and reconfiguration of cultural practices and values, both within the archipelago and across continents. This makes Cape Verde a transnational society *per se*. Drotbohm shows both the ongoing home ‘rootedness’ of migrants and resident islanders’ interest in reproducing relationships with influential migrants that hold promise for attaining prestige through the distribution of functions and resources.

By contrast, Markus Rudolf discusses ways of making diasporas within a country. His study focuses on the case of Senegal, where ‘nordistes’ – inhabitants of the northern part of the country, including the capital Dakar – and Casamançais originating from the country’s southernmost region, which has been shattered by violent conflict for decades, maintain discourses that construct each other as diasporas in the respective counterpart’s territory. In this way, concepts frequently used when discussing diasporas, like ‘country of origin’ and ‘recipient’ country or society, become blurred and contested.

Pedro F. Marcelino’s essay examines the perception and stereotyping of various diasporic communities by members of the host society. Over the past decades, Cape Verde has (re-)transformed into a country that attracts migrants. The archipelago has been characterized by inward and outward migration since its colonization in the late fifteenth century, and the resulting heterogeneity led to multiple processes of creolization that made diasporic peoples of European and African descent into Cape Verdeans. As a consequence, it is widely assumed that Cape Verdean creoleness has always been reproduced by integrating culture and identities of different origins. Marcelino questions this assumption, arguing that Cape Verdeans’ attitudes towards immigrants depend on a set of interrelated markers; hence, the varying ‘attractiveness’ of different diasporic communities relates to different degrees of integration, implying different extents of the respective boundary maintenance and boundary erosion.

Travelling Models

After the official termination of the Sierra Leonean Civil War in 2002, a Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up by the Sierra Leonean government and the United Nations to bring individuals responsible for war crimes to justice (Anders 2009). Simultaneously – and as in other postwar countries like Liberia and Guinea-Bissau – peace-building programmes devoting attention to former child soldiers and ex-combatants were established conjointly by the Sierra Leonean government, the United Nations, the international community, development agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The norms and values guiding these peace-building initiatives have functioned as global ‘travelling models’ that compete with more local practices and beliefs concerning the (re-)establishment of peace and order (Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010; Knörr 2010b). Following actor-network theory, as developed by Bruno Latour (2005), and organizational sociology approaches (e.g. Czarniawska and Joerges 1996), ‘travelling models’ are conceived as ideas and practices that are transferred into diverging social, cultural, political and geographic settings, where they are recontextualized, hence embedded and translated into new contexts (see e.g. Merry 2006; cf. Knörr 2007, 2014). Such travelling ideas and practices (i.e. narrative structures; trains of thought; beliefs; programmes; legal and normative orders) may become

materialized in printed documents, pictures, artefacts or voyagers, amongst others. In their new context or ‘web of belief’ (Quine and Ullian 1978) ‘travelling models’ are subject to innovations and transformations that involve processes of ‘translation’ (Kaufmann and Rottenburg 2012) and “‘*de*-strangement” of the external culture via its (meaningful) incorporation into what is familiar’ (cf. Knörr’s [2007: 33] elaborations on the ‘*Ent*-fremdung des Fremden’; Knörr 2014). Such processes of translation, transformation and *de*-strangement impact both the (travelling) ideas and practices as such and the contexts from which they originated and into which they are incorporated.

For centuries European presence was limited to relatively small coastal settlements along the Upper Guinea Coast. Only from the early nineteenth century onwards did colonial penetration of the hinterland get under way, whereupon old and new colonial powers alike tried to impose their respective ideological models of colonization and domination, which had in common the belief in European supremacy. The emerging colonial orders introduced techniques to control, subjugate and divide indigenous populations, leading to reconfigurations of political structures, alliances and identifications, and to new waves of migrations within the region (see Galli and Jones 1987; van der Laan 1992). At the same time, reward systems created new prospects of social upward mobility for some sections of colonial society, whose members adapted to its demands to varying degrees. European colonial metropolises became increasingly attractive in terms of educational and economic opportunities. Hence, earlier patterns of West Africans’ presence in cities like London (‘Black Poor’) and Lisbon (Braidwood 1994; Rodrigues 1999) continued, yet were transformed.

Formal European education contributed to the spread of ‘undesired’ anti-colonial and nationalist ideologies among the emerging African middle class, among them many members of creole minorities. Writings such as those of the Caribbean-born Americo-Liberian Edward Wilmot Blyden (cf. Tibebe 2012), the African-American pan-Africanist and civil rights activist W.E.B. du Bois (du Bois 2012) and Jamaican Marcus Garvey (see Grant 2009) were received favourably among intellectual circles in the region (and beyond). Pan-Africanist and proto-nationalist movements – some of them branches of metropolitan organizations – led by members of the educated African middle class served as models of modern nationhood from about 1910 onwards. Postcolonial state ideology built heavily on material and ideological support from communist and socialist states in Eastern Europe and Asia. In Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, nationalist leaders referred to the modernist and socialist models of governance in vogue at the time (Cabral 1976, 1977; Diallo 1990). As in other parts of the postcolonial world, many political leaders in the Upper Guinea Coast region adapted the classic French model of nationhood that equates state, nation and culture (see Gellner 1998; Hobsbawm 1999). However, they had to cope with the facts that in their case – and unlike the European ideal type of nationhood –

state building had preceded nation-building, and postcolonial society remained characterized by ethnic diversity and allegiances. This challenge prompted some leaders, for instance Amílcar Cabral (1976), leader of Guinea-Bissau's dominant independence movement, to adjust the European nation-building concept to postcolonial conditions by providing it with a 'unity-in-diversity' dimension that conceives of the nation as an umbrella covering the various ethnic groups living on the respective national territory. Vice versa, this model tends to conceptualize ethnic groups and identities as the respective nation's roots, without which the latter cannot unfold (see Anderson 1999; Kymlicka 2004; Young 2004; Knörr 2007, 2008, 2009b).

The former colonial powers continued to have a major impact on postcolonial developments. Independence went along with the provision of development cooperation programmes that reflected both hegemonic and philanthropic motives – prominently involving the former colonial powers – against the background of the East-West conflict. While both political camps sought to disseminate their supposedly superior ideologies, African leaders adapted them to local conditions as well as their own political needs. Initially, development cooperation likewise followed modernist and neo-Marxist approaches, aiming to reproduce the European and North American unilateral path towards economic development and industrialization in the Upper Guinea Coast region and elsewhere in the so-called Third World.

Colonial domination, development aid, economic structural adjustment and international law, along with security and peace-building reforms, in- and outward migration, and the expansion of media technologies, have all influenced societies in the Upper Guinea Coast region (and beyond) through concepts, ideas and practices related to and travelling with them. However, these flows are not unidirectional from the North to the South but rather proceed in a zig-zag fashion whose travel itinerary often is not traceable, as organization theory (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996) has emphasized.

In his contribution, Wilson Trajano Filho traces the transatlantic semantic journey of the word *tabanka*, showing that origins other than Upper Guinean ones are conceivable since similar words exist in Angola, Congo, Central Africa, Hispanic America and the French-speaking Caribbean. The analysis shows that tracing the origins of travelling words and meanings is often highly speculative, if not impossible. The chapter may also be read as a warning against simple linear source-recipient transfer models (cf. Djelic 2008).

The Upper Guinea Coast has been integrated into global networks for centuries, but the quality of its globalization has changed in recent times. The role of nonstate actors – notably supranational, transnational and economic organizations (e.g. nongovernmental institutions and enterprises) – has increased, as has the number of new actors from countries of the Global South, such as China

and Brazil. Employment and education opportunities in the Americas, Europe and Asia in combination with new and improved communication and transport networks have enabled growing numbers of Upper Guineans to keep in (virtual) touch with other parts of the world and to travel abroad. Nonetheless, the Global North's exercise of power by disseminating values and ideas often coined as 'Western' sometimes provokes resistance to what are perceived as acts of 'cultural imperialism' and 'neocolonialism', even as Western lifestyles, consumer goods, media and education attract people in the Global South and challenge local ways and traditions of (re-)structuring social, political and economic life. As Latour (2005), Kaufmann and Rottenburg (2012) and theorists of globalization like Appadurai (1996) and Hannerz (2002) have underlined, such travelling models are translated in ways that fit the local sociocultural contexts into which they are integrated, a process Robertson (1995) termed 'glocalization' (cf. Knörr 2002, 2009a, 2010a, 2014).

Increasing criticism of the failure of many development projects that came to be known as 'white elephants' clearly illustrated that models that had succeeded in the Global North could not simply be applied one-to-one in African contexts. The exacerbation of debt crisis and the resulting Washington Consensus in the 1980s² exposed the Upper Guinea Coast region to even more economic and fiscal interventions by supranational institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which pushed economic reforms that in many cases led to deregulation policies and aggravated socioeconomic disparities.

Joanna Davidson's chapter presents an example of nontranslation of Global North concepts. On the basis of her field research in Northern Guinea-Bissau, she discusses the sociocultural, political, economic and ecological dimensions of insufficient rice cultivation among the Diola against the backdrop of climate change. Besides telling the story of international actors' neglect and disregard of the sociocultural and political embedding of rice cultivation, Davidson points to the nontranslation of technology, that is, to development research schemes oriented to social engineering (see Scott 1998). Her chapter on the global warming-induced changes in rice growing contributes to the understanding of how international professionals' planning largely ignores local sociocultural patterns, expectations and demands while employing large-scale Global North technologies believed to be superior and in no need of adaptation to local contexts.

Following the model set by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission since the mid 1990s, 'local' solutions to resolve postconflict situations and reconcile offenders and victims have come into vogue, in line with international norm-setting agencies' (e.g. the UN's and OECD's) demands for increased 'local ownership' (see Donais 2009). This global discourse and its local manifestation are tackled by William P. Murphy in this volume. Dealing with the return of refugees and internally displaced people in postconflict Liberia and

Sierra Leone, he confronts the international discourse of postconflict reconciliation with conflicting local expectations and ideas of social justice. Murphy points to the problematic fact that both the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission³ and international law more generally tend to identify individuals as those responsible for war crimes without addressing the existing neopatrimonial institutional structures of injustice as a whole. Again, international reconciliatory approaches, discourses and practices do not seem to be well translated into local contexts. Similar observations pertain to other realms of Sierra Leone's postwar society. Supra- and transnational actors engaged in supporting the country's media sector with an eye to strengthening civic rights often fail to adequately take local conditions into consideration and 'translate' their approaches and concepts accordingly, a topic dealt with by Sylvanus Spencer in this volume. Since the establishment of peace a decade ago, the right to freedom of expression has turned into a contested space, or even a 'battleground', in postwar Sierra Leone. Spencer shows that transnational organizations involved in the discourse focus on the formal legal system and fail to consider customary law in the interior, thereby ignoring the effects of the bifurcate legal system. Another translational weakness he identifies is that civic education programmes promoting freedom of expression are unaware of cultural obstacles to talking freely, such as the culture of secrecy so prominent in most parts of the Upper Guinea Coast region (cf. King 2012).

Another issue that has drawn much attention from both scholars and development workers is that of youth and warfare in Upper Guinea Coast societies. Following, amongst others, Ellis' (1999) monograph on religious dimensions of youths' involvement in the Liberian war and works by Utas (2003), Shepler (2005) and Coulter (2009) on former youth combatants, as well as Vigh's (2006) publication on youth and soldiering in Guinea-Bissau's 'military conflict', Susan Shepler's contribution examines the global flow of child protection models, challenging – as do Murphy and Spencer – the widely accepted view that expertise trickles from the top down, that is, from the Global North to various peripheries in the South, a view that implies that local agents are bound to their locations, as Merry (2006), for instance, assumed. Expertise, Shepler concludes, is mainly about introducing a new expert language that fixes Sierra Leoneans in a hierarchical position, tacitly implying that they did not previously know how to take care of children. As in Murphy's case, a North-South power asymmetry becomes apparent where international NGOs seek 'traditional' child healing rituals that may well exist in other settings, but not in Sierra Leone. Such asymmetries also exist where child protection organizations commodify former child soldiers in order to attract funds. However, local Sierra Leoneans are not mere powerless objects of a top-down trickle of ideas. They learn the 'newspeak' of child expertise to take advantage of project activities and build careers within the international 'child

protection expertise' sector as 'locals' assumed to be experts on 'local contexts' anywhere in the Global South.

Interregional Integration

State borders between West African countries are relatively young, dating back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. People in the Upper Guinea Coast region have maintained contacts with their neighbours across these borders ever since they were drawn. They often have much in common in terms of ethnic identities, cultural features and historical experience. However, identification with the respective nation states has grown due to social, cultural, political and linguistic commonalities that developed out of specific colonial and postcolonial circumstances and experiences. Ethnic groups identify with 'their' nation-state to varying degrees, and some ethnic identities correspond to a given national identity more than others do (Højbjerg, Knörr and Kohl 2012; Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010). Ethnic or local identities may also be situated in opposition to the nation-state, as in the case of the Casamançais, mentioned above. The Mandingos and the Fulas are examples of ethnic groups that are scattered over a handful of West African states and maintain particular, regionalized sub-identifications while also identifying with their respective nation-state. Research has demonstrated how colonially drawn interstate borders in West Africa have, in the long run, shaped perceptions of belonging (cf. Nugent 2008). Against these backgrounds, Christian K. Højbjerg investigates the role of Mandingo identity in local conflicts in the border triangle of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where, as he concludes, common war experiences have led to a simplification of people's consciousness of processes related to Mandingo identity. Outbreaks of violence in the respective countries have often been attributed to a strengthening of transnational Mandingo identity and Mandingo expansion into new areas where they come into conflict with first-come ethnic groups (cf. Kopytoff 1987). This makes ethnic loyalties and differences responsible for what are often designated as 'ethnic clashes' (against this view, see Schlee 2008; Donahoe et al. 2009). According to Højbjerg, however, (transnational) Mandingo identity has strengthened only during the protracted wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, which prompted 'taking sides' and a stronger ethnic consciousness among Mandingos (and possibly other groups) on the one hand, and a coarsening and weakening of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms on the other. Colonization not only created new territory-related, protonational points of reference but also fostered transcolonial relationships that have given rise to specific transnational identifications and networks. For example, Sierra Leone and the Gambia were both British colonies. Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Liberia are linked by the settlement of different groups of liberated slaves and also share their official language. Today, air links

between these three countries are relatively frequent, and connecting flights exist to other anglophone countries in West Africa, namely Ghana and Nigeria. Flying directly from Sierra Leone or Liberia to Guinea-Bissau, however, is impossible, despite the proximity. Flight schedules, it seems, reflect the intensity of mutual contact and exchange among the inhabitants of the respective nation-states.

Thus, as this case exemplifies, colonial boundaries have produced new (trans-ethnic) identifications with the given colonial territory, laying the foundation for the postcolonial nation-states, but ethnic identifications and differences have nonetheless prevailed. The emerging identifications with newly created colonial territories were paralleled by emergent transcolonial identifications within the respective colonial empires that were based on shared (colonial) history and language, family ties, educational backgrounds, cultural representations and so on.

Internal socioeconomic disparities as well as social and political exclusion were among the causes of the wars that broke out in different countries within the region from the 1980s onwards (Richards 1996; Ellis 1999; Coulter 2009). However, these wars also had distinct regional and global dimensions. The Sierra Leonean Civil War was sparked by Charles Taylor's rebels entering the country from Liberia and also affected neighbouring Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Both the bordering Guinea-Bissau and Gambia have reportedly been involved in the Casamance conflict, and in 1998/99 Senegal, Guinea and France engaged in Guinea-Bissau's civil war (e.g. van der Drift 1999; Rodrigues and Guillerme 2005).

The societies of the Upper Guinea Coast were transnationally and globally connected well before and during the respective wars. In her contribution, Alice Bellagamba uncovers mid-twentieth-century transnational trade relationships and the establishment of neopatrimonial networks both within the region and beyond by examining the life story of a Gambian diamond dealer – a scion of a precolonial Senegambian Mandingo trading elite of Malian origin. She describes how this entrepreneur became engaged in trading activities in Sierra Leone and Liberia, making use of Jewish and Lebanese trading networks, amongst others, to later extend his trade to Congo, Europe and Israel before returning to the Upper Guinea Coast. Bellagamba underlines the common ground between British colonies, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, and networks of older, precolonially rooted Mande-speaking communities that facilitated the social and occupational integration of transnational traders. Bellagamba's biographical account reveals how ethnic, genealogical and professional continuities across national boundaries helped to establish patrimonial relationships that functioned to smooth individual trading activities.

The illicit international trade with ('blood') diamonds and tropical woods in Liberia and Sierra Leone in exchange for arms and ammunition, and the use of arms smuggled, inter alia, through Guinea-Bissau by Casamançais rebel fighters are abhorrent examples of the region's global connectedness. However, as Bella-

gamba's and Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta's contributions suggest, present-day trade and migration models revert to some extent to a premodern state of transnational network patterns of the past. They demonstrate how the Casamance was integrated into a global web of trade in blade weapons that linked it not only with Europe but also with North Africa, Latin America and the Indian Ocean. In the early nineteenth century, a trade in firearms emerged in the Casamance, involving both French and British trading posts along the Casamance and Gambia Rivers. Mark and da Silva Horta's chapter depicts the changing trade pattern in the Casamance, indicating that trading activities were far more globalized and Africans were far more active agents within them than commonly thought. Representing early examples of 'technoscapes' (Appadurai 1996), these trading activities thereby substantiate the claim that one may speak of globalization in the region well before the late twentieth century.

More recently, drug trafficking has turned parts of the Upper Guinea Coast – such as Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Guinea – into hubs for cocaine shipped from Latin America to Europe (Ellis 2009; Krech 2011). Other forms of globalized transnational economic activities in the region have received less attention. Indian wholesale buyers, for instance, annually return to Guinea-Bissau and Senegal to purchase cashew harvests that are subsequently processed in South Asia before being marketed in the Global North (Kohl, observation based on recent field research). Over the past decades, Cape Verde, Gambia and Senegal have evolved as nascent tourist destinations, entailing the commodification of culture through staged performances (de Jong 2007) and the attraction of young, urban, unemployed men and women who offer various services to tourists, including sex services. The more recent global entanglements of the Upper Guinea Coast include Mauritanian, Nigerian and Chinese migrants who settle in the region to serve various lines of business. By contrast, the settling of Lebanese shopkeepers and traders can be traced back more than a century. In many cases, long-established intraregional trade routes coexist with new trade channels, linking mainland Upper Guinea with Cape Verde and Brazil, for instance.

In political terms, the Upper Guinea Coast is well entrenched in regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The region also continues to be integrated in transcontinental, intergovernmental organizations that function as successor institutions to former colonial empires, such as the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the Commonwealth of Nations and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

To conclude, this anthology comes full circle, discussing the global connectedness of the Upper Guinea Coast from different points of view to outline how the region has been part of global flows and exchanges stretching far beyond the context of a 'Black Atlantic'.

Notes

1. Born in the four Franco-Senegalese towns of Gorée Island, Dakar, Rufisque and Saint-Louis, the African and *métis* inhabitants of these 'four communes' enjoyed – at least de jure – full French citizenship rights.
2. 'Washington Consensus' denotes a set of policies promoted by the Bretton Wood institutions and the United States. These policies encompass macroeconomic stabilization of national economies and their opening to foreign trade and investments, as well as privatization of state assets and the unleashing of market forces.
3. The commission was established following the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord. Installed by Sierra Leone and the international community, it aimed at an impartial coming to terms with abuses and violence committed during the Sierra Leonean Civil War (1991–2002) and intended to reconcile the warring sides and prevent further violence.

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