

the responsibility of citizens, and the authority of actors in their particular institutional and normative settings. These topics reappear in different sections, highlighting how pertinent they are for the people of Guinea.

Taken together, these elements highlight the multifaceted nature of the overarching theme of marginality, both as a self-chosen reference for a regional identity and as a means of integration into larger political bodies. Local elites negotiate the boundaries of collective identities, of the state and local arenas, and ultimately how they employ notions of marginality in the face of perpetual processes of state integration, at a location that at first sight does not seem at all to be an 'out-of-the-way place' (Lowenhaupt Tsing 1993).

Most of the topics presented here are not exclusive to the Basse Côte of Guinea. There are topoi shared with the wider West African region. There are challenges of the post-independence statehood that has been crumbling across Africa for the last decades. There are debates of socialism, developmentalism, geo-political dependencies and the meaning of the past that used to hold a better future, that are shared in many places across the globe. Memories of a more optimistic and more painful past may bring people in Guinea and beyond to make sense of their daily lives and manage contemporary perturbations, emergencies and an outlook into the future that currently appears less than hopeful than those times that are now described as the past.

Throughout the book, some descriptions of empirical details enliven the complexities of people's realities between the forces of economic perturbations, political insecurity, authoritarianism or military interventions. They hint at the force of everyday life and sociability that make communities and enable families to survive challenging times. They also hint at the complexities of each individual life that is shaped by, but not limited to, the grand events that are usually called history. Such complex intersections deserve attention, since life worlds are being made and perpetually re-made exactly there.

Notes

1. The original Guinean hymn in French: 'Peuple d'Afrique, Le Passé historique! / Que chante l'hymne de la Guinée fière et jeune / Illustre épopée de nos frères / Morts au champ d'honneur en libérant l'Afrique! / Le peuple de Guinée prêchant l'unité / Appelle l'Afrique. / Liberté! C'est la voix d'un peuple / Qui appelle tous ses frères de la grande Afrique. / Liberté! C'est la voix d'un peuple / Qui appelle tous ses frères à se retrouver. / Bâtissons l'unité africaine dans l'indépendance retrouvée.' An English translation: 'People of Africa! The historic past! / Sing the hymn of a Guinea proud and young / Illustrious epic of our brothers / Who died on the field of honour while liberating Africa! / The people of Guinea, preaching Unity / Call to Africa. / Liberty! The voice of a people / Who call all her brothers of a great Africa. / Liberty! The voice of a people / Who call all her brothers to find their way again. / Let us build African Unity in a newly found independence.'
2. Peul is the regional name for the group that in English is often called Fulbe or Fullah. As members of this Guinean ethnic group refer to themselves as Peul, I will do so as well.