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At Kankan's petrol stations, women can push to the front.
C. Ammann, September 2011

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Foreword

We are delighted to have two guest editors for this double issue of the Basel Papers on Political Transformations. Carole Ammann and Aïdas Sanogo, PhD candidates at the Institute of Anthropology, University of Basel, have initiated and convened a multi-pronged conversation on secondary cities around research undertaken by colleagues here at the Institute and beyond. Part of this conversation is published in this double issue, where some highly stimulating insights into experiences and findings are laid out.

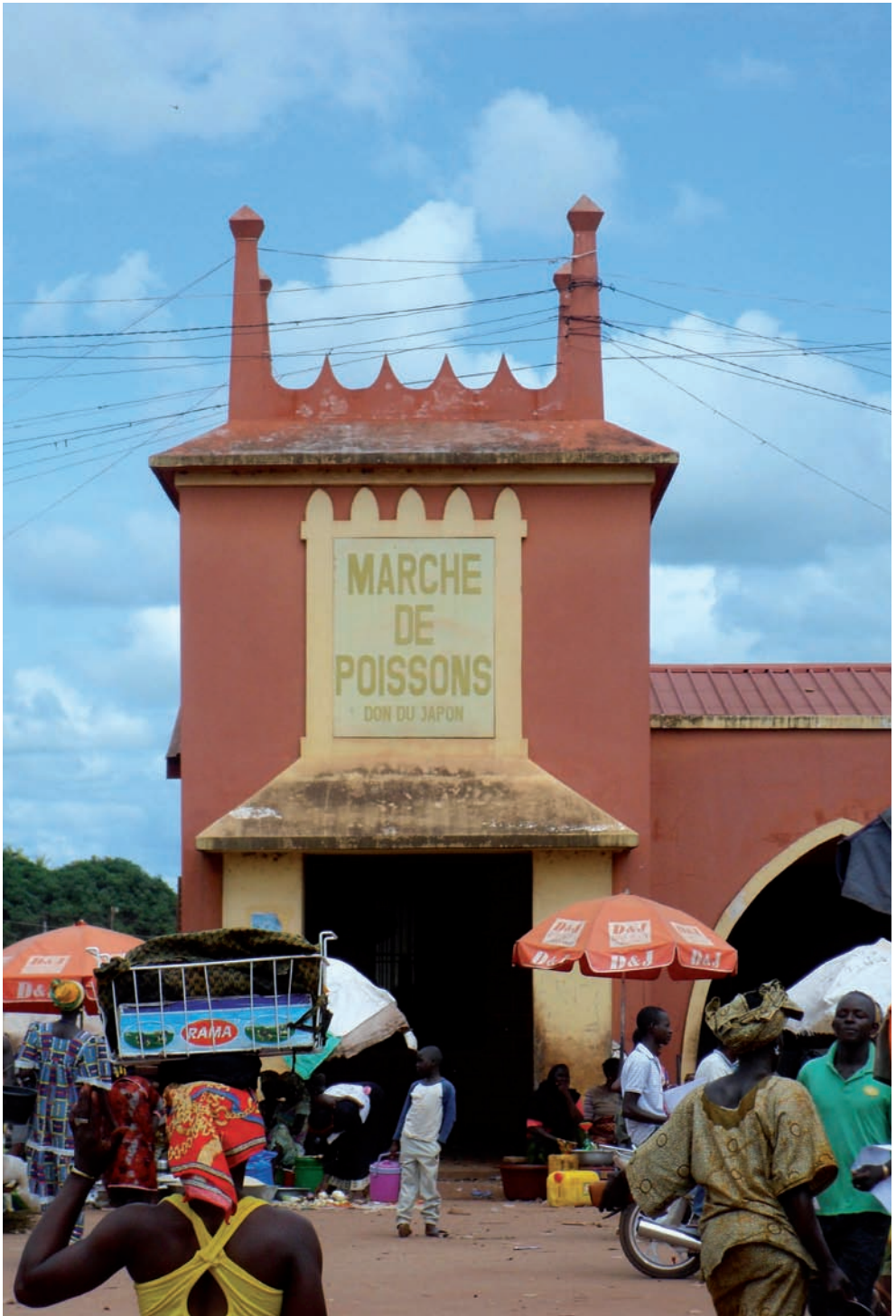
The fieldwork was part of three different research projects, all funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, that explore social, political and visual dimensions of urbanity in Africa. Even in those instances where urbanity was not the main research focus, the specificities and particular character of ‘secondary cities’ forcefully emerged through the perceptions, practices and aspirations of urban dwellers. Some of these insights are surprising and unexpected, others underpin emerging anthropological work on mid-sized cities. Secondary cities usually lack the ambitions of capital cities, but precisely because secondary cities do not need to make national, regional or even global claims, they permit deeper insights into ordinary urban life in Africa. In all instances the vignettes highlight intriguing facets of “the urban middle ground” that will whet the appetite of those readers who have not (yet) engaged with secondary cities and provide some nourishing food for thought for those who have.

Armed with the advantage of already knowing what lies in wait for you, we would like thank Aïdas Sanogo and Carole Ammann for their initiative and hard work in bringing this double issue together, and hope that you enjoy “Secondary Cities – The Urban Middle Ground” as much as we do.

Lucy Koechlin and Till Förster

Outside Kankan's
fish market.

C. Ammann, October 2011



Imagery of Kankan, a Secondary City in Guinea

Carole Ammann

Introducing Kankan

Kankan, founded in the eighteenth century and Guinea's second largest city in terms of inhabitants, is the centre of the Upper Guinea Region, located some 650 kilometres northeast of the capital Conakry.¹ According to the newest census, 220 000 people are living in the city (Republique de Guinée 2014).² Kankan is a major trading centre for rice, rubber, corn, potato, cattle and sheep (Camara, O'Toole, and Baker 2014, 186). Five roads lead from Kankan, one of which crosses the Malian border and goes to Bamako, which is only 340 kilometres away. Due to this proximity and the common



Graffiti tag by male youth.
C. Ammann, March 2012

- 1 I have changed all research participants' names to protect their privacy and to ensure anonymity. However, there are some exceptions to this rule: The two field assistants, Thierno Sow and Djénabou Dramé, had asked to be cited by their proper names. I have translated every statement into English myself, and the original (translated) French version can be found in the footnotes.
- 2 Here, I add up the numbers for Kankan centre and Karifamoriyah, a nearby village that is today considered as part of the city. According to Monique Bertrand (1997, 243) Kankan had around 70 000 inhabitants in 1987 and more than 100 000 in the mid 1990s. Generally, these figures must be handled with care: Thomas O'Toole and Janice E. Baker (2005: 121), for example, indicate the number of Kankan's inhabitants to 278 000 at the beginning of the 2000s.

Mande cultural background, Kankan's populace describe their hometown not only in comparison to Conakry, but also in contrast to Mali's capital Bamako. My aim in this contribution is to look at how Kankan's inhabitants imagine their city. Hereby, I focus on Kankan's imagery³ that consists of two different images, namely the 'rebellious' and 'the traditional' city: Why has Kankan for a long time been regarded as a rebellious city and what consequences did this have for Kankan's infrastructure and inhabitants? What is behind the name *Nabaya* Kankan's inhabitants have given to their city?

Kankan is not a spectacular city. Architecturally there are no outstanding buildings like in West African metropolises; Kankan's highest construction, the Julius Nyé-réré University, consists of four floors. The city centre is marked by decaying colonial buildings and simple one or two floor houses. Additionally – and contrary to other cities in the interior of the country, especially the Fouta Djallon – some families still live in thatched huts (*cases rondes*). Therefore, Thierno Sow, one of my two research assistants, used to say that 'Kankan is not well constructed.'⁴ I remember my first impression when arriving in Kankan in 2011: For me, it was a big village. Compared to Cotonou in Benin and Bamako in Mali, I perceived Kankan as boring, as a city without an interesting cultural life. In 2004, Guinea's Historical Dictionary described Kankan as following: "It is more a large cluster of Maninka villages around an administrative and commercial core than a truly urban area" (O'Toole and Baker 2005, 121). Today, the city is rapidly expanding in all directions; roads have been tarmacked, public electricity started working, and new stores and small restaurants are popping up in the city's centre. Additionally, in the course of the rotating independence celebrations, the government has made some investments in Kankan's infrastructure: One market has received a second floor and some administrative buildings, an artisanal centre, a youth centre and a bus station have newly been constructed. This change is also described in the newest edition of the Dictionary: "Lately Kankan has been growing and further modernizing as an increasing number of its natives invest in the region's development" (Camara, O'Toole and Baker 2014, 186).

Economically, Kankan is not very productive. The state is the main employer offering jobs in the administrative, security, educational and health sector. A small private sector, such as telecommunication and a few NGOs, also offers jobs. Furthermore, people work as tailors, carpenters, blacksmiths, hairdressers, labour in the constructing or transportation sector, produce bricks, soap and woodwork. Still, most of Kankan's population is engaged in some form of trade or in agriculture. Kankan's markets are important for the weekly markets of surrounding villages (Bertrand 1997, 243). According to a UN-study, the poverty rate in Kankan is higher than in the rest of the country (United Nations 2013). Djénabou Dramé, my other research assistant, used to say: "*Ici, ça va à la kankanaise*",⁵ meaning that everyday life is continuing and things, especially on the economic and infrastructural level, are not progressing. Kalil Mara, a man in his thirties who originates from Kankan and holds a good position in a telecommunication company in Conakry, speaks for many who have seen other Guinean

- 3 I talk of imageries when a cluster of images emerges around important themes. Different imageries exist and usually compete with each other. "Imageries are not closed systems; they are embedded in ongoing processes of social, political, and cultural articulation." (Förster 2013a, 530) Images and imageries are intrinsically linked: Images form imageries and imageries are expressed in images. Our imageries are influenced by our habits and our daily sensual experiences.
- 4 Kankan n'est pas bien construit.' When visiting the Fouta Djallon for the first time, the difference between Kankan and the towns and villages there were eye-catching: Even in small villages I saw impressive mosques and two-floor houses are no exception. Further, there are almost no huts in these cities. Obviously, there are other reasons for this difference, too.
- 5 "Here, things proceed the Kankanian way."



Male youth imagines its neighbourhood.
C. Ammann, March 2012

cities or foreign countries: ‘Kankan is a city without money. All the money that is there comes from other parts. Everybody just sits around and waits for someone to send them money. [...] I am from Kankan, but, honestly, I would not recommend anybody to invest there’.⁶

Generally, Kankan’s population is quite mobile: Adults visit their families in the village, travel around for business or participate in festivities of friends and relatives somewhere outside Kankan. Young men and women try their luck in one of the booming artisanal mining centres in Guinea and beyond. Young people typically go to Conakry for education and in search of employment or spend the holiday with family members in another city. When going to big cities like Conakry or Bamako for the first time, the research participants recounted that they were overwhelmed by the infrastructure, the fancy buildings and the crowded streets, that evoked a general feeling of confusion and disorder. Further, they complained about the high prices in these big cities. Returnees then valued Kankan’s non-polluted air, the non-congested roads, its tranquillity and its security. Thus, Kankan’s “rhythm”, to use Filip De Boeck’s (2015) term, is seen as quite calm. Here, contrary to the metropolises, people know how things ought to be and how to behave socially, in brief; they feel being part of the large Kankanian family.

Till Förster is right in saying that the images of cities “enhance, if not produce identification with the city. Many urbanites in Africa, as elsewhere, are proud of being from and living in a particular city” (Förster forthcoming, 10).⁷ This holds also true for Kankan. In what follows, I elaborate on the imagery of Kankan: Since Guinea’s independence in 1958 until 2010, Kankan has been regarded as a rebellious city as its inhabitants were, most of the time, opposed to the regimes in place. At the same time, Kankan’s urbanites promote the imagery of their city as being traditional. These two images do not contradict each other, as I will illustrate.

6 ‘C’est une ville qui n’a pas d’argent, tout argent qui est là-bas est importé d’autre part. Tout le monde s’assoit seulement et attend l’argent envoyé de quelqu’un [...]. Moi-même je viens de Kankan, mais sincèrement parlé, investir là-bas, ça ne vaut pas la peine.’ (Informal conversation, Conakry, 24.02.2013)

7 See Förster for more information on how the images of a city emerge out of social practice, as “objects of their intentionality” (Förster forthcoming, 13)

Kankan, the Rebellious City

Kankan's population is known as rebels; they refuse to subjugate. It has already been like that with its founder. [...] With Sékou [Touré] it was the same thing. They refused to do what he demanded. The case of Kankan does not date from today. In brief, Kankan has too much pride.⁸

Matthieu Hilgers (2012, 41) describes that secondary cities often produce specific procedures that go against the interests of the capitals, in this case Conakry, that embodies the state. Not surprisingly, such cities then come to symbolise political opposition. This is also the case for Kankan: At the beginning of Sékou Touré's regime (1958–1984), Kankan's inhabitants supported him. One factor for this support was Touré's ethnic background: He was a Manding, like the large majority of Kankan's population. But gradually the good relationship faded away. Decisive for this shift was Kankan's urbanites' long-standing engagement in trade. The Manding traders disposed of large networks and were importing and exporting commodities from neighbouring countries. Since the government's socialist attempts to control the economy – especially trade – in 1964 (Ladipo 1976, 58), Kankan's population suffered from these restrictions and started opposing Touré's policies. When the government closed the frontiers to Mali and Côte d'Ivoire, Kankan's black market flourished – very much to Touré's discontent. In 1975, the tensions between the government and Kankan increased: The regime misused the so-called *Complot Cheytan* ('Satan's Plot') to target mostly Manding merchants from Kankan (O'Toole and Baker 2005, Ixiii). A lecturer, teaching history at Kankan's university, explained: "The Kankanian [...] likes his freedom, he likes travelling, and he likes to know what is going on. In the end, he [Touré] told the people in Kankan that they are traffickers."⁹ The elderly research participants vividly remember how the government has closed Kankan's shops and markets because the merchants had sold their items for a higher price than the one fixed by the economic police. In brief, Kankan gained the image of an oppositional city already during the Touré-period. This had negative consequence for the city's infrastructure as Touré stopped investing in Kankan:

Dabola [...] and Kankan [...] are both regarded as 'bastions of the counter-Revolution'. Not only has the complete deterioration of the railway weakened their economy, but the new tarred road from Conakry to Kissidougou has isolated them [...]. The construction of an international airport, which had begun in Kankan in 1965, abruptly stopped in 1968 [...] and did not start again until 1973. The construction of a dam in Kamarato to provide electricity to Kankan and its region also came to a halt in 1971, thereby ensuring that most of the city is periodically in darkness. (Kaba 1977, 41)

The deterioration of the railway and the incompleteness of the international airport negatively influenced Kankan's economy. First, employment got lost. Second, the connection to other cities, especially Conakry, became more difficult and thus isolated Kankan.

8 'Les Kankaniens sont connus comme des rebelles, ils refusent de se soumettre. C'était déjà comme ça avec le fondateur de la ville. [...] Avec Sékou [Touré] c'était la même chose qui s'est passé, ils ont refusé de faire ce qu'il demandait. L'affaire de Kankan, ça ne date pas d'aujourd'hui. Kankan a trop d'orgueil, tout court.' (Djénabou Dramé and Thierno Sow, informal conversation, 30.11.2012)

9 'Le Kankanai [...] aime sa liberté, il aime voyager, il aime connaître ce qui se passe. Il [Touré] a finit par dire aux gens de Kankan qu'ils sont des trafiquants.' (Interview, 12.12.2012)

The relationship between Kankan and Lansana Conté, a Susu who was Guinea's head of state between 1984 and 2010, was not good either. Kankan's Manding population was suspicious of the president who built his power mainly on members of his own ethnic group (Camara 2014, 271). After the 'Coup Diarra' in 1985, the government arrested Manding militaries, businesspeople and state employees. Thereafter, riots against people from the Upper Guinea Region took place in Conakry. Conté's comment *wo fataara* to these lootings, meaning 'what you have done is justified', is still cited by my Manding informants. The incident in October 1991, when government's troops fired on demonstrators in Kankan, further fuelled the tensions between the president and the city (Camara, O'Toole, and Baker 2014, xIv, 296, 306). According to the Manding research participants, Conté's liberalisation policy, the subsequent inflation, and the benefitting (Fulani) traders were responsible for the high food prices and the resulting suffering of the people (cf. International Crisis Group 2005). Further, they blamed Conté for the cessation of Kankan's three factories.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Alpha Condé, a dissident in his fifties who stayed in France where he had done a doctorate, entered the political scene. The population of the Upper Guinea Region quickly rallied around him. During the presidential elections of 1993, the ballots in Kankan and Siguiri, another secondary city, where Alpha Condé was supposed to gain the majority, were annulled (International Crisis Group 2011, 2). In February 2003, manifestations by students in Kankan were severely suppressed (International Crisis Group 2003, 29). Finally, the government accepted the results of the communal elections of December 2005 and thus, Kankan and two other important cities in the Upper Guinea Region came under the direct rule of Condé's Guinean People's Rally (*Rassemblement Populaire Guinéen, RPG*) (International Crisis Group 2006, 7). Therefore, the RPG could already appoint Kankan's mayor in 2006 and the city thus consolidated its reputation of being in opposition to the government in place.

To sum it up, due to its opposition to the presidents of the First and the Second Republic, Kankan has been labelled a rebellious city. Monique Bertnd aptly sums this up: "Kankan's Manding traders have been the object of such confusion: From the figure of 'speculator' and 'conspirator' trafficker under Sékou Touré's regime, to the one of the bad citizen of 'tax resistance' under the rule of Lansana Conté, the continuity is striking"¹⁰ (Bertrand 1997, 241). This had a crucial impact on the city's infrastructure as its inhabitants had to pay the price of their dissident behaviour.¹¹ Kankan's inhabitants are proud of having gone their own way, even against the odds. And finally, in 2010, they were successful in having Alpha Condé, one of 'theirs' as Guinea's head of state.

Kankan *Nabaya*, the Traditional City

Kankan is a Muslim religious centre (Rivière 1971a, 295) and there are no apparent cleavages between Islam and Christianity. Kankan's population is very proud of this; people like to mention that a Protestant church stands just besides the city's main mosque. Kankan's urbanites stress that in their city different ethnic com-

10 "Les commerçants malinké de Kankan font souvent l'objet de telle confusion: de la figure du trafiquant 'spéculateur' et 'comploteur' sous le régime de Sékou Touré, à celle du mauvais citoyen des 'résistances fiscales' sous celui de Lansana Conté, la continuité est frappante."

11 Matthieu Hilgers (2009) labels Koudougou, the city of Burkina Faso's first president, also a rebellious city. He describes how the government in power had marginalised it due to its oppositional position.

munities live harmoniously next to each other. However, inter-ethnic cohabitation is much more complex and challenging (Ammann and Kaufmann 2014). Kankan's inhabitants refer to their city as a traditional one, where religious and customary norms are important and elderly's words have great weight. The discursive formations of tradition versus modernity are very present in many African societies. While tradition is attributed to the African (or Guinean in this case) ways of doing and behaving based on the imaginary of a fixed, mostly positively connoted past, modernity is considered as a 'Western' import.¹² As Peter Geschiere et al. note, modernity refers "to a basic sense of living in a new time" that "wield[s] tremendous power in everyday African life" (Geschiere, Meyer, and Pels 2008, 1). Normative expectations of behaviour in Kankan imply standards of dressing, speaking and courtesy, such as respecting elderly people and men in general. All these social norms are highly gendered (Ammann forthcoming).

Signboard of Radio Nabaya.
C. Ammann, December 2012



In the secondary city of Kankan, the central government's influence is less pronounced than in the capital Conakry. This gives its population more room to manoeuvre and to improvise and thus, it breeds novel, sometimes creative forms of governance. In Kankan, the so called traditional authorities, namely the *Sotikemo*, the city's traditional chief, and the council of elders (*conseil des sages*) have considerable influence on the local state institutions – like in other Guinean secondary cities (cf. Rey 2016). Since 1985, the government formally recognises the council of elders (Rey 2007, 55). In Kankan, its members are elderly men and usually descendants of the powerful Kaba or

12 Colonialism has been driven by the idea of modernity. For more examples on the ambivalent experience of modernity in Africa see the edited volume by Elísio Macamo (2005) and the article by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2004)

Chérif families. Once enthroned, the *Sotikemo*, who spiritually and politically watches over the city, does not leave his house anymore. His counsellors inform him about what is going on outside his compound. Jeanne Konaté, a historian who stems from the Forest Region, ascribed the distribution of power in Kankan as follows: “Kankan is a big city, but it has remained a little bit closed up and it is very much attached to cultural values. If you look at the *Sotikemo* [and] the erudite men, even the authorities are afraid of them.”¹³ In brief, the power of Kankan’s traditional authorities goes quite far, too far for some like Sory N’Nay Béréte, a young graduate, and Sala Diawara, a lecturer at university, as the following two quotes illustrate:

In Kankan, some traditional rules hinder the state system from functioning properly.¹⁴

There are no political acts, no cultural acts, no decisions by the trade unions without the elders’ consent. First, people must submit all activities to the elders. They are asked for advice for everything.¹⁵

Alfa Kabiné, Kankan’s founder, is said to have introduced a system called *Nabaya*, meaning welcome, “to signal its open-armed embrace of merchants and migrants, whom he integrated into the households of the state through marriage” (Osborn 2011, 50). Especially single men could profit from this method, as they were usually given one of Kankan’s women. Thus, as Emily Osborn (2011, 57) notes, marriage was seen as a state-building strategy. To this day, Kankan’s population refer to the notion of *Nabaya* when talking about their city. By calling Kankan *Nabaya*, they refer to its openness vis-à-vis foreigners, Kankan as a *ville des venants*, a city where strangers are welcome. That resulted in Kankan’s religious and ethnic diverse population, on the one hand, and in its economic vitality, on the other hand.

Especially elderly people like to diffuse the imagery of Kankan as being special in a positive sense by calling it *Nabaya*. Thus, foreigners are welcome and should easily feel at home. Indeed, during the whole time of my fieldwork, Kankan’s inhabitants welcomed me warmly and demonstrated why their city is labelled *Nabaya*. During a workshop, the vice mayor stated: “*Nabaya* is not a simple city, but a symbol of democracy, of open arms, tolerance, national unity and solidarity”.¹⁶ Bemba, a man born in the mid-1950s who acts as a consultant for the mayor and, at the same time, as an advisor of the *Sotikemo*, once stated to me regarding the principle of *Nabaya*:

We accept everybody, because we know that the name *Nabaya* is sweet; you are welcome! We reach out a hand. For us, it is an honour if someone goes elsewhere to tell how life is in Kankan. That is why I am at your disposal to talk. I could also say that you must pay for what I tell you, for what you will finally exploit. But the fact that you can say that you received this information from

13 “Kankan est une grande ville, mais elle est restée un peu renfermée sur elle-même et elle est très attachée aux valeurs culturelles. Quand on voit le Sotikemo [et] les érudits en place, même l’autorité a peur d’eux.” (Interview, 12.12.2012)

14 “À Kankan, certaines règles coutumières empêchent le bon fonctionnement du système étatique.” (Sory N’Nay Béréte, interview, 24.12.2012)

15 “Il n’y a pas d’actes politiques, il n’y a pas d’actes culturels, il n’y a pas d’actes syndicaux s’il n’y a pas d’abord la volonté des sages. Il faut d’abord soumettre les activités aux sages. Ils sont conseillés sur tous les plans.” (Sala Diawara, interview, 26.11.2011)

16 “Nabaya n’est pas une simple cité, mais un symbole de démocratie, de mains tendues, de tolérance, d’unité nationale et de solidarité.” (Recording, 13.11.2011)

the sons of one of the sons of the city, for me, this is an honour, that's enough. It is not easy to deliver, elsewhere they will tell you that they do not have the time for it. But I think this is our society's character.¹⁷

As Bemba's statement illustrates, he was very proud in knowing that someone had come from far away to learn more about 'his' beloved city and its inhabitants. Due to his personal networks, his knowledge of Kankan's history, and especially his narrative talent, Bemba became one of the key research participants for my project. Interesting for me was especially how he framed Kankan in between tradition and modernity. Bemba supported, for example, an opening up of the traditional authorities in reaction to the democratisation processes on the national level.

The imagery of the traditional city is fostered by many means, not least through the radio where, for example, a well-known, young, male journalist reprimanded young men not to wear their trousers too low on their hips and young women not to wear tight trousers and skirts that show their knees. Dress practices often differ between metropolises and secondary cities. While in the former, one can observe a huge variety of dress styles that are influenced by the global, regional, national and local levels; the dress codes in the latter are typically stricter. These nuances might be small for an outsider, however, Kankan's inhabitants immediately recognise people originating from Conakry or Bamako. We must not forget though, that people dress differently within different social spaces, be it in metropolises or secondary cities: Young women, for example, do not wear the same clothes when going to the market or to the night club. In the 2000s, many private radio stations emerged all over the country and in Guinea, freedom of speech is officially guaranteed. Still, Djouba Boumbaly, a young female radio journalist, who initially came to Kankan for her studies, recounted that their listeners complain if her radio criticises the local authorities too openly, for example for their corrupt practices: "Here in Kankan, ok, there are things, nonetheless, people say: 'The radio shouldn't say that, we are in Kankan, one shouldn't.'" ¹⁸ For her, this is evidence for Kankan's conservative population. Kankan's imagery of the traditional city consists of conflicting images. Here, a generational conflict becomes visible. It is not least influenced by the increase of young people – boys and to a lesser degree also girls – attending a 'Westernised' schooling system. I argue that this tension between tradition and modernity which is present in all West African cities, is even more prominent in secondary cities than in the capitals because the former act as intermediaries between the rural hinterland and the global, glittering metropolises.

17 On accepte tout le monde, parce que on sait que le nom de Nabaya est doux, venez. On tend la main. Pour nous c'est un honneur si quelqu'un va ailleurs pour raconter comment se passe la vie à Kankan. C'est pourquoi je me mets à ta disposition pour parler. Je pourrais aussi dire que pour ce que je te raconte, ce que tu vas exploiter, il faut facturer. Mais le fait que tu peux dire que tu as eu ces infos par les fils d'un des fils pour cette ville, pour moi c'est un honneur, ça me suffit. Ce n'est pas facile de livrer, ailleurs ils vont te dire qu'ils n'ont pas ce temps. Mais je pense que c'est la nature de notre société." (Interview, 10.12.2012)

18 "Ici à Kankan, bon, il y a des choses, quand même qu'on dit: 'La radio ne doit pas dire ça, on est à Kankan, on ne doit pas.'" (Interview, 06.03.2012)

19 [...] partager une mentalité liée au statut de la ville."

Conclusion

By regarding Kankan's imagery as a rebellious and at the same time traditional city, it becomes clear that Matthieu Hilgers is right in stating that inhabitants of secondary cities "share a mentality that is related to the city's status"¹⁹ (Hilgers 2012, 42). The imageries of cities are of interest because they influence the cities' population, their self-perception and the cities' perception in other parts of the country and beyond. Furthermore, such imageries have concrete consequences. As I have shown, the Guinean central government did not invest in Kankan's infrastructure as its inhabitants have been regarded as rebellious due to their opposition, first to Sékou Touré and then to Lansana Conté. This imagery of the rebellious city can be a typical feature of secondary cities like Kankan.

As the national government is far away, its administration has less power than in the country's main or capital city. This results in new forms of governance, for instance a strong influence of so-called traditional authorities like the *Sotikemo* and the council of elders. In Kankan, these two are said to be so powerful that they can achieve the dismissal of the prefect or the governor. The traditional authorities are all elderly men who are descendants of Kankan's Manding first-comers. Thus, their power has also wide-ranging consequences in terms of inclusion and exclusion: Youth, women, Manding late-comers and other ethnicities do not have access to traditional authorities and, thus, their influence on these traditional spheres is restricted.

The populace's imagination of their city depends on other places. In Kankan, they compare their city to Conakry and Bamako, but also to other Guinean secondary cities like Nzérékoré, Boké, Mamou or Labé. Kankan's urbanites are proud of their city, even though they know that it cannot compete with Conakry or Bamako on many levels. They call it affectionately *Nabaya*, hinting to the welcoming culture of its inhabitants. *Nabaya* is linked to the imaginary of harmonious cohabitation between different religions, ethnicities and between long-time residents and newcomers. Especially Kankan's elderly population emphasises that Kankan still holds on to traditional norms, not like the people in the big West African cities and abroad, notably in Europe and the US, who have forgotten African or Guinean values and the rich history of their ancestors. Because Kankan's elders feel that current trends threaten their traditional norms, they stress them so strongly. In many informal conversations and interviews, elderly men and women accused male youth of disrespecting them, being lazy, hanging out in cafés and taking drugs like marihuana and drinking beer. They also blame young women for not dressing properly, being prostitutes, questioning local gendered norms and thus of not being submissive to men. The depicted imagery of Kankan as a rebellious and traditional city do not necessarily contradict each other. On the contrary, for many, especially Kankan's elderly inhabitants who have lived during the First and Second Republic, these two imageries can perfectly exist side by side. Both enhance their identification with Kankan, their place of origin. African cities, as any others, are always changing. This also holds true for their imageries. Thus, it remains to be seen how Kankan's imagery alter due to recent changes, not least because the city is the stronghold of the current president Alpha Condé.

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