

Guinea

Ethnicity in Guinea

Group selection

The **Malinke, Peul and Susu** are politically relevant groups in Guinea. The remaining 10% of the population (besides the three big politically relevant groups) is made up of several small ethnic groups, none of which is politically organized/represented and thus politically irrelevant according to the definition of EPR. Group sizes according to figures provided by the CIA World Factbook (1935).

¹⁹³⁵ [CIA World Factbook]

Power relations

1958-1984, Sekou Toure's rule

Toure, a Malinke, who led the country to independence was known for his personal commitment to a transethnic, united Guinean nation (1936; 1937). Although his party (PDG) - the country's single ruling party until the military coup in 1984 - was sometimes portrayed/seen as a Malinke and Susu and anti-Peul party by political opponents, its leaders made a great personal effort to construct a party and government that included all of the country's ethnic groups and to maintain an ethnic balance (1938) - despite the highly personalized rule of Toure. Representation of all regions and ethnic groups in the party leadership was emphasized (1939).

¹⁹³⁶ [Schmidt, 2005]

¹⁹³⁷ [O'Toole, 2005]

¹⁹³⁸ [Schmidt, 2005]

¹⁹³⁹ [Schmidt, 2005]

Nevertheless, the more distrustful and authoritarian Toure became over the years, the more he was inclined to rely on a small clique of family members and Malinke associates which in the end formed the inner power circle of the regime (1940). I thus coded the Malinke as "senior partner" and the Susu and Peul as "junior partners".

¹⁹⁴⁰ [O'Toole, 2005]

There was an alleged "Peul plot" in 1976 after which Toure proceeded aggressively against prominent Peul intellectuals. Many were arrested and died in prison. However, Toure also persecuted opponents from his own ethnic group (e.g. Malinke merchants after another alleged plot in 1975) (1941). I have no evidence of an ongoing targeted discrimination or political exclusion of the Peul as a group. It seems that Toure simply became more and more distrustful and authoritarian in general, striking aggressively against all kinds of real and imagined opponents to stay in power.

¹⁹⁴¹ [O'Toole, 2005]

1985: Military coup in April 1984 after Toure's death

According to EPR's January 1st rule, the new period is coded as starting in 1985. A military junta takes over power. At first, a power-sharing regime is installed between the two main leaders: Lansana Conte, a Susu, becomes president, Diarra Traore, a Malinke, prime minister. However, ethnic and personal tensions quickly come to the fore (¹⁹⁴²).

¹⁹⁴² [O'Toole, 2005]

Nevertheless, this single-year period is characterized by a power-sharing situation between the different ethnic factions within the army. Conte's Susu can be considered the "senior partner", the Malinke and Peul groups the "junior partners" in the country's executive.

1986-2008

After Traore is sidelined by Conte, there is an unsuccessful coup attempt in July 1985. This leads to anti-Malinke violence and to the execution of numerous Malinke politicians and officers (¹⁹⁴³).

¹⁹⁴³ [O'Toole, 2005]

Meanwhile, Conte consolidates his power. More and more personalized, authoritarian rule despite the transition to a (superficial) multi-party democracy at the beginning of the 90s. The Peul- and Malinke-elite are almost completely excluded from political power. (Even the leadership of Conte's own national party PUP becomes marginalized.) A clique of Susu friends and businessmen dominate the politics alongside President Conte (¹⁹⁴⁴). Also, the public sector and the top-leadership of the military are dominated by the Susu group (¹⁹⁴⁵). The new opposition parties that emerged in the 90s and which are severely constrained by Conte's government are built along ethnic lines: the RPG of Alpha Conde is a Malinke party, the PRP and UNR are Peul parties (¹⁹⁴⁶; ¹⁹⁴⁷).

¹⁹⁴⁴ [O'Toole, 2005]

¹⁹⁴⁵ [US State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁴⁶ [O'Toole, 2005]

¹⁹⁴⁷ [US State Department, 1999-2016]

From 2006 onwards, there was increasing and increasingly mobilized opposition, which in turn was met with severe violence by the regime, and continuing ethnic bias and dominance of Conte's Susu group which also occupies the crucial posts in the all important army (¹⁹⁴⁸; ¹⁹⁴⁹). Based on this information and in absence of new evidence contrasting the picture sketched in the period of 1986-2005, Conte's last 3 years of rule are added to the foregoing period, resulting in a combined period from 1986 to 2008 in which the Susu are coded as "dominant" and the Peul and Malinke as "powerless".

¹⁹⁴⁸ [US State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁴⁹ [Freedom House, 2006-2009]

2009

After Conte's death, Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara seizes control of the government in a military coup, establishing a military junta (National Council for Democracy and Development) with himself as president (until a failed assassination attempt in December 2009 which left him incapacitated and led to his leaving the country for medical treatment). Camara belongs to the Kpelle (Guerze) group, one of the small ethnic groups located in the southeastern highlands (Forrest Region) which total about 10% of the population and are not relevant politically (although according to the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Report 2009 ⁽¹⁹⁵⁰⁾, they now enjoy a certain favoritism by the military junta leading to resentment by other groups). Generally, ethnicity still matters for national politics and the major political parties - RPG (Malinke), UPR, and UFDG (both Peul) - have easily identifiable ethnic bases. According to the U.S. State Department's HR Report of 2009, all major ethnic groups are included in the cabinet leadership. The junta's second man (and Camara's successor after the latter left the country), is Sekouba Konate, a Malinke; prime minister in 2009 was a Malinke, too (Kabine Komara). Nevertheless, it is not exactly clear based on the available information how much power representatives of the different ethnic groups really have (since Camara's Kpelle are not politically relevant as a group). Therefore, all three relevant groups (Susu, Malinke, Peul) are coded as "senior partners" in 2009.

¹⁹⁵⁰ [US State Department, 1999-2016]

2010

After the coup attempt in late 2009, vice-president and minister of defence S. Konate, a Malinke, took over power with president Camara staying outside the country. As no major ethnic reshuffling of the cabinet is reported for 2009 but the Malinke are upgraded through the new position of S. Konate, they are coded senior partner, while Peul and Susu are coded as junior partners on January 1 2010.

2011-2017

After a period of a transition government, the second round of presidential elections were finally held on November 7 2010. Alpha Conde, a Malinke from the RPG party (also mainly Malinke) won the election. As the party system in Guinea is very much based on ethnic identities I argue that the Peul are excluded from power, thus "powerless". Although some sources report members of all ethnic groups to be included into government ^(1951; 1952), no report indicates that members of one of the two Peul parties (UPR, UFDG) have access to executive power. Furthermore, the International Crisis Group ⁽¹⁹⁵³⁾ reports anti-Peul rhetoric from the part of government members and major tensions of the government with the opposition parties. With regard to the Susu, M. Z. Fofana was elected as PM,

¹⁹⁵¹ [International Crisis Group, 2011]

¹⁹⁵² [US State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁵³ [International Crisis Group, 2011]

reportedly *inter alia* because of its linkages with the Susu political community and the support it granted to Conde in the second electoral round (¹⁹⁵⁴). I therefore code the Malinke as being senior partner, with the Susu as junior partner for the years 2011 to 2013.

¹⁹⁵⁴ [International Crisis Group, 2011]

Parliamentary elections (free and fair; ¹⁹⁵⁵) were - after 2 years of delay - finally held in 2013.

¹⁹⁵⁵ [US State Department, 1999-2016]

Any assessment of the situation in Guinea should cover the political representation of the two main ethnic groups, the Malinke and the Peul (also known as “Fulani”). Alpha Conde, a Malinke from the RPG party, remains President in this period following his victory in the 2015 Presidential elections, thus justifying their continued “senior partner” position (¹⁹⁵⁶). Regarding the Peul group, their political representatives in the UFDG and UPR parties have been excluded from Conde’s cabinet, according to numerous sources (¹⁹⁵⁷; ¹⁹⁵⁸). This exclusion is significant, particularly in the context of tension between the two ethnic groups, ongoing for decades. Sources cite that many Peul consider it is “their turn” to rule (¹⁹⁵⁹). The Peul group therefore remain “powerless” in this period.

¹⁹⁵⁶ [International Crisis Group, 2015]

¹⁹⁵⁷ [Trade Bridge Consultants, 2015]

¹⁹⁵⁸ [Human Rights Watch, 2015]

¹⁹⁵⁹ [Gerber, 2013]

In 2015, the prime minister M.Z Fofana resigned, and was replaced with the independent former businessman Mamady Youla on 26 December (¹⁹⁶⁰). Youla is an independent, with no obvious party connections and intended to appear as a technocratic choice. As the party system in Guinea appears to be founded on ethnic identities, the introduction of an independent, pro-business and development candidate to a political position could be a sign of changing internal political strategy. Furthermore, the complete re-structuring of the Cabinet in 2016 is said to have represented a shift towards a focus on the economy following the Ebola endemic. Many ministers, for example the Finance minister, Maladho Kaba, studied and worked abroad before the cabinet was formed with no obvious party connections (¹⁹⁶¹). However, the Susu can still be considered “junior partner” in this period for 2 reasons. Firstly, searches on Lexis Nexis show that Youla identifies as a Susu, although he refrains from bringing ethnic identity into his politics. Secondly, it is clear that the Susu elite and political class remain on the side of Conde, as they supported him in the 2015 election second round. Furthermore, sources cite Conde to have said “Guinea belongs to the Malinke, to those from the Forest Region, and to the Susu!” (¹⁹⁶²). Therefore, this suggests that, as warned by the International Centre on Non-violent Conflict, there may be a rift between not just the Malinke and the Peul, but that a broader “Mandingo Ethnic Coalition”, of Susu and Malinke, exclude the Peul (¹⁹⁶³). Overall, there is enough evidence to suggest that the Susu remain “junior partner” in this period.

¹⁹⁶⁰ [Reuters, 2016]

¹⁹⁶¹ [Guinee Direct, 2015]

¹⁹⁶² [Pham, 2015]

¹⁹⁶³ [Darboe, 2010]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea

From 1958 until 1984

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Peul	0.4	JUNIOR PARTNER
Malinke	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Susu	0.2	JUNIOR PARTNER

From 1985 until 1985

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Peul	0.4	JUNIOR PARTNER
Malinke	0.3	JUNIOR PARTNER
Susu	0.2	SENIOR PARTNER

From 1986 until 2008

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Peul	0.4	POWERLESS
Malinke	0.3	POWERLESS
Susu	0.2	DOMINANT

From 2009 until 2009

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Peul	0.4	SENIOR PARTNER
Malinke	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Susu	0.2	SENIOR PARTNER



Figure 354: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea during 1958-1984.



Figure 355: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea during 1985-1985.



Figure 356: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea during 1986-2008.



From 2010 until 2010

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Peul	0.4	JUNIOR PARTNER
Malinke	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Susu	0.2	JUNIOR PARTNER

From 2011 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Peul	0.4	POWERLESS
Malinke	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Susu	0.2	JUNIOR PARTNER



Figure 358: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea during 2010-2010.



Figure 359: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea during 2011-2017.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Guinea

From 1958 until 2017

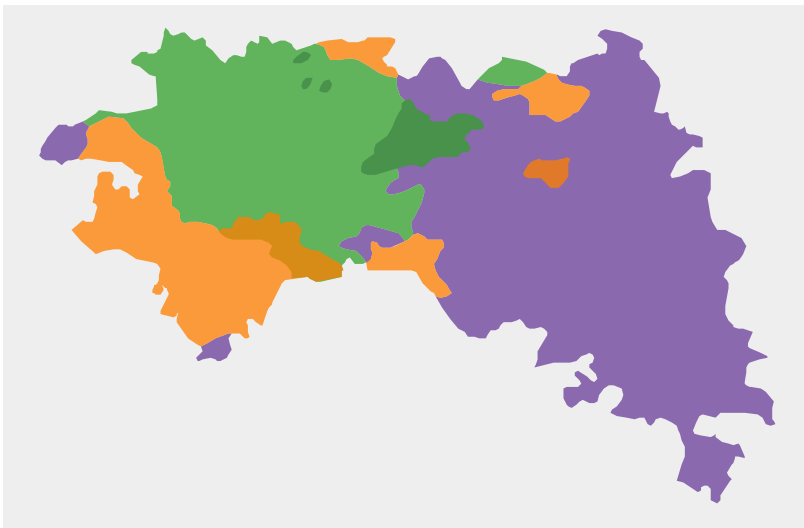


Figure 360: Map of ethnic groups in Guinea during 1958-2017.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ Malinke	119 508	Regionally based
■ Peul	65 470	Regionally based
■ Susu	38 704	Regionally based

Table 118: List of ethnic groups in Guinea during 1958-2017.

Conflicts in Guinea

Starting on 2000-08-31

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Guinea	RFDG		2000-08-31			