



Sustainability and Social Security Futures: The Case of Guinea Bissau

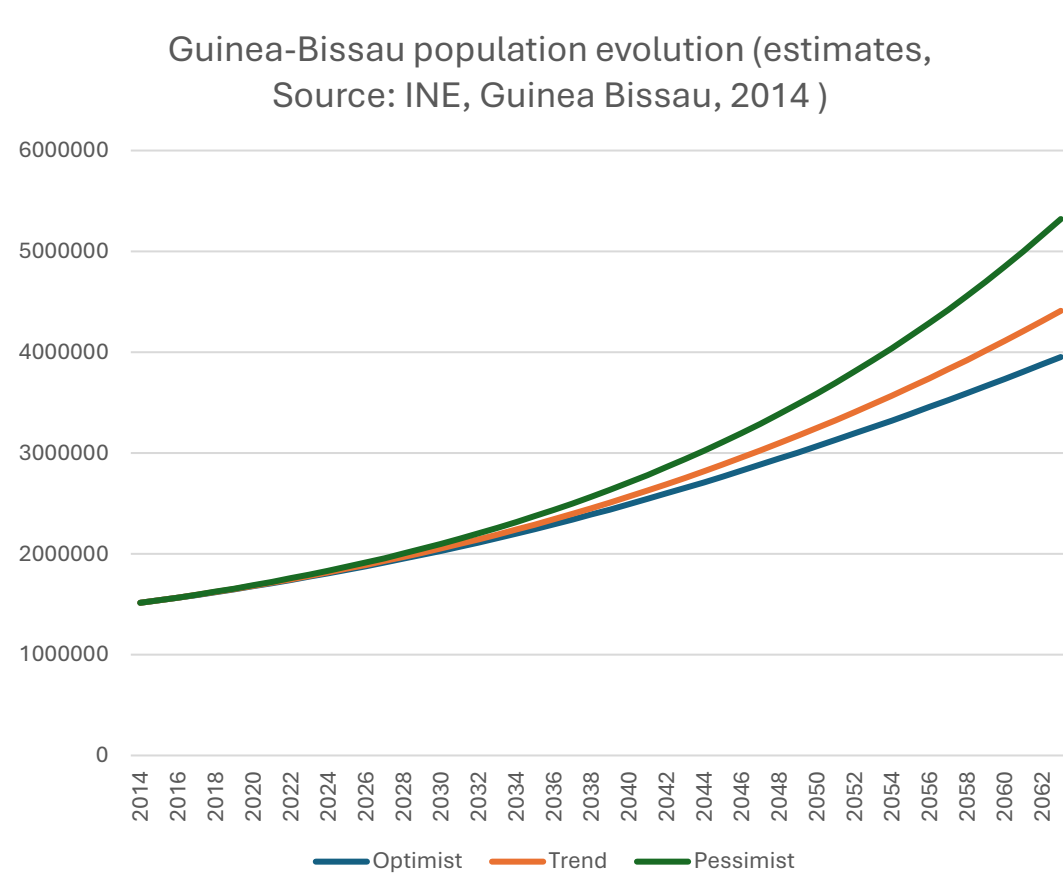
INTRODUCTION

Guinea-Bissau (GB) faces significant challenges in maintaining and developing a sustainable social security system over the next two to three decades. This analysis explores for future scenarios and their implications for the country's social protection framework, considering multiple interacting factors. Besides demographic and macroeconomic indicators, the present paper tackles the issues of the structure of the population, the main categories of vulnerable people, climate change, the technological change and practices and advance the idea of social security for vulnerable people and times of multidimensional change.

Picture 1 & 2 – Erosion of the seashore of GB



Fig 1_ Population evolution Relatório de apresentação das projeções da população da Guiné-Bissau de 2014 a 2063



THE ISSUE

Compared with neighboring countries like Gambia and Senegal, the social security in Guinea-Bissau is underdeveloped with an inclusion rate of only 3% of the population whereas it surpasses 17% in Senegal.

They share common climacteric risks changes currently and for the next three decades. They differ by their capacities and abilities to adapt to those challenges. Guinea-Bissau is perhaps the least ready for adaptation, especially at the level of institutions.

The linkages intersection between climate change, poverty and social protection, which includes social security and traditional institutions, appear clearer with recent research. The region can be characterized as climacterically stressed and with structural problems, namely in terms of preparedness, limited adaptive and coping capacities.

West Africa presents a vulnerability nexus where climate-sensitive livelihoods predominate economic activity and institutional and organizational capacity constrained by structural limitation like political instability, underinvestment, and fragmented elites, inter alia (Niang et al. 2014).

Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest nation globally, with a poverty rate of 69,32 % of the population below the poverty line. This percentage is around 35%, almost half of that of GB,

The economy of Guinea-Bissau is the most exposed to external shocks and climate change impacts, with 80 % of agricultural whereas it is 60 and 70% for Senegal and The Gambia. Exports revenue for GB are concentrated on one product, cashew nut, up to 80% of total.

The climate change impacts on poverty dimension can be related to three factors. First, low agricultural productivity and food security. Rice production, for example, is stagnating and with the lowest productivity. The cashew sector faces long-term threats from climate change and increased pest pressures (Monteiro et al. 2017). Second, water resources and human health are under stress. There is an increasing salinization of coastal aquifers that threatens water security, especially in a time when precipitations are more irregular. GB seems faring better at this level than neighboring countries.

Thirdly, asset and land erosion threatens communities that is related to increase in poverty and higher difficulties in maintaining livelihoods. This is the case for fishing communities and rural communities subject to erosion and irregular rainfall. Floodings have destroyed more frequently assets that are not easily rebuilt, as the major 2015 flooding.



Another dimension is related to social protection mechanisms and adaptive capacity. First the formal social protection is still very narrow in GB with just 3% of the population covered, whereas this figure is 17 % in Senegal and 9% in The Gambia. There is a need to expand. There is also a limited adaptive capacity related to several factors such as political instability. Second, the still embryonic climate-responsive social protection with some pilot project like the World Food program. It must move beyond the project-based scheme. Third, the informal safety nets and community adaptations capacity are important but undervalued in the studies. Family and community solidarity is notorious in areas affected by climate change. Communities affected by migrations are less robust to climate vulnerability. Finally, it is the policy challenges and future directions that interest us here. First, the institutional capacity and governance is negatively affected by political instability, namely frequent government changes with the implementation of policies that remained unimplemented (UNDP 2020). Second, the constraints that impinge on financing climate-adaptive social protection. Third, the lack of progress in policy integration (at the national level) and regional coordination between countries.

CONCLUSION

Taking the argument from Sen (2001) that the multidimensional concept of poverty goes beyond income metrics to encompass capabilities, assets and social capital, vulnerability and social security also encompass capabilities and broader institutional forms.

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