

Micro and Macro Levels of Social Peace in Gold Mining: Debts, Access to Land, and 'Soft Law'-State in Mali

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This paper analyses reciprocity relationships imbricated at national and local level of gold mining management in Mali. These dynamics are concerned by a multi-level policy of 'social peace', promoted in the 90s by the Malian State in the context of the national integration policies. They were based, among others, on the creation of a social landscape claimed on one side on the Maninka vision of the chief as *primus inter pares*. On the other side, they advocated a 'social peace' policy in regard to the co-habitation between different ethnic groups driving the principle that the land is owned by who engages himself to labour it. These principles are reflected on a tacit agreement between the Malian State and artisanal gold miners that, in spite of mining code and official statements, endorses, in practice, rights of use and informal circulation of artisanal gold in countryside. At local level, the principle of 'social peace' also characterises the access to community colonial gold mines in a perpetual balance between firstcomer's rights and hospitality social dynamics inherited by traditional land rights. As well as the 'soft law' practiced by the Malian State, the example of non-mechanized exploitation in the Basidibé region (south-west Mali) shows that the management of gold pits is governed by social norms of reciprocity (debt, mutual assistance, and division of labour) and by a segmentary management of power.