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Horizontal inequalities and violent conflict: the case of Côte d'Ivoire

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Abstract

In order to explain the emergence of ethnic violence, scholars from different disciplines have focused on different factors, such as the role of ethnicity, the individual gain from civil war, the relative deprivation explanations, and the role of ethnic elites, and proposed different conflict narratives. Although these approaches focus on different aspects and use different explanatory variables to explain the emergence of violent group mobilization, they are complementary and overlapping in many important ways. In order to explain the descent of Côte d'Ivoire into violence at the end of the 1990s, this paper focuses on the relationship between inter-ethnic or *horizontal* inequalities and the emergence of violent group mobilization. The central focus of the proposed analytical framework is on the interaction between the evolution of the political horizontal inequalities at the elite level *and* socio-economic horizontal inequalities at the mass level. The evidence presented regarding the Ivorian case demonstrates that the simultaneous presence of severe political horizontal inequalities at the elite level *and* socio-economic horizontal inequalities at the mass level forms an extremely explosive socio-political situation because in these situations the excluded political elites not only have strong incentives to mobilize their supporters for violent conflict along ethnic lines, but are also likely to gain support among their ethnic constituencies quite easily.

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1. Introduction

Robert Kaplan's famous 1994 article, *The Coming Anarchy*, refers to West Africa as "a natural point of departure for my report on what the political character of our planet is likely to be in the twenty-first century" (Kaplan 1994: 44). He argued that "Côte d'Ivoire, once a model of Third World success, is becoming a case study in Third World catastrophe" (Kaplan: 47). Kaplan attributes the causes of Côte d'Ivoire's predicted implosion into a system of criminal violence and anarchy to such Malthusian factors as demographic and environmental stress and tribalism.

Ten years later, Côte d'Ivoire has indeed become the scene of wide-spread xenophobia, political instability and ethnic violence. If Kaplan was broadly right about the outcome, was he also right about the factors and mechanisms that caused the breakdown of Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political system and led to the eruption of ethnic violence? Moreover, the question of why some countries are able to maintain stable and inclusive multi-ethnic societies while others, such as Côte d'Ivoire, which have been relatively stable for decades experience wide-scale violence, undoubtedly remains among the most important at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In order to explain the emergence of ethnic violence, scholars from different disciplines have focused on different factors, such as the role of ethnicity, individual gains from civil war, relative deprivation explanations, the role of ethnic elites, and a range of different conflict narratives. Although these approaches focus on different aspects and use different explanatory variables to explain the emergence of violent group mobilization, they are complementary and overlapping in many important ways. In order to explain the descent of Côte d'Ivoire into violence at the end of the 1990s, this paper focuses on the relationship between inter-ethnic inequalities, or what Stewart (2000) has called "horizontal inequalities" and the emergence of violent group mobilization.

In line with Stewart (2000, 2002), I hypothesize that multi-ethnic countries with significant inter-ethnic socio-economic and political inequalities have higher potential for conflict than more horizontally egalitarian countries. However, even if the prevailing horizontal inequalities are sufficiently visible, severe and durable to cause genuine grievances and frustrations, these grievances as such do not usually produce large-scale ethnic conflict.[2] Moreover, as will be argued in this paper, the emergence of violent group mobilization in plural societies with severe horizontal inequalities depends to a significant extent on the characteristics of the inter-ethnic elite interaction.

The structure of this paper is as follows. The first section introduces the conceptual framework to be adopted for analyzing the emergence of violent group mobilization. The

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[2] The labeling of these conflicts as 'ethnic' does not mean that ethnicity is the cause of such conflicts (see particularly: Alexander *et al.*, 2000). Ethnicity is here defined as being a largely socially constructed and instrumental concept. It is further a very broad concept that encompasses any significant perceived cultural differences among groups of people, such as religious, regional, tribal, racial or clan differences. It is important to recognize that group mobilization can happen along any of these identity lines or markers.

second section discusses the ethnic composition of Côte d'Ivoire. The third section provides an overview of Côte d'Ivoire's economic performance over the period 1960 to 2000. The fourth section discusses the evolution of the socio-economic horizontal inequalities. The fifth section shows how the political horizontal inequalities have evolved over the period 1960 to 2000. The last section draws some conclusions regarding the linkages between horizontal inequalities and violent group mobilization in the case of Côte d'Ivoire.

2. Horizontal inequalities and elites: a framework

The linkages between economic inequality and violent conflict or some other form of political protest have been extensively analyzed. As Nagel has stated: "at least since Aristotle, theorists have believed that political discontent and its consequences –protest, instability, violence, revolution- depend not only on the absolute level of economic well-being, but also on *the distribution of wealth*" (Nagel 1974: 453; *italics added*). However, Nagel also concluded in 1974 that the results of cross-national investigations into this relationship are "distressingly confusing" (Nagel: 453). More recently Cramer has come to a similar conclusion when he stated "the role of economic inequality in …the political economy of violent conflict has remained elusive" (Cramer 2003: 397).

Most studies that have focused on the inequality/conflict relationship have used the 'theory of relative deprivation' as a theoretical underpinning. Ted Gurr developed this theory most fully in his well-known book *Why Men Rebel* (1970). Gurr defines relative deprivation as "a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities" (Gurr 1970: 15). The theory's main claim is that the combination of deprivation-induced discontent and a sense of group cultural identity is the primary determinant of political mobilization. Similar to Gurr, Stewart asserts that where there are social, economic and political inequalities, "coinciding with cultural differences, culture could become a powerful mobilizing agent" that could lead to political violence (Stewart 2002: 3).

Stewart not only argues that "the existence of severe inequalities between culturally defined groups", which she calls "horizontal inequalities", might cause different forms of political disturbances, including civil war, she also stresses that this kind of inequality is different from the 'normal' definition of inequality. She refers to the latter type of inequality as *vertical inequality* because it "lines individuals or households up vertically and measures inequality over the range of individuals" (Stewart 2000: 3). By using the Gini coefficient as a measure of inequality, most scholars who have examined the inequality/conflict relationship econometrically, such as Collier and Hoeffler (1998), Nafziger and Auvinen (2000), and Alesina and Perotti (1996), have in fact analyzed the role and impact of vertical inequality, rather than inter-group or horizontal inequalities.

The body of empirical evidence –both econometric analyses and case studies of particular countries- regarding the relationship between multi-dimensional horizontal inequalities and different forms of political mobilization in developing countries is still rather limited. In addition to examining the impact of economic inequalities and discrimination, Gurr is one of the few scholars to have explicitly analyzed the impact of group political exclusion and discrimination on the incidence of political violence. Moreover, as part of his *Minorities at Risk* project, Gurr (1993) has examined the economic and political situation of 233 communal groups in 93 countries. He subsequently analyzed econometrically the linkages between the severity of the political and economic discrimination of particular communal groups and the incidence of various forms of political violence. An important conclusion of his analysis is that "political and economic disadvantages motivate communal groups to demand greater access to the political system and greater economic opportunities, whereas a history of political autonomy leads groups to attempt secession" (Gurr 1993: 86).

Stewart points out that most empirical work on the impact of group economic and social differences has been done by sociologists and refers to three main types of studies such as statistical analyses of race (black/white) relationships in the United States, various cross-country regression analyses conducted by Gurr in the Minorities at Risk project, and specific country case studies (Stewart 2002). Based on secondary literature, Stewart has reviewed the impact and consequences of horizontal inequalities in nine case studies. Among the cases examined, she finds that horizontal inequalities have provoked a range of different political actions and outcomes, “including severe and long-lasting violent conflict (Uganda, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Northern Ireland), less severe rebellion (Chiapas), coups (Fiji), periodic riots and criminality (United States), occasional riots (Malaysia) and a high level of criminality (Brazil)” (Stewart 2002: 14).

The analysis of violent group mobilization on basis of a horizontal inequality framework only makes sense however if the cultural groups used as subjects of comparison are perceived by its members as real and meaningful (Stewart 2002). This requires that group boundaries are relatively clearly defined and sufficiently stable. Fluidity of group boundaries might potentially pose problems for the horizontal inequality approach. If group boundaries are highly fluid and change frequently, the measurement of horizontal inequalities becomes not only difficult, but, more importantly, it may become conceptually useless. The ethnicity hypothesis underlying this paper broadly takes a constructivist approach. Here, ethnic groups are seen as constructed historically, according to various identity markers, such as ancestry, language and region of origin. In keeping with the instrumentalist perspective on ethnic mobilization, constructivists view ethnic identities and boundaries as malleable and fluid. Yet, distinguishing their position from the instrumentalists is “the belief that while identities can be reshaped, they can only be altered at significant cost” (Bates 2004: 5). It is further important to note that political leaders and spokesmen can increase the salience of certain identities. As we will show below, it was mainly due to political action that “foreigner” and “native” became salient categories in the Ivorian case.

It is however important to recognise that “group disparities and unequal exchange are, in and of themselves, insufficient to explain the course of interethnic conflict’ (Rothchild 1983: 172), partly because horizontal inequalities must be perceived and because there are other elements that can play an important role in stimulating or inhibiting the emergence of violent conflicts. For example, the existence of objective horizontal inequalities “may not translate itself into conflict if there is a strong state which suppresses it, or if ideological elements are such that the inequalities are not widely perceived” (Stewart 2000: 11). In addition to the containment of violence by a strong state, violent group mobilization might also be prevented as a consequence of ethnic leaders’ decisions to try to improve their ethnic group’s situation by use of non-violent strategies. It is only in cases where ethnic leaders and their supporters have lost confidence in the prospects of improving their socio-economic and political situation through non-violent means that they are likely to decide in favour of violent group mobilization.

This point is illustrated by Nelson Mandela’s autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, which provides a fascinating account of the debate in the early 1960s within the African National Congress (ANC) on the use of violence in the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa. Mandela recalls saying to members of the press in Soweto, Johannesburg on 30 May 1961, “If the government reaction is to crush by naked force our non-violent struggle, we will have to reconsider our tactics. In my mind we are closing the chapter on this question of a non-violent policy” (Mandela 2002: 320). Mandela further states that he believed that the ANC “had no choice, but to turn to violence” (Mandela: 320). The lost of confidence in the effectiveness and usefulness of the non-violent policies was however not the only reason for Mandela and the ANC to consider mobilizing people for an armed struggle. Another reason was the fact that other organisations such as the Pan African Congress (PAC) were already forming military units of their own. Thus in order to safeguard its leading position in the anti-

Apartheid struggle, the ANC was induced to adopt more aggressive policies and strategies as well.

Another reason why violent group mobilization may not occur in plural societies with severe horizontal inequalities lies in the characteristics of elite interaction across ethnic groups. National elites can broadly be defined as "persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organisations, to affect national outcomes regularly and substantially" (Burton et al 1992: 8). While some scholars have explained the emergence of ethnic violence "both as a means and a by-product of political elites' efforts to hold or acquire power" (Fearon and Laitin 2000: 853), others have shown that under certain circumstances elites might contribute to maintaining political stability. Indeed, it is often argued that the existence of mutually beneficial inter-ethnic elite alliances is an important factor for explaining the non-appearance of ethnic group mobilization in countries with significant ethno-regional inequalities. These inter-ethnic elite alliances are manifested by informal and formal agreements and networks; variously referred to by other scholars as "pacts" (Karl 1986) or "elite settlements" (Burton and Higley 1987). Lijphart was among the first to identify behaviour of political elites as a crucial variable for explaining the stability of democracies as a "deliberate joint effort by elites' to stabilize their country's political system is the essential characteristic of a '*consociational democracy*'" (Lijphart 1969: 213).

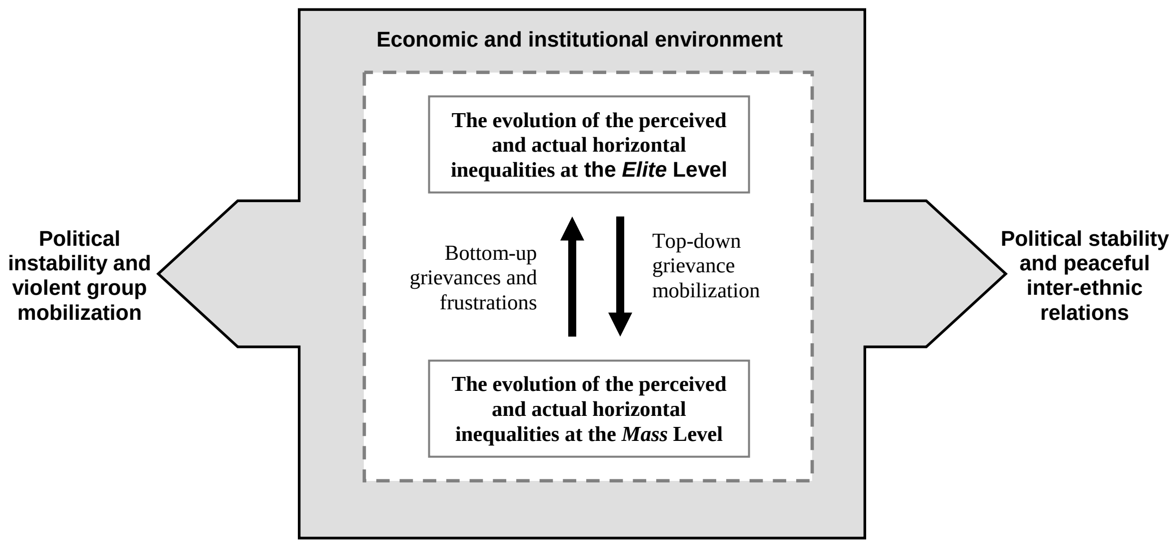
In recent years, Case in particular, has advanced the argument that "elite unity or disunity is the main determinant of the forms regimes take" (Case 1996: 6). Building on the work of Burton, Gunther, and Higley (1992) and Di Palma (1990), he argues that "elites who are 'consensually unified' display a 'restrained partisanship' synthesising and adhering to *procedural* rules of the game" (Case: 6; *italics added*). He further asserts that "while consensually unified elites compete strongly for state positions and power, mutually acceptable –and adaptable- rules of the game contain their competitiveness, dissuading them from undertaking divisive strategies and actions" (Case: 10). In addition to these mutually agreed procedural rules, I argue that inter-ethnic elite consensus also depends on the way in which national resources and assets are distributed among the various ethnic elites. In other words, regime stability is not only dependent on the elite consensus regarding the procedural rules of the game, but adherence to these rules also depends on the *actual* distribution of the favoured economic and political positions within the important state and parastatal institutions.

In this respect, I hypothesize that ethnic elites are primarily concerned with the distribution of political power, while the "masses" or "ordinary people", viewed as populations without political power (Putnam 1976) predominantly care about their socio-economic position and progress. This distinction between horizontal inequalities at the elite and mass level is crucial for understanding the emergence of violent group mobilization. It follows that the absence of political horizontal inequalities among the elites significantly reduces the risk of violent group mobilization, even if there are severe socio-economic inequalities between different ethnic groups or regions within a country, because in these situations political elites and leaders lack the incentives to mobilize their constituents for violent conflict. The converse hypothesis also seems to hold: ethnic mobilization and violent conflicts appear to become more likely if there is a high degree of political horizontal inequalities.

Some degree of violent conflict potential in the presence of sharp socio-economic horizontal grievances among the masses remains because this still puts pressure on ethnic leaders to address their constituents' claims and discontent. If ethnic leaders ignore their group's grievances too long, they may lose their support which may in turn threaten their positions of power. It is also possible that new ethnic leaders may emerge either from among the sub-elites or from among the masses. These new ethnic leaders might have a more confrontational approach towards addressing the prevailing horizontal inequalities. In response to competition from new, more aggressive leaders, the existing elite might decide to take a more active approach to the promotion of their group's grievances and claims. The ensuing intra-ethnic elite competition for support could lead to a process of "ethnic outbidding" (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972), resulting in the promotion of increasingly extreme views of the causes and solutions to group grievances. This, in turn, could jeopardize the inter-ethnic elite consensus, leading to increasing ethnic tensions and potentially violent group mobilization.

Figure 1 below depicts the main elements of the proposed framework for understanding the emergence of violent conflicts. The central focus is on the interaction between political mobilization and its nature (peaceful or violent), and perceived horizontal inequalities at both the elite and mass level. The framework's third analytical element refers to the economic and institutional environment.

Figure 1: Framework for understanding the emergence of violent conflicts



Source: Arnim Langer

The interaction between the existing horizontal inequalities and the behaviour of a country's ethnic elites is not only shaped by the formal and informal rules of a society, but also by the general standard of living and economic situation. Certain changes and institutional shocks within a country's institutional and economic environment, such as the introduction of multi-party elections or a sharp economic decline, can catalyse the processes whereby latent ethnic grievances become a source of violent group mobilization. One important institutional change is the introduction of multi-party elections. Although democracy is usually argued to be a conflict-reducing institution, an increasing amount of research has shown that the process of democratisation significantly increases a country's likelihood of experiencing a violent conflict (see Snyder 2000).

The state and progress of a country's economy is another important factor in the analysis of the emergence of violent group mobilization. Empirical evidence suggests that the progress of a country's economy and the likelihood of violent conflict tend to be inversely related; the better the state of the economy, the lower the probability of violent group mobilization (see Nafziger and Auvinen 2000). Moreover, violent group mobilization frequently occurs in situations characterised by sharp economic decline or lower-than-expected economic progress. At the mass level, a sharp economic decline is likely to result in a decreasing standard of living and increasing levels of economic insecurity and general discontent. The increasing dissatisfaction of certain ethnic groups is not only likely to put more pressure on ethnic leaders and elites to address their group's plight, but it also means that these groups can be mobilized much more easily. Even where ethnic elites are incorporated in the political system, a sharp economic decline frequently intensifies inter-ethnic elite competition for the declining national assets and resources, thereby possibly endangering the inter-ethnic elite alliances.

Horizontal inequalities at the mass and elite levels intersect to produce four basic situations with varying conflict potential as shown in Figure 2. For clarity, the measure of severity of horizontal inequality only distinguishes between 'minor' and 'severe' inequality, although in practice this obviously stretches out over a continuum. Situation one; minor horizontal inequalities at elite and mass level, is the preferred situation and has the lowest risk of producing violent 'ethnic' conflict. Situation four; severe horizontal inequalities at elite and mass level, is the most dangerous situation with highest risk of violent group mobilization. Prominent examples of multi-ethnic countries that fall into the low risk situation are Belgium and Switzerland, while the Apartheid regime in South Africa was a clear example of a high risk country outlined in situation four.

Figure 2: Horizontal inequalities and the potential for violent group mobilization

Horizontal Inequalities at the *Mass* Level	Horizontal Inequalities at the *Elite* Level: **Minor**	**Severe**
Minor	**1. Low Risk Countries** The incentives for violent group mobilization are largely absent at both levels. The absence of severe horizontal inequalities along specific group lines induces political elites to mobilize people more along ideological lines or class interests. e.g. Belgium & Switzerland	**3. Medium Risk Countries** Elites have strong incentives to manipulate the perceptions and future expectations of the masses, and use ethnicity as a mobilization agent. However, due to the absence of severe horizontal inequalities *violent* group mobilization will be more difficult. e.g. Belgium (1930s)
Severe	**2. Medium Risk Countries** Horizontal inequalities are potentially powerful mobilizing agent; however, elites' incentives to mobilize masses for *violent* conflict are relatively weak. e.g. Nigeria, Ghana and pre-1990 Côte d'Ivoire	**4. High Risk Countries** Violent group mobilization is imminent; however, violence might be prevented as a consequence of certain constraints such as for example a strong state or lack of financial and human resources. e.g. Côte d'Ivoire (1990s) & Apartheid South Africa

Source: Arnim Langer

The third situation; a combination of minor horizontal inequalities at the mass level and severe horizontal inequalities at the elite level, has an intermediate level of risk of producing violent conflict. In this situation, the excluded ethnic elites have strong incentives to mobilize support along ethnic lines in order to improve their own economic and political positions by getting access to the state institutions. Group loyalty feelings may be quite strong among group members whose leaders are openly excluded from the centres of political power. Although ethnic group mobilization for political purposes might be quite easily achieved in these situations, this does not necessarily mean that people are also willing to support violent actions and mobilization.

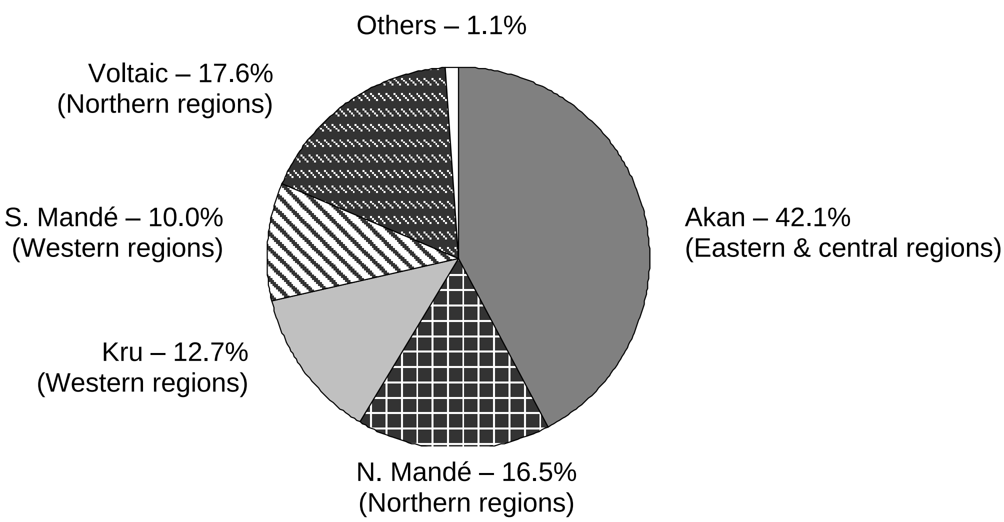
In order for violent group mobilization to take place in these situations, ethnic leaders and spokesmen have to manipulate the masses' perceptions of the prevailing horizontal inequalities at the mass level as well as their expectations about the future horizontal inequalities. It is again important to note that if the excluded ethnic elites see opportunities for non-violent improvements of their socio-economic and/or political situation, they might refrain from mobilizing their supporters for violent conflict. The Belgian situation in the 1930s is a good example of this category. At the mass level the socio-economic horizontal inequalities between the French-speaking Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemish people were relatively small. However, the centres of political and economic power, in contrast, were almost exclusively occupied by the French-speaking Walloons. The Belgian case also demonstrates that ethnic mobilization is not necessarily followed by violent conflict if certain accommodative measures and processes are introduced.

It is important to recognise that countries can move from one situation to another; thereby increasing or reducing their conflict potential. For instance, during the post-World War II period, Belgium moved from situation three to situation one in the above figure. In particular, the federalisation of the Belgian state, which was initiated in the early 1960s, established a political system in which both the Flemish and Walloon people were given equal representation and access to the state institutions and its benefits. In order to uphold the 'equality' between the different communities, a wide range of institutional check and balances and other safeguards such as a powerful and strictly independent Court of Arbitration and Council of State, were introduced as part of the federalisation process.

3. The ethnic composition of Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire's people belong to approximately 60 different ethnic groups which can be grouped into five larger socio-cultural or ethno-linguistic groups: Akan, Voltaic or Gur, Kru, Northern Mandé and Southern Mandé. Figure 3 below shows the relative proportion and geographical concentration of these five ethnic groups. The Akan are by far the largest ethnic group and are predominantly found in the eastern and central regions of Côte d'Ivoire. The main northern ethnic groups are the Northern Mandé and Voltaic, and together account for 34% of the population. Although these ethnic groups originate from Côte d'Ivoire's northern regions, many people belonging to these groups actually live in the southern parts of Côte d'Ivoire. For instance, approximately 23% of the Northern Mandé population live in the coastal city Abidjan.[3]

Figure 3: Ethnic composition of Côte d'Ivoire (1998)



Source: RGPH 1998 census data

[3] Author's calculation on the basis of 1998 census data (RGPH-98).

As a result of extensive international migration flows, a large proportion of the people in Côte d'Ivoire are of foreign origin. From the early 1940s, the French colonial administration organised the transfer of forced labour from the *Upper Volta*, today's Burkina Faso, to the cocoa and coffee plantations in the southern parts of Côte d'Ivoire. Although forced labour was abolished by the French Assembly in 1946, Côte d'Ivoire continued to attract large numbers of migrants from neighbouring countries. Houphouët-Boigny promoted the influx of foreign workers by introducing liberal landownership laws, under the slogan 'the land belongs to those that develop it' (Gonin 1998: 174). In 1998, foreigners accounted for over four million people or roughly 25% of the population, mainly coming from Burkina Faso (57.5%), Mali (20.4%) and Guinea (3.4%) (RGPH 1998). They predominantly belong to the Voltaic (mainly Mossi and Sénoufo) and Northern Mandé (mainly Malinké and Dioula) ethnic groups. However, about 50% of these foreigners were born in Côte d'Ivoire.

Another important dividing line, partly reinforcing the ethno-regional differences, is religion. Table 1 below provides some data on the religious composition of Côte d'Ivoire. The data show that the Akan and Kru are predominantly Christian, while the northern ethnic groups, Voltaic and Northern Mandé, are mostly Moslem. If one includes the large foreign population in Côte d'Ivoire, Moslems are the largest religious group with approximately 39% of the total resident population. Although the northern population is predominantly Moslem, due to extensive internal and international migration, numerically, most Moslems live in the southern regions of Côte d'Ivoire (RGPH 1998).

Table 1: Religious composition of Côte d'Ivoire (1998)

Religion	Akan	Kru	N. Mandé	S. Mandé	Voltaic	Total Ivorian population	Total resident population
Christians	51.5	52.2	1.4	23.1	16.4	33.9	30.3
Moslems	5.0	2.6	95.6	5.6	44.7	27.4	38.6
Animist	18.7	7.5	0.6	30.1	19.2	15.3	11.9
Other religions	2.4	5.1	0.1	2.2	0.5	2.0	1.8
Without religion	21.7	31.7	1.9	38.4	18.7	20.7	16.7
Undeclared	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source**:** RGPH 1998

4. The economic performance and environment of Côte d'Ivoire, 1960-2000

As noted above, the state and progress of a country's economy is an important factor that contributes to the emergence of violent group mobilization. As Table 2 shows, Côte d'Ivoire had an impressive economic record in the period 1960-1980; an average GDP growth rate of more than 7% and an average GDP per capita growth rate of more than 3%. However, Côte d'Ivoire's economic achievements have to be put into perspective. From the early 1980s, it became clear that Côte d'Ivoire's economic reputation was ill-founded because it disregarded fundamental flaws in its development model. First, Côte d'Ivoire's heavy reliance on export revenues of coffee and cocoa exposed the Ivorian economy to price variability in international commodity markets. When the prices of these commodities declined sharply at the end of the 1970s, Côte d'Ivoire's vulnerability to price changes in international commodity markets was clearly exposed and led to serious economic problems (Berg *et al* 2000). Second, the impressive economic growth record did not result in an equally impressive improvement of the socio-economic indicators. For instance, in the period 1970-1980, primary and secondary school enrolment increased only moderately from 58% to 74% and from 9% to 18% respectively.

Table 2 further shows that Côte d'Ivoire's economic performance remained weak throughout the 1980s. Most people therefore experienced a serious decline in their standard of living; GDP per capita declined from $1,162 in 1980 to $867 in 1990 (World Development Indicators, Constant 1995 US $). Although Côte d'Ivoire's economy improved briefly in the mid-1980s, from 1987, the economy slowly started to slip back into recession due to a serious deterioration of its terms of trade (Berg *et al* 2000). At the end of the 1980s, the Ivorian government decided to start implementing a new round of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). After almost a decade of bad economic performance, the period 1994-1998 was characterised by renewed economic progress (see Table 2). Although the standard of living improved in the period 1995-1998, most people were still worse off compared to the beginning of the 1990s; GDP per capita declined from $867 in 1990 to $862 in 1999 (World Development Indicators, Constant 1995 US $). As a consequence of the coup d'état in December 1999 and civil war in September 2002, Côte d'Ivoire's economic and financial situation further worsened from 2002-2004.

Table 2: Economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire, 1960-1980

Year	GDP growth (Annual %)	GDP / capita (Annual %)	Year	GDP growth (Annual %)	GDP / capita (Annual %)	Year	GDP growth (Annual %)	GDP / capita (Annual %)	Year	GDP growth (Annual %)	GDP / capita (Annual %)
1961	9.93	6.21	**1971**	9.46	5.09	**1981**	3.50	-0.35	**1991**	0.04	-3.30
1962	1.23	-2.28	**1972**	4.24	0.06	**1982**	0.20	-3.50	**1992**	-0.24	-3.50
1963	14.49	10.43	**1973**	5.94	1.71	**1983**	-3.90	-7.43	**1993**	-0.19	-3.38
1964	17.61	13.34	**1974**	4.33	0.18	**1984**	-2.70	-6.25	**1994**	0.81	-2.34
1965	-3.11	-6.70	**1975**	8.25	4.02	**1985**	4.50	0.72	**1995**	7.13	3.86
1966	11.58	7.38	**1976**	12.92	8.58	**1986**	3.26	-0.43	**1996**	7.73	4.61
1967	4.60	0.58	**1977**	7.31	3.23	**1987**	-0.35	-3.87	**1997**	5.72	2.82
1968	12.55	8.19	**1978**	10.91	6.72	**1988**	1.14	-2.40	**1998**	4.75	2.04
1969	9.54	5.24	**1979**	2.39	-1.46	**1989**	2.95	-0.60	**1999**	1.58	-0.89
1970	10.38	6.01	**1980**	-10.96	-14.29	**1990**	-1.10	-4.47	**2000**	-2.47	-4.70

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI)

5. An overview of the socio-economic horizontal inequalities

This section provides an overview of the extent and evolution of the socio-economic inequalities between the major ethnic groups and regions in Côte d'Ivoire. In order to get a picture of the evolution of the socio-economic inequalities in the 1990s, this section will use two different but complementary datasets: Côte d'Ivoire's 1998 census (RGPH 1998) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS).

5.1 The evolution of socio-economic horizontal inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is characterised by a serious socio-economic north-south divide. The origins of this socio-economic north-south divide are diverse and relate to such factors as ecological and climate differences and the varying impact of colonial policies and post-colonial economic development policies. In 1974, for instance, the income per capita of the four northern departments Boundiali (CFAF 28,480), Ferkéssédougou (CFAF 49,554), Korhogo (CFAF 45,041), and Odienné (CFAF 29,034) was significantly below Côte d'Ivoire's national average (CFAF 67,679) (Den Tuinder, 1978: 380-381). However, after president Houphouët's visits to the north in 1974, the northern region received an increasing amount of public investment to promote its economic development (see Table 3). Public investment per capita of the northern region increased from 18,400 CFAF in 1974 to 29,400 CFAF in 1977 and greatly exceeded that received in most other regions (except for the Southwest and Abidjan Region). However, these funds soon dried up because of the deteriorating economic environment from the end of the 1970s. Côte d'Ivoire therefore continued to have severe regional socio-economic disparities.

Table 3: Public investment per capita by region, 1971-77 (CFAF thousands)

Region	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975[a]	1976[a]	1977[a]	1971-77	1973 Population[b]
North	1.3	10.8	21.3	18.4	27.0	28.8	29.4	137.0	554.6
East	5.3	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.5	11.3	266.5
South	6.5	7.7	6.3	8.2	12.3	13.2	13.6	67.9	1,193.6
West	0.3	3.4	2.3	3.7	4.6	2.8	3.1	20.2	701.9
Center West	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.7	2.5	3.2	0.6	7.6	712.0
Center	10.8	11.5	9.2	11.0	13.5	10.4	4.3	70.7	1,490.4
Southwest	49.4	17.9	13.5	33.3	60.3	75.0	102.6	351.9	156.0
Abidjan	11.7	14.5	23.0	31.1	41.4	33.0	22.4	177.0	840.0
Non-allocated	2.3	2.8	3.0	4.2	6.2	6.8	6.9	32.2	NA[c]
Total	9.6	11.0	12.4	16.1	22.9	22.1	19.8	113.8	5,910.0

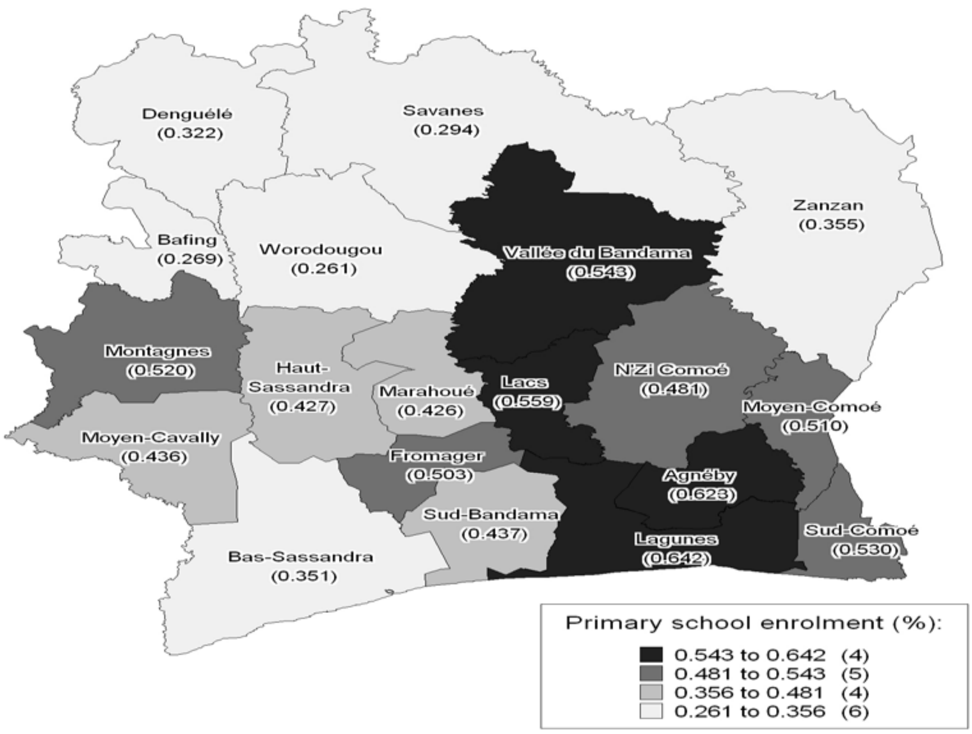
Source: Den Tuinder (1978: 151)

a. Projected
b. In thousands. The 1973 population was used for all years. Thus, figures for the later years are biased upward in comparison with earlier years.
c. Not applicable

Figure 4 below shows the continued presence of a severe north-south divide regarding primary school enrolment in 1998. Five of the six regions, Zanzan, Worodougou, Savanes, Bafing, and Dengélé, that score lowest on this socio-economic indicator, are located in the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire.

Figure 4: Primary school enrolment across regions in Côte d'Ivoire in 1998

(Source: RGPH 1998 Census)



In order to get a picture of the evolution of the socio-economic inequalities in the 1990s between the major ethnic groups rather than between regions, I have used data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS).[4] The standard DHS survey consists of a household and women's questionnaire for which a nationally representative sample of women is interviewed. The underlying assumption made here is that the inter-ethnic socio-economic inequalities that can be inferred from these women's questionnaires are a good approximation of the prevailing inequalities between the different ethnic groups for the population as a whole. In addition to asking an elaborate range of questions regarding issues such as family planning, maternal and child health, contraception, and nutrition, the surveys also asked questions on respondents' ethnic background, place of birth and socio-economic situation. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, DHS surveys were conducted in 1994 and 1998.

Using this data, Table 4 and 5 show some selected socio-economic indicators for Côte d'Ivoire's main ethnic groups and for the foreign population. The tables differentiate between urban and rural areas. As expected, the outcomes of both surveys affirm that the overall socio-economic situation in the urban areas is much better than in the rural areas. The socio-economic indicators generally improved significantly from 1994-1998. With the notable exception of the rural Northern Mandé, all ethnic groups appear to have improved their socio-economic situation in absolute terms. However, not all groups benefited equally. The role of the state is important in this respect.

This can be illustrated by looking at the differences in access to electricity of the different ethnic groups (DHS variable v119). The state is a crucial actor in establishing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure and networks for the provision of electricity to households. In 1994 only 17.9 per cent of rural respondents had access to electricity. In 1998, this percentage had increased to 28.0 percent. However, not all ethnic groups in the rural areas enjoyed the same increase in access to electricity. The increases in access to electricity of the different ethnic groups between 1994 and 1998 were as follows: Akan (16.4%), Kru (5.3%), Southern Mandé (19.6%), Northern Mandé (-11.6%), Voltaic (6.1%) and foreigners (12.4%). It appears that the Akan-controlled government gave priority to the rural areas where their own ethnic group where most numerous.

Not all variables should be interpreted in the same way (i.e. the more, the better). For example, when a group's socio-economic situation improves, individuals tend to replace the cheaper means of transport, such as bicycles or motorbikes, by the more expensive ones, such as cars. When comparing the data on car ownership and bicycle/motorbike ownership between 1994 and 1998, this "positive" substitution can be observed at the national level for the Akan, Southern Mandé, Northern Mandé, Voltaic, and for foreigners. The reverse happens when the socio-economic situation deteriorates. The case of the rural Northern Mandé and Voltaic illustrates this case of "negative" substitution. Moreover, in both cases a significant decline in car ownership coincided with a sharp increase of bicycle ownership.

[4] Macro International Inc. provides free of charge access to the DHS-data. For more information visit Macro International's website on: http://www.measuredhs.com/.

Table 4: Inter-ethnic socio-economic inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire based on the 1994 DHS Data[a]

	Akan			Kru			Northern Mandé			Southern Mandé			Voltaic			Foreigners			Averages		
Socio-economic indicators [b]	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**
Number of cases	2586	1166	1420	1026	400	626	970	653	317	620	255	365	1089	428	661	1808	950	858	8099	3852	4247
Electricity (% yes) [DHS v119]	51.4	82.7	25.6	36.2	76.0	10.7	61.1	75.7	31.2	34.6	65.5	12.9	33.0	67.0	11.3	42.4	69.2	12.7	44.9	74.6	17.9
Radio (% yes) [DHS v120]	65.6	75.9	57.1	58.8	69.5	52.0	67.6	73.8	54.9	48.0	58.8	40.4	49.3	71.3	35.1	59.8	61.5	57.8	60.1	69.7	51.5
Television (% yes) [DHS v121]	33.2	55.9	14.6	27.0	55.3	9.0	42.0	52.1	21.1	22.0	39.6	9.6	22.1	46.4	6.5	24.4	40.2	6.8	29.2	49.2	11.0
Refrigerator (% yes) [DHS v122]	23.6	41.1	9.3	16.9	37.8	3.5	22.5	27.8	11.7	11.3	24.3	2.2	11.3	22.9	3.8	9.1	15.4	2.0	16.8	29.0	5.7
Bicycle (% yes) [DHS v123]	27.2	10.5	41.0	8.8	5.5	10.9	36.0	23.0	62.8	15.2	13.8	16.2	49.9	24.7	66.1	36.4	14.8	60.4	30.1	15.0	43.9
Motorcycle (% yes) [DHS v124]	14.0	9.4	17.8	8.1	5.5	9.8	25.4	24.0	28.1	6.6	11.5	3.3	29.3	28.2	30.0	17.9	18.4	17.3	17.0	15.9	17.9
Car (% yes) [DHS v125]	9.1	15.3	4.0	7.6	16.8	1.8	9.5	12.4	3.5	4.2	9.9	0.3	5.4	9.7	2.7	3.3	5.2	1.2	6.8	11.5	2.5
Educational level: at least completed primary school [DHS v149]	27.2	40.3	16.3	31.2	49.9	19.4	16.2	21.5	5.6	19.2	32.9	9.3	14.4	25	7.5	9.8	14.3	4.6	20.1	29.5	11.7
Literacy: able to read (either easily or with difficulty) [DHS v108]	45.5	61.6	32.4	58.4	77	46.5	23.4	30	9.8	35.4	55.7	21.1	24.5	41.8	13.3	17.4	24.2	9.9	34.6	46	24.3
Source of drinking water: water piped into the house [DHS v113]	36.0	66.7	10.7	25.0	62.0	1.3	30.7	42.7	6.0	16.9	39.6	1.1	18.8	41.1	4.5	22.9	41.4	2.3	27.3	51.3	5.5
Main floor material: ceramic tiles in place of residence [DHS v127]	14.4	28.3	3.0	13.3	28.8	3.4	10.8	15.5	1.3	5.6	11.8	1.4	4.4	8.5	1.8	5.2	9.5	0.4	9.8	18.2	2.1
Type of toilet facility: access to flush toilet [DHS v116]	24.1	50.1	2.7	19.4	46.9	2	15.7	19.6	7.9	8.9	20.4	0.8	10.1	18.3	4.9	9	17.1	0.1	16.2	30.9	2.7
Working (% yes) [DHS v714]	64.6	57.4	70.5	66.5	48.5	78.0	75.2	71.8	82.0	73.7	57.3	85.2	77.2	61.7	87.3	71.4	64.1	79.5	70.0	61.0	78.1
Respondent's occupation: high-level job (managerial and clerical) [DHS v717]	2	-	-	2.3	-	-	1.8	-	-	1.4	-	-	1.1	-	-	0.4	-	-	1.5	-	-

Source: Arnim Langer

a) The table provides percentages for the different ethnic groups in the population as a whole (N) as well as –if useful- within the urban (U) and rural (R) areas. The number of cases within the 1994 DHS survey was distributed as follows: national (n=8099), urban (n=3852) and rural (n=4247). DHS variable v025 '*Type of Place of Residence*' was used to separate the rural from the urban cases [v025: urban=1and rural=2].

b) For every socio-economic indicator, the corresponding 1994 DHS variable code has been put between brackets.

Table 5: Inter-ethnic socio-economic inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire based on the 1998 DHS Data[a]

	Akan			Kru			Northern Mandé			Southern Mandé			Voltaic			Foreigners			Averages		
Socio-economic indicators [b]	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**	**N**	**U**	**R**
Number of cases	946	674	272	356	265	91	404	302	102	251	120	131	390	220	170	693	486	207	3040	2067	973
Electricity (% yes) [DHS v119]	79.0	93.3	42.0	73.7	93.3	16.0	72.5	91.0	19.6	58.8	86.7	32.5	60.1	92.2	17.4	70.0	88.7	25.1	71.4	91.4	28.0
Radio (% yes) [DHS v120]	80.5	84.3	70.6	75.5	77.7	69.1	70.7	78.1	49.5	69.8	77.9	62.2	70.6	80.6	57.4	77.1	77.1	77.0	75.7	80.1	66.1
Television (% yes) [DHS v121]	59.0	71.2	27.3	47.6	59.2	13.6	48.3	62.2	8.2	32.8	59.3	7.6	48.8	74.8	14.2	48.8	58.4	25.7	50.5	65.1	18.7
Refrigerator (% yes) [DHS v122]	44.2	53.0	21.2	36.1	45.0	9.9	32.3	41.1	7.2	17.2	31.0	4.2	26.8	42.0	7.1	21.4	28.8	3.7	32.0	42.1	10.1
Bicycle (% yes) [DHS v123]	16.0	9.7	32.2	9.1	7.6	13.6	29.5	14.7	72.2	11.2	7.1	15.0	44.0	22.8	72.3	34.5	18.1	73.8	24.5	13.4	48.5
Motorcycle (% yes) [DHS v124]	9.7	9.7	9.8	9.1	9.2	8.6	20.5	19.4	23.7	4.7	4.4	5.0	25.2	18.4	34.2	19.1	15.0	28.8	14.8	12.9	18.9
Car (% yes) [DHS v125]	17.1	19.1	11.8	12.5	16.4	1.2	14.4	18.6	2.1	8.2	16.8	0.0	8.6	15.0	0.0	7.7	7.6	7.9	12.2	15.4	5.3
Educational level: at least completed primary school [DHS v149]	50	57.8	30.5	60.1	69.5	33	21.4	27.1	4.9	31	46.7	16.8	29.1	44.1	9.4	19.2	23.9	8.2	36.1	44.7	17.7
Literacy: able to read (either easily or with difficulty) [DHS v108]	62.3	68.9	45.5	75.9	82.2	57.2	24.5	30.5	6.9	45	62.5	29	36.4	53.2	14.7	25.1	31.1	11.1	45.6	54.1	27.6
Source of drinking water: water piped Into the house [DHS v113]	58.9	77.1	11.4	56.4	68.5	21.0	52.7	70.3	2.1	31.8	60.2	5.0	43.3	66.0	12.5	38.3	53.8	1.0	48.8	67.4	8.4
Main floor material: ceramic tiles In place of residence [DHS v127]	27.0	34.5	7.3	21.3	27.7	2.5	10.6	13.6	2.1	10.7	20.4	1.7	12.2	21.4	0.0	6.0	7.8	1.6	16.1	22.1	3.0
Type of toilet facility: access to flush toilet [DHS v116]	39.0	51.9	5.3	31.3	41.2	2.5	18.4	24.0	2.1	16.4	33.6	0.0	18.8	30.6	3.2	12.9	18.1	0.5	24.9	35.2	2.6
Working (% yes) [DHS v714]	65.4	57.7	84.6	55.3	45.3	84.6	78.2	72.2	96.1	77.3	60.8	92.4	75.4	63.2	91.2	70.7	63.2	88.4	69.4	60.3	88.8
Respondent's occupation: high-level job (managerial and clerical) [DHS v717]	5.3	-	-	3.7	-	-	2.9	-	-	1.2	-	-	1.8	-	-	0.7	-	-	2.9	-	-

Source: Arnim Langer

a) The table provides percentages for the different ethnic groups in the population as a whole (N) as well as –if useful- within the urban (U) and rural (R) areas. The number of cases within the 1998 DHS survey was distributed as follows: national (n=3040), urban (n=2067) and rural (n=973). DHS variable v025 '*Type of Place of Residence*' was used to separate the rural from the urban cases [v025: urban=1and rural=2].

b) For every socio-economic indicator, the corresponding 1998 DHS variable code has been put between brackets.

In order to compare the inter-ethnic inequalities more systematically, the following two socio-economic indices were composed on the basis of Tables 4 and 5; a Socio-Economic Prosperity Index, and an Education-Literacy Index. The Socio-Economic Prosperity Index is made up of the following five variables: 1) refrigerator (% yes), 2) car (% yes), 3) source of drinking water - water piped into house (% yes), 4) main floor material - ceramic tiles in place of residence (% yes), and 5) type of toilet facility - access to flush toilet (% yes). The Education-Literacy Index is composed of the following two variables: 1) educational level - at least completed primary school (% yes), and 2) literacy - able to read (% yes). For every variable included in either index, an ethnic group's score is standardised by dividing it by the average for the corresponding area (national, urban or rural). The indices are subsequently computed by averaging the standardised variables to constitute the socio-economic prosperity index or the education-literacy index.

Table 6 shows the Socio-Economic Prosperity and Education-Literacy Indices for the different ethnic groups. The indices refer to the *relative* positions of the different ethnic groups with respect to the average within a particular area. Table 6 also provides the standard deviation of the different ethnic groups' indices for the national, urban and rural areas - what I call here the Socio-Economic Inequality Measure (SEIM) and Education-Literacy Inequality Measure (ELIM) respectively. The SEIM and ELIM are useful indicators for assessing the overall degree and evolution of the socio-economic inequalities between the different ethnic groups at various points in time. The interpretation of the measures is straightforward; an increase indicates that the inter-ethnic inequalities have increased, and a decrease means that the inter-ethnic inequalities have become smaller.

Two interesting observations can be made regarding the inequality measures in Table 6. First, the consistently higher SEIMs and ELIMs for the rural areas compared to the urban areas point to the fact that the inter-ethnic socio-economic disparities were more severe in the rural areas. Second, the SEIMs and ELIMs moved in different directions in rural and urban areas from 1994-1998. In the urban areas, the inter-ethnic socio-economic inequalities decreased between 1994 and 1998, while the inter-ethnic socio-economic inequalities increased in the rural areas in the same period.

Table 6: A comparison of socio-economic horizontal inequalities between 1994 and 1998

	Socio-Economic Prosperity Index						Education and Literacy Index					
	1994			1998			1994			1998		
	N	U	R	N	U	R	N	U	R	N	U	R
Akan	1.40	1.44	1.52	1.45	1.34	2.03	1.33	1.35	1.36	1.38	1.28	1.69
Kru	1.12	1.41	0.79	1.18	1.11	1.10	1.62	1.68	1.79	1.67	1.53	1.97
Northern Mandé	1.19	0.87	1.62	0.93	0.90	0.57	0.74	0.69	0.44	0.57	0.59	0.26
Southern Mandé	0.61	0.76	0.33	0.64	0.92	0.32	0.99	1.16	0.83	0.92	1.10	1.0
Voltaic	0.65	0.70	1.05	0.79	0.96	0.68	0.71	0.88	0.59	0.80	0.99	0.53
Foreigners	0.59	0.57	0.30	0.60	0.57	0.54	0.50	0.51	0.40	0.54	0.56	0.43
ELIM[a]	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.39	0.44	0.56	0.45	0.39	0.71
SEIM[b]	0.35	0.38	0.52	0.30	0.23	0.57	-	-	-	-	-	-

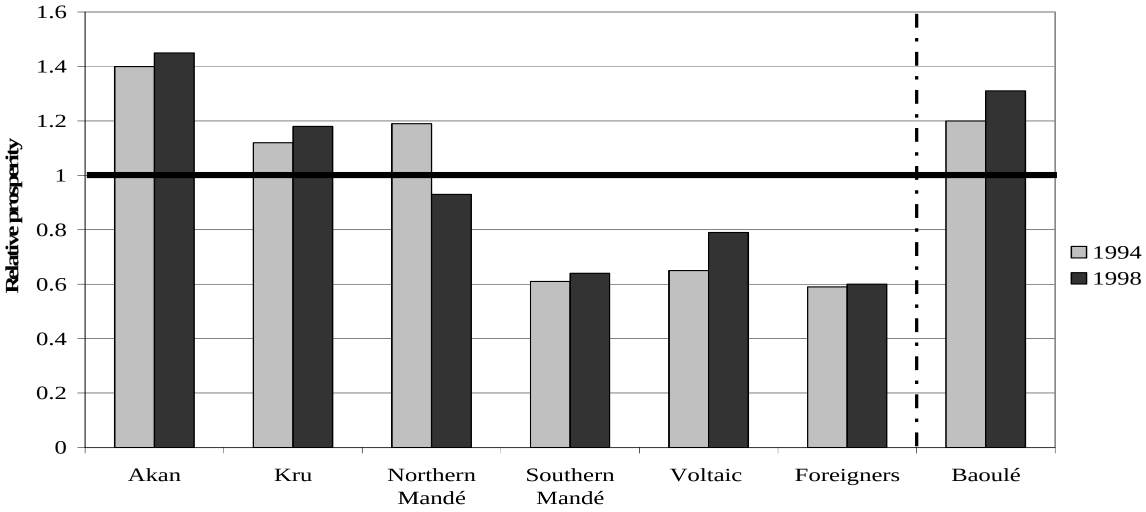
Source: Arnim Langer

a) Education-Literacy Inequality Measure

b) Socio-Economic Inequality Measure

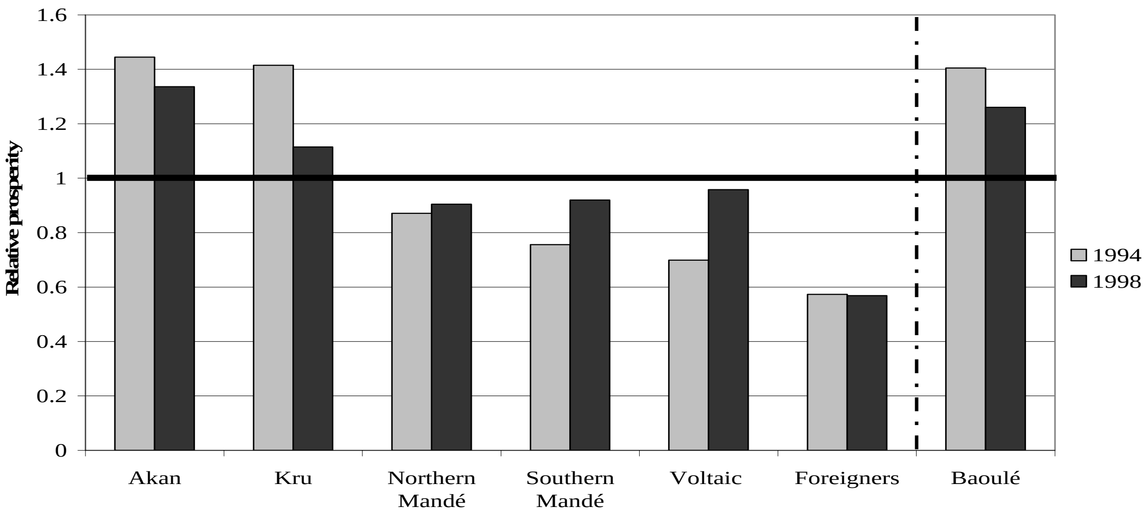
The evidence for socio-economic inequalities is presented graphically in Figures 5, 6 and 7. In addition to showing the socio-economic indices for the major ethnic groups, the figures also show the relative position of president Bédié's own ethnic group, the Baoulé, which is the largest *sub-group* of the Akan.

Figure 5: Socio-Economic Prosperity Index, 1994 and 1998, National (N)



Source: Arnim Langer

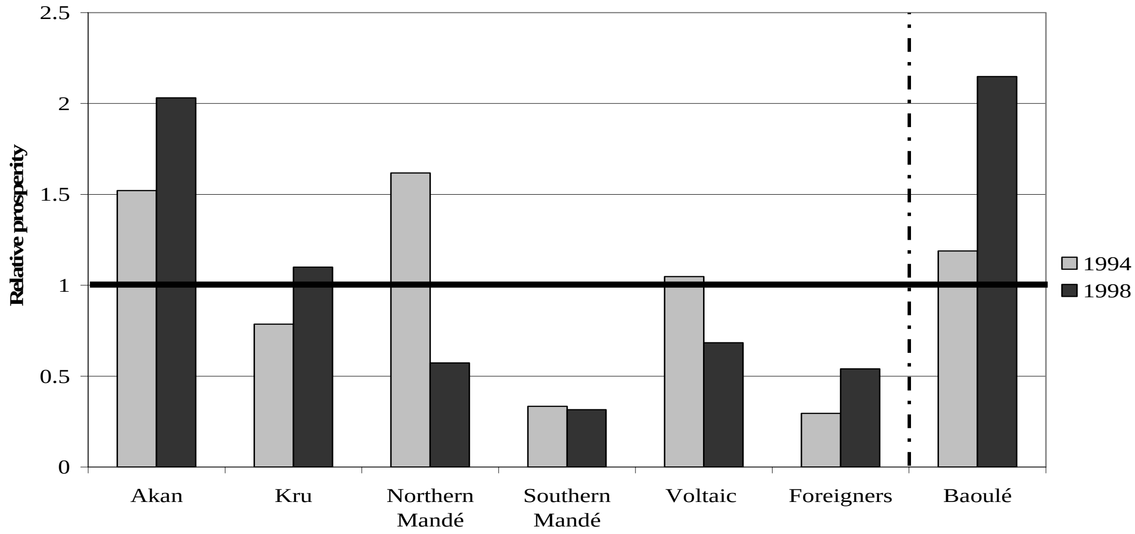
Figure 6: Socio-Economic Prosperity Index, 1994 and 1998, Urban (U)



Source: Arnim Langer

The Figures show that the Akan enjoyed the highest socio-economic prosperity both in 1994 and 1998. At the national level, Akan's relative socio-economic prosperity was about 40 per cent higher than the overall average in Côte d'Ivoire. From 1994-1998, the Akan further improved their relative socio-economic position moderately at the national level. In the rural areas, Akan's socio-economic advantage over the other ethnic groups was even more pronounced and they managed to increase their relative position in the rural areas significantly from around 1.5 times the rural average in 1994 to more than twice the rural average in 1998. In the urban areas, on the other hand, their relative socio-economic position deteriorated slightly from 1.44 times the urban average in 1994 to 1.34 times the urban average in 1998.

Figure 7: Socio-Economic Prosperity Index, 1994 and 1998, Rural (R)



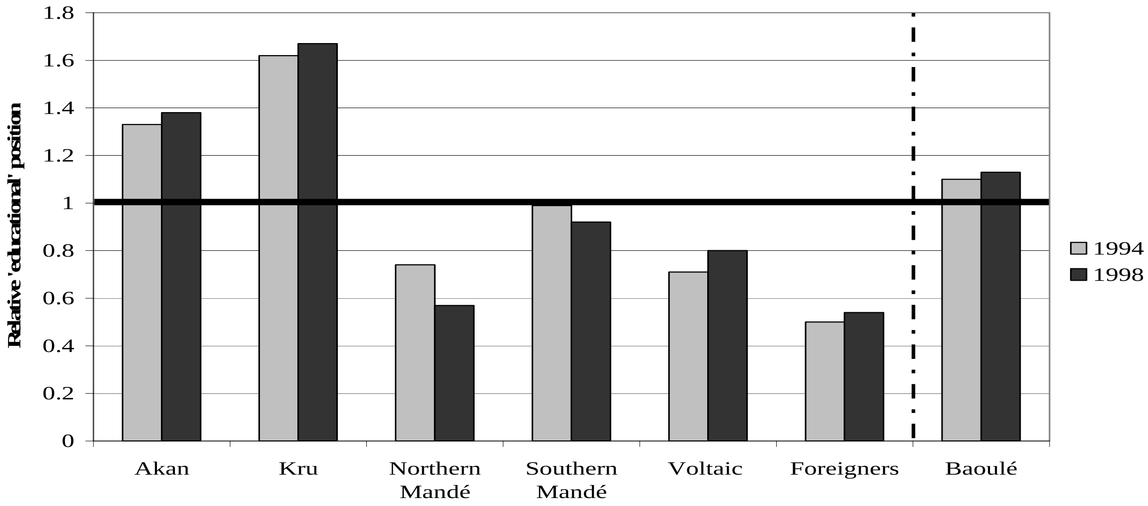
Source: Arnim Langer

As these indices point towards an ethnic group's *relative* position, a decline of the socio-economic prosperity index does not necessarily mean that an ethnic group's *absolute* socio-economic situation has also worsened. When a country's overall socio-economic situation improves –as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire in the period 1994-1998-, a decline in an ethnic group's relative position might coincide with an improving socio-economic situation in absolute terms. Referring back to the Tables 4 and 5, it appears that the socio-economic situation of the Akan in the urban areas did indeed improve in absolute terms while their relative socio-economic position slightly deteriorated.

The socio-economic position of Bédié's own ethnic group, the Baoulé, followed a pattern similar to that of the Akan group as a whole. However, in the rural areas in particular, the Baoulé's socio-economic position appears to have improved a great deal more than the relative position of the Akan as a whole. In particular, the Baoulé were able to increase their relative socio-economic position from 1.19 times the rural average in 1994 to more than twice the rural average in 1998. Although the Baoulé were able to improve their socio-economic situation in absolute terms (see Tables 4 and 5), to a similar extent as the Akan as a whole, their relative socio-economic position in the urban areas deteriorated noticeably. However, in 1998, they still had a relative socio-economic position that was about 1.20 times as good as the urban average.

From the perspective of violent group mobilization in Côte d'Ivoire, the relative socio-economic position of the Northern Mandé and Voltaic, the so-called northerners, and the foreigners is particularly important. In 1998, it is notable that these ethnic groups had socio-economic positions that were considerably below the socio-economic average in either the national, urban or rural area. Although the northerners were able to maintain or slightly improve their relative socio-economic position in the urban areas, in the rural areas their relative socio-economic position deteriorated severely in the period 1994-1998. In particular, the relative socio-economic position of the Northern Mandé appeared to have deteriorated dramatically from a relative position much better than the rural average in 1994 (1.62) to a relative position much worse than the rural average in 1998 (0.57).

Figure 8: Education and Literacy Index, 1994 and 1998, National (N)



Source: Arnim Langer

Figure 8 above shows the education and literacy index for the different ethnic groups in 1994 and 1998. The general picture appears to be fairly similar to that of the socio-economic prosperity index. Although the Kru had the strongest relative position according to this index, the Akan again had a relative position that was significantly better than the national average. The northerners and the foreigners, on the other hand, were again doing considerably worse than the national average. It is interesting to note that 1998 census and 1994/1998 DHS surveys not only complement each other in significant ways, but they also corroborate the same pattern of socio-economic horizontal inequalities, more particularly: northern regions and northern ethnic groups are significantly less prosperous than the Akan and Kru ethnic groups.

5.2 An overview of the political horizontal inequalities, 1960-2000

Côte d'Ivoire became independent in August 1960. A one party-system was subsequently installed and the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI-Ivorian Democratic Party) took control of the state institutions. Houphouët-Boigny was elected the first president of the *République de Côte d'Ivoire* and he was successively re-elected until his death in December 1993. During the first twenty years of his presidency, Côte d'Ivoire not only achieved remarkable economic growth rates, but also benefited from a relatively stable political environment. In the light of these economic and political achievements, international observers referred to Côte d'Ivoire as "*Le Miracle Africain*" (African Miracle) or "*Le Modèle Ivoirien*" (Ivorian Model).

In addition to the favourable economic environment, Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political stability in the period 1960-1980 largely stemmed from four factors. A first factor concerns Houphouët-Boigny's approach to politics which is often referred to as "*Le modèle Houphouétiste*" or "*Le compromis Houphouétiste"* (Akindes 2003: 1). It was characterised by a culture of dialogue, compromise, rewards, punishment, forgiveness and reintegration. In the absence of democratic mediating institutions, Houphouët-Boigny became the legitimate "mediator' and frequently "adjudicator" in the political decision-making processes. This model was applied throughout the public sector including to prevent conflicts and reach compromises with the Ivorian military forces (FANCI–*Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire*) (Kieffer 2000: 30).

Although Houphouët-Boigny aimed to prevent and manage conflicts by reaching compromise or peacefully eliminating potential challenges, when he was seriously challenged, he did not hesitate to use force. One well known instance when the Houphouët-Boigny regime reacted with considerable force was the Guébié crisis in 1970. The Guébié crisis emerged after a local Bété leader, Kragbé Gnagbé from the village Guébié, demanded the right to create an opposition party. The government forces brutally suppressed this crisis, resulting in the death of an estimated 4,000-6,000 people (Coulibaly 2002).

A second factor has to do with France's support for the Houphouët-Boigny regime. After independence, France, the former colonial power, still maintained significant economic, political, cultural, and social interests in Côte d'Ivoire. During Houphouët-Boigny's reign, the Franco-Ivorian relationship was very cordial which resulted in extensive consultations and cooperation on political, economic and military affairs. Besides the presence of a large French business community, France also retained a considerable military presence in Côte d'Ivoire. The possible intervention of these French forces worked like a deterrent against potential coup d'états and military insurgencies.

A third factor was the use of economic incentives to co-opt and appease individuals that might consider challenging the system. Zartman and Delgado illustrate this mechanism by pointing out that until the 1980s "all former opposition leaders have found a place in the Ivorian polity or economy, and there are no opposition leaders either in jail or in exile" (Zartman and Delgado 1984: 10). The Houphouët-Boigny regime was able to "focus energies on economic and materials goals instead of on political competition for power" (Zartman and Delgado: 11). Economic incentives were also used to prevent conflicts between the military forces and the civilian government. In addition to giving the military economic and social privileges, Houphouët-Boigny included them in civil functions of the Ivorian state (Kieffer 2000: 30).

A fourth factor that contributed to maintaining stability in Côte d'Ivoire was Houphouët-Boigny's 'system of ethnic quotas' which was aimed at establishing a certain balance between different regions and ethnic groups within state institutions (Bakary 1984). Table 7 illustrates Houphouët-Boigny's balancing policy, showing the relative proportion of the different ethnic groups in the major political institutions for the period 1959 to 1980. It is clear from this table that all major ethnic groups were represented, but the Akan nevertheless dominated the main political institutions (Bakary 1984).

Table 7: Elite by Ethnic Group, 1959-1980

Ethnic Group	Total Political Elite		Minister		Deputy		Economic and Social Councillors		PDCI Politburo		Total Population in 1975
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Akan	163	50.9	39	53.4	100	50.0	50	56.1	43	55.1	41.4
Kru	33	19.6	15	20.5	41	20.5	13	14.6	10	12.8	16.7
Malinké	33	10.3	7	9.5	19	9.0	10	11.2	8	10.25	14.8
S. Mandé	17	5.3	2	2.7	13	6.5	4	4.4	4	5.1	10.2
Voltaic	29	9.06	6	8.2	9	4.5	4	4.4	7	8.9	15.7
Others	13	4.06	4	5.4	6	3.0	7	7.8	5	6.4	1.2
Unknown	1	0.3	-	-	1	0.5	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Bakary 1984: 36

6. The end of Côte d'Ivoire's 'miracle' in the 1980s

From the 1980s, the Ivorian model slowly started to disintegrate. The negative economic environment exacerbated existing tensions between locals and foreign as well as internal migrants in the southern regions. These communal tensions were increasingly perceived as a conflict between north and south (Dembele 2003). As Dembele argues; "The communal conflict between north and south was mainly related to land issues and the presence of too many migrants from the centre and north in the rural economy in the south-western regions and the urban economy in the south" (Demble 2003: 36; *translation by Langer*).

The impact of the changed economic environment and simultaneous increase in communal tensions on the inter-ethnic political power distribution and inequalities is indicated by the data in Table 8, which provides an overview of ethnic representation in Côte d'Ivoire's three main political institutions consisting of the government, national assembly, and economic and social council. To compile this table, the ethnic background of government ministers, deputies and councillors was inferred on the basis of name recognition.[5] Each ethnic group's *relative representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government by its relative size in the entire population. Consequently, unity means proportional representation; figures higher than one point to over-representation and less than one to under-representation.

As well as showing the relative representation of the five major ethnic groups, the table also indicates the relative representation of Houphouët-Boigny's own ethnic group, the Baoulé. As the Baoulé are the largest *sub-group* of the Akan, the figures in Table 8 do not add up to a hundred percent if one includes them. The table also shows the standard deviation of the relative representation of the different ethnic groups –what I call here the Political Inequality Measure (PIM). The PIM is a useful indicator for assessing the degree and evolution of ethnic inequalities in government. The interpretation of the measure is straightforward: an increase indicates that the inter-ethnic inequalities have increased and a decrease means that the ethnic composition of government has become more ethnically representative.

There are two important observations to be made on the basis of Table 8. The table shows the continued existence of the system of ethnic quotas during the 1980s. Although the Akan remained the dominant ethnic force in the three political institutions, other ethnic groups were not excluded. On the contrary, for example, the Kru, an ethnic group mainly found in the south-western parts of Côte d'Ivoire, was considerably over-represented in all three political institutions during the entire period. However, in contrast to the 1980s, the November 1991 government shows a much more significant over-representation of the Akan. When further taking into account that the Akan are by far the largest ethnic group with approximately 42 per cent of the population (see Figure 2), it is clear that Ivorian politics remained the Akan's "business" (Bakary 1984: 35).

[5] In this regard, I would like to thank Professor Akindes of the University of Bouaké/IRD-Petit Bassam and his doctoral students Moustapha Touré and Kouamé for taking the time to fill in my questionnaires.

Table 8: Ethnic Representation in Political Institutions under Houphouët-Boigny, 1980-93

Ethnic Groups	GOVERNMENT [a]								NATIONAL ASSEMBLY						ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL			
	Nov-80		Jul-86		Oct-89		Nov-91		Nov-80		Nov-85		Nov-90		Feb-86		Feb-92	
	%	RR [b]	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.49	1.16	0.41	0.99	0.47	1.12	0.61	1.46	0.46	1.09	0.45	1.07	0.47	1.12	0.55	1.32	0.58	1.38
Baoulé	0.22	1.29	0.24	1.46	0.20	1.20	0.17	1.04	0.19	1.14	0.21	1.23	0.21	1.27	0.28	1.70	0.33	1.95
Kru	0.19	1.30	0.20	1.34	0.20	1.37	0.17	1.19	0.20	1.40	0.19	1.33	0.17	1.17	0.19	1.31	0.23	1.54
S. Mandé	0.05	0.51	0.10	0.91	0.13	1.25	0.04	0.41	0.11	1.02	0.10	0.91	0.10	0.91	0.03	0.31	0.03	0.31
N. Mandé	0.08	0.51	0.17	1.07	0.13	0.84	0.09	0.55	0.10	0.60	0.14	0.90	0.16	1.01	0.14	0.89	0.12	0.73
Voltaic	0.14	0.83	0.10	0.60	0.03	0.20	0.09	0.53	0.14	0.83	0.12	0.74	0.10	0.63	0.04	0.26	0.02	0.10
No.	N=37		N=41		N=30		N=23		N=147		N=175		N=175		N=120		N=120	
PIM [c]	0.36		0.27		0.46		0.47		0.30		0.22		0.21		0.52		0.63	

Source: Arnim Langer

a) The following government positions were taken into account: president of the republic, ministers of state and regular ministers. Note: deputy-ministers were <u>not</u> included in the calculations.

b) *Relative Representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government by its relative size in the entire population.

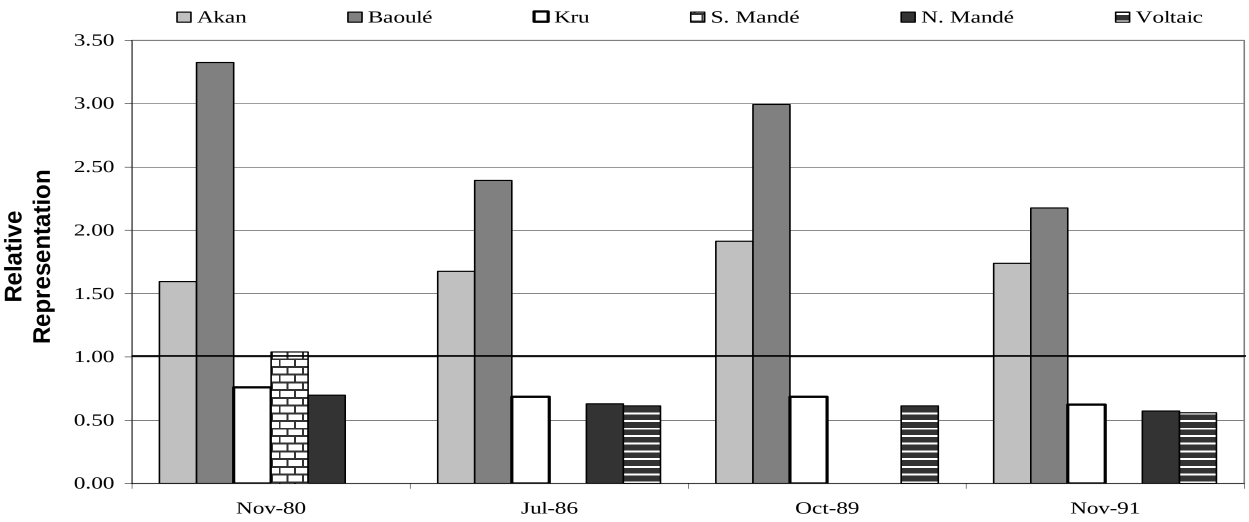
c) *Political Inequality Measure* (PIM) equals the standard deviation of the relative representation of the different ethnic groups.

A second observation is that the national assembly appears to have been the most equal political institution. At various points in time the PIMs, or the standard deviations of the relative representation of the different ethnic groups, are considerably lower than in the other two political institutions in the national assemblies. The national assemblies of 1980 and 1985 were elected on a semi-competitive basis, meaning people could choose from multiple candidates who all belonged to the PDCI, thus indicating that the PDCI was indeed a multi-ethnic political party.

A more ethnically equal distribution of government positions is likely to improve ethnic groups' perceptions and attitudes towards the political regime. However, whether the inclusion of different ethnic groups in government actually results in a more equal and participatory decision-making process is not always certain. It could be argued that even if the overall picture points towards ethnic balancing, the most important political positions and, therefore, the real decision-making power, might still be monopolised, or perceived to be monopolised, by one particular ethnic group. In order to respond to such claims, Figure 9 below depicts graphically the ethnic distribution of a set of key political positions in Côte d'Ivoire which I call here the *inner circle of political power*. The political positions included are the President of The Republic, Prime Minister, President of National Assembly, President of Economic And Social Council, Minister of Security, Minister of Economy and Finance, Minister of Defence, Minister of Mines And Energy, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Figure 9 clearly shows that the over-representation of the Akan group as a whole and the Baoulé, in particular, regarding the key political positions was more pronounced than in the case of the government as a whole. This suggests that Houphouët-Boigny assigned the government positions of lesser importance to the other ethnic groups. Figure 9 further shows that the Akan over-representation regarding the key political positions slightly increased to around 1.70 in November 1991. The Baoulé over-representation, on the other hand, was significantly reduced from 3.33 in November 1980 to 2.18 in November 1991. In addition, it is interesting to note that the Akan were the only major ethnic group than was consistently over-represented in the period 1980 to 1993.

Figure 9: Inner circle of political power under Houphouët-Boigny, 1980-93



Source: Arnim Langer

7. The introduction of multi-party elections in 1990

In April 1990 the government was confronted with major protests by students and the illegal political opposition. In an attempt to restore social and political stability by appeasing the political opposition, Houphouët-Boigny decided to abandon one party rule and legalise opposition parties in May 1990. The first competitive national assembly elections were held in November 1990. The ethnic composition of this national assembly seems to resemble the overall ethnic composition of Côte d'Ivoire fairly well (see Table 8 above). The first competitive presidential elections took place in October 1990. The election outcome showed that Houphouët-Boigny still had very considerable support. He won the elections with 82 percent of the vote against the main opposition party candidate, Laurent Gbagbo (Economist Intelligence Unit 2001). The most notable aspect regarding these elections, however, was the introduction of ethno-nationalism and xenophobia into the political arena. Since the 1990 elections, ethnic identities and debates on the Ivorian nation and nationality have played a central role in Ivorian politics (Dembele 2003: 34-35).

During the 1990 elections, Côte d'Ivoire's main opposition party, *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI-Ivorian Popular Front), initiated a political campaign around the message that "the PDCI was a partial regime which had systematically favoured the interests of particular Ivorian ethnic groups –Baoulé and groups from the north- and of foreigners" (Crook 1997: 222). In particular, Houphouët-Boigny's policies towards foreigners were vociferously attacked Subsequently, the FPI mainly won votes in the centre-western and south-eastern prefectures, where the local people had been in conflict with the migrants from the Baoulé region and the north and foreign migrants over land and employment for many years (Crook: 222).

The regional and ethnic balance of the government underwent an important change in 1990. At that time, Houphouët-Boigny appointed Alassane Ouattara to the newly created position of prime minister. As a former director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Central Bank for West African States (BECEAO), Ouattara was mainly chosen for his economic management skills and international reputation. Overnight Ouattara became a powerful political figure as in addition to being appointed Prime Minister he also took on responsibilities of Minister of Economy and Finance. His political influence was further enhanced by the fact that Houphouët-Boigny was by then ninety-one years old and becoming weaker and less involved in running the country. It is important to note that Ouattara is a Malinké, one of the ethnic groups of the Northern Mandé group, predominantly found in the northern regions. As Dembele has pointed out, by appointing Ouattara as Prime Minister, "the conflicts between the forest people from the south and the northerners in the land and economic spheres shifted to the political sphere" (Dembele 2003: 36; *translation by Langer*). Houphouët-Boigny seems to have counter-balanced the appointment of a non-Akan to such a powerful political position by significantly increasing the overall representation of the Akan in the November 1991 government.

7.1 President Henri Konan Bédié and the baoulisation of Ivorian politics

When Houphouët-Boigny died on 7 December 1993, the amended Article 11 of the constitution stipulated that the president of the national assembly, Henri Konan Bédié, would succeed him for the remainder of the presidential term. Although Ouattara initially attempted to delay Bédié's appointment as president, when the Supreme Court endorsed the legality of Bédié's appointment, Ouattara resigned as prime minister and returned to the IMF in Washington (Crook 1997).

The combination of several years of structural reforms, under the directorship of Ouattara, and the 1994 CFA franc devaluation led to a considerable improvement in the economic situation. However, Côte d'Ivoire continued to experience serious political confrontations and ethnic tensions. In particular, when the October 1995 presidential elections came closer tensions started to flare up. A growing northern consciousness was an important change that contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions at the beginning of the 1990s. The distribution of an anonymous document called "le Charte du Grand Nord" (Charter of the North) in 1992 illustrated the changed attitudes of the northerners regarding the socio-political system in general, and the Baoulé group in particular. The Charter "called for fuller recognition of the Muslim religion [inspired perhaps by the excesses of Houphouët-Boigny's Catholic Basilica], more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north's political loyalty during the upheavals of the 1980s and an end to Baoulé nepotism in recruitment to public jobs" (Crook 1997: 226).

The emergence of a new opposition party, *Rassemblement des républicains* (RDR-Republican Rally), in 1994, displayed a split among Côte d'Ivoire's political elite. The RDR set up by a group of disgruntled PDCI politicians under the leadership of Djény Kobina, aimed to draw support from people with a northern and/or Muslim background, predominantly found in the Voltaic and Northern Mandé ethnic families. Alassane Ouattara, who in 1994 was still working in Washington, would soon become their political leader. The emergence of this new party confronted Bédié with a serious challenge because the RDR was likely to reduce PDCI's electoral support in the northern regions that accounted for roughly 25 % of the total population (Crook 1997: 226). In order to win the next presidential elections, Bédié had to react.

As Crook states "Bédié's initial strategy was familiar to any student of electoral politics: he stole the opposition's clothes, and adopted a policy of Ivorian nationalism, under the slogan of the promotion of *l'Ivoirité* (Ivorian-ness) (Crook 1997: 226). Although he claimed that the concept was solely aimed at creating a sense of cultural unity among all the people living in the territory of the Côte d'Ivoire, it was widely recognised as being introduced for specific political reasons thus preventing Alassane Ouattara from participating in the following presidential elections in 1995.[6] For the political elites of both the Akan and the Bété, it was inconceivable that the northerners would ever take control of the political institutions of Côte

[6] As Dozon shows, the concept of l'Ivoirité or, more generally, the issue of xenophobia has a long history in Côte d'Ivoire; Bédié only labelled it differently. Dozon traces its origins as far back as the 1930s (Dozon, 2000).

d'Ivoire. For them northerners were not real Ivorians (*Ivoiriens douteu*'), but more or less foreigners like the people from Burkina Faso, Mali or Guinea (Coulibaly 2002).
L'Ivoirité changed the electoral code, requiring both parents of a presidential candidate to be Ivorian. The new 1995 electoral code further stipulated that the candidate himself must have lived in the country for the previous five years. Foreigners were no longer allowed to vote in Ivorian elections. Due to this new electoral code, Ouattara was effectively excluded from participating in the 1995 presidential elections. As a result, Ouattara's RDR decided to boycott the elections. The leader of the FPI, Laurent Gbagbo, also decided to boycott the presidential elections, claiming that the electoral process was being manipulated (Economist Intelligence Unit 2001). Due to the exclusion and boycott of his main rivals, Alassane Ouattara and Laurent Gbagbo, President Bédié won the October 1995 elections with a landslide, receiving 96.5% of the votes (Coulibaly 2002). Until the coup d'état in December 1999, these two opposition parties would together form the *Front républicain* (Republican Front). Gbagbo and Ouattara, for different reasons, would never acknowledge the legality of Bédié's election victory.

The Republican Front attacked Bédié for giving too much political influence and economic privileges to his own ethnic group, the Baoulé. In sharp contrast to Houphouët-Boigny's approach, Bédié almost completely stopped the balancing process among the different ethno-regional interests and parties. Bédié not only stopped this balancing process, but he even started a process of "baoulisation" of state institutions ((Dozon 2000: 53). The figures in Table 9 below regarding the relative representation of the different ethnic groups in the three political institutions under Bédié (1993-1999) largely corroborate these assertions.

Table 9: Ethnic Representation in Political Institutions under Bédié, 1993-1999

Ethnic Groups	GOVERNMENT								INNER CIRCLE OF POLITICAL POWER								NATIONAL ASSEMBLY		ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL	
	Nov-91 [a]		Dec-93		Jan-96		Aug-98		Nov-91*		Dec-93		Jan-96		Aug-98		Nov-95		Mar-98	
	%	RR [b]	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.61	1.46	0.52	1.24	0.52	1.23	0.59	1.41	0.73	1.74	0.67	1.58	0.67	1.58	0.75	1.78	0.46	1.10	0.58	1.39
Baoulé	0.17	1.04	0.24	1.43	0.28	1.64	0.31	1.86	0.36	2.18	0.42	2.48	0.42	2.48	0.42	2.48	0.22	1.29	0.33	1.98
Kru	0.17	1.19	0.24	1.89	0.21	1.63	0.16	1.23	0.09	0.62	0.17	1.31	0.17	1.31	0.08	0.66	0.19	1.52	0.23	1.84
S. Mandé	0.04	0.41	0.04	0.40	0.10	1.03	0.06	0.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.94	0.03	0.25
N. Mandé	0.09	0.55	0.08	0.48	0.07	0.42	0.03	0.19	0.09	0.57	0.08	0.51	0.08	0.51	0.08	0.51	0.12	0.74	0.13	0.76
Voltaic	0.09	0.53	0.12	0.68	0.10	0.59	0.13	0.71	0.09	0.56	0.08	0.47	0.08	0.47	0.08	0.47	0.12	0.70	0.02	0.09
No.	N=23		N=25		N=29		N=32		N=11		N=12		N=12		N=12		N=171		N=120	
PIM [c]	0.47		0.62		0.49		0.49		0.64		0.65		0.65		0.66		0.33		0.74	

Source: Arnim Langer

a) The November 1991 government was formed under president Houphouët-Boigny.

b) *Relative Representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government by its relative size in the entire population.

c) *Political Inequality Measure* (PIM) equals the standard deviation of the relative representation of the different ethnic groups.

Several remarks can be made regarding Table 9. First, the figures quite clearly show the process of "baoulisation". Under president Bédié, the relative representation of the Baoulé in the government increased sharply from 1.04 in the last government formed under Houphouët-Boigny in November 1991 to 1.86 in the Augustus 1998 government. The relative representation of the Akan group in government dropped initially to 1.24 in the December 1993 government, but was later increased again to roughly the level of the November 1991 government.

Second, the big losers in Bédié's governments appear to be the ethnic groups Kru and Northern Mandé. It seems that particularly after the formation of the Republican Front between the RDR and the FPI in 1995, Bédié decided to reduce the representation of the ethnic groups closely associated with these political parties. Ouattara's RDR mainly draws support from the Northern Mandé and Voltaic people, and Gbagbo's FPI is predominantly supported by the Kru people. The contrast between Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié in this respect is striking. While Houphouët-Boigny aimed to maintain stability through incorporating opponents into the political system, Bédié, in contrast, excluded them which led to increased tensions and ultimately violent group mobilization.

Third, the evolution of ethnic representation within the inner circle of political power shows a comparable pattern. Bédié increased the relative over-representation of the Baoulé from 2.18 in November 1991 to 2.48 in December 1993, and maintained this large over-representation throughout his presidency. As the Baoulé controlled more than forty percent of the key political positions during Bédié's presidency, one is indeed tempted to say that Bédié converted Ivorian politics into the Baoulé's "business".

7.2 The "baoulisation" of the military and the coup d'état of December 1999

In addition to the "baoulisation" of the political-administrative sector and the privileged advancement of the Akan and the Baoulé especially in the socio-economic sphere, Bédié also aimed to establish a more favourable ethnic composition among the military forces. Contamin and Losch (2000) assert in this respect that Bédié progressively destroyed the internal balances in the military and started a process of baoulisation regarding the higher command positions. Kieffer makes a similar point when he stresses that Bédié predominantly appointed Baoulé officers to the key positions of the different military regions. As part of this ethnic reorganisation process, Bédié removed the top-ranking generals Robert Gueï, Lansana Palenfo and Abdoulaye Coulibaly, who came from the west, north-west and north of Côte d'Ivoire. The removal of these generals was all the more important because the vast majority of the low to middle-level officers came from the same regions (Kieffer 2000).

In addition to the ethnic tensions that stemmed from the fears of exclusion and sentiments of favouritism towards the Baoulé, the military forces had to accept a gradual decline in their status and importance during the 1990s (Kieffer 2000). The main reason for this process of marginalisation was Côte d'Ivoire's precarious economic and financial situation. During the 1990s there was a significant decline in financial resources allocated to the military. As a result of budget constraints and expenditure priorities, Bédié refused to adjust the wages of the military forces in response to the CFA franc devaluation in 1994 (Kieffer 2000). This process of marginalisation further exacerbated the general sentiment of discontent among the military forces which would result in a coup d'état in December 1999 (Decraene 2000: 3).

The coup d'état was triggered by a group of young low-level officers who claimed they were owed financial compensation for their participation in an international peace keeping mission in Central Africa (Kieffer 2000). This protest movement quickly developed into large-scale mutiny, at which stage more senior officers got involved. Ultimately Bédié was removed from power and general Robert Gueï, previously side-lined by Bédié, was asked to become the interim head of state. Apart from the Akan and in particular the Baoulé, the people involved in the coup d'état had very different ethnic backgrounds, including Bété, Gueré, Yacouba, Sénoufo and Dioula (Kieffer 2000). Most ethnic groups welcomed the coup d'état of 24 December 1999. It even became common practice to refer to the coup d'état as "un cadeau de Noël" or "Christmas present". Correspondingly, junta leader Robert Gueï was often referred to as "le Père Noël" or Santa Claus (Contamin and Losch 2000: 117).

Although in first instance the coup d'état appears to have originated from individual grievances and fears of exclusion and discrimination within the military forces, these grievances and fears of exclusion cannot be separated from what went on the rest of the society. Individuals' perceptions of ethnic exclusion and grievances are also shaped and influenced by experiences of family members, friends and other acquaintances outside the military. In addition, as Kieffer (2000) argues, the opposition parties' discourse of exclusion and the Baoulé domination of the Ivorian state most certainly influenced the views and attitudes of the mostly young soldiers and officers as well.

7.3 General Gueï and the changing notion of l'Ivoirité

Following Bédié's removal from power, the military forces established the "*Comité national de salut public*" (CNSP-National commission of public safety). The CNSP was headed by general Gueï who was a Yacouba, one of the ethnic groups belonging to the Southern Mandé ethnic family. Once the CNSP acquired control over the Ivorian state, it took two important decisions (Contamin and Losch 2000: 120). First, it dissolved Côte d'Ivoire's main political institutions, the government, national assembly, and economic and social council. Second, it created a "*Commission consultative constitutionnelle et électorale*" (CCCE-Electoral and constitutional advisory commission) which reviewed and presented proposals for a new constitution and electoral law to create a new legal framework for a stable socio-political environment.

In line with "*le compromis Houphouétiste"* Gueï initially promoted the ideals of national integration and reconciliation, and openly opposed the ideology of *l'Ivoirité* (Akindes 2003: 11). As Table 10 below shows, he further ensured that the ethnic distribution of the January 2000 government was relatively equal. It is interesting to note that the inter-ethnic political inequalities of the January 2000 government as measured by the Political Inequality Measure (PIM) was the lowest of any government in the period from 1980 to 2003. The same observation holds regarding ethnic representation within the inner circle of political power. The main loser in this respect was Bédié's ethnic group, the Baoulé. Following the exclusion of the PDCI from government, their relative representation declined severely from an over-representation of 86 percent in the August 1998 government to an under-representation of more than 70 percent in the May 2000 government. Gueï initiated a similar process of "débaoulisation" among the military forces (Dozon 2000: 53).

After several months in office Gueï's political objectives and strategy changed drastically. There are three important events that demonstrate this change. First, in contrast to his earlier statements, Gueï decided to participate in the next presidential elections. Second, he excluded the RDR from the May 2000 transitional government, and third, although not explicitly using the term, Gueï started to use the concept of l'Ivoirité in order to gain political support and exclude political opponents, Alassanne Ouattara and the RDR in particular (Akindes 2003). It is important to emphasise that since the 1990 elections Gbagbo's FPI had never stopped using the issue of Ivorian nationality and identity to rally political support (Banegas and Losch 2002). However, Gueï would modify the ideology of l'Ivoirité. As Akindes (2003) argues, it would lose its Akan-focus and become an ideology that aimed to differentiate the people from the south, west and centre, from the people from the north.

Table 10 clearly confirms the important shift in Gueï's political behaviour between the first and second transitional government of January and May 2000. The following observations indicate that Gueï not only started to exclude his political opponents, but also began building an ethnic power base that was favourable to him. First, Gueï more than doubled the relative representation of his own ethnic family, the Southern Mandé, in the second transitional

Table 10: Ethnic Representation in Government under Gueï, 2000

Ethnic Groups	GOVERNMENT						INNER CIRCLE OF POLITICAL POWER					
	Aug-98 [a]		Jan-00		May-00		Aug-98		Jan-00		May-00	
	%	RR [b]	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.59	1.41	0.50	1.19	0.30	0.72	0.75	1.78	0.38	0.89	0.11	0.26
Baoulé	0.31	1.86	0.13	0.74	0.04	0.26	0.42	2.48	0.13	0.74	0.00	0.00
Kru	0.16	1.23	0.13	0.98	0.22	1.71	0.08	0.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
S. Mandé	0.06	0.63	0.08	0.83	0.17	1.73	0.00	0.00	0.13	1.25	0.22	2.22
N. Mandé	0.03	0.19	0.17	1.01	0.17	1.05	0.08	0.51	0.13	0.76	0.44	2.69
Voltaic	0.13	0.71	0.13	0.71	0.08	0.47	0.08	0.47	0.25	1.42	0.11	0.63
No.	N=32		N=24		N=23		N=12		N=8		N=9	
PIM [c]	0.49		0.18		0.57		0.66		0.55		1.22	

Source: Arnim Langer

a) The August 1998 government was formed by president Bédié.

b) *Relative Representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government by its relative size in the entire population.

c) *Political Inequality Measure* (PIM) equals the standard deviation of the relative representation of the different ethnic groups.

government of May 2000. A similar evolution is observable regarding the inner circle of political power. Second, the relative representation of the Kru in the May 2000 government sharply increased. The reason Gueï allowed this sharp increase in the representation of the Kru is related to the de facto coalition between Laurent Gbagbo, the leader of the FPI, and Gueï, against their mutual 'enemy' the RDR leader Alassane Ouattara. Third, by excluding the RDR from the second transitional government, he effectively reduced the relative representation of the largest northern ethnic family, the Voltaic. The relative representation of the Voltaic in the May 2000 government and inner circle of political power decreased sharply to 0.47 and 0.63 respectively.

It is interesting to note that the relative representation of the Northern Mandé remained approximately the same. This seems to contradict Gueï's intention of excluding potential adversaries, even more so, when one considers that the four Northern Mandé ministers all belonged to the Malinké, the same ethnic sub-group as Alassane Ouattara. However, a more detailed look at these four ministers with a Malinké background, Seydou Diarra (no party affiliation), Mamadou Koulibaly (FPI), Ahmed Timité (PDCI) and Moussa Touré (PDCI), reveals that three of the four belonged to political parties that, like Gueï, strongly opposed Ouattara's objective of participating in Côte d'Ivoire's presidential elections. Mamadou Koulibaly in particular was one of Ouattara's fiercest opponents and considered him to be a Burkinabé.[7]

The process of *débaoulisation* and *déakanisation* was further accelerated in the May 2000 government. The relative representation of the Akan decreased to 0.72 in this government. The relative representation of the Baoulé dropped to 0.26 in the May 2000 government and they were completely excluded from the key political positions. Although the PDCI was again included into the May 2000 government, none of the ministers had a Baoulé background. As shown by the higher PIM value, the May 2000 government involved rising political inter-ethnic inequalities. Within a period of five months, Gueï established not only the most equal government, but also one of the most ethnically unrepresentative or unequal ones.

[7] Mamadou Koulibaly is currently president of the national assembly.

On 24 July 2000, a new constitution was adopted in a referendum with the support of 86.5% of the vote in a 56% turnout (Le Pape 2002: 38), which introduced new eligibility criteria for presidential candidates. In particular, the new eligibility criteria required that a presidential candidate was born in Côte d'Ivoire, that both his/her parents were Ivorian as well, and that a candidate had never had another nationality (Dozon June 2000). It is widely recognised that the underlying objective of these eligibility criteria was to prevent Alassane Ouattara from participating in the following presidential elections. The third requirement in particular appeared to be aimed at specifically excluding Ouattara, since it was a well known fact that while he was president of the Central Bank for West African States (BCEAO) and Ouattara had temporarily possessed a Burkinabé passport (Dozon June 2000).[8]

In addition to changing the electoral code, Gueï started to purge the military forces, excluding a significant number of officers and soldiers with a northern background (Dembele 2003). Following their exclusion from influential positions, frequent harassments and arbitrary arrests, the northerners within the military forces started to develop strong feelings of resentment against Gueï's regime (Banegas and Losch 2002: 144). Amid accusations of involvement in an assassination attempt on General Gueï in September 2000, the high-ranking Generals Lansana Palenfo and Abdoulaye Coulibaly were removed (Banegas and Losch 2002: 144). Both generals originated from the north and belonged to the Voltaic ethnic family. Another important figure who was forced into exile in August 2000 was Sergeant-Chief Ibrahim Coulibaly or "IB". IB also had a northern background and was an important figure in Gueï's presidential guard. The officers that were removed from the military during this period would later play a central role in organising the military insurgency of September 2002 (Dembele 2003).

7.4 President Gbagbo and the emergence of civil war in September 2002

The presidential elections of October 2000 were marked by chaos and violence. Following the exclusion of their candidate, Alassane Ouattara, for "*nationalité douteus"*" (nationality in doubt), the RDR called for a general boycott of the presidential elections (Le Pape 2002). When it became clear that Laurent Gbagbo was going to win the elections, general Gueï prevented the Commission *nationale électorale* (CNE-National Election Commission) from further broadcasting the election results. The following day Minister of Interior, Grena Mouassi, proclaimed that Gueï had won the elections with 51.35% of the vote (Le Pape 2002). This sparked off massive street demonstrations by FPI supporters as well as members of the military and security forces. The military forces who supported these demonstrations and eventually staged an attack against Gueï's presidential guards which forced him to leave the country, had mainly had northern origins (Banegas and Losch 2002). The official CNE results stated that Laurent Gbagbo had won the elections with 59.36% of the votes (Le Pape 2002). The Supreme Court subsequently declared Laurent Gbagbo the official winner of the presidential elections.

The RDR, on the other hand, refused to recognise the legality of the election results and demanded new elections (Le Pape 2002). To support their demands, the RDR supporters started to organise large-scale street protests in Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo, which led to violent confrontations with both the FPI supporters and the security forces. On 29 October, the "massacre of Yopougon" was uncovered. In this neighbourhood of Abidjan, around sixty RDR-supporters with a northern background (mainly Dioula) had been slaughtered by the security forces (Leymarie 2001).

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[8] In his declaration to the Forum of National Reconciliation on 1 December 2001, Ouattara explained that he only had a *diplomatic* passport of Burkina Faso. According to him, this meant that he never possessed the Burkinabé nationality. He further explained that the presidency of the BCEAO circulated among the different member states and that it was officially Burkina Faso's turn to fill the position of the presidency. However, due to a lack of adequate candidates, Burkina Faso's president Blaise Compaoré and Côte d'Ivoire's president Houphouët-Boigny agreed that Alassane Ouattara would become the next president of the BCEAO.

Between October and December 2000, ethnic tensions remained high but there was little violence. Yet when the Supreme Court also prohibited Ouattara from participating in the December 2000 parliamentary elections, violent clashes between RDR supporters and the security forces resulted in approximately thirty deaths. The parliamentary elections were won by Gbagbo's FPI but the turnout was very low at only 33.12% (Le Pape 2002: 50). An important reason for this low turnout was RDR's renewed call to boycott the elections. As Table 11 below shows, an important consequence of this boycott was the significant under-representation of representatives from the Northern Mandé and Voltaic ethnic families in the December 2000 national assembly. As a result inter-ethnic inequality increased sharply compared to the November 1995 national assembly. Paradoxically, as Banegas and Losch (2002) observe, the same military forces who had chased Gueï away and helped Gbagbo become president of Côte d'Ivoire, had also attempted to overthrow Gbagbo's regime on 7 and 8 January 2001. However, the coup d'état failed and the military forces involved were forced into exile, with most ending up in neighbouring countries.

Table 11 shows the relative representation of the different ethnic groups in the government and the national assembly under President Gbagbo. Laurent Gbagbo originated from the western town of Gagnoa and is considered to be a Bété, one of the ethnic groups of the Kru family. By allocating twenty of the twenty-eight ministers in the January 2001 government to his own party, the FPI, Gbagbo was able to increase the relative representation of the Kru significantly. The ethnic composition of the January 2001 government had the highest Political Inequality Measure (PIM) of all governments in the period 1980-2003. Immediately, Gbagbo put his anti-Ouattara and anti-northern rhetoric into practice. By excluding the RDR from the January 2001 government, Gbagbo de facto excluded the "northerners", meaning the Voltaic and Northern Mandé, from government. In addition to their serious under-representation and lack of influence in the national assembly, Gbagbo effectively guaranteed that the northern ethnic elites were deprived of any executive power. This aggravated the already existing feelings of political exclusion and inequality.

Table 11: Ethnic Representation in Political Institutions under Gbagbo, 2000-2003

Ethnic Groups	GOVERNMENT								INNER CIRCLE OF POLITICAL POWER								NATIONAL ASSEMBLY			
	May-00 [a]		Jan-01		Aug-02		Sep-03		May-00*		Jan-01		Aug-02		Sep-03		Nov-95*		Dec-00	
	%	RR [b]	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR	%	RR
Akan	0.30	0.72	0.46	1.10	0.52	1.23	0.40	0.94	0.11	0.26	0.18	0.43	0.18	0.43	0.33	0.79	0.46	1.10	0.41	0.97
Baoulé	0.04	0.26	0.11	0.64	0.13	0.77	0.09	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.50	0.22	1.29	0.16	0.93
Kru	0.22	1.71	0.29	2.25	0.19	1.52	0.23	1.83	0.00	0.00	0.45	3.58	0.55	4.29	0.17	1.31	0.19	1.52	0.25	1.94
S. Mandé	0.17	2.17	0.18	1.79	0.16	1.61	0.07	0.70	0.22	2.22	0.09	0.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.94	0.12	1.17
N. Mandé	0.17	1.05	0.07	0.43	0.13	0.78	0.19	1.13	0.44	2.69	0.18	1.10	0.18	1.10	0.33	2.02	0.12	0.74	0.13	0.82
Voltaic	0.08	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.66	0.11	0.63	0.09	0.52	0.09	0.52	0.17	0.95	0.12	0.70	0.08	0.46
No.	N=23		N=28		N=31		N=43		N=9		N=11		N=11		N=12		N=171		N=223	
PIM [c]	0.77		0.93		0.66		0.48		1.22		1.30		1.74		0.74		0.33		0.55	

Source: Arnim Langer

a) The May 2000 government and the November 1995 national assembly were formed respectively under Gueï and Bédié.

b) *Relative Representation* (RR) is calculated by dividing an ethnic group's relative proportion in government by its relative size in the entire population.

c) *Political Inequality Measure* (PIM) equals the standard deviation of the relative representation of the different ethnic groups.

However, around June 2001, Gbagbo initiated a policy of national reconciliation aimed at reducing the political tensions and increasing the legitimacy of his presidency. This policy eventually resulted in the organisation of a "*Forum de la réconciliation nationale*" (Forum of National Reconciliation) from October to December 2001. Political tensions were further reduced when Gbagbo, Bédié and Ouattara agreed to form a government of national unity in August 2002. The government of "national unity" assigned four ministers of a total of thirty-one to Ouattara's RDR. Bédié's PDCI was allowed to provide four additional ministers and they now had eight ministers in total.

Although the inclusion of the RDR and PDCI ministers led to a reduction in inter-ethnic political inequality, (the PIM declined from 0.93 in the January 2001 government to 0.66 in the August 2002 government) it still remained extremely high compared to the other governments in the period 1980-2003. The Voltaic were the main victims of this political inequality. Although they are the second largest ethnic family with approximately eighteen percent of Côte d'Ivoire's population, not one of the ministers in either the January 2001 or the August 2002 government was considered to be a Voltaic. Gbagbo also insured that he did not lose any influence regarding key political positions. On the contrary, he increased the relative representation of the Kru to more than four times their relative demographic size. Although the Kru were a relatively small ethnic group with only thirteen percent of the population in 1998, under president Gbagbo they became the most important political force in Côte d'Ivoire, controlling more than 55 percent of the key political positions.

Like Bédié and Gueï before him Gbagbo increased and attempted to monopolise the political power in the hands of his own ethnic family. Again like his two predecessors he also wanted to establish a more favourable ethnic composition among the military forces. In order to achieve this Gbagbo planned to demobilise two contingents called "zinzins" and "bahéfouê" that predominantly consisted of soldiers who had been recruited during the brief reign of general Gueï (Banegas and Losch 2002: 142). In response to their planned demobilization, however, these soldiers started a mutiny which quickly turned into a more organised rebellion. The rebellion was led by officers that had gone into exile either because of the military purges during the Gueï regime or because of their involvement in the failed coup d'état in January 2001. It seems most likely that the military mutiny of 19 September was part of a larger plan to overthrow Gbagbo's regime.[9]

The violent conflict of 2002 in Côte d'Ivoire started with simultaneous attacks against the military installations of Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo on 19 September 2002 (MINUCI, 2004). Several subsequent attempts by government forces to retake the rebel-controlled towns in the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire failed. By the end of September, the rebels firmly controlled the northern part of the country. At that time they were referring to themselves as a political movement, called the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI-Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire). The main grievances put forward by the insurgents related to land ownership laws, criteria of eligibility for elections, the issue of identity cards and domination of northerners by southerners (Dembele 2003). Although the majority of its forces had a northern background, the MPCI claimed to have no specific regional or ethnic affiliation.

With strong encouragement of France and the Economic Organisation of West African States (ECOWAS), the conflicting parties were brought together in Linas-Marcoussis for a roundtable meeting. These negotiations resulted in the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement on 23 January 2003 in Paris. The principal provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement were the creation of a government of national unity, the request for a joint France-ECOWAS peace keeping force, and establishment of an international follow-up

[9] See Banegas and Losch for several hypotheses regarding the organisation of the rebellion in September 2002 (Banegas and Losch, October 2002: 141-143).

commission. The government of national unity was to include ministers from all political parties and rebel organisations.

As Table 11 above shows, by including all these different parties, inter-ethnic political inequality was significantly reduced. However, the transitional government has so far been unable to completely implement the Marcoussis Agreement and to restore a stable socio-political environment in Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, while claiming that President Gbagbo was obstructing the implementation of the Marcoussis Agreement, both the rebel forces and opposition parties have withdrawn their ministers from the power-sharing government on several occasions. Undoubtedly, the two most contentious issues that have stalled the Ivorian peace process are related to the eligibility of Alassane Ouattara to participate in the next presidential elections and disarmament of the rebel forces. Although in April 2005 President Gbagbo officially acknowledged that Ouattara would be allowed to participate in the upcoming presidential elections of October 2005, it is uncertain whether there is sufficient time and political will among the conflicting parties to establish an socio-political environment in which free and fair elections can take place.

8. Horizontal inequalities and violent conflict in Côte d'Ivoire: some conclusions

Since 1989, a UNESCO Peace Prize named after Houphouët-Boigny, in recognition of his contribution to sustaining peace in Côte d'Ivoire, has been awarded annually to people, organizations and institutions that have made outstanding efforts to promote peace. In a region where and during a time when most countries such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea experienced violent conflict or civil war, Côte d'Ivoire's achievement of maintaining a relatively stable political environment for such a long period has been remarkable and Houphouët-Boigny's role should not be underestimated. However, from the 1980s onward Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political system began to disintegrate.

Due to the economic deterioration following the collapse of the cocoa and coffee prices at the end of the 1970s, ethnic tensions and conflicts between locals and foreign and internal migrants over land and economic issues in both the rural and urban areas of the south began erupting in the 1980s. On the political elite level, however, ethnic tensions and competition were largely controlled through the continued existence of inter-ethnic elite alliances and co-operation within the PDCI institutions. By maintaining the ethno-regional balances among the military forces in the 1980s, Houphouët-Boigny was able to prevent military insurgencies or coup d'états that could have destabilised his regime and sparked off ethnic violence.

Mainly in response to the wide-spread socio-political unrest, Houphouët-Boigny decided to legalise opposition parties in May 1990. With the introduction of multi-party elections in October 1990, ethno-nationalism and xenophobia became the prominent mobilising themes in Ivorian politics and elections. The FPI opposition leader Laurent Gbagbo and, later, president Bédié were the main instigators of this ethnicisation of Ivorian politics in the 1990s. Coinciding with the introduction of ethno-nationalism in the political sphere, an increased "northern consciousness" contributed to the emergence of a new political party, the RDR, in 1994. The RDR aimed to gain support from people with a northern background who were predominantly Northern Mandé and Voltaic. By 1994, Côte d'Ivoire's political environment was firmly split between three ethno-political parties: Bédié's PDCI, mainly supported by the Akan; Gbagbo's FPI, mainly supported by the Krou; and Ouattara's RDR, mainly supported by the Northern Mandé and Voltaic. By stopping Houphouët-Boigny's ethnic balancing system and conversely starting a process of monopolisation of political power within his own ethnic group, the Baoulé, president Bédié also was very responsible for the break-down of the inter-ethnic elite co-operation and alliances. The ensuing baoulisation of the military forces eventually resulted in the military coup d'état in December 1999. When President Robert Gueï and President Laurent Gbagbo copied Bédié's strategy and policies of political monopolisation and ethnic favouritism, they too were confronted with wide-spread civil opposition and eventual military revolt.

The Ivorian case provides important evidence in support of the hypothesized interaction between the main variables of the horizontal inequality framework presented in the first section; political horizontal inequalities at the elite level, socio-economic horizontal inequalities at the mass level, status and progress of the economy, and institutional environment. Drawing on this framework, the following conclusions can be drawn with regard to Côte d'Ivoire's political stability in the period 1960-1980 and the subsequent breakdown into violence at the end of the 1990s.

First, Côte d'Ivoire's political stability during the period 1960-1980 illustrates that severe socio-economic inequalities at the mass level in and by themselves are not sufficient to produce violent conflict. An important factor that contributed to reducing the political salience of these prevailing socio-economic inequalities in this period was the positive economic environment. The strong economic progress mitigated the general discontent and prevailing socio-economic inequalities. Furthermore, Houphouët-Boigny used the economic progress partly for financing developmental projects and other public investment in the more deprived northern regions. Although the actual redistribution effect of this increased public investment appears to be rather limited, the symbolic impact in reducing the political salience of the prevailing socio-economic inequalities is likely to have been much more substantial. Another crucial factor that helped prevent emergence of violent group mobilization was Houphouët-Boigny's system of ethnic quotas, aimed at maintaining certain ethno-regional balances within Côte d'Ivoire's main political institutions. The political horizontal inequalities and exclusion at the elite level were therefore relatively moderate which in turn meant that the political elites had few incentives to mobilise their constituents along ethnic lines.

Second, when the economy started to deteriorate in the 1980s, socio-economic inequalities and grievances became more important in the national political sphere, resulting in social unrest and increased ethnic tensions. New political leaders increasingly used the discourse of ethnic exclusion and grievances as a way of building electoral support as well as challenging the supremacy and legitimacy of the PDCI. Due to the precarious financial and economic situation in the 1980s, the Houphouët-Boigny regime lacked resources to co-opt these new elites and sub-elites into the political-economic system. In an electoral environment characterized by new players and "democratic" rules, the prevailing political and economic horizontal inequalities, injustices and grievances became increasingly politicized. All three presidents who came after Houphouët-Boigny –Konan Bédié, Robert Gueï and Laurent Gbagbo- adopted strategies and policies of political monopolisation and ethnic favouritism towards their own group. The increasing emphasis on political winners versus losers turned the "politics of bargaining" into "politics of war" (Satori 1987 quoted in Case 1996: 14).

Côte d'Ivoire's violent disintegration at the end of the 1990s demonstrates that the simultaneous presence of severe political horizontal inequalities at the elite level and socio-economic horizontal inequalities at the mass level contribute to an explosive socio-political situation. In these situations the excluded political elites not only have strong incentives to mobilise their supporters for violent conflict along ethnic lines, but are also likely to quite easily gain support among their ethnic constituencies. The current military insurgency that started in September 2002 is in many ways the result of the failure of the country's political elites to agree on a new set of formal and informal procedural and distributional rules aimed at containing the elite competition for political power. In this political environment, socio-economic horizontal inequalities and grievances at the mass level have provided motivation for violence among groups.

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