Ethnic Exclusion and Ethno-Nationalist Conflicts

How the Struggle over Access to the State Can Escalate: 
A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of West Africa

Manuel Vogt lic.phil.
Center for Comparative and International Studies (CIS)
ETH Zurich / University of Zurich
manuelvogt@yahoo.de

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“We needed a war because we needed our identity cards.”

Adama Traore, rebel fighter in Côte d’Ivoire
Bouaké, November 1st 2005
(IRIN Africa 2005)
Abstract

This study examines the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts in the ethnically divided states of the West African region. Drawing on Wimmer’s theory of ethnic exclusion, it is assumed that the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups increases the risk of such conflicts. The impact of ethnicity on the emergence of (ethnic) civil conflicts has consistently been disputed in the literature, especially for West Africa. However, in many of these arguments the complex concept of ethnicity was measured with aggregated proxies regarding a country’s ethnic diversity. By contrast, in this study ethnicity is treated from a thoroughly political perspective and measured as the power balance within ethnic dyads.

The proposed hypothesis is examined in a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. In the quantitative analysis, the statistical link between ethnic exclusion and the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts is tested for the whole West African region. Both ethnicity and conflict are disaggregated from the country level to the level of ethnic dyads composed of ethnic groups in power (EGIP) and marginalized groups. The information about these dyads stems from a new, innovative dataset on politically relevant ethnic groups in West Africa which was created by the author and is presented and described in detail in this study. In the qualitative part, the causal mechanisms underlying this link are examined on the basis of three elaborate case studies on distinct ethnic dyads in Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal.

The results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses confirm the hypothesis for the most part. The political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups increases the likelihood of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West African states, and the more powerful the excluded group is, the higher the probability of conflict onset. In the more profound case studies, the causal mechanisms that lead from ethnic exclusion to the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in ethnically divided states are demonstrated. It is also shown, though, how local particularities have a decisive impact on the ethno-political processes in a given country. Importantly, the economic approach to explain the onset of internal ethnic conflicts in West Africa is rejected based on the results of this analysis.

Policy-makers interested in preventing ethno-nationalist conflicts and building stable political regimes in the ethnically divided states of this region need to ensure that all relevant ethnic groups are included within the coalition of power and that a (more or less) equal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs among the whole population is provided.

On the theoretical side, the results indicate that the consideration of the political dimension of ethnicity is indispensable for correctly capturing the relevant processes that lead to ethnic conflicts.
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Introduction

On September 19, 2002, rebellious soldiers attacked the cities of Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo in Côte d’Ivoire, the economic power of the West African region. This was the beginning of a series of destructive civil wars in the region and of the country’s split in two halves which has persisted until today. That they were fighting for equal rights, including identity cards, for the "badly treated" northerners – this was the justification of Adama Traore, a rebel fighter from the north of Côte d’Ivoire, for their rebellion (IRIN Africa 2005). – Do ethnic identities really play a role in the emergence of civil conflicts? Most recent studies on the subject reject a causal link between ethnicity/ethnic grievances and the outbreak of (ethnic) civil wars.

My study focuses on the emergence of conflicts in the West African region. Although all the states of this region are ethnically divided, the influence of ethnicity on conflicts is especially contested there in the face of such civil wars as in Sierra Leone or Liberia. My focus is on ethno-nationalist conflicts, i.e. conflicts connected to nation-states with ethnic groups as participants. In contrast to most quantitative studies on civil war onset, I disaggregate both ethnicity and conflict from the country level to the level of ethnic dyads composed of ethnic groups in power (EGIP) and marginalized groups. The generation of data on these dyads constitutes one of the main pillars of this work and was done on the basis of my participation in the *Ethnic-Power Relations* (EPR) project which has compiled a new global dataset on ethnic groups and their access to state power since 1945 (Cederman/Wimmer/Min (forthcoming); Wimmer/Cederman/Min (forthcoming)).

Civil conflicts in general are one of the most pressing policy concerns today for politicians worldwide. Since World War II, the vast majority of armed conflicts have been wars within states (Harbom/Wallensteen 2005: 623). Particularly ethno-nationalist conflicts have been inexorably increasing over the last decades (Gurr 1994: 347; Wimmer 2004: 1-2), and the continent of Africa has especially suffered from them (Bakwesegha 2004: 54).

Scholars of political science have put forward a number of studies on civil wars trying to unveil their causes. In recent years, most of the studies on civil war onset have been quantitative, large-n studies that relied on the same (often ambiguous) economic variables to explain the outbreak of various sorts of civil wars all over the world. These studies have generally disputed the significance of ethnicity as an explanatory factor for the emergence of (ethnic) civil conflicts (see e.g. Collier/Hoeffler 2004; Fearon/Laitin 2003). Especially in West Africa,

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internal conflicts have been consistently linked to greed, looting of natural resources and warlordism (see e.g. Snyder/Bhavnani 2005; Le Billon 2001; Reno 1998). Thus, the region of West Africa is a particularly interesting geographic area from an academic point of view. The econometric models which have produced the "evidence" for the irrelevance of ethnicity measure this socially and politically complex concept with static and aggregated proxies regarding a country’s ethnic heterogeneity. The argument of my study is that this measurement of ethnicity falls short of the reality – as it completely misses the political dimension of the concept.

Cederman and Girardin (2007) have developed a new approach which treats the concept of ethnicity from a thoroughly political perspective. Ethnicity is seen as a potential schism in the politics of (new) nation-states along which competition over access to the state between different groups takes place – particularly in ethnically divided states as in West Africa. Ethnicity can thus form the basis of political exclusion resulting in an escalation of this struggle. It is not ethnic heterogeneity which may create political conflicts and civil war but ethnic exclusion and discrimination (Cederman et al. 2006: 9).

This approach draws on the theory of ethnic exclusion delineated by Wimmer (1997; 2002) which presents a comprehensive “causal chain” of ethno-nationalist conflicts with the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups at its roots. Based on this theoretical foundation, I will address the following research question in my study on West Africa:

*Does the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) in a country increase the likelihood of the onset of ethno-nationalist conflict?*

The goals of this study are to find out whether ethnicity as the basis of political exclusion has an influence on the outbreak of ethnic conflicts in West Africa and, if so, to examine how precisely this happens. The practical relevance of this research is obvious: The region features a long history of civil conflicts (among them the atrocious wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia), and more systematic knowledge about their roots – providing thereby useful insight into how to prevent these in the future – would certainly be an important achievement of research.

The merit of the study lies in the distinct, more thoroughly developed operationalization of ethnicity as the power balance within ethnic dyads; in the generation of a groundbreakingly new, unique dataset on such ethnic dyads in West Africa; and, thirdly, in the theoretical relevance of this region – which provides a particularly “hard test” for the theory under investigation.

The heart of the study are the two analytical sections: In the quantitative analysis (Part II), the generation of the data on ethnic dyads in all West African countries is described and, based on this data, the statistical link between ethnic exclusion and the onset of ethno-

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2 See Chapter 1 for a more thorough discussion of the literature on ethnicity and civil war onset.
nationalist conflicts is tested. In the qualitative part (Part III), the quantitative results are deepened by examining the causal mechanisms proposed by the theoretical model. Three elaborate case studies based on a secondary analysis of historical sources are conducted. In the final section, Part IV, the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative research are combined and practical as well as theoretical conclusions are drawn.

I will start, though, with a detailed review of the previous research on the subject and an outline of the theoretical framework used in my study.
PART I

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
1. Literature review

The goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of the current state of research on (ethnic) civil conflicts. In the second chapter, I will outline the theoretical approach of my own study.

One of the first scholars addressing the issue of political conflicts in the newly independent states of Africa was Aristide Zolberg (1968). He pointed to the lack of effective institutions and the “syncretic” (i.e., unintegrated) character of African societies as basic features of political systems dominated by conflict and disorder. The “politicization of primordial ties” and an inflation of political demands by certain groups lead to serious conflicts. Under these circumstances, political power gives way to force. This in turn provokes coups and revolutions which over time become a normal feature of the political system.

In terms like “primordial ties” and “primordial identities” (Zolberg 1968: 74), one can still see elements of the then prevailing primordialist understanding of ethnicity in politics. Primordialism sees the existence or formation of ethnic blocs in politics as an inevitable, natural phenomenon since such “tribal ties” determine peoples’ identification and social organization. This view of ethnicity has later given way to the constructivist understanding of today which focuses on the exploitation of ethnic differences in political conflicts. Myron Weiner (1971) incorporates this in his descriptive model of transborder ethnic conflicts which – although focused on interstate conflicts – also addresses important aspects of internal ethnic conflicts like the difficulty of national integration or the political benefits of certain elites when ethnernational loyalties take on paramount importance. In Weiner’s model, such disputes can only be terminated by the use of violence or coercion, possibly involving an outside military power.

In regard to internal ethnic conflicts, Horowitz’s (1985) work on the politics of ethnic group conflict in severely divided societies has been groundbreaking. According to his analysis, ethnicity is usually connected to origin (“birth and blood”) – although changes of identity do occur – and based on a myth of collective ancestry (Horowitz 1985: 51-2). The motives for non-elites to participate in ethnic conflicts lie in an “invidious group comparison” juxtaposing backward and advanced groups which is used by elites in pursuit of their own career aspirations (“economic demands”) against opponents of different ethnic groups. These elites engage in an “ethno-bureaucratic conflict” over the composition of the civil service (but also the military) which is an important indicator of who owns the country (Horowitz 1985: 225-6).

The formation of ethnic parties as vehicles for pursuing the groups’ particularistic interests also follows from this struggle of ethnic groups over state power. Politicians have incentives to establish parties along ethnic lines as ethnicity offers them the promise of secure support. Here the question is no longer how voters will vote but rather whether or not potential voters will vote. Thus, mobilization of already-known supporters (and not appeals to swing voters) becomes the central focus of the election campaign. Without the need for moderation, radical
appeals to ethnic interests and hatreds are made which, in turn, raise the ethnic conflict again and increase the danger of violence (Horowitz 1985: 294-5, 332). Overall, according to Horowitz, it is the polarized ethnic equilibrium of two or more substantial ethnic groups struggling over state power – mirrored also in an ethnic party system – which leads to ethnic conflict, be it electoral violence, military coups or outright civil war.

More recent studies have relied on formally clearer, but also theoretically narrower rational-choice approaches, focused very much on individual actors for explaining the outbreak of ethnic civil wars. Thereby, the “security dilemma” as a basic concept of the realist tradition of international relations theory was applied to intrastate ethnic conflicts (see e.g. Posen 1993). Accordingly, scholars of this tradition have named concepts relating to the security dilemma as decisive explanatory factors in the outbreak of ethnic conflicts: state weakness that causes collective fears of the future within ethnic groups, strategic dilemmas between groups (e.g., information failures), and strategic interactions within groups (ethnic polarization caused by ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs) (Lake/Rothchild 1996). According to de Figueiredo and Weingast (1999), self-serving political leaders, citizens’ fear of becoming victims of political violence and their uncertainty as to the true intentions of the political leaders and to the causes of events all contribute to the support for ethnic civil wars. This approach picks up potentially powerful aspects of ethnic violence with the concept of fear and the focus on selfish leaders who play the ethnic card in order to retain power. It suffers, however, from several shortcomings. First, seeing state weakness as a necessary precondition for ethnic violence to erupt, the analysis starts with the state already being weak and cannot explain how a state actually becomes weak – which is often an important development in the course of an ethnic conflict. Furthermore, conflicts in strong states (e.g., the Casamance conflict in Senegal) remain unexplained. Similarly, the analysis starts with ethnic groups already being highly coherent political blocs and does not address the crucial processes that lead to this situation. Third, the notion of the (strong) state as a potential impartial arbitrator in multi-ethnic societies (also seen as impartial by all groups) (Lake/Rothchild 1996) seems rather implausible as the state itself becomes an object of group struggle (as Lake and Rothchild mention themselves). And lastly, formalistic schemes like the game-theoretical model proposed by de Figueiredo and Weingast (1999) appear unable to capture the complicated social and political reality that they intend to explain. The focus on individual actors with just two alternatives of behavior from which to choose at a given time (e.g., Hutu leaders who can either massacre or not massacre the Tutsi population) seems too simplistic for this purpose.

In the quantitative literature, ethnic conflicts are often pooled together with other kinds of civil wars in an attempt to statistically test different explanatory models. Here, the basic antagonism is the difference between two general notions as possible motives for civil war initiation:
“greed” and “grievances”. Proponents of the “grievances approach” point to social, economic and political inequalities between different sections of a state’s population which lead to grievances within certain disadvantaged groups. Such grievances can culminate in the outbreak of an armed rebellion. If inequalities and grievances develop between different ethnic groups, they possibly lead to an ethnic civil war (see e.g. Gurr 1968; Gurr/Moore 1997). The Minorities at Risk project indexed such grievances of ethnic groups worldwide, based on “statements of spokesmen, observers, and/or unambiguous actions by the group” (Gurr/Moore 1997). It also measured the political and economic discrimination of ethnic groups, developing a quantitative model for explaining and predicting political mobilization and/or rebellion carried out by such groups. The general finding was that economic discrimination and other factors (e.g., state repression) – but not political discrimination which turned out to be insignificant – lead to collective grievances within a certain ethnic group which, in turn, leads to the political mobilization of this group. Group mobilization has a significant impact on the occurrence of rebellion (Gurr/Moore 1997). However, the Minorities at Risk project, focusing exclusively on groups that are “at risk”, is closely linked to groups that are already in conflict with the state and, thus, leaves out a significant portion of the total sample of politically relevant ethnic groups. This results in a “selection bias” which might lead to inaccurate conclusions as to the real effect of the explaining variables – especially on the role of ethnicity in the onset of civil wars.

Proponents of the “greed approach”, on the other hand, identify lootable resources of a state, the consequential greed of certain criminal-like actors, and state weakness as the origins of civil wars. Using ethnic and religious fractionalization data (e.g., the Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization Index (ELF)), their quantitative models suggest that ethnicity does not constitute a significant factor in the outbreak of civil wars – not even of strictly ethnic civil wars (Collier/Hoeffler 2004; Fearon/Laitin 2003). Accordingly, Fearon and Laitin (2003: 88) consider “ethnic wars” just another “species of insurgency”.

This economic approach has become especially preeminent in the studies of civil wars in Africa and – in the face of the Sierra Leonean and Liberian experience – particularly in West Africa, partly already before the above-mentioned studies. Scholars have linked internal conflicts in this region mainly to greed, looting of resources and warlordism, thereby downplaying or even denying the importance of ethnicity as an explanatory factor.3 Building on the quanti-

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3 For Africa in general see e.g. Addison et al. (2003), and Collier/Hoeffler (2002). From the negative statistical effect of their proxy “social fractionalization” on civil war incidence, Collier and Hoeffler (2002: 22) conclude that “ethnic hatreds” have not been Africa’s problem. Klare (2001) does acknowledge the existing ethnic cleavages in these countries, but nevertheless causally links the incidence of intrastate violence to valuable resources. For West African countries see e.g. Le Billon (2001, pp. 573-5), Kachikwu (2004), McGowan (2005), and Reno (1998). For Sierra Leone and Liberia in particular see also Abdullah/Muana (1998); Ellis (1998); Ducasse-Rogier (2004), Keen (2003), and Collier (2000, p. 106). Ross (2004) sees resources as a contributing factor in the outbreak of conflict in Sierra Leone, but not in Liberia (where they only influenced the conflict duration). In their survey of Sierra Leonian fighters, Humphreys and Weinstein (2004) find no significant differences across warring factions along ethnic, regional, or religious lines.
tative literature, Snyder and Bhavnani (2005), for example, present a theoretical framework which identifies the overall resource profile of a country (lootable vs. nonlootable resources), the mode of extraction of lootable resources (artisanal vs. industrial), and patterns of revenue spending by states as the decisive factors that help to explain the (non-)occurrence of civil war in three diamond producing West African countries (Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ghana). Although this theoretical framework helps to explain how effectively a state can react to a rebellion once it has started, it does not shed light on the elementary question of why the rebellion occurs in the first place. Thus, the underlying causes of civil war onset are not addressed. In general, it remains unclear using the “greed approach“ how large masses of a population (the rank and file members of a rebel movement), who would certainly prefer peace, can be mobilized. Sheer greed seems a rather implausible explanation considering that the average fighters hardly benefit from looting. Moreover, it seems that in this approach phenomena which occur during a civil war and which might influence its duration (and intensity) are often confounded with the actual causal mechanisms responsible for its onset.5

Regarding the quantitative, large-n studies, Sambanis (2001; 2004) criticizes the pooling of different kinds of civil wars in the same statistical model and draws attention to measurement problems, namely “a poor fit between the empirical proxies and the theoretically significant variables” (Sambanis 2004: 260).

An example of this last point is the operationalization of ethnicity in these studies which is measured with aggregated proxies regarding a country’s ethnic diversity (like the ELF). Thus, the assumption tested (and rejected) in the statistical models is that the mere existence of ethnic heterogeneity could lead to political violence – without consideration of the relevant socio-political processes that take place in between. The insignificance of ethnicity in the obtained results is likely to stem from this deficient operationalization. The measurement of ethnicity used in these econometric models falls short of the reality – as it completely misses the political dimension of the concept.

In general, many of the approaches explicated above focus on specific parts – sequences – of the complete picture. By contrast, Wimmer (1997; 2002) delineated a theory on the origins of ethno-nationalist conflicts which tries to incorporate these separate sequences into a comprehensive, overarching dynamic process model with different possible paths. His approach forms the theoretical background of this study.

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4 The study of Humphreys and Weinstein (2004) suggests that captured valuable goods (like money or diamonds) went to the top of the chain of command. Material incentives that did play a greater role for regular fighters in Sierra Leone were non-valuable goods (e.g., food and clothing).

5 Cp. on this Bøås (2001, p. 718) for the case of Liberia. For a clear distinction between civil war onset and duration, see Ross (2004), Ross (2006) and Herbst (2000, pp. 274-6).
2. Research approach: Ethno-nationalist conflicts in ethnically divided states

With its focus on ethno-nationalist conflicts, Wimmer's theory avoids intermingling different kinds of conflicts. Furthermore, the political dimension of the concept of ethnicity is at the very heart of the causal model. The term ethno-nationalist hints at the centrality of the phenomenon of nation-states – i.e., states which aspire to represent a nation – in the model. In newly forming nation-states, relations between existing ethnic groups take on completely new dynamics: “owning” the state becomes the object and nurtures competition between the ethnic groups (Wimmer 1997: 633). Wimmer distinguishes between two variants: states with a majority ethnic group (a so-called “state people”), and ethnically deeply-divided states (Wimmer 1997: 635-636). The political dimension of ethnicity in the latter case – characteristic for the post-colonial (West-)African states – will be explicated below.

2.1. The theoretical framework: Wimmer's theory of ethnic exclusion

Wimmer sees the principle of national affiliation as the decisive basis of the modernity for the integration and exclusion of people. By determining who belongs to the nation and its state, in whose name the state is run, and who is to be entitled to the (democratic) rights provided by the state, the formation of nation-states can lead to social exclusion (Wimmer 2002: 52) – either along national or along ethnic lines. In the idealypical case, this happens along national lines (with privileges for citizens). However, where the new nation-state is not capable of distributing its benefits equally among the population – due to a lack of resources – and where the state formation takes place before the establishment of a strong democratic civil society, no real nation-state can emerge. Only a part of the whole population will be provided with the nation-state’s goods, leading thereby to clientelism – that is, favoritism towards certain groups within the population (e.g., selectively distributing infrastructure, positions in the state apparatus etc.) in order to secure their enduring support. In the absence of the organizations of a democratic civil society (parties, associations and other interest groups), ethnic ties inevitably become the anchor for mutual trust and reciprocal aid and, thus, the most important criterion for political alliances. The distribution of the nation-state’s goods will consequently occur according to ethnic lines (ethnic clientelism). Wimmer calls this condition the “ethnicization of the bureaucracy” (condition 1). The emerging ethnic groups become competitors in a struggle over access to the state and its resources (Wimmer 2002: 66-67) – an idea very much in the Horowitz’ sense of an “ethno-bureaucratic conflict”.

If elites of certain ethnic groups get excluded from access to the state within the context of an ethnicized bureaucracy, they feel disadvantaged in this struggle – experiencing a “status inconsistency” (Wimmer 1997: 652) – and start to formulate a public discourse on ethnic injustice (condition 2, “politicization of ethnic differences”). If there is a perception of ethnic discrimination regarding the state’s benefits and costs within the broad mass of certain ethnic
groups (condition 3), this public discourse on ethnic injustice – orchestrated by the elites⁶ – can lead to a political mobilization along ethnic lines. Given these three conditions, Wimmer speaks of an “ethnicization of political conflicts” (Wimmer 1997: 652). Thus, the theory does not treat ethnic groups as inherently unified, cohesive collectivities but acknowledges the specific, distinct interests of different sections (elites vs. grassroots members). The question of how these distinct interests get unified and how ethnic groups become cohesive political blocs is precisely an important part of the theoretical argument – which thus provides a convincing explanation of ethno-political mobilization.

Importantly, the approach also acknowledges the complex social and political reality in which this mobilization takes place – transcending the narrow focus on individual actors. Whether the situation culminates in the outbreak of an ethnic civil war also depends on the political system. According to Wimmer, multi-party systems are most vulnerable. However, under certain circumstances, ethnic conflicts can also escalate in the three other political systems he mentions: due to a shift of the power balance in a consociational democracy; as the result of a weakening of the central force in a dictatorship; and because of a democratization process or shrinking state resources in a one-party system (Wimmer 1997: 652).

As explicated, the political exclusion of (the elites of) powerful ethnic groups lies at the beginning of the “causal chain” leading to the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts according to Wimmer’s theory. Cederman and Girardin (2007) operationalized this notion of ethnic exclusion with a measure of ethno-nationalist conflict-proneness called $N^*$, which they tested for all Eurasian and North-African countries. This measure differs from the usual country data on ethnic configurations by disaggregating the “big picture” into a set of power relations between different ethnic groups within the country. This set consists of several center-periphery-dyads, each of them being composed of the ethnic group in power (EGIP) and a peripheral/marginalized group. All these dyads are potential sources of ethno-nationalist conflict as marginalized groups might attack the group in power. $N^*$ thus describes the probability for a given country to experience civil war based on the probability of a conflict erupting between the center and the periphery of any of its dyads. Due to the limited data, the results of the initial study were fragile. Subsequent studies, however, suggest that $N^*$ (especially in the logged form) is a robust predictor for the outbreak of ethnic civil wars in the entire world (see Cederman et al. 2007; Buhaug et al. 2007).

Explicitly focusing on ethno-nationalist conflicts, my operationalization draws on this dyadic design. The concrete application of Wimmer’s theory is presented in the following.

⁶ Thus, the theory, in principle, does not rule out the possibility that elites are also driven by “greed” – in the sense of a quest for personal power and the economic gains which follow from it.
2.2. The practical conceptualization of the theoretical framework

In a new, still ongoing project, Cederman, Girardin and Wimmer (2006) have extended the application of their approach to the entire world. In addition, more sophisticated data on ethnic groups' access to state power and the resulting ethnic dyads have been collected in a project called *Ethnic-Power Relations* (EPR)\(^7\) (see also Cederman/Wimmer/Min (forthcoming) and Wimmer/Cederman/Min (forthcoming)).

Again, the analysis focuses on the center-periphery dyads of ethnic groups described above – disaggregating, thus, ethnicity and conflict from a macro-perspective (country-level) to a meso-perspective (group-level). The units of analysis are no longer the countries per se, but rather pairs (dyads) of ethnic groups within these countries.\(^8\)

It is assumed that each state features an ethnic configuration comprising an ethnic group in power (EGIP) at the center and several peripheral groups which are more or less excluded from access to central power (Cederman/Girardin 2007: 176). Each of these peripheral groups builds a dyad with the EGIP, so a country will normally feature several dyads. The ethnic configuration of a given country is thus characterized by the whole set of these center-periphery dyads (see Figure 1). Note that more than one ethnic group can be in power at the same time and thus constitute the center, the EGIP.

![Figure 1: Ethnic dyads in a given country, example](image)

*Note: Conflicts between the different marginalized groups (e.g., communal violence over land) are not subject of this study as the theoretical focus is on (national) conflicts over access to the central state. The EGIP is thus part of all relevant dyads. It can also be in conflict with more than one peripheral group at the same time. Based on Cederman and Girardin (2007).*

In accordance with Wimmer’s theoretical argument, each of these dyads is a potential source of ethno-nationalist conflict. Marginalized ethnic groups might challenge and subsequently get in violent conflict with the central state as a reaction to their exclusion from access to political power. It is assumed that the demographic power balance within the dyads plays an important role in this process insofar as large – and thus powerful – excluded groups are

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\(^7\) See the detailed project description in Chapters 4.1. and 4.1.1.

\(^8\) It is clear that conflicts still erupt within states and their territory; the term "unit of analysis" refers here, above all, to an issue of measurement.
particularly inclined to fight against their exclusion. Ethnicity – as is the presumption here – can form the basis for systematic political exclusion resulting in an escalation of the struggle over access to the state described above. It is not ethnic heterogeneity which may create political conflicts and civil war but ethnic exclusion and discrimination (Cederman et al. 2006: 9).

Forming part of the EPR project, my study applies the proposed theoretical approach to the examination of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa. Inferring from the theoretical arguments, the following research question is examined:

Does the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) in a country increase the likelihood of the onset of an ethno-nationalist conflict?

In conformity with the definition of an “armed conflict” used by the Armed Conflicts Dataset (ACD) of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala, and the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, a conflict is defined as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths per year”. The opposition party, furthermore, needs to be a formally organized opposition, having announced a name for their group, that raises consciously planned political actions rather than spontaneous violence (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook, Version 4-2006: 4-5).

In accordance with Fearon and Laitin’s notion of “ethnic civil wars”, conflicts are considered ethno-nationalist conflicts in cases where “the fighters were mobilized primarily along ethnic lines” (Fearon/Laitin 2003: 79). Of course, the term ethno-nationalist conflict refers solely to internal ethno-nationalist conflicts.

Ethnic groups are defined as being “based on the idea of shared historical origin and common culture. Ethnic groups distinguish themselves from others on the basis of various diacritical markers: language (ethno-linguistic groups), phenotypical features (ethno-somatic groups), regional origin (ethno-regional groups), religion (ethno-religious groups) or more loosely defined culture and customs (ethno-cultural groups), or any combination of such markers” (Cederman et al. 2006: 14).

The term powerful is confined to demographic power here and is a relative concept. It refers to a peripheral group’s relative demographic size compared to the size of the center. It also implies that the group be politically relevant (see Chapters 4.1.1. and 4.1.3.).

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9 Type of political system, replacement of central government, or change of its composition.
10 Status of a certain territory, e.g. secession or autonomy.
11 Note that it is not necessary that both warring parties recruit from one specific ethnic group. A case in which a distinct ethnic minority fights a coalition of groups representing the state, e.g., is still considered an ethno-nationalist conflict. The term “nationalist” indicates the involvement of a nation-state.
Political exclusion refers to the impeded access (of ethnic elites) to the political power of the central state (see the exact operationalization of this term in Chapters 4.1.1. and 4.1.2.). Based on the theoretical arguments delineated above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

The political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) in a country increases the likelihood of the onset of an ethno-nationalist conflict in this country.

And:

The more powerful the politically excluded ethnic group(s), the more likely is the onset of an ethno-nationalist conflict.

The basic postulate of this study, thus, is that ethnicity does have an impact on the outbreak of ethnic conflicts. The following quantitative analysis in Part II tests this proposed statistical link for West Africa. But first a brief look at the geographic area, before the generation of the data and the methodical approach will be described.
PART II

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS
3. The West African region

The following 14 countries form part of West Africa\(^{12}\):
Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Map 1 demarcates the region within the entire African continent, indicating the geographical scope of my study.

\(^{12}\) According to the “Fischer Weltalmanach” 2003.
4. Methodology and the data

One of the main pillars of this work has been the generation of data on ethnic groups. My participation in the EPR project led to the compilation of an unprecedentedly complete dataset on ethnic dyads in West African states and the power balance within them. This dataset not only identifies “politically relevant” ethnic groups but also those groups which have been in power and those politically excluded during certain periods of time. Only through this information could the accurate ethnic dyads of each country be determined. Thus, after the illustration of the EPR project and its precise methodology, the main focus of this chapter will be on this data generation process. Then, the exact measurement of the relative demographic power of ethnic groups is outlined, before attention will be shifted to the dependent variable.

4.1. Independent variable: The power balance within ethnic dyads

Lists of ethnic groups for each country already exist, but these existing accounts are either too extensive or too narrow for the purposes of this study which explicitly focuses on politicized ethnicity. The Soviet Atlas Narodov Mira (ANM) (Bruk 1964), for example, contains all ethnic groups of a country even if politically irrelevant, and is thus too extensive. The Minorities at Risk (MAR) dataset of Ted Gurr and his colleagues (Gurr 1993), on the other hand, leaves out all groups that are not “at risk” and is thus too narrow. Fearon (2003) presents a cross-national group list focusing on groups which had at least one percent of country population in the 1990s and which constitute the main ethnic groups in a country, in other words, what people in the country would “identify as the most socially relevant ethnic groupings” if they were asked (Fearon 2003: 198-9). Although Fearon’s list provides a good starting point, it is still too extensive for the purposes of my study (while at the same time excluding potentially relevant minorities which make up less than one percent of the population). Furthermore, the existing sources do not contain any comprehensive information about ethnic groups’ access to political power.

As a consequence of this gap of research and data, a new, innovative global dataset on politically relevant ethnic groups – including detailed information about their access to state power – has been developed by researchers of the ETH Zurich and the University of California in Los Angeles: the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) project, an interactive web-based expert survey (Cederman/Wimmer/Min (forthcoming); Wimmer/Cederman/Min (forthcoming)). At the heart of the project is an online survey software on which country experts answer questions and write comments regarding the countries for which they are responsible through a normal internet browser. All sovereign states with a population of at least 500,000 are covered. On the basis of this data, the accurate ethnic dyads and the power balance within them can be determined for each country and each year since 1945.
Within my own participation as a country expert in the EPR project, I analyzed and coded the 14 West African countries listed above. Before elaborating on the concrete coding practice in regard to the specific social and political circumstances in West Africa, the general methodical approach of this globally-aimed project will be presented.

4.1.1. The methodical approach of the EPR project

In order to reflect a country’s ethno-political reality as genuinely as possible, the EPR project builds on the country-specific knowledge of experts both for the indication of the politically relevant ethnic groups and for the specification of their access to state power. With respect to the latter, instead of relying merely on figures regarding the ethnic origin of state leaders, the idea of the project is to evaluate the relative power positions of ethnic groups “through more sociological lenses”. The degrees and types of political participation and exclusion are assessed in qualitative terms, building on precise coding guidelines and the expertise of the country experts (Cederman et al. 2007: 5).

The dataset focuses on countries for which ethnicity has played a significant role in national politics during any period since 1945 or since the country’s independence. For this to be the case, at least one significant political interest group needs to be/have been organized along ethnic lines or one particular ethnic group needs to be/have been discriminated against in the political life of the country (Cederman et al. 2007: 6). Only if ethnicity has been politically relevant according to this definition is the actual survey conducted for a given country. Figure 2 shows an example of the survey screen.

If ethnicity has been a significant factor in a country’s politics, the first step of the survey is to divide the era covered by the project – from 1945 to 2005 – into sub-periods which feature different power relations between the country’s ethnic groups. Sub-periods are necessary if the list of politically relevant groups changes or an ethnic group’s access to political power alters at a specific point in time. The coding of states that became independent after 1945 starts with the year of independence, as colonial history is not part of this survey.

Next, a list of politically relevant ethnic groups has to be compiled for each period. An ethnic group is seen as politically relevant if a) at least one significant interest group (e.g., the Parti Quebecois) claims to represent its interests on the national level or b) ethnicity is the basis for political discrimination of this group (Cederman et al. 2007: 5).
Expert Survey on Ethnic Groups (ESEG)

Côte d’Ivoire

This is the main page for data entry on group lists. For detailed instructions, please see the coding instructions. First we would like you to indicate the overall role of ethnicity in politics of the country in question. Did ethnicity play a significant role in the political life of Côte d’Ivoire during any period since 1945 or since its independence?

Yes
No

By significant role we mean: either at least one significant political interest group (party, regional organization etc.) is organized along ethnic lines; or access to political power is depending on the ethnic background of individuals (e.g. through discrimination).

Time Periods
First, please determine if the list of groups or their access to power changed significantly during the sample period 1945-1999. If this was the case, you should create additional time periods for which you can provide separate input. You are asked to input start and end dates for each time period. Please make sure that the entire sample period is covered without any gaps or overlaps.

Please choose a period: 1960-1993
Add Delete
Current period range from 1960 to 1993
Save Changes

Group List
Once you have created time periods, if any, please enter the politically relevant groups. You can create an entirely new group list by repeatedly using the button “Create New Group” or you can base your own selection on pre-existing lists by using the button “Import Groups from”. Any selection can be further modified by creating or deleting groups. Group deletion is carried out by first checking the groups to be deleted and then pressing the button “Delete Checked”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern (Mande and Voltaic/Gourounsi)</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>JUNIOR PARTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Akans</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>JUNIOR PARTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baule (Akan)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>SENIOR PARTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Mande</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>IRRELEVANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kou</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>POWERLESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sum of sizes is not equal to one (0.99)

Figure 2: EPR coding screen, example

Note: The image shows the coding of the power relations between Côte d’Ivoire’s ethnic groups in the period from 1960 to 1993. There is a power-sharing arrangement with one senior and two junior partners. One ethnic group is excluded from political power. Another group is not politically relevant during this period.

To compose the group list, the system allows for the importation of groups from the three pre-existing lists mentioned above as a starting point: the Atlas Narodov Mira, the MAR project and Fearon’s list. Of course, groups can be added, deleted and renamed in order to arrive at a list that most closely mirrors a country’s ethno-political reality during a certain period of time. To measure the demographic power of each politically relevant ethnic group, its share of the total population also needs to be indicated.

Finally, the degree of access to state power of these groups in each period has to be specified. State power here refers to executive power, i.e. representation in the presidency and/or the cabinet and the occupation of senior posts in the administration and the army. (In military dictatorships, the most relevant dimension will be power over the army; in a strong presidential system, the presidency is the most important aspect, etc.) Furthermore, the question is about absolute access to power, not relative to the demographic size of a group. According to the coding rules (Cederman et al. 2007: 6-7), each group can find itself in the following positions:
I. *Leading position in the country*

The given ethnic group does not significantly share power with any other group in the country. Two possibilities:

- **MONOPOLY**: Group members hold monopoly power in the executive. Exclusion of members of other ethnic groups.
- **DOMINANT**: Group members hold dominant power in the executive, but limited (“token”) representation by members of other groups.

II. *Participation in coalition regime*

Power-sharing arrangement, either formal or informal, that divides the access to power between the groups making up the governing coalition. Two possible roles for a given ethnic group depending on the number and importance of the positions it controls:

- **SENIOR PARTNER**: Group members occupy senior posts in the power-sharing arrangement.
- **JUNIOR PARTNER**: Group members occupy junior posts in the coalition.

III. *Exclusion from central power*

Three possibilities:

- **ONLY LOCAL POWER**: Group members have no central power but influence (e.g., having a leading position or being coalition partners) at the sub-state level, that is, one level below the central government.
- **POWERLESS**: No political power either at the national or the subnational level – although without being explicitly discriminated.
- **DISCRIMINATED**: Group members are affected by active, intentional and targeted discrimination with the intent of excluding them from political power. Discrimination can be formal (by law) or informal (systematic practice). Indirect discrimination (i.e., disadvantages in the economic and/or educational sphere), however, is not included in the definition of discrimination applied here.

Additionally, an ethnic group can be marked as IRRELEVANT if it is neither politically mobilized nor discriminated against in the political sphere. This is an alternative option to deleting the group from the list altogether.

All coding decisions – and above all, issues that might be particularly difficult or contested – can be explained in more detail in a text field at the bottom of the survey screen. ¹³

¹³ My explanations regarding the countries of concern for this study can be found in the original version of this paper which was submitted as a Master thesis at the University of Zurich (see Vogt 2007).
4.1.2. The EPR coding of West Africa

On the basis of concrete examples, I will now delineate the translation of these guidelines into the West African context, address the particular coding issues that arose in that specific sociopolitical reality and explain how exactly I dealt with them. The complete coding records (including all references to the pertinent sources) can be found in the unpublished original version of this paper (see Vogt 2007).

For my coding decisions I relied on the following types of sources:

- Historical studies
- Country-specific work of other political scientists
- Online sources (e.g., information provided by the U.S. State Department, the Library of Congress, or the Ethnologue)

In accordance with the project’s overall conception, I thus drew on a qualitative secondary analysis of the country-specific academic literature.

Ethnicity has played a significant role in national politics in 13 out of the 14 West African countries. Only in Burkina Faso has this not (yet) been the case. Although being an ethnically very heterogeneous country (with about 60 different ethnic groups), there has not been any significant political interest group organized along ethnic lines nor a political discrimination of any particular ethnic group to my knowledge since independence. The ethnic dynamics in Burkina Faso seem to be disconnected from national and regional politics. The Mossi – making up about half of the whole population – have dominated Burkina’s politics, but they are far from being one politically coherent group. There are significant divisions between the Mossi elites, regionally but also between “traditionalists” and “modernists”. Characteristically, it has been Mossi presidents like Maurice Yaméogo or Thomas Sankara who have most intently tried to deprive the ethnic Mossi hierarchy (the traditional chiefs) of their power. Mossi elites are thus not to be seen as agents of ethnic power; their identity is not evidence for any ethnic politics.

Similarly, when Samo politicians like General Lamizana occupied dominant positions in the state apparatus between 1966 and 1970, the Samo ethnic group (and their region, respectively) was not privileged in any way. Although there have been ethno-regional voting patterns in earlier multiparty elections (e.g., 1970 and 1978) with certain parties having their strongholds in particular regions and regions/ethnic groups voting mainly for “their own” candidate, these structures were not enduring and were increasingly disbanded – also due to the ongoing fusions and new foundations of parties in Burkina Faso. Furthermore, it seems that the lack of any significant discrepancies regarding economic development between the different regions also contributes to the absence of a politicization of ethnicity in Burkina Faso at the present time. Burkina Faso has therefore not been included in the analysis of my study.
In all other West African countries, however, there have either been significant ethnic parties/interest groups, discrimination of certain ethnic groups or both.

One of the major challenges was to identify the politically relevant ethnic groups in each country. Some cases were fairly simple as, for example, the Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria, the Asante in Ghana, the Hausa in Niger, or the Ewe in Togo. They all have had “their own” political parties representing them on the level of national politics. In Nigeria’s First Republic, for example, the NCNC was an Igbo party, the Action Group a Yoruba party. Since Ghana’s democratization, the NPP has widely been perceived as an Asante party. The CDS in Niger started as a regional “cultural” organization whose goal was the protection of the interests of the Hausa civil servants against the Djerma dominance in Niger’s politics. After the country’s democratization it transformed into a national political party. The Ewe have also had several exile opposition movements (e.g., the MTD) and political parties (such as the CAR and the CUT) which claimed to represent their interests. Ethnic groups like these could clearly be deemed politically relevant. Of course, this is not to say that there are no intra-group divisions within, say, the Yoruba in Nigeria or the Ewe in Togo. Divergencies among different factions always exist (like they also exist in a non-ethnic political party). However, on a national scale these (and other) ethnic groups have acted as more or less coherent political forces with specific political parties representing their interests.

Besides parties/interest groups that represent ethnic groups, the military can also be dominated by a certain ethnic group and, as a consequence, act in support of this group. A prominent example of this pattern is the Togolese army which is dominated by the Kabré group. In Guinea-Bissau, the lower ranks of the army were overwhelmingly composed of Balanta (and Papel) after independence. When ethnic dissatisfaction with the ongoing political domination of Cape Verdeans rose, the Papel army commander Vieira seized power – supported by the Balanta and Papel troops. In such situations I coded the respective ethnic groups (thus, e.g., the Kabré in Togo and the Balanta and Papel in Guinea-Bissau) as politically relevant.

Another sign for the political relevance of an ethnic group is targeted political discrimination from the central state. Examples for this are the Mano and Gio groups in Liberia during Doe’s rule, minority peoples in Nigeria under Abacha, or Northerners (and the Southern Mande peoples) in Côte d’Ivoire after Bédié initiated the politics of “Ivoirité”. Regarding minority ethnic groups in Nigeria, it was extremely difficult to assess which ones should be listed as politically relevant on a national scale. As Nigeria consists of about 300 different ethnic groups, including all minority groups that were potentially discriminated during one or the other of the numerous military regimes would have led to an excessive and unmanageable list of ethnic groups. The communal violence within which these minority groups engage is normally targeted against each other – for local reasons mostly – and does not stem from a struggle over
the access to national political power. Hence, I restricted myself to the ones that have noticeably raised their voice in national politics, namely the Ijaw, the Tiv and the tiny Ogoni group.

The opposite power status of discrimination is dominance. Thus, if a certain ethnic group has dominated the political life of a given country (where ethnicity played a role!), I also automatically recognized that group as politically relevant. This was, for example, the case with the Krahn group in Liberia under Doe and the Djerma-Songhai in Niger before the country's democratization. Some of these dominant groups abruptly lost their political relevance after they were (finally) ousted from power, as was the case with the Cape Verdeans in Guinea-Bissau.

Most cases were more ambiguous. Often, it was already difficult to detect the (politically relevant) ethnic boundaries in a given country (i.e., defining the relevant boundaries between separate ethnic groups and subgroups). For instance, an ethnic group may consist of several distinct subgroups featuring considerable divisions on a local level, but in national politics only the overarching “family” plays a role. Alternatively, a big ethnic family may contain one subgroup that takes a particular role in the country’s political life whereas all other subgroups are important merely in differentiation to that one subgroup while having no political relevance by and for themselves. An example of the first case can be found in Senegal: The Pulaar ethnic group is composed of the Peul and the Toucouleur. On the national level, however, members of these subgroups formed the uniting Halpulaaren movement to defend the cause of their common Pulaar language against Wolof domination. I thus coded the Pulaar as one politically relevant ethnic group. In Côte d’Ivoire, the Bété are the largest and most relevant subgroup of the Kru family, yet when Laurent Gbagbo, a Bété, started to appeal to ethnic interests for his political campaigns, he was supported not just by the Bété subgroup but by the Kru peoples in general. I therefore named the Kru as a politically relevant ethnic group in Côte d’Ivoire.

The Akan group in both Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana is an example for the second variant. In Ghana, the Asante have been the only politically relevant Akan subgroup on the national level. At the same time, there is a certain fear of Asante over-dominance within other Akan subgroups. This – combined with historical aversions of some Akan subgroups (like the Brong or the Fanti) against the Asante – often led to anti-Asante voting patterns in certain Akan regions (like the Brong-Ahafo and Central regions). The Asante subgroup thus takes a particular role in Ghana’s politics whereas the importance of the remaining Akan subgroups (on the national level) lies only in their differentiation to the Asante. I tried to capture this reality by naming two different politically relevant Akan groups in Ghana: the Asante and “other Akans”. A similar picture can be observed in Côte d’Ivoire. There, the Baule (Houphouët-Boigny’s ethnic group) play this particular role and are mentioned separately from all other
Akan subgroups (some of which, like the Agni, had historical resentments towards the Baule) which were again combined into one politically relevant ethnic group.

In some cases, different (sometimes related) ethnic groups had to be combined into one nationally relevant group. The Fulani in Nigeria, for example, have culturally adapted to the Hausa for the most part. They together form the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. The tiny group of the Lebu in Senegal, assimilated for the most part, was included into the large Wolof group.

In Togo, both the Ewe and Kabré ethnic groups form “clusters” of several related groups (the Ewe cluster containing the Ewe, Fon and Adja groups among others; the Kabré cluster including the Kabré, Losso, Lamba and other groups), but in politics only the two big ethnic clusters have been of national relevance thus far. I therefore indicated only two politically relevant ethnic groups in Togo: the Ewe (and related groups) and the Kabré (and related groups). Mali provides an example of a special case of this. In Mali there are no significant ethno-political cleavages between the different black peoples who dominate the central state, yet there is a “white” minority of Tuareg and Arabs which is politically marginalized. For this reason, I coded two politically relevant ethnic groups in Mali: Blacks (Mande, Peul, Voltaic etc.) and “Whites” (Tuareg & Arabs).

A combination of ethnic groups can also be based on regional affiliation. In Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, for instance, a clear north-south divide exists, with the northern region being predominantly Muslim and economically much less developed than the mainly Christian south. Consequently, northern elites primarily represented the interests of the northern region on the national level – instead of individual ethnic groups – by pointing at regional inequalities. In Côte d’Ivoire, northerners were globally referred to as “Dioula” by southern peoples and increasingly equated with immigrants from northern neighboring countries to whom they were ethnically linked. With the initiation of the politics of “Ivoirité”, moreover, Ivoirians from the north suffered from collective political discrimination. In both countries, northern ethnic groups – despite big differences and (in the case of Ghana) even local tensions – are generally seen as one ethnic bloc of national political importance. In my country codings, I followed this standard, listing “Northern groups”/“Northerners” as one politically relevant ethnic group.

In Benin, the classification of politically relevant groups corresponds to the ancient kingdoms that existed before French colonization in the region that later became the independent state of Dahomey. There were 3 main kingdoms: Danhome (in the south/center), Hogbonou (in the southeast) and Nikki (in the north). The hostilities between these historic kingdoms persisted during colonial time and have determined the political cleavages in the independent state until today, with each region having been represented by specific parties and political leaders. I thus clustered ethnic groups into regional blocks according to their historic kingdom-affiliation: “South/Central” (Fon and related groups), “Southeastern” (Goun – which are often marked as a Fon subgroup – and Yoruba/Nagot), and “Northern” (Bariba, Gur-
manché/Betamaribe etc.). Only from 1991 on, the country’s southwestern part, populated mainly by the Adja group, became a politically relevant ethno-regional force, when it began to be represented by a political party (the PSD, led by Bruno Amoussou).

Of course, such regional compositions may also be subject to changes in the political situation. During the political dominance of the southern Mende group in Sierra Leone, the northern ethnic groups merged to one politically relevant bloc, also represented by a political party (the APC), out of a joint northern feeling of relative deprivation. When the APC came to power, however, contrastive, politically important ethnic identities developed among northern groups (especially the Temne and Limba) which now quarreled for the “booties” of power, and their political unity disintegrated quickly. Accordingly, I combined the northern groups into one politically relevant ethnic group during the political supremacy of the Mende and named two separate ethnic groups – Temne and Limba – when the APC was in power.

The demarcation of the time periods normally followed the changes in executive political power. Such changes were initiated through coups, elections, national conferences or the death of a president. In the West African states with politicized ethnicity, such ruptures in political history normally had a clear impact on the power relations between ethnic groups. There were some cases, however, where changes in the executive did not represent significant changes regarding ethnic groups’ power statuses. I combined, for example, the regimes of Hamani Diori, Seyni Kountché and Ali Saibou in Niger into one single period. Another such case is Ghana between 1972 and 1981: Despite remarkable political shifts producing four different rulers (a military regime by Acheampong, two coups by Akuffo and Rawlings, and the democratic government of Limann), the power relations between ethnic groups did not significantly change during this time.

Some sub-periods had to be inserted without any governmental change in the country, when an ethnic group began to be targeted by political discrimination at a given point of time. This was the case with the Tuareg group in Niger, for example, which became the target of army operations and massacres starting in 1990. A new period was created solely for this reason, thus ending a period that would have otherwise – regarding executive political power – lasted a year longer.

The second critical point of the coding procedure was the specification of the ethnic groups’ access to state power. The first step was to identify the actual “locus/loci of power” in a given country; only then could the access of each politically relevant ethnic group to political power be adequately assessed. Which are the sources of power most relevant for determining the status of groups in West Africa? The following institutions proved to be relevant factors in this region: (semi-)democratical governments (especially the presidency), the army or a military junta, unity parties, and informal cliques of “advisers” and cronies of a dictator. Given the strong presidential systems in most of (West) Africa and the large amplitude of power with
which they provide the presidents, the occupation of the presidency was a firm indicator for a
group’s leading role. This is still valid now – after many years of democratization – and was
even more so before the 1990s. I thus coded the ethnic groups of presidents normally as the
countries’ leading groups: the Malinke under Touré in Guinea, the Serer under Sédar Senghor and the Wolof under Diouf and Wade in Senegal, the Baule under Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié in Côte d’Ivoire, the Limba under Siaka Stevens in Sierra Leone, and so on. Depen-
ding on the extent of the power sharing practiced, I marked these groups either as “sen-
ior partners” or as being “dominant” or having a “monopoly” on political power.

However, under certain circumstances I decided to deviate from this norm – for example,
when no evidence was found of any political relevance of the president’s ethnic group. For
instance, Ghana’s first president, Kwame Nkrumah originated from a very small Akan sub-
group, the Nzema (approximately one percent of the total population), which did not have
any further political relevance as a group. I thus marked the ethnic category “other Akans” 14
as “senior partner” in the corresponding period. In the Third Republic from 1979 to 1981
there was a northern president with Hilla Limann. The political influence of northern ethnic
groups was nevertheless still inferior to the one of other groups, particularly of the Akans
(which, for instance, held four times as many cabinet seats as did northern politicians). With
this in mind, I left the northern groups as “junior partner” during these years, with the Asante
as “senior partner” as in the years before.

Another exception to this general norm was made in the case of Gambia. Here, I recognized
the urban Wolof elite (which had dominated the state organs already during the colonial re-
gime) still as the leading group under Jawara’s rule – although Jawara himself was a Mand-
inka and his party (the PPP) was generally seen as a (rural) Mandinka party as well. The
Mandinka group very much became a minority in the cabinet over time as the urban Wolof
(and Aku) elites, with their higher education and bureaucratic skills, made themselves indis-
pen sable in the government and even more so in the administration. 15 The Wolof’s leading
role – despite a Mandinka president – could also be seen by the persistent discontent of a
part of the Mandinka resulting in the foundation of new opposition parties which appealed to
the Mandinka electorate. For this reason, I decided to code Jawara’s Mandinka group as
“junior partner” in a power-sharing type of government (with the Wolof group as “senior part-
ner”).

In some cases an ethnic group was indicated as playing the leading role in national politics
based on the “identity” of the ruling party – even if the president himself did not hail from that
group. (Sometimes ethnic parties intentionally choose a candidate with a different, politically
not relevant ethnic background in order to mitigate their ethnic image – mostly with only

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14 In regard to this term, see above.
15 Also noteworthy is the fact that many high Mandinka politicians culturally adapted to the urban Wolof elite soon
after moving into the center of power.
modest success.) However, this was only done in cases where the ruling party could clearly be seen as the party of a specific ethnic group. Evidence for such an "ethnic identity" can be provided by the composition of the party leadership, but also by the origin of the support the party receives in elections. In Sierra Leone, for example, President Kabbah of the SLPP is a Mandingo. The SLPP, however, has always been the party of the Mende deriving support mainly from the Mende heartlands in the southern and eastern regions of the country (while not standing a chance in the north). Thus, I coded the Mende as the leading group in Sierra Leone during Kabbah's rule. In Niger, the CDS is historically a Hausa party. When Mammane Ousmane of the CDS ruled the country as president in a coalition with other (ethnic) parties, I marked the Hausa as the government's "senior partner", although Ousmane himself is a Kanouri. It is also possible that politicians of a certain ethnic origin are linked to the political establishment and interests of a different ethnic group. In Nigeria, Obasanjo (a Yoruba) was generally seen as an advocate of "northern interests" – being linked to the Hausa-Fulani political establishment – while he acted as military ruler from 1976 to 1979. (The Yoruba did not consider him "their" leader. This changed, however, during his tenure as democratically elected president beginning in 1999). Both Babangida and Abacha were not of Hausa-Fulani origin either (Babangida being a Gwari, Abacha a Kanuri). However, they can still be seen as representatives of the northern Hausa-Fulani political establishment. I thus indicated the Hausa-Fulani group as playing the leading role both during Obasanjo's first rule and under Babangida and Abacha.

In Togo, the real, de-facto "locus of power" has been the (Kabré-dominated) army since Eyadéma seized power in 1967 – even after the national conference of 1991 and the installation of a (Ewe-dominated) transitory government. This was clearly demonstrated when the soldiers – loyal to Eyadéma – simply did not accept the civil government's authority and even took parliamentarians hostage at one point. Only a few months after the "transition", the army succeeded in bringing Eyadéma back to formal power and reinstating prior rule. In Togo, I thus coded the Kabré as "dominant" and the Ewe as "powerless" during all of Eyadéma's rule. Similarly, when Niger relapsed to a new military regime after Mainasara's coup in 1996, the "locus of power" moved once again from the civil government to the army, whose core had always been composed of Djerma-Songhai. As all political opposition was oppressed under Mainasara, I (again) marked the Djerma-Songhai as "dominant" and all other ethnic groups as "powerless" in the period from 1996 to 1999. The composition of the military junta was also pivotal for the coding of ethnic groups' power status during military regimes in Benin, Ghana, and Nigeria.

In Guinea, on the other hand, it is a clique of Susu friends and businessmen which dominates the politics alongside President Conté, who himself is a Susu. Even the (ethnically more diverse) leadership of Conté's national party PUP is marginalized in this personalized,
authoritarian rule. Here, I marked the Susu group as “dominant”, the two other ethnic groups (Malinke and Peul) “powerless”.

In countries with strong unity parties like the PDCI in Côte d’Ivoire until 1990, the power structure within the party can also provide an indication of the power relations between the ethnic groups. Houphouët-Boigny also carefully ensured an ethnic balance within his PDCI, although the most powerful positions were occupied mainly by his Baule kinsmen. Partly based on access to power in the unity party, I coded the Baule as “senior partner” with other groups (“Northerners” and “other Akans”) as “junior partners” during Houphouët-Boigny’s reign in Côte d’Ivoire.

As a last point, I will now specifically address the gradation of the power positions provided by the definitions above (see Chapter 4.1.1.) and discuss their application and particular problems of differentiation which arose between them in the countries in question.

“Monopoly” is – already by definition – a term of absolute degree and was thus used in only two cases: in Mali (Blacks from 1960 to 1990 and between 1994 and 1995) and Liberia (Americo-Liberians from 1945 to 1980). In both of these countries, political power was so clearly monopolized that the use of that term seemed justified. In the case of Liberia, for example, the indigenous peoples did not even dispose of effective voting rights until 1985. Normally, however, even in dictatorships or ethnocratic regimes, there were at least some “token” members of other ethnic groups included in the regime. For instance, the Djerma-Songhai regimes in Niger from 1960 to 1990 still allowed some limited Hausa participation; Albert Margai’s SLPP government in Sierra Leone between 1964 and 1967 also included a few Temne and Creole ministers; Cape Verdeans controlled all relevant domains of political power in Guinea-Bissau in the first years after independence, but politicians of other ethnic groups formed part of the government as well. The northern Hausa-Fulani dominance in Nigeria never reached the degree of a political monopoly either. In these and many other cases, I used the term “dominant” to describe the power position of the leading ethnic group. If there was a power-sharing arrangement in place in a given country, it was normally quite simple to distinguish between the senior and junior partners of the government, especially in countries with clearly ethnic/ethno-regional parties as in Niger (after 1990), Nigeria, Benin, and Sierra Leone. In Nigeria, for instance, the NPC (the Hausa-Fulani party) emerged as the strongest party after the elections of 1959 and formed a governing coalition with the NCNC (an Igbo-dominated party) between 1960 and 1964. A Hausa-Fulani became prime minister, an Igbo governor-general (later president). I thus coded the Hausa-Fulani as “senior partner” and the Igbo as “junior partner” for this period. During Kérékou’s tenure as democratically elected president of Benin, the governing coalition was made up mainly of his own (northern) FARD party, the PSD (southwest, led by Bruno Amoussou), and the NCC (southeast, led by
Albert Tevoedjre). Based on the roles these ethno-regional parties (and leaders) assumed within the governing coalition, I marked the northern groups/region as “senior partner” and the southeastern and southwestern groups/regions as “junior partners” for Kérékou’s presidential terms. Also in party systems that are ethnically less clear-cut (as in Ghana and Senegal) and in inclusionary military or one party regimes, though, the differentiation between senior and junior partners was more or less straightforward.

More delicate, however, was the differentiation between the statuses of “junior partner” and “powerless”. Even in generally inclusionary systems, particular ethnic groups may be excluded from the elite coalition at the center. In country periods where a power-sharing arrangement was detected, the task was thus to find out for each ethnic group whether it was actually included in this coalition. In ethnic party systems, I labeled groups whose party was condemned to the opposition role as “powerless”. During Siaka Stevens’ APC regime in Sierra Leone, for example, the Mende party SLPP was excluded from governance. Hence, I coded the Mende as “powerless” in this period (which was characterized by a coalition of the Limba, Temne and Creole). Similar patterns of political exclusion (without discrimination) in generally inclusionary systems can be found in the cases of the Ewe in Ghana during the Second Republic, the minority peoples during most of Nigeria’s democratic experiments, and in Benin before Kérékou’s reign. In the case of the minority peoples in Nigeria, it was also important to take into account whether the minority group in question disposed of its own state in a given period (i.e., a state where it formed a majority and, thus, could exercise local political power). If not, the group was likewise coded as “powerless”.

In some cases I relied on other signs of political exclusion. In Côte d’Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny, an invasion of Baule farmers into traditional Kru territories took place, aided by the powerful position of the Baule in the political system, which equalled a state-controlled land appropriation. The inability of the Kru group to defend its rights within the central state was interpreted as a sign of being politically powerless for the most part – despite limited representation (“token members”) in the central government. Since there was no active political discrimination, I coded the Kru as “powerless”.  

In general, if an ethnic group was not included in central government it was marked as “powerless”. Sub-state entities hardly dispose of any substantial power (and financial resources) in the very centralized political systems of West Africa. As such local authorities cannot assume a relevant role in the distribution of political power within the West African state, I generally did not use the status of “only local power”. Exceptions to this pattern, however, are provided in the cases of Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, and Benin after 1990. In the example of

16 Note that some of the party names changed over time while their leaders and regional roots remained the same.
17 More or less inclusionary military regimes can be found in Nigeria under Gowon/Mohammed/Obasanjo, in Ghana under Ankrah, Acheampong, and Rawlings, and in Benin under Kérékou. Houphouët-Boigny’s PDCI in Côte d’Ivoire is the prime example of an inclusionary unity party.
Nigeria between 1960 and 1964, the Yoruba party AG was in the opposition. However, it clearly controlled the government of its own Western Region. Hence, I marked the Yoruba group as having “only local power”. The same happened to the Igbo group in 1965. In Benin, Nicéphore Soglo’s party from the south/central region was in the opposition on the national level after Kérékou’s return to power. However, it controlled important sub-state entities like the country’s economic capital Cotonou. Thus, I also used the term “only local power” for the south/central groups in Benin in the period from 1996 to 2005. In Guinea-Bissau, the Manjaco retain dominance over their own region Cacheu (one of the country’s most important political regions) and de-facto control over local affairs. Thus, the Manjaco – being out of central power after 1999 – were coded as having “only local power” as well.

The last controversial issue is the differentiation between “powerless” and “discriminated”. As the latter refers to an active and targeted political discrimination, I was somewhat cautious in using it. A clear example of a formal discrimination can be found in the case of the indigenous peoples in Liberia during the rule of the Americo-Liberian True Whig Party. The indigenous peoples were systematically excluded from political affairs during this time and did not have the right to vote. In Côte d’Ivoire the northern ethnic groups faced informal discriminatory practices when Bédié started his nationalist campaign of “Ivoirité” in 1993, distinguishing between “real” Ivoirians (the people from the south) and immigrants from the northern neighboring countries who should not be entitled to the Ivoirian citizenship. Northerners were blankety intermixed with “illegal immigrants” and began to be affected by political restrictions and deliberate state reprimals. This informal practice turned into a formal discrimination when Bédié adopted a new electoral law – based on true “Ivoirité” – which limited the access of northern elites to state offices and excluded millions of northerners from the Ivoirian citizenship. Before Gueï’s coup in 1999 the Southern Mande peoples faced similar discriminations. For both cases, I used the term “discriminated”.

Some ethnic groups suffered from concerted state violence, because they were identified as oppositional by their governments. Such targeted, indiscriminate use of violence – conducted by the central state/army – against a specific group as a whole (including civilians) was also interpreted as a sign of political discrimination against this group (if it was excluded from political power at the same time!). This was the case, for instance, with the Mano and Gio ethnic groups in Liberia under Doe and – after the first Liberian war – with the Mandingo and Krahn under Taylor, but also in Nigeria with the Ogoni group under Abacha or the Ijaw during Obasanjo’s presidential tenure.

It is important to distinguish between political and cultural or economic discrimination. The latter is not included in the definition of “discriminated” used here. In practice, though, the differentiation was very controversial. In the case of the Tuareg group in Mali and Niger, for

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See the specific case study in Chapter 10 for a more profound discussion of this case.
example, discrimination seems to have taken place rather in the economic (e.g., issues of property rights) and cultural (e.g., prohibition of nomadism) realms than in politics until 1990. I found no clear signs of particular political discrimination and thus decided to mark the Tuareg group as “powerless” rather than “discriminated” in both Mali and Niger until 1990. However, when the Tuareg conflicts turned more serious, the few Tuareg ministers and officials that were included within the central state were sacked or went into exile in both countries, and the group as a whole (including civilians) began to be targeted with systematic state violence (even massacres). Only in these periods (from 1990 to 1992 in Niger, and between 1994 and 1995 in Mali) did I mark the Tuareg group as “discriminated” in Mali and Niger.

Certainly special in this respect is the case of the Diola in Senegal. Despite issues of land expropriation, the interim appointment of a military governor for the Casamance and the dismissal of Diola administrative personnel from the Ministry of the Interior at one point, I could not detect a targeted, systematic political discrimination against the Diola group. One can certainly speak of a cultural dominance of the Wolof group in Senegal and, accordingly, a certain cultural marginalization of other groups. However, Diola politicians/officers have been included within government and army command even after Senghor (appointed to important posts sometimes). Therefore, I did not code the Diola group as “discriminated” (or “powerless”).

For the statistical analysis of this work, the distinction between politically excluded ethnic groups and ethnic groups in power (EGIP) was above all important in order to form the accordant ethnic dyads. Ethnic groups with the power status of “monopoly”, “dominant”, “senior partner”, or “junior partner” in a given year were recognized as the country’s EGIP in that year.

As politically excluded ethnic groups, I considered groups marked either as “powerless”, “discriminated” or having “only local power”.

As described in the theory part (see Chapter 2.2.), the power of excluded groups is proxied by their relative demographic weight. The exact operationalization of this indicator is the subject of the next section.

4.1.3. Measuring the relative demographic power of politically excluded groups

A politically excluded ethnic group’s demographic power results from its relative demographic size compared to the size of the ethnic group(s) in power (EGIP). This is, in fact, a measure of the power balance between the center and the periphery which will be called $r$. Operationalized as the excluded group’s share of the dyadic population (the total population of both the excluded group and the EGIP), $r$ of any given peripheral group $i$ is defined as

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19 For a more in-depth analysis of this very ambiguous case, see the specific case study in Chapter 11.
where $s_i$ denotes the peripheral group’s size and $s_0$ is the size of the ethnic group(s) in power (EGIP).²⁰

To determine the sizes of the relevant ethnic groups, I relied on official censuses whenever possible, reproduced in country-specific sources and/or online sources such as the CIA World Factbook, the U.S. State Department Background Notes or online encyclopedias (like the Ethnologue). In a few unclear cases I additionally drew on Fearon’s (2003) figures or information from the MAR project.²¹

It is clear that measuring ethnic groups’ power as their (relative) demographic size captures only one dimension of the concept of “power”. Other important aspects might be a group’s cohesiveness, its geographic location (e.g., close to the country’s capital), group members’ representation and position in the military, etc. However, obtaining valid and reliable data on such variables would be an extremely complex task clearly exceeding the possibilities of a study of this scope. Thus, I had to rely on this somewhat limited proxy of excluded ethnic groups’ power.

4.2. Dependent variable: Disaggregating the conflict data

For the conflict data, I drew on version 4-2006b of the Armed Conflicts Dataset (ACD) provided by the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala, and the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (Gleditsch et al. 2002). This dataset covers all conflicts from 1946 to 2005 with a minimum casualty threshold of 25 annual battle-deaths. For the purpose of my study, though, two additional preparative steps had to be conducted: Of all the registered conflicts in West Africa, I had to first determine those that can be classified as internal ethno-nationalist conflicts according to the definition put forward above (see Chapter 2.2). Furthermore, the identified ethno-nationalist conflicts had to be disaggregated from the country-level of the ACD to the group-level of my dyadic analysis. Thus, the specific ethnic groups constituting the warring parties in a given conflict had to be identified. Then, the conflicts could be attributed to the corresponding ethnic dyads in the EPR dataset composed of the EGIP in the year of conflict onset and a challenging, peripheral group.²²

In order to classify and attribute the ACD-listed conflicts, I relied on the same types of sources that were listed above²³, plus the conflict summaries of the Uppsala Conflict Database (2007) for incidences since 1989. Detailed comments and explications in regard to the

²⁰ Based on Cederman and Girardin (2007).
²¹ Again, all pertinent references can be found in the unpublished original version of this paper (see Vogt 2007).
²² In principle it is also possible that both ethnic groups identified as warring parties are part of the EGIP. In this case, the two groups do not form a dyad by definition and, consequently, the conflict cannot be attributed to an ethnic dyad. However, this was the case in only one conflict (Senegal 1990-2003, see Table 1).
²³ EPR coding of West Africa (see Chapter 4.1.2.).
procedure of classification and dyadic attribution can be found in the unpublished original version of this paper (see Vogt 2007).

Note that two separately listed onsets of the same conflict with the same warring parties were combined to one sole conflict if the ceasefire/peace agreement between the conflicts lasted less than two consecutive calendar years. An extreme case was the Casamance conflict in Senegal which went on and off over a time period of more than ten years with ceasefires that never endured two consecutive calendar years.

Overall, I detected 25 separate onsets of internal conflict in West Africa from 1946 to 2005. Of these 25 conflicts, 15 were identified as ethno-nationalist conflicts, which took place in 7 different countries (see Table 1). About as many conflicts were over government (7) as over territory (8). In 4 of these 15 cases, the conflict was limited to a coup or a coup attempt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>EGIP</th>
<th>Challenging group(s)</th>
<th>Government / Territory</th>
<th>Coup (attempt)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>2002-2004</td>
<td>Kru, Baule, other Akans</td>
<td>Northerners, Southern Mande</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>No a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Americo-Liberians</td>
<td>Indigenous peoples</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia b)</td>
<td>1989-1995</td>
<td>Krahn</td>
<td>Gio, Mano</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>2000-2003</td>
<td>Americo-Liber., Gio, Mano</td>
<td>Krahn, Mandingo</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>“Whites”</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>“Whites”</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>1992-1994</td>
<td>Hausa, Djerma-Songhai, Kanouri</td>
<td>Tuareg</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Djerma-Songhai</td>
<td>Tuareg</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>Djerma-Songhai</td>
<td>Toubou</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria c)</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba</td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria d)</td>
<td>1967-1970</td>
<td>Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba</td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, Igbo</td>
<td>Ijaw</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>1990-2003</td>
<td>Wolof, Pulaar, Serer, Mandingue, Diola e)</td>
<td>Diola e)</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Kabré</td>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo d)</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Kabré</td>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa, 1946-2005

Note: “EGIP” refers to the situation in the year of conflict onset.

a) The conflict in Côte d‘Ivoire started with a failed coup attempt, but took on much larger dimensions afterwards.
b) In Liberia 1989-1995, the Mandingo were seen as regime collaborators by the rebels and, thus, also targeted. The Mandingo then started fighting alongside the Krahn forces. According to my EPR codings, the group is nevertheless not to be considered an EGIP in 1989 (politically irrelevant).
c) In Nigeria 1966, there were actually two coups within the same year: an Igbo coup against the Hausa-Fulani-dominated government in January and a counter-coup by the Hausa-Fulani in July. However, as changes within one single year cannot be covered by the EPR dataset, the conflict listed here refers only to the first coup with the Igbo as the challenging group. At the same time, though, the coding of the EGIP in 1966 already reflects the situation after the July coup. This is the case to correctly capture the situation before the Biafra war which started in 1967. Thus, both the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba are listed as EGIP in 1966 although before the January coup the Hausa-Fulani group alone dominated the Nigerian government (EPR coding of 1965). Note that this does not skew the results in my own interest. In fact, the second coup would support the theoretical argument as well (coup by the Hausa-Fulani, now politically excluded, against the new Igbo government).

d) Note that although the involved groups indicated in the table are the same as in the 1966 conflict, the two Nigerian conflicts of 1966 and 1967-1970 are clearly two separate conflicts which cannot be combined to one sole conflict. The bloody January 1966 coup concerned the government whereas the Biafran war was a territorial conflict. Furthermore, the two conflicts are separated from each other by the July 1966 counter-coup of the Hausa-Fulani, resulting in an alternation of the actor constellation in between.

e) The Diola group in Senegal was effectively split between certain elites who accepted the central government and were appointed to meaningful positions in the state apparatus and other leaders who decided to rebel (see e.g. Humphreys/Mohamed 2005). As the Diola were both an EGIP and a challenging group during the conflict, no dyad could by definition be formed and, thus, the conflict could not be included in the statistical analysis. However, this highly ambiguous case will be covered in detail in my qualitative analysis (see Chapter 11).

f) In Togo 1991, a transitory civil government, led by an Ewe, had been installed. The Kabré group, however, still held de-facto power by dominating the army. The Kabré are thus named as the only EGIP in 1991 although they conducted a bloody military coup against a (Ewe-dominated) civil government which held de-jure power. For more on this coding decision see Chapter 4.1.2.

In conflicts where more than one marginalized group challenged the EGIP at the same time, an onset of conflict was recorded for each of the corresponding dyads. Thus, in the case of the civil war in Côte d’Ivoire, for example, two ethnic dyads were coded with a conflict onset in 2002: Northerners - EGIP and Southern Mande - EGIP.

Whether the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa can be statistically traced back to the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups will be examined in the next chapter.

5. Results of the quantitative analysis

The unit of analysis in my quantitative examination is a “dyad-year”, that is, a given ethnic dyad (connecting the EGIP at the center with a politically excluded group) in a given year. To test the proposed causal link, I rely on simple logit regression models. My key independent variable is a measure of the relative demographic power of a politically excluded ethnic group. It is operationalized as the excluded group’s share of the dyadic population, or \( r(i) = \frac{s_i}{s_i + s_0} \) as defined above (see Chapter 4.1.3.).

For the statistical models I used the natural logarithm of \( r \) because of the highly skewed distribution of values. Furthermore, one can assume that the influence of the variable decreases exponentially with a group’s size since one percentage point makes a much larger difference for small groups than for large ones.

Two control variables were included in all models: a variable that counts the number of consecutive peace-years of a given dyad (peaceeth) and a time trend variable (year).

In addition to these variables, I controlled for the logged GDP per capita of a country (\( l(gdp96l) \)) in Model 2. For this I used Gleditsch’s (2002) current version (4.1) of the GDP data.
which contains information on independent states from 1950 to 2000. In Model 3, I controlled for the effect of the level of democracy/autocracy in a country. The two variables (polity2l, and the squared version polity2sq) are from version IV of the Polity index by Gurr, Jaggers, and Moore (1989).

My dependent variable in all models is the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts. In a year in which a dyadic conflict started, the variable takes the value of “1” for the dyad in question. In dyad-years with no conflict onset, the variable was coded as “0”. Ongoing years of conflict were coded as missing, since one and the same dyad cannot feature more than one conflict at a time. Overall, the probability of conflict onset for any dyad in any given year is very low (about 1.6%) due to the small number of conflicts in the sample (18 dyadic conflicts). The values of r range between 0.5% and 98%. The longest dyadic peace period lasted 48 years, the shortest 0 years. Regarding the Polity IV index, values between -9 and 8 can be found in the sample.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the logit regressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lr</td>
<td>.204** (.102)</td>
<td>.119 (.099)</td>
<td>.169* (.102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>year</td>
<td>.070*** (.018)</td>
<td>.072*** (.025)</td>
<td>.072*** (.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peaceeth</td>
<td>-.101*** (.028)</td>
<td>-.122*** (.045)</td>
<td>-.120** (.047)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lsgdp96l</td>
<td>- (.045)</td>
<td>.302 (.045)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polity2l</td>
<td>- (.1045)</td>
<td>- (.037)</td>
<td>.025 (.037)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polity2sq</td>
<td>- (.1045)</td>
<td>- (.015)</td>
<td>.004 (.015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-140.873*** (36.177)</td>
<td>-148.359*** (52.699)</td>
<td>-145.159*** (62.138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald χ²</td>
<td>28.71***</td>
<td>59.13***</td>
<td>135.07***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Results of the statistical analysis, overview
* 0.90 ** 0.95 *** 0.99

Model 1 in the second column represents the main model of the analysis. Three basic variables are included: my key theoretical variable, the dyadic power balance, the time trend variable, and the peace-years variable. All of them are statistically significant. The dyadic power balance has a clearly significant and positive effect on the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts (p = 0.045). A high value of r leads to a higher probability of conflict onset within the corresponding ethnic dyad. Thus, the larger a peripheral group’s share of the dyadic popula-
tion (i.e., the more powerful a politically excluded ethnic group is), the higher the probability of conflict onset. This effect is statistically significant despite the strong influence of the two control variables which are highly significant ($p < 0.001$). This confirms the theoretical argument that the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) increases the likelihood of an ethno-nationalist conflict.

The effect of the peace-years seems logical: The longer there has been peace within a given ethnic dyad, the more unlikely a conflict onset. As will be explained in more detail in the next chapter, this effect even has a mitigating impact on the effect of the main independent variable. The longer peace lasts within an ethnic dyad, the smaller the influence of the power balance on conflict onset. Also interesting is the time trend variable: its positive effect means that there is a historical trend towards more ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa. The risk of conflict onset has increased over the years since 1946.

This statistical analysis indeed confirms the hypothesis proposed in this study which expects the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups to be positively related to the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts. Comparing the conflict risk of the least powerful excluded group with that of the largest excluded group, the conflict probability of the latter is 0.7% higher. This is a noteworthy value considering the very low average probability of conflict onset of just 1.6%.

Moving from the shortest period of peace (0 years) to the longest (48 years), the probability of conflict onset decreases by 4%. Regarding the time trend since 1946, the risk of conflict increased by 3.4% over the years.

The explanatory model as a whole is highly significant.

In Model 2, an economic explanation for the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts is taken into account. For this purpose, the logged version of the GDP per capita variable is incorporated in the statistical model in order to test its effect on conflict onset (besides the three variables of the basic Model 1). As described above (see Chapter 1), economic explanations figure very prominently in the literature on intra-state conflicts, particularly in the region of West Africa, and the GDP variable is one of the main statistical indicators of the econometric models. The GDP variable, however, completely fails to reach statistical significance here (see Table 2, third column). Thus, according to these results, economic strength does not lower a country’s risk to experience ethno-nationalist conflict in West Africa. The economic approach to ethnic conflicts in this region is, at least, not supported by these results. It must be remembered, though, that the focus of this analysis is solely on ethno-nationalist conflicts, and it is not clear how the GDP variable would perform in an examination of all internal conflicts in West Africa.

On the other hand, the dyadic power balance variable is also insignificant in this model. By adding the GDP variable to the basic analysis of Model 1, the positive effect of $r$ is thereby lost. The correlation between the two variables is very low, so multi-collinearity is not the
case here (which would not make sense theoretically either). However, the number of cases in Model 2 is considerably smaller than in Model 1 because of missing data for the GDP variable. I thus ran the regression of Model 1 again – but with exactly the 985 cases of Model 2. The result is revealing: The power balance variable is also insignificant here. Apparently, the 142 cases, which were left out, decisively contribute to the positive effect of $r$ in Model 1. Thus, the loss of significance of my key independent variable in Model 2 is the consequence of these lost cases – rather than the effect of the GDP variable itself. It seems even probable that the dyadic power balance variable would also be significant in this model if all 1127 cases could have been included.

In any event, a significant influence of the economic variable on the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa – very much claimed in the literature – is not confirmed by this analysis. Also Model 2 is highly significant. This is due to the strong significant effect of the two control variables $peaceeth$ ($p = 0.006$) and $year$ ($p=0.004$). These results reflect the results of the basic Model 1.

Finally, I controlled for the effect of the level of democracy/autocracy in a country on the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts in Model 3 (see Table 2, fourth column). The Polity IV index is the most usual measure of the democratic development of a country (with values between -10 and 10). Its effect is generally assumed to be quadratic since the risk of conflict should decrease on both ends of the scale. Both in full democracies and strong autocracies, conflicts are unlikely to happen while the state in between (a weak autocracy or a developing democracy) is regarded as most unstable. In addition to the normal Polity IV index, I thus incorporated a squared version into the statistical model to capture this effect as well.

In this model, the dyadic power balance variable reaches statistical significance again, although at a moderate level ($p = 0.097$). Hence, even when controlled for the democratic development of a country, the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups increases the likelihood of the occurrence of an ethno-nationalist conflict. In contrast, the democracy/autocracy measure does not have a significant influence on conflict onset. Both Polity IV variables are insignificant. (Note that the squared version also features the “wrong” sign, since higher values of it should be linked to a lower risk of conflict onset.) It therefore seems likely that the nature of the political regime does not have an important impact on whether an ethno-nationalist conflict occurs in the West African countries. Neither strong autocracies nor developed democracies have prevented the outbreak of ethno-nationalist violence. This would confirm Wimmer’s theoretical argument that such conflicts can, in principle and under different circumstances, occur in all political systems.

Not surprisingly, the time trend and peace-years variables are significant at a high level ($year: p = 0.021; peaceeth: p = 0.011$) again. As such, the influence of the duration of peace
within a dyad and the trend towards more ethno-nationalist conflicts in the region are also independent of the nature of the political regimes.

This explanatory model is likewise highly significant as a whole. The statistically found influence of the dyadic power balance variable on conflict onset withstands the effect of the level of democracy/autocracy in a country, although it is weakened somewhat by it. Comparing the conflict risk of the least powerful excluded group with that of the largest excluded group in the context of this last model, the conflict probability of the latter is 0.5% higher.

Overall, my key theoretical variable, the dyadic power balance, has therefore had a significant, positive effect on the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts in two of the three statistical models tested here. A more profound analysis of the meaning of these results will follow in the next chapter.

6. Discussion of the results

The quantitative analysis of my study has focused on ethno-nationalist conflicts in the whole West African region. In the center of the analysis was the proposed causal link between “ethnicity” and the occurrence of such conflicts – very much negated in the literature, especially in this region of the world, thus making the analysis a particularly hard test for the theory. In contrast to most previous quantitative studies, ethnicity was not measured with aggregated indicators at the macro-level but at the group-level – by focusing on the power balance within ethnic dyads consisting of groups in power and politically excluded groups. Similarly, conflicts were disaggregated from the country-level to the level of ethnic dyads. The hypothesis proposed in the theoretical argument claimed that the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups increases the likelihood of the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts. More precisely, it was assumed that the larger a politically excluded ethnic group (i.e., the larger its relative demographic power), the more likely the onset of an ethno-nationalist conflict.

Overall, the results of the analysis support this claim. The main statistical model shows a significant and positive effect of the dyadic power balance variable on the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts. The more powerful a politically excluded ethnic group, the more likely such a conflict becomes. The difference between the conflict risk of the least powerful excluded group and that of the largest excluded group is substantial (0.7%) – particularly in light of the very low average probability of conflict onset (1.6%) within this limited sample. This indicates that ethnicity – if its political dimension is taken into account – does play a role in the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts. Ethnicity as the basis of political exclusion and/or discrimination can therefore lead to political conflicts and civil war.

However, the statistical analysis has also shown that a long, sustained period of peace within a given ethnic dyad has a “pacifying” effect on these ethno-political processes. The longer
this peace lasts, the more unlikely the outbreak of conflict – even in the case of political exclusion. This mitigating effect of the peace-years variable on the relationship between the dyadic power balance and conflict onset is illustrated in Figure 3.

The six curves show the effect of the exclusion variable on conflict probability in six different situations dependent on the numbers of peace-years within the ethnic dyad, from the shortest period of 0 years to the longest of 48 years. The effect is positive in all cases. As would be expected, the situation is most unstable right after a violent conflict has already occurred between two groups. In this case, the political exclusion of a powerful group almost triples the risk of the resurgence of conflict in this dyad. The effect is still clearly noticeable after a peace period of 10 years. However, after several decades of sustained peace within an ethnic dyad, the dyadic power balance loses much of its influence.

It is possible that over such a period of peace a certain social equilibrium is formed which cannot be captured by the theoretical model applied here. The political dominance of an ethnic group might be balanced, for instance, by the economic supremacy of the politically excluded group. This is possible in cases where the political hegemony of one group does not negatively affect the economic activities of the other. Although the state dominates economic life in most (West) African countries, such socio-political equilibriums can emerge under particular circumstances. The Hausa in Niger, for example, dominated the economic life of the country during the authoritarian regimes of Hamani Diori, Seyni Kountché and Ali Saibou –
even though the Djerma-Songhai very much controlled the central state. Thanks to the transborder trade with their kinship in Nigeria, the Hausa were for the most part able to avoid the negative influences of the political dominance of the Djerma-Songhai. Maybe as a consequence, ethno-nationalist conflicts could be evaded in Niger during the whole period from 1960 to 1990.

At the same time, it seems probable that during a long period of peace within an ethnic dyad, modes of conflict management are established that are – if not democratic – at least non-violent. This is in stark contrast to dyads which have just recently been involved in a violent conflict. There, peaceful interaction gives way to conflictive behavior. Examples of resurging conflicts between particular ethnic groups abound: “Whites” (Tuareg and Arabs) against Blacks in Mali in 1990 and 1994; the Gio and Mano ethnic groups against the Krahn and Mandingo in both Liberian civil wars, the Tuareg conflicts in Niger, and so on.

An exception to this trend of decreasing conflict risk after long periods of peace can be found in the case of Liberia. In 1980, the indigenous peoples violently strode against the Americo-Liberians – after 35 recorded years of peace and political dominance of the latter.24

The positive effect of the time trend variable on conflict onset means that the risk of the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa has increased since 1946. This result is in line with the results of previous examinations which detected a clear trend towards more ethno-political conflicts worldwide (see e.g. Gurr 1994; Wimmer 2004).

Interesting, however, is a look at the developments in the states of this region right after they gained independence. The theoretical model predicts the emergence of a struggle over the access to state power in newly formed nation-states. The desire to “own” the state nurtures competition between the ethnic groups, which may in the end lead to the ethnicization of political conflicts and ethno-nationalist violence. The results show that the West African states were generally quite successful in managing this interethnic competition in its early phases. Only in Nigeria did major ethno-nationalist conflicts break out soon after independence. In all other countries, large-scale conflicts could be avoided over many years. (Cases like Guinea-Bissau, Benin, or Sierra Leone, however, show that there have nevertheless often been violent conflicts between ethnic groups over the access to state power, mostly in the form of coups. They were not recorded in the dataset because of an “insufficient” number of deaths.) Most major ethno-nationalist conflicts took place much later, from around 1990 onward.

According to the theoretical model and without looking at the concrete cases yet, this would mean that either the ethnicization of political conflicts did not occur in the first years after independence or the effect was halted or moderated by other factors, be it the political system or external factors (which are not considered in the model). One could argue that in most

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24 In reality, the “peace period” lasted even longer since Liberia became independent in 1847. The conflict dataset starts in 1946.
West African states an authoritarian political system was installed soon after independence, which effectively oppressed all political opposition and simply made violent resistance impossible. Only with the beginning of the democratization process in the region beginning in 1990 was there “room” for ethno-nationalist conflicts to erupt. However, such a claim is objected by the statistical results which show the character of the political regime to be unrelated to the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts. Democratizing countries should thus not be more conflict-prone. (The squared version of the Polity IV index even features the “wrong” sign in the statistical results, indicating a positive effect of high values at both ends of the scale on conflict onset – albeit at an insignificant level.) Another potential explanation of this historical trend involves external influences which changed over the years. During the Cold War, for example, it was common for both the West and the East to support well-disposed regimes in the “Third World,” both financially and militarily. This certainly enhanced the capability of these regimes to suppress ethno-nationalist conflicts during this era. It is thus possible that the detected trend towards more ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa partly reflects the global changes after the Cold War. However, the results of my statistical analysis cannot clarify this issue.

In the economic approach to explaining (ethnic) civil wars, the GDP per capita variable has been used as a statistical proxy for a variety of theoretical concepts. It has stood for a bad income situation at the micro-level, for instance, which makes people more susceptible to recruitment (Collier/Hoeffler 2004). Yet it has also been used to represent strong/weak states (regarding finances, military, infrastructure, etc.) at the macro-level (Fearon/Laitin 2003). Although it is not quite clear what exactly this variable really measures, the GDP per capita has been one of the main statistical indicators in the econometric models.

In my analysis on the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa, the GDP per capita variable proves insignificant. It therefore seems likely that the economic situation of a country does not have an important influence on conflict onset in this region. Whether it is interpreted as facilitating recruitment of rebels or as a sign of a weak state, a country’s economic weakness does not increase its risk for experiencing ethno-nationalist conflict. Equally, economic strength does not reliably protect a country against the outbreak of such a conflict.

So far, economic explanations have dominated the research on internal conflicts in the West African region. The results of my analysis, however, do not support this approach. In contrast, they invite a broadening of perspectives and the re-incorporation of ethno-political processes into theoretical models seeking to explain internal conflicts.

The ethnic exclusion variable also lost its significant effect when the GDP variable was included in the analysis. However, this was due to the loss of a considerable number of cases in the statistical model because of missing data. Thus, the GDP variable itself does not diminish the importance and explanatory power of the ethnic exclusion factor.
It needs to be pointed out again, though, that the focus of this analysis has been solely on ethno-nationalist conflicts. It is possible that economic factors would play a more important role in an examination of all internal conflicts in West Africa.

As mentioned before, the level of democracy/autocracy has also proven unrelated to the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa. Generally it is assumed that conflicts are most likely to erupt in the unstable environment of “mixed” systems which are neither full democracies nor strong autocracies (e.g., a developing democracy). The results of my analysis do not confirm this. It rather seems that the character of the political regime does not have an important impact on the likelihood of ethno-nationalist conflicts. (Again, it must be remembered that this may look different if all internal conflicts are taken into account.) Thus, no specific type of regime has proven to be particularly conflict-prone or conflict-resistant in the West African region. This conclusion can be well documented with a few examples: The violent coup against the Americo-Liberians in Liberia in 1980 and the Biafran War in Nigeria (1967-1970) erupted in very autocratic environments (featuring both a value of -7 in the Polity IV index of that year), whereas the second Liberian civil war (2000-2003) broke out when the country reached a medium level of political freedom (0) and the 1991 conflict in Togo after the installation of a transitional government. Particularly striking in this regard are the Tuareg conflicts in both Mali and Niger. In Niger the conflict first erupted in 1992 in a democratic environment with great political freedom (Polity IV value of 8), later again (in 1997) during an authoritarian regime (-6). In Mali, it broke out in 1990, when the country was still autocratically ruled (-7), and resurfaced in 1994 in a democratic political system (7).

These observations are very much in line with the theoretical argument applied in my study. According to Wimmer’s model, ethno-nationalist conflicts can emerge in all political systems under certain circumstances. The results of my statistical analysis confirm this notion, at least for the region of West Africa.

The lack of a statistically significant effect of the character of political regimes on the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts strengthens the relevance of the found effect of the ethnic exclusion variable even more. It means that, regardless of what kind of political system a country features, the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) increases its risk to experience an ethno-nationalist conflict.

Overall, my results cast serious doubts on the claim that ethnicity is not connected to the onset of ethnic conflicts – and in fact in a region for which this claim has been particularly prominent. It seems that this link depends very much on the way the concept is measured. Here, ethnicity was seen – and operationalized – as a political issue and measured at a level which comes much closer to where the actual ethno-political processes take place in reality: namely at the group-level within dyads of central and marginalized groups.
The results of this disaggregated analysis also cast further doubts on the appropriateness of the usage of such general statistical proxies like a country’s ethnic/religious diversity to measure a socially and politically complex concept like ethnicity.

The statistical link between ethno-political exclusion/discrimination and the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts constitutes the main finding of the (quantitative) results thus far. However, various issues remain unresolved. For example, it is not clear how different degrees of political exclusion affect the likelihood of conflict onset. In my quantitative examination, I did not distinguish between discriminated groups and groups which are simply excluded, on the one hand, and between politically completely excluded groups and those that possess meaningful local power, on the other. My operationalization of politically excluded groups comprised all three variants. It seems possible – if not probable –, though, that these differences have a significant effect on the outcome. Actively discriminated groups might be more likely to initiate ethno-nationalist rebellion than simply excluded groups or groups that have local power.

Similarly, no distinction has been made between the different degrees of power holding in a coalition regime (i.e., between senior partners and junior partners). However, if a very large ethnic group appears only as a junior partner in a coalition with a small minority as senior partner, the demographically more powerful group might also feel demoted. Such a situation could therefore prove unstable as well and possibly lead to ethno-nationalist violence. In this regard, the dyadic analysis conducted here has been somewhat simplistic as it did not take into account such important nuances of the distribution of political power.

Furthermore, as in all quantitative analyses, one can only diagnose a statistical link between the variables based on these results. The actual causal mechanisms leading to ethno-nationalist conflicts have not yet been demonstrated. Examining these mechanisms is the subject of the qualitative analysis that follows in Part III.

The qualitative examination of my study, though, will not only focus on conflict cases. As shown in Part I, Wimmer’s theoretical model is much more elaborate than this basic link between ethnic exclusion and ethno-nationalist conflicts – also implying possible paths which lead to the non-occurrence of such conflicts in ethnically divided states. Thus, Wimmer’s model can also be used for the examination of “outliers”, in other words, cases for which this basic link did not work as predicted. In a number of countries the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups did not lead to ethno-nationalist conflicts. In such cases, one must examine whether this deviation can be explained with the mechanisms in Wimmer’s model or, if not, identify additional factors of influence which are not captured by the model. On the other hand, Senegal presents a unique case which was not incorporated in the statistical analysis; it experienced the emergence of an ethno-nationalist civil war while the respective ethnic group was not coded as politically excluded. This case raises the question as to how such a
conflict can erupt within an inclusionary political setting. All these questions will be examined in the following qualitative analysis.
PART III

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS
The goal of this part of the study is to widen and refine the results of the quantitative analysis by examining specific cases in greater depth and identifying the actual causal mechanisms behind the historical processes. In so doing, our knowledge about how ethno-nationalist conflicts erupt and how they can be prevented is increased.

Before outlining the methodical procedure of this qualitative examination, I will begin with a few remarks concerning the case selection.

7. Case selection

The events in several West African countries serve to exemplify the proposed link between the political exclusion of powerful, politically relevant ethnic groups and the emergence of ethno-nationalist conflicts. These typical cases – in terms of the theory outlined – include the two Igbo conflicts and the Ijaw insurgency in Nigeria, the rebellion of the “Whites” in Mali, the violent revolt of the Ewe in Togo, the bloody coup of the indigenous peoples in Liberia and many more.

On the other hand, a number of cases deviate from this logic. In these countries powerful ethnic groups were politically excluded during certain – sometimes long – periods of time, yet this did not result in an ethno-nationalist conflict. Examples of this phenomenon are the political exclusion of the Hausa in Niger between 1960 and 1990, of the Northerners in Benin from 1964 to 1967, of the Peul and Malinke in Guinea since 1986, and the political dominance of the Cape Verdeans in Guinea-Bissau until the end of 1980. In the cases of Benin and Guinea-Bissau, this ethnic exclusion did lead to coups which were clearly ethnically motivated but do not figure in the dataset because of an “insufficient” number of deaths. In other cases, however, the ethnic exclusion remained without direct consequences in the form of ethno-nationalist conflicts.

The units of analysis of my qualitative study will not be countries per se, however, but – analogous to the quantitative analysis – ethnic dyads within the countries. Particularly interesting from the dyadic perspective is the case of Côte d’Ivoire, for which we find both of the above-mentioned constellations over the course of the country’s history in two different ethnic dyads. On the one hand, the Kru group was coded as “powerless” between 1960 and 1999 until the election of Laurent Gbagbo, a Kru, to the presidency in 2000 – with no conflicts recorded in the dataset during the whole period. On the other hand, the political discrimination of Northerners from 1994 onward was followed by a northern rebellion and civil war in 2002. Côte d’Ivoire therefore allows us to examine both a theory-confirmative and a deviating case in one and the same political setting. For this reason, the two ethnic dyads Northerners - EGIP and Kru - EGIP in Côte d’Ivoire are chosen as the first two cases of my analysis.

25 See Chapter 4.1.2. for explanations on this coding.
It is clear that the developments in the two cases overlap with each other. This raises the problem of a possible dependency and mutual influences on each other. However, the qualitative analysis will allow me to adequately deal with these possible interrelations. Moreover, the deviant no-conflict-case (Kru - EGIP) is temporally located before the conflict outbreak in the case of the northerners and as such is not biased by the event of the conflict.

As mentioned above, Senegal’s ethno-nationalist conflict from 1990 to 2003 could not be included in the statistical analysis, as the rebelling group, the Diola, was coded as part of the EGIP. This results in a third type of constellations regarding ethnic exclusion and ethno-nationalist conflict: an ethnic group that becomes engaged in a rebellion despite political inclusion. My third case, therefore, is the ethnic dyad Diola - EGIP in Senegal.

Overall, 3 dyadic cases will be examined in my qualitative analysis:

- Northerners - EGIP (Côte d’Ivoire)
- Kru - EGIP (Côte d’Ivoire)
- Diola - EGIP (Senegal)

Thus, one theory-confirmative case stands vis-a-vis two cases which – at first view – contradict the theoretical argument. Figure 4 illustrates the three ethno-political constellations – from the perspective of the theory applied – addressed in the qualitative analysis.

![Figure 4: Ethno-political constellations and selected cases](image)

All three cases will be used to test the proposed causal mechanisms in Wimmer’s theoretical model. The question addressed to the theory-confirmative case is: Does the theoretical

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26 See Chapter 4.2. For explanations on this coding decision, see Chapter 4.1.2.
27 To simplify matters, I use the term “dyad” here, although – if keeping strictly with the theoretical definition of “ethnic dyad” – the Diola group, which itself was part of the EGIP, does not form a dyad with the center.
model correctly capture the relevant causal mechanisms underlying the events which led to
the outbreak of an ethno-nationalist conflict?
The questions regarding the deviating cases: Is the picture of these cases sketched in the
quantitative part valid? And if so, can the deviation from the basic logic be explained with the
causal mechanisms in Wimmer’s broader theoretical model – or are factors responsible for
this which are not captured by the model?

8. Methodical approach

The analysis is composed of 3 case studies. Case studies aspire to uncover the causal
mechanisms at work in a specific case, that is, the “independent, stable factors that under
certain conditions link causes to effects” (George/Bennett 2005). They do not simply investi-
gate the existence and values of independent and dependent variables but explore how
these variables are linked to each other and how the underlying causal processes work.
To trace the links between possible causes and observed outcomes I will rely on the method
of process-tracing as proposed by Van Evera (1997). Here, the important task in the re-
search process is the division of the cause-effect link(s) between the independent variable(s)
and the outcome into smaller steps. Then the empirical reality is checked for observable evi-
dence of each of these steps in a given case. Evidence for a theory’s validity is therefore
sought in the sequence and structure of the events (Van Evera 1997: 64-5). Based on the
applied theory, expectations are stated about what should be observed in a given case if the
theory is valid. Then the case is explored looking for congruence or incongruity between ex-
pectations and observations (Van Evera 1997: 56).
The advantage of this method within the context of my study is its ability to deal with complex
causal relations (like multiple causal links or interaction effects). Such complex relations ob-
viously predominate in the theoretical model applied here.
Note that my focus is on process-tracing within cases rather than on comparisons across
cases. The approach of this qualitative study is not a comparative one.
The data upon which the empirical observations rely stem from historical research or previ-
ous studies by political scientists on the countries in question. My case studies are thus
based on “secondary analysis”.
Wimmer’s causal model is well suited for the process-tracing method since it is composed of
a chain of clearly identifiable steps. From this model a slightly adapted “causal chain” is de-
duced (Figures 5-8) – both for the occurrence and the absence of ethno-nationalist conflicts
in ethnically divided states – to which the historical events are compared. It consists of four
successional causal mechanisms. For each of these mechanisms, concrete, testable expec-
tations are formulated for what we would expect to see in the empirical reality of a given case
if the causal mechanisms effectively work as proposed by the theory.
Sign of the “ethnicization of the bureaucracy” is when ethnicity – i.e., the ethnic origin of persons – matters in politics and the administration of a country (e.g., in the distribution of posts).

“Struggle over the access to the state” is an extremely difficult concept to measure. But a sign of it could be the emergence of interest groups/parties/bureaucratic networks which represent the interests of specific ethnic groups.

However, in any event, the incidence of this process is seen as given in the cases which will be examined here, as ethnicity has already been marked as playing a significant role in all of the countries included in this study. This also makes sense since the basic premises in Wimmer’s model – scarce state resources and state formation before the emergence of a democratic civil society – match the reality in all West African states very well.

Figure 5: The "causal chain", first mechanism

Figure 6: The "causal chain", second mechanism

28 The causal mechanisms illustrated in Figures 5 through 8 are based on Wimmer’s (1997: 652) causal model.
To speak of the political exclusion of elites of certain ethnic groups, I expect the occupation of the crucial positions in the state apparatus (cabinet, etc.) with members of (an-)other ethnic group(s). Members of the affected group should not be found in positions with real power. In the case of such an ethnically based exclusion, I expect the excluded elites to initiate public protest against this “ethnic injustice”. The political leaders are expected to make appeals to ethnicity when competing for support.

Figure 7: The "causal chain", third mechanism

As signs of the unequal distribution of the state’s goods I expect to see, for example, regionally unequal investment in development projects and infrastructure as well as the existence of social, political or economic rights available exclusively to certain parts of the population. As signs of the unequal distribution of the state’s costs I expect to see, for instance, exploitation of raw materials of certain regions by the central state, unequal charge of taxes, appropriation of land by the central state or violent repression against certain groups. The excluded elites are expected to make appeals to these inequalities, marking them as ethnic discrimination in their public discourse and portraying themselves as fighting this discrimination. Consequently, the unequal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs is perceived as ethnic discrimination by broader masses of the affected ethnic group(s).

As signs of ethno-political mobilization, I expect public mass protests and violent riots of (a) certain ethnic group(s) or small-scale attacks on state representatives/property by members of this/these group(s) to occur. In multi-party systems leaders/parties should receive support

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29 Wimmer (1997: 637) even calls the ethnicization of the bureaucracy and the subsequent struggle over access
mainly from their own *ethnies* (or regions that are inhabited by these *ethnies*).

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**Figure 8: The "causal chain", fourth mechanism**

The ethnicization of political conflicts leads to the outbreak of an ethno-nationalist conflict (as defined in Chapter 2.2.) under the following circumstances:

- an ethnicized majoritarian multi-party system
- a shift of power balance in consociational democracy
- a weakening of the central force or violent repression in dictatorship
- democratization/shrinkage of state resources in one-party system

In order to be precise, this "causal chain" focuses on the *escalation* of ethnic conflicts. However, ethnically motivated military coups without mass participation can also be located in this model, namely as a special form of "middle class" upheaval with army officers as the disaffected elites (in cases where the "locus of power" is not the military itself).

It is now time to examine the selected cases using this methodical procedure in order to answer the questions posed above.

In each case, the ethnic landscape of the respective country and the historical events are presented first. (Naturally, this part is cut back in the case of the Kru in Côte d’Ivoire since the developments overlap – at least partly – with the case of the northerners.) These empirical observations are then compared to the stated expectations using the illustrated causal...

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to state power “practically ubiquitous” in the ethnically heterogeneous “Third World” countries.
mechanisms of Wimmer’s model. I will begin with the theory-confirmative case in order to carefully address the proposed mechanisms first.

9. 1st case study: Northerners - EGIP (Côte d’Ivoire)

9.1. The ethnic landscape

Côte d’Ivoire consists of over 60 ethnic groups. The 4 major cultural regions are the East Atlantic (southeast), West Atlantic (southwest), Voltaic/Gur (northeast) and Mandé (northwest). In addition, the Southern Mande peoples form a culturally distinct ethnic grouping.

East Atlantic cultures are generally Akan peoples. The politically most important Akan group are the Baule. The nation-state’s “founder”, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, was a Baule and the group has long dominated the political and social life in Côte d’Ivoire (Kanté 1994: 144). Other Akan groups are the Abron, Agni, Nzima, and the Lagoon peoples (Seibel 1987: 3). These groups are only politically relevant in their differentiation to the dominant Baule. Here they were thus combined into one single politically relevant ethnic group. In 1998, Akans made up about 42% of the total population (Toungara 2001: 65), the Baule group alone 20%.

The southwest is traditionally inhabited by Kru peoples, for example, the Bété, Guéré, Wé, Dida and others, which make up about 11% of the population (Toungara 2001: 65). The Bété are the largest and politically most important Kru group.

Northerners constitute about one-third of Ivoirians, almost evenly split between the Mande and Voltaic peoples (16.5% and 17.6%, respectively) (CIA World Factbook 2007). In contrast to the southern part, the north of Côte d’Ivoire is mainly Muslim. The Mande group consists of the Malinke and Dioula ethnic groups; the Voltaic group of Senoufo, Lobi, Kulango and others (Seibel 1987: 3). The northerners were combined into one single politically relevant ethnic group here as they were blanketly seen as one ethnic bloc by the southern peoples – not least of which due to their shared Muslim faith. This indiscriminate mixture started much earlier than the ethnic tensions escalated and was mirrored in the fact that Ivoirians used a global term (“Dioula”) to refer to northerners in general (Chappell 1989: 681; Skogseth 2006: 11).

The Southern Mande peoples (Yacouba/Dan, Gouro etc.) inhabit the western region between the Kru in the south and the nuclear Mande in the north. They make up about 12% of the population (Seibel 1987: 3).

Map 2 depicts this ethno-political landscape. It must be pointed out, though, that this map shows only the traditional settlement areas of the ethnic groups – ignoring the demographic movements which resulted from the massive migration (especially of Baule and northerners to the southwest) due to cocoa cultivation.
9.2. Empirical observations: The “chain of events“

From its independence from France in 1960 until 1990, Côte d'Ivoire was a strict one-party system ruled by a strong president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and his party, the Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI). The PDCI had emerged as the Ivorian section of the interterritorial Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), a political party in French West Africa that advocated independence from France and was connected to the Syndicat Agricole.
Africain (SAA), an agricultural syndicate of Ivorian planters. These two organizations were also led by Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

During Houphouët-Boigny’s rule (1960-1993) the country was considered to be an African model state (the “Ivoirian miracle”) for stability and progress. In the economic sphere, revenues from the country’s two main export products – cocoa and coffee – resulted in remarkable economic growth with real GDP growth rates of more than 7% per year during the first 20 years (Langer 2005: 30; Skogseth 2006: 13; Woods 2003: 647).

In the political sphere, Houphouët was successful at keeping the country stable. This achievement mainly rested on three pillars: On the one hand, Houphouët benefited from his personal charisma and his reputation as the “father of the nation” which he had acquired as the country’s political leader during the colonial period.

In addition, Houphouët’s regime, friendly to French interests, was stoutly backed by France. The French retained a substantial military presence in Côte d’Ivoire (Langer 2005: 30).

Thirdly, Houphouët proved extremely skillful in dissolving potential opposition and binding the important political elites to the system. With the help of the spoils of the export economy, he distributed lucrative posts in the party, state apparatus and state-run companies to consolidate his power base in a perfectly clientelistic system – without having to rely too much on repression (Crook 1997: 216; Chappell 1989: 687; Kanté 1994: 129). Indeed, Côte d’Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny can be considered the prototype of a clientelistic one-party system. Implicit in this clientelistic system was a carefully ensured ethnic and regional balance. Sure, Houphouët’s own ethnic group was dominant in the political, economic and social life (Kanté 1994: 144; Langer 2005: 39), and the inner circle of state power and the state-run companies were mainly made up of Baule (Jakobeit 1984: 31; Chappell 1989: 690). But all important ethnic groups and regions were proportionally represented in the government, on the party lists for the National Assembly elections, in the state apparatus and the military (Kanté 1994: 119; Jakobeit 1984: 18; Langer 2005: 31, 40, 42; Skogseth 2006: 24; Chappell 1989: 688).

Houphouët always portrayed his PDCI as a pan-ethnic party and prohibited any manifestation of ethnicity. Associations based on race or tribal origins were even outlawed by the constitution (Woods 1994: 467-8). In this way, he achieved a certain degree of elite assimilation and inter-ethnic clientelism and alliance (Kanté 1994: 120, 130, 132; Langer 2005: 42).

Not least the northerners were an important part of this political cooperation. Under Houphouët-Boigny, they were always included in the higher circles of political power (Langer 2005: 40; Kanté 1994: 133; Dozon 1985b: 58). Still in 1991, the national convention of the PDCI elected a northerner as the party’s Secretary-General (Vogel 1991). This strong position was due to the historical alliance between northern leaders and Houphouët’s Baule group: The SAA and its political arm, the RDA, represented the interests of the owners of large plantations from the country’s southeast (Dozon 1985a: 342-3; Woods 2003: 644)
which were in great need of workforce from the north (Woods 2003: 654). Thus, Houphouët allied himself with the Senoufo chiefly family of Korhogo and used the RDA’s northern networks in his struggle against forced labor (Crook 1997: 225). The SAA was soon dominated by Baule and their northern transport-trader partners (Chappell 1989: 686). Northerners were also represented very early in the ranks of its political arm, the RDA (Dozon 1985b: 58). After independence the government’s need for labor to expand the lucrative cocoa production increased further, so it supported the migration of work-seeking northerners to the plantations of the southwest. The northerners, as a consequence, gave Houphouët’s ruling party PDCI their political support (Collett 2006: 616, 620, 623; Skogseth 2006: 24, 26; Woods 2003: 654). The symbiosis of economic interests led to a political alliance between the Baule and the northerners (Dozon 1985b: 58; Skogseth 2006: 26; Woods 2003: 649). However, at the same time, this carefully achieved balance implicitly recognized ethnicity as an important factor in Ivoirian politics (Chappell 1989: 688). Houphouët himself used it as justification for his one-party regime (Jakobeit 1984: 21). Ethnicity was thus already omnipresent in Ivoirian politics and used by the different elite factions within the party as political capital in their competition for power and limited resources. Ethnic associations were euphemistically registered as home-town associations by the government (Woods 1994: 468).

Over the course of the years, several problematic issues came to the fore which eventually resulted in a severe economic and political crisis at the beginning of the 1990s.

Awarding elites for their compliance with state posts included the permission to take advantage of these posts for personal enrichment. Houphouët explicitly called on the co-opted elites to enrich themselves. By doing so, he turned the state and its resources into loot for these elites – with the effect that they would defend the clientelistic state structures at all costs (Kanté 1994: 120-4; Chappell 1989: 689). A large portion of the cocoa and coffee export revenues was spent for this patrimonialist consolidation of power. They alone made this stable clientelistic system possible. Between 1967 and 1990 the personnel costs of the public sector rose from 9.64% to 73.3% of the state budget (Kanté 1994: 153)!

Despite some attempts at economic diversification, Côte d’Ivoire was never able to reduce its dependency on commodity prices. When the world market prices collapsed in the 1980s, the country’s resources began to shrink and the clientelistic system became a severe burden for the country – resulting in a grave financial crisis with large budget deficits and a growing national debt. Already by 1987 Côte d’Ivoire was almost bankrupt (Skogseth 2006: 13). At the same time, another problematic issue of Houphouët’s strategy came to the fore. His long-standing alliance with the north had been complemented by a very liberal “open door” policy regarding immigration, including liberal land ownership laws (Langer 2005: 30; Crook 1997: 222). With the country’s agriculture in great need of workforce, he encouraged foreign

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30 For more on the migration to the southwest and its consequences, see Chapter 10.
Africans to come to work in the country. These immigrants stemmed overwhelmingly from Côte d'Ivoire’s northern neighbors – especially Burkina Faso, but from Mali as well (Skogseth 2006: 9). Burkinabé immigrants were ethnically linked with the Voltaic peoples, Malians with the Mande peoples (Skogseth 2006: 8). By 1998 foreigners officially accounted for 26% of the total population – though about half of them had actually been born in Côte d’Ivoire (Toungara 2001: 65; Langer 2005: 30). Houphouët granted them essentially the same rights as to Ivoirians – not least the rights to vote and to purchase land. Grateful for his “hospitality” they always voted for him and formed an important base of support for the PDCI (Crook 1997: 222; Collett 2006: 623; Skogseth 2006: 6; Woods 2003: 648). However, as the question of citizenship was never really addressed, over the course of the years it became very difficult to distinguish between foreign immigrants and “original” Ivoirians from the north, and the two groups became more and more conflated in the popular perception and the political discourse (Collett 2006: 620, 624-5; Vogel 1991; Woods 2003: 652). During the economic crisis, aversion against the large foreign population and xenophobic violence started to increase in the cities, but also in the cocoa region of the southwest – emanating both from Kru and Baule farmers – where many of the immigrants worked and land resources had become scarcer (Langer 2005: 31; Crook 1997: 223; Collett 2006: 620; Woods 2003: 650).

Moreover, a growing economic disequilibrium could be observed between the privileged south and the more and more marginalized north. Already in the colonial period, the southern part had been the object of the most significant investment by the French rulers, since the country’s valuable resources are concentrated there (Collett 2006: 619). The development policies after independence continued with this pattern for the most part. In 1974, the four northern departments had a significantly lower per capita income than Côte d’Ivoire’s national average (Langer 2005: 35; Collett 2006: 619; Chappell 1989: 692). The disparity also expressed itself in a clearly underdeveloped public health system (access to medical care), education sector (school enrolment rates) and other socio-economic conditions in the north (Jakobeit 1984: 62; Langer 2005: 36-8; Collett 2006: 620). In the 1970s, Houphouët attempted to address these disparities by increasing public investment in the northern region, but with the economic crisis of the 1980s the funds dried up again (Collett 2006: 619; Langer 2005: 35-6). The ongoing process of depletion led to the massive migration of northerners to the south and a growing consciousness of northern identity (Jakobeit 1984: 62; Collett 2006: 620).

The socio-economic crisis of the late 1980s finally led to student protests and demonstrations by the (officially illegal) political opposition in 1990. In order to restore political stability, Houphouët decided to legalize opposition parties and introduce a multi-party political system in May 1990 (Crook 1997: 220). The main opposition party in the 1990 elections was the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) led by Laurent Gbagbo, a Bété. In his campaign Gbagbo made
use of xenophobic propaganda reproaching the government that they were responsible for the flooding of the country with foreign workers (Crook 1997: 222-3; Woods 2003: 649). He thus heated up the increasing anti-foreigner sentiments in the population to gain votes. Nevertheless, Houphouët, the “father of the nation,” won by a vast margin (Crook 1997: 220). During the following legislative period Houphouët’s state of health worsened and the question about his succession got increasingly acute. At the same time the country was struggling with its massive national debt and shrinking incomes. To accomplish the necessary structural reforms Houphouët had appointed Alassane Ouattara – a recognized economist and former IMF manager who came from the Muslim north of Côte d’Ivoire – as prime minister. Ouattara was a newcomer in Côte d’Ivoire’s politics and willing to undertake drastic political changes that also threatened the clientelistic system (Crook 1997: 223-4). He was quite successful in his task of restoring the country’s economy which yielded him considerable political support. However, when he publicly admitted his interest in becoming president, he triggered the already latent power struggle among the elites of the PDCI and also the FPI opposition over Houphouët’s succession (Crook 1997: 224; Kanté 1994: 194-5). The leader of the old PDCI guard – which tried to save their privileges – was Henri Konan Bédié, president of the National Assembly and designated successor of Houphouët (and also a Baule). Supported by his loyal PDCI followers, he obstructed many of the Ouattara government’s policies in the Assembly. He could count on the help of the opposition which tried to harm Ouattara who was seen as a dangerous future opponent. Ouattara’s support came from a reformist group of technocrats within the PDCI (Kanté 1994: 194-5; Crook 1997: 224).

After Houphouët’s death in 1993 the power struggle escalated. According to the constitution Bédié succeeded to the presidency. He refused to schedule immediate new elections, and Ouattara resigned as prime minister and accepted a new job at the IMF in Washington. The different elite groups struggling for power then began to solidify. The pro-Ouattara reformist group founded their own party, the Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR). The RDR was not at all an exclusively northern party in its beginning – despite Ouattara’s northern origin – and did not have a regionalist message. In fact, four of its first nine deputies stemmed from the south and the center (Crook 1997: 226).

Nevertheless, it was clear that the RDR had great electoral potential in the north and thus represented a serious political threat to Bédié (Langer 2005: 32; Crook 1997: 225). Particularly alarming was an anonymous document called the “Charter of the North” which demanded, among other things, greater political recognition of the north’s “political loyalty”, an ending of “Baule nepotism” and the reduction of regional economic inequalities (Crook 1997: 226). In an aggressive move to retain his power, Bédié adopted the FPI’s strategy of

31 For more on this and on the role of Laurent Gbagbo, see Chapter 10 where the case of the Kru is analyzed.
nationalist, xenophobic propaganda. He portrayed the RDR as a northern regionalist party with a Muslim agenda – based on its allegiance to Ouattara (Crook 1997: 225; Collett 2006: 623-4). Moreover, he developed the concept of “ivoirité” for his propaganda, a nationalist slogan that distinguished between “real” Ivoirians (basically the people from the south) and immigrants from the northern neighboring countries who should not be entitled to Ivoirian citizenship. Consequently, the government began to limit the access of northerners and immigrants to public services (Toungara 2001: 67), and in 1994 it introduced a new electoral law that effectively determined what it meant to be a “true” Ivoirian: Candidates for the Presidency and the National Assembly had to be born in the country with both parents also Ivoirians by birth. Furthermore, foreigners were no longer allowed to vote (Langer 2005: 33; Crook 1997: 228; Collett 2006: 625; Woods 2003: 649). Of course this law was directly targeted at Ouattara whose origins are somewhat unclear. (It is said that his father was from Burkina Faso. Ouattara, however, was still in Washington at the time and had – at this point – never officially announced his candidacy!). With this move, though, Bédié not only excluded a particular group of elites from access to the state. Because of the blurry boundary between northern Ivoirians and foreign immigrants, he also excluded millions of ordinary northerners – who now more than ever became equated with immigrants – from the “national community” (Langer 2005: 33; Collett 2006: 625; Skogseth 2006: 15; Woods 2003: 652). Furthermore, he started to purge the state apparatus, the party and the government media of Ouattara loyalists, also sacking many respected technocrats of northern origins, and filled the state’s bureaucracy and the government with Baule elites loyal to himself. The military’s ethnic composition (especially the higher command positions) was changed in favor of the Baule, too (Crook 1997: 226; Langer 2005: 33, 41; Skogseth 2006: 14). This effectively ended the historical alliance of the Baule group and the PDCI with the north (Crook 1997: 225; Woods 2003: 649).

Before the 1995 elections, the two rival opposition parties FPI and RDR formed an alliance for the purpose of removing Bédié from power. They protested against the new electoral code that impeded a possible presidential candidacy of Ouattara with violent demonstrations (Crook 1997: 229-230). Incited by Gbagbo who wanted the party for his ethno-regional coalition building, the RDR started to answer the ethnic and nationalist slogans of Bédié’s PDCI using the same propagandistic language. Adopting the discourse of the “Charter of the North”, it talked about Baule domination of the country and portrayed Bédié’s moves as systematic discrimination against the north and the electoral code as a deliberate exclusion of Ouattara and of northern voters who might have voted for him (Crook 1997: 229; Collett 2006: 624). The violence in the streets increased: Deadly clashes arose between the police and demonstrators, and prefectures and court buildings were burnt down in the cities of Daloa and Bouaké (Crook 1997: 232). As the electoral code was not changed, the opposition
finally announced its total boycott of the elections – a “boycott actif”, though, meaning an active sabotage of the elections (Crook 1997: 233). The opposition press played a crucial role in this by heating up the ethnic tensions. They attacked the ethnic character of the government – the “Baule dominance” – and publicly encouraged opposition supporters to resort to violence. PDCI headquarters and government offices were burnt down by mobs and prefects chased away. Some opposition strongholds were even cut off by road blocks (Crook 1997: 233-4).

The elections, however, took place and Bédié resoundingly won against his only opponent Francis Wodié from the Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs (PIT) (Crook 1997: 235). The alliance between the FPI and the RDR then quickly disintegrated, and in the following legislative elections they participated separately. The votes spoke a clear language: The RDR won all but one of its seats in the north, the FPI in the same prefectures of the southwest and centre-west as in the 1990 elections – a pattern which recurred in the municipal elections of 1996 (Crook 1997: 237-240).

Bédié’s ongoing nationalist politics led to state reprisals against northerners, the forced removal of Burkinabé workers and the denial of citizenship to foreigners and to northerners who were accused of being immigrants. It also triggered xenophobic violence against northerners (Toungara 2001: 67-8; Skogseth 2006: 15-6; Woods 2003: 641, 652). When Ouattara returned to the country in July 1999, he was appointed party leader and presidential candidate of the RDR which had become a truly northern party now (Collett 2006: 624).

However, before the 2000 elections could take place, Côte d’Ivoire underwent its first military coup in December 1999. A military junta led by General Robert Gueï, a Yacouba, took over state power and formed a transitory government in January 2000 which promoted the idea of national integration and included all parties (Langer 2005: 34, 41). Yet just four months later Gueï changed his political objectives and excluded the RDR from his second transitional government. Moreover, the new constitution introduced in July 2000 still contained the controversial electoral code. In practice, Gueï had now adopted Bédié’s exclusionary policies (Langer 2005: 34, 41; Collett 2006: 626; Skogseth 2006: 17). Moreover, he formed a political alliance with Gbagbo and his Kru followers (Langer 2005: 41). Soon after, the Supreme Court rejected Ouattara’s candidacy for both presidential and legislative elections. It also disqualified the presidential candidate of the PDCI. After a failed coup attempt of northern military officers, several senior officers of northern origin were dismissed (Skogseth 2006: 16). Against contrary announcements Gueï launched his own candidacy for the October 2000 elections with Laurent Gbagbo, his close collaborator, as the only serious rival remaining. Apparently to his own surprise, Gueï lost the elections, and when he tried to rig the votes Gbagbo’s party militants (with the help of northern military forces) chased him into exile. Gbagbo then proclaimed himself president. The RDR, having peacefully boycotted the vote,
called for new elections – without success. In large-scale street protests, its supporters clashed with the security forces and radical FPI followers. The country’s crisis was now overwhelmingly perceived as a conflict between north and south (Collett 2006: 625, 627; Woods 2003: 641).

By excluding the RDR from his first government, Gbagbo almost completely inhibited the political participation of northerners. The PDCI, on the other hand, entered into a coalition with the FPI (Skogseth 2006: 29) – thus further cementing the north-south cleavage. In line with his political campaign before, Gbagbo also perpetuated the nationalist politics of “Ivoirité” (Langer 2005: 34, 40-2). The security forces increasingly terrorized northern civilians, equating them with foreign immigrants and intentionally destroying their ID documents (Skogseth 2006: 23; Woods 2003: 642, 652, 654). A mass grave near Yopougon, a neighborhood of Abidjan, with around 60 dead bodies of young northerners, slaughtered by the security forces, was later found (Langer 2005: 34; Skogseth 2006: 17).

After boycotting the National Assembly elections of December 2000 and January 2001, the RDR participated in the municipal elections in March 2001 and won the highest number of communal seats. It not only gained control of all northern but also of some of the largest southern towns. The PDCI derived its greatest support from the Baule (and other Akan groups) in the southeast, the FPI from the Kru groups in the southwest (Toungara 2001: 71).

On September 19, 2002, rebellious soldiers attacked the cities of Abidjan, Bouaké and Korhogo. The rebellion failed in Abidjan (where Gueï was killed) but was successful in the other two places resulting in the outbreak of a civil war. The rebels – the Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d’Ivoire (MPCI) – quickly took the north and after several months of fighting, a ceasefire line was installed which effectively split the country in two halves. In their official statements, the MPCI’s leaders – like Guillaume Soro, a Catholic from the north – based their insurgency upon the issues of nationality and identity cards. They claimed to fight for equal rights and against the existing ethnic injustice and the exclusion of the people from the north (Gberie 2004; Langer 2005: 35).

Despite several peace agreements and successive governments of national reconciliation, the basic issues have not yet been resolved between the two parties, and the country’s division has continued until today. The planned presidential elections have been postponed several times.

9.3. Expectations and observations: Discussion of the causal mechanisms

Despite a certain degree of inter-ethnic clientelism under Houphouët, ethnicity was used by different elite factions as political capital in their competition for power and limited resources. Thus already under Houphouët, the ethnicization of the state apparatus and ethnic clientelism were a reality and consequently led to a struggle over the access to the state (see Figure
Limited state resources and lack of a democratic civil society before state formation: Main syndicate, e.g., only represents wealthy owners of large plantations at the expense of small farmers.

**Figure 9: Northerners - EGIP, first causal mechanism**

The increasing exclusion of northern elites from the state apparatus under Bédié, Gueï and Gbagbo can be seen in innumerous instances. The public discourse on ethnic injustice by the excluded elites followed promptly. Thus, the causal mechanism proposed by the theoretical model, which links the political exclusion of the elites of a certain ethnic group to the politicization of ethnic differences, can clearly be observed in this case (see Figure 10).

**Ethnicization of the bureaucracy through ethnic balance, candidates chosen on ethnic grounds: Ethnic origin did matter in politics.**

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**Ethnic (“home-town”) associations founded by elites of all ethnic groups**

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**Exclusion of northern elites after Houphouët’s death:**
Electoral code introduced by Bédié; concept of “Ivoirité”; Bédié’s purge of state apparatus; exclusion of RDR from Gueï’s second transitional government and under Gbagbo; Bédié and Gbagbo’s filling of state apparatus and military with elites of their own ethnic groups.

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**Politicization of ethnic differences by the excluded northern elites:**
Public discourse on ethnic/regional injustice initiated with “Charter of the North”; appeals by RDR to ethnicity, especially referring to the discriminating electoral code, in forefront of the 1995 elections.

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**Figure 10: Northerners - EGIP, second causal mechanism**

The sequence and structure of the events strongly suggest that because of the public appeals of politicians, the existing inequalities started to be perceived as ethnic discrimination.

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32 Cp. the causal mechanisms of the theoretical model illustrated in Chapter 8 (Figures 5-8) in each case.
by the northern population (see Figure 11). This led to the ethnicization of political conflicts in Côte d’Ivoire and the mobilization of northerners as an ethno-political bloc.

In the face of the reprisals they underwent, northerners saw themselves obliged to fight for equal rights and inclusion within the nation. The ethnicization of political conflicts, therefore, seems to be clearly at the root of the civil war in Côte d’Ivoire.

After the collapse of Houphouët’s clientelistic system, the shrinking state resources and the democratization process stimulated the development of this case. The influence of these two (interlinked) factors on the escalation of ethno-nationalist conflicts in one-party systems is manifest in the case of the northerners in Côte d’Ivoire (see Figure 12).
The question regarding this theory-confirmative case was whether the theoretical model correctly reflects the causal mechanisms beneath the mere link between ethnic exclusion and ethno-nationalist conflict. The described results indicate that the causal mechanisms proposed by Wimmer’s model were necessary conditions for and sufficiently explain the origin of the Ivoirian civil war. As will be discussed below, though, the particularly great extent of the political exclusion in this case (active discrimination) most probably had an influence as well.

10. 2\textsuperscript{nd} case study: Kru - EGIP (Côte d’Ivoire)

10.1. Empirical observations: The “chain of events”

The Kru group adopted a unique position within this sociopolitical realm in Côte d’Ivoire under Houphouët-Boigny that was described above (Dozon 1985b: 65). Politically, the Bété subgroup has always been in the forefront of the Kru (Dozon 1985b: 58). Delayed integration of the Kru territory into the colonial system led to a backlog of development and to the Kru getting stigmatized as a backward people. They got the role of the sub-workers and subordinates within the Ivoirian population, being called “cannibals” (Dozon 1985b: 67-8; Chappell 1989: 681). In addition, they refused to cultivate cocoa on large, collective plantations (Dozon 1985b: 69).

Cocoa cultivation started in the east and then moved to the west. The Baule were in the forefront of the "cocoa front" (Woods 2003: 647, 650-1). Already during the colonial period, a massive

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33 See Chapter 12.
34 For more details regarding Houphouët’s rule see Chapter 9.2.
migratory movement to the southwest and centre-west took place, transforming the region into a zone of internal agricultural colonization (Dozon 1985b: 56, 73). The Baule, the major cocoa entrepreneurs and large planters who led this movement, also brought migrant workers – consisting of northerners and foreign immigrants (especially from Burkina Faso) – to the region. Migration was so vast that in certain areas the Kru became a minority in their own territory (Dozon 1985b: 69-71; Skogseth 2006: 7, 13; Woods 2003: 647). The autochthonous population – for the most part small farmers – was now confronted with a "rural bourgeoisie" of immigrants comprised of the large planters (especially Baule, but also some northerners) and the (northern) traders and transporters (Dozon 1985a: 342-3).

During this time, the French permitted the formation of political parties. Both the RDA and later its Ivoirian section, the PDCI, were controlled by the large planters whose interests they represented. The small farmers from the southwest were excluded (Dozon 1985a: 343; Collett 2006: 618). Consequently, most Kru supported the RDA's rival, the Mouvement Socialiste Africain (MSA). The MSA intended to regulate the migration to the southwest and the uncontrolled allocation of land and to combat the increasing impoverishment of the autochthones (Dozon 1985a: 342-3; Dozon 1985b: 77-9). Thus, despite Houphouët's charisma, his RDA was not considered a wholly national party as it could not represent the interests of the small farmers in the southwest (Dozon 1985a: 343; Collett 2006: 618).

Although the MSA disappeared from the political scene after independence, the Kru remained marked by this historical opposition to the RDA and began to feel the discriminatory practices of political power (Dozon 1985b: 59, 83). Within Houphouët-Boigny's one-party regime, the Kru (especially the Bété) – though represented in the state apparatus (Dozon 1985b: 57; Langer 2005: 31, 40) – had little political weight, and their participation in the central power was very limited. Whereas the northerners benefited from their historical alliance with the Baule and were well represented in the regime, the Kru were confronted with distrust. They hardly had any representatives on the level of state power who deserved this name (Dozon 1985b: 57-8, 80, 83; Dozon 1985a: 351; Collett 2006: 620, 623; Chappell 1989: 686; Crook 1997: 225; Woods 2003: 649, 654). This political inequality between the east and the west led to serious (economic) disadvantages for the Kru (Dozon 1985b: 58; Lemarchand 1972: 85). In the 1970s, for example, the centre-west (the Bété region) was clearly the taillight in regard to received public investment per capita (Langer 2005: 36)\textsuperscript{35}. As a result of these developments both before and after independence, the Kru formed a quite cohesive, sometimes latent, sometimes manifest opposition to the Ivoirian central power, directly targeting the structures and orientations of Houphouët's regime (Dozon 1985b: 59, 77; Dozon 1985a: 351; Skogseth 2006: 25; Collett 2006: 618; Woods 2003: 654).

\textsuperscript{35} The northern region, on the other hand, obtained 18 times as much public investment as the centre-west!
The massive migratory movement to the southwest – based on the ever increasing cocoa production – continued after independence. In the numerous disputes over the abusive allocation of land, the Ivoirian authorities overwhelmingly decided in favor of the allochthonous settlers and against the Kru – in accordance with Houphouët’s famous declaration: “La terre est à celui qui la cultive!” Baule settlers could count on their group’s leading position in the government, which favored them and their northern and foreign workers (Dozon 1985b: 73; Collett 2006: 616; Woods 2003: 642, 647). This state-controlled land appropriation in the traditional territories of the Bété, Dida, etc. created severe tensions and led to various clashes between autochthones and allochthones – especially as over the course of the years the soils got increasingly saturated and, at the same time, labor became scarce (Kanté 1994: 144; Dozon 1985b: 73, 80; Collett 2006: 616; Woods 2003: 650-1; Mundt 1995: 89). The Kru peoples began to voice their grievances and marked the “Baule intrusion” as a deliberate attack of the state power on their territory in order to impoverish their group – in favor of ethnic groups close to the ruling PDCI (Collett 2006: 616, 619; Woods 2003: 647).

Kru resistance became manifest (or even violent) and nationally relevant in several instances: Already in 1963, a (pseudo-)coup was discovered which led to numerous Bété figures being arrested (Dozon 1985a: 344). The most serious incidence took place in October 1970: In the context of the election of new PDCI secretaries, the Bété student Nragbé Kragbé wanted to found an opposition party.36 In a small-scale, relatively bloodless rebellion, a few hundreds of armed Bété farmers occupied the public buildings in Gagnoa. What followed was the “de-Ivoirization” of these buildings and – as symbol of the political takeover – the proclamation of the “République d’Éburnie” (an old name of Côte d’Ivoire) with a new flag. Kragbé announced a new state under his leadership and already named his ministers. The new republic was meant to comprise the whole Kru group which shared the same grievances, and Kragbé’s program stipulated an expulsion of the allochthones. However, the army attacked the city in an operation that lasted several days and was expanded to the surrounding villages where the rebellion had originated. Kragbé was mortally wounded by the soldiers. 200 people were arrested. It was much later that the number of victims was publicly estimated: Apparently 4000-6000 people died (Dozon 1985a: 344-7; Langer 2005: 30; Chappell 1989: 690). In the aftermath of this rebellion, in 1973, another (foiled) coup was conducted by Bété and Gouro junior officers (Dozon 1985b: 84; Chappell 1989: 689). In 1982, Bété lecturers demanded multi-party democracy and staged a university strike. Immediately, rumors of another attempted coup came up. The forced declaration of Bété officers on TV – in presence of the head of state – regarding their unconditional loyalty to the state and the party, gave these rumors a certain consistency (Dozon 1985a: 21, 349; Chappell 1989: 690).

36 Already in 1967, Kragbé attempted to found a party called PANA and was arrested (Dozon 1985a: 346).
And finally in 1988, the Bété commander-in-chief was accused of conspiring to overthrow the Baule (Chappell 1989: 690).

The most persistent Kru leader opposing Houphouët’s regime was Laurent Gbagbo, a former university lecturer. He had been in jail twice (1969 and 1971-1973) due to his political activities, and in 1982 – after the distribution of a suppressed speech on democracy – he fled to France. After his return in 1988, he (illegally) founded the opposition party FPI and was briefly arrested again (Mundt 1995: 92-3; Collett 2006: 622). When a multi-party system was finally installed in 1990, he contested the presidential elections. In his campaign he accused Houphouët and his government of being an instrument of Baule domination – discriminating the southwest (Crook 1997: 220, 222). At this time, the Kru still formed the opposition to the Akan-northerners alliance within the PDCI (Skogseth 2006: 28). The FPI claimed that the PDCI had systematically represented the interests of the Baule, northerners and foreigners. It also harshly criticized the voting rights of foreigners, arguing that the regime favored them in land disputes in return for their votes in opposition regions. The PDCI in turn (successfully) “stigmatized” the FPI as an ethno-regional party representing particularist interests (Crook 1997: 220, 222-3; Woods 2003: 649). In the end, Gbagbo won just 18% against Houphouët in the presidential election and his FPI merely 9 out of 175 parliamentary seats, almost all of them in the Kru region of the centre-west and southwest (Crook 1997: 220-2).

After Houphouët’s death, Gbagbo and his FPI refused to accept Bédié’s presidency (Crook 1997: 225). Together with the newly founded RDR they denounced his “baulization” of the state apparatus and the military (Langer 2005: 33). Moreover, Gbagbo started to attack the Baule as an ethnic group (Collett 2006: 623). The price of the unholy alliance with the RDR in the forefront of the 1995 elections for Gbagbo was that he had to fight against the new electoral code. On the other hand, he was able to push the RDR into the politics of ethno-regionalism – providing him with an electoral base in the north (Crook 1997: 229). In the end, his FPI joined in the election boycott although Gbagbo would have been ready to run for president. The FPI and its activists took part in the riots and violence that accompanied the boycott. In the Gagnoa area, Baule migrant farmers were attacked and 18 of them killed (Crook 1997: 233-5). Now the FPI thoroughly represented the Kru ethnic group as opposed to the Baule (Collett 2006: 624).

On Gbagbo’s insistence the boycott of the opposition was lifted for the legislative elections, and the alliance broke up. However, allegedly due to the bad security situation, the vote was postponed in three Gagnoa constituencies – which impeded Gbagbo’s candidature. The FPI won only 10 seats, again in its own “ethnic home base”. Also in the municipal elections of 1996, the FPI gained its votes mainly in the (south-)west (Crook 1997: 237-9, 241).

After Gueï’s military coup, the Kru moved closer to state power for the first time as Gueï formed an alliance with Gbagbo who allegedly had encouraged his coup (Langer 2005: 41;
Collett 2006: 626). Finally, after the turbulent 2000 presidential elections and Gueï’s departure, Gbagbo was proclaimed president with 59.36% of the votes (Langer 2005: 34). As soon as he rose to power, Gbagbo also counted on his own ethnic group in the state apparatus and the military so the Kru have now become the leading ethnic group in Côte d’Ivoire’s politics (Langer 2005: 34, 41-2). To further consolidate his power, Gbagbo also adopted the concept of “Ivoirité” (Collett 2006: 626; Skogseth 2006: 25). The relevance of the historical rivalry between the Kru and the Baule has thus diminished – with the central cleavage now being located between the south and the north (Collett 2006: 627; Woods 2003: 652).

10.2. Expectations and observations: Explaining the discrepancy

The events described above suggest that for an analysis of the case of the Kru group, the historical chain needs to be divided into two stages: before and after the rupture produced by the installation of the multi-party system in 1990. These two stages exhibit fairly distinct underlying causal mechanisms – despite an unchanged degree of political power.

The description also shows that the reality of this case is much more complicated than was sketched out in the quantitative part – an ethnic group coded as “powerless” but no (ethno-nationalist) conflict —, especially in the first stage (i.e., during Houphouët’s one-party regime). There, both the independent and the dependent variable are somewhat dubious: First, Kru elites were represented in the state apparatus and not completely excluded from state power, though they were mostly powerless — also because of their historical opposition to Houphouët’s party. Here, questions arise regarding the interpretation of the term “exclusion” and a possible incongruity between this notion and the meaning of the operationalization “powerless” — which explicitly allowed for a limited (“token”) representation of the group in question. Marking the Kru as “(mostly) powerless” under Houphouët was certainly justified sticking to this coding rule as the qualitative analysis has shown. However, as will be explained below, the “token” representation in the state machine had an important impact.

Secondly, in one instance – the 1970 rebellion –, a conflict broke out which should have been recorded in the dataset based on the number of deaths (4000-6000!). However, it was not included in the ACD. The reason might be that this small-scale uprising of (mostly) farmers (with its brutal consequences) did not meet the exact ACD definition of an “armed conflict” (not being considered as “consciously planned political action” by a “formally organized opposition” which announced a name for their group, but rather as “spontaneous violence” without stated incompatibility).37 This is also an important sign of the limited political scope of the incidence, though.

37 See definition of an “armed conflict” in Chapter 2.2.
Having particularly addressed these two ambiguities as basis, I will now attempt to draw some conclusions on the discrepancy between expectations and observations. I will do this by separately analyzing the two stages.

During Houphouët’s one-party rule, the Kru elites were mostly powerless. However, the public protest against the ethnic injustice never went beyond isolated incidents because it was not backed by enough elite representatives. Two factors seem to be responsible for this phenomenon: First, Houphouët’s patrimonialist distributive system which was socially and economically just too comfortable/profitable for most Kru elites – even if political powerlessness was the consequence! This factor is raised in Wimmer’s argument, although not discussed in its full political significance.\(^{38}\) Secondly, it is also possible that the substantial French military presence discouraged opposing elites, as an overthrow of the protected regime seemed virtually impossible – an external factor that is not captured by the model. In addition, in the strict one-party regime under Houphouët no effective public platforms existed for the few elites that intended to engage in a discourse on ethnic injustice. In such a context, weak elite cohesion as in the case of the Kru elites weighs even heavier.

Regarding the distribution of the state’s benefits and costs, the Kru population did not only benefit less from the state’s goods, they also had to bear the high costs of its economic activity. However, without a sustained politicization of ethnicity by the elites, these inequalities did not lead to an ethnicization of political conflicts in the case of the Kru (with possibly one exception: the 1970 rebellion). This is in line with the theoretical argument.

\(^{38}\) See, e.g., Wimmer (1997: 650)
Figure 13: Kru - EGIP, causal mechanisms, first stage (1960-1989)

Exclusion of Kru elites from power

Limited politicization of ethnic differences:
Sporadic protest and isolated upheavals by military officers and intellectuals (e.g., 1970 rebellion, attempted military coup in 1973). But no cohesive, sustained public discourse on ethnic injustice by the elites; focus rather on demands of democracy.

Intermediary factors:
Discouraging French military presence

Economic co-option
→ Larger part of Kru elites politically lulled
→ Weak elite cohesion (Effect strengthened by lack of public platforms!)

The two mechanisms not coupled.
→ No ethno-political mobilization.
→ No escalation of ethno-nationalist conflicts.

Unequal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs:
Centre-west region economically clearly disadvantaged; army punishment after 1970 rebellion; Kru suffer from state-controlled land appropriation by Baule, northerners and foreign immigrants.

Ethnic tensions/violence but no long-term political effects.
Thus, the developments at the elite level and at the mass level form two separate causal mechanisms in this case which did not interlink because of the mitigating effect of intermediary factors (see Figure 13). Accordingly – and as proposed by the theoretical model –, the ethno-nationalist conflicts did not escalate. However, the ethnic inequalities and the political marginalization of the Kru elites nevertheless led to limited (violent) upheavals. The 1970 rebellion, for example, was a veritable insurrection against the central state. Its original extent, though, was rather limited. What made it so bloody was the subsequent punishment campaign of the military. Hence, also in this instance, an escalation of simmering ethno-nationalist tensions could be avoided.

With the clientelistic system becoming less effective, politically marginalized elites were more willing to engage in an organized protest against the regime. At the same time, the installation of a multi-party system opened up new public platforms. These two factors made it possible for Gbagbo to initiate a public discourse on ethnic injustice in the forefront of the first multi-party elections and to gather enough elite support for a sustained political campaign. Especially after Bédié’s rise to power and his “baulization” of the state apparatus, the excluded Kru elites sustainably politicized existing ethnic differences. Together with the so produced popular perception of ethnic discrimination, this led to an ethnicization of political conflicts between the Baule/Akan and Kru groups. Thus, in this stage, the second and third causal mechanisms worked as proposed by the theoretical model (see Figure 14).

39 For the first causal mechanism, the ethnicization of the Ivoirian bureaucracy, see Chapter 9.3.
Figure 14: Kru - EGIP, causal mechanisms, second stage (1990-1999)

Exclusion of Kru elites;
Bédié fills state apparatus with Baule elites.

Politization of ethnic differences by excluded Kru elites:
Gbagbo denounces ethnic discrimination of centre-west and southwest in 1990 election campaign and presents himself as fighting against Baule domination; ethnic propaganda increases in run-up to 1995 elections; Gbagbo attacks Baule as ethnic group.

Unequal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs as before 1990. Now perceived as ethnic discrimination.

Unequal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs as before 1990. Now perceived as ethnic discrimination.

Shrinking state resources from late 1980s on → Collapse of the system of economic co-option.
Installation of multi-party system in 1990 → New public platforms for political discourse.

Interaction with other marginalized group (northerners): Prospect of future advantage.

Political mobilization of Kru based on ethnic origin:
FPI becomes Kru party; street protests and riots by FPI activists; Baule immigrants killed in the centre-west; Gbagbo receives strong support in centre-west and southwest in all elections.
Ethnicization of political conflicts.

No escalation of ethno-nationalist conflict!
Interestingly, in this case shrinking state resources and democratization stimulated the ethnicization of politics – but they did not trigger an ethno-nationalist conflict. Here, it seems that the influence of the interaction with the other marginalized group (northerners, discriminated since 1994) played an important role resulting in an extremely complex ethno-political playing-field. It seems plausible that after Bédié’s rise to power, Gbagbo and other Kru leaders speculated on a new southern alliance under Kru leadership and therefore did not completely radicalize the conflict with the Akan groups but used the RDR as a strategic ethno-regional tool in their struggle against the PDCI rule instead. The RDR as a northern party could help them in the first place to remove Bédié from power by virtue of the northern votes. Later, the northern image of the party would then make it easier to build a united southern front against it.

This argument – although impossible to definitely verify – is supported by the sequence of the actions by Gbagbo and his FPI from 1990 on: It was Gbagbo who originally spearheaded the xenophobic campaign; later the FPI formed an alliance with the RDR which – based on historical and ideological reasons – could never be more than a means to a very short-term goal (Bédié’s removal in the 1995 elections); Gbagbo incited the RDR to enter the politics of ethno-regionalism – against the party’s original orientation! – and started to denounce the new electoral code in the campaign against the PDCI; however, as soon as Bédié was ousted by Gueï’s coup, Gbagbo abandoned the common struggle; and when he finally came to power he opportunistically resorted to the existing anti-northern sentiments in the south to consolidate his power. The concept of “Ivoirité” – whose primary advocate he now became – helped Gbagbo exclude the northerners from access to political power and thus eliminate his most dangerous rival, Alsassane Ouattara. Politically weakened, the former ruling party PDCI accepted a new, southern alliance under the leadership of the FPI and the Kru.

It therefore seems that the influence of the interaction with the also marginalized northerners and the prospects of future advantage – at the expense of the northerners – prevented the opportunistic Kru elites from further radicalizing the conflict with the Baule and other Akan groups in the period after 1990. Consequently, ethno-nationalist tensions did not escalate in this stage either.

Intermediary, mitigating factors – not fully captured by the theoretical model – are responsible in the case of the Kru in Côte d’Ivoire that ethnic marginalization did not lead to an escalation of ethno-nationalist conflicts. During Houphouët’s one-party rule, economic quiescing of most Kru elites led them to accept their political marginalization (helped perhaps by the discouraging French military presence). In the second phase from 1990, shrinking resources and democratization triggered an ethnicization of politics. However, the complex interaction with another marginalized group resulted in the Kru group taking over central power by (more or less) peaceful means.
11. 3rd case study: Diola - EGIP (Senegal)

11.1. The ethnic landscape

Senegal consists of 5 different politically relevant ethnic groups. The largest and by far the most important group is the Wolof. They form the “core ethnicity” for the Senegalese state (O’Brien 1998: 28) and are particularly present in the centre, the north and along the coast of Dakar and Saint-Louis. Their number has constantly increased over the decades. On the one hand, this is because Wolof is the lingua franca in Senegal and because the group has had immense political and economic weight. But it is also because Wolof is a very universal, inclusive ethnicity with a great capacity to absorb other ethnic groups (O’Brien 1998: 27-9; Diouf 2001: 78).

One of the groups most affected by this “Wolofization” of the society is the Serer group. They inhabit the Sine-Saloum region between Dakar and Kaolack. Although many Serer are still Christians, their “Wolofization” also entails a gradual Islamization (Diouf 2001: 87; O’Brien 1998: 30, 35). The country’s first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, was a catholic Serer.

The Pulaar/Haalpulaar group is divided in two subgroups: Peul (Pulaar) and Toucouleur (Haalpulaar). Refractory to Wolof influence in the political and religious life of the country, they formed a cultural movement in the 1980s to defend the cause of their language (Diouf 2001: 81, 84; O’Brien 1998: 32, 39). They are spread in the north and centre of the country and in the eastern Casamance region. The Peul subgroup is a nomadic people.

The Mandingue live mainly in Eastern Senegal and in the Casamance. The tiny Soninke group can be classified together with them (Diouf 1994: 20) as part of the “eastern groups”.

The Casamance is an ethnically diverse region. Large numbers of Peul and Mandingue live in the Haute-Casamance (Kolda region). The Basse-Casamance (Ziguinchor region), the very western part of the region, though, is populated mainly by the Diola group. The Diola have developed a strong regional identity defying the progressive Islamization/Wolofization of the society (Diouf 2001: 88-9). Although a majority of them are now also Muslims, there are still large Christian and animist fractions (Wegemund 1991: 122).

The Wolof constitute about 43.5% of the population, the Pulaar 23%, the Serer 15%, the Mandingue and other eastern groups 8%, and the Diola make up about 5.5% (census data of 1988, in: Diouf 1994: 23). Today, 94% of the population are Muslims, 5% Christians (CIA World Factbook 2007). Map 3 depicts Senegal’s ethno-political landscape and the position of the particularly relevant Casamance region within it.
11.2. Empirical observations: The “chain of events”

Senegal’s urban coastal enclaves of Saint-Louis, Dakar, Rufisque and Gorée were the only Black-African places where France fostered cultural assimilation (Clark/Phillips 1994: 9). Residents of the so-called 4 Communes already possessed a number of political rights in the 19th century. Political parties, unions and civic associations date as far back as the early 1800s (Galvan 2001a: 57; Galvan 2001b: 5-6; Ziener 1984: 15; Wegemund 1991: 126-7).
In order to control the interior part (the Colonial Territory), however, the French relied on the authority of the religious leaders of the powerful Muslim brotherhoods, the marabouts. Supported by France, the marabouts furthered the peanut cultivation of their followers. This mutually benefiting collaboration resulted in the peanut becoming the fundament of the Senegalese economy and the marabouts a rural farming elite (Clark/Phillips 1994: 9-10).

Geographically remote and separated from the rest of the country, the Casamance exhibits a particular cultural and religious nature and experienced a distinct historical development. It was the last Senegalese region to be “pacified” by the French colonialists (Clark/Phillips 1994: 84; Wegemund 1991: 124-5). Moreover, its colonial status was highly ambiguous: It was attached to the Senegalese territory as late as 1939, having had an autonomous status before (Wegemund 1991: 125; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 36-7; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 3). The Diola group of the Basse-Casamance is culturally distinct from most other, northern Senegalese ethnic groups in its egalitarian, individualistic social structure without political hierarchies (Diouf 1994: 152; Wegemund 1991: 121,124). Islam has only superficially been accepted, as most Diola still adhere to their traditional animist culture (Wegemund 1991: 122; Sonko 2004: 31; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 3-4). The Muslim brotherhoods do not have a significant influence in this region (Galvan 2001b: 10).

In 1944, the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC) was founded to represent the interests of the region and lobby against centralization. Its leadership was multi-ethnic and it had the support of broad sections of the population (Diouf 1994: 122-3; Wegemund 1991: 128; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 8). Both the MFDC and later the Mouvement Autonome de Casamance (MAC) – founded by a Wolof! – were absorbed into Senghor’s party coalitions (Diouf 1994: 122-4; Wegemund 1991: 128; Foltz 1964: 20). Léopold Sédar Senghor became the country’s first president after independence in 1960 and his Union Populaire Sénégalaise (UPS) the dominant party, based on the (copied) French strategy of alliance with the Muslim religious leaders. The UPS was the product of a series of fusions of Senghor’s original party BDS, later BPS, with other parties – e.g., the MFDC and the MAC (Foltz 1964: 22-5; Creevey et al. 2005: 480). In December 1962, his personal rivalry with Prime Minister Mamadou Dia led to an attempted coup by the latter which was bloodlessly put down. Dia was imprisoned, and Senghor could strengthen his power over the country, being treated as the “father of the nation” (Clark/Phillips 1994: 15).

Although Senegal eventually became a de-facto one-party state, Senghor’s regime maintained a certain level of pluralism and democracy, reluctant to make use of repression (Creevey et al. 2005: 480; Galvan 2001a: 52; Diouf 2001: 207-8). Furthermore, he promoted a system of political inclusion building a ruling coalition that crossed ethnic and regional lines (Creevey et al. 2005: 479). All cultural, confessional and regional parts were represented in the cabinet (Diouf 1994: 111, 126) – despite the powerful position of the Wolof in the state

Also, the Casamance in general and the Diola in particular were included into this elite coalition. Diola were represented in the Executive Bureau of the party and among UPS parliamentarians (Foltz 1964: 29-30) and incorporated into the central government, also appointed to important posts (Wegemund 1991: 155; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 47; Diouf 1994: 112; Englebert 2004: 16; Morrison et al. 1972: 327). Reflecting the group’s position as a whole in the Senegalese society, though, their influence was limited (Wegemund 1991: 130, 155; Sonko 2004: 30). More far-reaching, however, was Senghor’s strategy of national integration which entailed the appointment of external governors to the different regions. This meant that Casamance and Diola elites were appointed to positions of local power (e.g., mayor of Dakar) – but not in their own region (Sonko 2004: 30; Englebert 2004: 3, 15-7, 19; Foltz 1964: 29-30; Diouf 1994: 132). Given the strong regional identity of the Casamance, this measure caused feelings of being controlled by an external power (Sonko 2004: 30-1).

In 1976, Senghor reopened politics to opposition parties of a predetermined ideological orientation (Galvan 2001a: 52). Besides the dominant party, now renamed Parti Socialiste (PS), the “liberal” PDS and the “radical left” PAI were admitted. In 1981, Senghor voluntarily handed over power to his handpicked successor, Prime Minister Abdou Diouf, a Wolof, who carried on with the principles of Senghor’s rule. Eliminating the remaining restrictions on opposition parties, he initiated a process of incremental change (Creevey et al. 2005: 472, 490). The fundament of the Senegalese political system was still formed by the patrimonialist connection between the political regime and the religious marabouts who controlled most of the peanut production (Galvan 2001a: 59; Galvan 2001b: 8; Ziemer 1984: 29). Senghor, although a Catholic, had the strong support of the leaders of the Muslim brotherhoods. As patrons of their peasant-clients, the marabouts constituted the middlemen between the centre of power and the periphery (Fatton Jr. 1987: 97-107). By means of their religious authority, they ensured the regime the political loyalty of their clients – which made up the majority of the population. The regime’s reward for the marabouts consisted of material compensations (like land) and the recognition of their authority (Galvan 2001a: 58; Galvan 2001b: 9; Ziemer 1984: 29-30). This alliance strengthen the marabouts’ power and left the economy dependent on the peanut production. Consequently, the peanut continued to dominate the agrarian production and exports (Clark/Phillips 1994: 54-5, 123-4), but the alliance also significantly contributed to political stability. At the same time, the marabouts assumed a protective function for the peasants representing them vis-à-vis the state, acting thus as a quasi-union (Ziemer 1984: 31). Importantly, the base of these brotherhoods is ethnically transcendent.
Members of different ethnic groups are linked together by their Muslim faith and their adherence to a specific marabout (Creevey et al. 2005: 479; Galvan 2001b: 7, 9-10).

This economic concentration on peanut cultivation, however, impeded the agricultural development of the Casamance, Senegal's most fertile region (Wegemund 1991: 131-2, 138; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 42; Woocher 2000: 360; Englebert 2004: 4-5) and marginalized the traditional product of the Diola, rice (Wegemund 1991: 131-3; Sonko 2004: 31). In general, the Casamance was not worse off economically than other rural areas in Senegal. In terms of average household income, primary school enrollment, medical services and telecommunications infrastructure, the Casamance occupied at least a medium (or even high) rank in comparison to all regions. Significantly, the Ziguinchor region of the Diola was clearly better off than the Kolda region (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 41-2, 45; Diouf 1994: 140-7).

The Casamance also received a high share of national investments, from 1977 to 1989 even the third highest of all regions (Wegemund 1991: 132). However, road infrastructure was particularly bad and this poor logistic development made trading extremely difficult. Also for this reason, the Diola were hardly integrated into the market economy (Wegemund 1991: 123, 134-6). Furthermore, the land tenure reforms of the 1970s resulted in a large number of expropriations of Diola in the Basse-Casamance in favor of tourism projects but also of immigrants from northern Senegal (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 43; Diouf 1994: 148-9; Wegemund 1991: 141-2; Woocher 2000: 361; Englebert 2004: 5). The Diola population also complained about the fact that most of the regional industry and trade was controlled by northerners (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 43, 54; Wegemund 1991: 135-6; Englebert 2004: 5).

Related to this was a certain horizontal income inequality between Diola and immigrated Wolof (although, again, this was actually worse in the Kolda region between Peul and Wolof) (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 44-5). However, despite the existence of regional organizations, no opposition political party emerged which drew on these grievances (Wegemund 1991: 130-1). In the 1978 presidential and parliamentary elections, Ziguinchor and the whole Casamance gave Senghor and his PS a large, above-average majority (Ziemer 1984: 52-5).

A national economic crisis in the 1980s aggravated the situation in the Casamance notably, especially as more northerners moved to the region and local resources became scarce (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 54; Sonko 2004: 31). In addition, a rumor came up regarding an alleged promise of former president Senghor that the Casamance would be granted independence within 20 years of Senegal's own independence (Wegemund 1991: 155; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 8; Woocher 2000: 356; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 2).

40 Like the Haous (a Diola word meaning “chez nous” in French) founded in 1946 (Wegemund 1991: 130).
41 After the outbreak of the conflict, separatists voted mostly for the oppositional PDS (Clark/Phillips 1994: 85) which was, however, a “northern” party, too.
42 This rumor is most probably false, but it clearly correlates with the timing of the emerging protests (Woocher 2000: 356). Furthermore, the oppression of the public discourse had a negative impact (Wegemund 1991: 155).
This all eventually led to the eruption of popular protests in the Basse-Casamance in the early 1980s. In a peaceful demonstration in Ziguinchor in December 1982, the Senegalese flag was replaced by the flag of the Casamance. Importantly, the demonstrators carried traditional symbols of the Diola, turning the demonstration into their own affair without the involvement of other ethnic groups (Wegemund 1991: 143-4). Senegalese forces violently dispersed the march, arresting numerous demonstrators (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 9). Among them was also the Catholic priest Augustin Diamacoune who had already called for the region’s autonomy in public letters to Senghor and Diouf (Wegemund 1991: 144-5; Englebert 2004: 9). He now became the leader of the emerging independence movement of the Casamance, the newly formed MFDC. December 1983 brought about a deadly clash between Diola and the police after policemen had entered a sacred Diola forest as well as another demonstration for independence in Ziguinchor, which degenerated into bloody combat with the police followed by an army operation in the region. All of the imprisoned persons were Diola (Wegemund 1991: 147). A group of those who escaped fled to the forests and founded the armed wing of the MFDC, Atika (“warrior” in Diola) (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 10).

The new MFDC rested overwhelmingly on the Diola group now (although the organization described itself as multi-ethnic) (Wegemund 1991: 149, 152; Clark/Phillips 1994: 163; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 65). Its leadership consisted of the intelligentsia and Catholic circles and remained in the background for the most part. The military wing was composed of disaffected army members led by Sidy Badji and Léopold Sagna (Wegemund 1991: 145, 152-3; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 10). Diamacoune and the MFDC stated economic, cultural and political grievances as reasons for their rebellion and pointed at the geographical and historical particularity of the Casamance (especially its ambiguous colonial status!) to justify their demand for independence (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 8-9, 38, 41, 46-8; Englebert 2004: 4). However, conflating the Diola group with the Casamance region in its discourse, the organization did not dispose of broad support among the region’s population and mass actions like electoral boycotts failed (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 40; Sonko 2004: 30).

During the rest of the 1980s, the conflict remained relatively small-sized with clashes between separatists and the security forces and regular army operations leading to arrests and tortures (Wegemund 1991: 147-8; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 10). A military governor was appointed to the region for more than a year, and at one point Diola administrative personnel was dismissed from the Ministry of the Interior (Diouf 1994: 130; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 6). But the state also endeavored to address the grievances stated by the separatists: Land allocation processes were improved, national investments in the Casamance
increased further and road infrastructure enhanced (Wegemund 1991: 132, 156; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 10, 67). The Casamance region was officially separated into two regions in 1984 (Ziguinchor and Kolda) with Ziguinchor now essentially forming a Diola region, and a new governor, a Diola, was appointed (Diouf 1994: 131, 134-5; Wegemund 1991: 120; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 10). Furthermore, two new Diola ministers from the Casamance were appointed to the cabinet (one as Minister of Agriculture). For some time, the Basse-Casamance was even overrepresented in the government (Diouf 1994: 131; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 10; Woocher 2000: 365).

In 1990, the conflict escalated nevertheless, with the MFDC attacking military facilities and also conducting terrorist acts against the civilian population. The Senegalese army responded with summary executions and, in some cases, the clearance of entire villages (Wegemund 1991: 150; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 11, 13-4). In 1991, negotiations led to a first truce (the Bissau accord). However, this agreement (as all later agreements) did not address the fundamental issue: the constitutional status of the Casamance. The effect was a split within the MFDC. Over the years the organization became highly fragmented without any univocal leadership, and Diamacoune lost more and more of his influence. The military wing broke into several rivaling factions, while the political leadership also became separated from the military wing and was unable to control the fighters. MFDC disunity made negotiations almost impossible (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 13, 17, 57-9; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 7-10; Englebert 2004: 9). At the same time, the conflict became increasingly ethnicized. The idea of a “Diola Republic” came up among the separatists (Diouf 1994: 129), and Diola fighters systematically attacked non-Diola people and Muslim groups, ethnically dividing the population into Diola and “traitors” (Wegemund 1991: 150; Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 14; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 4, 7, 9, 13). This development was further fueled by the Senegalese state which treated the movement as an ethnic collective in order to politically weaken it (Wegemund 1991: 153, 158-9).

Peace agreements were regularly broken during the 1990s. By now the conflict exhibited a strong economic dimension. The several rebel groups (but also some army units) had started to be active in the timber and cannabis industries of the region, in looting and drug trafficking, economically benefitting from the small-scale conflict (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 13-4, 55; Foreign&Commonwealth Office 1999: 13). Transborder links to Guinea-Bissau and Gambia further complicated the case (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 51; Sonko 2004: 32). In the meantime, the independence struggle had lost most of its support among ordinary people (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 15). Furthermore, in 1993, the report of the former French colonial administrator Jacques Charpy found that the Casamance had never been an independent colony (Woocher 2000: 357) – thus refuting the claims of the MFDC.

43 In May 1999 investments in the Casamance were up to a third of Senegal’s annual budget (For-
Shrinking state resources, due to the economic crisis, also compromised the crucial patronage links of the regime to the marabouts (Galvan 2001a: 59). Their subsequent neutrality and splits within the PS led to Diouf’s defeat in the 2000 presidential election against his longtime challenger Abdoulaye Wade (also a Wolof) of the PDS (Galvan 2001a: 54-5; Creevey et al. 2005: 486). With the support of the marabouts, the PDS also won the parliamentary elections in 2001 and has now become the new dominant party in Senegalese politics (Galvan 2001a: 56; Creevey et al. 2005: 479). Wade made fresh attempts to end the Casamance conflict. But despite a promising agreement in 2004, hard-core factions of the MFDC continue to fight in the region, and as of 2006 the conflict – which has brought with it about 3000-5000 deaths over 20 years (Humphreys/Mohamed 2005: 4) – has still not been completely resolved.

### 11.3. Expectations and observations: Explaining the discrepancy

In line with the theoretical argument, ethnicity turned out to be politically less significant in Senegal than in other countries of the West African region (see Figure 15). The original MFDC, for example, was a multi-ethnic organization. Still, autonomous organizations emerged representing different ethnic groups in a competition over access to the state apparatus (Diouf 2001: 211-2; Wegemund 1991: 159).

**Figure 15: Diola - EGIP, first causal mechanism**

Diola elites were included in the central state before the outbreak of the conflict in 1982/3 although their influence was limited. Their representation was even strengthened afterwards.
Due to the geographical and historical uniqueness of the (Basse-)Casamance and the strong regional identity of the Diola people, however, it appears that the quest for local autonomy was more significant to the group than a (naturally weak) inclusion within the central state. This assumption is confirmed by the history and location of the conflict which has a clear regional character and never entailed a fight over political power in the center.\textsuperscript{44}

Even more importantly, the Diola were excluded from the most important clientelistic networks: the unofficial patron-client-relationships between the regime and the marabouts (and their followers) in northern Senegal which exerted an enormous influence on the government’s policies (especially in the economic sphere). Combined with the critical lack of local autonomy, this equals a position of political powerlessness – despite the formal inclusion in the apparatus of the central state. Thus, the qualitative analysis partly corrects the picture sketched in the quantitative part regarding the Diola group’s power status.

As expected by the theoretical model, the affected elites – with Diamacoune at the head – started to publicly express their discontentment (see Figure 16). Characteristically for this case, this public protest was not initiated by political parties or national leaders but by local elites. Importantly, the state’s initial reaction accelerated the politicization of ethnicity: The violent intervention exacerbated the tensions, and the directed campaign against the Diola group deepened existing feelings of ethnic injustice.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig16.png}
\caption{Diola - EGIP, second causal mechanism}
\end{figure}

The influence of the marabouts on Senegal’s economic policies led to the neglect of the agricultural potential of the Casamance and to the economic marginalization of the Diola group. Analogous to the public discourse of the elites, the (relative) economic deprivation and denied local autonomy were first perceived as regional discrimination by the (Diola) population although the region became soon conflated with the Diola ethnic group.

\textsuperscript{44} Cp. Englebert (2004: 20).
The fact that no ethno-political party emerged to garner the votes of the Diola (or the Casamance region) in national elections, again shows the local character of the conflict. On this local level, however, the politicization of ethnicity by both the Diola elites and the Senegalese state along with the stimulated popular perception of ethnic discrimination led to an ethnicization of the conflict (see Figure 17). This ethnicization of the conflict was expressed by the political and military mobilization of the Diola group from 1982/3 on.

Not the ongoing democratization process but the change of leadership in 1981 – from the “father of the nation” (and a catholic Serer) to a less integrating personality (and a Wolof) – seems to have prompted the first eruptions of protest in the Casamance. The rumor about Senghor’s alleged promise might have played a role here as well. But how did the conflict escalate? The looting of valuable resources and external influences are clearly not at the root of this conflict.45 Support for the MFDC from neighboring countries (especially as military refugiums) and the fighters’ material gains from the war economy helped prolong the conflict. But as the “chain of events” has shown, these factors first became relevant after the onset.

45 Cp. the conclusions of Humphreys and Mohamed (2005: 34, 72) regarding the role of natural resources.
Neither did the shrinking state resources have a direct influence on the conflict. National investments in the Casamance increased steadily throughout the 1980s (Wegemund 1991: 132) and Diola representation in the central government was actually strengthened in the years between the first outbreak and the escalation. Thus, national resources were not at the heart of the matter: Local resources appear to have been more relevant. It was in an environment of intensified regional economic scarcity that the described ethnicization of politics led to a fiercer call for independence of the Casamance by a Diola organization and to the escalation of the conflict (see Figure 18).

![Political and military mobilization of Diola against central state](image)

De-jure multi-party system in process of incremental change both at the outbreak of conflict in 1982/3 and when it escalated in 1990. **No effect of democratization process/multi-party elections on course of conflict! But: Change of leadership** provoked first protests.

Local resources became scarce due to economic crisis and immigration from the north. → Latent tensions exacerbated!

![Escalation of Casamance conflict in 1990](image)

**Figure 18: Diola - EGIP, fourth causal mechanism**

Overall, the qualitative analysis tends to corroborate the theoretical model in the case of the Diola. Considering the relevance of the local dimension and the particular form of politico-economic exclusion in this case, it is perfectly conformable to call the Diola politically excluded – in contrast to the picture sketched in the quantitative coding. Then, the empirical events closely follow the causal mechanisms proposed by the theoretical argument – however always remaining within the local dimension (local elites, local resources, etc.) – resulting eventually in an ethno-nationalist conflict of delimited regional extent and with the distinct (original) goal of a separate, independent state rather than inclusion within the existing state. Thus, Wimmer’s theoretical model can also adequately explain the origins of the Casamance conflict.
The aim of the following final part of the study will be a summary of the findings of Parts II and III and the generation of more far-reaching conclusions.
PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
12. Combination of the quantitative and qualitative findings

The quantitative analysis of this study has focused on the statistical link between ethnic exclusion and the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa. This link was tested using logit regression models. Several additional variables were included as control variables in the statistical models. The following were the main findings of the quantitative examination:

- The key independent variable, the dyadic power balance, had a significant and positive effect on the occurrence of ethno-nationalist conflicts. Thus, the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) increases the likelihood of an ethno-nationalist conflict in a country. This holds even when the type of political system is taken into account.
- However, the longer there has been peace within a given ethnic dyad, the more unlikely is a conflict onset – even in the case of political exclusion. The effect of a sustained peace period thus has a mitigating impact on the effect of the dyadic power balance.
- There is a historical trend towards more ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa: The risk of the occurrence of such conflicts has increased by more than 3% since 1946. Furthermore, most large-scale conflicts took place from around 1990 on.
- The main statistical indicator of the econometric models, the GDP per capita variable, does not have a significant effect on the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa. The economic approach to explain internal conflicts in this region is therefore rejected by these results – at least for ethno-nationalist conflicts.
- The statistical analysis indicates that the type of the political regime does not have a significant impact on the occurrence or absence of ethno-nationalist conflicts in this region as no influence of the level of democracy/autocracy on conflict onset could be detected.

Several issues, though, remained unexplained or ambiguous in the quantitative examination:

- Does the theoretical model correctly capture the relevant causal mechanisms beneath the mere statistical link between ethnic exclusion and ethno-nationalist conflicts? The quantitative analysis could only attest that ethnic exclusion increases the likelihood of such conflicts, but could not show yet how exactly this happens.
- “Outlier” cases where this basic link did not work as predicted were detected. The questions in regard to those cases were: Is the picture sketched in the quantitative coding valid? And if yes, can the deviation be explained with the causal mechanisms in Wimmer’s theoretical model – or are factors responsible which are not captured by the model?
- And finally, a question mark needed to be made in regard to the aggregation (and thus mixture) of the different degrees of political exclusion (“discriminated”, “powerless”, “only local power”) to one sole category (“politically excluded”). No distinction was made be-
tween the three variants, although it seems well possible – if not probable – that these differences have a significant effect on the outcome.

Similarly, no distinction was made between the different degrees of power holding in a coalition regime – i.e., between senior partners and junior partners – although disproportions in this regard between larger and smaller ethnic groups might constitute a source of ethno-political discontent as well. Such possibly relevant nuances of the distribution of political power could not be treated in the dyadic analysis.

To address some of these open questions and ambiguities, a qualitative analysis in the form of three case studies (Northerners and Kru in Côte d’Ivoire, and Diola in Senegal) was conducted. In the following, I will summarize the central findings of this examination connecting them to the results and the open questions of the quantitative part.

Most importantly, the qualitative analysis has corroborated the explanatory value of Wimmer’s theoretical model for ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa. The case of the northerners in Côte d’Ivoire shows that the model correctly captures the relevant causal mechanisms which lead from the political exclusion/discrimination of a powerful ethnic group to the eruption of an ethno-nationalist conflict. After Bédié’s coming into power in 1993, northern elites were increasingly excluded from the access to the central state in the context of a clearly ethnicized bureaucracy. Their discourse on ethnic injustice led to the politicization of ethnicity. The inequalities between north and south subsequently began to be perceived as ethnic discrimination by a broad section of northerners, and political blocs along ethnic lines emerged. This ethnicization of a political conflict – which was mostly about the succession to Houphouët-Boigny, the “father of the nation” – took place within the framework of democratization as well as shrinking state resources of a former one-party regime and eventually led to the ethno-nationalist rebellion of northerners.

In the other conflict case that was examined – the Casamance conflict in Senegal –, the empirical events also exhibit strong congruence with the theoretical propositions. It turned out in the detailed case study that the Diola ethnic group could well be marked as politically excluded – despite a formal inclusion in the central state which led to the coding of the Diola as “junior partner” in Senegal’s governments. This is because the group was excluded from the most important informal power structure: the very influential clientelistic networks between the political regime and the Muslim brotherhoods. Combined with the particular historical circumstances (sentiment of lost local autonomy), this equaled a position of political powerlessness. Then, the empirical events closely followed the causal mechanisms already seen in the case of the northerners in Côte d’Ivoire. Thus, Wimmer’s model could also adequately explain the origins of the Casamance conflict – although this conflict is of regional rather than national character and its (original) goal was the formation of a separate, independent state instead of inclusion into the existing state.
It needs to be added, though, that in all analyzed cases (also in the Kru case) the politicization of ethnicity did not emanate solely from the excluded elites but also to some extent from the state itself. By systematically branding opposition as ethnically motivated, the state attempts to delegitimize and weaken it in the eyes of the majority of the population. At the same time, though, this propaganda further fuels the politicization of ethnicity.

Deviations from this causal chain that could be diagnosed in the two conflict cases appeared in the case of the Kru in Côte d’Ivoire until 1990. Here, the developments at the elite level and at the mass level did not interlink but formed two separate causal mechanisms. At the mass level, the unequal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs led to ethnic violence (without long-term political effects). At the elite level, the group’s powerless position resulted in sporadic protest and several isolated upheavals by military officers and intellectuals – which, however, only constituted a small part of the elite. The larger part was economically co-opted and thus politically lulled. Hence, no cohesive, sustained public discourse of the elite occurred, the two mechanisms were not coupled, and the ethno-nationalist conflicts never escalated.

This points to the potential of economic cooption of elites as a valuable alternative to real political inclusion. Economic cooption appears to be quite effective in impeding the escalation of ethno-nationalist conflicts, i.e. large-scale conflicts. It cannot however prevent continuing resistance, coup plots and smaller upheavals (and even a short rebellion in the Kru case). In order to avoid such developments, it seems, real inclusion and influence in the elite coalition is necessary. Moreover, the case of the Kru in Côte d’Ivoire shows that economic cooption only works as long as enough resources are available to distribute. When the income flow of the Ivoirian state ran dry, elite protest became more intense and ethnicity definitely politicized – which, again, is fully in line with the theoretical argument.

This finding has important implications for the theory as well as for its operationalization: Regarding the former, it suggests that a distinction has to be made between actual political inclusion and mere economic cooption. (Of course, the two notions represent two distinct ranks of a continuum rather than two completely different statuses.) This in turn raises a problem of the operationalization applied in this study: Whether an ethnic group is to be seen as politically excluded depends on the interpretation of the terms exclusion and inclusion. Does inclusion refer to real power/influence and exclusion therefore to the lack of it (as suggested by the term “powerless” which was used in the EPR project)? Or is economic cooption enough for a group to be considered politically included? Here, the first approach was employed. However, the findings of the qualitative analysis suggest that a distinction between these two notions might be conceptually beneficial although in practice this could raise difficulties. In any case, the wide gap between the two power statuses “junior partner” and “powerless” in EPR seems to result in a number of ambiguous cases.
The discrepancy between the two cases in Côte d’Ivoire also points to the possibly important difference between political exclusion and political discrimination. It seems plausible that a more subtle course of action on the part of Bédié and Gbagbo would have prevented the escalation of 2002. However, the political ambitions of the elites had greatly increased after Houphouët’s death whose position had never really been questioned. Ouattara’s serious aspiration for the highest political office of the Ivorian state, the presidency – which was supported by important elites –, made Houphouët’s former approach of economic quiescing impossible. Active, targeted political discrimination of northerners was Bédié’s and Gbagbo’s measure to protect their power against the serious threat posed by the politically promising Ouattara. The Kru group, in contrast, was never actively discriminated against under Houphouët. Thus, the events in Côte d’Ivoire confirm that the difference between political exclusion and political discrimination does have an impact on the outcome of politicized ethnicity.

Another interesting finding in the case of the Kru in Côte d’Ivoire is the possible influence of foreign (here, French) military presence on the state’s capability to avoid (or at least retard) the escalation of ethno-nationalist conflicts. This factor might be connected to the historical trend for West Africa found in the statistical analysis. In order to protect her economic and political interests, France has generally maintained a strong presence not only in Côte d’Ivoire but in most of her former (West-)African colonies for many years after independence. It is possible that this presence had a stabilizing effect on politics in these countries at first and later, when it decreased, conflicts became more likely.

Besides the deterrence of protests through foreign military presence, the leadership and charisma of some of the West African independence leaders might also have played a role in preventing ethno-nationalist conflicts in the years after independence. Both Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Léopold Sédar Senghor were seen as the “fathers of the nation” in their countries. Their initial election to the presidency was based on popular will, and throughout their rule they personally enjoyed considerable support as national leaders among the population. Such charismatic national leaders also emerged in other West African states.46 It is revealing that Nigeria, which experienced the most severe ethno-nationalist conflicts in the region after independence, did not dispose of an integrating independence leader which was able to unite the whole population behind himself – but of different ambitious leaders of separate parts of the country.47 In newly independent states with a variety of different ethnic groups which do not have a history of common statehood and do not form a cohesive society, an integrating, national political leader which is perceived as the “father of the nation” by the population can

46 e.g., Sékou Touré in Guinea. Kwame Nkrumah, however, was overthrown in a military coup nine years after independence. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, one could speculate whether history would have taken a different course if the charismatic independence leader, Amílcar Cabral, had not been assassinated by the Portuguese.
47 The same is true for Benin which experienced a turbulent ethno-regional struggle over state power and several coups after independence.
be an extremely important symbol of the unity of the new nation-state. Once this strong national leader has disappeared, skillfully built coalitions disintegrate and the struggle over succession leads to (ethno-political) factionalism – as in the case of Côte d’Ivoire. Also in Senegal, the first protests in the Casamance coincided with Senghor’s retirement. However – as in the case of the foreign military presence – the results of this study do not allow for any clear conclusions (let alone generalizations) regarding the influence of this point.

An important supplement to the theoretical argument was found in the case of the Kru after 1990. Here, the complex interaction between the two excluded groups, Kru and northerners, influenced their behavior towards the central state. Kru leaders (Laurent Gbagbo above all) astutely managed to use the increasing ethno-political polarization to their own advantage and take over central power by more or less peaceful means. Thus, the political exclusion of two or more different ethnic groups can result in an extremely complex ethno-political playing-field – not yet captured by the theoretical model – with the interaction between the excluded groups altering the mechanisms of the interaction between each of them and the center.

The non-effect of the level of democracy/autocracy on the occurrence or absence of ethno-nationalist conflicts indicated by the statistical results needs to be relativized in view of the findings in the case studies. The fact that such conflicts can erupt in all types of political regimes does not annul the fact that political systems and their evolution decisively influence the genesis and outcome of politicized ethnicity. In Côte d’Ivoire, for example, the democratization of the one-party regime suddenly opened up public platforms for elites that had not been available before. This finding does not contradict with Wimmer’s theory, which explicitly deals with these processes, but it does relativize the utter non-effect in the statistical analysis.

Importantly, the case studies also reject the economic approach to explain ethno-nationalist conflicts in this region. No evidence was found of valuable natural resources and “greed” playing a significant role in either of the analyzed conflict onsets. At least in the Casamance conflict, though, the fighters’ material gains from the war economy helped prolong the war. Economic factors seem to have an influence on the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in West Africa insofar as economic resources constitute a limited good of the state whose distribution is subject to group struggle. Shrinking resources during economic crises – either in the form of state income or natural resources – can drastically increase competition between different ethnic groups and/or exacerbate inequalities and local tensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative analysis</th>
<th>Qualitative analysis</th>
</tr>
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48 Though one also has to be aware of the “sins” of these leaders: A great part of the tensions and problems that escalated after their departure were already inherent, even rooted, in the political foundations (e.g., the clientelistic systems) they had laid!
In general, the findings of the qualitative case studies strengthen the theoretical argument and the results of the quantitative analysis – even in those cases which seemed to contradict the theory at first view. Especially, the case of the Diola in Senegal is well conformable with the theoretical argument, but also the case of the Kru in Côte d'Ivoire (even more in the face of the rebellion in 1970). The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study, in regard to the main issues discussed, are summarized in Table 3.

### Table 3: Summary of the findings on ethno-nationalist conflict onset in West Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quantitative analysis</th>
<th>Qualitative analysis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence of ethnic exclusion</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistically significant link.</td>
<td>Evidence of validity of the causal mechanisms proposed by the theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BUT: Possibility of economic quiescing of politically powerless elites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meaning of both exclusion and inclusion partly dependent on specific local circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic explanation</strong></td>
<td>NO EVIDENCE</td>
<td>NO EVIDENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistically insignificant.</td>
<td>BUT: Shrinking economic resources can exacerbate group competition and ethnic tensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other factors</strong></td>
<td>Influence of number of peace-years within ethnic dyads on conflict risk.</td>
<td>Influence of interaction between two (or more) excluded groups on the causal mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the findings of the qualitative case studies strengthen the theoretical argument and the results of the quantitative analysis – even in those cases which seemed to contradict the theory at first view. Especially, the case of the Diola in Senegal is well conformable with the theoretical argument, but also the case of the Kru in Côte d'Ivoire (even more in the face of the rebellion in 1970). The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study, in regard to the main issues discussed, are summarized in Table 3.

**13. Conclusion**

This study has focused on the onset of ethno-nationalist conflicts in the ethnically divided states of West Africa. Its theoretical foundation was formed by Wimmer’s theory of ethnic exclusion that provides a comprehensive dynamic process model to explain the origins of such conflicts. In ethnically divided states with an ethnicized bureaucracy and limited resources, ethnic groups become competitors in a struggle over access to the state. In this context, the political exclusion of powerful ethnic groups and the unequal distribution of the state’s benefits and costs can lead to ethno-political mobilization as excluded elites start a public discourse on ethnic injustice, thereby arousing sentiments of ethnic discrimination within the disadvantaged mass of the affected ethnic group(s). Depending on the develop-
ments and circumstances in different political systems, this ethnicization of politics may result in the escalation of ethno-nationalist conflicts.

This theoretical model was applied here by operationalizing ethnicity as the power balance within ethnic dyads composed of ethnic groups in power (EGIP) and marginalized groups. Both ethnicity and conflict were disaggregated from the country-level to the level of ethnic dyads. A major task of this procedure was the collection of data on politically relevant ethnic groups in West Africa, their demographic power and their access to state power since 1945, which was conducted through my personal participation in the overarching EPR project. On the basis of a qualitative examination of country-specific sources and precise coding guidelines, the relevant ethnic dyads were identified in 13 out of the 14 West African states. Only in Burkina Faso was ethnicity not relevant in national politics.

With the aid of this unique, comprehensive dataset, the following research question was examined:

*Does the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) in a country increase the likelihood of the onset of ethno-nationalist conflict?*

**It was assumed that** the more powerful a politically excluded ethnic group is, the more likely the onset of an ethno-nationalist conflict. The term “powerful” referred to an excluded group’s relative demographic size compared to the size of the center, the EGIP. This hypothesis was examined in a quantitative analysis of the whole West African region. Additionally, in three elaborate case studies – on the northerners and the Kru group in Côte d’Ivoire and the Diola group in Senegal – based on a secondary analysis of historical sources the proposed causal mechanisms underlying this link were examined. The focus on West Africa provided a particularly hard test for the theory as internal conflicts in this region have been consistently linked to greed, looting of natural resources and warlordism in the academic literature.

**The results of the study** – of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses – give a clearly affirmative answer to the research question. The quantitative examination has revealed a statistically significant link between the dyadic power balance and the outbreak of conflict. Thus, the political exclusion of (a) powerful ethnic group(s) increases the likelihood of an ethno-nationalist conflict, and the more powerful the excluded group is, the higher the probability of conflict onset. This confirms the hypothesis proposed in the theoretical argument.

Glaring examples of this logic abound in the West African region: The Gio and Mano groups in the first Liberian civil war, and the Krahn and Mandingo in the second; the “white” groups (Arabs and Tuareg) in Mali; the Igbo and (more recently) the Ijaw in Nigeria; the Tuareg and Toubou groups in Niger – all of these ethnic groups got engaged in ethno-nationalist civil wars after they had been politically marginalized by the central state. The bloody upheaval of the indigenous peoples in Liberia in 1980 and the continuing violent resistance of the Ewe in
Togo against the military dominance of the Kabré group are further examples. Together, these cases stand as an ineffaceable warning for the region – branding the consequences of the political marginalization of powerful ethnic groups.

But the prime example of the theory's working in this region is the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. In the qualitative analysis of this case, it was demonstrated how exactly ethnic exclusion can lead to ethno-nationalist conflict. The causal mechanisms proposed by the theory could be clearly observed in the events of the empirical reality. Also the case study on the Diola group in Senegal tended to validate these mechanisms – although the Casamance conflict is of regional rather than national character and aimed at independence instead of inclusion.

The case of the Diola group, though, also shows how local particularities have a decisive impact on the ethno-political processes in a given country. Regional sentiments of lost autonomy, for example, or specific modes of political inclusion and exclusion – like informal clientelistic networks – may decisively influence an ethnic group's position vis-à-vis the central state and the behavior of elites. Thus, the causal mechanisms proposed by Wimmer's theory – even if generally applicable – are inevitably interwoven with specific local circumstances.

Regarding the influence of the political system on the emergence of ethno-nationalist conflicts, no statistically significant link was found in the quantitative analysis. The findings in the case studies, though, suggest that changes in the political framework – like democratization, change of leadership, or shrinking state resources – do have an impact on the genesis and outcome of politicized ethnicity in West Africa. In principle, ethno-nationalist conflicts can emerge in all types of political regimes – but if and how this happens in a specific system depends on the changes of the more global, underlying socio-political framework. This conclusion, in fact, confirms the assumptions in Wimmer's theoretical model.

Importantly, the results of my study reject the economic approach to explain ethnic conflicts – even though the West African region has been a particularly prominent example used by the proponents of this approach. Greed and the looting of natural resources may prolong an ongoing conflict – but they do not form the roots of it.

The implications of these results for policy-making are closely associated with the "junctions" in Wimmer's model: In order to prevent ethno-nationalist conflicts in an ethnically divided country and build a stable political regime it is necessary to both include all relevant ethnic groups into the coalition of power and ensure a (more or less) equal distribution of the state's benefits and costs among the whole population.

Regarding the first point, the normatively most desirable political system, multi-party democracy, faces particular difficulties. Public platforms are available for ethno-political discourses and political parties may form along ethnic lines. Thus, mechanisms need to be introduced which guarantee the political participation of all relevant ethnic groups and their elites in the
(executive) power. To a certain degree, this can be achieved with constitutional and institutional measures: ensuring multi-ethnic national parties (e.g., parties must have branches in all regions of the country in cases where ethnic and regional divides coincide, the executive bureau of the party must consist of members from different regions, etc.); election systems that further alliances of (smaller) parties; proportional representation; and – fundamentally – fair elections that offer real opportunities for elite alternations. This last point is particularly important in the long run. Once a system of frequent elite change has successfully worked on a sustained basis, even the temporary exclusion of specific ethnic groups should not lead to serious tensions anymore as elites know that exclusion will not endure due to the reliable “rules of the game”. At the beginning of a democratization process, however, it seems indispensable that all relevant ethnic groups be meaningfully included. Mere economic cooption (as was seen in the case of the Kru group in Côte d’Ivoire) can forestall neither minor upheavals nor ethnically motivated coups reliably and – especially in the long run – is no safe strategy.

Constitutional and institutional measures are only one side of the coin, though. In the end, as much depends on the will, personal objectives and leadership of individual actors – as dissatisfying as this appears. But the case of Benin shows that well-designed electoral mechanisms and the cooperation of political leaders can change the turbulent ethno-regional competition over state power into a stable, more or less democratic political regime in this region.

With respect to the second point, political regimes in place need to pursue a well-balanced, non-discriminatory strategy of economic and cultural development of the country. Here, the actions of individual politicians are even more decisive, although legal provisions can also urge them to promote equal development.

One additional point needs to be added, though: As long as economic resources are scarce and the institution of the state is the only guarantor of economic prosperity and social status in a country, competition between elites over access to the state will always be tense. In order to cope with this underlying problem, thriving and promising socio-economic conditions need to be created which absolve the institution of the state from its paramount position within the society. Such issues, however, go far beyond the scope of this study.

**Regarding the theoretical model**, three major implications can be deduced: First, the politicization of ethnicity can also be consciously triggered by the state itself – not solely by the excluded ethnic elites. Secondly, a differentiation between actual political inclusion and mere economic cooption might be necessary in order to more thoroughly understand the (non-

49 The consequences of the lack of trust in the democratic system can be observed in Nigeria’s First Republic (1960-1966): Southerners feared that the north would permanently control the central government due to its demographic advantage. Change of power did not seem possible in the existing electoral system. Consequently, Igbo military officers overthrew the northern-dominated government in January 1966.
occurrence of the politicization of ethnicity. This is particularly important when distinguishing between low-scale conflicts and escalations (i.e., ethno-nationalist civil wars). Thirdly, the interaction between two or more excluded groups can alter the mechanisms between each of them and the center. However, the consequences of such a complex ethno-political playing-field are extremely difficult to capture in a reasonably compact theoretical model.

In general, the results of my study suggest that the (statistical) connection of ethnicity to the onset of ethnic conflicts depends on the way the concept is operationalized. A number of recent quantitative studies have disputed the significance of ethnicity as an explanatory factor for the emergence of (ethnic) civil conflicts. However, these studies suffer from a serious conceptual shortcoming: a poor fit between statistical indicators and theoretical variables. They measure ethnic demographics but draw conclusions about ethno-political issues. In their work on the incidence of civil war in Africa, Collier and Hoeffler (2002: 22), for example, draw conclusions about “ethnic hatreds” – based on a statistical indicator that measures social fractionalization. Yet, there is a huge gap between these two phenomenons! This inadequate operationalization inevitably leads to wrong conclusions about the actual processes. It is clear that ethnic diversity per se does not cause (ethnic) conflicts. But ethnicity has a political dimension: It can form the basis of political exclusion and/or discrimination. By incorporating this notion into the operationalization of the concept, the approach used here reduces the wide gap between ethnic fractionalization – meaningless by and for itself – and ethnic grievances. The obtained results indicate that the consideration of the political dimension of ethnicity is indispensable in order to correctly capture the relevant processes that lead to ethnic conflicts.

The particular accomplishments of this study are the distinct, more developed operationalization of ethnicity, the generation of a new, unique dataset on ethnic dyads in West Africa, and the obtainment of reliable scientific results about internal ethnic conflicts in this theoretically and practically relevant region of the world.

A weakness of the study lies in the operationalization of the concept of “power”. Due to practical restraints, (excluded) ethnic groups’ power was measured as their (relative) demographic size – an indicator which captures only one dimension of this multi-faceted concept. Furthermore, in my quantitative analysis I did not distinguish between different degrees of political exclusion. The case studies on Côte d’Ivoire, however, suggest that the difference between political exclusion and political discrimination, for instance, might have a significant effect on the outcome of politicized ethnicity.

My study has focused on the internal political processes that link ethnic exclusion to the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts, partly determined by the theoretical background. For this reasons, external influences have only superficially been addressed. In future research, 50 See Creevey et al. (2005).
Wimmer’s theoretical model needs to be linked to potentially relevant external factors by examining how these could alter the identified causal mechanisms. This might also lead to more elaborate findings about the historical time trend in West Africa which could not be conclusively examined here. Another promising extension of this study would be a closer look at the different degrees of power holding and problematic disproportions in a coalition regime (e.g., between a minority group as senior partner and a large, powerful junior partner). The dyadic analysis applied here did not allow for an examination of these possibly relevant nuances of the distribution of political power.

However, what the study has clearly demonstrated is that a war for identity cards – as the Ivoirian rebel fighter Adama Traore has put it – is not just a well-sounding theoretical fabrication or a unique, accidental incidence in West Africa. In contrast, it is a glaring, admonitory example of how ethnic exclusion can lead to the escalation of the struggle over access to the state and to the outbreak of ethno-nationalist conflicts in this region.
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