

PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6756

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Interdisciplinary Reflection of Contemporary Society

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J Soc Sci, 18(1): 45-57 (2009)

PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6756

DOI: 10.31901/24566756.2009/18.01.05

Even the Stones are Burning: Explaining the Ethnic Dimensions of the Civil War in Côte d'Ivoire*

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KEYWORDS Ethnicity. Politics. *Ivoirité*. Civil War. Côte d'Ivoire

ABSTRACT This article analyses the current civil conflict in the once oasis of peace and haven of political stability within the West African sub-region, Côte d'Ivoire, and specifically looks at the ethnic dimensions of the war. It commences with the discussions of the historical and other backgrounds to the current political cataclysm by scrutinising the ethnic composition of the country within the context of the migratory waves of the pre- and post-independence period. This is followed by the analysis of the impacts of ethnicity on the management of ethnic pluralism especially during the First Republic and the birth of the xenophobic ideology of *Ivoirité* as antecedent to the current socio-political upheaval. Finally, the article recommends and argues strongly that since ethnicity is at the root of the Ivorian civil conflict, de-ethnicisation of politics will serve as appropriate therapy for a conflict-free Cote d'Ivoire where Ivorian, irrespective of his/her ethnic and religious backgrounds, will be seen and regarded as genuine and bonafide citizen of the country.