

Title:

Voices from the Field – Interview fragments from rural areas in western Côte d'Ivoire

Author:

Magali Chelapi-den Hamer

Abstract:

This contribution aims at showing in image local conceptions of autochthony and conflict. Using their own words, four respondents describe local arrangements related to land tenure, what is meant by relations of 'tutorat', conflicts they experimented in the past, and local mechanisms of conflict resolution. Research was done in two villages in western Côte d'Ivoire, Zou and Zeregbo, which are both characterized by multi-ethnic communities. The area is located in the ex-'Zone de Confiance' and has been quite affected by the civil war. Many fled in 2003 during the fightings, some returned, the administration has not yet come back.

A few points of the movie are worth highlighting as they might be counter-intuitive given what is often said about Côte d'Ivoire. First, autochthonous rights are not necessarily contested by foreigners and some local arrangements seem to work and satisfy both parts. Second, tensions between autochthons and foreigners do not explain all the local violence. We should therefore avoid oversimplification and be more nuanced in the analysis.