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Regional Imbalances, Horizontal Inequalities, and Violent Conflicts: Insights from Four West African Countries

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Abbreviations

AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
HDR	Human Development Report Office
HI	horizontal inequality
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIA	Mouvement Islamique d'Azawad
MLNA	Mouvement National pour la Liberation de l'Azawad
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
PSPSDN	Le Programme Spécial pour la Paix et le Développement des Régions du Nord
PSRP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDR	Rassemblement des Républicains de Côte d'Ivoire
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1. Introduction

Horizontal inequalities (HIs) within a country, or inequalities among groups, have been shown to be an important source of violent conflict (Stewart, 2008; Cederman et al., 2011; Cederman et al., 2013). Relevant group categorizations include religion, ethnicity, and region. Generally, more attention has been paid to vertical inequalities, which consist of inequalities among individuals or households, than to horizontal inequalities, in measurement, analysis, and policy. Yet, HIs are more important in some significant respects, particularly as a cause of violent conflict and a source of injustice. They are highly relevant in most West African countries, not only because these countries are ethnically, religiously, and regionally heterogeneous, but also because quite a few of them have been confronted with violent conflicts and other types of violent disturbances in the recent past.

People have multiple identities and hence can be grouped in a variety of ways. Accordingly, HIs can also be measured in different ways. Ethnicity,¹ language, religion, race, and region are examples of potentially relevant and salient group categorizations. While identity groups are socially constructed, they can nonetheless be deeply felt, or perceived to be “natural” or “age-old” differences and categorizations. Salient categories vary across societies and time, depending on historical experience, group leaders, the media, and the contemporary context, particularly in relation to how group members perceive their treatment by governments and others, and the way in which groups are used by potential leaders as a mechanism for mobilization and gaining power.²

Horizontal inequalities are multidimensional: significant dimensions include political power at many levels; status (including levels of wealth); and cultural status recognition. Horizontal inequalities along any of these dimensions can be a cause of grievance, especially if inequalities are experienced simultaneously along each dimension. The combination of political HIs (or exclusion) with cultural HIs is particularly likely to lead to group mobilization, because political exclusion gives leaders a strong incentive to mobilize supporters, while cultural inequality generates strong grievances among potential supporters, who are therefore ripe for mobilization (Langer, 2005; Stewart, 2008).

There is mounting empirical evidence, across countries and within them, that large HIs raise the potential for conflict (see for example Mancini, 2005; Murshed and Gates, 2005; Brown, 2008; Østby, 2008; Cederman et al., 2011; Cederman et al., 2013). Moreover, the evidence shows that conflict is particularly likely if significant political and economic and social inequalities are both simultaneously present and run in the same direction (Langer, 2005; Cederman et al., 2011). However, it is not only crucial to analyze and track HIs because of the threat of violent conflict, but also because group inequalities are

¹ Broadly defined as “any group attribute that provides recognition or definition, reference, affinity, coherence and meaning for individual members of the group, acting individually or collectively” (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005, p. 5).

² In some contexts group alliances offer the best potential for achieving power. Consequently, the emphasis on differences within such an alliance are minimized, and those with outsiders are emphasized (see Posner, 2004).

fundamentally unjust, as people suffer or are privileged simply because of the group to which they belong, rather than their individual merit or efforts.

In analyzing HIs in particular cases, the first requirement is to identify relevant group categories. We should emphasize that membership in different categories may sometimes overlap, partially or wholly—for example, people of one ethnicity may all (or mostly) adhere to one religion, and people of another ethnicity to a different religion; and members of a particular ethnicity or religion are generally concentrated in particular regions. Sometimes—for example, with respect to religion, ethnicity, and region—it is difficult to know which is the more salient category, and this can change over time.³ Where there is considerable overlap, one can use one category as a proxy for the other(s) in measurement and in some types of policy. In the case of West Africa, there is a strong overlap between region and ethnicity, since ethnic identities develop as people live in proximity and develop a common language and culture. While migration (especially to the capital city) has diluted the identification of ethnicity and region, it remains strong. In this paper, mainly due to data availability, the bulk of our evidence relates to regional HIs. Given the overlap between region and ethnicity, this also provides a guide to ethnic HIs (and in some cases religious HIs, too) but we cannot infer from this that regional inequalities are more relevant than ethnic ones to political developments, including conflict. Indeed, there are strong reasons to think that in many sub-Saharan countries, people primarily mobilize by ethnicity (or by some coalition of ethnicities) (Posner, 2005; Guichaoua, 2006; Guichaoua, 2012).

In this paper we will review the prevailing HIs and their management in four West African countries—Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria. Table 1 provides some basic facts about these four countries, which vary greatly in area, per capita income, poverty, child mortality rates, and other features.

Further, in terms of economic structure, Nigeria stands out for its heavy dependence on oil, which accounts for over 70 percent of government revenues and 84 percent of exports. However, oil exports are rising in both Ghana (39 percent of total exports in 2012) and Côte d’Ivoire (31 percent of total exports in 2012) as well. On the other hand, Mali’s exports are mainly agricultural (cotton in particular), with a rising proportion of manufactures (24 percent of total exports in 2012).⁴

The case study countries also differ with respect to their colonial past. Nigeria and Ghana were British colonies, while Mali and Côte d’Ivoire were French colonies. In terms of ethnoreligious demography, it is important to note that all four countries have a highly diverse ethnic population, and three of the four (Ghana, Nigeria, and Côte d’Ivoire) have substantial Christian and Muslim populations (see Table 2 and Figure 1). Mali is the exception in that it is almost entirely Muslim (see Section 2 for more details on each country’s ethnoreligious demography and geography).

³ For example, in the Bosnian conflict, what started as primarily an ethnic division evolved into a religious one, with religious symbols used for mobilization (see Powers, 1996). See also Stewart (2012).

⁴ Data from the World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2014b).

Table 1. Basic characteristics of four case study countries

		Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mali	Nigeria
Population	millions	19.8	25.4	14.9	168.8
Area	sq. km, thousands	318	228	1,220	911
Population density	pop. p/sq. km.	62.4	111.5	12.2	185.4
GDP per capita	\$	1,224	1,605	699	1,555.00
Average growth rate, 1980–2012		1.09	4.48	3.24	3.75
Poverty rate	(>\$2 a day), %, 2011	46.5	51.8	78.7	84.5
Under 5 mortality	1980	167	168	321	215
	2012	108	72	128	124
Gross primary enrolment	1980	74	75	30	95
	2012	94	110	89	85*
Gross secondary enrolment	2002	—	41	23.5	29.4
	2011	—	57.5	44.5	43.8*

Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank, 2014b.

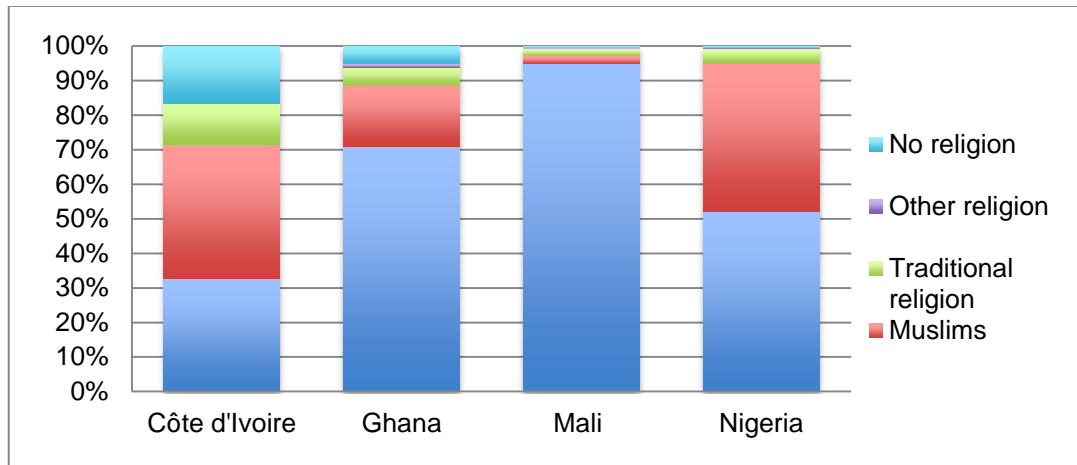
* 2010.

Table 2. Ethnic composition of four case study countries

Côte d'Ivoire		Ghana		Mali		Nigeria	
Akan	42.1	Akan	47.5	Bambara	32.6	Hausa-Fulani	29.0
Voltaic	17.6	Mole-Dagbani	16.6	Malinké	8.8	Yoruba	21.0
Northern Mandé	16.5	Ewe	13.3	Soninké	10.8	Igbo	18.0
Southern Mandé	10.0	Ga-Dangme	7.4	Fula	13.8	Ijaw	10.0
Krou	11.0	Gurma	5.7	Voltaic	12.0	Kanuri	4.0
Other	2.8	Guan	3.7	Songhai	6.0	Ibidio	3.5
		Other	5.2	Tuareg	10.0	Other	14.5
				Other	6.6		

Source: Data from the World Factbook (US Central Intelligence Agency, 2012) and Afrobarometer, 2012.

Figure 1. Religious composition of four case study countries



Source: Data from the World Factbook (US Central Intelligence Agency, 2012) and Afrobarometer, 2012.

Each of our case study countries has had a relatively turbulent and complex political history in recent decades (see the appendix for an overview of some key political events in each country). Indeed, all of them have been subject to different and varying types of violence in the recent past. There have been secessionist movements in Nigeria and Mali; violence aimed at “regime change” and control over the state in Côte d’Ivoire and Mali; violence with religious objectives (notably the introduction of Sharia law) in Nigeria and Mali; violence against corporations and the state in Nigeria; and all have experienced intercommunal violence at the local level with varying degrees of severity.

While conflicts in Africa are often described as “ethnic,” this is not a valid description of most of the violence in our four case study countries. Illustratively, the violence that occurred in the northern region in Ghana in the 1990s was partly intraethnic; in Nigeria, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire the divisions underlying the tensions and violence that have occurred in recent years were as much religious as they were ethnic, and different sides usually included a coalition of ethnicities. However, it is notable that regional differences and disparities have been a common feature of the conflicts in our case studies: north/south differences in Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, and Nigeria; and southeast and south versus the rest in the Biafran War and the oil protests, respectively. Yet despite the contribution of regional differences and inequalities to political mobilization and violence, policies have hardly addressed the issue in three of the four countries, and in two of them, politics have been very exclusionary for at least some of the time.

Thus, despite acknowledged structural and historical differences, the four case study countries present instructive examples of the possible (mis)management of HIs. In the rest of this paper we analyze the evolution and management of the prevailing HIs in each of the four cases. In Section 2, we present evidence on the evolution and current state of HIs in each country. We also present data on how people perceive the prevailing HIs (for example, subjective HIs). In Section 3 we analyze the main causes of the prevailing HIs, while Section 4 focuses on the governments’ attitudes, policies, and measures toward HIs. Section 5 discusses the links between the HIs we observe and the political outcomes. In

the last section, we draw some conclusions and make policy recommendations for improved management of HIs in multiethnic developing countries generally, and specifically in our four case study countries.

2. Horizontal inequalities in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and Mali

In this section we analyze the main horizontal inequalities in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and Mali⁵ and present data concerning the “objective” situation as well as people’s perceptions of the prevailing horizontal inequalities.^{6,7} The data concern the economic dimensions of horizontal inequality, although we recognize the importance of political and cultural status inequalities for well-being and political stability. We focus predominantly on presenting evidence on the prevailing interregional inequalities, since data is more extensive for this. Since, as we show below, there is a considerable overlap between ethnicity, religion, and region in each of the countries, these regional inequalities are indicative of ethnic and religious inequalities. This is demonstrated by the limited amount of data we present on ethnic and religious inequalities.

2.1 Ghana

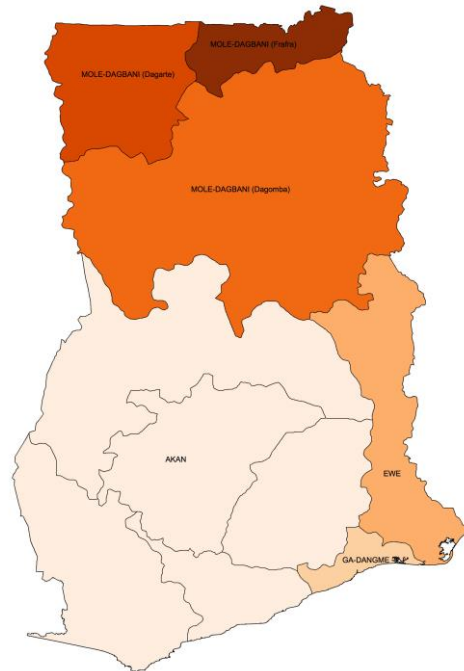
Ethnic and religious demography and geography. Ghana’s four main ethnic groups, which together account for about 86 percent of the Ghanaian population, are Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, and Ga-Dangme. The Akan are by far the largest ethnic group, with approximately 48 percent of the population. They form the majority of the population in five of the country’s ten regions in the south (that is, the Western, Central, Eastern, Ashanti, and Brong Ahafo regions) (see Figure 2). While the Akan are comprised of around twenty smaller groups (of which the Ashanti and Fanti are demographically the most important), these ethnic groups share important cultural, social, and political institutions, and traditions and customs. The second largest ethnocultural group is the Mole-Dagbani. They constitute about 17 percent of the population and are predominantly found in the northern regions (the Northern, Upper West, and Upper East regions).

⁵ Besides using country-specific census data, we also use data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). The standard DHS survey consists of a household and women’s questionnaire, for which a nationally representative sample of women is interviewed. In addition to asking an elaborate range of questions regarding issues such as family planning, maternal and child health, contraception, and nutrition, the surveys also ask about respondents’ ethnic background, place of birth, and socioeconomic situation. For more information see <http://www.measuredhs.com/>.

⁶ While it is often assumed that objective and subjective horizontal inequalities are broadly the same, some recent studies have shown that there may be quite serious discrepancies between the perceived and objective levels of inequality (Langer and Smedts, 2013).

⁷ In order to assess people’s perceptions of prevailing economic HIs, we make use of the Afrobarometer surveys. The surveys are repeated on a regular basis (every 4–5 years) and the latest round of surveys was conducted in 2012. For more information see www.afrobarometer.org.

Figure 2. Main ethnic groups in Ghana



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Ghana's Afrobarometer R5 survey.

However, the Mole-Dagbani are a very loose ethnocultural grouping that consists of about ten relatively small ethnic groups, including the Dagomba, Frafra, and Dagarte. While these ethnic groups have certain social and cultural institutions in common, they have very different histories, customs, and traditions (Brukum, 1995). The third largest ethnic group, with about 13 percent of the population, are the Ewe;⁸ they are the dominant ethnicity in the Volta region, which is located in the eastern part of the country. With about 8 percent of the population, the Ga-Dangmes are the fourth largest group. They are concentrated in coastal plains stretching from Accra to Tema, and hence constitute the largest group in the Greater Accra region.

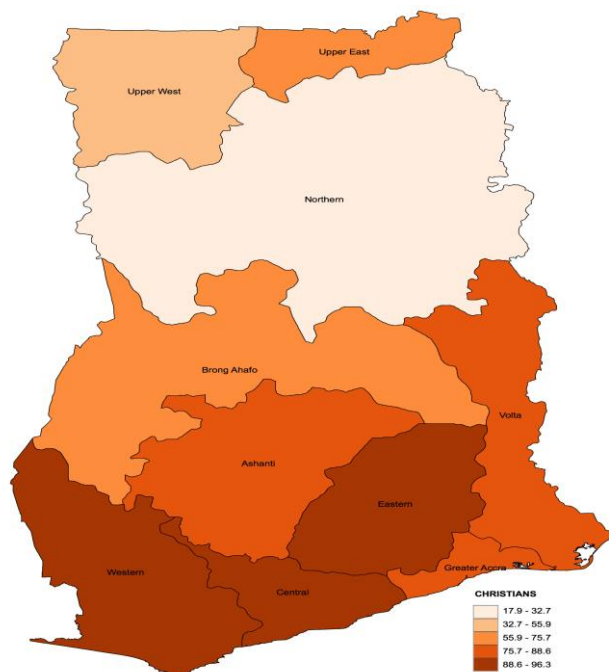
Internal migration has qualified the simple equation of region and ethnicity. One estimate for 2003 suggests that as many as 37 percent of males of northern ethnicity live in southern Ghana, although only 1.5 percent of people of southern ethnicity live in the north (Mancini, 2009).

Religion is another important dividing line in Ghana, as shown in Figure 3. Ghana is a predominantly Christian country, with almost 73 percent of the population adhering to one of the Christian denominations, in particular Catholic, Protestant, and Pentecostal/Charismatic. Muslims constitute around 18 percent of the population, while about 5 percent adhere to a traditional religion (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). Muslims form a particularly significant part of the population in the northern regions. Indeed, in the

⁸ The Ewe are usually portrayed as the most homogenous ethnic group mainly because of a lack of sharp subdivisions, as well as the perception that they speak a single language, despite the fact that there are a considerable number of Ewe dialects.

largest of the three northern regions (itself called the “Northern Region”), the majority of the population (about 60 percent) is Muslim. However, traditionalists also constitute a significant proportion of the population in the three northern regions, especially in the Upper West and Upper East regions. Based on data from the 2010 Population Census, about 48 percent of the population in the three northern regions are Muslim, while 30 percent are Christian and 19 percent have a traditional religion. In the south, around 10 percent are Muslim, and the vast majority are Christian.

Figure 3. Proportion of Christians per region in Ghana in 2012



Source: Authors’ calculations and graphics based on data from Ghana’s Afrobarometer R5 survey.

Objective socioeconomic and political horizontal inequalities. In Ghana, a serious developmental divide compounds the ethnoreligious north-south divide discussed above. The disadvantage of the northern regions—and to a lesser extent the Volta region compared to the rest of the country, especially with regard to the Greater Accra region—was already present at the time of independence, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Gross value added, per capita and per square mile, by region, 1960

Region	Gross value added per capita (£)	Gross value added per square mile (£)
Accra CD	176	87,374
Western	68	7,110
Eastern	53	7,410
Volta	43	4,187
Ashanti	68	7,753
Brong-Ahafo	61	2,389
Northern	30	1,032
All regions	63	4,566

Source: Szereszewski, 1966.

Throughout Ghana's postindependence period, inequalities between the northern and southern regions and, correspondingly, inequalities between northern and southern ethnic groups, and between Muslims and Christians, have persisted. The north remained much poorer in terms of income, infrastructure, education, and medical services in the 1970s and 1980s. Illustratively, it was estimated by Ewusi (1976) that the Northern and Upper East and Upper West regions had levels of development equivalent to only 11 percent and 7 percent respectively of the level found in the Greater Accra region in the mid-1970s.

Although the north appeared to have slightly caught up with the south by the 1990s with respect to some socioeconomic indicators (such as literacy and infant mortality), with regard to other indicators (such as the incidence of poverty and annual mean income per capita), the north-south divide actually worsened considerably during this period, as illustrated in Table 4. While the Greater Accra region (which is the country's administrative/industrial/economic core region), the Western, Eastern, Ashanti, and Brong Ahafo regions (that is, the Akan-dominated, cocoa- and mineral-producing regions) and the Volta region saw a considerable drop in their poverty rates, in two of the three northern regions (the Northern and Upper East regions) poverty increased between 1991–1992 and 1998–1999. While in 1991–1992 the mean annual income per capita in the Greater Accra region was about two times higher than in the Northern and Upper West regions, in 1998–1999, this was more than four times as high. The northern regions' position vis-à-vis the national average also worsened noticeably.

Table 4. Regional socioeconomic inequalities in the 1990s (% unless otherwise noted)

	Incidence of poverty ¹		Literacy ²		Mean annual income per capita ³		Access to health services ⁴	Primary school enrollment ⁴	Infant mortality rate ⁵		
	1991–92	1998–99	1993	1998	1991–92	1998–99	1997	1997	1988	1993	1998
Western	59.6	27.3	37	54	116,000	568,000	28.0	74.6	76.9	76.3	68.0
Central	44.3	48.4	43	55	118,000	444,000	35.9	72.0	138.3	71.6	83.8
Greater Accra	25.8	5.2	60	76	146,000	932,000	77.6	70.4	57.7	58.4	41.4
Volta	57.0	37.7	46	58	85,000	527,000	41.7	70.2	73.5	77.8	53.8
Eastern	48.0	43.7	46	66	116,000	415,000	32.8	78.1	70.1	55.9	50.2
Ashanti	41.2	27.7	31	64	111,000	622,000	43.2	72.2	69.8	65.2	41.9
Brong Ahafo	65.0	35.8	30	53	101,000	548,000	31.9	72.4	65.0	48.7	77.3
Northern	63.4	69.2	8	13	72,000	210,000	18.4	40.0	103.1	113.7	70.1
Upper East	66.9	88.2	12	20	83,000	321,000	8.2	45.0	103.1	105.0	81.5
Upper West	88.4	83.9	8	20	76,000	206,000	19.8	36.1	103.1	84.5	70.6
National	51.7	39.5	34	51	107,000	527,000	37.2	67.0	77.0	66.0	57.0

¹ Data derived from the Ghana Statistical Service, available at: <http://www.ghanainfo.org>.

² Authors' calculations based on data from the 1993 and 1998 DHS surveys.

³ Data drawn from Shepherd et al. (2005).

⁴ Data drawn from the 1997 Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Survey.

⁵ Data derived from the Ministry of Health, available at: http://www.moh-ghana.org/moh/facts_figures/default.asp.

Figure 4 provides information on contemporary inequalities in Ghana. It is clear that the north still lags considerably behind. With regard to all four indicators (that is, the proportion of people with access to electricity; the level of Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI); the proportion of females without education; and the under-five mortality rate), the three northern regions are doing considerably worse. Thus, for instance, while the national average of the proportion of people without education was 31 percent in 2008, in the Northern, Upper West, and Upper East regions, these proportions were 68 percent, 55 percent, and 54 percent, respectively. Similarly, while on average 61 percent of the Ghanaian population was connected to the national electricity grid in 2008, in the three northern regions, only about 32 percent of people had access to electricity. Unsurprisingly, under-five mortality rates were also much higher in the north compared to the national average. In line with Ghana's ethnic and religious geography, Table 5 shows that the main northern ethnic group (the Mole-Dagbani) and people who are Muslim are doing considerably worse in these areas.

If we look at the evolution of these three indicators over the last two decades, one can see that the situation in Ghana has generally improved substantially since 1993 (see Figure 5). But while the absolute situation in the three northern regions has improved considerably, the improvement was not faster than in the rest of the country. Consequently there was very little or no real catch-up, so horizontal inequalities remain very severe.

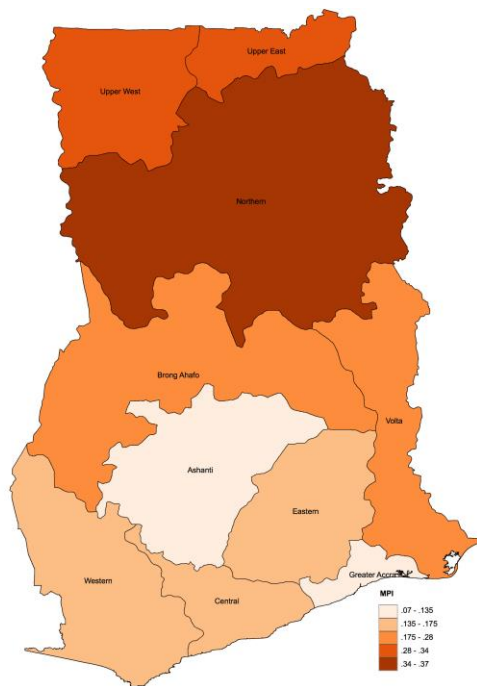
Table 5. Inequalities across ethnicity and religion, 2008

	Access to electricity (%), 2008	No formal education (%), 2008
Akan	70.8	8.1
Ewe	50.6	15.7
Ga-Dangme	63.8	13.0
Mole-Dagbani	38.7	52.2
Christians	64.3	13.5
Muslims	55.2	43.3

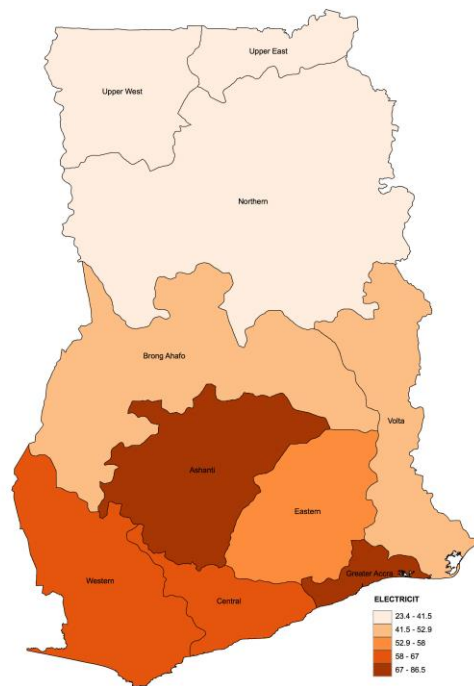
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Ghana's DHS.

Figure 4. Horizontal inequalities in Ghana

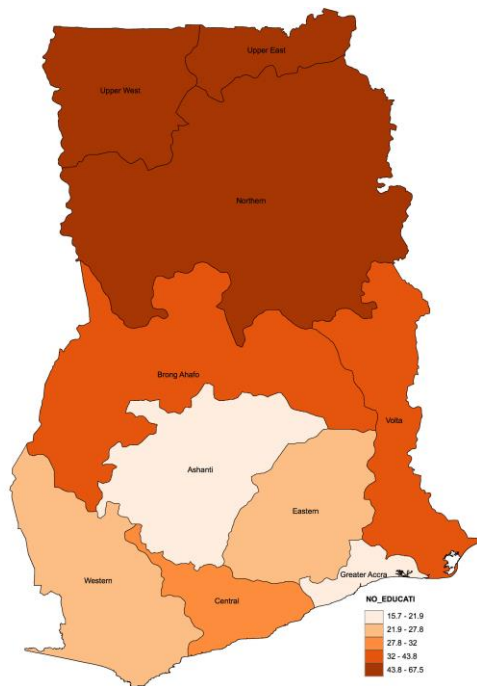
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), 2010



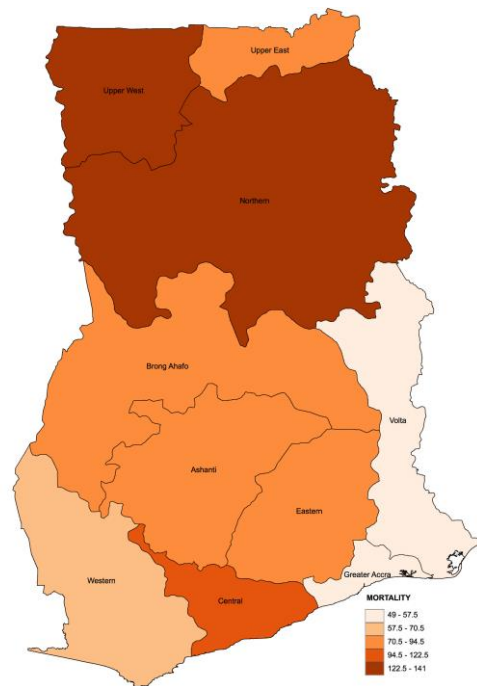
Access to electricity, 2008



Proportion of females without formal education, 2008



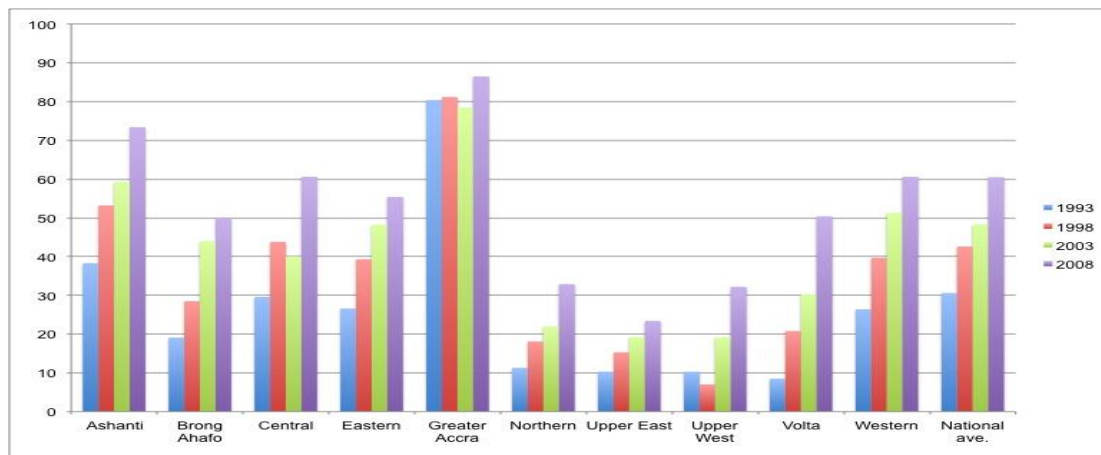
Under-five mortality rate, 2008



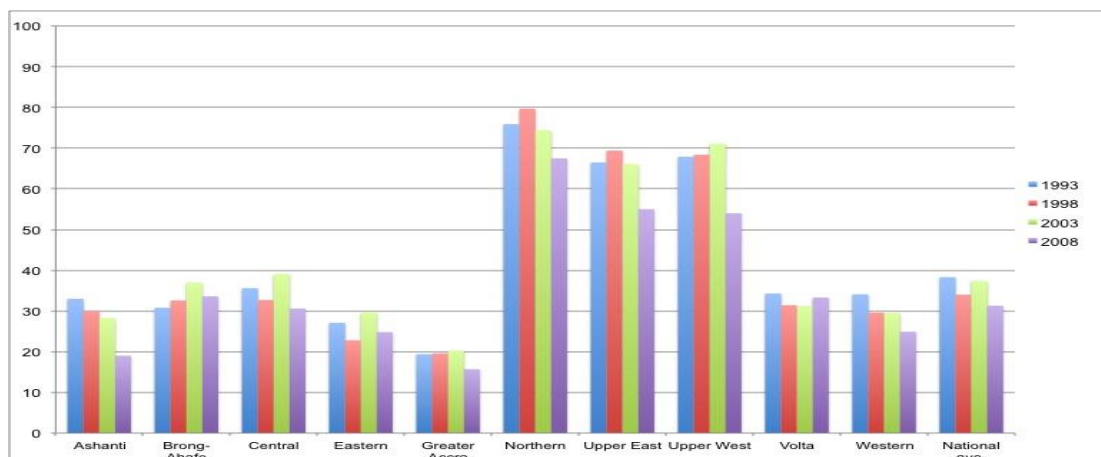
Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Ghana's DHS and Ghana Statistical Service, 2013.

Figure 5. The evolution of HIs, 1993–2008

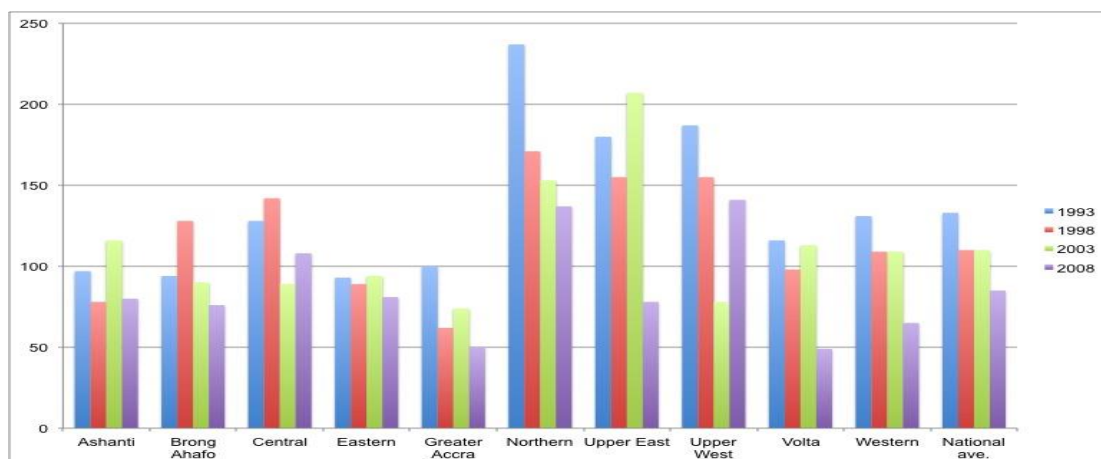
Proportion of people with access to electricity over time, 1993–2008



Proportion of females without formal education over time, 1993–2008



Under-five child mortality over time, 1993–2008



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from the DHS.

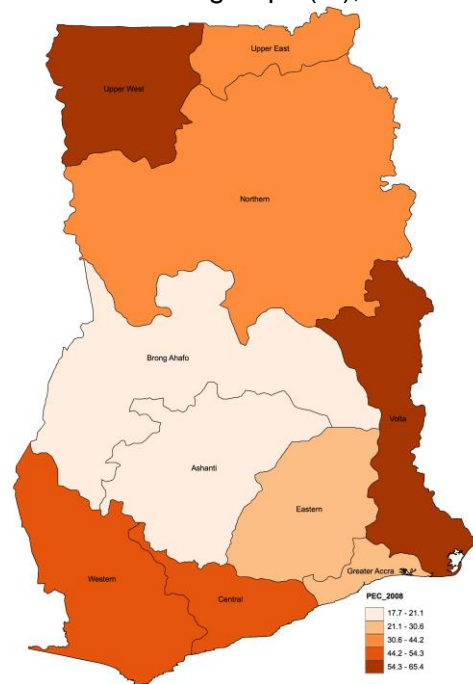
Perceptions of horizontal inequalities. In order to assess people's perceptions of the prevailing horizontal inequalities, we use data from Ghana's Afrobarometer R4 survey conducted in 2008. The survey asked people about the extent to which they felt their group was disadvantaged in economic and political terms compared to other ethnic groups. Figure 6 shows the proportion of people per region in Ghana who perceived their group's economic situation to be "worse" or "much worse" than other ethnic groups.

It emerges that the people in the north correctly perceive their economic situation to be worse than that of other groups in the country. In line with this, the proportion of people in the south who feel their group is doing worse than other groups is much lower, except in the Volta region, where quite a large proportion of people feel they are doing worse than other groups, despite the fact that the objective situation indicates otherwise. In other words, there appears to be a bit of a mismatch between perceptions of HIs and a more objective assessment of reality among the people in the Volta region (that is, predominantly Ewe people).

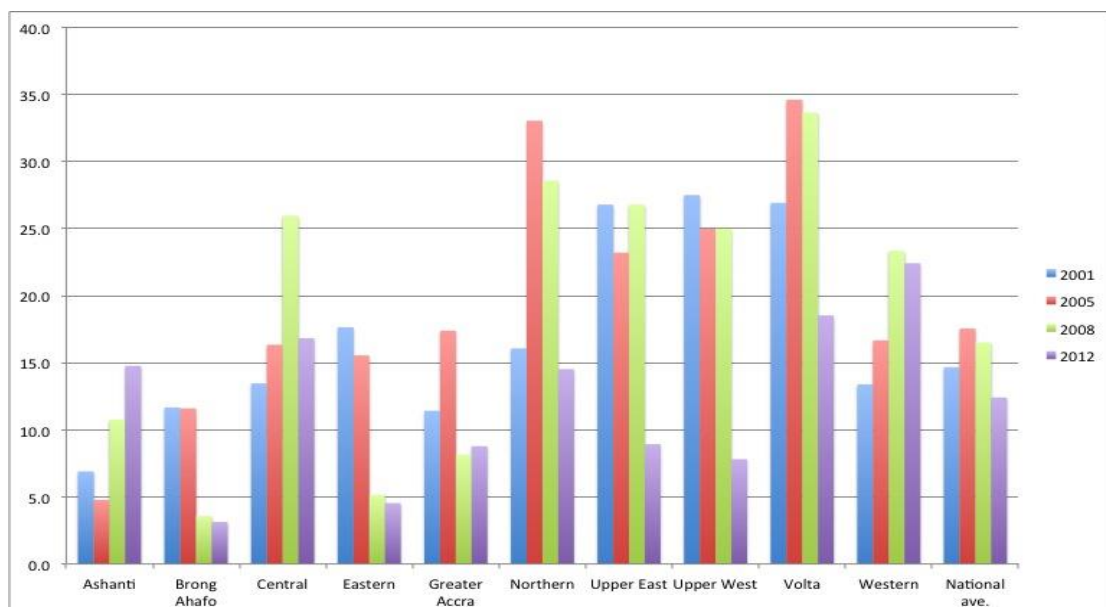
Despite these perceptions of deprivation among northern groups, the proportion of people in the north who feel they are consciously discriminated against by the government on a regular basis is relatively low and has decreased significantly since 2005. Indeed, the proportion of people who felt treated unfairly by the government "often" or "always" has consistently decreased in the three northern regions since then, much in line with perceptions of improvement in other regions of Ghana. Illustratively, in the Northern region, the proportion of people who felt treated unfairly "often" or "always" in 2012 was about 14 percent, down from 33 percent in 2005. A similar sharp drop occurred in the two other northern regions.

Figure 6. Perceptions of horizontal inequalities and unfair treatment

Proportion of people who consider their ethnic group's *economic* situation “worse” or “much worse” than other groups (%), 2008



Proportion of people who feel their ethnic group is “often” or “always” treated unfairly by the government over time, 2001–2012

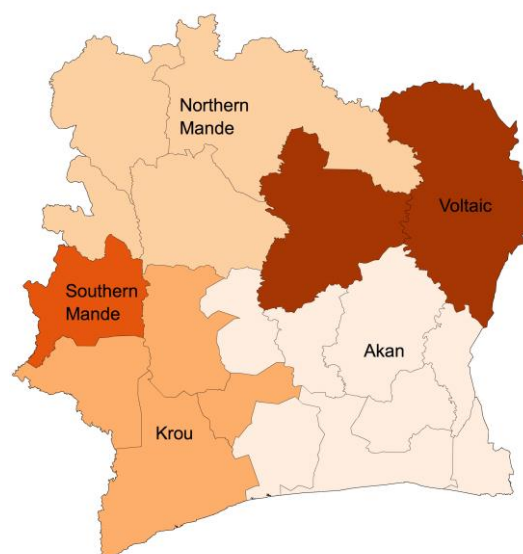


Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Ghana's Afrobarometer surveys.

2.2 Côte d'Ivoire

Ethnic and religious demography and geography. Côte d'Ivoire's ethnic groups are usually clustered into the following five larger ethnocultural groups: Akan, Voltaic, Krou, Northern Mandé, and Southern Mandé.⁹ The Akan consist of a number of ethnic subgroups, including the Abron, Agni, Baoulé, Abbey, Abouré, and Akyé, and are predominantly found in the eastern and central parts of the country (see Figure 7). The Baoulé are the largest Akan ethnic group and inhabit the center of the country, which contains the traditional cocoa-growing zone.

Figure 7. Main ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Côte d'Ivoire's Afrobarometer R5 survey.

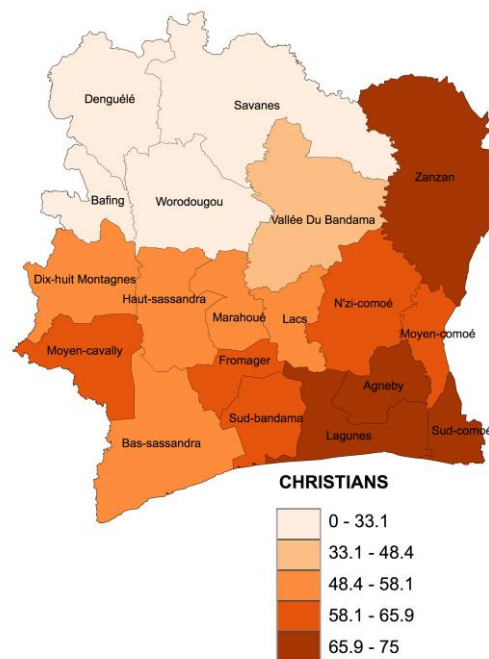
The southwestern part of the country is predominantly inhabited by people from the Krou ethnic cluster, who constituted about 16 percent of the population in 1975; however, since then, their share of the population has fallen to about 13 percent. The Bété are the largest ethnic group among the Krou. The Southern Mandé, which include the Dan, Yacouba, and Gouro ethnic groups, are predominantly found in the western part of the country, and constitute about 10 percent of the population. The northern population mainly consists of Voltaics and Northern Mandés, and these two ethnic groups together accounted for 34 percent of the population at the time of the last census (in 1998). The largest ethnic group of the Voltaic cluster are the Sénoufo, who originate from the northeast and are particularly concentrated in and around Korhogo, the largest city in the north and the most important cotton-growing area of the country (Coulibaly, 1978). The two main ethnic groups of the Northern Mandé cluster are the Malinkés and the Dioulas.

⁹ The ethnic categorization discussed here is based on the classification used by the Institute National de la Statistique.

Due to extensive international migration in both the colonial and postcolonial period, a large proportion of Côte d'Ivoire's population is of foreign origin. In 1998, people termed "foreigners" accounted for more than four million people or about 26 percent of the population, though many of these foreigners were born in Côte d'Ivoire and have parents who were born there as well, or have parents who migrated before independence. Because the vast majority of these foreigners originate from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea, they share important ethnocultural and religious traditions with people from these countries (Langer, 2005).

As in Ghana, religious differences appear to some extent to reinforce ethnoregional differences. While the Akan and Krou ethnic groups are predominantly Christian, the northern ethnic groups—the Voltaic and Northern Mandé—are mostly Muslim. Consequently, a majority of people in the northern regions (comprised of the Savanes, Vallée du Bandama, Denguélé, Worodougou, and Bafing regions) are Muslim (see Figure 8). Although the northern population is predominantly Muslim, a majority of all Muslims actually lives in the southern regions. But Christians nonetheless constitute a majority of the population in the southern regions.

Figure 8. Proportion of Christians per region in Côte d'Ivoire, 2012



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Côte d'Ivoire's Afrobarometer R5 survey.

Objective and political horizontal inequalities. Like Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire is characterized by serious regional socioeconomic inequalities, especially between its southern and northern regions. Although there were no distinct regional disparities in development before 1950 (Hinderink and Tempelman, 1979, p. 4), as a result of changed colonial policies in the 1950s, north-south inequalities had become quite severe around the time of independence in 1960. Table 6 demonstrates the extent of the regional income inequalities in 1965, when domestic income per capita (including nonmonetary income) in Abidjan (by far the most developed area in

the country) was 11 times higher than in the north. The north was also doing considerably worse than the center (with a domestic income per capita of 1.9 times higher than the north) and southern (2.6 times higher) regions. If one only takes into account cash income, the northern disadvantage was even more pronounced: domestic monetary income per capita in Abidjan, center, and southern regions was respectively 37, 4.5, and 7 times higher than in the north.

Table 6. Regional economic inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire, 1965

	North	Center	South	Abidjan	National
GDP ^a	15.3	46.5	95.0	91.1	247.9
Commercial product	4.6	33.5	74.7	90.1	202.9
Net domestic income	15.1	40.5	85.3	63.0	203.9
Net domestic monetary income	4.4	27.5	65.0	62.0	158.9
Net domestic income per capita	18,600	35,600	49,000	205,000	51,200
Net domestic monetary income per capita	5,400	24,300	37,500	201,000	39,900

Source: Data drawn from Aubertin, 1980 (based on Ministère du Plan, Côte d'Ivoire, Loi Plan de développement économique, social et culturel pour les années 1967–1968, 1969–1970).

^a GDP, commercial product, net domestic income, and net domestic monetary income are in billions of 1965 CFA francs.

Regional inequalities have remained severe throughout the postindependence period. Illustratively, in 1985 the mean consumption expenditure per capita in the northern Savannah region was about 50 percent below the national average (Glewwe, 1988) (see Table 7). Since then, no substantial or sustained reduction in the north-south divide has occurred, although some moderate “improvement” took place as a result of the economic recession in the period 1985–1995, as shown in Table 7, because the negative impact of the recession on expenditure levels was considerably larger in the southern regions. While the mean household expenditure per capita of the Savannah region was 39 percent below the national average in 1985, in 1995, this was only 25 percent. Yet, in absolute terms, the expenditure levels in the Savannah region also dropped substantially between 1985 and 1995, and as a result poverty levels further increased in the northern regions (affecting 80 percent of the population in 1995) (Azam, 2004).

Table 7. Mean household expenditure per capita by region

	Mean household expenditure per capita in 1985 CFAF per year			
	1985	1988	1993	1995
Abidjan	376,108	267,570	225,274	186,251
Other cities	261,867	158,534	125,445	118,605
East Forest	164,035	140,286	101,667	98,269
West Forest	252,047	130,142	105,986	96,247
Savannah	142,588	112,673	86,040	91,240
Côte d'Ivoire	234,867	158,410	129,306	121,486

	Mean household expenditure per capita relative to national average ^a			
	1985	1988	1993	1995
Abidjan	1.60	1.69	1.74	1.53
Other cities	1.11	1.00	0.97	0.98
East Forest	0.70	0.89	0.79	0.81
West Forest	1.07	0.82	0.82	0.79
Savannah	0.61	0.71	0.67	0.75
Côte d'Ivoire	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Source: Data drawn from Jones and Ye, 1997.

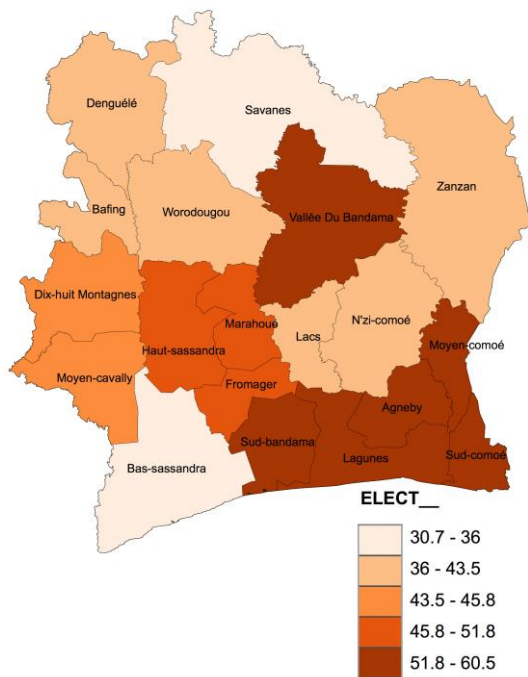
^a Authors' calculations.

Côte d'Ivoire's inequalities persist today. With regard to all four indicators (the proportion of people with access to electricity; the level of MPI; the proportion of females without education; and the under-five mortality rate) shown in Figure 9, it is clear that the northern regions are performing much worse than the southern regions. For example, while in 2012 on average 56 percent of the Ivorian people had access to electricity, in the north (the Savanes region), northeast (the Zanzan region), and northwest (the Bafting, Worodougou, and Denguélé regions), only 31 percent, 40 percent, and 39 percent of people were connected to the national electricity grid. Similarly, while on average 53 percent of Ivorian females had no formal education, in the north a much higher proportion of women were uneducated; 75 percent in the north, 63 percent in the northeast, and 83 percent in the northwest regions. Under-five mortality rates were also much higher in the north compared to the national average, especially in Savanes, Worodougou, and Denguélé regions. The main reason why the region of Vallée du Bandama, which is quite far north, is doing considerably better than its surrounding regions is because the country's second largest city (Bouaké) is situated in the southern part of this region.

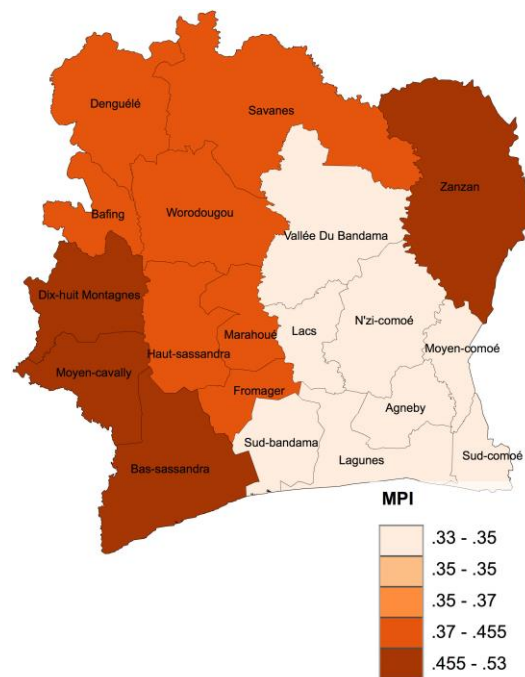
Looking at the prevailing HIs across ethnicity and religion in Côte d'Ivoire (see Table 8) reveals that while the southern ethnic groups (the Akan, Krou, and Southern Mandé) are doing considerably better in terms of educational achievements than the northern ethnic groups (the Northern Mandé and Voltaic), in terms of the proportion of people who have access to electricity, the Northern Mandé are performing best. However, a closer inspection of the DHS survey data indicates that this is a direct consequence of the fact that a higher proportion of Northern Mandé live in urban areas, which tend to have higher levels of development. With respect to the inequalities across religions, it emerges that Christians, as expected, are doing relatively better than Muslims in terms of having access to electricity. Yet, the difference between Christians and Muslims is moderated by the fact that a relatively higher proportion of Muslims lives in urban areas.

Figure 9. Horizontal inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire

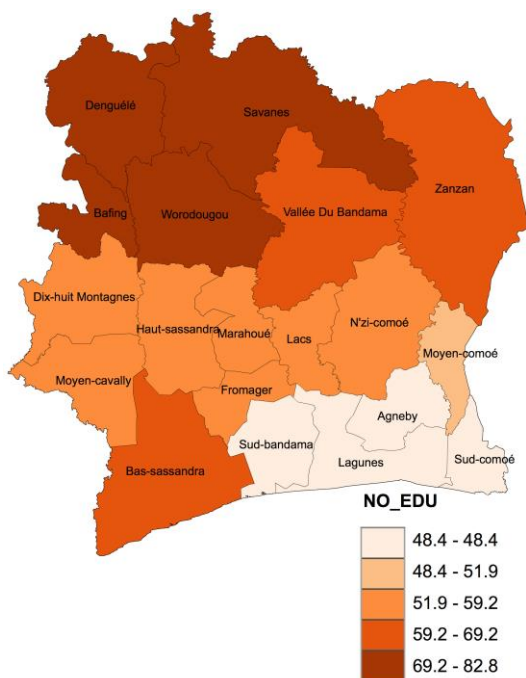
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), 2006



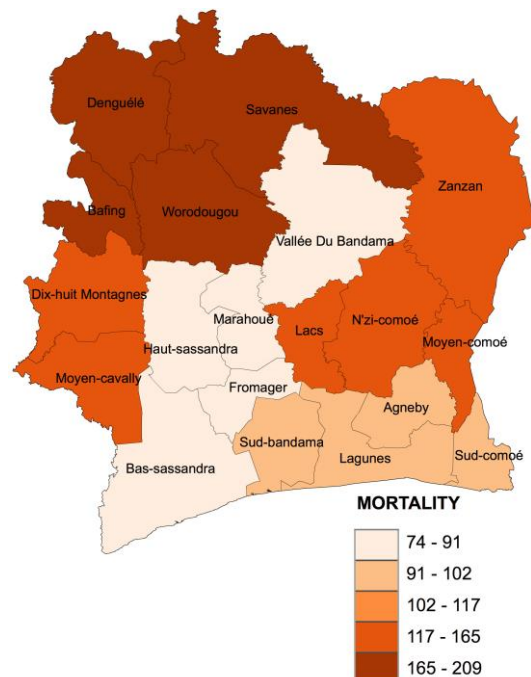
Access to electricity, 2012



Proportion of females without formal education, 2012



Under-five mortality rate, 2012



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Côte d'Ivoire's DHS and OPHI, 2014a.

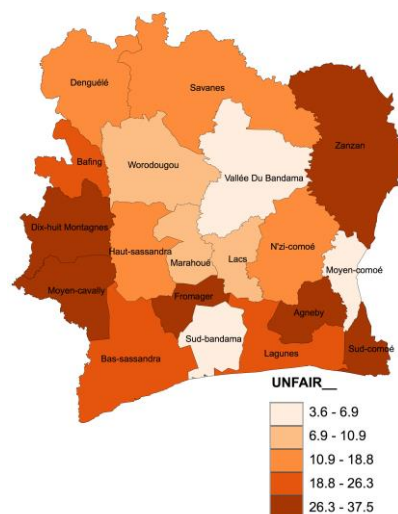
Table 8. Inequalities across ethnicity and religion in Côte d'Ivoire

	Access to electricity (%)	No formal education (%)
Akan	54.7	40.5
Northern Mandé	78.2	69.6
Southern Mandé	53.6	42.8
Krou	69.7	22.9
Voltaic	54.2	63.8
Christians	35.5	33
Muslims	26.5	65.5

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Côte d'Ivoire's 2012 DHS survey.

Perceptions of horizontal inequalities. Unfortunately, survey data like that for Ghana concerning people's perceptions of inequalities are not available for Côte d'Ivoire. The Afrobarometer survey was conducted for the first time in Côte d'Ivoire only in 2012, and unfortunately, the latest round of this survey no longer included questions about the extent to which people felt their group was disadvantaged in economic and political terms compared to other ethnic groups. However, the question regarding to what extent people feel the government is treating their ethnic group unfairly was included. Figure 10 shows the proportion of people who felt this "often" or "always." It is interesting to note that the regions with the highest proportion of people feeling discriminated against are not in the north, but rather in the west and in the east. In contrast, except for the Zanzan region in the northeast, relatively few people feel the government treats them unfairly. This might be explained by the fact that the current president, Alassane Ouattara, originates from the north and his government has a very clear northern representation.

Figure 10. Proportion of people who feel the Côte d'Ivoire government "often" or "always" treats their ethnic group unfairly, 2012

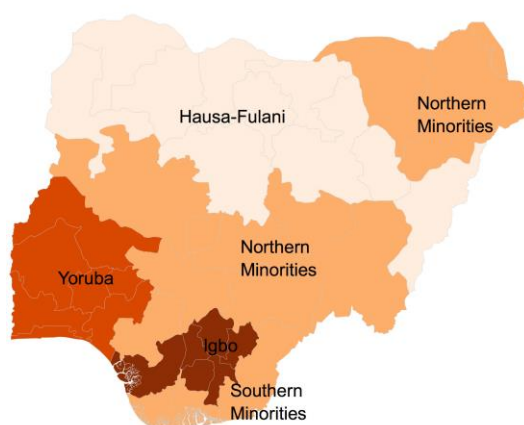


Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Côte d'Ivoire's 2012 Afrobarometer survey.

2.3 Nigeria

The exact number of ethnic groups in Nigeria is disputed. As Mustapha (2006) notes, estimates range from 250 to 374 (Otite, 1990) and 400 (Bangura, 2001). Official figures on the number and size of different ethnic groups are not available because of the omission of ethnicity in population censuses. Based on the last colonial census and more recent Afrobarometer surveys, it is clear that the three most populous ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba, respectively indigenous to the north, east, and west of the country (see Figure 11). The last colonial census of 1952 suggests that the three so-called “majority” groups together constituted about 52 percent of the population (Mustapha, 2006). If we look at the ethnic composition derived from the nationally representative 2012 Afrobarometer survey, it emerges that these three groups together now constitute about 66 percent of the population (that is, Hausa-Fulani, 28.9 percent; Igbo, 15.6 percent; and Yoruba, 21.3 percent).

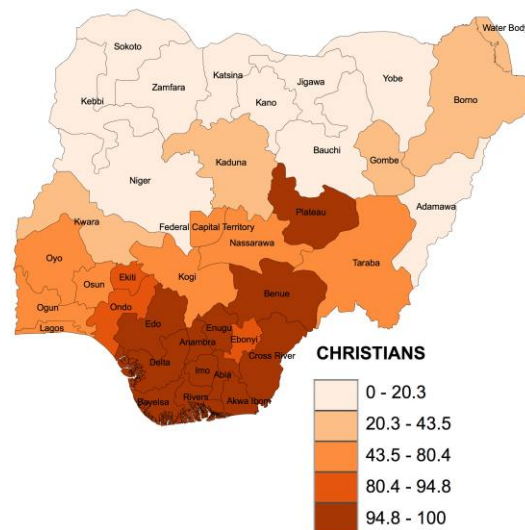
Figure 11. Main ethnic groups in Nigeria



Source: Authors’ calculations and graphics based on data from Nigeria’s 2012 Afrobarometer R5 survey.

Again based on data from the 2012 Afrobarometer survey, it emerges that Christians constitute about 54 percent of the Nigerian population, and Muslims about 44 percent. There is an important overlap between ethnicity and religion in Nigeria—the Hausa/Fulani and Kanuri are predominantly Muslim; the Igbo and Southern minorities are predominantly Christian; and the Yoruba and Northern minorities have an almost equal number of adherents of both religions (Langer and Ukiwo, 2010). In 2003, it was estimated that only 1 percent of people of northern origin were living in the south, while 6 percent of people of southern origin were living in the north. With respect to religion, almost a quarter of people in the north are Christian and 12.5 percent of people living in the south are Muslim (Mancini, 2009). Hence, the religious north-south divide, while not exact, is more pronounced than in Ghana or Côte d’Ivoire (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Proportion of Christians per region in Nigeria



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Nigeria's 2012 Afrobarometer R5 survey.

Objective and political horizontal inequalities. Like all countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea in the south, the most marked socioeconomic inequalities in Nigeria are those between the northern and southern regions, and correspondingly, between its northern and southern ethnic groups as well as between Muslims and Christians. The sharp north-south divide developed from the early 1900s (Mustapha, 2006) and has persisted throughout the postindependence period.

Table 9 illustrates the extent of the regional disparities on a range of indicators in the mid-1990s. It is clear that the two most northern zones or regions, the northwest and northeast, are the least developed. Illustratively, in these two northern zones, about 2.5 to 3 times fewer people have access to electricity or are literate than in the most developed southwestern zone. While the third northern zone, north central, performed considerably better in access to electricity and in literacy, it is still significantly less developed than the most developed zones, the southwest and southeast. The main reason why the north central is doing somewhat better than the other two northern zones is because Nigeria's capital, Abuja, is located in this zone (Langer and Ukiwo, 2010). Another interesting finding that emerges from Table 9 is that the south-south zone performs almost as poorly as the north central zone when it comes to access to electricity, immunization of newborn babies, and the proportion of pregnant women who have access to health clinics (Langer and Ukiwo, 2010).

Table 9. Various socioeconomic indicators across Nigeria’s zones, 1995–1996 (%)*

Zones/regions	Households without electricity	Children 6-11 in school	Children 12+ in school	Literate adults, 12+	Pregnant women using clinics	Born children not immunized
Northwest	79.8	34.2	35.2	20.7	25.3	65.9
Northeast	78.3	42.3	47.6	25	39.4	60.7
North central	61.2	69.8	73.7	44.7	66.8	54
Southwest	30.4	94.6	88.9	68.9	74.7	29.1
Southeast	47.7	88.3	89.6	75.8	84.8	29
South-south	55.7	90.9	87.6	77.2	60.7	56.9

Source: Mustapha, 2007.

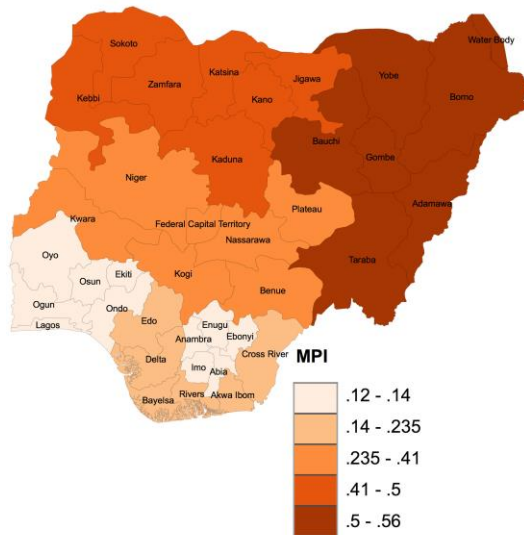
* Adapted from Federal Office of Statistics (FOS), 1995–1996, General Household Survey 1995–1996 national report.

Examining the current situation in Nigeria, it is notable that these inequalities remain very severe (see Figure 13). Comparing the MPIs of the regions in the northeast with the levels observed in the southwest, in the northern regions the poverty ratio was 4–5 times as high in 2008. A similar picture emerges with regard to the three other indicators. Thus, for instance, in 2008 in most regions in the south, a considerable majority (60–70 percent) had access to electricity, but in the northern regions, far fewer people were connected to the electricity grid: 20–30 percent in the northeast. The northeast was also doing extremely poorly with respect to under-five mortality, with rates more than twice as high as in the southwest and considerably above the rates found in other regional zones. The northwest is doing particularly badly compared to other regions in the proportion of women who lack formal education. While only 6 percent of women in the south had no formal education, in the northwest this ratio was 74 percent. In line with Nigeria’s ethnic and religious geography, it emerges that the Hausa-Fulanis and Muslims are doing considerably worse than people who belong to the Yoruba or Igbo ethnic groups or people who are Christians, all of whom are predominantly found in the south (see Table 10). Further, if we look at the evolution of HIs over time, it is noteworthy that regional inequalities got even worse with respect to some indicators over the last decade (see Figure 14). For example, the ratio of females without formal education in the northwest to the proportion in south-south was 6 in 1999 and rose to 12 in 2008,¹⁰ even though there had been a small improvement in the absolute proportion.

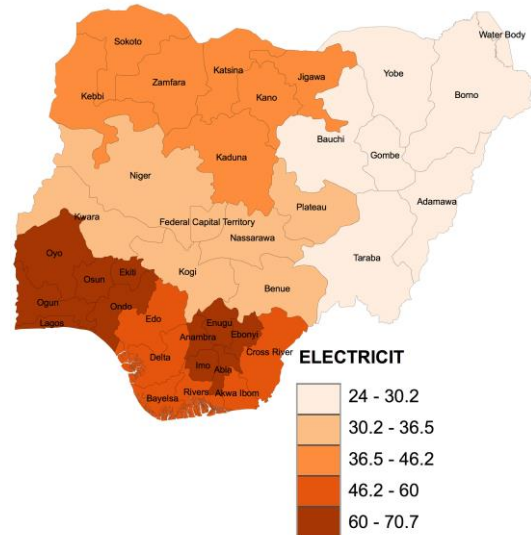
¹⁰ Of course, the ratio depends on the nature of the indicator. If we had measured the proportion of girls with some formal education, there would have been no change in the ratio over these years.

Figure 13. Horizontal inequalities in Nigeria

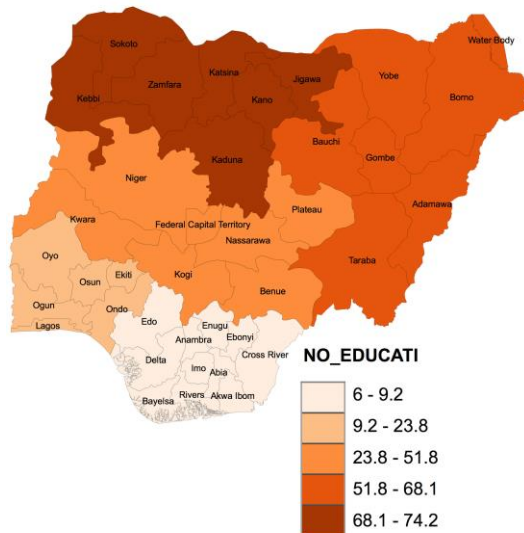
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), 2008



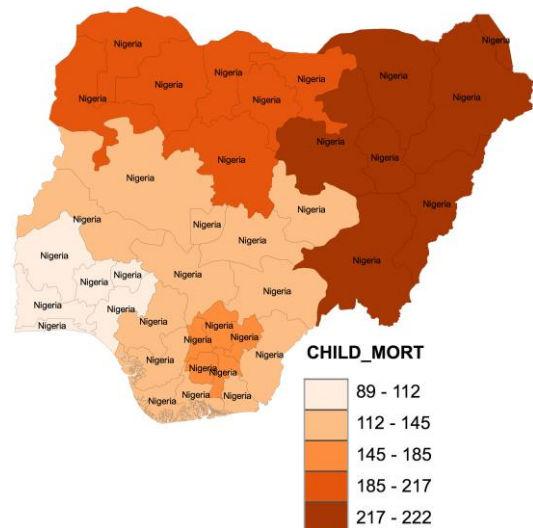
Access to electricity, 2008



Proportion of females without formal education, 2008



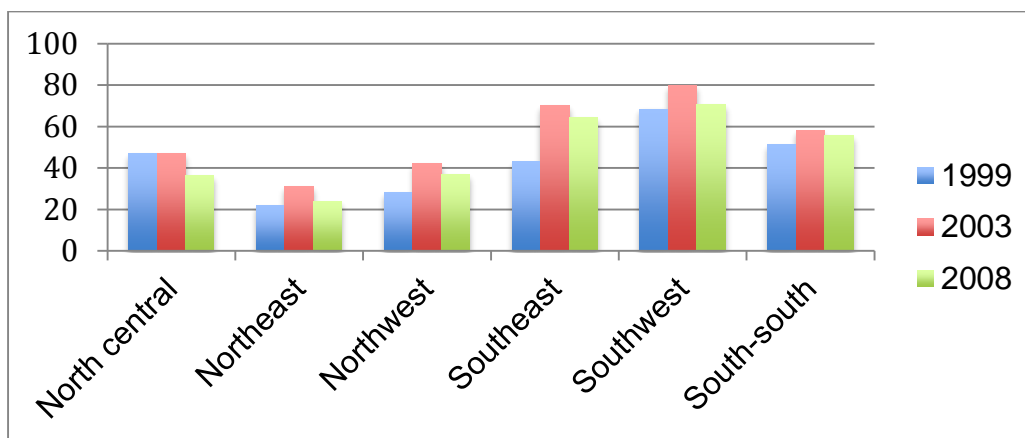
Under-five mortality rate, 2008



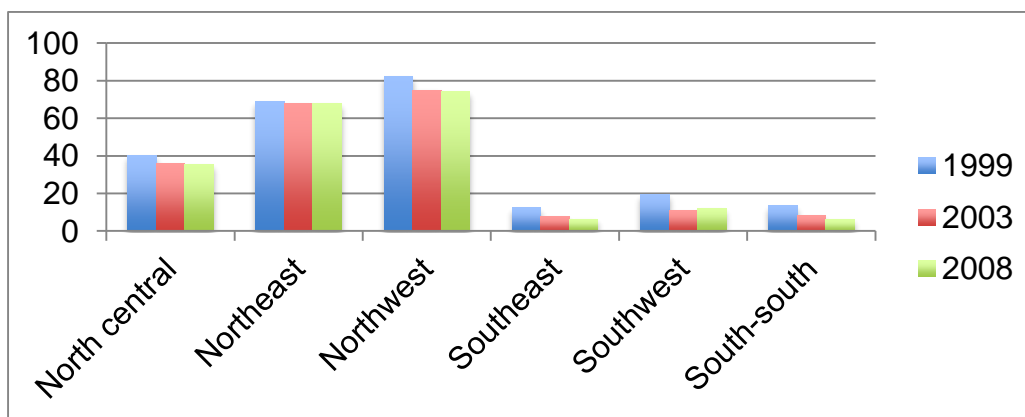
Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Nigeria's DHS and OPHI, 2014b.

Figure 14. The evolution of HIs in Nigeria, 1999–2008

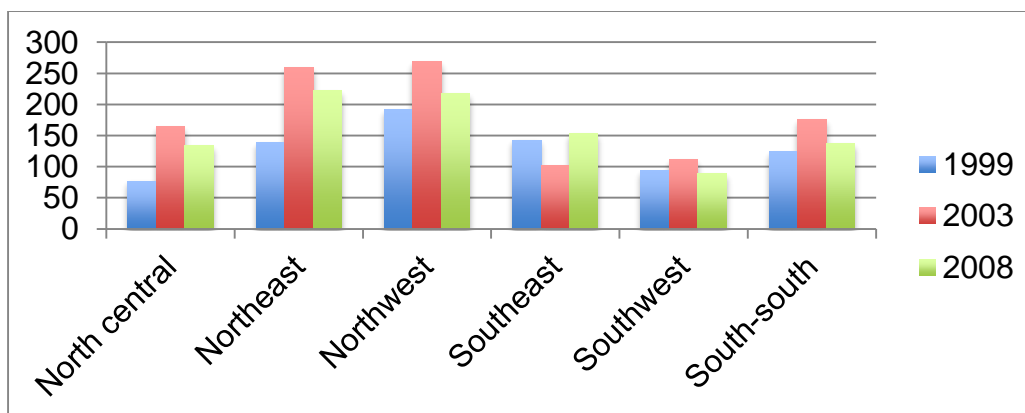
Proportion of people with access to electricity over time, 1999–2008



Proportion of females without formal education over time, 1999–2008



Under-five mortality over time, 1999–2008



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the DHS.

Table 10. Inequalities across ethnicity and religion in Nigeria

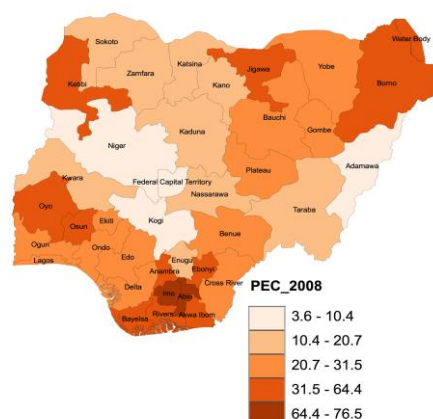
	Access to electricity (%)	No formal education (%)
Hausa-Fulani	35.2	79.7
Igbo	69.8	5.4
Yoruba	75.1	10.0
Christians	57.9	9.9
Muslims	40.7	66.0

Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Nigeria's 2008 DHS.

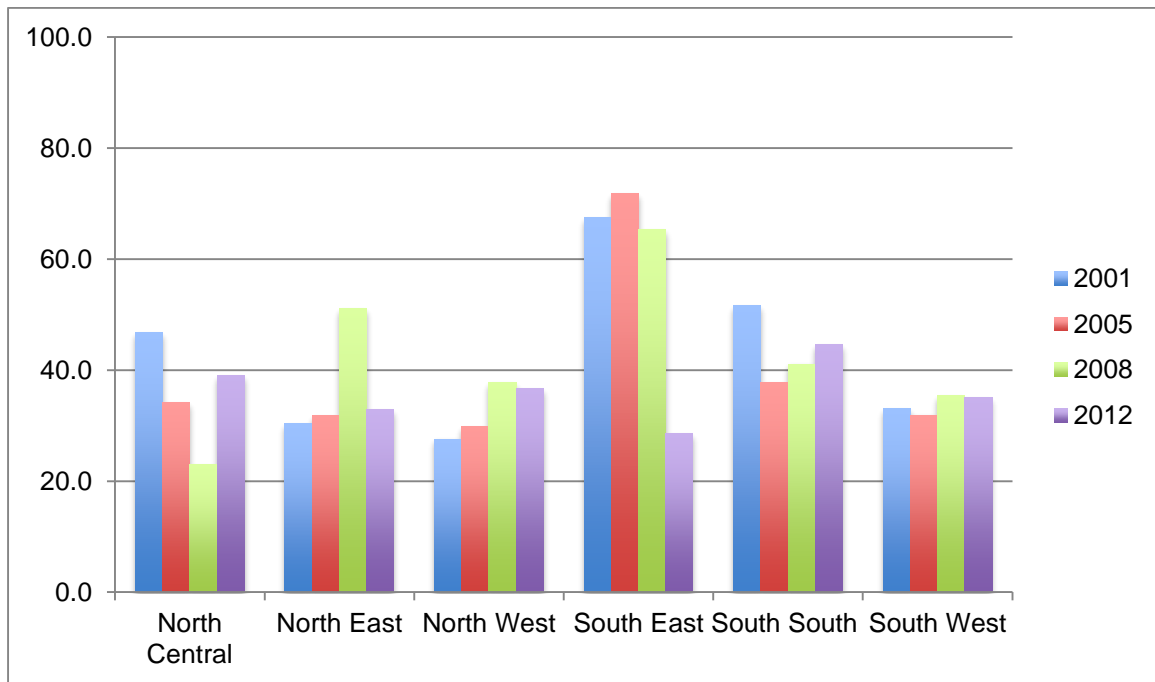
Perceptions of inequalities in Nigeria. As Figure 15 shows, the northeast has the highest proportion of people (65–77 percent) who consider their group's economic situation worse or much worse than that of other groups, a perception that is supported by objective indicators. This view is shared by people in the northwest and some in the southwest and south-south, yet the latter two regions "objectively" have quite low inequalities in relation to their region's average performance. This may be accounted for by high but unrealized expectations in the oil-producing region of Niger Delta, and by high vertical inequalities, so that many people are very poor despite the greater prosperity of the region. The north central region also showed a high proportion of people thinking their situation was worse than other groups (although less than in the northeast and northwest), also largely reflecting the objective situation. Interestingly, it is the southeast (mainly Igbo) that showed the largest proportion of population believing that they are unfairly treated by the government between 2001 and 2008 (see Figure 15), although there was a large reduction in this between 2008 and 2012. The northern regions do not regard themselves as particularly unfairly treated by the government.

Figure 15. Perceptions of horizontal inequalities and unfair treatment

Proportion of people who consider their ethnic group's economic situation "worse" or "much worse" than other groups (%), 2008



Proportion of people who feel their ethnic group is “often” or “always” treated unfairly by the government over time, 2001–2012

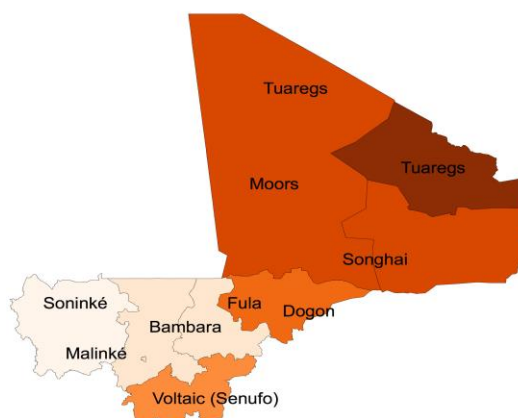


Source: Authors’ calculations and graphics based on data from Nigeria’s Afrobarometer surveys.

2.4 Mali

Mali is divided into eight regions and the capital district, of which three regions are in the north and the remainder are in the south of the country. The north is sparsely populated, accounting for just 9 percent of the population (2009 census). Population per square km is just 1.6 in the three northern regions, Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal, compared with 31 in the south. As noted earlier, virtually the entire population is Muslim. About half are classified as belonging to the Mandé group, located in the south, which includes the Bambara, Soninké, Khassonké, and Malinké. Other sizeable groups are the Fula (17 percent), Voltaic (12 percent), Songhai (6 percent), and Tuareg and Moor (10 percent). As in the other countries, ethnic groups are geographically located (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Main ethnic groups in Mali



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Mali's Afrobarometer R5 survey.

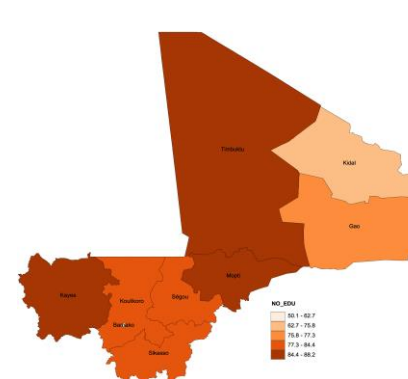
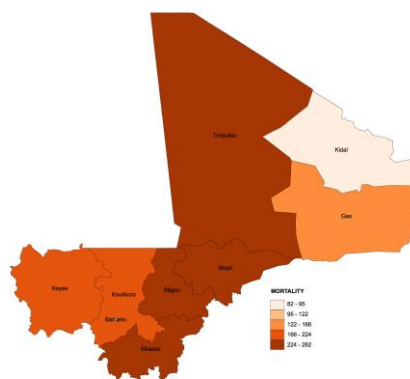
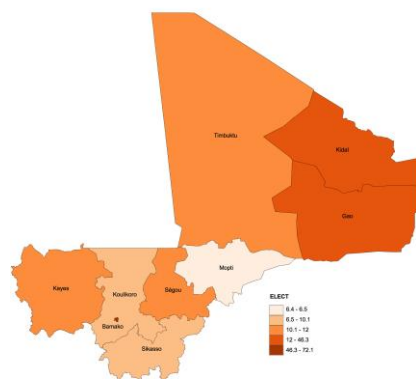
In Mali, the geographic differences in socioeconomic indicators are less clear-cut than in the other countries (see Table 11 and Figure 17). Bamako, the capital, does the best, but in other respects there is no systematic difference across regions. Basically, it seems like a situation of shared poverty, with every region showing marked deprivations. With respect to the prevailing inequalities between different ethnic groups, a similar picture emerges, with the Bambara, Senufo, Soninké, and Malinké (that is, the dominant ethnic groups in the southwest and in/around Bamako) doing somewhat better than the ethnic groups in the north. It is noteworthy, however, that the Tuaregs appear to be doing worst of all ethnic groups, although not by a large margin compared to the Moors. Worsening performance over time is to be noted in Timbuktu, the area most affected by the ongoing violent conflict (see Figure 18). The lack of a clear pattern is repeated in the perceptions data. Again, people in Bamako are least likely to perceive that they are less well off or unfairly treated, but elsewhere no particular pattern can be observed and the data appear very erratic (see Figure 19). However, it may well be that the data are not reliable, especially in the north, as surveying nomadic populations poses particular problems.

Figure 17. Inequalities in Mali by region

Access to electricity, 2006

Proportion of females without formal education, 2008

Under-five mortality rate, 2008



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Mali's DHS and OPHI, 2013.

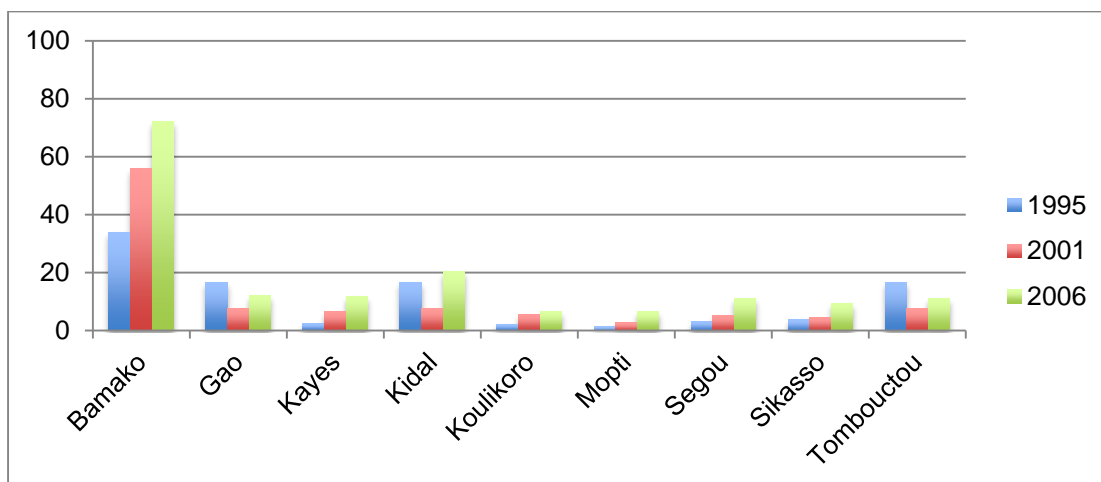
Table 11. Inequalities across ethnicity in Mali

	Bambara	Malinké	Peul	Soninké	Sonhai	Dogon	Tuareg	Sénoufo
Access to electricity (%)	20.2	26.5	17.5	22.6	16.9	12.7	11.9	23.2
No formal education (%)	77.5	73.3	80.2	81	79.4	83.6	86	71.4

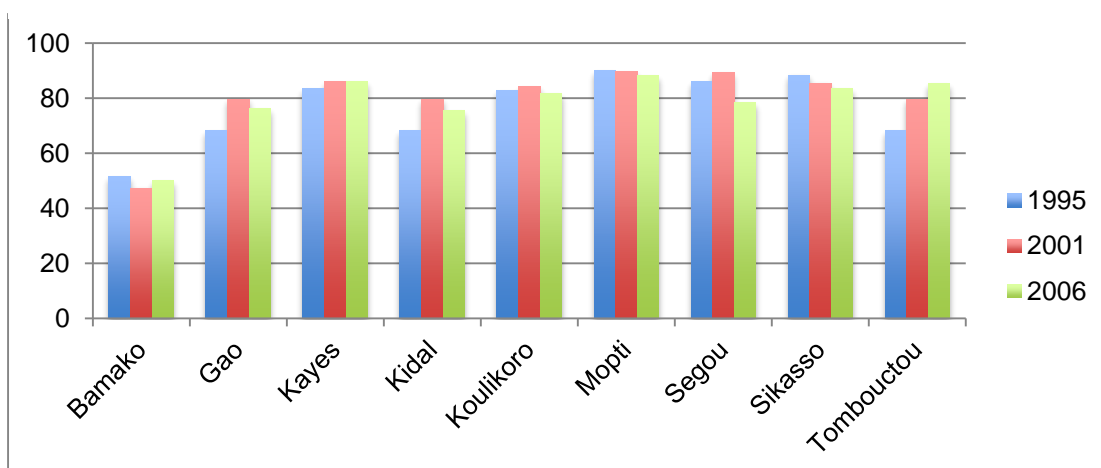
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from Mali's DHS.

Figure 18. The evolution of HIs in Mali, 1993–2008

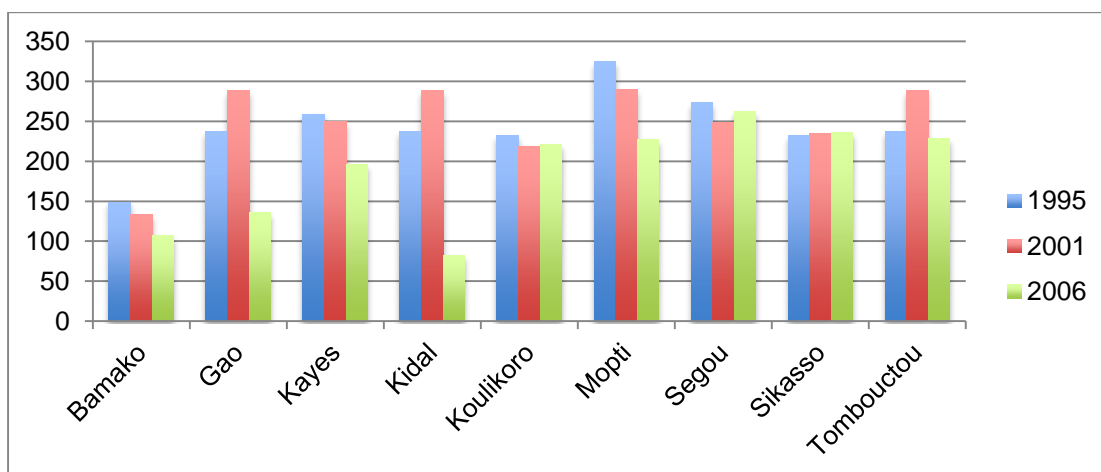
Proportion of people with access to electricity over time, 1993–2008



Proportion of females without formal education over time, 1993–2008



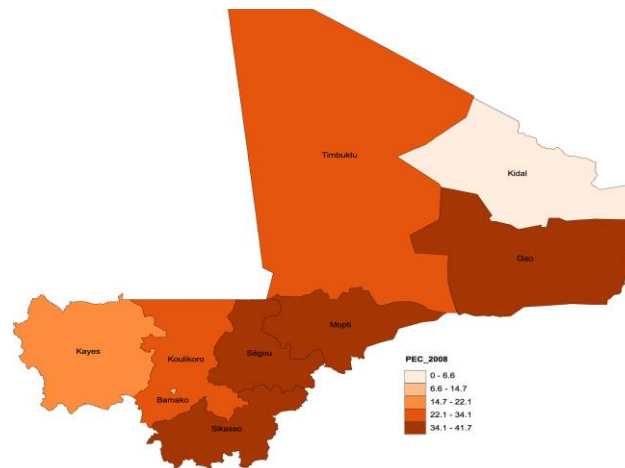
Under-five mortality over time, 1993–2008



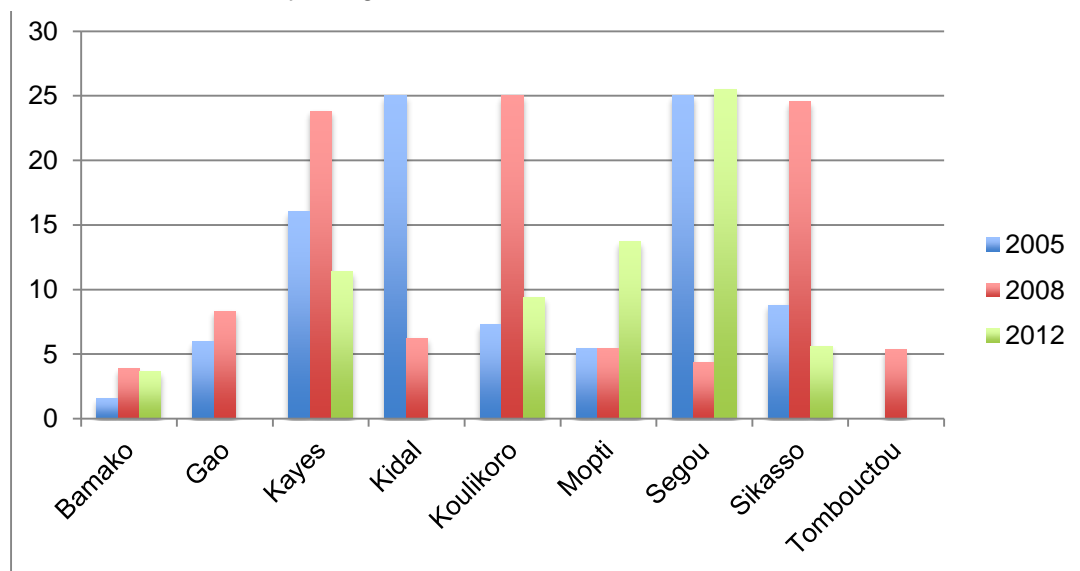
Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the DHS.

Figure 19. Perceptions of horizontal inequalities and unfair treatment

Proportion of people who consider their ethnic group's *economic* situation "worse" or "much worse" than other groups (%), 2008



Proportion of people who feel their ethnic group is "often" or "always" treated unfairly by the government over time, 2005–2012



Source: Authors' calculations and graphics based on data from Mali's Afrobarometer surveys.

2.5 HIs: A comparative assessment

Table 12 shows how the north and south in each of our four case study countries is doing regarding two indicators—the proportion of people with access to electricity and the proportion of females who have not had formal education. The table also shows the north-south ratio regarding these two indicators. It is interesting to note that the north-south divide with respect to the proportion of people with access to electricity is the sharpest in Ghana, followed by Nigeria, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire. In terms of the proportion of females who have not had formal education, Ghana and Nigeria are also doing very poorly compared to Côte d’Ivoire and Mali. Illustratively, in Nigeria, the proportion of females in the north who have not had any formal education is more than 7 times higher than in the south. In Ghana, this ratio is 4.27. In contrast, in Mali, there is hardly any north-south divide with respect to the proportion of females who have not had formal education. Indeed, it appears that both regions are performing equally badly concerning this indicator, with about 80 percent of females lacking any formal education.

Table 12. North-south inequalities in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria

	Access to electricity (%)			No formal education (%)			DHS
	North	South	N/S Ratio	North	South	N/S Ratio	
Côte d'Ivoire	43.3	65.2	0.66	69.0	41.2	1.67	2012
Ghana	31.1	66.2	0.47	58.1	13.6	4.27	2008
Nigeria	33.8	66.3	0.51	61.9	8.6	7.20	2008
Mali	12.4	20.3	0.61	80.8	78.0	1.04	2006

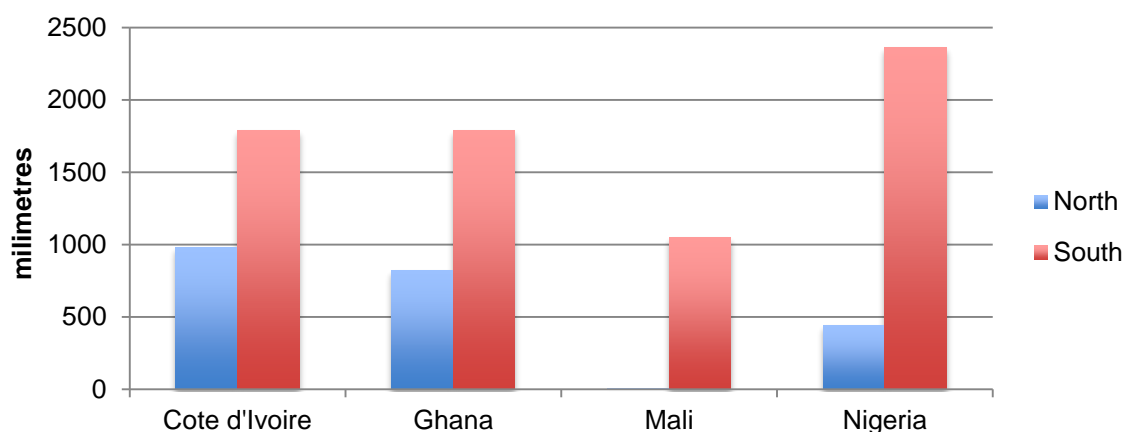
Source: Authors’ calculations based on data from DHS surveys.

Interestingly, the two countries doing “best” in terms of regional HIs (Côte d’Ivoire and Mali) have actually both experienced a violent national conflict in their recent past. In contrast, Nigeria, which has the largest north-south gap on these indicators, has not experienced conflict at the national level since 1970, but has had sporadic and serious violence in the Middle Belt and from Boko Haram in the north. Ghana, on the other hand, which has remained relatively peaceful and stable for the last two decades, appears to have the largest north-south divide. However, while Ghana has regional HIs that are in *objective* terms worse than the ones in Mali and Côte d’Ivoire, and more or less similar to the ones in Nigeria, the north-south divide nonetheless appears to be less politically salient and threatening than in the other three countries. Indeed, very few people across Ghana (both in the north and south) feel that their ethnic group is “treated unfairly” by their government (see Figure 6). In the other three countries, the proportions of people both in the north and south who feel they are treated unfairly by their respective governments were much higher. Arguably, a key element that makes the north-south disparities in Ghana more tolerable than those in the other three countries is the fact that Ghana is the only country that appears to have made substantial progress in improving its situation over the last 15 years in the north as well as in the south, even though this has not been accompanied by a rapid decline of the north-south divide.

3. An overview of causes of inequalities

In each case, it appears that a combination of climatic and other geographic differences and colonial policy lay at the origin of the HIs. Postcolonial policy often reinforced the imbalances.

Figure 20. Average annual rainfall, mm, 1990–2010



Source: Climate Change Knowledge Portal; World Bank, 2014a.

In all four countries, rain is more abundant and more evenly spread throughout the year in the south than the north. This has obvious implications for fertility, although in the case of Mali, even the south has very limited rainfall and the north is basically desert (see Figure 20). Hence the evidence for Mali shows considerable areas of deprivation in the south as well as the north. In each country, the south consequently formed the locus of colonial cash crops (and irrigation schemes around the Niger river in the case of Mali), while the north consists of dryer savannah country that colonial policy left largely to subsistence crops. In Ghana, for example, it was estimated that in the 1980s, the northern regions, which accounted for 40 percent of land area, produced only 14 percent of total agricultural output (Roe et al., 1992). Further advantaging the south, minerals (gold and bauxite) were found in the south of Ghana, and gold in the south of Mali. In Côte d'Ivoire, which had limited commercial development until the 1950s, there was little regional imbalance (Hinderink and Tempelman, 1979), but from then on, the production of cash crops in the south and southeast was promoted. Consequently, in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria, infrastructure and markets were concentrated in the south, where the colonial capitals were also located and where commercial crops and mineral producers were found. The small amount of modern industrialization was also concentrated there.

Education was initially introduced by missionaries—northern missionary activities were restricted by the governments in Ghana and banned altogether in Nigeria, ostensibly to avoid conflict with Muslims, and possibly also to preserve these areas as a “reservoir” of labor for mines and commercial agriculture in the south, and to provide the personnel for the military forces (see Langer, 2009; Bening, 1975, Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). In Côte d'Ivoire, too, most missionary activity was concentrated in the country's south and center rather than in the Muslim-dominated north. At independence in Ghana, there was only one secondary school in the north (Roe et al., 1992). Missionary schools were particularly focused on the Ewe (in the

west of Ghana), who were considered the most suitable recipients of Western education. In Nigeria, it was the Igbo in the southeast who were regarded as having a special aptitude for Western education. Education in the north was deliberately neglected by Governor Frederick Lugard, who believed that education had made southerners discontented (Graham, 1966). In 1957, in northern Nigeria there were 2,080 primary schools and 18 secondary schools, compared with 13,473 primary and 1,305 secondary schools in the south (population numbers were broadly equal) (Mustapha, 2006). French colonial policy involved a much narrower focus of education on tribal chiefs and their families, so that at independence the total number of children attending school in Côte d'Ivoire was very low throughout the country, just 1 in 20, or only 10 percent of the number of pupils in Ghana. But there, too, regional imbalances occurred, as shown by data for 1967 when the north and west had primary enrollments of less than half the national average (Salem, 1975). Education in the French colony of Mali mirrored that in Côte d'Ivoire.¹¹

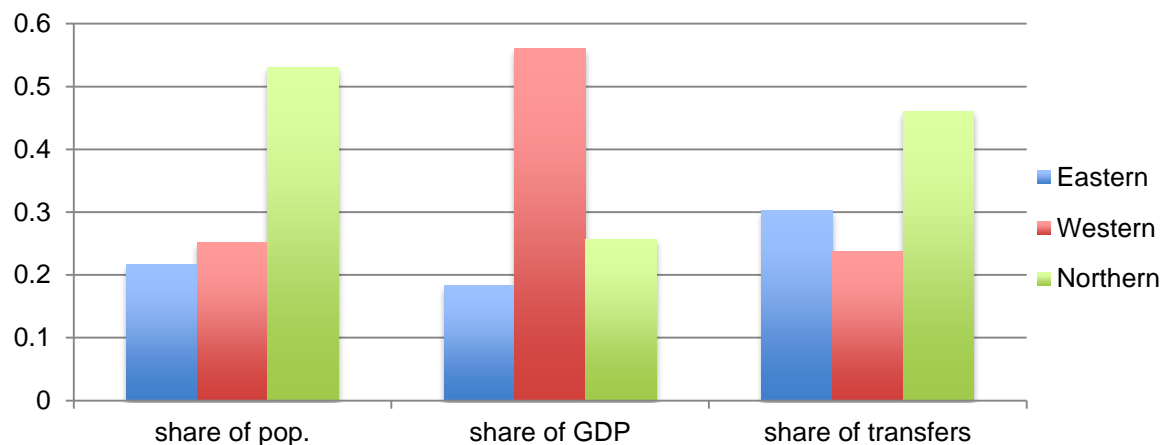
Most postcolonial governments continued the development bias against the north, since the south offered better prospects for growth, given its greater infrastructure, education, and markets. Import-substituting industrialization was located in the south in each country. North-south migration tended to reproduce ethnic inequalities within the southern regions, as northerners, with less education, mostly secured only the lower paying jobs. The first independence presidents in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, conscious of the need to support nation-building, made efforts to offset this southern bias. Between 1965 and 1975, of the eight regions in Côte d'Ivoire, the north received the third highest rate of public investment per head. In the light of continued regional inequalities, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny initiated a "Programme du Nord" and from 1971–1977, the region was the second highest recipient of public investment per head (Bresson, 1980; Den Tuinder, 1978), while the Ministry of Planning included a unit devoted to developing regional plans in the context of the 1971–1975 development plan. However, the worsening economic situation in the late 1970s halted these efforts. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah tried to offset the bias with large state-financed investments in agricultural production and processing in the north, but these were mostly unsuccessful and ended after his displacement and the political turmoil that followed. In both countries, the 1980s was a period of structural adjustment. The switch in policy away from import substitution to exports did not improve regional balance, since the export crops and minerals were located in the south.

Nigeria became conscious of the dangers arising from *political* inequalities following the Biafran War, and made a major effort to counter these through the design of the Federation and the Federal Character Principle, which aims to ensure a fair distribution of public appointments among the five major groups; the relocation of the capital city was also intended to advance national integration (Mustapha, 2007). On the economic side, import-substituting industrialization was largely located in the south. Oil was discovered in the southwestern Delta region, although the region itself did not gain that much from the discovery. But oil displaced agricultural activities from the early 1970s and generally disadvantaged agriculture, worsening

¹¹ Only 29 percent of children were in primary school in Mali in 1971, compared with 75 percent in Ghana. In general, former French colonies had much less extensive educational systems than British ones at independence (see Grier, 1999).

the conditions of previous agricultural export producers, which were mainly located in the southern part of the country. The revenue allocation formula that applied to federal revenue (mainly derived from oil, which became the dominant source of revenue) was intended to contribute to regional balance. The formula has been modified over time; it currently gives each state the same proportion of total federal revenue (40 percent) and distributes the remainder according to the size of the population (30 percent), the inverse of the level of social development (10 percent), and revenue generation (10 percent) (Lukpata, 2013). In principle, this would seem redistributionary. But in practice, the relatively prosperous eastern states get most, and the poorest northern states get the least, although the differences are not as great as the income differences, so from the latter perspective it constitutes a progressive distribution. However, a formula that simply gave every person the same would clearly be much more progressive.

Figure 21. Regional distribution of federal transfers to states and local government authorities in Nigeria, 2013



Source: Statistics Database. Central Bank of Nigeria. <http://statistics.cbn.gov.ng/cbn-onlinestats/DataBrowser.aspx> (accessed December 23, 2014).

In Mali, postcolonial development has focused primarily on activities in the south and west, including cotton, gold, and rice. While growth has led to a reduction in poverty at the national level, “poverty in the northern regions has remained largely unchanged over the decades” (European Parliament, 2014, p. 35). Conflict has been mainly confined to the north and has generally involved destruction of infrastructure and the disruption of services and development.¹²

While the analysis above was predominantly presented in regional terms, there is a corresponding ethnic and religious dimension due to the strong overlap of region, ethnicity, and religion, as shown in the previous section.

¹² According to UNICEF, conflict and crisis in Mali has disrupted the education of around 700,000 Malian children, mainly in the north, with 115 schools in the north closed in 2012–2013. http://www.unicef.org/media/media_67961.html (accessed May 2, 2014).

In all countries, one factor has tended to reduce inequalities, while one has tended to perpetuate them. The push to universalize some basic services, notably primary education and health care—to the extent that it is achieved—reduces inequalities in the education and health dimensions (although the extent to which inequalities are reduced must be qualified, because in the early stages of achieving these goals regional differences often widen while quality may continue to be uneven, even if quantity becomes more equal). Moreover, reductions in educational inequalities are not necessarily to the benefit of regional output, as these enable people to migrate to where economic opportunities are greatest. To reduce regional HIs, it is necessary to reduce inequalities in economic as well as social dimensions. The factor tending to perpetuate inequalities is the well-established tendency for HIs—or categorical inequalities, to use Tilly’s term (1998)—to be *durable*. This arises for several reasons: first, because parental circumstances (in education and income) influence children’s opportunities; second, social and cultural capital tend to be lower for deprived groups; and third, there is interaction between returns to one type of capital and access to other types, so that, for example, returns to schooling are lower for children who have limited access to jobs because of deficiencies in social capital or because of discrimination (Figueroa, 2006; Stewart and Langer, 2008; Figueroa, 2010). This implies that to reduce HIs it may be necessary not just to “level the playing field” but to give more than proportionate resources and opportunities to deprived groups. Moreover, action on just one front—for example, education—will not be sufficient if economic opportunities are not expanded simultaneously.¹³

Political inequalities also underlie socioeconomic ones, since politicians tend to favor their own group. In many West African countries, political HIs were instituted initially by colonial governments, which generally favored southern groups in education (as noted above) and in the bureaucracy, although northern groups were often called on to comprise the military. Upon independence, the countries followed different paths in this respect. In both Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, the first presidents made a conscious effort to have regionally and ethnically inclusive cabinets. In the case of Ghana, this policy has continued—for example, although the presidents have mostly come from the south or east, by convention the vice president is usually a northerner. Moreover, the current president, John Dramani Mahama, is actually a northerner, as he took over following the death of John Atta Mills in 2012. In Côte d’Ivoire, Houphouët-Boigny was inclusive, but after his death in 1993, Henri Konan Bédié and his successors excluded northerners, and this became a major cause of the civil war (Langer, 2005). Since independence, Nigeria has adopted conscious policies to distribute power to northerners as well as southerners, structuring its federation and principles of public appointments to do so, and also having an informal convention that the presidency should alternate between a southerner and a northerner. However, members of minority groups have been excluded in this process. In contrast, Mali has been exclusionary in its politics, especially toward the Tuaregs. Federalism is never considered and even decentralization has been largely token, with very limited transfer of power or resources.

¹³ Our analysis suggests that group inequalities in various types of capital, and in the returns to this capital, initiate HIs, but this is often perpetuated by inequality of accumulation and by differential returns across groups, because the returns to any one type of capital are kept low by deficiencies in quantity and quality of other types of capital, as well as by past and current discrimination (Stewart and Langer, 2008).

This section of the paper has briefly considered factors underlying the continued severe HIs, which included some postcolonial policies. The next section reviews contemporary policy, focusing on whether the problem of HIs is acknowledged, whether the need to reduce them is incorporated in policy, and what actual policies have been adopted to this end.

4. Recent policies toward HIs

It is not possible, given time and space, to conduct a detailed review of policies in all four countries. Consequently, Table 13 summarizes actions, objectives, and policies of the four governments, drawn from their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and, in the case of Nigeria, the 2004 National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. Since the PRSPs represent the governments' considered position on economic objectives, especially toward inequality and poverty, reached after extensive consultation, this seems to be a good way of ascertaining the various governments' attitudes toward HIs.

The following conclusions can be drawn from this exercise:

- In terms of *recognition* in each country, the regional dimension is acknowledged in one way or another, but is not given much priority—targets and most data are national. However, none of the governments consider ethnic or religious inequalities *explicitly*, although there is reference to “underprivileged communities” in the case of Côte d’Ivoire, “poor communities” and “marginalization” in Ghana’s case, and “marginalization” and “social inequalities” in Mali, all of which can be taken as proxies for ethnic inequalities. While equitable and effective regional policies would do much to correct ethnic and religious inequalities, they may not be sufficient, as migrants in the south tend to be significantly poorer than locals, while southerners located in the north often secure many of the benefits of commercial opportunities there.
- In terms of explicit *objectives*, national objectives appear to be given priority, and economic growth in particular. In Ghana, however, the need to correct regional imbalances has been a recurrent theme: “Bridging the gap between northern and southern parts of the country has been a long-term goal of most post-independence governments of Ghana;” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010, p. 95). Nigeria included the objective of providing “equality of status and opportunity” (Gov. of Nigeria, 2004, p. 4) in its 2004 plan, and its formula for the distribution of federal revenue has redistributionary intention. Regional development goals were included by Côte d’Ivoire and Mali in their postconflict policy papers; the aim of combating all forms of exclusion and building infrastructural capacities of under-privileged communities was included by Côte d’Ivoire; while Mali put big emphasis on rehabilitating and reconstructing the north.

Table 13. Policies toward HIs in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria

	Côte d’Ivoire			
	Recognition	Incorporated in objectives	Policy and implementation	Comment
“Interim PRSP” (Rep. of Côte d’Ivoire, 2002)	Not explicit	Decentralization “as a means for the people to participate in the development process, and reduction of regional and local disparities” (p. 13)	General increase in access to services (region/group not mentioned). Implementation prevented by conflict.	Assessments all national, little attention to regional, and none to ethnic dimensions.
“Strategy for Relaunching Development and Reducing Poverty” (Rep. of Côte d’Ivoire, 2009)	Very little—poverty not assessed by region. But “persistent regional and local disparities” recognised as one cause of poverty (p. 27) Regional disparities shown in poverty and per capita income data.	“The main tool for poverty reduction is economic growth” (p. 90). Social cohesion objective includes “combating all forms of exclusion” (p. 94); and “must also build the infrastructural capacities of under-privileged communities” (p. 102)	Governance reforms and extension of services, but no specific regional dimensions.	Growth strategy alone likely to worsen regional differentials.

	Ghana			
	Recognition	Incorporated in objectives	Policy and implementation	Comment
“Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2000–2002” (Rep. of Ghana, 2000)	Not explicit	Targets are national (Box 3).	Policies to reduce educational disparities in the north. Northern infrastructure investments aimed to reduce the isolation of poor communities, and special attention to deprived areas in water.	
<i>Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003–2005</i> (Rep. of Ghana, 2003)	Strong recognition of exclusion of groups, especially in north and in central regions; “Past policies for a more equitable distribution have not been implemented. ... Poverty has deepened and become more intractable in the Northern, Upper East and Central Regions.... Positive action to	“It seeks to ameliorate the spatial disparities in the growth process” (Rep. of Ghana, 2003, p. 40). Intention to provide special programs “for the vulnerable and excluded.” (Rep. of Ghana, 2003, p. 44) Data given on disparities.	Plan allocated almost half of the funds to northern regions. Policies included special incentives and training for teachers in the north; provision of wells and sanitation for deprived areas. But actual allocation of funds fell far below plans (Abdul-Gafaru and Hulme, 2014)	President Kufuor committed to correcting inequalities.

	redress gross imbalances in geographical distribution of resource investment must be taken” (Rep. of Ghana, 2003)			
	Ghana (cont'd)			
	Recognition	Incorporated in objectives	Policy and implementation	Comment
“Ghana: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” (Rep. of Ghana, 2005).	Elements of recognition: the growth strategy should be “complemented by the adoption of an overall social protection policy, aimed at empowering the vulnerable, excluded, especially women, to contribute to and share in the benefits of growth” (Rep. of Ghana, 2005 p. 5). Notes geographically uneven decline in poverty.	No, apart from reference to promoting northern investments in health care, water, and nutrition.		Policies largely ignore acknowledged inequalities.

<p>“Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010).</p>	<p>Some acknowledgement. Refers to challenge of regional inequalities, with the north having experienced significantly higher poverty than the rest of the country, and that income inequality “across regions and between groups remains high and has increased during the period of accelerated growth” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010, p. 9). But accelerating growth central. None of seven themes mention inequality.</p>	<p>Aims include “reducing gender and geographic disparities in the distribution of national resources,” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010, p. 1) “creating a new order of social justice, premised on the inclusion of all hitherto excluded and marginalized people, particularly the poor, the underprivileged and persons with disabilities” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010, p. 1) “ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are fairly shared among the various segments of society.” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010, p. 1)</p>	<p>Special incentives to support industrialization in poor areas, including the north, by infrastructure, tax incentives, and Special Development Zones, including Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA).</p>	<p>2010–2013 paper notes that “bridging the gap between northern and southern parts of the country has been a long-term goal of most post-independence governments of Ghana” (Rep. of Ghana, 2010, p. 95). Ignored in GRSP II and gap widened. Renewed consciousness and policies for 2010–2013.</p>
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	Mali			
	Recognition	Incorporated in objectives	Policy and implementation	Comment
<p>“Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” (Gov. of Mali, 2002)</p>	No	All national objectives.	Not an explicit part of strategy.	

<p>“Plan for the Sustainable Recovery of Mali, 2013–2014” (Gov. of Mali, 2013b)</p>	<p>Assessment almost all national. Some recognition of north-south differences in health and education.</p>	<p>Mainly national but include reconstruction objective, “ensuring inclusive development based on reduction of poverty and inequality.”(Gov. of Mali, 2013, p. 3)</p>	<p>Focus on projects for northern development.</p>	<p>Regional development motivated by heavy conflict costs in the north.</p>
<p>“Emergency Action Plan (PASU), 2013–2014” (Gov. of Mali, 2013a)</p>	<p>Largely directed toward reconstruction and rehabilitation.</p>		<p>Reconstruction in the north focuses on monitoring health structures, workers, schools, and so on in the north.</p>	
<p>“Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GRSP), 2012–2017” (Gov. of Mali, 2012).</p>	<p>Emphasis on reconstruction after conflict, includes special needs of the north. Second pillar includes correcting inequalities relating to “gender ... and reduce social inequalities” (para 22).</p>	<p>Need to reduce inequalities is acknowledged, but not given priority.</p>	<p>Food security, malnutrition, and health coverage are given regional dimensions. Reference to “development of the Northern region” (para 94) .Included a Special Program for Peace, Development and Security (PSPDN) directed toward the north.</p>	<p>Postconflict recognition, but actual focus has been on increasing security apparatus in the north and not on resource flows.¹⁴</p>

¹⁴ The PSPSDN was a donor funded program that aimed to develop eleven “pôles sécurisé de développement et de gouvernance” in northern Mali, to be protected by security forces. It followed agreements to enhance the development of the north included in previous peace agreements (1991, 1992) and a special investment fund established in 2006, but “neither the funds nor effective security forces materialised” (see Wing, 2013b, p. 6). The PSPDN was established without consultation and emphasized security and not development (Wing, 2013b).

	Nigeria			
	Recognition	Incorporated in objectives	Policy and implementation	Comment
Nigeria: Meeting Everyone's Needs 2004 (Gov. of Nigeria, 2004)	Basically not; no mention of regional or ethnic issues in "Nigeria at a Glance" (Box 1.1), or in analysis of "At risk groups" (Box 4.3). One statement refers to poverty varying by region, sector, and gender. Another states that "a policy that targets very poor states would have a greater effect on poverty reduction than one that does not."(Gov. of Nigeria, 2004, p. 12)	"To secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity"(Gov. of Nigeria, 2004, p. 4)	No policies pointed to in document. But derivation principle for distributing federal revenues is intended to be redistributive.	Federal distribution formulae designed to help reduce inequalities and bring about national unity, but insufficient to do so.

- Few *actual* policies to reduce (regional) horizontal inequalities were mentioned, with the exception of Ghana. In each case, however, the goal of extending basic services to the whole population should eventually reduce disparities in these dimensions. Decentralization is included in most documents, but not how it might be designed to combat inequalities (as against accentuating them, which it may well do). Despite the intention to reduce inequalities in postconflict Côte d'Ivoire, no specific policies were noted. However, Mali mentioned projects in the north in the Recovery Plan (2012–2013) and a Special Program for Peace Development and Security, which included reconstruction of northern facilities and the improvement of health and educational services in the 2012–2017 PRSP. But evaluation of this program shows it has emphasized security rather than development (Wing, 2013a). Ghana has the most advanced set of regional policies with Special Development Zones (including the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority), which include tax incentives and infrastructure to assist in regional development, but assessments suggest that implementation lagged behind intentions (Abdulai and Hulme, 2014). No specific policies were mentioned in Nigeria's 2004 "Meeting Everyone's Needs."
- Over the last twenty years, progress appears to have been made in terms of recognition. Policy papers produced around 2000 were mainly growth-focused, but more recent papers have tended to include regional balance in one way or another.
- Conflict itself tended to worsen regional inequality, but the need to focus on the conflict-affected areas (the north) is clearly acknowledged in postconflict Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. Nigeria has reacted to conflict with politically inclusionary measures, but has done little on the economic side.
- The PRSPs mostly report on progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The fact that the MDGs are all defined as *national* objectives may act as a disincentive to adopt regional targets or to report on regional achievements. Sometimes indeed, national MDG targets can more easily be achieved by enhancing regional differentials. Ghana is an example in which regional poverty disparities widened at one point, while there was good progress on the MDG national poverty target. This is highly relevant to the development of post-2015 targets.

5. From horizontal inequalities to violent conflict: Insights from our four case studies

The idea that horizontal inequalities raise the risk of conflict stems from the view that if there are sharp inequalities between different groups in society, the relatively disadvantaged groups are likely to feel aggrieved about their inferior position and may mobilize against the advantaged, while advantaged groups may act violently to preempt possible opposition or even rebellion. Group identity provides a powerful mechanism of mobilization. The idea that the presence of large horizontal inequalities raise the risk of conflict can be seen as a development of Ted Gurr's relative deprivation theory, first developed in the well-known book *Why Men Rebel* (Gurr, 1970), and originally related to individuals' motivations for joining a rebellion. But he later extended the logic of relative deprivation to the political mobilization of minority groups (Gurr, 1993). He argued that discontent stimulated by deprivation relative to contemporaries and by unfulfilled expectations, combined with a sense of group cultural identity, may lead to political mobilization, violent and otherwise, of minority groups against the dominant group(s) in society

(Langer and Stewart, 2014). However, in contrast to the horizontal inequalities hypothesis, he did not “explicitly focus on interpersonal or intergroup wealth comparisons” (Cederman et al., 2011, p. 479), nor did he allow for advantaged groups instigating violence, which is a quite frequent occurrence.

It is not claimed that horizontal inequalities automatically lead to conflict, but rather that they raise the risk of conflict. Other factors need to be present for this risk to turn into actual conflict. One element is the nature of horizontal inequalities themselves. Where different dimensions of horizontal inequalities are consistent (that is, particular ethnic groups are both politically excluded and economically disadvantaged) countries are more at risk of experiencing violent conflict (see, in particular, Østby, 2008; Cederman et al., 2011). The risk of violent conflict increases in these situations because both the political “elites” and “masses” of the relatively deprived groups have a strong incentive to mobilize along ethnic lines in order to improve their position (Langer, 2005). Moreover, violent group mobilization may be more “feasible” in certain political, economic, regional, and geographical contexts and settings, as argued by the feasibility or opportunity hypotheses, which suggest that rebellions occur where they are feasible or there is a good opportunity rather than because of insurgents’ motivations (see for example Tilly, 1978; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003).

In the light of these general considerations, below we briefly explore the impact of the prevailing horizontal inequalities in our four case studies on these countries’ political situation and histories.

5.1 Understanding Côte d’Ivoire’s descent into violence

Following its independence in August 1960, Côte d’Ivoire enjoyed two-and-a-half decades of relative peace and stability under the leadership of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. While Côte d’Ivoire’s strong economic performance in the first two decades contributed heavily to the country’s relatively stable political environment, Houphouët-Boigny’s approach to politics—the so-called “Le modèle Houphouétiste”—also played an important role. His approach was characterized by a culture of dialogue, compromise, rewards, punishment, forgiveness, and reintegration (see Akindès, 2007), and the effective use of economic incentives to co-opt actual and prospective political challengers into his patronage system (see Zartman and Delgado, 1984). The robustness of the economy in the first two decades provided sufficient resources for Houphouët-Boigny’s patronage system to defuse most sources of discontent (Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, 1999). Another factor that contributed to maintaining political stability under Houphouët-Boigny was his (informal) “system of ethnic quotas,” which was aimed at establishing a balance between different regions and ethnic groups within the main state institutions (Bakery, 1984, p. 35). Hence, political horizontal inequalities under Houphouët-Boigny were relatively moderate. As discussed above, he also undertook efforts to reduce the prevailing inequalities.

The sharp decline in the commodity prices of coffee and cocoa at the end of the 1970s clearly exposed Côte d’Ivoire’s vulnerability to the international commodity markets. The negative economic environment in the 1980s not only substantially reduced the standard of living in the country, but also had important political consequences. Due to the sharp decline in government revenues, the Houphouët-Boigny regime was no longer able to provide cozy state jobs to large

numbers of university students, which in turn led to serious student protests. The economic problems also exacerbated tensions between locals and foreign migrants, as well as between internal migrants from the north and locals in the southern regions. As most internal and international migrants belonged to the northern ethnic groups and were Muslim, the communal tensions were increasingly perceived as a conflict between north and south (Dembélé, 2003). As Dembélé (2003) argues, “the communal conflict between north and south was mainly related to land issues and the presence of too many migrants from the center and north in the rural economy in the south-western regions and the urban economy in the south” (p. 36).

The divisions in the economic sphere were transmitted to the political sphere with the arrival of Alassane Ouattara (that is, a politician from the northern regions who would become the leader of the main northern party, RDR) and the introduction of competitive elections at the beginning of the 1990s. The first competitive presidential elections took place in October 1990. Houphouët-Boigny won the elections with a considerable margin against the main opposition party candidate, Laurent Gbagbo. The most significant aspect regarding these elections, however, was the introduction of ethnonationalism and xenophobia into the political arena. When Houphouët-Boigny subsequently died in December 1993, this unleashed a power struggle between the new political leaders, which contributed substantially to the disintegration of the Ivorian state a decade later.

A growing northern consciousness was another important change that contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions at the beginning of the 1990s. The distribution of an anonymous document called “Le Charte du Grand Nord” (Charter of the North) in 1992 illustrated the changed attitudes of the northerners regarding the sociopolitical system in general and the Baoulé group in particular. The Charter “called for fuller recognition of the Muslim religion ..., more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north’s political loyalty during the upheavals of the 1980s and ... an end to Baoulé nepotism in recruitment to public jobs” (quoted in Crook, 1997, p. 226).

In sharp contrast to Houphouët-Boigny, his successor Henri Konan Bédié largely stopped the efforts to balance different ethnoregional interests in the Ivorian state and instead started favoring people from his own ethnic group, the Baoulé (Dozon, 2000). In addition to the Baoulization of the political-administrative sector, Bédié also began to change the ethnic composition of the military forces in favor of his own ethnic group (Contamin and Losch, 2000). The ethnic tensions that stemmed from favoritism toward the Baoulé were compounded by general discontent in the armed forces due to a gradual decline in their status during the 1990s, mainly arising from reduced expenditures due to the precarious financial situation (Kieffer, 2000). The grievances within the armed forces triggered a coup d’état in December 1999. Importantly, at the time of the coup d’état in December 1999, both the Baoulé overrepresentation and the underrepresentation of the northerners in government were the most severe in Côte d’Ivoire’s postcolonial history up to that point (Langer, 2005).

The military regime that was in charge after the coup d’état of December 1999 eventually organized new presidential elections in October 2000. These were marked by chaos and violence, and by the exclusion of the main northern presidential candidate, Alassane Ouattara. While the results were heavily disputed, ultimately Laurent Gbagbo became the new president.

In line with his anti-Ouattara, anti-RDR, and therefore de facto anti-northern rhetoric, Gbagbo allocated most government positions in his government to his own party, the FPI. Northerners were largely excluded from his government. Moreover, the northern underrepresentation in Gbagbo's government of January 2001 was considerably worse than in any government under Bédié (Langer, 2005). This obviously aggravated feelings of political exclusion among the RDR supporters. In September 2002, a group of northern insurgents attempted to overthrow the Gbagbo regime, thereby sending Côte d'Ivoire into a violent conflict that would only be resolved when Alassane Ouattara came to power in 2012. The main grievances put forward by the insurgents related to the land ownership laws, the criteria of eligibility for presidential elections, the question of identity cards, and the political domination of the northerners by southerners (Dembélé, 2003).

5.2 Nigeria's political turmoil and violent conflict

Over the half century of its independence, Nigeria has experienced several different types of violence. The first, and most severe, was the Biafran secessionist rebellion from 1967–1970, led by the Igbo ethnic group, who dominated the southeastern region. This group experienced several different types of horizontal inequality. The Igbo were the most educated group and, along with other southerners, notably the Yoruba, had been dominant in the bureaucracy. Northerners, however, dominated the military. The area was a relatively rich one, both in terms of agriculture and the location of some of the oil fields. However, the immediate cause of the war was political. An initial coup in January 1966 led by several majors involved the murder of some prominent northern political leaders and was believed to be an Igbo conspiracy, especially since General Ironsi (an Igbo) became president and failed to put the conspirators on trial. A northern counter-coup and the massacre of large numbers of Igbos living in the north provoked a declaration of Biafran independence by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, and a bitter civil war ensued as the federal government (which had much greater military resources) sought to suppress the rebellion (Ekwe-Ekwe, 1990; Korieh, 2012). More than a million civilians are believed to have died from a combination of famine and violence. As Mustapha (1986) concludes: "High levels of ethnoregional confrontation and conflict over [the] skewed distribution of bureaucratic and political offices up to 1966 contributed in no small measure to the eventual collapse of the First Republic in 1966 and the Civil War in 1967" (p. 7). In this case, the horizontal inequalities worked in several ways. The Igbos resented and feared their political exclusion, while at the same time they aimed for complete control over the economic wealth, which would come with successful secession. Yet the rest of the country, especially the northerners, resented the more privileged position of the better educated Igbos in the civil service and educational establishments, and of course, the loss of wealth that secession would have involved.

Following the tragic events of this war, Nigerians were determined to avoid any recurrence, and redesigned the constitution to make power more diffuse (by increasing the number of states), adopted the Federal Character principle for all major appointments, and introduced a formula for spreading the oil revenue around the country. The new constitution prevented major political horizontal inequalities, and the formula for revenue distribution moderated economic ones somewhat (Mustapha, 2007). They also created a new capital, Abuja, located in the precise center of the country, to replace the Lagos, on the south coast. There was also a conscious effort

to give the major ethnic groups equal cultural recognition. Perhaps because of these actions, there has been no further major national conflict, though there have been other conflicts.

One recurring conflict is a communal one—that does not involve the government—in the Middle Belt between settlers (from the north, many of whom had settled in the area for generations) and indigenous groups, which is also a conflict between Muslims and Christians and between particular ethnic groups. There is indeed considerable controversy as to which is the dominant mobilizing identity. While the clearest cleavage is between the settlers and the indigenous groups, the mosques and churches actively assist each side (Ehrhardt, 2012; Higazi, 2009). In this case, there are three types of horizontal inequality. First, there is inequality in land ownership; the settlers occupy the better land, and for this reason they are much resented by the indigenous people. Second, political inequalities go the opposite way—the settlers are basically excluded from local political power. Finally, in cultural terms, the settlers are treated poorly. Hence both sides feel aggrieved, and a single incident can set off serious riots involving killings and property destruction (Diprose, 2011). It is worth noting that this (and the Biafran case) involve inconsistent HIs (that is, those that go in different directions), and show that this situation, too, can be unstable.

Another serious source of violence is that in the Niger Delta region, in which the Ogoni and the Ijaw rebelled against the multinational oil corporation as well as the federal government. The Niger Delta region is the center of oil production and is relatively well off. But poverty is nonetheless high, and the people feel they do not receive their entitlements in relation to the oil wealth. While development projects have been initiated in the region, much is appropriated by richer people and little trickles down to others. The fighters wanted more autonomy and a greater share of the oil revenues. The rebellion escalated after the execution of the author Ken Saro-Wiwo, despite major international protests. After a fierce military crackdown in 2008, fighters were offered an amnesty, and the situation has quieted down. This is unlikely to lead to sustainable peace in the medium term, however, unless regional development occurs. The situation is what Tadjoeeddin (2003) describes as one of “aspirations to inequality” and is similar to that which is experienced in oil-producing regions in Indonesia; that is to say, people who live in an area that is the source of immense riches, yet personally receive very little of it (Obi and Rustad, 2011).

The latest form of violence in Nigeria is that perpetrated by Boko Haram, a group of young fundamental Islamists in the north who appear to be inspired by similar groups in neighboring countries (including Mali), and who aim to establish an autonomous Islamic Republic in the north that follows strict Sharia law. There are cultural, economic, and political elements underlying this movement, which carries out violent and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Poverty, lack of education, and scarce economic opportunities make it easy to recruit adherents. While there is not a direct or explicit connection between economic HIs and this movement, the region’s underdevelopment and the economic exclusion of these young men makes this fertile territory for such a movement to emerge.

5.3 Explaining Ghana's national stability and ethnic conflicts in the north

Ghana has had a turbulent postcolonial political history, with long periods of political instability, repeated nonconstitutional regime changes, and occasional ethnic tensions. Yet since the introduction of the Fourth Republic a functioning multi-party democracy has emerged. While ethnic conflicts have occurred at the local level (in particular in the northern regions), at the national level ethnic tensions and conflicts have never boiled over into serious violence. Interestingly, like Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana is confronted with major ethnic, social, and economic cleavages between its northern and southern regions. But "there has been no development of 'Northernness' as a basis for political cohesion, and no north versus south patterning of political alignments" has occurred (Brown, 1982, p. 42). Before briefly analyzing the conflict in the northern region, we will reflect on the main strategies and measures that successive Ghanaian regimes have undertaken to keep ethnoregional tensions and mobilization in check.

Kwame Nkrumah, the first national Ghanaian leader, was confronted with serious ethnoregional tensions and mobilization in the immediate pre-independence period. Nkrumah's strategies to deal with these tensions and promote national integration have to some extent become institutionalized, both formally and informally (Langer, 2009). An important aspect of Nkrumah's strategy to contain ethnoregional mobilization was the adoption of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in December 1957. Under this law, it became illegal to form political parties along ethnic, regional, or religious lines. While the Avoidance of Discrimination Act was strongly opposed by the opposition at the time, since then successive Ghanaian political elites have recognized the centrifugal potential of ethnic, religious, and/or regional political parties. Consequently, the 1969, 1979, and 1992 constitutions and the 2000 Political Parties Act all contain provisions aimed at curbing ethnic electoral politics and ensuring that political parties are national in character (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante, 2006). The Ghanaian body politic also agreed in more informal ways to avoid using ethnicity as a means of gaining electoral support. However, despite the formal and informal agreements and rules, as well as the existence of strong norms against the use of ethnicity as a means of political action, both government and opposition parties/politicians have occasionally played the ethnic card. Furthermore, ethnoregional voting patterns (especially in the Ashanti and Volta regions) as well as survey research suggest that ethnicity remains (or at least is perceived to be) an important factor in the public/political sphere (Langer and Ukiwo, 2008).

Nkrumah also promoted a Ghanaian identity and culture, which he projected as an amalgam of different ethnic cultures within Ghana (Hagan, 1992). Like Nkrumah, most of his successors continued to promote the Ghanaian state's cultural inclusiveness by undertaking a range of measures in the legal/institutional, policy-oriented, and symbolic spheres. Thus, for instance, most heads of state continued Nkrumah's practice of alternating dress on public occasions. Other examples of culturally inclusive practices and measures are the persistent refusal by consecutive Ghanaian governments to promote a particular local language (in particular, Twi/Akan) as the country's national language; the active state support for the study and teaching of the country's major local languages; the incorporation by institutions such as the Ghana Dance Ensemble of songs and dances from all major ethnic groups (Lentz and Nugent, 2000); the conscious effort to ensure that radio and television programs are broadcast in all major languages (Lentz and Nugent, 2000); and the custom that representatives from the government

attend the most important ethnic and/or traditional festivals and durbars throughout the country on a regular basis. As discussed above, Nkrumah and his successors also attempted to reduce the prevailing socioeconomic inequalities, in particular between the north and the south. Notwithstanding these efforts, Ghana's north-south divide remains severe, as shown above. Yet, despite the limited success of the strategies of economic redistribution in closing the north-south gap over the decades, the impact on reducing the political salience of the north-south divide seems to have been much more substantial.

In addition to attempting to reduce the north-south inequalities and preserve the cultural and religious "neutrality" of the state, an arguably even more important strategy was aimed at maintaining certain ethnoregional balances in the political sphere. This has remained a largely informal "policy" or convention among the country's political elites. Thus, for example, although the presidents have mostly come from the south or the east, by convention the vice president has usually been a northerner since Ghana's Fourth Republic emerged in 1993.

Northerners were generally included in government throughout the postindependence period. While northerners were somewhat underrepresented in proportion to their relative demographic size in the 1954–1979 period, they actually became slightly overrepresented when Jerry Rawlings assumed power in 1981 (Langer, 2008). Under John Kufuor (2001–2009), they again became somewhat underrepresented. However, Kufuor compensated the northern underrepresentation among government ministers by appointing a more than proportionate number of deputy ministers from the northern ethnic groups (Langer, 2008). In February 2005, for instance, about 17 percent of all government ministers (including the deputy ministers) had a northern background, which corresponded to a relative representation of about 0.75. The fact that the position of vice president, the second most important position in Ghana's 1992 constitution, was occupied by a northerner—Alhaji Aliu Mahama—further contributed to reducing the political salience of the northern underrepresentation among government ministers. Since July 2012, following the death of President John Atta Mills, Ghana has another president from the north, John Dramani Mahama.

Despite Ghana's success at managing ethnic relations and horizontal inequalities at the national level, there have been serious ethnic tensions and violent conflicts in the country's northern region over issues of land ownership and different groups' rights to assume certain chieftaincies. Major episodes of interethnic violence occurred throughout the last century, but ethnic violence became particularly intense and regular in the 1980–1996 period (Jönsson, 2009; Kaye and Béland, 2009; Pul, 2003). The main ethnic conflicts have been between the Konkombas and the Nanumbas (1980, 1994, and 1995) and between the Konkombas and the Dagombas (1994). The worst violence took place in 1994–1995—an episode commonly referred to as the Guinea Fowl War—and resulted in thousands of casualties, 200,000 internally displaced persons, and 441 destroyed villages (Assefa, 2001; Bogner, 2000; Kaye and Béland, 2009). Despite the large-scale destruction and extensive violence in the northern regions in 1994–1995, the conflict was only significant at the regional level and did not have any far-reaching consequences nationally (Agyeman, 1998). Indeed, somewhat paradoxically, the ethnic violence in the north is an additional reason why a collective northern identity and a consciousness of northern interests did not develop and lead to northern mobilization.

While the “seemingly superficial appellations” (Pul, 2003, p. 42) (including, for example, the Guinea Fowl War) may suggest otherwise, the issues at stake did not revolve around simple everyday resources (Jönsson, 2009). Indeed, as Pul (2003) notes, “the fight was about citizenship rights of whole ethnic groups (*indigeneity and ethnic identity*), recognition of the right of self-rule and the creation of political space to allow participation of all ethnic groups in the traditional institutions of governance (*chieftancy*), and the redefinition of the ownership of, and control over the major productive resource for 95 percent of the population of the area (*land*)” (p. 42; original emphasis). In particular, the Konkombas were especially aggrieved about the fact that “they were compelled ... to put in some days of free labour each year on the farms of Nanumba chiefs; that the chiefs intermittently collected tribute in the form of foodstuff and livestock from their Konkomba tenants ... that it was compulsory to donate the hind leg of any big animal killed, whether wild or domesticated, to Nanum chiefs during funerals ... Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the settler/host relationship was the fact that the Konkombas were not allowed to settle disputes among themselves, including matrimonial and other interpersonal conflicts” (Tsikata and Seini, 2004, p. 30). Brukum (1995) has strikingly described the violent uprisings of the Konkombas against the Nanumbas and Dagombas as “wars of emancipation” (quoted in Tsikata and Seini, 2004, p. 24).

The origins of the interethnic tensions and conflicts in the northern regions can be traced back to the migration patterns of the 16th and 17th centuries, when several “centralized” or “cephalous” ethnic groups, in particular the Dagombas, the Nanumbas, the Gonjas, and the Mampruis migrated to what is today Ghana’s northern region (Kaye and Béland, 2009). In contrast to the cephalous “invader tribes” (Stride and Ifeka, 1971, p. 81), the northern region was already inhabited by “noncentralized” or “acephalous” groups such as the Konkombas, Dagaras, and Talensis. In contrast to the cephalous ethnic groups with their paramount chiefs, the acephalous groups do not have a “recognizable apical head as the locus of political power for the entire ethnic group” (Pul, 2003, p. 43). Drawing on Brubaker (2002), Jönsson (2009) notes that “acephalous peoples are referred to as ‘minority’ ethnic groups and chiefly groups as ‘majority’ in Ghana today, although these terms are not used in their literal, demographic sense” (p. 509). Indeed, the Konkomba “minority” group is numerically larger than three of the four chiefly or “majority” groups (that is, the Nanumbas, Gonjas, and Mampruis) (Jönsson, 2009, p. 509).

The oppressive relations between the minority/noncentralized groups and majority/centralized groups developed during the time that the Asante ruled the north in the 18th and 19th centuries (Kaye and Béland, 2009). During this time, the Dagombas used the noncentralized communities as a “pool of manpower, which they raided in order to provide slaves for the Asante” (Kaye and Béland, 2009, p. 182). Under British colonial rule, starting from 1874, the Konkombas were formally placed under the administrative control of the Dagombas (Ladouceur, 1979) and hence the British colonial administration “transformed the chieftancy institution by creating and artificially bolstering chiefly authority” (Kaye and Béland, 2009, p. 183).

In the postindependence period, the power of chiefs has waxed and waned to a remarkable extent with different regimes. While Nkrumah’s government was openly hostile to the chiefs (a stance that was tacitly welcomed by acephalous groups in the north) and implemented several laws in the 1960s that basically placed the stools under the control of the state, in contrast, the Busia regime essentially restored the power of the chiefs by promulgating the Chieftancy Act of

1971 (Pul, 2003). With the emergence of Ft. Lt. Rawlings in June 1979 and later during his military rule in the 1980s, the power of the chiefs was once again seriously eroded and the right to recognize or withdraw recognition from a chief was again vested in the Ghanaian state (Pul, 2003). Interestingly, however, despite Rawlings' aversion to the chieftancy institution, the 1992 constitution (in particular Article 274) restored the power of the chiefs and "in effect restored and legitimized the subjugation of the acephalous groups to the cephalous ones" (Pul, 2003, p. 49).

There is circumstantial evidence that the subjugation of the "minority" groups by the "majority" groups in the northern regions (a clear political HI) has contributed to creating horizontal inequalities in education and occupation (Jönsson, 2009). Moreover, as Julia Jönsson (2009) further notes, "perceptions of horizontal inequalities in the fields of education, government influence, resources and appointments, access to justice and cultural status are widespread and contributed to mobilization through the spread of antagonistic narratives" (p. 512).

5.4 Mali's Tuareg rebellion

Since its independence from France in 1960, Mali has experienced periodic rebellions in the north by Tuaregs and Arabs, mainly driven by the Tuaregs located in the northeast. In pre-colonial times, the Tuaregs held sway over a large area of the Sahara and countries to the south (Cold-Ravnkilde, 2013). Indeed, when Mali became independent, the Tuaregs were shocked that they were included as part of this country and not given their own state; as they put it, "they felt 'colonized' for the first time, when southerners took over the state and formed the bureaucracy which ruled them. Our inclusion in the country was a mistake," according to Nina Walleit, leader of the Tuareg rebellion (quoted in Morgan, 2012).

In recent times, Mali has for years been viewed as a successful democracy. Democratic structures were established in 1991–1992 as a result of popular protests, following the long dictatorship of Moussa Traoré. However, northern rebellions continued, culminating in the 2012 events in which Islamists gained effective control of the north. The failure of the national army to suppress the rebellion is regarded as the major cause of an army coup in March 2012, in which the elected president, Amadou Toumani Touré, was overthrown. A French military intervention soon followed that defeated the Islamists and recovered control of the north for the central government.

The overriding objective of most of the recurrent rebellions is secession from Mali and independence, as is clear from the name of the main movement—Mouvement National pour la Liberation de l'Azawad (MLNA)—although in some peace negotiations the demand is for greater autonomy rather than complete independence. For example, in the 2006 Algiers Accords, the Tuareg demands included "greater autonomy for the Kidal region, greater recognition of the Tamasheq language and culture in the national media and in education, the formation of special security units staffed by local Tuaregs, economic development in the region, a functional airport for Kidal and a special tax regime for the north to encourage investment" (Morgan, 2012). However, northerners are not unanimous in these demands. Several types of division have emerged. On the one hand, some of the black groups (the Songhai in particular) have supported the Mali government against the paler Arabs and Tuaregs, and there have been racial attacks by

Songhai militia on the Tuaregs, Arabs, and Peul. The division between the Songhai and others is not only racial, but also a matter of occupation; the Tuaregs and Arabs are predominantly pastoralists, while the Songhai are agriculturalists. There are also clan and class distinctions among the Tuaregs themselves. Furthermore, in recent years, a Salafi Islamic movement has developed, including Ansar Dine, which has links to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Mouvement Islamique d l'Azawad (MIA). These groups aim to achieve an Islamic state that embodies Sharia law. In contrast, the Tuaregs are not traditionally fundamentalist and do not follow strict Sharia law.¹⁵ However, there is not a clear-cut division between the Tuaregs and the Islamists, who have fought together, and leaders and followers have shifted from one group to the other. While the earlier Tuareg rebellions were put down fairly easily, as noted, the 2012 rebellion, initially led by the MNLA but then taken over by the Islamist movements and reinforced by fighters (and arms) from Libya following the fall of Gaddafi, secured effective control of the north and was only displaced as a result of the French intervention.

The underlying causes of these rebellions are complex; as one observer noted, “few claim to understand its causes fully” (Cold-Ravnkilde, 2013, p. 11). Among the causes is the almost complete absence of a state presence in the north. Representatives of the state in the north are often corrupt and involved in illegal activities (Cold-Ravnkilde, 2013). Moreover, lawlessness in the north has permitted an escalation of drug trafficking and other illegal endeavors. These in turn feed the conflicts by providing resources for militias and fueling corruption of state institutions, and thereby enhancing disaffection. It is also clear that perceived HIs have constituted a long-standing set of grievances. We noted earlier the very limited educational and health facilities in the north. Kidal has the fewest schools, and 73 percent of communes in Kidal have no secondary schools, while only 24 percent of the people in Kidal have a health facility within 5 km of their home (World Bank, 2013). Food aid in response to drought in the 1970s and 1980s was largely diverted to the southern elites (Benjaminsen, 2000). Poverty and unemployment rates are also very high. Other causes of resentment include violations of Tuareg land rights (World Bank, 2013), destruction of Tuareg and Arab property during the conflicts, and a general lack of political control or influence. Pastoral groups “have been pushed out of the sphere of political influence, among other things because of their aversion to the French school system” (Cold-Ravnkilde, 2013, p. 29). Army atrocities against these groups aroused further hostility toward the central government. The Tuaregs and Arabs differ from the southerners in race, language, culture, and occupation. In each attempt to negotiate peace, they have demanded cultural recognition and substantially more political autonomy as well as economic development. Successive peace agreements have promised much in the way of greater autonomy (via decentralization) and greater development. Yet there has been very little progress in either dimension.

In principle, Mali was among the first African countries to undertake comprehensive decentralization reforms, but in practice these have meant little (Lavigne Delville, 1999). As Cold-Ravnkilde (2013) notes, “Decentralization did not fail because this dialogue [concerning greater autonomy for the north] was fruitless, but because it was never completed or effectively implemented” (p. 30). The central government’s authoritarian structures remained in place

¹⁵ As one Tuareg noted, “For us Tuaregs, it’s rather strange to see women treated in this way, because the Tamachek woman is very free” (World Bank, 2013, p. 19).

alongside local authorities. Central government recognition of traditional leaders and incorporation in formal structures led to their co-optation by the government, and reduced their ability to act as northern negotiators. The new authorities enriched local elites but bypassed the population as a whole. Not enough funding was transferred to the local authorities for them to exercise their duties in full. Budgeted transfers in 2010, for example, were just 2.3 percent of the total government budget, and a French report noted that the local authorities had only access to 0.5 percent of the total budget (World Bank, 2013, p. 37). A 2008 Afrobarometer survey found that the majority felt local authorities were performing their main functions badly or very badly (Coulibaly, et al., 2008).

Similarly, development efforts have had minimal success. The Algiers accord of 2006 included a special fund to develop the north, but it achieved very little. Its headquarters were in Bamako, not the north. "Instead of spearheading the development of public infrastructure in the north, it seems to have been deployed by the authorities in Bamako primarily as a vehicle for the clientelist co-optation of segments of the northern elites ... and much of its funding appears never to have reached the north" (Van de Walle, 2012, p. 15). Two programs were announced in 2010: "An Emergency Program for the Reduction of Insecurity and the Struggle against Terrorism in Northern Mali" and "A Special Program for Peace, Security and Development." Both further weakened local autonomy by reintroducing southern-dominated state security machinery into the north. Few funds went to development, relative to those for security, and the programs were centrally controlled without consulting the local population.

Most analyses of the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali attribute it to "decades of discrimination and exclusion from political and economic processes by successive Bamako-based governments" (Francis, 2013, p. 4). Yet, as shown earlier, their relative deprivation is not much greater than that of some groups in the south. It appears that the difference is that the Tuaregs regard themselves (and are regarded as) different; they view themselves as having a historic right to govern rather than be governed, and perceive themselves as being discriminated against in many spheres, while the recurrent wars accentuate their state of underdevelopment and their hostility toward southerners.

5.5 Some concluding considerations on the relationship between horizontal inequalities and conflict

We can draw a number of conclusions regarding the contribution of horizontal inequalities to political instability and violent conflict in our four case study countries.

First, a particularly dangerous political situation is created where horizontal inequalities overlap. The cases of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire in particular show that the presence of severe political and economic horizontal inequalities, together with cultural status inequalities, form an extremely explosive sociopolitical situation, because the excluded political elites not only have strong incentives to mobilize their supporters for violent conflict along ethnoregional lines, but are also likely readily to gain support among their ethnic constituencies, who are likely to feel economically disadvantaged and culturally disenfranchised. One of the reasons why the north-south divide in both Ghana and Nigeria has not escalated into a national conflict in recent

decades is that the relatively disadvantaged groups in both countries' northern regions were politically reasonably well included for most of the postcolonial period.

Second, what matters are not only economic and political issues and inequalities, but also cultural status inequalities. Both in Mali and Côte d'Ivoire, discontent about the treatment and recognition given by the state to the cultural and religious traditions and customs of the Tuaregs and Muslims (the dominant religion in northern Côte d'Ivoire) complemented respectively the existing and political grievances among these groups. Illustratively, in Côte d'Ivoire, *Le Charte du Grand Nord* explicitly called for a fuller recognition of the Muslim religion. Similarly, in Mali, the Tuaregs called for a greater recognition of their culture and language in the public sphere. Conversely, in Ghana, successive regimes have actively aimed to promote norms and practices of cultural neutrality and inclusiveness—a policy initiated by Ghana's first postcolonial president, Kwame Nkrumah.

Third, efforts to reduce horizontal inequalities and balance interests of different groups can help reduce the political salience of HIs, even if their objective impact is relatively small. Both Houphouët-Boigny and successive Ghanaian regimes were able to diffuse the salience of the north-south cleavage by including northern politicians and interests in the main political institutions and by undertaking economic redistribution toward the deprived northern regions. Importantly, even when the actual redistribution effect of the implemented measures appears to have been rather limited, the symbolic impact of these inequality-reducing measures and policies was undoubtedly much more substantial.

Fourth, a country's ethnoregional demography and geography is an important explanatory factor for the observed mobilization and types of conflicts we observe in our case study countries. In Mali, the Tuareg are a relatively small group that is concentrated in the Kidal region, in the east of the country. Given that they were never happy to be included in Mali to begin with, it is unsurprising that their mobilization took the form of secessionist rebellion. In Côte d'Ivoire, on the other hand, the northern ethnic groups constitute a substantial proportion of the population (30–40 percent) and while they are the dominant groups in the north, a majority of them actually live in the southern regions. Consequently, as might have been expected, the northern insurgency did not take on a secessionist form, but was rather aimed at dislodging the regime in charge in the south and take control of the existing state. In Ghana, the northern population constitutes a relatively small proportion of the total population (approximately 20 percent). The northern population is further composed of quite a few smaller ethnic groups, between whom serious tensions and violent conflicts have occasionally occurred. Compared to Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, it also appears that Islam is less of a unifying factor. Leaving aside other measures and policies undertaken by the Ghanaian government, these demographic factors make a north-south mobilization as seen in Côte d'Ivoire considerably less likely in Ghana.

Fifth, badly managed democratic transitions can enhance tensions and political instability. Although democracy is often argued to be a conflict-reducing institution, an increasing amount of research has shown that the process of democratization may in itself foster violent conflict (see for example Snyder, 2000). Côte d'Ivoire is an unfortunate case in point. A direct result of the introduction of competitive elections in 1990 was the emergence of ethnonationalism and xenophobia in the political arena. Moreover, in an electoral environment characterized by new

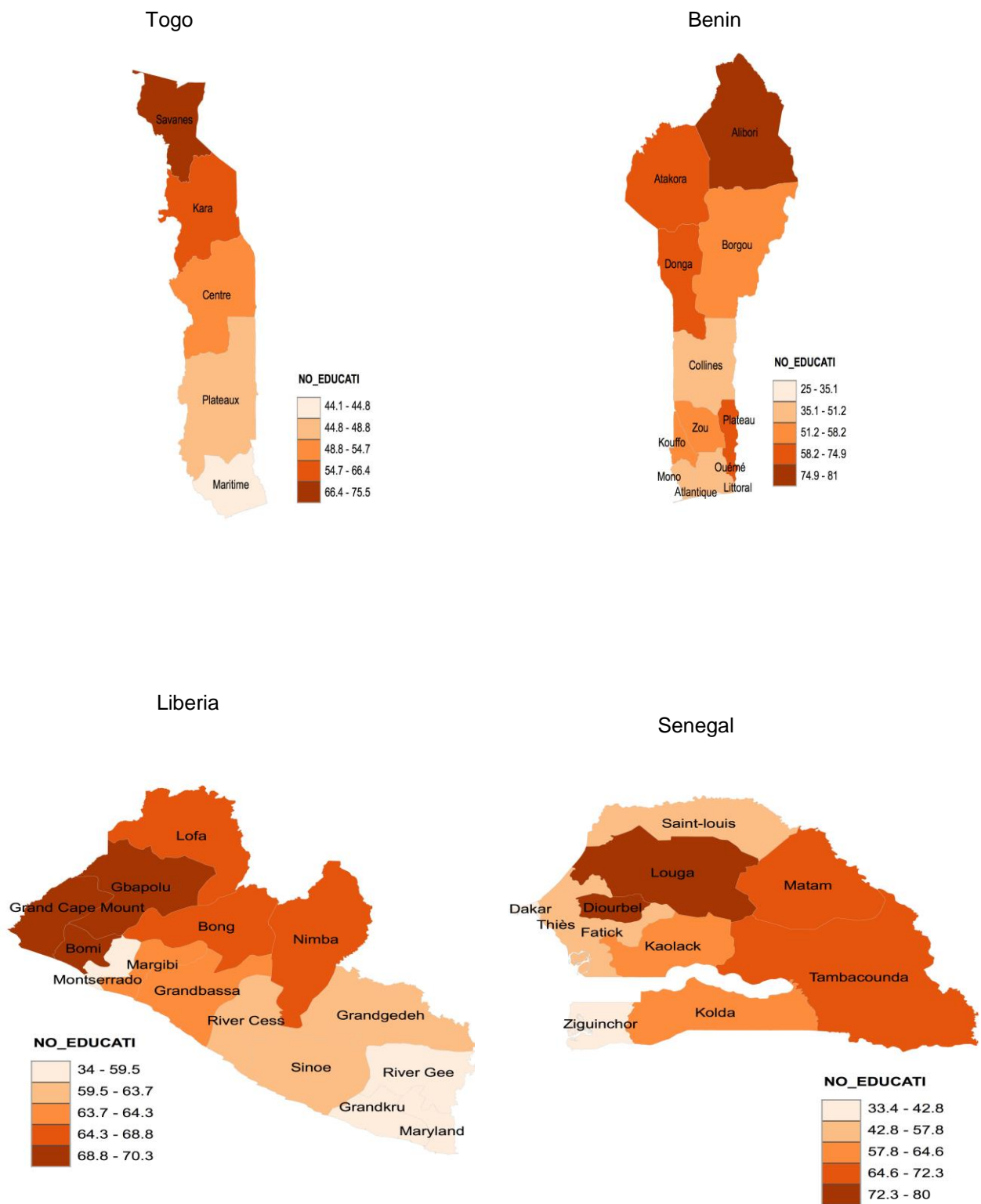
players and “democratic” rules, the prevailing political and economic horizontal inequalities, injustices, and grievances in Côte d’Ivoire became increasingly politicized. The case of Ghana, however, shows that once the initial democratization phase is successfully mastered, a flourishing democracy can be established in a poor developing country.

6. Conclusions and policy recommendations

The paper has identified significant HIs in Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, and Côte d’Ivoire, as well as discussed the way these countries have attempted to manage these inequalities. The analysis shows that there have only been minor attempts to introduce policies to correct them, except in the case of Ghana (and at times in Côte d’Ivoire). In Mali there have been periodic attempts to develop the north, but these have generally been ineffective, and many of the benefits from investments in security and construction in the north have gone to southerners.

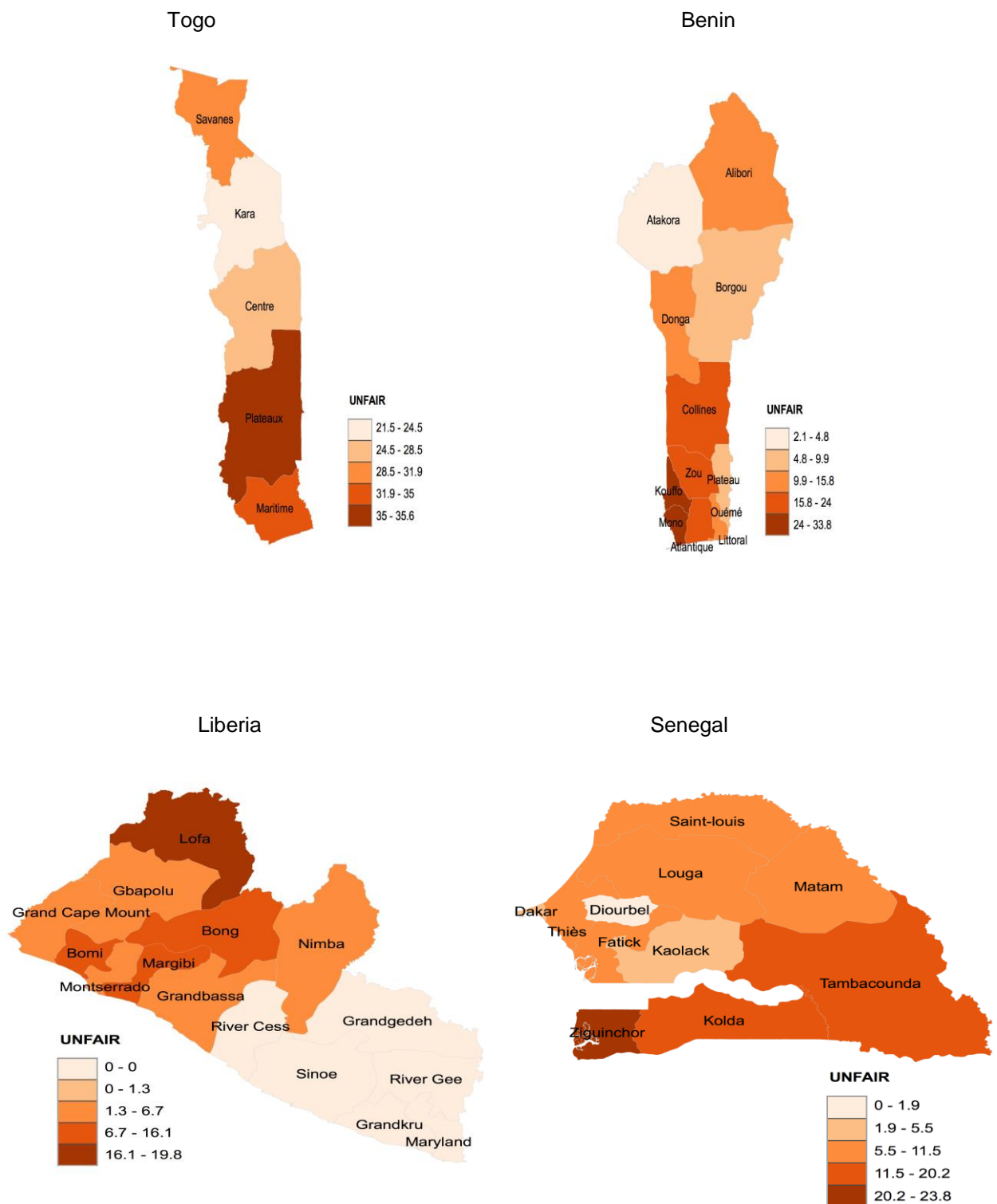
While we have focused on four countries, similar dynamics are apparent in other West African nations. These countries are also ethnically heterogeneous, though in several countries one group is dominant (such as in Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea). The other countries in West Africa also show considerable regional and ethnic inequalities (see Figure 22). As in our other cases, the objective HIs appear to be largely reflected in perceptions of unfair treatment (see Figure 23). In several cases, a major division is not north-south but between the coastal region and inland areas (the Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia), while in Sierra Leone and Liberia there exists an important cultural division and inequality between the Krio (emancipated slaves and their descendants), sometimes in alliance with local groups, and the indigenous population. For these two countries, the Krio/other division appears to be an important factor underlying the violence. In general, among the other West African countries, inequalities have been accompanied by political HIs. In Togo, like Nigeria, however, the north-south economic inequalities have been offset by political dominance of northerners; this, together with government policies of suppression of resistance, has helped to avoid large-scale violence at the national level. Elsewhere, groups that have been marginalized in economic and political terms have mounted violent protests, such as in Senegal’s Casamance region.

Figure 22. Educational inequalities across several West African countries



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from DHS.

Figure 23. Perceptions of unfair treatment across several West African countries



Source: Authors' calculations based on data from the Afrobarometer surveys.

The existence of such significant HIs in these West African countries represents a serious threat to their political stability. The past (and ongoing) conflicts are a clear sign of this, and constitute a warning for the future. Moreover, while governments are beginning to acknowledge regional imbalances, only Ghana is making a serious attempt to correct them. Policies to reduce HIs need to be on the agenda. In this section we suggest some possible policies that would contribute to this end. In fragile environments, there is a tendency for governments and the international community to emphasize enhancement of security, governance, and macroeconomic stability, and to neglect inequalities (Langer et al., 2012). This approach, however, threatens long-term stability. Moreover, a commitment to reducing HIs has a symbolic value that contributes to peacebuilding, even before the policies take effect.

If HIs are to be taken seriously, the first requirement is that they be systematically monitored. This will enable governments to identify which type of HI is most serious (regional/ethnic/religious); whether policies toward one will in fact improve others (for example, whether regional location of different groups means that regional policies can be used to correct other group inequalities), and in which dimension; in which particular element of each dimension major inequalities arise (for example, whether the most serious inequalities exist in the political or cultural dimensions); and within a dimension, whether inequalities are most severe in health, education, incomes, access to land, or economic infrastructure. The answer may be—as suggested by much of our data—that inequalities exist in each dimension and in many of the elements, so *comprehensive* corrective policies are needed.

We can differentiate between direct and indirect policies to reduce HIs. Direct policies target particular groups for inclusion or exclusion in access to resources; for example, affirmative action in education or appointments. Such policies are often adopted to reduce gender inequalities as well as those of other identity groups. Direct policies tend to be effective, but may provoke opposition from the unfavored groups and can be difficult (politically) to terminate, while they tend to arouse increasing opposition if sustained over decades (such as in Malaysia and the U.S.). However, in circumstances where visible inequalities are provoking (or have provoked) violent protest, direct policies are helpful—policies of this kind have been effective in reducing inequalities and associated tensions in the case of blacks in the U.S. and South Africa, Bumiputeras in Malaysia, Catholics in Northern Ireland, and lower caste peoples in India. In each case policies have helped avoid conflict and effectively reduced HIs without loss in economic growth,¹⁶ though eventually they tend to generate political opposition. Sometimes such policies increase intragroup inequalities, but this depends on the design of the policies (Badgett et al., 1997; Brown et al., 2012). Direct policies are most appropriate where group boundaries are very clear, and a particular group (or groups) has clearly been historically disadvantaged.

Direct policies can feature giving special privileges to particular groups (scholarships, or preference in appointments, contracts, or credit), or restricting privileged groups' access to these. Although in practice they may amount to much the same thing, providing special privileges is less provocative than restricting access. Direct policies are also sometimes applied to

¹⁶ In Malaysia, the policies were accompanied by a growth rate of 6 percent per annum sustained over decades. Assessments of American affirmative action programs have not established efficiency costs (see Holzer and Neumark, 2000).

political representation, such as in Nigeria. There are a variety of ways this can be achieved, sometimes via formal rules, sometimes informal.

Indirect policies are those that are universally applicable without respect to group identity, but as a result of their design they can reduce HIs. Universal provision of services is an example of an indirect policy, and this seems to be an approach taken by most West African countries. Progressive taxation or social protection are also indirect policies that reduce HIs. Where discrimination is a significant cause of inequality, effectively outlawing discrimination can make a significant contribution to reducing HIs, as in Northern Ireland (McCrudden et al., 2004; Todd and Ruane, 2012). Indirect policies may provoke less opposition (though measures such as progressive taxation do clearly generate opposition), but they tend to work more slowly and, because they are less visible, may have less effect on conflict prevention in the short-term. In general, where HIs are serious and threaten conflict, a combination of direct and indirect measures may be best, as was adopted for example in Northern Ireland and South Africa.

In addition to direct and indirect policies, integrationist policies are needed in many countries that are home to multiple identities, to reduce conflict potential and to help form a national identity. Although this is not our concern here, integrationist policies and the main types of direct and indirect policies are indicated in Table 14.

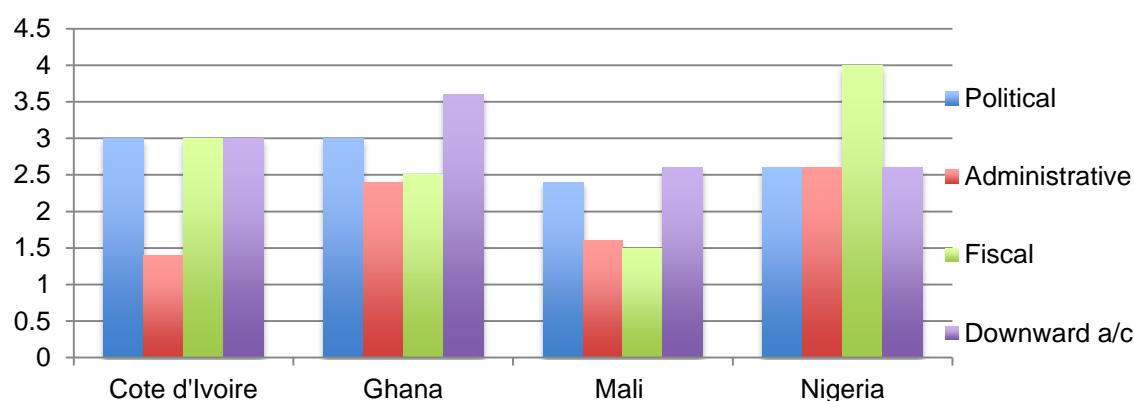
Returning to the four cases covered in this paper, one direct policy that is clearly recommended is preferential distribution of public resources to deprived regions—including economic and social infrastructure, employment programs, and support for teachers and health workers (who may need to be paid more to work in these difficult environments). Public contracts may also give preference to the north (McCrudden, 2007). In addition, there is a case to create economic incentives to make private investments in deprived regions, such as the special development corridor adopted by Ghana. In each of our cases, it is the country's north, broadly defined, that warrants preferential treatment. There is also a case for extending scholarships to northerners to attend secondary schools and universities. The Tuaregs in northern Mali stand out as warranting special preferences for employment as well as education.

In relation to indirect policies, the long-term objective should be universal access to good quality education, health services, economic infrastructure, electricity, and so on. If achieved, these universal services would make a major contribution to reducing HIs. However, starting from a situation which is far from this ideal, progress toward this objective may actually worsen HIs, as the more privileged regions, which are often easier to reach and have more political clout, are covered first. Consequently, the aim of universal provision needs to be accompanied by the aim to reduce inequalities, and this will almost certainly require preferential access for some areas. In both Ghana and Nigeria, there has been some attempt to steer universities to the north, for example.

Decentralization of resources and government functions is, nominally at least, a central aspect of most country plans. The implication, generally not overtly stated, is that this would help correct regional inequalities in both political and dimensions if properly designed and executed. But whether it contributes to reducing inequalities and making conflict less likely depends on whether resources and functions are truly devolved, and whether power over them is transferred to local actors or is retained by centrally controlled agents. In the three nonfederal

countries, it seems that only limited powers and resources have been transferred,¹⁷ and that in some cases (such as Mali), local people do not acquire power, but rather power is exercised largely by appointees from the center (Crawford, 2004; Crawford, 2005; Armstrong, 2013).¹⁸ A 2002 stocktaking exercise showed Ghana with an aggregate composite index of decentralization of 2.55 (10 is the maximum); 2.5 for Nigeria; 2.2 for Côte d'Ivoire; and 1.7 for Mali (Ndegwa, 2002).¹⁹ Figure 24 illustrates measures of different dimensions of decentralization. Moreover, decentralization can be disequalizing unless there is a strong redistributory element in resource transfers from the center, as richer localities can raise more from local tariffs. A federal system tends to be more effective in redistributing power and positions, but as noted, the formula for transferring federal revenue in reality favors richer states, while many argue that Nigeria, in practice, is highly centralized (Solomon, 2005; Amundesen, 2012). In brief, neither federalism nor decentralization is a panacea; both probably generally reduce political HIs, but they can and often do increase them, and they may also widen economic HIs.

Figure 24. Indices of decentralization, 2002 (10 = maximum)



Source: Ndegwa, 2002.

Because of the strong forces perpetuating group inequalities, the need for comprehensive policies must be emphasized. These must take a broad approach that encompasses inequalities in economic opportunities and in different types of capital, as well as in social services. Generally speaking, governments in the region have taken some action toward extending services throughout their countries, but have done very little (or been ineffective) in terms of economic development.

Formulating appropriate policies depends on country context, including the political situation and the constraints this imposes on policy choice. It is essential that a government be committed

¹⁷ Ghana has probably gone furthest in democratic decentralization, but the Chief Executive Officer and 30 percent of Assembly members are appointed from the center. In addition, powers and finance transferred are limited (at 6 percent of total government expenditure in 2005) (Crawford, 2004); and in practice decentralization is weaker than the constitutional provisions (Crawford, 2005).

¹⁸ The National Pact peace accord with Tuareg rebels in 1992 included decentralization as an important element. "But lack of resources, and state appointed administrators meant little changed: 'In reality power stayed as it had before,'" according to Ibrahim ag Youssouf, a Tuareg professor (Armstrong, 2013, p. 2).

¹⁹ Further decentralization measures have been adopted in most of the countries since then, so an updated stock-taking exercise is needed.

to reducing HIs, such as was broadly the case in Ghana and at times in Côte d'Ivoire, but has been noticeably absent in the other countries. The MDGs were formulated as universal targets, and as such neglected inequalities. It is apparent from a review of these countries' PRSPs that achieving progress on the MDGs took priority. Post-2015 goals need to incorporate HIs and vertical inequality to encourage governments to take them seriously when formulating objectives, developing policies, and monitoring progress.

The international development agencies also have a responsibility here in measuring, monitoring, analyzing, and making policy recommendations. Global reviews of policies show that quite a few national governments in multiethnic societies have initiated policies in this area, but these have rarely been a consideration of international agents. For example, the World Development Indicators data set (and that of the HDRO, UNDP; World Bank, 2014b) provide indicators of gender and rural/urban inequalities, but not of ethnic, religious, or regional ones; these are likewise neglected in policy advice.

Table 14. Examples of approaches to reducing HIs

		Policy approach		
		Direct HI-reducing	Indirect HI-reducing	Integrationist
		Quotas for employment or education; special investment or credit programs for particular groups, including regions.	Antidiscrimination legislation; progressive taxation; universal support programs (social and economic services; social protection); sectoral support programs (for example, Stabex).	Incentives for cross-group economic activities; requirement that schools are multicultural; promotion of multicultural civic institutions.
Dimension	Political	Group quotas; seat reservations; consociational constitution; list proportional representation.	Design of voting system to require power-sharing across groups (for example, two-thirds voting requirements in assembly); design of boundaries and seat numbers to ensure adequate representation of all groups; human rights legislation and enforcement; federalism and decentralization, if well designed.	Geographical voting spread requirements; ban on ethnic/religious political parties (national party stipulations).
	Cultural status	Minority language recognition and education; symbolic recognition (for example, public holidays, attendance at state functions).	Freedom of religious observance; no state religion.	Civic citizenship education; promotion of an overarching national identity.

Source: Adapted from Stewart et al., 2008.

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Appendix: Overview of key political events in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria

Year	Côte d'Ivoire
	French colony
1960	Independence
	Houphouët-Boigny first president
1993	Houphouët-Boigny dies; succeeded by Bédié
1995	Bédié elected; imprisons opposition members
1999	Guei leads coup and rigs elections
2000	Popular protest brings Gbagbo to power
2002	Failed coup is followed by rebellion
2003	Civil war ends with French intervention; country divided
2007	Peace agreement
2010	Elections won by northerner, Ouattara; Gbagbo refuses to hand over power; fighting ensues
April 2011	Gbagbo forced from office with help of UN forces and French; Ouattara becomes president; Gbagbo in Hague for crimes against humanity

Year	Ghana
	British colony
1957	Independence; Nkrumah becomes first president
1966	Nkrumah deposed in coup
1966–1981	Series of coups; economic collapse
1981	Rawlings takes over in military coup
1992	Multiparty democracy; Rawlings elected
1994–1996	Guinea Fowl War in northern Ghana; up to 15,000 killed, many displaced
1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012	Peaceful democratic elections

Year	Mali
	French colony
1960	Independence; Mali Federation; Senegal withdraws and Mali becomes a state on its own; authoritarian rule
1991	Coup-instituted elections
1992, 1997, 2002, 2007	Democratic elections
January 2012	Tuaregs begin rebellion in north with aim of secession (resuscitating long-standing repeated rebellions)
March 2012	Coup overthrows Touré; rebels gain strength in three northern provinces; Islamic militants establish bases and impose sharia law in north

2012 (summer)	ECOWAS negotiates return to civilian rule
January 2012	French military intervention with ECOWAS retakes northern provinces
April 2013	Security Council approves UN force; enters in July
July/August 2013	Keita elected
2013–2014	Islamist groups again in north—AQIM, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, and Ansar Dine terrorist incidents

Year	Nigeria
	British colony
1960	Independence, coalition government
January 1966	Coup; Aguiyi-Ironsi heads government
July 1966	Ironsi killed in coup; replaced by Gowon
1967	Three eastern states secede as the Republic of Biafra; major civil war
1970	Biafran leaders surrender; Biafra reintegrated
1975	coups against Gowon
1976	coups; Obasanjo becomes head of state, followed by Abacha
1979	Elections; Shagari elected, re-elected in 1983
1983	Coup; Buhari gains power
1985	Babangida coup
1993	Elections instituted then annulled by military because Abacha elected; Abacha gets power, arrests Abacha
1995	Campaign against oil industry damage led by Ken Saro-Wiwa
1999	Obasanjo wins elections
2000	Some northern states adopt Sharia law
2001	Ethnic conflict in Benue State (central Nigeria)
October 2001	Clashes in Lagos between Hausas and Yorubas
2003	Violence in Warri Niger Delta; about 100 people killed
2004	Plateau state, central Nigeria; Muslims killed
2004	Violence in Port Harcourt (south); 500 deaths
2006+	Niger Delta, militants attack oil pipelines
February 2006	Violence in north and Onitsha (southern city)
2006	Nigeria cedes sovereignty of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon; rejected by Nigerian Senate 2007; handed over in 2008
2007–2008	Fresh attacks by Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
November 2008	200+ people killed in clashes between Christians and Muslims in Jos (central Nigeria)

2009	Ceasefire in Niger Delta; amnesty offered
July 2009	Boko Haram Islamist movement starts violent campaign for Sharia law throughout Nigeria; leader killed
2010	Renewed Christian/Muslim violence in Jos
2011	Suicide bomb attack on UN headquarters in Abuja kills 23 people; Boko Haram claims responsibility
November 2011	63 killed in attacks in Damaturu (northeast); Boko Haram claims responsibility
December 2011	70 people killed in fighting between security forces and Boko Haram in Yobe and Borno
2011	bomb attacks on Christmas Day kill about 40; Boko Haram claims responsibility
2012	Boko Haram tells Christians to leave the north; further killings continued in 2012 and 2013
2012	President of Chad proposes joint military force to attack militants
2013	Government declares state of emergency in the three northern states of Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa; sends troops