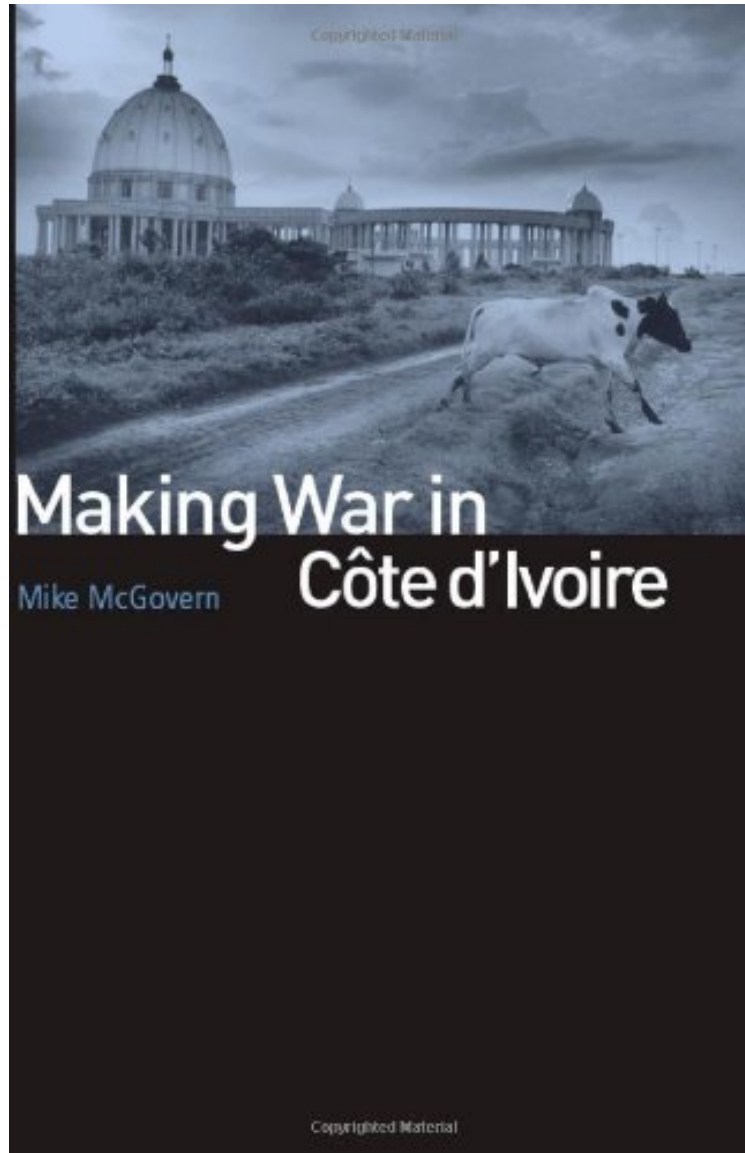


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## Making War in Cte d'Ivoire

*Mike McGovern*

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**Mike McGovern : Making War in Cte d'Ivoire** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Making War in Cte d'Ivoire:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Less than detailed and does not give any kind of ...By S McIntosh Less than detailed and does not give any kind of reasonable overview of what was the cause and problems leading to the war. this will never add to any reasonable discussion of the Ivorian experience. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. it's a goodBy Jeffery Bentley The book is academic, a bit dry, and it was written before the

last war, so it's also somewhat out of date. Other than that, it's a good book. 11 people found the following review helpful. Informative. By B Tuck. Accurately predicted the conflict after it went to print. Not many books available to read on the total Islamic take-over of Africa. This book exercises considerable restraint on the subject but clearly heralds the ensuing violence associated with a Muslim method of nation deconstructing.

After a brief period of active combat in 2002, the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire settled into a pattern of neither war nor peace until the 2010 elections led to a new phase of direct conflict. During these taut years, short bursts of intense violence alternated with long periods of standoff. When things were peaceful, the Ivorian political elite and the press produced inflammatory rhetoric while soldiers and militias used the state of emergency as an excuse to shake down civilians at roadblocks. What kept this perpetually tense, dismal, and destructive situation simmering? In this groundbreaking book, Mike McGovern suggests the answer lies in understanding war as a process, not a series of events, and that rather than focusing on the role of political institutions, we should be paying attention to the flawed and unpredictable people within them. McGovern argues that only deep knowledge of a region's history, languages, literature, and popular culture can yield meaningful insights into political decision making. Putting this theory into action, he examines an array of issues from the micro to the macro, including land tenure disputes, youth boredom, organized crime, and the international cocoa trade. Drawn from McGovern's academic research and experience working for a conflict resolution think tank and the political access that position gave him, *Making War in Cote d'Ivoire* will be the definitive work on the Ivorian conflict and an innovative example of how anthropology can address the complexities of politics.

'Under the leadership of President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who managed Cote d'Ivoire's transition to independence, the country was perceived as one of West Africa's few success stories, at least until the late 1980s. Domestic political stability and close relations with France aided steady growth in the economy, which was based on agricultural exports, most notably cocoa. By the time Houphouet-Boigny died, in 1993, the Ivorian miracle had already been seriously tarnished after a collapse in cocoa prices. But few predicted the country's descent into ethnic polarization and civil conflict. McGovern demonstrates how ethnic identities became entrenched over the decades, as a result of the mass migration of northerners encouraged by the government to find work in southern cocoa-producing regions. When the economy stalled in the 1990s, politicians such as Laurent Gbagbo took advantage of the resentments generated by conflicts over land and social inequalities. McGovern skillfully unmaskes the financial interests at stake in the country's politics: the cocoa sector continues to generate substantial revenues, which the state elite controls through an opaque web of public and semipublic organizations.' \* Foreign Affairs \* 'Cote d'Ivoire is rather little-known in the English-speaking world. This is surprising in view of the fact that for some two decades, from the mid-1960s onwards, it was considered one of the most economically successful countries in Africa. Since the 1990s, the shine has gone. From 2002 until recently (and even now the position remains precarious), the country was marked by a low-intensity war that was a volatile situation of neither peace nor war, or a mixture of both. ... There is no serious book in English on the Ivorian war. This is a gap that Mike McGovern, sets out to fill. ... He brings to his task a first-hand knowledge of leading actors in the Ivorian conflict and of some of the country's war zones, gained through academic and policy-oriented research.' \* Professor Stephen Ellis, Free University of Amsterdam \* 'With the craft of an expert anthropologist who knows something about political science and sociology, Mike McGovern explains how local customs, burning political issues, and the economies of patronage and privilege fuel the politics of violence, showing how conflicts are made, not just how they happen.' \* William Reno, Northwestern University \* 'A model for how to understand a mesmerising situation without reducing its complexity.' \* Peter Geschiere, author of *The Perils of Belonging - Autochthony, Citizenship and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* \* About the Author Mike McGovern is assistant professor of anthropology at Yale University.