

Junior Postdoc Fellowship für Dr. Gnangadjomon Koné: Mobilization for political violence: Who join pro-governmental militias and why?

Initiative: Wissen für morgen – Kooperative Forschungsvorhaben im subsaharischen Afrika (beendet)

Ausschreibung: Postdoctoral Fellowships Social Sciences

Bewilligung: 22.03.2012

Laufzeit: 3 Jahre

With the close of the Cold War, in the framework of what has been referred to as 'new wars', it has been argued that population pressure in the form of large youth cohorts, i.e. "youth bulges", increases a country's likelihood to experience armed conflict, in particular when these youth groups are excluded from political and economic participation. Indeed, the role of youth in violent conflicts has been in a sharp rise since the early 1990s, either as part of insurgent/rebellion movement, or as part of counterinsurgency/pro-governmental armed groups and militias. These new dynamics of war have led to a research boom and they have been the object of heated debates. What are the similarities and differences between armed rebellions and pro-governmental armed militias? How does the role of legitimacy influence the trajectory of armed militias? This research project on pro-governmental armed militias in Côte-d'Ivoire (2002-2011) aims at: 1. Demonstrating that theories on insurrectional rebellions are relevant for counter-insurgent or pro-governmental armed militias; 2. Highlighting the limits of material explanation of the emergence and evolution of armed militias; 3. Showing how reference to international norms and principles influences the legitimacy and trajectory of armed militias on the local level. 4. Showing how war is practiced as an opportunity by excluded youths from political participation to build their political careers or to negotiate better social status.

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