

**Côte d'Ivoire:**

**A Crisis of Leadership from Houphouët-Boigny to  
Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara**

**By**

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## Declaration

“I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.”

Signed

Jean-Claude Meledje

Date: 6 October 2015

## **Dedication and Acknowledgements**

This research is dedicated to my late father Lazare Meledje who was highly intelligent and provided me with guidance and advice about how to write my numbers when I was a child, although he had never been to school and was not an intellectual. This research is also dedicated to my wonderful wife Marrion Meledje because it would certainly not have been possible without her unconditional love, ongoing support, and patience.

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the root causes and effects of contemporary conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, focusing particularly on the period since the civil war broke out on 19 September 2002 after a failed coup d'état. It assesses the roles of the key players in order to provide comprehensive analysis of Côte d'Ivoire's economic, political and social instability. Importantly this thesis examines the key concept of *Ivoirité* to show how the ethnicisation of politics has shaped conflict and crisis in this West African nation. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the root causes of the conflict can be traced back to the period of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the first President of the independent, post-colonial nation, and his failure to successfully manage a leadership transition from his generation to the next. During his three decades of rule, there were no plans made for his succession, and thus when he ultimately died in office, political, economic, and social instability resulted, plunging the country into ongoing crises and conflicts.

Côte d'Ivoire is still recovering from the heavy consequences of the contested 2010 presidential elections between Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara, which caused political-military crisis from December 2010 to April 2011. Ouattara, the new President, has inherited a weak economy with high levels of unemployment, increased costs of living, and rising insecurity. This situation continues to deteriorate as the country tries to recover. However, this has led to a stalling of the national reconciliation process, which, as this thesis argues, is one of the few vehicles for peace and stability to occur in the country.

## Map of Côte d'Ivoire



Source: ICG available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/176%20A%20Critical%20Period%20for%20Ensuring%20Stability%20in%20Cote%20d'Ivoire.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/176%20A%20Critical%20Period%20for%20Ensuring%20Stability%20in%20Cote%20d'Ivoire.pdf) (accessed 22 March 2014)



## List of Acronyms

AIP	Agence Ivoirienne de Presse
AOF	Afrique Occidentale Française
APN	Agir pour la Paix et la Nation
BICICI	Banque Internationale pour l'Industrie et le Commerce en Côte d'Ivoire
BCEAO	Central Bank of West African States
BGF	Budget Général de Fonctionnement
BNETD	Bureau National d'Etudes Techniques et de Développement
CURDIPHE	Cellule Universitaire de Recherche et de Diffusion des Idées et des Actions Politiques du Président Henri Konan Bédié
CC	Constitutional Council
CCI	Centre de Commandement Intégré
CERAP	Centre for Research and Peace
CNMCA	Centre National de la Mutualité et de la Coopération Agricole
CDVR	Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation
CNSP	Comité National de Salut Public
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine
CFAO-CI	Compagnie Française de l'Afrique de l'Ouest - Côte d'Ivoire
DDR	Disarmement, Demobilisation, Reintegration
EU	European Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
FN	Forces Nouvelles
FRCI	Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire
GIGN	Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale
ICC	International Criminal Court
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LIDER	Liberté et Démocratie pour la République
MEECI	Mouvement des Elèves et Etudiants de Côte d'Ivoire
MFA	Mouvement des Forces de l'Avenir
MJP	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix,
MPIGO	Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest,
MPCI	Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire
MRP	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation NGO
OTJ	Observatory of Transitional Justice
OPA	Ouagadougou Political Agreement
PANA	Parti Nationaliste
PFC	Parti Communiste Français
PDCI	Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire
PAC	Programme D'Action Commerciale
RDA	Rassemblement Démocratique Africain
RDR	Rassemblement des Républicains
RHDP	Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix
R2P	Responsability to Protect

RFI	Radio France International
RTI	Radio Télévision Ivoirienne
SAA	Syndicat Agricole Africain
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SGBCI	Société Générale de Banques de Côte d'Ivoire
SIB	Société Ivoirienne de Banque
SONEICI	Société Négoce Internationale de Côte d'Ivoire
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UDPCI	Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNEECI	Union Nationale des Elèves et Etudiants de Côte d'Ivoire
ONUCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

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## INTRODUCTION

*In many an African country the ruler is portrayed as embodying the idea, dignity, and even the sacredness of the state – a concept most evident in countries with long-surviving rulers who have governed for a decade or more or have ruled continuously since independence. In those countries the idea of the state and the person of the ruler are intertwined to a degree that is difficult to imagine in institutionalised systems. For example, an Ivory Coast without Félix Houphouët-Boigny is difficult to visualise, even though one day it will be without him, when it is, the state is unlikely to be quite the same.<sup>1</sup>*

This thesis aims to identify the root causes of the ongoing Ivorian political crisis, as well as the consequences and the challenges that lay ahead. It aims to further examine the role of key players in Côte d'Ivoire's political history, and analyses the origin of the crisis. It clearly outlines the failure of the first President elect, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, to properly organise his succession. Houphouët, who led the country from 1960-1993, made a political mistake that plunged the country into a devastating crisis by deliberately refusing to nominate his successor. This thesis will argue that for 33 years, concerns persisted because Houphouët never intended to step down and bring in a new generation of Ivorian politicians. Houphouët knew the risk involved but he was reluctant to do anything meaningful about it. As a result, the nation submerged to political crisis after his death in 1993. The crisis was arguably due to his reign that lasted too long, as well as his undefined process of succession.

This thesis will argue that the overriding problem in Côte d'Ivoire today is the result of the concentration of power in the hands of Houphouët who maintained absolute control over all

<sup>1</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal rule in black Africa, prince, autocrat, prophet, tyrant*, 1982, University of California Press, p. 23.

forms of political and economic power. Personal rule under Houphouët, which was characterised by a combination of: authoritarian rule, a low level of institutionalisation of political processes, and a one man decision making process, posed major negative effects in Côte d'Ivoire. This forms the background of the crisis. In order to understand the political dynamics of Côte d'Ivoire, it is important to examine Houphouët's long political career based on his personal rule which began in 1960, and the resulting complexity of subsequent leadership battles after his death. For example, the tensions between Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara along ethnic divisions clearly shows how the key political actors have used ethnicity in order to divide Ivorians, in a vain attempt to rule and for their own political survival.

This thesis will also show the failure of the ruling elite to address and resolve key issues such as: citizenship, identity, and political inclusion or exclusion after Houphouët's death aggravated the situation. By exploring the historical context of Côte d'Ivoire since independence in 1960 through the lens of Houphouët's three decades of presidency and through the subsequent years of leadership/regime change, this thesis will also attempt to offer practical solutions to the crisis.

Nonetheless, significant indications given here support the conclusion that political clientelism and corruption in all forms are found in the politics of post-Houphouët political leaders Bédié, Gbagbo, and Ouattara. Their failure to put an end to these phenomena has impacted the legitimacy of their governments, and they have failed to deliver peace, stability and security for Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>23</sup> As a direct result of this, any new regime always looks like the old one, a matter of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, [the more things change, the more they stay the same].

<sup>3</sup> James Colman and Carl Rosberg, *Political parties and National integration in tropical Africa*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) pp. 151-161.

Côte d'Ivoire held its first multiparty election in 1990. Since Houphouët's death in 1993, political turmoil has persisted and a 2002 rebellion left the nation divided into northern and southern sections. Although attempts for reconciliation were initiated the following year, including a 2007 power-sharing agreement signed by the Gbagbo government and the rebels, they failed to reunite the nation.

To make matters worse, a disputed presidential election in 2010 led to a political standoff. This thesis will show that this election should not have been held as it increased the level of crisis it was supposed to end and failed to help bring about stability.

Based on the Ivorian Constitution, a candidate is required to win the absolute majority of the votes. Since no candidate among the fourteen contesters had obtained an absolute majority in the ballot at the first round, a second round took place on 28 November, 2010.

The second round of the contest took place between the leader of the opposition Alassane Ouattara and incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo, the two winners of the first round. The opposition candidate Alassane Ouattara, was announced the 'winner' on 2 December, 2010, by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) with 54.10% of the votes over the incumbent Laurent Gbagbo who obtained 45.90% of the votes.<sup>4</sup>

However, on 3 December, both Gbagbo and Ouattara took oaths of office. This move caused confusion. Gbagbo took the prescribed oaths before the Constitutional Council. In a letter addressed to the Constitutional Council, Ouattara took oaths of office too.<sup>5</sup> As a result, both Gbagbo and Ouattara appointed cabinet members in their respective governments and officially or unofficially assumed the title of 'President.' of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. For the first time in its political history, Côte d'Ivoire had two Presidents because of the clumsy way in which the election had been managed by the relevant authorities.

<sup>4</sup> See "Postelection crisis," ONUCI, United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, available at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unoci/elections.shtml> (accessed 19 July 2014).

<sup>5</sup> "Présidentielles 2010 1er tour" available at <http://www.abidjan.net/elections/presidentielles/2010/> (accessed 19 July 2014).

The announcement of these election results sparked widespread violence in many parts of Côte d'Ivoire. After months of international interventions by France and the United Nations under the auspices of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI), the political standoff was eventually resolved in 2011 and general calm was restored, but the overall crisis persisted.

The role of this international peacekeeping mission which had been deployed in Côte d'Ivoire since 2004, is important to examine in the context of this crisis. The aim of the mission was to monitor and assist in the implementation of a peace treaty and to help in the transition to democratic rule in Côte d'Ivoire. The 'controversial' concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which will be discussed below in chapter 7 was used in Côte d'Ivoire to protect civilians when Côte d'Ivoire descended into political and ethnic violence following the 2010 presidential election.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, this thesis will argue that the use of force by the UN peacekeepers and French troops under the guise of R2P was a clear indication of a regime change in Côte d'Ivoire.

The thorny question of national reconciliation remained a key stumbling block to management of the continuing crisis. This thesis argues that the public was frustrated in 2014/15 because of the weaknesses of the Ouattara government in its political approach to resolution of the problem. Further, it shows that though some steps toward normalisation have been taken, they have failed to lead to a broader national reconciliation.

Indeed, the research conducted for this thesis reveals that many Ivoirians are frustrated by the slow process of reconciliation. One respondent told me that "The same causes produce the same effects," when discussing the slow reconciliation process.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Leslie Varenne, *Abobo la guerre: Côte d'Ivoire terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, (France : Editions Mille et une nuits, February 2012), p. 261; The new concept of Responsibility to protect (R2P) was adopted in 2005 by UN member states. However, critics say it is a replica of French's former minister for foreign affairs Bernard Kouchner concept about the right to interfere.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Respondent "O" in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire on 19 June 2012.

Faced with this ongoing political chaos and long periods of uncertainty, some Ivorians are missing the stability they enjoyed under Houphouët, the Côte d'Ivoire 'Big Man,' despite his neopatrimonial rule. Houphouët was widely regarded by many Ivorians as a formidable negotiator and strategist, and he is remembered for creating the climate and conditions conducive to peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. For example, under Houphouët from 1970 to 1985, the nation was calm and Côte d'Ivoire was not at war. According to Jacques Baulin, Houphouët obtained political stability through his charismatic personality as well as his political ability to manage internal contradictions.<sup>8</sup> From the perspective of his supporters, even though he ruled in a one-man reign and grew increasingly autocratic and corrupt, Houphouët remained a popular figure.<sup>9</sup> For much of the Ivorian public, the crisis started following his death in 1994.<sup>10</sup>

Today, faced with the government's inability to overcome obstacles in the reconciliation process, Houphouët's followers have come to realise that it is unlikely that their ideal stability and balance will ever be achieved.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, as Jackson and Rosberg predicted, in the opening quote above, the nation won't be the same again. Unless the root causes of the tragedy are addressed immediately, recurrent violence in Côte d'Ivoire will continue to fuel opposition-government tensions.

Côte d'Ivoire's struggles with the after-effects of authoritarianism are far from unique, of course. African and Africanist communities would agree that authoritarianism spread around sub-Saharan Africa on the eve of independences and somehow persisted until the end of the 1980s. It was during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Africa faced a crisis of

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Baulin 1982, *La politique intérieure d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Eurafor-Press, p.31.

<sup>9</sup> Houphouët declared that "There is no problem in the world, however difficult... that cannot be solved through negotiation." Quoted by Mr Fidel V. Ramos, the President of the Republic of the Philippines in 1997 in his address during the Awards ceremony of Houphouët peace price, available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001873/187314e.pdf> (accessed 25 July 2014),

<sup>10</sup> Augustine Vidjannangni, 2011, "La complexité de la question identitaire en Côte d'Ivoire," Université du Québec à Montréal

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Respondent "D" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.



authoritarianism. If key African political actors did not have the resources required for a successful political transition, they got the resources to postpone it until chaos occurred. During the cold war, most African leaders were the same and Houphouët was no different.<sup>12</sup> In 1960, Houphouët left his mark on Côte d'Ivoire's destiny by negotiating independence from France. As a charismatic figure Houphouët became 'the unique kingmaker' and the principal architect of the destiny of Ivorian people. Over the years, he became 'the father of the nation,' 'the old man,' 'the wise man of Africa.' The transfer of the political and administrative capital to his native village of Yamoussoukro, including the construction of the Notre-Dame basilica of peace, the Houphouët-Boigny foundation for peace research, and the Félix Houphouët-Boigny peace prize awarded by UNESCO have definitely 'connected Houphouët to eternity,' making his legacy unassailable. In that regard, it is fair to say that his succession management strategy was a success.<sup>13</sup>

After his 33 years of authoritarian rule, Houphouët left behind a lasting political legacy on the Ivorian Constitution by constantly manipulating Article 11 in order to retain power. In effect, Article 11 was so often amended (1975, 1980, 1985, 1986, 1990) that it was dubbed a 'constitutional chameleon.'<sup>14</sup>

Houphouët also used the strategy of 'the successor without name or face,' creating ambiguity around the name of the potential successor, which profoundly reflected the obsession to eternity or immortality shared by a large number of charismatic African political leaders during the cold war.

According to the *Akan* formula, a serving chief is never replaced - while a chief is alive he doesn't indicate the name of his successor. Akan is Houphouët's ethnic group and this ethnic

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Bourmaud 2006, "Aux sources de l'autoritarisme en Afrique: des ideologies et des hommes," *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, Vol. 13, pp. 625-641.

<sup>13</sup> Claude Patrice, 1990, L'offrande d'Houphouët-Boigny, Jean-Paul II consacre la basilique de Yamoussoukro, la plus coûteuse et la plus contestée des cathédrales, in *Le Monde*, 10 Septembre, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> See Achille Mbembe, 1999, *Des Figures du politique en Afrique des pouvoirs hérités aux pouvoirs élus*, Karthala & CODERSIA Editions, p. 109.

group rejects the replacement of their leader while he is in office based on their tradition. Houphouët effectively used this formula until he died in office. In order to reach his objective and ensure that while he was alive no-one was acting as legitimate successor, Houphouët eliminated his ambitious opponents and created competition among them when required. This caused uncertainty and chaos rather than stability after his death, which is still continuing today.<sup>15</sup>

### **Methodology and Sources**

This thesis was prepared on the basis of field-work conducted by the author in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from March to June 2012. This research was approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Ethics Committee on 6 March, 2012.

Like many other researchers, I was confronted with the large number of possible research methods and strategies available. This thesis employed interviewing, which is one of the most popular research techniques in political science today. Interviewing presents a number of advantages over other research methods. One of the key advantages of interviews is that they enable us to capture “what is in people’s heads.”<sup>16</sup> Such an approach helps us to better understand interviewees’ motivations and actions.<sup>17</sup>

For this work, after selecting 20 interviewees and gaining access, I carried out interviews and analysed the results. The twenty participants, who were interviewed both formally and informally, included a range of political powerbrokers, representatives of the oldest political party in Côte d'Ivoire the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), the opposition political party the Ivorian Political Front (FPI), and a number of academics, journalists,

<sup>15</sup> Samba Diarra 1997, *Les faux complots d'Houphouët-Boigny, fracture dans le destin d'une nation*, Paris, Katharla, pp. 138-139 ; Thomas Hofnung 2012, *La crise Ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Emmanuel Alder 1997, 'Seizing the middle ground: constructivism in world politics,' *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 319-363.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Jones 1985, 'Depth interviewing' in Robert Walker (ed.) *Applied qualitative research*, Aldershot: Gower, pp. 45-55; Keith Punch 1998, *Introduction to social research*, London, Sage Publications.

representatives of civil society, religious groups, and Ivoirians from different social, political and economic backgrounds. I interviewed twenty people, two of whom were women. It was not possible to interview a larger group of women, because, given the country's culture, most Ivorian women preferred to refrain from face-to-face interviews with a male researcher.

Fortunately, I achieved a more satisfactory balance in the interview set among the various Côte d'Ivoire ethnic groups. I interviewed 5 respondents from the Akan ethnic group, 5 from Krou; 5 from Gur and 4 from Malinké, 1 from OTHER.

As far as achieving a balance regarding occupation, I interviewed 1 entrepreneur, 1 security officer, 1 house cleaner, 1 bank manager, 1 former journalist, 1 academic, 1 economist, 1 businesswoman, 1 church spokesperson, 1 social worker, 1 representative of civil society, 1 journalist, 1 former public servant, 2 public servants. Three respondents identified themselves as political analysts. For 2 respondents their occupation was not applicable. Moreover, the interview set also represented a satisfactory balance in age distribution. Nine respondents were aged between 50-60. 6 respondents were aged between 40-50 while 5 respondents were aged between 30-40.

During these interviews I understood that while everyone was entitled to hold and express an opinion that did not mean that everyone's opinion was "equally valid or influential."<sup>18</sup> According to Pierre N'da, the researcher should consult multiple sources including publications, resource persons, experts in particular areas, colleagues or other researchers working in the same field to validate the respondents' claims.<sup>19</sup> This was achieved in my research by cross-checking the information coming from different sources, such as through personal contacts and through literature review.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Burnham, Gilland Lutz Karin, Grant Wyn, and Layton-Henry Zig. 2008. *Research Methods in Politics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre N'da 2007, *Méthodologie et guide pratique du mémoire de recherche et de la thèse de doctorat*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 98.

I also understood the ‘saturation effect’ of the interviews: interviewees always talk about the same thing, and it adds nothing new to the interview. When saturation was reached – in other words - when no new data was emerging and I was satisfied that the data collected allowed for an in-depth understanding of the political crisis taking place in Côte d’Ivoire, interviewing stopped.<sup>20</sup>

The interview material utilised in this thesis went through the process of interpretation and reinterpretation. By using multiple sources for cross-checking, rather than one sole informant no matter how informed, intelligent and articulate they seemed, I dealt with bias, credibility, and reliability issues.<sup>21</sup>

All interviews quoted in this study were conducted in French. The objective of the interviews was to allow interviewees to freely express themselves and to collect detailed data specifically about the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. The interview material, along with other research methods such as the review and analysis of archival, primary, and secondary sources, will be used to support my conclusions of the causes and effects of the ongoing crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. See Table 0.1 below for a summary of this interviewee bio-data.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Berry 2002, Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing, *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 679-662; Patricia Fusch and Lawrence Ness, Are we there yet? Data Saturation in Qualitative Research, *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 20, No. 9, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR20/9/fusch1.pdf> (accessed 21 June 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Peter Burnham, Gilland Lutz Karin, Grant Wyn, and Layton-Henry Zig. 2008. *Research Methods in Politics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 246.

**Table 0.1: Summary of Interviewee Bio-Data**

Respondents: Total 20	Gender	Age range	Ethnic group/origin					Political party			Occupation
			Akan	Krou	Gur	Malinké	Other	PDCI	RDR	FPI	
A	Male	50-60	√							√	Entrepreneur
B	Male	30-40				√		√			Security Officer
C	Male	30-40					√		√		House cleaner
D	Male	40-50	√					√			Bank manager
E	Male	50-60	√								Former journalist
F	Male	50-60			√			√			Academic
G	Male	40-50		√							Economist
H	Male	50-60			√						Former public servant
I	Male	30-40		√						√	N/A
J	Female	50-60			√			√			Businesswoman
K	Male	30-40			√					√	Church spokesperson
L	Female	50-60				√				√	Social worker
M	Male	50-60	√						√		Public servant
N	Male	40-50				√			√		N/A
O	Male	50-60	√						√		Political analyst
P	Male	40-50		√						√	Political analyst
Q	Male	40-50		√					√		Public servant
R	Male	30-40				√		√			Representative of civil society
S	Male	50-60		√							Journalist
T	Male	40-50			√						Political analyst

The qualitative research method was used to validate respondents' assumptions. In addition to the twenty interviews (*See Appendix B for original transcripts of interviews*), a survey of twenty participants was conducted. *See Table 0.2 below for a summary of the survey respondents' bio-data.*

**Table 0.2: Survey Respondents' Bio-Data**

2012 surveys conducted by the author in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Surveys were conducted in French, and translated below by the author.

Respondents: Total 20	Gender	Age range	Ethnic Group				Issues that were raised during the survey			
			Akan	Krou	Gur	Malinké	Land Ownership	Religion	Ethnicity	Succession war
A1	Male	20-30				√	√			
B2	Male	20-30			√				√	
C3	Female	20-30		√					√	
D4	Male	20-30				√				√
E5	Female	20-30	√						√	
F6	Male	20-30			√			√		
G7	Female	20-30		√						√
H8	Female	20-30			√				√	
I9	Female	20-30				√			√	
J10	Female	20-30			√				√	
K11	Male	20-30			√					√
L12	Female	20-30		√						√
M13	Male	20-30	√						√	
N14	Male	20-30				√		√		
O15	Male	20-30	√						√	
P16	Male	30-30		√					√	
Q17	Male	20-30	√						√	
R18	Female	20-30	√						√	
S19	Female	20-30		√					√	
T120	Female	20-30				√			√	

Both the interviews and survey were conducted in French. Although no request was made by the participants to do so, their names have been withheld to protect their identity, privacy and security, according to ethical guidelines.

In addition to these interviews and surveys, I sourced documents concerning Ivorian politics through party officials, and I also conducted archival research at the *Fraternité Matin* (Government owned newspaper) and in Abidjan at the library of the Centre for Research and Action for Peace (CERAP). Furthermore, this research was based on both French and English documents and literature. I have provided translations from French to English where appropriate and this has been noted in the text. There is very little comprehensive literature written in English about the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, and in French, while more has been written, there remains a wide gap in published research on the political crisis and situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Therefore, this thesis aims to fill this gap by providing analysis in English of the causes and consequences of crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

### **Research Limitations**

The process of collecting information for this research, in this country still in crisis, was a 'delicate' task. Côte d'Ivoire is still recovering from the 2010 post-election crisis that killed an estimated 3,000 people. Progress since then has been slow, because the opposition, civil society, and community remain suspicious about the government's selective justice. While both political parties committed post-election crimes during the 2010 crisis, Ouattara only sent Gbagbo to the ICC, not his lieutenants. There is an evident lack of confidence from the opposition's perspective to engage in the reconciliation process. With the same token, attacks against innocent civilians and between pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara supporters, continue around the country. Because of the high level of propaganda and misinformation still in circulation, and the resulting volatile security issues, collecting political interview and survey data was challenging to say the least.



Given the high level of insecurity in Côte d'Ivoire, I conducted research solely in Abidjan, the economic capital. In one case, I was unable to interview an opposition figure because he was suspected by the government for inciting violence. He was later sentenced to 6 months in prison, after I had left Côte d'Ivoire. I was also unable to conduct field research in the wider regional areas such as Duékoué, Danané Guiglo, Man and Korhogo, due to the restrictions of my research ethics clearance which required me to adhere to the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Travel Warnings, which rated those regions as in the Category 4 of Travel Warnings (with 5 being the highest alert level). This unfortunately precluded them as sites for my academic research. Violent protests were considered likely to erupt spontaneously, and I needed to keep in mind my own security as a researcher as well as the safety of the respondents. For similar security reasons, I was unable to make a trip to Yamoussoukro to interview Houphouët's nephew Augustin Abdoulaye Thiam.

## Literature Review

The literature on Ivorian history is reconstructed through oral traditions, the colonial census and/or migrant records, and provides links to discussions of colonialism, politics, the economy, nationalism and ethnicity. Historians such as Jean-Noel Loucou and Françoise Ligier relied upon historical records preceding and during the colonial period to determine the origins of Ivorian ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> Writers and scholars such as Tety Louhoh Gauze have also used similar historical sources to closely analyse the patterns and timing of Ivorian migration.<sup>2</sup>

In his book *Côte d'Ivoire: entre barbarie et démocratie*, (Côte d'Ivoire: Between Barbary and Democracy), Martial Ahipeaud lays out the political history of Côte d'Ivoire from the

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou and Françoise Ligier 1997, *La reine Pokou: fondatrice du royaume baoulé*, Nouvelles Editions Africaines, Abidjan.

<sup>2</sup> Tety Louhoh, "Contribution à l'histoire de peuplement de la Côte d'Ivoire," AUA:F1, fasc. 1, pp. 7-24.

colonial era to modernity. In the first part, he demonstrates the ways the colonial master decided to transform the territory into the epicentre of its political action in the region, and more importantly into its supplier for agricultural raw materials. The second part of the work explores the economic crisis, political and ideological of the late 1980s, arguing that it was a transitional crisis of the Ivorian political class. Finally, the third part examines the concept of *Ivoirité* which he identifies as a very concrete example of the cause of barbarism in Côte d'Ivoire. In this Ahipeaud proved prescient, as contemporary Côte d'Ivoire is still trapped 'between barbarity and democracy.'<sup>3</sup>

In Côte d'Ivoire, the politicisation of identity based on national origin has become a force that has fundamentally torn the nation's social fabric. A considerable number of books have shed some light on what Ivorian ethnic groups have in common. Nonetheless, they have failed to consider nuances in names, religion, and the distortion of ethnicity in their analysis of this politicisation, despite the fact that these elements were used to promote "Ivoirité" by President Henri Konan Bédié as a nationalistic ideology in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>4</sup>

For example, in his book entitled *Les Chemins de ma vie* (The paths of my life), Bédié strongly attacked Ouattara for interfering in Côte d'Ivoire's politics, stating that, "Given that he is Burkinabe by his father, he did not have to interfere into the succession issue of Côte d'Ivoire."<sup>5</sup>

Due to the colonial legacy, African leaders embraced authoritarian as well as repressive one-party government regimes, which were endorsed by former colonial masters to keep African dictators in power, or to sideline them. As a result, as Cheru Fantu convincingly argues,

<sup>3</sup> Martial Ahipeaud 2009, *Côte d'Ivoire: entre barbarie et démocratie*, Les Editions du CERAP, pp. 159-167.

<sup>4</sup> Bernadette Koffi, 2001, "Univers des noms et prénoms baoulé en Côte d'Ivoire" Nouvelles Editions Ivoiriennes.

<sup>5</sup> In Siendou Konaté, 2004, "The politics of identity and violence in Côte d'Ivoire," *The West African Review*, issue 5, Africa Resource Centre, available at <http://www.africaknowledgeproject.org/index.php/war/login?source=%2Findex.php%2Fwar%2Farticle%2Fview%2F311%2F594> (accessed 7 June 2013).

“Africa became the prime battleground” when the West was opposing the East, intensifying domestic and regional conflicts. Each side backed its own dictators who silenced their own people and clinged to power by threat of force as well as abusing their power in order to enrich themselves.<sup>6</sup>

There have been few detailed accounts of the first President of independent Côte d’Ivoire, until Frédéric Grah Mel published Houphouët’s official biography in 2003. When I interviewed Grah Mel in 2012 he stated that “he ha[d] been researching Houphouët for 12 years.”<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, Grah Mel’s account of Houphouët’s life has remained an influential text in Côte d’Ivoire. For example, most of the respondents to my interviews and surveys had referred to Grah Mel’s work to understand the crises. The title of Grah Mel’s first book neatly encapsulated its meaning: *Félix Houphouët-Boigny Le fulgurant destin d’une jeune proie* (“Félix Houphouët-Boigny The fate of a runaway prey”). The book covers the period from 1900 to 1960, exploring Houphouët’s transition from unionism to politics and his affiliation with communism. Grah Mel’s second book *Félix Houphouët-Boigny l’épreuve du pouvoir* (“Félix Houphouët-Boigny the test of power”) concerns Côte d’Ivoire’s development. His third and perhaps most important book, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny la fin et la suite* (“Félix Houphouët-Boigny the end and the following”), examines the succession battle caused by Houphouët which led to the Ivorian crisis. Grah Mel aimed to offer a good understanding of Houphouët’s life with as much as detail as possible. As an historian and Houphouët’s official biographer, Grah Mel did not want to mimic such authors as Samba Diarra, Charles Donwahi or Kodiara Koné who gave negative accounts about the President because they were victims

<sup>6</sup> Cheru Fantu, “The global economic order and its socio-economic impacts: The African perspective,” *The Study of Africa*, vol. 1, Disciplinary and interdisciplinary encounters; Vol. 2, Transnational and global engagements, Dakar: (Codestria book series, 2006-2007), p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Grah Mel in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 15 May 2012.

of his policy.<sup>8</sup> Or authors such as Jacques Baulin, Laurent Gbagbo or Bernard Doza who wrote to demystify Houphouët<sup>9</sup>

In his first volume, Grah Mel wrote that:

Since Houphouët is no longer around to endorse those who write nice things about him or oppress his opponents, what would be the point of writing about him as disciple or objector? For me, a unique reason motivated me, the duty of memory, and this imperative which became unavoidable for countries interested in progress.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, other authors covered the aspect of political parties in Côte d'Ivoire. In his book *One-party government in the Ivory Coast 1964*, Aristide Zolberg argues that because fragmented political parties were dissolved and integrated into the PDCI, it formed a strong coalition in order to win several elections. In his analysis of the PDCI, Zolberg indicated that despite some disagreement over policies within the party among senior party members, the PDCI under Houphouët's leadership successfully created a modern, integrated and national society.<sup>11</sup>

This brief literature review shows that the literature on Côte d'Ivoire is dominated by a focus on the leadership of Houphouët. This thesis will both add to that literature and move beyond it.

<sup>8</sup> See Samba Diarra, 1997, *Les faux complots d'Houphouët-Boigny: fracture dans le destin d'une nation*. To be the only person running the country, Houphouët imagined 'plots' to arbitrary arrest and cruelly torture his opponents; See also Prison time Kodjara Koné's *Misadventure 63: Mes souvenirs des prisons d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Abidjan, SAFICA press, collection Temoignage, July 2000. In this autobiography, he narrates his chaotic life in prison under Houphouët just three years after independence; See Charles Donwahi, 1997, *La foi et l'action – Itinéraire d'un humaniste*.

<sup>9</sup> See Jacques Baulin *La politique africaine d'Houphouët-Boigny*, 1980, *La politique intérieure d'Houphouët-Boigny*, 1982, and *La succession d'Houphouët-Boigny*, 1989; Laurent Gbagbo, 1983, *Pour une alternative démocratique*, Paris; Bernard Doza, 1991, *Liberté confisquée*.

<sup>10</sup> Grah Mel, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Le fulgurant destin d'une jeune proie*, 2003, vol.1 pp. 15-17, (Translated for this thesis by the author, 2012); This was echoed by Prof Koby. Interview with Koby Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012; See also interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Aristide Zolberg, 1964, *One-party government in the Ivory Coast* (Princeton: Princeton University Press.).

## Thesis Structure

This thesis examines the root causes and consequences of the ongoing and persistent political crises in Côte d'Ivoire. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the country in order to comprehensibly understand Côte d'Ivoire's economic, political and social instability. This chapter also argues that because the successors of President Houphouët were not democratically elected they sparked a crisis of legitimacy. Chapter 2 provides a historical analysis ranging from the pre-colonial period to the post-colonial legacy of Côte d'Ivoire. It argues that despite Côte d'Ivoire achieving independence since 1960, its French colonial policies still have a significant impact on the politics, economy, language, culture and peoples to this day, for example in its monetary arrangements or its arbitrary geographic boundaries. Chapter 3 examines the role of Houphouët in order to understand how the first President governed the nation and how he became the dominant force of Ivorian politics. This chapter introduces the concept of the 'Big Man' including the associated characteristics of patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism, clientelism, patronage, nepotism and corruption. Chapter 4 argues that despite Houphouët's death, his successors maintained the 'Big Man' tradition due to fragile legitimacy and the prevalence of informal institutions. This chapter argues that corruption, tribalism, nepotism, and other assorted malpractices still continue in Côte d'Ivoire today under the ruling elites of Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara, five decades after independence. Chapter 5 examines the root causes of Côte d'Ivoire's crises, primarily Houphouët's failure to choose his replacement. While change was necessary and imminent in Côte d'Ivoire throughout his rule, the father of the nation was not ready to let go. Like many other autocratic African leaders, Houphouët was convinced that power was not to be shared. The chapter argues that the overriding problem in Côte d'Ivoire today is the result of Houphouët's possession of, and unwillingness part with, ultimate power, which led to the succession battle he caused.

Chapter 6 assesses Côte d'Ivoire's economic, social and political crises since 1980. It argues that the successors of Houphouët, as in most other African countries, used the politics of exclusion to exploit their ethnicity, region and religion to maintain their political power resulting in the country's various crises. The Succession War after Houphouët's death is also analysed in this chapter. Chapter 7 examines the 2010 elections, the international involvement, and the UN doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). It argues that the elections should not have been held as it worsened the crisis it was supposed to end. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the reconciliation process and argues that despite some progress towards normalisation, the country's leaders have failed to achieve national reconciliation, as seen by Ouattara's imprisonment of former President Gbagbo and his allied colleagues in 2011, and his continuing refusal to release them. This chapter argues that it is fundamentally necessary to release Gbagbo and his key allies in order to achieve reconciliation. Furthermore, this chapter explores other necessary reconciliation approaches, such as the implementation of 'a robust' program of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR). DDR has both the legitimacy and capacity to bring about a lasting peace and reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire.

## CHAPTER 1: CÔTE D'IVOIRE

This chapter provides an overview of Côte d'Ivoire and the Ivorian crises since independence in 1960. It argues that Houphouët ruled with the concept of Politics of the Belly to the country's detriment. The succession of leaders who came into power following his death did so illegitimately, causing a crisis of legitimacy that is still prevalent to this day. Many perceive that Ouattara came into power following the controversial 2010 elections only with 'help from abroad,' namely through support from both the ex-colonial power of France and the UN. Another cause of the crisis can be attributed to the concept of Ivorianism; the distinction between real Ivorians and foreigners. Through this concept, undemocratically elected leaders, such as Bédié, sought to claim legitimacy through their ethnicity.

### Geography

Côte d'Ivoire is geographically located in West Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea and neighbouring Ghana to the east, Liberia and Guinea to the west, Mali and Burkina Faso to the north. Côte d'Ivoire consists of a coastal strip in the south, dense forests in the interior and savannahs in the north. Ivorians have strong social and cultural ties with people in neighbouring countries.

### Name

The name Côte d'Ivoire, meaning Ivory Coast in English, originates historically from the ivory trade that occurred in the fifteenth century. Côte d'Ivoire was historically called *Côte d'or* (Gold coast) by France due to the lucrative active trade in elephant tusks on the coast. However, realising that a neighbouring country, under British rule was also called Gold Coast (now Ghana), the explorers decided to change and call it 'Côte d'Ivoire.' In 1986, the government led by then President Houphouët, requested that the country only be called Côte d'Ivoire in every language due to inconsistencies in the written and pronunciation styles by

non-French speaking countries, and this was decreed in 1987.<sup>1</sup> The country was also called *la côte des mal gens*, the coast of the bad people, by foreign settlers.<sup>2</sup>

### **Ethnic Regions**

This West African country, divided into 19 administrative regions, has a population of over 21 million people. While Côte d'Ivoire was initially comprised of numerous isolated settlements, today it is subdivided into 60 ethnic groups. These are further grouped into 4 major ethnic groups which are differentiated in terms of environment, language and cultural activities: Akan (42.1%, dominated by the Baoulé, Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Henri Konan Bédié's ethnic group in the south-east and south-west parts), Krou (12.7%, dominated by the Bété, Laurent Gbagbo's ethnic group in the centre to west parts), Gur (17.6%) in the north and north-east and Mandé 26.6% are settled in the mountain regions as well as in the north and north-east.<sup>3</sup>

### **Religion Divides**

The majority of the population adhere to Muslim belief (40%), which is predominant in the north and northeast although many Muslims moved to south in search for better life. The second most populous religious group is indigenous belief (35%) which is adopted across the nation. Only 25 % of the population is of Christian belief, but this grouping is regionally strong: Christianity dominates in the south and centre of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Indiana University Press, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Commandant Chailey summarised "the colonisation of the so-called 'bad people of the coast' the following way: twenty years were needed from Sénégal to Chad; Drawing and colonising the Côte d'Ivoire was done in thirty years." Therefore, it was a "*longue dureé* as it took much longer, highlighting the significance of resistance to colonialism. In Marcel Ahipeud "Elite ideologies and the Politics of Media. A critical history of Ivoirian Elite ideologies and their Press from the Brazzaville conference to the December 24th military coup." University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, History Department, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2003, source CERAP library in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, Field notes Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012; Grah Mel 2003, p.781.

<sup>3</sup> Other ethnic groups represent 2.8%. Kwas or Akan group (Agy, Abron, Adjoukrou, Alladjan, Avikam, Baoulé, and the other lagoon people. Krou (Wé, Bété, Dida, Bakwé, Néyo). Gur (Sénofo, Koulango, Lobi). Mandé (Malinké, Dan, Kwéni).

<sup>4</sup> CIA World Factbook, 2012, available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iv.html> (accessed 16 March 2014).



## Political Regime

The political regime of Côte d'Ivoire is presidential, with the President of the Republic being elected by universal suffrage or popular vote for a five-year term which is renewable once. The President is regarded as the nation's most powerful political leader. Within this role, he leads public debate, changing laws and regulations and representing Côte d'Ivoire. According to the Constitution, the President who is the head of state selects his Prime Minister and his Commander in Chief of the armed forces.<sup>5</sup> The job of the Prime Minister involves making formal decisions for the government. However, the Prime Minister does not exercise leadership independent of the President. As Jeanne Toungara has pointed out, the role of the Prime Minister is to manage the government.<sup>6</sup>

In theory, the cabinet is selected by the Prime Minister but in practice, the President chooses the cabinet Ministers. Given that the system is president-dominated, the creation of a Prime Minister role is atypical.<sup>7</sup> However, in the context of a single-party regime, it gives the impression that the actual regime is not operating under a dictatorship. Until Houphouët's death in 1993, Côte d'Ivoire's politics were characterised by one-party rule through the *Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI), (the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire). However, since the advent of multiparty politics on 28 October 1990, the nation has over thirty official political parties.

## Official Language

As part of the assimilation policy under the French colonial rule, the Ivorian community adopted French language and customs. French has been the official national language since

<sup>5</sup> A Presidential regime is defined as a political system in which executive power is only held by the President of the republic. Despite its failure, a limited number of nations are still operated by a presidential regime today; See also Ange Ralph Gnahoua 2006, *La crise du système Ivoirien: Aspects politiques et juridiques*, Editions L'Harmattan, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>7</sup> Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

1958. The maintenance of this French cultural connection was critical for Houphouët who depended on it for his political survival. French as a national language acts as a unifying characteristic, especially in a country with such a large number of ethnic groups with divisive political potential. Thus, the shared French language potentially contributes significantly to Ivorian unity, neutralising the particularities of local language.

### **Local Language**

Since each ethnic group has its own language, Côte d'Ivoire is linguistically diverse. There are at least sixty local languages including Adjoukrou and Bété. Agny and Baoulé are the most widely spoken languages in the south, while Sénoufo and variants of Mandé or Dioula, often used for business purposes across the nation, is more widely spoken in the north. It is important to note that although most Ivorians speak at least two languages, no single Ivorian language is spoken by the majority of the population.

### **Capital City**

In a political move, Houphouët changed the political capital from Abidjan to his hometown of Yamoussoukro, as he wanted to develop the central region. However, Abidjan still remains the economic capital, and many government offices and embassies remain in Abidjan.

### **Official Currency**

The official currency of Côte d'Ivoire is the CFA franc, which was initially called the franc of the *Colonies Françaises d'Afrique*. To this day, the abbreviation persists. Now CFA stands for (*Communauté Financière Africaine*), Financial Community of Africa, the French West African countries' currency. Some critics say it was created on 25 December 1945 by French President Charles de Gaulle, to allow France to defend its interests in Côte d'Ivoire, and maintain or expand its grasp over the Ivorian economy.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Julie Owono, "Devaluing a controversial currency," AlJazeera, 16 December 2011, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/12/2011121312953758399.html> (accessed 29 October 2013).

## Personal Rule and the Politics of the Belly

Personal rule under Houphouët, which began in 1960, involved a combination of authoritarian rule and a low level of institutionalisation of political processes, thus granting himself ultimate executive power. Jackson and Rosberg define personal rule as:

a distinctive type of political system in which the rivalries and struggles of powerful men, rather than impersonal institutions, ideologies, public policies or class interest, are fundamental in shaping political life.<sup>9</sup>

Instead of promoting institution-based practices of government, personal rule allows the leader's relationship with the state to become personalised. The objective of the system is to build loyalty to the leader, not to the institutions, which are designed to guarantee the achievement of the objectives set out by the leader, in particular, not to threaten the overall existence of the system.<sup>10</sup>

Houphouët adopted numerous practices of personal rule, with a resulting negative impact on the state. Besides being the President of the state of Côte d'Ivoire, Houphouët was Chairman of the PDCI and Commander in Chief of the army.<sup>11</sup> He convened at will and presided over all meetings of the PDCI's central council, the cabinet council and military council meetings. Initiated soon after the independence, this leadership style and the concurrent clientelism, resulted in self-enrichment in the country, widespread corruption, and embezzlement of public funds.<sup>12</sup> These were tightly linked to a direct access to state power due to personal rule.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson and Rosberg, 1984, p. 421. In Petros Ogbazghi, 2011, "Personal rule in Africa: The case of Eritrea" *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, Issue 2. available at <http://asq.africa.ufl.edu/files/Ogbazgh-V12Is2.pdf> (accessed 22 July 2014).

<sup>10</sup> In Petros Ogbazghi, 2011, "Personal rule in Africa: The case of Eritrea" *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 12, Issue 2. available at <http://asq.africa.ufl.edu/files/Ogbazgh-V12Is2.pdf> (accessed 22 July 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Houphouët's roles post-independence besides being President of Côte d'Ivoire included, for example: Minister for foreign affairs in 1963, Minister for defence in 1966.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal rule in black Africa, prince, autocrat, prophet, tyrant*, 1982. University of California Press, p. 145.

Under Houphouët, the Constitution laid out three main branches of government in Côte d'Ivoire: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. The executive branch, headed by the elected President who was also the Head of State and Commander in Chief of the armed forces, had the power to propose laws. In addition to this, the President had the power to negotiate and sign international agreements, as well as select the Prime Minister, who served as Head of government. The legislative branch had the power to pass laws. In theory, the legislative branch also maintained the power to introduce legislation, but as you would expect, in practice legislation was introduced by the President before being debated by the House and all parliamentarians, so that parliamentarians had a say in what was happening. The Supreme Court oversaw all aspects of the nation judicial system. This included the Court of Appeals and lower court. The fundamental role of the Ivorian Constitutional Chamber was to establish the eligibility requirements of candidates in the presidential election.<sup>13</sup>

In practice, however, in his search to accumulate and control power, Houphouët adopted personal rule practices rather than respecting separation of powers, ruling the nation as an autocrat for over three decades with exclusive power over the parliament and the judicial branch. He caused political chaos, the 'chaos that underpins' Ivorian politics, which none of his successors including Bédié, Guëi, Gbagbo, and Ouattara have been able to resolve. Instead, they all continued 'the politics of the belly' a way of describing the combination of post-colonial politics and corruption.<sup>14</sup> This Cameroonian expression, used by Jean-François

<sup>13</sup> See "Côte d'Ivoire public administration country profile," Division of Public Administration and Development Management, September 2007, available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan028168.pdf> (accessed 18 July 2014).

<sup>14</sup> The term is used to describe this phenomenon of African politics and wealth accumulation, which unfortunately is so common in sub-Saharan. For example, see John Emeka Akude, Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa, *Adonis & Abbey*, pp. 68-71.

Bayart to explain the politics of sub-Saharan Africa, and further implied in the Cameroonian proverb ‘the goat grazes wherever it is tied’ makes reference to ‘Big Men’ in power.<sup>15</sup>

In his work *The State in Africa*, Bayart attempts to bring into focus issues related to African leaders and their political styles. Almost everywhere, these leaders see public office as an opportunity to put into practice what Bayart calls *the politics of the belly*. In other words, it is the politics of “feeding” as leaders are required to “feed” their followers, members of their family, constituency or ethnic group.<sup>16</sup> In the case of Côte d’Ivoire under Houphouët’s watch, for example, this feeding was evident with the economic ascendancy of the Baoulé people, ownership of businesses by Houphouët’s family or the appointment of his followers to key Ivorian official roles.<sup>17</sup>

Given the widespread practice of political corruption and the leadership’s accumulation of wealth from the country’s resources in sub-Saharan Africa, each country there utilises a common local term that conveys the notion of the ‘politics of the belly.’ For example, as John Akude has pointed out, in Nigeria it is referred as ‘getting a share of the national cake,’ while in Côte d’Ivoire it is denoted as ‘*grilleurs d’arachides*,’ peanuts roasters.<sup>18</sup> Houphouët often said not to look too closely at a peanut roaster’s mouth, because during the process, the roaster is required to taste them for salt.<sup>19</sup> Houphouët, with his *faissez-faire* (“you are on your own”) attitude, told his Ministers who asked for higher wages, “*Débrouillez-vous*,” or “go fend for yourselves.” Therefore, for decades, cabinet Ministers were encouraged to commit economic crimes. However, Houphouët was not a fool. He tolerated his Ministers

<sup>15</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Respondent “J” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 June 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Nigerians see the idea of siphoning-off of taxpayers’ money for personal reasons as their way to try to get their share of the national cake, something that may be seen as corruption in the Western world, but for them, it is a normal attitude; See John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, pp. 68-69; Daniel Smith 2011, *A culture of corruption: Everyday deception and popular discontent in Nigeria*, Princeton University Press, p. 97.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Respondent “R” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 10 May 2012.

getting rich under his watch, but when he realised that they exceeded the limits established by his patrimonial regime, he subsequently took a tougher line and some of his Ministers were sidelined.<sup>20</sup>

In Côte d'Ivoire, electoral politics has been always considered to be systematically based on clientelism, as citizens are offered material goods by politicians in return for political support at polls. Thus, in order to receive ongoing support, leaders also rely on the distribution of personal favours to selected members of their constituencies.

One could stress that with a few rare exceptions, Ivoirians still identify themselves through politicians who can provide them something to 'eat.' This finally suggests that as long as we fail to promote democratisation in Côte d'Ivoire, the level of Ivorian dependency on clientelism will be increased.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Crisis of Legitimacy**

On 7 December, 1993, the evening of Houphouët's death, Henri Konan Bédié, the President of the National Assembly, immediately appeared on the national broadcasting system declaring he was in charge of the state power.<sup>22</sup> As Prime Minister, Alassane Ouattara, who had been acting President for over two years when Houphouët was bedridden, refused to hand over power to Bédié. Soon after this, France President François Mitterrand sent Bédié a message of national condolence on the death of Houphouët.<sup>23</sup> Thus France supported Bédié's undemocratic accession to power. The action circumvented the elections required by Article

<sup>20</sup> See Varenne 2012, p. 233; For some Ivoirians, Bédié was rightly punished by Houphouët on 20 July 1997 as a finance Minister for diverting public funds put aside for the construction of a sugar complex for personal gain. For others, it was a *montage* by Houphouët to undermine Bédié's potential leadership.

<sup>21</sup> While clientelism, the hierarchical relationship between patron and client can in general takes different forms, depending of the political and cultural environment, it is based on the principle of reciprocity where someone always gets something. See for example David Brinkerhoff and Arthur Goldsmith Clientelism, patrimonialism and democratic governance: An overview for framework and assessment for programming, 22 December 2002, U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Democracy and Governance, available at [http://www.abtassociates.com/reports/2002601089183\\_30950.pdf](http://www.abtassociates.com/reports/2002601089183_30950.pdf) (accessed 15 September 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Bédié said he was acting in conformity with article 11 of the constitution which granted him the right to rule the nation.

<sup>23</sup> "Legacy of Côte d'Ivoire 'Old Man' is uncertainty," *Africa Report*, vol.39, no 1, 1994.

11 of the Constitution regarding succession following the death of a ruling power. Bédié was later overthrown in 1999 by retired general Robert Guëi in a bloodless military coup d'état. In 2000, after a flawed election and a brutal war against Guëi, Laurent Gbagbo took over the presidency. Under enormous pressure from Gbagbo, the Supreme Court was forced to rule that Bédié and Ouattara were ineligible to stand, respectively for lack of a genuine medical dossier and for dubious nationality.

It has been reported that during the 2000 presidential elections, Gbagbo got the 'authority' to put pressure on the Supreme Court, through a secret deal with the transitional government headed by Guëi. It is important to remember that Gbagbo and Guëi were originally from the West of Côte d'Ivoire. The deal, according to the evidence from a large number of people from Gbagbo's inner circle, involved allowing Gbagbo to become Prime Minister on a tribal basis, with Guëi becoming President. Gbagbo's objective was to sideline Bédié and Ouattara, and his influence with Guëi led the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court to follow the instructions left by Gbagbo who was running the show behind the scene.

During the 2000 elections, Gbagbo and his party the FPI admitted through their statements and were even convinced that the eligibility requirements would cause electoral disadvantages for Bédié and Ouattara. Guëi was President at that time; however, as Ahipeaud Martial remarked, if Guëi was a military strategist, he was an unexperienced politician and lacked political skills as opposed to Gbagbo who was a political genius. So Guëi was happy to let Gbagbo do all the heavy lifting for him.<sup>24</sup> And this allowed Gbagbo to achieve his objective of sidelining Bédié and Ouattara.

During the proceeding, as Cissé Bacongo argued, Tia Koné, the President of the Supreme Court developed a strong prosecution case against Bédié and Ouattara. Koné was also from the West of Côte d'Ivoire and former General Guëi's legal Advisor. Further, because the

<sup>24</sup> Martial Ahipeaud 2009, *Côte d'Ivoire: entre barbarie et démocratie*, CERAP p. 157.

Supreme Court was dissolved and reformed in 1999 after the coup d'état, it is logical to conclude that its members were hand-selected by Guëi himself.<sup>25</sup> So as Bacongo concluded, the sentence which had been handed down by the Court to oust Bédié and Ouattara was not a surprise at all.<sup>26</sup> Overall, this suggests that Gbagbo had the 'authority' to influence the decision of the Supreme Court (meant to be an independent body) because 'tribal politics' played a significant role.

Ultimately in the 2000 election, Guëi was the only serious opponent to Gbagbo, and the legitimacy of the election was undermined due to a low turnout in response to a boycott by Ouattara.<sup>27</sup> As a result, riots broke out in Abidjan, with hundreds killed before Ouattara called for peace.

In 2005, Gbagbo retained office without going to the polls through a *mandat cadeau* (free mandate) justified by the rebellion and ongoing violence.<sup>28</sup> During that period, the West African Economic Committee (ECOWAS) recommended Gbagbo should remain President. He remained in office until the 2010 election.

### **Background and Focus on the 2010 Elections and Post-election Crisis**

Thus there was a 10 year span between Ivorian presidential elections, during which time the elections were postponed numerous times. The 2002 rebellion, discussed above, divided the country into a rebel held-north and government controlled-southern region. This division, as well as various political crises and ongoing spates of violence, delayed the 2005 presidential election, which was postponed from 2005 to 2009, then again to early 2010. Finally, under

<sup>25</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Le nouveau racisme la manipulation politique de l'ethnicité en Côte d'Ivoire" August 2001, Vol. 13, No. 6(A).

<sup>26</sup> Cissé Bacongo, 2007, *Alassane Dramane Ouattara une vie singulière*, NEI/CEDA, Abidjan, p. 114.

<sup>27</sup> In 2000, during the presidential election, the rate of abstention was 63%. It was arguably the lowest rate of abstention in living memory. Gbagbo won only 33% of votes over his opponent Guëi. See Jean-Claude Coulibaly, "Taux de participation: voici les statistiques qui confondent le FPI", *Le Patriote* 23 April 2013, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/457689.html> (accessed 8 July 2014).

<sup>28</sup> The 2000 presidential election was followed by violent demonstrations resulting in dozen of deaths; See Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne: de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat mat editions, p. 186.



growing pressure from the international community and despite serious and ongoing problems of violence and disunity, Ivorians went to the polls on 31 October 2010.

The first round of the presidential election was successfully held on 31 October 2010, with a substantial number of candidates standing for President. First round results showed that Laurent Gbagbo claimed the most votes, with 38.3%, compared to Alassane Ouattara's 32.08% and Henri Konan Bédié's 25.24%. To win, a candidate must obtain a majority of electoral votes. As all failed to win a majority, first-place Gbagbo stood up against second-place Ouattara in a run-off poll on 28 November, 2010. Supporters of each candidate accused each other of widespread fraud in the run-off.

Following the 28 November 2010 second round election, uncertainty and confusion blanketed the country as both the incumbent Gbagbo and the challenger Ouattara claimed they had won. The Ivorian Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had been given the authority to organise and conduct the election. The IEC was also tasked with reporting the 'provisional results' for both the first and second round. Accordingly, on 2 December 2010, the President of the IEC, Youssouf Bakayoko, declared the challenger Ouattara the winner of the second round of the 2010 elections with 54.1% of the votes. The following day, however, the President of the CC, Paul Yao N'dré, pronounced the incumbent President, Gbagbo the winner of the elections with 52% of the votes by declaring that there had been massive vote-rigging in the north in Ouattara's stronghold. N'dré subsequently cancelled 660,000 votes for Ouattara, declaring Gbagbo the President. These two role players, N'dré and Bakayoko have been blamed, rightly or wrongly, by some commentators for the post-election crisis in 2010.

The subsequent establishment of two distinct governments deepened the ongoing crisis of legitimacy. Ouattara was considered the 'legitimate authority' and was supported by the international community, namely France, the US, the UN, the EU, AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). On the other hand Gbagbo was considered

an ‘illegitimate authority’ who was backed by a faction of the French Socialist Party, China, and Russia.

Violence between pro-Ouattara and pro-Gbagbo groups continued well after the 2010 post-election crisis. One respondent was ‘alarmed and concerned’ about the hundreds of deaths of troops loyal to Gbagbo at the hands of Ouattara’s forces.

There was violence by Gbagbo’s forces against pro-Ouattara demonstrators in Abidjan, northern Muslims and immigrants from Mali and/or Burkina Faso living in Côte d’Ivoire. Additionally, according to the account of an eye-witness interviewed for this thesis, violence also occurred between indigenous and ethnic minority groups in Duékoué in the western region of the country.

According to Ouattara’s backers, at least 3,000 people were killed and more than a million were displaced during the six months of political violence due to the contested election which eventually resulted in civil war, mainly against groups which supported Gbagbo. This figure, reported by the UN and ICC, could have significantly underestimated the total number of deaths. Reports from the Red Cross regarding victims from Duékoué in the west were undermined by the UN who only reported 1,000 deaths in the middle calvary alone. Thus, some believe that the UN analysis lacks credibility, particularly during this six month period. These proponents argue that a full report of the total number of victims of political violence would expose a failure of the UN’s mission, and that despite the UN’s claim of impartiality, they had already chosen a winner. One eye witness stated that the actions of the UN show that they failed to translate their rhetoric in action and lacked credibility when they were confronted by the Ouattara government. He added that a full report would shed light on the killings by the winner’s camp.

The November 2010 election left a bitter legacy for us all to remember for future elections. When both Gbagbo and Ouattara claimed electoral victory and formed different governments,

Côte d'Ivoire faced a severe military-political crisis. In response a coalition of international forces led by France attempted to, but failed to solve the ongoing crisis. To the contrary, their interventions actually increased the political confusion and violence, making the future even more uncertain.

Although the violence ended in May 2011, following Gbagbo's capture on 11 April in Abidjan by Ouattara's troops supported by French forces, the situation on the ground remained tense for much longer.

Ouattara's objective was to capture Gbagbo. Ouattara's troops, the Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire/Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), were unsuccessful in getting closer than 500 m to Gbagbo's residence, and many lost their lives in the attempt because their small mounted artillery was insufficient to neutralise the heavy weapons used by Gbagbo's troops.

In frustration, one of the French officers is said to have lost his temper and allegedly decided that the French troops should take over. The officer in question was quoted saying "ça suffit maintenant! ...Vous perdez trop d'hommes, c'est humiliant à la fin, laissez-nous faire." That's enough now... You are losing too many people, it's humiliating in the end, let us do it. The French troops were close to the presidential compound to coordinate the capture of Gbagbo alongside UN peacekeepers.

A number of respondents revealed their belief that "La protection des autorités c'était de leur responsabilité" ["they (the French) were responsible for the protection of the authorities]. France acknowledged this responsibility. As stated by one respondent, "special instructions were given by Ouattara to capture Gbagbo and all members of his family alive." When the FRCI forces warned a number of Gbagbo's followers that they would be taken to Anyama military camp where they would be killed or raped, French soldiers opposed the idea and took the lead. Hence, from their perspective, it was *une mission accomplie*. Detainees were

brought to Ouattara's headquarters, the Hotel du Gold for protection. Thus, by taking the lead, France, the former colonial master, was finally able to get rid of Gbagbo.

Paris' ambition to break President Gbagbo can be understood to have developed during the tenure of Presidents Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy. Since Gbagbo took office in 2000, he was never warmly welcomed by French leaders. Gbagbo is a Francophile who awarded a large number of contracts to French companies and businesses including Alatel who have managed to carve out a strong hold in the telecommunications sector in Côte d'Ivoire, while Russia and China had obtained only crumbs. However, these economic loyalties were not enough to please the former colonial master.

Even though he was initially opposed to France's interference in the domestic politics of Côte d'Ivoire, President Nicolas Sarkozy eventually sent troops and missiles from the French Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN) to capture Gbagbo alive from his presidential residence. According to Sarkozy, because Gbagbo was not an 'assassin,' the aim was not to assassinate him, but instead, as they say in the military, to 'neutralise' him, demolish his troops and concretely capture him. However, Gbagbo and his allies denounced the 'aggressive approach' and arrogance of Sarkozy. As Gbagbo noted himself, with Sarkozy, there is no room for practical ideas, but there is always room for arrogance.

According to an Ivorian commandant from the so-called 'Invisible Commando' also fighting against Gbagbo, the radio announced Gbagbo's capture when Ouattara's forces were still on their way to the former President's residence; meanwhile French forces were already well inside Gbagbo's residence before the FRCI arrived. This suggests that Ouattara's forces were not in full control of the situation and that they were just making their presence felt.

On 21 May, 2011, Ouattara was formally inaugurated as President, with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in attendance at the ceremony. After a warm welcome, Ouattara said, "Mr President Sarkozy, Ivorian people want to say a big thank you" for a great job and tireless

support. He went on to highlight the strengths of France the former colonial master with which he believed Côte d'Ivoire has a historical connection and a common vision for the future.

Since the inception of the presidential crisis, the former colonial power's ambiguous position was openly criticised by many Ivorians, young and old. One respondent described how the French were assisted by the UN to attack the presidential palace and the bunker where Gbagbo, his key allies and his families were living. They also attacked one hospital and a supermarket in Cocody, a chic suburb in Abidjan, home to Gbagbo and the Ivorian elite. As such, the respondent regarded France's war against Gbagbo's forces as Sarkozy's personal revenge. The respondent concluded that the former colonial power attacked some soldiers and the Ivorian population on the ground to clear the way for Ouattara assuming power.

Ouattara also came to power supported by the international community headed by the UN, USA, the EU, and African organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) which towards the end were all opposed to Gbagbo, acknowledging his defeat at the polls. In order to pressure Gbagbo to step down, these entities took numerous multilateral and bilateral political and economic measures, restricting his government access to financial resources. These included sovereign credit restrictions, asset freezes and travel restrictions.

During the deadly post-election crisis, both sides committed atrocities, but a heavier weight of violence fell against the 'real' or 'perceived' allies of Gbagbo. Ouattara had to resort to this violence to claim office effectively. Thus, even Ouattara's supporters express concerns about his future considering that he came into power by attacking his own people.

This raises further questions about how Ouattara will govern. Even his own allies stress that the candidate from abroad is in power with help from abroad, which raises a legitimacy

problem. In their humour, Ivorians from diverse backgrounds have renamed the government army (FRCI) “Republican Forces of the International Community.”

Whilst Ivorians had hope that the 2010 election could reunite the deeply divided country, it resulted to months of political turmoil, violence and civil war, bringing to the forefront the divisions triggered 8 years before by the 2002 rebellion. The real outcome was post-election violence that killed thousands and resulted in a very fragile country.

The origin of the current crisis reaches back to the failed political transition in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Houphouët will be remembered for many things. Even his harshest critics admit that his infrastructural transformation is an obvious landmark. However, for many Ivorians, Houphouët, who had led the nation since independence in 1960 and had chosen not to engage in any substantial and open debate about his succession, was to blame for the crisis.

Ouattara came to power after a deeply divisive 2010 election in an unstable country struggling to end years of civil war. It took the international community in general and France in particular staging a military intervention against Gbagbo to pave the way for Ouattara to assume power.<sup>29</sup> Most importantly, Ouattara accepted military help from the *Forces Nouvelles*, a rebel group which launched a rebellion in 2002 against Gbagbo’s government and controlled the country’s north until 2011. Furthermore, the group committed mass atrocities against ethnic groups supporting former President Gbagbo.<sup>30</sup> On 17 March, 2011, Ouattara ordered the creation of the FRCI. This posed a serious problem because they were responsible for killing thousands of Ivorians, including the casualties of the mass killings in Duékoué in the west of Côte d’Ivoire.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise Ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, 2012, pp. 185- 186; When Gbagbo was elected President, there were several confrontations with his rivals from Ouattara’s political party the RDR. As a result, dozens of protesters died. The French intervention helped Ouattara to capture Gbagbo and his troops.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Respondent “A” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 25 April 2012.

## The Current Situation

Ouattara had been accused of being unfair in his dealings with members of Gbagbo's party. He admitted that with regard to the post 2010 electoral crisis, both sides have been involved in bloodshed.<sup>31</sup> However, while dozens of Gbagbo's allies, including Mr and Mrs Gbagbo, are still under house arrest awaiting trial, Ouattara's allies are free. More fundamentally, none of the ex-rebels incorporated into the FRCI have been prosecuted, despite human rights groups proving that abuses by the FRCI that helped him to power were extensive.<sup>32</sup>

While the government and the opposition are 'negotiating' the national reconciliation process, the level of political violence is growing.<sup>33</sup> The election's losers are powerful enough to do harm to the rebuilding of trust among communities.

In order to prevent more or ongoing conflicts in the future, the root cause of these major crises needs to be addressed in Côte d'Ivoire, while the ICC goes through its long process of charges against Gbagbo. Although Ivorian courts have restored their good reputation and are able to hold a fair trial that will guarantee the rights of the defence, Gbagbo is instead facing charges for crimes against humanity at The Hague after months of deadly violence over the 2010 post-election political crisis. According to one of Gbagbo's close allies, Gbagbo has

<sup>31</sup> See Les crimes de sang concernent les deux côtés: Alassane Ouattara, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/504121.html> (accessed 18 July 2014).

<sup>32</sup> This level of selectivity immediately prompts the issue of *deux poids, deux mesures* (double standards) by Ouattara. The Guardian, "Ivory Coast president dissolves government", *Associated Press*, 15 November 2012, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/14/ivory-coast-president-dissolves-lassane-ouattara> (accessed 7 July 2014).

<sup>33</sup> The opposition does not exist in reality in Côte d'Ivoire. The nomination of Daniel Kalan Duncan as new Prime Minister was to renew negotiation with them, but while a number of meetings took place, nothing concretely happened; During my fieldwork, I did not have to look very hard to find that the situation was deteriorating very quickly and the new regime was unable to discipline even its own troops on the ground, as there was basically no security service effectively operating; For evidence of political violence growing, see for example Thomas Hofnung, *La crise Ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, 2012, p. 175.

been sent to The Hague after being humiliated and the time has come for him to be sent home in order for everyone to move on.<sup>34</sup>

Even a pro-Ouattara political analyst declared that “while it is normal for Gbagbo to face criminal charges, dirty washing should be laundered at home and he should not be where he is today.”<sup>35</sup> As noted by one respondent, if Laurent Gbagbo is accused by the ICC for killings and war crimes committed by his army, Ouattara should face trial as well because there is some evidence that massacres were committed by his troops.<sup>36</sup>

The primary role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is to end impunity and help prevent serious crisis when the national court is unable to persecute perpetrators. In May 2011, the Ouattara government confirmed the authority of the ICC to investigate crimes committed by both sides after 28 November, 2010. However the Ivorian civil society organisations as well as the International Crisis Group (ICG) indicated that the investigations should go back to September 2002 due to the impact of the original rebellion on the post-election crisis.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Causes of the Crisis**

It can be argued that since the death of Houphouët in 1993, politics has grown dangerously polarised, making peace reforms difficult. Henri Konan Bédié sought to strengthen the Baoulé ethnic identity which he belonged, choosing to disenfranchise those who were perceived as non-Ivorians. Therefore, he promoted the concept of ‘*Ivoirité*,’ meaning Ivorianism, making the distinction between real Ivorians and foreigners. Significantly, the

<sup>34</sup> See interview with Laurent Dona Fologo, former President of the Social and Economic Council, “Crise postelectoral, Fologo: Voici ceux qui ont trompé Gbagbo” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco16980.htm> (accessed 18 July 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Leslie Varenne, *Abobo la guerre: Côte d’Ivoire terrain de jeu de la France et de l’ONU*, (France: Editions Mille et une nuits, February 2012), p. 257.

<sup>36</sup> It was a *déjà-entendu*. Bédié and Gbagbo said the same thing but did exactly the opposite; Interview with Respondent “A” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>37</sup> ICG, “Côte d’Ivoire: continuing the recovery,” Africa briefing no. 83, 16 December 2011, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/B083-cote-d-ivoire-continuing-the-recovery.aspx> (accessed 17 July 2014).



concepts of *Ivoirité*, xenophobia and ultra-nationalism, promoted by Bédié during his presidency, have been pointed out by the media and political commentators as the major causes of Côte d'Ivoire's conflicts.<sup>38</sup>

For the last two decades, clashes between different tribes have arisen largely due to the politics of exclusion. Today, the ongoing political turmoil is dominated by the politics of division relayed by the Ouattara camp. During the 2010 presidential election campaign, Ouattara's supporters repeatedly stated that they would provide better governance, and called for national unity by breaking with the past, in order to build peace and foster long-term development. However, upon assuming office, they embraced the politics of exclusion in order to strengthen their positions. Therefore, this situation is not a new one in Côte d'Ivoire since identical causes already generated identical results.

According to Equatorial Guinea President Theodoro Obiang Nguema, France played a key role in the Ivorian conflict because it decided to give power to one party. Instead of working through the polls and negotiation, France used its army to help Ouattara to power in 2011.<sup>39</sup> In the process, many Ivorians lost their lives due to the international interventions. Therefore, the role of international players, such as France, in either supporting, prolonging or trying to end the crisis needs to be examined.

## Conclusion

The Big Man, Houphouët, ruled Côte d'Ivoire from independence in 1960 up until his death in 1993. His all encompassing leadership style, alongside clientelism, resulted in self-enrichment in the country and widespread corruption. It can be argued that the root causes of Côte d'Ivoire's crises stem from Houphouët.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Hofnung, 2012, p.11. He observes that Bédié crafted the explosive concept of *Ivoirité* in a country formed by about 60 ethnic groups and an important immigrant community. This has "constantly poisoned Ivorian politics, destroying social cohesion" because Ouattara who is originally from the north but grew up in Burkina Faso has been unable to contest the 1995 presidential election.

<sup>39</sup> Abidjan Direct, "Ce sont les Français qui ont viré Gbagbo du pouvoir," available at <http://www.abidjandirect.net/index2.php?page=poli&id=9793> (accessed 10 July 2014).

Many migrants from neighbouring countries settled in Côte d'Ivoire during the colonial era and in the 19870s and 1980s during the economic boom. As a result, Ivorians have had strong social and cultural ties with people in neighbouring countries. However, nationalism increased through ethnic identification during the economic downturn.

The concept of Ivoronism explains the integrated divisions within the country. Bédié, whose 1995 election lacked legitimacy applied the politics of exclusion and the concept of Ivorianism resulting in further conflict.

Outside interventions from France, the UN and the IEC surrounding the 2010 controversial elections resulted in further conflict and unstable government. Both, Ouattara and Gbagbo claimed to be the legitimate winner of the election. Although the 2010 election was supposed to unite the country, violent unrest arose when Gbagbo refused to hand over power to Ouattara. As a direct result of Gbagbo's refusal to stepdown, a post- election crisis followed, during which 3,000 people lost their lives and several thousands more left their homes.

The perception of the lack of legitimacy is an underlying cause to Côte d'Ivoire's crises. One can argue that former President Bédié took power in 1993 in a contentious way with the support of France through its ambassador in Abidjan, Michel Dupuch, to complete Houphouët's term, Gbagbo came into power in 2000 in calamitous circumstances. Ouattara took office in 2010 supported by France and the international community. For many Ivorians, this suggests that these former Presidents and the current President Ouattara came into power illegitimately and were not democratically elected.

The nation is clearly in crisis and its future remains uncertain while there are a few solutions on the table. To understand the roots of these crises further, the next chapter will examine Côte d'Ivoire's pre-colonial history and the road to independence.

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORY - FROM PRE-COLONISATION TO COLONIAL LEGACY

This chapter will examine Côte d'Ivoire's historical trajectories. First it will explore the pre-colonial era, showing how colonialism began with Portugal's pursuit of trade and expanded into a rush for territory that peaked in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with French ruling over a vast territory, claiming they were bringing 'civilisation' to this ancient land. The French imposed their culture on every aspect of the Ivorian society. France was set to take advantage of Côte d'Ivoire, as there was already a potential to exploit its rich agricultural economy.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will argue that despite the former French colony being independent for 55 years, Côte d'Ivoire is still facing the challenges of the colonial years, including artificial boundaries. It will demonstrate how the locals were subjugated, oppressed, manipulated and killed for the needs of French trade, commerce and colonialism. This chapter will also introduce the key issue of colonial legacy that helps to understand how Côte d'Ivoire's past still influences Ivorian politics today.

Côte d'Or (known today as Côte d'Ivoire) has moved through a pre-colonial period to a colonial period and then on to a period of struggle for independence. Côte d'Ivoire had been inhabited since Neolithic times, by people living in primitive and independent farming lives.<sup>2</sup> However, little is known about Côte d'Ivoire's indigenous people and their history prior to France's involvement in colonialism. It is believed that there are records of the first evidence of the existence of humans in Côte d'Ivoire, which dates back to the Palaeolithic era.<sup>3</sup>

Historians explain that these people were either displaced by force or willingly absorbed by the ancestors of the contemporary inhabitants of Côte d'Ivoire. The Portuguese, who arrived

<sup>1</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> "Côte d'Ivoire," University of Iowa Museum of Art, available at <http://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/countries/show/8> (accessed 10 August 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Salia F. Zouande, 2011, "Governance and democratic transition in Africa: understanding 'Ivoirité' and the ethnicity challenges to citizenship and nation-building in Côte d'Ivoire," A master thesis submitted to the graduate school, Department of African studies, Howard University, UMI dissertation Publishing.

in Côte d'Ivoire in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, were the first European explorers, France made its initial contact with Côte d'Ivoire at the time, and missionaries landed at the coast of Assinie in 1637 near the Gold Coast, now Ghana. They established a mission in 1687 and built a fort at Assinie in 1701. Although various treaties were signed between French missionaries and local Kings, the interior remained predominantly untouched by Europeans until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

### **Côte d'Ivoire's Pre-Colonial History**

Centuries before European arrival, West Africa was composed of vast regions, of both savannah and forest. The land as well as the people went through key changes as trade links between north and west were established, and the indigenous people were required to make use of their organisational skills in order to be successful as traders.<sup>5</sup>

Islam was also a force of change. Islam was founded in Arabia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and then it quickly spread west. By 750, Islam was well-established in North Africa. As Muslims traders promoted Islam throughout the south, the number of people who adopted Islam significantly increased.<sup>6</sup>

There were a large number of states, empires and kingdoms in early West Africa. Perhaps the greatest Islamic states were the Mali, Songhai and Kanem-Bornu Empires. The rain forest kingdoms of Bénin and Kongo were created in the southern areas as non-Islamic states. By the time the Europeans landed in West Africa, many of the residents were citizens of Empires and Kingdoms. Today, it is believed thousands still lack central leaders.<sup>7</sup>

Before the French colonisation, Côte d'Ivoire was a land where property boundaries did not exist. While scholars know only a little inhabitants, it is clear that they lived in concentrated

<sup>4</sup> *Côte d'Ivoire foreign policy and government guide*, 2011, vol. 1, Strategic information and developments. International Business Publications.

<sup>5</sup> Christine Hatt 2003, *The African-American Slave Trade*, White-Thomson Publishing Ltd, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Christine Hatt 2003, *The African-American Slave Trade*, White-Thomson Publishing Ltd, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Christine Hatt 2003, *The African-American Slave Trade*, White-Thomson Publishing Ltd, p. 7.

communities with distinct practices and traditions. For example, in the savannah regions, trade was dominated by the Dioula who had fled Muslim conversion under the Mali Empire. They were trading gold and kola nuts by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, making Kong in the north a trading as well as an Islamic centre. Small kingdoms held power across the land. Under the leadership of the Ouattara dynasty in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Dioula acted as powerbrokers between the rich people from the south and the Mali and Ghana Empires. These pre-colonial empires were part of the Sudanic Empires of West Africa that introduced and disseminated new traditions into Côte d'Ivoire via trade.<sup>8</sup> When the Mali Empire collapsed, Dioula traders were forced to move south in search of new trading opportunities, which also forced southerners to assimilate the Dioula life style.<sup>9</sup>

The Empire of Kong was formed in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but their rival Samory Touré destroyed the empire because of Kong's connection with the French. Born in 1830 in Kankan in the south-east (present-day Guinea), Samory was a trader before becoming a soldier. Between 1852 and 1882, he formed the Madinka Empire which eventually stretched as far east as Sakasou (present-day Mali), as far west as Fouta Djalon (present-day Guinea), and, most predominantly, as far north as of (present-day Côte d'Ivoire), where he conquered huge territories between 1893 and 1898.<sup>10</sup>

From the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Asante Empire dominated Africa, inflicting wars on neighbouring communities. As a result, a large number of the Akan people from (Ghana) moved to Côte d'Ivoire. Nonetheless, the death of the well-known Asante leader Asantehene Opoku Ware in 1750 triggered a leadership battle that forced Queen Abla Pokou and her

<sup>8</sup>Kasia Broussalian, "Overcoming colonial vestiges in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana" *Journal of Political Inquiry*, No, 2011.available at <http://www.jpinyu.com/uploads/2/5/7/5/25757258/overcoming-colonial-vestiges-in-cote-d-ivoire-and-ghana.pdf> (accessed 23 September 2014).

<sup>9</sup>Kasia Broussalian, "Overcoming colonial vestiges in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana" *Journal of Political Inquiry*, No, 2011.available at <http://www.jpinyu.com/uploads/2/5/7/5/25757258/overcoming-colonial-vestiges-in-cote-d-ivoire-and-ghana.pdf> (accessed 23 September 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Sanderson Beck, "West Africa and the French: 1700-1950" available at <http://www.san.beck.org/16-9-WestAfricaFrench.html> (accessed 21 August 2014).

allies to abandon their Kingdom and move to the north-central area of today's Côte d'Ivoire, where they formed the Baoulé kingdom.<sup>11</sup> Other groups such as the Mandé and Krou were also forced to migrate from neighbouring countries to Côte d'Ivoire in fear of prosecution and conflicts from the opposing communities and Kingdoms.<sup>12</sup>

The exodus of Abla Pokou is such a well-known piece of history of the immigration of the Baoulé people to Côte d'Ivoire that it has been incorporated into Ivorian primary education curriculum. According to the legend, when the Queen and her people reached the shores of the Comoé River, they faced difficulties in their attempt to cross the river to reach their destination, Côte d'Ivoire. In order to cross the river, the Queen sacrificed her only son, the Prince, not by killing, but by tribal baptism. This sacrifice was the root of the name 'Baoulé,' originally *baouli*, meaning 'the child has died.'

During the time that the Asante Empire gained popularity towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Bouna Kingdom emerged as a new power.<sup>13</sup> The Bouna Kingdom was created by Bounkani migrants from the Gold Coast who moved into Côte d'Ivoire. They created a new regional Islamic education centre. Under the watch of the Bouna Kingdom, the social structure was organised in the following order: first, there were the aristocrats involved in slave trade and farm taxes; second, there were the Koulango (modern-day lobi) peasants; and finally, there were the Dioula traders.<sup>14</sup>

Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the residents of what was to become Côte d'Ivoire lived a traditional lifestyle, primarily relying on agricultural production. It is important to emphasise that prior to colonisation, rich traditional structures existed, Ivorians villagers lived

<sup>11</sup>Asantehene means the King of Asante

<sup>12</sup> Salia F. Zouande, 2011, "Governance and democratic transition in Africa: understanding 'Ivoirité' and the ethnicity challenges to citizenship and nation-building in Côte d'Ivoire," A master thesis submitted to the graduate school, Department of African studies, Howard University, UMI dissertation Publishing.

<sup>13</sup> The Bouna kingdom is a 400 –year-old in the north-east and is still a powerful institution in West Africa.

<sup>14</sup> Courtney P. Conroy, 2010, France as a negative influence on Côte d'Ivoire: The consequences of foreign interference" *Scholars and Senior Theses*. Paper 63.  
[http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell\\_theses/63](http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell_theses/63).

independently, and political life was naturally and internally organised. Despite this, Europeans often assumed the West African forest regions including Côte d'Ivoire had no history, because from the exterior, they became non-organised.<sup>15</sup>

### Historical Analysis

The broad history of the nation became accessible only in 1962, two years after independence of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>16</sup> The overwhelming majority of the scholarly research done during the colonial period came from anthropologists, linguists, geographers and philosophers. This included, among others, the 1978 work of Ivorian Historian Jean-Noël Loucou titled *Mémorial de la Côte d'Ivoire* as well as the three-volume work of Geographer G. Rougerie titled *Alta Général de Côte d'Ivoire*, published in 1978. Despite the late involvement of national historians, these books show the importance of the task, making the study a thorough scholarly work and identifying problems.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, most archaeological studies of Côte d'Ivoire didn't start until after 1975. Ivorian Historian Pierre Kipré has argued that the rationale for this delay was the ideological climate of the country during the 1960s-1980s, because Ivorian elites were focusing on the rise of production and economic activities. Kipré pointed out that if the relevance of the nation's history was neglected, that was because Ivorian elites believed it reflected a past that they wanted to forget - as it broadly undermined Africans including Ivorians and could potentially become an issue of serious concern to continued modernity and progress if examined too closely. Kipré went on to note that at the international level, Côte d'Ivoire's history was not particularly appealing to foreign historians, except in a few selected cases.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 496; Ahipeaud 2009, pp. 24-25.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Kipré 2005, *La Formation d'un Peuple*, Paris : SIDES-IMA, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> (CL Meillassoux, 1962, M. Auger, 1976, H. Memel-Foté- 1988) p. 8; Balla Mohamed Kéita 2013, *A Political history of Côte d'Ivoire from 1936-2011: The Politics of Ethnicity, Region, and Religion*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> Pierre Kipré 2005, *La Formation d'un Peuple*, Paris : SIDES-IMA, pp. 9-10.

As Nigerian scholar Claude Ake has stated, “to begin with, one must be aware of the tendency to ignore history.”<sup>19</sup>

Writings from French explorers of Côte d’Ivoire, including René Caillié, emerged in 1828. There were also written works in French by Gustave Binger who began his trip from the Niger River to the Gulf of Guinea in 1894 and by fellow explorer Marcel Treich-Laplène (1897-89). Despite the importance of state archive sources for historical research, Ivorian authority believed these archives were sensitive and refused to make them available for research until the 1970s.<sup>20</sup>

As Mahmoud Mamdani explained, French explorers refused to admit the existence of native institutions and the history of the colonies was limited to facts presented by the colonial rulers.<sup>21</sup> As a consequence of the lack of genuine primary sources, national researchers focused on post-colonial history based on a large coverage of the biographies of Houphouët and his fifty-year influence on the political arena - rather than focusing on delivering a nation’s history. Indeed, in that regard, Côte d’Ivoire’s rich historical background was sorely neglected.

According to Balla Mohamed Kéita, during the archaeological survey of Côte d’Ivoire, researchers found tools used by early settlers. For example, in the 1970s, archeologists made many key discoveries of sharpened stones, axes, and blades tracing back to 120,000 to 18,000 year before Christ. These were found in the south, north, and predominantly in the western region and lagoon areas of the country. Kéita has highlighted the sites of discovery as Odienné (north) or Ayama (south) dating back to the Palaeolithic age. More archeological work is needed in the so-called ‘V Baoulé’ region in the centre of Côte d’Ivoire, as these

<sup>19</sup> Claude Ake 1996, *Democracy and Development*, Washington, D.C, Brookings Institution, p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Kipré 2005, *La Formation d’un Peuple*, Paris : SIDES-IMA, pp. 9-10P.11.

<sup>21</sup> Mahamoud Mandami 1996, *Citizens and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of late Colonialism*, Princetown, NJ, Princetown University Press, p. 16.



archaeological objects didn't tell researchers much about the early inhabitants, how their societies functioned and their traditional structures.<sup>22</sup>

However, a close look at the facts and migration patterns in Côte d'Ivoire suggests that each ethnic group that was found in the land had its own oral and migration history. Therefore, no ethnic group can claim to be from the descendants of the original inhabitants and claim to be more Ivorian than others.

### **The Europeans Enter Present-Day Côte d'Ivoire**

Europeans, including Portuguese, Dutch, British, Danish and French landed on the coast in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Following the official abolition of the slave trade, they started exploiting palm oil, rubber, ivory and gold. In return, they exported rum and fabric. From the beginning of colonisation in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, England dominated France. Nevertheless, by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France began to conquer its opponents in Côte d'Ivoire, eventually expelling all its competitors. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France possessed the exterior, ensuring their territorial dominance.<sup>23</sup>

As discussed above, the Portuguese arrived first in Côte d'Ivoire, trading in gold, ivory and pepper.<sup>24</sup> Local chiefs engaged in the slave trade, capturing locals from inland. Portuguese contact with the locals was limited, predominately because Portuguese were handicapped by the lack of access to the interior. There were vast areas of the coastline that were bare and inhospitable.<sup>25</sup> When they eventually did contact the locals, the relationship was less than cordial. Faced with competition from the Dutch, the British and the French, the Portuguese prematurely abandoned their missions, but other European powers followed up. Although the

<sup>22</sup> Balla Mohamed Kéita 2013, *A Political history of Côte d'Ivoire from 1936-2011: The Politics of Ethnicity, Region, and Religion*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, p. p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> "L'histoire de la Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.cosmovisions.com/ChronoCoteIvoire.htm> (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Bona Udeze 2009, *Why Africa?: A continent in a dilemma of unanswered questions*, Xlibris Corporation, pp. 24-79.

<sup>25</sup> "Côte d'Ivoire," University of Iowa Museum of Art, available at <http://africa.uima.uiowa.edu/countries/show/8> (accessed 10 August 2014).

Portuguese presence was short-lived, their influence remained: Ivorian cities like San Pedro, Sassandra and Fresco have all been named after Portuguese.<sup>26</sup>

By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch and the British began to establish themselves in West Africa with the aim of launching trade. In 1593, the first Dutchman, a captain from Mendemblik named Barent Erickz sailed to the west coast of Africa, buying pepper, ivory and gold. Initially, the Dutch didn't have much experience in trade outside Europe, but they soon managed to trade in goods on the West African coast.<sup>27</sup> This provided numerous possibilities for European expansionist policy.<sup>28</sup>

Compared with the Portuguese, the French were slower to land in Africa. The French attempt to settle in Côte d'Ivoire can be traced to the 1600s. In 1637, French missionaries arrived near the Gold Coast (Ghana) border. Initially, Côte d'Ivoire was used by France for providing security to its traders. Once on the ground, France showed only a small interest in Côte d'Ivoire, simply initiating friendships with the local Agny ethnic group from the south coast and establishing some missions. Nonetheless, taking advantage of the Portuguese decline, they later attempted to settle into specific regions of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>29</sup>

Importantly, France changed its colonial priorities in Côte d'Ivoire when the French realised the significance of Côte d'Ivoire's ideal trade location near the Atlantic Ocean as well as its rich potential natural resources.<sup>30</sup> In order to gain local support the French created community centres. For example, they created the *Communauté de Saint -Malo*, sending five French

<sup>26</sup> "The peoples of Côte d'Ivoire" available at <http://bellecotedivoire.com/en/histoire.php?id=1272> ((accessed 12 August 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Peter C. Emmer 2003, The first global war: The Dutch versus Iberia in Asia, Africa and the New World, 1590-1609", e-JHP, vol. 1, no. 1, Leiden University available at [https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese\\_Brazilian\\_Studies/ejph/html/issue1/pdf/emmer.pdf](https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue1/pdf/emmer.pdf) (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Wooten, "The French in West Africa: Early contact to independence," University of Pennsylvania, African Studies Centre, available at [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French\\_16178.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html) (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Koffi Yapo and Silvain Tiégbé "Côte d'Ivoire," available at [http://cheikhkelindjan.com/resources/cariboost\\_files/habitat\\_20a\\_20dabou.pdf](http://cheikhkelindjan.com/resources/cariboost_files/habitat_20a_20dabou.pdf) (accessed 3 October 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Later on, Côte d'Ivoire has been significant in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century development of the Guinea coast gold and slave trade.

missionaries who established a mission at Assinie in the south-east in 1687 as the first European outpost (*comptoir*) in that area. This was followed by Grand-Bassam.<sup>31</sup> Over time, these *comptoirs* “became the nuclei for early colonisation.”<sup>32</sup>

However, these early missionaries found the area inhospitable. Given the severe heat and endemic tropical diseases like yellow fever or malaria, three of the ill-prepared and inexperienced missionaries died in the first year; the remaining two took refuge at the Dutch trading post of Axim, and then returned to France. A French navy ship finally docked in Assinie fifty years later.<sup>33</sup> During its return trip, the French took two Assinie youths with them, including a Prince who was given French education at the court of King Louis XIV. The King served as the godfather to the Prince, who converted to Christianity. Later the young Prince returned to Assinie with two French missionaries, two soldiers and thirty men and created conditions to establish a military outpost. Nonetheless, this French attempt at settlement was again unsuccessful, mainly because they were not well-prepared to live in a hostile tropical disease environment.

Further, in 1700, a French company called *La Compagnie d’Afrique* established a post on the coast, which was abandoned in 1707. After that, it took France a long time to make another settlement attempt in the 1800s. Between the 1840s to the 1860s, the French sailed around the Gulf of Guinea, trying to connect with the indigenous people to strike territory deals.<sup>34</sup>

According to the rules used during this historical era:

To obtain ownership of a given territory that would be recognised as legally binding in the European nation-state system, the colonial power had to

<sup>31</sup> Grand-Bassam became the colony first capital.

<sup>32</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Axim had been a Portuguese post since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Axim was captured by the Dutch in 1642.

<sup>34</sup> “L’histoire de la Côte d’Ivoire,” available at <http://www.cosmovisions.com/ChronoCoteIvoire.htm> (accessed 18 August 2014).

prove effective occupation by obtaining treaties signed by local African leaders.<sup>35</sup>

However, as Peter Schaefer has argued effectively and persuasively, many European treaties signed by local chiefs were unofficial because locals who were not authorised gave away lands. Even when those who signed held authority, they often did not understand the content of the treaties because of language barriers and translation problems.<sup>36</sup>

In 1842, France's occupation finally started to become effective after Commandant Louis Edouard Bouët Willaumez signed a series of treaties with indigenous chiefs. In 1843, after another expedition led by navy lieutenant Florieut de Langle, Amatifou (Amon N'Doufou), nephew of Attala who was the King of Assinie, also signed a treaty with France.<sup>37</sup> The French navy successfully convinced the chief of Sassandra and Fresco to sign a series of treaties, forbidding the local chiefs to enter into trading agreements with any other European powers. Moreover, the treaties allowed France to build military posts and forts along the Gulf of Guinea; these served as permanent trading centres.<sup>38</sup>

In return, the French paid a modest compensation annually to the local chiefs for using their lands. However, in 1872, due to competition from England exacerbated by the French defeat in the Prussian war in 1871 and the annexation of the French province of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany, France abandoned its colonial plans and withdrew from its military posts in Côte d'Ivoire, leaving them under the care of resident merchants. For example, during that time, the French government gave the power to a successful French trader Arthur Verdier to manage the trading post in Grand-Bassam. In 1878, Verdier was named resident of the

<sup>35</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> "L'histoire de la Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.cosmovisions.com/ChronoCoteIvoire.htm> (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>38</sup> The treaties provided for French sovereignty within the posts and for trading advantage.

French establishment in Grand-Bassam. Verdier was also involved in the exploration of palm oil and had played a key role in the early stage of cocoa and coffee plantations in the area.<sup>39</sup>

Côte d'Ivoire had formerly held the status of a French protectorate in 1843, after France conquered the lagoon regions of the south and imposed its protectorate over the whole forest zone.<sup>40</sup> In colonial discourse, a protectorate was politely referred as a territory, in which the occupying power was commonly 'invited and given power' by the local chief. In some cases, the local chief retained his position, but was advised by a European 'Adviser,' whose task was to produce a plan of action which ensured that events went according to the occupying power's plans.<sup>41</sup> Eventually, French were firmly based in Côte d'Ivoire in the 19th century.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Slave Trade**

According to a legend, one of the earliest accounts of French involvement in sub-Saharan Africa occurred between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, when a Calais fisherman visited the wealthy grounds of the Mauritanian coast.<sup>43</sup> French involvement in West Africa through the slave trade could be seen as one of the earliest substantial and sustained accounts.<sup>44</sup>

From the beginning of the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans forcibly shipped approximately 12 million Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to American states and countries where ready market existed due to increased demand for strong, docile and unskilled labourers to fulfil the need of plantation economy. The slave trade in men, women and children lasted for over 400

<sup>39</sup> "L'histoire de la Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.cosmovisions.com/ChronoCoteIvoire.htm> (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>40</sup> As a protectorate, Côte d'Ivoire depended on France, the metropolis, but it had its own government, which gave Côte d'Ivoire a certain internal autonomy.

<sup>41</sup> Sarah Kemp 2011, *European colonialism in the Asia-Pacific, Its Rise and Fall*, Trocadero Publishing, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Patricia K. Kummer 1996, *Côte d'Ivoire*. Children's Press: New York, p. 31. In Lori Liane Long 1998, "Present day effects of French colonisation on former French colonies" University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 10 August 2014).

<sup>43</sup> Calais is a French port city. A cross of the English Channel leads to Britain.

<sup>44</sup> There is a great deal of myth and legend surrounding this issue. See Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p.3.

years. In the 1780s, the busiest period of the trade, an estimated 80,000 slaves were taken from Africa each year.<sup>45</sup>

Due to the significant expansion of the trans-Atlantic trade by early 16<sup>th</sup> century up until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the French started to enhance their links with slave traders. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, slaves played an important part in the trade conducted by Europeans in West Africa. Like many of their European counterparts, the French slavers organised pick-up stations for slaves around the West African coast. This included, among others, Gorée in Sénégal, El Mina in Ghana and Ouida in Bénin. However, this grim form of exploitation was challenged by many white Christians who regarded it as an ‘offence against God.’ These Christians initiated a campaign for abolition of the trade, which was followed by a similar campaign by slaves and former slaves. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to serious economic and political developments in Europe and the Americas, the slave trade was abolished.<sup>46</sup> However, the original French trading posts (*comptoirs*) had played their part in early colonisation.

This massive forced migration of Africans had serious consequences. Although the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery itself was abolished, today people with African background living in Europe as well as the Americas are still impacted as they “still feel the effects of their history.”<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, prior to the development of European slave trade and slavery, these practices were already in place in West Africa. For example, Muslim traders enslaved prisoners of war and criminals and took them to North Africa through the Sahara desert, before selling them. In some cases, they were exported to Europe and Asia.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Christine Hatt 2003, *The African-American Slave Trade*, White-Thomson Publishing Ltd, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Christine Hatt 2003, *The African-American Slave Trade*, White-Thomson Publishing Ltd, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> Christine Hatt 2003, *The African-American Slave Trade*, White-Thomson Publishing Ltd, p. 7.

## The French Desire for Colonies and Influence

For decades, through a number of theories, scholars have attempted to determine why Europeans had to colonise Africa, asking whether colonisation was sparked by a mission to civilise, as the French colonial administrators claimed, or if it occurred for trade reasons, for other economic reasons or simply to benefit European capitalism.<sup>49</sup>

For example, a group of scholars such as Vladimir Lenin put forward an economic reason and argued that since many Europeans could not afford to buy goods from the shelves, it became essential for capitalists to look for new buyers in Africa.<sup>50</sup> Other scholars, like Ronald Robinson and John Gallenger, took a geopolitical approach, arguing, for example, that in order to maintain its economic status, Great Britain had to seek colonies and dominate trading.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, Henri Brunshwig argued that France was not interested in economic benefit. As they say in France, *les colonies avaient été créées par le métropole et pour le métropole*, the colonies have been created by the *metropolis* for the *metropolis*.<sup>52</sup>

Despite this common belief, Brunshwig insists that France's colonisation of Africa was solely based on status. France needed to be seen as a key player at the international level; consequently, it needed to colonise.<sup>53</sup> Lori Liane Long has also argued that while economic factors might be taken into account, national pride was one of the most important reasons why European colonial rulers embraced colonisation. Once the race to colonise begun, the

<sup>49</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup>ed), Indiana University Press, pp. 25-26.

<sup>50</sup> Vladimir Lenin, 1917, *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*, first published in pamphlet form in Petrograd, Russia. In "Why did Europe colonise Africa"? (n.d), The Saylor Foundation, available at <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/HIST252-Subunit-2.3.2-Why-Did-Europe-Colonize-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 3 October 2013).

<sup>51</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallenger, 1961, *Africa and the victorians*, London: Macmillan. In "Why did Europe colonise Africa"? (n.d), The Saylor Foundation, available at <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/HIST252-Subunit-2.3.2-Why-Did-Europe-Colonize-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed 3 October 2013).

<sup>52</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup>ed), Indiana University Press, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> Henri Brunshwig, 1964, *French colonialism, 1871-1914: myths and realities*: New York, Praeger. In "Why did Europe colonise Africa"? (n.d), The Saylor Foundation, available at <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/HIST252-Subunit-2.3.2-Why-Did-Europe-Colonize-FINAL.pdf> (Accessed 3 October 2013).

state that “could obtain the most colonies, convert most people to its enlightened, cosmopolitan culture was seen as the best.”<sup>54</sup> As has been succinctly observed, “In order to remain/become a great nation, they had to colonise.”<sup>55</sup>

According to Wayne Walker, given the challenges on the European ground, France utilised colonialism to regain its pride. Towards 1890, a colonial lobby group was established in France with the aim to mobilise Europeans’ opinions regarding the roots of the colonial conquest.<sup>56</sup>

Peter Calvocoressi argued that Europeans were interested in Africa long before occupation occurred.<sup>57</sup> In the case of Côte d’Ivoire, keeping in mind the idea of national pride, grandeur, and power, France decided to send explorers sailing into the unknown land to explore and claim Côte d’Ivoire as a new colony in order to appear grander.<sup>58</sup>

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, ivory was one of the most desired commodities in Europe. Côte d’Ivoire was rich in ivory due to its large number of African elephants. Although the locals were strongly determined to protect elephants, and opposed the presence of European powers in their territories, the French managed to establish and participated in the ivory trade. As a result, “by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, hunters had virtually wiped out the entire elephant

<sup>54</sup> Lori Liane Long 1998, “Present day effects of French colonisation on former French colonies” University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Lori Liane Long 1998, “Present day effects of French colonisation on former French colonies” University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014).

<sup>56</sup> Wayne Walker, Le Comité de l’Afrique Française (1890-1895), *A French Colonial Press Group*, University of California, June 1977, pp. 12-15. In Ahipeaud 2009, p. 21.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 493.

<sup>58</sup> Lori Liane Long 1998, “Present day effects of French colonisation on former French colonies” University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014).



population” in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>59</sup> This suggested that France wanted to colonise Côte d’Ivoire to have access to ivory.

Côte d’Ivoire’s wealth of exotic and rare material goods also attracted the French. From the French perspective, the potential profitability of the colony served as a main motivator, and profitability required the development of natural and human resources (what the French colonialists later called the policy of *la mise en valeur*). When the French planters found cocoa, coffee, banana and palm oil in Côte d’Ivoire, they began cultivating and exporting them back home, which raised French interest in colonisation.

As Peter Calvocoressi pointed out, contemporary Africa provided Europeans with things they needed. This included, among others, slaves for plantations in the West and raw materials.<sup>60</sup> In Côte d’Ivoire, France’s strategic plan was to transform the territory into the focal point of its political activities in the region, and to receive agricultural produce.<sup>61</sup>

Former American Ambassador Francis McNamara argued that, although France expanded its colonial empire in West Africa from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at the beginning, the French were not interested in colonialism or overseas involvement. It was only when national pride anxiety aroused that the French began their colonial adventures. Like others, McNamara indicated that the French were not in West Africa for financial reasons. From the outset, the primary reasons why the French were dragged into West Africa were politics and national ego. McNamara also argued that France became interested in territorial expansion because as a rising industrial power, it needed ensured markets and raw materials under its own control.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Courtney J. Conroy 2010, “France as a negative influence on Côte d’Ivoire: The consequences of foreign interference” Salve Regina University, available at [http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=pell\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=pell_theses) (accessed 7 August 2014).

<sup>60</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 493.

<sup>61</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 23.

<sup>62</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, pp. xiii-xv.

Like other colonised countries in sub-Saharan Africa that served as sources of raw materials for the colonial ruler, Côte d'Ivoire provided most of the low-cost raw materials to France. A French geographical society sums up the point succinctly the following way: "the new colonies offer markets for raw materials; the means of production, the products lacking in the mother-country," while prohibiting the colonies from producing or purchasing products from other European powers.<sup>63</sup>

However, as Carlene Edie has persuasively argued, like its European counterparts, France's colonisation of Africa including Côte d'Ivoire was constructed on a political basis as well as an economic one. Confronted with chauvinistic competitions and 'balance-of-power politics,' France expressed its political intention to colonise Côte d'Ivoire. Also, faced with massive industrial challenge, France was required to colonise many other African nations like Côte d'Ivoire in order to obtain and manage new markets and sources of raw materials.<sup>64</sup> In line with the industrial argument, William Tordoff has pointed out that like many European countries, after the industrial revolution France was concerned about how and where to get raw material required for the manufacturing industry.<sup>65</sup>

As anyone who studied the history of France and Côte d'Ivoire would tell, cultural supremacy also provided justification for France's colonisation of Africa in general, in order to teach Christianity and French 'civilisation.' In return, France planned to take advantage of the colonies including Côte d'Ivoire, as there was already a potential to exploit their rich

<sup>63</sup> Lori Liane Long 1998, "Present day effects of French colonisation on former French colonies" University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014);

Agnes Murphy 1948, "Ideology of French imperialism, Catholic University of America Press, Washington D. C, p. 39. In Lori Liane Long 1998, "Present ay effects of French colonisation on former French colonies" University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014).

<sup>64</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, p. 52.

<sup>65</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Indiana University Press, p. 26.

agricultural economy.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, Peter Schaefer argued that France's pronouncement of its *mission civilisatrice* (civilising mission) was its justification for the necessity for colonialism in Francophone West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, over people who were seen as "backward," "ignorant," "uncivilised," "barbaric," "savage" and "godless heathens."<sup>67</sup>

### **The Franco-Prussian War and its Aftermath**

When, in 1871, the French imperial army was defeated by Prussia and its smaller, German forces, power relationships in Europe automatically changed. The so-called Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871), fiercely fought by the armies of the main protagonists, lasted only one year. Soon after the embarrassing peace imposed on France, a new powerful German Reich took control of Europe. Further, this led to a revolution that sparked the end of an empire in France, and from which its third republic was born.

The Franco-Prussian war revolved around the issue of who would become the Monarch of Spain. Since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the French Bourbon family selected the Spanish monarch. When the French realised that Prince Léopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, who was a relative of Wilhelm 1 of Prussia, was the number one choice of the Spanish government for the role, France feared that selection would shift the European balance of power to Prussia.<sup>68</sup>

In the process, Léopold withdrew his candidacy, but France remained concerned that he would be supported by Prussia in the future. Therefore, on 13 June 1870, during his visit to Prince Wilhelm at the spa town of Ems, the French Ambassador wanted Wilhelm's assurance that the Spanish throne would never be offered to Léopold, but Wilhelm refused to give such

<sup>66</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 87.

<sup>67</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 58.

<sup>68</sup> "France's Prussian nemesis 2009," *Cartoon Times*, available at <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/ps/retrieve.do?retrieveFormat=PDF> (accessed 12 September 2014).

a guarantee. Wilhelm sent a telegram to the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck briefing him on the discussion. However, Bismarck reworded the telegram to indicate that: the French Ambassador and Wilhelm had insulted and offended each other. *The North German Gazette* printed the so-called 'Ems Telegram' on 14 June 1870, which both created and perpetuated anger, fear and hatred between the French and the Prussians. It took Napoléon III only five days to declare war on Prussia.<sup>69</sup>

However, Prussia and its allies of the Northern German Confederation quickly defeated the French in a series of battles at the border. The Prussians took a victory lap across France, during which time. France suffered its biggest blow when Napoléon III was captured during the battle for Sedan (1-2 September 1870). Adding to France's humiliation, Paris the capital itself fell in 1871 after two days of occupation. To showcase their superiority, the winners marched down to the *Champs-Élysées*, and under the *Arch de Triomphe*. As a result, France lost Alsace and the German part of Lorraine, including Metz and Strasbourg. Generations of French school students at home and in the former colonies learned never to forget the loss to Prussia in the war of 1871. In the end, France was expected to pay an indemnity of five billion gold francs in order to recuperate these lost cities.<sup>70</sup> Prior to this humiliating defeat, the French believed they had the strongest army in Europe.

Thus the French found it crucial to do everything they could to avenge the insult and forget the debacle. Given the power relationships on European soil, and in order to respond to its national humiliation, France was motivated to regain the lost prestige at home as well as abroad through colonial conquests.<sup>71</sup> However, as a result of the defeat, the French lost

<sup>69</sup> "France's Prussian nemesis 2009," *Cartoon Times*, available at <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/ps/retrieve.do?retrieveFormat=PDF> (accessed 12 September 2014).

<sup>70</sup> "France's Prussian nemesis 2009," *Cartoon Times*, available at <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/ps/retrieve.do?retrieveFormat=PDF> (accessed 12 September 2014).

<sup>71</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 48.

confidence in their ability to get involved in colonial expansion as they were feared it could trigger a conflict with Great Britain or Italy and further isolate France. With regained self-confidence in the 1880s, the French political and business classes retook control of their future plan for colonial expansion.<sup>72</sup>

### **1885 Scramble for Africa and the Berlin Conference**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, European colonial powers invaded Africa in a major territorial scramble. As a result, they occupied various portions of the African continent, apart from Ethiopia and Liberia which were never colonised by Europeans, as well as creating different regions.<sup>73</sup> Côte d'Ivoire, which was a French protectorate, became a nation-state.

The issue of the Congo basin provided another justification for European ambitions. Belgium's King Léopold 2 had an interest in colonial problems as well as running a personal fortune. In 1876, he proposed the creation of an African International Association. With the geographic exploration of the continent as its principal aim, the Association designated the British explorer Stanley as a coordinator for the exploration of the Congo basin.

Stanley faced the French ambitions, while the Portuguese claimed historical rights over the mouth of the Congo River. It had become a vital challenge for Europeans as Léopold's ambitions were also challenged by other colonial nations. In 1884, Chancellor Bismarck proposed a conference in Berlin, in order to resolve the commercial problems over the basin of Congo. Until this point, Bismarck was only interested in European problems, and supported the idea to protect the German traders in Africa.

The Berlin conference of (November 1884 – February 1885), which involved key European states, released a 'final act.' After defining the basin of Congo, this act established the

<sup>72</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Ethiopia, known to Europeans as Abyssinia was compromised by Orthodox and Ethiopian Christian in East Africa. Liberia was an independent state in West Africa inhabited by the natives. What is important to reflect on is that when the slave trade was abolished, African Americans moved to Liberia.

obligation of any colonial power to respect free trade, even during war time. It also outlined essential requirements to be met in order to effectively occupy only the coasts. This included implantation of pavilion, sufficient authority and diplomatic notification.

The Berlin Conference also took up the issue of competition for power among European nations over the accumulation of colonies. It stated that “any European power could colonise any African country, provided “government representatives of the colonising country are present in the country being colonised.”<sup>74</sup> This signalled the race for who could claim the most sovereignty over African nations through colonising them.

In 1885, Chancellor Bismarck who was in favour of French expansion beyond Europe thought he had the opportunity to resolve the competition issue. The conference aimed to avoid potential conflict between European colonial rulers in Africa. To achieve this, they officially demarcated the boundaries between European possessions. At the Berlin conference, European superpowers supported by France put in place the rules of the game, allowing them to be part of the ‘scramble’ for the black continent.<sup>75</sup>

Clearly, this final act didn’t authorise Europe to curve-up Africa, but in fact it triggered the expedition. As a consequence, France quickly undertook a range of activities to constitute a vast empire from the Mediterranean to West Africa. England exerted domination of eastern Africa from Cape Town to Cairo. Belgium, Germany and Italy shared the rest of Africa. When confrontations arose between the super-powers, multiple bilateral treaties enabled them to settle the borders.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Lori Liane Long 1998, “Present ay effects of French colonisation on former French colonies” University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014).

<sup>75</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 21; William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Indiana University Press, p. 25.

<sup>76</sup> “Les Colonies Françaises d’Afrique,” <http://www.ph-lugwigsburg.de/html/2b-frnz-s-01/overmann/baf4/colonisation/sénégal.htm>

France's domination of West Africa began in 1902 and Côte d'Ivoire was integrated into the *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF) or French West Africa in order to dominate this vast body of territories, one of the historical processes of integration imposed by the French empire through the decree of 16 June 1895.<sup>77</sup>

### **French Colonialism in West Africa**

From the 1500s to the 1900s, European empires saw the people of West Africa as bound for colonisation. While direct contact with the West African coastal people was made by the Portuguese traders in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans were involved with them previously through the trans-Saharan trade.<sup>78</sup> The French began to establish their presence in West Africa by the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning, the French traders sought only small portions of territory to protect warehouses and homes and eliminate opposition from European counterparts. They were mainly attracted by West African gold. As the French empire developed, the colonies and protectorates were utilised as important market places for the transfer of goods to France. However, French missionaries travelled on trading ships soon after, and, once on the ground, they converted the locals, willingly or unwillingly, to Christianity. Catholicism in West African countries such as Togo, Bénin and Côte d'Ivoire stands as a testament to their success.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, trade with the territories protectorates boomed. Over time, traders faced the challenge of expanding their territory, which they achieved by negotiation, threat or war. Sometimes, they simply forced the Kings or local chiefs to hand over their lands. In return, locals received European trade benefits or other forms of compensation.

By the 1800s, French colonial influence had spread across almost the entire West Africa. This was the era of empire, when local rulers were also invited to accept protection from the

<sup>77</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 59.

<sup>78</sup> During their first contacts, Portuguese traders were only focused on the West African coast, but others activities included missionary and exploration work.

French. Colonisation peaked between 1850 and the Second World War. The French administration inflicted severe punishment on locals who rebelled against French colonial rule.

As Alice Conklin indicated, in 1895, the colonial ministry in Paris appointed the Governor-General of French West Africa. During that time, little by little, France expanded its colonies in West Africa.<sup>79</sup> With headquarters in Dakar, Sénégal, the powerful Governor-General managed this ‘super-colony’ which included Côte d’Ivoire, Dahomey (now Bénin), Guinea, Niger, Mauritania, Sénégal and Sudan, thus exercising effective control over the entire territory.<sup>80</sup>

Over the years, the French colonial empire acquired several key points of the west coast of Africa. At the beginning they prioritised trade over missionary activities, but that changed after the Berlin conference. Indeed, France could not resist seeking coastal acquisition in attempt to protect its trade and compete with the British who were well established in Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and the Niger Delta region (Nigeria). Meantime, the Germans took possession of Cameroon and Togo and the Portuguese controlled the Angola coast.<sup>81</sup>

Sarah Kemp has argued that there were some positive elements of colonisation. She insisted some colonisations worked out reasonably well.<sup>82</sup> Clearly, the negative effects of 19<sup>th</sup> century French colonialism were rooted in their subjugation of the West African people as inferior. From the French colonisers’ perspective, they were tasked with ‘civilising’ the lesser race, even if brutality was required. As a direct result, colonisation caused bloodshed, conflict and social disruption.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Alice ConKlin 1998, *Colonialism and Human Rights: A Contradiction in terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914*, *JSTOR: American Historical Review*, Vol.103, No. 2, (April 1998), pp. 419-442.

<sup>80</sup> Sarah Kemp 2011, *European colonialism in the Asia-Pacific, Its Rise and Fall*, Trocadero Publishing, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, pp. 22-23.

<sup>82</sup> Sarah Kemp 2011, *European colonialism in the Asia-Pacific, Its Rise and Fall*, Trocadero Publishing, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 25.



## French Colonial Rule and Style

The French Governor Gabriel-Louis Angoulvand commented that colonisation “was not just about exploring the country in order to know it better, but it was about completely conquering the territory in order to contribute to its economic and social development.”<sup>84</sup>

Grah Mel describes colonialism as the racism of the *colon*, colonialist, a term which expresses the Europeans unjustifiable hatred of Africans.<sup>85</sup> Michael Watts describes colonialism as “The establishment and maintenance of rule, for an extended period of time by a sovereign power over a subordinate or alien of people who are separate from the ruling power.”<sup>86</sup> However, others emphasise on space and territory to define colonialism.<sup>87</sup>

During the colonial era, African territories were first colonised, and then exploited by Europeans. Although the colonial rule period lasted a relatively short time in Africa, Africans were subjected to organised repression. In Côte d’Ivoire, France ruled as a sovereign and political power via the specific mechanisms of colonialism. France profoundly reorganised Côte d’Ivoire’s political environment, mode of economic development and social hierarchies.<sup>88</sup> In addition, France forced unnatural boundaries in Côte d’Ivoire and required people to live in new environments without taking into account their life styles.<sup>89</sup> Initially, the

<sup>84</sup> Angoulvand became Governor of Côte d’Ivoire for the first term from 25 April 1908 until 28 April 1909. He went on to serve 4 other terms. His last on was from 1 December 1916 to 27 December 1916. See Ahipeaud 2009, p. 23.

<sup>85</sup> Grah Mel 2003, p.216.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Watts et al, 2000, *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Blackwell Publishers, Oxford and Malden, MA, pp. 93-95 in Ian Biard, *Questioning the Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial in the Context of The Brao of Southern Laos and Northeastern Cambodia*, ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 2011, Vol.10, No 1, pp. 48-57.

<sup>87</sup> Ian Biard, *Questioning the Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial in the Context of the Brao of Southern Laos and Northeastern Cambodia*, ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 2011, Vol.10, No 1, pp. 48-57.

<sup>88</sup> Courtney J. Conroy 2010, “France as a negative influence on Côte d’Ivoire: The consequences of foreign interference” Salve Regina University, available at [http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=pell\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=pell_theses) (accessed 7 August 2014).

<sup>89</sup> Courtney J. Conroy 2010, “France as a negative influence on Côte d’Ivoire: The consequences of foreign interference” Salve Regina University, available at [http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=pell\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=pell_theses) (accessed 7 August 2014).

country's north which includes Odiénné, Kong, Touba and Dabakala was considered as part of French Sudan (which is now called Mali); by January 1900, this segment belonged to Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>90</sup>

Soon after the Berlin conference of 1885, France sought to politically control West Africa including Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Africa.<sup>91</sup> As Tordoff pointed out, the French divided each colony into *cercles* for better management, based on the 'direct rule' system. A political officer managed each *cercle*, firing traditional rulers, and replacing them with soldiers or retired government clerks.

In Côte d'Ivoire, as Patricia Kummer had noted, by 1916, the French fully controlled Côte d'Ivoire. In order to further consolidate its power, the French organised the land into districts, controlled by French Commanders under the colonial government. Although subjects of the French government, Ivorians were denied French citizenship. Thus the French expected them to do public labour, and to join the French military, but denied them fair judicial rights and frequently subjected them to unfair trials.<sup>92</sup> In this way the French marked the beginning of the transformation of Ivorian politics and society.<sup>93</sup>

Furthermore, colonial administrators used the principles of forced labour during the colonisation era, insisting on applying pressure, coercion and the use of force. As Conklin stated:

The moral right to use coercion [is] the automatic corollary of the idea of colonisation... Colonisation rule rests on an act of violence. Its only justification lies in the intention to substitute a more enlightened authority

<sup>90</sup> Ahipeaud 2009 pp. 21-57; "Côte d'Ivoire, history and politics," available at <http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/IvoryCoast/Politics.html>, (accessed 9 April 2013).

<sup>91</sup> As a colony, Côte d'Ivoire was entirely placed under the sovereignty of France; See William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Indiana University Press, p. 27.

<sup>92</sup> Patricia K Kummer 1996, *Côte d'Ivoire*. Children's Press, New York, p.38.

<sup>93</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 50.

for the one in place, one capable of bringing the conquered peoples to a better existence... The result can only be achieved by applying pressure to individual actions. Such pressure is legitimate, on the sole condition that it is in the best general interests as well as in that of the natives.<sup>94</sup>

Modern Côte d'Ivoire was born after French colonisation. Shortly after the Berlin conference, attended by all the European superpowers, France acquired the West African territories. Côte d'Ivoire became a French colony in 1893 due to the work of Gustave Binger, who was supported by a French trader by the name of Marcel Treich-Laplène, with whom he met secretly to plot colonisation. During their mission, the two men travelled from Kong, now northern Côte d'Ivoire, to the south where they signed treaties. In recognition, Paris appointed Binger the first Governor of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>95</sup>

The project of 'civilising' the natives, by carrying out the '*mission civilisatrice*,' became a key aspect of the colonial era. Indeed, for the colonial master, French culture was 'universalistic', the French civilisation was exportable and the savages should be prepared to embrace it. Like most of the European great powers, the French Colonialists became convinced of the political as well commercial need for expansion. They also remained convinced of their right to rule and share the benefits of civilisation to those whom they civilised. In Côte d'Ivoire, that was not the case.<sup>96</sup> Ivorians paid a high price for France's civilising work.

<sup>94</sup> Alice ConKlin 1998, Colonialism and Human Rights: A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914, *JSTOR: American Historical Review*, Vol.103, No. 2, (April 1998), pp. 419-442.

<sup>95</sup> "L'histoire de la Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.cosmovisions.com/ChronoCoteIvoire.htm> (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>96</sup> Robert Aldrich 2008, "The French empire: Colonialism and its aftermath," Paper for comparative imperial transformations" Conference, Sydney, The University of Sydney, available at [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/nation\\_empire\\_globe/downloads/Empires\\_WUN\\_Aldrich\\_3\\_08.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/nation_empire_globe/downloads/Empires_WUN_Aldrich_3_08.pdf) (accessed 22 August 2014).

## French Policy of Assimilation

The key French colonial policy of ‘assimilation’ facilitated integration of colonial ‘subjects’ into the French nation through indoctrination into French culture via ‘an acculturation system.’ As long as the non-citizen African subjects willingly and fully embraced French culture, including achieving fluency in French language of Molière - abandoning Indigenous fetish-worship or animism and converting to Christianity or obtaining higher education, they were entitled to fully achieve the status of French citizens.<sup>97</sup> Shockingly, though, by 1936, only 80, 509 *Indigenes Citoyens Français* (French Citizens of African origin) existed in the entire AOF.<sup>98</sup>

In French, these ‘converts’ were called *évolués*, literally meaning ‘civilised persons, or even forward-looking *évolués*. Under the policy of assimilation, education was ‘the main currency.’<sup>99</sup> Houphouët and others, for example, graduated from a very limited number of *grandes écoles* or the most prestigious institutions such as the medical school at Dakar or the federal *Ecole Normale William Ponty*. Less illustrious institutions such as the teachers colleges in Sudan and Côte d’Ivoire or *alma mater* of Côte d’Ivoire as well as the veterinary school at Bamako also provided French education. In addition, there were two *lycées* in Dakar, which granted the equivalent of a *Baccalauréat*.<sup>100</sup>

Some of the graduates from those institutions continued their political and professional careers in significant decision-making positions. Indeed, William Ponty College and those institutions played a crucial role in the education of some first generation West African

<sup>97</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Indiana University Press, p. 61; Owen Write 2007, *Drunken States: Temperance and French Rule in Côte d’Ivoire 1908-1916*, *Journal of Social History*, 40.3 (Spring 2007), p. 663; Those who love the French language always refer to it as the language of Molière (Jean-Baptiste Paquelin 1622-1673). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he was a well-known French dramatist, theater actor, playwright and director.

<sup>98</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 36.

<sup>99</sup> Alex Thomson, 2004 *An introduction to African politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Routledge, London, pp. 16.

<sup>100</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 37.

leaders of the inter-war era, such as Houphouët. Ponty explained that education represented the most efficient instrument of the civilising work of the colonial state. He went on to say it imposed on the subjects the notion that they could and must improve their living conditions to have access to key resources. However, according to the local elite, the core objective of the education system was to uphold long term dominance of the territories.<sup>101</sup>

It is fair to say that the concept of assimilation through education applied only to a select group of state elites.<sup>102</sup> For example, in Côte d'Ivoire in 1947, only twenty-one Ponty graduates, or 'Pontins' were elected to the new territorial assembly, not an extraordinary number.<sup>103</sup> The second systematic problem was Pontins found themselves to be *à cheval sur deux civilisations*, trapped between the African and the French world. One English commentator named the proud graduates who considered themselves elites 'Black Frenchmen.'<sup>104</sup>

As one of its chief functions, Ponty College introduced its students to a French lifestyle. One well known ex-Pontin, Mamadou Dia summarised the impact of Ponty on himself, where he tasted modern life for the first time the following way:

The time at Ponty was very important... It was at Ponty that I really came into contact with western life, modern life. Before that, I even did not know

<sup>101</sup> Marcel Ahipeaud "Elite ideologies and the Politics of Media. A critical history of Ivoirien Elite ideologies and their Press from the Brazzaville conference to the December 24th military coup." University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, History Department, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2003, source CERAP library in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, Field notes Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Thomson/Wadsworth; Houphouët was a good example. As indicated I will show below that Houphouët earned a medical degree. He was a *docteur Africain*, Assistant doctor. Another good example was Léopold Senghor of Sénégal. Despite his humble origin, Senghor became a brilliant scholar-politician. He was a deputy in Paris before becoming President of Sénégal; Frederick Cooper 2002, *Africa Since 1940: The past and The Present*, Cambridge University Press, p. 45.

<sup>103</sup> Tony Chafer 2007, Education and Political Socialisation of a National-Colonial Political Elite in French West Africa, 1936-47, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 35, No 3, September 2007, pp. 437-458.

<sup>104</sup> In Tony Chafer 2007, Education and Political Socialisation of a National-Colonial Political Elite in French West Africa, 1936-47, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 35, No 3, September 2007, pp. 437-458.

how to wear a jacket, trouser or a tie. It was at Ponty that, as part of the school's uniform, I wore a European suit, jacket, tunic and a shirt for the first time... I ate at table for the first time... All those things were new to me.<sup>105</sup>

Although they made considerable efforts to adopt western culture, most Ponty students were rejected by their French counterparts, and were aware that their peers never recognised them as equals.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, despite assimilation being France's official policy, in actuality the French only pretended to assimilate the indigenous people to the *métropole*. Indeed, for all its apparent generosity, true assimilation rarely occurred, and instead the indigenous people remained in inferior positions because their French compatriots would never accept or treat them as full and equal citizens.<sup>107</sup> This attitude characterises all colonial cases. Local leaders soon realised that despite the introduction of the assimilation policy, there was still a sense of French superiority over them. Therefore, they strongly believed the best means to end discrimination and inequality was independence.

The concept of assimilation is not new; even today it continues to re-emerge during discussion of Franco-African international relations. Assimilation can be traced back to the French first colonial empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and originated in the ideals of the French revolution: equality, fraternity and freedom for anyone who was French regardless of race or colour. Thus, in 1790s, residents from the cantons of St Louis in Sénégal were granted French citizenships and political rights. Moreover, in 1848, along with residents mainly from the French West Indies and the Reunion, they were granted representations in Paris.

<sup>105</sup> Tony Chafer 2007, Education and Political Socialisation of a National-Colonial Political Elite in French West Africa, 1936-47, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 35, No 3, September 2007, pp. 437-458.

<sup>106</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup> ed), Indiana University Press, p. 61.

<sup>107</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 61.

However, conservatives from the right side of politics including catholic and monarchist never endorsed this policy.<sup>108</sup>

The assimilation process failed because few areas were involved and only a small number of residents benefitted, although 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers including Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Diderot culturally provided some support. During the 1879 French Revolution, missionaries were encouraged to spread their language, culture and political philosophy to the less fortunate non-francophone. This suggested that French civilisation missionaries were ethnocentric and automatically assumed French superiority.<sup>109</sup>

Under the assimilation policy, the French presumed the superiority of the French culture and civilisation. The French project of ‘civilising the savages’ served as a key justification for the colonial enterprise, and thus the French believed they had a duty to civilise African ‘barbarians and turn them into French.’<sup>110</sup>

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became clear that the policy of assimilation had failed. The French officially replaced it with a policy of ‘association’ for French African colonies, recognising the importance of the African culture, but requiring a more authoritarian approach to govern the colonies. The belief in the superiority of French remained largely unchanged.<sup>111</sup> Despite the assumption of culture superiority, McNamara has argued that the French longstanding commitment to assimilate local populations was a reflection of their inclination to accept them as equals, people who were fluent in French.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Wallace G. Mills, “French approaches in colonial policy” St, Mary’s University, available at <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/HIST252-French-Approaches-in-Colonial-Policy.pdf>.

<sup>109</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 34.

<sup>110</sup> Wallace G. Mills Hist, “French approaches in colonial policy” St, Mary’s University, available at <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/HIST252-French-Approaches-in-Colonial-Policy.pdf>.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Aldrich 2008, “The French empire: Colonialism and its aftermath,” Paper for comparative imperial transformations” Conference, Sydney, The University of Sydney, available at [http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/nation\\_empire\\_globe/downloads/Empires\\_WUN\\_Aldrich\\_3\\_08.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/arts/research/nation_empire_globe/downloads/Empires_WUN_Aldrich_3_08.pdf) (accessed 22 August 2014).

<sup>112</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 127.

## French Language Imposed

Compared to other colonial powers, French colonials, based on their *mission civilisatrice*, civilising mission, emphasised the promotion of French language and culture.<sup>113</sup> In most cases, imposing the French language served as an important aspect of colonisation in many parts of the sub-Saharan Africa. The French believed linguistic domination could determine France's colonial expansion and guarantee the future of the French language in the colonies. In their view, French language was the most valuable aspect of the French connection to the colonies.<sup>114</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire, where the French language was an important element of the colonial education, this view clearly dominated among the French colonial administrators.<sup>115</sup> France started its civilisation mission in the Senegambia area including Saint Louis, Dakar, Gorée and Rufisque at the time.<sup>116</sup> Despite the push to spread French language through colonial education, by the end of 1939, only 63,200 students attended primary schools across AOF. At that time, the entire population of AOF was 14.7 million. Most of those students attended village schools, taking a 2 year literacy course. The statistics demonstrate that the colonial masters failed to make headway against basic and functional illiteracy and did not increase much public awareness of the French language.

<sup>113</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 98.

<sup>114</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 127.

<sup>115</sup> French speakers are called Francophone. According to a British journalist, if French is the language of human rights, because human rights laws were written in French, it is also the reason behind the fiasco of many French speaking African countries. The linguistic control is often the result of a political disaster, he suggested. Using Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and now Central African Republic as examples, he went on to say that while most African countries are moving forward, Francophone countries including Côte d'Ivoire are irremediably lost, because they speak French; See Liam Mullone "Pourquoi je ne laisserai pas mes enfants apprendre le Français" available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco21856.htm> (accessed 17 April 2014).

It became clear that France successfully extended geographically its linguistic boundary to the territories. Marcel Ahipeaud "Elite ideologies and the Politics of Media. A critical history of Ivoirien Elite ideologies and their Press from the Brazzaville conference to the December 24th military coup." University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, History Department, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2003, source CERAP library in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, Field notes Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012; Alice ConKlin 1998, Colonialism and Human Rights: A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914, *JSTOR: American Historical Review*, Vol.103, No. 2, (April 1998), pp. 419-442.

<sup>116</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 48.



In the Ivorian village schools, for example, the French believed that the language would help Ivorians to develop their love for their own ancestors and at the same time, they would love the French ones.<sup>117</sup> Without any doubt, France's push for the colonial education system was a means to extend the French language and culture in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>118</sup> However, Ponty reportedly did not have that perception in mind when he stated that France's objective was to "permeate the masses, penetrate and envelop them like a new thin web of new loyalties," as explained in his 1910 speech on the influence of French language. Since Ivorians were to learn and speak French, they would ultimately develop an idea about "our moral, social and economic superiority," and in short that "will little by little transform these barbarians of yesterday into disciples and agents."<sup>119</sup> This happened exactly as stated.

Despite the colonial empire's ideas about forced civilisation and cultural assimilation, only a few outstanding students were sent to France for further education, graduating as clerks, court interpreters, *instituteurs*, (primary school teachers).<sup>120</sup> Therefore, this 'proto-elite' held positions of lower ranks in the public services. Yet again, only a few became professionals such as lawyers and African doctors.<sup>121</sup> Despite French's status as the official language and the language of instruction, all forms of schools were banned including the Islamic schools set up predominantly in the north and, only a minority of Ivorians spoke French sufficiently well during the period of *civilisation mission*.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>117</sup> For example, as children, Ivorians of my generation were encouraged to read Asterix and Lucky Luke comics. We grew up reading Balzac, Proust and Gide. Not surprisingly, when you speak French, you think French and you definitely start having a penchant for France. That is still the case for younger Ivorians.

<sup>118</sup> Marcel Ahipeaud "Elite ideologies and the Politics of Media. A critical history of Ivoirien Elite ideologies and their Press from the Brazzaville conference to the December 24th military coup." University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, History Department, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2003, source CERAP library in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, Field notes Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012.

<sup>119</sup> Alice ConKlin 1998, "Colonialism and Human Rights: A Contradiction in teams? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914," *JSTOR: American Historical Review*, Vol.103, No. 2, (April 1998), pp. 419-442.

<sup>120</sup> For example Philippe Yacé who was Houphouët's President of the Assembly who graduated as primary school teacher.

<sup>121</sup> Alex Thomson, 2004 *An introduction to African politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Routledge, London, pp. 16.

<sup>122</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, pp. 37-38.

## The First Resistance to Colonisation and Taxation Systems

France, which was present at the coast in 1843, returned with a mission: to conquer the interior area. To achieve this mission, Arthur Verdier, Marcel Treich-Laplène who was a French trader and Louis-Gustave Binger, a military officer, were sent as representatives.

Actual colonisation, including establishing a new political, administrative and economic system of management, proved to be a hard exercise. From the beginning when the first measures of the colonial administration, namely the establishment of the taxation system was introduced, many locals felt considerable anger towards the French. In 1852, the people of Akapless in the south, who opposed French accumulation of territories and taxation rebelled. This uprising met with defeat so severe that it allowed Captain Faidherbe to build forts in the south both at Dabou and Grand-Bassam. In an ultimate irony, recruited local chiefs worked alongside the French colonialists within the colonial bureaucracy. Like their 20<sup>th</sup> century counterparts, they also held positions of lower ranks and were tasked to do the dirty work of collecting taxes across the land, following the rules of the colonialists.<sup>123</sup>

France's ambition to unify the Sahelian territories and the southern areas was also challenged by the presence of Samory Touré's empire. A remarkable tribal leader committed to the Islamic state, Samory resisted the French colonial rule. This resulted in a long battle of strategists between Samory and the French under the leadership of Yves Person.<sup>124</sup> From 1882 to 1885, Samory fought the French, and then signed treaties with them between 1886 and 1887. The following year, war against the French started again, when they tried to provoke rebellion amongst Samory's fighters. The French lost on many occasions between 1885 and 1889.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 51.

<sup>124</sup> Yves Peson 1968, *Samory: une revolution dioula*, Dakar: I.F.A.N. In Ahipeaud 2009, p. 22.

<sup>125</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 11.

Yet again, following several confrontations with the French, Samory signed some treaties. In 1890, Samory managed to reorganise his army and used guerrilla tactics, signing treaties with the British Empire in Sierra Leone in order to obtain sophisticated weapons. Between 1893 and 1898, the Samory army dominated Kong upper present-day Côte d'Ivoire where he moved his capital. In the end, Samory, one of the great emperors and fighters of African freedom was captured on 29 September 1898, early in the morning in the mountainous westerners region in his camp at Guélérou.<sup>126</sup>

The French deported Samory to Gabon where he died two years later from pneumonia on 2 June 1900. Fifty years later, his grandson Sékou Touré from French Guinea stood as the only African nationalist to say 'No' to France and General de Gaulle. Regarding independence, he preferred freedom over slavery under the European master.<sup>127</sup> The capture of Samory allowed Verdier, Treich-Laplène and Binger to move freely around Côte d'Ivoire, make agreements, and sign treaties with the local chiefs. The local chiefs believed the treaties would put an end to internal division, and that their traditional structure and customs would remain unchanged. However, the French failed to abide by the agreements and "the treaties became the basis for most of France's claim to land" compromising present-day Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>128</sup>

The capture of Samory marked the beginning of the claim of the Anglo-French colonial authority in West Africa, as the powerful Asante confederation also collapsed due to almost three quarters of a century confrontations with the United Kingdom which was the first

<sup>126</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p. 22.

<sup>127</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p. 22.

<sup>128</sup> Lori Liane Long 1998, "Present day effects of French colonisation on former French colonies" University of Tennessee, Knoxville, available at [http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=utk_chanhonoproj) (accessed 12 August 2014).

superpower at the time.<sup>129</sup> Although the African kingdoms took the colonial masters by surprise with their unexpected strength and determination to fight, the kingdoms lost.<sup>130</sup>

The French managed to secure some territories through agreements and treaties with some local chiefs. However, given that they failed to negotiate treaties with the local leaders from the inland, some locals resisted the French troop's attempts to conquer the entire land. Local resisters who operated as guerrillas challenged the French, although subsequently, suffering heavy defeat. Different regions came under French control one by one. Key tribal leaders of the resistance became victims and suffered like Samory arrest, imprisonment, deportation or brutal execution.<sup>131</sup>

Following this, France's colonisation of the territory continued with violence. According to Martial Ahipeaud, the first real confrontation between the colonial power and the natives started in 1898. When France, one of the world's most advanced democracies with its liberal regime, attempted to forcibly 'conquer', 'pacify' and 'administer' the land, the natives resisted.<sup>132</sup> People from the south of Côte d'Ivoire who opposed the taxation system and genuinely believed in the idea of independence rebelled. For example, in 1910, the Abé people rebelled against the French and in 1915, local resistance intensified when people from the Bété and Baoulé ethnic groups joined the rebellion against the French authorities which caused a devastating conflict. The Baoulé played an important role in the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of Côte d'Ivoire, waging the longest resistance war to French colonisation. Some respondents

<sup>129</sup> See Robert B. Edgerton, 1995, *The Fall of the Asante Empire. The Hundred-Year War for Africa's Gold Coast*, New York. In Ahipeaud 2009, p. 22.

<sup>130</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 493.

<sup>131</sup> Elisabeth Schmidt 2007, *Cold War and Decolonisation in Guinea 1946-1958*, Ohio University Press, p. 44.

<sup>132</sup> Alice ConKlin 1998, "Colonialism and Human Rights: A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914," *JSTOR: American Historical Review*, Vol.103, No. 2, (April 1998), pp. 419-442; April Gordon and Donald Gordon 2001, *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, p 32.

suggested that many Africans strongly supported Baoulé due to their strong opposition to colonialism. This likely, explains a long Baoulé dominance of Côte d'Ivoire's politics.<sup>133</sup>

Harrism, a large protestant religion begun by Liberian preacher William Wade Harris, also served as a form of resistance.<sup>134</sup> Harris walked bare foot from his native Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana between 1910 and 1914, preaching his extremely effective evangelical revival based on prophecy, healing and miracles. Harris' first mission landed in Côte d'Ivoire in 1895 and he was particularly successful due to strong presence of Christianity in the area. Harris was arrested and beaten in Kraffy, Côte d'Ivoire on his way back from Ghana with three women assistants, and they were expelled from Côte d'Ivoire towards the end of 1914. The French imprisoned Harris at Cape Palmas "out of fear of uncontrolled charisma." Nonetheless, his arrest did not prevent many of his supporters from visiting him. The French empire believed because of his power over the people, Harris might foment rebellion. They extradited Harris to Liberia in 1915 as a potential 'instigator of revolt' and he died there in 1929.<sup>135</sup>

As Ahipeaud indicated, for imposition of colonial rule, the colonial forces of governor Angoulvand used violent repression against indigenous opponents of French colonialism in order to join their colonies from the north to the coast. Consequently, Angoulvand denied them the opportunity to enjoy their freedom, but there was resistance.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>134</sup> See Ahipeaud, "Elite ideologies and the Politics of Media. A critical history of Ivoirien Elite ideologies and their Press from the Brazzaville Conference to the December 24th military coup." University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, History Department, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2003, source CERAP library in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, Field notes Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012; Ahipeaud 2009 pp. 21-57; "Côte d'Ivoire, history and politics," available at <http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/IvoryCoast/Politics.html>, (accessed 9 April 2013); Despite the early rebellion, today Côte d'Ivoire still needs to find solutions to the problems the colonial power it was unable to resolve. On colonisation, see Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the earth*, 1974, pp. 51-84.

<sup>135</sup> Graham Ducan and Ogbu U. Kalu, *Bakuzufu: Revival movements and indigenous appropriation in African Christianity*, Digitised by the University of Pretoria, 2013, available at [http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/21579/012\\_Chapter11\\_p278-308.pdf?sequence=13](http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/21579/012_Chapter11_p278-308.pdf?sequence=13) (accessed 209 August 2014).

<sup>136</sup> Ahipeaud, "Elite ideologies and the Politics of Media. A critical history of Ivoirien Elite ideologies and their Press from the Brazzaville Conference to the December 24th military coup." University of London, School of

Although resistance occurred, France took advantage of regional conflicts to implement its policy of ‘divide - and - conquer.’<sup>137</sup> France used the same ‘divide – and – conquer’ tactic to interfere with the traditional leadership. For example, France gave employment preference to specific groups, aiming to create competition among them and increase insecurity and conflict. It must be noted that groups from the coast where French originally settled and where the first schools were built were more likely to be chosen for employment.<sup>138</sup>

### **Governor Angoulvand’s Method of Colonial Control**

Realising that its military method was failing, Paris deployed Governor Angoulvand a civilian with a better colonial ideology. Angoulvand applied his method of ‘burnt land’ (which became the norm later on.<sup>139</sup>) This method consisted of destroying everything where resistance was occurring and imposing heavy taxes to force the local population to join the colonial state.<sup>140</sup> When Angoulvand took command of the colony, he made it clear that the new regime would not tolerate the resistance of the locals. For Angoulvand, the country was called *la côte des mal gens*, the coast of the bad people. This meant that they were unfriendly to foreigners. From Angoulvand’s perspective, to administer a territory meant: “imposing a few rules, limiting particular privileges for everyone’s benefit and collecting more taxes.”<sup>141</sup> Angoulvand said that the territory did not exist and insisted the French administration should be received without conflict. He claimed that colonial domination should be achieved through

Oriental and African Studies, History Department, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2003, source CERAP library in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire, Field notes Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 2012

<sup>137</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 59.

<sup>138</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, pp. 48-50.

<sup>139</sup> Martial Ahipeaud, 2009, *Côte d’Ivoire: entre barbarie et démocratie*, Les Editions du CERAP, p.23.

<sup>140</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 26.

<sup>141</sup> Gustave Angoulvand, 1916, *La Pacification de la Côte d’Ivoire. Méthodes et Résultats*, Paris, Emile Larouse, p. 395.

total submission of the indigenous people to a military regime headed by a senior and strong officer or general with the necessary skills.<sup>142</sup>

This suggested that France intended to stay forever. Moreover, according to Angoulvand, brutal repression represented the best way to convince those who were *les plus dubitatifs*, more dubious about France's objective. Angoulvand imposed French rule by burning houses, and when necessary, destroying entire villages, successfully using state violence and terror against resisters. Thus French colonial rule in Côte d'Ivoire was based on coercion, not consent. Under Governor Angoulvand, during 'the pacification' process of Côte d'Ivoire, powerful and huge military striking forces were deployed on the ground to break-up any resistance.<sup>143</sup> As a further weapon against resisters, local leaders' heads were cut off, ridiculed and displayed on poles in public places as real war trophies.<sup>144</sup> Despite the large number of Ivoirians who died unnecessarily and painfully due to French colonisation, the French reportedly utilised less brutal tactics than the Belgian and German colonials.<sup>145</sup>

### **Second Wave of Resistance in 1940s and the 1944 Brazzaville Conference**

Resistance to colonial or imperial rule by the African natives continued until after the Second World War, after the acquisition of self-rule. During this period, all colonial states obtained the status of political independent states. In Côte d'Ivoire, during the Second World War, the economic pressure, and the toughening of the French regime provoked widespread dissatisfaction of locals. As a result, feelings of nationalism rose.<sup>146</sup> Local nationalists

<sup>142</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 24.

<sup>143</sup> Kasia Broussalian, "Overcoming colonial vestiges in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana" *Journal of Political Inquiry*, No, 2011. available at <http://www.jpinyu.com/uploads/2/5/7/5/25757258/overcoming-colonial-vestiges-in-cote-d-ivoire-and-ghana.pdf> (accessed 23 September 2014).

<sup>144</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 24; William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup>ed), Indiana University Press, p. 3.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 496.

<sup>146</sup> Koffi Yapo and Silvain Tiégbé 'Côte d'Ivoire,' available at [http://cheikhkelindjan.com/resources/cariboost\\_files/habitat\\_20a\\_20dabou.pdf](http://cheikhkelindjan.com/resources/cariboost_files/habitat_20a_20dabou.pdf) (accessed 3 October 2013).

inspired millions of people in their struggle against colonialism and foreign occupation by General Angoulvand and the colonial authority.<sup>147</sup>

For example, Ivorians perceived the Abé people in the south as one of the ethnic groups that strongly opposed the European penetration. To show the local resistance Ahipeaud had observed that if in 1893, Ivorians did not react, that was because they did not understand the logic of ‘colonisation.’ When Angoulvand affirmed that France’s occupation was not temporary, local Baoulé, Bété, Dida, and other chiefs decided to take action.<sup>148</sup> Despite the diplomatic effort by Governor François-Joseph Clozel who called off military operations, the locals strongly retaliated. Regrettably, faced with the French power, they didn’t prevail in 1915, and were victims of French colonialism against which they fought a very courageous battle.<sup>149</sup>

Inspired by India and its independence in 1947, African leaders influenced by Gandhian methods of passive resistance formed National Congress. They met on a regular basis and gained confidence. The first meeting was held in 1900; fifteen years later, they held a second conference in Paris requesting independence and the end of colonial rule.<sup>150</sup>

In Côte d’Ivoire, although the French military administration systematically repressed any active resistance, passive resistance was coordinated by Ivorian nationalist leaders in the 1940s. Locals who were defeated by Angoulvand early in the establishment and implementation of the territorial policy by Albert Sarrault, later reorganised themselves to relaunch their fight for freedom through negotiation with France.<sup>151</sup> Like their African counterparts, when Ivorian nationalists realised the only way to gain independence was

<sup>147</sup> Ahipeaud 2009 pp. 21-57.

<sup>148</sup> Ahipeaud 2009 pp. 21-57.

<sup>149</sup> Sanderson Beck, “West Africa and the French: 1700-1950” available at <http://www.san.beck.org/16-9-WestAfricaFrench.html> (accessed 21 August 2014).

<sup>150</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 496; Ahipeaud 2009, pp. 24-25

<sup>151</sup> Ange Ralph Gnahoua 2006, *La crise du system Ivoirien: Aspects politiques et juridiques*, Editions l’Harmattan, pp. 23-24.



negotiation, they asked the French colonial authority to consider how power could be progressively transferred to them.<sup>152</sup>

On 30 June 1944, General de Gaulle opened the so-called Brazzaville Conference. The conference aimed to propose a concrete African colonial policy, emphasising social, political and economic reforms in the context of decolonisation that would be implemented at the war's end. Although the conference was about the future of African people, no African representatives were in attendance.<sup>153</sup> In his opening speech, de Gaulle outlined the reform for Africa, promising Africans including Ivorians more involvement in mixed Franco-African councils, more decentralisation and a wider franchise.<sup>154</sup>

However, de Gaulle also made reference to how the 'civilisation mission' in the colonies was to be handled in the future. As part of his final recommendations he clearly warned that "the management of their own affairs" didn't mean self-government. It wasn't conceivable that the colonies should have any future outside the French empire: "the purposes of the civilisation work which France had accomplished in her colonies excluded any idea of self-government."<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, the Brazzaville Conference marked the starting point of the conflict resolution strategy by France.

Meantime, in an attempt to end the devastating effects of colonisation, Ivorian nationalists began to organise themselves politically. They made their dissatisfaction with the colonial system heard, through the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA), a federation of political parties and the main nationalist party which operated throughout Francophone West Africa. As a result of their participation in the Second World War to help liberate France territories in the side of allies, locals felt confident that they would gain their own freedom

<sup>152</sup> Alex Thomson, 2004 *An introduction to African politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Routledge, London, pp. 20-21.

<sup>153</sup> Elisabeth Schmidt 2007, *Cold War and Decolonisation in Guinea 1946-1958*, Ohio University Press, p. 11.

<sup>154</sup> Tony Chafer 2010, "French African Policy in Historical perspective" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 165-182, DOI: 10.1080/02589000120066443; Ahipeaud 2009, p. 29.

<sup>155</sup> Elisabeth Schmidt 2007, *Cold War and Decolonisation in Guinea 1946-1958*, Ohio University Press, p. 11.

from France. For its part, in order to avoid a decolonisation war *à l'Algérienne* or *Indochinoise*, France also began to resolve the rising tension through dialogue and negotiation.

At the end of Second World War, France adopted a new colonial governing strategy, giving the colonies more powers of self-determination. Historian and former President Laurent Gbagbo has explained that in Côte d'Ivoire, these new approaches took place between 1945 and 1960 as a result of major changes at the international level. Like all colonial powers, France faced great difficulties when the victorious former allies of the Second World War turned against each other as soon as fascism was defeated. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, France was required to change its colonial policies.<sup>156</sup>

The first draft of the April 1946 French Constitution of the then fourth Republic included new approaches France had to take to govern its colonies. According to the April Constitution, the French empire including the old colonies of West Africa would be transformed into the French Union. The draft was proposed by the *Parti Communiste Français* (PC) and the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO). In the colonies where indigenous people had been denied the right to gain French citizenship, the Constitution was defeated. It was also rejected by the French people in a referendum on 5 May, by 53% of the votes due to the rise of communism in the *métropole*. According Gordon Wright, “The referendum, in the mind of many citizens, had turned into a plebiscite against the communist party.”<sup>157</sup>

Despite the rejection of the April Constitution, some of the recommendations of the Brazzaville Conference such as the scrapping of the *indigénat* were adopted. The Brazzaville Conference proposed the abolition of the justice system. *Indigénat* was scrapped on 20

<sup>156</sup> Laurent Gbagbo 1982, *Côte d'Ivoire: Economie et Société à la veille de l'Indépendance* (1940-1960), Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 7.

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Elisabeth Schmidt 2007, *Cold War and Decolonisation in Guinea 1946-1958*, Ohio University Press, p. 21.

February 1946 by government decree.<sup>158</sup> The second attempt at a Constitution passed by 53.5% the same year in May, supported by the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire*, *Popular Republican Movement* (MRP), the French Communist Party (PCF) and the *Parti Socialiste*, Socialist Party (SFIO). As a result, all the West African territories became Associated Territories with representatives both in the French House of Representative and the Council of Republic.<sup>159</sup>

As Gbagbo has pointed out, during this significant period, African representation in the French Assembly galvanised the Ivorians.<sup>160</sup> Politically motivated Ivorian elites soon formed the PDCI-RDA, a political party that pushed for future independence. The Brazzaville Conference recommended the creation of a local Ivorian elected assembly; the French government kept this promise by allowing the Constituent Assembly.<sup>161</sup> Although no Ivorian participated directly at the Brazzaville Conference, the conference clearly took steps in the right direction, leading the nation to independence 16 years later.<sup>162</sup>

### **The Loi Cadre of 1956 and the Road to Independence**

In 1954, the French suffered defeat at Dien Bien Phu, losing its former colony in Indochina. The Algerian Civil War broke out in 1956 in response to French colonial involvement in Algeria. According to McNamara, following the disruptive Indochina war of the Indochina and faced with Algerian decolonisation, concerned French politicians could not afford to use further violence in their remaining colonies.<sup>163</sup> Perhaps most importantly, France needed to maintain its world-power status. In order to avoid being implicated in another conflict and

<sup>158</sup> The *indigénat* was a harsh system of arbitrary justice only applied to colonial subjects.

<sup>159</sup> Stephen Wooten, "The French in West Africa: Early contact to independence," University of Pennsylvania, African Studies Centre, available at [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French\\_16178.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html) (accessed 18 August 2014).

<sup>160</sup> Laurent Gbagbo 1982, *Côte d'Ivoire: Economie et Société à la veille de l'Indépendance* (1940-1960), Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 7.

<sup>161</sup> Elisabeth Schmidt 2007, *Cold War and Decolonisation in Guinea 1946-1958*, Ohio University Press, p. 15.

<sup>162</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 55.

<sup>163</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 72.

still maintain its world-power status, France's only best option was the introduction of decolonisation reforms.<sup>164</sup> France did just that in 1956.

Guy Mollet, the new French Socialist Premier, promised several constitutional reforms. He tasked his Minister for Overseas France, Gaston Defferre, to draft constitutional and administrative reforms for the overseas territories. As a result, the *loi cadre* or enabling law (Overseas Reform Act) passed on 23 June 1956, taking full effect in sub-Saharan Africa on 4 April 1957.<sup>165</sup>

The *loi cadre* aimed to “lead to a substantial degree of internal autonomy by way of universal franchise, elected councils,” which resulted in the *Ivoirisation* of public services. Due to this law, the French government abolished the policy of integration or assimilation, and replaced it with a freer federation in which all territories including Côte d’Ivoire could organise their own political affairs. They also gained power to strengthen and expand their participation in determining social, economic and cultural objectives, while remaining associated with France the colonial master.<sup>166</sup>

In addition, the Governor-General’s power decreased, although he continued to preside over the colonies, as executive powers were invested in a cabinet selected by the territorial assembly. The *loi cadre* provided a clear indication that France was moving toward ‘decolonisation.’ For the first time in the colonisation history, members elected by ‘universal suffrage’ ran the administration. In addition, due to the *loi cadre* the principle of territorial autonomy was ultimately acknowledged, clearing the air for independence. Reforms such as the abolition of many inequalities in voting, the creation of the posts of African councillors of

<sup>164</sup> The Mollet government included Gaston Defferre as Minister for overseas territories.

<sup>165</sup> As will be seen, Houphouët also contributed to elaborate the *Loi cadre* in 1956.

<sup>166</sup> Stephen Wooten, “The French in West Africa: Early contact to independence,” University of Pennsylvania, African Studies Centre, available at [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French\\_16178.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/French_16178.html) (accessed 18 August 2014).

government who later became ‘Ministers’ and the extension of powers to the existing territorial assembly became a step in the right direction for independence.<sup>167</sup>

However, the introduction of the *loi cadre* was deliberately extra-constitutional, allowing France to strategically position itself for a long-term in sub-Saharan Africa, including Côte d’Ivoire, after decolonisation. While France accorded certain powers to some loyal local leaders who were newly elected by their territorial constituents in areas such as civil service, education, health and economic development, it successfully maintained control over certain key policy areas such as defence, foreign affairs, the currency, higher education, international communications, and the media.<sup>168</sup>

In 1958, when de Gaulle, who presented himself as *l’homme d’Afrique*, de Gaulle ‘the African’, returned to office, he proposed a referendum over constitutional reform, a significant move for the overseas territories. In fact, prior to the referendum, de Gaulle declared during his African trip that the territories could freely indicate their intention to claim independence or remain colonised.<sup>169</sup> A ‘yes’ vote would mean they wanted to maintain their structural relations with France and continue to be part of ‘the French community.’ A ‘no’ vote would mean they intended to obtain an immediate independence. It is important to point out that in 1958, given the colonies’ political weakness and economic vulnerability, the French colonial government had ever confidence that its colonies would

<sup>167</sup> Alexander Keese 2007, “First lessons of neo-colonialism: Personalisation of relations between African politicians and French officials in sub-Saharan Africa 1956-66,” *The Journal of imperial and commonwealth history*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 593-693.

<sup>168</sup> Civil service included public servants’ pay, which was perceived as a politically difficult area to manage due to the high level of corruption; Tony Chafer, 2001, “French African policy in historical perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 19, no 2, pp. 165-182, DOI: 10.1080/02589000120066443.

<sup>169</sup> Maurice Poncelet “60 ans d’expériences fédérales en Afrique de l’ouest francophone” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, pp. 85-109.

remain part of the French community. Ivorian nationalist leaders who ‘adored de Gaulle’ got into the rule in, rule out game.<sup>170</sup>

What this really meant for Côte d’Ivoire was that the first choice was autonomy within the Franco-African community in which France was supposed to retain full control of the economy. The second option was independence, which was a polite way of excluding them from the Franco-African community. Independence would cause an immediate end to French aid, requiring Côte d’Ivoire to look elsewhere for support. The territory overwhelmingly voted ‘no.’ The elites remained content with their status and opted for increased territorial autonomy within the French community through the PDCI-RDA, instead of immediate independence. Therefore, they remained in the French empire, but the elites made a demand for future independence, joined their struggle for freedom and democracy, believing in their strength.<sup>171</sup>

Following the *loi cadre*, which transferred a number of powers from Paris to territorial elected governments of colonies from the Federation of French Western Africa, the colony of Côte d’Ivoire was proclaimed Republic of Côte d’Ivoire on 4 December, 1958. Eventually, Côte d’Ivoire became an independent sovereign state on 7 August, 1960.<sup>172</sup>

However, the new nation did not experience a strong win-win outcome.<sup>173</sup> With the implementation of *loi cadre*, Ivorians became entitled to a substantial degree of territorial autonomy, via the elites’ political struggle for independence. Nevertheless, right from the outset all didn’t go well for Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Alexander Keese 2007, “First lessons of neo-colonialism: Personalisation of relations between African politicians and French officials in sub-Saharan Africa 1956-66,” *The Journal of imperial and commonwealth history*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 593-693.

<sup>171</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World politics since 1945*, 1991, Longman: London and New York, p. 500.

<sup>172</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 70.

<sup>173</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 20.

<sup>174</sup> Alexander Keese 2007, “First lessons of neo-colonialism: Personalisation of relations between African politicians and French officials in sub-Saharan Africa 1956-66,” *The Journal of imperial and commonwealth history*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 593-693.

According to Overseas Minister Gaston Defferre, the *loi cadre*'s main objective was to avoid bloodshed.<sup>175</sup> In 1994, at his last Franco-African conference in Biarritz, former President François Mitterrand clearly indicated that France and its African partners had 'peacefully managed' the decolonisation process of sub-Saharan Africa including Côte d'Ivoire. Then he went on to explain how both France and its partners were able to overcome obstacles throughout the process. This clearly illustrated that strong international leadership and political will were essential to reach their goal.<sup>176</sup> Other French powerbrokers and politicians who believed that France had successfully managed decolonisation echoed Mitterrand's views. From their perspective, France granted independence to Côte d'Ivoire without war or continued violence, and it was largely an orderly and peaceful process.<sup>177</sup>

One can argue a more fundamental problem, though, resides in the fact that France managed to retain its presence and influence in Côte d'Ivoire. The *loi cadre* enabled France the colonial master to pursue its own national interest, rather than pursuing the common interest. Due to the *loi cadre*, France could detach itself from its 'civilisation mission,' distancing itself from its so-called 'colonial responsibility.' Therefore, the *loi cadre* contributed to the French long-term presence in Black Africa including Côte d'Ivoire. Although the term 'civilising mission' was replaced by partnership for the development of former colonies including Côte d'Ivoire, the process was inherently unequal.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>175</sup> Alexander Keese 2007, "First lessons of neo-colonialism: Personalisation of relations between African politicians and French officials in sub-Saharan Africa 1956-66," *The Journal of imperial and commonwealth history*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 593-693. Mitterrand was also a former Minister of overseas France in the 1950s and a former colonial official.

<sup>176</sup> *Jeune Afrique Economie* 1994, p. 29.

<sup>177</sup> Tony Chafer, 2001, "French African policy in historical perspective," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 19, no 2, pp. 165-182, DOI: 10.1080/02589000120066443.

<sup>178</sup> Tony Chafer, 2001, "French African policy in historical perspective," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 19, no 2, pp. 165-182, DOI: 10.1080/02589000120066443.

## The Colonial Legacy

According to Joy Alemazung, the colonial legacy describes a combination of political and cultural structures, including a broad range of policies inherited by African founding fathers or whatever was left by the colonial masters, which are still affecting African states and politics.<sup>179</sup>

Some of these legacies include neo-patrimonialism, clientelism, neo-colonialism, authoritarianism and so on. Eisenstadt (1973) first introduced the concept of neo-patrimonialism by making a distinction between patrimonialism in traditional and modern contexts. Initially, patrimonialism was not about corruption or a weak state, but it was fundamentally about power and a form of ‘social capital’ relevant to a certain stage of development. Now, personal rule, authoritarian rule, corruption as well as other related issues including weak state or state failure are often linked to the concept of neo-patrimonialism. It is said that neo-patrimonialism will likely “reduce voice and accountability, weaken government effectiveness and regulatory control, undermine the control of corruption, dilute the rule of law and compromise political stability.”<sup>180</sup>

Scholars such as Alexander Keese have defined French neo-colonialism as “the social history of the relations between Francophile African elites and French policy decision-makers in African policy.” Critics frequently perceived it as a form of manipulation that excludes ordinary African citizens from decision-making, urging neo-colonialists to put an end to all forms of neo-colonialism.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Joy Asongazoh Alemazung 2010, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.10, September 2010

<sup>180</sup> In Thandika Mkandawire 2011, “Neopatrimonialism and economic performance in Africa: critical reflections,” *London School of Economics*.

<sup>181</sup> Alexander Keese 2007, “First lessons of neo-colonialism: Personalisation of relations between African politicians and French officials in sub-Saharan Africa 1956-66,” *The Journal of imperial and commonwealth history*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 593-693.



Christopher Clapham has described clientelism as “a relation of exchange between unequals.”<sup>182</sup> While Alex Thomson described it as “a form of political contract.”<sup>183</sup> Since personal rulers rely on the distribution of state resources in order to gain legitimacy, there are rewards for clients who support them to reach their goals. These rewards, often cash-for-favours, are distributed through the system of clientelism.

According to Juan Linz, “authoritarian regimes are political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism without neither intensive nor extensive political mobilisation, and in which a leader or a small group exercises power, within formally ill-defined limits but actually predictable ones.”<sup>184</sup> Similarly, Samuel Huntington has indicated that “authoritarian regimes are characterised by a single leader or small group of leaders with either no party or a weak party, little mass mobilisation, and limited pluralism.”<sup>185</sup>

As April Gordon and Donald Gordon wrote, “Whenever and wherever colonial rule was established, it was essentially a paternalistic, bureaucratic dictatorship.”<sup>186</sup> Based upon his controversial approach to leadership, Governor Angoulvand helped to insure a tradition of civilian authoritarian regime in Côte d’Ivoire that went unchecked for many years because of the conditions he created. The colonial state that was born and developed under Angoulvand became more and more repressive over the years.<sup>187</sup>

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans created artificial boundaries for the new states through multiple bilateral treaties, cutting ethnic and topographic lines as well as dividing tribes and loyalties. The borders resulted from compromise between Europeans based upon the principle

<sup>182</sup> Quoted in Alex Thomson, 2004, *An introduction to African politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Routledge, London, pp. 119.

<sup>183</sup> Alex Thomson, 2004 *An introduction to African politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Routledge, London, p. 119.

<sup>184</sup> Quoted in Nathasha Ezrow and Erica Frantz 2011, *Dictators and Dictatorships Understanding authoritarian regimes and their leaders*, The Continuum International Publishing Group, New York, p.2

<sup>185</sup> Quoted in Nathasha Ezrow and Erica Frantz 2011, *Dictators and Dictatorships Understanding authoritarian regimes and their leaders*, The Continuum International Publishing Group, New York, p.2

<sup>186</sup> April Gordon and Donald Gordon 2001, *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, p. 48.

<sup>187</sup> Owen Write 2007, “Drunken States: Temperance and French Rule in Côte d’Ivoire 1908-1916,” *Journal of Social History*, 40.3 (Spring 2007), p. 663.

of territorial compensations. It can be argued that as a consequence, it impacted the relations among African neighbours and increased tensions at the community level where social relations remained fragile. In the process, Europeans had divided African ethnic groups and ancient kingdoms. Today, decolonised Africa remains dependent on those artificial borders.<sup>188</sup>

The French tradition of centralisation created a strong imprint of colonial power. It provided a degree of national cohesion through its administrative networks to created artificial states. Like all colonial powers, the French created arbitrary boundaries and powers unaccountable to the indigenous people in Côte d'Ivoire, who suffered major impacts. For example, the Akan ethnic group in West Africa was divided due to arbitrary boundaries settlement with the United Kingdom. One group stayed in Ghana while the other was forced to migrate to Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>189</sup>

As Alex Thomson indicated, state boundaries cause problems, because when they were delineated, they “rarely matched existing pre-colonial political, social or economic divisions.” The main objective of the French colonial power was only to reflect the short-term strategic and economic interests of France. Consequently, the arbitrary borders have created long-term problems for Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>190</sup>

Expert observers of financial markets agree that France's substantial contributions to the monetary system remain one of its most valuable legacies for its former colonies. In their view, the various currencies in the franc zone constitute single exchangeable money at fixed parity enjoying the backing of a common reserve held by the French treasury.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 93.

<sup>189</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 49.

<sup>190</sup> In Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 50.

<sup>191</sup> This view also held by *The Economist* in 1982. In Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, pp. 110-111.

Many francophone countries including Côte d'Ivoire have been using the monetary unit (CFA) since 1945. From the outset, one *institut d'émission* was created for the AOF in order to issue and control the money, led by the Bank of France and the French treasury. An operation account was opened for the region. In 1959, taking into account the political, social and economic changes that occurred in the region due to the move from overseas territories to autonomous republics, the *institut d'émission* was upgraded to a regional bank, called *Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (BCEAO) but the central banking function for this institution was essentially limited.<sup>192</sup>

Today, this operation account continues to play the role of a central mechanism system; all CFA financial transactions must pass through it. In addition, despite 'full sovereignty' in 1960, this operation account based at the French treasury in Paris remains the repository of all French West African franc zone foreign exchange reserves, guaranteeing the unlimited convertibility of the CFA into the Euro (formerly the French franc). For most foreigners, these monetary arrangements constitute the most valuable aspect of the French colonial legacy for West Africa.<sup>193</sup>

The current state of almost all French West African countries is essentially determined by the history of their occupation. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, colonisation processes such as the 'colonial direct rule' was cleverly used to control everything from administration, to economic, to culture. French colonisation's objective was to make the Ivorian a Black French through the politics of domination and assimilation. These politics left a permanent mark on the minds of the colonised.

<sup>192</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, pp. 110-127.

<sup>193</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 11.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined Côte d'Ivoire's pre-colonial history and France's acquisition and administration of one of its West African colonies. It has argued that France justified its colonisation of Côte d'Ivoire by its desire to civilise its people whom it saw as uncivilised. It has also traced Côte d'Ivoire's path to independence. Drawing upon the background, this chapter has examined the impact of colonial legacy and argued that despite the nation being independent since 1960, Côte d'Ivoire is still dealing with the colonial legacy such as arbitrary boundaries.

The small nation of Portugal led the way for Europeans to Côte d'Ivoire, but did not create a colonial settlement. Throughout the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the French started to establish their presence in Côte d'Ivoire, creating trade in the land thought to have fabulous riches.

The European "scramble for Africa" began when European colonial powers agreed on the rules of the colonial game at the Berlin conference in 1885. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, France acquired a vast empire in Côte d'Ivoire which expanded rapidly as the colonial masters made dirty deals with local chiefs. In the process, however, locals and members of the Islamic empires who were opposed to the French colonial empire resisted and faced terrible punishments for resistance. Some organised revolts. Wars were fought. Many people were murdered, but resistance continued.

By 1956, France lost Indochina as a colony and became involved in the bloody war in Algeria. However, France was keen to carry on its influence over its former colonies, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire. With nationalism gathering force through the PDCI and moves for independence strengthening, France created the *loi cadre* (Overseas Reform Act) 1956, under which a number of powers were transferred from Paris to elected territorial governments in French West Africa including Côte d'Ivoire. However, the

French empire did everything it could to maintain its influence and dominance over Côte d'Ivoire. It took Côte d'Ivoire much longer before it achieved its freedom in 1960. Indeed, they got it, but under very strict conditions.<sup>194</sup>

In 1960, France finally granted independence to Côte d'Ivoire but intended to retain influence. Through a series of deals signed with this newly independent nation, based upon close relations formed during the colonial era, France successfully managed to preserve its strong position in Côte d'Ivoire for decades. However, as the next chapter will demonstrate, Côte d'Ivoire's history is also closely linked to its first post-independence President Houphouët.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>194</sup> Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrican* 19 December 2013 available at [http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014).

<sup>195</sup> William Tordoff 2002, *Government and Politics in Africa* (4<sup>th</sup>ed), Indiana University Press, p. 2.

### CHAPTER 3: HISTORY AND LIFE OF HOUPHOUËT

This chapter traces the life and history of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, introducing the concept of the ‘Big Man,’ and discussing its associated characteristics of patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism, clientelism, patronage, nepotism and corruption. Houphouët-Boigny’s political actions were influenced by the Baoulé Akoué tradition since he became a traditional chief throughout his presidency. In 1944, Côte d’Ivoire discovered Houphouët the young Baoulé with his drawling and twangy voice. Despite being an excellent African doctor, he was an ordinary young man, frail and rather reserved. At the beginning, Houphouët did not appear to be capable of being a leader. Therefore, when he emerged into the Ivorian political environment, only a few people were determined to fully endorse him. As a politician, however, he surprised his supporters through his deeds, and they elevated him as the “King of Côte d’Ivoire.”<sup>1</sup>

In the 1980s, Balla Kéita, a Minister in the Houphouët government, ended his speeches by telling audiences, “long live Nana Houphouët-Boigny.” In general, in the Akan tradition and in the Baoulé tradition in particular (Houphouët’s ethnic group), Nana is a royal title. Apparently, Houphouët felt comfortable with the way his Minister used these words; he certainly never complained.

This chapter examines the leadership of the first President and his early attempt to stay in power, as well as the kind of resources and network he was able to mobilise in order to underpin his leadership. The end of the colonial repression marked the beginning of the tactical management of Houphouët, the leader of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain*, African Democratic Rally (RDA). The tactical management was already perceptible during the creation of this political movement in 1944. From that period until his death, Houphouët dominated Ivorian politics, some say with some ‘dexterity.’ The ultimate aim of Houphouët

<sup>1</sup> Grah Mel 2010 *l’Epreuve du pouvoir*, p. 221.

was to be in total control of Côte d'Ivoire in order to put into practice his vision through the single-party. For example, fear of losing power prompted Houphouët's forces to silence with violence the Agny of Sanwi, an Akan ethnic group from the South East of Côte d'Ivoire when they claimed self-determination in 1962, 66 and 69. In 1969, the Guébié (Centre-West) were oppressed by the military when they revolted.<sup>2</sup>

### The Family and Tradition

Félix Houphouët-Boigny, or Djaha Houphouët which is his original name (often shortened to Dia), was probably born on 18 October, 1905 in Yamoussoukro after two sisters; however accurate dates of birth were rare during the French colonial period.<sup>3</sup> Houphouët's father was simply called Kimou by Houphouët himself, Adwa Kimou or finally N'Doua N'San Kimou.<sup>4</sup> For some Houphouët's father was from Burkina Faso or Mali, meaning 'non-Ivorian.'<sup>5</sup> His mother, Kimou N'Dri Kan, died while at an early age. The two older sisters were Faitai Houphouët (died 1998) and Marie-Thérèse Adjoua Houphouët or Adjoua III (died in 1986). They worked, however discreetly, as Houphouët's influential Advisors during his career. He also had a younger brother called Kplé Augustin Dia Houphouët who died in 1938. However, for Houphouët and as it is common in the Akan tradition, the words "aunt" and "cousin" did not exist; he called his aunts "mothers" while cousins were "brothers" or "sisters." He explained himself that "in our tradition, aunts are mothers and cousins are brothers or sisters."<sup>6</sup> This probably explains why, when Houphouët created the RDA in 1946 in Mali; his

<sup>2</sup> René Otayek 1999, "Afrique: Les identités contre la démocratie," Cahier des Science Humaines, Nouvelle série, Numéro 10, Editions de l'Aube, (IRD) Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Ex-Orstom

<sup>3</sup> Frédéric Grah Mel argued that Houphouët's date of birth was uncertain. He went on to say further that it was something hard to prove, it was just estimation or a hypothesis. See Grah Mel, *Le fulgurant destin d'une jeune proie*, pp. 57-61. "In the past, people don't have an age. This was attributed to them. Generally, for people who were not tall, the age that was given to them was nowhere near the real age," explains one Respondent. "People look at them, and then they count their teeth to determine the age," explains another. Interview with Respondent "S" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012; Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Grah Mel 2003, p. 36; Paul-Henri Sirex Félix Houphouët-Boigny l'homme de la paix, p. 13; Charles Nokan, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny (1898-1993) et son gbé" in *Le Jour* no. 11341 2 18 November 1998, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Doza, *Liberté confisquée*, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Rapport Damas, tome 1, p.13. In Grah Mel 2003, p. 39.

cousin Djénéba was at his side, promoting the movement. She was introduced as “Houphouët’s sister.”<sup>7</sup>

Some claimed ‘Houphouët’ was a nickname meaning *balayure à jeter*, sweeping that should be thrown.<sup>8</sup> Others claimed a combination of ‘Dia Houphouët’ meant ‘diviner-healer.’ ‘Dia’ is a name given to a child after a succession of deaths in the family, but ‘Houphouët’ means “one who must sweep away lingering evil spirits.” In 1946, Houphouët added ‘boigny a family symbol meaning ram to his name. When he turned eleven Houphouët converted to Christianity and assumed the name Félix.<sup>9</sup>

According to the Baoulé Akoué tradition, a male baby born after two females was considered to be a *ki’ndo*, ‘sorcerer’ or one who casts evil spells within his family. In most cases, the specific male child was supposed to be killed by the Baoulé Akoué.<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that many considered Houphouët fortunate to have escaped the death sentence simply for being a *ki’ndo*. Actually, the term *ki’ndo* can refer to anyone born after two consecutive boys or girls and the Baoulé Akoué believed the child would bring bad luck into the tribe. Thus, a girl who was born after two boys could suffer the same ordeal.<sup>11</sup>

## The Formation

Houphouët received a standard boy’s village education based on the African education principles of respect for elders, solidarity, fraternity and general background. In particular, Houphouët acquired a vast knowledge of the Akan customs, enabling him to be more

<sup>7</sup> Grah Mel 2003, p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> Paul-Henri Sirex, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, homme de la paix, p. 14. In Grah Mel 2003, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> Houphouët explained why he converted to Christianity in the Dakar newspaper *Clarté* No. 75, 4 January 1946. See Inamdi Elleh 2002, *Architecture and Power in Africa*, Greenwood Publishing Group, pp. 62-63.

<sup>10</sup> In Carrol Coates 2007, A Fictive History of Côte d’Ivoire: Kourouma and “Fouphouai,” *Research in African Literatures*, 38.2, (Summer 2007), *Indiana University Press*, p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> The Baoulé Akoué (Akan) society is a matrilineal society, in which women have a right to the lineage lands and exercise great power over social activities.



practical in his political career. Further, the future Ivorian President also attended tertiary schools of the AOF general government.<sup>12</sup>

As a Prince from his mother's lineage, Houphouët was not supposed to attend the white man's school program because at that time, children from the royal family were considered 'too noble' to face any capricious master, even a white one. Houphouët attended the white man's school only because three slaves of his family ran away from school, and lieutenant Bouët, who was at that time the Commander of Bô-nzin (often wrongly spelled Bonzi) military base, asked his uncle to send him to school. Since his childhood, Houphouët had a connection with the traditional milieu and went to primary school in Bô-nzin, in the *cercle* of Baoulé-south where he spent five years. At the age of five, he inherited his maternal Uncle Kouassi N'Goh's position in 1940 as *Chef de Canton*, French Administrator. Though he was not able to assume the role until much later, it provided his initiation to power.<sup>13</sup> After obtaining a primary school certificate, Houphouët was admitted at *the Groupe Scolaire Central* of Bingerville in 1915 where he spent three years.<sup>14</sup>

Houphouët flourished at an elite high school in Bingerville in Côte d'Ivoire. The day of his embarkation for Sénégal, Houphouët led a group of Ivorian students protesting unfair treatment compared with their fellow students from Dahomey. While Ivorian students were segregated and spent the night in the tween deck, comfortable accommodations were available for students from Dahomey. Houphouët won his segregation case and successfully managed to convince Bingerville's Governor Binger, demonstrating courage and an early

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin," *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>13</sup> Nnamdi Elleh, *Architecture and Power in Africa*, Greenwood Publishing Group, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny," Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014) (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 20124).

form of eloquence. In 1918, Houphouët attended William Ponty and specialised with the medical and pharmacy school of Dakar.<sup>15</sup>

As he was studious and brilliant, Houphouët came first among thirteen junior Doctors on his graduation, with results being published in the official AOF newspaper in 1925. His time in Sénégal allowed Houphouët to discover and observe numerous socio-political protests against the French colonial empire and to attend political meetings, media campaigns, and public speeches. However, he did not break onto the Ivorian political scene as soon as he returned. Rather, he moved from medical and social action to political action as his professional career took him across remote areas in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>16</sup>

### **The African Doctor**

On 13 November, 1925, Houphouët started his career as a young auxiliary medical Doctor, the official title of the AOF Doctors at the central hospital of Plateau, Abidjan where he worked until April 1927. This was the highest level available to 'native Ivorians.' His supervisor's reports indicated his promising future as a practitioner. For example, on 7 October, 1926 Dr. Louis Bouffard, Head of Côte d'Ivoire health service described him as: "an excellent team player who, ever since he began working in Abidjan, showed good professional qualities, and had a great future if he continued with the spirit."<sup>17</sup> A year later Dr. Major Henri, also Head of health service gave the following appreciation: "Houphouët a third class auxiliary Doctor possesses excellent technical skills" and considered him as a hardworking man with a sense of duty, fairness, realism and fidelity to principles.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin," *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>16</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny," Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Cited by Emile Kei Boguinard, Félix Houphouët-Boigny un médecin compétent. In Grah Mel, *Le fulgurant destin d'une proie*, p. 116. (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2012).

<sup>18</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny", Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014) (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 2012).

By 1927, Houphouët's involvement with the African workers union became an issue for his supervisors, and they transferred him to the outskirts of Guiglo in the west of the country. In Guiglo, the young Doctor worked hard and was readily adopted by the local community. His time in Guiglo made such an impression on Houphouët that he later wrote: "In Guiglo I learnt that to live is to give yourself."<sup>19</sup>

On 17 September, 1929, the young Doctor took up a posting in Abengourou in the east of the country and considered joining the priesthood due to a lack of female company. However, he soon fell in love with the beautiful Ivorian-Senegalese Princess Kady Sow, the niece of the King of Abengourou and the daughter of a Muslim Senegalese businessman.<sup>20</sup> Their courtship was not all smooth sailing. As was often the case at the time, the Agny father refused to allow his daughter to marry a "*Baoulé Gban-Gban*."<sup>21</sup> Secondly, there was the 'anachronism of marriage' between the Christian Félix Houphouët-Boigny and the Muslim Kady Racine Sow. Despite the hurdles of interfaith union, Houphouët and Kady married in 1930 in Abengourou and he flourished as a young professional practitioner in Abengourou. In 1952, Houphouët married his second wife Marie-Thérèse Brou from the royal Baoulé village of Sakassou.<sup>22</sup>

As a young Doctor, Houphouët lived a highly regimented life and was almost an ascetic figure by denying himself certain pleasures such as dance, alcohol and smoking, practising to master his passions and subjecting himself to his own rule. After all, his aim was to be a self-monitor, before monitoring others in the future. Later on in his public life, when promoting the formation of the Ivorian elites and Scientists were needed, Houphouët asked Ivorians not

<sup>19</sup> Grah Mel, *Le fulgurant destin d'une proie*, pp. 101-138. (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2012).

<sup>20</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 158.

<sup>21</sup> See Grah Mel 2003, pp. 122-135. As Grah Mel states, Ivorians know well that people from the Baoulé ethnic group that Houphouët belonged to and people from the Agny ethnic group never get on well traditionally. Hence a marriage between the two groups has always been problematic.

<sup>22</sup> See Grah Mel 2003, pp 122-135. However, Houphouët was not getting good treatment from the locals, calling him names like "yam eater." Leaving Abengourou became a "necessity."

to stop dancing, but rather to concentrate on science and technology. Some may point out that it was in Abengourou that Houphouët became politically oriented, a region that produced a third of the national cocoa production and where brokers were ripping off local farmers.<sup>23</sup>

In 1932, when cocoa price went down, Houphouët organised a protest regarding cocoa sale to support distressed farmers. “I couldn’t remain indifferent because the life of the nation was in danger and I was interested in my people” he had noted. Houphouët who had been a farmer himself since 1925 published under a pseudonym in *Le Trait d’union* newspaper on 22 December, 1932 a vengeful article titled “*on nous a trop volés*” too many things have been stolen from us.<sup>24</sup>

Houphouët stated that farmers had created important plantations and the produce was able to secure their well-being. In order to justify their speculations certain people had cynically affirmed that they earned enough to cover their basic needs. However, Houphouët argued the conditions under which these farmers lived were not satisfactory and they had houses to build, families to support and children to raise, while their only resources were the products of their plantations.<sup>25</sup> Soon, the French colonial administration discovered the real identity of the article’s author, and temporary Governor Joseph Gourguine transferred Houphouët to Dimbokro, south, on 3 February, 1934.<sup>26</sup>

According to a report written on 6 September, 1936 at Dimbokro, Houphouët was unanimously valued as a professional who accomplished: considerable work in the context of social medicine. Moreover, the number of his consultations grew significantly; his unwavering dedication contributed significantly to the well-being of his people and he proved

<sup>23</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, “Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin,” *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>24</sup> “Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny,” Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, “Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin,” *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>26</sup> “Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny,” Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

his ability to financially support the disinherited and all kind of victims.<sup>27</sup> Houphouët's last posting was Toumodi, south, a subdivision near his home village of Yamoussoukro where he worked from 1936-1939. By 1938, the Head of his unit asked him to "choose between health service and local politics," requiring Houphouët to make a hard choice. From Dimbokro to Toumodi where Houphouët carried on with his medical career in 1936, the Doctor was in a dilemma between his professional career and the management of the family farming business as well as being a *Chef de Canton*.<sup>28</sup>

Following the death of his younger brother Augustin Houphouët in 1938, Houphouët resigned from his profession as a Doctor to become head of his family. Houphouët managed to establish and maintain social cohesion and solidarity even within his extended family.<sup>29</sup> He became a *Chef de Canton*, a local Administrative Chief, effectively a local Tax Collector on 21 December, 1938. Augustin had been *Chef de Canton* since 20 August, 1933, when his step-father died he deferred the post of chief to Augustin. Félix Houphouët later explained his decision in his first memoir: "I was forced," Houphouët pointed out, "to resign from the public service and abandon my career as a Doctor that I loved so much: you cannot be a Canton Chief, Doctor, and Farmer at the same time."<sup>30</sup> In his letter of resignation addressed to the Governor-General of AOF he indicated that after consultation with dignitaries and Tribal Chiefs of the area where he was born, he decided to succeed his beloved late brother Augustin.<sup>31</sup> By doing so, Houphouët took into account the Akan tradition which states that, when you are chosen by the rural council to be a Chief, which is inspired by the ancestors, you do not reject the offer.

<sup>27</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin," *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>28</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny," Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin," *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>30</sup> Grah Mel, *Le fulgurant destin d'une jeune proie*, p.149, (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2012).

<sup>31</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny," Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

After the approval of order No. 1898 of 8 June 1939 by the AOF Governor-General Mondo, Houphouët officially resigned as first class auxiliary Doctor to become *Chef de Canton* of the Akoué people. However, apart from his official role as *Chef de Canton*, during six years at the *chefferie cantonale*, Houphouët also engaged in improving the life style of his people, promoting basic hygiene notions, and contributed to achieving better housing. Houphouët also gave some examples by developing productivity on plantations.<sup>32</sup>

### **The President of the African Agricultural Union**

As a Planter, Houphouët became concerned about the worker shortage that was already noticeable in 1925. A law promulgated in 1943 only allowed European Planters to have access to the work force. Faced with this situation, some African Planters were exiled to Gold Coast.<sup>33</sup> Prior to entering mainstream politics, Houphouët contributed in forming the *Syndicat Agricole Africain* (SAA) African Agricultural Union on 3 September, 1944.<sup>34</sup> It is also worth noting that he “advocated for African unity regardless of their ideology, religion, origin and social status” because he believed it was essential to combat colonialism.<sup>35</sup> In 1945 he stressed:

I come from all *milieux* and all corporations. I am chief of the *canton*, ex-civil servant, farmer, transporter, the ‘uncle’ of traders or employees of

<sup>32</sup> “Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny,” Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Pierre Nandjui 1995, *Houphouët-Boigny, L’Homme de la France en Afrique*, L’Harmattan, Paris, p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> SAA’s main goal was to end forced labour; See also Richard Banegas, “Côte d’Ivoire: Une guerre de la seconde indépendance? Refonder la coopération française sur les brisées du legs colonial,” FASOPO, Fonds d’Analyse des Sociétés Politiques, Paris, (n.d.), pp. 197-251, available at [http://www.fasopo.org/publications/legscolonial2\\_rib\\_1206.pdf](http://www.fasopo.org/publications/legscolonial2_rib_1206.pdf) (accessed 5 October 2013); Frederick Copper 2002, *Africa Since 1940: The past and The Present*, Cambridge University Press, p. 45; Grah Mel 2003, pp.219-231.

<sup>35</sup> Frédéric Grah Mel, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny le fulgurant destin d’une jeune proie*, 2003, p.485.

traders. [...] I will conscientiously and courageously serve in everybody's interest, and in the general interest.<sup>36</sup>

There was a large number of older, well-established and fortunate Planters in Côte d'Ivoire. Some had participated in the Ivorian Planter Syndicate since 1939 including European and African Planters. Others were members of the Chamber of Agriculture or Chamber of Commerce.<sup>37</sup> Houphouët had been chosen to head the SAA, and the experience he had gained as a traditional leader prepared him to assume greater responsibilities and to make more contributions in the future.<sup>38</sup> According to Houphouët, given his dual capacity as a literate and the son of a chief he was accepted by the civilised elite and the traditional elite. For Joseph Anoma one of the founders of the SAA, Houphouët's nomination as President of the union was approved unanimously by the members. Despite being the youngest he was the most 'dynamic' Individual.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, both dynamism and pugnacity was required for the presidency in order to deal with European farmers and also ensure the triumph of the ideals of African farmers. During his time as the Head of SAA from 1944 to 1947, not only did Houphouët implement the syndicate in the country but also inspired his people to rebel against the colonial regime. Through his action, African Planters were entitled to work force and were not constrained to work in European plantations. Prior to these reforms, Houphouët who was guided by his desire to serve his people said, "This is why we were obliged to act; we could not just stand by and watch helplessly the ruin of farmers."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 183; Frederick Cooper 2002, *Africa Since 1940: The past and The Present*, Cambridge University Press, p. 45.

<sup>37</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin," *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>38</sup> Pierre Nandjui 1995, *Houphouët-Boigny, L'Homme de la France en Afrique*, L'Harmattan, Paris, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny," Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>40</sup> *Inter Afrique Presse*, no. 344, 14 December 1965, p. 5.

As it is evident from this historical review, Houphouët was not only determined to represent the interests of his colleagues but also the whole population of Côte d'Ivoire territory. However, as the President of SAA, he achieved his biggest triumph with the abolition of forced labour, a fundamental instrument of colonial exploitation, through the Houphouët-Boigny law which was passed without debate on 5 April 1946. The French government promulgated the law on 11 April the same year.<sup>41</sup>

### **Houphouët's Political Debut**

From unionist, Houphouët made his political debut with the formation of the PDCI on 9 April, 1946 (*étoile du sud*) in Abidjan. The PDCI emerged from the SAA, which provided financial and material resources as well as structural organisation. As founder of the PDCI, Houphouët was the federator of Ivorian patriots and non Ivorians (Africans). The PDCI was a party authentically African and anti-colonialist. At the beginning, the PDCI was a party open to all classes and nationalities.

Shortly after the defeat of the draft Constitution for the constituent assembly, African leaders called a conference in Bamako to form a united front and develop an anti-colonial strategy. As a result of the Bamako Conference, Houphouët created the first and most successful francophone political party, the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* (RDA) on October 1946.<sup>42</sup> By 18 October, 1946, Houphouët became the uncontested leader of the RDA. The movement had proposed bold and innovative measures, concrete and precise objectives. This included, among others, restitution of abandoned or coincided domains to local and regional authorities, free trade and fiscal reforms at the economic level. At the social level, there was a push to develop education, introduce free medical care, health social insurance and family allowance payment. Having the RDA as a powerful political instrument, Houphouët was

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Noël Loucou 1992, "Félix Houphouët-Boigny, un Destin," *Fraternité Matin* No 8410, pp.7-15.

<sup>42</sup> Francis Terry McNamara 1989, *France in Black Africa* National Defense University Press Publications, Washington, DC, p. 62.



aiming to emancipate the territories. Most territories had made reference to Houphouët's PDCI as a model for RDA. The PDCI was a combination of Marxist models in terms of organisation and French models in terms of administration.<sup>43</sup>

The two constitutional conventions held respectively in 1946 and 1947 triggered the beginning of African political organisations. For example, at the constituent assembly level, African representatives began informally to coordinate their activities through the *Bloc Africain* or caucus. While ambitious African members such as Léopold Senghor the leader of Sénégal joined the Socialist Party, in his youth, Houphouët attended several communist meetings organised by the *Mouvement Unique de la Renaissance Française*, another French political party which was affiliated to French Communist party (PCF). He eventually joined the PCF.

The practical sense of management that Houphouët acquired through his Akan customs allowed him to convince African MPs from *palais Bourbon* to member themselves with the three major parties including the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. On that Houphouët had stressed: "I asked my colleagues to put their names down in the list of these political formations. I was alone. What should I do? No one was on the Communist Party list."<sup>44</sup> The explanation given by Houphouët about why he joined the PCF showed his sense of practicality from the Akan tradition.

One could also argue that the PCF and the RDA were linked at the parliamentary level. Given their small number, elected African parliamentarians could not form a parliamentary block. Therefore, they were required to join the communist groups for the efficacy of their parliamentary actions. However, the two allies had different objectives. While the RDA was against the class struggle and wanted a vast anti-colonial coalition including all classes, the

<sup>43</sup> "Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny," Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>44</sup> Témoignage du Président Houphouët lors du Colloque International sur le 40<sup>th</sup> anniversaire du PDCI, du 18 au 25 Octobre 1986 à Yamoussoukro Tome II p. 10.

PCF a French Marxist party struggled for social revolution in France, but it did not advocate or support the principles of independence for the colonised. Clearly, fundamental opposition existed between the two allies in terms of their opinions, programs and objectives. Such an opposition could only definitely cause the rupture. Houphouët distanced himself from the Communists, known as the famous *désapparement* on 18 October, 1950.<sup>45</sup> Some claimed he was advised by François Mitterrand. Others claimed the *désapparement* was a result of Houphouët's sense of practicality *vis à vis* facts. As Houphouët had repeatedly said, politics was all about sound assessment of the realities. This explained why de Gaulle who was very sparing of compliments had referred to Houphouët as a first-rate political mind.<sup>46</sup>

However, between 1950 and 1952, a famous internal fight erupted between Houphouët and his key lieutenants including Gabriel d'Arboussier, Secretary-General of RDA - and pro-communist amid concerns over the *désapparement*. He resigned on 7 July, 1950. In his open letter addressed to Houphouët the RDA President, d'Arboussier who was based in Dakar to practice law, wrote, "with you or without you... the RDA will survive, develop and achieve its objective: the emancipation of Black Africa." The RDA parliamentary group reacted later to this polemic through a *communiqué*, announcing the definitive sacking of d'Arboussier on 12 July, 1952 from the parliamentary group. Houphouët launched a personal attack against d'Arboussier in the *Afrique Noire* newspaper, remarking that, since his rival d'Arboussier was a Métis (mixed ancestry), perhaps he was not the right person to speak on behalf of African popular masses. In 1957, both Houphouët and d'Arboussier transcended

<sup>45</sup> At the end of his speech in 1947, some people in the audience thought they just listened to the man who will be the 'Lenin of Africa.' Jacques Baulin argues that before going to Paris in 1945, Houphouët was already a communist. Le *désapparement* was when he quit the communist party. In Grah Mel 2003, pp. 460-465.

<sup>46</sup> Félix Houphouët-Boigny 1978, *Anthologie des discours 1946-1978*, CEDA, Abidjan p. 15.

politics and remained friends as d'Arboussier reintegrated the senior management of the RDA.<sup>47</sup>

It is important to point out that for Houphouët the RDA was initially a broad church and Côte d'Ivoire was one family formed with people from different political opinions. Houphouët was already seen as a giant of his time and he went on to symbolise and promote the culture of peace and dialogue. However, his statement about the d'Arboussier saga was a threat to national unity and a failure to inspire young people to get involved into public life.<sup>48</sup>

Although he had flirted with communism at the beginning, followed by the infamous, *Le désappointement* Houphouët later adopted a capitalist development model, as opposed to Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sékou Touré of Guinea and Modibo Kéita of Mali who retained communism. As a pro-West, anti-communist Minister of state in Charles de Gaulle's government, Houphouët never wanted early independence, compared with other African leaders who were impatient for it. Ironically, in 1958, he strongly campaigned against decolonisation, arguing that the only way to achieve economic development was to get France's help. Therefore, for Houphouët, the longer the colonisation the better for Côte d'Ivoire, as it would allow the nation to be well prepared for the future. That was not, however, to argue that Houphouët was against independence, rather he believed it was premature.

As Grah Mel stated, Houphouët understood the lack of resources. For example, Houphouët considered that providing better training to the new Ivorian elites, which required a lot of time abroad, was the best way to prepare them to take over the nation-building process.<sup>49</sup>

Nonetheless, in 1950s, faced with the rise of communism and radical nationalism, Houphouët

<sup>47</sup> Christian Roche 2001, *Le Sénégal à la Conquête de son Indépendance 1939-1960*, Karthala Editions, pp. 125-126.

<sup>48</sup> Dele Ogunmola 2009, "Côte d'Ivoire: Building Peace Through a Federal Paragim" University of New England, NSW Australia, *Journal of Perspective Alternatives in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No.3, pp. 544-582.

<sup>49</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a. p. 551.

accepted independence from the colonial masters in 1960 when he became President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. On that, Houphouët had stressed, "I did not become a leader when I became President of my country. I was born a leader."<sup>50</sup>

### Confronting Opponents

After independence from France on 7 August, 1960, Houphouët became the country's first President. Until the 1990 election, Houphouët was the sole candidate at every election held in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>51</sup> His political party, the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire was the only legal political party until 1990. According to Ahipeaud, the sole political objective of Houphouët was to make himself the absolute master of the Ivorian political system.<sup>52</sup> Although from the onset, Houphouët had symbolised the *politique d'ouverture*, an inclusive political process, he suppressed all types of opponents under the firm grip of the one-party state through the PDCI. Some painful events occurred under Houphouët's leadership, such as the case of the future Ivorian Prime Minister Elimane Seydou Diarra. As a General Manager of the *Centre National de la Mutualité et de la Coopération Agricole*, (CNMCA), he was alleged on 23 January, 1963 to have spread the communist plague to farmers. Diarra was locked in the cold basement of the presidential palace in Abidjan for fifteen days. In mid-February 1963 he was transferred to Hotel *La Plantation* of Yamoussoukro, then to the sinister prison of Assabou still in Yamoussoukro. He completed his sentence in Dimmokro in 1965. While Diarra was never brought before a Judge or tried in a court, his arrest, different relocations and time in Ivorian prisons were possible because of Houphouët. Diarra stressed that when one is accused

<sup>50</sup> Je ne suis pas devenu chef en accédant à la magistrature suprême de mon pays. Je suis né chef, *Jeune Afrique*, Mai 1990. Cited in Dele Ogunmola 2009, "Côte d'Ivoire: Building Peace Through a Federal Paragim" University of New England, NSW Australia, *Journal of Perspective Alternatives in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No.3, pp. 544-582.

<sup>51</sup> For clumsy techniques used by Houphouët to dissuade independent candidates and win elections, see Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966) pp.79-80.

<sup>52</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, pp. 43-55; For an understanding of techniques used by governments to suppress oppositions, see Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966) pp. 77-78.

and incarcerated without being presented before a Judge - or having the opportunity to be represented by a lawyer, then definitely the torture that one goes through is certainly terrible, but the one that an individual carries is permanent.<sup>53</sup>

In order to install a French resident in his Kingdom, the King of Sanwi signed a protectorate treaty with France on 4 July 1843. During a land dispute opposing the Agny and Ahotilé, the Sanwi King asked the Ivorian government to acknowledge the integrity of the Sanwi Kingdom within the limits set by the treaty. Dissatisfied with the response, the Sanwi authority directly contacted the French government, asking for their independence *vis à vis* Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>54</sup>

The Ivorian authority argued that this act constituted not only an act of defiance, but rather a more serious threat and a danger to the territorial integrity of the young state. In brief, they claimed, it was secession. They indicated that based on the Constitution at the time, it was France's exclusive responsibility to maintain order. So for the Ivorian authority, placed in its proper context, France took the lead in the intervention to re-establish order and safeguard the territorial integrity of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, for the Ivorian authority, the case might as well had a different outcome, if in 1962 a Sanwi liberation movement based in Ghana did not attempt to make the issue an international concern by attempting on several occasions - to raise the issue to the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity. After the fall of President Nkrumah of Ghana, senior members of the movement who were delivered to Houphouët were immediately freed. In Biafra (Nigeria) the Biafrans thought they would form a break-away state which caused the Biafra conflict. Houphouët supported the idea. According to the

<sup>53</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a. *l'Épreuve du pouvoir*, pp. 205-206.

<sup>54</sup> Niamkey Koffi, "L'Affaire Gnagbé Kragbé et du Sanwi" available at [http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur\\_1NKragbe.html](http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur_1NKragbe.html) (accessed 21 October 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Niamkey Koffi, "L'Affaire Gnagbé Kragbé et du Sanwi" available at [http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur\\_1NKragbe.html](http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur_1NKragbe.html) (accessed 21 October 2014).

Houphouët government, in 1969, as a pretext for Houphouët's recognition of Biafra, the Sanwi continued to push for independence. Detainees were released in 1970. In May 1981, Houphouët who was against the Côte d'Ivoire partition had organised a reconciliation and forgiveness meeting in Yamoussoukrou. He had authorised the Sanwi people to enthrone their new King.<sup>56</sup>

Houphouët also achieved greater control through his system of paternalism as one of his characteristic political practices. During his meeting with the Sanwi people, the Kingdom which had attempted to withdraw in 1959-1966 and 1969-1970 and subsequently suffered repression and long term marginalisation, Houphouët said that:

I am certainly the happiest person amongst those gathered here this morning, as I find myself amongst all my brothers and sisters of Aboisso. I would like to reassure the whole population of Aboisso, and above all the cadres. You must get rid of your guilty consciences. You have not betrayed the country. [...] There are problems in even the most united of families. You must understand what I am about to say: those who have left Côte d'Ivoire to struggle for their own successes, slamming the door of the communal house behind them, must know that I have never shut that door to them. I am waiting for them inside the house. And they need make no effort in order to be accepted back inside.<sup>57</sup>

The Sanwi people reached an agreement with Houphouët and those who were in exile in Ghana returned home in 1981. The kingdom was rewarded a ministerial post through the nomination of Bernard Ehui Koutoua as a Minister for industry on 10 July, 1986. As Grah Mel reminds us, during the PDCI congress in 1980, Houphouët's trusted lieutenants were

<sup>56</sup> Niamkey Koffi, "L'Affaire Gnagbé Kragbé et du Sanwi" available at [http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur\\_1NKragbe.html](http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur_1NKragbe.html) (accessed 21 October 2014).

<sup>57</sup> See Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 174.

nine young members of an executive committee to advise the President of the party who was in fact Houphouët-Boigny himself: Camille Alliali, Jean Konan Banny, Maurice Seri Ganoléba, Lanzéni Coulibaly, Laurent Dona Fologo, Balla Kéita, Gilles Laubhouet, Alphonse Djédjé Mady, and Bernard Ehui Koutoua, a Sanwi boy from Ehotilé.<sup>58</sup> It should be remembered that Houphouët the authoritarian leader who co-opted his serious candidates, openly rejected justice. Challenged by the rise of unrest in Côte d'Ivoire, he repeatedly said that if he had a choice between injustice and disorder, he would prefer injustice, adding that “when there is disorder, the lives of people and a regime is at stake, but injustice can always be corrected.”<sup>59</sup>

Houphouët was also confronted by the Guébié crisis. During the Guébié rebellion of 1969-1970, the government army wiped out some Bété villages in the Gagnoa region (West). Gbagbo, originally from Gagnoa, described it as a ‘*boucherie*’ (slaughter) that lasted two weeks which was part of the largest massacre of the country post-independent history. He accused Houphouët of being responsible for the killing of 4,000 people. He went on to say that according to some members of the PDCI, in 1970 and toward the end of his life, Houphouët also estimated the number of deaths at 4,000.<sup>60</sup> However, Jacques Foccart had firmly asserted that Houphouët had not committed murders. For Foccart, Houphouët had sent some people to prison but he freed them and they became very good and professional Ministers such as Jean-Baptist Monkey (health) and Jean Konan Banny (defence).<sup>61</sup>

According to the opponents of the PDCI, the events of Guébié might be genocide that derived from the Houphouët government’s refusal to apply Article 7 of the Constitution. Article 7

<sup>58</sup> *Fraternité Matin*, 2 October 1980, pp. 123-13, in Grah Mel, 2010, p. 282; Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>59</sup> See for example, William Zartman “Unbalance of power: US hegemony and international order” 2009 available at <https://www.rienner.com/uploads/49831d35c17a7.pdf> (accessed 11 April 2013).

<sup>60</sup> Laurent Gbagbo, *Côte d'Ivoire: Pour une alternative démocratique*, p. 86.

<sup>61</sup> From 1959 to 1969, Foccart led de Gaulle’s policy in francophone Africa. Every Wednesday he called Houphouët to discuss ongoing issues during Houphouët’s long reign. See Grah Mel 2010 *L'Épreuve du pouvoir*, p. 241.

allowed for the emergence of other political parties in order to freely operate without forming a coalition with the PDCI. The PDCI argued that the suspension of Article 7 was a result of a consensus between all political parties supporting the PDCI after its overwhelming victories in the 1956, 57 and 58 general elections. Most importantly, it was a basic requirement for developing the nation, at the dawn of its independence. In reality, it was Houphouët's strategy to force the opponents of the past to dissolve their parties into the PDCI, which in the end became the unique party in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, Alex Thomson indicates that Houphouët extended his power across the nation through the PDCI and also by eliminating his potential opponents one by one. While loyal members of the one-party system could retire with salaries that allowed them to live decently along with their families and relatives in constructed French style houses kept in clean state, efforts were made to ensure they did not retain any real power.<sup>63</sup>

With regard to the Kragbé Gbagbé case, Jean-Christophe Kragbé Gnagbé from the Bété ethnic group emerged on the Ivorian political arena in May 1966. After meeting with Ivorian political authorities, he distributed tracts in Abidjan and across the nation, denouncing theft of the land of Bété farmers by the Baoulé people living in the West of Côte d'Ivoire with the complicity of the central government led by Houphouët. He also stood up against the denial of fundamental freedoms. Summoned by the Ivorian authorities, he categorically rejected any compromise and went back to France. In 1967, when Kragbé Gnagbé returned from France, he attempted to form his political party called the *Parti Nationaliste* (PANA). However, given the agreement of 1958, confirmed by the 1965 congress, to only endorse parties which were determined to support the PDCI, his demand was rejected. The PDCI, considered the agreement to be essential for the stability, unity, cohesion and development of a young

<sup>62</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 55.

<sup>63</sup> Alex Thomson, *An introduction to African politics*, pp. 124-127.



nation, as it allowed them to break down internal and external forces which were a threat to the survival of the nation. According to the PDCI, it was in such a context that began “the Guébié case,” which is nothing more than “the Kragbé Gnagbé case.”<sup>64</sup>

According to the PDCI, however, Kragbé Gnagbé proclaimed an independent Republic called the *Republique d'Eburnie* and called himself Chancellor. On 23 October, 1970, Kragbé Gnagbé organised an insurgency in Gagnoa where, at night, he placed his flag on the government buildings, asking his followers to battle on all fronts, even with bare hands. Although he linked words to deeds, he failed to annex the city of Gagnoa. After the failure to annex Gagnoa, and back in their villages, PANA militants started a war against those, who from the outset refused to support efforts to achieve their goal.<sup>65</sup>

As a consequence, in the villages, settlement camps, and on the roads, Guébié and non-Guébié were murdered, hanged, thrown down in wells, buried alive, and out of sight. In response, the central authority, which is the guarantor the territorial integrity and the safety of people and property, called in the army. It took control of the situation on 30 October, 1970, and the government did not hesitate to adopt drastic measures, including the use of military combat vehicles and helicopters, against insurgents. The operation was personally led on the ground by a soldier called Gaston Ouassénan Koné, Houphouët's former Pilot who set up the presidential guard in 1962.<sup>66</sup> However, war being what it was, the crisis could not be resolved without affecting innocent civilians.<sup>67</sup> It was through military intervention that began the speculation about the murder of 4, 000 Guébié.<sup>68</sup> However, this statement could not be

<sup>64</sup> Niamkey Koffi, “L’Affaire Gnagbé Kragbé et du Sanwi” available at [http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur\\_1NKragbe.html](http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur_1NKragbe.html) (accessed 21 October 2014).

<sup>65</sup> Niamkey Koffi, “L’Affaire Gnagbé Kragbé et du Sanwi, la position officielle du PDCI-RDA,” available at [http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur\\_1NKragbe.html](http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur_1NKragbe.html) (accessed 8 October 2014).

<sup>66</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L’Epreuve du pouvoir*, pp. 298-299.

<sup>67</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L’Epreuve du pouvoir*, p. 299.

<sup>68</sup> Niamkey Koffi, “L’Affaire Gnagbé Kragbé et du Sanwi, la position officielle du PDCI-RDA,” available at [http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur\\_1NKragbe.html](http://www.leconservateur.net/leconservateur_1NKragbe.html) (accessed 8 October 2014).

verified. What could be verified, though, was that in the end, Kragbé Gnagbé had lost his life but under some bizarre circumstances.<sup>69</sup>

In addition, there were the repressions and *faux complots*, phantom plots. The most remarkable was the 1963 plot, during which some of Houphouët's own PDCI members were jailed in order to reinforce his political power. This process of repressions and phantom plots continued until 1964, because after that, Houphouët's regime was quite well established.

Ahipeaud further outlines this approach:

Plots were orchestrated between 1958 and 1964, weakening internal forces.

Five years after the independence, efforts had been made by Houphouët to pacify the whole country for the third time since Angoulvand and Pechoud.

He built a political edifice which had been around for a long time. Between 1965 and 1970, all components of Côte d'Ivoire had been pacified. Students and tribes were dominated, and therefore the Ram of Yamoussoukro can build his legend.<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, as the above quote suggests, Houphouët's debut had seen its share of upheavals, something that analysts such as Richard Comwell found hard to explain. Whatever the reason, this was his way of consolidating presidential power. For example, in 1963, thirteen people were arrested and subsequently sentenced to death; however, none of the death sentences were carried out. Houphouët was later quoted as saying that the so-called 'perpetrators' were "*my little perverts*."<sup>71</sup>

On 4 August, 1966, during a National Council meeting held at the National Assembly, Houphouët announced the release of 83 political prisoners accused of 'plots.' He insisted that

<sup>69</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L'Épreuve du pouvoir*, pp. 300-301.

<sup>70</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 55, (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 2012).

<sup>71</sup> Richard Cornwell 2000, "Côte d'Ivoire: Asking for it," *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

since Côte d'Ivoire was a land of fraternity, Ivoirians must show that they are brothers. He added that one can be away from his friend but cannot be away from his brother. This should be translated into practice. He said that Ivorian brothers were taken away because of mistakes and external manipulations and he wanted to ensure they were all brought back. Developing the same idea, he promised that there was so much to do to develop the young nation and everybody should get involved, adding, "Misters, you are free. You are our brothers. The party, expression of the country, forgives you." He said it was up to the former detainees to do what they could to ensure that the forgiveness allowed them to participate, as it was their turn, for the edification of the nation. However, addressing his audience the same day on 4 August 1966, Houphouët confined himself to declaring a sentence that sent some auditors dreaming and others were sceptical about Houphouët and were therefore more suspicious:

Let us be vigilant, of course. I would like to stress that based on exhaustive investigation, and you can walk around and say it to people who want to hear it, that there is no evidence to suggest that there are suspicions of a plot in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>72</sup>

On 12 June, 1980, during a National Council meeting in Abidjan, Houphouët reaffirmed in this gloomy overall context that there was never any plot in Côte d'Ivoire, nor a threat of coup d'état. He confidently said that the so-called plots were politically motivated frame-ups orchestrated by an envious individual wishing to obtain a high responsibility position by all possible means. Houphouët claimed to have been misled by Police Commissioner Pierre Goba.<sup>73</sup> However, one must understand that for the victims of Houphouët's dictator leadership who were arrested and imprisoned without fair hearing of their cases, it was too little too late.

<sup>72</sup> "96 détenus politiques libérés hier," *Abidjan Matin*, 5 August 1966, p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a *L'Épreuve de pouvoir*, p. 218.

The experience gained in the French parliament and cabinet ministry prepared Houphouët for the Head of state position. Houphouët was a member of parliament in Côte d'Ivoire government from 1946 to 1958, and a Minister in six governments of the French Republic.<sup>74</sup> However, in Côte d'Ivoire, one important issue of post-independence was the adoption of neo-patrimonialism by Houphouët, who ruled the nation as his estate.

### Houphouët's Leadership

Neo-patrimonialism is a particular form of authority and rule dominant in many newly independent states in Africa, particularly in the sub-Sahara.<sup>75</sup> The neo-patrimonial state was applied for the first time in Africa by J-F Medard given the total lack of state institutions in Cameroon, according to Daniel Bach and Mamoudou Gazibo. The rise of authoritarianism and the establishment of *early modern states* at that time incited Aristide Zolberg with reference to Bonapartism to examine the politics of Côte d'Ivoire under Félix Houphouët-Boigny.<sup>76</sup>

In their study of African politics, which suggests that African politicians generally applied personal politics, Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg state that “personal rule is a distinctive type of political system with operative principles and practices that can be apprehended by the political scientist.”<sup>77</sup> In a patrimonial state, high office is bestowed in return for personal service to the ruler. Close lieutenants are connected to the ‘Big Man’ who allocates key posts in which they have the right to exploit for their own advantage. Loyal appointees are rewarded by receiving massive incentives; alternatively they are instantly sacked if they are suspected or fail to regularly show loyalty to the ‘Big Man.’ As suggested by Crawford

<sup>74</sup> “Présentation de Houphouët-Boigny” Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, available at <http://www.fondation-fhb.org/index.php?nom=preshb> (accessed 27 September 2014).

<sup>75</sup> Daniel Bach and Mamoudou Gazibo, *L'état néopatrimonial: genèse et trajectoires contemporaines*, available at [http://www.durkheim.sciencespo-bordeaux.fr/PDF/02%20-%20L'%C3%89tat%20n%C3%A9opatrimonial\\_Bach.pdf](http://www.durkheim.sciencespo-bordeaux.fr/PDF/02%20-%20L'%C3%89tat%20n%C3%A9opatrimonial_Bach.pdf) (accessed 19 June 2013).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), p. 4.

Young and Thomas Turner, like many post-colonial African states, Côte d'Ivoire experienced patrimonialism.<sup>78</sup>

The Ivorian 'Big Man' utilised patrimonialism to maintain power by distributing resources to nominees of the PDCI. As Gbagbo pointed out just after Houphouët's death, his ability to influence the politics of Côte d'Ivoire and stay around for 50 years meant that Houphouët was a talented 'Big Man.'<sup>79</sup>

Despite the introduction of "legal-rational" institutions which Weber cited in Jackson and Rosberg describes as a best method of government, Houphouët ran the country in a Machiavellian style.<sup>80</sup> For example, as Jackson and Rosberg put, "Like Machiavelli's *Prince* and personal rulers in general, the Ivorian ruler" treated foreign policy as his personal domain.<sup>81</sup> Thus, since independence, politics in postcolonial Africa had been structured around neo-patrimonialism, and Côte d'Ivoire was no exception. According to Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle:

In patrimonial political systems, an individual rules by dint of personal prestige and power; ordinary folk are treated as extensions of the "Big Man" household, with no right or privileges other than those bestowed by the ruler. Authority is entirely personalised, shaped by the ruler's preferences rather than any codified system of laws. The ruler ensures the political stability of the regime and personal political survival by providing a zone of security in an uncertain environment and by selectively distributing favours

<sup>78</sup> Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, *The rise and decline of the Zairian state*, p. 164; Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Grah Mel 2010 b, *La fin et la suite*, p. 500. This was Gbagbo's statement just after the death of the Big Man. The man was who was among those who were constantly opposed to the policy of President Félix Houphouët-Boigny as he mentioned it himself that day.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 151.

and material benefits to loyal followers who are not citizens of the polity so much as the ruler's clients.<sup>82</sup>

What emerged was neo-patrimonial rule, which occurs when “one individual (the strongman, ‘Big Man’ or ‘supremo’), often a President for life, dominates the state apparatus and stands above the law.”<sup>83</sup> As Bratton and van de Walle have described, there are at least three political components associated with typical African neo-patrimonial regimes, which are *presidentialism, clientelism, and state resources*. The components exist across the board and continue to operate after “the death or retirement of the first generation of national leaders.”<sup>84</sup>

According to the authors:

Over time, rulers like Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, Sékou Touré in Guinea, and Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire left a deep personal imprint on national politics, melding their countries' political rules in rhetoric. The personalisation of power was both cause and consequence of the political longevity of neo-patrimonial rulers. They were more likely to remain in power than leaders in other regime types; regular coups d'état and the appearance of political instability notwithstanding, the average African leader from independence to 1987 still retained power considerably longer than counterparts in postcolonial Latin America or Asia.<sup>85</sup>

All together, they concluded that neo-patrimonial rulers managed to strengthen their power by systematically limiting the independence of the legislative and judicial bodies and rejecting multi-party elections and ruling only by decree, despite the existence of institutions

<sup>82</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66; Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp.18-22.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66; Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp.18-22

of inclusion, as well as declaring themselves Presidents for life. In addition, neo-patrimonial leaders deliberately mystified and exaggerated their images in order to promote their *grandiosity*, a “larger-than-life image” to maintain power.<sup>86</sup>

Côte d’Ivoire provides a case in point. As a typical neo-patrimonial ruler, Houphouët could remain in office much longer by systematically confining political power in his hands, while promoting some formal institutions such as the presidential Constitution. In other words, power was deeply personalised, significantly impacting Ivorian politics. As a result, Houphouët’s presidency largely “contributed to the weakening of existing fragile structures within the military, the judiciary as well as the civil service.”<sup>87</sup> Moreover, Houphouët built the image of a person capable of dealing with his subjects’ welfare. Personally or through his personal emissaries, Houphouët would tour the country and meet face-to-face with local leaders, not to discuss the state of the economy or the state of the education, but as Bratton and van de Walle put it, to “listen to their grievances, and promise redress.”<sup>88</sup> The May 1982 meeting chaired by Mr Camille Alliali a well-respected PDCI powerbroker is a perfect example:

The head of the Party’s wager to put the train of democracy back on the rails has been won, but for the train to progress it is necessary for all the wagons of all the activists of the PDCI, winners and losers, to be coupled to it. Fed by tenacious opposition, unsoothed rancours, unheaded wounds and above all by a thirst for revenge, divisions can only hinder the progress of the train and delay its arrival. This is why the Political Bureau, on the instructions of the President of the Party, busied itself in searching everywhere for the reconciliation of divided cadres and activists. It did not, however, succeed in

<sup>86</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66.

<sup>88</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, pp. 61-66.

dissipating all incomprehension and misunderstandings. Everywhere islands of resistance held out, necessitating a meeting under the authority of the President of our Party.<sup>89</sup>

As it is evident, clientelist networks were important for Houphouët in order to recruit his own clients as much as possible because more clients meant more support for his regime, as it created political stability and order.<sup>90</sup> Clientelism was evident throughout Houphouët's reign until his death in 1993. For example, to remain in power, he rewarded clients with public service roles, which increased over the years. As you would expect, however, benefits such as "accommodation, travel allowance, pension" and aid were part of the job package. As Jean-François Bayart observes, these various advantages "are sometimes very big ... and are always highly valued because of their scarcity."<sup>91</sup> The striking thing is that under Houphouët, the government budgeted to allow easy access to bank loans and political funds for public servants. In his memorable speech, Houphouët reveals:

The budget of the President of the Republic is two billion Francs CFA (for personal expenses and political funds). I am not selfish. For me, money only counts for the good use that can be made of it. Money gets its value for good use. I asked three representatives, one of whom is in this room, to manage some of the political funds. The fourth man, who distributes the most, is the Secretary General of the Government: not being from the country, he shows no favour. There are some people who go far as to demand a year's advance. I accept this. For example, some people ask me to give them one million

<sup>89</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa: the politics of the Belly*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>90</sup> Alex Thomson, *An introduction to African politics*, p. 121; Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp.18-19.

<sup>91</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa, the politics of the Belly*, 1993, P. 75.



two hundred thousand francs when they are entitled to one hundred thousand francs a month.<sup>92</sup>

The above quote indicates that typically Houphouët enjoyed the power of deciding everybody's share over the distribution of political funds under his control. The regime ensured payment and prerogatives of its employees to include them in the state *bourgeoisie*.<sup>93</sup>

Much of this happened within the faithful of the PDCI elites.<sup>94</sup>

Jackson and Rosberg describe Houphouët's style as 'charming.' At the same time, they note:

The ruler's anti-politics stance and the 'administration' of the state have combined to reduce the former commanding importance of the ruling PDCI.

What was before independence a fairly lively "political machine" especially in the urban centres and in particular around Abidjan has atrophied.<sup>95</sup>

During the fight for independence against the French colonial master, the PDCI was described as a single political party for people. Once in power, it became a symbol of patronage. As a party leader, Houphouët's personal 'clients' included close relatives, and friends or anyone working under him who could only be promoted through his direct involvement. Once promoted, his clients would push the patron's agenda to manage the state. On the other hand, "they would use Houphouët's patronage to build their own fiefdoms and client bases." However, they would be demoted if they were unable to show loyalty to Houphouët.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp.18-19.

<sup>93</sup> Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp.18-19.

<sup>94</sup> See also Victor T. Le Vine, *Politics in francophone Africa* 2004, available at <http://books.google.com.au/books> (accessed 17 April 2013).

<sup>95</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 143-152.

<sup>96</sup> Alex Thomson, *An introduction to African politics*, 2011, pp. 117-118; Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp.18-20.

The existence of clientelism leads us to believe that in Côte d'Ivoire, stability under Houphouët was possible because of such a system. For example, the extraction and redistribution of the agricultural income predominately generated by the cocoa and coffee sectors was managed by the *Caisse de Stabilisation* (The Agricultural Price Stabilisation Fund), commonly known as Caistab.<sup>97</sup> A large sum of rent came from the “differential between the official price paid to local farmers and the international market.”<sup>98</sup>

The distribution of income, which was only run by the one-party system, the PDCI, was an unwritten rule.<sup>99</sup> However, it took into account the geopolitics issue. While the system was seen as a monopolistic form of corruption, it created ‘stability.’ Houphouët used state resources to legitimise his power, having full access to state treasury or the *Caisse de Stabilisation*'s coffer for his personal needs. “Caistab was an invention of Houphouët, officially established in order to protect the prices of agricultural products. The fact was that this was an excellent tool of moving revenues from the public treasury into Houphouët's own hands,” explains Coates.<sup>100</sup>

Bratton and van de Walle reported that “Houphouët pocketed a tenth of his country's cocoa exports, spending it on grandiose prestige projects that flattered his image as the country's founding father.”<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Ahipeaud indicated that the management of cocoa and coffee section was run through a black market by the central government. In this context, Houphouët was the only person in charge of Caistab, ensuring that his most trusted ally, namely Marcel Laubhouet, was CEO of Caistab. Additional examples include Satmaci, a national agricultural company run by a permanent CEO Denis Bra Karon nominated by Houphouët

<sup>97</sup> This state-run organisation was established to control cocoa exports and the distribution of cocoa rent.

<sup>98</sup> Bernard Conte, “Côte d'Ivoire: clientelism, adjustment and conflict,” available at [http://www.miiis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05\\_3.pdf](http://www.miiis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05_3.pdf) (accessed 4 May 2013).

<sup>99</sup> Bruce Berman, “Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa,” *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>100</sup> Carrol Coates 2007, A Fictive History of Côte d'Ivoire: Kourouma and “Fouphouai,” *Research in African Literatures*, 38.2, (Summer 2007), *Indiana University Press*, p. 124.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, 1997, p. 67.

from 1966 until 1977 - when he was appointed as agriculture Minister for another decade which generated funds for the central government. Satmaci was tasked to manage Ivorian cocoa and coffee.<sup>102</sup>

It is worth noting that under Houphouët's patronage system, the suburb of Adjamé in the south received a government "funded market place in the mid-1960s." During the opening ceremony, the then Minister of State who was one of Houphouët's closest allies thanked the people of Adjamé for supporting the 'Big Man' while his government was facing protests early in the 1960s.<sup>103</sup> Further evidence of Houphouët's patronage system can be demonstrated by his choice of location for the annual national celebration of independence on 7 December.<sup>104</sup>

In *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg stress that each year, instead of celebrating independence on 7 August in Abidjan, the nation capital; Houphouët chose a different disadvantaged regional city for the annual celebration. This rotation system allowed the host city to receive government funding for a new school, a new market or for upgrading its infrastructure.<sup>105</sup> Individuals saw the skilful use of state patronage as a perfect opportunity to beautify the host town by fixing roads or building a new hospital, but most important, it was an opportunity to win the community votes in return. Moreover, Houphouët would ask his clients, "is there anything I can do for you?" then task his treasury Ministers to deal with the issue if a request for cash was made.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, pp. 126-127.

<sup>103</sup> Alex Thomson, *An introduction to African politics*, 2011, p. 126.

<sup>104</sup> Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 20-28.

<sup>105</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 143-152.

<sup>106</sup> This equally highlighted Houphouët's generosity towards his clients; See Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrican* 19 December 2013 available at [http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014).

Houphouët also implemented what Francis Akindès calls the strategy of “peanut roasters.” He argues that in the 1960s and 1970s, Houphouët introduced a combination of system of political patronage and patrimonialism, which could be traced in the para-public sector. To regulate political clientele, powerful organisations such as the *Caisse de stabilisation* were set up as seen earlier. His objective was to “create a national bourgeoisie” that emerged through corruption.<sup>107</sup> Houphouët himself, who authorised corruption and clientelism and/or often failed to take reasonable steps to prevent them, summed up his philosophy in the following way: “*on ne regarde pas dans la bouche de ceux qui grillent les arachides.*” Don’t look too closely at a peanut roaster’s mouth,” an Ivorian phrase meaning clientelism, corruption or rent seeking.<sup>108</sup> In the context of the African specific skills of political power broadly and in Côte d’Ivoire in particular, it means that at some stage during the cooking process the roaster might taste to figure out if more salt is needed.<sup>109</sup>

Clearly, it is admissible for peanut roasters as former President Gbagbo sarcastically called those from the Ivorian bourgeoisie, to take full advantage of the nation’s economic wealth and potential or maintaining their political positions through corrupt means.<sup>110</sup> Those so-called peanut roasters or senior Ivorian bureaucrats tasked to manage goods and state-owned companies stole the entire nation’s wealth. Certainly, under Houphouët, there were a lot of peanut roasters belonging to selected *milieux* that benefited from the system.

<sup>107</sup> See Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), pp-87-98.

<sup>108</sup> Francis Akindès “The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” Norkiska Afrikaninstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at Research report no 128, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-96> (accessed 19 July 2010); John Emeka Akude, 2009, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 69.

<sup>109</sup> Francis Akindès “The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” Norkiska Afrikaninstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at Research report no 128, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-96> (accessed 19 July 2010).

<sup>110</sup> Dele Ogunmola 2009, “Côte d’Ivoire: Building Peace Through a Federal Paragim” University of New England, NSW Australia, *Journal of Perspective Alternatives in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No.3, pp. 544-582.

Houphouët promoted smart community members in government through “ethno-regional lines.”<sup>111</sup> According to Zolberg, “in order to eliminate actual and potential conflicts” for example, Houphouët would appoint two of his PDCI members to the same role, while avoiding to clarify the status between them.<sup>112</sup> As a result, he became popular among Ivorians because he successfully managed ethnic diversity and maintained stability through ethnic clientelism.<sup>113</sup>

Houphouët will be remembered for his leadership style, called *Houphouëtisme*, which has been assessed by many authors including Richard Banegas, Christian Bouquet, Martial Ahipeaud and Francis Akindès. For Akindès for example, Houphouëtisme is a “set of structuring principles and practices interpreted in various ways, which function as a system of reference and a political form that is socially recognised.”<sup>114</sup> More specifically, *Houphouëtisme* entails a social dominance system, including a range of political, social and economic principles and practices operating as a system of reference and a political culture that is known. However, *Houphouëtisme* is not conceptualised.<sup>115</sup> For Ahipeaud, *Houphouëtisme*, which started during the struggle for independence is the idea of peacefully negotiating with the colonial masters rather than using force.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Dele Ogunmola, “Côte d’Ivoire: building peace through a federal paradigm,” *Journal of alternatives perspectives in the social sciences*, 2009, vol.1, no 3, 544-582.

<sup>112</sup> Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966) pp. 112-119; Bruce Berman, “Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa,” *JICA Research Institute No 22* (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>113</sup> Christopher Clapham, *Private patronage and public power: political clientelism in the modern state*, (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1982), pp. 20-28

<sup>114</sup> Francis Akindès “The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” *Norskiska Afrikaninstitutet*, Uppsala 2004, available at Research report no 128, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-96> (accessed 19 July 2010).

<sup>115</sup> Francis Akindès “The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” *Norskiska Afrikaninstitutet*, Uppsala 2004, available at Research report no 128, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-96> (accessed 19 July 2010); Yves Paul Mandjem, “Les gouvernements de transition comme sites d’institutionnalisation de la politique dans les ordres politiques en voie de sortie de crise en Afrique?” *Revue Africaine des relations internationales*, Vol. 12, Nos 1&2, 2009, pp. 81-182.

<sup>116</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 19.

Houphouët had a proud career in politics by maintaining ‘some stability’ which allowed him to gain respect from almost every Ivorian. For example, at the education level, Houphouët built private colleges and new schools across the nation, and even encouraged rural and regional communities to build their own primary schools. This strategy was in line with his nation building program. On the other hand, from a liberal perspective, Houphouët pioneered the introduction of affordable private school system.<sup>117</sup> As a result, for twenty years, the Ivorian education system was one of the best in Africa and accessible by most Ivorians.

Houphouët will also be remembered for the high level of corruption under his presidency, encouraging his Ministers and close allies to embezzle from Côte d’Ivoire. Houphouët was one of the multi-millionaires who ruled. The elite accused him of unfair accumulation of personal fortunes and using political power for personal gain. In 1990, downplaying the allegations of corruption and scandal and using his sense of humour, Houphouët pretended that there were no millionaires in Côte d’Ivoire, and the whole issue was a ‘legend.’<sup>118</sup>

Further, Abidjan university students orchestrated protests which spread throughout the political, trade union, university, economic and diplomatic elite targeting Houphouët for his unfairly accumulated fortune. However, when there was a speculation going around about Houphouët’s wealth, the opposition indicated that Houphouët was laughing at Ivorians and pretending to be poor, saying he did not want to be accused of having 1000 million, 2000 million or 3000 million dollars. He was accused of dishonestly accumulating his personal fortune which was estimated at US \$11, 756 billion.<sup>119</sup>

Similarly, Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg state that apart from the impressive new buildings such as his palace where he hosted dignitaries from home and overseas or the

<sup>117</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 65.

<sup>118</sup> Cited in Grah Mel, 2010 b, p. 295. This statement was made by Houphouët on national television on 5 March 1990.

<sup>119</sup> See Grah Mel, 2010 b, pp.397-403. The figure of 11, 756 billion CFA was reportedly secretly provided by the World Bank to the opposition. The list of billionaires shows around 5,004 615 385 Euros for Houphouët

luxurious President Hotel in his rural hometown of Yamoussoukro, Houphouët owned a small castle in Geneva in Switzerland where he invested his fortune, and a luxurious apartment in Paris. He also owned real estate companies including Grand Air SI.<sup>120</sup>

Whatever challenge his regime faced, Houphouët attempted to overcome it by dialogue first, then by use of force if needed. Despite his ability to control many political protests across the nation during his long period of dictatorship, Houphouët faced a succession of organised protests in the street of Abidjan in the early 1990s concerning his personal wealth. It marked the beginning of a turbulent period for a man who was capable of achieving greater control of the nation through neo-patrimonialism. As Grah Mel points out, despite Houphouët's attempt to meet students on 25 February, 1990 and end allegations surrounding his personal fortune, a huge protest occurred on 2 March against Houphouët for the first time since independence in 1960.<sup>121</sup> While some protesters accused Houphouët and his Ministers of corruption, others wanted a multiparty democracy to open up the political system, and asked for Houphouët's resignation.<sup>122</sup>

Predictably, Houphouët ran out of patience with protesters and the police were accused of serious abuses. According to media reports paramilitary forces were instructed by the government to calmly disperse peaceful protesters. However, they dispersed the protestors with tear gas and smoke canisters, making the matter worse. Students retaliated with stones,

<sup>120</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 143-152.

<sup>121</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp 397-410. See also "Ivory Coast police clash with students assailing regime," *Associated Press*, 3 March 1990 available at <http://articles.latimes.com/keyword/felix-houphouet-boigny> (accessed 5 April 2013). For example, see Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*, pp.101-102. One must note that like in other parts of French speaking Africa, university student protests were mainly about the economy.

<sup>122</sup> It was evident that there were a large number of emotional arguments. Ivorians were complaining about scandals and Houphouët's long reign. Thirty years on the top job was too long, therefore, they urged Houphouët to go. See Kenneth Noble, 'Unrest in Ivory Coast's capital turns to violence,' *The New York Times*, 25 February 1990, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/25/world/unrest-in-ivory-coast-s-capital-turns-to-violence.html> (accessed 28 March 2014).

and looted a supermarket.<sup>123</sup> As the mystery surrounding Houphouët's personal fortune deepened, a written statement from the opposition came out entitled "Who is Houphouët fooling concerning his personal fortune?"<sup>124</sup> The statement attacked Houphouët's own declaration on 26 April, 1986 regarding the origin of his personal fortune and his justification of his love for gold. In fact, to a group of Ivorian students who took to the streets in large numbers to protest against poor education system and the amount of money Houphouët spent on gold, he declared, "people are sometimes surprised that I like gold. It is because I was born in it."<sup>125</sup>

When the same statement was used against him, Houphouët said he was wondering if in this world any serious man who has money would not invest part of it in Switzerland. Finally, Houphouët made a mockery of his colleagues when he declared there were many people who had nothing initially but became rich because of politics, adding that he "pulled Ivorians out of the hole."<sup>126</sup> Jackson and Rosberg were right when they explained that:

Nearly all members of the elite were creations of the Head of State. The President has long been the man who makes and unmakes the leaders. With the exception of perhaps one man - Jean Baptiste Mockey - they owe all they have to 'the Old Man.' He has brought them into the system, provided

<sup>123</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp. 397-410; See also, Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966) pp.87-92.

<sup>124</sup> In Africa in general, politicians don't like criticism. These were strong words at the time from the opposition in a country where criticism was not authorised according to the tradition because a chief was a chief. Unfortunately, this tradition has been exploited by political leaders.

<sup>125</sup> Cited in Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa: the politics of the belly*, 1993, p.242. More protests about economic hardship and political repression in Côte d'Ivoire took place in late 1980s-early 1990. For instance see Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, "Popular protest and political reform in Africa", *Comparative Politics*, vol 24, no 4, Jul 1992, pp.419-442, available at

[http://www.nimd.org/documents/P/popular\\_protest\\_and\\_political\\_reform\\_in\\_africa.pdf](http://www.nimd.org/documents/P/popular_protest_and_political_reform_in_africa.pdf) (accessed 24 April 2013). For more about the written statement from the opposition regarding the wealth of Houphouët, see Grah Mel 2010, p. 402; *NewAfrican*'s reporter Tom Sykes said Houphouët's personal fortune was about \$ 9 billion; See Tom Sykes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrican* 19 December 2013 available at [http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014).

<sup>126</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 402. See for example Ahipeaud 2009, p.132. Houphouët made his statement during the teachers' crisis, in 1983.



them with all their needs - and he is the man who could exclude them from the system. And although this exclusion has mostly been smooth, and rather non-violent, the sheer threat of it has so far acted as a magnificently efficient preventative.<sup>127</sup>

This situation was possible due to the neo-patrimonial politics developed by Houphouët which allowed patron-client relationship. The relationship between Houphouët and his clients became inevitable as it provided support to clients through the distribution of resources and preferential appointment of public servants from the unique party (PDCI). Meanwhile, Houphouët ensured the continuation of the system for his own political survival. However, one can argue that if in the personal rule system under Houphouët, appointments and provision of resources were more often a matter for the Old Man, personal rivalry among the Ivorian elite over Houphouët favouring Bédié or Ouattara gave rise to internal division which contributed to the Ivorian crises.<sup>128</sup> While exposing his wealth, Houphouët critiqued a political opponent, arguably Laurent Gbagbo, referring to him as someone who “did not own anything, not even a bicycle.”<sup>129</sup>

As Ahipeaud comments, although the discussion of fortune was disrespectful to colleagues, Houphouët suggested that he became rich before joining mainstream politics. Houphouët disputed criticism of his personal fortune and claimed that he became wealthy prior to becoming President:

(...) I am forced to, in order to tell the truth in this country, let you know what I kept quiet until now because I was a scrupulous person. My wife has

<sup>127</sup> “The Iceberg That Is Ivory Coast:” *West Africa* 3088 (6 September 1976):1289. Cited in Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 143-152; see Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966) pp. 93-106.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, “Personal Rule: Theory and Practice in Africa,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 16, No 4(Jul., 1984), pp.421-442.

<sup>129</sup> See Laurent Gbagbo, *Pour une alternative démocratique*, Paris, Editions L’Harmattan, 1983, p. 80. In Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa: the politics of the Belly*, 1993, p. 242.

been accused of real estate and financial transactions, my poor sister Fetai as well. And ourselves, we became rich from ripping off the nation, they say. But, you see, to tell you the truth, I am forced to say things that you did not know. And it bothers me to talk about it myself. When the seven elders came to find me to create the African Farmers Syndicate, I came back home, not with empty hands, but full of wealth. We talked about signs of wealth, they were cars. We were four people in Côte d'Ivoire that owned vehicles: two Europeans, a Lebanese and I. I was the first person in Côte d'Ivoire who introduced a Cadillac; governors did not have them.<sup>130</sup>

For the first time Houphouët was forced to make a public statement over his wealth. For decades, the former President Houphouët and his family members were identified as the most successful business entrepreneurs in Côte d'Ivoire, investing in all sectors of the economy. Although Houphouët was clearly a billionaire, he insisted that his fortune had nothing to do with the nation's budget:

These are the fruit of my labours. One of the banks manages my profits from pineapple production. I have 4 billion in turnover from pineapples. I pay some 50 m francs a month for boxes for pineapples. Boats and planes come to 150 m francs a month. I had two sharp falls two years ago when I had reached 3,000 tonnes of pineapples a month, producing a third of the national total. And I asked a bank to manage all this. I have stopped producing coffee. At one time it brought in very little, perhaps 100 million francs, but that 100 million is today worth billions... I have confidence in the Ivory Coast. There is even a bank which manages my profits in

<sup>130</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp. 832-835; See also Jean-François Bayart, 1993, p. 242; See Grah Mel, 2003, pp.264-269, where he shows that Houphouët did not wait for politics to establish his fortune.

avocados, of which, I think, I am the main producer in the Ivory Coast.

There is another bank which modestly manages my profits from poultry farming. But these billions, because this all amounts to billions, are in this country.<sup>131</sup>

Despite accusations of corruption, Houphouët's governance could be simply summarised as a period of Houphouëtisme, quoting from his former Minister of scientific research and supporter, Dr. Balla Kéita. This political principle was defined as the philosophy, the action and acts of President Houphouët-Boigny for Côte d'Ivoire, focusing on "growth, harmony and Ivorian nation building."<sup>132</sup> *Houphouëtisme* is also "humanism reinforced by dialogue among brothers, political acceptance for Ivorian and African development."<sup>133</sup>

In fact, for the *Houphouëtistes*, his supporters that share his philosophy and political doctrine, humanism based on dialogue and solidarity under Houphouët greatly facilitated peace and harmony in Côte d'Ivoire. Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg define him as an "autocrat," as we have seen above.<sup>134</sup> Victor Le Vine went a step further, describing the first President

<sup>131</sup> Jean-François Bayart, "The state in Africa: the politics of the Belly" p.89. See also Speech of M. Houphouët-Boigny, *Fraternité Matin* (Abidjan, 29 April 1983, p.17. M. Houphouët-Boigny is expressing himself in CFA francs; Also the communiqué of the political bureau of PDCI-RDA. Because of its strong criticisms of Houphouët's fortune, the party officially banned any publications of *Jeune Afrique* group specifically for its article "Certes, grace à Dieu, le président Houphouët-Boigny ne manque pas d'argent. Mais ne vaut-il pas mieux faire envie que pitié?" *Jeune Afrique* 18 Nov. 1987, p. 70), and J. Baulin, *La Politique intérieure d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Paris, Eurofor-Press, 1982, in J-F Bayart, 1993, p.306.

<sup>132</sup> Ben Ismael, Editorial, 'Portrait d'artiste: Anaky Kobena: Il deteste le mensonge,' *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* 9 April 2014, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/494792.html> (accessed 10 April 2014; It is worth noting that some supporters of Houphouët like Anaky Kobena, President of the political party *Mouvement des Forces d'Avenir* (MFA) became an Houphouëtiste (believing in his policy) only under political circumstances. He was not an heir or 'natural political son' of Houphouët. Therefore, he still says what he wants, whenever, wherever. This perhaps explains why he is often accused of being a danger for the cohesion Houphouëtists; Grah Mel, *La fin et la suite*, pp. 551-559.

<sup>133</sup> See Augustine Vidjannangny "La complexité de la question identitaire en Côte d'Ivoire" April 2011, available at <http://www.archipel.uqam.ca/4180/1/M12041.pdf> (accessed 4 April 2013). Houphouëtisme is his ruling style. Even after Houphouët's death, his successors formed the coalition of Houphouëtistes or Houphouëtists. Dr. Balla Kéita was known to be an official puppet of Houphouët, selling his policy to the Ivorian public, paraphrasing Houphouët several times in his speeches. Kéita also invented the *nanaism* concept in reference to Houphouët's nickname nana and was seen as an extremist because of the way he was fascinated by Houphouët's politics. He gave this speech at the conference at the cultural centre Jacques Aka of Bouaké (central Côte d'Ivoire on Saturday 27 July 1987.

<sup>134</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal rule in black Africa, prince, autocrat, prophet, tyrant*, University of California press, pp. 143- 152.

ruling style as “not only a presidential monarch and autocrat but above all, as a manager, a consummate juggler of political institutions.”<sup>135</sup> Of course one can argue that Houphouët mismanaged public finances, but he was the founder of political stability in Côte d’Ivoire following its independence, while most neighbouring countries faced repetitive coup d’états. In effect, Houphouët put in place an institution called the *Conseil National* (National Council) to anticipate issues that could create major crises or conflicts.<sup>136</sup>

Yet, despite the ‘labels,’ and allegations of mismanagement of public finances, Houphouët maintained political stability, and is remembered ‘fondly’ as a unique leader. Hence, while some have described Houphouët as ‘corrupt,’ others called him ‘dictator,’ ‘an autocrat,’ and simply a skillful ‘manager’ who successfully ‘juggled’ Côte d’Ivoire’s political institutions. Even Gbagbo expressed an appreciation of Houphouët’s leadership style during his 2000 election campaign. In particular, Gbagbo was impressed by the way Houphouët included different ethnic groups, but also managed to keep his Ministers dependent.<sup>137</sup>

Despite allegations of corruption, and while it was not always a rosy picture under Houphouët, people lived decently on their wages and his policy of inclusion worked. On September 1965, Houphouët declared that individuals who were uncertain about the continuation of his policy by the new elites who had a sense of responsibility and initiative, were ‘judging them so lightly,’ but he was wrong.<sup>138</sup> If Houphouët was still alive he would be asking, rightly or wrongly, about what happened to his country.

According to Victor Le Vine, a combination of “centralisation of power in Abidjan, the use of patronage and targeted equitable benefits in order to create a manageable size state

<sup>135</sup> Grah Mel 2003, *Le fulgurant destin d’une jeune proie*, pp. 512-515. Some authors like Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg describe Houphouët as an “autocrat.” Virginia Thompson describes Houphouët’s regime as “one man, one party government”, in Victor T. Le Vine, 2004, p.207.

<sup>136</sup> “Cette Côte d’Ivoire ne ressemble pas à la Côte d’Ivoire” available at <http://www.lynxtogo.info/oeil-du-lynx/afrique/2673-cette-l-cote-divoire-r-ne-ressemble-pas-a-la-cote-divoire-.html> (accessed 17 April 2013).

<sup>137</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 143-152.

<sup>138</sup> Diaby Foussény, “Les vrais héritiers de Félix-Houphouët-Boigny: Aimé Henri Konan Bédié et Alassane Ouattara,” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco23375.htm> (accessed 16 October 2014).

*bourgeoisie*, manipulation, co-opting of the opposition, close ties with France and ethnic balancing” or geopolitics contributed to Houphouët’s success.<sup>139</sup> It is worth noting that, for example at the social level, Côte d’Ivoire’s system of government under Houphouët made a real impact.

We have seen the emergence of a dominant class which was essentially composed of senior members and leaders fundamentally from the PDCI. According to Ahipeaud, they were senior managers of state-owned companies which represented 11.5% of the registered companies nationwide.<sup>140</sup> It was a success. Houphouët’s vision was to create an environment in which “ethnic groups and tribal instinct” could melt together through promotions based on his geopolitical policy. Under the Houphouët government, some members of the community found themselves in positions of responsibility and decision making in the country because of their ethnic groups. The policy aimed to establish a political and social elite taking into account the regions of the postcolonial state.<sup>141</sup>

Ahipeaud indicates that Houphouët came up with the idea during his early days as President of the RDA by 1952.<sup>142</sup> However, this strategic plan which was based entirely on paternalism and clientelism fell apart as the elites accumulated 45% of the revenues.<sup>143</sup>

While Houphouët was using the concept of geopolitics, one could argue that paternalism, clientelism, tribalism and nepotism were the best course of action for promotion within the PDCI, although he constantly denied it.<sup>144</sup> For example, as soon as he assumed office, Houphouët ensured, to some extent, the promotion of young people from his ethnic group,

<sup>139</sup> See also Victor T. Le Vine, *Politics in francophone Africa*, 2004, available at <http://books.google.com.au/books> (accessed 17 April 2013).

<sup>140</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p. 68.

<sup>141</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p.178.

<sup>142</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p.178.

<sup>143</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p. 86.

<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately in Africa and in Côte d’Ivoire in particular, it is more and more about a family affair. When it is not the son who gets a promotion, it is the brother, the daughter, the wife or the in-laws. After, follows the chaos. See also Tiemoko Coulibaly, ‘Cult of dead dictator: Ivory Coast democracy deferred,’ *Le Monde Diplomatique*,’ October 2000, available at <http://mondediplo.com/2000/10/08ivorycoast> (accessed 28 October 2013).

Baoulé. He was even quoted saying time and time again that when there is an opportunity for promotion, it is normal that relatives get first priority.<sup>145</sup>

For example, Jean Konan Banny, from the second generation (1960s) of Ivorian elites, was Minister of Defence and Houphouët's nephew. Out of the 16 Ministers from that generation under Houphouët, eight Ministers came specifically from the Baoulé ethnic group, which was Houphouët's. Four of those Ministers comprised of 2 Agny, 1 Abé, and 1 Apollo, which are part of the Akan sub-ethnic groups. Like the Baoulé ethnic group, those ethnic groups are related to each other. The remaining four Ministers comprised of 1 Bété, 1 Dioula, 1 Malinké, and 1 Sénoufo. (*See Appendix A for details of the generations of Ivorian Political Elites*).

According to Bayart:

In 1944, Houphouët-Boigny persuaded Governor Latrille to depose the chief of Indénié and to replace him with his own brother-in-law. Through the intermediary of his relative, he then became involved in the succession to the throne of the great Agny kingdom. Houphouët-Boigny continued to organise such unions and to manipulate his relations to increase his authority not only in Ivory Coast, but also in the rest of the region, going as far as Guinea, Liberia, Burkina Faso and Sénégal.<sup>146</sup>

As a brother-in-law of Amoakon Dihyé and great friend of André Latrille, Houphouët took advantage of his position to convince the Governor of Côte d'Ivoire André Latrille to nominate his brother-in-law as head of Indénié in southern Côte d'Ivoire and to dismiss the incumbent Essey Bonzou. Equally, Grah Mel states that Governor Latrille's principal argument was that the sacking of Essey Bonzou was based on 'morality.' It is evident that

<sup>145</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny L'épreuve du pouvoir* », pp.221-223. "See Olympic review" no 114, April 1977.

<sup>146</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 158; Today to follow what Houphouët has predicted regarding his heir, his nephew Augustin Abdoulaye Thiam, named after Houphouët's brother is the Governor of the district of Yamoussoukro and tribal chief.

Houphouët had fabricated false accusations against Bonzou, requesting Latrille to start an investigation and sack him.<sup>147</sup>

After much analysis, extensive reading, and listening to passionate Ivorian community members, I came to the realisation that in 1960, those who were on the rise in public life included Jean Konan Banny, Camille Alliali, Henri Konan Bédié, Aoussou Koffi, and Antoine Konan Kanga.<sup>148</sup> They are all from Houphouët's ethnic group. As Grah Mel suggests, Banny was Minister for defence, while Alliali and Bédié Koffi were respectively Ambassadors in Paris, Washington and Roma.<sup>149</sup> Kanga was central mayor of Abidjan which is composed of four districts. Among those four districts, two were headed by two Baoulé Delegates. Joseph Attoungbré was running the Adjamé district and Kouassi Lenoir was in charge of Treichville.<sup>150</sup>

In addition to this, Aoussou Koffi who was Minister of transport in 1986 and formerly CEO of the multinational airline *Air Afrique* was Houphouët's nephew.<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, Houphouët had declared he would never appoint any of his children nor nephews in the government cabinet.<sup>152</sup> Whether it is in politics or business, Houphouët's family is the most influential family in Côte d'Ivoire. For example, one of his sons Guillaume Houphouët has been prospering in business for many years, with the construction of the prestigious building called JECEDA in the Central Business District (CBD) of Abidjan, Plateau.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Grah Mel, 2003, pp. 441-444.

<sup>148</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" and "S" in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 29 June 2012; Interview with Respondent "M," Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 27 June 2012.

<sup>149</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L'épreuve du pouvoir*, p. 221; Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 144.

<sup>150</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L'épreuve du pouvoir*, pp.219-223.

<sup>151</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 201; AP News Archive, "President announces kidnapped Minister's return," 21 August 1987, available at <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1987/President-Announces-Kidnapped-Minister-s-Return/id-5f5865589ec49c2492ea882b7b7344fa> (accessed 17 June 2013).

<sup>152</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L'épreuve du pouvoir*, pp. 402-403.

<sup>153</sup> JECEDA was named after his three children Jean, Cécile and David; See *La Lettre du Continent*, "Ces familles qui règnent à Abidjan," no 664, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/LC-/pouvoirs-et-reseaux/politique/2013/07/31/ces-familles-qui-regnent-a-abidjan,107971686-ART>.

At least in this context, he ensured that Guillaume Houphouët stayed in the private sector, perhaps knowing that government jobs in Côte d'Ivoire were not well paid. Although his nephew Daouda Thiam was natural resources Adviser to the presidency in Côte d'Ivoire, other nephews are in the private sector. For example, Abdel Aziz continues his career with Nicotrans (Cars and Transportation) and Tidiane Thiam remained the Chief Executive of Prudential Insurance Company based in London until 1 June 2015.<sup>154</sup>

Like many post-independent countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Côte d'Ivoire under the leadership of Houphouët was characterised by some form of neo-patrimonialism and personal rule. Although in theory Houphouët's regime was expected to go ahead with the full development of the Ivorian institutions, in practice, Houphouët manipulated Ivorian resources, accumulated his fortune and consolidated his power. For the late Ivorian Writer and political Activist, Ahamadou Kourouma, Houphouët was a "dictator; a respectable, write-haired old man, grown ruddy, first of all by corruption and then by age and much sagacity."<sup>155</sup> Houphouët had dominated Ivorian politics until his death in 1993.

### **Clientelism and the Gon Case**

From 1960 to 1993, Houphouët treated selected family, the Gon from the north, very well by giving them ministerial portfolios or key public servants positions as a sign of recognition of their loyalty to him when he made his political debut - allowing him to win their ethnic votes. That was because Houphouët found help through patriarch Pelefero Gon Coulibaly who gave him full support during his national parliamentary life in 1960.<sup>156</sup>

As a very talented spiritual leader, patriarch Gon Coulibaly anticipated the triumph of the RDA ideology, while among many other ethnic groups, especially the Akan group, the RDA

<sup>154</sup> *La Lettre du Continent*, "Ces familles qui règnent à Abidjan," no. 664, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/LC-/pouvoirs-et-reseaux/politique/2013/07/31/ces-familles-qui-regnent-a-abidjan,107971686-ART>.

<sup>155</sup> In Carrol Coates 2007, *A Fictive History of Côte d'Ivoire: Kourouma and "Fouphouai,"* Research in African Literatures, 38.2, (Summer 2007), *Indiana University Press*, p. 124.

<sup>156</sup> See Grah Mel, 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny la fin et la suite*, p.223.



lacked support. Nonetheless, if the historical Korhogo meeting between Houphouët the political leader of the emancipation movement the RDA and the spiritual chief of the people from the north resulted in a pact between the two of them, - one could argue that it was to ensure the succession of his children and grandchildren to the throne in order to manage his territory, and most important guarantee their wellbeing through clientelism.<sup>157</sup>

Under the vigilant tutelage of the ‘Big Man,’ the Gon family became arguably the most influential family in the north. As one of the principal beneficiaries of Houphouët’s clientelism, they accumulated what Bayart calls wealth *par excellence*.<sup>158</sup> In his attempt not only to reconcile divided PDCI members of the Gon family who still have an enormous influence in the north of Côte d’Ivoire, but also to satisfy and increase his clientele, Houphouët revealed his strong connection with this family during one of his traditional meeting with his clients from northern Côte d’Ivoire:

I should like to remind the Gon family, whom I consider as my own, that, as with nobility, honour is in our blood. A nobleman neither insults nor is insulted. We should put an end to this sad state of affairs by forcing uncle Gon and nephew Gon to bury their differences, which have lasted too long already. The prefect of the *department* of Korhogo is delegated by the government to guarantee public order. Anything which might disturb the public order should be rooted out. I solemnly call upon these two political officers to inform their followers publicly that they have once and for all

<sup>157</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny la fin et la suite*, pp.579-588.

<sup>158</sup> Bruce Berman, “Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa,” *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013); Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa*, 1993, p.82.

buried their fratricidal struggles which, I repeat, do no service to the cause of peace in S noufo country.<sup>159</sup>

As is evident, the Gon family was quite dear to Houphou t. They held positions of power perceived as “positions of predation” since they took the opportunity to access goods, cash and labour<sup>160</sup> Bayart has revealed that:

The family of the canton chief are also bosses within the PDCI, and you know that the PDCI is the government which rules the world. The canton chief and his family take advantage of this to take your money when they come to take cattle, chicken and sheep – for independence. Here, in Zanguinasso and in other villages [...] they say that it is for the PDCI but you know it all goes to their homes in Kouto.<sup>161</sup>

Although this practice is not always well understood, it is well known. The following extract from other villagers confirms this statement:

The time of the whites is not completely over yet because the canton chief, the village chief of Kouto and the Party security of Kouto give us as much bother as the whites used to. With their traditional and their modern powers,

<sup>159</sup> It was in Houphou t’s best interest to personally intervene any time there was a conflict between members of the Gon Coulibaly. His last sentence of the speech summarised all. The simple fact of the matter is that the S noufo country was ‘dear to him because Gon provided him the ethnic votes needed going back to the 1950s; See Bayart, pp. 214-215; See also Richard Banegas, “C te d’Ivoire: Une guerre de la seconde ind pendance”? Refonder la coop ration fran aise sur les bris es du legs colonial, FASOPO, Fonds d’Analyse des Soci t s Politiques, Parisa, (n.d.), pp. 197-251, available at [http://www.fasopo.org/publications/legscolonial2\\_rib\\_1206.pdf](http://www.fasopo.org/publications/legscolonial2_rib_1206.pdf) (accessed 5 October 2013).

<sup>160</sup> The Gon family demonstrated how important their alliance with Houphou t was when he died, requesting his body to be transferred to the north for a traditional funeral; See Grah Mel 2010, p. 533.

<sup>161</sup> Bayart, pp. 76-77. Reports emerged that in order to offer senior public service positions to Gon’s family; Houphou t strategically orchestrated the professional training of the children like Coulibaly Lancine Gon and grandchildren of the patriarch, although he was also promoting the children of those who opposed him. Houphou t mentored Gon Coulibaly and financed his education in France and wedding. For example, for further analysis, see Sylvy Jaglin et Alain Dubresson, “Pouvoirs et cit s d’Afrique noire, d centralisation en question,”  ditions Karthala, 1993, p. 235, available at <http://books.google.com.au/> (accessed 3 May 2013).

they come and help themselves to whatever they want – chickens, cattle – on Independence Day.<sup>162</sup>

The Independence Day celebration included all types of cultural activities, lively performances, parades and other festivities organised by the local authorities. Since guests from Houphouët's political party needed to be fed, chickens and cattle were likely to be taken away from owners (no charge) for cooking on that day as part of the standard practice. The elites including the Gon family who thus could obtain for free chickens, sheep and cows never saw themselves constrained to pay as others. Despite being among the best paid civil servants, very often they did not pay for products and services.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the biography of Houphouët as the key player in the Côte d'Ivoire politics not only in the historical context, but also in the context of the "Big Man" theory including neo-patrimonialism, personal rule, clientelism, tribalism, nepotism and corruption in Côte d'Ivoire. As a traditional Akoué Chief, Houphouët learned a lot from the Akan traditions, which had clearly forged his character. Houphouët had taken the general interest into account in his work. Therefore, he had championed the interests of the Baoulé Akoué people that he was responsible for. Moreover, as Planter and SAA President, Houphouët had battled for Ivorian and African Planters' rights, and led him to politics. Houphouët became the Parliamentarian of the populations during the course of the independence, then their President after the independence of Côte d'Ivoire in 1960.

From the onset in 1960 until 1993, Côte d'Ivoire remained the territory of one man; Houphouët. Politically, as a neo-patrimonial ruler, Houphouët established a one-party state which eliminated the opposition through "manipulation and intimidation, keeping virtually

<sup>162</sup> Sylvie Jaglin et Alain Dubresson, "Pouvoirs et cités d'Afrique noire, décentralisation en question," éditions Karthala, 1993, p. 235, available at <http://books.google.com.au/> (accessed 3 May 2013).

control over Côte d'Ivoire."<sup>163</sup> In his view, "multi-party competition was not allowed in Côte d'Ivoire until the nation was fully initiated."<sup>164</sup>

Houphouët desired the total adherence of the Ivorian public to his political project of development. There is an argument that Houphouët was prepared to adopt a particular brutality. Houphouët began with persecution and smear campaign against anyone who was hostile to his personal power in order to properly position himself, forcing his opponents to dissolve their political parties to join only the PDCI.<sup>165</sup> Borrowing from his experience with the French Communist Party, Houphouët introduced the Stalinian notion of 'plots' to destroy potential political contenders. Houphouët had mentioned in his own words "I do not believe that some youth could harm by occult means."<sup>166</sup>

Some have characterised this approach as a way of handing himself absolute power, in a dictatorial fashion, which was derived from his unlimited ambition to become a supreme leader. It is understood that the first President had simply struggled to impose his development vision for Côte d'Ivoire, resulting in a historic legitimacy. His victory over his opponents, young and old guaranteed him numerous years of peace that he defined once, with full knowledge of the facts, as a prerequisite for durable development.<sup>167</sup>

Indeed, the development of the young nation became possible only with the participation of all Ivorians. Houphouët might be fully aware of the fact that a low national integration might constitute a specific handicap for his development policy. However, by intending to pursue

<sup>163</sup> Alex Thomsom, *An introduction to African politics*, p.125.

<sup>164</sup> Alex Thomsom, *An introduction to African politics*, p. 126.

<sup>165</sup> On the PDCI one-party ideology, see Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966) pp.37-45; James Colman and Carl Rosberg, *Political parties and National integration in tropical Africa*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) p. 65.

<sup>166</sup> Bayart 1996, *L'Illusion Identitaire*, Paris, fayard, p. 18. In Dele Ogunmola 2009, "Côte d'Ivoire: Building Peace Through a Federal Paragim" University of New England, NSW Australia, *Journal of Perspective Alternatives in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No.3, pp. 544-582.

<sup>167</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, *L'Epreuve du pouvoir*, p. 204.

and consolidate his development policy through personal rule, Houphouët went one step too far.

Therefore, the following chapter will further examine the issue of the 'African Big Man' to understand Houphouët's influence on the leadership style of his successors.

## CHAPTER 4: THE 'BIG MAN' TRADITION

This chapter will examine the characteristics of personal rule such as clientelism, nepotism, tribalism and corruption post-Houphouët's. It will argue that these characteristics still continue in contemporary Côte d'Ivoire under the ruling elites including Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara, five decades after independence. They take advantage of the post-Houphouët neo-patrimonialism system by using the state resources for personal enrichment and fail to distribute these public resources to large segments of the Ivorian population. For example, under the colonial rule, if you stole a needle you went to prison. Under the post-colonial system, leaders are the main instigators of embezzlement.

Henri Konan Bédié, the Speaker of the house became the new head of state in line with the Constitution but six years after Houphouët's death in 1993, the nation faced a pattern of crisis with the coup d'état in 1999, a calamitous election in 2000, and a rebellion in 2002. In 1994, Bédié and his intellectuals of the PDCI constructed the concept of *Ivoirité*, Ivorian-ness. This concept was meant to distinguish the foreigners from 'real Ivorians' but most importantly, to eliminate Alassane Ouattara from the Ivorian political race. In 1995, Bédié was elected with 96% of the votes. In 1999, there was political unrest leading to an army mutiny. The insurgent troops demanded the reinstatement of retired General Robert Guëi. Bédié appealed for foreign help, but when France appeared favourable towards Guëi, Bédié fled to exile in nearby Lomé, Togo, as he was ousted in a military coup. Coup d'état of Guëi started a turbulent time in Ivorian politics that never ended. Laurent Gbagbo was Houphouët's historical opponent who was elected as President in 2000 through balloting, but amid bloody riots against General Guëi, who interrupted the counting of votes.

According to his critics, Gbagbo had been completely perverted by his quest for power before being overthrown by the rebels from the north of Côte d'Ivoire backed by France. As a result, Alassane Ouattara became President in 2010. Prior to the presidency, a PDCI-RDA Congress

was held in October 1990, and the prime ministership was authorised. Ouattara became Prime Minister on 7 November, 1990. The use of ethnic prejudice had become the practice of all governments, from Bédié to Guéi, Gbagbo and Ouattara. Despite their ethnic and political differences, the successors of Houphouët carried on neo-patrimonialism, a system which they adopted and adapted from Houphouët, who set a dangerous precedent of neo-patrimonial rule. In the process, political and economic resources were used and allocated based on discriminatory preferences.

### **Governance under Bédié**

Aimé Henri Konan Bédié, the President of the National Assembly, succeeded the deceased President Houphouët-Boigny in accordance with the Constitution in 1993. Although Bédié won the subsequent 1995 elections with 96.44% of the vote, a comfortable but suspicious election margin, from the moment he replaced the first President, he engaged in high level of nepotism and corruption.<sup>1</sup>

He remained President until 24 December, 1999 when he was ousted in a coup d'état orchestrated by retired General Robert Guéi based on ethnicity. The ethnicity problem generated tension and ultimately caused violence and was mentioned by some residents of Côte d'Ivoire. Respondents from the younger generation who did not know much about Houphouët's politics made a connection between the crisis and ethnicity. According to 58% of respondents surveyed by the author for this thesis, ethnicity played a major role in the downfall of Bédié, which helped to deepen the Ivorian crisis.

For example, when asked about the role of ethnicity in the contemporary conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, respondent "K" stated that: "Each political figure that emerges takes power and rejects other ethnic groups. During Houphouët's term, the Baoulé ethnic group believed they

<sup>1</sup>The 96.44% win of the vote was suspicious, his critics calling it a brezhnevian total. See Charles Onana, 2012, p. 36

were above everyone. Now the Dioula people believe it is their turn.”<sup>2</sup> Respondent “O” also stated that “Bédié started the *Ivoirité* debate in 1994 when he proposed to define what it meant “to be Ivorian.” Nevertheless, beyond the economic context, multiparty triggered the emergence of politicians from diverse ethnic backgrounds who used hate speeches, distinguishing between original Ivorians and second class citizens.”<sup>3</sup> (See Appendix C for details of the 2012 Surveys and the type of question that was answered). In 2012 he continued as the Chairman of the PDCI-RDA, and thus remains in public life.

Born on 5 May, 1934 in Dadiékro in the district of Daoukro, Bédié went to study at the famous *Ecole Normale de Dabou* high school like many other well-known public figures. The school was at that time attended by students from Côte d’Ivoire and Dahomey.<sup>4</sup> In October 1953 he was in year 12. In his book on memories and political reflexions entitled ‘*Les chemins de ma vie*,’ Bédié himself makes reference to his time at the school in Dabou:

At Dabou high school, I was the student delegate. I was in conflict with the management which estimated that I was a troublemaker. Just before the exams, I was called in to attend the teachers’ meeting to let me know that I was not allowed to repeat if I failed because I founded ‘school within the school.’<sup>5</sup>

This suggests that like many politicians who have cut their teeth in student unions, Bédié demonstrated his ability to have a political influence within the school. As one of the leaders of student unions who played a key role in the anti-colonial movement, he was able to draw

<sup>2</sup> For example, see interview with Respondent “K” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 23 June 2012.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see interview with Respondent “O” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 May 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, la fin et La suite*, p. 287

<sup>5</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, la fin et La suite*, p. 289; The school was getting more concerned about Bédié’s influence over his schoolmates, so was therefore reluctant to keep him. (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2013).



members.<sup>6</sup> However, the school which was still controlled by the colonial power regarded Bédié's behaviour as inappropriate. As Grah Mel notes, although he was not a very well behaved student of the entire school, Bédié projected himself as one of the best students of the *Cours Normal de Guiglo*, secondary school, saying that he was almost the best in each subject and excellent in mathematics. He obtained his baccalaureate in science in 1954. Bédié went to France where he graduated with a bachelor of law degree at the University of Poitiers in France with a practicing certificate and two graduate diplomas in political economy. He went back to Côte d'Ivoire in 1958. He finished a PhD in economic science in 1969.<sup>7</sup>

As Houphouët promoted him, he became Côte d'Ivoire's first Ambassador to the United States and Canada. Within his diplomatic role, Bédié led Côte d'Ivoire at the international level and developed the financial and economic relationship with the North American continent. From 1966 to 1977, he was persistently Minister of Economy and Finances and was regarded as one of the key players of the so-called 'Ivorian miracle.'<sup>8</sup> For instance, as head of the Ivorian economy, Bédié created government owned companies to increase the level of development and boost the Ivorian economy. Although some mistakes have been made, it is certain that Côte d'Ivoire would never have achieved its development without the creation of government owned companies. To introduce small business to Ivorians, Bédié created the *Programme D'Action Commerciale*, Commercial Action Program (PAC) food retail shops especially in rural areas, providing jobs and goods and services to Ivorians.

<sup>6</sup> See Bédié's biography in the PDCI's official site available at [http://www.pdcirda.org/?page\\_id=39](http://www.pdcirda.org/?page_id=39) (accessed 13 October 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b , *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, p. 304; See Bédié's biography in the PDCI's official site available at [http://www.pdcirda.org/?page\\_id=39](http://www.pdcirda.org/?page_id=39) (accessed 13 October 2013).

<sup>8</sup> See more in Ahipeaud, pp. 94-98. Until, as Ahipeaud observes, "the miracle became a nightmare with the cocoa war that Houphouët could not win."

Furthermore, he took advantage of his contacts to attract many foreign investors in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>9</sup>

Bédié also facilitated the overseas training of a large number of young Ivorians, particularly in the U.S.A which was necessary to develop Côte d'Ivoire. Grah Mel, one of the authors who have made some of the most valuable contributions in the debate over Côte d'Ivoire's politics stresses that during his 12 years as the head of the Ministry of Finance, the young Minister worked hard to increase Côte d'Ivoire's business partners, negotiating contracts with key financial institutions, recruiting the best international and local experts to deal with government policy, which was carried out with real vigour at that time. For Grah Mel, Bédié had a vision for his country and having the right team to work on that vision was two of the essential actions of Henri Konan Bédié.<sup>10</sup> He adds that Bédié was at the epicentre of Ivorian development from 1966 to 1977.<sup>11</sup> In *Félix Houphouët-Boigny La fin et la suite*, he further addresses the issue the following way:

In any case, the economic policy choice which was made by Houphouët and Bédié has proven to be a sound policy principle at that time. It was the impressive development of the country under the two men which also allowed Côte d'Ivoire to survive during the turbulent years of crises while it was impossible to make additional progress.<sup>12</sup>

This suggested that Bédié was serious about advancing the nation's economic principles in an effective way and capable of transforming the nation. However, what could have been a brilliant start to Bédié's role in Cabinet was blighted by personal scandals.

<sup>9</sup> Ben Ismael, "Ivoirité et rattrapage: quel concept préférez-vous?" *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, 18 February 2013, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/451987.html> (accessed 21 May 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny La fin et la suite* p. 309.

<sup>11</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny La fin et la suite* p. 309.

<sup>12</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny la fin et la suite* (Abidjan- Paris: Editions du Cerap Karthala, 2010), p. 312 ; (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2013).

In 1975, Houphouët accused Bédié of gross mismanagement of funds regarding the Sodesucre programs in northern Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>13</sup> Bédié categorically denied those accusations, highlighting his honesty when dealing with public funds. As Minister of Economy and Finance, Bédié got caught up once again in the 'war against dishonest citizens' which was allegedly orchestrated by Houphouët in July 1977.<sup>14</sup> This was a result of the anti-corruption law which was passed in June 1977. Among those who were embroiled in the controversy that dominated the media for months, and were subsequently sacked were Abdoulaye Sawadogo (Minister of Agriculture) and Mohamed Diawara (Minister of Planning).<sup>15</sup>

It can be argued that while Houphouët's propaganda described the events of July 1977 as a method for cleaning up the political system, in reality this could be justified by the political reason rather than the economic efficacy in the Ivorian postcolonial state. As Ahipeaud rightly points out, through the July 1977 actions, Houphouët's aim was to demonstrate that he was the only person in charge in Côte d'Ivoire. I will discuss this further in chapter 5.

Bédié contributed to promoting private investment in black Africa, as a Special Advisor at the World Bank for the International Financial Society from 1978 to 1980. Bédié returned to Côte d'Ivoire in 1980 after serving overseas and won a parliamentary seat in his hometown of Daoukro. He also became President of the National Assembly for the first time in December 1980, and then in 1985 and 1990.<sup>16</sup> In 1993, Bédié became President of the Republic based on Article 11 of the Ivorian Constitution. He was peacefully overthrown in a coup d'état in

<sup>13</sup> See "L'endettement de la Côte d'Ivoire" available at <http://loidici.com/sujets%20de%20culture%20generale/cultureendettement.php>, (accessed 19 April 2013)

Sodesucre was a sugar company, part of one of those extremely costly programs that failed under Houphouët when his ambition was to make Côte d'Ivoire one of the most developed countries in Africa; Marcel Amondji 1984, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny et la Côte d'Ivoire: L'envers d'une Légende*, Karthala Editions, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp.81-88; For more about lack of economic transparency under Bédié see Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>15</sup> Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp.81-88.

<sup>16</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, *La fin et la suite*, 2010, p. 295.

1999. As indicated above, Bédié did have a PhD but during his political career, Bédié was accused of obtaining a fake PhD, while he was already Minister of Economy and Finance. The truth of the matter is that Bédié was just a victim of political slurs. Some critics assert that he wanted to obtain a PhD because he had a complex *vis-à-vis* Planning Minister Mohamed Diawara, another Houphouët's Cabinet Minister, who had more degrees than him.<sup>17</sup> Others assert that it was a better way of positioning himself for the presidency.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the case, it is worth making the point that during his career, Bédié faced early criticism, but Houphouët continued 'to support' him as a Minister.

Bédié's leadership marked an important stage in Côte d'Ivoire's history. As many of his critics said, Bédié governed the nation with a mix of arrogance, entitlement and improvisation.<sup>19</sup> He simply lost touch with reality and overestimated his capacity to tackle any political adversity like any African politician confronted in this type of situation would do.<sup>20</sup> Bédié failed to understand that compromise could constitute a key political strategy. By trying to be always the winner over everyone, Bédié ended up against the wall. Like his predecessor Houphouët, Bédié prioritised personal ambition and his relationship with Paris over Côte d'Ivoire's national interests. To achieve that, he spent most of his career being surrounded by French experts who managed his portfolios.<sup>21</sup>

For example as Finance Minister, he reportedly recruited a dozen French finance experts, a plan very much appreciated by Houphouët.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, as Bonnie has indicated, in his

<sup>17</sup> His critics include Houphouët's former Advisor Jacques Baulin who has claimed he has easy access to Houphouët and was constantly listening to him; See Jacques Baulin 1989, *La succession d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Paris: Eurofar Press, p.67; Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 301; Among Bédié's critics, there is Jacques Baulin; See Jacques Baulin, 1989, *La Succession d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Paris: Eurafor-Press, p. 44; See also Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, 2010, p. 299.

<sup>18</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, la fin et La suite, pp. 293-304.

<sup>19</sup> Read Albert Bourgi, "Bédié, la chute: le roi est nu," *Jeune Afrique*, article published on 22 December 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Read Albert Bourgi, "Bédié la chute: le roi est nu," *Jeune Afrique*, article published on 22 December 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Read Albert Bourgi, "Bédié la chute: le roi est nu," *Jeune Afrique*, article published on 22 December 2009. pp. 31-40.

<sup>22</sup> Read Albert Bourgi, "Bédié la chute: le roi est nu," *Jeune Afrique*, article published on 22 December 2009. . pp. 31-40.

role as Finance Minister, he avoided transparency regarding management of public funds. Since he became the sole agent responsible for the operation of nation's budget under decree 67-575 signed by Houphouët in 1967, he had budgetary control over all state accounts, enabling the "transfer of defects resulting from misappropriation of these accounts to the balance of State's *Budget Général de Fonctionnement* (BGF)."<sup>23</sup> As President, clientelism and widespread corruption and violence were back on the agenda under Bédié. The only winners were the PDCI elites, and essentially Bédié the leader of the party and his close allies. His government was tainted by repetitive major scandals. One of the biggest scandals occurred at the Ivorian Ministry of Health.

His critics label Bédié an unpopular leader who accumulated mountains of debt and introduced the concept of *Ivoirité*, although he claimed the concept was solely designed to create a cultural of unity among all the people living in Côte d'Ivoire. Under Bédié's regime, 18 billion CFA Francs (FF 180 million, 27.4 million EUR) which represented 38% of aid money from the European Union made available to improve health services was misused. This prejudiced cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and the European Union in the field of International Relations. An EU audit revealed that the ministry of Health lost this amount to an act of fraud. Some of the items which were indicated in the reports have not been delivered. The auditors estimated that when the delivery actually happened in some cases, documented transactions were problematic because the stakeholders have been overcharged.<sup>24</sup> In other words, false invoices were created for goods and services that have never been rendered and fees were grossly exaggerated. For example, a baby scale which in

<sup>23</sup> Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>24</sup> See "l'endettement de la Côte d'Ivoire" available at <http://loidici.com/sujets%20de%20culture%20generale/cultureendettement.php> (accessed 2 April 2013).

reality cost 20,000 CFA has been overcharged 1,300,000 CFA.<sup>25</sup> It would be naïve to underestimate how Bédié's regime operated as a kleptocratic state.<sup>26</sup>

This serves as a clear indication of the 'politics of the belly' in an environment where corruption, embezzlement and abuse of power was the norm and rich and poor alike were required to network, although some participants involved in the process got more while other participants got less.<sup>27</sup> This highlighted a shameful part of Bédié's political career. Given the consistency of the facts presented above, it is not an exaggerated proposition to indicate that corruption was deep rooted under Bédié. One can argue that during his presidency, Bédié failed to reform the clientelism system which was established by Houphouët four decades before him, without realising that things needed to be changed. Instead, bad governance and large-scale corruption strongly dominated his time in office.<sup>28</sup> Faced with a succession of financial scandals which have rocked the nation, the IMF and the World Bank cancelled their financial assistance to Côte d'Ivoire in late 1998. Accordingly, it has increased the level of the clientelism system crisis.<sup>29</sup>

As Conte rightly points out, while Bédié sought to update the old clientelism created by Houphouët, he ended up with an "impoverished clientelism." In his analysis of changes to the Bretton Woods institutions models and how they impacted the nation's development socially, economically and politically, Conte writes:

By attempting to renew the former clientelism system in spite of its collapse, Bédié created a new manifestation of this system, "impoverished clientelism." To offset the large reduction of amount of rent available for

<sup>25</sup> During his 6 years in office, there were allegations of mismanagement and corruption and he relied on ethnicity to service in a very difficult economic environment.

<sup>26</sup> Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, *The rise and decline of the Zairian state*, 1985, p.183.

<sup>27</sup> Cameroon proverb cited in *The state in Africa* by Jean-François Bayart, p. 25; Also see, Michael Bratton and van de Walle, p.xviii.

<sup>28</sup> Bernard Conte, "Côte d'Ivoire: clientelism, adjustment and conflict," available at [http://www.miis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05\\_3.pdf](http://www.miis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05_3.pdf) (accessed 4 May 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

clientelist distribution, Konan Bédié tried to use xenophobia to unite the ethnic groups of the south. The widening of the divide between the Northern and Southern areas of the country that followed and the bad governance inexorably led to the military take over.<sup>30</sup>

Elements such as poor mechanism of rent distribution through public expenditure, ineluctably triggers failure of the clientelist model. The model can potentially function but impoverished when the rent distribution is confiscated by an ethnic minority group or state elites despite lack of resources during economic crisis. Ultimately, it creates impoverished clientelism. Since 1996, a slow growth led to progressive reduction of the rent in Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, taking into account the constraints linked to the adjustment programs, its volume was insufficient to satisfy the high demand. Towards the end of 1998, the international financial institutions put financial rates on hold due to bad governance and corruption, which aggravated the crisis of the rent distribution system. Although the promotion of *Ivoirité* allowed him to exclude people from the north from rent distribution, Bédié attempted to continue with the clientelist system despite its disapproval. Consequently, Bédié impoverished the nation. When he left office, the external debt was estimated at 6.246 billion CFA and an internal debt around 820 billion CFA.<sup>31</sup>

Côte d'Ivoire's politics was predominantly dominated by the PDCI leaders, from the Akan ethnic group, who promoted "Unity within diversity" and single-party politics.<sup>32</sup> Both Houphouët and Bédié monopolised Ivorian politics for almost four decades.<sup>33</sup> Since they were specifically from the Baoulé ethnic group, this was called the *Baoulisation* of Ivorian

<sup>30</sup> Bernard Conte, "Côte d'Ivoire: clientelism, adjustment and conflict," available at [http://www.miiis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05\\_3.pdf](http://www.miiis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05_3.pdf) (accessed 4 May 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Bernard Conte 2005, "Côte d'Ivoire: Clientelism, Adjustment and Conflict," Monterey Institute of International Studies, available at [http://www.miiis.edu/system/files/media/TI05\\_3.pdf](http://www.miiis.edu/system/files/media/TI05_3.pdf) (accessed 2 November 2014).

<sup>32</sup> Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>33</sup> Houphouët and Bédié held the presidency for 39 years.

politics. Shortly after his ascension to the highest office in 1993, Bédié began by favouring people from his own ethnic group, the Baoulé, initiating a process of *Baoulisation* of state institutions. Moreover, Bédié aimed to establish a more favourable ethnic group among the military forces. Early October 1995 and after his first election victory, Bédié initiated a campaign to sack all high-ranking officers who had close ties with Ouattara and were promoted when Ouattara was Prime Minister.

Ultimately, they were sidelined. Bédié only promoted officers from his Baoulé ethnic group to the high-ranking roles in order to guarantee his own security, but this strategy backfired as this did not increase his popularity. When he lost their support under enormous pressure from the northerners, he used the rhetoric of *Ivoirité* supposedly favouring no group, as a way to foment and legitimise his ascension to power. However, this also did not increase his popularity with the majority of people living in Côte d'Ivoire. First and foremost, there was an ethnic grievance stemming from Baoulé favouritism. In addition, there was a general decline in status of armed forces. Finally, there was a misunderstanding between his camp and military officers from the north and the west as well as a claim by impoverished and unpaid officers. Subsequently, a combination of these issues also triggered the 1999 coup d'état.<sup>34</sup> As leader, Bédié lost not only support within his own political party, the PDCI-RDA, but also the Student Federation of Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI) and other Student Unions.<sup>35</sup>

It needs to be remembered that PDCI-RDA under Bédié failed to learn from previous mistakes. A succession of policy mishaps, coupled with wrong choices and poor policy implementation on health, education and immigration had damaged the PDCI-RDA.<sup>36</sup> Understandably, it was hard to envisage Ivorian voters supporting Bédié at the 2000 elections, if he was not ousted in the 1999 coup d'état.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard Conte, "Côte d'Ivoire: clientelism, adjustment and conflict," available at [http://www.miis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05\\_3.pdf](http://www.miis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05_3.pdf) (accessed 4 May 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Ahipeaud, pp. 151-159.

<sup>36</sup> Ahipeaud, pp. 151-159.



According to Bédié's followers, the former President had an opinion on the ethnic state of his country. They have argued that with over sixty ethnic groups, all small in size, Bédié believed that it was impossible to have one group dominating another or forming a state of their own. Therefore he attempted to incorporate all ethnic groups equally, although he began by favouring the Baoulé people. For his supporters, Bédié firmly believed that Côte d'Ivoire had no ancient national culture but rather an emerging culture that incorporated all ethnicities within the country. Bédié linked the concept of *Ivoirité* to his nation's culture by saying: "The birth of *Ivoirité* after all" he concludes "will make an impact."<sup>37</sup>

However, Bédié got into hot water over *Ivoirité* when the question of identity became problematic nationwide.<sup>38</sup> This concept was interpreted as exclusive and ultranationalist.<sup>39</sup> His critics maintain that in reality, the aim of *Ivoirité*, a concept that separated 'true Ivorians' from foreigners and their children, was to sideline his rival Ouattara, in order to stop him from contesting the 1995 first 'free' presidential election<sup>40</sup> – although Bédié initially did understand that Ouattara was a force to be reckoned with. To achieve such a goal, Bédié adopted xenophobic measures. For example, Bédié curtailed a new electoral code which stated that "the President elect must be born of Ivorian parents, and must have resided in Côte d'Ivoire for five years prior to the elections."<sup>41</sup> These xenophobic measures were also articulated in constitutional amendments. The new amendments of Article 49 of the Constitution, made "a double nationality" illegal. This prevented Ouattara from participating in the 1995 elections because his parents were from Burkina Faso and he also held a Burkinabe passport. The infamous Article 49 states that to become President, the candidate

<sup>37</sup> Read Albert Bourgi, "Bédié, la chute: le roi est nu," *Jeune Afrique*, 22 December 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>39</sup> See Séraphin Prao's article "Les Ivoiriens ont-ils trahi la Côte d'Ivoire?" available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco17970.htm> (accessed 23 May 2013)

<sup>40</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire le coup d'état*, Editions Duboiris, pp. 31-40.

<sup>41</sup> Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Lindsay Whitfield 2009, *Turning points in African democracy*, Suffolk, UK, James Currey, p. 39.

must be born in Côte d'Ivoire, and both his parents must also be born in Côte d'Ivoire, despite the fact that Ouattara was Houphouët's first and only Prime Minister for three years.<sup>42</sup> Bédié attempted to use some of Houphouët's skills such as personalisation of power. Further, he spent a great deal of time overseas, in France predominantly, while his compatriots were busy working out how to resolve the serious socio-economic crisis they were facing back home.<sup>43</sup> According to his critics, Bédié's trips abroad were a direct reflection of his arrogance by portraying to the world that he was in control of a stable government back home.<sup>44</sup> In effect, it has been reported that the concept of *Ivoirité* which carries the notion of exclusion undermined national unity creating tension among religious and ethnic groups was introduced by Bédié. Although he allegedly tried to promote a new generation of Ivoirians, Bédié failed to enhance the national alliance policy initiated by his predecessor.<sup>45</sup>

In short, Bédié was an ultra-nationalist - taking a hard line on immigration.<sup>46</sup> In effect, he played the nationality card to justify his legitimacy. Bédié's politics was not a reflection of compromise and common sense. He was a man who intended to impose his convictions, rather than negotiating. However, his presidency was a continuation of the 'politics of the belly' by what Ahipeaud calls the generation of 'the founding fathers' of the PDCI but also Bédié's own generation based on clientelism, nepotism and corruption.<sup>47</sup> It was the classic "continuity of the conflicts of the past."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Jean-Claude Meledje 2011, "The Separation of ethnicity and elections in Africa: The case for Côte d'Ivoire" Paper presented at the 34<sup>th</sup> AFSAAP conference, Adelaide Australia, Flinders University, available at <http://afsaap.org.au/assets/Meledje.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Albert Bourgui, "Bédié la chute: le roi nu" (*Jeune Afrique*, Spécial Série, No 2, 2000), available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAHS02p038-045.xml0/> (accessed 8 June 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Albert Bourgui, "Bédié la chute: le roi nu" (*Jeune Afrique*, Spécial Série, No 2, 2000), available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAHS02p038-045.xml0/> (accessed 8 June 2013).

<sup>46</sup> See "They kill them like it was nothing" Human Rights Watch, October 2011, available at [www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cdi1011WebUpload.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cdi1011WebUpload.pdf) (accessed 12 April 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, p. 153. Taking advantage of the situation of patriarch, Bédié the President who has been ousted by the December 1999 coup d'état, but has played a crucial role for the election of Ouattara, his children hold senior roles in the coalition government; One of the persons who also took advantage of the system is Bédié's son Jean-Luc Bédié who is Special Advisor of Ouattara for finance and economics. Further, his

Bédié will be most remembered as the first Ivorian President overthrown in a coup d'état. According to his critics, up until his last days as President, Bédié refused to sit down with a group of frustrated soldiers led by General Guëi who were seeking the freedom of the *Rassemblement Démocratique des Republicains* (RDR) political prisoners who were reformists of the PDCI government led by Bédié. The RDR emerged when the PDCI split into two in 1994, with Ouattara leading the RDR and Bédié remaining as Head of the PDCI. For others, Bédié was sidelined because of *Ivoirité*, the Ivorian style of ultra-nationalism. Rightly or wrongly, these arguments might justify why the 1999 coup d'état was probable. This coup d'état "marked the end of the first part of the reestablishment of Ivorian ultra-nationalism."<sup>49</sup>

The economic and social frustrations under Bédié's presidency made the 1999 coup d'état unsurprising. In 1995, as a military Chief, Guëi objected to support Bédié's attempt to exclude Ouattara from the 1995 elections. To make matters worse, Guëi declined sending his troops to silence Bédié's opposition. Consequently, Bédié demoted Guëi as Head of the military. In 1997, Bédié dismissed Guëi altogether on the grounds that he was plotting a coup d'état, although this accusation cannot be proved. There was no indication that Guëi initiated the 1999 coup d'état himself; Guëi was apparently asked by young soldiers who were frustrated about their decreased wages to join them. However, there was an indication that the military overthrew the Bédié's government in an almost bloodless coup d'état on 24 December 1999.

daughter Lucette Bédié is Deputy General Manager at Société Des Palaces de Cocody (SDPC) which manages the nation's real estate. His other son Patrick Bédié has a career in cocoa and coffee trade. As a Head of the Africa division for the Swiss trade company Novotel Commodities, he has expended his business activities in the field of rice import as many Ivorians told me in Abidjan. See for example *La Lettre du Continent*, "Ces familles qui règnent à Abidjan," no 664, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/LC-/pouvoirs-et-reseaux/politique/2013/07/31/ces-familles-qui-regnent-a-abidjan,107971686-ART>.

<sup>48</sup>Ahipeaud, p. 103.

<sup>49</sup>Ahipeaud 2009, p. 154.

Guëi promised to “sweep the house clean” in other words, end corruption, take steps towards the politics of inclusion and hold democratic and transparent elections. However, within ten months, Guëi had transformed himself into another power-hungry civilian politician. Guëi promoted Bédié’s xenophobic policies, and became as unpopular as Bédié, which contributed to the election of Laurent Gbagbo in 2000.

### **The Rise and Painful Decline of Laurent Gbagbo**

Laurent Gbagbo was the candidate for hope and change, who was effective at promoting a new Côte d’Ivoire and promising hope for democracy, but his eleven years in office were not what was expected. He took office in 2000, defeating General Robert Guëi in his own words in a “calamitous circumstance,” but overall, the former President Gbagbo failed to deliver.<sup>50</sup> Despite taking office from 2000-2011, Gbagbo failed to give Côte d’Ivoire new heart in one of its blackest periods.

Gbagbo was an intellectual desperate to lead the nation, consistently and firmly opposed to Houphouët through his own political party of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI).<sup>51</sup> To him:

When you accept to be a member of a cabinet, you work with, alongside and under the orders of the head of the government. At least, this is my opinion. How would I have, by hypothesis, accepted to be a Minister in Houphouët-Boigny’s government knowing that I always claim to disagree with Houphouët-Boigny’s policy and that I engage in the fight against single party-rule?<sup>52</sup>

Laurent Gbagbo never idolised nor admired Houphouët. Among the political figures of Houphouët’s generation, the person that inspired Gbagbo the most when contemplating

<sup>50</sup> See Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne: de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Collection Passerelle, Frat mat éditions, p. 186. Gbagbo was elected on 26 October 2000 but violent protests took place, resulting in a large number of deaths; Grah Mel, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny la fin et la suite* (Abidjan-Paris: Editions du Cerap Karthala, 2010), p. 312.

<sup>51</sup> The FPI is a left-wing party, associated with the French Socialist party.

<sup>52</sup> *Laurent Gbagbo, Histoire d’un retour*, in Grah Mel, p. 350.

politics was President Léopold Sédar Senghor from Sénégal, stating that: “One day, I told my music professor who was also my friend, Father Boitton: the one that I like the most, is Senghor. I always wanted to be like him: be educated and to become President.”<sup>53</sup> Gbagbo was educated at the Saint Dominique Savio school of Gnagnoa from 1958 to 1962. He took interest in African politics and he discovered the readings of the catholic weekly *Afrique Nouvelle*. Gbagbo was born in 1945 in a small village called Mama in the West in the middle of the cocoa region, and from the minority Bété ethnic group.<sup>54</sup> He argued the Bété had been marginalised by Houphouët.<sup>55</sup> Gbagbo became aware of the impact of economic and social development on his country’s national sovereignty.<sup>56</sup>

Interestingly, Gbagbo recalls his humble origin, as a son of a policeman - stressing that while his father was in prison at a time when he was confronted with serious financial problems, and the whole family could not afford anything, he was tempted to leave school earlier in order to earn a living by becoming a private school teacher to look after his family.<sup>57</sup> Realising the potential for a better future ahead with a university degree, Gbagbo preferred to work hard to get his baccalaureate, which would increase his chance of obtaining a scholarship for tertiary education.<sup>58</sup>

Gbagbo obtained his baccalaureate in philosophy at the Cocody High School in Abidjan in 1965. When he started his tertiary education in September 1965, he opted to join the university faction movements opposed to Houphouët’s PDCI. Gbagbo got elected as

<sup>53</sup> See *Le président Laurent Gbagbo, une vie de combat*, p. 24; Also Simone Ehivet Gbagbo in *Paroles d’honneur*. This information was reported by Grah Mel in p. 350.

<sup>54</sup> Bété are described as ‘primitive’ amid their like of access to the modern part of the nation; See Aristide Zolberg, *Creating political order, the party-states of West Africa*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1966), p. 69; See Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), p. 137.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne: de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, (Abidjan : Frat mat éditions, Mars 2013), p. 59.

<sup>56</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d’Ivoire: le coup d’état*, (Paris: Editions Dubois, 2011), pp. 78-95; Douglas Zormelo, November 1996, ‘Is Aid conditionality consistent with national sovereignty?’ Overseas Development Institute, (ODI), Portland House, London.

<sup>57</sup> Grah Mel, 2010, p.352.

<sup>58</sup> Grah Mel, 2010, p.352.

President of the *Union Nationale des élèves et Etudiants de Côte d'Ivoire*, National Union for Ivorian Students (UNEECI) during the July 1968 Congress. When Houphouët came to the realisation that Gbagbo was the most popular opponent, he made an effort to co-opt Gbagbo. Houphouët's goal was to make Gbagbo the PDCI candidate, but fell short of executing his recruitment strategy. That was mainly because, while all senior members of the PDCI at that time were logically close to Houphouët, Gbagbo never had a close relationship with them, apart from clashes of ideas. Therefore, in order to prevent conflictual relations with his potential colleagues, Gbagbo did not see the need to be co-opted by Houphouët. As opposition leader, Gbagbo had been driven underground for thirty years and never accepted a personal ministerial post from Houphouët or Bédié. For him, they were governments of thieves, and it is true that he had kept his word during his time in opposition. Having said that, one should never underestimate the use of this powerful and predominantly successful mechanism of co-opting by Houphouët, as Bayart rightly stresses:

Moreover, the head of State reiterated his desire to give 'the youth a role in the exercise of power. The leaders of the Students and Pupils Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MEECI), which had replaced UNEECI in 1969 and which had succeeded in camouflaging students grudges), reached the highest levels in the party. In the following years, the application of a strict policy of economic austerity, the prospect of presidential succession, and the recurring social unrest, has not put an end to the co-optation system.<sup>59</sup>

While only a few Ivorians resisted total co-optation or what Bayart has called 'the reciprocal assimilation of elites' (Gbagbo was an obvious example), many of them were engaged in cohabitation with Houphouët's government.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, politics in Côte d'Ivoire since

<sup>59</sup> Jean-François Bayart, p. 184.

<sup>60</sup> In Adebayo Williams 1996, *Literature in the Time of Tyranny: African Writers and the Crisis of Government*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No 2, pp. 349-366.

the 1960s has also been notorious for its brutality. Leaders and members of dissident organisations were sent to prison or killed for their beliefs. Even today, it is still dangerous and can be brutal. Gbagbo's account is significant in this respect:

During the 1968 UNEECI congress, President Houphouët's allies were completely sidelined for the presidency role. Unhappy, the President of the Republic dissolved the UNEECI in July 1968 and created at the beginning of the following academic year, the Students and Pupils Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MEECI) which is a sub-section of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI-RDA). Aware that the student movement became a sub-section of the single-party, we started an anger strike to stop its creation. Naturally, we lost. What is a student strike compared to a political force? Nothing at all! We were beaten and sent to Akouédo military camp where we spent 15 days.<sup>61</sup>

Gbagbo earned a bachelor degree in history at the University of Abidjan in 1969 after a disturbing year. Gbagbo was among 400 students who were in a detention centre at the Akouédo army base after a rally on the university campus, but those delicate moments contributed to his prestige and boosted his popularity. He became a history teacher at the Cocody High School in 1970.<sup>62</sup> As a researcher at the African Institute of History, Art and Archaeology (IHAAA) from 1974, Gbagbo also obtained a Masters degree in history at the Sorbonne University in Paris, where he joined the clandestine communist organisation, *Cellule Fondamentale* (fundamental Branch), (CF). This was to be the beginning of Gbagbo's political engagement. Gbagbo also finished a PhD in history at Paris Didérot University in 1979.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Charles Onana 2011, *Côte d'Ivoire : le coup d'état*, (Paris: Editions Duboiris, 2011), pp. 78-95.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Onana 2011, *Côte d'Ivoire : le coup d'état*, (Paris: Editions Duboiris, p.353.

<sup>63</sup>Grah Mel 2010 b, *La fin et la suite*, p. 366.

As member of the National Syndicate for Tertiary Education Research (SYNARESS), Gbagbo took part in a number of education protests in 1982. Although he spent 15 months in detention at the military camp of Bouaké, Gbagbo's war against anti-democracy to end One-Party Rule in Côte d'Ivoire continued. However, under enormous pressure from the powerful regime of Houphouët, Gbagbo went underground.<sup>64</sup> As a result, in March 1982, he formed the FPI, a revolutionary party at a friend's apartment with Simone Ehivet who would later become his wife with the significant task of holding Houphouët's government to account. Nevertheless, Gbagbo was forced into exile in France in 1985.<sup>65</sup>

There is a report that Houphouët was 'serious' about drawing a genuine line in the sand over his political fight with Gbagbo and moving on. Houphouët showed it was time to end the intensity of the political battles, declaring that the era of division was over. According to this report, Houphouët totally 'forgave' Gbagbo who was his chief political opponent, stating that "the tree does not get angry at the bird."<sup>66</sup> It is an open secret that Houphouët preferred to keep a close eye on Gbagbo, close to him in Abidjan rather than allowing him to freely move around overseas in Paris. Subsequently, Gbagbo returned to Côte d'Ivoire on 13 September, 1988. The FPI was officially created on the weekend of 19-20 November 1988 in Dabou, in the south of Côte d'Ivoire. Two years later, Laurent Gbagbo contested the October 1990 presidential elections.<sup>67</sup>

As the only candidate who ran against Houphouët, Gbagbo won 18.3% of the votes. He lost the first multiparty elections, but won a seat in the National Assembly. On 25 October, 1990, Houphouët was re-elected for the seventh time. On 18 February, 1992, government forces

<sup>64</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire: le coup d'état*, éditions Duboiris, pp. 78-95.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne, de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat mat éditions, p.183.

<sup>66</sup> Slate Afrique, *Faut-il passer par la case prison pour devenir Président?*, available at <http://www.slateafrique.com/101319/politique-presidents-africains-passage-case-prison-obligatoire> (accessed 20 October 2013).

<sup>67</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *La fin et la suite*, p. 390.



severely suppressed a huge protest organised by the opposition over better living and working conditions. Gbagbo was arrested, jailed and sentenced to two years on 6 March, 1992 along with his wife Simone and more than 300 other colleagues when Ouattara was Prime Minister. Gbagbo was freed after six months when the Houphouët government passed an amnesty for the detainees, a proceeding that took everyone by surprise. To achieve this, Houphouët authorised his Justice Minister, Jacqueline Lohouès-Oble, who was also in favour of an amnesty, to debate the bill of amnesty in parliament. It was argued that for the first time ever, Houphouët was paying more attention to the debate and very carefully listening to what he was about to sign and to understand all its implications.<sup>68</sup>

According to Gbagbo, Houphouët once famously said *hélas! tu me ressembles*, stressing that they both had a lot of things in common. If you believe him, this confidence suggests that Houphouët might have had a strong connection with this ambitious, charming and deeply educated young Gbagbo.<sup>69</sup>

For Houphouët, the amnesty law had the power to totally clear the names and exonerate the persons including Gbagbo who were under suspicion. It was a way to ultimately forget about what happened, put the past behind and move on. This seemed convenient for detainees who were only hoping to start new public lives, but in reality, the amnesty law was politically motivated and was a deliberate attempt to tarnish their reputations. Yet again, it was a routine for Houphouët to free all detainees, put pressure on them and reinforce his regime.

Following the death of Houphouët in 1993 and accession of Bédié to the presidency, Gbagbo called for an amendment of the electoral code for the next general elections of 1995. Moreover, he revoked foreigners' right to vote, as well as the establishment of the minimum age for voting at 18 years. In 1994, the parliament adopted a new election code, making it

<sup>68</sup>Grah Mel 2010 b, *La fin et la suite*, p. 392.

<sup>69</sup>Grah Mel 2010 b, *La fin et la suite*, pp. 392-393.

harder for the opposition to contest elections. In 1995, as a leader of the opposition, Gbagbo announced that the government could not be trusted to organise free elections and urged a boycott of the 1995 elections due to the new electoral code. However, the new code favoured Bédié a ‘sham presidential election’ that was won by Bédié on 22 October, 1995, as unique candidate. Nonetheless, in the long-term the boycott progressively facilitated the instauration of democratic institutions such as the Independent Electoral Commission. From 1995 to 2000, despite the violence repressions of the Bédié and Guëi governments, Gbagbo advocated for a peaceful transition to democracy through the so-called formula of “let us sit down and talk.” In 2000, the FPI nominated Gbagbo as a presidential candidate. Gbagbo became President in 2000 after his controversial win over Robert Guëi on 22 October. The 2000 electoral struggle led to violence among political factions.<sup>70</sup>

During the 22 October 2000 presidential elections, a controversial Supreme Court decision disqualified 14 of 19 candidates including Ouattara. He was disqualified on citizenship grounds, in other words, on *Ivoirité*. Bédié was disqualified for not providing a proper medical certificate. Therefore, only two serious candidates the incumbent President Guëi and the FPI candidate Gbagbo were left to vie. Ouattara’s allies accused Gbagbo of flirting with *Ivoirité*, a populist concept designed to marginalise many Ivorians from the north but also those who were originally from neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso or Mali.

Results clearly showed Gbagbo to be leading in the polls, but Guëi dissolved the National Electoral Commission and declared himself winner. Before the 2000 elections, Gbagbo had warned that if the elections were marked by frauds, his supporters would take to the streets and protest. In his press conference shortly after Guëi claimed victory, Gbagbo said, “I

<sup>70</sup> According to Hofnung, several people died. As cited in page 186.

demand that in every town and every neighbourhood, Ivorian patriots take to the streets until their rights are recognised and until Guéi backs off.”<sup>71</sup>

In fact, on 24 October, 2000, tens of thousands of Gbagbo’s allies did rise up when Guéi attempted to rig the elections. Gbagbo’s principal supporters came principally from his minority Bété ethnic group, joined by students from the powerful students union (FESCI), small businessmen and young Ivoirians.<sup>72</sup>

Guéi’s forces opened fire on the demonstrators. On 25 October, 2000, Guéi fled the country after the military and police stopped supporting him and Gbagbo declared himself President, but with only 37% of eligible voters cast ballot. Ouattara’s political party, the RDR, which is mainly composed of Dioula or northerners from Malinké origin and Sénoufo, boycotted the legislative elections, sparking more street protests.<sup>73</sup>

Since the legitimacy of the 2000 elections was questionable, the transition was marred by violence with RDR supporters demanding fresh elections. Continuing protests and clashes with the police widened the mistrust. Most importantly, it deepened the ethnic divisions between Bété and Dioula as well as the regional divisions between north and south and led to a coup d’état attempt on 7 January, 2001. The coup d’état attempt against Gbagbo further undermined Côte d’Ivoire’s reputation of political stability.<sup>74</sup>

With a very low participation at the 2000 elections, Gbagbo knew he was not a legitimately elected President. Therefore, he embraced a reconciliation process. In March 2001, Gbagbo

<sup>71</sup>New racism :The Political manipulation of ethnicity in Côte d’Ivoire, Human Rights Watch, Vol. 13, No. 6 (A), August 2001, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> Côte d’Ivoire: Ouattara face au malaise étudiant, *Jeune Afrique*, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20130517154146/front-populaire-ivoirien-reforme-alassane-ouattara-fpicote-d-ivoire-alassane-ouattara-face-au-malaise-etudiant.html> (accessed 20 May 2013).

FESCI has always been at the centre of Côte d’Ivoire politics and a key ally of Gbagbo well before taking office in 2000 and supported him for a decade. See also Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne, de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat mat éditions, p. 61.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne, de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, (Abidjan: Frat mat éditions, March 2012), p.186.

<sup>74</sup>Jessica Kohler 2003, “From Miraculous to Disaster: The Côte d’Ivoire in Crisis” Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, (CASIN), available at <http://www.casin.ch/web/pdf/cotedivoire/pdf> (accessed 28 October 2014).

and Ouattara met and agreed to take steps towards reconciliation. In October 2001, Gbagbo set up a National Reconciliation Forum where all political actors including Guëi attempted to put their political differences behind and focus on the best interests of the nation. In August 2002, Ouattara had been delivered a certificate of nationality and his party, the RDR entered government. The RDR received four ministerial posts in the new Gbagbo government, but this reconciliation lasted only two months, as the scale tipped.

On 19 September, 2002, Muslims northerners who identified themselves as the *Mouvement Pratriotique de Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI), and indicated an identity contestation, rebelled against Gbagbo and asked for fresh elections. The rebels were trained and armed in Burkina Faso whose former President Blaise Compaoré was a friend of Ouattara. Claiming to be a victim of an external attack, Gbagbo requested that the 1961 Defence Agreement which was signed by Houphouët and the French government should be applied to protect his regime. Paris intervened and decided to split the difference as a French force was allowed to stand on a ceasefire line between the north and south. Gbagbo's forces backed by France repelled the rebellion in Abidjan, but the turn of events led to the death of Guëi. The rebels who formed the core of support for the RDR, called for, among other things, the resignation of Gbagbo. They protested against the xenophobic policies, and demanded a transitional government leading to new elections within a month.<sup>75</sup> This marked the beginning of the 2002 armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire.

In 2003, after several months of fighting between Gbagbo and Ouattara forces, key players involved in the conflict signed the Marcoussis Agreement organised by France in South of Paris in France on 24 January, 2003 and led by the then French President Jacques Chirac. The Kléber Summit was held in Paris on 26 January, 2003. Returning from the summit, Gbagbo

<sup>75</sup>Jessica Kohler 2003, "From Miraculous to Disaster: The Côte d'Ivoire in Crisis" Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, (CASIN), available at <http://www.casin.ch/web/pdf/cotedivoire/pdf> (accessed 28 October 2014).

stated that he did not win the war, and therefore he had to have a discussion with senior members of his party, the FPI, make some compromises, and draw the relevant consequences. Back in Côte d'Ivoire, he told Ivorians that the Marcoussis Agreement in South of Paris was like “a bitter pill to swallow, ” arguing that the agreement only favoured the rebels from the north and France was supporting the rebels’ objectives.<sup>76</sup> Gbagbo suspected Chirac for transforming him into the “Queen of England” without power and proclaimed ‘the second independence’ for Côte d'Ivoire. Gbagbo signed the agreement, but he said the French government forced his support. Later on he added that “if I had to start Marcoussis all over again, I would not do it,” claiming to be a victim of France, a country that would never accept him.<sup>77</sup> (See chapter 8 for details of the process of Marcoussis).

France then accused Gbagbo of further using political manipulations when needed. In 2003, during his overseas visit to Abidjan, French Minister for Foreign Affairs Dominique de Villepin was blocked in front of the presidential palace by Gbagbo’s protesters shouting “We want Gbagbo!” but the security forces did not intervene. Gbagbo himself came “to rescue” the French Minister an hour later. It was a real coup politically orchestrated by Gbagbo. Paris was not too impressed, nicknaming Gbagbo *le Boulanger*, the baker of his ability to fool everyone. It might be seen by France as an outrageous publicity stunt, when Gbagbo attempted to publicly humiliate Minister Vellepin. For Gbagbo, it was a political muscle flexing exercise and a way to show France how popular he was among his patriots.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Public International Law & Policy Group, “One year on, Ivory Coast peace deal a bitter pill to swallow,” Peace Negotiations Watch, Monday, 26 January, 2004, Vol.3, No, 4, available at <http://publicinternationalawandpolicygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Vol.-3-Issue-4-Jan.-26-2004.pdf> (accessed 20 October 2013).

<sup>77</sup> Pierre Prier 2011, “Gbagbo, l’homme qui voulait rester roi,” Le Figaro, available at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2011/04/01/01003-20110401ARTFIG00615-gbagbo-l-homme-qui-voulait-rester-roi.php> (accessed 30 October 2014).

<sup>78</sup> Pierre Prier 2011, “Gbagbo, l’homme qui voulait rester roi,” Le Figaro, available at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2011/04/01/01003-20110401ARTFIG00615-gbagbo-l-homme-qui-voulait-rester-roi.php> (accessed 30 October 2014).

In the end, Gbagbo the *Boulangier* lost the upper hand regarding the Marcoussis Agreement and was forced to expand the government to include members of the RDR within his ministries and took steps towards national reconciliation by setting up a National Reconciliation Council in October to discuss the nation's future. However, this move was short-lived as between October 2002 and January 2003, he faced the emergence of groups such as the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest*, (MPIGO), (The Popular Ivorian Movement of the Great West) and the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP), (Movement for Justice and Peace), to avenge the death of Guëi and further complicated the crisis. Both groups later merged to form a military-political force called the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN), New Forces, led by Guillaume Soro, a Christian, former leader of the Ivorian Students Federation from the north now Speaker of Ivorian House of Representatives, to fight the Gbagbo government.<sup>79</sup>

As is evident, the government was forced to accept a peace deal forced on them by France the colonial power, which was supposed to end the conflict. On early November 2004, Gbagbo's forces attacked the rebels in Bouaké (centre) and Korhogo (north), and France made a request to the UN for an intervention to protect the rebels, but the worst case was in December 2004. When the Gbagbo government bloodily suppressed a pro-Ouattara protest and the Ivorian aviation killed "by mistake" nine French soldiers, a small Ivorian air force was immediately destroyed on the ground by the French forces. Pro-Gbagbo protests organised by Gbagbo's militia (The Patriots) followed at the French military headquarters in Abidjan. The French riposted and when some protesters were killed, others turned against French expatriate staff, triggering a temporary exodus.

<sup>79</sup> Jessica Kohler 2003, "From Miraculous to Disaster: The Côte d'Ivoire in Crisis" Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, (CASIN), available at <http://www.casin.ch/web/pdf/cotedivoire/pdf> (accessed 28 October 2014).

Gbagbo was able to make sound assessments of the realities of the moment, which proved to work very well for him. Determined to scrap the Marcoussis Agreement, Gbagbo successfully managed to sign other agreements directly with the rebels from the north, under the auspices of former President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, who Gbagbo considered as the godfather of northerners. Soro the Head of the rebels from the north became Prime Minister, but the country could not be properly reconciled. On 15 January, 2006, Gbagbo's forces (The Patriots) attacked the UN forces.<sup>80</sup>

Houphouët's economic model relied on the development of a cocoa plantation industry, whose rent was distributed among various ethnic groups across the nation including the north in order to attain stability. Unfortunately, these revenues instead became a funding source for Bédié's war against the north, while favouring his own ethnic group the Baoulé. One of Gbagbo's biggest challenges was the natural resource contestation initiated by people from the north. According to Gbagbo, Bédié had neglected the north for six years during the distribution of the clientelist rent. Gbagbo admitted this from the beginning of his first mandate. He stated that in the future, an 'affirmative action' or even a 'marshal plan' must be in place to help the north.<sup>81</sup>

However, one can indeed say that in this case Gbagbo used the north of Côte d'Ivoire for his own political advantage, while the region received little benefit from this initiative. Gbagbo's second wife Dr. Nadiana Bamba, known as Nady Bamba is from the north. As FPI's Strategist, she took the opportunity to increase Gbagbo's clientelism in that part of Côte

<sup>80</sup> Pierre Prier 2011, "Gbagbo, l'homme qui voulait rester roi," *Le Figaro*, available at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2011/04/01/01003-20110401ARTFIG00615-gbagbo-l-homme-qui-voulait-rester-roi.php> (accessed 30 October 2014).

<sup>81</sup> Public International Law & Policy Group, "One year on, Ivory Coast peace deal a bitter pill to swallow," *Peace Negotiations Watch*, Monday, 26 January, 2004, Vol.3, No, 4, available at <http://publicinternationallawandpolicygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Vol.-3-Issue-4-Jan.-26-2004.pdf> (accessed 20 October 2013); In *Le Patriote*, no 428, 21 December, 2000.

d'Ivoire.<sup>82</sup> In fact, according to one of the respondents, Bamba's task was to recruit new female members for the FPI. Bamba was the young Muslim woman behind Gbagbo's ethnic clientelism in the north, giving hope to specific clients, occasionally maximising their opportunities, and providing them with a limited amount of cash and rewards for loyal services.<sup>83</sup>

One must observe that Gbagbo also relied on the Attié ethnic group, south of Abidjan, to get the top job. They guided him and ultimately elected him.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, once in power, Gbagbo deliberately neglected the Attié people as he was expected to allocate resources to his own ethnic group from the west. Gbagbo was required to meet this expectation in order to consolidate his ethnic power base. They believed in their full entitlement to 'eat' after forty years of marginalisation by the two previous Baoulé leaders, Houphouët and Bédié. As Berman points out:

Civil service departments and public enterprises constitute virtually bottomless financial reservoirs for those who manage them, and for the political authorities who head them. The result has been the extensions of ethnically patron-client network to the centre of the state apparatus with their ramifying linkages reaching from cabinet to the village.<sup>85</sup>

Gbagbo's government was rocked by a succession of corruption and nepotism scandals. To take just one example, Interior Minister, Désiré Tagro who came from the same Bété ethnic group as Gbagbo was accused of corruption and nepotism by the then outspoken President of the National Assembly, Mamadou Koulibaly. Gbagbo stressed in 2007 on state-run radio

<sup>82</sup> Nady is a former journalist with Africa no 1 who traditionally married Gbagbo in 2001, and founder of a press group in Côte d'Ivoire. Now she is in exile, reportedly in Ghana while Gbagbo is being detained at The Hague.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Respondent "J", female senior PDCI member, at her house, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire,

<sup>84</sup> Today he is relying on the Attié ethnic group to get him out of detention through mobilisation. See "Alépé, Koua Justin (JFPI) aux militants de son parti "Je suis venu vous annoncer que Gbagbo sera là bientôt..." 27 May 2013, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/460480.html> (accessed 27 May 2013).

<sup>85</sup> Bruce J. Berman, "Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: the politics of uncivil nationalism" *African affairs* (1998), 97, 305-341,



he would be savage to anyone who tried to embezzle the US \$ 198 million given by Dutch-based multinational company Trafigura as compensation to toxic waste victims. However, Gbagbo's spokesman, Tagro, and one of his closest allies involved in the crucial negotiation of the Ouagadougou Agreement (APO) was implicated in the embezzlement of the US \$ 198 million in 2007. Tagro was also accused of tribal recruitment for police officers in 2010. On 19 July 2010, Tagro has been cleared of any criminal wrongdoing by the director of public prosecutions Raymond Tchimou.<sup>86</sup>

When asked about the rise of the controversy related to embezzlement and nepotism under Gbagbo, respondent "S" who knew both Gbagbo and Tagro quite well stated:

Initially, Gbagbo was a person with a long history, a person who demonstrated his capacity to put the nation first. I visited him when he endured another prison sentence in 1992 for breaking the law by organising a student protest. I was going to vote for him in 2010, but when I saw his anti-socialist policy, I was disappointed. Regarding Tagro, it was impossible for Gbagbo to sack him, given the fact that he supported, mentored and promoted him.<sup>87</sup>

Given the nature of their complicated relationship, it was an impossible task for Gbagbo to sideline Tagro as his powerful Interior Minister. Tagro was one of Gbagbo's close collaborators who was also the Director of all police forces. Gbagbo appointed Raymond Tchimou Director of Public Prosecutions. These actions are a clear example of actions that contribute to the 'Big Man' theory. Due to the lack of accountability, Gbagbo did not follow through with prosecuting Tagro. Rather than creating a jurisdiction under a parliamentary process, Gbagbo made the decision to clear Tagro and move forward without any charges.

<sup>86</sup> See "Tagro: l'affaire qui fait 'pschitt'" *Jeune Afrique*, 29 July 2010, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAJA2585p038-039.xml1/> (accessed 9 May 2013).

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Respondent "S" in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 29 June 2012.

Although Mamadou Koulibaly the President of the National Assembly under Gbagbo's leadership accused Tagro of tribalism, nepotism, clientelism and corruption, Gbagbo defended Tagro. Gbagbo stated that Tagro was not a thief and that he trusted him. Despite the overwhelming amount of information and evidence, it became clear that Gbagbo could not attack Tagro. This lack of response may have been due to the fear of the latter ending the crucial direct peace negotiations initiated with the opposition leaders. Consequently, Gbagbo was forced to maintain Tagro rather than making him resign.<sup>88</sup>

Although Ivorian MPs made a request to set up a parliamentary committee of inquiry to look into the controversy (embezzlement and nepotism) involving Interior Minister Tagro, no decision was taken on the issue. To put it bluntly, no further action was taken to 'improve the situation.'<sup>89</sup> Tagro has been one of the main victims of the traumatic end of the post-electoral confrontations between pro-Ouattara, the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) and pro-Gbagbo forces. He died from injuries inflicted by FRCI when they entered the presidential palace compound on 11 April, 2011. However, there is here once again an obvious continuity of what Bayart describes as 'the politics of the belly'<sup>90</sup> in his critical analysis that stimulated so much work on African politics. Therefore, one should not posit the disappearance of this African way of being 'politically involved.' It is worth stating in this connection that only a few were chosen by Gbagbo and even among them, not every participating client benefited from the process. A former public servant has lamented, saying that Gbagbo has done little or nothing for others in ten years. There is a view among many people that Gbagbo could be difficult and knowingly hurting people. He would pretend to be

<sup>88</sup> Pascal Airault, Que cache l'affaire Tagro, *Jeune Afrique* 2010 6 July 2010.

<sup>89</sup> American embassy's national daily press review, 30 June 2010, available at <http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/june2010/june-30-2011.html> (accessed 25 May 2013).

<sup>90</sup> Bayart, *The state in Africa*, pp.218-227; Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

a good man, an interesting and charismatic man willing to help. He would then make appointments with people but refuse to meet them.<sup>91</sup>

On 12 February, 2010, Gbagbo dissolved the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in order to postpone the 2010 elections, but under enormous pressure from France, the US, the EU and the UN, Côte d'Ivoire went to elections on 31 October, 2010. For over a decade, Gbagbo was determined to resist the rebellion because his regime was constantly under threat. He suffered attacks on the whole country by rebels from the north, uprisings by forces from the north in Abidjan, attacks on his presidential palace, by French tanks and finally his bunker by French forces in which he was hiding in the end. He was captured on 11 April, 2011 by French forces but Ouattara forces claimed they launched the massive final offensive against Gbagbo and captured him. Major Frederic Daguillon, a French military spokesman also insisted strongly that "Mr Gbagbo was arrested by Ivorian forces. Not one French soldier was in the residence of Mr Gbagbo."<sup>92</sup>

He has been under house arrest in the north of the country following the 2010 elections. The Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) attempted to kill Gbagbo during his capture after months of diplomatic stalemate and military defiance, despite Ouattara insisting he be captured alive, rather than making him a martyr, to enable him face justice for the crimes against humanity that he committed. British Secretary of State William Hague also called for Gbagbo to be treated with respect and given an orderly trial, and Ban Ki-moon the UN Secretary-General said "Gbagbo's physical safety should be ensured" by means of integrated systems. Gbagbo's first plea upon capture was "Don't kill me!"<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Respondent "S" Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 29 June 2013.

<sup>92</sup> David Smith 2011, "Laurent Gbagbo's humiliating foul" *The Guardian*.

<sup>93</sup> AFP, "Captured Gbagbo calls for end to fighting", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 2011, available at <http://www.smh.com.au/world/captured-gbagbo-calls-for-end-to-fighting-20110412-1dbd1.html> (accessed 9 June 2013).

Analysts say the post electoral crisis could have been avoided if Gbagbo had accepted the election results, after the votes were ‘cast against him.’<sup>94</sup> Others argue that an election recount, as requested by Gbagbo, and occurred in a similar crisis situation in Haiti in 2010, would have provided a simple and democratic solution that might have saved many lives, as also a million people have been displaced in Abidjan alone.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, elections are important for democracy. They allow citizens to express their interests and hold the government accountable. However, in many sub-Sahara African countries, due to weak institutions as well as history of conflict, high stakes electoral competition triggered violence and killings. As a consequence, elections can threaten the stability of democratic institutions. In Côte d’Ivoire, to no one’s surprise, widespread irregularities and frauds took place during the second round of the November 2010 presidential elections.

Hence, given the evidence of frauds from both sides of politics and dissatisfaction of Ivoirians that followed, the Independent Electoral Commission should have decided to start a recount immediately of 660,000 votes from seven regions concerned in the presence of Ivoirians and international observers. The recount could conclusively determine who won the elections and prevent conflict and killings, which could bolster Ivorian hopes for post-election stability. At the same time, the government could develop a medium and long-term strategy to increase voter and political party education to electoral rules and procedures. This could ultimately reduce confusion and frustration from voters and also prevent potential conflict and killings.

Gbagbo was transferred to the ICC on 30 November, 2011. As the first former Head of State to appear at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Gbagbo faces four charges of

<sup>94</sup>*Jeune Afrique*: 11 December 2012, article by Marwane Ben Yahmed on Simone Gbagbo’s obsession to remain in power which largely contributed to the fall of the regime and her husband.

<sup>95</sup> See *The Guardian*, “Haiti orders election recount” available at <http://www.Guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/10/haiti-orders-election-recount> (accessed 1 April 2013).

crimes against humanity, including murder and rape.<sup>96</sup> One frustrated respondent has stressed that all methods were used for a peaceful solution to the electoral crisis including an academic role in the U.S.A. as an offer from President Barack Obama, but Gbagbo essentially went to war against his own people.<sup>97</sup> “This is a logical deduction that things could have been much different, but Gbagbo did not want to go. We all knew he would be President for ten years then be humiliated towards the end.”<sup>98</sup> For 30 years, Gbagbo was either prosecuted and/or imprisoned for defying Houphouët. When he declared himself winner of the 2000 presidential elections, the nation was on the brink of civil and ethnic war.<sup>99</sup> Over the years, pro-Ouattara Muslims from the north and pro-Gbagbo Christians from the south confronted each other. Given his history of misconduct and defiance, Gbagbo failed to restore peace and calm to the country. Gbagbo acknowledged that France organised a plot with the ultimate objective to overthrow his legitimate government and sideline him. However, Gbagbo was not quick to re-establish the values and norms of representative democracy in his country. Many Ivorians were not proud of the record of his government that for ten years was involved in corruption, anti-colonialism propaganda, and artificial political alliances. His government also faced the overwhelming failure of the socio-economic policies. Therefore, the humiliating demise of former President Gbagbo was not a surprise at all.<sup>100</sup> When reflecting on contributing factors to the conflict of Côte d’Ivoire, it is apparent that in spite of good

<sup>96</sup> BBC news, 5 December 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16027845> (accessed 30 March 2013); According to *La lettre du Continent*, Gbagbo has decided to stay away from political manipulation and trouble making if the ICT drops the case against him; See *La Lettre du Continent* no 668, 16 October 2013, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.com/LCE/court-circular/2013/10/16/gbagbo-s-peaceful-promises,107990167-BRE> (accessed 24 October 2013).

<sup>97</sup> See Zeenews India, “Côte d’Ivoire: Gbagbo offered teaching at US Varsity if he demits office, 13 April 2011, available at [http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/ivory-coast-gbagbo-offered-teaching-at-us-varsity-if-he-demits-office\\_699548.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/ivory-coast-gbagbo-offered-teaching-at-us-varsity-if-he-demits-office_699548.html) (accessed 1 April 2013). Respondent “S” said all Gbagbo wanted to do was to go to war, and he was well prepared for that.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Respondent “J” Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire on 19 June 2012.

<sup>99</sup> *Le Monde* (France) 28 October 2000, p. 4.

<sup>100</sup> “Les intellectuels d’Afrique et d’ailleurs invitent Gbagbo à céder le pouvoir, *Le Nouveau Réveil*, 14 January 2011, no. 2719, p. 9; Daniel Sovy, Après le deuxième tour... la fin du régime Gbagbo, *Le Nouveau Réveil*, 30 November 2010, no. 2684, p.4; Mathias Kacou, Votre bilan est négatif, cédez le pouvoir, *Le Démocrate*, 8-9 January 2011, no. 099, p.11; Ano Affoua Thérèse, A mon frère Gbagbo: quitte le pouvoir avec dignité, *Le Démocrate*, 8-9 January 2011, no. 099, p.11.

intentions, President Gbagbo escalated the conflict and did not offer any solid solutions that would address the root causes.

For most Africans, including Ivorians living abroad I spoke to who were seduced by his speeches, Gbagbo was the right person for the situation when he was in opposition.<sup>101</sup> However, since his rise to power, people said Gbagbo was here with his ethnic clients. Thus, it was an opportunity to take advantage of public resources available for some extravagant uses, rather than concentrating relentlessly on key issues such as education, health, public transport and, above all, high cost of living and unemployment.

Thus Gbagbo, the veteran opposition leader and former university lecturer, became the fourth President of Côte d'Ivoire, and in just over one decade, failed to restructure the dying economy to reduce poverty and provide welfare to all Ivorians. Instead, Gbagbo the supposed socialist re-established clientelism which some analysts argue was the opposite of Houphouët's version as it was constantly divisive.<sup>102</sup>

Gbagbo and his government also had their share of damaging scandals. One of the aspects that characterised Gbagbo's presidency was the accumulation for wealth and the corruption which had become systematic within the structure of the FPI, despite efforts by the Ivorian authorities to instil morals into the country's public sector.<sup>103</sup> However, the situation is essentially the same. It is well understood today that the 'Big Man'syndrome still continues through networks of clientelism.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, Ouattara's Government since 2012 also embraces corruption, clientelism, nepotism and tribalism, in spite of a new anti-corruption

<sup>101</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 154. As a first secretary general of FESCI, the student union and current president of the Freedom Development Union, Ahipeaud worked closely with Gbagbo for ten years when Gbagbo was in the opposition; See "Pourquoi j'ai refusé de rentrer dans la rébellion" *Fraternité Matin*, 30 June – 1 July 2012, pp. 8-9.

<sup>102</sup> Bernard Conte, "Côte d'Ivoire: clientelism, adjustment and conflict," available at [http://www.miis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05\\_3.pdf](http://www.miis.edu/media/view/4901/original/TI05_3.pdf) (accessed 4 May 2013).

<sup>103</sup> Article by *Le Nouveau Reveil*, a paper close to the former ruling party FPI. In American embassy's national daily press review, 30 June 2010, available at <http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/june2010/june-30-2011.html> (accessed 25 May 2013).

<sup>104</sup> Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

initiatives and the creation of a government body tasked to promote transparency initiatives.<sup>105</sup>

### **The Newcomer Alassane Dramane Ouattara (2011 to date)**

Confronted with unprecedented social agitation and in disagreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for failing to pay back the nation's debts since 1987, President Houphouët needed someone who could help him re-engage with these institutions. Given the fact that Ouattara has held senior executive roles with the IMF, he was the best candidate for the role of managing the structural adjustment programs.<sup>106</sup> Subsequently, the former Governor of the Central Bank of West Africa (BCEAO) Alassane Dramane Ouattara or ADO, as he is known entered the Ivorian political scene in 1990.<sup>107</sup>

Born on 1 January 1942 in Dimbokro, centre of Côte d'Ivoire, Ouattara attended primary school in Côte d'Ivoire, then secondary school in current Burkina Faso. Some analysts say his father emigrated from Burkina Faso; others smear Ouattara by claiming he is not Ivorian.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, Ouattara obtained his baccalaureate in mathematics in 1962. Ouattara obtained his B.Sc. in business administration at Drexel Institute of Technology in Philadelphia in 1965, and his M.A. in economics in 1967. He earned a PhD in economics in 1972 at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States of America and worked as an economist for the IMF in Washington the following year. He then worked for the Banque Centrale des Etats d'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO), or Central Bank of West African States in Dakar, Sénégal between 1973 and 1984 respectively as chargé de mission, director of program, and special advisor and eventually as the vice-governor. Between 1984 and 1988 he was at the IMF as

<sup>105</sup> On this topic, see for example "Côte d'Ivoire qualifies for extractive industry transparency initiative" reported by *L'Inter*, p. 11. In American embassy's national daily press review, available at [http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/national\\_daily\\_press\\_review.html](http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/national_daily_press_review.html) (accessed 25 May 2013).

<sup>106</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire: Le coup d'état Editions* Duboiris, p. 51. Onana further says Dominique Nouvian, his current wife who was having a close friend of Houphouët influenced him to nominate Ouattara as prime minister; Camille Alliali, *Disciple d'Houphouët-Boigny*, p.115. In Grah Mel 2010, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, p.327.

<sup>107</sup> ADO is a combination of Ouattara's initials.

<sup>108</sup> Kevin Schington 2012, *History of Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 467-469.

the director for Africa department and advisor to the managing director. Ouattara returned to the BCEAO for the top job as governor in October 1988.<sup>109</sup>

The Ivorian government was proud to recruit a talent who had such a remarkable international career. Houphouët initially appointed Ouattara as chairman of the Interministerial Committee for the Coordination and Stabilisation of the Economic Recovery Program. Within this role, Ouattara publicly presented an exposé of the catastrophic economic situation of Côte d'Ivoire and outlined his plan to fix the Ivorian economy. Houphouët was impressed:

Did you hear it? The young and brilliant governor Alassane Ouattara, discussing with competencies the problem we are confronted to: the problem of our economic and social development. He treated it with higher standard that we must not only understand, all of us, but support through our understanding and our trust. Heading a small team of Ministers, he accomplished an excellent job despite the enormous difficulties. I trust him.

You will trust him.<sup>110</sup>

The creation of the prime ministership was created for the first time by a PDCI-RDA Congress in October 1990. For an individualistic ruler whose ambition was to cling to power with the help of his political party, a nomination of a Prime Minister who might be a potential threat was not on Houphouët's agenda, but he gave a traditional justification. During one of his speeches at the *Hotel Le President* of Yamoussoukro, Houphouët said he will never nominate an Ivorian Prime Minister during his lifetime, because in his Akan tradition, when the Chief is still alive, he will not decide about his successor.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/np/omd/bios/ado.htm>. (Accessed 17 February 2013).

<sup>110</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 332.

<sup>111</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 556.



However, when the economic crisis started by 1983, Houphouët was required to nominate Ouattara to salvage the Ivorian economy. As a result, he became Prime Minister on 7 November, 1990. Based on the Constitution, the Prime Minister formed a government on 30 November, 1990, following the PDCI victory in the legislative elections.<sup>112</sup> However, reports have said he had worked as an Upper Volta citizen in those roles. According to his official biographer, Cissé Ibrahim Baongo, questions have been raised about his affiliation, nationality and identity, rightly or wrongly.<sup>113</sup>

For example, meeting the press in October 1992, Raphaël Lakpé, journalist and the then managing editor from The *Nouvel Horizon* publishing group, an opposition group openly objected to Ouattara during a television interview.<sup>114</sup> Lakpé asked: “Mr Prime Minister, in 1982, you were a Voltaïque national .... In 1985 and 1986, you opted for Ivorian nationality; in 1990, you were promoted head of government... I would like to ask you a question ... what were the motivations for this choice.”<sup>115</sup>

Some analysts of Ivorian politics reported that the question was impertinent and insensitive. Others reported it was a sign of arrogance on Lakpé’s part. However, as a journalist Lakpé had a right to raise the question and he recognised the importance of clarifying the issue of Ouattara’s nationality to Ivorians. Lakpé kept the pressure on Ouattara, demanding detailed information and exposing inconsistencies surrounding his nationality. Lakpé wanted to promote a contestable and honest public debate through his journalistic work. However, this marked the beginning of the debate over Ouattara’s nationality.

<sup>112</sup> For more about Ouattara’s bibliographical information, see IMF’s site, available at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/omd/bios/ado.htm> (accessed 22 October 2013).

<sup>113</sup> Cissé Ibrahim Baongo, *Alassane Dramane Ouattara, une vie singulière*, p. 9. It has been reported by Grah Mel that while Baongo claims to be the Biographer, the book was written under the strict instructions of Ouattara: source field notes Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 2012

<sup>114</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, tome 3, p. 330; See also *Fraternité Matin* 22 October, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>115</sup> Cissé Ibrahim Baongo, *Alassane Dramane Ouattara, une vie singulière*, p. 37.

Although he was born in Côte d'Ivoire, Ouattara's critics have argued that from 1984-1988, as a former Deputy Director of the IMF, he did not hold an Ivorian identity card and he worked with a Burkina Faso passport. Moreover, they have argued that his parents were supposed to have originated from Burkina Faso. As a result, he was perceived as a non-Ivorian or alien to Côte d'Ivoire, but no one could say it publicly for fear of being targeted by Houphouët because he was still dominating Ivorian politics.

It is important to note that as a Prime Minister, Ouattara failed to make new friends when he implemented the SAP throughout the 1990s, which caused so much pain and suffering to Ivorians. Therefore, there was a sentiment among Ivorians that only a non-Ivorian could implement such a program. However, questioning the nationality of SAP implementers was not restricted to Ouattara and Côte d'Ivoire. For example in Zaire, Kengo Wa Dongo, Mobutu's Prime Minister who was in charge of implementing SAP in Zaire faced a similar challenge. Yet again, Zairians believed that 'a true national' wouldn't have brought so much suffering on his own people.

Ouattara's prime ministerial role ended in December 1993. His economic growth plan for Côte d'Ivoire was expected to boost the nation's competitiveness, create more new jobs, and provide higher quality services and more opportunities. Nevertheless, he failed to drive economic growth and under Ouattara, there have been no additional new jobs created. In fact, many full-time jobs have been lost and university graduates were unable to find work. Further, Ouattara contributed to the devaluation of the CFA. F, which entered into force on 14 January, 1994. It is fair to say that through Ouattara's work, Côte d'Ivoire was one of the countries that did not fully benefit from the devaluation programs. On July 1994, Ouattara returned to the IMF where he was appointed deputy managing director from July 1994 to July 1999. Ouattara resigned from his IMF job in July 1999 and returned to Côte d'Ivoire. He was elected chairman of the RDR during the memorable 1 August 1999 congress.

On 10 December, 2000, the RDR boycotted the legislative elections with new confrontations on the streets. After the failed 19 September 2002 coup d'état attempt by the rebels from the north against Gbagbo, Ouattara left Côte d'Ivoire after finding refuge at the French embassy in Abidjan. Pro-Gbagbo supporters accused him of starting the rebellion. Despite his misunderstanding with Bédié the leader of the PDCI, Ouattara, the leader of RDR, joined Bédié, the successor to Houphouët and other leaders on 18 June, 2005 in Paris to create the Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP).<sup>116</sup> On 23 March, 2006, as a member of the opposition, Ouattara was in rebel-held north promoting national reconciliation.<sup>117</sup> He remained relatively quiet in terms of political activities until 2010, as the elections have been postponed six times, spending time in France and awaiting Gbagbo's announcement of elections dates. Gbagbo has argued that the delay was due to the fact that the preparation of the final lists for each electoral district was needed.<sup>118</sup>

The RHDP played a key role in Ouattara's 'victory' during the 2010 presidential elections, according to its members.<sup>119</sup> Ouattara was officially sworn in as President on 21 May, 2011 in Yamoussoukro, the political capital. Nevertheless, his time in office was marked by corruption and nepotism, making his example more revealing.<sup>120</sup> First, as soon as he acceded to the highest office, having survived the '*Ivoirité*' concept orchestrated by his political rivals to destroy his political career, Ouattara, who is from the north introduced the *rattrapage*

<sup>116</sup> Other leaders of the RHDP include Paul Akoto Yao of UDPCI and Innocent Anaky Kobena of MFA. They all share the view that they belong to Houphouët's political family and see the necessity of carrying on his work. The Houphouëtists mount an argument that through their inspiration, Côte d'Ivoire is finally moving to the right direction in terms of democracy.

<sup>117</sup> Reliefweb, "Ivorian political leader Ouattara in rebel north for first time in years," available at <http://reliefweb.int/report/c%3%B4te-divoire/ivorian-opposition-leader-ouattara-rebel-north-first-time-years> (accessed 23 October 2013).

<sup>118</sup> Pierre Prier 2011, "Gbagbo, l'homme qui voulait rester roi," Le Figaro, available at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2011/04/01/01003-20110401ARTFIG00615-gbagbo-l-homme-qui-voulait-rester-roi.php> (accessed 30 October 2014).

<sup>119</sup> *Nord-Sud*, "6 ans après sa naissance/L'histoire secrète du RHDP, 17 May 2011.

<sup>120</sup> *Notre Voie* no 4431, 1 June 2013.

*ethnique* (the ethnic catch-up).<sup>121</sup> Not only did this controversial process complicate the ongoing political crisis, it also unnecessarily promoted exclusion rather than inclusion and competition. For example, during his state visit to France from 25 to 28 January 2012, and responding to a question by Vincent Hugué from *l'Express* newspaper related to promotion of people from the north, Ouattara provided a surprise answer: “it is just an ethnic catch-up. Under Gbagbo, the community from the north, around 40% of the population, was excluded from key roles.”<sup>122</sup> So new President, old problem.

Ouattara went on to stress that regarding senior army officers, he had to negotiate with officers from *Forces Nouvelles* (the rebel army) which wanted all the positions. He observed that he had successfully imposed a balance, right up to the command level; the number one came from *Forces Nouvelles*, followed by the number two who came from the old regular army. All grades combined: there are 12% of northerners in the police, 15% in the *gendarmerie* and about 40% in the army.<sup>123</sup> In this context, he said he could not be blamed, but the opposition rejects this policy, claiming it is divisive.<sup>124</sup> Prior to his accession to the presidency, Ouattara was perceived by a large number of Ivorians as the man for political change. He suggested he would put an end to the past practices. Today, the reality is quite different. President Ouattara’s management of state affairs has surprised everyone. From the

<sup>121</sup> Ouattara’s Achilles’ heel could be his clan. If yesterday we had Ivoirité under Bédié and Gbagbo, today we got ethnic catch-up; Christopher Boisbouvier, *Henri Konan Bédié Sur la candidature du PDCI*, RFI, 12 June 2013, available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco18312.htm> (accessed 12 June 2013).

<sup>122</sup> See Traore M. Ahmed “*Nominations et équilibre ethnique sous Ouattara: ouvrons le débat*”, 23 June 2011, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/402368.html> (accessed 21 May 2013). (Translated from the French by Jean-Claude Meledje 2013).

<sup>123</sup> It is a military force. The task of a *gendarmerie* is to provide public safety. Its mission is more judicial, gathering information, providing training ... etc.

<sup>124</sup> See Traore M. Ahmed “*Nominations et équilibre ethnique sous Ouattara: ouvrons le débat*”, 23 June 2011, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/402368.html> (accessed 21 May 2013). In *Fraternité Matin*, a state-owned daily newspaper, with a circulation around 23, 000 according to the American embassy national’s daily press review, a senior journalist Ferro Bally accused Ouattara of Tokenism for promoting only his ‘parents’ (people from his ethnic group, region or religion in his early nominations. I met with Bally who supported Gbagbo. (Respondent “T” told me) on 23 April 2012 in his office at *Fraternité Matin* and now a strong critic of Ouattara. During my fieldwork in Abidjan, he gave me some advice on how to collect data from specific newspapers linked to specific political parties.

onset, his eyes have been hooked on the 2015 presidential elections. This explains the rushed appointments of northerners, all circumstantial and intended to please.

This ethnic catch-up debate raised by President Ouattara himself, exacerbated the problem of tribalism. As it is evident, among the coalition government, only 4 or 5 Ministers are not from the north. For instance, the then Financial Director at the presidency Téné Barahima Ouattara who is Ouattara's younger brother was officially nominated as Minister in charge of presidential affairs. For the first time in Côte d'Ivoire's history, a head of state nominated his own brother as a Minister. According to the respected *La Lettre du Continent* (West Africa Newsletter), "as presidential affairs Minister, the President's brother Téné Barahima Ouattara is a real second Prime Minister, having a say on all matters."<sup>125</sup> This appointment has raised some eyebrows in Côte d'Ivoire. By appointing his own brother also known as 'photocopy' in reference to their physical resemblance, "the President went a step too far and it looks like a family running the show."<sup>126</sup> This action led to nepotism becoming a common practice under the leadership of Ouattara. The qualifications to acquire a government position were minimised. While some Ivorians spend restless nights to study in order to successfully pursue their studies, appointments were made without considering the applicant's educational level and intellectual skills. Master's graduates and engineers were neglected but at the same time positions were distributed based on nepotism. The case with the nomination of Téné Barahima Ouattara as second Prime Minister is a perfect example.<sup>127</sup> This nepotistic practice contributed to the conflict of Côte d'Ivoire because it resulted in an influx of government officials who lacked the skills needed in order to maintain peace.

<sup>125</sup>*Lettre du Continent* no 25 August 2010, no 617, in "Niveau très élevé de la corruption sous Ouattara: les investisseurs hautement indignes," available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/437853.html> (accessed 16 May 2013)

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Respondent "R", male PDCI member who voted for Ouattara, Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.

<sup>127</sup>Christiane Djahuié "Bilan mitigé pour Ouattara," *L'Eléphant se déchaine*, no. 044, 9 April 2012.

However, the President's niece, Massaré Touré was nominated as Ouattara's Communication Strategist.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, within the first lady's circle, Ouattara's wife Dominique Ouattara has placed her brothers and children from her previous marriage in important roles in the private sector. The first lady's brother Marc Nouvian has created his *Société Négoce Internationale de Côte d'Ivoire*, international trading company (SONEICI) which he manages with his sister Noëlle Nouvian. Her other brother Philippe Nouvian runs his construction, real estate and financial company (GEMCO) with a large number of contracts in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>129</sup> For example, Loïc Folloroux the second lady's son has also been placed as Head of the African department of trade for Armajaro.<sup>130</sup>

In opposition, Ouattara strongly criticised neo-patrimonialism and all its related components such as corruption, nepotism, etc., ironically called *séfonnisme* by Ivorians.<sup>131</sup> This term was primarily used in Côte d'Ivoire when an individual insisted on marrying only someone from his/her own tribe. These days, it could be used as a reference to nepotism. As indicated by two public servants from the Ministry of Construction, the vast majority of the individuals from the north in their Ministry lack the technical and professional skills required to do their jobs efficiently. They maintained that because people from the north believe that they are in charge at the moment, they replaced the old system by a different system, which does not

<sup>128</sup> For example, *La Lettre du Continent*, "Ces familles qui règnent à Abidjan," no 664, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/LC-/pouvoirs-et-reseaux/politique/2013/07/31/ces-familles-qui-regnent-a-abidjan,107971686-ART>.

<sup>129</sup> Dominique Ouattara managed Houphouët's real estate and she was very close to the presidential palace. She also managed the real estate of Omar Bongo of Gabon. Now as a first lady of Côte d'Ivoire who exercises a decisive influence on Ouattara, it is likely that these contracts are government contracts organised by senior members of Ouattara's government.

<sup>130</sup> *La Lettre du Continent*, "Ces familles qui règnent à Abidjan," no 664, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/LC-/pouvoirs-et-reseaux/politique/2013/07/31/ces-familles-qui-regnent-a-abidjan,107971686-ART>; For more information about how Madame Ouattara does business while avoiding conflict of interest see *La Lettre du Continent*, "Dominique Ouattara, au Confin des Affaires et Charity Business," available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/insiders/LC-/COTE%20D'IVOIRE/2013/11/05/aux-confins-des-affaires-et-du-charity-business/107993109-BE1> (accessed 14 December 2013).

<sup>131</sup> Like Ivoirité, it could also be seen in the Ivorian jargon as a form of differentiation between real and non-real Ivorians, so a form of new Ivorian racism.

work. Thus, when facing some difficulties, “they come to us for advice.”<sup>132</sup> Obviously, there is no objectivity and skills are less relevant, as long as they come from the north and remain loyal to the President, his Ministers and close allies.

Another relevant example would be the appointment of Ahmadou Bakayoko from the north as General Manager of the National Radio and Television Broadcast (RTI). For many Ivorians, this was not a surprise given that since Ouattara took office, they got used hearing only people from the ‘north’ with names such as, among others, Ouattara, Bakayoko or Coulibaly being nominated. On one hand, Bakayoko might be the strongest candidate for the job. It is true that prior to his nomination, he was a Deputy General Manager at the RTI with much experience in broadcasting in France and also considerable experience in finance in the U.S.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, one can argue that the wise thing to do in a country of about 60 ethnic groups full of talented intellectuals from all regions would be to apply geopolitics by looking for nominations from elsewhere for key public servant roles, taking into account the idea of a modern state. The problem is this double standard by Ouattara which does not take into account people’s potential limits Côte d’Ivoire’s opportunity to become an egalitarian society. In the meantime, corruption is endemic.<sup>134</sup>

Despite the signing of a code of ethics and good governance by Ouattara’s Ministers to promote integrity, honesty and responsibility, corruption and clientelism have reached a high level.<sup>135</sup> According to *La Lettre du Continent*, for example, an online enrolment scandal

<sup>132</sup> The conversations took place when I visited their department in 2012; while researching for this thesis, I was told on numerous occasions that most key roles are held by people from the north making important decisions about the country. I also observed during my two visits at the ministry of construction that the vast majority of senior officers displaying their names on the front doors were from the north, Ouattara’s ethnic group.

<sup>133</sup> See Daniel Aggré, “Les bakayoko montent en puissance avec Ahmadou Baka yoko à la RTI,” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco18080.htm> (accessed 3 June 2013); Bruce Berman, “Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa,” *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>134</sup> Bruce Berman, “Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa,” *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>135</sup> To boost the number of foreign investors by ending corruption, Ouattara’s Ministers were required to sign a draft code of ethics in August 2011, but corruption still remains one of the government’s biggest challenges.

involved two Cabinet members for misuse of funds, Minister Kandia Kamissoko Camara (National Education and Technical Training) and Mamadou Sanogo (Construction and Housing), both from the north. There was also the dossier of the household waste management concerning Minister Anne-Desirée Oulotto (Solidarity and Family). The list of corruption and clientelism revealed by the same African newsletter also included the toxic waste affair concerning Adama Bictogo (Minister of African Integration) and the scandal over the renovation of the police stations concerning Hamed Bakayoko (Minister of Interior and Security) and potential successor of Ouattara.<sup>136</sup>

Similarly, a scandal arose over the renovation of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University, which reportedly cost 167 million Euros. This scandal implicated Ibrahima Cissé Baongo (Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research) which impacted on Ouattara's relationship with students. As a consequence, this triggered a student protest on 13 May, 2013 with protesters shouting on campus "Baongo liar" "Baongo thief."<sup>137</sup> They wanted to know how the above amount disappeared in a controversial contract, but Minister Baongo maintains his innocence, saying "there was no embezzlement."<sup>138</sup> These facts are an indictment of a government which has promised the world to restore transparency regarding the broad management of the nation. Despite his 'direct involvement,' the corruption Ouattara had promised to end has been significantly increasing. On the other hand, good

<sup>136</sup> *Lettre du Continent* no 25 August 2010, no 617, in "Niveau très élevé de la corruption sous Ouattara: les investisseurs hautement indignés," available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/437853.html> (accessed 16 May 2013); See also "Côte d'Ivoire: chiefs of state and cabinet members of foreign governments", 29 November 2012, available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-c/cote-divoire.html> (accessed 16 May 2013); Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013); Interview with Respondent "S", 29 June 2012, Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>137</sup> "Côte d'Ivoire: Ouattara face au malaise étudiant," *Jeune Afrique*, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20130517154146/front-populaire-ivoirien-reforme-alassane-ouattara-fpicote-d-ivoire-alassane-ouattara-face-au-malaise-etudiant.html> (accessed 20 May 2013).

<sup>138</sup> *Le Démocrate*, 31 May 2013. According to the same newspaper, the initial cost for the renovation of the university Houphouët-Boigny and Abobo was 47 billion franc CFA. Surprisingly, it went up to 100 billion FCFA.



governance has been decreasing.<sup>139</sup> Perhaps, as he said in his interview with *Jeune Afrique*, “More time is needed to succeed.”<sup>140</sup> In any case, it must be admitted that there is no proper training as Méité Sindou, one observer who denounces corruption, has put it. Moreover, if there are no effective measures in place to sanction corruption, it will not go away.<sup>141</sup>

If one believes *La Lettre du Continent*, to take just one example, so far Ouattara has been able to keep his family members away from the mining business. However, his former Mining Minister Adama Toungara had not been prevented from using his family connections, notably his brother Mamadou Latif Toungara, to build his own contacts and networks.”<sup>142</sup> The continuity of neo-patrimonialism after Houphouët is obvious and Ouattara’s regime gives us another illustration of this practice. He was against the system during Bédié and Gbagbo’s time, but as soon as he came to power, he learned to redistribute resources and strategic roles to get political support and strengthen his power.<sup>143</sup>

It has become clear that as in many African countries, this practice, which is directly linked to tribalism and regionalism, is unavoidable in Côte d’Ivoire’s politics, despite Ouattara promising a ‘new era.’ Ouattara intends to ensure he is surrounded by loyal political cronies who hold lucrative positions and who he affords various privileges to keep power. It is not impossible for Ouattara to reach this goal by ending this practice. After all, “impossible is not

<sup>139</sup> “Côte d’Ivoire,” Freedom House, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/c%C3%B4te-divoire> (accessed 20 May 2013).

<sup>140</sup> Alassane Ouattara, “Nous avons besoins de temps, mais nous réussiront en Côte d’Ivoire” *Jeune Afrique*, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2729p024-032.xml0/abdoulaye-wade-guillaume-soro-rtc-alassane-ouattaraalassane-ouattara-nous-avons-besoin-de-temps-mais-nous-reussirons-en-cote-d-ivoire.html> (accessed 21 May 2013). During his official visit to Yokohama in Japan on 3 June 2013, he announced that it is more likely that he will contest the 2015 elections, according to AFP.

<sup>141</sup> See “Il n’y aura pas d’émergence sans bonne gouvernance, sans un mécanisme efficace de sanction des faits de corruption” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco18129.htm> (accessed 1 June 2013).

<sup>142</sup> “Côte d’Ivoire,” *Freedom House*, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/c%C3%B4te-divoire> (accessed 20 May 2013); *La Lettre du Continent*, “Ces familles qui règnent à Abidjan,” no. 664, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.fr/LC-/pouvoirs-et-reseaux/politique/2013/07/31/ces-familles-qui-regnent-a-abidjan,107971686-ART>.

<sup>143</sup> What is lacking in Côte d’Ivoire is more about the desire to do well, to do very well and also properly distribute the benefits of national resources; See “Alassane Ouattara, President and mining supremo” *Africa Intelligence*, available at <http://www.africaintelligence.com/insiders/AMA/IVORY%20COAST/2012/12/04/president-and-mining-supremo/107933559-BE2> (accessed 20 May 2013).

Ivorian,” which means with the will of Ivorian people, anything could happen. I have been told by several Ivorians.<sup>144</sup>

In 1990, when he was Houphouët’s hand-picked choice for the prime ministership – and arguably the international financial institutions, Ouattara’s task was essentially to fix the economy. To achieve this, he proposed a wage cut, eliminating tax exemptions and decreasing expenditure. His slogan was *transparence et rigueur*, transparency and rigor. Ouattara was also tasked by Houphouët to combat corruption and nepotism.<sup>145</sup>

Although he has suggested a program to streamline the administration, he has failed to manage the economy and replace Houphouët’s system of patronage, despite taking some measures in these areas.<sup>146</sup> Since assuming office as President, Ouattara’s style of leadership has been characterised as governance by decree, which is an anti-democratic and dictatorial method. He has also dissolved his government over a new marriage law that would make wives joint heads of the household. While members of Ouattara’s party, the RDR supported the changes, members of the ruling coalition, the PDCI were opposed. Like many African countries, Côte d’Ivoire’s law recognised the husband as head of the household. As such, he is responsible for all major issues, a situation Ouattara was determined to change, rather than conducting politics with a contest of ideas to win legitimacy, as that would be the case in normal politics.

Perhaps above all, Ouattara continues to provide protection to his Ministers who are embezzling the nation’s resources as well as finances. As a result, they are getting richer.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Source field notes, Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>145</sup> Diarra Cheick Oumar “Comment nous avons dénaturé le Président Ouattara”, 5 June 2013, available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco18226.htm> (accessed 6 June 2013); *Fraternité Matin*, 6 June 1990.

<sup>146</sup> Interview with Respondent “N” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 21 May 2012; Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>147</sup> Analysts say if the president keeps on making mistakes in those areas and keeps on failing to act promptly and professionally then he will potentially miss the opportunity of getting another term in 2015; See for example article by Dr Prao Yao Seraphin, National Delegate for LIDER, an opposition party, available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco18859.htm> (accessed 27 October 2013). I have been told during my

Corruption has become so commonplace, a habitual part of everyday life and everyday social activity in Côte d'Ivoire under Ouattara's watch that Ivoirians are concerned.<sup>148</sup> As Reno has argued so persuasively, the shadow state is a concept that explains the relationship between corruption and politics. The shadow state is a product of personal rule, usually constructed behind the façade of de jure sovereignty.<sup>149</sup>

For example, when asked about the illicit mining exploration in Côte d'Ivoire under Ouattara one respondent replied, everything is done illegally behind closed doors, rather than going through the legal channel. It is a system based on corruption and patronage rather than strong democracy.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, if things are going this way, like in Sierra Leone where business is done informally, Côte d'Ivoire could be on the list of those countries Reno calls 'Shadow state.'<sup>151</sup> Today, scandals have rocked Côte d'Ivoire and left Ouattara facing allegations of cronyism. Ivoirians still await any proper explanation or justification for the President's decision to retain Ministers embroiled in scandals, and have been demanding the fullest possible investigation into the scandals and that the real culprits be exposed.<sup>152</sup>

Unprecedented levels corruption among the political elites have dominated the governance the former BCEAO Governor and the 'IMF's boy' as he was called by his rivals since his 'election' in 2011, as explained by one respondent.<sup>153</sup> Based on what I have been told in

research that if Ouattara's Ministers are involved in corruption and he thinks this is alright, then he got a perspective problem.

<sup>148</sup> ICG, "A critical period for ensuring stability in Côte d'Ivoire," Africa Report No 176, 1 August 2011, available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/176%20A%20Critical%20Period%20for%20Ensuring%20Stability%20in%20Cote%20d'Ivoire.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/176%20A%20Critical%20Period%20for%20Ensuring%20Stability%20in%20Cote%20d'Ivoire.pdf) (accessed 25 March 2014).

<sup>149</sup> Rono 2000, p. 45 in John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 71.

<sup>150</sup> Interview with Respondent "A" in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>151</sup> William Reno 1998, *Warlord Politics and African States*, Lynne Rienner, p. 1; Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p.231.

<sup>152</sup> Despite the high level of corruption, Ouattara's government speech is over economic growth and infrastructure (roads in particular), instead of creating new jobs. Many Ivoirians on the ground who do not see the benefit of the economy use the following popular expression: "On ne mange pas route, "you can't eat road." It is evident on the ground that people were unable to improve their standards of living and there was great degree of impatience. Like they broadly say in Africa, 'an empty stomach does not have any ears.'

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012; Bruno Charbonneau 2013,

Abidjan, it is less likely that Ouattara's Ministers will be placed under investigation or pressured to quit their posts because they get full support from the President, despite evidence of fraud and embezzlement, corruption, nepotism and abuse of power. He continued to express his confidence in his Ministers' ability to effectively carry on their duties, but the clock has been ticking for Ouattara to end corruption and nepotism. He has talked tough before with regard to these issues, but has not acted.<sup>154</sup>

The above examples indicate that neo-patrimonialism or neo-patrimonial features are strongly rooted in everyday political life across the nation. Indeed, the increased level of neo-patrimonial forms of government is often associated with the increased level and subsequent routine of what Olivier de Sardan calls "big time" corruption. This involved state elites such as the Presidents, Ministers, and Directors of public and parastatal enterprises dealing with millions or even billions of CFA francs. For example, such a big time corruption may take on the form of natural resources exploitation, whereby a power holder may use his power to sell these public resources and transfer a substantial part of the income from the operation into his own bank account. Due to lack of good governance, the government has failed to eradicate authoritarianism, nepotism and corruption as their politics and public administration continued to be marked by the practices. The question on everyone's lips is why these practices persist?

One can argue that Côte d'Ivoire is a country that thrives on a vast agricultural production based on cocoa. The cocoa-boom of the 1970s rendered Côte d'Ivoire a veritable 'cocoa-rentier state' marked by a prevalent economic dependence on export returns from cocoa. Such a monocultural economy grew at an exceptional average annual of 9% between 1960 and 1970. Moreover, from 1970 to 1975, it was followed by a 7% rate and led to the much

<sup>154</sup>*Le Démocrate*, 31 May 2013; Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

talked-about 'economic miracle.' As a result, Côte d'Ivoire became the number one world cocoa producer with 40% of the global total output.<sup>155</sup> However, the miracle became a nightmare when between 1977-1978 the cocoa price collapsed. The government deficit reached a record high of around 180 billion FCA francs and Côte d'Ivoire was confronted by huge external debt that it was unable to pay off.<sup>156</sup>

Meantime, given the fact that national dependence on cocoa export remained unchanged, competition for political positions became what Daan Beekers and Bas van Gool call a 'do or die affair.' That was partly because the struggle for resources redistribution intensified when the resource could not meet the demand. Therefore, the power struggles between reformists and conservatives and even within the conservatives resulted in further factional fighting within the nation.<sup>157</sup> Perhaps most importantly, despite the factional struggle for power and politics of retribution orchestrated by the Ivorian political, military and economic elites, the available resources became increasingly inaccessible for ordinary Ivorians who were isolated and lacked desired connections. As a consequence, in the context of such administrative inefficiency, they became increasingly impoverished. Such deprivation explains the widespread and persistence of parochial as well as 'big time' corruption in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>158</sup>

The historical continuity of the patron-client relation in Côte d'Ivoire can be attributed to the fact that for economically poor Ivorians living in marginalized areas often finding a patron is the only alternative to satisfy their monthly livelihood needs. When they find one, it can often be virtually impossible to end the relation because of the lack of alternative sources of livelihood. This suggests that the bond between the patron and the client is essentially

<sup>155</sup> John Emeka Akunde, p. 264.

<sup>156</sup> Eric Fottorino, "Le Cacao, rocher de Sisyphe." *Le Monde* 1 February 1998, p. 10.

<sup>157</sup> "From patrimonialism to neopatrimonialism. Postcolonial governance in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond" African Studies Centre, Working Paper 101, 2012, available at <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/19547/WP101.pdf?sequence=4> (accessed 23 October 2014).

<sup>158</sup> Olivier de Sardan, 1999, "A moral economy of corruption in Africa?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 25-52.

characterised by the dependency of the client on the patron, and it makes it difficult to end corruption. It also opens opportunities for patrons to control, manipulate and in many cases, deny their clients. Although neo-patrimonial politics brings about considerable uncertainty in the everyday lives of ordinary Ivorians, the scale of personalised politics has tended to move easily upwards from local 'Big Man' politics to central state 'Big Man' politics. Clearly, it indicates that they have not left.

## Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated the influence of the 'Big Man' on Côte d'Ivoire's politics as well as the contemporary continuity of this theory despite efforts for democratisation. The chapter has also shown how complex it was for Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara to succeed Houphouët the father of the nation after his death in 1993 because his success obscured their achievements, making them illegitimate but also due to their own failings. Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara lacked the insight and ability to command the same amount of respect as their predecessor, Houphouët. The issue of legitimacy became more acute when their victories were manufactured through controversial elections.

In today's crisis, the successors of Houphouët have carried on the 'Big Man' tradition, as their respective governments had the reputation of suffering from problems of poor governance and corruption. Rather than focusing on institutional renewal, which makes it hard to manipulate the system, they have failed to avoid 'Big Man' politics. Corruption in Côte d'Ivoire is a serious problem, but perpetrators are untouchable. Unfortunately, without solving the underlying systemic problems in Côte d'Ivoire, history has a tendency to repeat itself. Given the maintenance of the status quo, one can argue that, as Bruce Berman aptly summarised the dynamic situation, "Big Men are not coming back; they have never left."<sup>159</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Bruce J. Berman, "Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: The politics of uncivil nationalism" *African Affairs*, 1998, 97, 305-341; Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22

The next chapter examines the root causes of Côte d'Ivoire's crises, primarily Houphouët's failure to choose his replacement.

(November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

## CHAPTER 5: THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE CRISES

This chapter will highlight the root causes of the Ivorian crises, demonstrating that Houphouët failed to prepare Ivorians for proper democratic transition or choose an acceptable successor. This chapter will argue that the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has occurred mainly because of Houphouët's deficiency in organising a smooth transfer of power to the younger generation.

Particular colonial and post-colonial issues form the basis of the Ivorian crises. These issues have simmered under the surface for decades, exploding during the economic decline. After Houphouët's death in 1993, Ivorian nationalism arose, driven by the elites such as Bédié and supported by a large number of unemployed and disillusioned youth.<sup>1</sup> Most importantly, although it was time to unequivocally pass the baton to the new generation of Ivorian politicians, Houphouët did not resign. There was a lack of institutions guaranteeing a smooth transition.

Since coming to power in 1960, Houphouët put in place an authoritarian regime, combining democratisation *à l'ivoirienne* (Ivorian way) with repressions, to maintain political stability - something his successors never achieved. This chapter will argue that the root of Ivorian political crisis can be attributed to Houphouët's refusal to anticipate the consequences of his obsession for power. He died without preparing a clear succession plan which triggered a succession war between his constitutional *dauphin*, Bédié and his only Prime Minister, Ouattara. Therefore, the hypothesis that Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the first President who led the country from 1960-1993, made a political mistake that plunged the country into a devastating crisis by deliberately refusing to nominate his successor should not be excluded.

<sup>1</sup> Ben McIntyre, "France's Colonial Legacy Still Poisons Africa: Ivory Coast's Spiral into Chaos is exacerbated by the reluctance of Paris to give up power in its former possessions," *The Times*, 4 January 2011, available at <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/docview/822056383?accountid=10910> (accessed 15 February 2014)



## A Difficult Transition under Houphouët

Since the end of colonialism, sub-Saharan African countries have been characterised by coups d'état and countercoups d'état for power. Observers of African conflicts have suggested that colonialism caused this dire state, blaming colonialism as the deep root cause of many contemporary wars and conflicts in Africa.<sup>2</sup> Colonial powers drew arbitrary boundaries, which divided ethnic and language groups, to satisfy their political and economic needs. Given that they failed to unify the community, “these artificial boundaries have created one of the greatest political problems in post-independence Africa and have led to several wars and conflicts,” as Edie explained.<sup>3</sup>

For example, civil war in Nigeria occurred when the Ibo people of Biafra attempted to create their own state.<sup>4</sup> In Zaire, during the secession war, inhabitants of Katanga also attempted to formally withdraw or separate from Zaire, later renamed Democratic Republic of Congo with the aim of establishing themselves as an independent and sovereign state. Both in Biafra and Katanga, the attempts failed because secessionist movements were brutally quelled by the relevant authorities. On the other hand, in May 1991, Eritrea successfully proclaimed its independence after seceding from Ethiopia, the state to which it was formerly united.<sup>5</sup>

When analysing the causes of conflicts in Africa, Alex Thomson has insisted that the politics of division and outbreak of ethnic conflict are the legacy of colonialism.<sup>6</sup> While it is asserted that colonialism is to blame for Africa's problems, this attribution of Africa's problems to the

<sup>2</sup> In Clarence Tshitereke 2003, *On the Origins of War in Africa*, *African Security Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. pp. 81-90.

<sup>3</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 49; April Gordon and Donald Gordon 2001, *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Schaefer 2004, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), Thomson/Wadsworth, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> Cases of secessionist movements in Africa include, among others, Cabinda (Angola) and Lozi (Zambia).

<sup>6</sup> Alex Thomson 2004, *An Introduction to African Politics*, Second Edition, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 14-15.

colonial legacy has been rejected as it is far more usual for people to blame problems on others than to blame themselves.<sup>7</sup>

There have been a wide range of explanations regarding the origin of the Ivorian crises. For example, Boyer stated that ethnic, religious and regional divides that emerged in Côte d'Ivoire in the late 1980s were the root causes of the wars and conflicts. He argued that:

These divides, largely created by the country's ruling elite to maintain political power, resulted to a civil war between the largely Christian south and the mostly Muslim north. More critically, the conflict resulted in a xenophobic atmosphere which spawned an ethnically based hatred and violence targeted to a large proportion of the society labelled non-Ivorian.<sup>8</sup>

Côte d'Ivoire's crisis is far more complex than the above generalisation suggests. Many sub-Saharan countries faced military coups and countercoups for the control of the postcolonial African state after European colonial powers left.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, one could certainly argue that this factor which conditions a nation's political life appeared to be almost non-existent in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, because despite the departure of the French colonial power and the emergence of a single-party authoritarian regime inspired by Angoulvand as we have shown in a chapter 2, the country remained stable for three decades. Any conflicts or civil wars did not take place immediately, as Houphouët was capable of avoiding the internal conflicts that had devastated many postcolonial states.<sup>10</sup> Sénégal and Kenya have had some political similarities with Côte d'Ivoire because since independence, they all have had some stability

<sup>7</sup> Clarence Tshitereke 2003, On the Origins of War in Africa, *African Security Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. pp. 81-90.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy E. Boyer, Côte d'Ivoire: Intervention and Prevention Responses, in Douglas C. Peifer 2008, Stopping Mass Killings in Africa: Genocide, Airpower, and Intervention, *Diane Publishing Co*, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p. 49; April Gordon and Donald Gordon 2001, *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed), Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> See Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrican* 19 December 2013 available at

[http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014).

and in the 1990s have made a big move towards a more democratic government after three decades of one party regimes.<sup>11</sup>

However, in Côte d'Ivoire, although the colonial masters can be blamed for Ivorian problems, Houphouët's reluctance to give up power played a key role in the wars and conflicts. A good starting point would be the political transition under Houphouët that was meant to be smooth, straightforward and transparent but did not go as planned due to Houphouët's refusal to step down or share power. As Clarence Tshitereke observed, much of what was witnessed in Côte d'Ivoire was a result of Houphouët's authoritarian rule that lasted more than three decades.<sup>12</sup> This leadership, inherited by Houphouët, the 'founding father' at independence, has its roots in French colonialism, which significantly contributed to the downfall of Ivorians.<sup>13</sup>

In his study of the causes of conflict, Kenneth Waltz developed at least two levels of analysis of the causes of the wars. First, the individual level: focuses originally on the leader's approach to politics. Second, the nation-state level: focuses on how both the political and economic systems have been controlled as well as the implementation of ethnic policy.<sup>14</sup> At least the first level of analysis will help us to understand why Houphouët should bear at least some moral responsibility for most of the crises and conflicts that ravaged Côte d'Ivoire after his death. In many Francophone nations of sub-Saharan Africa, political transitions have always been problematic. This was primarily because the incumbent Presidents were obsessed with retaining political power for life.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Party Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JTSOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>12</sup> Clarence Tshitereke 2003, On the Origins of War in Africa, *African Security Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. pp. 81-90.

<sup>13</sup> Joy Asongazoh Alemazung 2010, "Post-colonial colonialism: An analysis of international factors and actors marring African socio-economic and political development," *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.10, September 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Clarence Tshitereke 2003, "On the Origins of War in Africa," *African Security Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. pp. 81-90.

<sup>15</sup> Some examples would include Omar Bongo of Gabon, Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo, and Lansana Conté of French Guinea. In the case of Gabon, although Bongo died in office, the transition to his son was peaceful, avoiding political violence.

Côte d'Ivoire was not an exception. Prior to colonisation, the succession system was matrilineal in some societies, as the nephew or the niece would be chosen to succeed. In other societies where the hereditary system was taken into account, the son or daughter from the royal family would be designated to lead. While the French colonial administrators would intervene in the succession process to maintain their direct rule during the colonial era, the traditional system was retained.<sup>16</sup> At independence, the presidential system was introduced, in theory. However, since Houphouët was the President of Côte d'Ivoire and Chairman of the PDCI, he accumulated enormous executive and political power. As a result, he became a modern chief who ruled until he died.

Many commentators including American academic, Mike McGovern, who has professional experience working in Africa for the International Crisis Group (ICG), have noted how hard it is for “Ivorians to forget about Houphouët and his time in office because of his so-called successful economic years.” However, tracing the origins of the crises back to Houphouët's era, one could argue that the first President was the first person to blame. The leadership transition was long overdue and despite his age, he remained unprepared to announce his intention to leave Ivorian politics for good. Houphouët's refusal to nominate a successor convulsed Ivorian politics and stirred yet more division among his political heirs. The most brutal and obvious division was between Bédié and Ouattara. Thomas Hofnung describes the root of the crises in these terms:

The Ivorian crisis has a very long history dating back in the colonial period, but after all, the key players of the crises are Ivorians. Houphouët the father of the independence and autocrat who failed to build a factory to transform raw materials in Côte d'Ivoire and prepare his succession can essentially be

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Warioba, “Political succession in East Africa” available at <http://www.kituoachakatiba.co.ug> (accessed 18 November 2013).

blamed for this. While his heirs were disputing the throne, the chaos worsened.<sup>17</sup>

In his critical analysis of Ivorian politics, Ahipeaud argues that anti-democratic rule and neo-patrimonialism under Houphouët's watch and post Houphouët are the main reasons behind the crises.<sup>18</sup> While centralising on the processes and systems of ethnicity and interregional rivalry (north-south) during the September 2002 period when the rebellion started until March 2007 with the Peace Accords - to explain the conflict, McGovern argues that the origins of the Ivorian crises can be traced back from Houphouët's three decades of personal rule - through his single political party the PDCI. However, comparing the 'real' and 'invented' causes of the ongoing crises, McGovern argues that through the politics of plantation which began during the colonial era, the French administration focused on their cocoa plantations in the southwest of Côte d'Ivoire and used the ever-booming cocoa industry to their advantage. According to McGovern, Houphouët maintained this concept, but it was poorly organised by his government. It created serious inequalities in the Ivorian southwest, as ordinary Ivorians from the region benefited little from the wealth generated by the cocoa industry, when Côte d'Ivoire was producing 40% of the world's cocoa. Ultimately, "this planted seeds of discord which came to fruition only after his death."<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, McGovern argues that it is impossible to ignore the role of France, the former colonial power, in the Ivorian conflicts. This was demonstrated by the lack of transparency with regards to French management of the political economy in Francophone countries including Côte d'Ivoire known as *Franafrique*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Hofnung 2011, pp. 9-10.

<sup>18</sup> Ahipeaud's interview with *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* published on 14 February 2014, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/488176.html> (accessed 15 February 2014)

<sup>19</sup> Mike McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire*, 2011, The University of Chicago Press, p. 26; Also in *Think Africa Press* available at <http://thinkafricapress.com/ivory-coast/review-making-war-cote-d-ivoire-outtara-gbagbo-soro-goude> (accessed 22 July 2013).

<sup>20</sup> Mike McGovern, *Making war in Côte d'Ivoire*, 2011, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 202-203.

One analyst reports that the former colonial master should be blamed for their part in the conflict.<sup>21</sup> Bertin Kouadio echoed this view. Following the attempted coup d'état on 19 September, 2002, France decided to intervene into the Ivorian conflict. France argued it was “solely protecting French and foreign expatriates.” Therefore, 600 soldiers from the French 43<sup>rd</sup> Marine Infantry Battalion based at Port Bouet, near Abidjan international airport, were on alert due to the unstable situation. They were deployed around the Ivorian territory. A few days later, on 22 September, they were joined by other French troops positioned in Libreville, Gabon, and other African countries for an intervention called ‘humanity.’<sup>22</sup>

Since then, the French government supported or worked against respective Ivorian governments. Starting from the September 2002 period, Kouadio shows how the politics of division contributed to the Ivorian crisis, concluding that it all began with Houphouët's succession issues.<sup>23</sup> The Ivorian author and researcher Philippe Assalé, focusing on security reforms and disarmament, expresses similar concerns, describing Houphouët as the man who somewhat intrigued the crises. For him, the bottom line is that the current Ivorian nightmare is partly the consequence of the problems of the succession of Houphouët.<sup>24</sup> He adds that the problem started with Houphouët, however, the economic crisis and his successors contributed to it through their power struggle.<sup>25</sup>

Grah Mel, one of Côte d'Ivoire's most respected authors and researchers, acknowledges that it was a period of brutal politics caused by Houphouët, who never played his role in the best interest of the nation and facilitated a crisis around his own leadership. In the end,

<sup>21</sup> John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 281

<sup>22</sup> François Rivasseau, 4 Octobre 2002, Point de presse des porte-parole du ministère français des affaires étrangères, et du ministère de la défense, available at <http://www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr> (accessed 13 November 2014)

<sup>23</sup> Bertin Kouadio, 2009, “From Stability to Insurgency: The Root and Proximate Causes of the September 2002 civil War in Côte d'Ivoire” *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, Paper 115, available at <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/115>. (accessed 23 November 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, p. 58. (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, p. 58.

Houphouët's government was weak. This provides a clear indication of the consequences of authoritarian regime broadly in the West African region and in Côte d'Ivoire in particular.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Baulin and N'Guéssan have pointed out that the Ivorian crisis was a result of bad transition from Houphouët.<sup>27</sup>

Many analysts including Ahipeaud, Akindès, Baulin, Coulibaly, Grah Mel, Kouadio, Jackson and Rosberg have exposed Houphouët's tight control over the nation throughout his system of patronage, and the consequence of this strategy has been enormous. They would agree that because of his style of leadership and desire to die while in office without a proper replacement procedure, the country submerged to political crises.<sup>28</sup> According to Grah Mel, the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has been rooted in the succession dossier which began in 1960 when Côte d'Ivoire became independent.<sup>29</sup> Houphouët spoke about his succession to a group of Ivorian students in France in January 1965, towards the end of his first mandate. He stated this:

Vous êtes nos fils. Demain, face à vos jeunes, vous serez ce que nous sommes aujourd'hui face à vous. Avant d'être 'le vieux' de 1965, j'ai été le jeune de 1925.

<sup>26</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *La fin et La suite*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Baulin 2000, *La Succession d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Paris, Karthala; Kouamé N'Guéssan 2002, "Le Coup d'Etat de Décembre 1999: Espoirs et Désenchantements," in Marc Le Pape and Claudine Duval (eds) *Côte d'Ivoire Année Terrible 1999-2000*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 51-80; Yves Paul Mandjem, "Les Gouvernements de Transition Comme Sites d'Institutionnalisation de la Politique dans les Ordres Politiques en Voie de Sortie de Crise en Afrique," *Revue Africaine des Relations Internationales*, Vol.12 Nos 1&2, 2009, pp. 81-182.

<sup>28</sup> Martial Ahipeaud 2009, p. 55; Francis Akindès "The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d'Ivoire," Norkiska Afrikaninstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at Research report no 128, Nordiska Afrikaninstitutet, Uppsala 2004, available at <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:nai:diva-96> (accessed 19 July 2010); Jacques Baulin 2000, *La Succession d'Houphouët-Boigny*, Paris, Karthala; Interview with Grah Mel in Côte d'Ivoire, 15 May 2012; Bertin Kouadio, 2009, "From Stability to Insurgency: The Root and Proximate Causes of the September 2002 civil War in Côte d'Ivoire" *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, Paper 115, available at <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/115>. (accessed 23 November 2013); Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 143-152.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Respondent "E" in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, 15 May 2012.

You are our sons. Tomorrow, in front of your young ones, you will be what we are today in front of you. Before becoming ‘the old man’ of 1965, I was the young man of 1925.<sup>30</sup>

Although he was not explicit, many saw these words as an early indication that, given his popularity, Houphouët, was not going to quit the leadership after five years of his reign. Before the end of 1965, Houphouët once again publicly raised his succession issue in a speech he gave on 23 September, 1965. At the opening ceremony of the fourth PDCI-RDA congress, he stressed that he was aware of people asking questions about his succession. He went on to say that under his leadership, a policy was in place, for ensuring stability in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>31</sup> However, asked if this policy would be followed by young Ivorians, Houphouët said:

Those who ask this question should reassure themselves! They should know that in effect, no matter the importance of the role that I play as the leader of this country given all the responsibilities involved, Côte d’Ivoire policy is not about one person. It is the policy of our party and the PDCI-RDA whose dedicated activists strongly believe in ensuring happiness and freedom for Ivorians. It is also the result of a collaboration and constant dialogue with the youth that - let us not forget it – takes up in government more than half of the posts and, in administration, quasi-totally all management roles (...)

Will they benefit by scrapping a policy which provided people of this country a standard of living which makes many African countries jealous,

<sup>30</sup> Grah Me 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, pp. 243-244 (quote translated by Jean-Claude Meledje for the purposes of this thesis.

<sup>31</sup> Grah Mel, 2010 b *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, p. 244.



and allows Côte d'Ivoire to enjoy the status of respectful country and have a large prestige abroad?<sup>32</sup>

Simply put, Houphouët believed that change was not required if things were working well, especially when the economy at least from a micro-economic perspective was thriving. For Houphouët, when a motor is operating well, and you are driving on an empty road, “you change neither the vehicle nor the road.”<sup>33</sup> It is also worth emphasising that Houphouët had a reputation for mystery surrounding himself, such as when he declared: “Within the Akan group...while the chief is alive, whether it is at a religious level or family level, no-one is meant to know the name of his replacement.”<sup>34</sup> It can be argued that many Akan Ivorians were unaware of this tradition. In any case, for a President representing a nation composed of sixty ethnic groups, the method of governing should not be based solely on one tribe's tradition unless you wanted civil conflict based on ethnic differences. This was the political situation at the end of Houphouët's first mandate in 1965.

In a study of conflict related to the politics of transition in Africa, William Zartman demonstrated how a conflict can be generated by post-colonial authoritarian regimes in their attempts to accumulate power for personal ambitions.<sup>35</sup> Bonnie Campbell also highlighted that the *rapprochement politique* with the French colonialists in the 1950s of protecting the colonial interests, the rise of the PDCI as a single party, and the exclusion of opponents since 1958 under Houphouët's watch, made it impossible to have an exchange of ideas with

<sup>32</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite* pp. 244-245 (quote translated for the purposes of this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> This typical political metaphor à la Houphouët suggested that he was not ready to go; Grah Mel 2010, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, the end and the following, p. 245. Houphouët was not concerned about when he should step down. Rather, he was concerned about allowing the younger generation to be educated but not carry on the work he started as a leader until he dies.

<sup>34</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, p.556.

<sup>35</sup> In Charles Mwaura, “Political succession and related conflicts in Kenya,” A paper prepared for the USAID conference on conflict resolution in the Greater Horn of Africa held at the Methodist Guest House 27-28 March 1997.

potential leaders about alternative government and the nation's future.<sup>36</sup> As Ben Ismaël pointed out, since 1958 the politics of Francophone Africa had been dictated by both sides of politics in France, whether from the conservative or the left.<sup>37</sup>

Taking into account the fact that France which had ruled Côte d'Ivoire since the end of the twentieth century had centralised the political, social and economic structure of Côte d'Ivoire. Maja Bovcon also argues that the former colonial master was partly responsible for causing the on-going conflict.<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, France was partly responsible for the Ivorian crisis because of its management of the nation's territory and society during the colonial and post-colonial era. However, Houphouët also played a central role after independence by continuing the colonial authoritarian policy. In short, the argument has been all along that if the colonial powers created the problem, Houphouët could have fixed it by stepping down, as was the case in Sénégal. However, he failed to act. As a result, since passing away, Côte d'Ivoire has witnessed military coup d'états, succession battles, constitutional war, and ethnic confrontations. Houphouët will be also remembered for the role he played in securing the nation's independence and defining Côte d'Ivoire following the end of the colonial era. He had dominated the Ivorian political scene for decades, because members of the PDCI were divided or did not have the courage to challenge him.

Perhaps his stepping down would not have been enough to solve all the problems. However, by neglecting to abide by the Constitution and democratic principles, Houphouët failed to prolong the most important achievement for his 33-year personal rule – stability. He also

<sup>36</sup> Bonnie Campbell, "Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>37</sup> Successive French leaders who have impacted politics in Francophone countries from 1958 include Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou, Giscard d'Estaing, François Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, Lionel Jospin, Nicolas Sarkozy, and now François Hollande. See Ben Ismaël, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, 3 April 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Maja Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy and its Ethical Implications," (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed) *African Studies Quarterly* 11, Issue 1 (2009), Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. available at <http://africa.ufl.edu/asq/v11/v11i1a1.htm>. (accessed 18 February 2014)

created uncertainty, instability and a row between Bédié and Ouattara over who should succeed the first President, which were part of the earliest signs of the ongoing crises. One can put it that, Houphouët's immediate legacy was turbulent political landscape.

### **The Growing Diplomatic Concern**

Although it was clear that he could not rule the country while ignoring the issue of his inevitable succession, Houphouët pretended that choosing his successor was not a concern for him. At the international level, France the former colonial master was really concerned about who would replace Houphouët. As Jacques Baulin notes, despite the former colonial ruler's concern about Houphouët's sudden death, which was more likely to impact the whole nation socially, he was not in a rush to nominate his successor. Instead, he kept everyone guessing.<sup>39</sup> American diplomats in Abidjan were worried too. Since 1967, American secret services began producing reviews about the internal situation in Côte d'Ivoire, on topics such as "Current Problems, followed by documents on Rural Exodus, and Population Influx, and before that Non-Party Blocs, Students and Tribalism."<sup>40</sup>

For example, in 1967 a cable from the American secret services over then 'Current Problems' in Côte d'Ivoire illustrated how obsessed the diplomatic milieu was with Houphouët's succession at the time. It also highlighted how the topic was a concern for Houphouët himself as demonstrated by the American embassy in Côte d'Ivoire, despite showing lack of interest publicly. Moreover, it revealed that in 1967, no one was shortlisted for Houphouët's succession, in spite of an internal power struggle within PDCI-RDA.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See Jacques Baulin, "La Succession d'Houphouët-Boigny," Fonds d'Archives Baulin, available at <http://www.fonds-baulin.org/ouvrages/la-succession-d-houphouet-boigny/article/preface-300> (accessed 8 August 2013); (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> 31 March 1967 Despatch, "Assessment of internal situation in Ivory Coast" Department of State Airgram A229. In Grah Mel *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, the end and the following, p. 247 as the original document could not be accessed at the moment.

<sup>41</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, the end and the following, p. 248.

Indeed, divisions existed within the PDCI-RDA, the most notorious being between supporters of Auguste Denise and Philippe Yacé. Both Denise and Yacé were powerful PDCI members in their own rights. A generation gap also plagued the party, pitting old party members such as Yacé against young, ambitious technocrats such as Bédié. Neither side nor individual had the political expertise and charisma of Houphouët to make a real impact. Although internal issues continued, they were not likely to have long-term deleterious impacts. So the government continued with its highly successful strategy of co-opting, and when needed, repressing potential opponents internally.

In October 1969, during the national dialogue forum, Houphouët said at the closing ceremony speech that one day he would retire because he did not intend to remain President of the Republic forever.<sup>42</sup> However, while rejecting the whole idea of an early retirement and also paraphrasing his mentor general de Gaulle, Houphouët stated, “I did not have a predecessor; I will not have a successor.”<sup>43</sup>

At that time, Houphouët was 64 years old, and as Grah Mel stresses, there were some indications that he was on track to retire from public life. However, Houphouët gave no sign of possible retirement and carried on working with enthusiasm and determination. For example, he remained willing to engage in a reconciliation process with the then President Sékou Touré of French Guinea. Further, he also developed a close relationship with many other regional leaders, favouring to avoid the succession issue and embracing the zero option: ‘do nothing.’<sup>44</sup> For the American Ambassador Morgan, in 1969, Houphouët came to realise

<sup>42</sup> Houphouët, however, has shown it was business as usual and was happy to stay in power; Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, pp.252-265.

<sup>43</sup> Jacques Baulin was Houphouët’s ex-Advisor, He wrote his book also as an observer of Ivorian politics and key player. So therefore see “La Succession d’Houphouët-Boigny,” Fonds d’Archives Baulin, available at <http://www.fonds-baulin.org/ouvrages/la-succession-d-houphouet-boigny/article/preface-300> (accessed 8 August 2013) (quote translated for the purposes of this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> This option suggested that no further work was necessary; assuming the continuity of what was already in place.

the danger associated with the succession in Côte d'Ivoire. On the other hand, there was much speculation about the identity of the successor:

On the question of who, honestly, we do not want to be certain. Almost certainly a member of the PDCI, but no particular individual has emerged yet. The President of the National Assembly Philippe Yacé would certainly like to be elected, and he has got the theoretical advantage of being party Secretary General. However, in addition to the fact that he does not have a sufficient ethnic base, he has a few enemies. Mamadou Coulibaly and Auguste Denise are no longer from the younger generation (...) Above all these individualities, the field is largely open.<sup>45</sup>

Houphouët used another strategy to silence those who were constantly speculating about his likely successor: international travel. While the nation was facing succession uncertainty, Houphouët and many of his senior colleagues were simultaneously out of the country for long periods of time. According to Grah Mel, these strategically planned absences were aimed to distract observers and partners who were concerned about the succession.<sup>46</sup> For example, in June 1970 Houphouët made an official visit to Holland and an extended private trip to Europe. These lengthy absences were interpreted by the *Agence Ivoirienne de Presse*, Ivorian Press Agency (AIP) as a sign of a stable government that engaged in the national reconstruction program. This view of stability was also shared by the American embassy:

As noted by a recent press agency dispatch, the Embassy notes, and the simultaneous and prolonged absence abroad of President Houphouët-Boigny, his number two man in the Ivorian political hierarchy (Yacé), and several key Ministers and important personalities, it is a rather striking

<sup>45</sup> Department of State Air gram, A-110, 5 June 1970. In Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, p. 254. (Translated for this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje, 2013).

<sup>46</sup> The whole idea was to make people in Côte d'Ivoire believe that compared to its neighbours, the nation was peaceful and the succession issue was not on the top of the agenda.

testimony of stability in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed it is. Moreover, there seems no reason why such stability cannot be considered genuine and trustworthy for the time being.<sup>47</sup>

Houphouët used the tenth anniversary celebration of independence in 1970 to return home after an extended period of time in Europe, and introduced himself as *Le Vieux*, 'the old man' alluding to his inevitable succession. However, according to the American embassy:

Although certain aspects of the President's Tenth Anniversary Address may have the ring of a valedictory, Houphouët's plan for the future remains as guarded as ever. No candidate for succession is apparent. The waves in the Ivorian political pond caused by the January 1970 cabinet reshuffle have not yet subsided. Like all skilful political leaders, whether autocratic or otherwise, Houphouët prevents pockets of political influence from forming at lower levels by stimulating competition and suspicion among his Ministers and other leading political figures. By maintaining ambiguities in his relations with individuals in the political hierarchy, he continues to inspire greater efforts and demonstrations of loyalty from his subordinates. However, after ten years of independence, in Côte d'Ivoire, Félix Houphouët-Boigny seems firmly in control of the country's destiny and his authority is unquestioned. Even critics who may want change do not seem prepared to challenge the system while Houphouët is still around.<sup>48</sup>

At the heart of Houphouët's transition dilemma was also a question of trust and loyalty. As one senior PDCI campaign operative indicated, Houphouët concerned himself primarily with loyalty, while dealing with three groups of people. Firstly, the most trusted were those who

<sup>47</sup> Department of State Air gram, A-150, 24 July 1970: Subject Test – But should not destroy Côte d'Ivoire's remarkable stability. In Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, pp.255-266.

<sup>48</sup> See "The Ivory Coast after ten years- The Houphouët-Boigny Style," American Embassy Abidjan. Department of State Airgram A-168, 28 August 1970, in Grah Mel 2010, p. 257.

had not deserted him since the early days of the battle over independence. Secondly, there were those who had shifted their loyalties. While he trusted them, he was always wary. Thirdly, there were those who either betrayed him or were never on his side. Unfortunately for Houphouët, there were few people in the first group.<sup>49</sup> However, this did not mean he was keen to abandon his power.

Once Houphouët rose to power, he wanted to make the most of it, whatever the cost. He totally ignored that being a President is not the only way to be a great man. Since he feared replacement, he used every trick in the book to replace his opponents, and above all else, held the goal of dying in office. There were numerous reports regarding Houphouët's health in the 1970s. Given the fact that there were no sign of his intent to resign, foreign diplomats got frustrated by the issue of political succession and requested for necessary steps for a smooth political transition. Another cable on 8 October, 1971 from the American Embassy showed:

Houphouët-Boigny, in spite of missing his usual summer sojourn in Europe appears to be in good health. Concern was expressed on his physical state in diplomatic circles due to the infrequency of his public appearances. Ambassador Root saw him on September 20, and, although he appeared to be tired at the beginning of their interview, once he began to speak, he became his normally loquacious self.<sup>50</sup>

As the above quote suggests, Houphouët appeared to be healthy, but Ivorians were carefully monitoring his movements. In other words, from their perspective, they expected Houphouët to clearly designate his successor, a democratic alternative which was the only guarantee for

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Respondent "F" in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012; Grah Mel 2003, p. 47; Among those Houphouët 'trusted' most were also Mathieu Ekra, sub section of RDA Secretary General for the suburb of Treichville in Abidjan, before being promoted into the cabinet to lead both the public service and information portfolios in 1961, then senior PDCI minister and powerbroker. While being one of the new recruits in 1961, he had been one of Houphouët's close collaborators in the last 20 years.

<sup>50</sup> See Political development in Côte d'Ivoire, Amembassy Abidjan, Department of State Airgram A-2151, 8 October 1971, p. 3, in Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 258.

genuine stability. The continuity of the crisis sheds light on Ahipeaud's observation that as a Ponty graduate, Houphouët led the William Ponty generation of Ivorian elites for the struggle for independence and nation-building. As a talented mediator, Houphouët was more and more consulted by his Francophone African counterparts for conflict resolution. However, from 1946-1993, his reign blocked the succession of new generations to power, which caused the crisis."<sup>51</sup> As research shows, "We all knew it was coming. It was just a matter of when it would come."<sup>52</sup> When the crisis finally came, the negative impact lasted several years. Political, economic and developmental instability dominated the nation. Furthermore, this instability spread to the West African countries of Bénin, Burkina Faso, and Niger which had once benefited from Côte d'Ivoire's economic power.<sup>53</sup> Houphouët's decision to focus his energy on maintaining his position rather than grooming a successor resulted in a negative legacy for Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries.

As is common knowledge and also attested by some of the respondents interviewed for this thesis, Houphouët never intended to resign because he was very comfortable in the presidential seat.<sup>54</sup> According to other respondents, Houphouët was going to hang in there and fight until the end and he did just that. Therefore, he was selfish not to surrender the leadership at an early stage.<sup>55</sup> The following section will examine the manipulation of Article 11 of the Constitution that Houphouët used to hang onto power.

<sup>51</sup> Ahipeaud made a critical assessment of Ivorian politics in his interview with *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* published on 14 February 2014, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/488176.html> access 15 February 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Respondent "D" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.

<sup>53</sup> "Impacts de la crise ivoirienne sur l'espace Uemoa - Les signaux au rouge," *Le Temps*" 8 March 2012 <http://news.abidjan.net/h/393436.html> (accessed 11 April 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012; Interview with Respondent "H" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 13 June 2012

<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately in Africa it is not common to see a Head of state resigning. Some stay in power until they pass away in office or overthrown. Others resign on paper, knowing that they will strongly contest the next election; Interview with Respondent "O" in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012; Interview with Respondent "R" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.



## The Manipulation of Article 11

Supported by his inner circle, Houphouët the ‘Strong Man’ of Abidjan put in place several strategies to stay in power, as attested by the Table below, through amendments to Article 11. Like many former French colony leaders, Houphouët designed the first Constitution *à la française*, based on the 1958 Fifth Republic model of his mentor, General Charles de Gaulle. As a result, Houphouët had greater authority over the new postcolonial state, accumulating more powers in parliament.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Houphouët was the sole person in charge of the hiring of all military and most personal civilians, but most importantly, he had greater power through Article 11 of the Constitution, which he manipulated on several occasions through his ‘personal rule’ to hang onto power against the odds.<sup>57</sup>

Even if it was amended, its reasons for inception and the philosophy behind it were highly questionable. It was a highly questionable law made in a highly questionable way, and which delivered a highly questionable outcome. Houphouët’s mentor General de Gaulle said, it is better to leave power years earlier than a minute later. African wisdom tells us that it is better to leave glory before it leaves you.<sup>58</sup> However, Houphouët modified the Constitution when pursuing his political agenda, sparking a succession battle. Numerous African conflicts have had their roots in the same type of power struggle caused by the confusion surrounding succession.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p.63.

<sup>57</sup> *Du déjà vu* elsewhere in Africa these days, even if the contexts are different. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), President Joseph Kabila is in favour of constitutional reforms, allowing him to stay in power after 2016, despite the end of his constitutional mandate.

<sup>58</sup> Mamadou H Karamoko, “Blaise Compaoré est un fin connaisseur du marigot politique ivoirien et ouest africain” *L’Intelligent d’Abidjan* 18 March 2014, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/492957.html> (accessed 19 March 2014).

<sup>59</sup> Tessimili Bakary 1984, “Elite Transformation and Political Succession,” New York: Preager, pp. 21-56; Claude Wauthier, Côte d’Ivoire: A Strange Inheritance, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1997; in Bertin Kouadio, 2009, “From Stability to Insurgency: The Root and Proximate Causes of the September 2002 civil War in Côte d’Ivoire” *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, Paper 115, available at <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/115> (accessed 23 November 2013).

In Zimbabwe, 91-year-old President Robert Mugabe has been in power since independence from Britain in 1980. Mugabe shows no sign of retirement and in 2014, he pushed for the amendment of the Constitution to personally appoint his deputies and consolidate his iron-grip on power. The succession battle within his own party the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was between his Vice-President Joice Mujura and Justice Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa. At the national level, ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by opposition leader and union activist Morgan Tsvangirai who served as Mugabe's Prime Minister (2009-13) in a power-sharing government are embroiled in key power struggles. The First Lady Grace Mugabe was appointed with the support of her husband Mugabe to take-over the leadership of the ZANU-PF women's league to secure his rule, and indeed, help Grace to attain the highest office of the land. However, Mugabe declared in October 2014 on national television he was still in control. ZANU-PF maintains Mugabe will be their candidate for the 2018 presidential elections. This has complicated succession dynamics further because Zimbabweans saw it as a continuation of the Mugabe dynasty, which could trigger a serious political and potential violent internal conflict.<sup>60</sup>

In Togo, after surviving attempted coups d'état and political transitions, President Gnassingbé Eyadéma died on 5 February, 2005 of heart attack on the plane on the way for medical treatment, after a record 38 years in office. Eyadéma was the last of the dominant francophone dictators, but the circumstances surrounding how his son succeeded him was intriguing. Although the Constitution allows the President of the National Assembly to stand as President for the next 5 years, the Chief of Staff of the Togolese Armed Forces General Zachari Nandja declared Faure Gnassingbé as Head of state. Moreover, the parliament

<sup>60</sup> *The International Crisis Group*, "Zimbabwe: waiting for the future" Briefing no. 103, 29 September 2014, Johannesburg/Brussels available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/southern-africa/zimbabwe/b103-zimbabwe-waiting-for-the-future.pdf> (accessed 5 February 2015).

refused to act in accordance with the Togolese Constitution, which it amended to facilitate the appointment of Faure Gnassingbé as President. In the process, seven private radio stations were shut down by the government along with a television station and political rallies could not be held. Faure Gnassingbé was officially sworn in as new Togolese Head of state in February 2005. Although the political situation in Togo did not deteriorate significantly like in Côte d'Ivoire, Togolese lawyers took to the steps of the court to protest against Faure Gnassingbé's accession to power.<sup>61</sup>

Also in neighbouring Burkina Faso, when Blaise Compaoré attempted to potentially prolong a 27-year rule through the amendment of the Constitution, it caused intense pressure and violent protests as a result of uncertainty. It was a repeat of the 2011 uprisings. Compaoré was forced to resign on 31 October, 2014 amid a massive uprising, but the security situation remained highly volatile. Côte d'Ivoire was no exception to that. This reinforced the belief that Houphouët's historic responsibility for the ongoing crisis was not to be undermined.<sup>62</sup>

According to Richard Crook, Houphouët categorically resolved the succession problem by amending Article 11, enabling the President of National Assembly, Bédié, to automatically replace him in the event of his death in office.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Tiémoko Coulibaly and Honorat De Yédagne have argued that, as a proponent of tribalism, Houphouët carefully orchestrated the transition of Bédié to power by amending the Constitution on many occasions.<sup>64</sup> In other words, Bédié received special treatment. They have insisted that he was Houphouët's favourite, the one that he loved the most, and had an edge over his rivals, however, that was

<sup>61</sup> Appiagyei-Atua Kwadwo 2005, "Political developments in Post-Eyadéma Togo: A critical analysis" Human Rights brief 12, no.3 pp. 21-24.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Respondent "I" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 16 June 2012.

<sup>63</sup> see Richard Crook, "Winning elections and ethno-regional politics: The failure of the 1990 and 1995 elections in Côte d'Ivoire," (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed ) *African Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 383, April 1997, p. 215, available at <http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.flinders.edu.au/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALE%7CA19493235&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&authCount=1> (accessed 20 February 2014).

<sup>64</sup> Tiémoko Coulibaly, "Cult of a Dead Dictator: Ivory Coast Democracy Differed," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English Edition, available at <http://mondediplo.com/2000/10/08ivorycoast> (accessed 25 November 2013); See also Honorat De Yédagne interview on 8 November 2013, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco20146.htm> (accessed 25 November 2013).

not the case. In reality, Bédié was a frustrated man who was constantly humiliated and terrorised by Houphouët, as was evident in one of the corruption accusations fabricated by Houphouët against him. Moreover, it is clear from Table 5.1 that Bédié only became a team member among his colleagues, with a very limited mandate. What we have witnessed was a clear indication of Houphouët's master plan to destroy Bédié's political career with the recruitment of Ouattara. As the succession had been postponed by Houphouët on numerous occasions, Bédié's role appeared to be temporary, amid the constitutional amendment.<sup>65</sup>

One can argue that since the constitutional amendment on 31 May 1975, the President of the National Assembly, Philippe Yacé, an Akan from the south became the apparent heir to the presidency. At that time, Yacé was one of the rare candidates who enjoyed the good favour of the President and had the experience necessary for assuming office. As it is evident, at that time Bédié was not the President of the National Assembly, but Minister for Finance. When Houphouët discovered Bédié's irrepressible determination to hold the presidency, he revoked everything and ensured that Bédié and Yacé were not designated for his succession. To achieve his objective, without waiting for the return of parliamentarians to the parliament, Houphouët rushed to announce the amendment of the Constitution on 25 November, 1980. This was only 48 hours after the second round of the legislative elections and Yacé was sacked in 1980 as President of the National Assembly and was replaced by Bédié. Nonetheless, Bédié's power was strictly limited as Houphouët was the supreme holder of executive power. Bédié's mandate and the timeframe of the succession were also strictly limited as he was only authorised to govern within a maximum period of 60 days, and then enter into fresh elections.

From that point on, the President of the Republic became the only one in charge. Houphouët planned the appointment of a Vice-President who would become President of the Republic in

<sup>65</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp. 324-325.

case of a vacuum of power on 25 November, 1980. However, the role only existed on paper. Moreover, in November 1985, Houphouët won re-election for a fifth term, and had not indicated any preference for a successor. Consequently, there was considerable uncertainty over succession. On 31 January, 1986, three months after the 1985 amendment, Houphouët introduced another amendment, without adding anything substantial to the previous text. It only stated that where the President of the Republic was prevented from exercising his functions, they should be exercised temporarily by the President of the National Assembly.

It is clear that from 1975 to 1990, Houphouët was determined to make the succession difficult for Bédié. The last stumbling block organised by Houphouët was the arrival of Ouattara on the Ivorian political scene in 1990. Indeed, as the 6 November 1990 Constitution stipulated, Bédié became the successor in line with the Constitution as President of the National Assembly. Nonetheless, as Prime Minister of Houphouët and the deputy of Bédié, Ouattara became Bédié's rival, a rivalry that contributed to the Ivorian conflict.

It can be argued that the amendments served as a good tactic to neutralise public disturbance and end speculation over the succession. During the 1990 presidential election, Houphouët decided at the last minute to run for the seventh time for the presidency as the unique candidate for the PDCI. It is clearly observable that if Houphouët was not seriously sick, his intention was to dump both his constitutional heir, Bédié and his first Prime Minister, Ouattara in order to elevate Gbagbo, his historic rival, as it was highly likely for Houphouët to seek another term.<sup>66</sup> In other words, he wanted to finish off Bédié and Ouattara politically.

History shows that Houphouët was using constitutional manipulation to retain his hold of the presidency. As Table 5.1 shows, on 25 November, 1980 the post of Vice-President that only existed on paper was created. In 1985, Houphouët put more restrictions on the succession

<sup>66</sup> Grah Mel, 2010 b, p. 555; Varenne 2012, p. 32; There was a clear contradiction here. For Houphouët who said "my heart is so small that there is no room for hatred," it was the best way to punish both Bédié and Ouattara; Also see *Boigny Express*, 6 December 2012.

criteria. Perhaps the most defining moment of the amendments of the Constitution came on 31 January, 1986, when the post of Vice-President was abolished. Houphouët modified the Constitution for the last time in 1990, but this does not suggest that Houphouët had an immediate succession plan.<sup>67</sup>

This final change stipulated that in the event of the incumbent's death, the President would be succeeded by the speaker of the house. The latter would hold office until the next scheduled election. However, the events that unfolded prior to Houphouët's death gave plenty of good reasons to suggest that Houphouët only wanted his successor to carry out presidential functions after his death. As one respondent pointed out, going through the constitutional amendments was a *passage obligé*, an essential phase for Houphouët to consolidate his power.<sup>68</sup> As a result, like Malawi's President Kamuzu Banda, Houphouët remained President-for-Life, in other words, "plugged into eternity."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Richard Cornwell 2000, "Côte d'Ivoire: Asking for it," *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Gray Cowan 1987, Côte d'Ivoire at 27, *CISIS Africa Notes*, The Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, No. 71, 28 April 1987, available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/anotes\\_0487.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/anotes_0487.pdf) (accessed 18 January 2015).

**Table 5.1: Amendments of Article 11 of the Constitution: 1975-1990**

DATE	AMENDMENT	DESCRIPTION
31-May-75	First amendment: The law stipulates power would pass to the President of the National Assembly	Law no 75-365 related to amendment of Article 11 of the Constitution
25-Nov-80	Second amendment: The succession is given to a Vice-President elected the same way as the President of the Republic	Law no 80-1232 amending and adding certain clauses of the Constitution
12-Oct-85	Third amendment: The President of the National Assembly takes over the functions of the President, but new elections must take place between 40 days and 60 days. If incapacitated, he is replaced by the first Vice-President of the National Assembly	Law no 85-1072 amending and adding certain clauses of the Constitution
31-Jan-86	Fourth amendment: The President of the National Assembly takes over the functions of the President, but new elections must take place within 60 days. The eventual role of the first Vice-President of the National Assembly is scrapped.	Law no 86-0090 related to amendment of Article 11 of the Constitution
06-Nov-90	Fifth amendment: The President of the National Assembly takes over the functions of the President of the republic should the latter die or become incapacitated, but the Prime Minister is a designated <i>suppléant</i> , Deputy President of the National Assembly	Law no 90-1529 related to amendment of Article 11 of the Constitution

Source: Data compiled by the author. Law nos from Grah Mel 2010, p. 325

As Table 5.1 shows, Ivorians witnessed another characteristic example of Houphouët's use of delay tactics to remain in power through the five amendments of Article 11 of the Ivorian Constitution. The first amendment, on 31 May 1975, stipulated that if the office of the presidency is vacated by death, resignation or incapacitation as attested by the Supreme Court, the President of the National Assembly shall perform the functions of the President of the Republic. Therefore, the President of the National Assembly was the apparent heir. The second amendment, passed on 25 November, 1980, states that the Vice-President becomes the successor. Peter Calvocoressi observes "a constitutional amendment introduced in 1980

had designated the Vice-President as heir and nobody was appointed to that office and five years later Houphouët-Boigny announced that he would remain in office until death.”<sup>70</sup>

The third amendment of 12 October, 1985 states that the President of the National Assembly becomes the successor but he has 45 to 60 days to organise fresh elections.<sup>71</sup> Although the fourth amendment of 31 January, 1986 is similar to the third one, the role of the Vice-President is abolished. Finally, the Fifth Amendment, on 6 November, 1990, stipulates that the President of the National Assembly is designated as President, but the Prime Minister, in this case Ouattara remains the *suppléant*, deputy or substitute, capable of replacing him to take over the presidency if needed.<sup>72</sup>

In short, following the 1990 presidential elections, Houphouët amended the infamous Article 11 on 6 November, 1990 for the fifth time since independence. Yet again, it was a new format, and a new rule. This Article deals with succession which allowed the President of the National Assembly, at that time Bédié, to finish Houphouët’s mandate in case of death. As authoritarian leader, Houphouët was aware that there were no real “constitutional limits” to the presidency, but his desire to remain in power inspired him to manipulate the Constitution, creating uncertainty and confusion over his succession.<sup>73</sup>

Given the fact that Houphouët wanted to remain in office, constitutional manipulation was the best policy. All this chaos could have been avoided by creating a Vice-President post in the Constitution to facilitate the transition process. According to a RDR powerbroker and

<sup>70</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics since 1945*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, Longman, London and New York, 1991, pp. 503-504.

<sup>71</sup> Assalé 2009, pp. 57-58.

<sup>72</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 325; “Côte d’Ivoire Succession,” *The Library of Congress Studies, CIA World Fact book*, available at

[http://www.photius.com/countries/cote\\_divoire/government/cote\\_divoire\\_government\\_succession.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/cote_divoire/government/cote_divoire_government_succession.html)

(accessed 25 November 2013); John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, *Adonis & Abbey*, pp. 269; Assalé 2009, pp. 57-58.

<sup>73</sup> Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p.226.



political analyst, “this form of government is much better than a parliamentary regime, but Houphouët’s modification of Article 11 had already ruined the system.”<sup>74</sup>

These textual modifications of Article 11 reinforce the view that Houphouët’s intention was to revise once again the Constitution, in order to contest for the presidency as long as possible while he was tightening and extending his grip on power. In other words these constitutional modifications had a precise objective: to reinforce his patrimonial regime and above all manage his leadership.<sup>75</sup>

Houphouët enjoyed creating doubt and confusion over his succession, and suggested that this proved that no one was ready or capable of succeeding him. Despite the last modification of 1990, many Ivorians were critical about Houphouët’s transition plan, accusing him of not being in favour of a short transition, and delaying the process which sparked crisis.<sup>76</sup>

Nearing the end of his life, Houphouët intended contesting the presidency in 1995 for his eighth mandate as head of state. When he was asked by French journalist Arthur Conte, on 19 March, 1981, about how he would prefer to die, Houphouët replied, “In my village, on my bed, and full of lucidity.”<sup>77</sup> In the end, this was exactly what happened. Houphouët spent the last few days of his life in Yamoussoukro, his doctors doing their best to sustain him.<sup>78</sup> However, the transition problem remained unresolved.<sup>79</sup>

Analysts of Ivorian politics such as Robert Handloff and Gray Cowan argue that to allow a split between the apparent heir and the other potential candidates, Houphouët refused to clearly name a successor.<sup>80</sup> To make matters worse, Houphouët even avoided openly

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Respondent “O” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 May 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Ange Ralph Gnahoua 2006, *La crise du system politique Ivoirien: Aspects politiques et juridiques*, Editions L’Harmattan, pp. 48-50.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Respondent “K” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 23 June 2012.

<sup>77</sup> See Arthur Conte, “Les confidences d’Houphouët,” *Jeune Afrique*, no 1720-1721, 23 December 1993, in Grah Mel 2010 b, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny, La fin et la suite*, (2010) : 474.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Respondent “T” in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 29 June 2012.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Respondent “T” in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 29 June 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Handloff 1988, *Ivory Coast: A country study*, Washington, GPO for the library of congress, available at <http://countrystudies.us/ivory-coast/> (accessed 18 January 2015) ; Gray Cowan 1987, Côte d’Ivoire at 27,

suggesting a successor, which resulted in a standoff between Bédié and Ouattara.<sup>81</sup> Houphouët's ultimate objective was to remain in power. For Houphouët, Côte d'Ivoire was his territory and he was prepared to cling to power until death. Obsessed with the idea of being the unique representative of the nation, he failed to give the opportunity to his potential opponents and political heirs. Houphouët thought being the President was his privilege and no one else. Although the time for him to hand over his authority to his successor was up, like many other African leaders, he got caught up with 'the trappings of power' and never left.<sup>82</sup> There is no doubt that as seen above, Houphouët was a politician with strong conviction who was leading the nation. His goal was to reform Côte d'Ivoire after the French colonial era. To achieve this, Houphouët pursued it relentlessly with vision and, above all, a lot of diplomacy and courage. However, Houphouët betrayed Ivorians. Chaos arose because Houphouët did not step down, and died in power without putting a system of smooth transition in place. For example, when asked about the failed political transition under Houphouët, one respondent explained, "These attempts to amend the Constitution highlighted Houphouët's strong intention to stay in power."<sup>83</sup> As one observer concludes, at least Houphouët "must share the blame of what is happening in his country today."<sup>84</sup> As stated by another respondent, "with the failure of the transition, chaos was never far away."<sup>85</sup> In 1994, the confrontations between Northerners and Southerners escalated to the point of chaos. This conflict was due to

*CISIS Africa Notes*, The Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, No. 71, 28 April 1987, available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/anotes\\_0487.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/anotes_0487.pdf) (accessed 18 January 2015).

<sup>81</sup> See also Côte d'Ivoire Succession, *The Library of Congress Studies, CIA World Fact book*, available at [http://www.photius.com/countries/cote\\_divoire/government/cote\\_divoire\\_government\\_succession.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/cote_divoire/government/cote_divoire_government_succession.html) (accessed 25 November 2013).

<sup>82</sup> Peter Beattie, 2003, *Making a Difference: Reflections on Life, Leadership and Politics*, Harper Collins Publishers, p. 279.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Respondent "R" Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire 10 June 2012.

<sup>84</sup> Issaka Souare, *Civil Wars and Coups d'Etats in West Africa: An Attempt to Understand the Roots and Prescribe Possible Solutions*, University of America Press, Lanham, 2006, pp. 50-51.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

Houphouët's lack of systematic transition and an organised plan that would benefit all parties involved. He sought to retain power by all means, even at the cost of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>86</sup>

By nominating Ouattara who did not have the potential of gaining significant ethnic support to challenge him because he had spent much of his adult life working overseas for the IMF and the West African Central Bank, Houphouët showed that he was not keen to "share power."<sup>87</sup> This was confirmed in his 1985 statement after a long search for power-sharing arrangements, stating that, "wise old men... all reminded me that I am by custom the chief; that we have principles that must be respected."<sup>88</sup>

According to Grah Mel, the succession problem was not resolved on time and with transparency, due to Houphouët's fault of repeatedly postponing the *dénouement*. In a media interview when asked about the succession in 1980, Houphouët replied: "We never think about a successor." He added:

But we always think about a team, whose members will trust each other, and will be committed to my work. And it will be among this team that the future leader will emerge, who will have a difficult task of leading a young nation with a lot of difficulties because of its limited resources.<sup>89</sup>

Five years later, during a workshop on 11 July, 1985, he said yet again, "The succession of Houphouët is unity, peace, and team work. Therefore, anyone who will be appointed will carry on the nation-building work in the best conditions possible."<sup>90</sup>

Some suspected that he never really wanted to resign, despite making statements about his desire to retire to his 'small village' of Yamoussoukro for the rest of his life. Houphouët

<sup>86</sup> See Bernard Doza 2002, interview with *Le Grand Soir* <http://www.legrandsoir.info/Cote-d-Ivoire-Interview-de-Mr-Bernard-Doza.html> (accessed March 2014).

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Respondent "R" in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 10 June 2012; Also, see Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>88</sup> Houphouët 1985, p. 8. In Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>89</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp. 265-266. (Translated by Jean-Claude Meledje for the purposes of this thesis).

<sup>90</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp. 265-266

offered a particularly interesting illustration of a failed political transition in Côte d'Ivoire. Having played a key role in the 1950s during the battle for independence, he became the example not to be followed by the end of his public life. Widespread opinion inside Côte d'Ivoire agreed that toward the end of the leadership of former President Houphouët, Côte d'Ivoire appeared headed for political crisis because of a failed transition. For the Ivorian population and respondents interviewed for this thesis, the period of political transition represented a critical moment that was to permit the arrival of a new generation of Ivorian politicians with fresh ideas, the holding of elections and the reestablishment of a democratically elected leader. Therefore, popular expectations *vis à vis* the transitional government were high, and data collected in Abidjan are consistent with this argument.

According to most respondents including members of Houphouët's party, the PDCI, the Houphouët's constitutional amendments pointed to his disinclination for early retirement. Respondents believed that there was a lack of political responsibility on the part of Houphouët for the measures which he proposed and for the political processes of which he was a part.<sup>91</sup>

Here, the emphasis is placed on Houphouët's failure of leadership transition. There are not too many commentators who really understand the central role played by Houphouët, the first President. The main argument put forward in this chapter is that Houphouët never intended to step down. Indeed, the country's leadership devolved to the latter's constitutional heir, Bédié, not Houphouët's first choice. Houphouët did not trust Bédié. Most importantly, the succession only took place when Houphouët died. Houphouët cited the peaceful transitions in Sénégal and Cameroon as a proof that African states were able to select a leader without

<sup>91</sup> For example, see interview with Respondent "O" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012

causing crisis.<sup>92</sup> However, that was not the case in relation to the transition in Côte d'Ivoire. As has been pointed out by a number of respondents, Houphouët had failed to understand that in these countries, governments were transparent and the new head of state had been known sufficiently far in advance and accepted before taking office in order to avoid turmoil.<sup>93</sup>

Since the transition took too long, Côte d'Ivoire became unstable, sparking the crisis that occurred when he died.<sup>94</sup> According to Fologo, one of Houphouët's disciples and followers, Houphouët himself might well have predicted the Ivorian crisis. In his interview with Flore Hazoumé from Scrib Magazine, Fologo revealed that Houphouët saw the Ivorian crisis that came after him coming on the horizon. He sensed it, which helps to explain why he said, "After me, make up a team," knowing that no one among his colleagues, taken separately, could succeed him.<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, some of Houphouët's followers including Jacques Baulin and Tiémoko Coulibaly described him as West Africa's most remarkable public figure with a successful political career.<sup>96</sup> However, the question on everyone's lips is whether Houphouët's stepping down be enough to solve the problems?

On April 1990, when the single party system ended and political pluralism was established, Côte d'Ivoire experienced its first political demonstrations headed by a large number of political opposition leaders such as Gbagbo. While the motivations behind the protests were social and political, they covered all segments of Ivorian society including, farmers, civil

<sup>92</sup> Gray Cowan 1987, Côte d'Ivoire at 27, *CISIS Africa Notes*, The Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies No. 71, 28 April 1987, available at [http://csis.org/files/publication/anotes\\_0487.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/anotes_0487.pdf) (accessed 18 January 2015).

<sup>93</sup> For example see Interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012; Interview with Respondent "F" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.

<sup>95</sup> See César Djedje Mel 2014, "21 ans après sa mort, des secrets dévoilés sur Houphouët-Boigny, ce qu'il avait prédit sur la crise Ivoirienne," available at <http://www.linfodrome.com/vie-politique/18182-21-ans-apres-sa-mort-des-secrets-devoiles-sur-houphouet-boigny> (accessed 6 February 2015).

<sup>96</sup> Mamadou Coulibaly 1975, *Houphouët-Boigny 20 ans de Sagesse, 50 ans de Travail*, Abidjan: Société Ivoirienne d'Imprimerie (SII), in Bertin Kouadio, 2009, "From Stability to Insurgency: The Root and Proximate Causes of the September 2002 civil War in Côte d'Ivoire" *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, Paper 115, available at <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/115> (accessed 23 November 2013).

servants as well as youth. As Akindès, Fofana and Kouamé argued, the demonstrations were mainly connected to the issue of power struggles at that time. For example, on 14-16 and 21 May 1990, the army and the police took to the streets in Abidjan, showing that the Houphouët government no longer controlled the Ivorian society. Perhaps the major demonstration that took place was on 31 May, 1990 when an estimated 20,000 protesters called for the resignation of Houphouët.<sup>97</sup>

However, that did not happen, although Houphouët got arguably the biggest wake-up call of his public life and although a significant number of Ivorians were uncomfortable with the Houphouët regime, which was growing old and out of touch with reality. From that moment on, the stage was quietly being set for a politico-military crisis. Ultimately, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a political face-off between Houphouët and the political opposition in their pursuit of power. As a result, Côte d'Ivoire's image as a nation of peace in a region marred with violence was tarnished.

The debate over the long-awaited resignation of Houphouët that never took place is a complex issue that must be addressed. However, its complexity must not be used as a smokescreen to avoid need for careful analysis. According to Langer, due to his tendency to favour the southern areas over the northern areas, in the 1960s, Houphouët built most factories excluding sugar factories such as Sodesucre in the south, rich in natural resources. This approach resulted in inequalities between south and north which were increasingly a threat to ethno-regional harmony, suggesting that Houphouët's resignation would not be enough to solve the problems.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Francis Akindès, Moussa Fofana and Severin Yao Kouamé, in *The Hows and Whys of Mobilisation in Côte d'Ivoire*, available at <http://www.rosalux.sn/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Chap06.pdf> (accessed 21 January 2015).

<sup>98</sup> Arnim Langer, "Côte d'Ivoire's violent peace process" IBIS discussion paper no. 4, *Patterns of conflict resolution*, Institute for British-Irish studies, University College Dublin, available at [http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/publications/discussionpapers/cotedivoiresviolentpeaceprocess/A\\_Langer.pdf](http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/publications/discussionpapers/cotedivoiresviolentpeaceprocess/A_Langer.pdf) (accessed 16 February 2015).

Similarly, for Akindès, Houphouët privileged people from his own ethnic group, the Baoulé. Moreover, Houphouët saw them as superior to other ethnic groups, which was openly articulated in his speeches. This privilege and superiority of the Baoulé laid the foundation for potential confrontations and conflicts among Ivorians, according to Akindès, and his resignation would not mean that Côte d'Ivoire was out of the woods.<sup>99</sup>

Sénégal is known throughout Africa as one of the most politically stable countries on the continent because of its peaceful transitions from President to President, which have kept the country away from the fate of its neighbouring countries. The case of Léopold Senghor in particular stands out. Sénégal became an independent state on 20 August, 1960 and Senghor became its first President. Like Houphouët, Senghor dominated Senegalese politics for decades. Under his leadership, Senghor was virtually unchallenged through his ruling socialist party. While some of his rivals had been defeated or co-opted, others had been forced into exile. This is where the similarities end, as Senghor was successful and survived due to the way he interpreted Senegalese politics.<sup>100</sup>

Unlike Houphouët, however, Senghor peacefully transferred power to his handpicked successor, Abdou Diouf, without violence in the streets. Like former President Senghor, Houphouët could have resigned and that would be perhaps enough to solve part of the problems the Ivorian society is facing. As respondents have pointed out, if Houphouët who had dominated the Ivorian political scene for decades had left power early like Senghor, perhaps the result and outcome would have been different and we would not be discussing the succession war or *Ivoirité*.

According to 80% of the respondents from the older generation from Côte d'Ivoire interviewed for this thesis, Houphouët's long political career based on personal rule and the

<sup>99</sup> Francis Akindès 2004, "The Roots of the Military-Political Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," *Uppsala: Nordiska, Africainstitutet*.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg 1982, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat,, Prophet Tyrant*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, p, 89,

subsequent succession war essentially caused the Ivorian conflict. For example, when asked about Houphouët's personal rule and the subsequent succession war in Côte d'Ivoire, respondent "O" stated that:

Houphouët bore some responsibility for the problems in Côte d'Ivoire because, during his leadership, Côte d'Ivoire welcomed a large number of migrants from the sub-region (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinée, and Togo), but Houphouët failed to adopt automatic mechanisms for the integration of successive waves of migration. After his death, the identity crisis emerged as Côte d'Ivoire has been affected by its debate over national identity or *Ivoirité*.

Respondent "D" also stated Houphouët caused the Ivorian crisis which started with Houphouët's personal rule and the succession crisis because for him there is no succession in Africa and Côte d'Ivoire was no exception, when there is no death.

Respondent "D" further stated that:

The real cause of the Ivorian crises is that Houphouët was prepared to die in office, but he said he had a younger person in mind for his succession. This was followed by a creation of a board governance committee. Since he was never clear about who would succeed him, Houphouët created confusion, uncertainty, and the succession crisis.<sup>101</sup>

Based upon the information given by the respondent, it is apparent that Houphouët's decision to die without a chosen successor is the root cause of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. The power struggles between the nation's top leaders became a dominant feature of the Ivorian political landscape.<sup>102</sup> In particular, this triggered hostilities among rival political factions within the PDCI itself. On one side Henri Konan Bédié, President of the National Assembly

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Respondent "D" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 10 June 2012.

<sup>102</sup> See Philippe Assalé, *Les dessous de la crise Ivoirienne: d'Houphouët à Guéï*, 2009, p. 108; Ahipeaud Martial 2009, *Côte d'Ivoire: Entre Barbarie et Démocratie*, Les Editions du CERAP, Abidjan, p. 138.



and on the other side Alassane Ouattara, Prime Minister. The struggle for power ultimately led to the resignation of Ouattara from the PDCI and joining the RDR. However, neither leader had the capacity to mobilise significant support beyond their respective constituencies. As a result, both parties embraced the politics of ethnicity, which exacerbated the political crisis by increasing divisiveness in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>103</sup>

See Appendix B for further examples from the other 14 respondents who agreed with this view. The remaining 4 respondents gave different reasons.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the origins of the Ivorian war do not simply lie in ethnicity as has often been reported by the press. Instead, the causes of recent conflict can trace their roots back to the colonial era – in particular the authoritarianism of the colonial administration. However, ultimately the chaos, crisis and civil wars can be blamed on the post-colonial politics promulgated by Houphouët, and his inability to step down and hand over the reins of power to a successor prior to his early death.

Côte d'Ivoire had five versions of the Constitution under Houphouët's watch after independence from France. Some people saw the last Constitution in particular as an effective means to address many problems associated with the succession.<sup>104</sup> Others saw it as a diversionary tactic orchestrated by Houphouët to hang on.<sup>105</sup> What was in Houphouët's mind is hard to prove. However, history shows that Côte d'Ivoire went through one of the

<sup>103</sup> "Côte d'Ivoire: scission au sein du parti au pouvoir," *Le Monde* 29 June 1994, p.6; "Côte d'Ivoire: Plus Ivoirien qu'Ivoirien," *La Lettre du Continent*, 8 December 1994, p. 3; Ahipeaud Martial 2009, *Côte d'Ivoire: Entre Barbarie et Démocratie*, Les Editions du CERAP, Abidjan, p. 150.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Cornwell 2000, "Côte d'Ivoire: Asking for it," *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

<sup>105</sup> Grah Mel 2010, Félix Houphouët-Boigny La fin et la suite, p. 325.

country's most restless times, sparked by the failed transition after Houphouët's untimely but not unexpected death.<sup>106</sup>

One could certainly argue that in sub-Saharan Africa today, "Constitutional authoritarianism is almost diminished, but the authoritarian ways and authoritarian leaders from the past are not."<sup>107</sup> Côte d'Ivoire is no exception, as it has a history of authoritarian leaders who have defined domestic and foreign policies through the neo-patrimonial system.<sup>108</sup> Houphouët's failure to address succession brought about chaos, immigration issues, economic problems, and a succession war. However, as shall be discussed in the following chapter, the 'politics of exclusion' also led to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>107</sup> There are still a large number of dictators or authoritarians in Africa who categorically refuse to respect the Constitution. Some examples could include Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso. After he had overthrown his friend President Thomas Sankara in 1987, he had reigned for 27 years. There was a strong indication that he had the intention of modifying the Constitution to remain in office. His motto was: let's not move from where we are. Compaoré finally stepped down in October 2014 amid a violent popular uprising; In 2013, Robert Mugabe he gave himself a new mandate to lead Zimbabwe, promising Zimbabweans would never starve, as long as they prefer the local potato instead of imported rice; Idriss Déby Itno of Chad has been in office for 24 years and has no intention of accepting an arguably well 'deserved retirement.' It is certain that France is less likely to tape him on the shoulder given his military support in northern Mali; Paul Biya is over 81 years old and he has been governing Cameroon for over 32 years. Given the 'stability,' it is more likely that the President is not going to retire; As a former rebel, Yoweri Museveni has been guarding Uganda since 1986 (28 years). Not surprisingly, in 2005, he modified the Constitution, giving him a new mandate. These examples suggest African leaders have been following the footsteps of their founding fathers, including Houphouët; See Tiékorobani 'Chronique satirique: Le soleil tue la démocratie', available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco21919.htm> (accessed 24 April 2014); Bruce Baker (1998) The class of 1990: How have the autocratic leaders of sub-Saharan Africa fared under democratisation?, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No 1, pp. 115-127, DOI: 10.1080/01436599814550 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436599814550> (accessed 11 March 2014).

<sup>108</sup> These policies are commonly defined by personal interests, given the fact that political power continues to centre around the presidency.

## CHAPTER 6: THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CRISES

Côte d'Ivoire has been riddled with economic, social and political crises since the 1980s. This chapter outlines some of the pressing causes of the war and crisis such as the politics of exclusion, French interventions and the failure of the immigration policies that have plagued Côte d'Ivoire for decades and continue to present a major threat.

This chapter also argues that Houphouët's successors manipulated ethnicity and regional differences which resulted in rivalries between Ivorian communities in general and between northerners and southerners in particular. When the cocoa and coffee prices collapsed during the 1980s and discourses of hatred were used by leaders, foreigners became scapegoats for all Ivorian problems which greatly exacerbated the economic, social and political situation.<sup>1</sup>

### Houphouët's laissez-faire Immigration Policy

History will judge Houphouët for his mismanagement of the immigration policy. Ivorian immigration policy can be traced back to the colonial era in 1920. During French colonisation in Côte d'Ivoire, plantation villages of cocoa and coffee and a system of urban economy were established in Côte d'Ivoire. The development of cocoa and coffee to sustain economic growth required a large labour force. The colonial administration, major companies and individual European planters requested local labour and workers from Upper Volta for work on their plantations.<sup>2</sup>

In 1936, Côte d'Ivoire's population was only 1,900,000, while more workers were required to work in the cocoa and coffee plantations in the south.<sup>3</sup> To achieve this, French colonialists used Upper Volta to provide labour for the south. The year 1941 marked the beginning of forced labour in Côte d'Ivoire. Youngsters from the Upper Volta, which was an integral part of Côte d'Ivoire until 1947, were forced to the railways in order to be sent to the plantations

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Assalé 2009, pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> At the time, Côte d'Ivoire was a relatively small nation in terms of population and immigration was a positive thing for Côte d'Ivoire according to the colonial administration.

in the south. As Maja Bovcon pointed out, this deliberate, extremely brutal, and illegal policy was designed to displace hundreds of thousand people from the north to the south.<sup>4</sup>

In 1944, between 90, 000 and 100, 000 migrant workers from the north were required. Initially, these migrants, strongly attached to their villages in the north, were impatient to return home when work slowed down or at the end of their contracts.<sup>5</sup> However, in July 1944, Houphouët through the African Agricultural Union proposed a different policy to provide permanent work to immigrants in Côte d'Ivoire. This was the beginning of the Ivorian immigration problem as locals rejected foreigners, although the foreigners helped to build the nation.<sup>6</sup> Coming from neighbouring sub-Saharan countries, this immigration was historically followed by internal migration from north to south.<sup>7</sup> With the migration of the Malinké and the Sénoufo people from the north, there was a massive immigration to the forest zones and the southern cities.

In his interview with the leftwing French daily newspaper *Libération* on 26 September, 2000, Gbagbo summarised his opinion regarding the immigration issue. Asked whether immigration was a 'chance' or a 'handicap,' he said:

As in all countries which have had immigrants, it is first a chance and today, it is a handicap. We are going to create an office of immigration which will have a technical role for it is not a problem which concerns politicians (*un problème politicien*). First, in order to know precisely the proportion of foreigners in our population: 26%, 35% or 40%? (Sic). Whatever the

<sup>4</sup> Maja Bovcon, France's Conflict Resolution Strategy and its Ethical Implications, (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed) *African Studies Quarterly* 11, Issue 1 (2009), Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. available at <http://africa.ufl.edu/asq/v11/v11i1a1.htm>. (accessed 18 February 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Grah Mel 2003, pp. 206-207.

<sup>6</sup> Grah Mel 2003, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> Neil Ford, Côte d'Ivoire: Divide and Reap Chaos: How and Why Côte d'Ivoire once a Model African Nation in Terms of Economic Growth and Political Stability Descended into the Conflict Ridden Nation Today? Neil Ford Describes the Destructive Influence of weak, Short-sighted Political Leadership, (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed) Issue 292, Nov. 2003, p. 42, Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. Available at <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA111013987&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&asid=bc049139a6988e4c29beffc631c7211> (accessed 18 February 2014)

answer, their number is very important; therefore, they must be managed (*il faut les gérer*).<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, the issue at stake was the government's neglect of the need to investigate and manage the immigration issue, despite their awareness of the problem. Given that foreign workers were urgently needed, Houphouët retained the colonial way of doing business, which involved massive numbers of overseas migrants especially from the Upper Volta being deported to Côte d'Ivoire. As research shows, Houphouët maintained the same colonial immigration process throughout his leadership, rather than introducing immigration reforms. His objective was to achieve a quick economic development project based on the colonial cash crop expansionism policy.<sup>9</sup>

Houphouët also carried on the colonial foreign recruitment policy, giving work opportunities to foreigners with good remuneration packages. While a large number of African countries such as Sénégal and Chad were opposed to foreign recruitment within the public sector, Côte d'Ivoire recruited without discrimination. Skilled migrants reportedly received the same treatment as Ivorians, as demonstrated by the free movement of goods and persons agreements with West African countries initiated by Houphouët.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, this strategy was put in place by Houphouët to attract an influx of immigrants via bilateral or multilateral agreements.<sup>11</sup> Most importantly, this was demonstrated by his open-door policy and promotion of Côte d'Ivoire as a hospitable country.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Libération* 26 September 2000 "Laurent Gbagbo, principal opposant ivoirien, mais rallié au gouvernement de transition: L'armée veut nous conduire au piège." This was also quoted by Campbell. For more detail on immigration in Côte d'Ivoire, see Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> One of the key bilateral agreements was signed with Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso on March 1960; In regard to multilateral agreements, there is the *Conseil de l'Entente*, signed by West African countries, allowing their citizens to enter, become residents and work without working visas; Assalé 2009, pp.19-24.

<sup>12</sup> In 1960, Côte d'Ivoire's population was only four million people. President Houphouët decided to valorise the Ivorian soil. Therefore, he largely opened his borders for neighbours from the north (Burkina Faso and Mali

The commencement of this open-door policy faced a lot of challenges. From 1960-1990, the creation of an Ivorian identity was formalised when the national identity law 61-415 of 14 December 1961 failed to be included into the National Identity Act. This act promoted *jus soli* for non Ivorians in a range of Articles including Article 6 of the Constitution, focusing on affiliation and birth in Côte d'Ivoire as part of the criteria for attribution of Ivorian nationality.<sup>13</sup> In order to protect Côte d'Ivoire's reputation as a hospitable nation, the act ensured the protection of non-nationals.<sup>14</sup>

After independence, one of President Houphouët's signature policies involved assimilation of foreigners to the social and economic fabric of Ivorian society. For Houphouët, it was important for Ivorians to be open to the outside world, in order to achieve their full potential internally, as he did not want a nation that was closed in on itself. In the context of an open-door policy, in 1963, in his attempt to create an environment in which foreigners could be more assimilated, Houphouët initiated a dual nationality bill for foreigners, saying: "they are at home here and we will enter into negotiations with their political leaders in the view to granting the dual nationality."<sup>15</sup> He relied on the parliament to adopt a national law on dual citizenship.<sup>16</sup>

As a result, on 31 December, 1965, an agreement on dual nationality was signed by all leaders of the *Conseil de l'Entente*, 'Council of Accord or Understanding.' At that time,

essentially). He gave them access to the land, public employment and voting rights; Contrary to Guinea under Sékou Touré. Houphouët also opened doors for foreign investors, starting with France.

<sup>13</sup> Law of the soil. A non-Ivorian could be granted a citizenship based on his or her ancestry.

<sup>14</sup> Alfred Babo, 'The Crisis of public policies in Côte d'Ivoire: Land law and the nationality trap in Tabou communities,' (*MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed*), *Africa* Vol. 83, No 1 (2013): 100+. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web. 11 Mar. 2014, available at

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA321334869&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&asid=9fe56104f6ef209c1d0111d162b20397> (accessed 11 March 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Babo, "The Crisis of public policies in Côte d'Ivoire: Land law and the nationality trap in Tabou communities," (*MLA 7<sup>th</sup> Ed*), *Africa* Vol. 83, No 1 (2013): 100+. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web. 11 Mar. 2014, available at

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA321334869&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&asid=9fe56104f6ef209c1d0111d162b20397> (accessed 11 March 2014)

<sup>16</sup> Alfred Babo 2011, "La politique publique de l'étranger et la crise sociopolitique en Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/2-Babo-2.pdf> (accessed 15 November 2014).

Houphouët insisted that citizens of the five *Conseil de l'Entente* countries namely: Bénin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Togo would be granted dual citizenship. One of the main objectives of the regional organisation was to guarantee a solidarity fund dedicated to help member states, which was fed by Côte d'Ivoire by over 90%. In 1965, Houphouët announced that dual citizenship would be established in all *Conseil de l'Entente* countries on 1 January, 1966.<sup>17</sup>

However, Houphouët was challenged by members of his own political party, the PDCI, to end the policy that they believed favoured foreigners. According to Amondji, given that Côte d'Ivoire was the only nation in the region with strong economic incentives, the adoption of double citizenship would only benefit foreigners.<sup>18</sup>

Houphouët made some mistakes on this issue. In 1966, Houphouët's proposal was rejected in parliament due to street protests; as Ahipeaud had pointed out, Houphouët was not all-powerful until after 1970.<sup>19</sup> As a result of the rejection of the dual citizenship proposals, Houphouët continued to financially support his allies, in return for their respective allegiances to Côte d'Ivoire. For example, parliamentarians such as Jerome Alloh argued that it was fundamentally difficult to distinguish an Ivorian from the north, Malian or a Guinean.<sup>20</sup> On 21 January, 1966, during its national meeting, the PDCI rejected the convention on double citizenship initiated by Houphouët. This revealed great differences of opinions between Houphouët, his party colleagues, and Ivorians in general. However, the project suffered a similar fate in Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), under the initiative of unions and students who in fact, accused President Maurice Yaméogo of selling the country to Côte

<sup>17</sup> Alfred Babo 2011, "La politique publique de l'étranger et la crise sociopolitique en Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/2-Babo-2.pdf> (accessed 15 November 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Marcel Amondji 1984, *Félix Houphouët: la Côte d'Ivoire: l'envers d'une légende*, Paris, Karthala, p. 333.

<sup>19</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred Babo, "The Crisis of public policies in Côte d'Ivoire: Land law and the nationality trap in Tabou communities," (*MLA 7<sup>th</sup> Ed*), *Africa* Vol. 83, No 1 (2013): 100+. *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web. 11 Mar. 2014, available at

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA321334869&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&asid=9fe56104f6ef209c1d0111d162b20397> (accessed 11 March 2014).

d'Ivoire. Despite this failure, the immigration policy increased the number of migrants in Côte d'Ivoire and attracted people from the sub-region. As stated by one UN observer, "The Ivory Coast was where you made your dreams come true. Immigrants came to do the jobs that the Ivorian nationals did not want to do."<sup>21</sup>

From Houphouët's perspective, if Côte d'Ivoire gave a warm welcome to everyone, it did not make sense to reject its neighbours who needed help. As one observer noted, for Houphouët, who allowed immigrants to work in coffee and cocoa plantations, "racial discrimination is painful and appalling ... for our dignity."<sup>22</sup> He believed that after adjusting to their new environment the new entrants made permanent economic, civic and social contributions once they were successfully integrated in Côte d'Ivoire. Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire would continue to be a land of refuge, dialogue and exchange.<sup>23</sup> As stated by one analyst and agriculture expert, a patronage system was established by Houphouët. Through this system, clients (foreign migrants) were entitled to property rights over pieces of land with regard to cocoa production.<sup>24</sup>

In his speeches, Houphouët constantly stressed his desire to help his 'African brothers.' This brotherhood was possible because of the economic direction Côte d'Ivoire wanted to take, but most importantly because of the prosperity, resulting in the integration of many people from Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali in the Ivorian production. During the colonial era, France took advantage of poor neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso and encouraged labour migration into the cocoa growing regions of western Côte d'Ivoire. Under the leadership of

<sup>21</sup> Timothy E. Boyer, "Côte d'Ivoire: Intervention and Prevention Responses" in Douglas C. Peifer 2008, *Stopping Mass Killings in Africa: Genocide, Airpower, and Intervention*, Diane Publishing Co, p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> See Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrica* 19 December 2013 available at

[http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014.)

<sup>23</sup> Jolivet Elen, 2002, "Ivoirité De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne," available at <http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoiritelaconceptualisation-6164amanipulationjolivet.pdf> (accessed 30 November 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.



Houphouët, the policy was adopted and institutionalised in order to facilitate Ivorian economic growth. Houphouët argued in the 1970s that “*La terre appartenait à celui qui la cultivait.*”<sup>25</sup> The land belonged to those who cultivated it. For him, those who cultivated the land had the right to own it, while he demonstrated his strong interest in farming by calling himself the nation’s ‘Number One Planter.’<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, this *laissez-faire* land policy facilitated the so-called ‘Ivorian miracle’ or economic growth, “as cocoa production grew to 13-fold between 1960 and 1989 from 67,000 tonnes to 880, 000 tonnes.”<sup>27</sup> As a result, Côte d’Ivoire became the world’s number one cocoa producer. Nonetheless, due to the politicisation and clientelisation of land relations in the local community, this land policy led to an increasingly hostile environment between locals and foreigners.<sup>28</sup> Houphouët was also happy to recruit foreigners for white collar positions rather than Ivorians. Houphouët recruited the Ivorian administration personnel from Africa and beyond.<sup>29</sup>

For example, his Chief of Staff from 1960-1993 Guy Niaray was French, so was the Secretary General of the Ivorian government from 1957-1993, Alain Belkiry. Jacques Baulin was his special advisor and Director of the Centre for Ivorian Information and Documentation (CIDI) based in Paris. Houphouët once said: “If I could have twice as many

<sup>25</sup> This statement was made by Houphouët in 1976 during his meeting with local farmers from Abengourou (East) complaining about foreigners ‘stealing their land.’ John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 267

<sup>26</sup> Jeanne Maddox Toungara, The Apotheosis of Côte d’Ivoire’s Nanan Houphouët-Boigny, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 28, 1, (1990), pp. 23-54.

<sup>27</sup> Timothy Shaw, Andrew Grant and Scarlett Cornelissen 2011, *New Regionalisms, Micro-Regionalisms, and the Migration-Conflict/Nexus: Evidence from natural resource sectors in West Africa*, The International political Economy of New Regionalisms Series, The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms, P. 384.

<sup>28</sup> Grah Mel 2003, p. 228.

<sup>29</sup> A year before the end of colonialism, Houphouët legitimately told de Gaulle in 1959 that because Côte d’Ivoire had only twenty lawyers, ten medical doctors and two engineers it would have some implications for its development. Therefore, there as a need to recruit more French white collar workers, and Houphouët did just exactly that but once they came the overwhelming majority would not leave Côte d’Ivoire. See Stephen Smith ‘Remembering Félix Houphouët-Boigny father of the Ivory-Coast,’ in *dependence* available at <http://thinkafricapress.com/ivory-coast/felix-houphouet-boigny-ivory-coasts-father-independence> (accessed 29 March 2014).

Frenchmen as we have to help us build Côte d'Ivoire, I would take them."<sup>30</sup> According to his critics, the real power was held by a powerful team of foreign advisors.<sup>31</sup>

Most civilian and military officers from the colonial period were retained by Houphouët after independence in order to avoid a potential negative impact on the Ivorian development in case the French left. In the 1970s, when the technical competence of the Ivorian elites had improved, popular resentment over the French presence in Côte d'Ivoire had surfaced. The French had argued that their presence was justified because their key role was to end corruption and waste in Côte d'Ivoire. In any case, although the French government had gradually reduced the number of French expatriates, through a series of treaties and agreements, they had ensured the continuation and extension of French influence in Côte d'Ivoire's military, political, economic, and cultural affairs.

The move by Houphouët to recruit foreigners raised a few eyebrows among Ivorian intellectuals, including Ferro Bally, who perceived it as a lack of recognition of their competencies.<sup>32</sup> According to Bally, Côte d'Ivoire became a victim of its legendary hospitality. Foreign nationals were like wolves with long teeth. Although Ivorian companies provided work for foreigners, in return, Ivorians got paid peanuts. They did not have a good image or good press, they were accused of being xenophobic by many countries in the sub-region, and they were victims of the insidious national preference.<sup>33</sup>

As stated by Marcel Amondji, Houphouët spoke frequently about recruiting Ivorians but at the same time, he failed to set up good example because his own entourage was largely dominated by foreigners. As a result, lobby groups such as the Association to Defend Ivorian Interests (ADIACI) and the League for the Nationals, those who were originally from Côte

<sup>30</sup> Houphouët was quoted in David Lamb's *The Africans*, New York 1985 available at <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/biography/a/qts-Houphouet-Boigny.htm> (accessed 29 March 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 24-25; See Marcel Amondji 1984, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny et la Côte d'Ivoire: L'envers d'une Légende*, Karthala Editions, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Ferro Bally 2004, *Fraternite Matin*, 4 March 2004, p. 2.

d'Ivoire (LOCI) arose to serve the best interests of the locals and denounce Houphouët's tendency to promote foreigners.<sup>34</sup>

As a result, in the 1970s, an 'ivoirisation' of employment policy designed to offer work to Ivorians was implemented by the Houphouët government. From 1973, the government encouraged the recruitment of young Ivorian graduates in the civil service. In 1975, the National Assembly passed a law over the ivoirisation of the cadres, but the law was quickly extended to all job vacancies. Nonetheless, under enormous pressure, in 1978 Houphouët agreed to give more key roles to Ivorians, at least in the administration. Subsequently, a special ministry was created, ensuring that key roles were held by the cadres of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>35</sup> Preference was to be given to Ivorians for certain managerial. As a result, the percentage of expatriates working in public administration which was 4.3% in 1961 was reduced to 2.2% in 1981.<sup>36</sup>

However, not everyone agreed. Some analysts said it was a discriminatory policy but also a political coup of combining his national preferential policy with his foreign integration speech. Houphouët's common response to his critics was the following: if Ivorians were willingly to welcome foreigners, it also meant that Ivorians deserved some privileges.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Those organisations were also in place to target the large number of people from Dahomey (Bénin), Togo and Upper Volta taking up Ivorian jobs.

<sup>35</sup> It was the ministry of labour and "Ivoirisation des cadres" headed by Mr Albert Vanie Bi Tra.

<sup>36</sup> Alfred Babo 2011, "La politique publique de l'étranger et la crise sociopolitique en Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/2-Babo-2.pdf> (accessed 15 November 2014).

<sup>37</sup> Jolivet Elen, 2002, "Ivoirité: De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne" <http://geophile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoiritelaconceptualisation-6164amanipulationjolivet.pdf> (accessed 30 November 2013). Perhaps Houphouët wanted to kill two birds with one stone. When I was doing my fieldwork, I have been told that Houphouët used Paul Pépé, one of the leaders of the anti-foreigner groups to 'evacuate' the community of Dahomey and Togo living in Côte d'Ivoire. The case is known as the "Daho-Togo" case. They were sent back home in October 1958; For Tiémoko, Pépé was Houphouët's messenger but only the one doing all the dirty work for him; See Tiémoko Coulibaly, *Cult of a Dead Dictator: Ivory Coast Democracy Differed*, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, English Edition, available at <http://mondediplo.com/2000/10/08ivorycoast> (accessed 25 November 2013); See Marcel Amondji 1984, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny et la Côte d'Ivoire: L'envers d'une Légende*, Karthala Editions, p. 173; Assalé 2009, p. 26; Documents: Ivoirité, Immigration et Nationalité, *Politique Africaine*, no 68, 2000, pp. 63-64; Emma Yeo, *Idéologie Politique et Conflit en Côte d'Ivoire: Une Analyse du Discours Politique sur l'Identité Nationale*, *Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour la Paix*, Research Report no 3, 2008.

In 1998, a study by the Ivorian Social and Economic Council found that despite their low level of education, immigrants had the monopoly on the Ivorian economic sector. It also showed that foreign companies only employed a small number of Ivorians with low pay. However, Assalé argued that while the study might be correct, Ivorians had only themselves to blame because they systematically refused to do certain jobs in the secondary sector like the manufacturing industry.<sup>38</sup> It would be naïve, of course, not to assume that if Houphouët used this integration strategy to reach his economic goal, he also used it to win foreign votes. Rendering foreigners of Côte d'Ivoire clearly responsible for the maintenance of the PDCI in power, the opposition called the foreign communities a *bétail électoral*, (an electoral livestock).

Article 5 of the Ivorian Constitution stipulates that only Ivorians were allowed to vote. In practice, since 1960 citizens of the West African Economic Development (ECOWAS) member states had always voted. Moreover, in 1980, an Article of the electoral code allowed non-Ivorians from African origin who were registered on voters list to vote. The PDCI's sovereignty had been achieved thanks to the support from people from Burkina Faso living in Côte d'Ivoire. Houphouët's 1990 election victory had been possible, partly because of foreign votes. Therefore, foreigners enjoyed the same rights as Ivorians. A large number of foreigners obtained Ivorian nationality through the arrangements of local clientelists. The PDCI insisted, "Our position at the PDCI is clear. We are not going to strip foreigners of their voting rights. They have been voting in Côte d'Ivoire since 1945."<sup>39</sup>

However, Houphouët's political calculations backfired when the collapse of the world prices of raw materials (cocoa and coffee) in the mid-80s triggered a deep economic crisis in Côte

<sup>38</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Gbagbo opposition leader at the time strongly criticised the process, calling it *bétail électoral*; See also Maja Bovcon, France's Conflict Resolution Strategy and its Ethical Implications, (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed) *African Studies Quarterly* 11, Issue 1 (2009), Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. Available at <http://africa.ufl.edu/asq/v11/v11i1a1.htm>. (accessed 18 February 2014)

d'Ivoire, which increased the level of ethnic tension. Moreover, as noted in chapter 3, corruption within Houphouët's patrimonialist one-party regime also negatively impacted on the national cohesion program initiated by Houphouët at independence. Subsequently, in the late-80s, foreigners were blamed for the Ivorian economic and social crisis, and the general feeling was to force them leave Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>40</sup>

During the colonial period in Côte d'Ivoire, the colonial administration recruited people from Burkina Faso and Mali to build roads and buildings and to perform other tasks as required.<sup>41</sup> This process marked the beginning of massive immigration into Côte d'Ivoire. During the post-independence era, Houphouët was reluctant to change the nature of the labour market. He adopted a liberal policy toward migrants from the poor neighbouring countries. As one analyst observed, rather than ordering a comprehensive review of the immigration policy, he left it unchanged. To attain its economic growth objectives, the Houphouët government protected the newcomers. In return, the government also received strong political support from the immigrants.<sup>42</sup>

This open-door immigration policy attracted immigrants from neighbouring countries, mostly from Burkina Faso and Mali. As a respondent remarked in his detail account of these events, this policy was based on the availability of thousands of a low-paid immigrant workers, most of whom were from Burkina Faso.<sup>43</sup>

It is important to note that the Houphouët government could not provide an adequate and effective response to problems caused by the open-door immigration policy, because they

<sup>40</sup> Timothy E. Boyer, "Côte d'Ivoire: Intervention and Prevention Responses" in Douglas C. Peifer 2008, *Stopping Mass Killings in Africa: Genocide, Airpower, and Intervention*, Diane Publishing Co, p. 103; Neil Ford, Côte d'Ivoire: Divide and Reap Chaos: How and Why Côte d'Ivoire once a Model African Nation in Terms of Economic Growth and Political Stability Descend into the Conflict Ridden Nation Today? Neil Ford Describes the Destructive Influence of weak, Short-sighted Political Leadership, (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> ed) Issue 292, Nov. 2003, p. 42, Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. Available at <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA111013987&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&asid=bc049139a6988e4c29beffc631c7211> (accessed 18 February 2014).

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Respondent "S" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

failed to consider its permanent regulation. Such a deep-rooted issue degenerated into conflict and constituted a major factor in the confrontation between the local population and foreigners. As many observers point out, if the immigration rate was high, it was important to resolve the problem of long-term foreign residents - those who had been in Côte d'Ivoire for a long period of time in order to integrate them within the Ivorian culture, while taking into account the need to preserve the original identity of migrants. This could be achieved through the implementation of a proper immigration policy by ensuring due implementation of immigration legislation, in particular the proper application of immigration procedures which, at least in theory, has the potential to reduce the level of the politics of division.<sup>44</sup>

Many of these West African neighbours who worked on farms saved their money and bought land in Côte d'Ivoire. This was important for them to become land owners themselves based on informal or traditional systems of managing the land. Others continued to work for Ivorian land owners, forming "the backbone of Ivorian prosperity."<sup>45</sup> Over the years, when unemployment increased during the economic crisis and land became scarce, the relationship between 'locals' and 'foreigners deteriorated.<sup>46</sup> To make matter worse, the new elites radicalised the immigration issue in their attempt to win power especially during the economic downturn.<sup>47</sup>

Broadly speaking, the history of immigration in Africa is related to commercial movements, slaves, colonial penetration and forced labour. West Africa is a vast migration zone where

<sup>44</sup> Source: field notes, Charles Nokan "Intellectuels ivoiriens face à la crise," CERAP library Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012.

<sup>45</sup> See Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrica* 19 December 2013 available at [http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014); World Bank 2008, Local governance and national crisis in Côte d'Ivoire opportunities and challenges for community-based development and peace-building, available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEV/Resources/3177394-1168615404141/3328201-1172597654983/Cote\\_dIvoire\\_Decision\\_meeting\\_draft\\_April008.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEV/Resources/3177394-1168615404141/3328201-1172597654983/Cote_dIvoire_Decision_meeting_draft_April008.pdf) (accessed 15 March 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Respondent "S" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012; Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Despite the adoption of more restrictive immigration policies toward West African immigrants, flows of immigration still remain large.

people from diverse backgrounds move from one area to another. In Côte d'Ivoire, the foreign presence must be seen in the context of the extension of former trade movements, which transpired in Africa between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. One can argue that in Côte d'Ivoire, immigration policy was strongly marked by the willingness of President Houphouët to build an open, modern and model Ivorian nation. However, given his strong personalisation of power, he implemented the policy informally rather than formally. Faced by the failure of his political party, the PDCI, Houphouët used his charisma and authority in a context of one-party system to distribute social, economic and political gains to foreigners, in particular to those from West Africa. However, he had failed to analyse different policies that were put in place, the logic behind them, as well as their amendments based on the social, economic and political context of the day. Houphouët's failure of the immigration policy set up the stage in Côte d'Ivoire for a civil war of highly ethnic nature. As Akindès has pointed out, immigration problems in Africa and in Côte d'Ivoire in particular is linked to the limited efficacy of legal provisions, which explains the lack of thought about immigration policy.<sup>48</sup>

The brutal questioning of these gains in the 1990s by Houphouët's successors who had based their politics on ethnicity had torn the Ivorian society apart. Given Côte d'Ivoire's strong position in the regional economy, and in spite of the on-going crisis, Côte d'Ivoire will most likely remain an important destination for many West African immigrants for the foreseeable future. However, the ability of Côte d'Ivoire to address its internal challenges will be determined by the quality of policies Côte d'Ivoire applies to manage its new and existing West African immigrants. A lesson should be learnt from Houphouët's *faissez-faire* immigration policy. In fact, this *laissez-faire* went a step further. As he was in a dominant position, he did not hesitate to let this situation rumble on, resulting to chaos after his death.

<sup>48</sup> Francis Akindès 2004, "The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d'Ivoire," research report no. 128, Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

However, how his successors addressed it also fuelled the problems. For example, they estimated that the decline of the economy was directly attributable to foreigners. Therefore, it is easy to observe that the problem of foreigners also played its part in the Ivorian crisis.

From the onset, it is evident that the succession failure was a critical trigger for the political crisis. This eventually destabilised Côte d'Ivoire after the death of Houphouët. However, the conflict cannot be explained by the succession failure only. Other factors such as the state of the economy also played its part.

### **The Continuing Economic Crisis and French Hegemony**

The Ivorian political breakdown can also be attributed to the economic problems which had socially and politically impacted the country because of the policies adopted to address the economic crisis, among them, the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). As a newly independent state rich in diamond, rubber and, above all else, cocoa and coffee, Côte d'Ivoire was seen as a model during the post-colonial period.<sup>49</sup> Soon after French colonial rule, the country attracted foreign investors due to the liberal economic policy launched by Houphouët. With a steady and astonishing growth, the Ivorian economy grew between 8 and 10% during 1966-77. As Houphouët had pointed out, the success of this country was based on agriculture.<sup>50</sup>

Charbonneau indicated that, until the late 1980s, Côte d'Ivoire served as a successful model of economic development referred to as the 'Ivorian miracle', also commonly called '*la belle époque*' in Côte d'Ivoire – the good old days. When agriculture, once the economy's main commodity was struggling and Côte d'Ivoire entered the crisis phase, it was ironically called the 'Ivorian mirage.' For Houphouët, it was neither a miracle nor a mirage; "it was short-

<sup>49</sup> Timothy E. Boyer, "Côte d'Ivoire: Intervention and Prevention Responses" in Douglas C. Peifer 2008, *Stopping Mass Killings in Africa: Genocide, Airpower, and Intervention*, Diane Publishing Co, p. 103.

<sup>50</sup> Grah Mel 2010 a, p. 336.



lived, according to critics.”<sup>51</sup> After becoming a model and being classified as the ‘Ivorian miracle’ in the 1960s and 1970s, the economy entered a period of crisis throughout the 1980s, 1990s, enabling some to continue calling it the ‘Ivorian mirage.’<sup>52</sup> From that period, Houphouët was under pressure and the nation’s reputation of stability diminished.

A decade before independence, the French colonial administration developed a plantation system that Houphouët left unchanged.<sup>53</sup> Soon after independence in 1960, Côte d’Ivoire strongly relied on its natural potential which included an enormous, but less populated forest zone in the south with a hot and humid climate, which was suitable for agricultural plantations for its economic development. Exported agricultural raw materials were highly remunerated at the time in the international market. Côte d’Ivoire opted for a development model based on the exportation of cocoa and coffee. Sales revenues served to build, among others things, new schools, hospitals and extensive infrastructure between 1950 and 1965.<sup>54</sup>

Although cocoa production served as Côte d’Ivoire’s main colonial agricultural system, this sector recorded significant growth soon after independence. Subsequently, the economy grew remarkably well beyond expectations with an average annual rate of 9% within a decade (1960-1970).<sup>55</sup> The subsequent 5 years the rate grew by 7% from 1970 to 1975. Those figures

<sup>51</sup> Bruno Charbonneau 2013, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in sub-Saharan Africa*, Ashgate Publishing, p. 154.

<sup>52</sup> Jovilet Elen “Ivoirieté. De la Conceptualisation à la manipulation de l’identité Ivoirienne,” Section service public, séminaire: le fait national, 2002-2003, available at <http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoiritelaconceptualisation-6164amanipulationjovivet.pdf> (accessed 4 March 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Respondent “G” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 21 May 2012; For more detail see Richard Cornwell 2000, Côte d’Ivoire: Asking for it, *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Jovilet Elen, “Ivoirieté. De la Conceptualisation à la manipulation de l’identité Ivoirienne,” Section service public, séminaire : le fait national, 2002-2003, available at <http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoiritelaconceptualisation-6164amanipulationjovivet.pdf> (accessed 4 March 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Richard Cornwell 2000, “Côte d’Ivoire: Asking for it,” *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

reflected the positive impact of agriculture on the economy and Houphouët was determined to consolidate them. Planters of cocoa as well as coffee benefited from high prices.<sup>56</sup>

Until the 1980s, this growth enabled Houphouët to establish his patrimonial and clientelist style of governance in order to reinforce his leadership and to finance his political and social policy. Given the nation's ample resources and economic prosperity as well as his domination of Ivorian politics, Houphouët could dispense patronage and ensure political stability. From 1960 to 1975, Houphouët's neo-patrimonial government enjoyed strong economic performance. Assisted by French machinery planning and close PDCI allies, Houphouët exercised a grip on the economy through the *Caisse de Stabilisation*, a rent management system which set an effective price for cocoa planters. Houphouët favoured his own ethnic group, but he ensured the benefits of cocoa growth were fairly distributed. Houphouët combined broad pro-liberal economic policies with a centralised rent seeking political policies that generated dynamic growth for a certain period. Nonetheless, this state capitalism that provided economic resources came at a price, specifically during the collapse of cocoa prices, tipping the economy into a chronic unbalance. Despite Houphouët's decentralisation of rents in the 1980s, the economy had never recovered. For example, according to one local agricultural expert, too much focus on export crops such as cocoa and coffee impacted on domestic food production. This led to importation of non-traditional food.<sup>57</sup>

In the 1980s, faced with massive exogenous shocks, Côte d'Ivoire's economy became weak. At that time, Côte d'Ivoire's economy was affected by the second oil shock, as well as a world recession and the collapse of the cocoa prices, which constituted its main export. In the meantime, the industrial and mining sectors were totally undermined. As a consequence, Côte

<sup>56</sup> John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 264; See Marcel Amondji 1984, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny et la Côte d'Ivoire: L'envers d'une Légende*, Karthala Editions, p. 173.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

d'Ivoire was "dangerously exposed to fluctuations in commodity prices and deteriorating terms of trade."<sup>58</sup>

In 1981, like many African countries, Côte d'Ivoire was forced to adopt the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the World Bank to reform its economy. The main structural reforms included a liberalisation of the cocoa and coffee sectors, a reduction in government expenditure, and a devaluation of the currency, Franc CFA. In the mid-1980s Côte d'Ivoire faced an economic recession which got worse in the early 1990s due to decreased prices of agricultural commodities (cocoa and coffee). In 1989, faced with worsened economic conditions, the Houphouët government was forced to accept dramatic cuts. Thus, salaries for teachers across the board (primary, secondary as well as university) were cut overnight. Furthermore, student housing and transport allowances were scrapped. Ivorians including students, workers and opposition groups affected by the economic decline, urban high unemployment and falling living standards started protesting against the economy when the world prices of commodities affected cocoa export, resulting to the decrease of exports and high debt. This impacted the nation's economy.<sup>59</sup> In 1987, Houphouët was unable to meet his foreign debt requirements, refusing to pay interest on his external debt. Furthermore, from 1987-89, he attempted to influence the world cocoa prices.<sup>60</sup>

In July 1987, during the economic crisis, Houphouët suspended the selling of the nation's cocoa by shutting down its supply, forcing world cocoa rates to increase. In 1989, he also cheaply sold a large stock of his cocoa to key Ivorian planters to boost the economy, but both exercises were a fiasco. This sparked the so-called 'cocoa war' from 1987 to 1989 when

<sup>58</sup> Richard Cornwell 2000, "Côte d'Ivoire: Asking for it," *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

<sup>59</sup> Robert Ištók, Tomáš Koziak. "Ivory Coast - From Stability to Collapse. Failed States in Time of Globalisation." In *Beyond Globalisation: Exploring the Limits of Globalisation in the Regional Context* (conference proceedings), 81-87. Ostrava: University of Ostrava Czech Republic, 2010. Available at [http://conference.osu.eu/globalization/publ/10-istok\\_koziak.pdf](http://conference.osu.eu/globalization/publ/10-istok_koziak.pdf) (accessed 7 December 2013).

<sup>60</sup> Bruno Charbonneau 2013, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in sub-Saharan Africa*, Ashgate Publishing, p. 155.

Houphouët banned cocoa export. Under the instructions of the IMF and the World Bank, Houphouët halved the guaranteed price of cocoa to planters and ended the *Caisse de Stabilisation* price guarantee system. Consequently, this marked the beginning of the end of the historical relationship between Houphouët and the rich planters that emerged in the 1950s and were estimated at about 20,000 in 1965, as well as the collapse of his clientelist regime. The rich planters constituted a class of rural *bourgeoisie* created by Houphouët and owned almost a quarter of the nation's land. In addition, they provided work to two-thirds of the wage-earning workforce and provided political support to Houphouët. As Charbonneau pointed out, between 1985 and 1988, there was a rise of 16% in the number of Ivorians living in poverty. In 1987, the balance of payments deficit was up to 50 billion CFA, but in 1989, it reached a record level of 700 billion CFA for the first time in the nation's history.<sup>61</sup>

To avoid further problems, Houphouët unsuccessfully initiated economic reforms and a diversification of agriculture.<sup>62</sup> Given the collapse of cocoa prices, which had been central to the nation's economy, Côte d'Ivoire went into recession. As the vast majority of post-independence enterprises failed, unemployment rose by 45% and between 1980 and 1983, exports dropped from CFA 4 billion to 1 billion.<sup>63</sup>

The economic crisis contributed to the ongoing crisis in Côte d'Ivoire when the level of competition for resources and power increased. Given the reduction of the metaphorical pie, everyone was determined to desperately get a piece of it. Moreover, the economic crisis that affected Ivorians was responsible for the social and economic crisis that followed, making the situation worse for many Ivorians. Due to the economic crisis, a deep crisis of legitimacy was

<sup>61</sup> Bruno Charbonneau 2013, Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>62</sup> Kevin Shillington, 2012, *History of Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 468; Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>63</sup> Kevin Shillington, 2012, *History of Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 468; Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

created for the government because of Houphouët's clientalist style of governance. Houphouët gained legitimacy since he had the advantage of incumbency and had access to patronage resources. Nonetheless, given the economic decline, this basis of power was challenged. Additionally, the economic crisis created the politics of exclusion in Côte d'Ivoire because of the adoption of *Ivoirité*, in particular by the successors of Houphouët.

During the economic crisis, as government funds dried up and competition increased, Ivorian political elites were involved in systemic corruption to make up their losses. For example, as indicated in the previous chapter, successive disclosures of cases of corruption involving the political elites in Côte d'Ivoire such as the corruption scandals of the 80s put this issue high on the political debate. As Michael Birmingham pointed out, "as the economy sank, so did Côte d'Ivoire state's legitimacy." In 1990, when foreign governments and international financial institutions including the IMF and the World Bank began putting pressure on Houphouët to fix the Ivorian economy, a large number of state-owned firms were sold. Major government bodies working in the agriculture, energy, and mining sectors were scrapped. Côte d'Ivoire was literally back to where it was in the early 1960s. To make matters worse, Côte d'Ivoire's income plummeted with high inflation and interest rates, which led to a foreign debt crisis. In unfolding his analysis of the conflict, one political scientist notes that at one stage, the budget deficit was up to around 17% of the GDP and the trade deficit was up to the same level of GDP.<sup>64</sup>

To manage Côte d'Ivoire's economy, the IMF and the World Bank imposed the implementation of SAPs.<sup>65</sup> The programs were designed to put struggling economies back on

<sup>64</sup> *The World Guide 97/98*, 204, in Michael Birmingham, "The Ivory Coast: From an African Miracle to conflict," *Khamasin*, The American University in Cairo, issue no 1, 1 May 2008, available at <http://aucegypt.edu/publications/khamasin> (accessed 3 December 2013).

<sup>65</sup> Côte d'Ivoire started receiving his first loans in 1968. It signed its first SAPs agreement with the IMF and the World Bank in 1981; See Ange Ralph Gnahoua 2006, *La crise du système Ivoirien: Aspects politiques et juridiques*, Editions L'Harmattan, p. 21. In his book *Côte d'Ivoire Yako*, Bedi Holy broadly defines Africa as the

track by increasing growth and ensuring micro-economic stability. To benefit from the international financial support, interested countries were required by these institutions to implement their methods, which broadly consisted of privatisation. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, however, the programs reduced investment. At the same time, the youth were significantly affected by the high level of unemployment. In 1999, the nation's debt reached 11 billion dollars. Although France stepped in to provide financial assistance by bailing out Ivorian fiscal deficit, it was too little and too late. Côte d'Ivoire was in a serious economic crisis.<sup>66</sup> It is evident that the economic liberalism project through SAPs was accelerated in Côte d'Ivoire by the IMF and the World Bank, resulting to political instability and “xenophobic authoritarianism.”<sup>67</sup>

In their analysis of Côte d'Ivoire crisis, Andrew Dabalen, Ephraim Kebede and Saumik Paul argued that the SAPs “only made the situation worse by leading the Ivorian economy to a prolonged economic crisis.”<sup>68</sup> Thus if the IMF and the World Bank forced Côte d'Ivoire to implement measures to adjust its economy, the SAPs became part of the problem. In other words, the SAPs were an inappropriate one-size-fits-all approach to fix the economy of the developing countries including Côte d'Ivoire that had failed. As Joseph Stiglitz points out:

continent of rhythm. As they say in Africa, when a dancer is confronted with a rhythm, he always find hard to get involved in the dance and give a good performance.

<sup>66</sup> See Philippe Assalé, *Les dessous de la crise Ivoirienne: d'Houphouët à Guéï*, 2009, pp. 29-32; Bruce Berman, “Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa,” *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013); John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 266; Ralph Groves, “Ethnicity and Political Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire,” *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, Summer/Autumn 2006. Despite the excessive borrowing from France, Houphouët said with a certain cynicism, “if they lend us some money, it means we are rich, and you only lend money to rich people.” See Alexis Gnagno, “La Côte d'Ivoire et la responsabilité historique d'Houphouët-Boigny,” available at [http://www.civox.net/La-crise-ivoirienne-et-la-responsabilite-historique-d-Houphouet-Boigny\\_a1648.html](http://www.civox.net/La-crise-ivoirienne-et-la-responsabilite-historique-d-Houphouet-Boigny_a1648.html) (accessed 15 March 2014).

<sup>67</sup> Bruno Charbonneau 2013, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in sub-Saharan Africa*, Ashgate Publishing, p. 157.

<sup>68</sup> Andrew Dabalen *et al.* “Causes of civil war: micro evidence from Côte d'Ivoire”, Household in conflict network, the institute of development studies, the university of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, 2012 available at <http://www.hicn.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/WP-118.pdf> (accessed 27 March 2013); Mark Shaw and Tuesday Reitano, The evolution of organised crime in Africa: toward a new response, Institute for Security Studies paper 244, April 2013, available at [http://www.cites.org/fb/2013/organized crime Africa.pdf](http://www.cites.org/fb/2013/organized%20crime%20Africa.pdf).

Structural adjustment policies (measures that were meant to adjust their economy in the face of crises) provoked in a large number of starvation and protest cases; even when their effects were not that terrible, and when successfully managed to produce small growth for a specific period, part of the benefits went to wealthy people in developing countries while poverty among those who are on the bottom of the ladder has gotten worse.<sup>69</sup>

Equally important, as Modeste Dadié Attébi also stated, ultimately, everything shows that the SAPs was a one-size-fits-all monetary policy that did not have a good outcome and that the programs failed to adjust the economy through a series of belt-tightening economic measures and bring the country out of debt in exchange for aid and loans. Clearly, each round of the programs appeared to solve the Ivorian economic problems, but the economy never truly recovered. Instead of solving the problems, they contributed deeply to ruining the Ivorian social fabric.<sup>70</sup>

Economic problems also led to the crisis of fraud and public sector mismanagement, such as a major scandal in the public sector implicating a large number of senior public servants. While many were demoted, none were punished. Due to lack of enforcement mechanisms, fraud increased, while performance decreased, during a crucial time when Houphouët's government was exclusively relying on adjustment reforms in Côte d'Ivoire. This made it difficult to implement tough reforms, which were put in place without any other social or bureaucratic initiatives. As pointed out by a large number of respondents, inevitably, the civil

<sup>69</sup> Joseph Eugene Stiglitz "The great disillusion," Paris, Plon 2002, in Philippe Assalé, *Les dessous de la crise Ivoirienne: d'Houphouët à Guéi*, 2009, p.32 ; Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa," *JICA Research Institute* No 22 (November 2010), available at [http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI\\_WP\\_No.22\\_2010.pdf](http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/publication/assets/JICA-RI_WP_No.22_2010.pdf) (accessed 11 June 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Modeste Dadié Attébi, *Du miracle économique à la crise politique en Côte d'Ivoire*, 2011, pp.7-14; John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 174.

war in Côte d'Ivoire emerged in 2002 when the implementation of the financial policies imposed by the IMF failed.<sup>71</sup>

As a result of the structural reforms, economic instability increased, the quality of education and national health systems declined and standards of living decreased. The IMF claimed that the failure of the SAPs policies in Côte d'Ivoire was due to the fact that the Ivorian government was unable to implement them to full extent."<sup>72</sup> Commenting specifically on the Ivorian SAPs experience, Bonnie Campbell wrote:

[SAPs] has shaped and continues to condition the choice of development strategies open to the country and the means by which they are to be implemented in the domestic sphere, as well as the place which the country occupies in the world market. Ultimately, through these strategies, [SAPs] has conditioned possibility of prolonging or redefining particular kinds of social, political and economic regulation specific to Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>73</sup>

This would also explain the nature and the failure of the programs. The growing constraints imposed by the IMF on Côte d'Ivoire were undoubtedly important factors that led to the ongoing crisis, as a result of the liberalisation process.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the government privatised over 30 state-owned companies after 1987 to decrease the high volume of rent seekers as well as the number of people who actually benefited from it. Keeping in mind the old principal of neo-patrimonialism, these state-owned firms were basically sold to Houphouët's 'friends' from France, which gave them more power in a large number of business sectors such as electricity and water.

<sup>71</sup> For example, see Interview with Respondent "G" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Clarence Tshitereke 2003, "On the Origins of War in Africa," *African Security Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2. pp. 81-90.

<sup>73</sup> Bonnie Campbell, "Governance, Institutional Reforms & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 28, No.88, Africa's future: That Sinking Feeling, (June 2001), pp. 155-176, Taylor & Francis, LTD, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006714> (accessed 21 April 2014).

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Respondent "N" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.



Nonetheless, it should be noted that the major sectors of the country's economy include cocoa, timber and coffee sectors which represent 40% of the gross national product. In the cocoa sector, France only holds 15% of the market share behind the United States, while two American companies, a British and Dutch company hold far more than Proci, France's most important exporter, which holds 6.83% of the total cocoa market. So therefore, even if French companies are still implicated in the Ivorian economy, their investments have declined as they were less politically supported by French government.<sup>75</sup>

Houphouët's strong relationship with the former colonial master began in 1946 when Houphouët was elected at the French national assembly in 1945. The relationship was further reinforced between 1956 and 1959 when he served as a French cabinet Minister in Paris. Until his death, Houphouët remained close to all French Presidents and Prime Ministers from both sides of politics.<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, for example, in the communication sector, France Telecom acquired 51% of Citelcom (now known as Côte d'Ivoire Telecom) and Orange became the biggest mobile phone company in Côte d'Ivoire. This demonstrates the extreme presence of French colonialism in Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, through its subsidiary Saur, the very powerful French construction and public works firm Bouygues, bought the concession of the electric company Ciprel, including 25% of the *Compagnie Ivoirienne d'Electricité*. Moreover, it is in charge of the Ivorian water company Sodeci. Total and ELF acquired 25% of SIR, *Société Ivoirienne de raffinage*. BNP, Crédit Lyonnais and Société Générale control the Ivorian

<sup>75</sup> Antoine Dulin 2005, "La gestion par la France de la crise en Côte d'Ivoire de septembre 2002 à avril 2005," séminaire des relations internationales, available at [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La\\_gestion\\_par\\_la\\_France\\_de\\_la\\_crise\\_en\\_Côte\\_d'Ivoire\\_de\\_septembre\\_2002\\_a\\_avril\\_2005.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La_gestion_par_la_France_de_la_crise_en_Côte_d'Ivoire_de_septembre_2002_a_avril_2005.pdf) (accessed 23 November 2014).

<sup>76</sup> Houphouët said on many occasions that "no matter who is the host of the Elysée, France's policy vis à vis Africa does not change." See Daouda Domandéh "Relation France/Afrique: visite officielle à Paris: Dos Santos, la Françafrique et ... Gbagbo" *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* 30 April 2014 available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/496298.html> (accessed 30 April 2014); Richard Cornwell 2000, "Côte d'Ivoire: Asking for it," *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No 1, pp. 80-93, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2000.9628038> (accessed 7 March 2014).

banking sector. The privatisation of the above Ivorian firms reinforced the presence of French multinational firms in Côte d'Ivoire. As one analyst has argued, privatisation increased the level of French hegemony and neo-colonialism in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>77</sup>

Houphouët adopted a system of economic liberalism to attain the trust and confidence of foreign investors, particularly the French, but Côte d'Ivoire failed to fully benefit from capital generated by its economy.<sup>78</sup> It is not hard to find French companies, which have been operating in Côte d'Ivoire for decades, getting preferential treatment in terms of contract allocations. For example, Bouygues, Bolloré, Saga, SDV, and Dalmas got maritime contracts to manage the port of Abidjan.<sup>79</sup> Arguably the oldest French company in Africa since the colonial period in 1887, the *Compagnie Française de l'Afrique de l'Ouest - Côte d'Ivoire (CFAO-CI)*, still has exclusive monopoly rights. CFAO-CI controls the import-export sector and also other business areas including retail, new technologies, and pharmaceuticals, among others. It must be emphasised that starting from Houphouët's era, those business contracts have been regularly renewed by his successors to retain the patron/client relation.<sup>80</sup>

The reality is that under his regime, Houphouët, who remained France's closest ally - and the regional operator of their neo-colonialism - allowed French minorities to control an important part of the nation's business, and influence policy making and day-to-day management of the country as Birmingham has pointed out.<sup>81</sup> However, all his successors followed and continue

<sup>77</sup> Source field notes from CERAP, Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire Abidjan 21 May 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrican* 19 December 2013 available at [http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014.)

<sup>79</sup> John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 264.

<sup>80</sup> John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 264.

<sup>81</sup> Michael Birmingham 2008, "Ivory Coast: From a West African Miracle to Ethnic Conflict," *Khamasin*, Reflections on the Social and Political, Issue No. 1 May 2008.

to follow his footsteps.<sup>82</sup> Today, French companies are still implicated in the Ivorian economy. According to several West African businessmen, French companies control the four major sectors of the Ivorian economy such as water, electricity, telecommunications and rail and maritime transport, a factor that gave Ivorians the impression of going through a process of neo-colonialism.<sup>83</sup>

In broad terms, some have suggested that the economy has suffered because of Houphouët's generosity towards foreigners, since he allowed foreigners in general including the French involved in export business to send 90% of their profits home while only paying a small export fee.<sup>84</sup> As pointed out by Edie, apart from the Ivorian ruling elite, the French expatriates living in Côte d'Ivoire took advantage of the nation's development following independence, and this continues into the modern state.<sup>85</sup>

During the reign of Gbagbo from 2000-2011, the hostility between France and Côte d'Ivoire was palpable. He officially presented himself as standing up against French influence on Côte d'Ivoire, despite some secret deals. This has resulted in the so-called 'war of France against Côte d'Ivoire.' It was in France's best interests to repair the lost relationship. In 2010, a few months before the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, Claude Guéant from the Sarkozy government said that if the Ivorian government was willing to reinforce its relationship with

<sup>82</sup> Even more than fifty years after independence, France still has a huge influence over so many domains of Ivorian life. For example, Canal Plus, France's number one broadcaster still runs every television channel in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, all shopping malls are covered quintessentially with French brands, forcing Ivorians to heavily consume French products.

<sup>83</sup> Antoine Dulin 2005, "La gestion par la France de la crise en Côte d'Ivoire de septembre 2002 à avril 2005 séminaire des relations internationales, available at [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La\\_gestion\\_par\\_la\\_France\\_de\\_la\\_crise\\_en\\_Côte\\_d'Ivoire\\_de\\_septembre\\_2002\\_a\\_avril\\_2005.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La_gestion_par_la_France_de_la_crise_en_Côte_d'Ivoire_de_septembre_2002_a_avril_2005.pdf) (accessed 23 November 2014).

<sup>84</sup> See Tom Sypes' report "The fairground of Abidjan, a nation within a hotel" *NewAfrican* 19 December 2013 available at [http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697](http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=1160&Itemid=697) (accessed 15 April 2014).

<sup>85</sup> Young Ivorians (between 11- 35 years old) called *Brouteurs* are now involved in cyber crimes. To find an alibi and legitimacy, they say it is in retaliation for Western colonialism, calling it colonial debt.' For them, Africa has been a victim of the exploitation of its resources by Europe during colonialism. Therefore, there is a certain debt, or financial damages that Europe should pay for. Carlene J. Edie 2003, *Politics in Africa A New Beginning?* Wadsworth Thomson Learning, Melbourne, p.231.

France; France was ready, committed, and very delighted to repair their part by intensifying efforts to normalise relations between the two countries and promote trust between them. The relations had sometimes been strained under Gbagbo's presidency.<sup>86</sup>

The economy played a key role in the Ivorian crisis. Gbagbo's lieutenants argued that they initiated intervention in Côte d'Ivoire to protect French investments, given the large number of French companies there. However, Gbagbo's opponents aimed to oppose Gbagbo who was in favour of competition and after the 2000 elections called for a further opening of the Ivorian market, particularly towards the United States.<sup>87</sup>

Today, Côte d'Ivoire still presents an economic interest for French authorities, and strategic sectors of the Ivorian economy are run by French multinationals such as the Bolloré Group, which controls the Ivorian-Burkinabe railway, Sitarail. On 17 July, 2014, French President François Hollande was in Côte d'Ivoire in a two-day official visit to intensify economic relations between the two nations. Ouattara is France's best friend, following the fall of the Gbagbo government. In power with the support of the French army, Ouattara noted the wishes of the French authorities. Between 2011 and 2012, French exports to Côte d'Ivoire increased by 35.4%, quicker than Côte d'Ivoire's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which was 9.8% during the same period.<sup>88</sup>

The foundation of the Ivorian economic system was also based on the model of the French colonial administration. Shortly after its accession to independence, Côte d'Ivoire opted for the colonial economic system of development by promoting agriculture, notably cash crops as a driving force for growth. Côte d'Ivoire also adopted strategy for development based on

<sup>86</sup> Alexis Gnagno, "La Côte d'Ivoire et la responsabilité historique d'Houphouët-Boigny," available at [http://www.civox.net/La-crise-ivoirienne-et-la-responsabilite-historique-d-Houphouet-Boigny\\_a1648.html](http://www.civox.net/La-crise-ivoirienne-et-la-responsabilite-historique-d-Houphouet-Boigny_a1648.html) (accessed 15 March 2014).

<sup>87</sup> Antoine Dulin 2005 "La gestion par la France de la crise en Côte d'Ivoire de septembre 2002- 2005," séminaire des relations internationales, available at [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La\\_gestion\\_par\\_la\\_France\\_de\\_la\\_crise\\_en\\_Côte\\_d'Ivoire\\_de\\_septembre\\_2002\\_a\\_avril\\_2005.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La_gestion_par_la_France_de_la_crise_en_Côte_d'Ivoire_de_septembre_2002_a_avril_2005.pdf) (accessed 23 November 2014).

<sup>88</sup> "Ouattara comble les souhaits de Paris," *Le Nouveau Courrier*, available at [http://www.lecridadidjan.net/soutien\\_forcene\\_de\\_paris\\_a\\_alassane\\_ouattara\\_le\\_rapport.html](http://www.lecridadidjan.net/soutien_forcene_de_paris_a_alassane_ouattara_le_rapport.html)

two lines of approach which were: a liberal economy as a social project and form of organisation for the economic activity, and openness to the outside world to foster economic growth.<sup>89</sup>

At that time, the country's economic potential depended essentially on a few key agricultural commodities such as cocoa, coffee, and timber which were exclusively exported without further processing. As a result, Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed an exceptional economic growth. Nonetheless, the Ivorian economy in general was confronted by a lot of problems in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. From 1985, there was a significant drop in revenue and a very low standard of living. Furthermore, unemployment had raised both in the formal and informal sectors. In order to benefit once again from IMF aid which was suspended during the 'cocoa war,' Côte d'Ivoire was meant to pay back its external debt and adhere to the establishment of SAPs, ensuring deeper cuts in public spending, embracing privatisation policies and selling off state-owned enterprises.<sup>90</sup> The combination of the economic crisis and the tough budget measures that followed had impacted on the nation. The population's discontent became obvious when thousands of people took to the streets to protest against Houphouët. The late head of state had called upon the military forces or in René Lemarchand's words a "counterweight to forces of democratisation" to intimidate protesters, who called him 'thief.'<sup>91</sup>

Alice Sindzingre from the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS) made the point that during the economic downturn, Côte d'Ivoire saw about a 45% drop in revenue

<sup>89</sup> "Plan National de Développement 2012-2015" Décembre 2011, Tome 1, Résumé Analytique, available at [http://ivorycoast.humanitarianresponse.info/Portals/0/Reports/Others%20reports/TOME%20I%20RESUME%20ANALYTIQUE%20PND%202012-2015%20\\_28%20jan2012%2015h.pdf](http://ivorycoast.humanitarianresponse.info/Portals/0/Reports/Others%20reports/TOME%20I%20RESUME%20ANALYTIQUE%20PND%202012-2015%20_28%20jan2012%2015h.pdf) (accessed 25 Novembre 2014).

<sup>90</sup> This included reducing the number of government employees and wage cuts for public servants.

<sup>91</sup> René Lemarchand, "Africa's troubled transitions" p. 104 in Bruce Baker (1998) *The class of 1990: How have the autocratic leaders of sub-Saharan Africa fared under democratisation?*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No 1, pp. 115-127, DOI: 10.1080/01436599814550 available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436599814550> (accessed 11 March 2014).

between 1979 and 1993.<sup>92</sup> The economic crisis triggered the social crisis, and also deepened the gap between rich and poor, which was reinforced by the recurrent poor management of the economy, widespread corruption and neo-patrimonialism. All the macro-economic and social indicators were warning signs for the nation's stability. For some, the Ivorian crisis was global. For others it was more related to the actual leadership of Houphouët, which was problematic.<sup>93</sup> For others also, the crisis was the result of the alarming economic situation, which was amplified by the strong French hegemony in Côte d'Ivoire through the control of the economy.<sup>94</sup>

The economic crisis of the 1980s caused a sharp decline in living conditions among the middle class as well as the populations in underprivileged urban districts. As the World Bank had pointed out in 1985, 11% of the population was living below the poverty line. In 1985, it increased up to 33%. Certainly, implementations measures such as the decrease of the number of young French working in Côte d'Ivoire as part of their military service from 3,000 to 2,000 in 1986 enabled many young Ivorian graduates to get jobs.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, Houphouët's government was unable to control the rising rates of unemployment and bankruptcy in many companies. The social agitations that followed in 1990 shook the country, resulting to insecurity and social crisis.

French hegemony in Côte d'Ivoire can be traced back to the colonial era, during which France had developed and benefited from a rent economy through the cocoa and coffee farming. Therefore, as Ahua had stressed, "France had taken the lion's share of the Ivorian

<sup>92</sup> Alice Sindzingre, "Le contexte économique et social du changement politique en Côte d'Ivoire," *Afrique Contemporaine*, 1<sup>er</sup> trimestre 2000, No. 193, p. 33.

<sup>93</sup> Source: field notes, CERAP library Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 2012; Interview with Respondent "G" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.

<sup>94</sup> John Emeka Akude, *Governance and Crisis of the State in Africa: The Context and Dynamics of the Conflict in West Africa*, Adonis & Abbey, p. 264.

<sup>95</sup> Bridgette Kasuka 2012, *African leaders*, Kanbole Kamara Taylor, pp. 83-84.

economy.”<sup>96</sup> After independence, this rent system had benefited political leaders in power who had developed an ethnic clientelism favouring their ethnic groups, rather than distributing the wealth of the nation in a balanced way. Two years after independence, France had established a powerful banking system, to be at the heart of the Ivorian economic and financial system.<sup>97</sup>

In 1960s, three French banks shared this important market, namely the *Société Générale*, renamed *Société Générale de Banques de Côte d’Ivoire* (SGBCI), the *Crédit Lyonnais* and its subsidiary *Société Ivoirienne de Banque* (SIB). Finally, there was the *Banque Nationale de Paris*, a subsidiary of *Banque Internationale pour l’Industrie et le Commerce de la Côte d’Ivoire* (BICICI). At the same time, French enterprises controlled the bulk of Ivorian assets. Moreover, France was the major provider of senior managers to Côte d’Ivoire, both in the government and the private sector. However, after independence most French assets in the industrial sector decreased by half within 15 years shifting from 100% in 1960 to 41% in 1976 due to the policy of “Ivoirisation,” designed to provide work to Ivorians.<sup>98</sup> As a result, French influence became less and less important. In the 1980s, the continuing decline in the prices of commodities such as cocoa and coffee caused a massive departure of French *entrepreneurs*.

However, the devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994, which was pushed by the French government, and the SAPs imposed by the IMF and the World Bank in the 1990s enabled French investors to restart capital investments in Côte d’Ivoire. Companies which were nationalised after the independence were privatised due to the opening up of capital in

<sup>96</sup> Bernard Ahua 2005, “La France se taille la part du point de l’économie Ivoirienne” *Manière de voir*, No. 79, p. 85.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard Ahua 2005, “La France se taille la part du point de l’économie Ivoirienne” *Manière de voir*, No. 79, p. 85.

<sup>98</sup> Bernard Ahua 2005, “La France se taille la part du point de l’économie Ivoirienne” *Manière de voir*, No. 79, p. 85.

paragovernmental sectors such as water, electricity and telecommunications, allowing French companies to reinforce their presence in Côte d'Ivoire.

The spectre of the succession to Houphouët agitated members of his inner circle, predominantly Bédié and his rival Ouattara, despite one insider urging them not to “fight over the lounge room furniture” with reference to the power struggle.<sup>99</sup> That was because the “house was burning” with reference to the high tension and suggesting a way towards an effective and brotherly collaboration to resolve the issue of succession.<sup>100</sup>

### **The Succession War**

Prior to Houphouët's death the ruling party PDCI members were at war with each other over who was to succeed Houphouët. While it was an open secret that the fight for the succession would arise between the two main frontrunners, Bédié and Ouattara, what took many Ivoirians and observers by surprise was how bloody it turned out to be.<sup>101</sup>

Indeed, the succession war in Côte d'Ivoire was at the heart of the conflict. Similarly, in her account of political transition in Côte d'Ivoire, Bonnie Campbell illustrated that before the introduction of multiparty political system, Côte d'Ivoire's political state was principally dominated by internal division in attempt to achieve or retain power within the one-party (PDCI) regime.<sup>102</sup>

Côte d'Ivoire had been facing an economic crisis since 1980. This economic crisis resulted in high unemployment and low standards of living. It caused conflicts between locals and new immigrants over land alienation. Coincidentally, the succession war for the presidency began

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Respondent “H” Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 13 June 2012.

<sup>100</sup> Statement made by Philippe Yacé during the PDCI consultations to senior members in 1993 soon after Houphouët's death. See Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 486; See also *Fraternité Matin* 2 December 1993, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Respondent “H” Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 13 June 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.



in the early 1980s.<sup>103</sup> While until 1993, Houphouët was able to control these tensions, they re-emerged during the succession war because they were exploited by his potential successors. Houphouët deliberately postponed the official nomination of his successor as long as he could. This sparked machinations and infighting between the heirs (Bédié and Ouattara) to the presidency, although from the beginning, almost all PDCI elites saw an opportunity to be the successor.<sup>104</sup> They were together in PDCI, but they were not working together, resulting to bruising encounters between the two contestants over the succession.<sup>105</sup>

In 1993, Bédié, known as Houphouët's protégé, eliminated Prime Minister Ouattara.<sup>106</sup> Since then, they have been two key architects of the Ivorian crisis after Houphouët's death, and the cost of the succession war has been enormous. Côte d'Ivoire has been reduced to a political crisis that is far from over.

According to an insider and a very well respected member of the PDCI who worked to better serve the needs of his local community, immediately after Houphouët passed away, the then President of the National Assembly, Bédié declared himself the new leader who wanted to finish Houphouët's mandate. Accompanied by some soldiers from his *garde rapprochée*, (the President with his inner circle) he rushed to the state-owned television station (RTI). In his broadcast address to the nation, he said the nation's supreme law, namely the Constitution conferred on him weighty responsibilities, those of the head of the state. He said, "The

<sup>103</sup> Bonnie Campbell, Governance, Institutional Reform & the State: International Financial Institutions & Political Transition in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.28, No. 88, pp. 155-176.

<sup>104</sup> Jacques Baulin, 'La Succession d'Houphouët-Boigny,' Fonds d'Archives Baulin, available at <http://www.fonds-baulin.org/ouvrages/la-succession-d-houphouet-boigny/article/preface-300> (accessed 8 August 2013); Kevin Shillington, 2012, History of Africa, *Palgrave Macmillan*, p. 468; Ahipeaud 2009, pp. 114-155; In Adebayo Williams 1996, Literature in the Time of Tyranny: African Writers and the Crisis of Government, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No 2, pp. 349-366; Brian Klaas, From miracle to nightmare: an institutional analysis of development failures in Côte d'Ivoire, *Africa Today*, Vol. 55, No 1, 2008, *Indiana University Press*, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27666953> (accessed 6 March 2014).

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Respondent "O" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Respondent "I", in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, 16 June 2012, Assalé 2009, pp. 59-61; Interview with Respondent "S" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

Constitution confers on me... on this tragic moment, the responsibilities of the head of State. I am assuming the office now.”<sup>107</sup>

However, Bédié’s constitutional claim (based on Article 11 as amended by Houphouët in 1990) was challenged by Ouattara who wanted to form a ‘broad-based transitional government’ that he would obviously lead.<sup>108</sup> This view was supported by some of Ouattara’s closest allies from the north who argued that it was time for them to lead the nation after Houphouët’s 33 years of reign.<sup>109</sup> Houphouët was from the south.

According to another insider, during the power struggle period, a split occurred within the security forces. The *gendarmérie* had been historically loyal to the PDCI because of the important number of high-ranking officers from the Baoulé (Bédié’s ethnic group) supported Bédié while the army remained loyal to Ouattara.<sup>110</sup> Most importantly, Bédié was also supported by France which played a key role during the succession war and protected its considerable interests in Côte d’Ivoire through its army stationed at the army base a few kilometres away from Abidjan central district and in a position to control the airport. France’s quick recognition of Bédié as the successor of Houphouët, took everyone by surprise at that time. However, France had its *raison d’être* (the rationale behind its attitude). France feared that the succession war would quickly spread. While Bédié took advantage of the Constitution and was supported by the *gendarmérie* and France to succeed Houphouët, the real succession war did not arise immediately.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Respondent “D” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 14 June 2012. This insider is has taken part in the PDCI’s political activities; Daniel Balint-Kurti, 2007, Côte d’Ivoire’s Forces Nouvelles, *Chatham House*, available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/ivorycoast0907.pdf> (accessed 14 March 2014)

<sup>108</sup> Legacy of Côte d’Ivoire’s ‘Old Man’ is uncertainty, *Africa Report* 39.1 (1994), (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> edition), p. 5. Expanded Academic ASAP. Web. Available at <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA15139630&v=2.1&u=flinders&it=r&p=EAIM&sw=w&asid=d0ea5999a85c3e26fae7832a1c88bbfb> (accessed 6 March 2014).

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Respondent “J” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 June 2012.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Respondent “J” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 June 2012. This PDCI’s long-time member and insider was well known for promoting the idea of increasing social standards in Côte d’Ivoire.

The American embassy, which saw the danger coming, warned Ivorians and US authorities about the consequences of Houphouët's inaction:

Houphouët relies on the probability that he will live long enough to take Côte d'Ivoire through its precarious period of transition and consolidation, and lead it to an era of strong social cohesion, economic growth and political unity. Whether the succession occurs sooner or later, he and his entourage are conscientious about the supreme importance of the issue over the nation's future, and there is no doubt that they are seriously thinking about it, even if they hardly talk about it in public, and if we don't ignore how often they discuss it among them. As long as there is no shortlisted serious political candidate, those who are interested will intend to create a strong sense of rivalry, which will open the door for a grave instability.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, the French and other diplomatic circles as well as the general public in Côte d'Ivoire paid attention to the US warnings. However, they were ignored by Houphouët who promoted a certain number of young politicians as well as balancing the power of those around him in order to maintain harmony within the PDCI.<sup>112</sup>

Ahipeaud states that Bédié, Houphouët's *dauphin*, knew that he was required to face at least one serious internal opponent, namely Ouattara, within the PDCI. Therefore, the nomination of the former banker triggered other forms of internal opposition. On one side, the Bédié camp was formed by influential PDCI powerbrokers from the south, but also including a large number of senior PDCI members from other regions. On the other hand, Ouattara became Bédié's most serious challenger when the clans from the north, which were deliberately, quiet because of the 1963 repressions. As we recall from discussions above in

<sup>111</sup> Grah Mel, 2010 b, p. 247.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Respondent "N" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, 21 May 2012.

chapter 3, it was the period in which Houphouët, in order to secure and strengthen his political hegemony, invented plots across the nation to take on his real or imagined political opponents. This was followed by torture, arbitrary imprisonments and systematic eliminations, in particular against northerners.<sup>113</sup>

During his three years of Prime Ministership, Ouattara took advantage of Houphouët's long absences overseas for medical treatments to progressively prove himself as a potential heir. When Houphouët died, not only Ouattara became the leader of the government, but he also became second in charge of the single party PDCI, which did not make Bédié happy. Despite being less known in Côte d'Ivoire, Ouattara had legitimacy within the party. One respondent asserted that the actual succession war started before Houphouët's death, when Ouattara formally announced his candidacy in October 1991 for the 1995 presidential election.<sup>114</sup>

Despite Houphouët's attempt to reform Article 11 of the Constitution, which would allow him to win power, Bédié, the President of the National Assembly, replaced him as President of the country as stipulated by the Constitution on 8 December 1993. Moreover, summarising the argument, respondents said that Ouattara attempted unsuccessfully to hang on to power through the Supreme Court. Faced with a strong opposition, Ouattara was forced to resign. It is argued by his critics that he was pushed by senior officers from the military to resign.<sup>115</sup>

In order to have a less competitive 1995 election, Bédié started with the controversial issue about Ouattara's nationality as will be discussed in detail in this chapter, exposing Ouattara's strong connection to Burkina Faso. It is widely known that he went to high school in Burkina Faso, where he completed grade 12. Ouattara was also accused of dividing the old party, the

<sup>113</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, pp.146-147.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, 29 June 2012.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Respondent "S" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, 29 June 2012; Jolivet Elen, 'L'Ivoirité: De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne', 2002, available at <http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoiritelaconceptualisation-6164amanipulationjolivet.pdf> (accessed 10 August 2013).

PDCI, for his own advantage in order to later join the RDR.<sup>116</sup> As President of the RDR, Ouattara declared his candidacy for the 2000 presidential elections, despite being disqualified for his dubious nationality in 1995. According to the PDCI, Ouattara did not hold an Ivorian identity card at that time, despite being born in Côte d'Ivoire. Additionally, they insisted that his father was not Ivorian but a Burkinabe, which made the former Prime Minister ineligible. For their part, Ouattara's allies vigorously disapproved the Burkinabe paternity. There were many reasons for Ouattara's candidacy, chief among them was revenge.

According to Kouadio, he sought revenge after yet another defeat and humiliation by Bédié. To achieve this, he relied on the support of PDCI powerbrokers who did not like Bédié, as well as key RDR leaders from the north and foreigners who were Muslims like him.<sup>117</sup> Back in 1966, inspired by Houphouët's 1965 speech, Bédié clearly expressed that a change of approach that would ultimately impact stability was not necessary:

Ivory-Coast, under the leadership of President Houphouët-Boigny, has an independent policy, providing it with stability and credit abroad. But after he is gone, will young people follow this policy...? Will they feel the need to change for the simple pleasure of change? Will it be worth it to change a policy? Will it be worth it to change a policy, which has provided the population of this country with a standard of living, which many African nations envy? A standard of living which gave Ivory Coast great respect and prestige abroad? No, no, the young people in the PDCI who in turn will be

<sup>116</sup> Jolivet Elen, 'L'Ivoirité: De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne,' 2002, available at [http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoirite\\_la\\_conceptualisation\\_-6164\\_a\\_manipulation\\_jolivet.pdf](http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoirite_la_conceptualisation_-6164_a_manipulation_jolivet.pdf) (accessed 10 August 2013).

<sup>117</sup> Bertin Kouadio, 2009, "From Stability to Insurgency: The Root and Proximate Causes of the September 2002 civil War in Côte d'Ivoire" *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, Paper 115, available at <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/115> (accessed 23 November 2013).

the elders will not feel the need to change our practice of stability and continuity.<sup>118</sup>

Many argue that, in 1993, faced with the long overdue succession problem, Bédié did exactly the opposite of what Houphouët had done for many years to maintain stability and continuity, despite pledging that there would be no change to the ‘practice of stability.’ In fact, Bédié played the xenophobic card to cut down Ouattara, twisting priorities and marking a sharp departure from Houphouët’s style and philosophy.<sup>119</sup> This first political mistake occurred because he was obsessed with eliminating Ouattara from the 1995 and 2000 presidential elections. Above all else, Bédié’s second mistake was that he turned against Houphouët. As Grah Mel puts it, those two fundamental mistakes explain his responsibility in the crisis.<sup>120</sup> According to one observer, the events of the past years gave plenty of good reasons to believe that replacing Houphouët, who was such a god-like figure to the nation, was difficult and Bédié was an ‘unfortunate choice.’<sup>121</sup>

Sadly, he did not practise what he preached, hence creating division. By maintaining a constant ambiguity between Bédié and Ouattara and pitting them against each other, the late President Houphouët put in place all the necessary ingredients of the conflict, which exploded when he died. Both Bédié and Ouattara used all the tools available for confrontations.<sup>122</sup> And the tensions and divisions that resulted in the end created a succession battle more intense than it was before. Unfortunately, both Bédié and Ouattara did not understand that in politics, cards are often redistributed and nothing is won in advance, because the nation had been run by only one individual, Houphouët. Most importantly and regrettably, Bédié did not realise

<sup>118</sup> Tom Kamara 2000, Côte d’Ivoire: Implications of the December 1999 coup d’état, *UNHCR Center for Documentation and Research*, Writenet paper no. 1, available at <http://www.unhcr.org> (accessed 8 March 2014).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., pp. 151-154; See also Jean-Pierre Dozon, ‘La Côte d’Ivoire au péril de l’Ivoirité,’ *Afrique Contemporaine* No. 193, January-March 2000

<sup>120</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp. 558-559.

<sup>121</sup> Tom Kamara 2000, “Côte d’Ivoire: Implications of the December 1999 coup d’état,” *UNHCR Center for Documentation and Research*, Writenet paper no. 1, available at <http://www.unhcr.org> (accessed 8 March

<sup>122</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, pp.558-559.

that, like Ouattara, he was closely watched by Houphouët as soon as he expressed interest for the presidency role. According to Grah Mel, Houphouët became Bédié's most serious opponent. In order to sideline Bédié, Houphouët accused him of corruption in July 1977. In 1980, he created a vice-presidency while putting more and more strict restrictions on the succession process in November 1985. Finally, there was no doubt that in April 1990, Houphouët brought in Ouattara as a last obstacle to weaken Bédié.<sup>123</sup>

As Ahipeaud saw it, although Houphouët nominated Ouattara, who was a very ambitious and highly competitive politician, for the prime ministership, Houphouët also saw the quick rise of the new Prime Minister to the leadership as a concern. That was because Houphouët offered himself a job for life as President.<sup>124</sup>

Houphouët was proactive and determined to resolve all the international (European and African) political conflicts in particular, according to Essy Amara, former Ivorian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Secretary-General for the Organisation of African Unity.<sup>125</sup> However, he fell short in preparing his own political transition and succession, resulting in a political crisis. Furthermore, the role of independent hero or father of the nation was wearing thin among a younger generation.<sup>126</sup> As one analyst stated, if a political transition is not smooth, it can impact development, spark the rise of tension and ultimately incite wars and crises.<sup>127</sup> In effect, when Houphouët died, the nation plunged into the most unprecedented political confusion in its history. This still manifests itself in the on-going crisis after his demise.

<sup>123</sup> Grah Mel 2010 b, p. 557.

<sup>124</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 117.

<sup>125</sup> Essy Amara, Témoignages: "Houphouët est notre fétiche," *Le Patriote* 18 February 2014, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/488465.html> (accessed 20 February 2014).

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Respondent "D" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.

<sup>127</sup> Brian Klaas, From miracle to nightmare: an institutional analysis of development failures in Côte d'Ivoire, *Africa Today*, Vol. 55, No 1, 2008, *Indiana University Press*, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27666953> (accessed 6 March 2014).

Houphouët was never clear and open about the selection of his successors. Nonetheless, Houphouët's successors also failed to establish a dignified Côte d'Ivoire on the international stage. More importantly, they had failed to develop a better sense of national cohesion by helping people from different backgrounds living in Côte d'Ivoire develop a stronger sense of 'togetherness.' Guillaume Kigbafori Soro, Speaker of the House of Côte d'Ivoire has stressed that "One cannot govern without harming someone in some form or another, knowingly or unknowingly."<sup>128</sup> However, Ivoirians had to pay the price. The intense contest for political succession of Houphouët following his death in 1993 contributed to the deepening of ethnic tensions through the politics of exclusion.

### **The Politics of Identity: Implementation of Ivoirité and the Charte du Grand Nord**

Côte d'Ivoire's xenophobic social explosion history can be traced back to the end of the 1920s and continued later through the 1950s, 70s, 80s and 90s when foreigners were chased on the streets of Abidjan, a strong indication that some Ivoirians were hopeful to see foreigners go back to where they came from. It was also suggested that the ingredients of xenophobia existed before Bédié's speeches. Given the arrival of Ouattara and the severe economic crisis that the Ivoirian governing elite was incapable of resolving, the masterminds and promoters of *Ivoirité* took it to a new level, setting the scene for divisive ethnic politics in modern Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>129</sup>

The strength of the original *Ivoirité* at the time was the fact that it was based on cultural notions and its aim was to promote culture and national products.<sup>130</sup> As Augustine Vidjannangni reminds us, the concept appeared for the first time in 1945 in Dakar while

<sup>128</sup> APA, "Soro dit ne pas être à la chasse du CPI," dans l'Agbéby Tiassa, 15 May 2014, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/497196.html> (accessed 19 May 2014). (Translated for the purposes of this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2014).

<sup>129</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 144.

<sup>130</sup> Marc le Pape et Claudine Vidal, "La crise en Côte d'Ivoire," question à Marc le Pape et Claudine Vidal, Documentation Française, entretien réalisé en février 2003, [www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr](http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr) in Augustine Vidjannangni, "La complexité de la question identitaire en Côte d'Ivoire," Mémoire de la maîtrise en science politique, Université du Québec, Montréal, Services des bibliothèques, April 2011.



Ivorian students were promoting Ivorian products with a simple slogan: “*Consommons Ivoirien*.” Let us consume Ivorian.<sup>131</sup> For Thiémélé Ramsès-Boa, the word and the idea of *Ivoirité* were born in the 1970s.<sup>132</sup> More specifically, the term emerged for the first time in 1974 out of the mouth of journalist Pierre Niava who had played a key role in promoting the term *Ivoirité* among intellectuals. At the time, Niava was commenting on the work of the young researcher, poet and playwright Dieudonné Niangoran-Porquet. The concept emerged for the first time under the pen of Niangoran-Porquet<sup>133</sup> In his work entitled “*Ivoirien et authenticité*” (Ivorian and authenticity), which was published in *Fraternité Matin* newspaper, Niangoran-Porquet reflected on the cultural identity issue in order to promote African cultural heritage and Ivorian cultural heritage in particular.<sup>134</sup> The ethno-sociologist Georges Niangoran Bouha had defined the socio-cultural foundation of *Ivoirité* as follows:

*Ivoirité* is the set of socio, historical, and linguistic data which enable us to say an individual is a citizen of Côte d’Ivoire or an Ivorian. The person who asserts to his ‘Ivoirité’ is supposed to have Côte d’Ivoire as his country, be born of Ivorian parents belonging to one of the original ethnic groups of Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>135</sup>

During the period of *Ivoirisation* in the 1970s the term went unnoticed because Côte d’Ivoire was in the middle of its economic boom and foreigners were encouraged to work in cocoa plantations, but many observers believed that it was created by Bédié. The original *Ivoirité*

<sup>131</sup> Augustine Vidjannangni, “La complexité de la question identitaire en Côte d’Ivoire,” *Mémoire de la maîtrise en science politique*, Université du Québec, Montréal, Services des bibliothèques, April 2011.

<sup>132</sup> Thiémélé Ramsès-Boa, “Ivoirité, identité culturelle et intégration Africaine: Logique de dédramatisation du concept” *Synergies Afrique Centrale et de l’Ouest*, No. 3, 2009, pp. 75-83.

<sup>133</sup> See Assalé 2009, p. 73; Onana, 2011, p. 60; Aghi Bahi, 2013, *L’Ivoirité mouvementée Jeunes, Médias et Politiques en Côte d’Ivoire*, Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group, Mankon, Cameroun, p. 15.

<sup>134</sup> See Niangoran-Porquet, “Le créateur d’un concept,” *Fraternité Matin*, 17 January 1974, in Onana 2011, p. 60.

<sup>135</sup> Francis Akindès 2004, “The roots of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” research report no. 128, *Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute*, Cited in Guro Almas “The political implications of economic adjustments, crisis, reform and political breakdown in Côte d’Ivoire.”

had a strong Ivorian cultural identity component and had nothing to do with exclusion. It appeared as a nation-building project that politicians were meant to integrate into their dream to transform the Ivorian society. One academic had stressed that people did not understand well the original concept, it was badly presented and most importantly, perhaps, harshly criticised.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, despite being a grandiose idea, *Ivoirité* failed to reach its goal as it moved away from its cultural setting and was manipulated by politicians.<sup>137</sup>

Politics is an uncertain and unpredictable business. At the beginning of his presidency, Bédié was distancing himself from the nationalist issue surrounding *Ivoirité*.<sup>138</sup> In politics: ‘Never say never!’ Indeed, confronted by Ouattara who had joined the RDR, Bédié believed it was the right time to formulate the criteria about what it meant to be an Ivorian. He totally ignored the fact that Côte d’Ivoire is nothing else than an entity created by difficult migrations of people from diverse backgrounds.<sup>139</sup> As a result of this shift, the new concept of *Ivoirité* emerged.<sup>140</sup>

As Akindès has so rightly pointed out, as an ideology, the conceptualisation of *Ivoirité* changed because of the political circumstances.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, the concept of ‘political *Ivoirité*’ was developed by a group of intellectuals including Niamkey Koffi and Bédié’s

<sup>136</sup> Thiémélé Ramsès-Boa, “Ivoirité, identité culturelle et intégration Africaine: Logique de dédramatisation du concept” *Synergies Afrique Centrale et de l’Ouest*, No. 3, 2009, pp. 75-83; Onana 2011, p. 60.

<sup>137</sup> Thiémélé Ramsès-Boa, “Ivoirité, identité culturelle et intégration Africaine: Logique de dédramatisation du concept” *Synergies Afrique Centrale et de l’Ouest*, No. 3, 2009, pp. 75-83.

<sup>138</sup> Christian Bouquet, 2005, *Géopolitique de la Côte d’Ivoire*, Armand Colin, Paris, in Hofnung 2012, P. 40.

<sup>139</sup> See Ahipeaud 2009, p. 146; Hofnung 2012, p. 37; As Ahipeaud has noted, this thesis has been so present in the minds of academics that a lot of researches about Ivorian identity have been conducted. See recent publications over Ivorian history from the CERAP-INADES editions available at the <http://www.cerap-inades.org/edicerap.publication.html>

<sup>140</sup> Francis Akindès, “The Root causes of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” Research Report 128, *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet*, Uppsala 2004

<sup>141</sup> During the conceptualisation of *Ivoirité*, it was alleged that statements such as: “we no longer feel comfortable at home in Côte d’Ivoire, foreigners are invading us, we are suffering because of them, now they want to take over the country and lead us;” See Aghi Bahi, 2013, *L’Ivoirité mouvementée Jeunes, Médias et Politiques en Côte d’Ivoire*, Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group, Mankon, Cameroun, pp. 41-43. See Francis Akindès, “The Root causes of the military-political crises in Côte d’Ivoire,” Research Report 128, *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet*, Uppsala 2004; Also see Africa Confidential October 2002 and Vidal 2002.

chief of staff Jean-Noel Loucou.<sup>142</sup> Their role was to conceptualise Bédié's reinvention through a research body called *Cellule Universitaire de Recherche et de Diffusion des Idées et des Actions Politiques du Président Henri Konan Bédié* (CURDIPHE).<sup>143</sup>

In Scheuer's 2001 documentary film "*Côte d'Ivoire: Poudrière Identitaire*," in which acts of vandalism and physical violence caused by "*Ivoirité*" are filmed, Loucou was portrayed as an extreme *Ivoiritaire* who claimed that Muslims from Côte d'Ivoire were foreigners.<sup>144</sup> He called them sons of Guineans, Malians, Burkinabe and Nigériens who, "after being recognised socially, wanted to ensure their grips on the political apparatus of the country." For around a decade, some news media and politicians have increasingly made pronouncements and published articles setting 'true' Ivorians against the new comers, commonly known as Dioulas. Dioula refers to any person with Muslim background and originating from the north of Côte d'Ivoire or other countries in the sub-region. For the main promoters of *Ivoirité*, Côte d'Ivoire has been facing a frequent crisis because of foreigners who do not want to stay where they belong and are now intending to take over the state after they have taken everything away from the people of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>145</sup>

As Jolivet has pointed out, without going through the political objective behind the introduction of *Ivoirité*, it clearly appears that given the circumstances, *Ivoirité* was re-crafted to discriminate northerners and essentially to evict Ouattara. For her, *Ivoirité* pretended to insure a federation in Côte d'Ivoire. The reality was that it was an element of national division. In her research, she concluded that although *Ivoirité* attempted to reflect on Ivorian identity and moving away from any form of discrimination, being an instrument of

<sup>142</sup> Jean-Noel Loucou, "contribution to CURIPHE forum," in *Ethics*, University press, 1996, pp 20-21, cited in *Politique africaine*, no 78, June 2000.

<sup>143</sup> Jolivet Elen, 2002, "*Ivoirité De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne*," available at [http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoirite\\_la\\_conceptualisation\\_-6164\\_a\\_manipulation\\_jolivet.pdf](http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoirite_la_conceptualisation_-6164_a_manipulation_jolivet.pdf) (accessed 30 November 2013).

<sup>144</sup> An *Ivoiritaire* is someone who believes in the concept of *Ivoirité*.

<sup>145</sup> Ahipeaud, 2009, pp. 144-145.

harmonisation of Ivorian national identity without rejection and exclusion, *Ivoirité* was about xenophobia.<sup>146</sup> Anthropologist and Côte d'Ivoire expert Jean-Pierre Dozon echoed this view. For him, while the conceptualisation of *Ivoirité* by CURDIPHE appeared to be inoffensive focusing on national unity, it was making a move towards ethnic division.<sup>147</sup>

However, the promoters of *Ivoirité* disagreed. They argued that each country must take, in its best interests, all the adequate measures to avoid being invaded by immigrants. This is not xenophobia; it is a simple question of national safeguard. Ivorian anthropologist Georges Niangoran Bouha, one of the strong supporters of *Ivoirité* insisted that researching the origins of some people had nothing to do with xenophobia or segregation. For him, you cannot be seen as an advocate of xenophobia or having a segregationist view of Ivorian society if you want to do an exposé of people's origins.<sup>148</sup>

On 2 February, 1995, about nine months before the presidential election, and taking advantage of the cultural award ceremony, President Bédié proposed his prospective vision for the nation and his people. For him, "we are required to progressively realise the cultural project that will make the new man, an Ivorian man full of the substance of our diverse ethnic cultures, carrier of a national culture that found its *Ivoirité*, but at the same time is open to cultures around the world."<sup>149</sup>

In August 1995, in his attempt to combine political and cultural *Ivoirité* to his political project, Bédié wrote in his text at the PDCI annual congress at Yamoussoukro that "what we are aiming, is of course, the affirmation of our cultural personality, the development of the

<sup>146</sup> Elen, Jolivet. 2002. "Ivoirité: De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne" [http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/Mire\\_Livoirit\\_e\\_la\\_conceptualisation\\_-6164\\_a\\_manipulation\\_jolivet.pdf](http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/Mire_Livoirit_e_la_conceptualisation_-6164_a_manipulation_jolivet.pdf) (accessed 30 November 2013).

<sup>147</sup> Jean-Pierre Dozon, "La Côte d'Ivoire au péril de l'Ivoirité, genèse d'un coup d'état," Janvier 2000, *Afrique contemporaine*, No. 193, p. 17.

<sup>148</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 73

<sup>149</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 139.

Ivorian man, in what makes him specific, what can be called his *Ivoirité*.<sup>150</sup> In 1999, Bédié recycled his original ideas, emphasising in *Les chemins de ma vie* (The Path of my life) that “*Ivoirité* concerns people who have settled in Côte d’Ivoire but also those who live here and share our values.”<sup>151</sup>

At the time, the call to embrace *Ivoirité* took a different turn in Abidjan the nation capital. In October 1999, senior members of the RDR suspected of being a political party of people from the north and foreigners in general - although other senior members were from a range of different parts of Côte d’Ivoire were imprisoned by the Bédié government. President Bédié himself defined *Ivoirité* as a cultural concept which highlighted his ideal of “new Ivorian” deeply rooted in the Ivorian tradition of values, peace and love.<sup>152</sup>

According to the former President, the objective of *Ivoirité* was not to target foreigners, given the fact that “there is no *Ivoirité* card, no good or bad Ivorian. In fact, *Ivoirité* has no legal component; it is a cultural synthesis to regroup these sixty ethnic groups that constitute Côte d’Ivoire.”<sup>153</sup>

According to his supporters, the objective of Bédié’s ideology was not to exclude or deport foreigners from a country that they had contributed to build. The creators of the concept were quick to argue their case. For them, the notion of *Ivoirité* was not an expression of xenophobia. They insisted that Bédié promoted *Ivoirité* as a harmonious symbiosis and a brassage, “a perfect synthesis of our history, an affirmation of a way of being original, in short, a federating concept of our consciences.”<sup>154</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Henri Konan Bédié, 1995, “Le progrès pour tous, le bonheur pour chacun, Oui nous le pouvons,” discours-programme 1995, Abidjan, Edition non précisée. In Tiémélé Ramsès-Boa, “Ivoirité identité culturelle et intégration Africaine: Logique de dédramatisation du concept” *Synergies Afrique Centrale et de l’Ouest*, No. 3, 2009, pp. 75-83.

<sup>151</sup> Tiémélé Ramsès-Boa, “Ivoirité, identité culturelle et intégration Africaine: Logique de dédramatisation du concept” *Synergies Afrique Centrale et de l’Ouest*, No. 3, 2009, pp. 75-83.

<sup>152</sup> Henri Konan Bédié 1999, “*Les chemins de ma vie*,” Plon, Paris.

<sup>153</sup> Le Conservateur Kiziro, “Le grand dossier sur l’Ivoirité,” Abidjan.net Avant –propos. Mais comment peut-on être Ivoirien? In Ahipeaud 2009, pp. 138-139.

<sup>154</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 73.

They argued that due to the ideological and demagogic context such as the arrival of Ouattara as a potential President and the questions over his origins and his nationality in 1990, the sale of the concept was a failure. However, one can argue that behind this political definition of *Ivoirité*, there was the strong idea of exclusion.<sup>155</sup> There was no doubt that Bédié carefully crafted the political version of *Ivoirité* to eliminate his harsh rival Ouattara and maintain his grip on power. The politicisation of ethnicity triggered the political crisis and the stigmatisation of people from the north of Côte d'Ivoire as foreigners.<sup>156</sup>

According to Salia Zouandé, the debate over cultural *Ivoirité* only suggested that people from the south were true Ivorians while those from the north were seen as foreigners. In his thesis, he noted that the emergence of this sub-regional nationalism in Côte d'Ivoire was the result of the discourse over Ouattara who is a northerner.<sup>157</sup> In the lead-up to the 2000 presidential election campaign, Guëi promised that he would abolish *Ivoirité*. The return of Ouattara from exile and apparently the good relationship between them appeared to diminish the tension over *Ivoirité*. However, he changed his mind and on 28 February, 2000, he confirmed in the FPI newspaper *La Voie* that "*Ivoirité* was a good concept," thereby began to progressively join Bédié and other supporters of the concept.<sup>158</sup> The old tactic returned in May 2000. The RDR and Ouattara boycotted the December 2000 elections which sparked new confrontations in Abidjan.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Jean-Pierre Dozon, 1997, "L'étranger et l'allochtone en Côte d'Ivoire," in Bernard Contamin and Harris Memel-Fote (eds), *Le modèle ivoirien en question, crises, ajustement et recomposition*. Paris: Karthala-Orstom, pp. 779-798.

<sup>156</sup> Salia Zouandé, "Governance and democratic transition in Africa: Understanding "Ivoirité" and the ethnicity challenges to citizenship and nation-building in Côte d'Ivoire," A thesis submitted to the faculty of graduate school, Howard University, May 2011.

<sup>157</sup> Salia Zouandé, "Governance and democratic transition in Africa: Understanding "Ivoirité" and the ethnicity challenges to citizenship and nation-building in Côte d'Ivoire," A thesis submitted to the faculty of graduate school, Howard University, May 2011.

<sup>158</sup> Christian Bouquet, 2005, *Géopolitique de la Côte d'Ivoire, Le désespoir de Kourouma*, Armand Colin, Paris, p. 44.

<sup>159</sup> Hohnung 2011, p. 186.

Under Guëi's watch, the Consultative Constitutional and Electoral Commission (CCCE) embraced *Ivoirité* by imposing strict eligibility conditions for the presidency in order to sideline Ouattara. Under those strict conditions, Ouattara was required to prove that he had continuously lived in Côte d'Ivoire in the past five years before the election, and he had not accepted another nationality. As Jolivet has noted, knowing that Ouattara had just left the IMF and was recruited under the Upper Volta quota, it is fair to say that these new legal measures were put in place to yet again destroy Ouattara. To justify this action, the general said "the bottom line is that the people of Côte d'Ivoire want *Ivoirité*." In addition he said, "Côte d'Ivoire to Ivorians."<sup>160</sup>

During the 2000 presidential campaign, although he claimed to be a Houphouëtist, he made no reference to the father of the nation, ensuring that he excluded his main competitors from the race, namely Bédié and Ouattara. He had forgotten that political opponents are not enemies. As a result, *Ivoirité* installed a poison that Côte d'Ivoire has found hard to scrap. Eventually, political cleavages have created ethnic frontiers. The exclusion of Ouattara on the grounds that he was from Burkina Faso also sidelined a third of voters from the north. In an interesting twist, during the 2000 national reconciliation forum Guëi declared that in his opinion, Ouattara is 'Ivoirian.' Articulating his position on the problem of Ouattara, he stated:

Concerning my dear brother Alassane Dramane Ouattara, I would like to make the point that my position remains unchanged. Our party the UDPCI had recently reminded us in front of this same audience. For me, Mr Alassane Ouattara is Ivorian. At my level, the debate is closed. So let us

<sup>160</sup> Jolivet Elen, 2002, "Ivoirité De la Conceptualisation à la Manipulation de l'Identité Ivoirienne," available at [http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoirite\\_la\\_conceptualisation\\_-6164\\_a\\_manipulation\\_jolivet.pdf](http://geo-phile.net/IMG/pdf/MireLivoirite_la_conceptualisation_-6164_a_manipulation_jolivet.pdf) (accessed 30 November 2013).

avoid further damage of our beautiful country for simple personal disputes.<sup>161</sup>

It was a matter of too little too late. Thus, Gbagbo was the only challenger facing Guëi. Realising that he was less likely to win, the retired general ordered the vote count to stop. Moreover, members of the Electoral Commission were arrested and went on to declare himself President on national television.

On 24 October, 2000, supported by international media, especially Radio France International (RFI), Gbagbo called on his supporters to take it to the streets. He added: “from now on, I am the head of the state of Côte d’Ivoire.” His militants marched to the national television. They were confronted by soldiers loyal to Guëi. The Electoral Commission proclaimed Gbagbo as President with 60% of the votes but with a very low participation of 37%. Indeed, he remained on the top job until 2011.

Gbagbo had an ambiguous attitude during this turbulent period. Sometimes he was Ouattara’s ally; sometimes he was Guëi’s ally. On 23 November, 1994, as a parliamentarian, Gbagbo described Article 35 related to the eligibility criteria for the presidential election laid before parliament as “liberticidal, racist, xenophobic and dangerous.”<sup>162</sup> Gbagbo repeatedly denounced *Ivoirité* speeches that he described as dangerous, asking why the PDCI, which maintained that Ouattara was Ivorian a few years later denied him this nationality. “Suddenly, they discovered another nationality for him. [...] If this issue was only limited to two protagonists, it would not be a problem. However, in its current form, it risks to weaken the nation stability, national unity and trigger a civil war.”<sup>163</sup> It thus seemed that the honeymoon between Gbagbo and Ouattara was not over.

<sup>161</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 190. (Translated for the purposes of this thesis by Jean-Claude Meledje 2014).

<sup>162</sup> Assalé 2009, p. 82.

<sup>163</sup> Laurent Gbagbo, Interview with *Continental*, no. 12, p. 11.



Yet surprisingly, Gbagbo supported the Article of the 2000 Constitution which reinforced the provisions of 1994. Once in power, Gbagbo used the concept of *Ivoirité* which was explicitly endorsed by the FPI. Gbagbo said time and time again that as long as he was the President, Ouattara would never get the nation's top job. The concept was manipulated by Gbagbo as a weapon of xenophobia, seeking to divide and conquer support from Ivorians. Ivorian identity in the west in particular was determined by land ownership and new identity cards were issued to identify those who were 'foreigners.' As a member of Bété ethnic group, Gbagbo maintained strong support among people from the west of Côte d'Ivoire. They claimed northerners were stealing their land.

Furthermore, during the 'Battle of Abidjan,' which started on 31 March 2011, tactics like marking "D" or "B" on the doors of houses within ethnic dominated suburbs in order to identify people from the Dioula ethnic group (including people sharing the same religion and culture with people from the north) and the Baoulé ethnic group and returning later to murder the occupants was reported.<sup>164</sup> As indicated by one respondent, this method was in line with Gbagbo's concept of *Ivoirité*:

In the Abidjan district, pro-Gbagbo militia marked the doors of houses with "D" meaning Dioula and "B" for Baoulé. Those two communities formed the coalition to support Ouattara during the 2010 elections. To burn victims, the famous "Article 125" was applied referring to the cost of the resources used. The petrol cost was 100 CFA F and the cost of box of matches was 25 CFA F. They said they were ready for war and chaos could be expected if Gbagbo was targeted.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>164</sup> The term Mossi is frequently used to designate Burkina Faso migrants in Côte d'Ivoire; Leslie Varenne 2012, p. 155.

<sup>165</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" Male, former senior government advisor, Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire on 29 June 2012.

As one informant described it, these actions allowed for pro-Gbagbo militias to establish themselves in Abidjan. Moreover, the militias were able to accomplish their task of obtaining power without the use of sophisticated weapons. The strategy involved using a charismatic leader such as Charles Blé Goudé as a resource. Pro-Gbagbo militias were able to successfully mobilise followers, and murder innocent civilians because of their ethnicity (Dioula or Baoulé). In addition to the loss of innocent lives, these dangerous actions posed as an immediate threat to stability in Abidjan.<sup>166</sup>

As a consequence, Gbagbo's government was a government in meltdown. It was a government in crisis. The trouble began when Gbagbo changed his rhetoric. Support for Gbagbo fell on the back of his approach to *Ivoirité*. For a parliamentarian and President who had campaigned for unity, he had let the nation down. That was the legacy Gbagbo left behind. His traditional electorate (teachers, public servants, trade unionists and people from the west) had moved on.

The emergence of the concept of *Ivoirité* sparked the debate over the politics of hate and acted as a significant symbolic blow to the country, given that Côte d'Ivoire had a reputation as the land of hospitality during Houphouët's era. While some had stressed Ivorians must adopt the concept in order to sustain Ivorian cultural identity and national unity, others had noted it was a policy on the run.<sup>167</sup> Most importantly perhaps, it was a "hollow concept" which was constructed by Bédié to exclude Ouattara, northerners and 'foreigners.'<sup>168</sup> In either case, as Ahipeaud had remarked, they were engaged in political adventures, basing their concept on an ultra-nationalistic ideology, not necessity, and firmly entrenching this ideology

<sup>166</sup> Olivier Tallès, La violence actuelle exprime une crise de citoyenneté, *La Croix*, 4 April 2011; Thomas Hofnung, 2012, *La crise Ivoirienne, de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Collection Passerelle, Frat Mat Editions, p.178.

<sup>167</sup> Henri Konan Bédié 2009, *Les chemins de ma vie*, p. 44, Plon; Assalé 2009, p.70.

<sup>168</sup> Augustin Minka, "Côte d'Ivoire Henri Konan Bédié: L'homme par qui le malheur arriva," 23 June 2013, available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco18466.htm> (accessed 27 May 2014).

into the nation's politics.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, *Ivoirité*, which was aimed at recasting Ivorian citizenship, was a concept that was seen by some as divisive.<sup>170</sup>

It is apparent that Bédié acted as the father of the new concept of *Ivoirité* which meant a lot for many Ivorians and foreigners. According to Tiémélé Ramsès-Boa, despite the calls for unity, a willingness to establish the foundation for a new way of living together, without reference to ethnicity and religion, *Ivoirité* was violently attacked. Consequently, the concept had been accused of blocking the integration of certain persons into the Ivorian society, opposing people from the north to those from the south and promoting exclusion and in particular, rejecting Muslims who came from the north.<sup>171</sup> Equally, Laurent Dona-Fologo, one of the spokespersons who were tasked to sell the policy, said *Ivoirité* was not about exclusion. It was not a concept targeting foreigners.<sup>172</sup>

It was meant simply as an acquisition of Ivorian character, but they suffered a major setback in their attempt to explain this expression and sell it to Ivorian people. He gave his view over *Ivoirité* and its waves. Fologo said that despite the failure, Bédié and President Ouattara were best of friends then. They are together, suggesting that there is even a President and a *demi-Président*. Some Ivorians even say there are two Presidents. So therefore, as they often say, everything is possible in politics.<sup>173</sup> Nevertheless, Bédié the unfaithful heir had left behind the concept of *Ivoirité*, a policy of social division that Houphouët had combated all his political life.

<sup>169</sup> Ahipeaud 2009, p. 137.

<sup>170</sup> Jean-Pierre Dozon, 2000, "La Côte d'Ivoire au péril de l'Ivoirite", *Afrique contemporaine*, No. 193.

<sup>171</sup> Tiémélé Ramsès-Boa, "Ivoirité, identité culturelle et intégration Africaine: Logique de dédramatisation du concept" *Synergies Afrique Centrale et de l'Ouest*, No. 3, 2009, pp. 75-83.

<sup>172</sup> Laurent Dona-Fologo is an ex Minister for communications under President Houphouët, director and editor at the time of *Fraternité Matin*. He is a catholic from a Muslim family. As a first class politician, he knows all about Côte d'Ivoire politics; Interview with Respondent "L" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 June 2012.

<sup>173</sup> See Fologo's exclusive interview with Ben Ismaël, 'Fologo se fache, se livre et se confesse,' second and last part, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, 9 May 2014, available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco22065.htm> (accessed 10 May 2014).

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the causes of the social, economic and political crises that continue to have a significant impact on the lives of Ivorians as Côte d'Ivoire is still suffering from the consequences of 13 years of civil war.<sup>174</sup> Once touted as the 'Ivorian miracle,' Côte d'Ivoire has been through many fundamental challenges in the decades since independence, going from being known as West Africa's economic powerhouse to economic crisis. Given the state of the economy, the IMF and the World Bank, also known as the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI) have pressed the liberalisation of the political and economic processes through SAPs, which have failed to solve the nation's problems and instead have intensified them.<sup>175</sup> As one analyst has explained, SAPs "introduced new problems and aggravated old ones."<sup>176</sup>

This chapter has argued that Houphouët's successors were also to blame as they have individually and collectively contributed to the crisis through the 'war of succession' and the politics of identity. Before Houphouët's death, an intensive political competition for the control of the nature of Ivorian politics had emerged.

Ambitious politicians engaged in the violent politics of ethnicity. The manipulation of ethnicity and regional differences by the successors of Houphouët resulted in rivalries between northerners and southerners, and foreigners became scapegoats for all Ivorian problems. The consequences were enormous. They replaced the political philosophy of *Houphouëtisme* with *Ivoirité*. This latter political concept also contributed to the social and political crises, which affected the political fragility of the Ivorian nation.<sup>177</sup> The following

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>175</sup> See discussions about those institutions on section 6.2 of chapter 6.

<sup>176</sup> Brian Klaas, "From miracle to nightmare: an institutional analysis of development failures in Côte d'Ivoire," *Africa Today*, Vol. 55, No 1, 2008, pp. 109-126, *Indiana University Press*, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27666953> (accessed 6 March 2014).

<sup>177</sup> Balla Mohamed Keita, 2013, *A political history of Côte d'Ivoire from 1936 to 2011*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, pp. i-ii.

chapter will therefore discuss the 2010 presidential elections. It will argue that although the electoral turnout was high, holding the election when the country was divided was a mistake, plunging the country into further political turmoil.

## CHAPTER 7: THE ELECTIONS IN 2010 AND THEIR AFTERMATH

Despite international pressures to hold national elections, the 2010 elections failed to end the on-going political-military crisis. This chapter argues that the 2010 elections should not have been held and that subsequent international involvement following the contested election result did not solve Côte d'Ivoire's political problems. France intervened with its military and the UN enforced the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

The 2010 elections were meant to bring about stability and steer the nation along a path towards sustainable growth and development. The January 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the 2007 *Accord Politique de Ouagadougou* (APO), Ouagadougou Political Agreement, which aimed at facilitating the successful completion of the elections in Côte d'Ivoire, established the process for the 2010 election. The 2010 election process implicated the Gbagbo government, the armed rebels, and the Ivorian political parties, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the European Union, France, the *Francophonie*, and the United Nations. This also involved successive mediators such as the Togolese Gnassingbé Eyadema of Togo, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso.

The first round of voting in the 2010 elections proceeded calmly with fourteen candidates including a woman, Jacqueline Lohouès-Oble, and a high voter turnout of about 80%.<sup>1</sup> However, the second round was marked by the radicalisation of positions primarily from the presidential camp and the opposition. In the first round, Gbagbo and Ouattara obtained respectively 38.04% and 27.07% of the votes. Lohouès-Oble's prediction was right when she

<sup>1</sup> Among these fourteen contesters, there were Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara who spent 20 years fighting over the presidency. Lohouès-Oble has indicated that among the contenders for the nation's top job, she was better placed to win the elections in Côte d'Ivoire; See Diallo Harry, *La Dépêche d'Abidjan*, [http://www.ladepechedabidjan.info/Election-Presidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-presidentielle-Gbagbo-Bedie-et-Ouattara-se-battent\\_a904.html](http://www.ladepechedabidjan.info/Election-Presidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-presidentielle-Gbagbo-Bedie-et-Ouattara-se-battent_a904.html) (accessed 19 March 2015).

said some of “the three political heavyweights might refuse to concede defeat.”<sup>2</sup> Bédié obtained 25.24% of the votes and fought unsuccessfully to contest the results.<sup>3</sup> In the end, he offered his votes to Ouattara during the second round. Also in the second round, both Gbagbo and Ouattara made public calls for peace, advocating for the acceptance of the official election results. However, Gbagbo reportedly challenged the results in order to “hold on to power at all costs.”<sup>4</sup>

The organisation of the elections by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) encountered a number of difficulties, including frauds, a lengthy wait prior to results being reported, and the auto-proclamation of two Presidents. All this resulted in violence, intimidations and post-electoral crisis. As Mbeki has indicated, “many things have gone radically wrong along the road to this result.”<sup>5</sup>

### **The 2010 Elections and Their Consequences**

In April 2005, as a result of intense negotiations led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki involving the Gbagbo government, the leadership of the rebel groups, renamed *Forces Nouvelles*, and the opposition parties, the Pretoria Agreement was reached. The agreement called for elections to be held in October under the supervision of the United Nations, but it failed to end the fighting or bring about new elections as the civil war continued intermittently until 2007.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Diallo Harry, *La Dépêche d'Abidjan*, [http://www.ladepechedabidjan.info/Election-Présidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-présidentielle-Gbagbo-Bédié-et-Ouattara-se-battent\\_a904.html](http://www.ladepechedabidjan.info/Election-Présidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-présidentielle-Gbagbo-Bédié-et-Ouattara-se-battent_a904.html) (accessed 19 March 2015).

<sup>3</sup> See Diallo Harry, *La Dépêche d'Abidjan*, [http://www.ladepechedabidjan.info/Election-Présidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-présidentielle-Gbagbo-Bédié-et-Ouattara-se-battent\\_a904.html](http://www.ladepechedabidjan.info/Election-Présidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-présidentielle-Gbagbo-Bédié-et-Ouattara-se-battent_a904.html) (accessed 19 March 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Respondent “J” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 June 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Thabo Mbeki, “What the world got it wrong in Côte d’Ivoire,” *Foreign Policy*, 29 April 2011, Available at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/29/What\\_the\\_world\\_get\\_wrong\\_in\\_cote\\_d\\_ivoire](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/29/What_the_world_get_wrong_in_cote_d_ivoire), (accessed 12 April 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hofnung, 2012, *La crise Ivoirienne, de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Collection Passerelle, Frat Mat Editions, p. 187.

On 4 March, 2007, the Ouagadougou Agreement was brokered by the former President of Burkina Faso, and then Chairman of ECOWAS, Blaise Compaoré. Among others things, the Ouagadougou Agreement dealt with the issuance and restoration of birth certificates, identity cards and resident permits. The Ouagadougou Agreement also focused on the reunification of the country, the implementation of the national Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Program (DDR) of rebel combatants before the elections.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the elections, a code of conduct was put in place along with the electoral law and the Constitution to ensure a strict respect of the rules by all the actors involved. Although the electoral process had already attained a laborious consensus between all stakeholders involved, things got out of hand at different stages such as courts hearings for the identification of the population, the creation of a new electoral register, the issue of national identity cards, and the creation of the Independent Electoral Commission. This also included the distribution of voters' cards.<sup>8</sup>

Beginning in 2008, the identification of citizenship and registration proceeded at a slower pace than the last few years due to increased operational concerns related to the lack of adequate recourses. In 2009, a provisional electoral list was established. A new crisis arose because of the dispute over the names listed. As a consequence, Gbagbo decided to dismiss the government as well as the IEC in February 2010, justifying his actions based on the supposed fraud or violations of regulations. In October 2010, in spite of the political instability, mistrust, and mutual suspicion among the key players were obvious, and although the reunification of the country and the DDR strategy were not completely accomplished, Ivoirians went to the polls.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps more importantly, as Assi Kimou and Patricia Kouyaté have declared, especially during the preparations of an election which was aimed at restoring

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Respondent "D" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Respondent "R" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Respondent "A" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012.



stability, “The disarmament challenge is paramount. Without the disarmament of armed groups and their insertion, stability runs the risk of being compromised.”<sup>10</sup>

According to respondent “A” Gbagbo went to the polls “because Gbagbo relied on the opinion polls from eight agencies in one and half years, including the SOFRES Institute which suggested he would win during the first round by 46%, but it was a trap because the polls were manipulated by those agencies in order to force Gbagbo to allow the election to go ahead then sideline him.”<sup>11</sup> Gbagbo used opinion polls as a tool to ensure an election win. As his legitimacy as a leader began to wane, Gbagbo began to strategise a different approach. Convinced he would win, Gbagbo held an internationally monitored election. As history shows, Gbagbo’s plan backfired. The plan backfired for a number of reasons. One significant example is the fact that the poll results showed he had lost the votes of the Baoulé ethnic group, one of the largest in Côte d’Ivoire. This was a major loss because the Baoulé frequently determined election winners. Gbagbo continued to devise different plans of action in order to hold onto office until he was indicted by the ICC for alleged crimes committed during the post-election violence.<sup>12</sup>

On 31 October, 2010, Ivoirians cast their votes for their President. According to *Le Patriote*, a pro-Ouattara daily newspaper, 5.7 million Ivoirians on the 2010 registered voters list went to 20,073 polling stations to vote. Despite a reported record turnout of around 80%, pro-Gbagbo forces argued the participation rate was only around 70%.<sup>13</sup>

In any case, it was the first election since the outbreak of the Ivorian’s 2000 post-election crisis. Perhaps most importantly, it was the first election since 1960 which allowed any

<sup>10</sup> K. Mamadou, “Stabilité en Côte d’Ivoire, des propositions pour consolider les acquis,” *Fraternite Matin*, No. 15 100, 8 April 2015, p. 7. (Translated for the purposes of this thesis 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Respondent “A” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Bédié fait gagner ADO, *Le Nouvou Réveil* 30 November 2010, no. 2684, p. 1; Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d’Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l’ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> Ouattara Gaoussou, “Retour sur une crise,” *Le Patriote*, No. 3719, 11 April 2012, p.2.

candidate running for national leadership to contest the election. Before the first round, all parties agreed on the honesty of the balloting. While Gbagbo and Ouattara garnered the most votes, they were unable to receive a majority. Therefore, a runoff election was held on 28 November, 2010. Shortly after the first round, both Gbagbo and Ouattara agreed to accept the verdict of the ballot-box and abide by the results of the second round unconditionally. The agreement was reached during Côte d'Ivoire's first presidential debate aired on a national television network. The debate occurred on 25 November, 2010. Even before the second round started, Ouattara was committed to sidelining Gbagbo. Toward the end of the debate, he told Gbagbo, "You have done two terms, that is enough."<sup>14</sup> This revealed the tension between the two candidates, despite the debate amicable appearance.

According to Gbagbo's allies, Gbagbo attempted to challenge the result of the elections because of technical irregularities found in the voting process, fraudulent practices and voter intimidation in Ouattara's northern strongholds such as Korhogo, Seguéla and Bouaké in the centre.<sup>15</sup> Gbagbo appealed to the Constitutional Court based on these irregularities. At a press briefing held at the Golf Hotel in Abidjan on 1 December, 2010, Ouattara told Gbagbo to respect the commitment they made in front of the nation. Ouattara's camp also denounced fraud and impediments to voting in certain localities where its rival Gbagbo was in a more favourable position.<sup>16</sup>

However, for international observers from the UN, ECOWAS, the United States, France, and the others that recognised Ouattara as President, the elections were held under favourable conditions. At the same time, Gbagbo said there was a plan being developed by a group of politicians, from France in particular, to sideline him. He called on the UN to withdraw from

<sup>14</sup> "Face à face Gbagbo vs Ouattara," available at [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfu2mu\\_faceaface-gbagbo-vs-ouattara-1ere-partie\\_new](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfu2mu_faceaface-gbagbo-vs-ouattara-1ere-partie_new), (accessed 3 April 2015); Interview with Respondent "J" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 June 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Respondent "A" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Jules César, "Second tour de l'élection présidentielle, *Le Mandat*, No 416, 2 December 2010, p. 5.

the Ivorian territory.<sup>17</sup> As a result of failure and impasse, the country was plunged into a post-election crisis. Ultimately, Ouattara the supposed winner faced the risk of governing against at least 46% of Ivorians who supported Gbagbo for a long time.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from political tensions, the elections were also challenged by a grim security situation arising from the rebels in the north and central Côte d'Ivoire and a lack of compliance with several agreements. As Pierre Sane has indicated, the first identified anomaly is due to noncompliance with signed electoral agreements which allowed for a framework and timeline for the organisation and the holding of peaceful and transparent presidential elections. These modalities were enumerated in the fourth supplementary agreement of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement which reflected on a pattern for demobilisation efforts, disarmament and storage of weapons.<sup>19</sup> The third supplementary agreement of Article 3 stipulates that:

In order to promote the smooth conduct of the elections, both parties (pro-Gbagbo forces and the rebels from the north) agreed to relaunch without any delay and headed by the *Centre de Commandement Intégré* (CCI), Integrated Command Centre and under the supervision of impartial forces, the disarmament, weapons storage of the two ex-belligerent forces as well as the demobilisation of former combatants from *Forces Nouvelles* (New Forces). In any event, these operations should be finalised by the latest, two months before the date selected for the presidential elections.<sup>20</sup>

Within the Ivorian political class, however, tradition allows that important dossiers are interpreted differently by both political sides. In the FPI, it could not be disagreed that the

<sup>17</sup> UFRGSMUN 2011, The United States Security Council, available at <http://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun/2011/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/UFRGSMUN-2011-UN-Security-Council-Study-Guide.pdf> (accessed 19 March 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Monica Mark, "Ivory Coast disputed presidential election," *Time*, 6 December 2010, Available at <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2035342,00.html> (accessed 2 April 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Sane 2010, "Les élections de Côte d'Ivoire: chronique d'un échec annoncé," *Le Temps*, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/385241.html> (accessed 5 December 2014)

<sup>20</sup> ONUCI, Opérations des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire, Revue de Presse du 30 Décembre 2008, *Ivoire Info*, Sortie de crise-Ouaga IV à l'épreuve des intérêts. Available at <http://www.onuci.org/spip.php?article1651> (accessed 31 March 2015).

burning issue regarding the disarmament of the rebels would occur two months prior to the beginning of the elections. In this sense, Gbagbo and his allies were pleased that the Ouagadougou Agreement dictated the disarmament process take place no later than two months prior to the presidential elections. On the other hand, in the RHDP, they believed that disarmament would be completed after the presidential elections. It is, therefore, remarkable that, politicians from both camps were reading the dossier based on their interests and needs. The supplementary agreement also required that the rebel forces be regrouped and cantoned, the militia be dismantled, the demobilisation allowances be paid, and “the whole thing should be finalised by the latest, two months before the date selected for the presidential elections.” Furthermore, Article 8 of the same supplementary agreement recognised that “the non-reunification of the country and the slow progress in matters involving the institutional and political normalisation constituted major obstacles to the conduct of fair, transparent, and democratic elections.”<sup>21</sup>

It appeared that the aforementioned provisions, which were absolutely essential to allow free and fair elections to take place, were not respected. Most importantly, the rebels from the north refused to disarm. Although they signed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and the four supplementary agreements, the rebels from the north did not conform to them. That was because Blaise Compaoré, the facilitator of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and godfather of the rebels from the north, and the international community, including the United Nations Security Council, failed to put pressure on the rebels from the north to unconditionally join the dialogue and negotiations for the enforcement of this crucial provision. As experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan showed, it was unrealistic to envisage holding elections free of intimidation in zones controlled by armed rebels from the north.

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Sane 2010, “Les élections de Côte d’Ivoire: chronique d’un échec annoncé,” *Le Temps*, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/385241.html> (accessed 5 December 2014)

However, the international community insisted that the conditions existed for a democratic election, but, as Mbeki indicated, “The world got it wrong in Côte d’Ivoire.”<sup>22</sup>

The electoral misconduct triggered violence and intimidation in the seven regions of the nation controlled by armed opposition groups located in the centre, north, and west. While violence and intimidation impacted the regularity of the voting, it was assessed differently by the Constitutional Council and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Côte d’Ivoire. The head of the Constitutional Council, Paul Yao-N’dré, firmly condemned the organisation, the procedure, and the irregularities in the aforementioned regions. However, the Special Representative of the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (ONUCI), Choi Young Jin, believed the impact was not serious. The ONUCI provided technical, logistical, and financial support to identify and register voters along with the delivering of ballots. Choi indicated that the elections were held in a globally peaceful and secure environment, although some incidents such as acts of intimidation and obstruction of free movement occurred in some regions. This created a new crisis.<sup>23</sup>

The second anomaly related to the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission and how it operated. As defined in the Constitution and outlined in the electoral code, the Commission organises, supervises, and monitors all electoral procedures. Its members were sworn in on 25 February, 2010 at the presidential palace in the presence of the Constitutional Council. The members expressed their willingness to fulfil their mission in conformity with the Constitution and in an impartial and objective way. This Commission was composed of 31 members, including 11 members of the civil society, or individual Ivorian citizens, as opposed to the government, and 20 members from political parties and rebel groups. Among those 20 members, 18 were from the opposition and rebel groups while only 2 were from the

<sup>22</sup> Thabo Mbeki, “What the world got it wrong in Côte d’Ivoire,” *Foreign Policy*, 29 April 2011.

<sup>23</sup> See “Chute imminente des Refondateurs” *Le Démocrate*, No 099, 8-9 January 2011, p.3.

Gbagbo government. Somehow, the so-called Independent Commission was dominated by the opposition.<sup>24</sup>

In fact, its President Youssouf Bakayoko who was nominated on 25 February, 2010 was an eminent member of the opposition coalition and former PDCI Minister for foreign affairs on 28 December, 2005, the day Gbagbo established a broad-based government of national unity. Nonetheless, the electoral law promulgated in 2001 only allowed 2 representatives from each political party or political grouping with a parliamentarian at the National Assembly or at least a member who has won a municipal election.<sup>25</sup>

The process adopted by the consensus of Central Commissioners was that the results needed to be consolidated by the Central Commissioners before they were published. However, the commissioners of the Electoral Commission could not agree on the nature of the election results. The first sign of disagreement between the Commissioners appeared on 30 November, the day the IEC released the first results of the 2010 elections after a two-day waiting period. Two Commissioners were close to Gbagbo, namely Etienne Topka Vehi and Damana Adia Pickass. The latter physically and aggressively prevented the IEC spokesperson Bamba Yacouba from announcing initial results from the second round on live, national television, asserting that they had not been consolidated and validated by the IEC.<sup>26</sup> Pickass' main argument was that the IEC should have validated the results while they were in its possession. According to respondent "I" Pickass believed that was not the case that the IEC validated the results correctly.<sup>27</sup>

Under enormous pressure, Bakayoko intervened on national television, around 11.20 PM local time, asking Ivorians to be patient and understanding. Bakayoko further asked Ivorians to allow his institution to work without opposition in order to announce the presidential

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Respondent "R" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 14 June 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Respondent "I" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 16 June 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Ouattara Gaoussou, "Retour sur une crise," *Le Patriote*, No. 3719, 11 April 2012, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Respondent "I" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 16 June 2012).

election results. They were very expected, but these results did not come early. In the meantime, fear overtook much of the population, a situation which, as Ouattara admitted, “exposes the country in a total uncertainty. This situation is unacceptable.”<sup>28</sup>

From the perspective of Gbagbo’s camp, the results did not fulfil expectations. On 2 December, 2010 around 5.40 PM local time, taking advantage of his position, the President of the Electoral Commission hurried to the campaign headquarters of the opposition candidate Ouattara to announce the provisional results of the second round.<sup>29</sup> As Ahipeaud, the President of the Union for Development and Liberties and a member of the coalition for opposition political parties known as ‘the third voice,’ declared, the IEC and its President Bakayoko “are entirely under Ouattara’s regulatory power.”<sup>30</sup>

Although the results were not yet consolidated or validated by all the Central Commissioners, the President of the Electoral Commission declared Ouattara the winner on 2 December, 2010. This declaration was made 72 hours after the deadline. The Electoral Commission presented its report with 54.10% of the votes for Ouattara and 45.90% to the incumbent. Gbagbo was also declared the winner by the Constitutional Council. Therefore, both Gbagbo and Ouattara claimed to have won the second round and separately inaugurated themselves as the President. This sparked a post-electoral crisis. Fighting intensified between pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces.<sup>31</sup> One month after the proclamation of the election results, on 3 January, 2011 Bakayoko defended the same results and said, “I persist and I sign: Ouattara was clearly elected with 54.10% of the votes. No one in Côte d’Ivoire- not even the Constitutional Council could contest these figures from the IEC.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Jules César, “Second tour de l’élection présidentielle, Le Mandat, No 416, 2 December 2010, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Respondent “I” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 16 June 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Herve Kpodion, “L’UDL invite les Ivoiriens à rejeter le nouveau code électoral,” *Soirinfo*, N.6151, 3 April 2015, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Respondent “S” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Koffi, “Bakayoko, président de la CEI, Un mois après la proclamation des résultats,” *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2709, 3 January 2011, p. 3.

It does appear the President of the Commission acted in flagrant violation of the rules adopted by his colleagues. Moreover, the Commission did not respect his oath of impartiality and the Constitution. It should not be otherwise, due to its composition, its *modus operandi*, and its challenges.

It is also noteworthy that the Independent Electoral Commission failed to update the electoral list in order to prevent cases of fraud. During the second round, the Commission acknowledged elements of the defence and security forces voted several times, leading to judgment from the media. The Commission failed to take stricter measures in each polling station during the first and second round. There were numerous delays and technical shortcomings regarding the implementation of the elections' security policy. During both the first and second round, polling stations were secured by the authorities in roughly half of the cases.<sup>33</sup>

The IEC was criticised by the European Union for being centralised through the concentrating of information solely in the IEC's hands. The period in which it distributed voters' cards went on for several weeks in October of 2010. The IEC developed a grievance mechanism in case of any anomalies, but there were no arrangements in place to accommodate voters if they did not possess a valid card. The exact number of undistributed cards during the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire could not be determined.<sup>34</sup>

The role of the Constitutional Council is to ensure the regularity of the referendum operations, the election of representatives of people, and to decide about the eligibility of candidates at the presidential and legislative elections. More importantly, the Constitutional Council, the nation's highest authority on matters related to elections, proclaims the final results of the presidential elections. Article 64 of the electoral code stipulates, in instances of

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Respondent "I" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 16 June 2012.

<sup>34</sup> "Alassane Ouattara réassure les chancelleries de la sous-région: les élections prochaines seront démocratiques et apaisées" *Le Patriote* No. 4594, 24 March 2015, p.6.



widespread irregularities that may affect the final result of the election, the President of the Constitutional Council may cancel the polls and organise a new election within 45 days.<sup>35</sup>

The President of the Constitutional Council, Yao-N'dré, who is also known as Pablo, was nominated by Gbagbo on 8 August, 2009. According to him, there were irregularities, including a lack of representatives or delegates in the polling stations, ballot box stuffing, transportation of vote reports by unauthorised persons, and a lack of privacy for voters. Yao-N'dré was Gbagbo's closest friend. With regard to Yao-N'dré's nomination, Gbagbo said, "I hear people saying I have promoted my friend Pablo. Yes, he is my friend. I know him and he knows me. It is not the first time this has happened."<sup>36</sup>

Yao-N'dré argued that obstruction to voters in seven districts prevented people from voting. Also, due to violence and the fact that voters were omitted from the list in several regions, the overall results were cancelled during the course of the first and second round. This resulted in uncertainty as far as the proclamation of the results was concerned. The President of the Constitutional Council invalidated the polls (about 660, 000 and 16% of votes cast) in those regions, declaring to the media that the IEC's power of result proclamation has expired.<sup>37</sup> However, the IEC claimed that the President of the Constitutional Council had exceeded his authority. Yao-N'dré also rushed to proclaim Gbagbo winner on 3 December, 2010 - giving him 51.45% of the votes whereas his opponent had only 48.55%. By doing so, the Constitutional Council failed to adjudicate electoral disputes.<sup>38</sup> The real issue, though, is that rather than clarifying which and how many of these polling stations were affected, the

<sup>35</sup> Decision No.Ci 2011-EP-036/04-05/CC/SG regarding the proclamation of Mr Alassane Ouattara as President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire cancelled out Decision No.CI 2011-EP-34/03-12/CC/SG regarding the proclamation of Mr Laurent Gbagbo as President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>36</sup> Bakary Nimaga, "Paul Yao-N'dré: L'homme par qui est arrivé le grand malheur", *Le Patriote*, No. 3719, 11 April 2012, p. 4; Interview with Respondent "I" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 16 June 2012.

<sup>37</sup> These regions included Bouake, Katiola, and Dabakala in the Bandama region, Boundiali, Ferkéssédougou, and Korhogo in the savannah region.

<sup>38</sup> Bakary Nimaga, "Paul Yao N'Dré: L'homme par qui est arrivé le grand malheur," *Le Patriote*, No. 3719, 11 April 2012, p. 4.

Council decided to cancel voting in entire regions after some Ivorians exercised their constitutional right to vote for new leadership or give Gbagbo another term.

It is argued by Bakayoko that the Constitutional Council only had two options available in those turbulent times. The first option was to validate the results proclaimed by the IEC. If the Council believed there was fraudulence, the second option was to invalidate the national results and call for a new election. It had no alternative but to purely cancel the votes in the seven regions favourable to Ouattara.<sup>39</sup>

As French political scientist Christian Bouquet, who made it a habit to intervene in the Ivorian political debate, said it is a fact that Ivorians authorities are in charge at home concerning the management of the electoral process, but they are very “strictly controlled by the ONUCI.”<sup>40</sup> The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1765 was adopted in July 2007. It gave Choi the mandate to certify the elections. Choi rejected the final results announced by the President of the Constitutional Council and certified the overall results of the first and second round, noting they were relatively free, fair, and credible. They proclaimed Ouattara winner. The quasi-totality of the international community, including France, recognised the victory of Ouattara. Gbagbo did not have many allies in West Africa, apart from modest support from Gambia. For pro-Gbagbo groups, the Constitutional Council is the only constitutional body empowered to determine the winner of the elections and install the President. According to Pascal Affi N’Guessan, President of the FPI who was also Gbagbo’s campaign manager, “We are prepared for war. We are prepared for any eventuality. We are prepared to resist, as we have been doing since 19 September, 2002.”<sup>41</sup> However,

<sup>39</sup> Paul Koffi, “Bakayoko, Président de la CEI, Un mois après la proclamation des résultats,” *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2709, 3 January 2011, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Christian Bouquet in *L’Inter*, ONUCI, Opérations des Nations Unies en Côte d’Ivoire, Revue de Presse du 30 Décembre 2008, Available at <http://www.onuci.org/spip.php?article1651> (accessed 31 March 2015). Paul Koffi, “Bakayoko, président de la CEI, Un mois après la proclamation des résultats,” *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2709, 3 January 2011, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> See “Affi N’guessan: Nous sommes prêts pour la guerre” *Le Démocrate* No. 99, 9 January 2011.

Ouattara's allies argued that the Constitutional Council recalculated the votes to reverse the final elections results. Therefore, the decision of the Constitutional Council was unlawful.<sup>42</sup>

Article 63 of the Constitution stipulated, "The result of the presidential election is proclaimed by the Constitutional Council, after an examination of possible claims, in accordance with the emergency procedure, within seven days starting from reception of records."<sup>43</sup> One month after the declaration of Gbagbo as President, on 4 May, 2011, the President of the Constitutional Council returned from exile in Ghana, cancelled out Gbagbo's proclamation as President, and declared Ouattara winner of the presidential elections, arguing that "decisions taken at the international level have priority over those taken at the domestic level."<sup>44</sup>

He reiterated his full support for Ouattara. According to Bakayoko, Gbagbo decided in 2005 at the Pretoria Accord meeting that what was stated about the certification by the ONUCI was authoritative over the Constitution Council, or "Choi's word is above Yao-N'dré's word."<sup>45</sup>

However, for the Ouattara camp, Yao-N'dré was the person through whom the unfortunate development was transmitted. He was unquestionably the person who opened up the proverbial *Pandora's Box*. They argued that he must bear the greatest responsibility for the death of 3,000 people during the post-election violence.<sup>46</sup>

It should be noted that the 31 October first round and 28 November second round, 2010, presidential elections came after a slow, lengthy, complex, and expensive process to end the crisis, first initiated in 2007 by the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. Through those elections, the main challenge was to bring a final end to an eleven year period of intense

<sup>42</sup> See "Chute imminente des Refondateurs" *Le Démocrate*, No 099, 8-9 January 2011, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> ONG FOACAP-CI, Forum Civil Africain Pour La Paix, "Côte d'Ivoire Post-Crise Electorale," p. 12. (Translated for the purposes of this thesis, 2015).

<sup>44</sup> Decision No.CI 2011-EP-036/04-05/CC/SG regarding the proclamation of Mr Alassane Ouattara as President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire cancelled out Decision No.CI 2011-EP-34/03-12/CC/SG regarding the proclamation of Mr Laurent Gbagbo as President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Koffi, "Bakayoko, Président de la CEI, Un mois après la proclamation des résultats," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2709, 3 January 2011, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Bakary Nimaga, "Paul Yao-N'dré: L'homme par qui est arrivé le grand malheur," *Le Patriote*, No. 3719, 11 April 2012, p. 4.

political crisis and normalise Côte d'Ivoire's troubled relationships with the international community. According to Lohouès-Oble:

The elections should be held on 31 October 2010 before the constitutional deadline. That is because it will enable Ivorians to find real solutions to their problems and they must not pass up this unique opportunity. And the President that will be elected will acquire the necessary legitimacy.<sup>47</sup>

Bédié also said the election should be held to help Côte d'Ivoire to get out of the situation it found itself in. "We must do all we can so that the elections and the presidential ones in particular, take place."<sup>48</sup> He concluded that Ivorians must ensure that the country once again embraces the rule of law, where human life is most likely to be respected and protected, where an Ivorian is a citizen, and where everyone has a place and feels free.<sup>49</sup>

As stated by one respondent, "pro-Gbagbo forces perpetrated the most hideous and immoral forms of violence imaginable during this crisis. Pregnant women were executed in daylight. The killing method was similar or even worse among men. Abobo, the suburb where I live, was a no man's land."<sup>50</sup> This description accurately captures the turmoil during that time. Many victims in Abobo (Abidjan) paid the ultimate penalty. On the strength of the information I collected during my field visits and the cross-checking I was able to do, it became clear that during the 2010 post-election, pro-Gbagbo forces including militias and Liberian mercenaries perpetrated crimes against humanity. Crisis, defiance, security and an overall struggle for power ultimately led to the death of innocent victims. Moreover, FRCI

<sup>47</sup> Diallo Harry, *La Dépêche d'Abidjan*, [http://www.ladepech-edabidjan.info/Election-Presidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-presidentielle-Gbagbo-Bedie-et-Ouattara-se-battent\\_a904.html](http://www.ladepech-edabidjan.info/Election-Presidentielle-Jacqueline-Lohoues-Oble-candidate-a-la-presidentielle-Gbagbo-Bedie-et-Ouattara-se-battent_a904.html) (accessed 19 March 2015).

<sup>48</sup> ONUCI, Opérations des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire, Revue de Presse du 30 Décembre 2008, *Fraternité Matin*, "vœux de nouvel an de Bédié : que notre pays redevienne un état droit," available at <http://www.onuci.org/spip.php?article1651> (accessed 31 March 2015).

<sup>49</sup> ONUCI, Opérations des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire, Revue de Presse du 30 Décembre 2008, *Fraternité Matin*, "vœux de nouvel an de Bédié: que notre pays redevienne devienne un état de droit," available at <http://www.onuci.org/spip.php?article1651> (accessed 31 March 2015).

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Respondent "C" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 28 April 2012.

also perpetrated similar crimes. During the so-called battle of Abidjan to take control of the capital city, which became a principal theatre of the war, pro-Ouattara forces committed similar crimes.<sup>51</sup>

Unfortunately, the elections failed to mark the beginning of the problem resolution process for Côte d'Ivoire. I argue that, given the refusal of the rebel groups to disarm and the above malfunctions caused by the relevant authorities, the 2010 presidential elections should not have been held as they contributed to the political impasse and widespread animosities which ultimately sparked a post-election crisis. Côte d'Ivoire's 2010 presidential elections were more contentious than usual. There were tensions between the three major political parties, namely the PDCI, the RDR, and the FPI and there was a competing claim to the presidency between politicians from the north and west of the nation.

In addition to this, there was the emergence of rebel forces and increasing communal violence in several western regions, along with inadequate preparations by the IEC and apparent bias by the Constitutional Council. This helped to suggest that Côte d'Ivoire was heading toward a very volatile and vicious electoral violence. On the other hand, the international community and its agencies failed to ensure that the vote was not conducted in an explosive situation. Since the elections were held while this violent trend continued, it deepened Côte d'Ivoire's already grave security and governance crises, further destabilising the country.

As Bakary Traoré noted, when a country does not hold elections or does not enable every citizen to exercise their right to vote, this is the equivalent of a lack of democracy and political rights.<sup>52</sup> However, according to a UN report, when the 2010 elections finally took

<sup>51</sup> Paul Koffi, Jules Kra, François Bécanty & François Konan, "Laurent Gbagbo doit arrêter d'assassiner les Ivoiriens," *Le Nouveau Réveil* 14 January 2011, no. 2719, p. 3; William Atéby, Le FPI dénonce les crimes commis par le camp Ouattara, *L'Inter* 9 March 2011, no. 3848, p. 3; Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d'Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 142.

<sup>52</sup> Interview by Gooré Bi Hué, "Bonne gouvernance," *Fraternité Matin*, No 15082, 17 March 2015.

place, an estimated 900 deaths have been confirmed in Abidjan and western Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, at least 800,000 people were internally displaced inside Côte d'Ivoire and more than 160,000 others fled to neighbouring countries, such as Liberia, due to the post-election conflict.<sup>53</sup>

This suggests that in 2010 Côte d'Ivoire was not ready to facilitate the holding of free and transparent elections peacefully, but the IEC and the Constitutional Council were in a rush to find the way out of the political impasse instead of engaging in long-term structural efforts to improve the quality of the vote. Much of the rush and frustration came from the international community, which spent around \$400 million for the elections.<sup>54</sup> As a result, it directly threatened a political stability and democratic governance in Côte d'Ivoire, prerequisites for the nation's long-term socioeconomic development, rendering efforts by ordinary Ivorians to support a transition to peace useless.

The post-election crisis 'ended' when Gbagbo was ousted on 11 April, 2011 by forces loyal to Ouattara and supported by the French military. Gbagbo accused the international community of "meddling" in issues related to the sovereignty of Côte d'Ivoire. However, the intervention led to violent conflicts and political stalemate, making progress towards lasting peace difficult.<sup>55</sup>

### **French Intervention**

Faced by the size of the task that awaited him, Ouattara decided to rely on the former colonial power for help. In response to an urgent request from Ouattara, Paris ultimately left around 300 soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, a military adviser remunerated by France worked

<sup>53</sup> UFRGSMUN 2011, The United States Security Council, available at <http://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun/2011/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/UFRGSMUN-2011-UN-Security-Council-Study-Guide.pdf> (accessed 19 March 2015).

<sup>54</sup> Monica Mark, "Ivory Coast disputed presidential election," *Time*, 6 December 2010, Available at <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2035342,00.html> (accessed 2 April 2015).

<sup>55</sup> Monica Mark, "Ivory Coast disputed presidential election," *Time*, 6 December 2010, Available at <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2035342,00.html> (accessed 2 April 2015).

alongside President Ouattara to help reform the army. Also, two other French advisors landed in Abidjan. While one was tasked to reform the Ivorian administrative systems, the other oversaw large public works projects. In short, after those years of glacial relations under Gbagbo, it was time for cordial and lucrative reunions between the former colonial power and its former 'showcase' in West Africa.<sup>56</sup>

Since independence in 1960, France's neo-colonial influence in Côte d'Ivoire was characterised by military support for successive Ivorian governments. This military support was defined in the 24 April, 1961 defence agreements between France and Houphouët who expected France to protect him 'in case of a foreign invasion,' according to the Ivorian former Ambassador to the US, Pascal Kokora.<sup>57</sup> Due to the end of the Cold War and especially after the debacle in Rwanda in 1994 and the debacle in Zaire in 1997, France has reviewed its military involvement in Francophone Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire. However, as Daniela Krosiak has pointed out, certain key aspects of this involvement remain firmly unchanged.<sup>58</sup>

In 1997, France began to implement its new African intervention policy of *ni ingérence, ni indifférence*. This meant neither meddling in the domestic affairs of African countries, nor being indifferent to their plight. This included Côte d'Ivoire, where France attempted to break with its old post-colonial habits by reducing its military presence. As a result, France resisted military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire during the December 1999 coup d'état.

On 19 September, 2002, when the rebels from the north staged a rebellion which resulted in a civil war, Gbagbo asked for France's protection based on the 1961 agreements. One of

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Hofnung, 2012, *La crise ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 181.

<sup>57</sup> Luxter & Mbakwe, "This is an Economic war": Pascal D. Kokora, Côte d'Ivoire's Ambassador in Washington, Blames France for his country's recent woes, *New Africa*, March 2003, p. 26.

<sup>58</sup> Daniela Krosiak, "France's policy towards Africa, continuity or change"? In Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 2004, *Africa in international politics, external involvement on the continent*, Routledge, London, p. 11.

Gbagbo's allies reportedly said, "We are calling on the heart of France. We feel like a child abandoned by his protector. We want to see at our sides, our ancestors, the Gauls."<sup>59</sup>

On 22 September, 2002, the French Minister of defence, Michèle Alliot-Marie declared that "There would be no military intervention."<sup>60</sup> However, faced with the rebellion, President Jacques Chirac decided to intervene militarily. It is important to note that under the leadership of Gbagbo, France was militarily engaged in Côte d'Ivoire by sending 600 soldiers from 2002 to 2006 to assume the buffer zone role between Gbagbo's regular army and the rebel groups during the September 2002 mutiny and failed coup d'état. Indeed, France responded to their call and successfully halted, at least from the Gbagbo's government perspective, the rebels advance to Abidjan in the south while maintaining the Gbagbo government's position of power. Nevertheless, it quickly became apparent that things have changed since then and France's role "remained ambiguous."<sup>61</sup>

At that time, France had been criticised by both political sides for its mismanagement of the Ivorian crisis. Gbagbo and his allies accused Chirac for not fully endorsing and supporting the elected Gbagbo government and for using French troops to impose a cease-fire. Ouattara and his supporter blamed France for backing Gbagbo, despite his lack of fundamental legitimacy. They argued that the Gbagbo government survived because of the presence of 3,000 French soldiers based in Abidjan.

However, under the Gbagbo regime, bilateral relations deteriorated, especially following the 2004 events. For example, Gbagbo criticised the role of France in the continent in general and disapproved of France's presence, actions and, in particular, its position as a mediator in its former colony. This resulted in clashes between France and Côte d'Ivoire. When the

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Hofnung, "Côte d'Ivoire: un patriote veut cacher une femme," *Libération*, 13 February 2003.

<sup>60</sup> Daniela Kroslak, "France's policy towards Africa, continuity or change" ? In Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 2004, *Africa in international politics, external involvement on the continent*, Routledge, London, p. 79.

<sup>61</sup> Daniela Kroslak, "France's policy towards Africa, continuity or change"?? In Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 2004, *Africa in international politics, external involvement on the continent*, Routledge, London, p. 79.



Ivorian forces attacked the French military base in Bouaké, the second biggest city, France destroyed the Ivorian Air Force in retaliation.<sup>62</sup> On several occasions, Gbagbo openly denounced France's stranglehold on the Ivorian people and orchestration of a regime change.<sup>63</sup>

A further prominent example of French military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire was during the 2010 post-election crisis. According to one respondent:

A lot of people believe Côte d'Ivoire is a sovereign state, but they are surprised when France intervenes. The problem is that we are not sovereign. We are not independent, but all France did from 2002 to 2010-11 was to protect its interests.<sup>64</sup>

Based upon the fact that both parties were unwilling to work towards a resolution, it seemed logical to have a third party intervene so that peace could be obtained. However, the reception of France's intervention has been mixed. When France intervened in the Ivorian conflict, it raised a lot of criticisms and interpretations. For example, when France intervened in 2010-11, many Ivorians I spoke to with regard to the French intervention argued that the French had their specific interests in resolving the conflict. In order to protect their political and business interests, the French government obtained an international legitimacy based on the UN mandate and also took into account the legality of the French Constitution to intervene in Côte d'Ivoire during the post-election crisis.<sup>65</sup>

A few weeks prior to the intervention, President Sarkozy and his defence Minister Michèle Elliot-Marie swore they would not interfere in Côte d'Ivoire's domestic issues. In Abidjan

<sup>62</sup> Justin Vaisse 2003, "The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire," *The Brookings Institution*, U.S.- France Analysis Series, March 2003.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Respondent "N" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Respondent "N" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.

<sup>65</sup> Caroline Monnot, "Côte d'Ivoire: ce conflit est crucial pour l'avenir de la démocratie en Afrique," *Le Monde* 7 April 2011, [http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/chat/2011/04/06/cote-d-ivoire-l-intervention-de-la-france-est-elle-legitime\\_1503973\\_3212.html#zz7VDGMM1FJW7UW2.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/chat/2011/04/06/cote-d-ivoire-l-intervention-de-la-france-est-elle-legitime_1503973_3212.html#zz7VDGMM1FJW7UW2.99) Accessed 19 May 2011).

Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire le coup d'état*, Editions Duboiris, 2011, p. 352.

and elsewhere, things started to go back to normal, but ultimately the masks came off, as they were convinced that a military intervention was the best way to resolve the Ivorian post-election crisis. Unexpectedly, Ouattara's allies and the international actors led by Sarkozy set ultimatums in mid-December 2010.<sup>66</sup> In his ultimatum, Sarkozy said "the President and the First Lady have their destiny in their hands. If they have not left their post, the post held by Laurent Gbagbo, in violation of the will of Ivorian people, they will be momentarily punished."<sup>67</sup>

However, in France, this ultimatum was severely criticised by politicians from different backgrounds. Indeed, the most vociferous was Jean-Marie Le Pen, President of the *Front National*, (FN), National Front party, who stated in a brief, "by issuing an ultimatum to President Gbagbo, Mister Sarkozy made a political mistake, which, given the confrontations between Ivorians, endangers the French military contingent, 12,000 French nationals, and more broadly our national interests."<sup>68</sup> For the former presidential candidate who likes to tell it like it is, rather than giving Gbagbo lessons in democracy and making comments that were particularly threatening and aggressive, priority could have been given to negotiated solutions.<sup>69</sup>

As the President of Sierra Leone Ernest Bai Koroma, one of the ECOWAS Special Envoys said, "President Gbagbo knew very well members of the international community no longer recognised him as leader."<sup>70</sup> His diplomatic and consular postings were rejected, which

<sup>66</sup> Ouattara Chérif, "La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire le coup d'état*, Editions Duboiris, 2011, p. 334.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire le coup d'état*, Editions Duboiris, 2011, p. 334.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire le coup d'état*, Editions Duboiris, 2011, pp. 334-335.

<sup>70</sup> Ouattara Chérif, "La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

clearly showed that his days as the leader of Côte d'Ivoire were numbered. However, Gbagbo said he was the only President of Côte d'Ivoire and that was not negotiable.<sup>71</sup>

By April 2011, Paris was willing to intervene in the post-election crisis, arguably because Sarkozy was ready to take a military risk to place his long-time friend Ouattara into power. He knew that Ouattara, who is married to a French woman and lived in France for many years, had good contacts with the French establishment and its military. On the other hand, Sarkozy decided to abandon Gbagbo not only because he was suspicious of him but also because he was not worth it, as Gbagbo was not prepared to publicly accept the continuity of the old way of France doing business in Côte d'Ivoire. As Charles Onana observed, Gbagbo did not have the profile of African Presidents who were appreciated by Paris under the conservative government of Sarkozy.<sup>72</sup>

Although it is true that the personal relationship between Gbagbo and Sarkozy has been considerably affected, one should not underestimate the importance of favouritism. As Daniela Kroslak noted, this “formed the basis of political and military decisions” concerning Francophone Africa including Côte d'Ivoire, an approach that Gbagbo rejected.<sup>73</sup> For Smith and Glaser's part, “the majority of political leaders responsible for France's African politics are masons,” in reference to the secretive and elitists way in which negotiations on African policies were conducted.<sup>74</sup> Gbagbo did not have this connection, which could be cultivated with regular meetings. He only knew a few French Socialist politicians who tolerated him and that he could turn to for support.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Ouattara Chérif, “La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo,” *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Charles Onana 2012, p. 380

<sup>73</sup> Daniela Kroslak, “France's policy towards Africa, continuity or change”? In Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 2004, *Africa in international politics, external involvement on the continent*, Routledge, London, p. 65.

<sup>74</sup> Smith S and A. Glaser, 1997a, “Ces Messieurs Afrique,” *Le Paris-Village du continent noir*, Paris: Calmann-Levy, p. 173.

<sup>75</sup> Charles Onana 2012, p. 380.

Perhaps more importantly for the former President's loyalists, Gbagbo was ousted by France because Ouattara was seen as the only person who could look after its interests.<sup>76</sup> As former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing commented, "I am dealing with African affairs, namely with France's interest in Africa."<sup>77</sup>

According to Ouattara Chérif from *Le Nouveau Réveil* daily newspaper, France was determined to save the people of Côte d'Ivoire from a dictatorship that did not take long to materialise. To Sarkozy, the stakes were very high and the consequences of not acting promptly to protect hundreds of thousands of people would have been extremely serious.<sup>78</sup>

In particular, France took the security of French citizens in Abidjan as a pretext to intervene for a regime change. However, as Dumisani Kumalo, South Africa's former Ambassador to the United Nations and CEO of the Thabo Mkeki Foundation has pointed out, "It was not about protecting civilians."<sup>79</sup> This view from South Africa, which was one of the UNSC's three African member states (Nigeria and Gabon were the two other members), was also understood well by most Ivorians interviewed for this thesis. They now have doubts about France's role in the post-election conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. They argued that France was significantly embroiled in the conflict and carried out military attacks on Gbagbo's allies until he was defeated to ensure a regime change.<sup>80</sup> Gbagbo probably saw the change coming.

<sup>76</sup> Charles Onana 2012, p. 97. Like the President of the African Development Bank Donald Kaberuka observes in his interview with Jeune Afrique and RFI 1 June 2013 "Nations got no friends, they got interests" available at [http://economie.jeuneafrique.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=17574](http://economie.jeuneafrique.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17574) (accessed 4 June 2013).

<sup>77</sup> Daniela Krosiak, "France's policy towards Africa, continuity or change"? In Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 2004, *Africa in international politics, external involvement on the continent*, Routledge, London, p. 61.

<sup>78</sup> Ouattara Chérif, "La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> Liesl Lauw-Vaudran, "2011: a year of change," *Institute for Security Studies, ISS*, Issue No.16, December 2011-January 2012, p. 12.

<sup>80</sup> For example see interview with Respondent "O" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2015; Interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.

Back in 2002, his former Director of Protocol and former Ambassador to Cameroon, Eugène Allou, warned him that sooner or later, “We will have to deal with the French army.”<sup>81</sup>

On 11 April, 2011, at 10.30 AM, powerfully armed French soldiers appeared at Gbagbo’s residence. According to Arielle Kouassi from *Le Quotidien d’Abidjan* daily newspaper, the head of the French commando unit, Captain J. François told Gbagbo, “Good morning Mister President, we have received some instructions to arrest you. Please follow us.” Gbagbo replied, “I knew you were coming. I was waiting for you. I know you will not kill me. This is to hand me over to my enemies. I am at your service.”<sup>82</sup>

The French army, which was supported by the UN, bombarded Gbagbo’s forces. Gbagbo was hidden in a bunker until he was recovered and captured on 11 April, 2011, which was intended to put an end to killings and serious abuses perpetrated against civilians.<sup>83</sup> This was followed by the most circulated pictures of Gbagbo and his family, cowering and humiliated before and after their transfer to Ouattara’s headquarters.

From that moment on, Ouattara replaced Gbagbo and it was a *mission accomplie* for Sarkozy. Nonetheless, another significant international actor in Côte d’Ivoire, and a permanent member of the UN Security Council China, emphasised that, “There must be no attempt at regime change or involvement in civil war by any party under the guise of protecting civilians.”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, protection is a legitimate goal, but it should not be associated with regime change. It appears, as Louis de Guiringaud commented, that “Africa is the only

<sup>81</sup> Benjamin Koré, “Je ne peux pas trahir Gbagbo,” *Notre Voie*, No. 4987, 16 April 2015, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Arielle Kouassi, “Pour la première fois, le chef du commando Français parle,” *Le Quotidien d’Abidjan*, No. 600, 25 April 2012, p.3. (Translated for the purposes of this thesis 2015).

<sup>83</sup> UFRGSMUN 2011, The United States Security Council, available at <http://www.ufrgs.br/ufrgsmun/2011/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/UFRGSMUN-2011-UN-Security-Council-Study-Guide.pdf> (accessed 19 March 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

continent that remains within France's capacity and means. The only one where it can still change the course of history with 500 men, that includes Côte d'Ivoire.'<sup>85</sup>

The former General Manager of *Bureau National d'Etudes Techniques et de Développement (BNETD)*, National Bureau for Technical Studies and Development, promoted the Minister for equipment and sanitation in the last Gbagbo government, Ahoua Don Mello gave *Africatime* an opportunity to question him. From his place of exile, the former spokesperson for Gbagbo made disclosures concerning Ivorian events, which included the role of France in the Ivorian crisis. He revealed that while only a project manager at the beginning, France became a prime contractor and a service provider for Ouattara at the end.<sup>86</sup>

The former President and his key lieutenants argued that all the difficulties met by Gbagbo in the course of his tenure were due to Gbagbo's opposition of the former colonial power's willingness to maintain its monopoly on the resources of Côte d'Ivoire. They endorsed the thesis that Gbagbo, who was an anti-neo-colonialist, was a victim of France which punished him for his indocility and insubordination. Since independence, France enjoyed a quasi-monopoly on the natural resources of its rich former colony. According to Toussaint Alain, another former spokesperson for Gbagbo, soon after his accession to power in October 2000, Gbagbo initiated a policy of openness and partnership with countries such as China and Russia, who are permanent members of the UN Security Council. Since France has considered Côte d'Ivoire to be its own hunting ground, the situation became embarrassing for France. Therefore, Gbagbo was a man to bring down. Alain made the point that France has done everything in its power to oust Gbagbo.<sup>87</sup> France used its political and diplomatic

<sup>85</sup> Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, 2004, *Africa in international politics, external involvement on the continent*, Routledge, London, p. 66.

<sup>86</sup> "M. Billon ignore les raisons de l'intervention militaire de la France," available at <http://www.connectionivoirienne.net/cote-divoire-pour-don-mello-m-billon-ignore-les-raisons-de-lintervention-militaire-de-la-france> (accessed 18 June 2013).

<sup>87</sup> "Laurent Gbagbo: Despote ou Anti-néocolonialiste" available <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/index.htm> (accessed 20 April 2015).

influence to gain support from the African Union and ECOWAS and pushed for a Security Council resolution to oust Gbagbo and install Ouattara as President of Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>88</sup>

As Kabbah has rightly pointed out, “The most profound legacy of the Ivorian actions may well be the deepening of France’s hegemonic interests in Africa.”<sup>89</sup> However, for Renee Edwards, Audrey Mattoon, and Andrew Appleton, France’s objective during the 2010-11 intervention in Côte d'Ivoire was to preserve its role as powerbroker and in particular, return stability through the concept of the Responsibility to Protect.<sup>90</sup>

### **The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and The Responsibility to Protect in Côte d'Ivoire**

The UN has been part of the dynamics of international relations including the protection of human rights since its creation in 1945, despite its struggles with state sovereignty and Cold War security agendas. In response to the Holocaust tragedy, the international community quickly adopted the UN Charter. Article 1 of the UN Charter (paragraph 3) stipulated that it is mandatory for each state to take appropriate actions for the promotion and respect of human rights. On 10 December, 1948, as an experience of the Second World War, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly. Unfortunately, only minimal progress had been achieved in this area.<sup>91</sup>

Many crimes were committed during the Cold War period, but it was only after the 1994 Rwanda genocide and the 1995 Srebrenica massacre that the international community reacted to avoid future gross violations of human rights. For example shortly after the death of its

<sup>88</sup> Ouattara Chérif, “La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo,” *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Lansana Gberie “2011: a year of change,” *Institute for Security Studies, ISS*, Issue No.16, December 2011-January 2012, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> Renee Edwards, Audrey Mattoon and Andrew Appleton, “Successful interventions in civil wars: Former colonial status as a missing variable,” Washington State University, available at <http://wpsa.research.pdx.edu/meet/2012/edwardsmattoonappleton.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2015).

<sup>91</sup> The United Nations, The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, “History of the document,” available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/history.shtml> (accessed 1 May 2015).

President on 6 April, 1994, Rwanda plunged into civil war followed by genocide and up to one million Rwandans were killed as the UNSC was slow to react. Through UN Resolution 929, authorised in June 1994, France intervened. Arguably, France's role was ambiguous because the intervention's aim was to protect the perpetrators of genocide. The intervention lasted two months as France ended the military operation. The aim of the Roma Statute, which was adopted in 1998, was to prosecute perpetrators of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

In 1999, the conflict between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), pursuing independence and the Serbian authorities resulted in the death toll of an estimated 1,500 Kosovo Albanians. Deeply concerned about the escalating conflict, the international community opted for a military intervention. However, "the intervention became highly controversial among the international community." While some supported this position to protect the lives of civilians, others argued it violated international law and caused damage among civilians.<sup>92</sup>

In Darfur, in 2003, the brutal conflict between the government of Sudan and various rebels groups caused hundreds of thousands deaths. Diplomatic and political efforts were made by the international community to bring all parties into a peace process, but it still remains "one the bloodiest conflicts since the Second World War."<sup>93</sup>

In February 2011, mass protests were directed against the Colonel Qadhafi regime, which were related to the 'Arab Spring' protests. However, they were brutally repressed by the regime. According to the UNSC, crimes against humanity were committed. In support of UNSC Resolution 1973, NATO used force to protect civilians and civilian populated areas

<sup>92</sup> Lars Brozus and Jessica von Farkas, "Germany and R2P: Common but differentiated responsibility"? In "the Responsibility to Protect – From Evasive to Reluctant action": The Role of Global Middle Powers, HSF, ISS, KAS & SAILA, 2012, p. 58.

<sup>93</sup> Lars Brozus and Jessica von Farkas, "Germany and R2P: Common but differentiated responsibility"? In the Responsibility to Protect – From Evasive to Reluctant action": The Role of Global Middle Powers, HSF, ISS, KAS & SAILA, 2012, p. 59.



under threat of attack, which lasted until 31 October 2011. In the process, Qadhafi was captured by armed rebels and killed.<sup>94</sup>

The UN military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire took place in 2010 due to the contested 2010 presidential elections. The UN concluded that Ouattara won the elections, but Gbagbo and his supporters refused to concede defeat. Shortly after the elections, armed conflict began between pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces. In the eyes of Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, as fighting intensified between the two camps, ONUCI and France were required to authorise peacekeepers to intervene militarily for human protection purposes.<sup>95</sup>

In April 2011, the UNSC also authorised the use of force in Côte d'Ivoire through Resolution 1975, in the context of post-election violence in order 'to protect civilian population.' However, the R2P remains controversial as the UNSC used force to change regime in Côte d'Ivoire. Like the humanitarian intervention, the military intervention has been controversial when it happens. On the other hand, it has also been controversial when it has failed to happen.<sup>96</sup>

In 2011, in his response to the controversies regarding the implementation of the R2P principles, the UN Secretary-General noted, "This is a crucial moment in the life of the Responsibility to Protect. In the short six years since its endorsement by the World Summit, this doctrine has gone from crawling to walking to running."<sup>97</sup>

Based on a traditional Westphalian principle of international relations, the protection of civilians who may get caught up in conflict is a matter for the jurisdiction of the sovereign

<sup>94</sup> Lars Brozus and Jessica von Farkas, "Germany and R2P: Common but differentiated responsibility? In "the Responsibility to Protect – From Evasive to Reluctant action": The Role of Global Middle Powers, HSF, ISS, KAS & SAILA, 2012, p. 61.

<sup>95</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, "The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>96</sup> ICISS, "The Responsibility to Protect," Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Ottawa, December 2001, p. 1, available at [http://responsibilityto\\_protect.org/ICISS%20report.pdf](http://responsibilityto_protect.org/ICISS%20report.pdf), accessed 1 May 2015.

<sup>97</sup> UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 'Remarks at Breakfast Roundtable with Foreign Ministers on "Responsibility to Protect, Responding to threats and imminent atrocities," UN Headquarters, 23 September 2011,

state which is facing conflict. Nevertheless, toward the end of 1990s, the security and welfare of civilians in violent situations, including children and internally displaced persons (IDP), more frequently became a matter for the international community.<sup>98</sup>

The R2P principle says it is our collective responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us. First and foremost, that responsibility exists within the state in which the population resides. The residual responsibility rests with the outside world when the state has manifestly failed to protect its own population. These tenants are crucial for R2P, but it has been contested since its inception.<sup>99</sup>

In fact, as Fergus Watt has pointed out, there is no R2P international 'treaty' and it is not a norm of international customary law. In 2005, the UN member states' World Summit provided the R2P document, which was elaborated in paragraphs 138 and 139 in very compressed and condensed terms, in order to leave room for extensive interpretation. Paragraph 138 stipulates that each individual state has a responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity which still remains its 'most authoritative' international legal framework.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, paragraph 139 says that the international community, through the United Nations, "also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means in accordance with chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity."<sup>101</sup>

Writing on international efforts to protect civilians in armed conflicts in Africa, Sara van Hoeymissen correctly noted that the Responsibility to Protect "entails that the international

<sup>98</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams 2009, "Protecting civilians in uncivil wars," Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to protect Program on the Protection of Civilians Working Paper, 1, pp.1-45.

<sup>99</sup> Malte Brosig, "Responsibility to Protect, the GIBSA perspective." In "the Responsibility to Protect – From Evasive to Reluctant action": The Role of Global Middle Powers, HSF, ISS, KAS & SAILA, 2012,

<sup>100</sup> Fergus Watt, "Ivory Coast: Lessons for responsibility to protect," *Mondial*, World Federalist Movement, Canada, May 2011.

<sup>101</sup> Fergus Watt, "Ivory Coast: Lessons for responsibility to protect," *Mondial*, World Federalist Movement, Canada, May 2011.

community reserves the rights to assess states' capacity and willingness to protect their citizens."<sup>102</sup> The problem was that it is difficult to judge a state's ability and will to protect its citizens.

According to the UN, on 20 December, 2010, in the face of the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the rising threats to international peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Security Council, UNSC, which is the primary body responsible for the organisation and maintenance of international peace and security, as defined by the UN charter, extended ONUCI's mandate.<sup>103</sup>

The UN also argued that, in the face of spiralling violence and the increased involvement of armed forces from Gbagbo's camp in the country, ECOWAS and the African Union attempted to negotiate Gbagbo's resignation. This failed. According to the UN, as attacks on civilian buildings increased in several main cities such as Abidjan, ECOWAS threatened to remove Gbagbo by force. However, the African Union dithered over a solution to this pressing issue. In the eyes of former President of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, this was because of "South Africa's cautious approach to the issue."<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, on 1 April, 2011, the African Union chairperson Jean Ping urged Gbagbo to cede power "in order to end the suffering of Ivoirians."<sup>105</sup>

Rather than handing over power to Ouattara, Gbagbo reportedly authorised his troops to launch attacks against pro-Ouattara civilians, as well as ONUCI forces. As a result, on 2 April, 2011, 4 ONUCI troops were seriously wounded. The following day, on 3 April 2011, in a letter addressed to French President Nicholas Sarkozy, the UN Secretary-General Ban ki-

<sup>102</sup> Sara van Hoeymissen, 2011, "China, Sovereignty and the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Africa: The Emergence of a 'Third Paradigm' of International Intervention"? In China and the European Union in Africa, Jing Men and Benjamin Barton (ed), Ashgate Publishing Limited, p. 160.

<sup>103</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, "The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>104</sup> Lansana Gberie "2011: a year of change," *Institute for Security Studies, ISS*, Issue No.16, December 2011-January 2012, p. 15.

<sup>105</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, "The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

Moon requested the military support of French forces based in Côte d'Ivoire where they operate under the UN mandate. The aim was to conduct a UN operation in Côte d'Ivoire in order to destroy heavy weapons used against civilians and UN personnel. This aligned with the commitments and objectives of the UN Resolution 1975 being pursued. Sarkozy agreed to the request and was committed to cooperating fully with the agreed upon plan.

On 5 April, 2011, the international community prepared for the end of Gbagbo's rule. For example, prior to his meeting with Sarkozy, the President of the United States, Barack Obama said, "We will talk about dossiers such as Côte d'Ivoire where democracy is currently in danger and with which France nurtures very important historical ties."<sup>106</sup> When Sarkozy visited Obama on Monday 10 January, 2011, they discussed their common concerns. The ECOWAS consulted its Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces in order to fine-tune their strategy for a potential military intervention to oust Gbagbo. The ECOWAS was not alone as the African Union, the European Union and the UN also took up targeted measures against Gbagbo.<sup>107</sup>

While Gbagbo, his family and friends were under siege in the presidential bunker in Abidjan during the post-election crisis, there was a trend in the Security Council in which the Responsibility to Protect principle was gaining a new hold as there was a desire to intervene in Côte d'Ivoire.

On 30 March, 2011 Resolution 1975 was passed unanimously by the UN Security Council in light of Gbagbo's attacks on civilians. Although South Africa stood "on principle in the end it gave in to the other members."<sup>108</sup> The UN's intervention and "protection" strategy was led by 9,000 troops, who were already based in Abidjan, and an additional 2,000 peacekeepers with

<sup>106</sup> Ouattara Chérif, "La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> Ouattara Chérif, "La communauté internationale prépare la fin du film Gbagbo," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, No. 2716, 11 January 2011, p. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Liesl Lauw-Vaudran, "2011: a year of change," *Institute for Security Studies, ISS*, Issue No.16, December 2011-January 2012, p. 12.

a mandate that included “taking all necessary measures” to protect civilians, but it was criticised by some Council members.<sup>109</sup> For example, China said “peacekeeping operations should strictly abide by the principle of neutrality” and ONUCI should “help to peacefully settle the crisis... and should avoid becoming a party to the conflict.” Equally, India indicated that “peacekeepers cannot be made instruments of regime change.”<sup>110</sup>

Clearly, the ONUCI became involved in the Ivorian political stalemate and also got involved in a civil war, but ONUCI failed to carry out its mandate with impartiality.<sup>111</sup> As it has been argued by Russian foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, “UN peacekeepers and supporting French forces have started military action, taking the side of Ouattara, carrying out air strikes on positions held by supporters of Gbagbo. Lavrov urged peacekeepers to ‘remain neutral.’<sup>112</sup> This raised the issue of legality of the UN intervention in Côte d’Ivoire. On May 2011, during the Council’s debate regarding the intervention in Côte d’Ivoire, Russia insisted that it was unacceptable for United Nations peacekeepers to take the side of one of the parties, while implementing their mandate.<sup>113</sup>

In the course of the same debate, Brazil also argued that “the use of force by peacekeepers to protect civilians must be carried out with utmost restraint.<sup>114</sup> As was strongly argued by China, India, and Russia, while Gbagbo’s forces and pro-Ouattara forces breached the cease fire and committed atrocities against civilians, ONUCI had only used force against Gbagbo’s

<sup>109</sup> F. Jourdarl, “L’Onu devra valider l’option militaire de la Cedeao,” *Le Démocrate*, No. 99, 9 January 2011, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>111</sup> Quotes from Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>112</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>113</sup> “Russian lashes out at military intervention in Côte d’Ivoire,” *Associated Press*, 6 April 2011.

Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>114</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

forces. They argued, therefore, that “ONUCI had abandoned impartiality.”<sup>115</sup> As Mbeki, a vocal critic of the situation argued, “ONUCI had fallen short of its mandate by failing to prevent or stop cease fire violations by the *Forces Nouvelles* as well as failing to protect civilian in Duékoué, in the west of Côte d’Ivoire. He continued to emphasise these failings are rooted in the lack of “impartiality by the UN and the undue influence exercised by France.”<sup>116</sup>

As acknowledged by Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The situation became more controversial, when demands made by the Gbagbo regime for the ONUCI to withdraw from Ivorian territory were rejected by the ONUCI.”<sup>117</sup> They also admitted that the civilian protection argument put forward by the ONUCI was weak, given the fact that their policy did little to prevent the massacres committed by pro-Ouattara forces or to punish the perpetrators. The UN Resolution 1975 calls for immediate cease fire. As it has been argued by the Gbagbo camp, instead of pursuing an immediate cease fire, immediate military action was taken. Therefore, they have insisted that the UN failed to take “all necessary measures” to solve the conflict, including the implementation of a democratic transition.<sup>118</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the fluid and volatile environment in which preparations for the November 2010 elections took place to prove that, while upholding an election is important for democracy, it was unwise to call for an election in a country known for its deep history of mistrust and instability. There were, as we know, tricky preparations and negotiations which raised fears of a setback. This has indicated that, partly due to the actions of Yao-N’dré and

<sup>115</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>116</sup> Thabo Mbeki, “What the world got it wrong” in Côte d’Ivoire Foreign Policy, 29 April 2011, Available at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/29/What\\_the\\_world\\_get\\_wrong\\_in\\_cote\\_d\\_ivoire](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/29/What_the_world_get_wrong_in_cote_d_ivoire), (accessed 12 April 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, “The new politics of protection? Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

<sup>118</sup> Lansana Gberie “2011: a year of change,” *Institute for Security Studies, ISS*, Issue No.16, December 2011-January 2012, p. 15.

Bakayoko, Côte d'Ivoire opened a brand-new chapter of its history, a country with two Presidents and two governments and as a result of the clumsy way in which the Ivorian and foreign authorities had managed this issue. Both Presidents claimed to be 'legal' or 'legitimate.' According to Choi, the ballots were well managed and took place in a "democratic climate." Choi also said there was no sufficient evidence to suggest that people were prevented from voting.<sup>119</sup>

However, the realities on the ground did not support such an opinion. The 2010 elections were widely criticised as the most violent, poorly organised, and massively rigged elections in the nation's troubled electoral history. For example, as stated by one respondent from the FPI who also attended the 2010 elections as an observer, "in 2010, the election outcomes have been decided by a combination of massive rigging at polling sites, violence and intimidation and the ballot became an instrument of legitimisation, instead of a tool for democratic expression."<sup>120</sup> Prior to polling day, prominent opposition candidates pulled out of the race due to widespread irregularities. They alleged that the voting system was undemocratic and it had been rigged to guarantee victory for Ouattara.<sup>121</sup>

The IEC is now composed of hand-picked members from the ruling coalition government. Moreover, members of the Constitutional Council, including its President Kone Mamadou, were appointed by the RDR-PDCI ruling government. The opposition questioned its integrity

<sup>119</sup> Ouattara Gaoussou, "Retour sur une crise," *Le Patriote*, No. 3719, 11 April 2012, p.2.

<sup>120</sup> For example, see Interview with Respondent "A" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012;

<sup>121</sup> Mission d'Observation électorale de l'Union Européenne en Côte d'Ivoire: Rapport Final - Election présidentielle 2010, p. 40, [https://eeas.europa.eu/eueom/pdf/missions/rapport-final-25012011\\_fr.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/eueom/pdf/missions/rapport-final-25012011_fr.pdf) (accessed 20 June 2014); Laurent Bigot, Côte d'Ivoire: mais qui a gagné la présidentielle de 2010, *Le Monde Afrique*, 27 May 2016, [http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/05/27/cote-d-ivoire-mais-qui-a-gagne-la-presidentielle-de-2010\\_4927642\\_3212.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/05/27/cote-d-ivoire-mais-qui-a-gagne-la-presidentielle-de-2010_4927642_3212.html) (accessed 8 August 2016); Doudou Sidibé, Peace process in Côte d'Ivoire: Democracy and challenges of consolidating peace after the post-electoral crisis, *Accord*, issue 1, 2013; Jean Paul Loukou "Charles Konan Banny, a propos des violences sur les militants du RHDP," *Le Nouveau Réveil*, no. 2684, 30 November 2010, p. 8.

and how it will impact future elections.<sup>122</sup> However, the ambassador of the United States in Côte d'Ivoire remained optimistic. Terrence McCulley maintained that these elections should have been “transparent, credible and peaceful,” indicative of the supposed consolidation of democracy. Equally, Ouattara pledged to the chancelleries from the sub-region that, while nothing is perfect, the government will do everything to ensure that future elections are “democratic and peaceful.”<sup>123</sup>

This chapter has also looked at the international community's response to the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire through R2P which caused further instability after the 2010 presidential elections. Some respondents argue that a military intervention in Côte d'Ivoire was necessary to protect innocent civilians as the old regime used heavy weapons against its own people.<sup>124</sup> However, some respondents have questioned the part of the population that benefited more from the ‘intervention’ based on R2P.<sup>125</sup>

It was argued that the UN peacekeepers and French troops intervened to implement regime change in Côte d'Ivoire. Gbagbo's camp still distrusts France, accusing them of neo-imperialism, and the international stakeholders for their role in the 2010 crisis, elevating the importance of the credibility issue. As one respondent has noted, the perception that “Ouattara is a stooge of the Western powers” has been reinforced by the fact the international community was completely dependent on France, Côte d'Ivoire's former colonial masters, to lead this UN intervention.<sup>126</sup> The reliance of the international community including the UN, the EU, UK and other European countries on France was pivotal for a change in power. The strategy to force Gbagbo out of power worked. On 11 April, 2011, Ouattara's rebel forces

<sup>122</sup> Focus Côte d'Ivoire, Situation sécuritaire, Département fédéral de justice et police DFJP, Berne-Wabern, 17 December 2015 <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslander/afrika/civ/CIV-sicherheitslage-f.pdf> (accessed 9 August 2016).

<sup>123</sup> Hervé Adou, “Elections générales 2015, l'ambassadeur des Usa se dit optimiste,” *Fraternité Matin*, 19 March 2015, p. 7.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Respondent “S” Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Respondent “K” Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Respondent “K” Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.



officially overthrew President Gbagbo. While Ouattara's rebel forces received the most credit for the transition in power, the French army played a determining role. When determining strategies to maintain peace in Côte d'Ivoire, the use of third parties such as the UN and France may be instrumental.<sup>127</sup>

Indeed, the R2P's mandate to protect civilians caught up in the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire required international players to engage with messy domestic politics embraced by pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces and their associates as well as complicated international politics, but the ONUCI and France did not remain neutral. The Côte d'Ivoire post-election crisis constituted the most controversial case for the ONUCI. The ONUCI refused to accept the judgment of the Constitutional Council, and both ONUCI and France cooperated with Ouattara. Since they have done this, they failed to stabilise the situation and minimise casualties as crisis continued. Despite this and perception of regime change agendas, Bellamy argued that the ONUCI succeeded in ousting Gbagbo and took humanitarian measures to resolve the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>128</sup>

The following chapter therefore will examine the reconciliation process and argue that despite some progress towards normalisation, the country's leaders have failed to achieve national reconciliation.

<sup>127</sup> Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d'Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, pp. 141-142; Thomas Hofnung 2012, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 170.

<sup>128</sup> Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, "The new politics of protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, No. 87: 4, 2011, pp. 825-850.

## CHAPTER 8: THE PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

This chapter will argue that the process of national reconciliation which began in 1999 is vitally important, primarily as it will help unite a country torn apart by successive crises and deep political and ethnic divisions. However, as stated by one respondent:

In order to achieve reconciliation, we need to know why we are reconciling.

Reconciliation should be complemented by the resolution of economic and employment problems, guarantee the fundamental rights of foreigners, and seek to stop the judgment of people based on their ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>

A major factor in the ongoing conflict in Côte d'Ivoire can be attributed to the judgment of people based on their ethnicity. Ethnicity as a social construct still continues to define the political environment of the nation. This action has resulted in divisions between Ivoirians and foreigners alongside Ivoirians who live and work outside their region of origin.<sup>2</sup> While some steps towards normalisation have been taken, including the National Reconciliation Forum and the Linas-Marcoussis Agreements, they have failed to lead to a broader national reconciliation.

Before the context of reconciliation from 2001 to 2007 can be considered, one must have a basic understanding of why reconciliation was needed in the first place. Much of the violence in the nation began after the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire in 2000. During these presidential elections, Guëi sought to win the elections, and a violent contest for power led to deaths in some suburbs of Abidjan. Laurent Gbagbo, who was declared the winner of the highly disputed presidential elections, created the Mediation Committee for National Reconciliation through a presidential decree in 2000. He did so to restore the nation to peace.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Respondent "N" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d'Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 33; Alfred Babo 2010, *Conflits fonciers, ethnicité politique et guerre en Côte d'Ivoire*, *Alternatives Sud*, vol.17, no 95.

Such an action would not have been needed outside of the context of the 2000 presidential elections. The Committee, which lasted until 2001, was chaired by Ombudsman Mathieu Ekra and was intended to investigate the killings of about 303 citizens between the 24 and 26 October, 2000.<sup>3</sup>

To restore stability, a National Reconciliation Forum was initiated by the Committee, which was held from 9 October to 18 December, 2001. This was intended to give key political and civil society players the opportunity to vent their anger and frustration. Political leaders wanted to acknowledge the Ivorian nationality of Alassane Ouattara as well as the legitimacy of the Gbagbo government. Nonetheless, the forum failed to reconcile Ivoirians.<sup>4</sup>

Initiated by the French government, the round table of the Linas-Marcoussis and Kléber Conference of the African Heads of State took place from the 15 to the 24 and from the 25 to the 26 of January 2003 respectively. The objective of the first meeting was to build a consensus among different Ivorian political forces and the rebels who were defying the institutional power of President Laurent Gbagbo. It was also designed to find the path to peace and reconciliation. The second meeting was brought about to endorse the agreements that resulted from the round table in front of the international community. Both meetings failed to restore peace and reconciliation.

In order to come out of the crisis caused by the 2010 presidential elections, the new authorities of the country, aware of the social fragmentation, opted for reconciliation. Therefore, the *Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation* (CDVR) Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created on 13 July, 2011. The CDVR was based on the South-African post-Apartheid transition. One of its primary roles was to serve as a vehicle for the consolidation of peace among the different components of Ivorian society. Despite both

<sup>3</sup> “La Côte d’Ivoire en crise: Chronologie, Documentation Française,” available at <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/dossiers/cote-divoire/chronologie.shtml> (accessed 12 May, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, *Les dessous de la crise ivoirienne d’Houphouët à Guëi*, L’Harmatan, p. 179.

the Ouattara government and the opposition's publicly stated commitment to national reconciliation, there was a lack of dialogue. Leading political actors disagreed over the conditions under which a true reconciliation should occur.<sup>5</sup>

The Ouattara government and the opposition both shared a lack of determination and commitment to tackle the question of national reconciliation, which has led to a stagnation of the process. This has left the nation unreconciled. While each political party pointed the accusing finger at the other side, Ivorians questioned whether the political will to produce a meaningful reconciliation process existed.

### **The Failure of the 2001 National Reconciliation Forum**

Reconciliation is essentially an objective-something to achieve-and a process-a means of achieving this end. Reconciliation simply involves identifying a means to coexist with former enemies without necessarily loving or forgiving them.<sup>6</sup> Reconciliation was further defined by Mansa Solo from the Ivorian Human Rights Group. He saw it as a process intended to restore trust between communities and further coexistence after violence or conflict.<sup>7</sup> For example, reconciliation can be achieved through a forum. One respondent defined reconciliation forums as a gathering of people from all parts of society with the purpose of promoting reconciliatory initiatives, especially at the community level.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Emmanuel Kouassi, "La réconciliation ne peut se substituer au gouvernement," *Fraternité Matin*, 17 February 2012

<sup>6</sup> Francis Vallée "La réconciliation après un conflit violent: un manuel," série manuels international IDEA, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, available at <http://www.idea.int/publications/reconciliation/upload/Part%201.pdf> <http://www.idea.int/publications/reconciliation/upload/Part%201.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Mansa Solo, "Processus de paix en Côte d'Ivoire: la réconciliation est-elle possible sans justice" *L'Appel*, No.866, February-March 2013, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Respondent "G" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 21 May 2012.

A reconciliation forum can also be defined as a process which enables people who disagree with each other to find common ground. It is also a process of acceptance and exculpation after a shameful episode in a nation's history.<sup>9</sup>

In a post-conflict situation, achieving long-term reconciliation is a substantial challenge, but Truth Commissions are seen as one of the most important contributing elements of the justice and reconciliation processes. While the implementations of Truth Commissions have varied from official human rights inquiries mandated by a state to non-government requests to investigate abuses, their mandate includes final conclusions and recommendations as well as reparations and institutional reforms. With regards to the composition of the Truth Commissions, the case of Sierra Leone was considered to be successful because a panel including representatives from the government, armed opposition forces, and a large number of representatives from civil society organisations was formed. Furthermore, it was argued that “over-all, truth commissions have been more successfully implemented, and have contributed more to processes of national reconciliation than war crimes tribunals.”<sup>10</sup>

On 24 December, 1999, President Henri Konan Bédié was ousted by General Robert Guëi, former Chief of the Ivorian army. Bédié was forced into exile in Paris, France. Considering Bédié's harsh rule, the former General's takeover was welcomed in Côte d'Ivoire. According to one respondent:

Guëi never said openly that he initiated the coup d'état. He stated young soldiers went searching for him in his village and asked him to lead them. Nevertheless, when the army came to power, they destroyed or stole everything. It was ‘power for money.’ Since Bédié was excluded and went

<sup>9</sup> “Processus de paix en Côte d'Ivoire: la réconciliation est-elle possible sans justice” *L'Appel*, No.866, February-March 2013” Dossier de bimestre, *L'Appel*, No.866, February-March 2013, p. 8

<sup>10</sup> Judy Meltzer, “Transitional justice and reconciliation in post-conflict Columbia: some considerations for future Canadian engagement” Policy paper, *Focal*, PP. 7-8, available at <http://www10.iadb.org/intal/intalcdi/PE/2007/00457.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2015).

in exile in France, it benefited the rise of Gbagbo and his FPI. Gbagbo welcomed the coup d'état, a move that facilitated a *rapprochement* between Ouattara and Gbagbo.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, it was during this time that Alassane Ouattara moved closer to Laurent Gbagbo's Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) to create a united opposition front, which boycotted the 1995 presidential elections.<sup>12</sup> This is a critical fact as it set the tone for the looming conflict that would soon follow.

Guëi, the new 'strong man' of Côte d'Ivoire talked about tolerance and expressed his willingness to reconcile the country, even referencing Houphouët whom he supported. Like Houphouët's, Guëi's intention was to cultivate the reputation of a man of peace and wisdom. He claimed to have no interest in holding power and promised he would step down after "sweeping the house clean" and holding transparent elections.<sup>13</sup> This was an approach that convinced the international community, which did not endorse him initially, that the General was able to stop the spiral of hatred in the country. However, Guëi failed.<sup>14</sup>

Many agree that, to his credit, the 24 December 1999 coup d'état was carried out without bloodshed. Furthermore, Guëi set up a *Comité National de Salut Public* (CNSP), National Committee of Public Safety, on 25 December, 1999, to run the country and further national reconciliation. However, within 10 months Guëi transformed himself into a power-hungry leader, abandoning his national reconciliation task. In addition, Guëi's divisive policies deeply polarised the Ivorian political elites and the people of Côte d'Ivoire. As a result,

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Respondent "F" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 May 2012

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hofnung 2012, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Respondent "H" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 13 June 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hofnung 2011, *La Crise ivoirienne: De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Editions Frat Mat, p. 49.

during Guëi's military interlude, Côte d'Ivoire was worse off in terms of political stability and national reconciliation.<sup>15</sup>

In the end, as argued by Boubakar Ndiaye, "Guëi remained stuck at the level of what can be labelled political adolescence" without graduating to the stature of Head of State at home and abroad.<sup>16</sup> Guëi did not live long enough to see the impact and devastation his policies caused in Côte d'Ivoire as he was assassinated on 19 September, 2002, at the beginning of the rebellion during action by Gbagbo's forces to suppress an uprising by troops loyal to Guëi.

The social cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire was directly impacted by the events that followed the calamitous presidential elections of 2000. As stated by one respondent:

During the transition, things were not run properly. The fundamental hope of this process was the holding of incontestable elections in Côte d'Ivoire, but the transition resulted in calamitous elections in 2000. There were violent protests which had caused dozens of deaths. Gbagbo badly managed the country and crisis until 2010.<sup>17</sup>

The transition and fight for political power marked a determining point in Côte d'Ivoire's history as it deepened the Ivorian social crisis. The 1999 coup d'état, which failed to address the underlying problems facing the nation including *Ivoirité*, exacerbated the socio-political crisis. Furthermore, under Gbagbo's leadership, the 23 July 2000 Constitution's aim was to completely eradicate the nationality problem of numerous Ivorians, including those from the north. However, this process only reinforced discrimination by empowering *Ivoirité*. This is

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Hofnung 2011, *La Crise ivoirienne: De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Editions Frat Mat, p. 49.

<sup>16</sup> Boubakar Ndiaye "Not a miracle after all... Côte d'Ivoire' downfall : flawed civil-military relations and missed opportunities" *Scientia Militaria*, South African Journal of Military Studies, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2005,

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Respondent "F" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 June 2012.

due to the fact that the Constitution was elaborated in a context of crisis and passion for power, also directly impacting the social cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>18</sup>

Supported by the Laurent Gbagbo government, the Mediation Committee for National Reconciliation initiated a national reconciliation forum in October 2001. The objective of the forum was to enable Ivorians to reconcile, but it was unable to reunite the segments of the nation because the forum was a succession of monologues rather than an exchange of ideas. Organisers believed in the participants' good faith by submitting a series of questions they should answer. In their speeches, each one of the participants was expected to accept their share of the responsibility concerning the Ivorian crisis in order to defuse social tensions. However, most of the relevant stakeholders defended themselves, justified their positions, or defended their leaders. Everyone identified themselves or introduced themselves as victims. Through their actions, words, and silence, they individually contributed to the deterioration of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. As a consequence, as Assalé correctly noted, at the end of the forum "Ivorian society was more disunited than reconciled." The forum may have been a success if it was focused on dialogue and negotiations.<sup>19</sup>

During his speech at the 2001 reconciliation forum, former President Henri Konan Bédié denounced the 24 December, 1999, coup d'état, as well as the widespread lies against his overthrown government. Bédié also denounced his forced exile in France despite being elected as President of the Republic by universal suffrage. Bédié insisted that those who were sidelined were not responsible for the tragic consequences that followed this power grab by

<sup>18</sup> See Mamadou Koulibaly, Antoine Ahua and G.K. Busch 2003, *La guerre de la France contre la Côte d'Ivoire*, Paris:L'Harmattan, p. 85; Idriss Diabaté, Ousmane Dembélé, Francis Akindès and Jean-Pierre Dozon 2005, *Intellectuels Ivoiriens face à la crise*, Paris, Karthala, p. 194 ; Martial Ahipeaud 2009, *Côte d'Ivoire: entre barbarie et démocratie*, Les Editions du CERAP, p. 155.

<sup>19</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, *Les dessous de la crise ivoirienne d'Houphouët à Guéi*, L'Harmattan, p. 179.



the army, labelling it an attack on democracy. Rather, they were the first victims who had no blood on their hands.<sup>20</sup>

One of the weaknesses within the Ivorian political class is that political debate focuses on tribal issues. The traditional society, operating on the basis of ethnic identity, takes precedent over the formation of social cohesion. This remained the norm despite the August 2000 Ivorian Constitution (Article 13) that detailed “parties or political groups that were created on regional, religious, tribal, ethnic or racial basis were banned.”<sup>21</sup>

Since ethnic identities are very much a part of the political activity, it is difficult to analyse the Ivorian political landscape without taking ethnicity into account. It has progressively gained importance since the emergence of conflicts in the past fourteen years. During Houphouët’s presidency, although efforts were made to include different communities in the management of state affairs, it remained true that the Akan ethnic group in general, and the Baoulé ethnic group in particular (a group to which Houphouët belonged), had privileged positions. Houphouët constructed, according to Harris Memel-Fotê, an Akan myth over the management of political power to legitimise the Akan power. Analysts such as Kevin Adou contended that Houphouët sowed the seeds of ethnicity. This frustrated people from the west of the nation, especially the Krou ethnic group. As already discussed in chapter 6 Bédié his successor contributed to the spread of ethnicity at the political level through *Ivoirité*.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, the Ivorian crisis was something for which Bédié also had to take responsibility, but he argued at the reconciliation forum he was an innocent victim. During his presidency, Bédié refused to distance himself from tribalism, ethnocentrism, regionalism, and religion which formed the basis of the actions taken by his party. His and his party’s actions caused

<sup>20</sup> Bédié was in his luxurious apartment of the chic Paris suburb of XVI Arrondissement; See Thomas Hofnung 2011, *La Crise ivoirienne: De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Editions Frat Mat, p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> Kevin Adou, “Réconciliation Nationale : entre les vieux démons et les défis actuels,” D.C.A.O. No. 86-87, July-August 2011, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin Adou, “Réconciliation Nationale : entre les vieux démons et les défis actuels,” D.C.A.O. No. 86-87, July-August 2011, p. 55.

serious troubles in Côte d'Ivoire including the weakening of the state and national cohesion. Having said that, Bédié admitted, as President of the Republic, he was the Supreme Commandant of all the Armed Forces, but he failed to prevent the coup d'état that toppled him. He added:

But, on our part, we acknowledge the coup d'état took place during our tenure. On this basis, as the Supreme Commandant of the Armed Forces, we should admit our failure in our efforts to maintain public order and the discipline of the army. We did not see the danger coming like in 1995 when we saved Côte d'Ivoire from similar peril fomented by the same opponents that you will easily recognise in the first transition government.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, during his speech at the forum, Guëi demonstrated that the events of the 24 December which removed President Bédié were not a coup d'état, but a complete break with Ivorian tradition. Although the ten month period of military transition constituted a difficult period for most Ivorians as it created a political, economic and social disaster, Guëi noted that “we were all conscious, we Ivorians, that it was clearly about a break, which should enable our country to resolve many issues such as the lack of communication between the government and Ivorians.” For Guëi, the forum was perceived to be a fundamental requirement to restore national cohesion. Guëi also presented himself as a victim. The only area on which he made his *mea culpa* was his responsibility over the hard line stance taken by the military in 1991 at the Yopougon university campus, west of Abidjan. Guëi expressed his profound regrets, publicly requesting “the forgiveness of our children, the forgiveness of our youth,” who suffered from human rights violations.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, *Les dessous de la crise ivoirienne d'Houphouët à Guëi*, L'Harmatan, p. 184. (Translated for the purposes of this thesis 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, *Les dessous de la crise ivoirienne d'Houphouët à Guëi*, L'Harmatan, pp. 188-192.

President Laurent Gbagbo also intervened at the National Reconciliation Forum. In his opening speech, he noted that there were many significant challenges facing the forum, but there was room for optimism. He reiterated the meeting was a step in the right direction, stating “Côte d’Ivoire decided to make a critical assessment, without indulgence, of its past for the long-term future.”<sup>25</sup> At the closing ceremony of the forum, Gbagbo said the forum was organised in order to allow Côte d’Ivoire to find its true nature once again, meaning a country of peace, fraternity, and responsibility. He reiterated some Ivorians attacked others in 2000. Gbagbo indicated that:

Ivorians faced other Ivorians, and the army was divided. That is when, in a historic move, the people of Côte d’Ivoire took their destiny in their own hands. Thanks to them the rule of law prevailed over the use of force. They have clearly chosen democracy... By the way, I am not asking you to forget, because no one has the right to ignore his past. But we have to forgive.<sup>26</sup>

Gbagbo asked for forgiveness, but he was accused of the events that took place in 2000 to 2001 including the official killing of 303 people on the 25 and 26 October, 2000. It is worth pointing out that while Gbagbo claimed there were only 57 deaths, he failed to set up a commission of inquiry to shed light on this tragedy. This did not help to contribute to the national cohesion process.

The executive board of the forum proposed solutions to a number of ‘hot issues’ after two months of debate. For example, with regard to the never-ending dispute over the nationality of Ouattara, one of the main spokespeople of the board noted that:

in the name of the nation, in the light of all the information it has been given, the board recommends the competent judicial authorities to issue

<sup>25</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, *Les dessous de la crise ivoirienne d’Houphouët à Guëi*, L’Harmatan, p. 184. (Translated for the purposes of this thesis 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Philippe Assalé 2009, *Les dessous de la crise ivoirienne d’Houphouët à Guëi*, L’Harmatan, pp. 194-195. Translated for the purposes of this thesis 2015).

Mister Ouattara a certificate of Ivorian nationality, consistent with relevant laws and regulations.<sup>27</sup>

He justified this proposal by arguing that all participants at the forum recognised the need for immediate action to resolve this issue. That was, in fact, the view expressed by the three main opponents of Ouattara as the leader of the RDR. That included the former head of the junta, Guëi, who did all he could to sideline Ouattara during the 22 October, 2000, presidential election. The board also suggested that “Côte d’Ivoire was suffering from a social and political divide due to the controversies surrounding the nationality of Ouattara.”<sup>28</sup> However, as past events proved, the controversies persisted as the divide further compromised national unity, social and economic development, and the future of the nation.

Despite several meetings between President Gbagbo and the nation’s key political actors, no agreement was reached on concrete steps for arriving at a genuine reconciliation process. Some argued that the forum was not used as an opportunity to negotiate binding solutions to controversial issues such as the release of prisoners.<sup>29</sup> Many saw the 2001 forum as a fundamental and critical step towards achieving reconciliation in Côte d’Ivoire with the hopes and expectations associated with its activities. It aimed to analyse the causes of the Ivorian crises, forging a national consensus on addressing contentious issues, and, in the words of one respondent who was also a participant at the forum, “elucidating a common vision of community involvement for the future.”<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, the forum provided an opportunity to hit upon a long-term solution to the Ivorian crises. Obviously, the forum occurred in a difficult security contest as confrontations between pro-Gbagbo armed forces and the rebel group increased. Furthermore, there were conflict-

<sup>27</sup> Christophe Champin, “Les conclusions du forum de réconciliation” RFI, 13 December 2001, available at [http://www1.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/024/article\\_11862.asp](http://www1.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/024/article_11862.asp) (accessed 11 May 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Christophe Champin, “Les conclusions du forum de réconciliation” RFI, 13 December 2001, available at [http://www1.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/024/article\\_11862.asp](http://www1.rfi.fr/actufr/articles/024/article_11862.asp) (accessed 11 May 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Respondent “H” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 13 June 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Respondent “O” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 June 2012.

affected communities in the west of the country. This led to cycles of retaliation, making the reconciliation process difficult. However, participants at the forum lacked the commitment and determination to help reconcile Ivorians through negotiated solutions. Participants were also unable to demonstrate, to make Côte d'Ivoire a better country, there was a need to end divisions, unnecessary attacks, and smear campaigns. Finally, participants were unable to resume work in the best interests of the populations and leave politics aside. Therefore, they failed to lay the foundation that could have contributed to stabilising the country.

One should note that reconciliation initiatives are not new in Côte d'Ivoire, as the nation's political history suggests. For example, previous crises such as the Sanwi crisis of 1963-1964 and the Guébié crisis of 1970 required reconciliation processes. These past attempts all failed. Thus the failure of the 2001 reconciliation forum was not a surprise, although it raised the question why the agreements kept failing. For example, during the 2001 National Reconciliation Forum, the justice issue was very much on everyone's lips as it was impossible to reconcile without justice. As Mansa Solo pointed out, "a large number of Ivorians said no to reconciliation without justice."<sup>31</sup> The stakes were, therefore, twofold: first, the reduction of injustice and impunity, second, the assurance this would not happen again. Unfortunately, Ivorians witnessed a justice system administered by the victors over the vanquished, which led to the failure of the National Reconciliation Forum. More explicitly, justice could have contributed significantly to healing the wounds of the past and reinforce reconciliation. This brings us to the failure of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreements.

At the invitation of the French President Jacques Chirac, a Round Table of Ivorian political forces met in Linas-Marcoussis, a neutral location in France, from the 15 to 23 January, 2003. This meeting brought together parties including FPI, PDCI-RDA, and RDR. Each delegation

<sup>31</sup> Mansa Solo, "Processus de paix en Côte d'Ivoire: la réconciliation est-elle possible sans justice" *L'Appel*, No.866, February-March 2013, p. 2.

gave an analysis of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and made some proposals to restore confidence and overcome the crisis. A government focused on national unity was established immediately after Marcoussis to ensure a return to peace and stability. However, the conference failed to reconcile the nation. Indeed, there was already a risk of civil war, but the failure of Marcoussis provoked an escalation of violence, and Côte d'Ivoire was never reconciled.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Failure of the January 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Agreements**

Several peace agreements were signed between 2003 and 2007. The first African initiatives to resolve the Ivorian crisis were taken by the ECOWAS. ECOWAS Heads of State met on 29 September, 2002, in Accra, Ghana for an extraordinary summit. This meeting produced the Accra Agreement 1. The aim of this agreement was to create a contact group in order to set up mediation and the deployment of about 1,100 'White Helmets.' After some tough negotiating, led by President Gnassingbé Eyadema of Togo, a decision was reached. On 17 October, 2002, the contact group obtained a ceasefire agreement from the rebels. In November 2002, when two new rebel groups emerged from the west of the country, the contact group successfully convinced them to abide by the terms of the cease-fire agreement. Simultaneously, since 30 October, 2002, ECOWAS initiated negotiations in Lomé, Togo between the Gbagbo government and the rebels for the political resolution of the crisis. Those negotiations were unsuccessful.<sup>33</sup>

In January 2003, taking into account the failure of negotiation led by ECOWAS in Togo, the former colonial power took the risk of being at the front line to pursue the negotiation.

<sup>32</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan "Le Réengagement Français dans les conflits Africains et le défi Ivoirien," p. 329, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).

<sup>33</sup> The African Union constituted the other African organisation that was supposed to intervene, but it remained silent. See for example Chérif Ouazani, "Abidjan en quelques minutes," *Jeune Afrique L'Intelligent* No.2196, 9-15 February 2003.

Initially, France avoided being locked in face-to-face discussions with Ivorians with the intent to solve the Ivorian crisis by pursuing the Linas-Marcoussis Agreements.<sup>34</sup>

To achieve this, the French foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin met Gbagbo in Abidjan on 3 January, 2003, stating, “we need to make things happen.”<sup>35</sup> Villepin took the initiative to force dialogue between key stakeholders involved in the conflict. Gbagbo accepted the principle of a conclave on the Ivorian crisis in Paris, and Villepin obtained a guarantee from Gbagbo over the respect of the ceasefire. The next day, Villepin appeared in Bouaké in the centre-north of the country for a meeting with the rebel leaders who were first intimidated but were delighted to be internationally recognised by France. They did not think this was possible four months beforehand. The Minister further reiterated that “only a political solution will allow to effectively solving the difficulties and that is the conviction expressed by each of the parties.”<sup>36</sup>

So Villepin obtained an agreement from the Ivorian authorities and the rebels to take part in a meeting in Paris on 15 January, 2003, to expedite an exit from the crisis and the signing of agreements to end the hostilities between belligerents.

On 14 January, during an address to the media, the French Minister had only one thing in mind, “we must succeed, otherwise it is the Ivorian people that will pay the price.”<sup>37</sup> He stressed that the meeting would be “the last chance” to avoid a civil war in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>38</sup>

The French authorities invited 32 people to participate at the negotiations of Marcoussis. This included nine members from the delegation of the rebels. Other posts were distributed among political parties holding seats at the Ivorian National assembly. On 15 January, 2003, all key

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Smith, “La politique d’engagement de la France à l’épreuve de la Côte d’Ivoire” *Politique Africaine*, No. 89, p. 121, March 2003.

<sup>35</sup> *Libération*, 22 January 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Dominique de Villepin, Conférence à Abidjan du ministre des affaires étrangères, 4 January 2003, available at <http://www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr> (accessed 16 June 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, “Côte d’Ivoire: La France organise le sommet de la dernière chance,” *Le Monde*, 16 January 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, “Côte d’Ivoire: La France organise le sommet de la dernière chance,” *Le Monde*, 16 January 2003.

players of the Ivorian crisis including President Bédié, Guillaume Soro, and Ouattara were present. Gbagbo was excluded because only political parties and rebel groups were invited to Paris, not the President. The Ivorian President's political party was represented by Pascal Affi N'guessan who was considered to be a moderate.

In general, civil society, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), union groups, and political parties were invited to negotiations. The objective was to expand the negotiations in order to facilitate the implementation of the agreements. However, their presence could be contested by one of the belligerents. The case of Côte d'Ivoire was an exception. The 'legitimate government,' which was victim of attacks by the rebels, was not represented. As a result, it was forced to negotiate back home in Côte d'Ivoire with the rebel groups who were endorsed by the French government. For nine days, participants worked assiduously at the negotiation chaired by Pierre Mazeaud, President of the French Constitutional Council. He imposed compromises and was assisted by moderators representing the ECOWAS, African Union, and the UN.<sup>39</sup>

The peace talks were followed by a series of incidents. For example, the rebels accused the FPI of attempting to corrupt them by sliding envelopes through the doors of their hotel rooms in the middle of the night. Indeed, this act of corruption distorted the sincerity and credibility of the FPI. It constituted a substantial irregularity regarding the expression of consent, likely cancelling the agreements that resulted from such negotiations. In addition, there were two significant problems. First, Minister Vellepin imposed strict deadlines and was incredibly firm during the negotiations. The second problem was that the meetings took place behind closed door. As Antoine Dulin pointed out, those conditions were perceived by certain participants like the President of the Ivorian National Assembly, Mamadou Koulibaly, as an

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Hofnung 2012, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 94.



expression of new French colonial ambitions. On 20 January, 2003, Koulibaly slammed the Marcoussis' door in protest, accusing the 'facilitator' Mazeaud of preparing a constitutional coup, even though the adopted measures were meant to pass the National Assembly dominated by Koulibaly's party, the FPI before implementation.<sup>40</sup>

Back in Abidjan, Koulibaly stated, "I noted that Pierre Mazeaud was staging a constitutional coup d'état. What the rebels have not been unable to do militarily, he is doing that at Marcoussis"<sup>41</sup> Faced with this strong criticism, Villepin was forced to recall that "France speaks with a single voice, its Ambassador, its Minister; the President of the Republic, this voice is the one of Ivorian reconciliation."<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, on 24 January, 2003, the Marcoussis Agreements were signed at 2 AM Paris time. Participants stood up, embraced each other, and then sang the national anthem, *L'Abidjanaise*, while holding hands.<sup>43</sup> Villepin thought he had won his gamble.

For Thomas Hofnung, Marcoussis was like a second Forum of National Reconciliation, but with concrete measures, a precise roadmap established to resolve the Ivorian crisis. The agreement included everything from the nationality code to land rights. Ouattara "welcomes the end of Ivoirite" as the agreement covered the amendment of Article 35 of the Constitution regarding eligibility conditions to contest elections.<sup>44</sup> It stipulated that from now on, "candidate must be born of a father OR mother of Ivorian origin, and no longer of a father AND mother of Ivorian origin." Meantime, the rebels and newly recruited soldiers loyal to

<sup>40</sup> Antoine Dulin 2004, "La gestion par la France de la crise en Côte d'Ivoire de septembre 2002 à Avril 2005" Université Lyon 2, Institut d'études politiques de Lyon, available at [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La\\_gestion\\_par\\_la\\_France\\_de\\_la\\_crise\\_en\\_Cote\\_d\\_Ivoire\\_de\\_septembre\\_2002\\_a\\_avril\\_2005.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La_gestion_par_la_France_de_la_crise_en_Cote_d_Ivoire_de_septembre_2002_a_avril_2005.pdf) (accessed 16 May 2015).

<sup>41</sup> International Crisis Group, "Côte d'Ivoire, pas de paix en vue," Africa Report No. 82, p. 31, July 2004, available at [http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/africa/west\\_africa/](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/africa/west_africa/)

<sup>42</sup> Dominique de Villepin, "Conférence du ministre des affaires étrangères," Translated for the purposes of this thesis, Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire).

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Hofnung 2012, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> *Le Monde*, 26 January 2003.

Ouattara were meant to be demobilised, disarmed, and integrated into the national army or civilian life, and a government of national reconciliation was formed.<sup>45</sup>

It must be noted that the process initiated at Marcoussis got off to a bad start. During the negotiations, the influential Simone Gbagbo, who led the FPI at the Ivorian National Assembly, warned that those who signed the agreement imposed by France “will no longer find us in their bed.”<sup>46</sup> The Marcoussis Agreements lasted less than two days. Arriving in France, Gbagbo discovered that the agreements stripped him of his prerogatives to the benefit of the government of national reconciliation on 25 January, 2003. During the negotiations, Soro argued that the rebels have renounced insisting the resignation of Gbagbo and asked for the ministries of defence and interior. Surprisingly Gbagbo agreed. However, a close ally of Gbagbo noted, “France is always the one who decides everything here. And the lesson to be drawn is that taking up arms allows you to become government Minister.”<sup>47</sup>

Generally speaking, numerical balance served as the criterion that prevailed during the political negotiation between the signatories regarding the allocation of key ministerial posts, taking into account the equal representation among parties. Not surprisingly, in the case of Côte d’Ivoire, the allocations of the ministries of defence and security to the rebels following the Marcoussis Agreements sparked violent discontent among the civilian population and the security and defence forces.<sup>48</sup>

Charles Blé Goudé was the leader of the “Young patriots” who were directly financed by the presidency and loyal to Gbagbo. Blé Goudé also criticised the Marcoussis Agreements, saying Marcoussis showed that using arms was the best way to be heard. Blé Goudé’s

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 95.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 95.

<sup>47</sup> Colette de Braeckman, “Aux sources de la crise ivoirienne,” *Manière de Voir*, No. 19, p. 83, February-March 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan “Le Réengagement Français dans les conflits Africains et le défi Ivoirien,” p. 329, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).

followers chanted “à chacun son Français,” one young patriot against one French, meaning each young patriot should go around a French national’s place and kill one. The young patriots marched on the streets of Abidjan for three days and destroyed official French buildings such as the French Cultural Centre and several French schools. They also threatened French nationals. Minister Villepin was required to raise his voice against Gbagbo, pointing out, “we took an initiative to reunite all Ivoirians. They reached an agreement. Now we need to respect it. France solemnly asks President Laurent Gbagbo to be resolutely committed to the path of reconciliation.”<sup>49</sup> The next day, on 26 January, 2003, Gbagbo who was suspected by the French intelligence service to be organising the rally from his hotel room in Paris was forced to call for calm.<sup>50</sup>

On 26 January, 2003, two days after the signing of the Marcoussis Agreements, President Jacques Chirac organised in Paris, at Kléber Street, an African Heads of State Conference. Among the guests were a dozen African Heads of states, including representatives of the United Nations and the, then, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and other representatives from the European Union. During the Heads of States Conference, Gbagbo noted “the Ivorian crisis became an international crisis.” Finally, he added, “I am going to Abidjan to tell Ivoirians I did not win the war. If I had won, there would not be Marcoussis ... But I have not won it.”<sup>51</sup>

France, through Jacques Chirac, welcomed the signing of the agreements, reaffirming that the agreements respected the integrity and sovereignty of Côte d’Ivoire as well as the authorities who were legitimately elected. However, France was criticised by supporters of the Gbagbo government. For example, the armed forces claimed that “the Marcoussis Agreement, rather

<sup>49</sup> AFP, “Appel solennel de Paris au président ivoirien,” *Le Monde* 3 February 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Hofnung, *La crise ivoirienne : De Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 97.

<sup>51</sup> Laurent Gbagbo, “Déclaration du président ivoirien a la conférence des chefs d’état.” *Politique Etrangère de la France*, p. 145.

than leading to peace, carries the germs of national implosion”<sup>52</sup> For Toussaint Alain, “the Marcoussis Agreements are only proposals.”<sup>53</sup>

Many regretted that the Ivorian state, through its government, was not represented at Marcoussis. Only Ivorian political party representatives were invited. This absence of the Ivorian state drew a lot of criticisms which allowed Gbagbo to denounce the text of Marcoussis. Back in Abidjan, Gbagbo dithered despite his public commitment made in Paris. In December 2004 he voiced his thoughts: “I was not at Marcoussis. The Ivorian state was not there. Marcoussis was a catastrophe. It is a bad text, which was wrong to believe in people’s good faith and common sense”<sup>54</sup> The resulting agreements of Marcoussis were signed by a large number of participants. They were legitimised by the African and international community at the Kléber meeting, but the agreements were not implemented.<sup>55</sup> Once again, on 21 January, 2005, disqualifying the French mediation, Gbagbo said, “the Ivorian state was not represented at Marcoussis. I never signed Marcoussis and I would never sign it.”<sup>56</sup> Finally, Marcoussis was criticised because it was concluded in Paris. Some Ivorians interpreted it as a return to neo-colonialism. France disagreed. French officials argued that the meeting took place in Paris in order to protect Ivorian participants from physical threats. Jean-François Bayart summarised France’s position the following way: “she

<sup>52</sup> Agence Reuters, “Un ministre ivoirien dénonce les accords de Marcoussis,” 29 January 2003, available at <http://sanganet.com/fich5ActuaInterAfric/accordMLMnuletnova.html>.

<sup>53</sup> Agence Reuters, “L’accord de paris rejeté par le ministre de l’intérieur,” 29 January 2003, available at <http://sanganet.com/fich5ActuaInterAfric/accordMLMnuletnova.html>.

<sup>54</sup> *Le Parisien*, 16 December 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Antoine Dulin 2004, “La gestion par la France de la crise en Côte d’Ivoire de septembre 2002 à Avril 2005” Université Lyon 2, *Institut d’études politiques de Lyon*, available at [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La\\_gestion\\_par\\_la\\_France\\_de\\_la\\_crise\\_en\\_Cote\\_d\\_Ivoire\\_de\\_septembre\\_2002\\_a\\_avril\\_2005.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5758~v~La_gestion_par_la_France_de_la_crise_en_Cote_d_Ivoire_de_septembre_2002_a_avril_2005.pdf) (accessed 16 May 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Yacouba Konaté, “Côte d’Ivoire: le canari d’eau de Jacques Chirac,” Mars 2005, *Politique Africaine*, No.97, p. 121.

was the only one that could and wanted to do it. It was necessary for her to do it. But she was the worst placed to do it.”<sup>57</sup>

It should be pointed out that the success of mediation depends on the location where it takes place. In choosing the mediator’s place for negotiations, the physical security, freedom of expression, and opinion of participants must be taken into account. However, several negotiations occurred in foreign places instead of the mediator’s place. For example, during the Liberian conflict, Houphouët conducted negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland in April of 1982.<sup>58</sup>

It is easy to note that the French mediation was a vain attempt; the French diplomacy failed to bring back peace in Côte d’Ivoire. Indeed, the mediation led to the signing of the peace agreements despite all the controversies, but the agreements remained at a standoff and several provisions were not implemented. However, the non-implementation of those provisions showed how difficult it was for French authorities and forces to work towards a peaceful Côte d’Ivoire, a country split in two and where key political players and signatory parties lack the political will or commitment to restore peace.

According to Isabelle Lasserre, a journalist at the French *Le Figaro* daily newspaper, France attempted to promote a new crisis resolution strategy through Marcoussis in Côte d’Ivoire. For Lasserre, by taking the risk of peace, Paris tried to avoid the worst case scenario, namely a civil war in its former colony. However, twelve years later, the country remains under the threat of war as the agreements were challenged several times. Some of the French soldiers

<sup>57</sup> Jean-François Bayart, “La difficile mise en œuvre des accords de Marcoussis: un contre-sens inévitable,” *Le Figaro* 28 January 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan “Le Réengagement Français dans les conflits Africains et le défi Ivoirien,” p. 329, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).

based in Côte d'Ivoire doubted the viability of the agreements. They believed that in Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, "power is not shared."<sup>59</sup>

In 2006, President Gbagbo initiated a direct dialogue with the FN, the rebel forces. The inter-Ivorian dialogue led to the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement on 4 March, 2007. The agreement contained measures including the delicate process of the restoration of the authority of the state and reconciliation. The agreement generated a 'no peace, no war' situation and the leader of the FN, Guillaume Soro, became Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the implementation of those key measures became problematic. In such a scenario, a resumption of violence could not be excluded. While the direct dialogue was a step in the right direction, it was unable to bring long-term peace.<sup>60</sup>

Immediately after being signed, the Marcoussis Agreements provoked many reactions within the political class. The Ivorian issue moved from the political arena to the legal field, as evidenced by the public stance of the, then, Minister of interior and professor of public law N'dré who stated that, "the agreement is null and void."<sup>61</sup>

Given the controversies that led to the conclusions of the round table and largely dominated the negotiations, as well as the incidents that followed the signing of the agreement, the legal debate focused on the nature of the agreement, the constitutionality of the provisions, the modalities of its implementation, and on its binding power on the parties. Although its purpose appeared to be judicial, like its predecessors, the Marcourssis Agreement was first of all political. The strength of the agreement depended on the will and consensus of the authors and those who contributed to its conclusion.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Isabelle Lasserre, "L'Introuvable sortie de crise ivoirienne," *Le Figaro*, 9 November 2004.

<sup>60</sup> The International Crisis Group (ICG), "Côte d'Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement bring peace?" *Africa Report* 127, 27 June 2007, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/127-cote-divoire-can-the-ouagadougou-agreement-bring-peace.aspx> (accessed 24 May 2015).

<sup>61</sup> Interview with national television channel 1, reported by *La Voie*, 30 June 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Jean du Bois de Gaudusson, "L'Accord de Marcoussis entre droit et politique" *Afrique Contemporaine*, Vol.2, No. 206, p. 7.

The legal debate was essentially launched, for obvious reasons, by President Gbagbo and his Ministers and was supported by a certain number of Ivorian and foreign lawyers, as demonstrated by statements from a spokesperson for Ivorian lawyers - published in the *Fraternité Matin* daily newspaper on 7 February, 2003. There was also the manifesto from French lawyers which was published in the same paper on 17 February, 2003, highlighting an organised rebellion against a constitutional government which was legally elected.<sup>63</sup>

It should be noted that less than two months after the Marcoussis Agreements, several issues needed to be addressed in the context of the resolution of the Ivorian crisis and substantial progress had not been achieved. The peace process was at a standoff and tensions were far from being resolved. The success of a crisis resolution required the involvement of all stakeholders. This essential element for the return of peace was lacking in Côte d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, it is agreed here that Gbagbo, who was supposed to lead by example as the embodiment of the power elected by Ivorian people, should take responsibility for the situation of impasse that the Marcoussis negotiations had reached. One particular event summarised well the attitude of the former President after the Marcoussis Agreements.<sup>64</sup>

In January 2003, following the violent demonstrations against the Marcoussis Agreements in Côte d'Ivoire, Gbagbo suddenly left the conference of the African Heads of State for Côte d'Ivoire before the official closing date for calm to be restored. However, once in Côte d'Ivoire, he deliberately allowed the protests to escalate and the attacks against French interests to continue for over a week. Gbagbo eventually intervened by giving a speech which calmed the situation.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Jean du Bois de Gaudusson, "L'Accord de Marcoussis entre droit et politique," *Afrique Contemporaine*, Vol.2, No. 206, p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> Jean du Bois de Gaudusson, "L'Accord de Marcoussis entre droit et politique," *Afrique Contemporaine*, Vol.2, No. 206, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan "Le Réengagement Français dans les Africains et le défi Ivoirien," p. 329, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).

In his speech on 7 February, 2003, he stated that he respected the principles of the Marcoussis Agreements as long as they were in conformity with the Ivorian Constitution and in cases of divergence, the Constitution should come first. This attitude highlighted the double standard of Gbagbo regarding the agreements. The stance of Gbagbo tended to move away from the agreements by constantly bringing up additional limits. However, faced with international pressures, he multiplied unfulfilled promises of good behaviour. This double standard constituted a fundamental political tool for Gbagbo that allowed gaining time during a way out of the crisis that he rejected. Gbagbo confirmed the mechanism to exit from the crisis imposed on him, but he was committed to it.<sup>66</sup>

Therefore, from February 2003 on, Gbagbo twice refused the government's proposal for national reconciliation made by the Prime Minister. Furthermore, Gbagbo's bad faith when it came to handling the national reconciliation issue was also illustrated by his refusal to form a government of national reconciliation. It was only thanks to the mediation put in place by the Ghanaian President within ECOWAS (Accra 1) that the appointment of the government of national reconciliation was possible. Finally, when the government of national reconciliation was formed, Gbagbo continually blocked the workings of the government in order to prevent the implementation of several reforms provided by the Marcoussis Agreements.<sup>67</sup> These facts shed light on the actual role of President Gbagbo during the deadlock of the peace process and helped one understand how his refusal to endorse the Marcoussis Agreements impacted the national reconciliation process.

However, France's responsibility in the Ivorian impasse should also be analysed. Since the beginning of the Ivorian crisis, France stated on numerous occasions that only a political

<sup>66</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan "Le Réengagement Français dans les conflits Africains et le défi Ivoirien," p. 329, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).

<sup>67</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan "Le Réengagement Français dans les conflits Africains et le défi Ivoirien," p. 332, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).



solution would resolve the difficulties as quick as possible.<sup>68</sup> According to Hewane Serequeberhan, by organising the Round Table of Linas-Marcoussis, France coordinated a conflict resolution strategy in order to end political problems related to the nationality, identity, status of foreigners, electoral system, and eligibility of the President of the Republic. However, as Serequeberhan noted, the moment chosen to resolve the crisis was too early to attempt to put in place a general political resolution strategy of the Ivorian crisis. The Marcoussis Agreements occurred in January 2003, only a few months after the outbreak of the 2002 conflict. It appeared that a conflict resolution strategy was premature at that time as the key players of the Ivorian conflict were not ready to negotiate.<sup>69</sup> It needs to be remembered that time also effectively resolves conflicts among competing interests.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Failure of The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

During the 2010 presidential elections campaign, Ouattara made a move to end a breakdown of the Ivorian social fabric, making national reconciliation his first priority as the potential leader. Unfortunately, as discussed previously in chapter 7, the presidential elections ended in catastrophic disaster, which created the necessity of a national reconciliation process.

According to Timothée Labelle and Jean-Nicholas Trudel, faced with Gbagbo's refusal to respect the will of the people as expressed through the ballot box and surrender peacefully in order to avoid bloodbath during the 2010 presidential elections, the international community put in place diplomatic and financial pressure. However, the results were limited. At the same time, Gbagbo's forces quickly attacked Ouattara's forces. The latter launched an offensive in areas controlled by the defeated regime. Pro-Ouattara's demonstrations were systematically

<sup>68</sup> For example see Press Conference of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Dominique de Villepin, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 4 January 2003.

<sup>69</sup> Hewane Serequeberhan "Le Réengagement Français dans les conflits Africains et le défi Ivoirien," p. 332, available at [http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21\\_323-339.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/21_323-339.pdf) (accessed 17 June 2015).

<sup>70</sup> Ira William Zartman 1990, *La Résolution des conflits en Afrique*, L'Harmattan Paris, p.245.

repressed by security forces loyal to Gbagbo.<sup>71</sup> The post-election crisis which lasted six months caused the death of an estimated 3,000 people, thousands of displaced people, and a deep social divide according to NGOs and journalists.<sup>72</sup>

This divide was reflected daily by the hatred and contempt observed by communities towards each other as well as the unhealthy relations maintained by the political class and the intellectual elite as a whole. Although Ouattara and his forces took power after the capture of Gbagbo on 11 April 2011, they failed to stabilise and reconcile the nation while Ivorians are deeply impacted by the devastating effects of the conflict. As they say in Côte d'Ivoire, "in a civil war, even a victory is a defeat."<sup>73</sup>

First, I argue that after such a violent election as seen in 2011, reconciliation is necessary in Côte d'Ivoire because the ethno-political violence experienced by the nation threatened democracy, development, and peace and stability. Reconciliation is a must to regain peace and prosperity. During the reconciliation debate, the country is experiencing a period of turbulence that threatens to plunge Ivorians into a new abyss as the country has also descended into lawlessness, deprivation of basic freedoms, in various forms and to varying degrees, all over its territory. Furthermore, the most horrendous crimes, sometimes of inalienable nature, were committed against ordinary citizens. For example, during the 2011 post-election crisis, massacres took place in the west in the Cavally and Guémon regions. Given their volatility, those two regions are likely to boil over if reconciliation does not take place and tensions increase. Reconciliation will contribute to the resolution of strong

<sup>71</sup> Timothée Labelle and Jean-Nicholas Trudel 2012, "Au coeur de la reconstruction ivoirienne: la réconciliation," *Revue québécoise de droit international*, Vol. 25, No. 1,

<sup>72</sup> Human Rights Watch, October 2011, "They killed them like it was nothing: the need for justice for Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/10/05/they-killed-them-it-was-nothing> [Human Rights Watch, *Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Election Crimes* (accessed 23 June 2015); British Broadcasting Company (BBC), "Ivory Coast gets truth and reconciliation commission," *News Africa*, 8 September 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15086829> (accessed 23 June 2015).

<sup>73</sup> Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d'Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 260.

animosity among various population groups and regions. Ivoirians must reconcile because within them are buried feelings of suspicion and unease of other ethnic groups. However, there are also many disputes and litigations of all kinds between ethnic groups, politicians, ordinary Ivoirian citizens, regions, and social classes. Therefore, true reconciliation must be achieved among all Ivoirians and at all levels because those conflicts are of all kinds.<sup>74</sup>

The story of this tragic moment is still present as armed groups have not laid down their weapons, the army did not return to the barracks, and the displaced people and refugees have not returned to their abandoned homes. Meanwhile, the political class as a whole failed to reinsure the public and international opinion. Although populations have been torn apart and mistrust and bitterness persist, the Ivoirian political elites appeared to be unconcerned.

Second, I argue that Ivoirians are forced to reconcile to save their country. A successful reconciliation will enable Ivoirians to bury the hatchet, shoulder their responsibilities, accept each other through their diversity, and break through communication barriers, which are necessary to build a harmonious Ivoirian society. However, it is not that the government cannot reconcile people through hatred between groups and ethnic confrontations in order for the nation to regain its social cohesion. Indeed, Côte d'Ivoire needs this social cohesion for its development, but reconciliation must be inclusive and balanced. Reconciliation goes hand in hand with justice. That is to say that those perpetrators from both sides must be prosecuted in court to end allegations over a two-tiered justice system. Ivoirians are unanimous on this.<sup>75</sup>

Several measures need to be taken into account towards the achievement of national reconciliation. These may include 'a robust' program of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR).

<sup>74</sup> International Crisis Group "Côte d'Ivoire's great west: key to reconciliation," Africa Report 212, 28 January 2014, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire/212-cote-divoire-s-great-west-key-to-reconciliation.aspx> (accessed 24 June 2015).

<sup>75</sup> Séraphin Yao Prao, 26 Mars 2014, "Réconciliation en Côte d'Ivoire: le président Ouattara cherche palabre sous l'arbre à palabres," Afriquessor, available at <http://www.afriquessor.com/reconciliation-en-cote-divoire-le-president-ouattara-cherche-palabre-sous-larbre-a-palabres/> (accessed 24 June 2015).

Third, I argue that one of the fundamental steps in order to have a true reconciliation is the implementation of a robust program of DDR that fosters reconciliation as one of the key requirements for peace building in Côte d'Ivoire. As one of the several post-conflict recovery strategies, a DDR will help promote both security and development in the Ivorian context, which is characterised by insecurity, lawlessness, a badly functioning economy, and a lack of social services and social cohesion. The implementation of a robust DDR should contribute to political stability in Côte d'Ivoire and should build confidence. As a result, DDR should enable the Ouattara government, the rebels and the opposition to reject violence. In addition, a DDR should enable conflicting parties to transform their political and organisational structures to meet development objectives. Nevertheless, a DDR is unlikely to succeed due to a lack of firm commitment from the Ivorian political elites. Furthermore, a DDR in Côte d'Ivoire should work alongside with other peace-building strategies such as social economic-recovery programs, security sector reform, and programs to re-establish and strengthen the rule of law.<sup>76</sup>

Fourth, I argue that the release of former President Laurent Gbagbo, who has been sent to The Hague to face allegations of mass murder even though crimes were committed by both pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces, is crucial for national reconciliation. The transfer of Gbagbo to The Hague did not go over well in Africa. By handing over Gbagbo, Ouattara set a precedent. A large number of African Presidents including Jonathan Goodluck, the former Nigerian President advised Ouattara against it. In Côte d'Ivoire, pro-Gbagbo and even some

<sup>76</sup> Observatoire de la Justice Transitionnelle de Côte d'Ivoire 2013, "Perception des populations vivant en Côte d'Ivoire à propos de la réconciliation et de la Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation" (CDVR), available at [http://www.univ-paris1.fr/fileadmin/IREDIES/Projets\\_de\\_recherche/Rapport\\_du\\_sonage\\_sur\\_le\\_processus\\_de\\_r%C3%A9conciliation\\_nationale\\_et\\_la\\_CVDR.pdf](http://www.univ-paris1.fr/fileadmin/IREDIES/Projets_de_recherche/Rapport_du_sonage_sur_le_processus_de_r%C3%A9conciliation_nationale_et_la_CVDR.pdf) (accessed 18 June 2015).

pro-Ouattara were shocked. According to a supporter of Ouattara, “that is normal if he is facing trial, but we would prefer not to wash our dirty linen in public.”<sup>77</sup>

Gbagbo’s case being turned over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) has created tensions among Ivorians. As Claverie Boni noted after the post-election crisis, the release of Gbagbo is the real prerequisite for peace. Boni’s opinion remains the same. As Affi N’guessan, President of the FPI pointed out, Côte d’Ivoire needs Gbagbo for national reconciliation, which will be incomplete if Gbagbo is not present in Côte d’Ivoire while the debates over the past and present of the nation are taking place.<sup>78</sup> For Ivorians, it is hurtful to see Gbagbo at The Hague because his place is not there. According to Banny, it is as if part of Côte d’Ivoire is in prison. This takes into account the fact that about 49% of voters voted for Gbagbo in 2010.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, I argue that another crucial step for reconciliation should be the compensation of victims of human rights abuses; otherwise, a desire for revenge could exist among certain factions during peace-building process. During the celebration of the National Day on 6 August, 2014, Ouattara announced the forthcoming creation of a fund for victims, stating that priority should be given to victims. Ultimately, if this fund is available and properly allocated, compensation could certainly improve the material, medical, and social situation of many victims. Nevertheless, like reconciliation, the compensation issue should be treated, at least in part, with a focus on justice issues. Otherwise, it would appear to be merely a political or electoral process.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d’Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l’ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 257.

<sup>78</sup> Christophe Boisbouvier 2013, “Pascal Affi N’guessan: la Côte d’Ivoire a besoin de Laurent Gbagbo” Radio France International, RFI, available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20131001-pascal-affi-nguessan-cote-ivoire-gbagbo-justice-cpi-elections/> (accessed 25 June 2015).

<sup>79</sup> Haby Niakate and Vincent Duhem, “Charles Konan Banny: pourquoi Ouattara n’est mon ami,” *Jeune Afrique*, 23 June 2015.

<sup>80</sup> David Gray 2010, “A no excuse approach to transitional justice,” Vol. 87, No. 5, Washington University Law Review Press 1043, p. 1058.

Soon after he entered office, Ouattara guaranteed to deliver in terms of the restoration of social cohesion. On 1 May, 2011, he decided to create the *Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation* (CDVR), (Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission). Ultimately, the CDVR was created on 13 July, 2011. Charles Konan Banny and other members of the CDVR were officially ‘empowered’ by Ouattara in Yamoussoukro, located in the centre-north of the country on 28 September, 2011. During the ceremony, Ouattara stated, “Mr. President of the CDVR, you are accountable to the Ivorian people and I am giving you officially the instruments of the mission assigned to you.”<sup>81</sup>

The depth and scope of the Ivorian crisis required innovative, objective, and robust approaches. The creation of the CDVR appeared to be the most appropriate response to the situation. However, it required a search for the truth, the delivery of fair and credible justice, and the rejection of impunity. Article 5 of the CDVR stipulated that, the objective of the Commission was to work independently towards reconciliation and contribute to strengthening national unity and social cohesion among all communities living in Côte d’Ivoire. According to the President of the CDVR, Charles Konan Banny, “Ivorians believe in national reconciliation, even if they are aware of the political issues at stake.”<sup>82</sup> More frequently, Ivorians were confident, stating Charles will succeed. So we can trust him.<sup>83</sup>

However, the Commission failed to create the best possible conditions for reconciliation and a durable peace. Since its creation, the CDVR faced many difficulties regarding the functioning of this institution, to the point where the population did not really feel the expected impact of its actions. During the Commission’s ceremony in Yamoussoukro, located in the centre-north of Côte d’Ivoire, Banny, the former Prime Minister stated, “if I

<sup>81</sup> Paul Koffi, “Les membres officiellement investis, hier,” *Le Nouveau Reveil*, No. 2901, 29 September 2011, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> APA, 31 December 2013, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/483414.html>, accessed 28 April 2015.

<sup>83</sup> Eddy Pehe, “Réconciliation Nationale: Le président Banny pourra-t-il réussir ?” *Le Nouveau Reveil*, No. 3085, 9 Mai 2012.

have accepted this national reconciliation mission that is because I want to be a follower of Houphouët-Boigny, as there is nothing better than peace in our regions, in our cities, in our villages.”<sup>84</sup>

However, the task has not been easy. The President of the CDVR and his administration began their activities with no official head office, budget, or logistical or political means to operate, especially to communicate, despite being the main institution tasked with national reconciliation at the time. In an effort to overcome the difficult situation, Banny contributed by using his private residence as an office to enable the CDVR’s programs to begin.<sup>85</sup>

However, President Banny is a leading PDCI figure and he is perceived by part of the community as a supporter of the coalition government. Furthermore, he left the door open for his candidacy in the 2015 presidential elections and caused conflict of interests due to his political stance. Therefore, for his critics, Banny is not the right person for the role, a role that requires neutrality and should be removed from the leadership of the Commission and replaced by a neutral President.<sup>86</sup>

It is worth pointing out that if Banny failed to fully restore social cohesion among Ivorians, he was not solely at fault with what was happening. The Ouattara government should also be blamed. Obviously, Banny’s institution failed to secure government funds, which adversely affected the nation’s political dialogue.

Banny’s sought to include Gbagbo in the reconciliation, but he did not get the green light from President Ouattara to meet Gbagbo at The Hague, located in Holland, where he is being detained. According to Article 1 of the CDVR, Order NO. 2011- 167 of 13 July 2012, the

<sup>84</sup> Paul Koffi, “Les membres officiellement investis, hier,” *Le Nouveau Reveil*, No. 2901, 29 September 2011, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Patrick N’guessan, “Lacommission manque d’argent, la crise post-électorale n’est pas terminée,” *Le Mandat*, 18 September 2012.

<sup>86</sup> *Le Figaro*, “Côte d’Ivoire : l’ancien premier ministre dans la course à l’investiture,” available at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2014/12/10/97001-20141210FILWWW00369-cote-d-ivoire-l-ancien-premier-ministre-dans-la-course-a-l-investiture.php> (accessed 23 September 2015)

CDVR is under the authority of Ouattara, the President of the Republic. In addition to this, Ouattara pulled the rug out from under Banny's feet by creating a permanent framework for dialogue and consultation on matters related to reconciliation led by his former Prime Minister, Jeannot Ahoussou Kouadio. Work began on 27 April, 2012, diminishing the role and power of the CDVR.<sup>87</sup>

Banny also failed because of the lack of recognition of his institution by all the concerned stakeholders in the reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire. In effect, the CDVR was considered by the opposition to be an instrument of the government, and therefore the winners. It was tasked to bring the non-winners to the negotiation table in order to achieve reconciliation. For the opposition, the CDVR was not a neutral institution capable of mobilising opposition leaders and social and regional players to join the reconciliation. This lack of legitimacy was a negative factor that did not help the CDVR achieve its objectives.

The work of the CDVR has been always criticised. Banny, however, believed he achieved what was expected from the CDVR. That included seeking the causes and typology of all violations of human rights abuses of the 2010 post-election crisis through public hearings, seminars, and workshops around the country. For Banny, about 73,000 Ivoirians were able to share their sufferings. However, the public hearings were not broadcasted on Ivorian national television as expected. Banny noted in his interview with *Jeune Afrique* in June 2015, "you cannot reconcile a country which you are not running."<sup>88</sup> However, for Amadou Soumahoro, Secretary-General of the RDR, "Banny has never succeeded in Côte d'Ivoire."<sup>89</sup>

For his critics, Banny failed because he was the wrong person for the job and because he was unable to take concrete steps in the right direction since the creation of the CDVR. For

<sup>87</sup> Coulibaly Vamara, Editorial: Réconciliation de façade, *Soir Info*, 22 October 2012, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/443365.html> (accessed 14 May 2015).

<sup>88</sup> Haby Niakate and Vincent Duhem, "Charles Konan Banny: pourquoi Ouattara n'est mon ami," *Jeune Afrique*, 23 June 2015.

<sup>89</sup> In Thiery Latt, "il n'a jamais rien réussi dans ce pays," *Le Patriote*, 29 June 2015, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/556378.html> (accessed 1 July 2015).



example, according to Abel Djohoré, RDR's parliamentarian for Ouaragahio-Bayota in the country's west, the reconciliation was meant to bring about cohesion and provide for calm political analysis, but there was vagueness concerning reconciliation. There was no legibility in Banny's approach and he could not adopt a convincing work method. Therefore, Ivorians appeared to be moving toward a false reconciliation.<sup>90</sup>

It can be argued that the families of the victims were incensed by the Commission's unwillingness to investigate and assign responsibility to the disappearances. They stated it was an attempt to pacify them without truth. They demanded information about the loss of their relatives and insisted truth should precede reconciliation. Civil rights activists were outraged by the government's attempt to cut short all discussion of what really happened in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 despite the establishment of the CDVR. The government remained convinced that it could promote national reconciliation while blocking any real attempt to investigate crimes committed by its camp in order not to hold perpetrators accountable. Major decisions to deal with the reconciliation were promulgated by presidential decree, without a submission to open debate in parliament. By doing so, the government hoped to turn the page on a dark chapter of Ivorian history as soon as possible, or as one respondent stated, the government focused on convincing Ivorians to move on without looking back.<sup>91</sup>

However, in the minds of most Ivorians, the dossier is far from closed. The government ignored the fact that genuine reconciliation decisions should not be imposed from the top down; rather, it is a long process that should involve the entire social fabric, including all political groups and institutions. A large segment of the public believed that in the absence of

<sup>90</sup> Y Doumbia "Ce que Banny doit faire s'il veut réussir" *L'Inter*, No 4094, 23 January 2012, p.6.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.

genuine reconciliation, it is likely that a crisis will break out in the future in Côte d'Ivoire as uncertainties remain about the long-term stability of the nation.<sup>92</sup>

For some Ivorians, the Commission was nothing but 'an empty shell' because it lacked the necessary resources.<sup>93</sup> They argued that the Commission was a shell that was deliberately rendered empty in order to prevent its President from succeeding. That was because the dossier of the reconciliation was one of President Ouattara's signature policies as he wanted to achieve success by himself in order to make himself appear to be a saviour before Ivorians and leave the strongest impression on them.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Banny, the treasury has provided about 13 billion CFA, (20 million euros). The West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) has provided 2.5 billion and the African Development Bank (ADB) 700 million. Banny said that 45% of this sum was spent on salaries while the rest was spent on the general functioning of the Commission. He added that he did his best with what he was given and he used his personal relations to request additional funding from WAEMU and ADB.<sup>95</sup>

For other Ivorians, the major factor towards the failure of the CDVR was the result of the bad relationship between Ouattara and Banny. The latter was known to be very critical with regard to the management of the PDCI, his own political party, led by Bédié. In the eyes of Banny, the PDCI was an ineffective party unable to carry out its national duties but rather followed the lead of Ouattara. It is worth noting that Bédié was indeed a close friend and ally of the Ouattara regime. Whoever attacked Bédié had to face Ouattara. By doing so, Banny

<sup>92</sup> Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d'Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 256.

<sup>93</sup> For example see interview with Respondent "M" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 27 June 2012.

<sup>94</sup> For example see interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.

<sup>95</sup> Haby Niakate and Vincent Duhem, "Charles Konan Banny: pourquoi Ouattara n'est plus mon ami," *Jeune Afrique*, 23 June 2015.

essentially committed a profound error. As Laurent Dona Fologo, the former information Minister under Houphouët observed, “in politics, you don’t pass the ball to the adversary.”<sup>96</sup> Banny stated that during the 2010 elections, he campaigned for Ouattara in the centre of Côte d’Ivoire and contributed to Ouattara’s victory. As they knew each other since the 1970s, Banny thought they shared the same values - including democracy and respect for public affairs. He believed Ouattara would break with the old age practice, but that was not the case. When Ouattara told Banny that he wanted to reconcile Ivorians, Banny believed him, thinking Ouattara was sincere. According to Banny he accepted the role as Head of the CDVR after some hesitation, but it was a trap. Banny said the Ouattara camp orchestrated a plot to humiliate him by accusing him of money embezzlement.<sup>97</sup>

The Commission tried to sell its ‘reconciliation’ plans nationally, but it can be argued that since the creation of the CDVR, Côte d’Ivoire is further from reconciliation than ever. Critics of the Commission found that the CDVR lacked the independence to serve as an accountability process for numerous allegations of war crimes committed by pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces. They also found that the CDVR lacked initiatives to mitigate divisions and heal wounds. Although the Commission served as a platform for airing some grievances, it failed to win confidence domestically and can do little to aid reconciliation.<sup>98</sup>

The CDVR failed to take into account a series of complex social issues. The treatment of these issues is necessary for the success of reconciliation process. For example, the case of children involved in the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire was a concern. While some were victims of crimes, exploitation of children at work or child trafficking, no concrete action was taken by the CDVR to support them. This was an important weakness of the reconciliation process.

<sup>96</sup> Guy Evariste, “Le mandat de la cdvr sera-t-il renouvelé ? - oui, mais sans Banny,” *L’Hebdo Ivoirien*, 17 Octobre 2013, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/477760.html> accessed 30 April 2015.

<sup>97</sup> Haby Niakate and Vincent Duhem, “Charles Konan Banny: pourquoi Ouattara n’est mon ami,” *Jeune Afrique*, 23 June 2015.

<sup>98</sup> Haby Niakate and Vincent Duhem, “Charles Konan Banny: pourquoi Ouattara n’est plus mon ami,” *Jeune Afrique*, 23 June 2015.

Following the recommendations of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the CDVR could have formed partnerships with local organisations working with children as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), schools or community centres to encourage them to come forward and testify. Giving children access to CDVR's necessary resources could have enabled them to contribute to future conflict prevention by familiarising them to the reconciliation process. According to UNICEF, children should have access to psychological support, which could not only make their testimony convincing, but would speed up their psychological healing. This process is promoted by the UNICEF in the form of "three P": participation, protection and prevention.<sup>99</sup>

Due to the increase of post-election violence, extra-border social problems have also emerged as waves of refugees entered Liberia. While some were forced out, others attempted to escape the massacres. The International Crisis Group argued that the flow of refugees could have had catastrophic effects on the stability of neighbouring countries which took over 200,000 Ivorian refugees when the vast majority headed to Liberia. Although a true reconciliation can be achieved through awareness and by opening a path to the unification of the Ivorian population, the CDVR failed to necessarily take into account the refugee issue.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, this analysis highlighted some of the weaknesses of the CDVR, but it is far from too late to correct them.

Also, Côte d'Ivoire is not only in a period of instability, but is also in a position of opportunity. During visits to the Ivorian villages, Banny reinsured Ivorian people, stating

<sup>99</sup> Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (UNICEF), *Children and Truth Commissions*, New York, Unicef, 2010, p. 11.

<sup>100</sup> International Crisis Group, "A crucial period for ensuring stability in Côte d'Ivoire," available at 1 August 2011 Africa Report no. 176 available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/cote-divoire.aspx> [International Crisis Group], (accessed 23 June 2015).

that, “the fear within you will fade gradually.”<sup>101</sup> While the reconciliation process is long, it is necessary to restore social cohesion. As Timothée Labelle and Jean-Nicholas Trudel noted, this could also be achieved by ensuring that “forgiveness does not become impunity, that truth does not become a political tool, and that reconciliation does not trigger new tensions.”<sup>102</sup>

### **National Reconciliation Under Ouattara**

Danièle Boni Claverie is the Vice-President of the *Agir pour la Paix et la Nation* (APN), Act for Peace and the Nation. Boni Claverie indicated at a forum on 15 June, 2013, that the reconciliation in Côte d’Ivoire had not progressed at all.<sup>103</sup> It can be added that, as time passes, this factor only serves to reinforce frustration. Ivoirians are aware that much of the nation’s stability depends on a quick reconciliation, and any delay could be used by the rebels or Gbagbo’s camp as a justification to consolidate their power. Such an action by the rebels and Gbagbo’s camp could lead to further destabilisation and possibly violence.<sup>104</sup>

Politicians from the opposition, the FPI, and those who formed government, the RDR, and its allies from the RHDP give the impression that they are concerned by the national reconciliation problem. However, the reality is much different. A huge gap exists between their words, their thoughts, and their actions. First, on the government’s side, remaining true to its logic of its two-tiered justice system, the regime of Ouattara did not give peace and reconciliation in the country a chance. It is true that justice and reconciliation are not

<sup>101</sup> Charles Konan Banny, président de la commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation, “La peur qui vous habite va s’estomper progressivement,” 4 June 2011, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/400677.html> (accessed 23 June 2015).

<sup>102</sup> Timothée Labelle and Jean-Nicholas Trudel 2012, “Au coeur de la reconstruction ivoirienne: la réconciliation,” *Revue québécoise de droit international*, Vol. 25, No. 1.

<sup>103</sup> *RFI*, “Danièle Boni Claverie: La réconciliation en Côte d’Ivoire n’a pas bougé d’un oïta,” 16 June 2013, available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20130616-daniele-boni-claverie-reconciliation-cote-ivoire-cpd-apn-reunion-fpi>, accessed 29 April 2015.

<sup>104</sup> “Gomez Coovi (analyse politique) décortique la réconciliation en Côte d’Ivoire,” available at <http://www.ivorian.net/video/p/39.html> (accessed 21 June 2015); Interview with Respondent “A” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 25 April 2012.

incompatible. Therefore, it is also unacceptable, fundamentally unfair, and shocking that the judge is only sentencing perpetrators from the opposition.<sup>105</sup>

In this post-election crisis situation, it is important to disclose the truth of facts as quickly and as completely as possible in order to achieve reconciliation. This will enable the possibility of identifying perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-election crisis through a proper judicial process. Instead of having the opportunity to prove they have done what they are accused of doing, Ouattara threw Gbagbo and his allies in jail, arguing they were guilty of endangering state security and guilty of economic crimes. Mamadou Koulibaly was the former Speaker of the House under the Gbagbo regime and is currently President of *Liberté et Démocratie pour la République* (LIDER) Liberty and Democracy for the Republic, the political party that Koulibaly created in 2011. Koulibaly stated that, “this is a sign that we live in a totalitarian state.”<sup>106</sup> Also, the reconciliation should start with the prosecuting of pro-Ouattara forces. All the investigations indicated that they had also committed human rights violations on a vast scale and, therefore, should be arrested, tried, and sentenced.

However, this was not the case. There was a two-tier system in Côte d’Ivoire. Indeed, Mbaye Fall echoed this two-tier system, member of the ‘We Have Enough Movement’ from French Guinea. Fall strongly criticised the way that Ivoirians were made to feel that all crimes committed during the 2010 post-election crisis were solely committed by the Gbagbo camp. He believed that there were shared responsibilities.<sup>107</sup>

After the 2011 bloody post-election crisis, Ouattara managed to restore some basic services such as water, electricity, and health, with 2013 being declared a year of health. Ouattara

<sup>105</sup> “Gomez Coovi (analyse politique) décortique la réconciliation en Côte d’Ivoire,” available at <http://www.ivorian.net/video/p/39.html> (accessed 21 June 2015); Interview with Respondent “A” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>106</sup> Yacouba Sangaré and Lucien Ahonto “Avec Gbagbo, les ponts ne sont pas rompus, nous avons des communications lui et moi,” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco19525.htm> (accessed 5 May 2015).

<sup>107</sup> Amadou Sidibe and Sougrinouma Bonkoungou, “Alassane Ouattara: Les Africains juge son bilan,” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco25496.htm> (accessed 6 May 2015).

succeeded in restoring Côte d'Ivoire's image and attracting potential investors, but nothing substantial has been achieved in relation to the national reconciliation.

I argue that the victory of Ouattara over Gbagbo reintroduced people who were originally from the north into the political game and allowed for the potential reunification of Côte d'Ivoire. However, Ouattara was not impartial in his treatment of his allies from the south and pro-Gbagbo forces, despite a confirmation that all Ivorians are equal before the law. Reconciliation has not been achieved because Ouattara himself is an obstacle to national reconciliation.<sup>108</sup>

As President, Ouattara is perceived as someone who only looks after the interests of his own party, the RDR, rather than governing for the nation. Ouattara made no effort to remain neutral. During his international conferences and meetings with the diverse population, he always supported his own camp, without being humble. According to the opposition, Ouattara merely pretended to play the role of a conciliator, and reconciliation will not be achieved in Ouattara's term.<sup>109</sup>

Ouattara failed to show, through concrete actions, his real willingness to move to reconciliation. He refused to release, unconditionally, all political prisoners from Gbagbo's camp, including those who were falsely accused of economic crimes. Furthermore, Ouattara failed to unlock all the bank accounts belonging to Gbagbo's allies and fully and definitively disarm the militias and the rebels. Ivorians must reconcile, but Ouattara did little to advance the cause of true reconciliation.<sup>110</sup>

However, according to the government, regarding the initiatives undertaken by the Ivorian authorities, disarmament has progressed and is worthy of being noticed. The government argued they proceeded by disarming former belligerents and reintegrating them into the social

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Respondent "A" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Respondent "K" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 23 June 2012.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Respondent "A" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012.

fabric. As a result, there was a gradual return of many ex-combatants to normal civilian life after attending learning centres. They also argued that many detainees from the post-election crisis and certain FPI members who were in exile were given permission to return home. This included the unfreezing of some citizens' assets.<sup>111</sup>

However, it was argued by Stéphane Kipré, a pro-Gbagbo politician and President of the Union for New Generations, that the Ouattara government's intention was to silence members of the opposition who refused to renounce their beliefs. According to Kipré who lived in exile, it was not sufficient to merely put out a call for exiled politicians to return home. There needed to be a guarantee of effective security associated with this call. For Kipré, it needed to be said that some of those exiled politicians who maintained an attitude of denunciation of the shortcomings of the regime would end up in prison, unless they became puppets that the government used as it wished to make people believe reconciliation is progressing.<sup>112</sup>

Although Ouattara has insisted that his aim was to “transform Côte d’Ivoire into a nation reconciled with itself and with other nations,” the challenge of reconciliation is far from being won.<sup>113</sup> The opposition denounced the lack of independence of the judiciary in cases involving Gbagbo’s allies who were the people most affected by violations of human rights. According to Koulibaly, confidence has clearly not been totally restored between President Ouattara and his opposition, between the President and the Ivorians who have not voted for him, between the President and his army, and between the President and all components of the Republican Forces that he formed. They continued to attack his regime or harass him.

<sup>111</sup> Amadou Sidibe and Sougrinouma Bonkougou, “Alassane Ouattara: Les Africains juge son bilan” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco25496.htm> (accessed 6 May 2015).

<sup>112</sup> Stéphane Kipré, “Le pouvoir veut faire taire ceux qui renoncent de se renier,” *L’Inter*, 15 May 2015, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/551733.html> (accessed 18 May 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Yacouba Sangaré and Lucien Ahonto “Avec Gbagbo, les ponts ne sont pas rompus, nous avons des communications lui et moi” available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco19525.htm> (accessed 5 May 2015).



Since his election, Ouattara freely travelled overseas. However, for security reasons Ouattara hardly made official visits inside Côte d'Ivoire. This made him, according to Varenne, a lonely man in his own country.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, he was forced to become defence Minister in order to control defence forces, improve security around him, and maintain his regime.<sup>115</sup>

However, the opposition continued to press for the immediate and unconditional release of Gbagbo and all political prisoners from the FPI before it would contribute to the national reconciliation process. The FPI and its allies argued that Ouattara lacked legitimacy and the institutions for which he stood. They also argued that "Ouattara came to power in 2011 through France's a coup d'état" against his predecessor, Gbagbo. Therefore, for them, there was no need to contribute to the reconciliation as long as Ouattara is in power.<sup>116</sup>

As Coulibaly Vamara noted, it is true that "in politics, good faith is a rare virtue."<sup>117</sup> However, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, what is at stake is that the national reconciliation process involved the lives of Ivorian people. It was politically awkward for the FPI to accept the reconciliation idea, while it continued to hide its sword behind its back. The FPI consistently claimed that "an arms struggle is not part of their philosophy."<sup>118</sup> However, as suggested by a Human Rights Watch report on Côte d'Ivoire, many dignitaries of the former regime continued to destabilise the country, especially from Ghana. For example, the Ouattara government has accused Gbagbo's allies exiled in Ghana of orchestrating an attack

<sup>114</sup> Leslie Varenne 2012, *Côte d'Ivoire: terrain de jeu de la France et de l'ONU*, Editions Mille et une nuits, p. 266.

<sup>115</sup> Yacouba Sangaré and Lucien Ahonto "Avec Gbagbo, les ponts ne sont pas rompus, nous avons des communications lui et moi," available at <http://www.lebanco.net/banconet/bco19525.htm> (accessed 5 May 2015).

<sup>116</sup> Coulibaly Vamara, Editorial: Réconciliation de façade, *Soir Info*, 22 October 2012, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/443365.html> (accessed 14 May 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Coulibaly Vamara, Editorial: Réconciliation de façade, *Soir Info*, 22 October 2012, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/443365.html> (accessed 14 May 2015).

<sup>118</sup> Coulibaly Vamara, Editorial: Réconciliation de façade, *Soir Info*, 22 October 2012, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/443365.html> (accessed 14 May 2015).

on the border town of Noe in late September 2012. This prompted the closure of the Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire border.<sup>119</sup>

It is important to note that Ghana was chosen as a favourite destination because under the presidency of Gbagbo and former President Atta Mill of Ghana, the Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire relations were cordial. Collective efforts were made to restore peace between the two West African neighbours and Ivorian political refugees were welcomed in Ghana. Also, in terms of distance, it is the closest country for Gbagbo's allies as they could arrive there in little time. However, more than that, the Ghanaian government decided to accept their political demands. Under Ouattara, the relations were characterised by accusations, distrust, and mutual suspicions and claims of oil ownership.<sup>120</sup>

Edith Lederer also noted there was a connection between Gbagbo's allies in exile and extremist rebels such as the junta from Mali, which controlled the half of the country in 2012. She pointed out that Gbagbo's allies and members of the junta from Mali met in the Malian capital Bamako in the end of June 2012. According to Lederer, Gbagbo's allies who were seeking a return to power attempted to recruit a radical group called Ansar Dine to seize power from Ouattara and destabilise the region.<sup>121</sup> It was in the best interest of the FPI to impose a democratic culture and discipline by respecting the institutions and those who lead them. Otherwise, "reconciliation will only remain a vision of mind."<sup>122</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Bien loin de la réconciliation," November 2012, p. 1, available at [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cotedivoire1112webwcover\\_FR.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cotedivoire1112webwcover_FR.pdf) (accessed 18 May 2012)

<sup>120</sup> Patrick Mahama, "Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana relations after the fall of Gbagbo: challenges and lessons," University of Professional Studies, Logon, Ghana, available at <http://www.abstract.xlibx.com/a-political/126771-1-ghana-cote-divoire-relations-after-the-fall-gbagbo-cote-ch.php> (accessed 17 June 2015).

<sup>121</sup> Edith Lederer 2012, "UN report says Gbagbo supporters try to recruit rebels," *Mail and Guardian*, available at <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-10-09-un-report-says-gbagbo-supporters-tried-to-recruit-rebels> (accessed 26 June 2015); Human Rights Watch, "Bien loin de la réconciliation," November 2012, p. 1, available at [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cotedivoire1112webwcover\\_FR.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/cotedivoire1112webwcover_FR.pdf) (accessed 18 May 2012; Also see UN Security Council Meetings Coverage, "2015 presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, critical time to assess post-crisis security situation sanction chair tells Security Council," 29 October 2014, available at <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11621.doc.htm> (accessed 18 May 2015).

<sup>122</sup> Coulibaly Vamara, Editorial: Réconciliation de façade, *Soir Info*, 22 October 2012, available at <http://news.abidjan.net/h/443365.html> (accessed 14 May 2015).

In light of the above evidence, it is easy to conclude that the reconciliation process under Ouattara, which began in 2011, is not working. There is a lack of political will on the part of both the Ouattara government and the opposition to boost the reconciliation process at a time when the country remains deeply divided by political and ethnic affiliations which are frustrating Houphouët's followers.

Many Ivorians began to mourn their first President, Houphouët, when his successor, Bédié, launched the *Ivoirité* categorising and differentiating between "real Ivorians" and "Ivorians who came from elsewhere" before the 1995 elections. The latter were considered to be second class citizens and could not run for a president or a seat in parliament. As a result, the social fabric of the nation has fundamentally changed for the worse. Houphouët's followers argued that under his tenure there was no distinction between Ivorians based on their origins, or between Ivorians and other Africans who had the right to vote. They also argued that Houphouët, the native of Yamoussoukro, the centre of Côte d'Ivoire, never failed to remind Ivorians of the importance of the votes from the north, saying he was elected in 1946 as a Parliamentarian at the French National Assembly thanks to the votes of northerners.<sup>123</sup>

Houphouët's followers lamented the loss of their favourite father of the nation when, in 2002, an armed rebellion terrorised the population, split the nation in two, and grave violations of human rights were committed by both sides. For those followers, Houphouët never took up arms during his public life in order to take control of the nation. For example, Ben Ismael, a journalist from the *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* daily newspaper and Houphouët's follower, indicated that although there were killings in Bouake in the centre-north and Dimbokro and Agboville in the south of Côte d'Ivoire during the battle for independence against France, Houphouët never took up arms. Therefore, he said he "preferred the father of the

<sup>123</sup> *Le Monde Afrique*, Point de Vue, "Présidentielle 2015: Houphouët-Boigny sera-t-il au premier tour?" 5 February 2015.

independence.”<sup>124</sup> Houphouët’s followers maintained that Houphouët always presented himself as a man of peace, who failed to win a Nobel Prize, but created and financed his own prize. This was endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to reward peacemakers around the world.<sup>125</sup>

Also, in 2011, these followers regretted the loss of Houphouët when the post-election crisis caused 3,000 deaths. While the country was plunged into a crisis, the list of those who had a desire to return to the ideals of Houphouët, labelled Houphouëtists was getting longer. Practically all his opponents or enemies, such as Gbagbo, became Houphouëtists. This list also included Tiburce Koffi, President of the Neo-Houphouëtists Movement. In 1987, Koffi spent an entire year at the infamous military camp of Séguéla in Côte d’Ivoire for militating for the rights of teachers through the Teachers Union, which was a thorn in the side of Houphouët at that time.<sup>126</sup>

Interestingly, respondent “J” is a PDCI member and respondent “A” is a member of Gbagbo’s FPI. They have disagreements and opposite position about Ivorian politics. The FPI had always been a bitter opponent for the PDCI. The values of the FPI are at odds with those of the PDCI. Respondent “A” focused on anti-French, anti-imperialist, and anti-PDCI sentiments. More than this, he focused on the rights of ordinary Ivorians and blamed immigrants for the nation’s problem. Respondent “J” on her part welcomed this group, seeking to include them into Ivorian politics, an aspect of the identity issue that surfaced frequently, as in the case of the 2010 post-election crisis that led to an almost total displacement of West African immigrants. Respondent “A” viewed the Ouattara government’s efforts as smokescreen designed merely to reassure the international community that reconciliation was progressing. Respondent “J” argued that the opposition is

<sup>124</sup> Ben Ismaël, “Houphouët, Senghor... n’ont pas pris les armes,” *L’Intelligent d’Abidjan*, 25 June 2012.

<sup>125</sup> *Le Monde Afrique*, Point de Vue, “Présidentielle 2015: Houphouët-Boigny sera-t-il au premier tour?” 5 February 2015.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Respondent “O” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 19 May 2012.

engaged in a smear campaign to tarnish the government's image overseas. Nevertheless, they were on the same page on the slow process of national reconciliation and lamented the loss of Houphouët.<sup>127</sup> There is a stark contrast between the accomplishments of Houphouët and Ouattara. Under the leadership of Houphouët, there was no official coups d'état, no rebellions, no ethnic wars, and no postelection conflicts. Although he was an authoritarian, Houphouët successfully managed to reconcile a nation of over 60 ethnic groups through dialogue and negotiations.<sup>128</sup> Ouattara's leadership was marked by ongoing conflict, ethnic divisions, and slow process of national reconciliation that continued to negatively impact the country.

In 2013, during the ceremony marking the twentieth anniversary of the death of Houphouët, Ouattara who introduced himself as a spiritual son of Houphouët paid a vibrating homage to his illustrious predecessor through an impressive photography exhibition on the life and work of Houphouët.<sup>129</sup>

Houphouët is still present in the heart of his followers and for them, criticising him is politically incorrect. However, they forget that Houphouët was a man who ruled with an iron fist and imprisoned those who contested his power. They also forget that toward the end of his rule, the financial situation was so catastrophic that he was shouted down by students who demonstrated in the streets. Finally, they forget that he only endorsed multiparty elections in 1990 due to pressure from protesters and international financial institutions. Some Ivorians have a short memory when the situation they live in is not significantly better than the past.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Respondent "J" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 19 June 2012; Interview with Respondent "A" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 April 2012.

<sup>128</sup> Joan Tilouine, "L'ombre d'Houphouët-Boigny plane toujours sur la Côte d'Ivoire," *Le Monde*, 6 February 2015, [http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2015/02/06/l-ombre-d-houphouet-boigny-plane-toujours-sur-la-cote-d-ivoire\\_4571219\\_3212.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2015/02/06/l-ombre-d-houphouet-boigny-plane-toujours-sur-la-cote-d-ivoire_4571219_3212.html) (accessed 11 August 2016); Charles Onana, *Côte d'Ivoire le coup d'état*, Editions Duboiris, 2011, p. 384; Maureen Grisot 2014, Reconciliation falters in Ivory Coast as Ouattara is slow to welcome back exiles, *The Guardian* 18 April 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/08/ivory-coast-ouattara-gbagbo-reconciliation> (accessed 21 April 2014).

<sup>129</sup> *Le Monde Afrique*, Point de Vue, "Présidentielle 2015: Houphouët-Boigny sera-t-il au premier tour?" 5 February 2015.

The Observatory of Transitional Justice (OTJ) in Côte d'Ivoire conducted a survey on the perception of the populations living in Côte d'Ivoire about the reconciliation process from 22 June to 25 July 2013. The research enabled OTJ to collect data on opinions, judgments and sentiments in eight regions in Côte d'Ivoire (Lagunes, Gbêkê, Pôro, Gontougou, Haut-Sassandra, Lôh-Djiboua, Guémon, and Nawa). The analysis showed that for 94% of respondents, reconciliation was a necessity for the well-being of the country while 64% upheld that reconciliation was important for sustainable development.<sup>130</sup>

The national reconciliation announced by the belligerents themselves and the international community is a long time coming. The populations surveyed showed Ivorians' uneasiness with regard to the effectiveness of the reconciliation process. The respondents pointed out a certain number of obstacles that impacted the reconciliation. Chief among them were political reasons including a lack of political willingness to bolster the process.

In addition, Ivorians felt that a durable solution depended on the comprehensive investigation of crimes and war crimes resulting from political violence from pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces. For example, the massacres in Duékoué and other towns in the west were possibly committed by supporters of Ouattara. On the other hand, crimes were also committed by Gbagbo's forces in Abidjan in the south. Unfortunately, those crimes have not been investigated with equal seriousness and only the Gbagbo camp has been targeted. Amidst the lack of political will to implement the DDR and the lack of credibility of the transitional justice mechanisms, Ivorians felt that reconciliation was hopeless.

Indeed, one cannot talk about reconciliation without promoting peace, forgiveness, justice, and re-establishing the historic truth. Since 1990, Côte d'Ivoire has not been functioning in a

<sup>130</sup> Observatoire de la Justice Transitionnelle de Côte d'Ivoire 2013, "Perception des populations vivant en Côte d'Ivoire à propos de la réconciliation et de la Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation (CDVR)," available at [http://www.univ-paris1.fr/fileadmin/IREDIES/Projets\\_de\\_recherche/Rapport\\_du\\_sonage\\_sur\\_le\\_processus\\_de\\_r%C3%A9conciliation\\_nationale\\_et\\_la\\_CVDR.pdf](http://www.univ-paris1.fr/fileadmin/IREDIES/Projets_de_recherche/Rapport_du_sonage_sur_le_processus_de_r%C3%A9conciliation_nationale_et_la_CVDR.pdf) (accessed 18 June 2015).

climate of appeasement as a certain number of events took place. These events included the introduction of debates led by Ouattara and his allies who are leading the reconciliation process that took ethnic or regionalist forms. It is impossible to select people who are not consensual to organise a reconciliation, which by its definition requires the culture of forgiveness. According to Gomez Coovi, since 11 April, 2011, reconciliation became a political slogan used by Ouattara and his allies to hide the lack of legitimacy in their regime.<sup>131</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter argued that reconciliation is crucial in Côte d'Ivoire to end disputes and litigations of all kinds between ethnic groups, politicians, ordinary Ivorian citizens, regions, and social classes. This chapter showed that attempts were made to resolve the crisis and bring some stability. For example, the main belligerents reaffirmed their commitment to the Linas-Marcourssis Agreements. The document addressed the issues of peace and national reconciliation. Also, most expected that the successful implementation of the CDVR's framework would lead to reconciliation and end the crisis. However, it did little to reconcile the nation; but it turned a new page in the nation's history. This chapter also showed that faced with the slow pace of the progress of national reconciliation, Houphouët's followers are lamenting the loss of the nation's first President and maintaining that the reconciliation will never be achieved.

From Houphouët to Ouattara, peace varied the fortunes in Côte d'Ivoire. In effect, according to Houphouët's allies, the first President managed to maintain stability and preserve peace.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>131</sup> "Gomez Coovi (analyse politique) décortique la réconciliation en Côte d'Ivoire," available at <http://www.ivorian.net/video/p/39.html> (accessed 21 June 2015).

<sup>132</sup> Chrysantus Ayangafac, 2011, *The politics of post-conflict elections in Côte d'Ivoire*, in Hany Besada edition, *From civil strife to peace building: examining private sector involvement in West African reconstruction*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, p. 39.

However, for them, Houphouët' successors lacked the wisdom and high capacity to resolve conflicts. They insisted that Côte d'Ivoire has been particularly disturbed since the 2002 rebellion. Therefore, the hope for peace was dashed by increasing instability caused by numerous conflicts. Since 2011, Ouattara has been given an opportunity to stabilise the nation through dialogue, but social peace has decreased. Repetitive attacks in the west of Côte d'Ivoire and the violence of the political debate in Abidjan have not helped.

There were also the charges of conspiracy against soldiers and civilians close to former President Gbagbo-although crimes were committed by both pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara forces, rendering the national reconciliation process difficult.<sup>133</sup> This included over a hundred detainees from the Gbagbo camp who were formally accused of crimes committed during the post-election crisis. This reinforced the sentiment of victor's justice and a situation of impunity for forces that helped Ouattara gain power. In the meantime, Ivoirians who clearly perceived reconciliation as a crucial dimension for the prevention of future conflicts want to move on as quickly as possible.

As stated by one West African diplomat, "reconciliation is on the bad rails in Côte d'Ivoire."<sup>134</sup> The truth is that bitterness, tensions, and frustrations still exist in Côte d'Ivoire as the government and the opposition continue to defy each other. Indeed, true reconciliation will be a difficult, painful, and complex process, but it must be achieved because failing will sow the seeds for future conflict.

It is noteworthy that there is no practical itinerary for reconciliation. There is no shortcut or simple prescription to heal the wounds and divisions of a society left by prolonged armed violence. Creating an environment of trust and understanding between old enemies is a

<sup>133</sup> Pascal Airault, "Côte d'Ivoire: Réconciliation impossible"? *Jeune Afrique*, 3 July 2012, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2685p034-037.xml0/> (accessed 12 May 2015).

<sup>134</sup> Pascal Airault, "Côte d'Ivoire: Réconciliation impossible"? *Jeune Afrique*, 3 July 2012, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/JA2685p034-037.xml0/> (accessed 12 May 2015).



difficult challenge. However, it is a challenge that needs to be addressed for the sake of sustainable peace by building trust and seeking out a shared future from a divided past.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Francis Vallée “La réconciliation après un conflit violent: un manuel,” série manuels international IDEA, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, available at <http://www.idea.int/publications/reconciliation/upload/Part%201.pdf>  
<http://www.idea.int/publications/reconciliation/upload/Part%201.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2015).

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the root causes and effects of the contemporary conflict in Côte d'Ivoire which started on 19 September, 2002, when civil war broke out after a failed coup d'état. This thesis argued that the root causes of the conflict can be traced back to the period of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the first President of the independent and post-colonial nation and his failure to successfully manage a leadership transition from his generation to the next. In French West Africa, when colonial rule ended in the 1960s, it was believed that democracy would emerge in those countries. However, the 'fathers of independence' adopted various forms of clientelism and personal rule and leadership transition. For example, during the presidency of Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, politics was dominated by personal rule, corruption, and clientelism.<sup>1</sup>

The colonial heritage of the plantation economy helped Houphouët build the Ivorian nation. His pragmatism and desire to make Côte d'Ivoire a showcase for the sub-region was followed by a reliance on immigration, mainly from Mali and Upper Volta, which became Burkina Faso in 1984. The increased inflow of cheap foreign labour to the cocoa and coffee plantations of the south of the nation contributed to the 'Ivorian economic miracle' of the 1980s. However, Houphouët's leadership was also based on his Akan tradition, which allowed him to justify his establishment of a single-party, the PDCI, and the disqualification of any individual who challenged 'the father of the nation.'<sup>2</sup>

As Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg stated, "one-man politics raises the question of succession."<sup>3</sup> Houphouët presided over the destiny of Côte d'Ivoire from 1960 until his death in 1993. The issue of his succession inaugurated troubling times of nationalist tension and

<sup>1</sup> Martial Ahipeaud 2009, *Côte d'Ivoire: entre barbarie et démocratie*, Les Editions du CERAP, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> See Amadou Koné 2003, *Houphouët-Boigny et la crise Ivoirienne*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 43-98.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, 1982, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*, University of California Press, p. 152.

political violence.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is agreed here that if Houphouët did not create uncertainty and confusion during the transition period, Côte d'Ivoire could have remained stable and peaceful after his death.

According to 80% of older Ivorian respondents interviewed for this thesis, the nation is in crisis mainly because of the succession war caused by Houphouët and his personal rule. However, the failures of the Ivorian elite also contributed to the deepening of the crisis, as they were unable to tackle Côte d'Ivoire's major issues such as citizenship, identity, and political inclusion. As a result, they passively contributed to the disintegration of the country. Chaos resulted, and the majority of the population lost confidence in the political system.

This thesis has demonstrated that the death of Houphouët (an Akan from the south) at the end of 1993 coincided with the weakening of the Ivorian economic miracle and the devaluation of France's CFA in 1994. Since then, only three politicians have dominated the Ivorian political scene: Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara. Given the deepening of the economic crisis, there was an accumulation of frustration within Ivorian society. People from the north of Côte d'Ivoire were often stigmatised, and others especially those who had migrated from Burkina Faso and Mali, were often used as scapegoats for various crimes, simply because of their surnames, nationalities, or ethnic origins. Furthermore, Bédié, the then President of the National Assembly and a member of the Akan ethnic group, created the notion of *Ivoirité*, which disallowed Ouattara from running for the political leadership, although he had already served as Houphouët's Prime Minister. Thus, Bédié had accused Ouattara of not being 'a true Ivorian.' Nonetheless, Bédié's leadership was not secured by these exclusions, and he was toppled in a military coup d'état in 1999 by General Robert Guéi. The second President post-Houphouët was Gbagbo. In 2000, when Gbagbo (from the Bété ethnic group) took power, he

<sup>4</sup> Jean-François Harvard, "Tuer les pères des indépendances ? Comparaison de deux générations post-indépendances au Sénégal et en Côte d'Ivoire," *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée*, 2009, No. 2, Vol. 16.

also embraced Bédié's concept of *Ivoirité*, which triggered the rise of ultranationalism, the defence of Ivorian identity, and the fight against assailants from the north. Gbagbo was unable to govern in these circumstances. This situation was exacerbated by the September 2002 rebellion. Given Gbagbo's history of anti-colonialism and his fight against French hegemony, the conflict took the form of a war for "a second independence."<sup>5</sup>

After suffering repetitive attacks from Gbagbo's opponents, Côte d'Ivoire fell gradually into a deeper crisis, for various reasons including unprecedented mismanagement and corruption, as well as violence and the implementation of the politics of ethnicity that have reigned for years in the country. According to Hofnung, Gbagbo could have bowed out with his head held high by accepting his electoral defeat in 2010, but because he refused to go, there was no way he could leave with any political respect left intact.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis has thus argued that the 2010 Ivorian presidential elections should not have been held, but should have been delayed, as they have left a bitter aftertaste and failed to resolve the crisis. Côte d'Ivoire has witnessed a tragic chapter in its history, with over 3,000 deaths. It is estimated that about one million people were internally or externally displaced, from a total population of 21 million people. Furthermore, it worsened the crisis it was meant to end and failed to help bring about reconciliation and stability despite an appeal for calm to voters before the second round of the elections.

Therefore, for the first time in its political history, Côte d'Ivoire ended up with two Presidents claiming electoral victory, as a direct result of the flawed electoral process, which was widely perceived to be skewed or corrupted. While Ouattara eventually became the

<sup>5</sup> Richard Banégas, "Côte d'Ivoire: les jeunes se lèvent en hommes. Anticolonialisme et ultranationalisme chez les jeunes patriotes d'Abidjan," les études du CERI, no.137, July 2007, p.15.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hofnung, 2012, *La crise ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 176.

President of Côte d'Ivoire after these 2010 elections, he did so with little internal legitimacy, and his victory was widely perceived as being secured by foreign forces.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis has demonstrated that the use of force by both UN peacekeepers and French troops, intervening under the policy of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), aimed to sideline Gbagbo and ensure Ouattara's hold on power. However, this international coalition which secured Ouattara's presidency failed to resolve the decades long crisis facing the nation. Instead, it plunged Côte d'Ivoire into political confusion, creating an insecure future for this African nation.

This thesis has argued in favour of the reinforcement of the reconciliation process in order to contribute to national cohesion and stability, a necessity for Ivorians. In order to help advance political reconciliation throughout the nation, the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR), which was initiated by Ouattara, was created in May 2011, but things remain unresolved. Despite this, as Respondent "B" stated, "The nation is not fully reconciled, but Côte d'Ivoire is relatively peaceful despite the insecurity."<sup>8</sup> This is indeed the case, because as we have seen, since the French intervention which resolved the political stalemate, there have been hardly any battles, fights or skirmishes between government forces and protesters.<sup>9</sup>

As Hofnung pointed out, a true reconciliation among Ivorians will only be achieved through justice. However, under Ouattara, the nation has been suffering from impunity. Although

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Hofnung, 2012, *La crise ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 180.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Respondent "B" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 28 April 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Focus Cote d'Ivoire, Situation sécuritaire, Département fédéral de justice et police DFJP, Berne-Wabern, 17 December 2015 <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslander/afrika/civ/CIV-sicherheitslage-f.pdf> (accessed 9 August 2016); *AFP*, L'armée ivoirienne apaisée après des promesses du gouvernement, 18.11.2014, [http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2014/11/18/les-militaires-ivoiriens-manifestent-dans-tout-le-pays\\_1145477](http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2014/11/18/les-militaires-ivoiriens-manifestent-dans-tout-le-pays_1145477) (accessed 9 August 2016); *Jeune Afrique*, Côte d'Ivoire : avec le CCDO, la sécurité d'Abidjan se militarise, 12.03.2013, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/171838/politique/c-te-d-ivoire-avec-le-ccdo-la-s-curit-d-abidjan-se-militarise/> (9 August 2016); *Le Patriote*, Criminalité, grand banditisme, délinquance juvénile... : Le CCDO frappe fort !, 18.03.2014, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/492974.html> (accessed 9 August 2016).

Ouattara promised he will end impunity, and all perpetrators will be persecuted, irrespective of their camp, only Gbagbo's close collaborators are currently detained. That contributed to Ouattara's failure to heal and reconcile the nation, causing the frustration of many Ivorians who were tired of the failure of the reconciliation and its consequences.<sup>10</sup>

The end of the witch hunts, which are significantly impacting the return of political exiles from the FPI, and the release of prisoners who were unjustly detained according to their allies, including the fate of Gbagbo, could be seen by the Gbagbo camp as the first step towards national reconciliation. However, this reconciliation may not take place as long as both camps continue to deny the atrocities they committed just as they refuse to accept responsibility for acts perpetrated against their people.

In order to solve the national reconciliation issue, Ivorians need to put more emphasis on promoting the culture of peace, forgiveness, justice, and re-establishing the historic truth. On the other hand, the government should take practical steps to ease tension and promote reconciliation by appealing to political exiles to return home in order to contribute to nation-building.

This thesis has also identified some broader Ivorian political issues which need to be resolved in order to achieve a comprehensive peace. It is therefore recommended that the parties involved should take some practical steps to promote reconciliation, a prerequisite for lasting peace.

According to respondent "T", "reconciliation is something new in the Ivorian culture. To achieve reconciliation, parties involved should admit their wrongdoing, grant amnesty, and adopt a traditional justice system like in Rwanda."<sup>11</sup> When researching ideal models that

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Hofnung, 2012, *La crise ivoirienne de Félix Houphouët-Boigny à la chute de Laurent Gbagbo*, Frat Mat Editions, p. 176.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Respondent "T" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 29 June 2012; UN, "Background information on the justice and reconciliation process in Rwanda," available at

could be applied, many specialists of political conflict resolution would agree that the Rwandan model of national reconstruction and reconciliation is a good example that Côte d'Ivoire could follow to achieve reconciliation. However, in order to achieve reconciliation, the nation must make compromises and include all the political stakeholders in the reconciliation process.<sup>12</sup>

Reconciliation could also be achieved by releasing Gbagbo and his supporters from prison. In the words of one respondent "L," "broadly speaking, all political prisoners should be released. Gbagbo's case in particular should proceed under the Ivorian judicial system then released."<sup>13</sup> On 6 June, 2011, the members of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Côte d'Ivoire appointed by the UN recommended that lasting peace or stability is possible in Côte d'Ivoire. However, peace can only be achieved if the perpetrators are confronted and brought to justice.<sup>14</sup> When discussing strategies for peace in Côte d'Ivoire, it is worth noting that acknowledging the errors of the past may be beneficial to understand how Côte d'Ivoire can move forward through planning and collaboration.

It is therefore recommended that the government should appeal for the rapid release of former President Gbagbo, a necessity for national reconciliation, as he is still present in the heart of his allies.

It is also recommended that free and fair transparent elections must be held in the future, to further promote and consolidate peace in Côte d'Ivoire. As respondent "G" noted, "the best way to avoid future fallout in Côte d'Ivoire is through the organisation of free and transparent

<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgjustice.shtml> (accessed 25 September 2015); Phil Clark 2010, *The Gacaca Courts, post-genocide justice and reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 186-220.

<sup>12</sup> Doudou Sidibé, Peace process in Côte d'Ivoire: Democracy and challenges of consolidating peace after the post-electoral crisis, *Accord*, issue 1, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Respondent "L" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 25 June 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Doudou Sidibé, Peace process in Côte d'Ivoire: Democracy and challenges of consolidating peace after the post-electoral crisis, *Accord*, issue 1, 2013; 6 June 2011 Independent International Commission of Inquiry Report on Côte d'Ivoire, [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.48\\_Extract.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.48_Extract.pdf) (accessed 21 July 2011).

elections.”<sup>15</sup> In order to build a foundation of trust with all stakeholders, Côte d’Ivoire will need to establish a free and transparent electoral system. One respondent, who has been engaged in political activities in ECOWAS countries since the 1990s, made it very clear that the majority of sub-Saharan countries have been regularly organising elections.<sup>16</sup> However, conflict has occurred due to the fact that many of those countries have failed to comply with democratic standards. Consequently, only a few national elections have occurred without dispute. Instead of moments of peace and change following an election, many countries face long periods of internal conflict and instability. The informant stated that holding elections in Africa is a daunting task because of the conflict that often occurs as a result of corrupt practices. However, the informant believes that holding free and transparent elections can ultimately unify the country and prevent conflict in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>17</sup>

It is also recommended that a neutral President of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission be appointed. Finally, it is recommended that the government should implement a robust social cohesion policy to end xenophobia. For decades, Ivorian political elites have used political discourses that stigmatised foreign and non-native communities. This has created tensions, which are far from being completely resolved because the government’s social cohesion policy is far too weak to appease the populations. As respondent “C” pointed out, when asked about how to end xenophobia for political purposes:

in my view, if Ivorians and non-Ivorians wished to combat racism and xenophobia effectively, they should tackle the issue from the bottom up, through education, communication and dialogue. Ivorians and non-Ivorians

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Respondent “G” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 21 May 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Field notes with Respondent “O” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 28 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Field notes with Respondent “O” Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire 28 May 2012; Groupe des Sages de l’Union africaine, “Les conflits et la violence politique résultant des élections. Consolider le rôle de l’Union africaine dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits,” *La collection Union africaine*, New York : International Peace Institute, December 2012; The role of elections and peace processes, United Nations System Staff College 2011, [http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/UNSSC-ZIF-2011-The-Role-of-Elections-in-Peace-Processes\\_2011.pdf](http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/UNSSC-ZIF-2011-The-Role-of-Elections-in-Peace-Processes_2011.pdf) (accessed 11 August 2016).



must learn to live together in harmony and learn to forgive. Personally, forgiveness is important for me because I forgive without bitterness.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, the absence of forgiveness during the last decade in Côte d'Ivoire has become a significant trigger for violence. On 6 June, 2011, the committee members of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Côte d'Ivoire appointed by the UN also delivered an optimistic report: most of the participants involved in the inquiry expressed their desire to live together on good terms. This willingness to work together through collaboration is a key element of peace in Côte d'Ivoire. After numerous challenges and long standing conflict, the willingness to live together in good terms is the most certain path towards the creation of a more peaceful nation.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to this, it was the lack of commitment of stakeholders involved in the reconciliation process and their impartiality; the perception of a two-tier justice system at the expense of one community; and the absence of a robust social cohesion policy to end xenophobia, that impacted on the failures of reconciliation. It is through the timely implementation of the above recommendations that the battle for nation-building and reconciliation may be won.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Respondent "C" Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire 28 April 2012.

<sup>19</sup> See 2011 Independent International Commission of Inquiry Report on Côte d'Ivoire, [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.48\\_Extract.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.48_Extract.pdf) (accessed 21 July 2011).

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## Appendix A: The Ivorian Elites

### The Four Generations of Ivorian Political Elites

This Appendix shows the four generations of Ivorian political elites, mainly Ministers. Lists are not exhaustive, showing name, ethnic affiliation (dominated by males from Akan ethnic), and political posts held during the colonial era, through to the independence period and up until the late 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Generation 1946 – 1950s

Name	Ethnic affiliation	Gender	Political Post held
Mamadou Coulibaly (died 1985)	Malinké	Male	Economic and Social Council President, Political Bureau, PDCI Treasure, Councillor in the French Union, UN Ambassador
Bernard Dadié	Agny	Male	Minister of Culture, imprisoned at Grand Bassam (1949)
Auguste Denise (died 1991)	Baoulé	Male	Secretary General of the PDCI, parliamentarian, Minister of State
Matthieu Ekra	Abouré	Male	Colonial Administrator (1956), Minister of Information, Minister of State, imprisoned at Grand Bassam (1949)
Germain Coffie Gadeau	Baoulé	Male	Secretary of founder's meeting (1946), Minister of Interior, the Order's Grand Chancellor, imprisoned at Grand Bassam (1949)
Jean-Baptist Monkey (died 1981)	Apollo	Male	Secretary General of the PDCI, Vice-Prime Minister(Community), Minister of Interior, Minister of Agriculture, parliamentarian, Mayor Grand Bassam, President of the Court for State Security, Ambassador to Israel, imprisoned (1949)
Philippe Yacé (died 1998)	Alladian	Male	General Councillor (1952), PDCI Secretary General, National Assembly President, Economic and Social Council President

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Jeanne Maddox Toungara, *Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire*, JSTOR: *African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38; Frédéric Grah Mel 2003, *Félix Houphouët-Boigny: Le Fulgurant Destin d'une Jeune Proie*, Les Editions du CERAP, p. 757.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation: 1960s

Name	Ethnic affiliation	Gender	Political Post held
Camille Alliali	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Justice
Lambert Amon-Tanoh	Agny	Male	Minister of Education
Kacou Aoulou	Agny	Male	Minister of Construction and Town-Planning
Jean Konan Banny	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Defence
Henri Konan Bédié	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Finance, National Assembly President
M' Bhia Blé	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Defence
Ernest Boka (died 1964),	Abé	Male	Minister of Education, Minister of Civil Service, President of Supreme Court
Johachim Bony	Baoulé	Male	Minister of National Education
Lanzeni Coulibaly	Sénoufo	Male	Minister of Justice
Lamine Diabaté	Malinké	Male	Minister of State
Mohamed Diawara	Dioula	Male	Minister of Planning
Charles Donwahi	Bété	Male	Minister of Agriculture
Jeanne Gervais	Baoulé	Female	Baoulé, Minister of Women's Condition, AFI President
Léon Konan Koffi	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Interior, Minister of Defence
Ahoussou Koffi	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Mines, Minister of Transport
Assouan Usher	Apollo	Male	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mayor of Cocody

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation – 1970s

<b>Name</b>	<b>Ethnic affiliation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Political Post held</b>
Simeon Aké	Ebrié	Male	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lamine Fadika	Malinké	Male	Minister of Maritime Affairs, Mayor of Touba
Laurent Dona Fologo	Sénoufo	Male	Minister of Information, Minister of Youth and Sports, Secretary General of the PDCI
Sery Gnoléba	Bété	Male	Minister of Commerce, Minister of State
Paul Gui-Dibo	Guéré	Male	Minister of Mines, Minister of State
Denis Bra-Kanon	Bété	Male	Minister of Agriculture
Paul Akoto Yao	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Education, Mayor of Cocody

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation – 1980s

<b>Name</b>	<b>Ethnic affiliation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Political Post held</b>
Ezan Akélé	Agy	Male	Minister of Environment
Yed Ngoran	Abidji	Male	Minister of Mines and Energy
Kouamé Agoran	Agy	Male	Minister of Commerce and Industry
Vamoussa Bamba	Malinké,	Male	Minister of Education
Emile Constant Bombet	Guéré	Male	Minister of Interior
Adama Coulibaly	Sénoufo	Male	Minister of Supply, Transport and Tourism
Henriette Diabaté	Alladjan	Female	Minister of Culture
René Djedjemel Diby	Adioukrou	Male	Minister of Youth and Sports
Alain Ekra	Agy	Male	Minister of Health
Amara Essy	Dioula	Male	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Alain Gauze:	Bété	Male	Minister Delegate to the PM
Claire Thérèse Grah	Krou	Female	Minister of Women's Promotion
Daniel Kablan-Duncan	Apollo	Male	Minister Delegate to the PM
Nicolas Yao Kouassi-Akron	Agy	Male	Minister of Posts and Telecom
Patrice Kouamé	Agy	Male	Minister of Civil Service
Lambert Kouassi Konan	Baoulé	Male	Minister of Agriculture

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Generation – Late 1980s

Name	Ethnic affiliation	Gender	Political Post held
Jean-Jacques Béchio	Attié,	Male	Minister of Civil Service
Bernard Ehui	Agy	Male	Minister of Industry, Minister of Youth and Sports
Balla Kéita	Malinké	Male	Minister of Education
Gilles Laubhouet	Dida	Male	Minister of Subsistence Agriculture
Alphonse Djédjé Mady	Bété	Male	Minister of Health

Note: It is important to note that Ivorian elites have been dominated by men in general and Akan men in particular, apart from a few women such as Jeanne Gervais, Henriette Diabaté, or Claire Thérèse Grah. In the 1960s, only Jeanne Gervais, an Akan, was the only female Minister under the presidency of Houphouët. For Laurent Dona Fologo, the large number of young people joining the PDCI was a symbol of success for the party.<sup>2</sup> Broadly speaking, they were all graduates from western universities, the overwhelming majority graduated in France. While only a few resisted total co-optation or what Bayart has called the ‘reciprocal assimilation of elites’ (Gbagbo was an obvious example), many of them were engaged in a cohabitation with Houphouët’s government.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, they all had been loyal to Houphouët, receiving special treatment and getting fruitful careers in return – a clear indication of the Ivorian patron-client relationship which involves reciprocity.

<sup>2</sup> Jeanne Maddox Toungara, Generational Tensions in the Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire, *JSTOR: African Studies Review*, Vol. 38, No. 2, September 1995, pp. 11-38.

<sup>3</sup> Bayart, Jean-François. 1993. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, Longman, London.

## Appendix B: Transcripts of 2012 Interviews

Transcripts of 2012 interviews conducted by the author in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. All interviews were conducted in French, and translated below by the author.

### **Respondent A – 25 April 2012.**

One of Gbagbo's allies behind his 2010 election campaign was Respondent "A". Respondent "A" (age range 50-60), is a male entrepreneur from the Akan ethnic group who spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire on 25 April, 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you for being here. Before going to the specifics of the 2010 presidential elections, I wanted to ask you about the origin of the crisis.

RESPONDENT "A": There is no doubt in my mind that we are in this situation because of Houphouët.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What about the 2000 elections?

RESPONDENT "A": Prior to the 2000 elections, the Gbagbo camp was opposed to the idea of giving Ivorian citizenship to people from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinée living in Côte d'Ivoire. They feared it would create an artificial society in Côte d'Ivoire which would be difficult to manage. In particular, the Gbagbo camp refused to endorse the application of Ouattara for the presidency. Since Ouattara was not allowed to run and he really wanted to be a candidate and potentially President, he stated he would make Côte d'Ivoire ungovernable. This triggered the rebellion on 18-19 September 2002 which was funded by Ouattara, sending the rebels who were based in Burkina Faso 20 million CFA each month, although no rebellion is accepted in the world.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Would you like to make a comment on the 2010 elections?

RESPONDENT “A”: As an election observer in the north, south, and west of the country, I can confirm that a number of serious electoral irregularities took place including multiple voting. More importantly, in the north, there was credible evidence pointing to intense ballot-stuffing or voter intimidation.

Gbagbo’s option to avoid the crisis was a vote recount. This proposal, which was one of the best ways to end the crisis, was supported by Gbagbo’s French lawyers after an analysis of the Ivorian election dossier. So the 2010 post-election crisis occurred because the demands of Gbagbo and the FPI that the votes be recounted were rejected by the electoral authorities and the Ouattara camp. By the way, going to the polls in 2010 despite the presence of the rebels in a country that was divided in two was not wise.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: If Gbagbo postponed the elections so many times, why did he go ahead in 2010?

RESPONDENT “A”: That was because Gbagbo relied on the opinion polls from eight agencies in one and half years, including the SOFRES Institute which suggested he would win during the first round by 46%, but it was a trap because the polls were manipulated by those agencies in order to force Gbagbo to allow the election to go ahead then sideline him.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: We have to leave it there. Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent B – 28 April 2012.**

Respondent “B” (age range 30-40) is a male from the Malinké ethnic group and from the security forces who believed that disarmament was impossible prior to the 2010 elections, but Côte d’Ivoire is relatively peaceful despite the insecurity. Respondent “B” joined me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 28 April, 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: According to you, what are the causes of the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire?

RESPONDENT “B”: Côte d’Ivoire is facing a political-military crisis because of the way Houphouët ruled the nation, but there was also the 24 December 1999 coup d’état. Guëi took power while Bédié was forced into exile in France. After 40 years of PDCI’s rule, the FPI was impatient to take over power. In 2000 Guëi lost the elections, but he wanted to hang on to power no matter what. A deal was struck between Guëi and Gbagbo. Guëi was supposed to remain President and Gbagbo was supposed to take up the role of Prime Minister. However, this did not work because Gbagbo changed his mind which caused a lot of problems. As the crisis persisted, it posed a serious threat to regional peace and security.

Apart from the problem of power struggle there is the problem of ethnicity which has been the cause of much suffering for Ivorian people for over a decade. There is also the issue related to foreigners’ land ownership, sparking a debate over the necessity to continue or put an end to Houphouët’s liberal land policy which contributed to the economic prosperity of the nation. One of the key elements of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement was about introducing more flexibility regarding the rural land issue because the 23 December 1998 Article 26 No. 98-750 did not allow the heir of a foreigner to benefit from the land, a policy the Gbagbo government wanted to retain.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Given your military background, do you think the disarmament of former rebels was necessary before the 2010 elections?

RESPONDENT “B”: Resolving the problem of the former rebels was a real challenge for the Ivorian authorities. While it was a necessity, the disarmament of the rebels before the 2010 elections was impossible because the government was unable to provide for compensation, housing, integration into security forces, and rehabilitation.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What do you think about the intervention of France in the 2010 conflict, for example?

RESPONDENT “B”: France intervened militarily because of the UN which decided that Gbagbo’s arms should be destroyed. Since Gbagbo signed the UN Agreement, the intervention was the right thing to do.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: A lot of people said the military influenced voters in the north. What is your opinion on that?

RESPONDENT “B”: That’s possible. Let’s not forget that in the south including Azopé and Agboville regions it was estimated that about 95% of the population supported Gbagbo. In the north it was estimated that about 90% of the population supported Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: I want to get your view on the security. How is this important aspect going, namely the security in Côte d’Ivoire?

RESPONDENT “B”: Things are slow, but it will improve.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: I want to know what you think of the reconciliation and violence. People talk about reconciliation, but violence still remains. What is your opinion on that?



RESPONDENT "B": The nation is not fully reconciled, but Côte d'Ivoire is relatively peaceful despite the insecurity.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: You have given me a lot of things to think about. Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent C - 28 April 2010.**

Respondent “C” (age range 30-40) is a male house cleaner and a native of Burkina Faso (former Upper Volta) from the Mossi ethnic group who now lives in Côte d’Ivoire. Respondent “C” talked about xenophobia, the post-election crisis, and how he lived through this crisis in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 28 April, 2010.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: I believe you have been here long enough and know about Houphouët’s rule and the consequences.

RESPONDANT “C”: Houphouët has been rightly blamed for the root of the crisis.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: We are going to talk about the post-election military-political crisis. How did you manage to get through those difficult moments?

RESPONDENT “C”: After the elections, tensions were high and something had got out of hand. It was a period that I would never forget because the situation was untenable. During that time, I was working at the Sorbonne in Abidjan city centre and it was difficult get to work without being harassed because I am a foreigner with my residence card. Xenophobia did not exist before. For example, one day I was stopped by 3 attackers who checked my ethnic identity. The fact that they were armed with automatic weapons was a further indication that the Gbagbo government provided support to them.

In fact, they perpetrated the most hideous and immoral forms of violence imaginable during this crisis. Pregnant women were executed in daylight. The killing method was similar or even worse among men. Abobo, the suburb where I live, was a no man’s land.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why Abobo?

RESPONDENT “C”: Abobo? That was because the rebels who came from the north were based there. There were also the *Dozos*, traditional hunters who were fighting for Ouattara. I survived because for two weeks I went into hiding in my house.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How should the xenophobia issue be resolved to prevent the use of racism for political purposes?

RESPONDENT “C”: In my view, if Ivorians and non-Ivorians wished to combat racism and xenophobia effectively, they should tackle the issue from the bottom up, through education, communication and dialogue. Ivorians and non-Ivorians must learn to live together in harmony and learn to forgive. Personally, forgiveness is important for me because I forgive without bitterness.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your view on the transfer of Gbagbo to The Hague?

RESPONDENT “C”: Laurent Gbagbo should not be sent to The Hague by Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Is reconciliation possible?

RESPONDENT “C”: Reconciliation is possible and the government has been doing its best.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent D – 10 June 2012.**

Respondent “D” (age range 40-50) is a male from the Akan ethnic group and was a PDCI member for decades. Respondent “D” believed Houphouët caused the Ivorian crisis which started with Houphouët’s personal rule and the succession crisis because for him there is no succession in Africa and Côte d’Ivoire was no exception, when there is no death. During the fieldwork, Respondent “D” spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 10 June, 2012 about the real cause of the Ivorian crises, the 1999 coup d’état, the 2002 rebellion and the 2010 elections.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is the real cause of the crises?

RESPONDENT “D”: The real cause of the Ivorian crises is that Houphouët was prepared to die in office, but he said he had a younger person in mind for his succession. This was followed by a creation of a board governance committee. Since he was never clear about who would succeed him, Houphouët created confusion, uncertainty, and the succession crisis.

It all begun in 1977 when Konan Bédié was out of the government’s loop. He was sent to the World Bank as an advisor for three years (1977-80). Bédié came back and was elected Member of Parliament of Daoukrou, his hometown. He was supported by Houphouët, then President of the National Assembly. In 1980, Houphouët abolished the position of Secretary-General of his party, the PDCI, which was held by Philippe Yacé. Since Yacé was getting more and more powerful, Houphouët thought abolishing his position was the best way of weakening him.

According to the 1980 Constitution, the President of the National Assembly should temporarily be in charge of the running the country for a period of 60 days then organise

elections. This caused internal problems and frustrations within the PDCI elites, but they remained loyal to Houphouët from 1990 on despite the frustrations.

Due to the economic crisis, Houphouët was forced to appoint Alassane Ouattara, a young Governor from the Central Bank who is a Muslim and from the north, as Prime Minister. At the same time, feeling already old, the PDCI elites organised themselves to fight against Bédié, a younger, stronger, and more powerful adversary who was the successor of Houphouët based on the Constitution. However, the real battle begun when Houphouët died in 1993. So the real cause is the succession crisis caused by Houphouët and the identity issue was only used by politicians as an alibi.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why the 1999 coup d'état occurred?

RESPONDENT "D": The coup took place because of the succession crisis as the PDCI was still powerful. Ouattara was Gbagbo's ally, but the coup took place in 1999. The government of transition was formed of the military and civilians. According to Gbagbo, there were too many RDR's members within the government so he stated that it was RDR's coup. The power struggle between the RDR and the FPI started there.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why the 2002 rebellion?

RESPONDENT "D": According to the rebels, the attack was in response to *Ivoirité*, attacks against people from the north, harassment, treatment of certain Ivorians who were considered as second class citizens while others were considered as 'real Ivorians.' For the rebels, if Gbagbo was in trouble that was because, unlike his two predecessors, he chose not to govern for all Ivorians. Furthermore, Gbagbo did not choose to resolve contradictions and tension with military forces and civilians. He never intended to create the best possible conditions to

achieve peace between communities and political forces of the nation, or to bring about concord between Côte d'Ivoire and its neighbours.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why did Gbagbo go to the polls in 2010?

RESPONDENT "D": Marcoussis Agreement suggested disarmament of former rebels and the Gbagbo militia before elections. Back in 2007, the so-called 'direct dialogue' between Gbagbo and the rebels said he could go to the polls early meaning in 2008. In 2010, he did not abandon hope of a FPI victory.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

## **Respondent E - 15 May 2012**

Respondent “E” (age range 50-60) is a male from the Akan ethnic group, an author and a former journalist. Respondent “E” spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 15 May 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why is Côte d’Ivoire facing crises today?

RESPONDENT “E”: Houphouët is responsible for the crises Côte d’Ivoire is facing today. The repetitive crises witnessed by the nation can be traced back to 1960 with the dossier of the failed succession of Houphouët. The seeds of the crisis had taken root there as he never wanted to step down. In fact, it started with Philippe Yacé who was Houphouët’s major threat who wanted the presidency but never got it. In 1990, Houphouët introduced Alassane Ouattara who was notably known as foreigner. After Houphouët’s death on 7 December 1993, Côte d’Ivoire witnessed a difficult succession. For decades, the key political actors of the nation Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara formed coalitions, and then they were engaged in a prolonged period of fight against each other for political power. For example, during the conflict between Ouattara and Bédié, the latter stated Ouattara was from Burkina Faso. As a consequence, this has taken the nation to the edge of the abyss.

However, in the economic context, under Houphouët, Côte d’Ivoire benefited from an economic success in the 1970s and 1980s because Houphouët embraced a liberal economy policy.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

## **Respondent F – 19 May 2012**

Respondent “F” (age range 50-60) is a male from the Gur ethnic group, an academic and PDCI member. Respondent “F” spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 19 May 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is the root of the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “F”: Houphouët’s personal rule and the conquest of power by the Ivorian elites which was caused by Houphouët were at the core of the Ivorian crisis.

After a 30 year rule (too long and anti-democratic) under the presidency of Houphouët, the instauration of multi-party was an opportunity which enabled the elites to seize the state’s power.

The death of Houphouët in 1993 created a problem because a lot of people were opposed to the application of Article 11 of the Constitution because they did not want Konan Bédié to succeed Houphouët. On the other hand, Yacé was not in favour of the rise of Alassane Ouattara who came from Burkina Faso and his ambition to succeed Houphouët. This was followed by an internal crisis within the PDCI.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the political power games played by all relevant local stakeholders?

RESPONDENT “F”: The key actors were Bédié from the PDCI and Ouattara. The latter was from the PDCI but he joined the RDR which was formed by Djeni Kobena. Kobena was a native from Ghana. When Kobena did wish to speak at a PDCI meeting at the Hotel Ivoire, Laurent Fologo refused to give him the floor. So he slammed the door and created the RDR. Tensions were high between Bédié and Ouattara. Ouattara was the voice of the Dioula people from the north who never conquered power but were willing to do so. There was also Laurent Gbagbo who was exiled in France and later became a key stakeholder when he formed the



FPI. The late General Robert Guëi was also a key military actor. In 1995, Gbagbo and Ouattara formed a coalition (Republican Front) in order to overthrow Bédié. Overall, they had their objectives. For example, during political debates, they never tried to keep their distance from power games and never focused on the substantive arguments. These political actors intervened individually or collectively to protect their interests.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the 1999 coup d'état?

RESPONDENT "F": Guëi never said openly that he initiated the coup d'état. He stated young soldiers went searching for him in his village and asked him to lead them. Nevertheless, when the army came to power, they destroyed or stole everything. It was 'power for money.' Since Bédié was excluded and went in exile in France, it benefited the rise of Gbagbo and his FPI. Gbagbo welcomed the coup d'état, a move that facilitated a *rapprochement* between Ouattara and Gbagbo.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Was the transition successful?

RESPONDENT "F": During the transition, things were not run properly. The fundamental hope of this process was the holding of incontestable elections in Côte d'Ivoire, but the transition resulted in calamitous elections in 2000. There were violent protests which had caused dozens of deaths. Gbagbo badly managed the country and crisis until 2010.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent G - 21 May 2012.**

Respondent “G” who (age range 40-50) is a male and an economist from the Krou ethnic group also pointed the finger at Houphouët, stating he was responsible for the crises through his fake plots strategy to remain in office. Respondent “G” spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 21 May, 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: First of all, who do you think can be mainly blamed of the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “G”: Houphouët to begin with and then his successors.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why Houphouët invented ‘the fake plots’?

RESPONDENT “G”: The fake plots were used by Houphouët as a strategy to sideline or to disallow his political opponents to pursue their ambition in order to remain in power.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What other factors contributed to the crisis?

RESPONDENT “G”: The economic crisis in the 1990s which caused by high unemployment and impoverishment while other Ivorians became rich in an exaggerated way and the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programs did not help. For example, as a result of this, student scholarships were removed. In 1990, Houphouët added three more elements to reinforce his power. First, the arrival of Ouattara. Second, the modification of the Constitution. Third, the authorisation of foreigner votes.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why Ouattara?

RESPONDENT “G”: That was because his arrival was seen as an advantage because he was not corrupt like the PDCI politicians, but it triggered a political battle for the succession of Houphouët among the elites as a lot of methods were used so that Ouattara could fail.

So in 1993, the battle within the PDCI began. When Ouattara decided to take part at the presidential elections, it became a national issue. So in 1995 he was forced not to run because the Constitution did not allow him to do so.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What can you tell me about the particularity of the concept of *Ivoirité*?

RESPONDENT "G": In 1995, Kobena who was President of the National Student Union (FESCI) was seen as a Ghanaian. So the strategy of *Ivoirité* was tested first with Kobena, before Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What are the consequences of the crisis?

RESPONDENT "G": There are three levels of consequences: 1) the lack of social harmony, 2) the increase of poverty at the economic level 3) lack of progress for the nation.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent H – 13 June 2013.**

Respondent “H” (age range 50-60) is a male retired public servant from the Gur ethnic group who talked to me about the Houphouët regime, the succession war, *Ivoirité*, the 1999 coup d’état and its aftermath in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 13 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is the real cause of the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “H”: The real cause was the Houphouët regime. As an autocrat, he had carefully muzzled all his opponents and ruled without sharing power with anyone. He ruled without any real opponent. Gbagbo only became his real opponent after. Then there was the succession crisis between Bédié and Ouattara. When Ouattara formed the RDR, his members were incarcerated.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the 1999 coup d’état and its aftermath?

RESPONDENT “H”: It was Robert Guëi’s coup d’état. This allowed him to put in place a government of transition that he led. In 2000, Gbagbo won the elections, but the opposition contested because Bédié and Ouattara were sidelined and could not compete as their applications were rejected and were not happy about it. They argued there was certain complicity between Gbagbo and Guëi. So Gbagbo only faced Guëi. Gbagbo won the elections, but Guëi attempted to resist because Gbagbo did not honour the deal.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What was the deal?

RESPONDENT “H”: According to rumours, Gbagbo promised he only wanted to be Prime Minister. After the elections, Guëi run away and took refuge in his native region. Guëi never forgave Gbagbo for that.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Now, can you tell me about the reconciliation forum?

RESPONDENT “H”: The forum implicated all key actors, but it was a fiasco because they were not sincere with Ivorians. In 2002, the failed coup d’état caused the division of the country into two. Then, there was the Agreements of Marcoussis involving Seydou Diarra, Konan Banny, and Guillaume Soro and so on, which resulted on the formation of a government of unity. The country was moving forward because of the elements of Marcoussis which were taken into account. The elections were meant to follow, but they were postponed. Also, there were Pretoria, Accra, Lome and Ouagadougou Agreements. Once again, the elections were meant to follow, but they were postponed several times because of the non-disarmament and the country was not unified.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the 2010 elections?

RESPONDENT “H”: After 10 years the official alliance took place. So, the elections also took place. That was because officially disarmament and free movement of persons took place.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why did Gbagbo go to the polls?

RESPONDENT “H”: The situation was good. Two or three times, President Gbagbo was leading the opinions polls. Knowing that he would win, he organised the elections led by the UN and the votes were certified by the UN.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent I - 16 June 2012.**

Respondent “I” (age range 30-40) a male finance officer from the Krou ethnic group in the west of the nation talked to me about the post-election crisis in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 16 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How did the elections start?

RESPONDENT “I”: There were two important aspects. The first aspect was the first of October 2010, which went reasonably well. The IEC proclaimed the results.

The second aspect was the second round between Gbagbo and Ouattara. This was where there were difficulties. From Sunday to Tuesday, the IEC was unable to proclaim the results on time, although the IEC President stated on national television that the results would be proclaimed. On Wednesday, the IEC President proclaimed the results at Ouattara’s campaign Headquarters at the Golf Hotel, through French television.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How did the CC react?

RESPONDENT “I”: On Wednesday, the President of the Constitutional Council (CC) reacted and proclaimed the results, declaring Gbagbo the winner. These were the two contradictory exchanges. So who should be taken seriously? Here was the problem.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: The most televised event was when the IEC’s spokesperson was prevented from proclaiming the results. Why?

RESPONDENT “I”: The argument behind that was that the IEC attempted to proclaim results which were not validated. However, we knew that during the first and second rounds, results in France had not been validated and some voters had been omitted from the list. There was

violence in certain regions so the overall results in France had been cancelled, which provoked the uncertainty of results.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: The CC, which was used as an absolute last resort, cancelled votes in a lot of regions in the north and Bouaké in the centre. Do you believe the CC did the right thing by cancelling the entire votes in those regions?

RESPONDENT "I": If there were in fact frauds in those regions, what the CC could have done was to reorganise the elections in these regions.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Did they actually have massive frauds?

RESPONDENT "I": In Bouaké for example, Ouattara was expected to win about 90,000 votes. That was on paper, but there was surplus. Some voters said there were massive frauds and they had been prevented from voting because the army and police failed to protect voters. Rebels were still present and they took control of the security aspect of the elections.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why did France intervene in 2011 and not in 2002, 2004?

RESPONDENT "I": From the beginning, Sarkozy wanted Gbagbo to go.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today

**Respondent J – 19 June 2012.**

Respondent “J” (age range 50-60) is a female PDCI member from the Gur ethnic group who spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 19 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Should Houphouët be blamed for the crisis?

RESPONDENT “J”: Houphouët did not want to leave office. It was after his death that Bédié was chosen to become President but Ouattara also wanted to replace Houphouët. During the succession war caused by Houphouët, Bédié told Ouattara he should be President.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your view about how Côte d’Ivoire had its first coup d’état in 1999?

RESPONDENT “J”: The 1999 coup d’état took place because of a combination of efforts between Ouattara-Guëi-Gbagbo. Gbagbo stated he had the support of Ivoirians. Guëi stated he had the support of the army. Ouattara provided the financial support. In 1999, they all got together to make the coup d’état. Bédié did not want to resist, although he had the support of the *gendarmérie*. He went to Togo, then in exile in France.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your view about the 2000 elections?

RESPONDENT “J”: Before the 2000 elections, Gbagbo had a meeting with Guëi to form a coalition because they were both from the west in order to sideline Ouattara. Gbagbo stated he was only interested in the Prime Minister role. Gbagbo managed to convince Guëi to organise the elections. All candidates were rejected so Gbagbo only faced Guëi.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How do you remember Ouattara as Prime Minister?

RESPONDENT “J”: As Prime Minister, Ouattara insured that people paid taxes, including Houphouët. Also he aimed to end the waste of tax payer money and abuse of the nation’s



resources. For example, Mathieu Ekra, a close ally of Houphouët was arrested with a dozen of government's vehicles. When Ekra went to see Houphouët and complained, Houphouët told him that even he had been paying his taxes under Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent K – 23 June 2012.**

Respondent “K” (age range 30-40) is an academic from the Gur ethnic group, member of a political party, male and a leading figure in a religious organisation who spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 23 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: what caused the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire?

RESPONDENT “K”: It was Houphouët’s regime and the succession war among Houphouët’s heirs that provoked the crisis which started with the 1999 coup d’état. The coup was organised by Ouattara, but when Guëi took power, Ouattara went to Europe. In 2000, Gbagbo took power because he was smarter than the others. From 2002 until 2011, there has been a war against Gbagbo.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your view on *Ivoirité*?

RESPONDENT “K”: Each political figure that emerges takes power and rejects other ethnic groups. During Houphouët’s term, the Baoulé ethnic group believed they were above everyone. Now the Dioula people believe it is their turn.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: The post-election crisis was a new challenge for Gbagbo?

RESPONDENT “K”: Gbagbo wanted to resolve the election issue. He wanted a recount of votes, but the others did not want this. Even in prison, Gbagbo still believed he won the elections and questioned the credibility of the UN. The UN was impartial and chose to support Ouattara. Ivorian people had suffered a lot because Ouattara took power through the use of force.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What needs to be done to achieve reconciliation?

RESPONDENT "K": To reconcile, Gbagbo must be released, otherwise it is a fake reconciliation. Genuine reconciliation is about closing the gap, providing food and health care to Ivorians.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent L – 25 June 2012.**

Respondent “L” (age range 50-60) a female from the Malinké ethnic group stated, apart from Houphouët, Ouattara was to blame for the Ivorian crisis. Respondent “L” spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 25 June 2012

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: According to you, what are the causes of the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “L”: The causes of the crisis are linked to land ownership issues but most importantly the leadership style of Houphouët and the succession problems that Houphouët could not resolve. Since 1990, Ouattara wanted to take power. As the Prime Minister, he divided Ivorians and foreigners by introducing residence cards. He said he would attack the government and the government would fall. To achieve this, he organised the first coup d’état in 1999. Therefore, Ouattara also created the problems.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your view on *Ivoirité*?

RESPONDENT “L”: These days *Ivoirité* is not as dominant as it was under Bédié, even though the concept had been misunderstood.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Was the French intervention at the post-election crisis a good thing?

RESPONDENT “L”: No it was not a good look. The French intervention was not a good move.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: The ongoing public debate is about reconciliation. Is the problem of women taken into account?

RESPONDENT "L": Not, but the problem of women should be taken into account and women should be compensated in order to achieve reconciliation. Broadly speaking, all political prisoners should be released. Gbagbo's case in particular should proceed under the Ivorian judicial system then released.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent M – 13 June 2012.**

Respondent “M” (age range 50-60) is a male from the Akan ethnic group, and a pro-Houphouët that blamed him for the crisis. Respondent “M” talked to me about the Houphouët regime, the succession war, *Ivoirité*, the 1999 coup d’état, and its aftermath in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 13 June, 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What are the real causes of the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “M”: The root causes were Houphouët’s personal rule and willingness to die in office. As a personal rule, he had carefully muzzled all his opponents and ruled without sharing power with anyone. However, the crisis was also caused by the Ivorian elites’ inability to deal effectively with post-Houphouët crisis.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the 1999 coup d’état and its aftermath?

RESPONDENT “M”: Although Robert Guëi stated he was not the mastermind behind the 1999 coup d’état, it allowed him to put in place a government of transition that he led. In 2000, Gbagbo won the contested elections because Bédié and Ouattara were sidelined and could not compete as their applications were rejected.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What was the deal?

RESPONDENT “M”: There were reports that there was a deal that Gbagbo only wanted to be Prime Minister and would allow Guëi to be President.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Now, what can you tell me about the reconciliation forum?

RESPONDENT “M” The first Agreements of Marcoussis about reconciliation involved Seydou Diarra, Konan Banny, and Guillaume Soro and so on, which resulted on the

formation of a government of unity. The elections were meant to follow, but they were postponed. Also, there were Pretoria, Accra, Lome and Ouagadougou Agreements. Once again, the elections were meant to follow, but all those agreements failed to unify the nation.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the 2010 elections?

RESPONDENT "M": After years of negotiations, the elections also took place but they failed to meet their main objective (reconcile the country) because officially the rebels did not disarm as expected.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why did Gbagbo got to the polls?

RESPONDENT "M": There were several reports that based on opinion polls conducted by French firms that President Gbagbo was leading the opinions polls. Since he was certain that he would win, he organised the elections.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent N – 21 May 2012.**

Respondent “N” (age range 40-50) is a male from the Malinké ethnic group who talked to me about *Ivoirité*, the 1999 coup d’état and its aftermath in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 21 May 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Before asking you about *Ivoirité*, who do you think caused the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “N”: Houphouët and he would take some responsibility for the nation’s problems.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why *Ivoirité* was put in place by Bédié?

RESPONDENT “N”: During his term, Bédié openly stated power would never escape him. Therefore, he created *Ivoirité*.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What can you tell me about the 1999 coup d’état?

RESPONDENT “N”: The thing about the 1999 coup was that Bédié was overthrown without any French plot. Young Ivorians who were *anti-Ivoirité* because it was a concept based on tribalism, xenophobia and exclusion overthrew Bédié.

RESPONDENT “N”: Can you tell me about what happened after the 2000 elections?

RESPONDENT “N”: In 2000, we had two Presidents (Gbagbo and Guëi) and one country followed by radicalisation and contradictions. For example, there were contradictions because Gbagbo stated he did not believe in *Ivoirité*, but his allies believed in *Ivoirité*. It is when people are afraid to lose all their rights, they become xenophobic. Also, Gbagbo and the FPI contradicted themselves because they asked France for support when needed. At the same



time, they talked about Ivorian sovereignty, which is very contradictory. It was under those circumstances that the Second Republic was created and during that period Gbagbo described the 2000 elections as “calamitous.”

From that period on, the legitimacy of the FPI was never recognised. So, the whole battle of the FPI was to regain legitimacy.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What was the Côte d’Ivoire-France relation like under Gbagbo?

RESPONDENT “N”: In 2011 for example, Gbagbo delivered anti-French sentiments when he knew he was losing power. So, he desperately attacked France to remain in power.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your comment about the French intervention in 2010-2011?

RESPONDENT “N”: A lot of people believe Côte d’Ivoire is a sovereign state, but they are surprised when France intervenes. The problem is that we are not sovereign. We are not independent, but all France did from 2002 to 2010-11 was to protect its interests.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your opinion about Ouattara’s regime?

RESPONDENT “N”: The current regime is not even republican. All powers or almost all powers are concentrated on one person, the chief, therefore, the President is a king.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What needs to be done in order to achieve reconciliation?

RESPONDENT “N”: In order to achieve reconciliation, we need to know why we are reconciling. Reconciliation should be complemented by the resolution of economic and employment problems, guarantee the fundamental rights of foreigners, and seek to stop the judgment of people based on their ethnicity.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

## **Respondent O – 19 May 2012**

Respondent “O” (age range 50-60) is a male political analyst from the Akan ethnic group.

Respondent “O” spoke to me in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 19 May 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is the root of the Ivorian crisis?

RESPONDENT “O”: Houphouët bore some responsibility for the problems in Côte d’Ivoire because, during his leadership, Côte d’Ivoire welcomed a large number of migrants from the sub-region (Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinée, and Togo), but Houphouët failed to adopt automatic mechanisms for the integration of successive waves of migration. After his death, the identity crisis emerged as Côte d’Ivoire has been affected by its debate over national identity or *Ivoirité*.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How was *Ivoirité* born?

RESPONDENT “O”: In the 1980s, Côte faced an economic crisis. The sharp drop in the cocoa and coffee prices and the lack of available land provoked a disastrous social crisis. It was in this context that *Ivoirité* was born. According to its inventors, *Ivoirité* was not originally an exclusive term, but the context in which it was born allowed it to lead to divisions.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How did the debate over *Ivoirité* started?

RESPONDENT “O”: Bédié started the *Ivoirité* debate in 1994 when he proposed to define what it meant “to be Ivorian.” Nevertheless, beyond the economic context, multiparty triggered the emergence of politicians from diverse ethnic backgrounds who used hate speeches, distinguishing between original Ivorians and second class citizens.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How did foreigners react when politicians said “Ouattara is not Ivorian enough”?

RESPONDENT “O”: In the middle of the social crisis, some of these messages backfired because about 26% of foreigners living in Côte d’Ivoire supported Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: How did the *Ivoirité* debate impact the reconstruction of social fabric?

RESPONDENT “O”: The consequences of this debate: 12 years of political instability, a coup d’état, a country divided into two, thousands of deaths, and a population in a humanitarian crisis.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent P – 16 June 2012.**

Respondent “P” (age range 40-50) male from the Krou ethnic group political analyst who talked to me about the succession war caused by Houphouët as one of the main factors that triggered the civil war and the post-election crisis in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 16 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What were the factors at the heart of the military-political crisis in Côte d’Ivoire?

RESPONDENT “P”: Two of the factors which have been discussed by many observers were Houphouët’s personal rule and the problem of the succession. From 20 July, 1977, the person who was seen as successor of Houphouët was Bédié. However, there were other serious potential candidates in the government like Minister for planning, Mohamed Diawara, Minister for foreign affairs, Usher Assoun, or Minister for agriculture Abdoulaye Sawadogo. The succession crisis spanned 1978-93. Houphouët picked Bédié as his successor. According to the law, in case of death, the power goes to the President of the National Assembly.

Nevertheless, Bédié was accused of mismanagement of funds related to the construction of factories in the north with three other Ministers. For that reason, Laurent Dona Fologo stated four thieves should not be in government. As Minister of finance, Bédié was sacked for mismanagement. Some said Houphouët sent Bédié to the World Bank to allow him to gain experience. Others said Bédié negotiated his own transfer at the World Bank.

The succession started at the same period when the privatisation was occurring. The privatisation was a new concept, something Houphouët himself did not master well. Therefore, he asked Ouattara to sell the policy at the National Assembly. Ouattara was challenged by his own colleagues as if he were from another party. Houphouët was forced to intervene, stating Ouattara had his support. It was during that period that Houphouët went to

France to receive treatment and died on 7 December 1993. Then, the real succession war began.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Before we get to the post-election crisis, why were the IEC members well known members of the opposition?

RESPONDENT "P": The IEC was more favourable to the opposition, but the CC President Yao N'dré was close personal friend of Gbagbo.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why the disarmament did not take place?

RESPONDENT "P": The disarmament did not take place because most of the rebels were illiterates who insisted on elections.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why the contestations?

RESPONDENT "P": There were contestations mainly because in some regions, Gbagbo's candidates were not authorised to vote. Also, the army prevented some election officials from doing their work.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is your view of the electoral process?

RESPONDENT "P": The electoral process should be this way: 1) manual, 2) electronic, but the electronic part of the process was rejected by the Ouattara and his allies, although the Prime Minister stated the two systems should be used to resolve the problem by validating the results in order to achieve transparent elections. That was not the case, but Choi from the UN insisted the current government won the election.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent Q - 14 June 2012.**

Respondent “Q” (age range 40-50) male from the Krou ethnic group was a public servant talked to me broadly about postponed elections, the rebels and disarmament in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 14 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you take me through why the elections did not occur until 2010?

RESPONDENT “Q”: The elections were meant to take place in 2005 and were meant to be supervised by the international community, after Marcoussis. Nevertheless, they had been postponed until 2010 because Gbagbo wanted to ensure that his victory was guaranteed. For Gbagbo, the elections could not take place early because the rebels did not disarm and the nation was still divided.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why the rebels refused to disarm?

RESPONDENT “Q”: Gbagbo’s opponents stated even without total disarmament, Ivorians could vote, but the international community insisted the two camps (Gbagbo’s forces and the rebels should resign. The rebels were required to be located in specific military bases under the supervision of the international community. The militia fighting for Gbagbo was required to fully disarm, leaving only the normal army to do their job. The Gbagbo government thought it was unfair for the militia while the rebels were still armed.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: So was it fair to go to the polls under those circumstances?

RESPONDENT “Q”: The opposition maintained that in some countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, people did not disarm, but they went to polls. Also in 2007, Gbagbo did

a tour in the north, centre and west, reinsuring that Côte d'Ivoire was peaceful, especially when he spent sometimes in Bouaké (centre) a rebel zone. The reality was that in 2010, Gbagbo organised the elections when he was under pressure from the international community.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: I will get to the post-election crisis, but first what was Gbagbo's approach to win the elections during the campaign?

RESPONDENT "Q": During the campaign, Team Gbagbo played the identity card and demonstrated that Gbagbo was 'an original,' a native of Côte d'Ivoire while the RDR had a candidate from abroad, namely Ouattara. The problem was the nationalism approach taken by Team Gbagbo. That worked well for them because some members of the coalition did not vote and others voted for Gbagbo due to nationalism. Honestly, even now, some members of the coalition say Ouattara is a foreigner.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you comment on the post-election crisis?

RESPONDENT "Q": There 14 candidates. During the first round, the coalition obtained 60% while the FPI and candidates from other parties obtained about 40%. So logically, it was impossible for Gbagbo to win the elections on that basis. The reality is that in the second round, Ouattara won the elections, but Gbagbo never accepted it. As he told the media, Ouattara should never become President.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Was the intervention of the international forces necessary?

RESPONDENT "Q": Since the coalition was convinced it won the election, it was important for them to hang on. It was also important to gain support from the international community to destroy his heavy weapons in order to sideline Gbagbo. At that time, a large number of

elections took place in Africa. Therefore, it is important to lead by example by using force to sideline Gbagbo.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Is reconciliation impossible?

RESPONDENT "Q": The FPI is still refusing to admit its defeat. That makes the dialogue impossible.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.



**Respondent R – 14 June 2012.**

Respondent “R” (age range 30-40) male professional from the Malinké ethnic group stated that the French intervention was needed in the war. I spoke to Respondent “R” in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 14 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you tell me about the post-election crisis?

RESPONDENT “R”: The Independent Election Commission (IEC) declared Ouattara the winner. The Constitutional Court (CC) took over the dossier to declare Gbagbo the winner.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What is the cause of the post-election crisis?

RESPONDENT “R”: The plan was that the IEC counts the votes, the CC verifies the votes and the UN certifies the votes. The IEC was prevented from doing his job when Damana Pickass (pro-Gbagbo) prevented the IEC official to proclaim the results. So, the cause of the post-election crisis was the contestation.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you give me your opinion on the French intervention?

RESPONDENT “R”: The war ended after the intervention of France, which was supported by the UN, the ECOWAS and the African Union. The UN intervened to avoid the use of heavy weapons by the FPI.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Who captured Gbagbo?

RESPONDENT “R”: There were two versions: according to the Ouattara camp, Gbagbo was captured by Ouattara’s forces; according the FPI, Gbagbo was captured by France.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Is reconciliation possible?

RESPONDENT "R": In my opinion, Ouattara started reconciliation too early. It should have taken more time to succeed.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent S – 29 June 2012.**

Respondent “S” was (age range 50-60) male from the Krou ethnic group was pro-Gbagbo and blamed Houphouët for the political crisis because of the leadership problems he created. Respondent “S” talked to me about the Houphouët regime in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 29 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What are the roots causes of the crisis that Côte d’Ivoire is going through?

RESPONDENT “S”: Although some people say the actual conflict started in the 1930s, Côte d’Ivoire is going through this crisis because of Houphouët who was not clear about his succession. Like in any other country, there is a leadership problem when a lot of contesters show their willingness to lead through their political parties based on ethnicity, which always triggers conflict.

The succession war through political parties based on ethnicity is nothing new. During the pre-independence era, intellectuals such as Jean-Baptist Mockey regrouped politicians from the south to form the progressive party.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Was there an exception?

RESPONDENT “S”: Only the RDA was able to extend its electorate in a large number of territories. Its electorate was popular and powerful as it managed to get its message through farmer communities. All farmers who joined the RDA believed the party could look after their interests. However, since the leaders came from different regions and relied on their regional electorates, there were a few clashes.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: The 18 February 1992 protest was one of the biggest towards the end of Houphouët's political life. Why the protest?

RESPONDENT "S": Because the government did not have enough money to pay public servants, it decided to cut wages. This caused discontent among public servants.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What happened there?

RESPONDENT "S": On 18 February 1992, Gbagbo and his allies from the opposition and public servants were involved in the protest. Gbagbo was warned there would be violence, given that the protest was not officially authorised, but he decided to participate. Demonstrators like Gbagbo were imprisoned. Although it was forbidden by law to destroy government buildings, the destruction started at the courthouse. Cars were burnt, students were beaten and girls were raped at the Yopougon university campus of Abidjan.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why students?

RESPONDENT "S": Because the Students Union was associated with opposition parties.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why was the destruction forbidden by law?

RESPONDENT "S": There was already the economic crisis that started in the 1980s because of the decline of cocoa price which reduced the financial capacity of the government. It did not want to deal with unnecessary bills.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why were the 1995 elections boycotted?

RESPONDENT "S": Because it was important to resolve the problem of the illegibility of Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

**Respondent T – 29 June 2012.**

Respondent “T” (age range 40-50) male from the Gur ethnic group was a political analyst who also mainly blamed Houphouët for the political crisis because of the succession war that followed his death. Respondent “T” talked to me about the Houphouët regime in Abidjan Côte d’Ivoire on 29 June 2012.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Can you take me through the succession war?

RESPONDENT “T”: Before the death of Houphouët, Ouattara was in conflict with Bédié. In the middle of a debate at the National Assembly, Bédié and his MPs asked for the resignation of the government which was meant to be a PDCI government. This suggested there was some positioning going on, pro-Bédié versus pro-Ouattara.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What caused disunity within the PDCI?

RESPONDENT “T”: Given that Houphouët was affected by his illness, he was every often in France for medical treatments. Houphouët gave far too much power to Ouattara. As Prime Minister, he was seen as the second heir of Houphouët which was chocking. That created some dissidents.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Did Bédié get a lot of support within the government?

RESPONDENT “T”: From reliable sources, only three members of the government, including Emile Bombet, (a PDCI powerbroker) supported Bédié. All other members of cabinet including those from his ethnic group did not support him.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Did Ouattara either expressed his interest for the top job?

RESPONDENT “T”: During Raphael Lakpé’s program called “The Write Couch” he asked Ouattara on national television if he would seek to take power. Ouattara had led the Ivorian

people to believe there was a leader, namely Houphouët, but if he had the opportunity he would not say no.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Was the implementation of Article 11 of the Constitution accepted by the majority of government's members?

RESPONDENT "T": Article 11 of the Constitution was modified to favour the President of the National Assembly, but the government rejected it because they wanted it to be done like in France or in Gabon in order to ensure the succession was done temporarily.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Was Bédié the right candidate for the presidency?

RESPONDENT "T": Since Bédié was too interested in material well-being, the opposition questioned if he was the best candidate who should become leader. As one observer stated it was not necessary for another leader from the Baoulé ethnic group to take over.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Why the post-election crisis?

RESPONDENT "T": The new government took over the previous one to contest the legitimacy of Ouattara for the presidency, although until 1999, they formed a coalition. The real issue was the leaders lacked the ability to unify people and based their votes on ethnicity. Once in power, they say: "I am here with my ethnic group to take advantage of the availability of state resources to become rich and show off."

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: What are your comments on the French intervention?

RESPONDENT "T": In a 'civilised country like Sénégal, intervention was not needed. After the proclamation of the results, Abdoulaye Wade conceded defeat and Macky Sall was declared the winner in 2012. In Côte d'Ivoire, given the coalition (RHDP), it was more likely

that the coalition would win. Because Gbagbo refused to go, the French intervention was needed to end the post-election crisis.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Is reconciliation possible?

RESPONDENT "T": Reconciliation is something new in the Ivorian culture. To achieve reconciliation, parties involved should admit their wrongdoing, grant amnesty, and adopt a traditional justice system like in Rwanda.

JEAN-CLAUDE MELEDJE: Thank you very much for your time today.

## Appendix C: 2012 Survey letter



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**Study title:** Conflict in Côte d'Ivoire: A crisis of leadership from Houphouët-Boigny to Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara

**Researcher:** Jean-Claude Meledje

To participate in this project, participants were strongly encouraged to carefully read the explanation of this research. Participants have been given the relevant information in a comprehensive way and were free to take part. No information about participants will be published in my thesis and the issue of confidentiality and anonymity will be respected. This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia.

**Survey question: what is the cause of the Ivorian crisis?**

The survey was centred on the cause of the crisis. When asked whether the crisis was caused by land ownership, religion, ethnicity or succession war, most young respondents indicated the crisis was synonymous with ethnicity. This explains why ethnicity was often used by failed politicians who lacked credible agenda for Ivorians.

inspiring  
achievement