

The Restoration of the Côte d'Ivoire Public Sector

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Since September 19th 2002 the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire is marked by direct confrontations between the legal National Force Army of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and three rebel forces, the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP) and the Popular Movement of the Great West of Côte d'Ivoire (MPIGO). The situation on the field seems to reveal discomforts in the State-nation. Till now the country is parted into military occupation zones. Thus, Côte d'Ivoire is no longer governed. Hostilities are marked by human right violations and massacre of civilians. Most people living in rural areas and in towns are compelled to forced displacements. Vis-à-vis the high risk of disturbance to order, the Government called France on an emergency. More than 2500 soldiers are sent for rescue operations. In fact Paris interposes itself between the armed factions at conflict, by creating its own demarcation line which divides the country into a southern part where can be seen the presence of governmental troops and in a northern zone held by rebel forces.

In the tread, protagonists at the war hold their round Table, in Linas-Marcousis (France), from the 15th to January 23rd 2003. A Conference of Heads of State is called, in Paris, in January the 25th-26th 2003. But two years after the Marcousis Agreements still stayed dead letter. In November 17th 2003 Abidjan proclaims its ceasefire, which nobody really respects. To stop confusions the United Nations sent 6250 soldiers for security operations.

To address the situation one could state the following hypothesis: **The Côte d'Ivoire conflicts seem to result from deficits of viable public sphere for the concerned ethnic groups whose activity is relevant to the plantation economy.**

The cocoa plantation economy is introduced in Côte d'Ivoire during the colonial rule. After independence public policies are implemented in the seventies, with the purpose of sustaining domestic growth by enhancing cocoa arboriculture. Natives as well as foreigners are attracted to forest of the south-eastern Côte d'Ivoire. Several migrants invest labour forces in working near their hosts under seasonal (short term) or decennial (long term) contracts. Those whose activity is based on short term agreements gain payments by sharing crops outcomes. They are called "abusanfué", which means seasonman!



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However, peasants who work in a long term perspective acquire at least “usufruit” rights, when cocoa fields they create will be parted in two parts.

What are the characteristics of the long term contract? When a foreigner - someone coming from a different place - seeks for long term work in a village, he expressed his needs to a native who indicates to him a virgin space (black forest) to exploit. The newcomer undertakes his duties by clearing land cover. He also cuts down big trees to permit that rays of sunshine can access the field and, finally he undertake cacao-trees plantation labour. The worker is not paid for his job, for the simple reason that he is not an employee, but a partner of the native to whom belongs the land. However, he receives a peripheral ground for growing crops for his personal maintenance and that of its family. Cocoa field reaches its cruising approximately after ten years of labour. It is the moment when the migrant and his host agree to inspecting the work carried out. The both of them and their witnesses move onto the plantation and divide the field in two equal parts. The foreigner gets his own parcel on which he has full “usufruit” rights, but he has no property right to claim on the land. The “usufruit” rights are available as long as the cocoa vegetation lasts.

After the field is parted, the land owner lacks know-how to control his cocoa parcel because he didn't work while “migrant” was creating the cocoa field. Usually to solve this problem, the villager may entrust his field to the care of the “migrant” who has been undertaking forest weeding, crops gathering, cocoa beans drying and transporting since ten years. This type of contract is seasonal and named “abunu”. The migrant's status here is similar to the one of any employee. He is thus remunerated by the third (30%) of cocoa beans outcome.

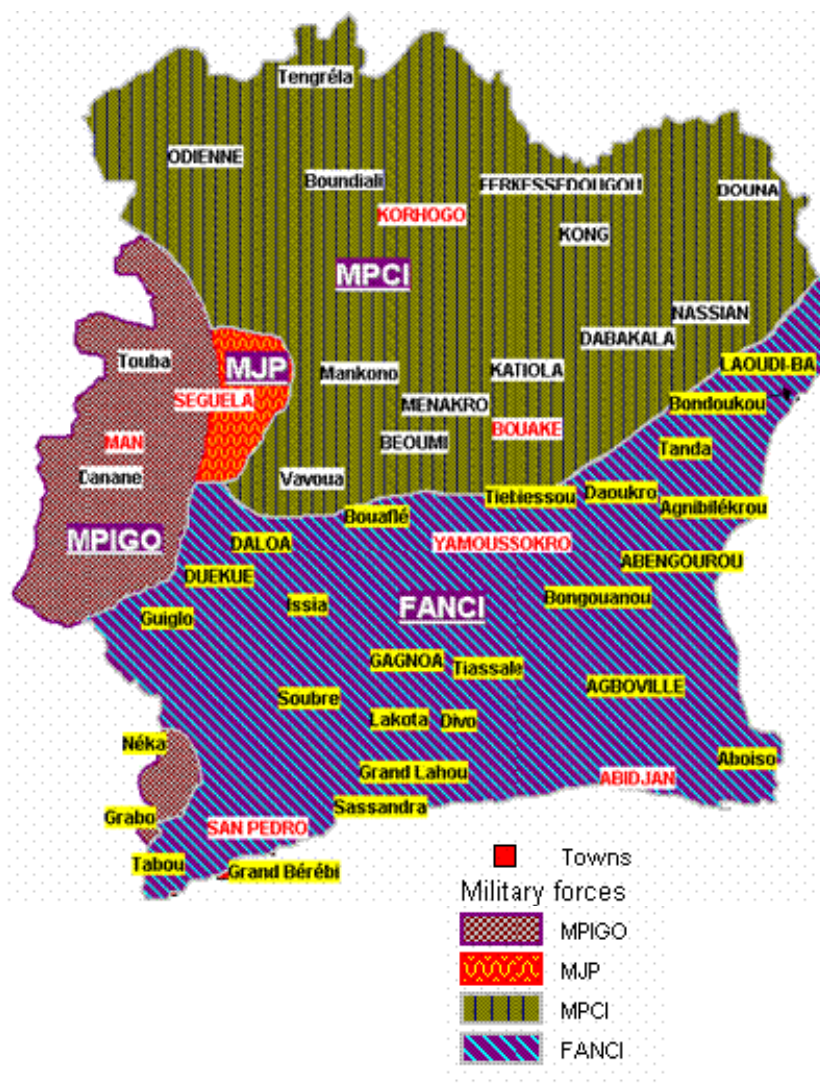
Beside short and long term work contracts, rural zones are also marked by the fact that people may set their cocoa plantations into mortgage in order to obtain the necessary money. The mortgage contract permits creditor or his representative to exploit the concerning field for some fixed years. A part from this, one could observe many cases where plantations are submitted to mercantile alienation. This process allows many migrants to become owners of the former plantations they opened three decades before.

While land factors are changing hands in the rural areas, most of the native's heirs were living far away in the towns or working for public administration. After their retirement, they got financial problems due to the lack of payment of pension like it is the case in most African countries. When retired heirs go back home, they discover that their supposed land properties changed hand for a long time. Natives accuse the migrants and the migrants' heirs who

become somehow the targets of anger of those who are now frustrated. Villages which, some decades earlier, were considered legendary harbours of solidarity and friendliness between disparate members of ethnic groups, have become spaces of tension.

With the change at the top of the State, new officials vote for laws that restrict the rights of foreigner in rural zones. People react furiously. The country enters into a long crisis that affects multinational companies as well as natives. Cocoa-plantations and food production are also deeply affected. Several peasants were really shocked and leave their field into abandon because of the generalised insecurity. Local activities collapse. The progressive fragmentation of the country has considerable social, human and economic costs.

Map n° 1: The military positions in Côte d'Ivoire



Beyond domestic activities, the Côte d'Ivoire conflicts have many impacts on several sectors of West African economy. Transnational companies as Nestle, French SME or the West African monetary Union, moved their personals from Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana. Consequently, Accra, its capital, faces housing, health care, and transport problems. The Republic of Mali and Burkina Faso are closed to Côte d'Ivoire. But they could no longer access the port of Abidjan for traffics on sea. These two countries turned to the ports of Conakry (Guinea), Tema (Ghana) and Lome (Togo) for import-export activities of cotton, oils and consumption products. Mali cannot trust on the decrepit Dakar-Bamako railways. Neither Burkina Faso nor Niger use the Régie Abidjan-Niger (RAN) now regarded as a railway of high-risk. Highways could be an available solution. But there remain many other constraints, like cost overrun of transport on long distances which are only practicable in some areas.

The research question

1. - Côte d'Ivoire is considered as an economic lung of West Africa. What are the consequences of the open and larval war of Côte d'Ivoire on the economic activities in West Africa?
2. - Which key role local actors (traditional chiefs, Imams, village elders, women, etc.) could play in the process of construction of confidence in Côte d'Ivoire?
3. - On which factors one may act in order to restore social dialogue (Workshops of discussion, regional forum, circles of mediation between the representatives of Natives and Migrants)?
4. - Which form of institutionalisation one must implement (land laws, property rights, Nationality, etc.) to sustain good governance?

The objective of this project

This research is aimed at the analysis of the consequences of the political crisis in Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on the ethnic groups, the domestic economy and on the States and societies in West Africa. We will target our reading on land

studies. There for we will mention that the current social tensions in Côte d'Ivoire are relevant to the way people claim their identity they oppose to others.

We will mention particularly the problems of Nationality, the social ethnic composition of the country, as well as the problems of institutionalisation in the nation-States. We will propose dialogue workshops where grassroots people can contribute to restore civil peace.

1. – The Nationality and property rights

The conflict of Côte d'Ivoire reveals misunderstanding between the ethnic factions and the nation-State concerning the questions of property rights and Nationality. Till seventies, people who are established in the country could obtain Nationality by request addressed to officials. However, since 1972, Nationality is accessible only if the applicant:

- is born from Côte d'Ivoire natives
- is married with a Côte d'Ivoire indigene
- is adopted by one Côte d'Ivoire native
- is naturalized by Côte d'Ivoire officials

These new laws provoke resentments against Administration. People's anger is exacerbated, because of the limits to land access imposed to the former foreigners who perceive injustice. In 1998, the legislator initiates land politics and stipulates in line 5 that, property rights can be transmitted. But in the first article the Government says that only State, the Collectivises, and the Côte d'Ivoire natives have property rights. So land rights implemented by officials appear exclusive and practically directed against foreigners.

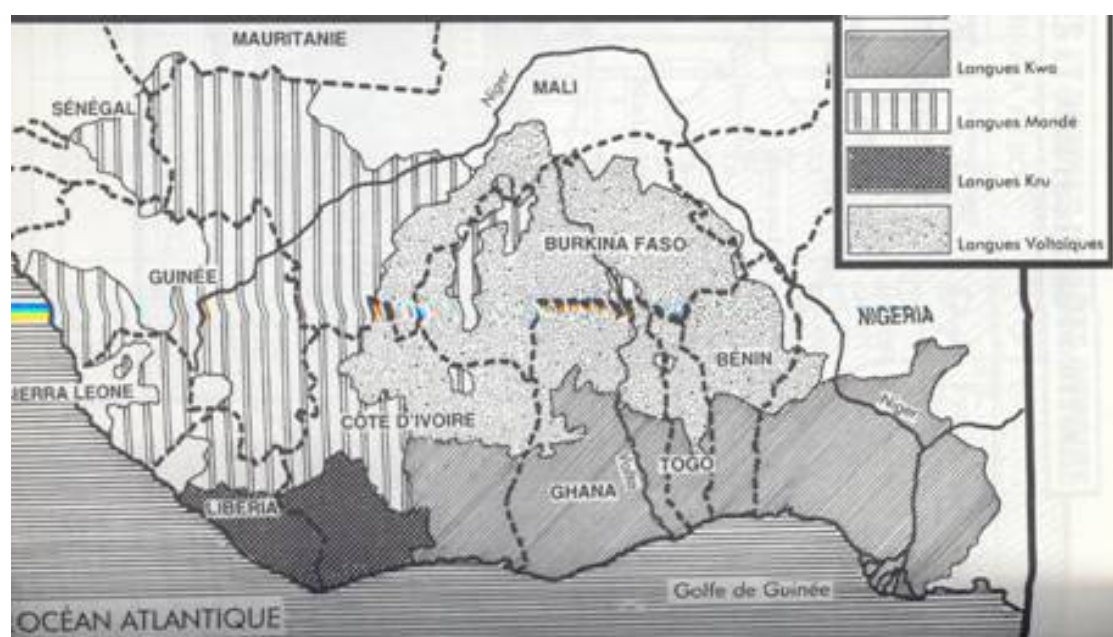
Nevertheless, the term foreigner is not a descriptive concept. Côte d'Ivoire indigene peasants working far away from their village and migrants who have created for several decades "usufruit" rights in Côte d'Ivoire, are still being identified as foreigners, as well as ethno linguistic groups living in the country before the establishment of the Colonial rule, itself supplanted by the State-nation after 1960. Concretely speaking property right problems does not touch

only those identified as "strangers", but also natives who moved for different reasons in another region and acquired grounds far from their village. Akan ethnic members of Bouaké, are for instance well known as "abussanfouet" = seasonal workers. Now their hosts also referred to the doctrine of "Ivoirité" to deny usufruit rights small peasants achieved under cocoa plantation labour.

2. - The acculturative historical State-nation

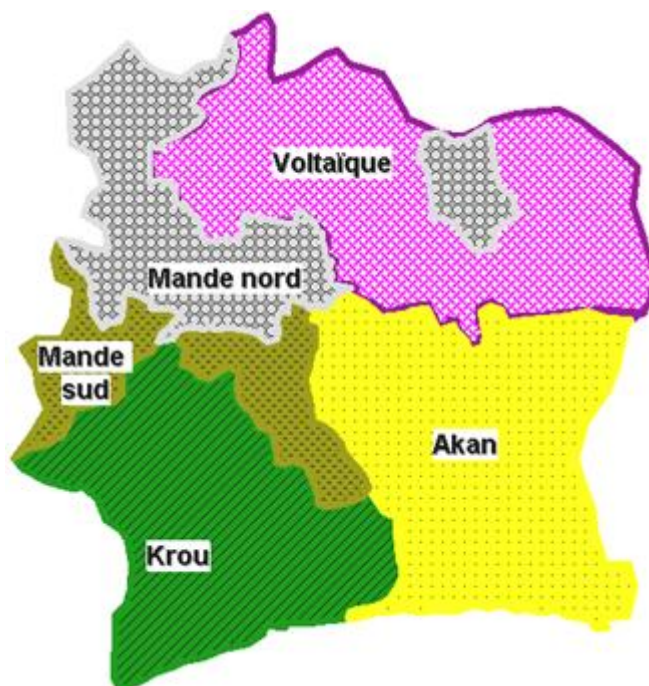
The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire is a confetti State of 322.000 Km² resulting from colonial rule. The country is set up on the territory of five ethnic groups: Akan (42%), the Voltaic ones (17.5%), Northern Mandé (16.4%), Southern Mandé (10%) and Krou (11%). This acculturative State is free from the colonial domination since approximately half a century. 14.7 million people live in the country. But only 11.043.903 inhabitants are listed in 1998. Ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire emigrated from diverse West African societies. The Akan (Baoulé, Agni, Akie, Abey, Abrou, Adjoukrou, Ebrie, N'zima, Abure, Abidji, Alladjan, Avikan, Ahizi, etc.) came from East in XVIIIth century, while deserting the Ashanti kingdom. Most Akans live nowadays in Ghana or Togo. The Krou (Bete, Guere, Dida, etc.), numerically very few, have some ramifications in Liberia. The Northern Mandé (Malinké, Dioula, Mahou, etc.) are descents of the feudal chiefdom of Samory, whereas the Yacouba and the Gouro constitute the Southern Mandé group. The Voltaic group (Sénoufo, Lobi, Tagouana, etc.) occupy their current positions since the XVIth and the XIXth centuries.

Map n° 2: Ethnic groups in West Africa



Source : B. Lukan, *Atlas historique de l'Afrique des origines à nos jours*, Editions du Rocher, 2001, p. 202.

Map n° 3: The ethnic composition of Côte d'Ivoire



3. - The construction of the public sphere

The pluralism of ethnic groups has brought multiple and variable representations of the space. Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina-Faso have interesting story due particularly to the meeting of their populations. Thus, Burkinabé (former Voltaïc) contributed to creating benefits in Côte d'Ivoire. Qualitative and the meso studies justify many complex links between people long time before the arrival of some "Elephants" at power. When officials do not take these stories into account, especially the memory of the forest management before declaring Nationality ex office, they get State-nation into troubles. The collective exclusive laws they produce destroy grassroots' long term hard labour.

The economy of cocoa plantation was introduced early XIXth century. During and after the Colonial era, multinational companies focused their interests on projects that could permit them take benefits from Côte d'Ivoire. Doing so, they have occulted the process of democracy. Bilateral and multilateral co-operation to development hardly supported institutionalisation that must secure people's activity. So the National-state lacks political ambitions. Finally Côte

d'Ivoire remains both formal and informal society under the manipulation of ethnicity.

4. - Propositions for the Peace restoration

A. - How could one contribute to the construction of the democracy and freedoms Côte d'Ivoire?

Priority must be given to the restoration of the confidence between populations living in rural and urban zone and officials. To achieve that, one must identify some main mediators between the eminent members of religious associations, village dignitaries, district elders, charismatic women and political authorities.

B. - Which actors one could identify, who can sustain the construction of confidence?

It seems important to initiate meeting workshops in which the partners of the dialogue for peace keeping can talk together. It is difficult to require from those who act significantly during the wars to make peace. However, Côte d'Ivoire can trust on the eminent role of women. Thus in the gender perspective, one need women and mothers' contribution in the peace process building.

C. - Which resources could one mobilise in favour of the social peace?

Government must also play a key role in organising and securing the workshops. Departments of interior, justice and the rural Development must be particularly, by facilitating participation to those who will attend the workshops.

5. - The methodology of this research

Our methodology in the research will be primarily qualitative and biographical. It will enable us to characterize the memory of the relationship between migrants and natives, from the point of view of the rural lands and their notable evolutions. Our approach will be meso-biographical, that scholars use to call by sequential method. This narrative approach will emphasize the history (*life story*) of particular individuals, through the screen of the long term perspective (life history) of a given area. By doing this, our reading of the history will be a comprehensive one.

We will also use quantitative informations to model the successive changes occurred in space in term of evolution of the densities. With this intention, we will map the correlation between demographic information and space data, like the surface. Such a step will enable us to determine the change in its static implications. However, beyond the fixity, we will more seek to simulate the space processes in a dynamic way. We will characterize our information by the usage of two softwares of geographic information systems (GIS), **MapInfo** and **Arc View**, as well as drafting package **CorelDraw**.

We will chart our data on MapInfo. With this intention, we will scan photocopies of the charts of the territory. We will create links of our "Raster" images, with the geographical co-ordinates (latitude and longitude) of certain areas. Once obtained the vectorial images, we will determine the scales and will carry out the digitalization of the charts. The various layers will enable us to create charts sets of themes and to emphasize the variations in agrarian space in Côte d'Ivoire.

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